Master Thesis

Front page for examination assignment

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Title of assignment:	
How Modern Technology Has Changed Fantasy	
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Abstract

Fantasy literature has always been a part of our culture. The way we interact with fantasy in our everyday life has increased significantly and the platforms on which we interact with them has expanded significantly. Traditionally fantasy is restricted to orality and literacy, however in recent years we have enjoyed a great increase in not only the amount of printed fantasy, but also on every conceivable platform in fantasy. It has become not so much a literary genre, but a genre in general. Whether it is books, movies, video games, or something else, it has become a very recognizable genre. In this thesis I will be looking at the way in which we encounter fantasy, why has it become so popular, why do we need it, why is it so inspiring, and why is it important to talk about it across multiple platforms. Fantasy has a lot of different ideas in terms of its academic community. There are in general a lot of ways to characterize and analyse fiction based on the way we interact with it and the way the subject matter itself want to influence the reader. I have focused more on the relationship between the text and the reader. I have treated fantasy like a relationship between the reader and the subject matter because when we talk about the theories of Walter Ong and Rita Felski, it seems very appropriate to talk about the way it influences us, but also the way fantasy has a connection that goes both ways even though the subject matter is of course somewhat unchangeable. Ong's theories about the impact on the reader when experiencing especially the written word makes a lot of sense when but into the relation of the fantasy world. Felski's theory can be used to talk about the different ways in which we connect and exchange information with the subject matter, she talks about the way we recognize ourselves and becomes enchanted by different factors. When we discuss the fantastic I games it is important to talk about not just the subject matter and the theories about how we meet a fantastic world, but also the way that the game works since it is fundamentally different from a book or a movie, so we have to consider not just the way we engage and interact with the world, but also what type of game it is and what it allows us to do within its genres. There also seems to be some evidence that suggest that fantasy is a constant. We will keep getting new ideas and based of them we will create new worlds and act them out this way.

The way we use wishes and fulfil them by fantasy is a very important part of what fantasy is. Another important part is the way that we can escape into a fantastic universe. Not just how we go in there, but also how we keep telling our world through fantasy. It is at though there is a portal where we as humans want to pull things from and walk through ourselves and it is through the ideas of escape and wishes that we develop the worlds we call fantasy. By employing the views of Farah Mendlesohn, it is possible to talk about coherence beyond the different technologies employed in the fantasy genre. It is possible to look at them because they have a broader spectrum than some other theories about the genre. It is not merely a way of discussing what constitutes a fantasy, but also how we use, meet, and let the fantastic behave. We are in need of the fantastic, it is a testament to the fact that we have influences every type of technology with it that we are in need of experiencing the fantastic both to develop ourselves, but also because the stories can inspire humanity to reach new heights.

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1. Introduction

Fantasy is probably some of the most fundamental in us all. We are able to use our

imagination and as we so often are told, that the only limit is our own imagination. We allow

ourselves to dream about vast areas with magic creatures and a hero not unlike ourselves, but more

fit and a little more eloquent than we are. We dream of a future inhabited by robots, where we live

at the mercy of a rouge artificial intelligence, or in a galaxy far away. Imagination and by proxy the

fantastic have been the source of what we can create for millennia. Because we can create, we need

ideas of what to create. However, first we dream about it, first we savour and taste upon the silvery

snack that is the fantastic world we are about to create. What are the rules, the mannerisms, what

are the reason for its existence? Many people tend to dream themselves far away from everything

around them and it is that fantasy, I am going to talk about in this thesis. Fantasy has gone through

many changes in recent years, not to say that it has never been changed before, but the rise of new

technologies has given it ample room to evolve to different platforms, but the many new advances

we have made into the universe in science have also given birth to a lot new material that has seen

the light of day because of new technologies. Fantasy fiction is a very unspecific genre because it is

so big. I am going to discuss what it is about the fantastic that draws us in, why it has become so

much more pronounced in recent years, why the technology of the world has concentrated it so

fiercely into our society. First, we are going to look at the theory of Walter Ong, Intertextuality, and

Rita Felski. I am going to use the three theories to make a case for the proper way to view fiction and

most important of all the fantastic. I am going to discuss technology of writing and throughout the

thesis I will incorporate my finding into the different technologies of the fantastic. After that I will

look at what the fantasy world is, what is so special about it and how does my chosen theories tie

into the ideas about it. Then we will be discussing the importance of the computer in the fantastic,

why has it become such a large part of fantasy as we know it today, what is so appealing about

experiencing games through it and I will also be talking about newer technologies and why they

might prove imperative for fantasy going forward. Through the idea of the game we will also be

discussing the roleplaying games because of their specific tie to the fantastic because of how they are built up and look at it in contrast to what is different form a video game. Next, I am going to look at the fandom culture. Fandom is one of the most important relations to fantasy in the real world and it might ad I will be discussing the world both inside and outside the fandom culture. We are also going to talk about what we lose in the different technologies we experience fantasy through, the worlds we long for and the problems we face when trying to talk about fantasy fiction and try to incorporate the different technologies into a way of thinking about them as stories instead of different technologies. Last, I am going to talk about the future, what might the fantastic look like in the future and how might we experience it then.

2. Theory

To speak is one of the most primal functions we are born with. The first actions of a baby include using their voice to cry, as a result we as a species use our voices to interact and communicate through language. It is one of our most primary functions and we do try to mimic our parents form a very early age. "Oral speech is fully natural to human beings in the sense that every human being in every culture who is not physiologically or psychologically impaired learns to talk[2]." We learn to speak because we imitate our elders and start to recognise words. Because of this, all cultures have some form of oral communication, but not all have literacy[3]. In this part of the essay, I am going to talk about the basis of communications. Walter J. Ong has written extensively on the subject and has a firm grasp on communication, including the digitalisation of the written word. Therefore, I am going to discuss his findings in this theory section because his research will help me to analyse what happens when we go from one form of communication to another, orality to literacy in this example.

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[2] Ong p. 81
[3] Ong p. 7

After that, I will explain what intertextuality come in to play when we start discussing the technology of literacy.

In ancient Greece, communicating orally was highly recognized. The way you argued and spoke in front of an audience was their way of measuring the intellectual prowess of a person[4]. Plato, ironically enough, spoke out against the written word. From reading Plato's work, we know he found that: "Writing … is inhuman, pretending to establish outside the mind what in reality can be only in the mind. It is a thing, a manufactured product"[5]. Ong acknowledges here, that some of the problems that Plato had against writing are the same arguments that were made against the computer and the handheld pocket calculator[6]. Writing, much like those tools, were believed to make people dumber and parallel to this committing some of your memory to a page in words was viewed as an inability. Of course, as time went on, people started to write regardless of Plato's warnings and since then it has become such a large part of our society, that most people would not be able to consider a world without literacy, not to say that we no longer value orality. People who are able to speak in front of an audience are still revered, just look at debates for example. It is impossible to argue with a piece of paper, no matter what you do, you cannot change what is written on it nor can it explain what its intention is, but that would be possible if you have access to the writer in some form. It is rare that we hear someone expatiate upon several subjects, like a speech, that has not been prewritten in some form. Not many people are able to do that while still making a good speech, but the written speech is often performed orally by committing it to memory to give the speaker more authority, therefore, in some sense we still look up to those who can do such things[7].

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[4] Ong p. 78
[5] Ong p. 78
[6] Ong p. 78
[7] Ong p. 112-114

2.1 Writing as a technology, pros and cons.

The written word has a long history, it is always accompanied by an oral counterpart and is rarely, if ever, found without. The Chinese developed a language where you had to understand different pictures or drawings and interpret their meaning in order to reach a specific understanding, all these picture had their own noises that could then be interpreted orally into speech, it is an ancient writing system and much like ancient Egypt, which also communicated through pictures. There are a lot of alphabets and they all convey meaning in different ways all accounting to their oral counterparts. The written word laid the groundwork for being able to communicate over large distances, by capturing meaning and understanding in signs on a piece of paper and then sending it. In the beginning there was not a lot of people who was able to read and write and some alphabets like the Scandinavian runes became known as sources of magic[8]. Learning grammar became associated with the occult because it was a mystical thing to be able to do. In countries inhabited by people with low literary skills, it was only specifically skilled and often wealthy people who could read. However, it also came to be associated with the clergy.

Today, many do not think about writing as a technology. However, it most certainly is, by definition, but also because as many other technologies, it is in constant development. The reason may be that we commit the written word to be stored digitally and sometimes it might be hard to see one technology for another, never mind that the word 'technology' has become largely synonymous with computers and other digital devices. Even though we might not think about computers as an instrument to do work with and more of leisure, it is hard to deny that they have become excellent to store and publish the written word in many different forms. However, writing is a technology that has developed through time, the studies of grammar and the mass production of books have scattered the technology to such an extent, that a large number of people are able to

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[8] Ong p. 92

use it and it has become demystified to a very large extent. Contrary to what we saw earlier when the technology of writing would be associated with the occult, many might still see the use of some languages as mystical or associate them with the occult, but the technology of writing itself has changed a lot during the last 2-300 years.

One might also consider the idea of 'coded language'. By that I don't mean codes like vingenere ciphers, even though their principles certainly are used in modern computing, but rather the languages that has been developed for computer programming, that are still mystical enough to command a state of amazement form people almost like people once thought runes to be a source of magic, lines of code are most certainly able to change our lives by emptying our bank account or making the computer understand how to set up the graphics from that game we are playing. This is important to note, because, even though it would be arguable to consider it a traditional language it is still a sequence of information that can be written and be interpreted much like a normal language, and it still has its set of rules and can therefore be considered to be a language, it is just not meant to be understood by a human. The only difference is that everything the computer interprets is binary, either it is on or off and it is through this that we use the computer language.

It is important to understand, that the written word is to be considered artificial. The communicative effort behind it is not natural, or as Ong prefer to say, straight from the subconscious[9].

> "To say writing is artificial is not to condemn it but to praise it. Like other artificial creations and indeed more than any other, it is utterly invaluable and indeed essential for the realization of fuller, interior, human potentials"[10].

Ong goes on to talk about how technologies in general are 'transformations of consciousness'. It is important to note here that Ong is not merely talking about writing, however

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[9] Ong p. 81
[10] Ong p. 81

that is what we shall focus on. What he is trying to say is that a technology is not just used to understand the world, but it also impresses the interpreter's consciousness. We are exposed to the written word all the time, but not only can we interpret the meaning, we also gain perspective and make the knowledge our own.

"Writing heightens consciousness. Alienation from a natural milieu can be good for us and indeed is in many ways essential for full human life. To live and to understand fully, we need not only proximity but also distance. This writing provides for consciousness as nothing else does.[11]"

Writing can provide us with the means to understand other people, their agenda, their worldview and who they are, it can also convey fantastic worlds and provide immersion to see the world from a different point of view. The media that writing is, relies heavily on the reader to fantasize and spend their time interpreting the picture an author of a text, might have originally had in mind. Writing, is a way to let other people understand the world that the writer made and to distribute it easily, because of the use of printing and other such technologies.

2.2 What is Intertextuality

"Works of literature … are built from systems, codes and traditions established by previous works of literature.[12]" The theory of intertextuality points to the fact, that all works of literature are connected. The literary tradition of a culture is heavily dependent on intertextuality. Taking bits and pieces from its forefathers to create new pieces is like splitting up a string of DNA and putting it together in new way, but from old parts. That does not mean that we cannot create anything new or that all the pieces stem from a tradition, but there still is a heavy reliance on other works of literature from that same culture. We see this constantly in the literary heritage of fantastic stories

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[11] Ong p. 81
[12] Allen p. 1

especially. An example would be entities and monsters that comes from a literary heritage, but even further back also from folklore and thus an oral tradition. We could draw parallels to the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, whose books have been an inspiration to many other series but is itself founded in English folklore. It is not only found in things or entities, but also the use of words. Literature is as Allen said, a selection of systems, codes and traditions, that are the founding stones of a literary tradition. We might also consider how the bible has impacted literary traditions, because of its early use, its importance in many cultures, as well as its sheer number of prints.

"A text is the material inscription of a work. It is that which gives a work permanence, repeatability and thus readability.[13]" Reading this snippet form Graham Allen's 'Intertextuality' we see the relation to Ong's theory in intertextuality. The written word provides a work with permanence, repeatability and readability. These three terms are paramount to any written work, as they are representing of what the technology of writing provides us. While artificial, it provides us with the ability to keep reading the same words over and over, while the only thing changing are the effect it has on us, as such. And most importantly, it is permanent, it is persistent of time and through it we can still experience the view of someone after they have died. Readability is a term shared by Ong and Allen. We can of course read anything, the understanding relies on our ability to interpret and the texts use of the rules for reading that we utilize, in that way a text can be readable. In terms of intertextuality we see the 'readability' of a work as how the codes, systems and traditions of this piece of literature is used.

2.3 How we use it

Since intertextuality do not have in limits in terms of media, it provides me with the opportunity to talk about it alongside the different media which I will be discussing in this thesis. Allen says that:

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[13] Allen p. 61

"Intertextuality, as a term, has not been restricted to discussions of the literary arts. It is found in

discussions of cinema, painting, music, architecture, photography and in virtually all cultural and

artistic productions.[14]"

Intertextuality, according to Allen, has become a misused word, a sort of umbrella term, that

can be seen as transparent[15]. However, the term is essential when discussing the internal

relationships among not just books, but all media. It is a term that can connect the different artistic

platforms and unite them in traditions and create meaning as well as readability, which is

understood here to mean interpretation, especially in terms of expectations and relations. I will be

employing it especially in my sections about the emerge of fanfiction, because it is quintessential to

the term.

However, we have not broken down the idea and appeal of what 'readability' is. Anything

can be read, reading something is done by using our pre-existing understanding of grammar and

words and applying them to a written text we expect certain things from a text, like those, when we

read it. However, it also has to do with the way we expect certain character or tropes to pan out. In

a fairy tale we expect the antagonist to be evil and possibly ugly in either personality or looks. By

including a familiar setup, reuse a type of story, writing words in a specific order, or in any way give

textual understanding from other works in other word a literary tradition or indeed break them we

find the readability. It might be subconscious on the part of the writer, but it provides the reader an

opportune moment to read behind the lines and might uncover a hidden truth. To include an already

read work, like the bible, writers would be able to give the reader a broader understanding of a

character.

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[14] Allen p. 174
[15] Allen p. 1

2.4 The Uses of Literature

Rita Felski has written extensively about literature. One of her books, 'The Uses of Literature' talks about four different ideas about how to analyse literature according to the reader. She uses the terms; 'recognition', 'enchantment', 'knowledge', and 'shock'. They represent the relationship between the reader and the book and provides a bridge from analysis to the audience. I will be using her theory in my thesis because she provides a way to describe the different assets and features I will be covering in terms of fantasy, its transformation, and the fandom culture.

'Recognition' is the way we see ourselves in characters. How we, when we read a work, can associate ourselves with a protagonist for example. "Suddenly and without warning, a flash of connection leaps across the gap between text and reader; an affinity or an attunement is brought to light"[16]. To recognize yourself in parts of a character creates a bond between the reader and the story. The story provides you with insight into you and quite possibly the character or might at least expand your horizons because of the bond between you. The term also underlines the idea of Ong's discussion out how we can use the written word to understand different circumstances.

'Enchantment' and 'recognition' are different, but the latter might contribute a great deal to the former. When the reader already has developed a relation to a character the 'enchantment' will only enforce it. Already we see a pattern emerging as I have already mentioned. The theory is based on the single individual's relation to the story, but not one bit less relevant than a more general analysis. However, 'enchantment' is the collective effort of the story elements to provide a world for the reader and the more you are able to see yourself in the characters and, therefore in the world, the more the two terms work together. Somewhere they can be pulled into, magical or not, stories tend to draw people in if they can relate to or empathize with it.

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[16] Felski p. 23

'Knowledge' might be the most interesting part of the four terms. It contains all the information we can find about the world. Every time there is a description, an explanation, or anything is mentioned about anything we discover something about the universe and story an, that we call 'knowledge'. It is the ability to give the reader a sense of rules, manners, symbolic. Essentially it is all that might be noteworthy for the reader to understand. 'Knowledge' gives the reader an idea of how to behave and act, which furthers the inclusion and relation to the reader.

Lastly, we have 'shock', which in a way relies heavily on all the others, but in turn they might also rely heavily on it. 'Shock' is the ability of a story to, as the name implies, shock the reader, it has to provide enough, recognition, enchantment, knowledge, immersion, and make the reader care enough, to be able to give them a shock. However, we are not talking about a real shock, but rather the reader has to care enough about something in the story that they will find the twists of the story exiting, though in some books it might give a shock. In turn the 'shock' quality might also provide further quality to the other terms. It might give a certain kind of depth or be the reason there was a story to tell at all. It itself provides recognition, knowledge and enchantment, to reach that immersion and the relation to the reader, which are the roof over these four pillars.

The reason I have chosen to describe these theories are, that they go very far to provide an explanation to why we interact with fantasy fiction the way we do. The different elements are some of the core values of why we seem to connect with fantasies in the way we do.

3. Fantasy literature

In this part of my thesis I will define my use of the word 'fantasy' and what can be recognized as such. Fantasy is by itself often associated with medieval settings. The medieval setting is often associated with the adventures of Arthur, his knights and the other characters from the authorian legends, and other more recent series like J.R.R Tolkien's Lord of the rings trilogy. It will

also be associated with magic worlds that normally would follow into the medieval settings as well.

Oxford dictionary defines it as a genre thus: "A genre of imaginative fiction involving magic and

adventure, especially in a setting other than the real world[17]." This definition provides is a more

general understanding than the one many might be used to. Not confining it to medieval setting but

defining it as anything as long as it has some part of the fantastic to it. The fantastic can discussed,

and the debate if what might be categorized as fantasy is a confusing one, because technically all

worlds described in fiction are different form our own in that we are writing down fantasies, that we

make by taking in inspiration from the world we are in. But for the purpose of this thesis I will be

going by the definition set by the dictionary since it provides the biggest play area to interpret fiction

and the fantastic tales. However, I will be talking about the theory of analysing the constituents of

what makes a fantasy story later, this is merely a broad definition to work with.

3.1 World building

The world we live in are built around a set of rules, Einstein tells us that E=mc2 and whether we

understand thermodynamics or not, we know that they are rules as true as when you want to walk

somewhere you have to continually step one foot in front of another until you reach your

destination. We are as such aware of how the world around us will react if we do a certain thing. We

understand that magic and gods are not a part of our world, but that does not mean we cannot

create them. Just as our world has rulesets, the classic fantastic world will also have a set provided

by the 'knowledge' as Rita calls it. The worlds we travel to when reading a story react certain ways

when the characters interact with it and by that we slowly learn how it functions. We assume that

the basics of our world transcend the others until we learn differently, and most stories also take

most of the basic rules with it, such as for example gravity and often social rules. Therefore, building

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[17] Oxford

a world is hard work, but often there are some key elements to consider. It might be magic,

futuristic technologies, incredible abilities, and more. There is usually one element that sets the

world apart from our own. Some worlds might also contain other worlds that again have different

set of values and different lore. We can exemplify this in his book "The Magicians Nephew" by C.S.

Lewis, which provides an area to which the main characters can travel that has millions of pools that

provides portals to other worlds. These worlds are as we learn in his Narnia Chronicles, privy to their

own rules and set of Values.

> "There were no birds, no insects, no animals, and no wind. You could almost feel the trees
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> growing. The pool he had just got out of was not the only pool. There were dozens of
>
> others—a pool every few yards as far as his eyes could reach"[18].

The building of the world is important to the story, but also one of the most interesting

aspects. It is one of the few fantasy elements that are not impeded by its media. Since it is the

framework of the story, the frame that contains the story it is one of the things that have to be told

regardless of how the medium works. When we convert a book to a movie, we sometimes loose

scenes, characters, lore, locations, and more because of the format not being up to the task of either

having enough time or money to set it up. However, the goal is to capture the sense, the feeling of a

world. The sense of the world will have to be the same for the story to be the same. It might be that

we get a lot more world lore from the books, but we still have to be given the premise by the movie

that Harry Potter is a story that takes place in a secret place in England, that there are wizards, that

they act in secrecy, and that there is a school for magic. Also included is the mannerisms, which are

very important. Being a fantastic world there are often mannerisms and general supplements to the

real world, continuing the example of Harry Potter, it is essentially a supplement to the real world,

being that it is hidden from sight, it might reminds people of the ever clever Sherlock Holmes stories,

because it is a part of English society and since Holmes always gives away the credit, he is not acting

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[18] Lewis p. 21

in secret, but like the Potter stories it is something that could have happened, were it not for that fact that magic do not exist[19]. Such a world is important because it is supposed to immerse you by relaying the knowledge, that it is part of our world, but also that it is enchanted to be a secret in our society and thus just like the Holmes stories, one could feel like it could have happened. It really draws on all the Felski terms: As I have already eluded, we have the 'knowledge' and the 'enchantment' part, actually literal enchantment and the 'recognition', in that one might often dream oneself away to another place, another time, another world, the fact that we see this world connected with what happened in our own in the past, because the culture in the 'Harry Potter' series also have a rich culture and history, that resembles our own, albeit from another perspective. Last, we have the 'shock' factor, which persists in the way the plot uses the other factors to shock us. What is very important with a series like Harry Potter is that the reader is quickly educated in the lore of the universe. It is a literal secret place where a whole culture of people live and it is very interesting to see how Rowling uses the perplexity of people not yet a part of the wizarding community to provide the reader with lore and 'knowledge' through people who are not yet a part of the wizarding community. I think it is best worded by Rowling herself in the character of the current Prime Minister of England in the books, when she says:

"But for heaven's sake — you're wizards! You can do magic! Surely you can sort out — well — anything!" Scrimgeour turned slowly on the spot and exchanged an incredulous look with Fudge, who really did manage a smile this time as he said kindly, "The trouble is, the other side can do magic too, Prime Minister"[20].

Or the case Hagrid makes in front of Harry the first time they meet each other:

""But what does a Ministry of Magic do?"

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[19] Fry & Rowling
[20] Harry Potter and the half blood prince p. 52

"Well, their main job is to keep it from the Muggles that there's still witches an' wizards up an' down the country."

"Why?"

"Why? Blimey, Harry, everyone'd be wantin' magic solutions to their problems. Nah, we're best left alone."[21]."

As the wizard have their own culture, we meet through Harry Potter a world that does not always comply to his standards, he often worries and stares helplessly as the other wizards, who have been brought up in the wizarding community and just knows how to act. For example, in 'The Goblet of fire", where Harry saves Gabrielle Delacour from her prison in the waters even though he was only supposed to save Ron. As Ron, a wizard born in the community comments on Harry's achievement: ""There you go. Harry!" Ron shouted over the noise. "You weren't being thick after all - you were showing moral fiber!""[22]. It shows how Ron never thought that they wold let the poor girl drown, but Harry, partly having been through a tough time with a dark wizard and partly from a non magical upbringing takes the situation very seriously. It shows how he is still haven't adjusted to the limit to which the wizarding community find sport and when they find danger.

As we can summarize, how the world is different form our own is important because it affects the characters, the plot line, mannerisms, and conclusively the whole story.

4. The Computer

We learn of fantasy on quite a different set of platforms and media these days. We are in no way limited to books and previous generations have been. With the invention of the movie and more than anything else the personal computer we have a lot of new ways to enjoy the fantastic. Movies provide just like the book a very one sided and completely devoid of interactivity. It is true

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[21] Harry Potter and the philosopher's Stone p. 51
[22] Harry Potter and the Goblet of fire p. 252

for those and other media that the platforms does not invite the audience to participate in how the story plays out. It is true that some rare and books and movies can be found that utilize the format and give some kind of interactivity. In books it would be they way they can give you a choice to continue on either page xxx or xxx to let the characters make the choice given to you, or in movies, they might give you to choice through the technology of the DVD to go through the menu and let it play the next piece of the movie of your choice. However, they do not offer might for the viewer/reader to act on their own and discover other parts of the world. They are limiting in terms of being and interactive experience. Both movies and books offer a specific storyline that is not to be altered by anything, the experience might be perceived differently, but the subject matter will forever be the same no matter how the world around it changes. It is as injected into the pillars of the world as Ong talks about when exploring the idea of the immortality of the written word.

We are of course able to interact with it post reading or viewing. We are able to discuss it and in the case of fan fictions are able to build on it and change the story to our liking. I have discussed this further in my section on fan fictions. There is no format as of yet that we can look to for guidance in order to find something that is truly interactive, in terms of technology we will always have to have clever programming to make it seem like we are indeed interacting with the media or we have to make a human be the receiving part and able to change the world in that way, more on that later.

Now since this thesis is about fantasy it would have been natural for me to include a definition of it in my theory section, however I have chosen to not do this since this thesis is about the technologies through, which we experience fantasy. However, I will be discussing different theories later on, the reason being that I have a lot to go through first.

4.1 The Convenience of Computers

I will be starting off by talking about the computer as a technology. The computer has become very quintessential to not just more modern types of fantasy stories and experiences, but also to the older format. Because of this I will start by talking about the written text and the computer and then go on to talk about the more modern fantasy medias and the trouble they face because of their multimediality.

We have briefly discussed the difference between Orality and Literacy. They are both technologies that we have cultivated over thousands of years and stand as the main way of communicating in our time. However, since the invention of the computer and indeed the internet, we have enjoyed the idea of many things, including electronic production of the written word. There is a big difference in the analog written word and the digital one. While in the right circumstance they might not be that different. We are able to read both just fine, they both have grammar and so on, but when something is digitalized it can be messaged and accessed in an instant and most importantly of all, instantly edited. Digital text has the very special ability of being interactable. We can comment on almost anything instantly and tell people what we think about a new article or some video. We are masters in commenting, we make our thoughts heard everywhere, we are able to let our words follow the original text for everyone to read. This is a thing that is interesting especially for people in fandoms, which we will discuss later.

The Personal Computer came to the markets in 1975, it was a MITS Altair 8800, named after the enclosed most popular Central Processor Unit of the time. Computers have developed exponentially since that time. Over the years, companies have shaped content to be viewable on these PCs. Whether computers will ever truly become interactable, will remain to be seen. It is surely an interesting question, however, we will be discussing the reactions to that later. For convenience I will briefly introduce the difference in single player and multiplayer games, since it matters a lot as to what narratological line we can give them.

4.2 Gaming

Games are fundamentally different from books, but not just in the way we experience them. Games have always been different from literary texts, however it was not until very recently in our history, that games came to include the story based computer game. As such we are in some terms so far from the traditional game like Ludo, that using the same term as an umbrella term seems wrong[23]. The cinematic experience and the fact that we are able to influence the world in some way sets the computer game very far apart from both books and movies. The fact that we are able to choose is no little difference, it is the foremost difference on why games are so hard to talk about like we could a specific scene in a book or a movie, of course games sometimes also have cinematic scenes where we are forced to lay back and watch like if it was a movie or book, However, the choices changes it quite a bit and I will be talking about this phenomenon and its connection to fantasy later on, when we have discussed what a computer game is.

There is a large difference in the way that we select games. A story can be enough to try out a game, but I would suggest, that the genre of the story is but one thing. We tend to further characterise games into the type of way they are played. 'Platformer', 'MMORPG', 'RPG', 'puzzle', and 'FPS' are all terms for different types of games and there are numerous more. They are all different playstyles and while some might make the case that there or only 2D and 3D games and overall that should be enough, there is still the fact that a book can only be read from start to finish and a movie can only be seen from start to finish. This is largely the truth and even if it isn't, we rarely se books sorted in any other way than genre, pertaining to what type of knowledge they contain. While there is such a thing as reference books, it is still only a page with words on it.

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[23] Understanding video games p. 23

Objectively, it is the same display a fantasy book would provide to someone who had never seen a

book before. However, computer games are a lot more diverse because anyone would be able to tell

the difference between the famous game 'Pong' and any 3D based 'RPG' like 'The Witcher'. Genres

can be a good way to talk about books and movies, however other than the genre of the dominant

playstyle of a specific title, games are much harder do recognize as some theorists reminds us:

> "Game theorist Espen Aarseth considers it unproductive to define a genre based on one
>
> variable (such as theme) as this is likely to have major overlaps (e.g. games that are about
>
> shooting *and* flying) or tell us nothing very interesting[24]."

Because of this distinction I will be talking about games as either fundamentally single or

multi-player as that is a big distinction, not only to the game and the way it has been build, but also

to the use of narrative in the plot. It is one of the factors, in my opinion, that is imperative as to

understand why the game acts as it does.

4.3 Single vs multi - player

Single player games are often known for having the best story, we are able to look at them

and part many of those that claim to be interactive experiences like: Skyrim or Oblivion, which are

both huge open world games where you are able to go wherever you want and explore the world.

They are often crowded with mini missions and of course a master story line. There might be some

who prefer such stories because they are able to become a bigger part of the world, almost like a

book with small side stories that you are able to read at leisure at any point in your adventure. It is

also littered here and there with choices. The choices could be for example, to turn in the criminals

or let them get away with their loot, often not something that actually impedes the main story line,

but enough in the players power to be defined as some form of 'interaction'. However, some games

might require you to do certain mission to reach a certain ending in the overall game. So there is a

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[24] Understanding videogames p. 40

level of interactivity, but the level we are at is still within the confined rule space, we never go

beyond the original programming, that is how I define true interactivity. What we need to cover is

that games are very different from books exactly because you are the chooser, you are able to go

through a game the way you want to with the rules and choices you are provided. The book provides

a very linear story in the way that we only have the choice to go from start to finish, exactly as the

writer has written it and it might be hard to see, but here the computer game is very similar it just

have more facettes and the ability for the player to spend as much time in each area or parts of the

story. The game requires the player to go on a hunt in the game to find the story by talking with the

characters, reading lore, and whatever might be the developers fancy. Where the single player game

differs hugely from the multiplayer is that it has the ability to suit the story better to the player,

however it is also limited in that you cannot explore it with others and have an interaction with

other people. Earlier I mentioned the idea of learning from the impressions you get from books to

discover other ways of living, this is where the game is brilliant, because it offers not just the visual

of a movie, but a lot of what a movie can narratologically speaking, skip, when a book is turned into

a movie for example. It is able to retain and let the player experience the lore on a much larger scale.

        Videogames can have a great story and talking from a narrative standpoint we might be

forced to largely look at the single player, because they often offer the most linear story and

therefore the most coherent narrative. It is not impossible to analyse a great multiplayer game like

'World of Warcraft', however, the actual game is largely consistent of different people with their

own characters and then all these different worlds they can travel to, but it is precisely that, which in

some cases can devoid a game of a coherent storyline. Within these worlds there are quests that

need to be done. If we look at the quests as standing alone, there are definitely specific

narratological storylines in there, but then again, we can say the same about the side quests in single

player games. There might be some overall goal in these largescale games, but not something you

can easily go do over the course of a few days, these games are meant to go on for the long haul. A

much more interesting thing to discuss is not the game itself, but the story or the path that the

player chooses for his character. As they have access to other people, they are in command of

making their own party, having a specific role in it, going on specific quests together, as well as

having a specific personality. In other words, one can more easily give the game another level by

actively speaking and acting with other people. Within the space of this fantasy world, they are able

to find real connections with other people and their characters. There might even be discrepancies

in the idea of playing your character even outside the game, but we have numerous cases of young

children, purged of any other social influence who find people across the world in these games. They

share events, speak of hardship, they gain social connection with other people through the game[25].

In this way the multiplayer platform or a more specific type; 'MMORPG's might be the most

interesting to discuss compared to single player games, because it is so much more personal,

precisely because people can connect with other people, who has an interest in becoming

something different in this other world. Along with the personal relationships, developers want

people to play as much as possible and instead of having a questline with an end, they instead keep

releasing new updates and extra content to the players and then that will give the players new

worlds and new quests, but it is not a game that one can win as such. It has much more to do with

how you utilize, gear up, and develop your character. However, as these things find their way into

the world, it becomes larger and more dynamic. There are of course other types of multiplayer

games like, the very popular 'looter shooter' as they call it, 'borderlands', that is made specifically to

be a single or multiplayer game. You can choose to allow other people into your game and help you

during and outside missions. However, what makes it so different is that, it has a specific storyline

and is only able to cater up to 4 players at any one time. 'Borderlands' has a linear storyline, but also

include a lot of smaller missions, but you have to clear the main mission to gain access to other

places. It is no problem clearing it alone, but a lot of the dialog is designed to allow for more players

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[25] Computers in Human Behavior p. 11

to be present. Of course, games like borderlands are categorically different to the larger scale

multiplayers I have mentioned, as they do have a story mission and only people you invite can

partake in your game. In addition, there are also the competitive e-sport titles as they are commonly

called today[26]. 'Counterstrike' and 'Overwatch' are two such titles, another thing that ties them are

the fact that two teams compete against the other. Overwatch is a little different in that they have a

lot of different characters that continuously expand with both new characters and new areas. Your

character can not level up, it is purely skill based. Even though games like Overwatch sport weapons

and utilities of science fiction, it has no narratological line if we look at just the game. However, the

developers have sprinkled in stories in the form of animated shorts, and some story missions. As

such there is no story in the game, but they have chosen more traditional means of telling it. The

story missions are then only available once a year. However, there is no direct narratological line we

can follow to understand the timeline of the lore, however, the characters are presented in such a

way that they are very distinctive and have their own personalities. So, to sum up. Multiplayer

games are notorious for the individual story they provide, but as far as that can be an interesting

aspect, it is worth analysing, however, the rest of the thesis will concern itself with the experiences

computer games provide and I will not be differentiating between single and multiplayer, because

now that we have understood the difference, the word 'video game' will suffice. However, it is

important going forth to understand that the difference is important to the fantasy.

4.4 Fantasy Worlds in Computers

In this section I will look at how the worlds in videogame differs from the ones in books and

movies and what possibilities we have for creating a world. A videogame is of course fundamentally

different in terms of presenting the fantastic world. There is no need for imagination or the level of

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[26] Understanding Video Games p. 161

interpretation which is often required in books. Instead of having to imagine we are simply there, whether it is through goggles or simply a computer screen, it is generated in front of us. The world that is displayed is like the feed of a camera and on top of that we have some level of control as to what is going on in there. Often, we will have the opportunity to look through our characters eyes and see what they see, control them, and orchestrate events. In front of us is something quite extraordinary that people would probably have found impossible a hundred years ago. We are invited along and are able to learn about this world. In some sense we do deal with a world that has consequences, but we are often able to try again and again to reach the ideal outcome. If we die, we are 'respawned' and can return when we are at a higher level. So, we can conclude that there are rules in the game, that govern how we can play it. However, while it is often the convention in games that the characters talk about death as final, we know that there are special rules for us. It is created under the notion that a game has to be somewhat playable. For example in the game 'Borderlands', you are informed, that if you die, you will just be re-made, for x amount of money, of course it will always take a specific percentage so you can never die completely, however should you kill any boss enemy, they will be gone forever. If you had to start over every time, if would become quite the tedious experience, so these are some of the rules that governs a game.

        The fantasy aspect and immersion are helped along quite a bit because the world arguably looks more real than it ever could in a book. Just like in the real world a game is made from rules. If you take a specific action you will experience a consequence according to it. Computers are notorious like the real world in that it will always adhere to the rules of the game, it will only react to the inputs it receives, even though some of them has grown so sophisticated that it might be hard for some to see. We can easily conclude that all games relay on their ability to have rules and use them. Rules are quintessential both for the world, but also for the player. They have to count on the fact that the world is governed by some rules, whether we expect them out of intertextuality form other games or the type of Felski 'knowledge', that we might have learned through the lore and the mannerisms and our surroundings. In some cases, intertextual knowledge of how other game worlds

are made in terms of controls and the use of different abilities, especially the currency of 'lives', are

expected to be understood by the player beforehand. It is rare to find a game that relies on counting

the lives of your character in todays market, however, it is a concept that almost every gamer is

aware of. A world is always governed by rules and we must follow them in order to win a game, but

rules in games and especially in fantasy ones are very different from those in books. The rules might

be the same, say this thing and a beam comes out of your wand, but in games you are often limited

by the system or your character might be able to destroy planets with a mere flick, but that would

never function in a game world, so therefore, your abilities might be enhanced or lowered

accordingly. As opposed to books, games actually have to create a form of the world and has to

create visual images, whereas in a book we have the freedom of experiencing a world and its lore

through the protagonist and many things might be possible in our minds, but a game might not have

the same level of interactivity, which I will be discussing in the next section.

4.5 Interactivity

A game allows you to take form in a universe. It is arguably the closest we can come to

feeling like going to another world. An example would be the "Assassins Creed" series. In the games

you are able to walk around in a simulation of the past. The only thing keeping the 'simulation'

stable is the player. The player then has to act in a manner as the character would. i.e. not killing

random bystanders, dying, not completing mission, and similar things like it. Should the rules be

broken, the system will automatically send the player back to a staple connection with the words;

"desynchronised" and you are able to try again. Essentially it is reinforcing the concept of gaming,

even in while you are in it. In a way you are a person in a game playing a game. This really puts the

rules of a game into perspective. The rules are after all highlighted any time you are about to do

something you should not. In many of them it is possible to do these forbidden things, but it will

result in a ban. For example, you are able to kill bystanders in many of the titles in the series, but it

will result in a warning and a slight desynchronization, but ultimately giving you a game over. Since

the character we control in the game is a supernatural being, it is very interesting to use features like

'eagle vision' because the character in the game are very aware of the existence of the ability, but it

is presented to us in the form of pressing a button and being able to see enemies and locations of

special interest. In no game yet produced are you able to be judged as you would in the real world

by your surroundings, such a thing would be immensely powerful. A game, however, might mimic

the rules of our universe to some degree. It is because of the format that the game is able to give us

the rules in such a convincing way, we are supposed to be the guy controlling the other guy in the

simulation therefore it would make sense that the system would have a consequence if we ingored

or were not able to fulfil the mission it gave us. Why you are respawned when you die, why you can

keep going at missions and the like, is very clearly explained through this approach. However, a

game would prove very uninteresting if you would just stay dead if you died, albeit such games do

exist. Interactivity does mean a lot to the player, the more you are able to interact with things and

NPC's (non player characters), the more immersive the game becomes. There is a case to be made

for the way the game interacts with its player, it is important that you can influence the world

around you in a game, the more the better, but it is also through its ability to be interactive that it

influences us. The games ability to influence us is important because the better we understand the

rules of interactivity in a game, the most immersed we will be. Games like 'Until dawn' takes this

philosophy to a new level. The game has a few sections were the player is addressed directly and

they are then asked some questions about their life, their fears and the like. The game then takes

this into account in its rendering of the environment to give provide the experience. It can become

quite hard to remember that you are in fact playing a game because it can feel so natural to adhere

to the rules of it. You learn to interact with the things in the game, you lean to focus on them and

begin to think in terms of the information or knowledge you have gathered in the world. Your brain's

power to immerse you can become very strong indeed. It is a new type of the Felski 'knowledge' that

has both to do with the lore we get from playing the game and its surroundings, but also how we

influence the world. Something else that is important to interactivity is the way you interact

physically with your body. The choice is generally to either use a computer where you generally have

access to any kind of controller or keyboard if you can find the right driver, and even though most

consoles have been restricted to use only controllers, they have recently been known to allow

keyboards through the universal serial bus or USB. However, to people who game on their computer

it is mostly typical to do so with a mouse and a keyboard, at least in the more competitive titles of

games. Many gamers might automatically let their fingers fall on the WASD keys if they play

computer games where those are the default movement keys. The reason I mention controls is

because of the developments into VR technology. Of course, many VR titles are merely proof of

concept, stuff like finger tracking have yet to make it into any major game title. It is not a typical

technology yet. As the VR experience gets cheaper, there will be an increase in the games that

support it. Some consoles have also adopted the technology and have released different editions of

their games, including 'Until Dawn' so that people can experience them in VR.

VR stands for Virtual Reality. The capabilities for VR are infinitely more interesting because

we are able to look at the world from the character we play. We are able to implement ourselves

into the world and because many systems track your movement, it is possible to interact with many

things because it requires you to reach out your own hand and grab the stuff using a remote. It is

still largely done with a controller in your hand, which is very different form the traditional controller

we see from different console developers. Needless to say, when you are not impeded by monitors

and arbitrary buttons you feel a lot more invested because your visuals are captured entirely. When

you step into a VR title, you understand how much of your awareness is done through vision. The

fact that we can stand within the game and have a live feed from it, that track not only where we

look but also tracks the movement of our eyes become a very interesting experience. If we talk

immersion, it will be infinitely better to view the fantastic from this place. There are still limitations,

but the promise VR gives us is untold. We are able to exist inside the other reality. It might also be

why the idea of virtual reality have given birth to so many stories like: 'Ready player one', 'Sword Art

Online' and so on. Both titles cover the idea of immersion into a game or another world. However, in

those account we talk about a 'full dive', a complete entering of all sense to another world. The idea of superimposing yourself into a world is very tempting, however we are still impeded by the prepared characters and their prepared lines that we see in normal games. The promises we see in the stories that have been created are not reality yet, we do not have that amount of 'full dive' yet and probably will not in our lifetime as it requires us to ensnare all our senses and not merely sight and hearing. However, many people find it very interesting to be able to experience the world inside it instead of from the outside. The idea of wishing to cross borders into another world is not a new one, but it is the first time it is even remotely possible to visit another world. The further we can ensnare the senses to be inside another world, the more we are able to cross over into another world where the fantastic blossoms. The reason I mention all these accounts is that the fantastic is always somewhere in our fantasy and precisely because vision and immersion is so important to be able to interact properly, however we can never reach any of it. As opposed to many other narratives, the fantastic often involve epic moments and magic, being able to do something that is considered impossible in the real world, really goes a long way to feel like you have crossed over to another place. This is especially important for fantasy games and potentially movies as it can provide a much more immersive experience precisely because of the subject matter, no matter how much we know that it is impossible to perform those acts in the real world.

4.6 What is a Game

'Game' is a very useful word because it is generally an umbrella term that can be used as we want to. Whether it is a football match, a social activity like tag, a game on the computer, or a whole fourth thing, it is still a game. In the world of computer games alone, games can be categorized after their playstyle and after their genre, like thriller, horror, or something else. And because of this and the fact that most games are not a perfectly linear experience, it can be hard to analyse them, because sometimes there are many choices and they can be hard to replicate.

As we have already talked about, rules are a mixture of knowledge, both meta and the rules that are provided by the game to the player through tutorials and intertextual knowledge, whether they are given to the protagonist or only to the player. Furthermore, we know that some of the same rules are apparent inside books. The difference is that we do not need any meta knowledge, because we are never confronted by the rules in the books and movies. In games we are constantly confronted by the rules that the developers have filled the game with. In books we do learn about them, but books have no way of stopping you from reading and throw you back to an earlier place, because those rules only govern the characters and not the reader. This can be what makes a death in a videogame so interesting because they almost always allow you to go on, no matter how many times you die, however, in books there is no use for such things. It is one of the great differences in fantasy literature. We do not need to understand the rules and the ideas we encounter in a fantasy book; we just need to understand the fundamentals about how to read the specific language. In games we need to understand specific things. Without the knowledge on how to kill enemies, in many games you can't progress the story. It might concern fairly common rules to do most things, as many games control the same pertaining to the kind they are. Therefore, when we walk around in a game, we might be impeded enough that we cannot go past a certain point, as it also might require a certain level of skill. This is not to say that books, fantastic or not, cannot provide a certain level of difficulty to go through and understand, but that is exactly the point, you do not need a tutorial in every book to teach you how to read, you often do in games.

In the next section we will take a look at another kind of game, that was conceived exactly because fantasy exists and because it provides a very interesting argument in the idea of fantasy gaming.

5. Roleplaying games

One might start to discuss whether true interaction in stories is important or not. We might make the case that if we were able to do whatever we want in games, there would be very little challenge, especially in replaying them, essentially we need rules to govern a world, and if the world is complete chaos, that will be its rule. However, the games we have already discussed have a tendency to have to predict the things we do within the game and by anticipating it never really understand our intentions and could never bend to them. If we are able to have the game understand our intentions, it might change the story completely and it might go in another direction. For example if we had a game in which we had to hunt down a vicious zombie lord, it would not be anticipated nor allowed in the computer game to open up a pizza stand and forget all about the evils of the world, it would have to change itself completely and figure out how it should provide a game about maintaining a pizza stand for the player. This is merely an example, however, in roleplaying games it might be a very apt one. If for example one could tell the characters in the book version or indeed the game version of Harry Potter, who was housing Voldemort in "Harry Potter and the Philosophers stone" ("Sorcerers Stone" in America), it would be a pretty short story and not very interesting because we were able to break the suspension because of our own prior knowledge. It is instrumental that the games we play are restrictive and governed by rules that confront us if we break them so that the narrative can continue its set path, even if we know what is going to happen. It isn't only into games that the fantasy genre has clawed itself. However, what would happen if we could have an intelligence change the story according to our own ideas? What if we, instead of assuming the role of Harry Potter in a videogame, we took control of a character in a world that was subject to change as well as being able to shape itself after our will? What if we did make the idea of fantasy totally interactable.

5. Roleplaying games

5.1 What is a roleplaying game?

Roleplaying games have become very popular over the last 20 years. A roleplaying game is much like a play where the actors in it create their own characters and are then put into a world of the game master's creation. The game master or 'GM' is the person responsible for the story and for shaping the world around the players and letting it react to them. If we take, for instance, the popular game 'Dungeons and Dragons' also known simply as DnD as an example. 'DnD' was created by a man called Gary Gygax, he loosely based his game on different English medieval lore, but he was of course also very inspired by the works of J.R.R Tolkien[27]. The game master will make sure that the players have created their character according to the rules. Each player can create a character according to the rules in the rulebooks, which decide their race, basic abilities and their heritage, but it is up to the player to decide the story of their character and try to create them in accordance with the rules, in the basic 'Player's Handbook', people are able to choose from 7,020,285,872,418 different character designs over the course of a game. The player has to choose a race, a class and a background for their character for a start. It is then through that character, that players are expected to interact with the other players and the world. The world around them is governed by rules which the GM will follow at their discretion, which is also why the spells of the game are so carefully detailed, so characters and players do not abuse them. Many of them have very specific measurements defined. Spells are rather diverse and that is one of the reasons why the DM sometimes have to make a judgement call because not everything is ruled out and if nobody is aware of a rule, they have to make a judgement to the best of their abilities. If we had to consider the knowledge, we needed in pc games, then the rules we need to know here are infinitely more complicated. There are very specific rules as to how for you can walk until your character needs a break and sometimes one has to roll to see if the character can even go on or will suffer from exhaustion. A lot more meta knowledge is required for the player to be able to play their character.

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[27] Gygax

It is interesting to see how a game based only on books are infinitely more complex to play than a computer game. There is some graphical work and you can operate a game digitally, but it is still up to the people involved to do almost everything, form rolling the dice to push their characters around on the battlefield and govern the rules. It works because we need to use our own fantasy as with books. Of course, there is such a thing as official rules, however, many GMs take up homebrew rules, items and monsters, to further experience so that people feel the consequences around them. That means that they are able to choose from a wider selection when deciding their class, race, and heritage as well. General rules are also subject to homebrewing, all decided by the GM. Of course, not all creatures can use magic, some are just equipped with a sword, but they have training and special abilities that stem from that, which makes them able to keep up with magic users. Those abilities are also determined by their race and class. It might be a good time to talk about the hidden truth in everything that say "anything can happen", while 'DnD' is a game in which everything can happen, however as we can only work with one point of concentration at a time, we are not able to do whatever we want. In the interest of time and the other players, players sometimes have to compromise with their own characters choices as to not disrupt the flow of a game, some characters might have very different opinions about certain things, and it is possible for a character to leave the group or kill one of the other players, however this is not always received the best way. We have to remember that we influence the world in which our characters are directly, and we are in turn influenced by them, because of this we have to sometimes consider a compromise as to not disrupt the whole game and instead let our characters learn from the experience, of course sometimes it is a necessary thing to do, but it is a very common example. You are in charge of acting like your character would in any given situation, you have to feign ignorance even if you know the answer to a question, but your character does not. It is very important that you view them as a different entity sometimes and try to remember how much they know. It is interesting how a person can sort of unite with their character. Even though you have no controls like in a videogame, you still start to think about the choices you are able to make and as you learn the rules more completely, you will

find it easier to find solutions, because the world in front of you can only be influenced by your

imaginary character. It might be interesting to note that the most important thing in the game is not

the rules, because someone is bound to say something if you break them, but it is more important to

be respectful and develop your character. In other words the fantastic narrative is the most

important. The most important thing in the universe is the dice. They decide everything. It decides

how powerful your characters are, how easy they are to kill, how great they do in certain situations.

Your abilities will strengthen over time when your character lv up, but ultimately you can still make a

bad roll even if you have a bonus. The dice adds a certain amount of randomness and chaos to the

game. Of course the characters know nothing about the rules the players have, nothing about any

dice, however, since they are played by the players, the players have to feign ignorance and become

their character for all intents and purposes. However, even though the dice represent randomness it

is not wrong to think of them as rules. Dice often have the final say in disputes and it is a way of

letting randomness decide how well you do in a certain situation. Your stats are then responsible for

the bonus you get when you roll, and they can sway the randomness of the roll according to the

bonus or minus you might have.

5.3 Playing the game

Any game of DnD or whatever roleplaying game you are playing, will always be different

from the other, the only thing you can navigate by is your character and the general rules and the

homebrew that a 'GM', might have introduced. Acting in the game is more like becoming the person

you have created, you do not have a script, you need to make everything up as you go and try to

change your mind to think like the person you have created. What is their background, what was

their childhood like, how would they act in this situation; how do they speak, how is their body

language, are they bored, exited, what are their dreams, what are their ideals, and so on. In the

beginning it can be scary to be someone else, no less because there can be quite a few people

beside you, but there is sort of a norm that people don't make spiteful fun of one another. When the

people are there, you will be sucked into the story like any other book or television series, the only

difference is that you have to be active here, much like a game, however, everything is interactable,

down to the smallest pebble and you are, along with your 'GM' actually responsible for transferring

what you know about the real world into this fantasy one. You slowly become the character you

have created, you will often take on their mannerisms and make hand gestures or not, according to

your 'new' personality, because everything they do becomes what you do. In this way you are able

to imprint yourself into a setting through another person. The wish fulfilment I have talked about a

few times does become more apparent here. You might argue that being an author, a writer might

give you a higher level of the fulfilment of your wish, but I would argue that exactly because you are

not in control of the inner working of this world, you are able to feel more in contact with it and your

desired character, you are in some sense able to escape into another world through this character in

another way than many other things because it is live like a computer game, but it is also of your

own creation. If you lose in a videogame you can generally go back and try again. Here it is more like

the real world, if you die, you die, if you are caught stealing there is no do-over, if you kill someone,

there are consequences, because not only can you make your impression on the world around your

character, but it can also make its imprint on your characters growth and even psyche. In a

videogame you might be able to set a big city on fire without many issues, but in this world, the

guards will not forget you, you might begin to go mad with guilt, you might… and so on. This world is

governed by specific rules and the effect of them are decided by dice, but the characters inside just

see this as a normal thing, they are oblivious to levels, ability scores, rolls, and everything else, that is

not natural.

5.4 The point about roleplaying games

The reason I have taken the opportunity to look at roleplaying games is their quality in terms

of fantasy. There are many variants, but the most popular ones cater to the traditional way many

people see fantasy. It is, in the case of 'DnD' often set in the past. However, it is not weird for the

characters to end up in modern New York because of something magical or science fictive. Fantasy in the roleplaying games are just as important to mention as many of the other things, I have included in this thesis, because it is a different, but similar technology to both the book, game, and spoken word, of course one might talk about what we lose when we shift form one paradigm to another and when we mix up the technologies to create fantastic entertainment, but I will save that for later. Fantasy is entertainment, it is a type of fiction that can transform the world also quite literally. We are going quite far away from Ong and the way he spoke about book reading being a way to improve yourself and your understanding of the world. In the roleplaying game you are able to both impress and be impressed by other views and ideas, the important thing is that you are forced to look thought another viewpoint when you control your character.

Everything we create are made in contrast to our own world, especially the way we view our own world, which I will also talk about later on. We judge everything we encounter by our own understanding of the universe we live in. It is precisely because of that, which makes the roleplaying game so interesting, because we do not need to write dialog or code anything to use it. We simply have to find other people and agree upon some rules and then we are able to create a world through these different kinds of technology that we have made. All the systems and rules are made in order to make the world believable. What is very fundamentally different here however, is that you are the only one who has that specific experience. Technically, some videogames can impart somewhat the same experience to different players, but in the world of DnD you are sure to be privy to your own playthrough, because there is only one of your characters and you are the only one to control them. They all judge what happens from their own subjective role. Roleplaying is of course not a new thing by any means, but the consistency and the intricacy of the roleplaying game is very interesting to the way we view fantasy, because even though it might not contain any fantastic trait depending on your type of game, there are still something very interesting about playing out the fantasy in such detail, to be able to go above and beyond what any videogame could impart, to be a person in this world. One might suggest that the mere idea that we imagine another world with

different sets is enough to make it a fantastic adventure. It is restrictive in other ways, of course you

do need other players to set up the world around you, playing by yourself, would not give the same

kind of effect as having people around you help set up the world. It is an interesting aspect that you

are often able to play a videogame, or watch a movie, or read a book by yourself, but the roleplaying

game needs other people to function. That is probably the most fundamental and what sets it apart

form other kinds of fantasy entertainment, but also its uniqueness in terms of stories and

experience.

6. Fandom

With the utilisation of the internet we have seen many new inventions and types of software

that are specifically designed for us to utilise the internet connectivity and engage in the social

planes of the internet. We can name Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other social webpages like

those. Webpages like those feature a way to show content on a larger scale form both normal

people and big corporations. We can transmit anything we want to, for other people to find and we

meet the term 'user generated content'. We are in an increasing fashion able to broadcast any and

all facets of life. As the name alludes, the idea is for independent people to generate content within

the border of the software, which is at their disposal. Everyone who has access to a computer is able

to create stories, art, movies, or music regardless of talent or prior experience. The main thing we

are going to be discussing through this part of the thesis is the so-called 'transformative work', it

means that people have grabbed something that already exists but are able to change or improve

upon it to release it again. The discussion of what constitutes a transformative work is not

something I will be going into, but I will be discussing how fandoms utilise it and use it to expand and

understand the universe of the fandoms they are a part of. In this part we are mainly going to focus

on the fandom and the fanfiction. I will be going through what constitutes a fandom and how the

term fanfiction is used within it.

6.1 What is a fandom and where do they find each other?

Fandom is a term given to those communities that consists of the people who have a mainly online presence, build because of the existence of a certain piece of art. Fandom is more than just the online content we are able to find on various webpages like, Deviantart, Fanfiction.net, Tumblr and other pages like those. Fandoms vary greatly in size. Depending on their size they will have their own internal resources for sharing their content. Where Fanfictions.net is a united page for almost every possible series, movies, books, games, and any other type of entertainment, fandoms like the Brony fandom, which are fans of the series: 'My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic', have multiple resources to share content on. Fimfiction.net is their fan-fiction resource, equestriandaily.com is a news site, mlpforums.com, which is a general forum, and pony.fm, their music streaming service. There are multiple more and a whole range that broadcasts the episodes and fan made audio and video content continually throughout every day. It is one of the fandoms that are lucky enough to have multiple conventions across the world, with a staggering number of fans spread all over the world. Usually the fandom will have a structure much like a nation will, especially if it is big enough[28]. It will have a full culture, rich with its own music, art, movies, literature, clothing, videos, and a mix of the different media and most importantly, it will have a sense of togetherness a feeling of belonging to each other and the cause. It is a very specific community, that is held together by its creator and participants, therefore people often feel like they belong there, because they are per definition going to meet people who are fans of the same thing as them, as such they can get a sort of unspoken or unwritten citizenship to this nation. The content will usually derive from the show, series, movies or whatever kind of media might be able to convey content. Like a nation, there will be people who uphold the 'law', moderators that are able to uphold the sometimes unwritten values that might derive from the original content or common sense. The tagline to the series My Little Pony is, as mentioned earlier; 'Friendship is Magic' and therefore many 'Bronies', as they call

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[28] Westberg p. 1

themselves, aim to spread an atmosphere of friendship and peace[29]. Because some people create these pages on the internet some content will be more promoted than other fan entertainment and because of this, fandoms will sometime acknowledge celebrities within the fandom itself. People that create entertainment for the audience. Many people and especially 'famous' ones in fandoms will find names for themselves that derive from the original content and be known by a so called 'OC' or 'Original Character'. These 'OC's' will often be used by many within the fandom, but often the celebrities within the fandom will brand themselves with the name of their 'OC'. In the Brony fandom there are many well-known creators and some like 'The Living Tombstone' has gone on the become more mainstream famous in many different fandoms and with close to 3,7 million subscribers on Youtube.com, he has become quite popular[30]. Since we have already discussed the gamer aspect of the fantastic it would make sense to include a quote:

> Serious players do not content themselves with just the game. "The game, and the typically rudimentary communication it offers between players (such as limited-length text chat in many shooters), is simply not satisfying enough. And so, metaculture is born. In order to bring a game beyond the screen, so to speak, players construct elaborate out-of-game meeting places; these devotees can do anything from discussing a given game to creating ranking systems for evaluating their performances."

This quote from 'Understanding Video Games' really puts into perspective what it will say to be a fan of a certain thing. It is important for some gamers to create relation through the game and across the fandom to make them feel like they can enter the world, by talking about it and doing research into the game and try to relate it to the real world. This is something that I will be discussing later in this thesis in my sections on bringing the fantastic into the real world and how we interact with it.

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[29] Robertson p. 25
[30] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFYMDSW-BzeYZKFSxROw3Rg

6.1 How do they utilize the internet

We all know the famous Wilde quote: "Man is least himself when we talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth", this seems to be true of the fandom culture. When they engage in their 'other nation' they are able to go into another state of their personality. They can gain a different set of values, they can be more open, they can become part of another culture, they have a completely blank slate with no reason to hide themselves or their interests, because nobody knows them, they are able to hide completely behind their screen and engage in the fandom without the fear of someone discovering them, if they are not open about this fictive nation. They are able to create another person online, another aspect of who they are, especially if they treat the fandom as an escape from their own reality. They are part of a society where they know people are likeminded and have a common ground. We could for example take and interest in the Harry Potter fandom. There are quite a few reasons for choosing this fandom. It is still one of the biggest. On Fanfiction.net, their influence is ever growing, they are still very much active even though the series 'ended' several years ago. However, the 'Potterheads' as they like to call themselves, are privy to some of the fundamentals in the fandom community. They were one of the first fandoms to go digital, before them, series like 'Star Trek' were some of the pioneers in the creation of fandoms, but they mostly conferred at conventions. The 'Trekkies' as they were known, shared their fan fictions and other creations at their conventions, but for the main part were analogue in their presence[31]. They of course had the same ability to be a part of this fandom as people do today, but with the increase in people getting access to the internet, the online fandoms have grown exponentially. Therefore, the Potter fandom was pioneers in the use of the digital world, creating homepages, sites for fanfiction, message boards, and other such things for their passion. As the 'nation' quickly grew, it also came with the hierarchy of moderators, admins and other such titles, but they also gained traditions within the community that was bound to a specific time of year. Now we are going to look

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[31] Click & Scott p. 123

at fanfiction and I will try to define what it is and how it has a special relation to the fandom and how people utilize it.

6.2 What is fanfiction

Fanfiction is used by the fandoms as their literature, there are usually some in the fandom that are known for their abilities in this form of entertainment and it is created both by amateurs and actual writers with experience[32]. They usually utilise the world and some of the characters that are native to the original content in order to put them in other settings and tell untold stories. The fanfiction is the wish fulfilment of the writer and sometimes the reader, it is created by the user in order to serve some self-interest or their idea about characters. Describing it as wish fulfilment is not wrong, as with most fantasy literature we are entering the world of a creator who wants to introduce us to its characters and whatever trouble there might be. And much like this the fanfiction goes even further. The fans are the new creators, they have a desire to become a part of their favourite stories and how they do this is often by making their own content within the world, they are expressing a desire to have a conversation with the original content and give it their own wishes.

What is especially interesting to this thesis are the stories that implement real world characters or their 'OC's' as the stories generate such a desire to be a part of the world. It is important to note these, as we engage with the written word and especially the digitalized word, we meet the increasing desire to become a much larger part of it. Right here in the fanfiction we see the need of some people to become part of another world. They, in a way, wish to invoke some kind of conversation by trying to interact with the world they adore. The intertextual tendencies in fanfiction are a large part of it. Without them we would not be able to create fanfiction at all, because we borrow so much and it is so apparent what is happening to the text. It is read exactly because it is advertised as using the rules and flavours of another world, a known world. We might find things in stories that claim they did not draw inspiration from another work, and in that case we

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[32] Schaffner p. 613

might say that there is a literary tradition for stories about magic to have those and those attributes,

but fanfiction never claims to own anything it is there for the writer and the reader to simply enjoy

the universe in their own mind and are pretty clear about their heritage.

Fanfiction is the written word and intertextuality gone wild. From Ong's point of view we can

instantly publish the stories created by the fans, we can read different takes on the main story,

alterations and a lot more, and we can understand a perspective form somewhere else, in other

words, heighten our consciousness. As Ong says: "Technologies are not mere exterior aids but also

interior transformations of consciousness, and never more than when they affect the word. Such

transformations can be uplifting"[33]. He says this to support his statement, that it is not bad to call

writing artificial[34]. To put it roughly, the very core of intertextuality is to say that there is

resemblance in writing. The technology of the computer has made it possible to publish anything

instantly and that is what fanfiction is. We are able to recreate literary works, but keeping many of

the same characters, worlds, items, lores, and so on. It might not be correct to define it by the quote

I mentioned by Ong, however he is speaking about the broader ideas of technology and at the same

time talking about how different kinds can chance and or heighten our consciousness and that is

exactly what fanfiction does by constantly changing the source material from that fandom or

fandoms. The idea of fanfiction exists specifically to transform the consciousness of the original

source material to create a new one.

6.3 Why is fanfiction important to the fandom?

"It's a sort of definition of successful fiction to have a world that is somehow circumscribed

by its own rules, its own ethics, its own cultural flavour, and smell and senses, and you've

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[33] Ong p. 81
[34] Ong p. 81

done this, and that's why it's very common to hear about children and adults dreaming that

they are in Hogwarts"[35]

Dreaming, in this context should be understood as the literal term dreaming and not

metaphorically dreaming or wishing. However, Stephen Fry is very clear here. Those are reasons for

people to enjoy a fantastic world. A world, the knowledge it imparts is just as important to the world

itself as it is to fanfiction writers since it is their task to operate within an already explored universe,

to make sense of their story with somebody else's rules. It is important to note however that, while

it is not an original work, it still in general have to find some reason to emit the rules of the original

stories. It might be that they bring characters from other fantastic universes in or their own. It might

also be an object, but whether they choose to do one or the other, we still take a basis in the rules,

by trying to find a way to omit them is the same as acknowledging them in some way. This might be

why the quote form Stephen fry is so apt in considering why fanfiction is so appealing. The writer

wants something to happen in this world, they want some order of events to take place. However, it

can be a little tedious to only write to yourself, however, it is a pressing matter, to get this story out.

So, they are lucky that a lot of other people online just happen to do the same thing, they also read a

lot of it themselves, they are able to experience what a lot of people have written and see their take

on certain ideas within the fandom and the universe, they are able to talk about it and make this

fandom a community. Fanfiction give people the chance to enter, for example the school of

Hogwarts themselves and in the shape of fandom they are able to get human interaction and at least

kid themselves, that they indeed are there. Being called by nicknames, wearing clothing, using a

specific language, and other norms from a fantasy is helping the immersion as well. This is why you

might find clusters of people dressing up and cosplaying form a specific universe. Cosplay means per

definition 'costume play' and is a whole other part of the fandom that is a subject of another thesis,

but it is worth mentioning, that wearing the same close and acting is very much the same change a

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[35] Fry and Rowling

person goes through when they log into their favourite fan page and takes part of this. They cross

the border to a different land, where they have a community, a nation they are part of.

Another reason that fanfictions are important to the fandom is that it, to them, are just as important

as the real stories. The fanfictions are their way of continuing the stories so that they could in

corporate their own ideas. As Suman Gupta says:

> "It is this interwoven quality that actuates the Harry Potter fluid text, of which the Harry
>
> Potter fan fiction text is as much an integral part (really a very large part) as the original
>
> Harry Potter text itself, and as indeed the various other textualisations of the Harry Potter
>
> phenomenon are. So integral is the fan fiction text to the Harry Potter fluid text that from a
>
> world-to-text perspective it can hardly be overlooked: it has become an auto-perpetuating
>
> area of textual production"[36].

He talks about this 'interwoven quality' that blossomed out of technological convenience,

consumers, their interactions with others, and the creativity of fans. The stories are so important to

the fandom that it can become a part of their own canon and while we cannot analyse all fanfiction

about J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, we can indeed look on the effect it has on people. People

keep taking the original text as if it was small crumbs of sand and melding them into a coherent

story. They are then a type of co author to this story along with Rowling, they then post this new

take on the world themselves and let their story join the millions of others inside the fanfiction

fluid[37].

One might also ask, "why is any fiction important to anyone". It does represent an

interesting discussion, why is fantasy important, but I will save that for later. There is a few more

points about the existence of the fanfiction that I must go through. Up until now I have described

what fandom is and the wish fulfilment that a writer and reader can enjoy, and how they might do

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[36] Gupta p. 218
[37] Gupta p. 219

that. In this part I aim to discuss the strange world one might find in the fanfiction world. An

unwritten rule that anything goes, it is sort of a joke in the community, that whatever you are into,

there is at least one fanfiction for you. Whether it is a romance between Sherlock Holmes and John

Hamish Watson, a world where Harry Potter was brought up by Severus Snape, or a story where

everything that happened was a dream. Whether one write for oneself or the fandom in general it is

important to look at the fandom as a collective. As an example, one will frequently find different fan

fiction competitions and offers where you can buy a specific fanfiction for money. The competitions

contain a few rules and you then have to write a fanfiction containing whatever the issuers have

dreamt up. In addition, there might also be a certain kind of secret Santa where creators go together

and try to think up presents based on the requests of others[38]. A bought story can contain

everything and more. Some writers have issued rules about what they accept as to weed out

potential unwanted requests, but most of the request across any fandom will be about: a special

pairing, a specific event, essentially a minor or major part of the story.

A fanfiction writer does not have to please an editor, or even a copyright, they can write

whatever they like directly to the public. There might be an editor in the terms of solving

grammatical errors, but beyond that they are free to write about anything, anyone, doing anything

in any way they want to. There is always an audience, especially if they write about a popular series.

They even enjoy fame within the fandom because of it and they might suggest edits or changes to

the story, the writer might even ask them for help to get over a tough issue. In essence the fandom

and the fanfiction are about the collective and the ability of the fans to expand and visit the universe

they are fans of.

7. Why do we need fantasy?

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[38] Westberg p. 34

Before we start this section, I will take a few lines to set up the case. I will be talking about religion to quite an extent and will add that I do not condom people's personal beliefs unless they are to any extent harming to others. What I write here is my own opinion and I only aim to explain the need to expand ourselves through the written word. Up until now we have worked with the notion that all fantasy is at some level wish fulfillment; we haven't really addressed the type of wish that we ask in this idea. The wish we ask might never have made its way to the conscious mind, it might have been there all along, or it might be there to some middle extent. A wish in this case is merely that, we can't put any good or bad intentions in it, it is simply there. You might interpret it as a question, a statement, or something third. We imagine for ourselves a reality opposed to our own by living inside it for a spell and then carrying it inside until we no longer need it. Such is that wish. However, What I want to talk about here is why we need fantasy, why we need that world.

7.1 The popularity of fantasy

Fantasy is a large part of popular culture these days, however even in the 1940'ies it was on the rise, in America many new publishers opened their doors to supply the material[39]. Back them Harrison Smith theorized that one of the reasons might be the increasing failure of religion to:

"satisfy the emotional and imaginative needs of human beings has destroyed men's sense of security, their belief in an ordered world, and their hope for a reasonable continuance of sensation after death[40]."

I am prepared to agree with Mr. Smith on this matter. If we accept the fact that people need their own philosophy or beliefs, it must surely be obvious, that if the explanation for everything that in people's minds has been true for centuries, it has to be replaced by something. If we need ideals

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[39] Harrison Smith p. 305
[40] Harrison Smith p. 306

to believe in it would go without saying that people aim to find another alternative, that can please them. Mr. Smith goes on to postulate:

> "With our increasing knowledge of the world and the universe, the charming and legendary paradises and heavens which were sufficient for human imaginings centuries ago have lost their appeal as the abode of billions of enfranchised souls. To vast numbers of people, their churches no longer offer emotional catharsis, mystery and beauty, but a system of rigid morality and ethics, which their observation of human conduct does not enable them to accept as a
>
> mutable and binding law"[41].

Humans have been used to the clear rules and philosophies that had been a fact to them for a long time. They understood, at least in much of the western world, that if you did something morally wrong, you would be subject to a god's wrath. A god was the supreme judge and you were to be held accountable to him when your time came. However, as the human race developed and found new ways to explain phenomena in the world, gods became less and less important. We might have started to find the outlines of how the universe has been put together, but at the same time we became mistrusting and started to lose faith in religion, divine retribution, fairness, judgement, and so on. We became so distanced to our own world as we learned about it, and it might have lost its appeal for many. However, with the sense of wonder gone it is no wonder people started to turn to the fantastic, not to replace god, after all if you did not believe in god you accepted that we never had any supreme conscious power, but to give a sense of wonder, to be able to wish yourself into a land a world, that was inhabited by gods, magic, and science beyond comprehension. It is especially apt that this article by Mr. Smith should be dated directly after the second world war. It would make sense that at least some of the points I have made would apply after such a devastation upon the world.

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[41] Harrison Smith p. 306

Mr. Smith goes on to talk about how the atom bomb is a very real thing, an actual device of mass destruction, but also mentions that every kid, that has grown up with fantasy literature will not be alarmed as to its presence[42]. Because, they will already have read about it, but also be aware of where we are headed, into space and the cultivation of other planets. In other words, the fantastic is so much further in its ideas than in our world. The supernatural and the scientific, seems to Smith to be the two categories that exist[43]. No matter how you piece them together they will always be the frontrunners for science, the things we imagine today are frontrunners and science might one day get there too. There was a time where the car, the computer, the internet, and indeed the atom bomb was but a dream and a distant thing in the future, it might not have been named at that time, but in the worlds those things inhabited, it was real and a frontrunner for science. As such we once again fall on the idea of wish fulfilment, however in relation to science, it might actually be attainable, as opposed to magic, which might as well be treated as unexplainable science. The fantastic impregnates our world with ideas and fantasies. It allows people to dream and believe that things might be possible, as we have already discussed in the earlier section. This is certainly a very good case as to why we need fantasy. It essentially helps us dream and further our world.

If we listen to Mr. Smith, one might say that we have swapped one fantasy out with another. In accepting the fact that magic does not exist in our world, we are still drawn to it. However, every religion in the world offer some sort of magic relief. Be it life after death, extraordinary powers, events that are beyond any comprehension and other stuff like that, but as we accept it, we do change out gods with stories that just like religions might teach us something, impress some philosophy on us. Not that we are dependent on any one kind of story to develop of moral compass, but more that we can read books and develop ourselves from a moral standpoint. As I have talked about a number of times, Ong talks about how we should read books, read words form other people

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[42] Harrison Smith p. 308
[43] Harrison Smith p 308

to gain an understanding of them and their views on life and that can be used by us to expand our

moral compass, our philosophy.

Another reason why people started to flock to the fantastic literature, might have been that

they recognized the rules of a magic world, not because they themselves were a product of a society

in which the belief in god was indisputable, but rather because fantasy offers some sort of mystery

under rules. Our ordinary world is no longer filled with mystery, we always find a scientific reason

that this or that happens, even upheld prestidigitators are never believed, but they keep their

secrets close to maintain the wonder. However, the fantastic offers a world of true mystery, as we

can never experience it for ourselves, magic, space age science, and other phenomena are only privy

to those books and when we are told something we can often treat it as absolutes. However,

phenomena like magic offers explanation, but is still mysterious. Things that are impossible in our

world are fascinating, magic and science are the ground pillars of fantasy literature, they provide the

wonder in those books people love so much. As Mr. Smith also mentions, they are devices that have

unlimited potential[44].

Another reason why we have allowed the world of fantasy to become such a big part of our

own is that our world has become so complicated, that we find relief in the idea of a utopia where

we can overthrow the great evil, because as opposed to the real world, fantasy often have the

quality of having a goal, something more or less specific to overthrow. In Harry Potter it was the dark

wizard. This will never be true for all stories, but we do enjoy a sense of direction going forward, no

matter if it is a roleplaying game, video game, a book, or a movie, there is always a moving force,

whether it is a GM, the following pages, the next pictures, or the missions in a game. There is always

a sense of direction, some goal, something to overcome, be it physical or psychical. Maybe it is not

so much wish-fulfilment, but more escapism from the real world, a way to feel like you have purpose

and direction. Perhaps this is the cause of the boom in popularity we have enjoyed in fantasy

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[44] Harrison Smith p. 306

literature. We are afraid of all the information we gain from the real world, all the black and white

that is less saturated and more grey in the real world. In some ways the world of fantasy can provide

a retreat from anything we fear as well as any drug. The fantastic is a way to give up yourself and be

someone else, according to Felski it should be someone you can relate to, something recognizable to

you or some part of you. Then the sense of direction you enjoy, the passive existence you enjoy in a

story or even any kind of game, roleplaying or otherwise, should be able to create a world where

everything is possible away from your trouble, because you are forced to make choices for someone

else, you are free, but in opposition to the real world, the fantastic can be shut down whenever you

please, it is merely there waiting for you to use it, whereas the problems in the real world never go

away until you deal with them. It is appealing to drift away to a land where you can ignore that thing

that has been bugging you all week, but you can do nothing about and read about the middle ages

where you weren't plagued by constant phone calls.

At this stage I should make it clear that the article Mr. Smith wrote is from 1948. It does not mean

that we should discredit his findings. Quite the contrary, I think that his finding verify much of our

relation to fantasy today as well. The fact that he talks about fantasy to not be ephemeral, might be

the best way of describing it[45]. Oxford dictionary defines ephemeral as: "Lasting for a very short

time"[46]. And goes on to use the word about fashion: "fashions are ephemeral: new ones regularly

drive out the old"[47]. As the premise for fantasy is, as he said, about the use of science and the

supernatural, the idea of fantasy never goes out of style, like fashion does[48]. However, there might

be tendencies and themes that are birthed at specific times, but fantasy is not a fashion show, it is

simply there because it does not matter if we for example reach the goals we set in fantasy because

fantasy cannot be measured like that, we can always come up with themes, but they never go out of

style. In intertextuality we often find hand me downs from older literature, they, as we already have

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[45] Harrison Smith p. 312
[46] Oxford
[47] Oxford
[48] Harrison Smith 312

discussed, are the development of other literary texts. However, over time literacy changes and

different genres has emerged, even inside the fantasy genre. But the fantastic never have a

standstill. It is very understandable that Mr. Smith so often make references to space travelling,

considering the age in which he wrote this article, it makes sense. The moon landing was only 20 odd

years into the future; therefore, it makes sense that there would be a tendency to use space travel in

fantasy. He is just proving that fantasy have had 'fashions' within itself over the years. However,

even though the cultural and the social as time has gone for writing that specific type of fantasy it

can never stop, because as long as these trends have been created, they can never be stopped

again[49]. This only means that there are fads within the genre, but the reality is that fantasy only adds

to its content over time, after all, the source material is in many regards inexhaustible, people are

still writing about space even though we have already been there. We have accepted that there is no

one on the moon other than us, but still it intrigues us to find the mystery of the moon, as such the

subgenres within fantasy might have their origin in ages, but it does not belong to them.

8. A study in the reading habits of fantasy fans

A study was made into the readership of science fiction and fantasy fiction. It was made in relation

to how people experience the genre in terms of how it affects their view on science and scientists in

general. Studies like these are very interesting because they tell us something about the people who

read fantasy and their views on how it inspired them, not just to have another world to escape to,

but to try and improve our world. We are of course not able to measure the degree to which a

person is affected, but studies like these enables large quantities of people to address how they

relate to the books they read. Now this study was specific to books, the written word, but I would

argue that no matter the platform or media the same results would apply as long as they have the

ability to store the thoughts of someone and relaying them in a coherent fashion to someone else.

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[49] Harrison Smith 312

> "Most respondents consider themselves to be open to all sides of an argument (84.8%)
>
> rather than relying primarily on their own opinions. There was a very strong positive
>
> response to the suggestion that science fiction opens readers up to new ideas in general.
>
> This is believed by 92.7% of respondents[50]."

So the results would seem to agree with Ong, there is a definite correlation with the reading of

books and the generating of ideas, this should not be new info to anyone who has ever read a book

before, but since they concentrate so much on the relation to science shows that even though

science fiction is per definition; "Fiction based on imagined future scientific or technological

advances"[51], it would be a fair summation, that the general ideas they get expand their

understanding of how science work or where it could lead. In this way it might be an inspiration for

people to pursue and advance science. After all, in their conclusion the people who made the study

said:

> "The audience identified in this survey is characterized by openness to and belief in science,
>
> consistently high-volume reading, and a very high level of education. Respondents are
>
> sympathetic toward science and scientists, and believe that reading science fiction inspires
>
> scientific comprehension and positive attitudes to science and that reading science fiction
>
> also has the potential to positively change new readers' atti-tudes toward science.[52]"

It is interesting to hear that people in higher education think the genre inspires the populace to

achieve higher in the natural sciences, because there is a good chance that many of them are

themselves in that line of work and if that was an inspiration for them to do get their education. It

would make sense if others could become inspired to do the same. It gives one a good idea of the

power of the fantastic in literature precisely because the people in the study are themselves an

authority on that subject because they have been through it themselves. Ong did say this was the

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[50] Menadue P. 7
[51] Oxford
[52] Menadue P. 10

case. We must understand that we are impressionable beings and we react to the inputs we get. The

human race is mostly shaped from the experiences they are privy to. What matters it how they feel

in a certain situation, what matters is their outlook, everything is relative to everyone. However, as

books are stationary and presumably never change, we may not have the exact same experience,

but many might have similar feelings when reading through a story.

9. What is lost

When we try to compare media from books to movies, there will always be some things

gained and some lost. Different media will have different ways of entertaining. Many series have

gone from book, to movie, to game and are examples of what we gain and what we lose. In this part

of my thesis I will discuss what is lost when we introduce these new formats into the world of

fantasy.

The book is an age-old medium, writing things down as previously discussed are as old as

Plato and have only increased in frequency ever since. Today a book is as common as anything and if

you go to a used goods store you will practically get them thrown after you, the same can be said for

movies and to some extent games. However, it is still a form of pride to announce that: "I have read

the book", it is viewed as a commitment in many circles. Not to say that book writing is easy, but it

does not require much money or knowledge, as long as the output is great. When we compare it to

games and movies, those often take comparatively extreme amounts of money and people to

create, this is of course no guarantee that they turn out great. Books are dependent on your own

fantasy to understand the pictures it describes through words. They can require a lot from the

reader since it has no visuals nor any music. This can be both a good and bad thing; on the one side

it could be a disadvantage to the other formats, but in its favour, it allows the reader to make their

own world from the descriptions. At the same time the book can have a much more detailed

conversation with the reader and part more knowledge about the world than say a movie can. A picture can say a thousand words but not when it is only viewed for 1/24 of a second. Books are fantastic tools for holding long descriptions and detailed discussion without getting boring, it is able to describe the indescribable and though it is not easy to write a book, it is certainly easier to get your fantasy across, because most people do not have the skill or knowledge to partake in any of the other format.

The movie has both visuals and audio to rely on. The usual movie only last for a few hours and has the advantage that it can show pictures and show the scenes instead of having to describe them, but at the same time it only has a set time to do it and often has to cut out scenes in the interest of time. So not only can we lose a lot of more or less important information, but we might feel like the knowledge we have is complete, but the book might be able to impart more of the thoughts and personality of character. Stories are after all what makes a person, it is hard to create a recognition to a character without much information. In this regard a book is better to retrieve information from. However, the shorter story and the pictures might give an advantage because we do not need a long description of the world and its inhabitants if we can see it with our own eyes. The movie also has music to heighten the immersion, which can be very important to communicate to the viewer what they should be feeling. In the other direction music can also make it harder to create immersion if it doesn't feel like it supports the movie. Another advantage of the movie is that it can display action scenes better than some books can.

In the world of the computer game, which I have already discussed at length here, I might have oversaturated the game as being an almighty ruler, something that cannot be bested by neither the written word nor the movie, however, this is not my intention. Games should be the obvious choice to have both the time of books and all the perks of movies to give the best possible experience, however, it is rarely so. Games are expensive to make, and they take very long to code. Therefore, in many games, players are required to spend most of their time taking on the same

quest template. It requires a lot of time and money, for developers, to go out of their way to create

small often unnecessary things. You might notice that many games that require you to go to

somewhere and then press a button, to activate a health pack for instance, requires no movement

from the character you are controlling. This might be a bad example, but the argument still stands,

there are many games that skip out on the small details because of the limits of time and money.

Some games might, as a consequence, feel a lot less intuitive than they are marketed. Computer

games often have music in them, the sounds are designed just like movies, to reflect some sort of

empathic effect upon the player. Some games, of course, does this masterfully, but most are not as

adept as the sound are often situational and not like in the movies, a constant. As to say that when

playing a game, it is vital for the game to be at the same page as the story. To play a happy song at a

very sad funeral would be inappropriate and destroy the immersion that person would otherwise

have had. It is generally a good thing that a fantasy world is expandable, especially in a game where

you can walk form one end of a continent to another and find life and most important of all quests,

to do for random people in order to gain levels and the like. However, some games might be too

much so. Games like 'Oblivion', 'Skyrim' and the like, are notorious for their expansiveness and while

the main quests might shape the world in some way, shape, or form. It is still an important point that

is the creators and the writers wanted the player to understand something about the main event, it

might not reach them, they might have played more than 50% of the game without touching the

main quest a whole lot. In comparison, books are free to tell people whatever narrative they want.

Everyone learns something different from it, albeit there are general genres, but from games there is

not always such a guarantee. People might miss intended narrative completely. If there indeed is

any. Of course, many games have a consistent storyline. Games like 'What Remains of Edith Finch'

by 'Giant Sparrow' are sometimes referred to as 'walking simulators' simply because they have a

story that goes from point A to point B. It is of course a game, but there are no collectibles, no score,

no countdown, It is merely a story you can walk around in, adapted to some form of game, where

you are free to roam, but the story only goes in one direction, but when a game like that is made it

can neglect al of the choices we might expect of many games and it becomes less a game and more an interactive story that might as well have been a movie.

10. The importance of experiencing the worlds

So far, we have talked about books, computer games, VR, fanfiction, and a lot of other stuff. In this section, I would like to say a few words about why we want to be inside these worlds. We cannot stop technology and there might come a day where we do not want people to go father, but at the moment, we are in a golden age of technology. We are expanding in all areas, but one of the most important things is that is has never been easier to obtain fantasy. Fantastic characters and things that have sprung from it is all around us all the time. The fantastic world is an exclusive club and an escape from the real world, that we can never really enter, but we certainly have done ours to experience it. Popular fiction is recorded and made into movies, made into books, fandoms spend their time on it and people go out of their way to celebrate it. Several times a year many thousands of people celebrate different parts of the fantastic worlds, we have invented. Harry Potter, Anime, no matter what, it is has some sort of celebration. Indeed, just in Denmark we have 'J-popcon', 'Hydracon', 'Fantasyfestivallen', 'Comicon' and many more. There is definitely a huge group of people who are into fantasy on most platforms, because any fantastic world can be applied to any platform, we even converted the well-known Harry Potter sport called 'quidditch' into a game that we could partake in[53]. We continuously celebrate fantasy all the time and we even attend panels to talk to the creators and find out more about the world. Even J.K. Rowling herself has written extensively about her world on the website called 'pottermore.com', where one can go take a quiz about what 'Hogwarts' house they belong to, find out which wand is their kind, and what kind of magical forcefield, against dark monsters, known as a 'Patronus', they have. We live in an age where many things are possible, and we spend a lot of our time celebrating the worlds that we find suits us. We do this because we want to be a part of their world, be a part of the stories that we love so

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[53] https://www.usquidditch.org/

much, what other reason could there be for the fact that we obviously try to find people everywhere

we go to discuss our passions with. People have done so for ages, but not before now has fantasy

taken up such a large part of our social sphere. Of course, not to say that everyone partakes in these

practices, but the fans are very adamant about doing it. If would of course be uninformed to only

contribute the rise in fantasy to the way we have ceased to believe in god as Mr. Smith says,

however, it is certainly very probably one of the reasons. Another might be that we have had such

technological proves in our world, that we need more wonder to keep up with it. It is also

undeniable that the technological have had another effect on the general population and especially

the new. Something we might be aware of at the moment would be the HBO series: 'Game of

Thrones', which has grown to such mainstream popularity, that whenever it is on, both the online

forums, the fandom, but also the more mainstream people, who do not partake in fandoms, feel a

need to discuss theories and read about 'behind the scenes'. The series is quite popular and has a

massive hoard of fans behind it. As of writing it is airing its concluding season and nobody seems to

speak about anything else. The social impact for people who watch it is immense, this is of course

my own observations, however if we just turn to look at the coverage in news all around the English-

speaking world. Popular news outlets like; 'Huffington Post', 'Buzzfeed', 'The Guardian', 'CNN', and

'The Verge', publish at least one article every time the show airs. The integrity of these names can be

discussed, but they understand what people want to read, and that definitely includes everything

they can dig up about 'Game of Thrones'. It just goes to show how important fantasy has become in

our lives. Not because series haven't enjoyed success in the media in the past, but we have both

developed a dependency on said fantasies and we are presented with the news a lot more rapidly

because of the use of the internet.

Another reason why Smith might find this idea of people stopping to believe in a god might

be the whole idea of the world having collapsed. It might not only be a god, who has gone missing,

but also the world as a whole. His essay was written after the second world war and it would make

sense that people had lost faith in their beliefs, because of the impact such an event would have had

on the people who were alive back then. Losing faith in, not just the world as a mystic fantastic

place, but also in other people. The reason it might be that people started to take up fantasy as we

have discussed might be to lift their spirits, to escape into another world, where things were still

magic, because they by their very definition had to be mystical, that is what fantasy is, no matter

what kind, it is always a mysterious and strange from our own world. Escapism is maybe right to use

in this case. We have also mentioned wish fulfilment and they might be used somewhat

interchangeably, they both provide some very basic needs for us, the need of wonder. However, one

should not think about the escape as something that has a bad connotation. One might categorise

both terms as a form of desire as J.R.R Tolkien has done in his essay 'fairy stories':

> "There are hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death. And even when men are
>
> not facing hard things such as these, there are ancient limitations from which fairy-stories
>
> offer a sort of escape, and old ambitions and desires (touching the very roots of fantasy) to
>
> which they offer a kind of satisfaction and consolation"

11. The fantastic mark on our world

The fantastic will always be a way to explain things that we do not yet understand or have

yet to experience. However, we also talk about things as though they have feeling or a body of their

own. In some ways we anthropomorphize qualities into certain aspects of our lives and make them a

part of our world in a more creative way. For example, proverbs often maintain these ideas about

different items or concepts. 'Fit as a fiddle', for example. A violin can not be fit, not in the normal

way, like a human can, however when the proverb is mentioned people do understand it to be about

a human. The way we sometimes speak about the sun is also very evident of a humanization, in the

way that we say "the sun is going away", We talk about it as though it has a mind of its own and legs

to take it where is means to go. It is very interesting that we talk about things like that, the fantastic

is sort of slithering into our world through these phrases that we use. As humans we have a way of

saying something and meaning something completely different. We have a knack for developing our

world into a story. Just look at the way we personify the worldly powers through religion. Having an

omnipotent character like Zeus, in the old Greek myths. The old Greek gods and goddesses was

master of their own areas of the thing the old Greeks called cosmos. In the old myths about Zeus

and the other 11 Olympians, we hear about a lot of them and their activities, they were the main

characters so to speak, those that had the most developed characters, at least according to the book

'Mythos', by Stephen Fry. Somehow many of their gods, have sneaked their way into our language,

of course as many gods were the personification of the names they had, so it was even a fact when

the old Greeks walked the earth. Characters like Narcissus are very well-known today. Being

narcissistic is a very common term, it is classified as a mental disorder[54]. It is not the same as talking

about the sun as though it has legs and a mind of its own, but the myths of the Greek are fantastic

stories that explain a specific phenomenon and you might remember some of these stories when

you hear the words. Whether you do or not, these stories they were made to explain a specific

character trait or relation and language has since then developed to have the names become the

name for these ideas. The characters in the stories have the name of it. Terms like 'Eros' was both a

word to them, but also a specific god. As Stephen Fry writes: "Science has taken these names and

immortalized them in a way that splendidly exemplifies the continuing relationship between Greek

myth and our language.[55]" We use those terms everywhere, we might not no longer know the story

behind them, however, they do exist and continue to remind us that humans need to explain things.

This is what has given birth to science, religion and a lot of other practices, the need to explain. Now

whether one believes in a god or not, one must admit that a lot of the tales from scriptures like the

bible that contains fantastic elements. Resurrection, enchantment, curing the sick, walking on water,

great big ships build by unskilled workers with room for all the different species of animals. Humans

have a tendency to tell the world through a story and adding fantasy to the things we do not

understand. We might write a story about getting wings and fly, but in reality, talking about being

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[54] Fry – The Gods Take Pity
[55] Fry – The Newest God

free from anything that tries to hold us down. It is in our nature to want to know how the world

works. We are somehow cursed and blessed with curiosity. We also know that a lot of different

polytheistic religions have moon or sun gods, so it became their responsibility to take care of the

celestial bodies. We know about Selene and Helios form the old Greek myths. They were the ones

who, in some stories, pulled the celestial bodies around the earth. We make a story out of our

reality, because we want to explain something, we want to mystify and make our existence more

interesting. Therefore, some people still tell their children about Santa Claus and the tooth fairy.

They serve a purpose in the life of young kids. So no matter if it is a personification of a concept like

the travelling of the sun, or it is the fantastic stories we tell to each other and our kids, we definitely

have a tendency to romanticize our world around us, to discover its latent possibilities, it is not a

specific way of accessing our world, but sometimes conceptionally. Because what we aim to teach

our kids by talking about figures like Santa, is to teach them about the joy of giving, love and belief.

Much like the ancient Greeks personified terms by the stories about Narcissus, we still try to teach

each other about practices by personifying them into conscious real beings. We mean to give them a

sort of joy and wonder in their life.

12. The Problem with classifying fantasy literature

Now that we have discussed the many different places we meet the fantasy genre and how

we utilize and celebrate it, it is time to talk about its definition, what constitutes a fantastic tale. If

we are prepared to talk about and recognise the many different kinds of fantasy and their formats,

we have to find a definition that makes sense, that might include all of them and I would argue the

motion that that is possible, as long as we do not get too specific. After all there are many different

ways of defining fantasy:

"Mendlesohn approaches texts of the fantastic through an analysis of their rhetorical

structure and the positioning of the implied reader. For Mendlesohn, the reader's response

to any fantasy text is fashioned above all by the degree of success with which the author

delivers on the reader's expectation – which is in turn shaped by recognition of these

categories"[56].

Farah Mendlesohn's ideas of: 'portal-quest fantasy', 'immersive fantasy', 'intrusion fantasy',

and 'liminal fantasy', might be one of the more coherent ideas, precisely because it gives a more

general inclusion of fantasy overall. As Lykke Guanio-Uluru talks about, it has much more to do with

the perspective of the reader than it does with the subject matter and when we are going to use it

on other formats than writing, it seems very apt to talk about it. I will be describing the different

categories in a short manner. The 'Portal-Quest Fantasy', is not too complex, it is founded on the

idea that the way we experience the fantastic is by going through some kind of portal as the name

suggests. Mendelsohn suggests an example would be 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' by C.S.

Lewis, which does indeed feature a closet through which, the main characters go through. The world

we meet in those circumstances are other complete worlds, where none of the magic sips through

to our own, even though some characters might freely pass through the opening. They often have a

clear objective and have a condition that must be fulfilled. The portal does not have to be physical, it

merely represents the entry or transition. It is characteristic for the protagonist to start off in the

mundane, being very far away form anything fantastic, if they are even aware of such a thing. The

'immersive fantasy' is essentially found where the world is already assumed, it become in part

science fiction, because we are already a part of it and expected as reader to follow along as

everything that is general knowledge will be apparent to the protagonist. However, Mendlesohn still

argues that if we talk about a quest story, we will still rather have it as part of the portal fantasy,

because it still requires a certain condition to be met[57]. 'Intrusion Fantasy' is chaotic, it is

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[56] Guanio-Uluru p. 13
[57] Mendlesohn – The Immersive Fantasy

unpredictable, not necessarily unpleasant, but it will only return to predictability in the world when the fantastic retreats. 'Liminal fantasy' is very different from the other categories, but at the same time it does retain some qualities. It is different from the portal fantasy in that, the protagonist, would hesitate to go through it, but at the same time, the fantastic might sip into the world, Mendlesohn makes an example of Phillip Pullman's 'The Subtle Knife'. We see the world as our own and when the fantastic appears it should be intrusive, but at the same time the tone of the story Mendlesohn describes as blasé, i.e. the characters would not be surprised. It is based on the way the fantastic world works, how it is structured, and gives a quick overview of the choices we have to describe it. However, in this thesis, we have not just described linear stories. We have talked about how the technologies of the fantastic differ from one another. We have discussed why the fantastic is enjoying such a big increase in readership and how people even figures it is great for your curiosity and further development. Fantasy is the fulfilment of wishes and the land we can escape to, when we feel like it. Mendlesohn seems to be looking at transcendent trends within the fantasy culture. As Mendlesohn herself writes in her book: Rhetorics of fantasy: "This book is not about defining fantasy. The debate over definition is now long-standing, and a consensus has emerged, accepting as a viable "fuzzy set," a range of critical definitions of fantasy[58]." This is one of the reasons I regard the idea of defining fantasy literature as futile if you do not deal in broad strokes, precisely because of how confusing it is to define what actually constitutes a fantastic story. It is sort of a double edged sword, on the one hand many people would not hesitate when we define books like the Harry Potter series as fantasy, because it is evident. At present time it seems like fantasy is an unidentifiable norm that people either think something is fantasy or they do not and on the other hand, people have trouble defining, precisely because the fantastic in its search to explain everything that is fantastic to use smith's terms, scientific or magical, however, does a magic have to possess either, to be a fantastic world? Or would the world qualify if it was simply different than ours, if it was inhabited by another dominant creature. Maybe it is inherent because we all fantasize differently, however, let us

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[58] Mendlesohn p. 14

take a look at the quote from Mendlesohn here. In her first sentence she claims that she is not trying

to define fantasy. She recognizes that such a fit has become somewhat impossible, I would recon.

But I would also argue that it has become impossible, in part because of what I have discussed

earlier and because starting a book by claiming they are not going to define fantasy, speaks very

clearly about the ambivalent feelings on the present market about the current theories. It is a way to

start off in a way that might aim to gather the parties on different sides. She then states what we

already know, that debate over definition has been "long-standing", but that a consensus has

emerged. She is not talking about something agreed upon, but offering it to be defined. However,

we then arrive at the most interesting thing, the "fuzzy sets" as she calls it. It might be the best way

to describe her loose theory. It is a useful model in many ways. In her introduction Mendlesohn

writes: "How do we get there? How do we meet the fantastic?", which is a very apt question to

ask[59]. Instead of branding the narrative we are about to analyse with specific tropes, we instead try

to look at how the fantastic is represented. She also talks about how the meeting with the fantastic

influences the narrative and rhetorical choices, the choice of language, the construction of the

fantastic, and the position of the reader. And according to her, the most crucial: "Where are we

asked to stand in relationship to the fantastic?"[60]. What is immediately apparent is that his theory

requires a bond with its reader. The way we choose to describe fantasy from this theory, will be in

accordance with how everything is represented by the narrative and most importantly, how the

actual fantastic elements is represented too us and how it deals with problems, because exactly that

is what is interesting about the way we analyze fantasy. She says: "What I am interested in is the

reader's relationship to the framework"[61]. It is not the goal of the theory to define fantasy, but

maybe rather to explain it, there are of course the categories that we then mark the fantastic by, but

I would view it, rather, as a way to describe than define it by, because, while she is very unspecific in

her categories, she is still very much basing it on how the fantastic is met rather than defining it,

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[59] Mendlesohn p. 29
[60] Mendlesohn p. 29
[61] Mendlesohn p. 29

basing the discussion on it.

If we look at games in the way of defining their genre. Defining genres has always proven a problem, no less so in videogames. However, defining a narrative whether it is a games, movie, or book, can prove very important to reviewers and people who want to run campaigns for games and promote them. "Observations may pertain only to certain game types and thus many game scholars and journalists find it hugely useful to establish systems for categorizing games[62]." We understand genre as a set of instructions that should define each type. As we have already talked about, games have it double hard, because we also have to consider the playstyle of the game itself.

However, even here there are 'major overlaps' as they call it. Of course, a narrative might not just cover one literary genre either, most books I would say crosses over into many facets throughout itself. When we buy a book, we might already know which genre the book is dominated by, because it will show in the advertising, so it is with movies and of course video games. The question of how to define genres, can sometimes seem archaic in some way. However, this is where the theory from Mendlesohn is brilliant. We are never unsure whether there is some fantastic element to a game. So in this regard it might not be very interesting to define something as a specific genre, but rather to talk about what this genre does to the reader. Therefore, I would propose that when trying to talk about the tropes and ideas of the fantastic in games, movies, books, and all entertainment, it is much more informative to study the way we are presented with this other world. This is also very important in terms of games, because it might be valuable to look at how we directly interact with the fantastic. How do we control it and so on? This is where the discussion of what it does to the player is very interesting, especially because it would be wrong to only look at the narrative in a game, when you so often control so much of it. Looking at the game through elements in it, and then judging it according to it, however it is not just words, but also the way we play, the cinematography, everything that is a part of the game. It makes it much easier to discuss

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[62] Understanding Video games p. 40

fantasy across platforms and technology, because they all have to present fantasy in some way.

Technologies provides us with a lot of different ways to present the elements of fantasy. We might

even bring Rita Felski into the discussion, because she also talks about the relationship between the

reader, viewer or player and the subject matter. Therefore, I think when we talk about describing a

fantastic narrative, it makes way more sense to talk about it in more general terms, like the ones

stated by Mendelsohn. It does not overlook the way we access the narrative; it could potentially

include it i.e. things like controls on a computer that allows us to interact because it is part of the

way we interact with the fantastic elements.

13. The Future, Where Does Fantasy Go from Here

So where does fantasy go from here. We have access to fantasy on almost any platform and

it only continues to grow, so what can we try to guess about the future?

Fantasy is continually winning people over, people like the ones in the survey described

earlier seems to always be campaigning for people of all ages to read fantasy. Many people would

argue that some adult have lost their sense of wonder, but that is no excuse and as we know, there

are more people who read about the fantastic than ever before. There is no indication that we will

lose interest in the fantastic going forward, there is only evidence that it will continually become a

bigger part of our world and everyday life. Fantasy will probably exist as long as people do. We are

the ones who create and need it, however, with technology we have to face that the medium will

change with time. Science have a long time ago crossed barriers of fantasy and as we continue to

grow in intellect and knowledge, less and less things will become of the fantastic. Eventually we

might even have great computers that might enable us to enjoy a 'real' separate world to our own. A

world where we will be without any connection to our own, a full dive with all cells and limbs intact,

a world where we might be able to interact as we want to. Artificial intelligence might be a thing in

the future, and I would say, that might only add to the way we interact with the fantastic. The world

would be virtually indistinguishable from our own and we know we will have to bite the proverbial

red pill. We might start to ask ourselves what is fantasy and what is reality? Will there even be a

need for such a word, when everything will be imagined with petaflops of data running around and

making the whole picture for not just our eyes and our ears, but for all our senses. Will it then be a

separate place to our own? That future is indeed a paradoxical amount of time away. It might be a

100 years into the future or maybe it will never come, but if it does it will be such a marvel of

technology and as with the original computer before it, as with the movie before that, the book, and

the written word that Plato condemned so harshly, it will be judged just as much. However, at this

point in time it takes no expert to see where we are going. As it is with technology and capitalism,

we might keep generating new technology and sell it to the masses for profits. Virtual Reality is very

quickly becoming a thing. It envelops the senses like very few other things. Your senses are

completely in that world, your spacial awareness changes, so much so that you might forget your

friend next to you and hit him instead of the monster that is quite clearly in front of you, however it

is not quite there yet, it is not a full dive, not by any definition. There is no reason why we would

stop producing books and movies just because a fantastic medium is still being discovered, however

we might get to a point where the book as we know it will be abolished and that the smell of newly

printed words might become a stranger to most people. So, fantasy might get a radical overhaul, as

it has, many times before. The fantastic might become a more integral part of our lives. However,

fantasy have adapted until now, so who is to say that when we finally cross that threshold, there

might not be something, a new goal to master? As Robert Browning said: "a man's reach should

exceed his grasp or what is heaven for". To think that the fantastic will stop, would be hubris. Who is

to say we will not find a new goal that might be as perceivably unobtainable to achieve as the goals

we write about now? To be fair, we have eradicated some means of communication to make way for

new ones along the way, because they were more convenient, however I do not see that happening

to paper any time soon. However, if fantasy should ever come to an end, if we should ever end up in

a world where we are able to experience all our senses in another world, that feel, everything

included, like our own. Will it then be the end of the fantastic, or actually the real beginning?

Whatever happens it seems that fantasy is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future. I think we

can all agree that as new technologies are invented, we will keep finding new ways to experience

another world apart from our own. We will always reach for the fantastic as long as we exist.

14. Conclusion

No matter if we talk about the written word, the computer game, or the movie, we must

acknowledge how much the fantasy genre has come to mean in our society. We are able to

experience the fantastic through many kinds of platforms, however the new technology has made

new areas for us to frolic. We are able to do so much more, than just read books, but then again, we

have not forgotten the importance of reading books and gaining understanding from them, because

every platform have something unique to bring but also things that will change it. We have seen how

the fantastic can be a part of any technology capable of telling a story. What is important to mention

though is the way that we meet the fantastic elements, how it is related to the story and how it is

relating to us. We can through the theories of Felski, Ong, and Mendlesohn find the ideas of how we

are connected not just to fiction, but more importantly to the subject of fantasy. Fantasy is the genre

we use when we want to write about the world, it is a place where we are free to create no matter

what platform we express ourselves on. The level of interaction is very different from video game to

book, but not so much that we cannot see how either influence their reader. Games have a way of

going through us when it decides what happens next, the computer is a tool for us, which can

generate the fantastic so we can see and experience it, just like a movie, but it also allows us to take

some part in what goes on in it. In much the same way there is a relation to what we can create and

money and technical knowhow. That is why we can look to things like roleplaying games, which are

able to offer a much higher level of interactivity when we experience that world, but without the

number of visual tweaks. Fandom create the meta part of the fantastic world on the outside. They

engage in the different platforms and can recreate the subject matter in their own image. In this way

the fantastic world has become a nation wherein fans can talk to each other and discuss the things

they experience in relation to the worlds of the fantastic. We can see through the fandom how much

the fantastic influences them, how much the use of the source material is used in their gatherings

and their work. Fandoms are able to experience their original subject is a much more pronounced

way because of the fact that they have this fandom. The citizenship they have to their fandom is as

real to them as being part of any other nation. They are able to create a meta world within our own

where they decide the rules and are able to influence. We have a need to experience fantasy. We

present our ideals pretty well through both fandoms and fanfiction which are able to expand and

twist the original subject into whatever the writer wants it to be. We can see both the wish to create

something, but also the idea that some might need the fantastic to escape into, however the escape

nor the wish is a bad thing, it is a way of coping, because the fantastic is able to let you go into

another universe and even though it might not be fully interactable, you are still able to go there and

become something else. There might be problems with defining the genre, but it is not really

important to the fantastic because we are able to recognise it and through the theories of

Mendlesohn we are able to see where we are in accordance with fantasy. How the reader is

positioned in relation to the fantastic is one of the most important things when analysing the

fantastic. It seems that when we talk about the fantastic across the things it has gone through when

subjected to different platforms, how it has evolved, we have to consider the idea, that the most

important aspect is the way we experience it and not what the writer might have intended, not that

it is not important, but when we discuss the fantastic as a single thing, we are able to see how the

world has been created. We are able to experience it through the stories we explore. In the future

we might be ale to go above and beyond when we talk about the promises of the fantastic stories

we enjoy at the moment, but as we have also seen, the fantastic never really goes out of fashion, it

can persist because it is made up of the worlds and the magic and science they use. Whether we

might see a machine that can provide a full enter to another world sounds fishy, but who is to say

that someone could not dream it up. Needless to say we have to consider the different platforms

when we talk about the fantastic today, it is no longer enough to talk about critique in books and

movies, we need to unite the idea of fantasy and this might be a way to do it, because the fantastic

is a big part of our lives and can be found all around us. There might be a case to make, that the

fantastic genre has become useless because of the way we keep changing it to fit new platforms, but

the truth is that we need it to evolve with us and we need it to recognise the fantasies we want to

visit and why we want them. The fantastic will only continue to grow into our world, as we allow it.

The more we create the more we will wish and escape, but we might also use the new wishes that

might come to life to create new platforms to experience fantasy.

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