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**ALICE'S JOURNEY AS AN IMMERSION IN THE UNCONSCIOUS:  
AN ARCHETYPICAL READING OF LEWIS CARROLL'S NOVEL**

**Campina Grande – PB  
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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado como requisito para obtenção do grau de Licenciatura em Letras – Língua Inglesa pela Universidade Estadual da Paraíba, sob a orientação do Professor Me. Valécio Irineu Barros.

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*But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?'*  
*Ah, that's the great puzzle!*

Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present the journey of the hero and its symbolical aspects as an analogy to an immersion in the unconscious, which is part of a long and complex process of self-development. We apply concepts of Carl G. Jung's Analytical Psychology, such as archetypes, collective unconscious and individuation, to examine Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by relating its protagonist's path to the archetypical journey as identified by Joseph Campbell. The journey of the hero represents the rites of passage from mythological narratives and may be seen as a metaphor to the process of self-development, or individuation. Considering Alice's journey, we undertake an analysis of the story as a dream, understanding it as a means through which the unconscious shows itself, symbolically revealing aspects of the psyche one cannot yet consciously apprehend. Alice's journey is about maturation, while she faces the several kinds of adjustment in the transition from childhood to early adulthood, assimilated and displayed by her unconscious in form of dream. Passages from the story like the fall into the rabbit hole, the hall with many doors, the size changing, and the meeting with many characters will be highlighted as important echoes of this process.

**Keywords:** Journey. Unconscious. Archetype. Individuation.

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## ALICE'S JOURNEY AS AN IMMERSION IN THE UNCONSCIOUS: AN ARCHETYPICAL READING OF LEWIS CARROLL'S NOVEL

Paloma Vasconcelos de Lima

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Narratives have been an essential part of the human existence from the beginning. As Barthes (1973) states, they are everywhere, in various forms; there is no people in the world, from any period of history, without them. Narratives have always been fundamental to the way people apprehend reality. Barthes also says that when we narrate, the world stops being inexplicable (*apud* MESQUITA, 1987, p. 10): it is a way to make sense out of the world. It has been so since the earliest forms of narrative – the myths. They were the first means people used to explain the world, prior to the advent of the scientific method, a way to perpetuate their knowledge, rules and spiritual beliefs.

An important feature of myth is that it presents a set of recurring structures, plots and characters – known as archetypes. Scholars have analyzed literature through this point of view, the archetypal aspects, and identified certain models which seem to underpin and inform the narratives of all times. In this sense, despite the fact that modern narratives have different meanings and purposes, they still bring inside them elements of the mythological narrative (MESQUITA, 1987, p. 11).

The structure of narrative itself, the stages it is built around, also reveal a certain pattern: a more or less common path which the hero goes through. This journey, if one considers its more general features and leaves out its more specific points, is relatively the same now and back in ancient times. According to Campbell (2004, p. 6), its symbolic aspects can be related to rituals of passage and the process of self-development. Campbell refers to this characteristic trajectory as *the hero's journey*, a term by which it has been usually called.

The purpose of this article is to present the journey of the hero and its symbolic aspects as an analogy to an immersion in the unconscious, which is part of a long and complex process of self-development. In order to do so, first we will carry out a review of the theory on the archetypal narrative and its relation to Analytical Psychology, a theory and psychotherapeutic approach developed by Carl G. Jung, so as to support our observations. Then, we will undertake a case study, and apply the theoretical concepts to examine Lewis

Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by relating its protagonist's path to the archetypal journey, as a metaphor to the process Jung called individuation.

The work we shall analyze, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, was published in 1866, and it is believed to be a book dedicated to a young girl, Alice Liddell. As for Lewis Carroll, this was a pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, an author born in 1832, in Daresbury, Cheshire, England. The third of eleven children of curate Charles Dodgson and his cousin Frances Jane Lutwidge, his early years were spent in that rural region, and dominated by religious rituals and an overbearing father. In 1843, his family moved to Tees, North Yorkshire, a less secluded region, and in 1844, Carroll left home to begin his school education. In 1851, he took residence in Christ Church, following his father's steps. In time, he became a mathematics lecturer, a clergyman and a children's writer.

The author was not accustomed to talk about his childhood, but acknowledged its importance. It was something he missed and cherished his entire life. It is said that most of Alice's story was told to the Liddell children on a summer afternoon. The series of stories were then written down and became a book. It tells about the adventures of a young girl named Alice, in a strange place, Wonderland. It all begins with a white rabbit running across the field; Alice then runs after it, falling a long way down into a rabbit hole. She then faces challenges, meets the most peculiar creatures, animals, living cards, and goes through many extraordinary changes, until she wakes up from her dream and finds herself on a bench, on her sister's lap. Some years later, Carroll wrote another book telling more of Alice's adventures: *Through the Looking Glass*.

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* offers a lot of material to be explored, from many points of view and through a wide range of possible interpretations. As such, it has been frequently perused and analyzed. For this particular study, more than being an example whereby we can examine the journey of the hero itself, it presents a chance to observe the journey's relation to the unconscious: the story is a dream, and as we shall see, according to Psychoanalysis, and later on, Analytical Psychology, dreams are closely connected, in all their symbolic representations, to the unconscious. As a matter of fact, according to Freud and Jung, dreams are thought to be the means this mysterious part of our psyche uses to communicate with our conscious, rational mind (JUNG, 1968).

## 2 THE ARCHETYPES AND THE SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

It was psychiatrist Carl. G. Jung who elaborated the concept of archetypes we are going to consider in the present analysis. In the beginning of the 20th century, he started to develop what came to be known as Analytical Psychology, to which the concepts of *archetype* and *collective unconscious* are essential. In order to better understand the presence and role of archetype in narratives, we should first consider its psychological definition and context.

Jung's theory has its roots in Psychoanalysis, which was created by Sigmund Freud. Jung was one of Freud's most important pupils, willing to learn his mentor's new views on the human mind. He strongly believed in Freud's ideas and they worked together for years. However, he always had some reservations concerning certain aspects of Psychoanalysis, which eventually came to cause a rupture between them. The major points of divergence were related to the concept of *libido* and the role it played in the human psyche, as well as to the significance of dreams and how they and their symbolism might be interpreted.

The term unconscious was coined by Freud, although the idea existed before. He considered that the psyche was arranged in three areas: conscious, preconscious and unconscious, the latter being the largest one. He defined the unconscious as the part of the psyche in which our instincts and basic animal necessities subsist, and also where repressed material remains. He considered that the unconscious had its own way to communicate, and believed that it was mainly through dreams that it could be accessed and known. In his method, the meaning of a dream could be revealed by making free associations based on its elements.

Jung's understanding of the unconscious and the importance of dreams is similar to Freud's. For him, the unconscious is where things that we cannot consciously understand, remain. Also, it is in the unconscious that our instincts and our most primitive human aspects are kept. Jung also emphasizes the major importance of dreams to access what is in the unconscious. There, he says, we can find "the almost invisible roots of our conscious thoughts" (1968, p. 29). Every event has its unconscious aspects, and "as a general rule, the unconscious aspect of any event is revealed to us in dreams, where it appears not as a rational thought but as symbolic image" (1968, p. 5).

But Jung also considered other aspects of the unconscious, which distanced his views from the strong sexual outlook present in Freud's theory. He divided the unconscious into levels – personal and collective. The personal is more superficial, formed from the experience

of each individual. In the collective unconscious, however, there seems to be no personal content: “it comprises the whole experience of mankind since primordial times” (XAVIER, p. 339, our translation<sup>1</sup>). In this sense, it is common to all human beings and carries a set of innate features and patterns that drive human behavior – the archetypes. In his analysis of the process of individuation, Jung defined three fundamental archetypes: the *anima*, the *animus* and the *shadow*, which will be considered later on in our analysis. Furthermore, differently from Freud, Jung gave more importance to the dream itself, its structure and content, than to the method of free association. In his opinion, free associations can be made from many starting points, but the dream must be considered in its specificity, because it has its own way of expressing what is in the unconscious. Considering the collective unconscious and the archetypes, Jung’s theory presents a broader and more holistic approach than that of Psychoanalysis.

According to Meletínski (2002), he considered the archetypes as structures present in the collective unconscious which have a strong symbolic character. They are not defined images, but the origins, the impulses that create many symbolic representations. Archetypes appear to us, in many ways, through archetypical images. Both myths and dreams are filled with these images: “many dreams present images and associations that are analogous to primitive ideas, myths, and rites” (JUNG, 1968, p. 32). When we dream, these images come to reveal not only some aspects of events of which we were not consciously aware, but those primordial aspects of humankind.

Therefore, the archetype is a tendency of our mind, and it is manifested in the symbols mankind has been using over history. In Jung’s view, the myths of the entire world can be understood as projections of the collective unconscious, understanding myths as they were seen by ancient societies: sacred stories that give meaning to life and offer models for human behavior (ELIADE, 1963). In the beginning of his famous book *The hero with a thousand faces*, Campbell (2004, p.1) says:

Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind. It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. Religions, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that blister sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth.

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<sup>1</sup> (...) compreende toda a experiência da humanidade desde seus primórdios.

That is, myths are at the basis of human life, imagery and behavior. Myth originates from archetypes, and tells about the deeds of supernatural beings who created everything: they are “the role model for all significant human activities” (ELIADE, 1963, p. 13, our translation<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>2</sup> (...) o modelo exemplar de todas as atividades humanas significativas.

### 3 THE JOURNEY OF THE HERO

Over time, the mythical narrative started to interweave with other narratives and the terminology itself began to lose its original meaning: myth started to be regarded as pure fiction, dispossessed of its sacred features that had made it the absolute truth to ancient peoples. Thus, myths began to be taken as legends, fables and folk tales. Nevertheless, some of their elements, images and themes continued to appear in narratives of following periods. (MESQUITA, 1987) Now, these elements remain because they are archetypes. One of them seems to be constant in the narratives of all times: the archetype of the hero. It is in all kinds of stories: legends, fairy tales, and also in modern fiction. The hero's journey is also an archetype, and represents the rites of passage from ancient societies. The hero sets out on a quest and, in order to achieve victory, he must overcome many obstacles. It symbolizes a process of change. From the point of view of Analytical Psychology, this quest represents the process of individual development, the insertion into the world: a painful path in which victory "purifies the soul" (MELETÍNSKI, 2004). In Jungian terms, the hero's journey is a process of individuation.

There is a basic scheme to the journey of the hero: the departure, the initiation and the return (CAMPBELL, 2008). Campbell writes that, no matter where it originates, the hero's journey usually follows this pattern: "a separation from the world, a penetration to some source of power, and a life-enhancing return" (*op. cit.*, p. 28). There is an initial situation of balance, which Vogler (2007, p. 83) calls "the ordinary world": the hero is living his everyday life, in the everyday world. Until something entirely new happens, disturbing this original state. The world as he/she knew it is no longer possible for them, "the familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit" (CAMPBELL, p. 43). The hero is somehow summoned or obliged to leave home, face the unknown, and try to reestablish the balance lost.

It is common for the hero, at first, to refuse the call. There are some cases in which the call is left forever unanswered and the journey actually does not happen. But, once the hero overcomes the doubt and accepts the call, he sets out on his journey. For the purpose of making the hero go forth, it is common that a supernatural helper appears to assist him (*op. cit.*, p.57), someone who will offer guidance and protection, "who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass" (*loc. cit.*).

In this journey, the hero faces powers and forces previously unknown. Once he receives the supernatural aid, he comes to face his first obstacle. He comes to the frontier, the

entrance to a new and dangerous world: he is about to cross *the first threshold* (CAMPBELL, p.64). Not only the circumstances but even the space reflect the perils waiting for him: in fact, “the folk mythologies populate with deceitful and dangerous presences every desert place outside the normal traffic of the village” (*id. ibid.*). There is usually something or someone guarding the threshold, and the hero has to find the courage to confront them and, by doing so, pass “beyond the veil of the known into the unknown” (*op. cit.*, p. 67).

Similar to the rites of passage, in which the individual, once leaving the familiar zone, is considered to have died in the sense that he is no longer part of the community in the way he once was, the hero, by crossing the threshold, experiences a kind of self-annihilation (*op. cit.*, p.77). Once he departs, he has to survive a path in which he is constantly, restlessly tested. By facing and overcoming the obstacles, he is initiated into the new world; he may face enemies and make allies.

Until he arrives at a decisive moment of the journey: he approaches the inmost cave, the place “where the object of the quest is hidden” (VOGLER, 2007, p. 14). While he approaches that place, he prepares to confront greater danger than those he surmounted before. Then the actual confrontation happens: the hero faces death in a crucial fight. Once he overcomes this greater danger, death itself, the hero earns a reward. Psychologically, this is the moment when the individual, having confronted his/her most crucial questions, comes to a deeper understanding of the self. In short, the moment of personal growth.

Then, the journey back begins. After “finding the treasure”, the hero returns to the everyday world, changed by the things he found and learned. Here, just as it happens at the onset of the journey, the hero sometimes shows an initial resistance to the idea of coming back, but eventually makes the journey home (CAMPBELL, 2008, p.167). When he returns, he is no longer the one who had left, but someone new – if he was once annihilated, in the end he is reborn.

Psychological analysis of narratives relates this basic scheme to the course of human life in general. For example, the hero fears to “cross the first threshold” which, as Campbell points out, represents the prohibitions, the dangerous unknown, the forces that act to keep one from engaging in his/her own journey. Continuing the analogy, it is only by deciding to leave the familiar place that one grows and develops his/her individual conscience.

It is by these metaphorical relations that the archetypes can be found in narratives from all times and places. And it is no wonder that they have such a strong presence, since they reflect the human condition itself. This symbolic process is timeless and perpetuated in all forms of human expression and culture. If one takes fiction, one can observe that the path

depicted above is also present, even if with some minor variations. There is a hero, primarily living in a given situation, until something happens to unbalance this initial state, so that he/she —, willingly or not — has to face turbulence, confusion and eventually a great danger. In the end, the hero/heroine is changed, or even dies, which is also another form of transformation.



#### 4 ALICE'S JOURNEY

On a hot summer afternoon, a white rabbit runs into Alice's life and, beginning with this unexpected incident, a series of extraordinary events take place. Dressed in a waistcoat, the rabbit is in a rush and talks to itself about being late. It catches Alice's attention as soon as she sees it, but only when it takes a watch out of its pocket, does Alice start up and, "burning with curiosity, [runs] across the field after it" (p. 10). At this moment, Alice begins to move from her ordinary world into something unknown: she has answered the call to adventure. The archetypal journey, as described by Campbell, usually has a moment when the hero first decides if he will refuse or accept the call. It does not happen to Alice: she shows no hesitation or fear before following the rabbit and falling down its hole, "never once considering how in the world she was to get out again" (p. 10). Eventually, she will come to wonder about the ultimate destination of her journey; but, for the time being, she isn't worried about what is going to happen in the end of it; instead, she gets impatient because the fall takes too long. "Down, down, down. Would the fall never come to an end?" (p. 10)

The falling itself is a representation of the mind's path towards its deepest spaces. While falling, Alice can see, on the walls of that deep well, cupboards, bookshelves, maps and pictures. She is passing over the objects and references of the common life and getting deeper into darkness – the unknown. And she talks to herself – a nonsense talk, considering she is falling down a deep black hole. It reinforces the feeling that she is somehow getting detached from the ordinary world and its logic. As we have already observed, the unconscious has its own way of expressing concepts and happenings. Also, in the beginning, Alice shows no wonder about that strange situation: as it happens in dreams, we can see extraordinary events naturally, whereas ordinary events, in their turn, may disturb us. What matters to Alice is to follow the fleeting rabbit, and it keeps hurrying. Time is flowing and it cannot be avoided but, in this place, from the moment she begins to fall, it does not pass as in the ordinary world.

Finally, after what seems to be a long time, the fall is over. Alice loses sight of the rabbit and finds herself in a long hall with doors all around, all of them locked. It is at this moment, when there seems to be no way out, that she, for the first time, wonders how she is ever going to get out again. The long hall with many locked doors would represent the spaces of the psyche, and those we still do not have access to, those we cannot yet comprehend. The doors represent ways into new experiences; we must somehow find our way through them, so we can progress in our journey. In this case, a door would present to the one who dreams something new, or at least unacknowledged, about his or her own being. Considering the

archetypal journey, this moment could be the crossing of the first threshold. It is the first obstacle she faces and has to overcome.

What happens to Alice, then, is that she “came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass: there was nothing on it but a tiny golden key” (p. 12). This key, Alice finds out, doesn’t fit any of the doors. However, “on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!” (p. 12). Once she opens the little door, she can see a beautiful garden, and she longs to leave that dark hall and get in there. But the door, she realizes, is too small for her to pass. As happens in dreams, the story has changed its focus. When Alice sees the garden beyond that door, she no longer thinks about the rabbit: what she wants is to get into the garden. Also, she begins to consider that everything could be possible there. “For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible” (p. 13). It also reveals some awareness about the strangeness of the happenings, which reinforces the feeling of uncertainty and strangeness one feels when beginning a new path.

In order to go through that door, Alice needs help. There is, however, no one to guide her. Nonetheless, things appear to her and she tries to use them: those things are her helpers. Things appear to Alice as she needs them, or she sees them as she needs them: things she does not see at first, or that were not there before. A second look is required. First, she finds a bottle with a label which reads “DRINK ME”. Sensible advice comes to her mind, as she remembers all the stories she had heard about little children who get in trouble because they forget the rules, and she thinks that she should not drink it before seeing if it is poison or not. However, since nothing is written on the label, she discards this possibility and decides to drink it. It is interesting to observe that Alice is a little more cautious here than when she ran after the rabbit. The advice that come to her mind in this moment can be understood as the prohibitions that stand in her way, reminding her of the risks involved in taking a step into the unknown.

Once she drinks from the bottle, Alice starts to get smaller and smaller. She wonders if she is going to disappear completely. She ends up so small that she can go through the tiny door. But then, she realizes she had forgotten the little key on the table, now too high for her to reach. “The poor little thing sat down and cried” (p. 14). It is a moment of frustration. But, once again, she finds unexpected help: she notices a little glass box under the table, with a cake on it, and the words “EAT ME”. Thinking she has nothing to lose, she eats it, and then

she starts to grow. But once she is big again, she is able to get the key but cannot go through the little door. Again she gets frustrated, and cries a pool of tears.

Despite the apparent failure, all these things that suddenly appear to Alice can help her go through the little door. They are instances of supernatural aid. In this case, we can understand that Alice's mind itself tries to help her. As Analytical Psychology points out, the unconscious offers the answers we need and many times cannot reach rationally, because we do not understand or grasp them yet with our conscious mind. They are in a deeper level, and we have to go into it and interpret what it says. The key, the bottle, the cake, all are instruments she finds in her own psyche to go further in her journey of self-development. But Alice does not know how to use them yet. She shrinks and forgets the key; she grows again, but then is once more too large to pass through the door. We can also observe that the changes are caused by drinking and eating. The theme of eating is usual in myths and fairytales, for example. It represents absorption, integration of something else into one's being. These new elements bring change: in drinking and eating, Alice passes through successive size changes, and it is not a pleasant process. The failure in getting what she wants and the succeeding transformations cause despair. She is not satisfied at all with the situation, and feels alone. This sensation of unease seems to represent the physiological and psychological adjustments children must often face in their transition to adulthood. There are so many changes and unusual events that Alice gets really confused and begins to ask herself who she is, and she herself acknowledges: "Ah, that's the great puzzle!" (p. 18). Despite being an uncomfortable situation, it is necessary to the journey: through it, she will learn and know a little more about herself. And that's where the journey leads to: Alice's dream represents a path to self-knowledge. But before the heroine gets a deeper understanding about herself, she finds herself lost among things she does not yet comprehend.

After all the crying, Alice falls in the pool of tears ("I wish I hadn't cried so much!" p. 20), and after that, the scene changes: "the great hall, with the glass table and the little door had vanished completely" (p. 31). And, then, the white rabbit appears again, and, taking her for someone else, orders her to go and get some things in its house. There, she finds another bottle, and thinking that "something interesting is sure to happen" (p. 32), she drinks it. She is already beginning to understand that things will probably change once she eats or drinks something. So, once she drinks it, she starts to grow again, until she is so large that can hardly fit inside the rabbit's house. She gets stuck; again, there does not seem to be a way out. She almost regrets having followed the rabbit and ending up like that. She even says that "it was so much pleasant at home" (p. 32). Trying to take her out of there, the rabbit and other

animals throw a barrow of pebbles through the window. But then again, as Alice needs it, the pebbles begin to turn into cakes: she understands that they might make her small again, so she takes one and eats it. That means that, again, Alice herself has found the way out, the solution she had not seen before. Once more, the process of eating and drinking makes her grow and shrink, and she gets more aware of how it works. Once she escapes the house, she is more lucid and has a plan: to get to her right size and find a way through the little door into the beautiful garden. After the despair and apparent hopelessness, she can find some balance.

Alice realizes that, to grow to the right size, she must eat or drink something, but she cannot see anything around that she is likely to eat, until she sees a mushroom and decides to look it over. On top of it, there was a caterpillar, and they begin a conversation. The first question it asks Alice is “Who are you?” (p. 40). Well, to Alice, after everything that had happened so far, that was not an easy question to answer as it should be. There had been so many strange things, and so many changes in herself, that all she can answer is “I – I hardly know, Sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.” (p. 41) Alice, being at some point in the journey, in the process of development, has lost the precise idea of herself she previously used to have. She has changed so much that she gets confused about it. In order to explain the situation, Alice compares it to the process of change of a caterpillar into a butterfly. This association is the proper image of transformation and the delicate process involved. She complains about the constant size changing, and tells the caterpillar she would like to stop it and get to an appropriate height. The caterpillar, then, gives Alice a tip: one side of the mushroom would make her grow taller and the other would make her get shorter. What Alice discovers, at this point, is some control over the process, some power to balance and adapt, so that she could go further. We can say she has already found some degree of self-knowledge. So that, when she sees a little house and decides to approach it, she eats a little bit of the mushroom that makes her smaller, so that she gets to what she thinks is the appropriate size for that situation.

Some moments of the journey, as the conversation with the caterpillar, clearly indicate the process of self-discovery and development, for they put direct questions about the self and the path, like “who are you?” and “where do you want to get to?” But the girl does not really know just yet, and she must discover by trying and learning, that means, through experience. She exclaims: “I’m never sure what I’m going to be, from one minute to another!” (p. 48). The unconscious, in this case, does not provide exact answers to those questions, but it indicates the ways in the process of discovery.

Another moment similar to this occurs when Alice is wandering and comes across a cat in a tree. She consults it about which way to go, but she doesn't know where she wants to get to. She just wants to "get somewhere". The cat answers that, if she doesn't know that, it doesn't matter which way she goes, and that she is sure to get somewhere if she walks long enough (p. 56). Although she feels lost, she must move. In spite of the uncertainties, at some point she would find something. The cat indicates two ways to Alice: to go and see the March Hare or the Hatter. She ends up meeting both together, having tea in a large table in front of the hare's house. Their talk appears to Alice, as the others in the story, nonsensical, and she sometimes gets angry because of the way they treat her. But the most interesting point in this moment is what it tells about time, since those characters are facing a paralysis for not being able to deal with it. The March Hare, the Hatter and a Dormouse are stuck in a situation that remains unchanged: "it's always tea-time" (p. 64). And the Hatter advises Alice about how to deal with time: "He wo'n't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock." (p. 63) Alice is beginning to deal with time and growing up; she must not fight it, but go along with it.

During tea, Alice's behavior is continually reproached, because she interrupts when the Dormouse is telling a story, or she is misunderstood in something she says. Until she cannot bear it any longer and walks off. Then, Alice finds a tree with a door and goes into it, and finds herself in the long hall again. The image of the tree with a door is meaningful. According to Von Franz, psychologically, the tree represents the process of individuation (apud JUNG, 1968). The door in that tree takes Alice back to the place where she can now achieve what she wanted. Alice, by this time, has learned some things and gained the knowledge she needed to get into the garden: "Now, I'll manage better this time", she says (p. 68), because now she knows how to proceed to achieve her goal. She eats the appropriate quantity of the mushroom to grow and get the key, then the amount of mushroom needed to shrink and go into the little door.

Once she gets into the garden, she meets new creatures; this time, they are playing cards. First she encounters three gardeners painting white roses red; then the rest of the cards appear, among them the Queen and the King of Hearts. The Queen has very strong characteristics: she is angry, wants things to go always according to her will and does not have patience or the ability to conciliate: she just wants to cut everyone's heads off if they have done something she does not like. The King, on the other hand, is quieter and goes after the Queen trying to soothe the tensions she causes. He shows power, but is not so strong or brave. He even hides behind Alice when the cat appears in the sky in the middle of the

Queen's croquet game. What we can extract from this part of the story may symbolically represent some configurations of the collective unconscious itself – in this case, what Jung called *anima* and *animus*.

He defined *anima* as the feminine aspect present in the masculine being; the *animus* being the masculine aspect present in the feminine being. According to Jung, when these archetypes are not balanced, when the anima takes control over the man or the animus takes control of the woman, they create conflicts. We can relate that to the Queen and the King of Hearts, as an exact illustration of this unbalanced state. The Queen appears as someone irrational, whose opinions and actions are arbitrary and aggressive. The King, on the other hand, is weak in his will. As in everyone's minds, these archetypes of the feminine and masculine will influence Alice's process of growth.

While playing croquet, Alice is afraid to upset the Queen and be sentenced to death, so she looks for ways to escape. However, during the trial that happens at the end of the story – because the Knave supposedly stole some tarts – Alice does not fear the Queen anymore; nor does she keep quiet anymore when someone gives orders. She realizes she is growing again, and “she had grown so large in the last few minutes that she wasn't a bit afraid of interrupting him [the King]” (p. 106). She “won't hold her tongue” anymore (p. 107), after all, she says, they are “nothing but a pack of cards!” (p. 107). Before this moment, despite disagreeing with them, she feared them or feared to be impolite, so she did not contradict them. Now, she is no longer afraid of these strange creatures, because she has grown. She has discovered that she has no reason to be afraid of them and that they cannot hurt her. Even if it seems dangerous, she must say or act according to what she thinks is right.

Concerning this, it is interesting to notice Alice's behavior not only towards the cards, but also towards the various creatures she meets in her adventure. She often complains about being contradicted and continually ordered about, and how all of them keep asking questions and arguing. It happens, for example, when she meets the March Hare and the Hatter, one moment she is reproached because she interrupts the story; they say that she must be civil (p.66). Also when she is listening to the Mock Turtle's story, and they say she said things she did not, or laugh at her for not understanding things they consider so simple (pp. 83-5). Facing things she disagrees, or does not like, or being misunderstood, she often cannot behave as others expect, and it makes her say things or answer back sharply. Such reactions could be unconscious ways to do what she is not normally allowed to do in her life, because she herself thinks it is not right. These circumstances have to do with the archetype Jung defined as the *shadow*. Every human being has his shadow: the dark aspects of our personality, things that

many times we cannot realize or acknowledge even to ourselves, because they involve moral aspects. In this case, Alice's dream could be not only a means of exposing repressed contents, but a way to show her how she is indeed: impatient and intransigent. Even if this is kept hidden by a shallow layer of good manners.

In the middle of the great confusion that takes hold of the trial, Alice wakes up. We could consider that there is not a proper apotheosis, as Campbell defines it: a moment in the journey when the hero finds some kind of illumination and becomes ready to face the last dangers and return home with the elixir. It is as though the journey has not ended yet. However, something was learned from it: there was some kind of illumination, and the child has somehow changed and grown. In the archetypical journey, the hero returns to the ordinary world with the elixir or some great power to reestablish balance; in the journey to self-development, the elixir is the very knowledge that has been gained. The individual is not the same; the unconscious was working its way to guide him. After all, as Jung explains, “the general function of dreams is to try to restore our psychological balance by producing dream material that reestablishes, in a subtle way, the total psychic equilibrium.” (1968, p. 34)

## 5 SOME CONCLUSIONS

We can observe that Alice does not strictly follow the stages of the archetypal journey of the hero. As a matter of fact, Campbell points out that the general pattern of the journey may assume different configurations and arrangements. Moreover, since Alice's adventure is actually a dream, it is fitting that it happens the way it does. As Jung says, in dreams, the idea of time is not the same we consciously have; there is no precise order as in our awakened life. Also, in dreams things may suddenly change, abruptly end, or reappear (JUNG, 1968). So it happens that Alice ends up back in the same hall with many doors. Yet, now, she has gained the knowledge she needed to get into the garden. We might say that the part of the story until Alice is able to go into the garden may be construed as a first great obstacle, the first threshold, even if she does not follow a straight way to get there. But we could also see it as a journey within a journey, a minor cycle inside a major one.

As we have seen, Alice's dream presents many motifs that are reflections of the process of growing up and of transformation. As a rite of passage, the transition from childhood to adulthood implies continuous adaptation and maturation. The journey as a process of self-knowledge and development is reinforced by the relation Alice establishes with the creatures she meets. She tries to be a polite and kind girl, as it is expected of her in the "real world." Sometimes, however, she loses her patience because the others behave so peculiarly, and often misinterpret what she says. Furthermore, she always questions the stories she is told, and in doing so is often not satisfied with the answers she gets. At other moments, the answers puzzle her, because they present new possibilities she had not thought of before. If her common ideas and beliefs are being tested and maybe changed, those peculiar creatures could also be seen as some kind of helpers, as they bring new views and ideas, which may reveal something about her or present a new possibility of thought.

We can make a relation between Alice and these aspects. As mentioned before, she always tries to be correct in her behavior, and often chides herself for not being able to do so; when she cries, for example. About this attitude, the narrator says: "She generally gave herself very good advice (though she very seldom followed it), and sometimes scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes" (p. 14). In many parts of the story, we can observe the repetition of this process. The idea is that she must behave and control herself, as illustrated, for instance, by the advice from the caterpillar – which, by the way, had already appeared in the beginning of the narrative, when an old Crab says to her daughter: "Ah, my dear! Let this be a lesson to you never to lose your temper!" (p. 29). When she escapes from that pattern —



getting angry, contesting or refusing to do something, i. e., losing her temper — she may be gaining more autonomy over what she must do, or else, recognizing the inmost features, both positive and negative, that may be hidden in her unconscious.

Through the situations presented in the dream by the unconscious, it is possible for Alice—in her “adventure”—to have a larger perception of herself, along with a necessary assimilation of aspects that may be conflicting about the process of growth and self-discovery she experiences. All the changes she faces and doubts she feels represent some kind of progress in her path to individuation, until she is able to develop skills to overcome her troubles. It is a true journey, full of obstacles and perils, but not in a material sense. Alice does not have to actually travel to distant unfamiliar places; her voyage follows the opposite direction: to go inside, immerse herself in the deepest and unknown spaces of her own psyche, and return somehow enriched. Furthermore, in this particular adventure, the help needed, the solutions and the reward are somehow found and given within, through the mysterious ways of her own mind.

## **A JORNADA DE ALICE COMO IMERSÃO NO INCONSCIENTE: UMA LEITURA ARQUETÍPICA DA OBRA DE LEWIS CARROLL**

### **RESUMO**

Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar a jornada do herói e seus aspectos simbólicos como uma analogia à imersão no inconsciente, que configura parte de um longo e complexo processo de desenvolvimento pessoal. Consideramos conceitos e abordagens da Psicologia Analítica desenvolvida por Carl G. Jung, como arquétipos, inconsciente coletivo e individuação, para analisar a obra *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, de Lewis Carroll, relacionando o caminho da protagonista à jornada arquetípica como identificada por Joseph Campbell. A jornada do herói representa os ritos de passagem das narrativas mitológicas e pode ser vista como uma metáfora do processo de desenvolvimento individual, ou individuação. Considerando a jornada de Alice, propomos uma análise da história enquanto sonho, entendendo-o como um meio através do qual o inconsciente se mostra, revelando, simbolicamente, aspectos da psique que ainda não foram apreendidos conscientemente. A jornada de Alice fala de amadurecimento, enquanto ela se depara com os muitos ajustes necessários no período de transição entre a infância e o início fase adulta, assimilados e expostos pelo inconsciente em forma de sonho. Passagens da história como a queda na toca do coelho, o corredor de muitas portas, as mudanças de tamanho, e o encontro com vários personagens serão destacadas como importantes reflexos desse processo.

**Palavras-chave:** Jornada. Inconsciente. Arquétipo. Individuação.

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