Narratives of Participatory Culture
Reading: fan written fiction as literature

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Objectives

• To give an understanding of fan writing history.
• To tell the story of our exploration of fanfiction through a literary lens.
What is fanfiction (fic)?

- Works of fictitious prose written by fans that transform pre-existing stories and their characters to create new narratives.

Don Quijote sequel written by Alfonso Fernández de Avellaneda

The Idler magazine, which featured works by JM Barrie and Arthur Conan Doyle
Historical Background

The tradition of borrowing and playing with pre-existing stories goes far back. However, fanfiction as we know it only came to be known as fanfiction as recently as 1970.
Historical Background

Welcome to the Archive of Our Own!

We're a fan-created, fan-run, non-profit, non-commercial archive for transformative fanworks, like fanfiction, fanart, fan videos, and podfic. We currently have 16121 fandoms, 398688 registered users, and 1286836 works.

While the site is in beta, you can get an invitation from another user or from our automated invite queue. All fans and fanworks are welcome!

The Archive of Our Own is a project of the Organization for Transformative Works.

Log in or Get an Invite

archiveofourown.net
Participatory Culture

• The negotiation that occurs over the meaning of the **text**, and the terms of the relationship between **producers and consumers**. This involves a reciprocal **relationship** between spectator and source material (Henry Jenkins – 2012- “sociological view of participatory culture”).
Can fanfiction be studied as literature and if so, how?
Methodology

- Literary theory
- Mixed methods survey on fanfiction practices
  - 22 questions
  - Distributed through Tumblr.com
  - During 1 month
- Received 2,246 responses
Survey announcement on our tumblr.com blog.
Methodology (cont.)

Text message reactions to the number of survey responses.
Methodology (cont.)

Printed and annotated pdf of *All the Other Ghosts*
Methodology (cont.)

• Selection of most work with best qualities of fanfiction – All the Other Ghosts (AtOG)
• Analysis of AtOG following theories and approaches
  New Criticism (Eliot)
  Reader Response (Rossenblatt)
  New Historicism (Greenblatt)
  Psychoanalysis (Jung)
  Feminist Theory (Beauvoir)
Revised research question

• How do fanfiction and literature intersect?
Results

• The theories used were limited in their scope and depth of AtOG. The participatory nature of fanfiction was lost to the limited focus demanded by these theories and approaches.
Conclusions

Need to create a theory for analyzing fanfiction in a way that encompasses all of its participatory complexities.
Future inquiries

• Analysis and presentation of the survey results
• Application of Fanfiction Theory to other fanwritten works
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