



Facultad de Filología

**Grado en Lengua y Literatura Inglesas**

Comparison between *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll, and the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns*

Autora: Sara Freijanes Gil

Director: Antonio Jesús Gil González

Santiago de Compostela, curso 2018/2019



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LIÑA TEMÁTICA ASIGNADA: Intermedialidad

Tendo en conta a liña temática que me foi asignada, SOLICITO que o meu TFG leve por título o que indico a continuación:

**Título:** *Comparison between "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland", by Lewis Carroll, and the videogame "Alice: Madness Returns"*

The main topic of my final grade project will be a comparison between the classic "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865) written by the English writer Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, and the videogame "Alice: Madness Returns" (2011) released by Electronic Arts (EA Games).




Although videogames are usually considered mere entertainment mediums, some of them, such as "Alice: Madness Returns" could be considered as artistic masterpieces when analyzing them deeply. It is through this analysis of the narrative and aesthetic aspects, and the comparison of the same ones, that I would like to show how a videogame can transmit the same feelings and emotions as a good universal classic such as "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". However, Carroll's book does not only transcend the literary dimension to the one of the videogames, but also to the television and cinematographic dimension with more than 30 adaptations such as, perhaps the most known ones, the animated version by Walt Disney "Alice in Wonderland" (1951) and Tim Burton's "Alice in Wonderland" (2010), this last one also with its own videogame. Undoubtedly, there is an enormous quantity of adaptations of Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" in all the different mediums we have at our disposal nowadays, from films to theatre or even music. However, although I am going to mention a few ones throughout this project, the main aim is to profoundly analyze the works first mentioned, since I find quite interesting the aesthetic power of both works.

In order to achieve this, the project will probably follow the next structure:

First of all, I would like to briefly analyze both works, the book and the videogame, separately. In both analyses I will focus on their main features according to the narrative's and aesthetics' aspects using the

respective methodology in consonance with literary and game studies. After a short analysis of these aspects of both works, my aim is to compare them from the perspective of intermediality, paying special attention, as mentioned before, to the aesthetics.

Santiago de Compostela, 6 de Noviembre de 2017

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## **1. Introduction**

The goal of this thesis is to carry out a comparison between the world-renowned classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011) from the point of view of a new but already consolidated field of study, Comparative Media Studies, as well as from the perspective of Game Studies. In order to carry out this comparison a brief introduction to the concept of “intermediality” as well as Carroll’s *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and some of its adaptations will be given. Moreover, I will also delve into the concept of “transmediality” in order to allow for classification of the video game and to accomplish an accurate comparison in the following sections. Following the introduction, a deeper analysis of the main aspects concerning the field of narratology as well as the field of aesthetics will be carried out for both Carroll’s novels and the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011). In addition to this, a middle section dealing with unnatural narratives will work as a bridge between the main sections of narratology and aesthetics.

In order to both analyse and compare these works from the perspective of Comparative Media Studies, I will use Carroll’s *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (2016) as a main source, an edition with the original John Tenniel’s illustrations published by Macmillan Collector’s Library; as well as the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011), developed by Spicy Horse and released by Electronic Arts. In my analysis of *Alice: Madness Returns* I will also reference *The Art of Alice: Madness Returns* (2011), a book based on the designs and work of the Spicy Horse art team on the videogame. Moreover, I will make use of other secondary sources such as Gil and Pardo’s *Adaptación 2.0 Estudios Comparados sobre Intermedialidad*, a book which addresses the main aspects of intermediality and its influence on many adaptations using different mediums; James Newman’s *Videogames* (2004), a book from the field of Game Studies with a less literary perspective than Gil and Pardo’s book; Gillian Beer’s *Alice in Space: The sideways Victorian world of Lewis Carroll* (2016), a book which covers some of the main characteristic elements of Carroll’s work; Alber’s *Unnatural Narratives – Unnatural Narratology* (2011), which presents and analyses different examples of unnatural narratives; and Sigmund Freud’s *The Uncanny* (2003), which will be the basis of my analysis of the uncanny aesthetics of both Carroll’s *Alice* and the videogame.

## 1.1. 'Intermediality' and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

It is through the concept of 'intermediality' that this thesis attempts to give a more accurate picture of videogames and their role as a new medium capable of being just as valuable as a good novel or a fascinating theatre play. Irina Rajewski's article titled *Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality* (2005) views the concept of intermediality from a literary perspective, which may help us understand more accurately what this broad term means. According to Rajewski:

[...] intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix *inter*) in some way take place *between* media. "Intermedial" therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media, and which thereby can be differentiated from *intramedial* phenomena as well as from *transmedial* phenomena. (2005: 46)

Moreover, focusing on "concrete medial configurations and their specific intermedial qualities", Rajewski proposes three different subcategories in the field of intermediality: "intermediality in the more narrow sense of medial transposition", "intermediality in the more narrow sense of media combination", and "intermediality in the narrow sense of intermedial references" (Rajewski 2005: 51–52).

Rajewski defines intermediality in the sense of transposition as the transformation of a certain media product into another medium. This means that the "original" product, which belongs to a certain medium, becomes the main "source" of a different medium, and therefore a new product based on a different medium. Adaptations such as the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns*, which will be analysed throughout this thesis, would fit into this subcategory.

The second subcategory, known as intermediality in the sense of media combination, makes reference to productions created by the combination of different mediums, such as opera or cinema. As Rajewski states, "for this category, intermediality is a communicative-semiotic concept, based on the combination of at least two medial forms of articulation." (2005: 52)

Lastly, the third and final subcategory of intermediality in the sense of intermedial references is related to the imitation of techniques typical of a certain medium in a different medium. One example would be the use of specific literary elements in poetry to evoke the medium of music, a technique which was characteristic of the art movement of French Symbolism.



Even though the term intermediality described by Rajewski may sound unfamiliar to those out with the field of arts and literature, the concept of intermediality is present almost everywhere with the development of new technologies nowadays. This can be seen through the numerous adaptations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that are currently on the market. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, first published in 1865, is the most famous novel written by the English writer and mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll. Although it was first conceived as a book for children, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* increasingly became an object of study for curious adults who found something extraordinary in its reading, giving rise to many critical interpretations even more than one hundred years after its first publication. The novel's capacity to adapt to different mediums and contexts, such as music, television or theatre, is what makes Carroll's work so attractive. Gillian Beer describes in her book *Alice in Space* (2016) how Carroll's novel transcends the boundaries of literature thanks to its 'capacity to absorb new contexts':

The *Alice* books continue to spark ideas for philosophers, graphic novelists, psychoanalysts, pantomime, advertisers, children, astronomers, filmmakers, gamers, and artists. Intensely verbal, they have added many words to the English language: portmanteau words, unbirthdays, galumphing, curiouser and curiouser, frabjous inventions! Yet they also provide material for images, ballet, and silent film, forms where gesture substitutes for talk. They have provoked terms for scientists: the "Red Queen hypothesis" in which parasite and host must keep changing (or co-evolve) in order to remain in the same place; "Alice in Wonderland syndrome" in psychiatry in which the patient experiences the body or the body parts as shifting shape and scale, and where near and far become disturbed. (1)

Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* has an overwhelming amount of adaptations compared to other classics, many of them lost in the passage of time. The first adaptations were theatrical, for example the musical pantomime *Alice in Wonderland* (1886), the only version which Lewis Carroll himself was able to see; followed by the first film adaptation directed by Cecil Hepworth and Percy Stow, *Alice in Wonderland* (1903), which screened five years after Carroll's death. The *Alice* books have also had a great influence in the realm of music, inspiring classical pieces such as those of Irving Fine (1942) and David Del Tredici (1969-1975), and popular songs such as Neil Sadaka's *Alice in Wonderland* (1963), Aerosmith's *Sunshine* (2001), and Avril Lavigne's *Alice (Underground)* (2010) to mention only a few. Carroll's

work has even been broadcast on television, with TV adaptations such as the children's live-action television show *Adventures in Wonderland* (1991-1995) produced by Disney. However, the most well-known and cherished adaptation is without a doubt Walt Disney's film *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), a mixture of both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*<sup>1</sup>. One of the newest cinematographic adaptations, which also received a warm reception from the public, is Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), with a later sequel called *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (2016). Burton's first film adaptation also comes with a videogame released in the same year (2010) and with the same name as the film (*Alice in Wonderland*). The aforementioned adventure videogame was released by Disney Interactive Studios and is available for Wii, Nintendo DS and PC, however, it did not receive the same critical acclaim as the film (Burton, 2010).

The number of videogames influenced by Carroll's *Alice* is enormous, and some examples can be found in the online entertainment platform for computers called "Steam"<sup>2</sup>, which allows users to buy and play videogames online without the need of going to a physical store. Only on Steam's platform can one find 175 different videogames influenced by Carroll's *Alice*; including *Alice Mystery Garden*, released in 2017 by AMG Games; *The Night of the Rabbit*, released in 2013 by Daedalic Entertainment; and *House of Alice*, released in 2016 by Cuddles and Snowflake, amongst many others. However, throughout this work the focal point will be *Alice: Madness Returns*, released in 2011 by Electronic Arts and developed by the Chinese studio Spicy Horse.

### **1.2. *Alice: Madness Returns* as an example of a "complement"**

The numerous adaptations mentioned in the previous section are clear examples of intermediality, where a novel transcends the boundaries of the written paper to become a different piece of art in a different medium. In the case which will be analysed through this thesis, Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, together with *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, transcend the realm of literature to become a videogame, *Alice: Madness Returns*. However, we do not

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the adaptations' information was taken from the website *Curiouser and Curiouser: The Evolution of Wonderland*: <<https://www.carleton.edu/departments/ENGL/Alice/media.html>>

<sup>2</sup>Website: <<https://store.steampowered.com/>>

find a mere adaptation here, but a different story taking the basic and most characteristic elements which compound Carroll's novel.

Before looking into *Alice: Madness Returns* in detail, I will give a further introduction to the arrival of videogames in the modern world and how they began to be highly influenced by novels. The appearance of the first videogame in 1962, called *Space War*, expanded the world of arts and entertainment; a new medium was introduced, and its use became widespread in society. The 80s were the turning point for the videogame industry, and with the development of new technologies and the emergence of new and improved games the demand for this new entertainment medium grew exponentially into its present form (Glancey 1996: 12). Moreover, during the 80s the videogame not only became more popular in society due to its innovative characteristics, but also in the narrative world due to the many adaptations of novels into videogames that appeared during this period. The most common subgenres which began to be adapted into videogames were science-fiction, fantasy, and thriller; the first recognised adaptation was a version of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* created in 1981 (Gil 2018: 269). However, because of its relative newness and its ongoing development, the videogame does not receive the same respect and admiration as other mediums such as literature or music. The prejudices and snobbery surrounding the world of videogames resembles the rejection other mediums such as television or comics suffered at first. (Gil 2013: 207).

*Alice: Madness Returns* (2011) is the sequel of *American McGee's Alice* (2000), developed by Rogue Entertainment and released by Electronic Arts. Both games were directed by American McGee, a game designer born in 1972 in Texas<sup>3</sup>, who, inspired by hearing Crystal Method's song "Trip Like I Do" while driving down the famous California Highway 1, came up with the idea of designing *American McGee's Alice* (Marshall 2011: 6). The plot of *Alice: Madness Returns* is similar to that of *American McGee's Alice*, but has a different design and a much more solid body of art behind it, probably thanks to the numerous advances in technology in the eleven year gap between the production of the videogames. Moreover, a third sequel with the name *Alice: Asylum* is being developed at the moment and is supposed to be released in 2021.

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<sup>3</sup>Retrieved from: <<https://www.americanmcgee.com/about/>>

*Alice: Madness Returns* is probably the darkest work based on Carroll’s books that I have come across. It is a videogame where the imaginary world and the real world merge into one, at the same time becoming opposites; everything is surrounded by a sinister and gloomy atmosphere. Following Gil and Pardo’s theory, it could be said that calling *Alice: Madness Returns* an adaptation is not accurate, since it does not adapt the ‘diegesis’<sup>4</sup> to another medium, but rather expands it into another medium. The term adaptation is usually applied to works which are based on another work or medium; however, it is too vast a concept to be used in a thesis where the main goal is to abide by Comparative Media Studies and be as accurate as possible. Therefore, using Pardo’s theory, *Alice: Madness Returns* should be called a ludic “complement” (from the Spanish “complemento”). In order to substantiate this, a further explanation of his theory of ‘transmediality’ is necessary.

‘Transmediality’ is the transference of possible worlds, such as characters, action and chronotope, not only from one work to another, but also from one medium to another (Pardo 2018: 66). Pardo’s model of transmediality, which is represented by a square, explains in a graphic and clear way the possible elements into which it can be divided. The following image of Pardo’s model is taken from his theory “De la Transescritura a la Transmedialidad: Poética de la Ficción Transmedial” which appears in the book *Adaptación 2.0. Estudios Comparados sobre Intermedialidad*(2018: 66):

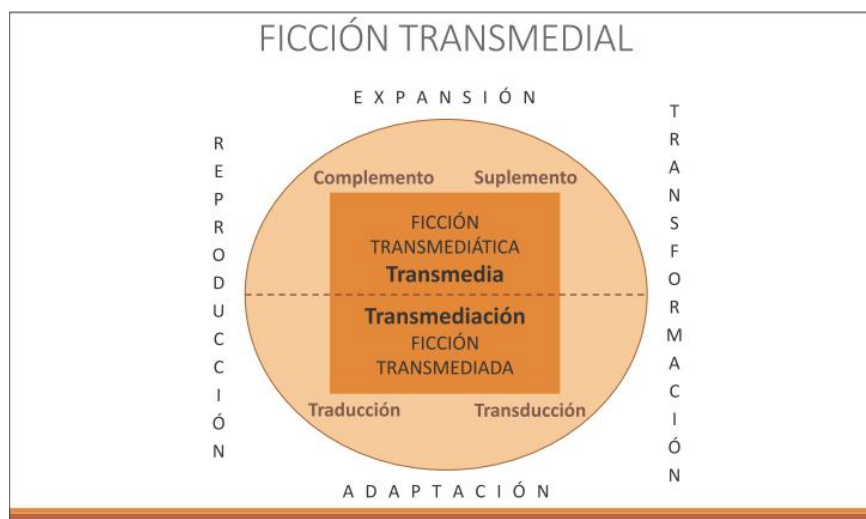


Figura 2.- El modelo cuadrangular de la transmedialidad.

**Figure 1.2.1.: Pardo's quadrangular model of transmediality**

<sup>4</sup> The spatio-temporal universe designated by the story. In other words, diegesis is the story itself. (Genette 1989: 334)

The square is divided horizontally into two, on the upper half we find “transmedia”, which is linked to the expansion of the diegesis; and in the lower half we find “transmediation” (from the Spanish “transmediación”), which is linked to the adaptation of the diegesis. The square is also divided vertically, with “reproduction” (from the Spanish “reproducción”) on the left-hand side and “transformation” (from the Spanish “transformación”) on the right-hand side. This division allows us to distinguish between what Pardo calls the “complement” and the “supplement” (from the Spanish “complement” and “suplemento”) in the realm of “transmedia” (the upper half), and “translation” (from the Spanish “traducción”) and “transduction” (from the Spanish “transducción”) in the realm of “transmediation” (the bottom half).

The “complement” is on the top left-hand side and reproduces the diegesis as well as expanding it, while the “supplement” is on the top right-hand side, transforming and expanding the diegesis. In contrast, “translation” is on the bottom left, as it is almost the mirror image of the diegesis, and the “transduction” is on the bottom right, as it is the “translation which rewrites”, or, in other words, an adaptation which transforms (Pardo 2018: 68).

The main reason why this videogame may be considered a ludic complement is that it extends the original diegesis of Carroll’s books while keeping their essence. When first playing the videogame, one might be mistaken in thinking that it is a supplement, since it appears quite different from the original *Alice* books and it seems to transform the diegesis, but when one delves into the story of the prequel *American McGee’s Alice*, one realises that the videogames’ saga is a continuation of Carroll’s books. In fact, American McGee himself says in *The Art of Alice: Madness Returns* (2011) that:

The idea was to present something classic and dark—not necessarily my own vision of what a “dark” *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* might be, but a vision that felt like it could be a natural extension of the world and characters in Carroll’s books. In this was the first challenge: defining the characters. Many of the early concept images tried to “do something” with Alice as a character, things that strayed too far from a natural evolution of the original material. (6)

Here we can see how from the beginning of the project the director American McGee tried to be faithful to the original *Alice* books while expanding Carroll’s diegesis in time. This is how *American McGee’s Alice* was originated and released

eleven years before its sequel *Alice: Madness Returns*, which is what will be analysed in this thesis.

The story of *American McGee's Alice* begins just after the events of Carroll's last *Alice* book, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. The videogame begins in 1863, when, at the age of seven, Alice Liddell became an orphan, developing a post-traumatic disorder which leads her back to the world of Wonderland. However, this time the Wonderland she enters is not the intriguing and beautiful dimension she visited in her dreams in Carroll's books, but a darker version.

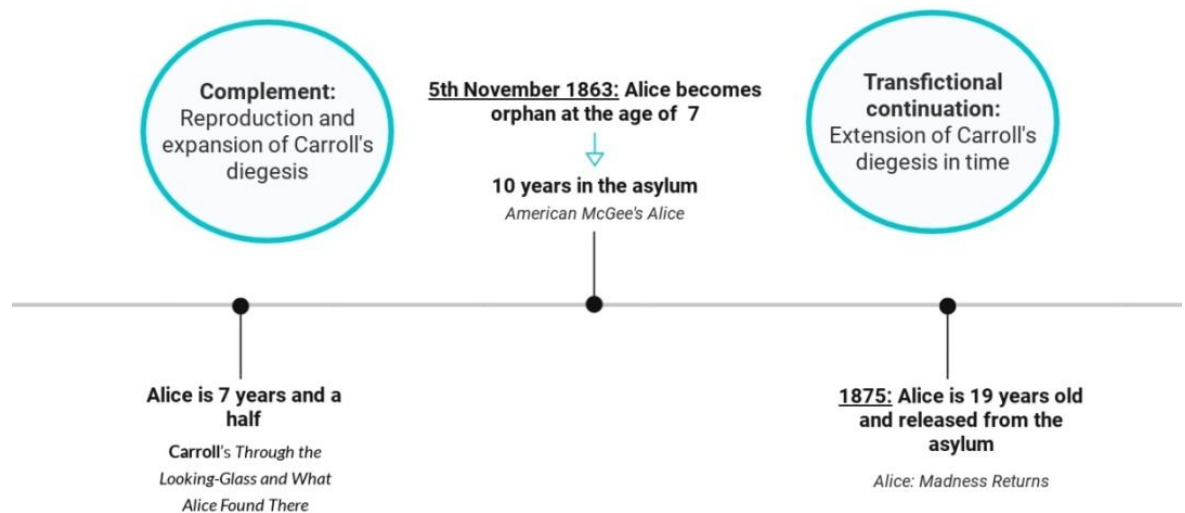
*Alice: Madness Returns* is not only a ludic complement of Carroll's *Alice*, but also a transfictional work which transcends the limits of the text and expands itself to other texts. As Gil states in the section "Intermedialidad. es: El Ecosistema Narrativo Transmedial", part of the book *Adaptación 2.0. Estudios Comparados sobre Intermedialidad*:

El propósito ahora no es ni el de reproducir ni el de transformar en profundidad el hipotexto o el architexto de partida, sino de una variante intermedia que los expande mediante nuevos argumentos complementarios a partir de la imitación o repetición de ciertos elementos de un repertorio dado, generalmente un personaje. (2018: 227)

Gil recognises three different types of transfiction: transfictional recreation (from the Spanish "recreación transfictional"), transfictional expansion (from the Spanish "expansion transfictional"), and transfictional continuation (from the Spanish "continuación transfictional"). The first type refers to the construction of a new story which keeps the most characteristic elements of the story on which it is based; the second one refers to the adding of extra parallel stories which expand the original diegesis; and, lastly, the third and final one is connected to the timeline, where the diegesis is expanded into a future point in time (Gil 2018: 227 – 229).

In the case of *Alice: Madness Returns* we encounter a transfictional continuation which extends the diegesis of Carroll's books chronologically and from the perspective of a future point in time. As Gil specifies, it is the aspect of space in the sequel and the series which correlates with the fact that this videogame was created to be a sequel of Carroll's books through the medium of videogame (Gil 2018: 229), at the same time resulting in a series consisting of *American McGee's Alice*, *Alice: Madness Returns*, and the coming sequel *Alice: Asylum*.

In figure 1.2.2, we see a diagram which clarifies what has just been discussed in a more visual way:



**Figure 1.2.2.: Classification of *Alice: Madness Returns***

Through comparing the videogame to Carroll's books and analysing it from both the perspective of Comparative Media Studies and of Game Studies, we will see how characteristic elements of Carroll's work are altered to become part of Carroll's future diegesis, expanding and complementing it with a dark tone.

## 2. Narratology

This section will focus on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (2016), as well as in *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011) in terms of narratology. The main objective of the first part of this section is to analyse the voice and mood of Carroll's *Alice* and see how they evolve in the medium of the videogame throughout *Alice: Madness Returns*. In the second part of this section a further analysis of the aspects of time and space in both works will be carried out. In order to accomplish a proper analysis of the main characteristic narrative aspects of Carroll's *Alice* books, I will mainly use Gérard Genette's *Figuras III* (1989) and Chatman's essay "Genette's Analysis of Narrative Time Relations" (1974). Moreover, Aarseth's book *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic*

*Literature* (1997), as well as Newman's *Videogames* (2004), and Gil's "La metalepsis en el videojuego y la realidad virtual (Narratólogos *versus* ludólogos *reloaded*)" (2018) will be the main sources employed to analyse *Alice: Madness Returns*.

## 2.1. Voice and mood

Both of Carroll's novels are divided into twelve chapters, each with a prefatory poem. Throughout the *Alice* books we encounter a 'heterodiegetic'<sup>5</sup> narrative with a third person narrator. This heterodiegetic narrator belongs both to the 'extradiegetic' narrative level in contrast to a 'diegetic' or 'intradiegetic' level as well as the 'metadiegetic' level (Genette 1989: 284). The extradiegetic narrative level is the first level and is external to any diegesis, since it is where the main story takes place; the intradiegetic or diegetic level is the second, and belongs to the primary narrative, being at the level of the events of the story itself; and the metadiegetic and third level corresponds to an embedded narrative within the intradiegetic level.

A good example of the metadiegetic level is the story told by the Mock Turtle to Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

So they went up to the Mock Turtle, who looked at them with large eyes full of tears, but said nothing.

'This here young lady,' said the Gryphon, 'she wants to know your history, she do.'

'I'll tell it her,' said the Mock Turtle in a deep, hollow tone. 'Sit down, both of you, and don't speak a word till I've finished.'

So they sat down, and nobody spoke for some minutes. Alice thought to herself, 'I don't see how he can *ever* finish, if he doesn't begin.' But she waited patiently.

'Once,' said the Mock Turtle at last, with a deep sigh, 'I was a real Turtle.'

[...] (Carroll 2016: 94 – 95)

In this excerpt where the Mock Turtle tells Alice his story we find the three levels of communication: the extradiegetic level, the act of narrating itself; the intradiegetic level, where the characters communicate with each other; and the metadiegetic level, where one character tells the other a story.

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<sup>5</sup>It makes reference to the fact that the narrator is absent from the story that they are telling: in other words, the narrator is not a character from the story, they are not part of it. (Genette, 1989: 299)



Following Genette's classification of the time of narration as an aspect of voice, we find a 'subsequent' narration in the *Alice* books, since they were written at a later point in time than when the events took place (Genette 1989: 274). Therefore, the narration is in the past tense, which is the most common type of narration. Moreover, the narrator is a selectively omniscient one, meaning that they have access to every event and dialogue taking place in the story, but they limit themselves to only one or a few characters (Genette 1989: 243). This selectively omniscient narrator in the *Alice* books is characterised by being an 'internal-focaliser'<sup>6</sup> who focuses on the character of Alice, being able to reproduce her thoughts and feelings and seeing the world through her eyes, but not having access to other characters' minds, or more specifically, not "wanting" to have access to other characters' minds. Aspects of voice, in this case the type of narrator and the time of narration, and perspective in terms of focalisation, can be seen in the next excerpt of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book', thought Alice 'without pictures or conversations?' (Carroll 2016: 11)

Here we can see how the third person narrator focuses on the character of Alice, accessing her mind and reproducing the events taking place through her perspective. Furthermore, it is written in past tense, reporting events which took place at a previous point in time.

However, even though almost all through Carroll's books the reader perceives everything from the point of view of Alice, at the end of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, when Alice wakes up from her dream, the narrator changes the object of focalisation from Alice to her sister, having access to her sister's thoughts and dreams. Therefore, it could be said that we do not so much encounter an internal-focaliser in the *Alice* books as mentioned earlier, but a 'variable-focaliser' who can change the focalisation of the narration (Genette 1989: 245). This can be seen through the following fragment of the novel, which comes from the end of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

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<sup>6</sup> This means that the type of focalisation we encounter here is that of "internal focalization" (Genette 1989: 245). This type of focalisation is characterised by focusing on one character.

But her sister sat still just as she left her, leaning her head on her hand, watching the setting sun, and thinking of little Alice and all her wonderful Adventures, till she too began dreaming after a fashion.

First she dreamed of little Alice herself, and once again the tiny hands were clasped upon her knee, and the bright eager eyes were looking up into hers – she could hear the very tones of her voice, and see that queer little toss of her head to keep back the wandering hair that *would* always get into her eyes – and still as she listened, or seemed to listen, the whole place around her became alive with the strange creatures of her little sister’s dream. (Carroll 2016: 126)

Through this fragment of the novel we can appreciate how the focus changes from Alice to her sister, who has a strange dream related to what Alice told her about her dream in Wonderland.

In *Alice: Madness Returns*, we encounter a similar depiction of the diegesis, but from a different point of view. In Game Studies issues concerning narratology have always been quite controversial due to the “potential tensions between the activities of reading and interacting” (Newman 2004: 91), as well as the high number of complex elements which constitute a videogame and its interplay. Throughout *Alice: Madness Returns* the player experiences everything through the protagonist, Alice. In contrast to Carroll’s Alice, here we encounter a more mature Alice with dark hair, but still easily recognisable due to the many familiar dresses she wears in the different domains of Wonderland, and the fact that she retains Carroll’s essence. In the following image we can see how Alice is depicted in one of the first chapters of the videogame with her famous blue dress:



Alice in the Vale of Tears

As expected, the player plays through Alice's character from a third person perspective, always experiencing everything through her. In this sense it resembles Carroll's books, which focus on the character of Alice in a similar way to the videogame.

Moreover, to reinforce the powerful narrative nature of the videogame, 'cut-scenes' or cinematics which show the main aspects of the story are present. According to Newman:

Cut-scenes are sequences in which the player is offered no direct control through the game's interface. Commonly referred to as 'intermissions' or more problematically as 'movie sequences', they typically introduce or frame 'gameplay' sequences or episodes in which direct control or 'interactivity' is offered (2004: 17).

This is reminiscent of Rajewsky's third subcategory in relation to intermediality, that of intermediality in the sense of intermedial references, which is related to the mimicry of techniques characteristic of a certain medium in a different medium. The cinematics we encounter in *Alice: Madness Returns* resemble a movie sequence, since they depict important parts of the diegesis without any possible interaction on the player's part. All through the videogame we encounter two different types of cut-scenes: ones integrated into the gameplay which are very short and do not represent a very important element in the story; and ones which are less integrated into the gameplay, more accurately called cinematics due to their resemblance to cinema and displaying a range of impressive audio-visual elements which depict important parts of the diegesis. This last type are the most relevant in the videogame, since they embrace the key points of the plot, and if watched separately tell the story itself. These cinematics are characterised by their 2-D graphics and their unique style, which resembles that of a mock-up. In the following images we see a few screenshots of the aforementioned cinematics:



*Alice: Madness Returns Cinematics*

As Newman states, “the cut-scene has become part of the language of the videogame player and designer” and they “might easily be considered ‘narratives’” (2004: 93). Therefore, it could be said that the essence of the narrative content of *Alice: Madness Returns* is created to a large extent by these cinematics. At the same time, the cinematics are strictly linked to ‘memories’ which Alice has to collect throughout the videogame; these memories help the player better understand the story and discover important parts of it. There are a sum of ninety-four memories, and the most important memories of each chapter, of which there are five in total, lead to cinematics. One example of these memories is the following:

Dinah saved my life! I survived because...she showed me how to escape! I didn't leave the lamp in the library and Dinah didn't knock it over! The lamp and Dinah were upstairs when I went to bed. Dinah was in the room with me when the fire started! (Spicy Horse 2011: chapter 3)

Through this memory the player discovers that there was no possible way that Alice was responsible for the death of her family, due to the fact that she did not forget the oil lamp at the source of the fire and Dinah, her cat, was with her when it began. It is also interesting to see how Dinah's character is still present in the videogames and plays an important role in the development of the story.

Parallel to Genette's model of communication, which we briefly analysed through the *Alice* books, Aarseth proposes an "adventure game's intrigue structure", which is shown in the following diagram taken from his book (Aarseth 1997: 127):

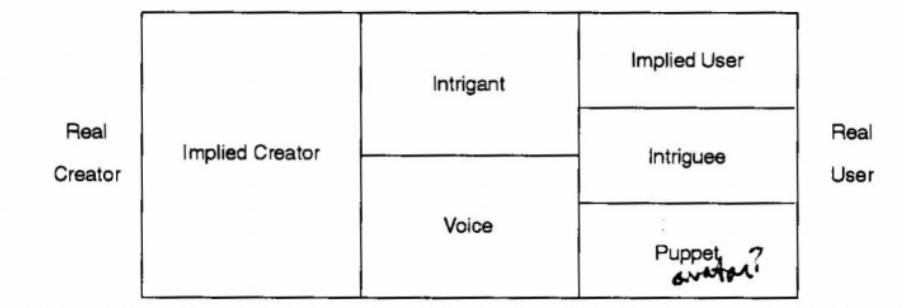


Figure 5.3. Intrigue Communication Structure in an Adventure Game

**Figure 2.1.1. Aarseth's communication structure**

Through this model Aarseth explains how an adventure game is usually structured in terms of the user's position and the three levels of an adventure game's discourse<sup>7</sup>. According to Aarseth:

Unlike the implied author of narratives, the implied creator or programmer is not the instigator of a finite train of events but someone who must expect the production of unintentional signifiers [...].The intrigant is neither implied author nor narrator but an immanent adversary who inhabits rather than transcends the game. And the voices, although controlled by the intrigant, are not identical to it, since they appear mechanical and discontinuous yet not without purpose, which makes them also unlike the narrator voices of narrative fiction. The puppet is not a character or a narratee but an empty body, a contested ground zero of both the discourse and the intrigue. And the intrigue, like the intrigant, represents an immanent position but one that must be (re)constructed by the implied user and not by the voice of the event narrator. The implied user, on the other

<sup>7</sup> According to Aarseth an adventure game's discourse is structured into three levels: progression, negotiation, and event; in contrast to the two levels of the ordinary narrative: progression and event (1997: 126).

hand, is both responsible for the action and the game's outcome and does not have the implied *reader's* privileges of *tnesis* and distancing. (1997: 127)

In order to understand this model, a further explanation of the terms 'intrigue' and 'intrigee' is necessary. In Aarseth's classification, the intrigue refers to the plot which is directed at the user, who is an "innocent but voluntary target"; whereas the intrigee is "the target of the intrigue" (1997: 112 – 113). Therefore, it could be said that the intrigee is the user assuming the role of the main character, while the intrigue is the plot working against them, the outcome of which is not yet known.

Even though this model is useful when looking at the different elements which play a part in an adventure game's discourse, as well as the user's position, the three levels of the adventure game's discourse are not so useful when applied to the specific case of *Alice: Madness Returns*. Aarseth's three levels (progression, negotiation and event) are too focused on the typical adventure videogame where the protagonist has to constantly interact with the game's voice<sup>8</sup> in order to be successful. This kind of adventure videogame is characteristic of the 90s and is known as 'graphic adventure'. This type of videogame differs a little from the kind of adventure game we find in *Alice: Madness Returns*, which is a platform adventure videogame where the protagonist has to be skilled and physically face a series of characters, as well as different platforms<sup>9</sup>, in order to be successful. Therefore, in contrast to Aarseth's three levels of adventure games' discourse, and focusing on *Alice: Madness Returns*, I suggest progression, 'confrontation', and event as more useful categories. Progression and event would be understood as Aarseth describes them, the progression level being "the unfolding of the events", and the event level being "where the events take place" (1997: 125). Aarseth describes the negotiation level as "where the intrigee confronts the intrigue to achieve a desirable unfolding of events", more specifically as "the dialogue between the voice and the player" (1997: 125). However, in the 'confrontation' level that I propose there is no dialogue between the voice and the player but rather that physical confrontation between characters and interaction with platforms are key to advancing the development of

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<sup>8</sup> The game's voice refers to the intermediary between the implied user and the events. It allows the implied user to interact with everything surrounding them. (Aarseth 1997: 114)

<sup>9</sup> In *Alice: Madness Returns* the main character has to kill certain characters with weapons, as well as overcoming platforms by running and jumping.

the story. In addition to these three levels of discourse, one could argue that a fourth should be added in order to better place the cinematics we encounter in *Alice: Madness Returns*, since they do not fit into any of the other three levels. The cinematics as a whole embody the diegesis itself and therefore need to have their own level in the videogame’s discourse.

Another interesting and less intricate model which seeks to analyse the different communication levels in a videogame is proposed by Antonio Jesús Gil in his article “La metalepsis en el videojuego y la realidad virtual (Narratólogos *versus* ludólogos *reloaded*)” (2018). This model, which is even closer to Genette’s theory than Aarseth’s model, divides the narrative into the same levels as Genette: extradiegetic, diegetic and metadiegetic. The following figure shows Gil’s model as it appears in his article (2018: 4):



**Figure 2.1.2. Gil's communication structure**

According to Gil, the extradiegetic level would comprise elements such as the player-narrator, the voice-over, tutorials, the interface, the inventory, or even the cinematics; these last few are difficult to classify since they could belong to both the extradiegetic and diegetic levels. In the diegetic level Gil includes fictional characters, sound effects, once again cinematics, different settings, and the events taking place during the action. Finally, in the metadiegetic level, we find all the stories produced by the fictional characters of the videogame.

## 2.2. Time and space

Starting with the issue of time and following Genette's theory, we can conceive three different categories; order, duration, and frequency. These categories delve into the relationship between the story-time and the discourse-time, the story-time being the story of the diegesis itself, and the discourse-time that of the narration. The category of order relates to the succession of the events which take place in a story, the duration is connected to the speed of the story and its duration, and frequency relates to the story's capacity for repetition (Genette 1989: 90 – 91). In the analysis of the *Alice* books these three categories must be applied from the viewpoint of a dream, "where the temporal becomes spatial, with perspectives dissolved between past and present" (Beer: 2016: 32). This fusion of time and space is particularly remarkable in *Through the Looking-Glass*, where the space takes the form of a chessboard and is strictly connected to the issue of time.

Regarding the aspect of order, the *Alice* books follow a normal sequence, this being characterised by the story and the discourse having the same order; there are no anachronous sequences<sup>10</sup> (Chatman 1974: 353). In relation to the aspect of duration, the discourse-time of Carroll's books is longer than the story-time. Therefore, here we encounter what Genette calls a "pause"<sup>11</sup> (Genette 1989: 152). This is due to the fact that the *Alice* books narrate Alice's dreams, and even though "it is impossible to recollect the length of time a dream takes to dream", the dreams are characterised by being quite short (Beer 2016: 32). Pauses tend to occur because of an emphasis on very detailed descriptions, but in the case of Carroll's books we do not encounter an excessive amount of descriptions, and those present are not overly detailed. In addition to this, the "sense of hastening and crowding" that the books transmit is striking, which again leads us back to the fact that the narration of two different dreams, which are obviously shorter than the discourse time, are present (Beer 2016: 32). With regards to the aspect of frequency, the *Alice* books can be

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<sup>10</sup> There are two types of anachronisms: analepsis (or flashbacks) and prolepsis (or flashforwards) (Chatman 1974: 353).

<sup>11</sup> Within the aspect of duration Genette differentiates between four different possibilities: summary, ellipsis, scene and pause (Genette 1989: 152).



considered traditional narratives, since they narrate a singular event only once, which Genette calls a “singulary”<sup>12</sup> discursive representation (Chatman 1974: 366).

When looking at the aspects of order, duration, and frequency, Carroll’s books do not seem to be anything out of the ordinary; perhaps the most striking feature that both books share is that they can both be said to have a pause when they are looked at using the category of duration. The fact that the books lack an excessive amount of detailed description but that the discourse-time is nevertheless longer than the story-time is what makes them different from traditional narratives. Due to the fact that the *Alice* books follow a normal sequence regarding the aspect of order and have a singulary discursive representation regarding the frequency, they are easy and simple to read. This could be linked to the fact that these books were initially designed for children, and, therefore, they contain neither pretentious language nor confusing anachronisms. However, Carroll plays with a different perspective of time than that story-time and discourse-time. In *Through the Looking-Glass*, the world of Wonderland seems to abide by a different system of time, where the characters react before things happen. One example is the following, where the White Queen starts screaming just before pricking her finger with a brooch:

Alice was just beginning to say, ‘There’s a mistake somewhere – ,’ when the Queen began screaming so loud that she had to leave the sentence unfinished. ‘Oh, oh, oh!’ shouted the Queen, shaking her hand about as if she wanted to shake it off. ‘My finger’s bleeding! Oh, oh, oh, oh!’

[...]

‘What *is* the matter?’ she said, as soon as there was a chance of making herself heard. ‘Have you pricked your finger?’

‘I haven’t pricked it *yet*,’ the Queen said, ‘but I soon shall – oh, oh, oh!’

‘When do you expect to do it?’ Alice asked, feeling very much inclined to laugh.

‘When I fasten my shawl again,’ the poor Queen groaned out. ‘The brooch will come undone directly. Oh, oh!’ As she said the words the brooch flew open, and the Queen clutched wildly at it, and tried to clasp again. (Carroll 2016: 195)

This is a quite peculiar and amusing scene, but what makes it even more entertaining is that after actually pricking her finger the Queen does not scream,

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<sup>12</sup> In the aspect of frequency, Genette again distinguishes between four separate possible types of discursive representation: singulary, multiple-singulary, repetitive, and iterative (Chatman 1974: 366 – 367).

explaining to Alice that she has already screamed and that that is how things work in Wonderland. This singular conception of time perceived in *Through the Looking-Glass* is, as mentioned before, strictly connected to the representation of space, which at the same time is related to the world of dreams. Through the following passage, where Alice is resting after running with the Red Queen, we can see the necessity of analysing time and space as one in the *Alice* books:

Alice looked round her in great surprise. ‘Why, I do believe we’ve been under this tree all the time! Everything’s just as it was!’

‘Of course it is,’ said the Queen-. ‘what would you have it?’

‘Well, in *our* country,’ said Alice, still panting a little, ‘you’d generally get to somewhere else – if you ran very fast for a long time, as we’ve been doing.’

‘A slow sort of country!’ said the Queen. ‘Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!’ (Carroll 2016: 160 – 161)

In this passage the Red Queen explains to Alice that in the world of Wonderland you have to run as fast as you can to stay in the same place, while in order to approach a place you have to walk away from it. This is linked to the territory of the chessboard and the mirror; as Beer states:

Placing the flat chessboard and the optics of the curved looking-glass together suggests a newly equivocal understanding of how time and space may be rumbled. Alice, like the bookworm, can both move across the two-dimensional chessboard and bulge into a different dimension through the mirror. In *Looking-Glass* particularly, Alice becomes aware that our mode of living in time is peculiar, and not necessarily the only pattern available: a thicker arrangement can be conceived. (Beer 2016: 34)

Beer mentions the “bookworm”, which refers to a distortion of space; if bending a flat space as if it were a page, it becomes curved, which at the same time gives rise to a fourth dimension. This concept, also applicable to the world of dreams, creates a dream-like sense of time and space which is not necessarily perceivable through the concepts of discourse-time and story-time, which Genette develops in his theory. Carroll’s books do not need to be repetitive or have many flashbacks and flashforwards in order to transmit a different sense of time and space.

Focusing now on *Alice: Madness Returns*, and in contrast to the aspect of order in the *Alice* books’, in the videogame we find many examples of analepsis through the

cinematics mentioned in the previous section of this work. These analepsis, characterised by being “where the discourse breaks the story-flow to recall events *earlier* than what precedes the break” (Chatman 1974: 353), are closely linked to the fragile state of mind of Alice, who is gradually recovering some of the memories she had repressed because of the traumatic experience of losing her family. Genette differentiates between “external” (or “heterodiegetic”) and “internal” (or “homodiegetic”) analepsis, which, as their names indicate, can be external or internal to the temporal field of the first narrative level, the extradiegetic level (Genette 1989: 105). In the case of this videogame, all the types of analepsis that we encounter are external, many of them being narrated by characters close to Alice such as Radcliff, the family lawyer, and Pris Witless, one of her caretakers in the asylum. Through these external analepsis the player discovers events which took place before the starting point of the first narrative level. Furthermore, through the external analepsis recounted by Alice, the player has access to Alice’s memories of past events, which helps them gradually uncover the truth behind Alice’s family’s death towards the end of the videogame’s diegesis.

Regarding the aspect of frequency in relation to the videogame, we could say that, in contrast to Carroll’s books, here we find the element of the loop, or what Genette calls a repetitive discursive representation. According to Lluís Anyó “the loop has become part of the very identity of video games. If the temporal order imposes linearity, and if the duration is identical in the dual temporality<sup>13</sup>, the loop is therefore the most characteristic formula of narrative time in video games.” (2015). Even though we talked about *Alice: Madness Returns* being characterised by its many external analepsis, these do not affect the linearity of the diegesis, and, therefore, its analysis from a linear point of view is possible<sup>14</sup>. The loop is linked to the fact that in many videogames, when the user or player does not achieve the goal set by the videogame, for instance if they die, they are forced to repeat sections in order to be able to progress. “The loop is integral to progress in the intradiegetic action and it is the player who, subject to the rules of the game, repeats the action however many times they need in order to learn.” (Anyó 2015). In other words, the loop takes

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<sup>13</sup> This dual temporality references the previously mentioned relationships between discourse-time and story-time; distinction made by Genette in his narratological theory. (Anyó 2015)

<sup>14</sup> This would not be possible if what we encountered were multiple internal analepsis, which would definitely affect the timeline of the extradiegetic narrative level.

place at the level of discourse without affecting the level of the story, and it basically depends on the extradiegetic actions performed by the player. This leads us to the aspect of duration and the concept of the “scene”, which, according to Anyó, is the discourse representation of the videogame. In the scene, which is a term coined by Genette, the discourse-time (or participation-time) is equal to the story-time; this term is linked to the videogame’s discourse representation due to the fact that “the actions of the game are displayed on a continuous plane.”(Anyó2015).

To sum up, *Alice: Madness Returns* is characterised by its adherence to a linear timeline with many external analepsis, which can be perceived through most of the cinematics and do not affect the main story-line; its discursive representation corresponds to that of the scene, and the loop becomes a main element regarding the aspect of frequency. The player may die numerous times throughout the videogame, either at the hands of creatures that they must kill or because of the placement of certain platforms in void places with difficult access; this leads the player to what Anyó calls loops, which force them to repeat sections as many times as necessary so they can advance in the game.

### **3. Unnatural narratives**

Even though unnatural narratives emerged as a branch of narratology, it may be more practical to analyse them through a different structure, separate from that of narratology. This is due to the fact that since unnatural narratives connect both narratological aspects and more aesthetic traits, creating a new method which works as a bridge between the field of narratology and that of aesthetics may help us better analyse both Carroll’s books and the videogame while complementing these main sections.

The theory of unnatural narratives developed in Alber’s and Heinze’s *Unnatural Narratives – Unnatural Narratology* (2011), differentiates between three possible definitions of unnatural narratives, ranging from the broadest to the most specific. The first definition relates to “narratives that have a defamiliarizing effect because they are experimental, extreme transgressive, unconventional, non-conformist, or out of the ordinary.” (Alber 2011: 2). The second one, which is more specific, argues that “unnatural narratives are anti-mimetic texts that move beyond the conventions of

natural narratives, i.e., “the mimesis of actual speech situations.” ” (Alber 2011: 3). The third and final definition, and the one which we will be applying throughout this section, was formulated by Jan Alber himself, and, as he states in detail in his article written for the website *the living handbook of narratology*<sup>15</sup>:

An unnatural narrative violates physical laws, logical principles, or standard anthropomorphic limitations of knowledge by representing storytelling scenarios, narrators, characters, temporalities, or spaces that could not exist in the actual world. However, narratives are never wholly unnatural; they typically contain ‘natural’ elements (based on real-world parameters) and unnatural components at the same time. (Alber 2014: paragraph 1)

Furthermore, within this last definition Alber also differentiates between two different ways in which the unnatural may be conceived: the still not conventionalised impossibilities and those that have been conventionalised. The former make reference to impossibilities which appear in postmodern works, and, therefore, are still not conventionalised, while the latter are related to impossibilities which have become common with the passage of time, such as representations of magic, speaking animals, or time travel (Alber 2014: paragraph 2).

Using Alber’s definition of unnatural narratives, one can almost instantly class Carroll’s *Alice* as such, not only because of the already conventionalised impossibility of speaking animals, but also due to all the illogical situations that are depicted throughout his novels. Having an unnatural narrative is perhaps one of the main reasons why Carroll’s *Alice* has stood the test of time and why its transformation and reproduction through different mediums has become so widespread. Therefore, in this section the most characteristic unnatural elements of Carroll’s books will be analysed in comparison to *Alice: Madness Returns*.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing elements linked to Alber’s concept of unnatural narratives in Carroll’s books is found in the dialogues. In a world full of sense and nonsense, the reader empathises with Alice through her numerous self-dialogues. These self-dialogues create a connection between Alice and the implied reader, allowing them to identify with her (Beer, 2016: 104). One example is the following:

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<sup>15</sup> Retrieved from: <<http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/unnatural-narrative>>

At last the Red Queen began. ‘You’ve missed the soup and fish,’ she said. ‘Put on the joint!’ And the waiters set a leg of mutton before Alice, who looked at it rather anxiously, as she had never had to carve one before.

‘You look a little shy; let me introduce you to that leg of mutton,’ said the Red Queen. ‘Alice – Mutton; Mutton – Alice.’ The leg of mutton got up in the dish and made a little bow to Alice; and she returned the bow, not knowing whether to be frightened or amused. (Carroll, 2016: 258-259)

In this passage from *Through the Looking-Glass*, both the reader and Alice are astonished when the Red Queen literally introduces Alice to the dishes, not allowing her to eat them because it is impolite to carve someone that you have just been introduced to. These kinds of dialogues create that special connection between the character of Alice and the reader, regardless of their age or background.

Both of Carroll’s works were initially intended for children; however, his works attracted both young and old, inspiring different interpretations with the passage of time. “The jokes tend to have several layers, accommodating the learned and less learned reader in a way that allows us to feel chosen by the writer as his special confidant if we get the extra ripple” (Beer 2016: 104). It could therefore be said that the implied reader is not singular, but rather there are multiple implied readers, which provides the novels with the power to adapt to new and different contexts. Regarding the term ‘implied reader’, Fludernik states that:

He or she is a projection from the text and is perceived by the reader as acting out the role of an ideal reader figure, although the real reader may actually not assume this role. In ironic texts, the implied reader figure position is understood to be filled with somebody capable of enjoying the ironical remarks by the narrator, and the real reader will ideally take on that role. (2009: 23)

This adaptability is not only apparent with regards to the implied reader, but also in language and the juxtaposition of sense and nonsense mentioned before. The creatures of the world of Wonderland are characterised by their understanding of everything in a very literal way, something which creates confusion for both Alice and the reader. Ironically however, in that strange world where everything seems to be twisted and senseless, sense plays an important role. Carroll plays with the field of logic in his works, employing some of its basic rules such as the *modus ponens*, also known as affirming the antecedent (Piette 2009):

‘A likely story indeed!’ said the Pigeon in a tone of the deepest contempt. ‘I’ve seen a good many little girls in my time, but never *one* with such a neck as that! No, no! You’re a serpent; and there’s no use denying it. I suppose you’ll be telling me next that you never tasted an egg!’

‘I *have* tasted eggs, certainly,’ said Alice, who was a very truthful child; ‘but little girls eat eggs quite as much as serpents do, you know.’

‘I don’t believe it,’ said the Pigeon; ‘but if they do, why then they’re a kind of serpent, that’s all I can say.’ (Carroll 2016: 54)

According to logical relations between propositions (the meaning expressed by declarative sentences), a proposition  $p$  entails or implies a proposition  $q$  when the truth of  $q$  is deduced by the truth of  $p$  and the falsity of  $p$  is deduced by the falsity of  $q$  (‘if  $p$  then  $q$ ’) (Chapman 2011:26). Therefore, in this passage from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, the logic of the pigeon follows the structure:

Alice (who has a very long neck and says she is a little girl) eats eggs ( $p$ )

Alice is a serpent ( $q$ )

If  $p$  then  $q$  = ‘If Alice eats eggs’, then ‘Alice is a serpent’

The pigeon, who thinks that Alice does not look like a little girl because of her long neck, assumes that she is a serpent because she eats eggs. The reasoning of the pigeon, even though seemingly lacking sense at the first glance, does make sense because it follows the rules of logic. The pigeon is, however, false, as just because something eats eggs does not necessarily mean that it is a serpent. Another passage of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* with the same peculiar nonsensical logic is the following:

‘Come, we shall have some fun now!’ thought Alice. ‘I’m glad they’ve begun asking riddles – I believe I can guess that,’ she added aloud.

‘Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?’ said the March Hare.

‘Exactly so,’ said Alice.

‘Then you should say what you mean,’ the March Hare went on.

‘I do,’ Alice hastily replied; ‘at least – at least I mean what I say – that’s the same thing, you know.’

‘Not the same thing a bit!’ said the Hatter. ‘You might just as well say that “I see what I eat” is the same thing as “I eat what I see”!’

‘You might as well say,’ added the March Hare, ‘that “I like what I get” is the same thing as “I get what I like”!’ (Carroll 2016: 69-70)

Here the reasoning of the Hatter and the March Hare, and later the Dormouse, also follows the basic rules of logic in language. The *Alice* books are full of passages like these, where both Alice and the reader become confused in a world where sense makes no sense and vice versa.

In the case of *Alice: Madness Returns*, such peculiar and witty dialogues as those found throughout Carroll’s novels are lacking. Instead, throughout the videogame the player must carry out a series of tasks, some of them puzzles or riddles, such as the following:

How is the Queen of Hearts like a typhoon?

- Both are indiscriminately destructive
- Both are cruel
- In all ways—but the typhoon doesn’t mean to be
- Both are powerful (Spicy Horse 2011)

This is an example of a riddle formulated by the Cheshire Cat. The correct response to this riddle is: “In all ways—but the typhoon doesn’t mean to be”. We can see here how the videogame lacks the essence of Carroll’s wit, which is expressed through the unique dialogues and puns found in his books. It is apparent that the creators of the videogame tried to keep some of the sense of nonsense through language, but they did not fully achieve this through the riddles and characters’ dialogues. Nevertheless, there are some expressions, especially those uttered by the Cheshire Cat, which try to reflect the humorous language of the books. One example could be the following: “different denotes neither bad nor good, but it certainly means not the same” (Spicy Horse 2011). In this quote the cat plays with the double meaning of words, creating confusion through logic.

One aspect of the videogame in which Carroll’s essence is almost palpable is its recreation of the characteristically dream-like aura of the *Alice* books, which is one of the biggest achievements of the Spicy Horse team in this videogame. This is at the same time linked to Alber’s concept of unnatural narratives due to the myriad of impossibilities a dream itself entails.



Throughout the *Alice* books everything resembles an actual dream. The way Carroll presents the world of Wonderland and Alice's perception of it gives the reader the sensation of being in Alice's dream, even though they do not realise it until the end, just like waking up from an actual dream. According to Beer:

Lewis Carroll was exact in his unfurling of dream space. The *Alice* books are rapid, light-footed, sagacious. Most of the people, animals, flora, and fauna that Alice meets are incurious, preoccupied with their own anxieties. It is her curiosity that creates both urgency and order in these relativistic universes. Alice's endless search for "rules" in both the *Alice* books may seek to harness the incongruities of dream space to a more logical order and to cope with her anxieties. (2016: 173)

Here Gillian Beer describes the way in which Carroll defined the world of Wonderland as a dream space. Alice's search for logic in such an illogical universe, as well as the "easy shifts and flow of dream-order" that one can perceive throughout the books shape the perfect dream space (Beer 2016: 177). A passage where the easy shifts and flow of dream-order can clearly be seen is the following:

Alice never could quite make out, in thinking it over afterwards, how it was that they began; all she remember is that they were running hand in hand, and the Queen went so fast that it was all she could to keep up with her; and still the Queen kept crying, 'Faster!' but Alice felt she could not go faster, though she had no breath to say so. (Carroll 2016: 159)

In this fragment of *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, we see that Alice is not able to remember how she ended up running with the Red Queen when they were just talking a moment before. This demonstrates the rapid transition of the scenes that form Carroll's books, where even the protagonist herself is unable to establish the natural order of the actions which have taken place. This also affects the reader, who, perceiving everything through Alice's point of view, finds themselves just as lost and confused as Alice.

Another example of this dream-like arrangement of the world of Wonderland, which also shows Alice's curiosity deriving from her urge to make sense of the things that surround her, is the following passage, where she is talking to the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

'When we were little,' the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, 'we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle – we used to call him Tortoise –'

‘Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn’t one?’ Alice asked.

‘We called him Tortoise because he taught us,’ said the Mock Turtle angrily; ‘really you are very dull!’

‘You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question,’ added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth. (Carroll 2016: 96)

Here we can see how she feels the urge to question what the Mock Turtle says in order to better understand the curious world in which she finds herself, feeling ashamed when the Gryphon calls her “dull” for not understanding why they called their teacher Tortoise even though he was not one. This urge to try to find logical explanations in the world around her is pretty prominent throughout the rest of the section with the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon, where Alice constantly asks questions and is treated with contempt, making her feel even more confused and humiliated.

In *Alice: Madness Returns* the different domains<sup>16</sup> which the world of Wonderland is divided into contain many details which give the illusion of being in a dream, just like Carroll creates in his books, but from a more visual perspective. The fact that one of Alice’s abilities is that she can float after a double jump confers upon Wonderland the quality of an oneiric space where the laws of gravity seem to be inexistent. In the following image we can see Alice floating near the Card Castle:



**Alice floating**

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<sup>16</sup> The world of Wonderland is divided into eight different domains which will be analysed in section 3.1. of this work.

Alice has also the ability to dodge while fighting against other characters. Both when Alice is floating and when she is dodging objects a swarm of butterflies surround her, giving the impression that she has evaporated, which makes everything appear even more unreal, especially when she dodges something. It is also important to remark upon the fact that, in contrast to the *Alice* books, in *Alice: Madness Returns*, the world of Wonderland does not exist in a dream but rather in hallucinations resulting from Alice's fragile state of mind after losing her family. However, even though not a dream, the arrangement of the world derives from Alice's childhood dreams and, therefore, its characteristic elements remain the same, with only some slight differences. These differences stem from the dark transformation the world of Wonderland undergoes in its transition from Carroll's books to the videogame. This will be analysed in the later section discussing the double dimension (section 3.1.). Another element connected to this dream-like perception of Wonderland is Alice's shrink sense, her ability to become smaller in *Alice: Madness Returns*. The following images show how Alice's shrink sense works:



Alice's shrink sense

With this ability Alice is not only able to become smaller and enter places which she previously could not, but also see hidden platforms and paths which allow her to obtain different awards. This shrink sense is obtained at the beginning of the game when Alice drinks from a giant bottle containing a purple substance labelled “DRINK ME”. This links back to the numerous food and drink that Alice finds during her adventures in Wonderland in the *Alice* books which enable her to become huge or tiny. As Gillian Beer states:

Alice has a somewhat conflicted relationship to food and drink but she is a willing and adventurous consumer, no anorexic: “I know *something* interesting is sure to happen,” she said to herself, “whenever I eat or drink anything” (W, 32). Alice is no fairy but what used to be called a “great girl,” solid and springy. In *Wonderland* she takes risks through obedience as well as through appetite. (2016: 226)

Early on in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice finds a bottle on which "DRINK ME" is written in beautiful calligraphy, and, like Beer says, she takes the risk of trying it. After drinking it she becomes tiny, and after a while stumbles across a piece of cake which is labelled "EAT ME", which makes her grow huge. These are only the first of a large number of substances which make her grow or shrink, a concept which will be returned to in the last section of this work, that discussing Alice's identity. Alice's shrink sense in *Alice: Madness Returns* is the videogame's take on the first beverage that makes Alice grow in the *Alice* books. This first beverage is the point of inflection that determines the rest of Alice's decisions to take the risk of drinking and eating substances which she knows will alter her size. Another part of the book where Alice decides to follow her instincts and try something new is when she meets the Caterpillar:

[...] In a minute or two the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth and yawned once or twice, and shook itself. Then it got down off the mushroom, and crawled away in the grass, merely remarking as it went, 'One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.'

'One side of *what?* The other side of *what?*' thought Alice to herself.

'Of the mushroom,' said the Caterpillar, just as if she had asked it loud; and in another moment it was out of sight. (Carroll 2016: 52)

Here the Caterpillar induces Alice to eat part of the mushroom in order to change size, which leads us to the topic of drugs and the possible allusions to them in the books. Even though this possible reference to drugs may be slightly removed from the concept of unnatural narratives, the fact that the notion of eating mushrooms and becoming bigger or smaller is reminiscent of drugs makes it interesting to develop this point a little further.

According to Beer: "Alice is willing to risk drugs, as well as food and drink. The hookah-smoking drowsy caterpillar is a very clear signal that his mushroom is likely to be hallucinogenic." (2016: 226 – 227). The fact that the caterpillar is drowsy and smoking a hookah makes us instantly speculate that he is smoking some kind of drug, such as marihuana. Moreover, the fact that mushrooms make Alice grow bigger or smaller could be linked to the fact that the ingestion of hallucinogenic mushrooms changes the perception of reality. People can also experience a loss of control when

taking drugs, which links to Alice's inability to control how big or small she becomes (Davis 2010: 147). As Davis states:

Indeed, Alice's journey can be read as an allegory for an intense drug experience. Rephrasing the plot only slightly, Alice gets lost and tries to find her way back to *normal reality*. Within the story are specific allusions: the Caterpillar smokes a hookah, Alice drinks mysterious liquids and eats mushrooms, Alice's perceptions of time and space are altered, and the impossible is everyday. The association of drugs with *Alice* is so established that *alice* is now a slang term for LSD.

Here Davis summarises the main reasons why Alice can be understood as having a trip on drugs, noting that even the name "Alice" is a slang term for LSD nowadays.

The same happens in *Alice: Madness Returns*, where the allusion to drugs is even more apparent. In the videogame Wonderland is a part of the hallucinations that Alice produces as a result of the trauma of her family's death. The allusion to drugs in this case may be the medicines she was given in the asylum or just as a way of escaping from reality. When Alice uses her ability to shrink she hiccups, resembling a drunk person, and some purple bubbles appear around her; the reference to alcohol in this instance is quite obvious. Furthermore, in the game Alice also has to smoke from hookahs to activate some platforms, the connection to drugs here is again quite obvious. It looks as if in both the videogame and the books the world of Wonderland was connected to taking drugs. However, in a world where everything already seems to be twisted, the element of drugs does not seem so out of place; it could be said that everything is a matter of perspective. Again, to quote Richard Davis:

Drugs and dreams dissolve the distinction between normal and distorted reality by calling to our attention the faulty assumptions under which this distinction is made. *Alice in Wonderland* — drug story, dream story, cultural myth — presents these dilemmas for us. In fact, it raises them so well that *Alice in Wonderland* (a drug trip inside a dream inside a fantasy inside two pieces of cardboard) has become the name for a real, diagnosable medical syndrome: it describes a condition where a person suffers from distorted space, time, and body image. (2010: 149)

It could be said then, that even though this is all very speculative, there are some notable aspects that could lead us to think that Alice's trip may be more than just a normal trip into the world of Wonderland.

#### **4. Aesthetics: the ‘uncanny’**

In this section a further analysis of the aesthetic aspects of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (2016), as well as of *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011), will be carried out. The main source that will be used in this analysis will be Sigmund Freud’s *The Uncanny* (2003), an essay which delves into the dark side of aesthetics. Both Carroll’s *Alice*, and the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns* impart a powerful uncanny feeling. The term ‘uncanny’ will be briefly and concisely analysed before going into detail with its depiction in both mediums.

In his essay *The Uncanny*, first published in 1919, the world-famous founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud explores the complex field of aesthetics, focusing on its dark side, the uncanny. Freud takes around thirty-seven pages to try to explain the complicated concept of the uncanny, stating from the start that “there is no doubt that this belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread.” (2003: 123). The uncanny is much more than something to be feared, however; it is a strange feeling or sensation that the individual experiences in certain situations. In contrast to the romantic sublime, which could be understood as the “positive” side of aesthetics, since it deals with beauty, the uncanny focuses on the psyche and inner urges or impulses; it deals with the “dark” side of aesthetics. According to Freud, “the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar.” (2003: 124). The uncanny is the feeling that we experience when something frightening leads us back to something familiar to us. Even though this may sound confusing, Nicholas Royle manages to give a clear definition of the term uncanny based on Freud’s work:

[...] it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context. It can consist in a sense of homeliness uprooted, the revelation of something unhomely at the heart of hearth and home. (2003: 1).

Here we can see how the uncanny is something that may arise from an unfamiliar situation turning into something familiar and vice versa. Moreover, the uncanny is not only related to what is familiar and unfamiliar, but also to that which is secret and concealed from the self, and therefore also to what is revealed to the self. In relation to

this last point, and analysing the antonym of the word for ‘uncanny’ in German (‘heimlich’), Freud states:

This reminds us that this word *heimlich* is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which are not mutually contradictory, but very different from each other – the one relating to what is familiar and comfortable, the other to what is concealed and kept hidden. (2003: 132)

We can infer then, that the word ‘uncanny’ encompasses two different meanings that may be intertwined, one related to the unfamiliar, and the other to self-revelation. In addition to this, Freud links the concept of the uncanny to the notion of the ‘double’, “a creation that belongs to a primitive phase in our mental development, a phase that we have surmounted, in which it admittedly had a more benign significance.” (Freud 2003: 143). In other words, the double could be explained as a return to a primitive state linked to the primary narcissism that the child experiences during early childhood. Freud distinguishes between primary and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism is considered normal and inherent to all humans; it allows us to feel affection towards an object; whereas secondary narcissism is more characteristic of psychic illnesses such as schizophrenia (Freud 2001: 74 – 75). It is this encounter with the projection of the self produced by primary narcissism that provokes an uncanny feeling; this projection of the self is what Freud calls the double. However, Freud also links the double to the formation of the superego, which is in charge of fulfilling moral standards and of punishing the ego when these moral standards are violated; the double would then represent all the suppressed dreams and wishes, and everything which is intolerable to the ego (Freud 2003: 143). This last theory will be the basis for our analysis of both Carroll’s *Alice* and the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns*.

The presence of the uncanny is strong in both the novels and the videogame; however, it is represented in different ways. In the case of Carroll’s books, language plays a very important role in relation to the uncanny. According to Royle:

At the same time, the uncanny is never far from something comic: humour, irony and laughter all have a genuinely ‘funny’ role in thinking on this topic. Above all, the uncanny is intimately entwined in language, with how we conceive and represent what is happening within ourselves, to ourselves, to the world, when uncanny strangeness is at issue. And it is different (yet strangely the same) every time: its happening is always a kind of un-happening. Its ‘un-’ unsettles time and space, order and sense. (2003: 2)



Some peculiarities of this kind of language have already been analysed in the previous section through some of the puns found in the novels, which evoke a strange feeling in the reader. As Beer asserts, “puns and parodies (those constant linguistic features of the *Alice* books) both emphasize doubleness, a doubleness that runs under the pellucid surface of the text.” (2016: 75). This relates to the double meaning of words depending on their context, and at the same time to their uncanny nature all the way through Carroll’s novels. Moreover, in the previous section the adaptability of Carroll’s work and its accessibility to readers of all ages was mentioned, something which could be due to the uncanny essence of his works, which affects both children and adults but in different ways. As we can see, Carroll’s books contain many uncanny elements that could be analysed in depth; however, the focus of the following section will be on the depiction of the double dimension in both the books and the videogame, as well as in Alice’s identity from Freud’s perspective of the uncanny.

#### **4.1. The double dimension**

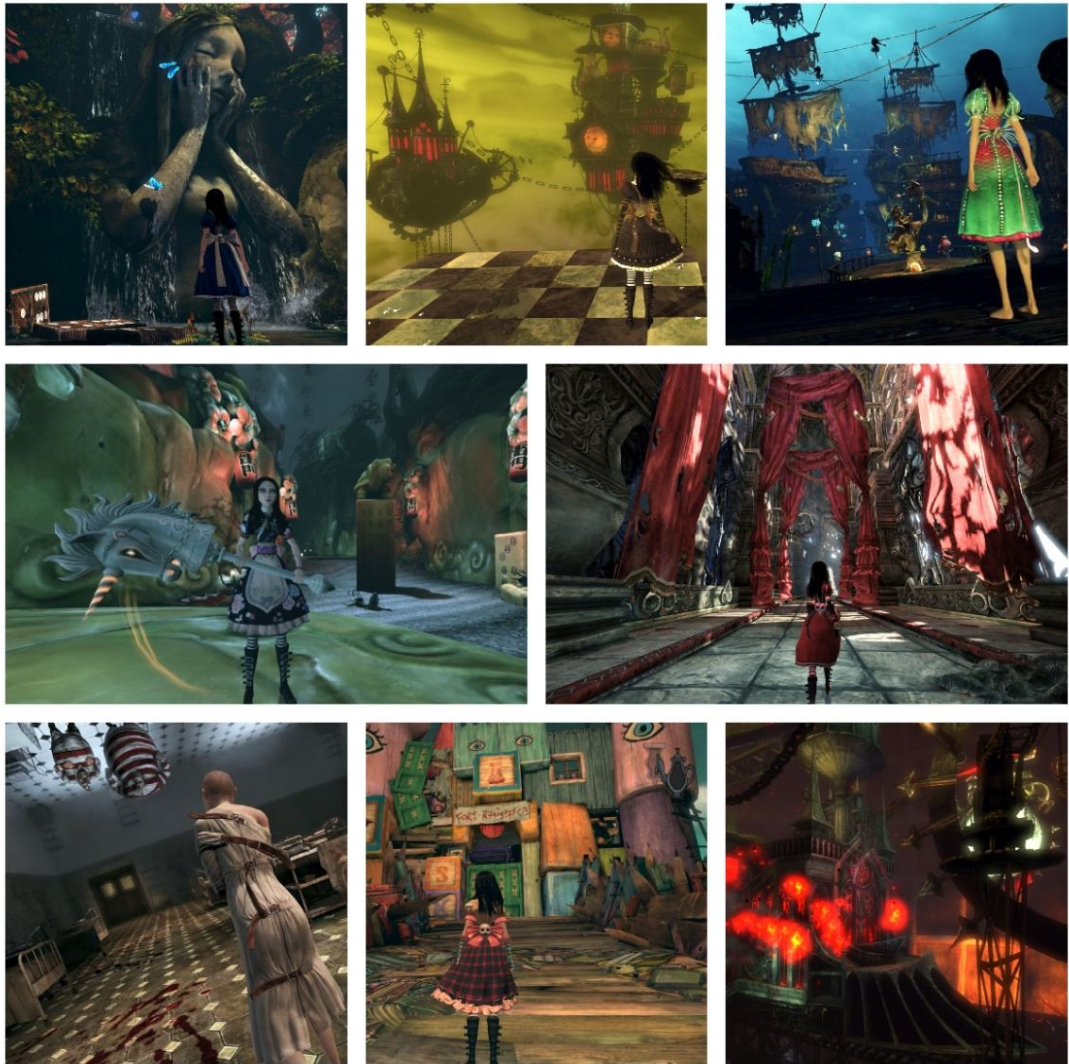
One of the main aspects present in both the *Alice* books and the videogame is the division of the world into two; on one hand we encounter the real world, and on the other hand we find the world of Wonderland, a fantastic world which is related to that of dreams.

Even though *Alice: Madness Returns* is a ludic complement and a transfictional continuation of Carroll’s books that expands the diegesis, when focusing on the world of Wonderland in both mediums we can appreciate that it is transformed into a different world in the videogame. In this particular case we could say that the world of Wonderland which we find in *Alice: Madness Returns* is a different version of the one that we find in Carroll’s books. The concept of the “version”, according to Pardo, lies between those of transfiction and rewriting (Pardo 2018: 60). We have already delved into the concept of transfiction and its expansion of the diegesis; in the case of rewriting we encounter a transformation of the diegesis. Therefore, the version transforms as well as expands the diegesis. The world of Wonderland in *Alice: Madness Returns* is a dark version of Carroll’s Wonderland, since the main characteristic elements of Carroll’s Wonderland are kept in the videogame but undergo a dark twist.

Based on what we have observed in connection to the uncanny, the world of Wonderland can be understood as what remains secret and hidden in the subconscious or unconscious. It could be said that this double dimension is related to Alice's suppressed desires and wishes that are concealed from the self. In Carroll's books the representation of Wonderland is absurd, dreamlike, and both logical and illogical at the same time, whereas in the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns*, we find a clear division between the real world, 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian London, and the double dimension of Wonderland.

In *Alice: Madness Returns* the double dimension between the Victorian London of 1875 and the world of Wonderland are key to understanding the videogame's saga and the story itself. Through its design and graphics the gamer experiences the life events of a psychologically damaged Alice after the death of her family in a tragic housefire. Here the world of Wonderland is formed by multiple domains containing different smaller areas; each domain has its own features such as colours, shapes and materials, through which it is characterised. These domains create a psychological dream space, "everything in Wonderland is amplified and mutated by Alice's disturbed imagination, filtered through her uniquely insane understanding." (Marshall 2011: 73)

There are eight domains: the "Vale of Tears", the "Hatter's Domain", "The Deluded Depths", "The Mysterious East", "Queensland", "The Asylum", "The Dollhouse" and "The Infernal Train". In the following images we can see how each of these domains look in the order mentioned above:



*Alice: Madness Returns* Domains

In the Vale of Tears we encounter an idyllic landscape; colourful, beautiful, and dreamlike, with strange but cute creatures which resemble animals. It could be said that this domain is the one which most resembles the original world of Wonderland of the *Alice* books. It seems to be the perfect depiction of what one would imagine whilst reading Carroll's books, from the fall into the rabbit's den to encounters with curious creatures such as birds with the appearance of cows or bulls and strange snails. The following excerpt from Carroll's books describes some characteristic details of the world of Wonderland which resemble the domain of the Vale of Tears in the videogame:

‘And then there’s the butterfly,’ Alice went on, after she had taken a good look at the insect with its head on fire, and had thought to herself, ‘I wonder if that’s the reason insects are so fond of flying into candles – because they want to turn into Snap-dragon-flies!’

‘Crawling at your feet,’ said the Gnat (Alice drew her feet back in some alarm), ‘you may observe a Bread-and-butter-fly. Its wings are thin slices of bread-and-butter, its body is a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar.’

‘And what does *it* live on?’

‘Weak tea with cream in it.’ (Carroll 2016: 170)

In this excerpt Alice talks to the Gnat about the different kinds of insects found in Wonderland and why they are named as they are. In this particular case the Gnat talks about the “Bread-and-butter-fly”, which is known as the common butterfly in the real world.

Continuing with the other domains of Wonderland in the videogame, in the Hatter’s Domain the predominant colours are black and red, and it contains many gothic and steampunk elements such as clocks, odd teapots and steam machines; it resembles the Industrial Revolution. The Deluded Depths is depicted in cold colours such as shades of blue, purple, pink and white, and everything ends up underwater. In The Mysterious East everything has an Asian theme; there are many things with elements of Asian culture, such as the dress Alice is wearing and rocks which look like pieces of the famous board game Mahjong. Queensland is totally in ruins and the predominant colours are red, grey and black; almost everything we encounter here is gothic and sinister. The Asylum is perhaps one of the most interesting domains, since it flickers between the two worlds; “the “normal” Asylum closer to what it was really like, and a surreal, white, “insane” Asylum, which is perhaps how Alice saw the place” (Marshall 2011: 145). The Dollhouse is one of the creepiest domains, filled with broken and mutilated dolls, as well as dollhouses and with a range of colours. The final domain, The Infernal Train, is “a gothic monstrosity, with carriages grown to the size of cathedrals” (Marshall 2011: 160).

In contrast to the eight domains of Wonderland, we encounter the real dimension of the Victorian London of 1875, which can be seen in the following image:



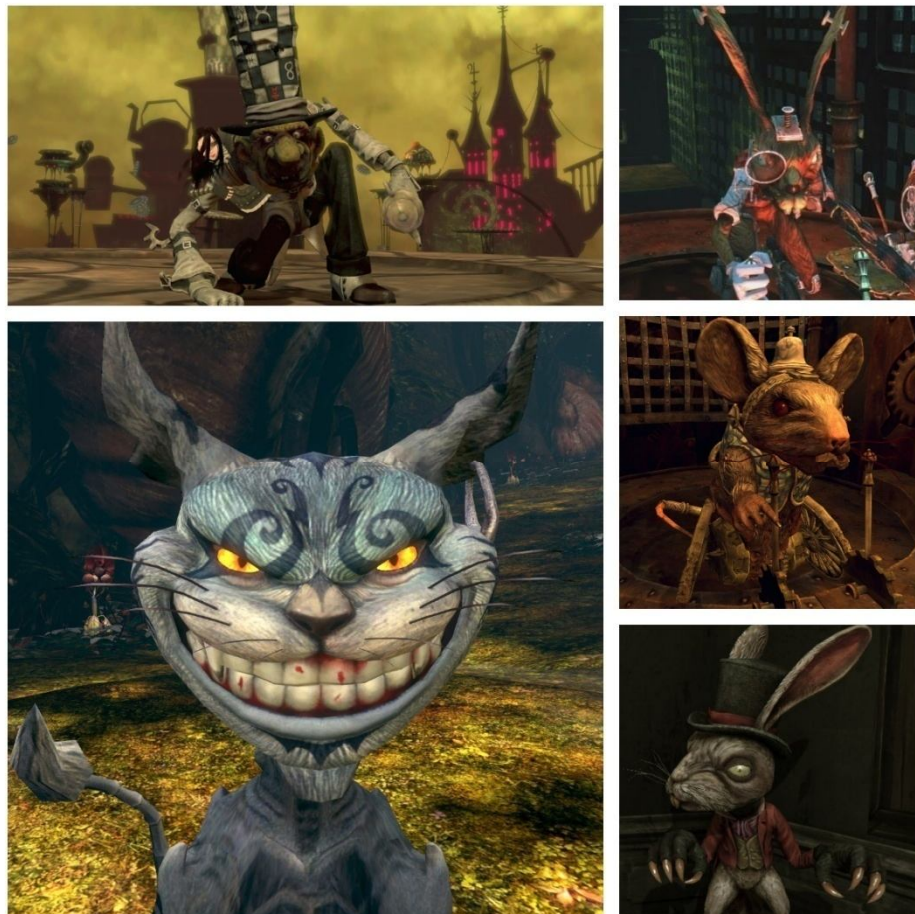
*Alice: Madness Returns London*

If we analyse the actual Victorian London of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we see that the Spicy Horse team has tried to depict it in the videogame as accurately as possible. As Marshall remarks: “London in 1875 was not a pleasant place. The Industrial Revolution tore up the streets, put children to work in factories, and soiled the sky with acrid clouds of black smoke; poverty, crime, and disease marched through the streets.” (2011: 59). Due to this, London is depicted throughout the videogame as very grey, full of smoke and polluted, highly influenced by the industrialisation of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and enveloped in an atmosphere of decay which is also demonstrated through the people of London. The characters shown are for the most part criminals, prostitutes, and drunkards who belong to the slums of the city.

One of the most interesting aspects of Wonderland’s strange domains is that everything we see in them is related to something belonging to the real world of the diegesis, 19<sup>th</sup> century London. “Everything in Wonderland has a “real” London counterpart.” (Marshall 2011: 71). In other words, many aspects of Alice’s reality have a double in the world of Wonderland. In fact, when analysing the videogame, it could be said that Alice’s journey through these seven domains is a journey into her psyche which leads to self-revelation. This means that what was hidden in her inner self became revealed to her at the end of her journey through Wonderland. The whole world of Wonderland is uncanny in itself, since it is not just a mere space but

the container of all the repressed emotions and traumas that Alice has experienced throughout her life, as well as a psychic tool that helps Alice to discover not only herself, but also the truth behind the mysterious death of her family<sup>17</sup>.

However, Wonderland's virtual space is not the only element which is characterised by having a double. The main characters of the *Alice* books, who are also present in the Wonderland dimension of the videogame, also have a double in the London dimension. The most important of these characters are: the Carpenter and the Walrus, the Caterpillar, the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, the Dormouse, the March Hare, the Duchess, the Mock Turtle, the twins Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the White Rabbit and the Queen of Hearts. In the following two images we can see how these characters look in the dimension of Wonderland in *Alice: Madness Returns*:



*Alice: Madness Returns* Characters (1)

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<sup>17</sup>Analysed in the following section of this work.



*Alice: Madness Returns* Characters (2)

Each of them appears in the dimension of London, at the same time having a double in the world of Wonderland. The versions of these characters are much darker in *Alice: Madness Returns*, some of them being truly horrific. The best example of characters who are depicted as horrific are the twins Tweedledum and Tweedledee. In the world of Wonderland they are quite similar to their originals in the *Alice* books, but in the dimension of London they turn out to be two sadists who enjoy torturing the patients of the asylum in which Alice is a long-term patient; they are the nephews of the superintendent of the asylum. Towards the end of the videogame they trepan Alice's cranium, which is shown explicitly and bloodily. In contrast to this, the twins of Carroll's books are peculiar creatures with an aura of innocence; physically they are quite similar to the twins of *Alice: Madness Returns*, but their personalities are completely different. Carroll's Tweedledum and Tweedledee

resemble a pair of naughty children, it does not take much to make them cry and they are very noisy. This can be seen through the following fragment of *Through the Looking-Glass*:

‘Do you see *that?*’ he said, in a voice choking with passion, and his eyes grew large and yellow all in a moment, as he pointed with a trembling finger at a small white thing lying under the tree.

‘It’s only a rattle,’ Alice said, after a careful examination of the little white things. ‘Not a rattlesnake, you know,’ she added hastily, thinking that he was frightened: ‘only an old rattle – quite old and broken.’

‘I knew it was!’ cried Tweedledum, beginning to stamp about wildly and tear his hair. ‘It’s a spoilt, of course!’ Here he looked at Tweedledee, who immediately sat down on the ground, and tried to hide himself under the umbrella. (Carroll 2016: 186)

Here we can appreciate the childish reaction of one of the twins when he realises that his new rattle was broken by his brother.

Another interesting pair of characters is the Carpenter and the Walrus. In the *Alice* books they are mentioned in the poem recited by Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They are depicted as mean characters, since they are responsible for tricking oysters in order to eat them. In *Alice: Madness Returns* they are actors in their own show in The Deluded Depths; in which they have oysters as actresses. In the show they end up eating all the fish who had come to view the show, which links back to the twins’ poem. In both the books and the videogame they are tricksters who end up eating their guests. In the real world of Victorian London there are many boxes around the city which are labelled “The Carpenter Company: Oyster & Co”, as well as many posters with “Bruno Capentieri’s, Carnival of Oddities, Featuring the Insatiable...Walrus Man”.

#### **4.2. Alice’s identity**

Both Carroll’s books and *Alice: Madness Returns* can be seen as exploring the inner process of Alice’s identity. From the beginning until the end of both works Alice undergoes the uncanny process of self-revelation through the constant questioning of who she is. According to Beer:

The creatures in *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass* are quite as puzzled by Alice as she is by them. In these worlds she is taxonomic anomaly. The phatic phrase “Who are you?” becomes threateningly intrusive, or maddeningly condescending, “Who are *you?*” And



repeatedly she is asked not just *who* she is but *what* she is: she is taken to be a serpent, a servant, a fading flower, a dream figment, a monster. (2016: 143)

As Beer states, in the *Alice* books Alice is constantly questioned, and because her identity is unclear from the creatures' perspective from the start, she is an intruder in a world where the laws of logic differ dramatically from those of the real world. Moreover, the fact that she does not know that what she is experiencing is part of a dream, and that the creatures she meets are both familiar and unfamiliar to her, triggers an uncanny process of Alice's self-revelation. Alice is continuously overwhelmed by incessant questioning about what kind of being she is; she does not understand how being a little girl can be perceived as strange. What is normal for Alice is not normal for the inhabitants of Wonderland, which both bothers and frightens Alice at the same time. A fragment of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* which shows this is the following, where Alice grows huge after eating a mushroom and a pigeon thinks she is a serpent who wants to eat her eggs:

'But I'm *not* a serpent, I tell you!' said Alice. 'I'm a – I'm a –'

'Well! *what* are you?' said the Pigeon. 'I can see you're trying to invent something!'

'I – I'm a little girl,' said Alice, rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through her day.

'A likely story indeed!' said the Pigeon in a tone of the deepest contempt. 'I've seen a good many little girls in my time, but never one with such a neck as that! No, no! You're a serpent; and there's no use denying it. [...] (Carroll 2016: 54)

Here we can appreciate that Alice hesitates when saying she is a little girl. After all the transformations in size she has experienced and the weird creatures she has met she questions herself. This may link to the process of growing up and becoming an adult, "the alarms associated with growth in Alice involve not only the flat dread the child feels at entering the boredom of adult life but the possibility that growing is not a straight pathway to human adulthood." (Beer 2016: 210). Alice constantly tries to convince every creature she meets that she is a little girl called Alice, emphasising her identity to make it visible not only to the other creatures but also to herself. She feels the need to establish her identity as fixed and unchangeable despite all the changes she is undergoing; this may be linked to the fear of growing up and entering

a new stage in life. Another fragment of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in which Alice's identity is questioned is when she meets the Caterpillar:

'Who are you?' said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I – I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the Caterpillar sternly. 'Explain yourself!'

'I can't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, sir,' said Alice, 'because I'm not myself, you see.'

'I don't see,' said the Caterpillar.

'I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly,' Alice replied very politely, 'for I can't understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.'

'It isn't,' said the Caterpillar.

'Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet,' said Alice; 'but when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?'

'Not a bit,' said the Caterpillar.

'Well, perhaps *your* feelings may be different,' said Alice; 'all I know is, it would feel very queer to *me*.' (Carroll 2016: 46 – 47)

This fragment is the most revealing regarding the inner processes that Alice is experiencing. Alice changes multiple times rapidly in such a short period of time that she feels disoriented and unable to recognise herself. Moreover, she emphasises the natural process the Caterpillar will undergo in order to become a butterfly, which according to Alice would make her "feel very queer". This resembles the process of becoming a woman that she is experiencing; her confusion derives from all the changes she is undergoing, and the creatures questioning her identity are the reflection of her inner psychological struggles caused by becoming a woman. The uncanny process of meeting all the different creatures of Wonderland is none other than the uncanny process of becoming an adult. As we have seen in the previous section, Wonderland is the mirror of the real dimension in which Alice belongs. Therefore, following Freud's theory, Wonderland represents the emotions suppressed by the superego; it is the container of everything that was hidden. It is this encounter with this double dimension that makes Alice become aware of all the changes she is experiencing; growing bigger or smaller in size is just the reflection of her maturing

process, something that frightens her. This fear of becoming an adult, which remains concealed from herself, is what she faces through the different creatures of Wonderland and is what leads her to the self-revelation of adulthood. Growing up is part of the natural cycle of life, and growing up and becoming an adult is necessary to experience different things in life. This is also reflected in the *Alice* books, where Alice is continuously trying new things through the different beverages she drinks and the food she eats. Even though she is not afraid of trying new things, at the start she becomes afraid when changing size and she finds this disturbing. However, she ends up getting used to it and this feeling fades, and as these changes become normal she is becoming aware of what being an adult means. In the previous excerpt of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, when talking to the Caterpillar Alice is not only aware of the fact that the Caterpillar will go through the natural process of maturing, but also of her own process of growing up.

In the case of *Alice: Madness Returns* the process is similar, but Alice's fears and self-revelation are quite different. In the videogame we encounter an already mature Alice who has completed the process of becoming an adult. Here we find however a broken version of Alice, whose state of mind is extremely fragile. The double dimensions of Wonderland and London in the videogame, as we have seen, represent different aspects of Alice's real life in Victorian London which, in some sense, have left a mark on her mind. An example we have already looked at is that of Tweedledum and Tweedledee, who tortured Alice in the asylum. We can appreciate then how something familiar in the dimension of Victorian London turns into something unfamiliar.

In the case of the videogame the journey through Wonderland is a journey through Alice's mind and the memories she repressed after the traumatic experience of losing her family. Accessing Wonderland is at the same time accessing all the psychological material blocked by the superego, and it is thanks to the encounter with this psychological material through the double dimension of Wonderland that Alice is able to overcome her trauma and access the memories that allow her to remember everything from the night her family died. In *Alice: Madness Returns*, the uncanny process of self-revelation is even more apparent than in Carroll's books, thanks to the explicitness of the videogame. One part of the videogame where this uncanny process becomes very obvious is when Alice arrives in the domain of

Queensland and encounters the Red Queen. The Red Queen appears as a young and sinister version of Alice, “her hands and lower body are all tentacles, which control the whole domain.” (Marshall 2011: 130). It could be said that she represents the double of Alice and reflects all those suppressed emotions, and it is the encounter with her that produces an uncanny feeling, which returns Alice to a primitive state. Here we can see part of the conversation between Alice and the Red Queen:

RED QUEEN: You don't know your own mind.

ALICE: It's nearly a completely stranger.

RED QUEEN: What you claim not to know, is merely what you've denied. You've recaptured your vagrant memories.

[...]

ALICE: The destruction of Wonderland is the destruction of me?

RED QUEEN: Indeed. And vice versa (Spicy Horse: 2011)

Even though this conversation may be confusing at first glance, when analysed deeply and in connection to the rest of the videogame, we could assert that Alice is still repressing and blocking parts of her mind, which inhibits her from seeing reality. It is through her double, the Red Queen, that she becomes aware of the fact that she can find the truth through her newly unblocked memories. When Alice becomes aware that the destruction of Wonderland is her own destruction, she realises that since Wonderland is part of her mind its destruction would be her perdition; she would become completely mad and there would be no salvation for her. The uncanny process of self-revelation is triggered when everything suppressed and forgotten by Alice comes to the surface, returning her to a primitive state and making her aware of the truth hidden in the depths of her own mind.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this work I have analysed Carroll's books *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (2016) in comparison to the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns*. In order to carry out this analysis between two different mediums I have made use of Gil and Pardo's *Adaptación 2.0 Estudios Comparados sobre Intermedialidad*, from the field of Comparative Media Studies, as

well as James Newman's *Videogames* (2004) and Aarseth's *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997), which belong to the field of Game Studies. Moreover, in order to delve into the different aspects which characterise the *Alice* books I have taken into account Gillian Beer's *Alice in Space: The sideways Victorian world of Lewis Carroll* (2016) as well as Sigmund Freud's *The Uncanny* (2003), amongst other sources which have helped me to closely examine both works.

Applying Gil and Pardo's theory, it could be said that *Alice: Madness Returns* is a ludic complement of the *Alice* books, as well as a transfictional continuation which expands and complements Carroll's diegesis through the medium of videogame. Moreover, when analysing the world of Wonderland one finds that this double spatial dimension can be conceived as a version of the original world of Wonderland present in Carroll's books, which creates something new but keeps many of the most characteristic elements of the original. In this particular case, the version we encounter is a dark and gloomy one which twists the perception of Carroll's diegesis.

Throughout the videogame Carroll's influence is substantial, even down to the slightest detail, which facilitates its analysis when comparing it to the books. From a narratological point of view, the differences between the books and the videogame are quite significant due to prominent discrepancies between both mediums. In the case of voice and mood, and in contrast to Carroll's books, we find that throughout the videogame the key points of the diegesis reside in the cinematics, which are characterised by being cut-scenes resembling movie sequences, where no possible interaction on the player's part is allowed. Moreover, regarding different narrative levels, we find different theories, such as that of Gil, which allows an easy and straightforward analysis of these levels, and which is similar to Genette's narratological theory; or Aarseth's theory, which focuses more specifically on the communication structure of adventure videogames in terms of the user's position and the three levels of adventure games' discourse. Regarding the aspects of time and space, the main differences again stem from the different nature of both mediums, the literary and the ludic. While the *Alice* books are a linear pause and the discourse representation is singulary, the videogame is marked by a great amount of analepsis which can be appreciated through many of the cinematics. Besides this, the discourse representation is repetitive, and the duration corresponds to what Genette calls a scene.

Furthermore, due to the unnatural quality of both the books and the videogame, and regarding the issue of narrative impossibilities and its connection with both narratology and aesthetics from the point of view of the world of fantasy, a further analysis following Alber's theory of unnatural narratives has allowed us to delve into the main elements which have characterised Carroll's books over the years. Curious creatures which speak or changes in size caused by drinking or eating are some of the elements which define both works as unnatural narratives in an oneiric space.

Regarding the aspect of aesthetics, in both the books and the videogame there is a clear double dimension which allows us to differentiate between the real world and that of Wonderland. Moreover, in both works the character of Alice undergoes a process which directly affects her identity, and which can be analysed from a Freudian perspective. In the case of the *Alice* books this is experienced by Alice through the process of maturing, while in the videogame Alice has already completed this process and is now undergoing the deeper process of overcoming psychological trauma. In both works Alice experiences fear caused by familiar situations turning into unfamiliar ones and vice versa, leading to a self-revelation which affects her identity and its evolution. It is through the concept of the double that this process becomes easier to perceive, this concept also being key to Alice's uncanny process of self-revelation.

With the purpose of analysing the *Alice* books and the videogame *Alice: Madness Returns* accurately from a literary perspective, I have used theories belonging to both Comparative Media Studies and Game Studies. I have, however, come across some difficulties when searching for sources linked to these scholarly fields to use in order to carry out a precise analysis of both works, a fact which is probably linked to the relatively recent emergence of these fields of study and the fast development of new technologies. Many of the articles and books that I encountered during my analysis, especially from the field of Game Studies, focused more on technological issues such as software development and design than on literary aspects. Nevertheless, in recent years both scholarly fields have evolved at great speed, even from a literary perspective, and they will probably continue in this direction.

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