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"IS THIS THE REAL LIFE? IS THIS JUST FANTASY?":

THE NARRATIVE STYLES IN *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* (1865),
ALICE IN BORDERLAND (2010) AND ITS SERIES ADAPTATION (2020)

Florianópolis,

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> Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso, apresentado ao Curso de Letras − Inglês da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina como requisito para obtenção do título de bacharel em Letras − Inglês.
> Orientador: Prof. Dr. George Alexandre Ayres de Menezes Mousinho

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to carry out a comparative analysis in order to investigate if and how the nonsense tradition presented in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) served as an inspiration for the plot and development of the manga *Alice in Borderland* (2010). Additionally, the research intends to investigate whether there were changes in the nonsense style addressed in the manga in the process of adaptation for the homonymous Netflix series (2020). Despite its prestige and source of inspiration for many artistic manifestations since its creation, it is believed that Lewis Carroll's novel lacks logic and meaning in its scenarios, dialogues, and narrative structures. Notwithstanding, pieces of research indicate that the Victorian prose brings patterns of order beyond the superficial level of the text (FLESCHER, 1969; MARUCCI & GIROLDO, 2020). Thus, this project is focused on analyzing *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the manga and series *Alice in Borderland* in order to understand if the manga's narrative incorporates the same stereotypes as the nineteenth-century book, as well as understand if there were changes due to the adaptation process in the approach perceived in the manga in comparison with the series. The hypothesis proposed is that the manga presents similarities concerning the approach of *Alice*'s nonsense, just as it is maintained in Shinsuke Sato's homonymous serial adaptation. As a result, the analysis proved the validity of the assumptions aforementioned.

Keywords: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Alice in Borderland,* nonsense, narrative styles.

RESUMO

Este estudo visa realizar uma análise comparativa a fim de investigar se e como a tradição nonsense apresentada em *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) serviu de inspiração para o enredo e desenvolvimento do mangá *Alice in Borderland* (2010). Adicionalmente, a pesquisa pretende investigar se houve mudanças no estilo nonsense abordado no mangá no processo de adaptação para a série homônima da Netflix (2020). Apesar de seu prestígio e fonte de inspiração para muitas manifestações artísticas desde sua criação, acredita-se que o romance de Lewis Carroll carece de lógica e sentido em seus cenários, diálogos e estruturas narrativas. Contudo, pesquisas indicam que o romance vitoriano traz padrões de ordem para além do nível superficial do texto (FLESCHER, 1969; MARUCCI & GIROLDO, 2020). Assim, este projeto tem como foco analisar *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* e o mangá e série *Alice in Borderland* a fim de entender se a narrativa do mangá incorpora os mesmos estereótipos do livro oitocentista, bem como entender se houve mudanças devido ao processo de adaptação na abordagem percebida no mangá em comparação com a série. A hipótese proposta é a de que o mangá apresenta semelhanças quanto à abordagem do nonsense de *Alice*, assim como este é mantido na adaptação seriada homônima de Shinsuke Sato. Como resultado, a análise comprovou a validade das suposições acima mencionadas.

Palavras-chave: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Alice in Borderland*, nonsense, estilos narrativos.

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1. **Introduction**

During the 19th century, England went through singular events under the reign of Queen Victoria (1819-1901). The Victorian Era — the period comprising the years of her regency — was marked by the country's enrichment as a result mainly of the industrial revolution and the English colonial ventures, which helped to consolidate the image of the empire as a great power worldwide. Notwithstanding, Isabella Pereira Marucci and Ramiro Giroldo (2020) describe this historical moment as a "turbulent period, of severe ideologies and conservative positions." (p. 571, my translation)[1] It is in this context that Charles Dodgson became one of the leading writers of the *nonsense* tradition with the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, originally published in 1865. Under the name Lewis Caroll, the author published a novel that is the source of considerable influence in numerous artistic, literary, and cinematographic expressions till the modern days.

Although its publication took place over 150 years ago, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* keeps captivating new readers to this day. This 'canonic' status can be attributed to numerous intersemiotic adaptations to different media throughout all this time. Aside from Disney's animation (1951) and live-action production (2010), we can also count a silent film (1910), theater plays, and inspirations for several art manifestations such as songs, games, cartoons, and even series cameos — as in the spin-off of ABC series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018)*,* entitled *Once Upon a Time in Wonderland* (2013-2014).

The importance of *Alice* is also heavily perceptible in Japanese productions. For instance, it is possible to highlight its influence on various television dramas, mangas and animes[2], such as in its animated adaptation *Fushigi no Kuni no Arisu* (1983-1984) and *Pandora Hearts* (2009), for instance. Notwithstanding, it is essential to emphasize two Japanese productions from the past few years which will play an important role in this analysis: Haro Aso's manga *Alice in Borderland* (2010) — the English translation of *Imawa no Kuni no Arisu* — and its homonymous Netflix series (2020). Both works mentioned previously are the objects of study for the present research alongside Carroll's novel.

In noticing the novel's prestige, this study aims to carry out a comparative analysis between the narrative styles of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), the manga *Alice in Borderland* (2010), and its series adaptation (2020). The Carrollian novel tells the story of

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[1] Full in-context citation in the source text is: "Interessante citar que sua origem é inglesa, nascido no contexto da Inglaterra Vitoriana, período conturbado, de severas ideologias e posições conservadoras."
[2] Japanese graphic novels and animations, respectively

Alice, a child that decides to follow a white rabbit to escape boredom and arrives in a fantastic universe ruled by strange laws. In the course of the narrative, odd characters such as the Mad Hatter, the Caterpillar and the Duchess cross the girl's path, providing single pieces of advice while Alice tries to adapt to — and ultimately escapes from — this complex fantasy world. In this novel, Carroll utilizes a linguistic extension of the English language — through the use of techniques like repetition and figures of speech such as irony, allusion, and metaphors — to create an internal stylistic logic, avoiding the domain of the absurd (FLESCHER, 1969; MARUCCI & GIROLDO, 2020). Therefore, in opposition to the common misconception that the plot lacks logic and meaning in its numerous scenarios, dialogues, and narrative structure, "[t]he nonsense world is a world of fantasy which shies clear of reality, yet indicates its existence." (FLESCHER, 1969, p. 141)

On the other hand, the Japanese graphic novel and series are shown as a modern way of referencing the work of the Victorian writer. *Alice in Borderland* is the official translation of *Imawa no Kuni no Arisu*, a manga produced by Haro Aso during 2010-2016. The story follows Ryohei Arisu, a carefree high school student who does not have a good relationship with his family or big goals for the future. Unexpectedly, alongside his friends, they suddenly appear in an 'alternative Tokyo' after unknown circumstances. Now, they have to complete mandatory games in order to guarantee their survival in this mysterious place — while searching for explanations to understand this reality and escape from there. This literary work yielded in a homonymous series adaptation, produced by Shinsuke Sato and with its first season released in December 2020 and a second one, at the end of 2022.

1.1.   Objectives, Research Question, and Hypothesis

Despite the gap of a century and a half between these works, both *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the versions of *Alice in Borderland* have traces of the nonsense style in their composition. For illustration, the English work can represent in its own way what Anthony Burgess (1986) describes as "English nonsense tradition (...) [,] a bizarre way of making sense" (p. 21). The novel carries with it the common preconception that the narrative is preposterous and implausible in its conception and in numerous passages — for instance, the introduction of odd individuals who play roles they are not assigned to in the 'real world', as working and talking animals. Meanwhile, the Japanese works follow the main character and his friends in an unknown place where they meet new characters who help them throughout

their survival journey of understanding and discovering what the so-called 'Borderland' is in order to come back to their familiar reality.

The three selected works were chosen as the main objects for further analysis due to personal interests. The recent release of the Japanese series on a famous worldwide streaming service — an adaptation of a finished manga, whose publication period spanned between 2010 and 2016 — drew my attention as a fan of both East Asian productions and the mystical universe of Wonderland. The experience of concurrently following Haro Aso's story while searching for apparent similarities between the objects of study aroused my interest in investigating the influence of this Victorian novel in Aso's manga and Sato's series. Understanding the aforementioned statements, in addition to considering the ambiguity brought by the nonsense tradition and the popularity of Lewis Carroll's novel, the present study aims to carry out a comparative analysis between *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), *Alice in Borderland* (2010) and its homonymous Netflix adaptation (2020).

In order to accomplish this research, two main objectives have been established to guide this project: **1)** to investigate how the 'nonsense' structure approached in the novel might have served as an inspiration to the construction and setting of the manga's storyline; and if so, **2)** to comprehend if there were any changes in the approach of the nonsense tradition in the adaptation process between the manga and the series. Therefore, the research questions that will guide the present study are: can we perceive the influence of the nonsense tradition present in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* on the narrative structure of the manga of *Alice in Borderland*? If so, did the process of adaptation from the manga to the homonymous series result in alterations concerning the former's nonsense approach to the latter? Thus, my hypothesis is that the manga presents similarities concerning the approach of *Alice*'s 'nonsense' in its narrative elements, such as structures, storyline and characters, for instance — as well as that the series maintains an akin approach during the process of adaptation from the manga to the serial drama.

1.2.   Methodology

The present monograph consists of a comparative research with three main objects of study: Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Haro Aso's manga *Imawa no Kuni no Arisu* (2010-2016) — which is translated to English, and commonly referred to as *Alice in Borderland* — and its homonymous series adaptation (2020), directed by Shinsuke Sato. The material to be studied was accessed through online resources.

Particularly, up to the day of writing this research, the manga does not have an official Brazilian Portuguese translation and its English authoritative version is inaccessible since it is an international purchase with high cost. Therefore, the version used in this monograph was an unofficial translation made by an independent group of fans called *Black Rock Scans* and distributed for free on the website *Manga Kakalot*[3]. In view of its unofficial status, it is important to emphasize that the structure of the publication online does not assume the same organization as the official translation, having its own style of translation and separation of chapters.

Furthermore, the series is available on the streaming service *Netflix* — from where the screenshots were retrieved to be added to this work and complement the analysis with illustrative examples. Although it already has two seasons, this research will include only the first episode of the first season, comprising the moment in which the protagonist is still adapting to the universe of Borderland. The comparative work will be separated into subtopics, in which each one will approach one of the media aforementioned, using as its central point of reference the beginning of each oeuvre — with the discussion being supplemented with excerpts from other parts of the narrations to complement the discussion. In a fourth subsection, there will be an analysis of the previous categories to compare the results in order to evaluate the element of nonsense through the course of these adaptations taking into consideration the established objectives for this monograph.

1.3.   Significance of the study

As mentioned in the introduction, in the contemporary world, we can notice that the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) still inspires several productions worldwide, instigating new generations to consume it despite the growing historical gap between Carroll's work and nowadays' artistic manifestations (music, novels, movies, and so forth). Nevertheless, although *Alice*'s novel is constantly considered a meaningless and disjointed prose (MARUCCI & GIROLDO, 2020), this appraisal is based on preconceptions as studies point to the presence of order and logic between the lines of the Victorian novel (FLESCHER, 1969; MARUCCI & GIROLDO, 2020). Therefore, this work intends to encourage possible interested scholars to investigate the nonsense tradition in literature and expand research in the area once, as it is possible to perceive in the book *The Edinburgh Companion to Nonsense*,

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[3] Available on the following link: https://ww4.mangakakalot.tv/manga/manga-mv951478

organized by Anna Barton and James Williams (2022), 'nonsense' is not restricted to productions from Victorian England.

Furthermore, focusing on the adaptation process itself, when consuming any kind of artistic manifestation, it is possible to notice references and allusions to other works of diverse historical and social contexts, directly and indirectly. One plausible explanation for this phenomenon happens due to constant cultural exchanges between people worldwide, which might incite artists to cite other famous and renowned works in their own writing. Moreover, the conduction and presentation of a study aimed at more recent artistic manifestations — such as series, movies, graphic novels, and music, for instance — might instigate new research following similar research lines, collaborating with the expansion of the field of literary and comparative studies.

2.   Review of literature

For the present study, the review of literature will be divided into subcategories in order to discuss previous studies and books in order to decode aspects that will be addressed in the analysis. Firstly, a section will focus on "Narrative elements in Literature, Comics and Cinema", to investigate how they can structure and impact the course of the story, followed by the topic on "Adaptation studies", in order to elucidate this process of transposition between media. Furthermore, a part of the review of literature will tackle "Audiovisual elements", which will aid in the scene analysis, as well as the "Nonsense in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)", in the interest of a more profound understanding of the presence of the component previously mentioned in Carroll's book. The intention of this section is to elucidate important concepts that will be approached in the following segment of the research.

2.1.   Narrative elements in Literature, Comics and Cinema

In order to understand and analyze the narrative structures in the three chosen media, it becomes essential to do a review of literature of texts aimed at discussing narrative elements in Literature, Comics and Cinema. In the field of literary studies, narrative plays an essential role. In the introduction of the book *The Nature of Narrative*, Scholes et al (2006) define that "[b]y narrative [,] we mean all those literary works which are distinguished by two characteristics: the presence of a story and a story-teller." (p. 4) During the chapter "Elements of fiction", Scholes et al. (1991) debate that fiction is not merely inserted in an inflexible

category once "[i]t can be very factual, maintaining the closest possible correspondence between its story and things that have actually happened in the world. Or it can be very fanciful, defying our sense of life's ordinary possibilities." (p. 122) In the case of *Alice*, the story tends to assimilate more to the fantastic world — especially considering the universe of Wonderland, its odd residents and the events that occur in a mysterious place that causes, in first contact, a feeling of strangeness and unfamiliarity on both Alice and the reader.

Carrying on the discussions, in *Basic Elements of Narrative* (2009), David Herman characterizes what is a "narrative" and what differentiates it from other "text-type categories (descriptions, lists, arguments, etc.)" (p. 13). To describe each element, he claims it is essential to classify a text as part of the narrative genre. In his words

> On this account, a prototypical narrative can be construed as
>
> (i) A representation that is situated in – must be interpreted in light of – a specific discourse context or occasion for telling.
>
> (ii) The representation, furthermore, cues interpreters to draw inferences about a structured time-course of particularized events.
>
> (iii) In turn, these events are such that they introduce some sort of disruption or disequilibrium into a storyworld[13] involving human or human-like agents, whether that world is presented as actual or fictional, realistic or fantastic, remembered or dreamed, etc.
>
> (iv) The representation also conveys the *experience* of living through this storyworld-in-flux, highlighting the pressure of events on real or imagined consciousnesses affected by the occurrences at issue. Thus – with one important proviso – it can be argued that narrative is centrally concerned with *qualia*, a term used by philosophers of mind to refer to the sense of "what it is like" for someone or something to have a particular experience.
> (HERMAN, 2009, p. 14)

Therefore, according to the author's view, texts characterized as narratives are stories embedded in a certain background that transmits the emotions and feelings experienced by the agents of the narrative. This is brought by a storyteller to an interpreter, who plays an active role in this process of perceiving its pieces of evidence and features in order "to reconstruct a storyworld." (HERMAN, 2009, p. 17) These assumptions are based on the presented events, which are part of a large network of facts that unfold from a cascade effect of cause and consequence in a given temporal and spatial scenario — culminating consequently in the development of that narration's "storyworld."

In particular, Herman's notion of the construction of a storyworld plays an important role in the analysis of the present monograph. According to the writer, this textual element can be understood as

[T]he world evoked implicitly as well as explicitly by a narrative, whether that narrative takes the form of a printed text, film, graphic novel, sign language, everyday conversation, or even a tale that is projected but never actualized as a concrete artifact [...]. Storyworlds are *global mental representations enabling interpreters to frame inferences about the situations, characters, and occurrences either explicitly mentioned in or implied by a narrative text or discourse*. As such, storyworlds are mental models of the situations and events being recounted – of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what manner.
(HERMAN, 2009, p. 106-107, my highlight)

Later on, the writer emphasizes that storyworlds are not limited solely to representations of physical spaces, but also the character's personal microcosm, comprising their intimate "beliefs, desires, intentions, memories, and imaginative projections [, which may or may not] be expressed outwardly to other characters" (HERMAN, 2009, p. 108) — helping and supporting the development of a story's main narrative line. Additionally, Herman (2009) points out the importance of the public's active role during this process, since, in order to comprehend and assimilate the narrative's given features that compose a specific storyworld, they have to

draw on such medium-specific cues to build on the basis of the discourse (or sjuzhet) a chronology for events (or fabula) (what happened when, or in what order?); a broader temporal and spatial environment for those events (when in history did these events occur, and where geographically?); an inventory of the characters involved; and a working model of what it was like for these characters to experience the more or less disruptive or noncanonical events that constitute a core feature of narrative representations, which may in turn be more or less reportable within a particular discourse context or occasion for telling.
(HERMAN, 2009, p. 107)

According to the author, this process is strongly influenced by the public's (readers, listeners and viewers) own perceptions and impressions about the "real world" and its occurrences. Particularly, the beginning of a story is an important memento for the audience's storymaking and can lead the interpreters' next steps throughout their narrative experience. Each particular world is conjured through "referring" and "deictic expressions" (HERMAN, 2009, p. 113), which are inserted in a unique context and entwined into its own network of events and pieces of information — helping to allocate the public in the respective narrative universe. Therefore, as discussed by Herman (2009), taking into consideration the singularities of every media resource, "procedures for worldmaking are affected by a different system of affordances and constraints than the system that impinges on written narrative texts, whatever their genre." (p. 115) Then, the audience's active role is, above all, immersive and interactive once

> [i]nterpreters of narrative do not merely reconstruct a sequence of events and a set of existents, but imaginatively (emotionally, viscerally) inhabit a world in which, besides happening and existing, things matter, agitate, exalt, repulse, provide grounds for laughter and grief, and so on – both for narrative agents and for interpreters working to make sense of their circumstances and (inter)actions.
> (HERMAN, 2009, p. 119)

Finally, the author concludes this topic by highlighting the narrative's flexibility and mutability once its course and the interpretation of the events that will come to unfold are influenced by specific contexts — which are characterized by its particular "temporal" and "spatial dimension." (HERMAN, 2009) While the former pays attention to the **duration** of a certain event (in relation to the amount of time it takes in the universe of the narrative, as well as the textual length it occupies), the **frequency** it occurs throughout the story and the **order** in which it is presented, the latter is worried about the geographic aspects incited by the narration. These elements combined are important pieces for the unfolding of a story, bringing to it the sensation of development, rhythm and logic. Ultimately, Herman (2009) discusses the idea of "world disruption", when a circumstance causes instability in the plot and leads to a sequence of consequential incidents until it attains stability once again — which might differ from the state of equilibrium at the beginning (p. 133-134). When debating its impacts on the characters and their narrative development, the author states that

> stories place an accent on unexpected or noncanonical events – events that disrupt the normal order of things for human or human-like agents engaged in goal-directed activities and projects within a given world, and that are experienced as such by those agents.
> (HERMAN, 2009, p. 133)

Another important aspect of the narrative that will be part of the present research concerns the image of **characters**. This element constitutes an important piece for the development of the narrative since they are agents of actions that dominate the course of the story in a cause-consequence relationship. According to Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013), characters are important features for the narration's trajectory as they instigate the audience's commitment regarding the process of "recognition, alignment, and allegiance" (HUTCHEON & O'FLYNN, p. 11). On the same topic, in accordance with Margolin (1989), the conceptualization of character depends on how we characterize a literary piece. In his article, he presents six theories that explain the function of the literary character: as the topic entity of a discourse, device, textual speaker, thematic element, actant and role, and non-actual individual — all of them being "grounded in a different general conception of the nature of

the literary work, as well as in a different general model of narrative, its basic constituents, and their hierarchy." (p. 5)

For this analysis, the perspective that is going to be employed refers to the last one mentioned above, which is described by Margolin (1989) as a character inserted in a fictional universe where their actions, personality and relationships with other literary entities are developed within the narrative

> Within this non-actual world, the individual can be referred to, located in space-time points, and ascribed human or human-like properties and relations: physical, actantial (verbal, mental, physical), social (ethical, interpersonal). The mental dimension can be further subdivided into cognitive, emotive, volitional, and perceptual. In addition, the individual can be ascribed inner states, knowledge and belief sets, attitudes, wishes, goals, plans, intentions, and dispositions
> (MARGOLIN, 1989, p. 4)

Extending further on the subject, Margolin (1989) argues that a character, on this view, can be understood as a compound chain of characteristic, "a partially ordered set of traits" (p. 17) in an unstoppable process of interpretations which may result in the introduction of more feature to this web as the story unfolds, thus "[yielding] an even richer and fuller characterization of each narrative agent involved." (MARGOLIN, 1989, p. 16) Moreover, he also highlights that a character finds himself/herself introduced into relationships with other individuals — associations that allow the emergence of pieces of information about his/her characterization

> Individuals in fiction never exist in isolation from one another; they are, instead, related to one another through actantial, thematic, or formal patterns. Much information about each individual can be derived in a relative contrastive manner through these patterns of interrelations.
> (MARGOLIN, 1989, p. 11)

Besides, these characters are inserted in a "unique" fictional world, made up of parameters that will influence their development in a specific context for such. Therefore, "[a] description of the kind of world created in a given narrative, its underlying structures and laws, is hence a precondition for the formulation of any set of rules of inference regarding the properties of individuals in this world." (MARGOLIN, 1989, p. 14)

A second medium that will be approached in the analysis concerns the *manga*. According to an article shared on *The British Museum* website, it is characterized by storytelling with the combination of text and drawings. (ROUSMANIERE, 2019) Although the present monograph intends to analyze a medium whose literary style is inserted into the

Japanese culture and should not be equated with the Western tradition of producing comics — since each one has its own particularities — the readings for this section work mostly with the concept of comics as it is understood by the Western theorists due to their structural similarity. Throughout this topic of the review of literature, the nomenclatures "comics", "graphic novel" and "manga" will be used interchangeably.

When thinking about its structuring, comics are organized in 'panels', which are described by Thierry Groensteen (2007) "as a portion of space isolated by blank spaces and enclosed by a frame that insures its integrity (...) [, taking] part in the sequential *continuum*." (p. 28-29) These panels assume forms named by the author as 'hyperframe', "[t]he exterior outline of this form, its perimeter (...), [separating] the useable surface of the page from its peripheral zone [.]" (GROENSTEEN, 2007, p. 32-33) Moreover, the movement of noticing, understanding and connecting the separate parts is identified by Scott McCloud (1993) as 'closure', which requires an active role of the public interpreting the offered information, "mentally complementing that which is **incomplete** based on **past experience.**" (p. 63, author's emphasis)

According to Groensteen (2007), the organization of these panels on a page takes place strategically, occupying positions that reinforce their importance for the flow of the story or their secondary role in this trajectory. This location is named as **site**, and "it is from the respective localization of the different pieces of the multiframe that the reader can deduce the pathway to follow in order to pass from one panel to the other." (GROENSTEEN, 2007, p. 36) Furthermore, the writer characterizes this approach as 'braiding effect', which is "the way panels (more specifically, the images in the panels) can be linked in series (continuous or discontinuous) through non-narrative correspondences, be it iconic or other means." (GROENSTEEN, 2007, p. 8)

Concerning the 'frame', Groensteen (2007) lists six major functions that aim to suit this comics' element to the main objectives of a narrative and its development: function of closure, separative function, rhythmic function, structuring function, expressive function and readerly function. It is important to recognize the importance of all of these features for the composition of the graphic novel and for dictating the rhythm and quality of the story; however, for this analysis, I will pay special attention to structuring and readerly. The former refers to the arrangement of panels in the trajectory of the comics in order to bring cohesion and organization once "the panel will most often be rectangular or square. As much as every other, this form, and its particular dimensions, will induce or at least inflect certain choices touching upon the composition of the image, and subsequently influence its perception by the

reader." (GROENSTEEN, 2007, p. 45) Meanwhile, the latter concerns the engagement of the public in the reading process, which is an essential component as "to create in the reader a desire to keep moving, it is necessary to arouse his interest or pique his curiosity." (GROENSTEEN, 2007, p. 51)

A similar discussion on the structuring of comics is aroused in Scott McCloud's book *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga, and Graphic Novels* (2006), which brings important points for further analysis, including the construction of a narrative in this particular medium, and the creation of characters. Concerning the former, as debated in previous paragraphs, the structure of comics differs from other media in combining the use of words and drawings, which "requires us to make a constant stream of **choices** regarding imagery, pacing, dialogue, composition, gesture and a ton of other options" (MCCLOUD, 2006, p. 9, author's emphasis) in order to provide a more organized and intelligible story.

The author of *Making Comics* (2006) lists it as being: choice of **moment** (the selection of important or unnecessary moments to include or omit from the course of the narration), choice of **frame** (the author's decision on what to present in a frame), choice of **image** (the visual representation of the story's intended drawings — characters, objects, scenarios, etc), choice of **word** (the strategic selection of the words that will compose the piece of narrative) and choice of **flow** (how information is presented to direct the reading process). Of these features, the choice of frame, image and flow are key aspects in the analysis of *Alice in Borderland*'s manga. Moreover, McCloud (2006) highlights that, independent of the technology to be used for the circulation of comics — be it paper or online — it is essential to think about the flow of the narration once the reading should be a "simple, intuitive process" (p. 36) which will provide a comprehensible and engaging story, not interfering its reading.

For the creation of a character, McCloud (2006) points to the significance of three major components: character designs, facial expressions and body language. In this context, symmetry plays an important role in this process once "no matter how **abstract** or **stylized** a piece of art is, if it displays that basic arrangement, humans will see **themselves** in its features." (MCCLOUD, 2006, p. 60, author's emphasis) Taking them all into consideration, aside from an individual's personal history, the writer reminds the reader the relevance of planning the story thinking strategically about their appearance as it helps us distinguish between them during the course of the narrative — highlighting as well the importance of "put[ting] those qualities **front** and **center**" (MCCLOUD, 2006, p. 77, author's emphasis) during the process of creation.

In this context, McCloud (2006) draws readers' attention not only to the physical aspects that will characterize individuals who are part of the stories, but also their intrinsic characteristics and background, which "help[s] us **predict** what they'll do in any given situation" (p. 64, author's emphasis). In particular, facial and body gestures influence the characterization of a character and their feelings, emotions and intentions. However, the writer states that it is crucial for the reader to do these inferences taking into consideration the context of each story since these expressions are not universal and can be analyzed differently depending on each situation (MCCLOUD, 2006, p. 89).

On the other hand, the evaluation of the principles of narratives comprising the cinematographic universe follows similar standards to those previously mentioned that concerned novels. For this review of literature, I will use the book *Film art: an introduction* (2017) — which, despite bringing discussions focused on films, can be extended to this topic — to punctuate the configuration of narrative in series. In this publication, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Jeff Smith (2017) define 'narrative' as "a chain of events linked by cause and effect and occurring in time and space" (p. 73), which in a film can be referred to as the 'plot' (the way a story is told on screen), an element that "guides the viewer in building up a sense of all the relevant events, both the ones explicitly presented and those that must be inferred." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 76).

According to the writers, 'narrative' consists of three major features: causality, time, and space. The way these factors are presented and explored throughout the film can directly and/or indirectly impact the viewers' experiences and their building up of the story. (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017) The term 'causality' refers to the events that occur as a result of a triggering episode and/or occasion, which tends to instigate the audience to create connections between scenes and develop a story through the plot. Meanwhile, 'time' concerns the chronological period in which events are set, while 'space' is usually the location where the story takes place.

Furthermore, the authors of *Film art: an introduction* (2017) discuss the role of characters in the course of a narrative and their influence on its trajectory. The writers characterize them as representations that would imitate, or reflect, the image of people from the "real world" — therefore, individuals who are outside the borders of the cinematographic universe serve as a basis for character design. In accordance with Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith (2017), they are key elements during the conception of a piece of work once

> characters create causes and register effects. Within the film's overall form, they make things happen and respond to events. Their actions and reactions contribute strongly to our engagement with the film. Unlike characters in novels, film characters typically have a visible body (...) [, and, besides that,] a character has *traits*: attitudes, skills, habits, tastes, psychological drives, and any other qualities that distinguish him or her.
> (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 77)

Additionally, the authors aforementioned also emphasize that these characteristics are thought taking into consideration their "causal roles in the overall story action" (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 78), serving to assist in the progress of the narrative.

2.2.   Adaptation studies

As previously mentioned, the corpus of the present research consists of three major objects of study of different media. Among them, the Japanese media have references and allusions to Lewis Carroll's text through a retelling of the Victorian story in a contemporary context in the manga format and the other, in its live-action version. Therefore, it is through understanding this thread of intertwined artistic manifestation that it becomes essential for this monograph to create a subtopic for the discussion of **adaptation studies**. According to Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn (2013), the concept of adaptation can be defined as a process with three main points: "An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works [;] A creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging [; and] An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work." (p. 8)

Thus, the procedure of what the aforementioned authors describe as "transcoding" consists of the relocation of a source-content (that is not restricted only to written texts) to a target one while preserving some important aspects such as "its themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery, and so on." (HUTCHEON & O'FLYNN, 2013, p. 10) This process undergoes the interpretation of this source-content by the responsible person (or team), whose outcome will converse on different levels with the original text. This instills in the public a sense of investigation and comparison between both works in search for cues and references in order to make connections, assuming an active role once "perceiving and interpreting a direct representation of a story on the stage or screen is in any way passive; both are imaginatively, cognitively, and emotionally active." (HUTCHEON & O'FLYNN, 2013, p. 23)

Reinforcing this idea, Robert Stam (2006) complements the discussion of the previous authors by sharing a similar opinion, in addition to highlighting the discourses and the contexts of production of the respective adaptations. Although his arguments focus on the relocation from novel to film, it is equally suitable for this debate — especially for this research once it is comparing a textual work and an audiovisual production, aside from a manga as well

> the original novel or hypotext is transformed by a complex series of operations: selection, amplification, realization, updating, critique, extrapolation, popularization, re-emphasis, transculturalization. The original novel, in this sense, can be seen as a situated expression, produced in a medium and in a historical and social context and, later, transformed into another expression, equally situated, produced in a different context and transmitted in a different medium. The original text is a dense informational network, a series of verbal clues that the film that adapts it can choose, amplify, ignore, subvert or transform. The film adaptation of a novel makes these transformations according to the protocols of a different medium, absorbing and altering available genres and intertexts through the prism of current discourses and ideologies, and through the mediation of a series of filters: studio style, ideological fashions, political and economic constraints, authorial predilections, charismatic stars, cultural values, and so on.
> (STAM, 2006, p. 50, my translation)[4]

Furthermore, as it could be perceived in the fragment above, Stam (2006) also highlights the specificity of each medium and the relevance of taking them into consideration during this interchangeable process of adaptation. In this sense, Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013), with an association with the trade of translation, describe how the singularities of media devices can affect this process

> In many cases, because adaptations are to a different medium, they are re-mediations, that is, specifically translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images). This is translation but in a very specific sense: as transmutation or transcoding, that is, as necessarily a recoding into a new set of conventions as well as signs.
> (HUTCHEON & O'FLYNN, 2013, p. 16)

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[4] Full in-context citation in the source text is: "o romance original ou hipotexto é transformado por uma série complexa de operações: seleção, amplificação, concretização, atualização, crítica, extrapolação, popularização, reacentuação, transculturalização. O romance original, nesse sentido, pode ser visto como uma expressão situada, produzida em um meio e em um contexto histórico e social e, posteriormente, transformada em outra expressão, igualmente situada, produzida em um contexto diferente e transmitida em um meio diferente. O texto original é uma densa rede informacional, uma série de pistas verbais que o filme que vai adaptá-lo pode escolher, amplificar, ignorar, subverter ou transformar. A adaptação cinematográfica de um romance faz essas transformações de acordo com os protocolos de um meio distinto, absorvendo e alterando os gêneros disponíveis e intertextos através do prisma dos discursos e ideologias em voga, e pela mediação de uma série de filtros: estilo de estúdio, moda ideológica, constrições políticas e econômicas, predileções autorais, estrelas carismáticas, valores culturais e assim por diante.""

Therefore, taking all the discussions presented in this subtopic, it is possible to conclude that adaptations are embedded in their own cultural, socio-historical and economic context. These features influence the production's development, either at a higher or lower level, and characterize it uniquely, bringing it a tone of originality — something exclusive to it and that will distinguish it from the original text. In this sense, Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013) discuss how the specific framework can shape this process and its outcome

> We engage in time and space, within a particular society and a general culture. The contexts of creation and reception are material, public, and economic as much as they are cultural, personal, and aesthetic. This explains why, even in today's globalized world, major shifts in a story's context—that is, for example, in a national setting or time period—can change radically how the transposed story is interpreted, ideologically and literally."
> (HUTCHEON & O'FLYNN, 2013, p. 28)

Still discussing this issue, Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013) debate which works should be categorized as adaptation and the ones should not. Although the writers define this term considering its broadest definition, they explain that even though it can comprise many variations of an original work, it can also point out discrepancies and allows people to disregard it as an adaptation, such as allusions, references, plagiarisms, etc. (HUTCHEON & O'FLYNN, 2013, p. 9) However, it is precisely considering these arguments and colocations that the works of the manga and the series of *Alice in Borderland* should be included in the category of adaptation. This is due to the complexity of the interconnection of information translated from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to a modern context once the "novel [, manga series] and film are communicative, socially situated, and historically shaped expressions." (STAM, 2006, p. 24-25, my translation)[5]

Thus, the current national and international environment plays an active role in both the process and the conception of a new adaptation. For this reason, it should be emphasized that in the past few years, dystopian and post-apocalyptic films and books have gained more space in cinemas, television schedules and bookstores, as successful franchises like *The Hunger Games*, *Maze Runner* and *Divergent*. Particularly, the Japanese entertainment industry has followed a similar path, developing important productions such as the animation *Akira* (1988) and the *Battle Royale* franchise — comprising Kōshun Takami's book and its live-action adaptation. Therefore, it is possible to assume that this particular framework might have

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[5] Full in-context citation in the source text is: "Ao invés de ser mero 'retrato' de uma realidade pré-existente, tanto o romance como o filme são expressões comunicativas, situadas socialmente e moldadas historicamente."

influenced not only the creation of Haro Aso's manga, but also encouraged the production of the series.

2.3.   Audiovisual elements

Considering that the present monograph aims to work with the analysis of a series, it is important to dedicate a subtopic that addressed the audiovisual elements that compose a serial drama. To cover important elements that will be addressed in the future, the literature review on this subject was based entirely on the work of David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Jeff Smith, entitled *Film art: an introduction* (2017). In this book, one of the components pointed out by the authors concerns the *mise en scène*, which they describe as "the director's control over what appears in the film frame", an 'umbrella term' that comprises many aspects as "setting, lighting, costume and makeup, and staging and performance" (p. 113).

Through the management and combination of these elements, the filmmaker is able "[to find] ways to guide the viewer's eye" (p. 140) and arouse different emotions and expectations in the public — in addition to being capable of directing their attention to the 'areas of interest' in a frame in order to captivate the spectators throughout the scene. Although this study intends to analyze a great part of the aforementioned components, there will be a focus on the 'visual' ones in order to search for evidence to corroborate the investigation — especially in relation to 'setting' and 'staging and performance'.

Moreover, 'editing techniques' will also play an important role in the analysis of the series. As described by Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith (2017), "editing allows the filmmaker to manipulate time, space, and pictorial qualities in ways that shape the viewer's experience of the film" (p. 217) — which, combined with narrative techniques in audiovisual media, can expand the opportunities of exploring a cinematographic universe. An important technique that will appear in the analysis of the series concerns the cutting function, which "provides an instantaneous change from one shot to another." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 217) According to the authors of *Film art: an introduction* (2017), it can be explored in several ways such as the control of space and duration, emphasis, and consistency, influencing the course of the narrative. Another important element that will also receive attention during the analysis of the scenes concerns the colors that compose it. According to Rothstein (2020), "[d]ifferent colors elicit different emotions (...) [, helping filmmakers to] tell a story, define a character or create a reaction by the audience." (para. 1)

Additionally, elements regarding 'cinematography' are also essential to the development of this research. Bordwell, Thompson and Smith (2017) explain that "[i]n controlling mise-en-scène, the filmmaker stages an event to be filmed. But what happens in front of the camera isn't the whole story." (p. 159). The production requires the filmmaker to use a methodical procedure of "choice and control" (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & THOMPSON, 2017, p. 159) in order to impact the viewer's experiences. Furthermore, the way the director opts to frame a scene helps the viewers to construct a sense of exploration of the universe that is not being shown on screen since "filmmakers can creatively exploit the space *offscreen* (...) [, as they] are well aware that we need only a few hints to start imagining things taking place outside the frame." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 186-187, author's emphasis)

For this monograph, some substantial components of cinematography that are described by Bordwell, Thompson and Smith (2017) will receive special attention during the analysis. The matter of **perspective** will play an important role hereafter, as it concerns "a set of spatial relations organized around a viewing point." (p. 168) In this element, the camera lens is the director's allies to construct the scene once, "[l]ocated at a specific point, it gathers light from the scene and transmits that light onto the flat surface of the film or video chip to form an image that represents size, depth, and other dimensions of the scene." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 168)

Another important feature of filming that will be essential for the following analysis concerns the **framing** of scenes once "[t]he frame shapes our experience, calling attention to what the filmmaker wants us to see." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 185) With all of its particularities, a frame is composed of many arrangements that stimulate the audience to develop an interweaving between the objects in scenes and the events that follow one another. Moreover, the way a scene is framed helps to "[define] onscreen and offscreen space. Framing also creates a vantage point, and that has a certain distance, angle, [level] and height. And, in cinema, framing can move in relation to what it films." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 181)

2.4. Nonsense in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

When getting in contact with *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) for the first time, the novel's narrative progression might instill a sense of instability, madness and absurdity, influencing the reading as "[o]ur engagement with the story depends on our understanding of

the pattern of change and stability, cause and effect, time and space." (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017, p. 73) Therefore, to better understand *Alice*'s story, its fantastic characters and narrative elements, it becomes essential to explain how nonsense can be perceived throughout the text to provide a more conscious and productive analysis in the following section.

Firstly, it is important to clarify what the nonsense structure entails. According to an excerpt from Wim Tigges in *Explorations in the Field of Nonsense* (1987), nonsense is explained as a combination of opposite poles of sense and nonsense, in order to encourage the reader to continue their journey through its unknown universe

> I would define nonsense, then, as *a genre of narrative literature which balances a multiplicity of meaning with a simultaneous absence of meaning. This balance is effected by playing with the rules of language, logic, prosody and representation, or a combination of these.* In order to be successful, nonsense must at the same time invite the reader to interpretation and avoid the suggestion that there is a deeper meaning which can be obtained by considering connotations or associations, because these lead to nothing. The elements of word and image that may be used in this play are primarily those of negativity or mirroring, imprecision or mixture, infinite repetition, simultaneity, and arbitrariness. A dichotomy between reality and the words and images which are used to describe it must be suggested. *The greater the distance or tension between what is presented, the expectations that are evoked, and the frustration of these expectations, the more nonsensical the effect will be.*
> (TIGGES, 1987, p. 27, my highlights)

One of the most evident representations of this tradition is precisely Lewis Carroll and his works with the protagonist Alice, who is responsible for perpetuating the purposes and peculiar characteristics of nonsense for generations to the present day. However, despite Tigges' previous explanation, there is a common misconception that the plot of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) lacks logic and meaning in its numerous scenarios, dialogues, and narrative structure. Nonetheless, scholars such as Marucci and Giroldo (2020) state that the nonsense "brings with it the complexity and contrariety in its conception (...) [but it] would not be random or totally meaningless. This would constitute something far beyond what is superficially stated." (p. 569, my translation)[6] Additionally, they argue that the use of nonsense would be a way of distancing the fiction from the reality, which can instigate reflections in the reader through the different possibilities of interpretation presented in the story.

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[6] Full in-context citation in the source text is: "Originado propriamente na Inglaterra, esse fenômeno carrega consigo a complexidade e contrariedade na sua concepção, pois apesar da visão geral (senso comum) de não ter significado, não seria aleatório ou desprovido de sentido totalmente. Constituiria algo muito além do que está posto superficialmente."

Likewise, Jacqueline Flescher (1969) explains that "[t]he backbone of nonsense must be a consciously regulated pattern", adding that "[i]t is the existent or implicit order which distinguishes nonsense from the absurd. It is the departure from this order which distinguishes nonsense from sense" (p. 128-129). An important tool for nonsense is the use of language itself, with which writers can explore many possibilities for the creation of a story that combines both logical and illogical meanings and elements, as argued by Juliette Smeed in her essay entitled *Nonsense and Early Childhood* (2012)

> In addition to being the ultimate open-ended material, language has its own aesthetic properties – as any of us who have heard a persuasive speech or have tried to write the perfect sentence can attest. It is a medium particularly amenable to patterning and ordering impulses – to destruction, recreation, translocation, dislocation, etc – and therefore to aesthetic manipulation. Meta-linguistic awareness of the open-ended and aesthetic properties of language leads to creative usages.
> (SMEED, 2012, p. 6)

To explain the fluidity of languages and its inventive usage as opposed to its supposed stiffness and formality, Márcia Lemos (2009) uses the term "language-game"[7] to highlight the creative process behind this strategy and to clarify how the rules can be subverted in Wonderland, consequently enhancing the effect of nonsense in the story

> [B]oth games and language function according to rules recognised by the players/speakers. Yet, as the author underlines, nothing should stop a restless player or an imaginative speaker or an inventive writer from neglecting, partially altering or completely subverting those rules. It is part of the game!
> (LEMOS, 2009, p. 25)

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that, in the context of Wonderland, language works with its own flexibility and adaptability. Thus, unlike Alice, its residents can manage it as, although not aware of it, they are already inserted in the fictional world and are accustomed to this way of functioning. However, because Alice was born and raised in Victorian England, her perceptions of language consist of a system of other established rules with different methods of regulation and organization in comparison to the ones she saw in the fantastic universe. Due to her inability to understand the meaning behind what natives are trying to say and domain their linguistic system, Alice, who usually tries to be a well-mannered and

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[7] Term coined by Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose concept "comprises every feature of language in actual use. (...) When they become obsolete, that is when they cease to represent language in use, they disappear and new ones arise." (LEMOS, 2009, p. 24-25)

amiable girl, loses composure and feels frustrated "as a result of her loss of control over language" (LEMOS, 2009, p. 28)

Finally, when reading Carroll's novel, the reader enters a universe ruled not only by the Red Queen but also by the mystery and uncertainty revolving around the existence of 'Wonderland' itself. However, as it is informed to the audience at the end of the book, the story is solely Alice's dream. Therefore, "it is not pure nonsense" (BURGESS, 1986, p. 20) once the brain must build its scenarios and events based on the person's real, lived (or visualized) experiences. (BURGESS, 1986) Thus, in addition to developing an oneiric and fantasy environment, dreams contest a person's reality, knowledge and own experience. The concepts listed in this topic will be of paramount importance for the discussions carried out in the analysis.

3.   Analysis

The present analysis aims to conduct a comparative study between the novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), the manga[8] *Alice in Borderland* (2010) and its Netflix series adaptation (2020) to investigate if and how the nonsense of the first is perceptible during the development of the second and if, given the adaptation process, there were changes in the approach of the nonsense style from the second to the third. To achieve these goals, the introductory moment and entrance of the main characters — Alice (in the novel) and Ryohei Arisu (in the manga and series) — in their respective alternate worlds were selected for further investigation. This corresponds to the first chapter of the book, the first volume of the manga and the first episode of the series. However, in order to delve deeper into discussions, passages from other chapters of the novel will be integrated to complement the argumentation.

Moreover, the protagonists' actions and inner world are also going to be considered in order to understand how the nonsense style affects their behavior and decision-making process, complementing the discussion about the impact and presence of nonsense in the aforementioned works. Furthermore, although detecting the presence of transmedia characters, in this study, the characters of the manga and series will be seen as what Brian Richardson (2010) calls "variants", since they can be interpreted as "figures derived from an

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[8] Concerning the way of reading a manga, it is read from the right to the left side, from the top to the bottom of the page. (ROUSMANIERE, 2019)

original character (...) [, when] one still needs knowledge of the original version to fully comprehend [them.]" (p. 539)

With this in mind, the present section will be divided into four subsections. Each one of the first three subsections will focus on the analysis of one of the objects of study previously mentioned. Meanwhile, the last subsection aims to interrelate the discussions referred to in the previous sections, evaluating the nonsense tradition, the correspondences between the novel and the manga, and the process of adaptation between the manga and the series. In view of the organization of the analysis, it is important to emphasize that, despite recognizing the existing process of adaptation of the Victorian work to the manga by Haro Aso — as well as its presence in the actual relocation process of *Alice in Borderland*'s story between the manga and the series —, this issue will not be evaluated in this monograph.

3.1. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

The first chapter of the novel, entitled "Down the rabbit-hole", starts with young Alice sitting with her sister in a bank. At first, she is bored as there seems to be nothing worth doing, especially on that lazy hot day. It is worth highlighting a passage in the first paragraph, where the protagonist finds it strange to read books "without pictures or conversations" (CARROLL, 2000, p. 2). Through this excerpt, it is possible to infer that some habits considered "adultlike" (such as reading long texts) are uninteresting to her and, to a certain extent, meaningless, as she mentally inquires that "what is the use of a book (...) without pictures or conversations?" (CARROLL, 2000, p. 1-2)

Her disinterest suddenly disappears after she catches sight of a white rabbit with humanoid mannerisms — with attitudes which call her attention because it differed from what would be expected of a bunny's behavior in her conceptions. As the chapter goes on, the protagonist follows the mammal until it enters a wheel, which can be inferred to be the entrance to the world that we will later know as "Wonderland". However, the path leads her to a fall that, according to the protagonist, took a long time and seemed to never end. During the period that comprises the beginning and end of the well, Alice points out the presence of unusual objects that are part of its composition, such as "cupboards", "bookshelves", "maps and pictures hung upon pegs" (CARROLL, 2000, p. 3) — something unexpected to be seen in the place and situation in which the character was.

As she waits to arrive somewhere, she takes the time to make assumptions and analyze the tunnel and its distance

> Down, down, down. Would the fall *never* come to an end ? " I wonder how many miles I've fallen by this time ?" she said aloud. "I must be getting somewhere near the centre of the earth. Let me see : that would be four thousand miles down, I think—" *(for, you see, Alice had learnt several things of this sort in her lessons in the schoolroom, and though this was not a* very *good opportunity for showing off her knowledge, as there was no one to listen to her, still it was good practice to say it over)* " —yes, that's about the right distance—but then I wonder what Latitude or Longitude I've got to ?" (Alice had not the slightest idea what Latitude was, or Longitude either, but she thought they were nice grand words to say.)
> (CARROLL, 2000, p. 4-5, my highlight)

In this excerpt, we can find evidence in the narrator's speech of the girl's cleverness. However, in the same passage, one can observe that the protagonist likes to use her intelligence as a means of receiving external validation; otherwise, when she does not have the opportunity to share her knowledge with others, she seems to be insecure and believe that the information that she owns is not relevant. This is reinforced in the next moment, when her following assumption is incorrect and the narrator says that "she was rather glad there *was* no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word" (CARROLL, 2000, p. 5, author's emphasis)

Finally, the course of the narrative takes us to the moment when Alice finally reaches the ground and follows the white rabbit until she arrives in a hall with locked doors. There, as the protagonist realizes that her plan to drink the mysterious shrinking drink and go through the small door to reach the beautiful garden has failed, she bursts into tears, but quickly and harshly reprimanded herself

> "Come, there's no use in crying like that!" said Alice to herself, rather sharply, " I advise you to leave off this minute!" She generally gave herself very good advice, (though she very seldom followed it,) and sometimes she scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes[.]
> (CARROLL, 2000, p. 12)

In this excerpt, one can understand that her frustration and the loss of control of her emotions in face of the sudden adversity can be inferred as her reaction to the lack of control over the results of an event. Moreover, based on the construction of the character and the evidence presented so far, it is also possible to assume that Alice's characterization can be stimulated by her experience with the unpredictable events and outcomes of this unknown reality.

Eventually, after her plans to reach the garden behind the small door were thwarted, Alice finds a box with a small cake on the ground. At this moment, the text presents us with

some of the protagonist's perceptions regarding the mysterious place where she finds herself, showing the way in which she deals with the events that occur there. She says out loud, "'Well, I'll eat it,' said Alice, 'and if it makes me grow larger, I can reach the key ; and if it makes me grow smaller, I can creep under the door; so either way I'll get into the garden, and I don't care which happens !'" (CARROLL, 2000, p. 13)

Therefore, as she interprets the possible effects that the cake would have on her, outlining plans for the various possibilities depending on the outcome, it is possible to infer that, faced with a spark of sense, the protagonist soon regains control of her logical reasoning, appearing more courageous and trusting. Moreover, this passage can be understood as that, despite being amazed at certain aspects — such as the flower garden behind the door, for instance — she can perceive some abnormalities that permeate this universe especially due to the unfolding of situations that take unexpected turns. This is reinforced by a narrative excerpt from the next paragraph, where the narrator describes that "Alice had got so much into the way of expecting nothing but out-of-the-way things to happen, that it seemed quite dull and stupid for life to go on in the common way." (CARROLL, 2000, p. 13-14)

3.2. *Alice in Borderland* (2010)

The first chapter of the manga begins by situating the reader at the moment in life when the protagonist finds himself and his perceptions regarding prospects for the future. In the manga, Arisu is presented as an aimless high school student **(figure 1)** uninterested in — and somewhat afraid of — the future, describing himself as a "failure" (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, p. 9) — apparently for not fitting into social norms or fulfilling expectations placed on young people.

However, on page seven **(figure 1)**, it can be seen that, despite his lack of interest, the main character is depicted as an intelligent, astute and insightful teenager, but whose low confidence in himself makes him incapable of recognizing his capacity. These assumptions are reinforced by the character's facial expressions, which are often frowning, serious or apathetic in the first moments, as well as his body language, as his shoulders tend to slump frequently **(figures 1 and 2).** However, despite appearing unconcerned, Arisu constantly thinks about the future as it is evidenced by his reflections in thought bubbles and also, once again, by his body and facial language, which is constantly permeated by droplets of sweat **(figure 2)** — a graphic element often used to show concern and anxiety. (MCCLOUD, 2006, p. 97)

Figure 2 - Arisu reflecting after a conversation with his brother about the
future (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, page 12)

Later on, Arisu's melancholic feelings seem to be corroborated not only by his reflections on page 22 of chapter 1 **(figure 3)**, but also by the scenario's depiction and the character's configuration. As could be seen in **figure 3**, the use of darker, grayer shades of colors and the friends' placement on an empty train track during the early morning (a fact evidenced by the clock in the next frame) conveys an aura of solitude and exclusion, as to portray the group as social outcasts.
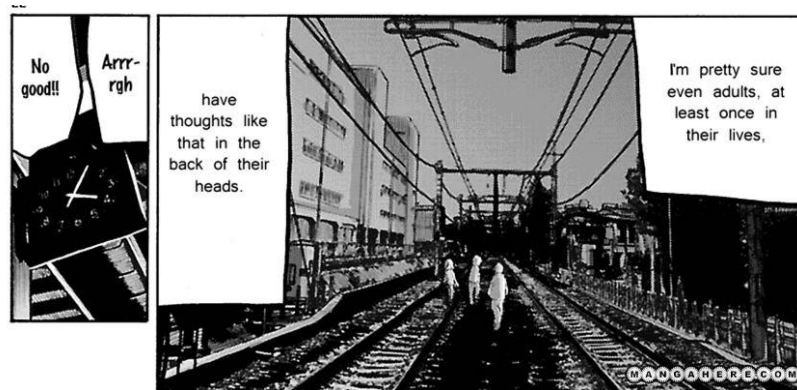
Figure 3 - Arisu reflecting on a train track while walking with friends (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, page 22)

Jumping forward, the manga takes us to the moment when the trio is in a train station. There, the group witnesses what they conclude are fireworks, whose explosion is the last thing they see before appearing in an alternate version of Tokyo, evidenced by the prevalence of the color white on the frame as to portray "bright lights" (**figure 4)**. Their awakening in a suspicious place **(figure 5)** that seems an abandoned version of the city they lived in arouses many questions between them, such as if it is a "dream", the "world of the dead" or if they "went nuts" and are in a hospital (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, p. 34). The world-building is characterized by using the city they know as a basis, but with the addition of mosses and plants taking over the urban landscape, such as roads and buildings, which are themselves with a worn and deteriorated appearance **(figure 5)**. The feeling of uncertainty grows as the group explores this new environment once there is a lack of knowledge about this reality where perishable foods are rotting and have a recent day as an expiration date (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, p. 43-44).

Figure 4 - Arisu and the group observing the strong light coming from the mysterious
explosions in the sky (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, page 26-27)

Figure 5 - Arisu and the group observing the surroundings of what they will later know as
'Borderland' (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, page 36-37)

Moving to the end of chapter 1.2, as well as encompassing the two following chapters
(since they all address the same event), the characters are drawn to a festival filled with light
and newly-cooked foods. There, they are introduced to a mysterious woman (called Shibuki)
who gives them pieces of information about the rules that dictate the functioning of this place

that is later called "Borderland" (ASO, 2010, chapter 4, p. 5). The course of the frames and organization of information — not only in these three chapters, but in the manga as a whole — is structured in order to arouse suspicion and tension for the audience to develop their own theories and expectations about the conceptualization of this eerie place.

For instance, at the end of chapter 1.2 **(figure 6)**, to explain her point, Shibuki throws an object at the shrine's gate, which automatically combusts. This panel occupies half a page, given its relevance to the narrative, while approximately 1/3 of the space shows the reasons for the ignition. Meanwhile, the panels showing the reaction of the characters occupy the remaining space, since it is important for the reader to see their expressions in order to understand the level of apprehension created by this new information. The tension established between the group given the imminent danger reaches its climax on the last page **(figure 7)**, when a hyperframe with two panels shows a large screen with the word "game" highlighted and Arisu's facial expressions appearing to demonstrate disbelief in face of the large wave of new shocking information.

Figure 6 - Arisu and his group's reaction to the object's combustion (ASO, 2010, chapter 1.2, p. 57)

Figure 7 - The festival's screen and Arisu's reaction to the new information (ASO, 2010, chapter 1.2, p. 60)

The two following chapters are intended to present the performance of the quartet in the game in which they were compelled to participate. It consists of the participants taking their paper fortune that, depending on its outcome, can have serious consequences for the party. Faced with the unknown and vulnerability of both the game and the universe he is currently in, Arisu spends the first moments of the game desperately trying to understand this new reality **(figure 8)**. This is portrayed with facial expressions of disbelief, fear, anxiety and despair **(figures 8 and 9)** — evidenced once more by the recurring appearance of the drops of sweat.

Figure 8 - Arisu desperately asks Shibuki questions in search for clear
answers (ASO, 2010, chapter 2.1, page 10)

Figure 9 - Arisu confronts Shibuki's decision to continue playing, not
understanding her choice. (ASO, 2010, chapter 2.1, page 22)

Notwithstanding, the main character's behavior changes when it is his turn to face the challenge. At this time, in chapter 3, the manga is organized by interpolating a conversation between Karube and Chota, flashbacks from Karube and Arisu's childhood, and the protagonist's analysis of the game. This structuring creates an atmosphere of anticipation where readers get to know a little more about Arisu's background and attributes, as well as allows the readership to build the character's development in their minds and create expectations about his next actions (MCCLOUD, 2006).

This is proven in the panel on page 15 of chapter 3.1 **(figure 10),** where there is a compilation of crucial moments for the construction of Arisu's logical reasoning, with the aim of deciphering the enigma. By finding logic behind what did not seem to make sense before, his countenance changes and he begins to smile more and show more courage through his body features **(figure 11)**. Therefore, this boost in confidence can be interpreted as a result of his insight, since there is an increase in his self-esteem and determination once he begins to make sense of what was once mysterious and inexplicable.

Figure 10 - Arisu assimilating and organizing his perceptions in a logical
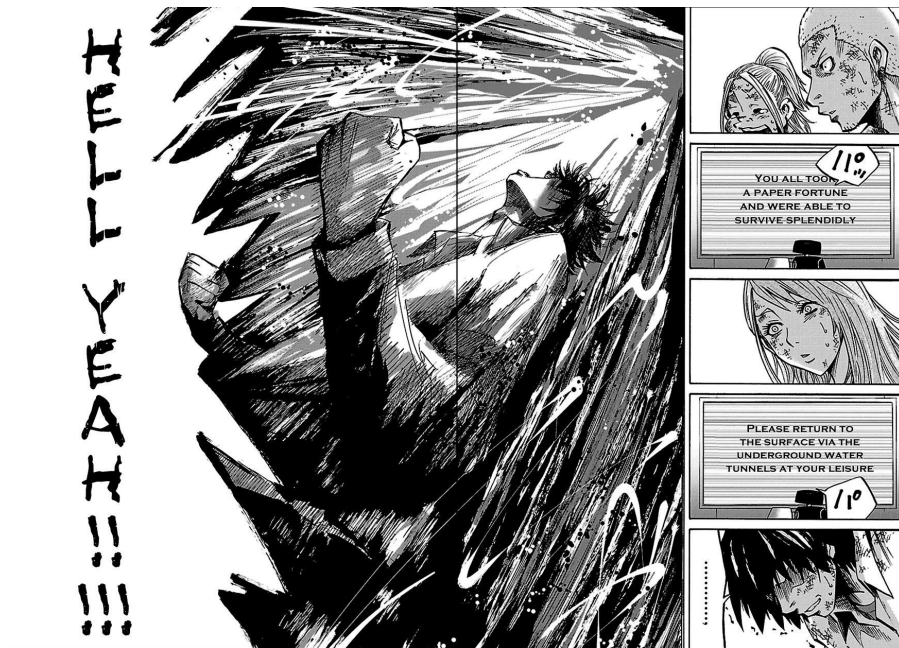line of reasoning (ASO, 2010, chapter 3.1, page 15)

Figure 11 - Arisu's triumphant reaction after clearing the game (ASO, 2010, chapter 3.2, pages 20-21)

Ultimately, chapter 4 presents the reader with a few explanations about the residence in Borderland, such as, for instance, the 'visa' — which is explained as an individual passport which is extended as the citizens participate in (and possibly win) the games (ASO, 2010, chapter 4)**.** Notwithstanding, further information about the very existence of this 'country' and why they were brought to this unknown universe remains a mystery to both the characters and the audience.

3.3. *Alice in Borderland* (2020)

The first episode of season one begins in Arisu's bedroom, where we can catch glimpses of his characterization. Initially, he plays a battle video game that exercises his logical and cognitive skills. The organization of the scene is composed of sounds of gunshots and bombs and a sequence of close-up shots of the protagonist's glazed eyes, the video game's console, and his hands holding the controller, together with shots of the game — all of them short and with quick interleaving **(figures 12 to 15)**. Later on, these transitions culminate into one shot **(figure 18)**, denoting that these shots are interconnected and happen simultaneously. This, in addition to close-up shots of objects distributed throughout the room such as a small tabletop statue of Albert Einstein, geometry books and a magic cube **(figures 16 and 17)**, allows us to infer that Arisu is depicted as a shrewd young adult with keen intelligence.
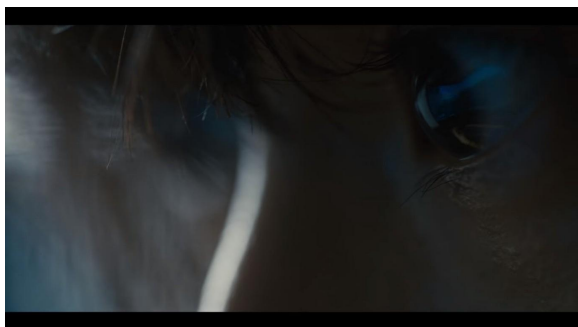
Figure 12 - Arisu glazed eyes in a close-up shot (00:12)

Figure 13 - Arisu's hands holding the controller and pressing the buttons frantically (00:18)

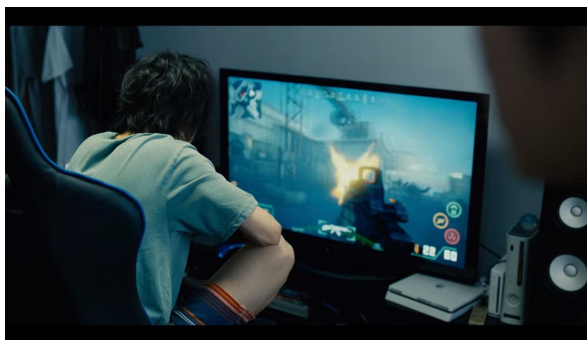**Figure 14 -** Arisu's game console (00:20)

Figure 15 - Scenes of a battle video game (00:21)

Figure 16 - A small tabletop statue of Albert Einstein (00:38)

Figure 17 - A frame with a magic cube and fractal and sacred geometry books (00:42)

Figure 18 - Arisu, concentrated while playing
battle video game (00:55)

However, after a conversation with his younger brother, it is possible to notice that the protagonist is a NEET[9] and, through his expressions and reactions to his sibling's speech, he seems uninterested in pursuing a career. Therefore, from an analysis of the introductory scene, we can observe that Arisu is an unemployed adult with low prospects for the future, whose one of his great interests is the immersion in the virtual world — which seems more attractive and comfortable for him compared to the 'real world'.

A few scenes later, the protagonist, after going through unpleasant moments with his brother and father, decides to meet his friends in front of Shibuya Station. In this context, it is worth mentioning that Arisu's clothing allows us to draw conclusions about his social status. When wearing a wide T-shirt, colored shorts and sandals, together with his disheveled hair, the character stands out in the crowd since most citizens have a more casual and elegant style or, in the case of teenagers, are wearing school uniforms.

This emphasizes his feeling of displacement toward others and this sensation is highlighted by the prominent color in the palette of his composition; once blue, in addition to enhancing his sad and apathetic expressions, conveys passivity and melancholy, as well as cerebral and loyalty (ROTHSTEIN, 2020). This allusion is brought up in the following scene, when a composition of scenes intersperses a medium-long shot — which turns into a close-up shot by zooming into Arisu with an empty gaze while looking directly at the camera — and isolated shots of people walking through the region **(figures 19 and 20)**.

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[9] An acronym for "Not in Education, Employment, or Training"

Figure 19 - A busy crowd at Shibuya crossing (08:50)

Figure 20 - Arisu with a blank stare (08:54)

Successively, the series takes us to Arisu shoulder-ridding his friend Karube, spinning and fuzzing around the Shibuya crossing along with his other mate, Chota. This composition follows the same cinematography from the previous scene, showing the main character in a medium close-up shot changing his features from discomfort to excitement while the footage of the citizens starts to get blurred **(figures 21 and 22)**. This parallel allows the audience to interpret that the protagonist puts himself in positions of comparison with others, resulting in feelings of unhappiness and apathy.

Figure 21 - The crowd at the intersection seen from higher ground level is blurred (09:56)

Figure 22 - Arisu, excited while on Karube's shoulders (10:24)

The turmoil caused by the group draws the attention of the police and, to escape the authorities, they hide in the bathroom of the subway station — but not before Chota notices explosions in the sky **(figure 23)**. The direction of the scene **(figures 23 to 29)** uninterruptedly accompanies the characters from the entrance of the station to the bathroom, where it is established in a medium shot while the group remains discreet in the sanitary cabin. The cinematography is maintained while there is a sudden blackout and the cell phones

stop working, with the camera following them outside, where the group faces the city completely abandoned in broad daylight. The camera level begins to rise and the group ceases to be the focus, moving away from the focal point and the framing being transformed into a long shot, in order to give prominence to the scenery (BORDWELL, THOMPSON & SMITH, 2017). Arisu's astonishment towards the sudden disappearance of Tokyo's population is evidenced through the utilization of the zoom technique, where a medium shot turns into a close-up shot focusing on the protagonist, in order to highlight his expressions of confusion and surprise at their appearance in that alternative reality **(figure 29)**.

Figure 23 - The view of explosions in the sky of Shibuya (10:40)

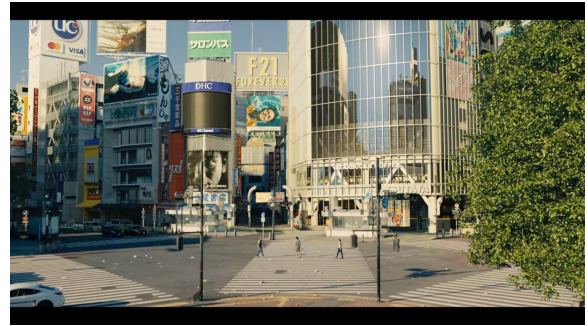**Figure 24 -** Arisu, Chota and Karube running away from the police at the Shibuya Station (11:08)

Figure 25 - The group laughing while hiding in the bathroom stall (11:27)

Figure 26 - The group, surprised by the sudden power outage while they hide in the bathroom (12:08)

**Figure 27 -** The group, surprised with the empty Shibuya station (13:54)

Figure 28 - The group exploring the empty Shibuya crossing (15:12)

Figure 29 - Arisu, confused with the empty Shibuya crossing and surroundings (15:31)

The following sequence is composed of a compilation of shots of empty urban spaces such as convenience stores, restaurants, offices, and streets — places which are explored by the group while searching for fellow citizens. Once again, it is possible to notice a blueish hue in many of the depicted scenarios **(figures 31 to 33)**, building up a gloomy mood and highlighting the sensation of melancholy and isolation expressed in much of the framing (ROTHSTEIN, 2020). The composition of shots presented plates with perishable foods, steam coming out of cups with hot drinks and cars abandoned in the middle of the roads, allowing the public to notice that the city would be inhabited in a near period **(figures 30 to 33)**.
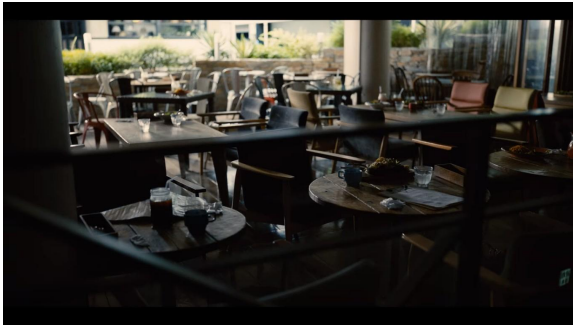
Figure 30 - A restaurant with freshly made dishes and drinks (16:57)
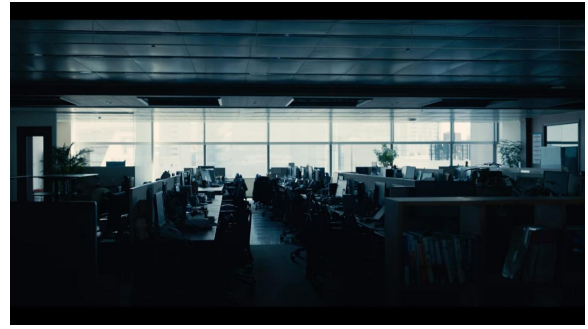
Figure 31 - The office where Chota works, completely empty (17:28)

Figure 32 - Chota observing the city from the office where he works (18:16)
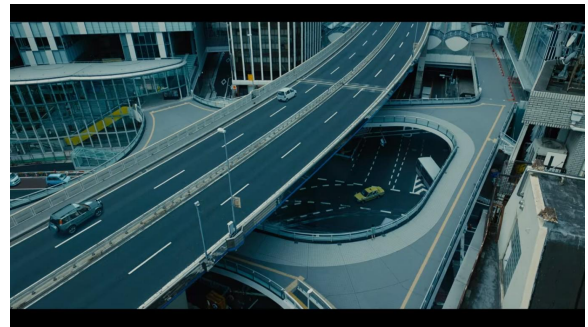
Figure 33 - Extreme-long shot of Arisu exploring empty roads with abandoned cars (18:38)

Over the course of the episode, a path guided by lights from signs and buildings takes them to a game arena accommodated to urban molds, where they meet up with other people and their participation is imposed — even if they are unaware of the objectives of the challenge and its consequences. The use of electricity during the game's extension **(figure 34)** and their meeting with other individuals **(figure 36)** shows a breakdown of expectations regarding their assumptions and triggers feelings of uncertainty and insecurity about the logic that governs this unknown universe **(figure 35)**.

Figure 34 - The group arrives in a bright game arena (24:03)

Figure 35 - The group expresses confusion upon arriving at the scene (24:08)

Notwithstanding, their contact with fellow citizens allows them to understand some rules that guide their future actions and decisions, which is hinted at through the construction of the scenes — building up the atmosphere of the environment in order to prepare the audience for the next narrative development. For instance, the configuration of the following medium shot **(figure 36)** puts the new character (Shibuki) as the central figure, who exudes calmness and composure once she is aware of the rules. Around her, Arisu and his friends are positioned in the background. The trio is depicted as surprised and fearful, since they were not attuned to the situation as a whole. This action is illustrated in warmer colors, especially yellow, which, in accordance with Rothstein (2020), expresses knowledge and insecurity — noticeable through the divergent duality expressed by Shibuki and the trio.

Figure 36 - Medium shot with Shibuki in the center of the frame and the group around her, scared and confused (27:18)

Following the course of the episode, it is imposed on the participants of this challenge that they make a choice between two options, which seems to be defined by luck, since it appears illogical. The apparent lack of sense and the choice of individuals to trust each other's

intuition awakens in Arisu a wave of hesitation, despair and helplessness, since the lack of foundation in concrete reasoning instigates his fear of choosing wrongly and causing the group's death **(figure 37).** However, minutes later, it can be seen through a close-up shot that his previously anxious and frightened features turn into surprise as he begins to put the pieces of the puzzle together **(figure 38).**

Figure 37 - Arisu, nervous about having to make a choice (33:51)

Figure 38 - Arisu, surprised with his insight about game solution (36:08)

The sequencing of the next scenes **(figures 39 to 44)** consists of a compilation between flashbacks of moments prior to the start of the challenge and the present moment, where the former alludes to the protagonist's perceptions, while the latter, to his intelligence in putting together pieces of information to find a consistent pattern that leads to a solution. Moreover, the close-up shots of his wide eyes and dilated pupils **(figure 40)** and the medium shot of his face **(figure 44)** allow the audience to notice pride and confidence in his countenance as he unraveled the solution of what had previously seemed meaningless. Thus, it is possible to infer that his reliance on sense and logic towards this new reality is directly proportional to his self-esteem and well-being.

Figure 39 - Arisu building his logical reasoning (36:26)

Figure 40 - Close-up shot of Arisu's wide open eyes (37:07)
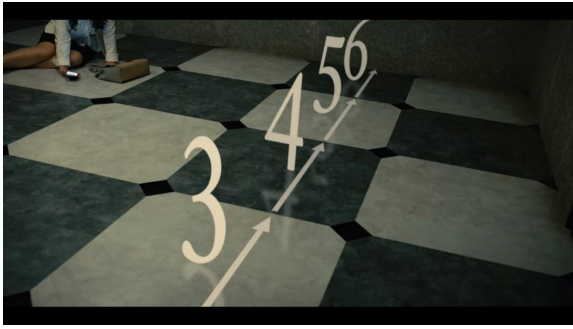
Figure 41 - Visual representation of the size of the room, according to Arisu's perceptions (37:17)

Figure 42 - Flashback showing the shape of the room in the building hall (37:27)

Figure 43 - Arisu's drawing of the building plan based on his perceptions (38:09)
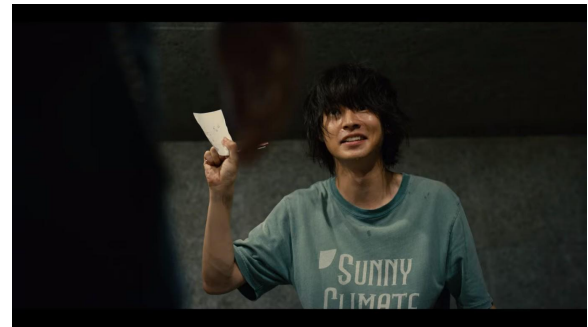
Figure 44 - Arisu, confident about his conclusion (38:39)

Moving on to the end of episode 1, they are informed that their participation and completion of such games are required in order to extend their visa — on the contrary, they are going to be killed. This last bit of information is visually presented through a long shot of a man being hit by a laser from the sky **(figure 45)**. Despite the information acquired in this episode, no explanation is presented to fully comprehend this reality called "Borderland" and their current situation.

Figure 45 - A man being hit by a laser (43:47)

3.4.   The exploration of the nonsense tradition through the objects of study

After evaluating the initial moments of the three selected objects of study, the last section of the analysis will focus on investigating if and how the nonsense approached in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* can be perceived in the manga *Alice in Borderland*. Moreover, there will be an evaluation of whether the process of adapting the manga to the series brought changes in the approach to the nonsense tradition in the series. Firstly, it is important to recognize the passages where the nonsense can be acknowledged during the reading of the first chapter of the English novel.

It is possible to perceive traces of implausibility and incongruity already in chapter one, which, if not inferred as part of a pattern, can be misunderstood and cause strangeness. Some examples that show the presence of nonsense in the composition of the universe concern the passages corresponding to Alice's fall already mentioned in topic 3.1 and the mysterious foods and drinks that alter the character's size (CARROLL, 2000, chapter 1). This is stressed since, when compared to the reality the protagonist is used to, these situations are inconceivable and unfeasible.

Moreover, as discussed in the literature review, the nonsense is also perceptible in the "language-games" (LEMOS, 2009) in the text and in the fact that Wonderland does not follow the expected rules and linguistic standards. For instance, in the novel's first chapter, while falling, the protagonist thinks of her kitten Dinah and wonders if she would eat bats. At a certain point, the order of the words is inverted and, what would sound strange given the break of expectations, goes unnoticed by a tired Alice. It is possible to interpret that, in this

passage, the word order no longer has the same importance for sentence construction as compared to language functioning in the protagonist's familiar reality[10]

> But do cats eat bats, I wonder?" And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats ? Do cats eat bats ?" and sometimes, "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it.
> (CARROLL, 2000, p. 6)

Another possible way to understand the nonsense in *Alice* would be in Wonderland's world-building. According to Alice's perceptions throughout the novel, this place is characterized as a universe where the rules and laws differ from those we know. Accordingly, the construction of Wonderland and its functioning mechanism already demonstrate contrasting features to what would be expected from the outcome of such an event, which constantly breaks with the audience's expectations. For illustration, as mentioned on topic 3.1, during Alice's fall into the well after seeing the white rabbit for the first time in chapter one, the protagonist's observations present pieces of evidence that demonstrate incompatibility with events of the ordinary world

> Either the well was very deep, or *she fell very slowly*, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next. [...] [S]he looked at the sides of the well, and noticed that they were *filled with cupboards and bookshelves: here and there she saw maps and pictures hung upon pegs. She took down a jar from one of the shelves as she passed*; it was labelled " ORANGE MARMALADE," but to her great disappointment it was empty [.]
> (CARROLL, 2000, p. 3-4, my highlights)

In the previous citation, it was expected that Alice's fall would not take long, as well as the walls of a deep hole would not be permeated with household objects, which can be understood as evidence of the nonsense in the conception of Wonderland.

Simultaneously, when analyzing Alice's character prior and during her first contact with Wonderland, we can draw a behavioral profile that defines her as a rational and astute child, but insecure about the way her attitudes are seen by others. Moreover, it can be seen that she

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[10] Another example to support this discussion can be found in chapter seven during a dialogue between Alice and the members of the 'mad tea-party'. When the Dormouse is telling a story of three young sisters to the group, while reporting about their drawings, it said that "they drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M[.]" (CARROLL, 2000, p. 109) Throughout the dialogue, the recurring mention of words that begin with the same letter — "mousetraps", "moon", "memory", "muchness" — indicates that the "underlying principle of organization is the repetition of the letter [M]" (FLESCHER, 1969, p. 131). Accordingly, the alignment of words that seemed to make no sense due to different semantic and etymological groups is now interconnected, following a chain of thoughts that disqualifies it as an 'absurd'.

is constantly frustrated when situations get out of her control, constantly reinforcing the impact of the lack of logic in that fantastic universe on the protagonist's behavior. In addition to the example presented in topic 3.1., we can see a similar situation in chapter seven, where, upon realizing that the conversation is taking disconnected directions and that she is being confronted by the Mad Hatter, Alice loses her composure and confronts him, giving an outrageous answer

> "Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.
> "I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more."
> "You mean, you can't take *less*," said the Hatter: "it's very easy to take *more* than nothing."
> "Nobody asked *your* opinion," said Alice.
> (CARROLL, 2000, p. 106, author's emphasis)

With this in mind, despite the noticeable thematic and elemental similarities between the novel and the Japanese oeuvre[11], it is possible to perceive traces of the nonsense tradition in the course of their narrative. Particularly, although there is no clear evidence of nonsense on linguistic levels, it can be more easily perceived in its world-building as both the manga and the series' introductory moments are permeated by an unsettling feeling of strangeness. This is noticed, for example, concerning the questions about their sudden appearance in Borderland: what is this place? How did they get there? How do they leave?

For illustration, in **figure 46**, the panels appear as an intermediate moment between the protagonist visualizing the explosions in Tokyo's sky and him waking up in an alternate reality. Therefore, it can be inferred that this passage of the narrative is about Arisu's entry into Borderland, where we can already see the representation of disconnected elements that can be alluded to Alice's fall — which in itself already presents evidence of the nonsense tradition. In these pages, it is possible to observe that the images are composed of assorted objects and visual patterns that somewhat correlate objects from Arisu's experience in contemporary times (a guitar, a telescope, and a truck, for instance) and others that allude to Alice's fall down the rabbit hole (a tea set, food and household items, for example). Moreover, this part of the narrative is reinforced by the vertiginous perspective of the larger panel on the left — another allusion to Alice's falling..

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[11] Such as the title pun between the works, the counterpart relation between the characters (with "Arisu" being the Japanese reading of the name "Alice", for example) and their introspective worlds, for instance

Figure 46 - Panels representing Arisu's entry into Borderland (ASO, 2010,
chapter 1, p. 30-31)

Furthermore, now in unknown lands, the group cannot find a plausible explanation for
the disappearance of citizens or what would have led the city of Tokyo to its deteriorated state
(figure 5) — which once again evidences the presence of the nonsense tradition on the
manga's narrative. Additionally, the characters report inconsistencies that make the situation
even more confusing and incomprehensible, such as decomposing food, even if their expiry
date was the day before **(figure 47).** Therefore, the lack of recognition of a pattern and the
apparent disorder of the scenario where they are found arouses unfamiliarity and
disorientation, consequently causing confusion and uneasiness as they cannot find a solution
or draw a logical line of reasoning that explains the situation — which is the precise
experience instigated by the nonsense style in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
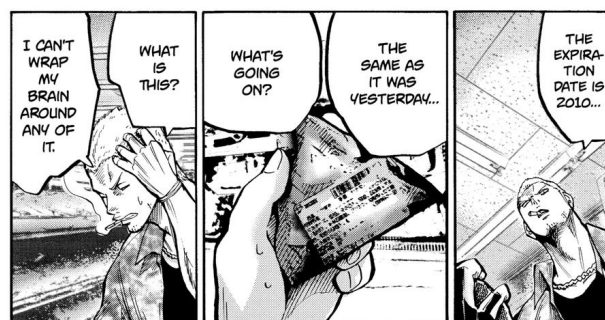
Figure 47 - Karube, confused with the situation in this alternative
reality (ASO, 2010, chapter 1, p. 44)

Keeping up with the discussion on topic 3.2, when analyzing the protagonist in the manga, it is possible to notice that his mental state is greatly affected by the apparent lack of logic while playing the games — another narrative aspect in which the nonsense style is also perceived in *Alice in Borderland* — just like Alice's temperament and mood is afflicted in Wonderland. At first, the wave of new, sudden and supposedly disconnected information leaves Arisu astonished as he cannot trace a logical assessment to the resolution of the challenge, which destabilizes him and leaves him concerned and in a pessimistic state **(figures 8 and 9)**.

Notwithstanding, as the main character manages to perceive and assimilate pieces of evidence that make up the structure of the game into a large thread of plausible interconnections, his behavior changes, becoming more centered and confident **(figure 48)**. Thus, it is possible to assert that both Alice and Arisu are depicted as perceptive, smart characters. Still, these traits and their psychological conditions are constantly challenged by the nonsense of their respective universes, impairing their agency and performance in the narrative when they cannot use logic to find a credible and efficient solution.

Figure 48 - Arisu with a confident face as he finds a solution for
the challenge (ASO, 2010, chapter 3.2, p. 6)

As for the second objective of this monograph, when addressing the series' process of adaptation of the manga's narrative and thematic propositions, we can notice that the approach of the nonsense tradition is maintained similarly to the manga. Although plot changes are perceptible when comparing both media — such as the age range of the characters, their entrance in Borderland and their first games in there, for instance — it is observable that the director Shinsuke Sato retained the same aspects of Borderland's

world-building as in Aso's creation. The existence of the unknown land, its mysteries and peculiarities were preserved and, consequently, the narrative construction remains based on inquiries concerning the reason for their presence there and the necessary procedures for their return to their familiar reality.

Moreover, as well as in the manga, the representation of survival games in the series also continues to refer to the nonsense tradition in its composition. As perceptible in the analysis of topic 3.3, their configuration remains to appear to be an illogical and incomprehensible challenge at first, requiring the participants to interpret their surrounding context, catching the smallest details and understanding the logic between the lines **(figures 39 to 44)**. Similarly, according to the analysis in topic 3.3, the protagonist's personality and attitudes are maintained during the adaptation process between the manga and the series. Therefore, despite changes in its plot in comparison with the manga, the original Netflix production still accompanies an aimless individual who is searching, along with his friends, for answers to explain their current condition in that unknown reality. Additionally, the narrative structure and the elements provided throughout the first episode of season one evidence the use of nonsense in both works — once the very existence of the 'Borderlands' is a reference to Alice's 'Wonderland'.

4.   Conclusion

Throughout this monograph, I sought to understand the tradition of nonsense in the first chapter of the novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) in order to analyze whether this element would also be present in the first volume of the manga *Alice in Borderland* (2010). Furthermore, given the evidence for this inquiry and in view of the recent homonymous series adaptation of the latter, I also intended to investigate if there were changes in the adaptation process when it comes to the nonsense style between the manga and the series — more specifically in its first episode. To this end, during the analysis, I chose to investigate elements that expressed the presence of nonsense in the narrative (the linguistic extension of the English language and the world-building of the respective universes) or that were influenced by it (the portrayal of the protagonists).

As the readings progressed, the nonsense tradition was understood as present at the linguistic level of the English language (FLESCHER, 1969; LEMOS, 2009) — requiring the perception of order and pattern to build up the logic between its lines. However, despite taking this assessment into consideration, the investigation in topic 3.1 focused mainly on the

presence of nonsense in the context and composition of the narrative (BURGESS, 1986; MARUCCI & GIROLDO, 2020). Thus, paying attention to Wonderland's world-building (HERMAN, 2009) and its events, it was possible to notice not only traces of the nonsense in its composition but also how the nonsensical elements influence the protagonist's actions and reactions and the way she relates to this new universe.

Furthermore, through the development of topic 3.2, it was possible to conclude that, despite the story taking place in contemporary Japan, similar perceptions concerning the nonsense style in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (in topic 3.1) were noticed as well as in the manga of *Alice in Borderland*. The analysis could confirm the assumptions that the nonsense tradition would be equivalent between both works, despite each media approaching it in its own way. Moreover, comparing such findings with those in topics 3.2 and 3.3, it was possible to notice that the process of adaptation preserved the presence of the nonsense tradition during the development of the audiovisual production — remaining similar to that detectable in the manga despite alterations between the Japanese media.

Ultimately, from the analysis carried out throughout this research, I could perceive that, regardless of the pre-established topics, the omnipresence of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) is undeniable. This can be explained as a reader's referential issue as a result of the adaptation process. In accordance with Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013), "[i]f we know that prior text, we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly. When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works." (p. 6) Therefore, it is possible to notice that both Haro Aso's manga and Shinsuke Sato's adapted series constantly recreate the mood and events experienced by the ones familiar with the story of *Alice*.

4.1. Obstacles and future research

To conclude this work, some complications and redirections found throughout the project should be pointed out. Despite the range of books and articles that supported my discussions in the various sections of the paper, it is important to emphasize the lack of access to some publications that, even with the advent of the internet, could not be retrieved. Among the examples, I would like to highlight the book *Alice no País da Linguagem* (1991), by Marina Yaguello, whose content (perceivable through passages in some of the works read throughout the development of this monograph) would be an important foundation to the literature review and analysis of this monograph.

Finally, in the perspective of future studies, this work's observations are restricted to delimited research objectives and questions that guided the development of the analysis. However, given the cultural impact of Carroll's works and the range of possibilities offered by all three media analyzed here, future research involving themes and aspects overlooked by this monograph are necessary and encouraged. For instance, a possible line of research for eventual studies concerns works in the field of adaptation.

Another point of discussion regarding adaptation studies would be the differences and similarities between the three media. Hutcheon and O'Flynn (2013) discuss that "[i]n adapting, (...) 'equivalences' are sought in different sign systems for the various elements of the story: its themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery, and so on." (p. 10) Thus, by considering that these three productions are intertwined by the adaptation process, subsequent research projects can focus on drawing incompatibilities and dissimilarities between them — which, although recognizable, were not within the scope of my research. In these propositions, it is offered for scholars to broaden the scope of study and cover more chapters and episodes from other volumes and seasons in order to expand their investigation possibilities.

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