

# Adapting Lewis Carroll's *Alice*: Japanese Alice Fantasy Turning Global

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## Introduction

Literary adaptations have always fascinated readers who see either a resemblance with the original text or the absence of any resemblance. But with the rise of cinematography and digital technology, hypertext and hyperreality are adding new dimensions to literary representation. The original British fantasy *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) has been adapted into Japanese *anime* or *manga* where the text influences the reader and vice versa. The Japanese anime *Key Princess Story: Eternal Alice Rondo* (『鍵姫物語 永久アリス輪舞曲 (ロンド)』) adapts Lewis Carroll's story into a digital representation and converts a paper story into a new digital reality. The two way interaction of text with the reader changes the Alice classic into a digital reader's imaginary world. The *otaku* tradition further transforms the Alice story into a contemporary story of high school intrigue and excitement where a devoted male reader of Alice stories enters the fantasy paradigm as an independent character in his own right transforming and getting transformed as the story unfolds. It is one of the rare moments in the history of intertextuality where not only literature imitates life but life impacts upon literature and transforms it.

The literary imagination plays upon a text and transforms it into hyperreality. The adaptations depend on the cultural fashion, social values and taste of the audience. The digital representations of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* by the Japanese coauthors, Kaishaku (介錯) into Japanese manga and anime under the title of *Kagihime Monogatari: Eikyu Arisu Rondo* (『鍵姫物語 永久アリス輪舞曲 (ロンド)』, lit. *Key Princess Story: Eternal Alice Rondo*) forces the reader to accept a new representation of the story not only as linguistic translation but as manga-anime genre and tradition. The shift in medium through artistic and digital representations adds a new literary dimension to the original Alice story and transforms it into a world of hyperreality, Baudrillardian or Deleuzian simulacrum, resurrection of the author, participatory reader, secondary creation, believing in each other, literary database theft and new conflict-resolving hyperspace. The active participation of the writer or the reader transforms the story from mere fantasy and representation to a reader-centered text. The adaptation matches the aspirations of the new Japanese reader who is more interested in the visual representation of the story and wishes to participate in the world of the imaginary and fantastic. The paper analyzes the Alice adaptation in the light of Japanese Comic Market or *komike*, *otaku* readers' response and pop culture in a globalized society.

### **Transforming *Alice* into Anime and Manga**

*Alice* has always attracted Japanese readers through the translations or early adaptations as a moral tale of good behavior of the woman in the Meiji or Taisho era but the recent rise of Japanese manga has drawn Alice's narrative into more popular narratives of love triangles, frame tales, psychological therapies, sexual deviance, and virtual or augmented reality. The transformation of the Alice story into Japanese animation and manga tradition has not only given the original story a wider readership but provided the manga or animation artists with new thematic trajectories that are directly connected to the social reality. Perhaps Lewis Carroll

(1832-98) anticipated this diversification in the famous phrase “without pictures or conversation” (Carroll, 1998 9) there can be no good story. From the stories about a young child, the Alice narrative has become popular as an adult tale of escape into a world of hyperreality. The analysis of the work will also show us how British fantasy gets transformed into comic fantasy or digital fantasy through adaptation.

### ***Otaku and Komike in Japan***

Whether they belong to high culture or not, we have fabricated countless stories to share our proper community or a company space, even if they are purely fictitious. In reader-response criticism, readers are redefined as active participants in textual interpretation and members of an interpretative community. Some of the devoted readers, however, are not satisfied with just reading the literary texts and immersed in the world. They cannot resist their desire to rewrite the original story after their own fashion and re-create the newer stories to own the narrative space for themselves and next maybe, they will try to publish or just release them to the other fan writers or readers to feel the mutual bond intensely and heal the solitude. Although there is almost no detailed study or analysis of *Eternal Alice Rondo* yet, it is quite unique among the comics and animations based on Carroll’s original works. It reflects the typical phenomenon of the Japanese pop culture and scoop out the drastic change of life in the digital-oriented society.

Some of those fan readers or writers are called *otaku*, which means, in a broad sense, “those who indulge in forms of subculture strongly linked to anime, video games, computers, science fiction, special-effects films, anime figures, and so on” (Azuma, 2007 3) . On “postmodern characteristics of otaku culture” Hiroki Azuma writes:

Here I use the phrase “derivative works” as a general term for the largely eroticized rereading and reproduction of original manga, anime, and games sold in the form of fanzines, fan games, fan figures, and the like. They are vigorously bought and sold mainly in the Comic Market (which meets twice a year in Tokyo), but also through countless small-scale exhibits held on the national level, and over the Internet. Founded by a base of amateurs, the market, where numerous copies circulate and a great number of professional authors get their start, formed the nucleus of otaku culture both quantitatively and qualitatively over the past twenty years (Azuma, 2007 25).

Tamaki Saito sees the otaku in a slightly different light as “a group of maniacs who have reacted to the changes in the media environment by a proliferating set of adaptations” (Saito, 2011 17). If so otaku people are qualitatively different from collectors. Saito also points out that “collectors pride themselves on the size of their collections” but “maniacs compete with each other in terms of how effectively their hobbies translate into materiality” (Saito, 2011 18). Otaku people use their favorite stories and characters and transform them as their personal possessions. In his *Beautiful Fighting Girl*, he writes:

Their goal is simply to take fictions that are out there and promote them to fictions that are theirs alone. It is no coincidence that otaku like parodies. It may be that cosplay (*kosupure*) and fan magazines are best understood as examples of this process of fictionalization. Popular anime always attract so-called SS (“short” or “side” story) writers, who borrow the setting and characters from these works, write novels and scenarios in different versions, and then upload them to online forums (Saito, 2011 20).

If we see his parody of didactic poems as a kind of derivative works, Lewis

Carroll can be said a forerunner of Japanese otaku writers who love to contribute to their fanzines. Like Carroll they are basically amateurs without the intention of seeking a large audience through publication. They are therefore free to experiment with the story and incidents. The professional writer has to be true to the artistic vision but amateur writers often have more freedom with their materials for stories. To be exact, Carroll was not a professional writer but an amateur one. He was a don of mathematics and logics at the Christ Church, Oxford by profession.

Aruto Kirihara (桐原 有人), the male protagonist of this story, is also somewhat similar to otaku writers. Of course he is just an ordinary junior high school student and does not seem an otaku, but where Alice stories are concerned he reveals an unconquerable obsession and extraordinary interest and he is a fan writer of Alice stories. He does not belong to any fan magazine community at first, but later he is introduced into a devoted Alice readers' community called the Merveilleux Space. In fact, it is not so difficult to see the reflection of *komike* (the Comic Market) culture in the settings of the Merveilleux Space; both *komike* and the Merveilleux Space are the common space for the people tied with the strong sense of the same attachment, although the former is considered a real and actual phenomenon and the latter is an imaginary space where the young devoted female readers of Alice's story fight one another.

They are also girl duelists called "Alice Users" and are capable of transforming into a "kemono-mimi-girl" (a girl with animal ears) or a "usagi-mimi-girl" (a girl with rabbit ears) and use a key sword in fights against other Alice Users. The keys the princesses have are the weapons when they fight with each other. With the keys they can unlock the other girls' mental world and take away and read the secret stories based on their traumatic experiences. Although they do not write

their own Alice stories, they are also selected Alice readers by the person called Alternate Takion, who in fact, turns out to be Lewis Carroll himself. He can live eternally as long as he stays in the narrative space he created. The girl dualists have also their secret stories based on their personal and sometimes traumatic experience and memory.

In the fantastic opening scene, Aruto is writing his own Alice story and suddenly he sees a girl leaping through the night sky against the full moon. At first he thought the girl, who was in fact the spitting image of his own Alice, was just an illusion but the next day he actually saw her again at his school and followed her into an unfamiliar library. While Carroll's Alice pursued the White Rabbit and entered the Wonderland, Aruto was conducted to the wonder space by the girl in "beautiful fighting girl" costumes with rabbit ears. The heroin introduced herself as Arisu Arisugawa (有栖川 ありす), which means she is a Japanesque Alice, because her surname is written in Japanized Chinese characters and her first name "is written in hiragana and not in katakana" (Surhone, 2011 2).

After the prologue the story begins by the following monologue or lines by Aruto, who serves both as the hero and the story teller of the story at the opening.

I'm writing... / a story. / The story inside me, / created by my imagination.  
/ Using the feather pen I bought at the antique store... / I'm taking my time  
and writing this carefully. / A story about... / my beloved Alice (Kaishaku,  
2006 Vol.1 6).

Like Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), the narrator is sometimes foregrounded and expresses his opinions or comments and in most cases the device is the writer's strategy intending to reverse the relation between the reality

and the fiction. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the narrator often suspends or digresses from the subject and makes humorous comments or ironical judgments in the parenthesis. In Japanese comics or animations such as *Key Princess Story: Eternal Alice Rondo*, however, we need to know the role or function of *koma* or a frame and *hukidashi* or a speech balloon. It is important that his monologue is written in the frame without using any speech balloon, although speech is usually written in foam-shaped speech balloon in the tradition of Japanese comics. This style may suggest whether the speaker is a character of the story or not, the narration belongs to another time different from the time within the story itself (Natsume, 1995 152). As Huanosuke Natsume points out "time in manga's koma" can sometimes "expand and contract" according to the context and transformation of the koma (Natsume, 1995 176). Koma is a sort of mark to read the meaning of the gap in manga narrative. The monologue at the opening is not only Aruto's soliloquy but also the predicting narration of the theme of the whole story. Here he is an "extradiegetic narrator" as well as an "intradiegetic narrator" in terms of literary theory. This opening functions as the threshold dividing the imaginary world from the real world.

Some of the readers might present a question about why Aruto uses a "feather pen" that he has bought at the "antique store" in the computer graphic age. Many Japanese comic writers stick to handwriting by using their favorite pens. It is also true that many of the famous Japanese comic writers use the different types of pen, such as Japanese *hude*, *kabura*-pen, G-pen, and *maru*-pen according to their aim (Natsume, 1995 12-16). Even in the case of animation production, many of the Japanese anime creators try to keep the touch or taste of a picture. For instance in 2014 Isao Takahata (高畑 勲), an animation director of studio Ghibli, succeeded in making an unprecedented animation where the background of a screen and characters were unified and gave us the feeling "as if one picture is

moving on the screen” according to the production note on *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* (『かぐや姫の物語』), although traditionally the background and celluloid pictures used to draw after the different style (From the production note on *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya* 2013).

### ***Eternal Alice Rondo as Metafiction and Intertextuality***

Intertextuality is one of the key traits in interpreting literary text and metafiction is among the unique ways of telling a stirring story. We can call *Eternal Alice Rondo* an amazing story on the mode of reading and writing or the author's manifestation of the way of creating Japanese manga or anime in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Terumasa Shichinohe (七戸 輝正) and Jin Ota (太田 仁) are the co-authors of the story (Kaishaku, 2006 vol.1 177). Why did they choose “Kaishaku” as their pen name, which is transcribed as “介錯” in Japanized Chinese characters? It literally means “to assist a person in committing *hara-kiri* suicide by beheading him.” But this macabre name pronounced “kaishaku” reminds me of the homonym “解釈” (pronounced “kaishaku”), which means “to interpret” or “interpretation” in Japanese. Probably this is not just a mere pun but strongly suggests one motif of this fantasy: how to interpret the literary texts transformed into comics or animation.

The second notable point on this adaptation of *Alice* is that the doorway into the wonderland named the Merveilleux Space is not the Carrollian rabbit-hole nor the looking-glass but the library. Indeed while falling down “the very deep well” Carroll's Alice found bookshelves too, but it's not a large-scale public library. The library is literally a treasure house of intertextuality and database and also a magical place which makes human desire to go beyond time and space possible. As a symbolic metaphor it causes the audience to be fully conscious of the encounter of different narrative worlds.

The Merveilleux Space is a battle field where the two authors, Alternate L. Takion, the original author of two Alice's stories, (another name for Lewis Carroll in the story) and Aruto Kirihara, a fan writer of Alice stories, are forced to duel with each other in the common narrative space as well as the space for the fighting girls called Alice Users. While Takion represents the generation who believes in the grand narrative and the overwhelming power of the original authorship, Aruto represents the writer of a new age brought up among the pop culture in the digital age although he still loves handmade culture and respects Takion as the writer who gave him the way of liberating from the sense of solitude. Of course, we should not easily identify Takion with Carroll himself nor consider Kaishaku criticizes Carroll. Aruto's profound respect for him is probably Kaishaku's homage too. Kaishaku lets Aruto make a comment about Takion namely Carroll: "Alternate L. Takion is a great man for writing such wonderful stories. I won't let you—speak badly of him" (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 105). Nevertheless, Aruto is still in strong contrast with Takion in his new mode of writing. Takion tries to compare himself with Shakespeare.

I ADMIRE SHAKESPEARE , WHO ONCE SAID THIS: ALL STORIES ARE BASED ON ONE OF THIRTY-SIX PATTERNS. / SO WHAT? DO YOU MEAN YOUR TWO ALICE BOOKS FIT WITHIN THAT? / ARE OUR CREATIONS ALL JUST BASED ON SHAKESPEARE? THE STORIES TAKION TOLD ALICE... WERE ALL THE SAME AS EVERY OTHER STORY THAT CAPTURES THE IMAGINATIONS OF YOUNG GIRLS. / THAT MUST MEAN THAT THERE ARE ONLY THIRTY-SIX PATTERNS TO THE HUMAN HEART (Kaishaku, 2007 vol. 4 98).

The thirty-six patterns probably derives from Vladimir Propp's 31 narrative units but it is more important Takion, by referring to his greatest literary icon, unconsciously faces the issue of intertextuality and in fact is fearful of the

extinction of authorship as an original writer and tries to make himself believe that where the popularity among young readers is concerned, he is also an icon and one of the heirs of Shakespeare by producing in him a sign of the similarity between Shakespeare and himself. But it is also ironical he needs the approval of Aruto, an ardent fan of the original Alice stories, and therefore he uses the phrases such as “your two Alice books” and “our creations”, not “my two Alice books” nor “my creations.” Without his implied readers’ response, Takion’s stories will be forgotten and die, just as now he is “only able to live within this Merveille Space” and “can’t leave this world”(Kaishaku, 2007 vol. 4, 108).

Takion’s creativity in fact, has been falling into a decline but he does not or does not want to recognize it, and after all he decides to collect all Alice Users’ inner stories and edit and create an ultimate Alice story. He tries to lure the users by intentionally spreading the false rumor that only the final winner duelist of the tournament will be allowed to read Takion’s “third lost volume” (Kaishaku, 2006 vol.1 24) of Alice story entitled “*Never-Ending Alice*” (Kaishaku, 2006 vol.1 24). He has to rely on the gross invention of the existence of made-up story, which means he not only commits a literary database theft but also cannot resolve his mental conflict by himself even in his own narrative space. After Aruto, Kiraha, his sister, and Arisugawa Arisu finally win the tournament called Alice Royale, they are invited to the tea party by Takion. At the party when Aruto asks to Takion why the legendary book is never-ending and when and how they can read the story. Takion confesses that the book does not exist and he has been collecting the Alice fans’ stories to complete his final work and he asks Aruto’s cooperation. Ironically, *Eternal Alice Rondo* is a story about the fictitiousness of Takion’s *Never-Ending Alice*, and the Merveilleux Space too is a fictitious world based on this fallacious assumption. Like the Unicorn and Alice in *Through the Looking-Glass* (Carroll, 1998 201), the two authors encounter in the wonder space created

by Takion but by Aruto's invasion, it transforms into a space like a pair of Chinese boxes multiplied by another author's writing. Finally Takion recognizes he cannot control his narrative space. It sounds ironical because Takion's first name is Alternate. As the name suggests, he created the *alternative* world called the Merveilleux Space but after his defeat, Takion in turn had to become Aruto's *alternate*. But what is the difference between the two in their ability? Arisugawa Arisu highly estimates Aruto's talent as follows:

ALTERNATE L. TAKION, THE AUTHOR OF THE ALICE STORIES, WAS SAID TO BE A VERY GIFTED MAN, ABLE TO WRITE OUT THE STORIES INSIDE PEOPLE'S HEARTS... / SOME PEOPLE SAY HE JUST WROTE STORIES THAT STAYED WITH YOU, BUT... / YOU MIGHT HAVE THAT SAME GIFT... (Kaishaku, 2006 vol. 1 43).

But according to Kaishaku's original version, Takion is depicted as “超能力者” (介錯, vol.1 41), which literally means “a person with supernatural power.” It is possible that Kaishaku assumes the two authors, who both have the preternatural power, will fight not only in the narrative space but also in the extrasensory hyperreal space in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But Aruto has the power Takion cannot have; that is “the power to write down the stories in people's hearts” (Kaishaku, 2006 vol.1 94) and to “copy” the stories. During the tournament fights, Aruto asks Arisu, who has won the battle and taken Kisa's story or memory, to give it back to her by saying:

I GOT IT! I'LL COPY THESE STOLEN PAGES. / THEN WE CAN GIVE THESE BACK TO KISA-CHAN (Kaishaku, 2006 vol.1 41).

Of course, the stories are not written down on the papers but stacked as personal memories in each Alice Users' subconscious mind. According to Takion, the

Merveilleux Space “was built by her (i.e. Alice Liddell) and I (i.e. Takion) (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 83) and now is “a world created by the thoughts of girls who wish to leave the real world” and “the shared subconscious located deep within the dreams of these girls” (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 109). Takion can “write out the stories inside people’s hearts” as an original writer but cannot “write down” or reproduce a copy or simulacrum from the original. Both in the comics and the animation of the story, it is visualized as a scene where the papers filled with written letters spring out of the girl’s chest and then are transformed into a volume of books.

The copies or the *simulacrum* Jean Baudrillard (1920-2007) advocates might be a clue to analyze the issue. On the close link between otaku’s “prominence of derivative works” and the *simulacrum*, Hiroki Azuma points out:

This prominence of derivative works is considered a postmodern characteristic because the high value otaku place on such products is extremely close to the future of the culture industry as envisioned by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard predicts that in postmodern society the distinction between original products and commodities and their copies weakens, while an interim form called the *simulacrum*, which is neither original nor copy, becomes dominant. The discernment of value by otaku, who consumes the original and the parody with equal vigor, certainly seems to move at the level of simulacra where there are no originals and no copies (Azuma, 2007 25-26).

According to Baudrillard, the attempt to blur the focus between reality and other dimensions of reality creates a new experience and becomes more exciting for the modern reader or audience. He refers to Borges’ fable in *Simulacra and*

### *Simulation.*

If once we were able to view the Borges fable in which the cartographers of the Empire draw up a map so detailed that it ends up covering the territory exactly (the decline of the Empire witnesses the fraying of this map, little by little, and its fall into ruins, though some shreds are still discernible in the deserts...as the most beautiful allegory of simulation, this fable has now come full circle for us, and possesses nothing but the discrete charm of second-order simulacra (Baudrillard, 2017 1).

Today our life territory is also entirely covered with the multiple Internet space and its global area goes in a small cellular phone now. Almost all of the younger generation cannot do without it in a single day. According to Baudrillard we are now in the third order of simulacra: “simulacra of simulation, founded on information, the model, the cybernetic game—total operability, hyperreality, aim of total control” (Baudrillard, 121). As he says, it is the age of endless self-multiplication of secondary copies and the border between reality and non-reality or the original and the simulacrum is already blurred out.

### **Hyperreality or Augmented Reality**

The manga-anime *Eternal Alice Rondo* uses metaphors and incidents as key techniques to create hyper or augmented reality to represent the complexity of post-modern society in an era of digital technology. *Eternal Alice Rondo* is seemingly a story unconnected to the digital space because what Aruto uses is not a computer graphics but his feather pen in creating his story, however, it just represents how the Japanese manga writers and anime producers have stuck to the taste the handwriting work brings and paradoxically shows they understand how difficult they keep their proper way or mode of creation in today's multiple

Internet society. In fact, it is not so difficult for us to find the conjunction with the Internet society in the story. In the first place, there is a strong affinity between manga or anime and otaku culture. For example Tamaki Saito points out: “a unique media environment was formed by the demand of an equally unique community of otaku. It was this demand that solidified the existence of the beautiful fighting girls” (Saito, 2011 135). His list of otaku objects includes such items as anime, video games, young-adult novels, voice actor idols, special effects, C-class idols, fan magazines, *yaoi* and fighting girls (Saito, 2011 17).

Secondly, through the process of the media mix, original works are easily transformed from comics to anime and games. As Hiroki Azuma states unequivocally, many derivative works such as “reproduction of original manga, anime, and games sold in the form of fanzines, fan games, fan figures, and the like” are “bought and sold mainly in the Comic Market...but also through countless small-scale exhibits held on the national level, and over the Internet” (Azuma, 2007 25). He divides otaku into three generations and says the third-generation otaku “experienced the spread of the Internet during their teens, and, as a result, their main forum for general fan activities has moved to Web sites, and their interest in illustrations, to computer graphics” (Azuma, 2007 7).

Thirdly, the key words or metaphors used in the story suggest a strong affinity with the digital space. Kaishaku sets up the tournament called “the Alice Battle Royale”, which is also a situation very often used by the video game producers. Further we remember the beautiful fighting girls were named “Alice Users.” The term “user” reminds us of the connection with the computers and some terminology such as user name, user(s) group and user interface as well as the users of Alice stories. But most important of all is Kaishaku gave Aruto the distinguished power to copy Alice Users’ secret memories. There is a scene

where Aruto tries to use his power to copy and overwrite not to write down Alice Users' inner stories but to make his Arisu's ability more powerful by transplanting the other users' power like updating a file when Aruto asserts:

IF EVERYONE IS HELPING BY HAVING ALICE POWERS IN THE STORIES... / YOU  
MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE THE POWER IF I WRITE IN THE POWER WORDS  
(Kaishaku, 2007 vol.2 28).

But again we come across the difference between the original and its English translation. In the original text, Kaishaku chooses the Japanese word “上書きする” (介錯, vol.2 26), which literally means “overwrite” instead of just “write in.” Today the word “overwrite” can be often used to mean “to replace the older letters or information and instead of it, to write down the renewed data-file on the computer screen.” In spite of the fact he sticks to the feather pen, the co-authors gave Aruto the unique ability to overwrite the hypertext as other person's personal memory in a flash just like the “USB flash memory.” It is also highly important that Aruto can exercise the power only within the Merveilleux Space. It is a hyperspace where all Alice readers' memories and responses have been stocked from the past to the present like a huge database on supercomputers. It is hyperreal because the border of space and time does not exist any more and as Baudrillard predicts, the distinction between the original and the simulacra disappears completely. Besides, it is a space expanded through the rhizomic network and there is no absolute central point actually, although Takion could not avoid his misconception that led him to the ultimate failure inevitably. He might have created the network system but once released, it is shared as a common space and no one can monopoly. Of course we should note the story itself is not set in the cyberspace, but to attempt an analysis of the story's hyperreal side, it is highly useful to be conscious of the affinity with the digital world.

In fact, *Eternal Alice Rondo* begins and ends in a hyperreal world, at least according to its manga version, although the ending of the anime is considerably different. While Saito reads close interrelationship between “the layered structure of intertwined narratives” in Japanese anime such as *Sailor Moon* and role-playing games, I think *Eternal Alice Rondo* too, comes under this category, and also belongs to “the summoned to another world subgenre that developed in the 1990s” where “utterly ordinary girls become mixed up in an alien world by chance and are forced into battle willy-nilly” (Saito, 2011 123).

Carroll's *Alice*, for instance, needed the devices for entering the Wonderland such as falling down the rabbit hole and going through the looking-glass, and they were needed to turn over the Victorian sensible world and introduce the non-sense world. But the uniqueness of *Eternal Alice Rondo* lies in the fact that from the very beginning, augmented reality has been already introduced in the narrative space, and later Aruto himself turns out to be the ringleader of forcing the door open. The morning after he witnessed Arisu flying across the night sky, Aruto, pursuing after the girl resembling to her, came across the totally unfamiliar library, the entrance into the wonder space, but it should not have been there until then as long as he remembered. What happened at all? The moment he started *overwriting* his own Alice story on Takion's original stories, Aruto unintentionally renewed the former narrative space and if so, whenever he adds the newer story the space might suffer from change or renewal everlastingly. For the writers belonging to the pre-digital age such as Takion, it is a dangerous situation never to be overlooked and he might have resurrected again as a protesting “ghost-writer” from the past literally.

While a computer term “conflict” means a collision of plural programs on the same domain of computer memories, the Merueilleux Space can be a conflict-

resolving hyperspace, too. At first Takion and Aruto cannot determine which world is more real and a complementary pair of Chinese boxes multiplies and develops into complexity; Aruto exists in Takion's world but Takion exists in Aruto's world. Impatient of paradoxical incompatibility and undecidability, Takion tries to extrude Aruto by strangling his formidable antagonist and cries:

IT'S NOT RIGHT! IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! NO FAN WORK CAN BE BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL! I CAME UP WITH THIS STORY! / WHAT ABOUT HIM THAT IS BETTER THAN ME! HE IS WELL UNDER MY CONTROL! / HE CAN'T EVEN COME UP WITH HIS OWN STORY! WHAT'S SO CREATIVE ABOUT THAT! (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 149)

But whether it's possible or "not possible", Takion cannot deny the existence of Arisugawa Arisu created by Aruto, a fan writer of Takion. Takion is persuaded to acknowledge the defeat by his librarian, in fact, Alice Liddell.

DID YOU NOT NOTICE? / ARISU ARISUGAWA IS JUST LIKE THE GIRLS FROM THE TWO BOOKS OF ALICE YOU WROTE. / SHE MUST'VE BEEN ABOUT THEIR AGE WHEN SHE WAS FIRST CREATED... BUT SHE DEVELOPED BEYOND THAT/ ARISU GREW SO MUCH SHE WAS BEYOND YOUR IMAGINATION. / ... DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO STOP ARUTO-KUN, WHO HAD THE CREATIVE POWER TO MAKE A CHARACTER WHO WOULD PROGRESS THIS FAR? (Kaishaku, 2007 vol. 4 146-47).

But unfortunately it is just at this moment that Aruto, Arisugawa and Kiraha, Aruto's sister, know the secret of the birth of Arisugawa Arisu. While Aruto can overwrite the girl duelists' inner stories, Arisugawa Arisu is the only exceptional character to whom he cannot display his ability. Strangely unlike the other Alice-Users, Arisugawa Arisu does not have any past memories of the days before

meeting Aruto, and at first she just thought she had lost her memories somehow but now she knows the truth. However, she hesitates to accept she is unreal and a fictitious character and at a loss for words.

I... AM ... / THE ALICE THAT ARUTO-KUN CREATED? / JUST AS HE WROTE ME... /  
JUST AS HE IMAGINED ME... / BUT THAT IS... THEN THAT MEANS... / I'M... /  
THAT EXPLAINS IT... / I'M...! / AND... / MY FEELINGS... MY FEELINGS ARE...  
(Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4, 126-127).

Arisugawa's confusion reminds us of the famous dialogue between Alice and the twin brothers in *Through the Looking-Glass*.

"He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee: "and what do you think he's dreaming about?"

Alice said "Nobody can guess that."

"Why, about *you!*" Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?"

"Where I am now, of course," said Alice.

"Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"

"If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!"

"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if *I'm* only a sort of thing in his dream, what are *you*, I should like to know?"

"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

He shouted this so loud that Alice couldn't help saying "Hush! You'll be

waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise."

"Well, it's no use *your* talking about waking him," said Tweedledum, "when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real."

"*I am* real!" said Alice, and began to cry. (Carroll, 1998 164-65)

Seemingly the Red King dreams of Alice and Alice finds him asleep or dreaming of herself. This Chinese-box construction leads the readers to the question: who is Alice and what is reality? Of course Alice does not admit she is not real nor a resident of the Red King's dream, and at the end it turns out the whole story was in Alice's dream. But Arisu's confusion might be more complicated because she feels a deep love for Aruto, her creator, but nevertheless she has to talk to herself about her substantiality too. Kiraha, Aruto's sister, also loves his brother secretly and their relations inevitably develops into a love triangle. At last Kiraha confesses her love for Aruto, her brother without any relation by blood, and then searches his true heart:

EVEN IF ARISU-CHAN COULD EXIST OUTSIDE, I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH HER LIKE BEFORE. / BECAUSE SHE REALLY IS JUST THE GIRLFRIEND YOU MADE UP FOR YOURSELF. / YOU ACTUALLY FELL IN LOVE WITH A CHARACTER YOU MADE UP, WHO ISN'T EVEN REAL. / ...I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT. / EVEN THOUGH YOU USED ME AS A MODEL FOR HER... / AND ARISU-CHAN KNOWS THAT... I MEAN WE THINK THE SAME WAY. .../ SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME, ANYWAY? / I'M AS MUCH ALICE AS SHE IS! (Kaishaku, 2007 Vol. 4 160-161).

Aruto, too, talks to them why he has created Arisu, his ideal Alice character, and why he has repeatedly narrated the story solely to his sister and at the same time he reveals his unrequited love for Kiraha.

IT'S BECAUSE WE AREN'T RELATED! WE CAN'T BE MORE THAN SIBLINGS! I HAVE TO LIKE ARISU! / THAT'S WHY... / THAT'S WHY I MADE UP THE ALICE STORIES TO TELL YOU, / TO MAKE YOU HAPPY... / TO FOCUS MY FEELINGS FOR YOU ONTO ALICE (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 164-65).

Aruto's involuntary suppression of consanguineous love for her sister has invented Arisu as a simulacrum or a reflection of his idealized image of his sister. Unlike Pygmalion, he cannot be satisfied solely with the copy and urges both of them to come back to their real world with him; however, like the twin brothers in *Through the Looking-Glass* or Alice and Alice Liddell as her model, Kiraha and Arisu are in fact a sort of doppelgangers to each other and they are like the twin images who are watching through the looking-glass, so it's unavoidable the last fight starts to prove which is more real and attractive to Aruto between the original and a simulacrum. But when Takion jealous of Aruto's superb imagination attacks him, they stop fighting and join forces to help Aruto. Of course it's a temporal truce and interestingly enough the person who comes to an end to this battle is Alice Liddell.

ARUTO-KUN... / THE STORIES YOU WRITE FOR SOMEONE ELSE... / THEY HAVE MUCH MORE MEANING FOR THAT PERSON THAN ANY LOVE LETTER COULD. / ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE THE MODEL FOR A CHARACTER. / YOU'VE COMPOSED BILLIONS AND BILLIONS OF LOVE SONGS FOR KIRAHA. / IT WOULD BE STRANGE IF SHE HADN'T NOTICED YOUR FEELINGS. / SO, YOU MUST KNOW... / WHAT YOUR TRUE FEELINGS ARE. / AND WHO IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU... (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 166-67).

After Liddell's remark, Arisu abandons her love for Aruto and decides to remain in the Merveilleux Space. With all tears, she wishes for their future happiness, but

much more interesting and important is that Arisu finally realizes Kiraha is another creator of her and without Kiraha, her birth could not have been possible at all.

I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU. / KIRAHA-CHAN... ARUTO-KUN... / I KNOW WHERE I CAME FROM... / I WAS BORN OF HER POWER... / ... TO FULFIL ARUTO-KUN'S FEELINGS AND WISHES... / I AM THE REFLECTION FROM KIRAHA-CHAN'S MIRROR KEY. / ARUTO-KUN AND KIRAHA-CHAN'S ARISU FROM WONDERLAND... / FROM ARUTO-KUN'S LOVE FOR KIRAHA-CHAN... / AND... / FROM KIRAHA-CHAN'S LOVE FOR ARUTO-KUN... / FROM A WISH YOU SHOULD NOT WISH FOR. THE FEELINGS YOU HIDE DEEP WITHIN YOUR HEART... / I WAS MADE FROM ARUTO-KUN'S IMAGINATION... / BECAUSE ARUTO-KUN WISHES IT... / I REALLY CAN'T EXIST OUTSIDE THIS PLACE. I'M NOT A REAL GIRL(Kaishaku, 2007 vol. 4 169-172).

But why does Arisu think she should stay only in fiction? She does know now her character is totally under Aruto's control and not independent so she confesses a secret suspicion dawned in her mind:

ARUTO-KUN! THINK ABOUT IT... / THE WAY I'M ACTING NOW MIGHT JUST BE A PART OF YOUR STORY. / IF SO, THEN WHAT ARE MY REAL FEELINGS? / IF YOU WROTE ME TO LIKE YOU, IT MIGHT JUST BE A STORY YOU MADE UP. / YOU MIGHT JUST BE TWISTING MY FEELINGS AROUND TO FIT ME INTO YOUR STORY. / PLEASE DON'T ALWAYS THINK OF ME AS YOUR IDEAL ALICE. / I MIGHT NOT REALLY LIKE YOU (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 177-78).

Probably her heart-searching doubt as to autonomy of her free will lead her to the departure from her creator and Aruto finally understands that, too.

...ALL RIGHT. YOU MAY BE RIGHT. / STORY CHARACTERS THAT ARE FULLY DEVELOPED CAN ACT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN WILL. / THE IDEAL ALICE I LOVE... / MIGHT NOT EXIST ANY MORE. (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 178)

According to Alice Liddell's advice, Aruto and Kiraha leave the world of dreams called the Merveilleux Space and come back to their reality just like Carroll's Alice once did. But *Eternal Alice Rondo's* ending is precisely opposite to those of Carroll's two Alice stories. Right after their departure, Arisu bursts into tears and expresses *her own* feelings toward Aruto.

I KNEW... / THAT THE STORIES ARUTO-KUN MIGHT WRITE IN THE FUTURE... / WOULD NOT BE MINE. / EVEN IF I WERE IN THEM... / IT WOULD NOT BE ME. / ARUTO-KUN WILL NEVER...MEET ME AGAIN... / AND NEVER NEED ME AGAIN (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 187-88).

Certainly Arisu anticipates the contingencies of her future life; at the same time it is at this moment that she has succeeded in creating her own feelings and forming her own distinctive character because Aruto, her creator, is not with her any more nor is revising Arisu's story either. In fact, *Eternal Alice Rondo* does not end here. Perceiving the fictitious nature of the Wonderland at the end, Arisugawa Arisu comes back to the actual world and tries to rewrite the story on her future life. Arisu's last monologue strongly suggests it:

**IMAGINATION BECOMES CREATIVITY.** / COMPLETED CHARACTERS WALK ON THEIR OWN. / THEY MOVE AROUND AND ENJOY THEMSELVES FREELY WITHIN THEIR STORY. YOU TOLD ME THAT. / MY ACTIONS ARE MY OWN. / MY FEELINGS FOR YOU ARE MY OWN. / MY MIND IS NOT WHAT YOU CREATED. / **AND...** / AWKWARD? / UNCALLED FOR? / WHY NOW...? / IT DOESN'T MATTER. /

***THAT IMAGINATION IS... / I THINK I HAVE A SHOT... / YEAH. / I AM HIS IDEAL ALICE, AFTER ALL. / AT SURPASSING MY CREATOR. / AND THIS TIME I'LL START A STORY... / WITH MY OWN WORDS. / THE BEGINNING OF A NEVER ENDING STORY...*** (Kaishaku, 2007 vol.4 195-96).

*Eternal Alice Rondo* has not ended yet and will never end eternally. The shape of speech balloons in which the italicized parts of her monologue are written, is quite different from the other round speech balloons and shows her last soliloquy belongs to the extradiegetic narration, too. Surprisingly, Arisugawa Arisu reappears as another creator of a newer story of her future life as well as Aruto's mere imaginative character, so metaphorically we can call *Eternal Alice Rondo* "a meta-metafiction."

### **Conclusion**

Just like the White Rabbit in Carroll's Alice story, Arisugawa Arisu can come and go between the two worlds as "a completed character" but this time the boundary may lie between the virtual world and the actual world as well as between the narrative world and the actual world, and the opposing two worlds are blurred by her hyperreal existence. The two worlds are connected with each other like a Mobius band and our wonderland in the 21<sup>st</sup> century may be in wafting timelessly in a digitalized cyberspace.

Japanese readers too have been charmed by the world of fantasy as well as continental readers, and in their understanding of *Alice* Japanese artists have attempted to transform the original tale and the medium with both ingenuity and creativity. The fascination with a story that can connect reality with fantasy and transform fantasy back to reality has been the corner stone of both the original *Alice* and the new versions adapted to the new world. The tale of a small English

girl exploring her surrounding over one and a half century ago has moved from just a childhood fantasy to an adult tale of morality and augmented reality. From the printed word to manga and anime, the Japanese artist and otaku have adapted the original Alice story and transformed her into a Japanese Alice who now functions as an independent character in her own right. The obsession with fantasy in Japan has also allowed different media to include contemporaneous themes of social significance promoting a new culture of Japanese fantasy turning global.

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