

Fan fic? Fooey.

The Whorl list — 10 messages, 4 voices, 19 Jun 2001

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/whorl/1451>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 Jun 2001, 09:10

Or pfui. With all due respect to the various people who've used this term, I'm just about apoplectic from not shouting at you about it, and now I will.

Look. Whatever _tBotSS_ is (or the editors-written third- person parts of it, or even "selected bits" of those), it ain't fanfic. The term is specific, refers to the parasitic creation of new stories in a _fictional_ world _created by some other person or corporate entity_, on an amateur or not-for-profit basis, and usually (but not always) quite _bad_. The best-known, if not actually dominant, forms, are the [erotic|pornographic] "slash" fiction* and the MaryJane.

* The concept of / fiction in the Lupiverse has its own peculiar horrors to offer. Severian/Severian?

What makes the concept ludicrous is this: Who is the fan writing the fanfic? Not Wolfe, certainly; he's the creator of all this. Not the editorial kids; what comes from them isn't fiction -- it's either reconstruction or outright lies.

(Where did that one conversation come from? Maybe Oreb? Naaaaah...)

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

Kevin J. Maroney — 19 Jun 2001, 13:38 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

At 09:10 AM 6/19/01 -0700, Blattid wrote:
The term is specific, refers to the parasitic

Not that we're loading up with judgmental terms here, no, no.

creation of new stories in a _fictional_ world _created by some other person or corporate entity_, on an amateur or not-for-profit basis, and usually (but not always) quite _bad_. The best-known, if not actually dominant, forms, are the [erotic|pornographic] "slash" fiction* and the MaryJane.

"Mary Sue".

But your basic point is right; whatever Hoof and Hide are doing, it's not "fanfic".

Wombat, a.k.a. Kevin Maroney kmaroney at ungames.com
Kitchen Staff Supervisor, New York Review of Science Fiction
<http://www.nyrsf.com>

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 Jun 2001, 11:22 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

Responding to my use of the term "parasitic," his

Wombattitude wrote:

Not that we're loading up with judgmental terms here, no, no.

No, no. I meant the word in a strictly technical sense; the existence of fanfic is completely dependent on, and draws its energy from, the primary creator of the fictional world. (Or would that be "secondary creator," since the fictional world is, by definition, a secondary creation? In which case the fanfic writer is a tertiary creator, and...)

MaryJane.

"Mary Sue".

Right. Mary Janes are those shoes. Guess who doesn't read much fanfic? (Though I wrote some, and even got paid for it, a very long time ago. It was very bad indeed.)

In my defense, I was careful to say "usually (but not always) quite bad." I know that good fanfic exists; I'm just not intrepid enough to wade through the jungles of sludge and dig out the good stuff.

An interesting side note: Are franchise novels fanfic? Ever? Is "fanfic" a boolean or a fuzzy term? One can see a kind of spectrum running from purest fanfic; to things like the "Best of Trek" anthologies; to the more blatantly fannish Trek novels (i.e., "Spock, Messiah"); to the professionally franchised books; to "authorized continuations" like the Anderson/B.Herbert DUNE books and the "New Foundation Trilogy"; to homage and parody; to "heavily influenced," and finally ending with "pure" creation (which is never pure).

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Kevin J. Maroney — 19 Jun 2001, 15:26 · follows Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

At 11:22 AM 6/19/01 -0700, you wrote:

No, no. I meant the word in a strictly technical sense; the existence of fanfic is completely dependent on, and draws its energy from, the primary creator of the fictional world. (Or would that be "secondary creator," since the fictional world is, by definition, a secondary creation? In which case the fanfic writer is a tertiary creator, and...)

I'm not certain I'd agree with that. The point of fanfic is to create works which fulfill a need that the original author's work doesn't fill, whether that desire is to see Kirk and Spock doing it or seeing how Xena reacts to meeting Patty Duke.

(Besides, the biologists I studied under in college said that the term "parasite" was falling out of favor because it was impossible to define clearly....)

An interesting side note: Are franchise novels fanfic? Ever? Is "fanfic" a boolean or a fuzzy term? One can see a kind of spectrum running from purest fanfic; to things like the "Best of Trek" anthologies; to the more blatantly fannish Trek novels (i.e., "Spock, Messiah"); to the professionally franchised books; to "authorized continuations" like the Anderson/B.Herbert DUNE books

and the "New Foundation Trilogy"; to homage and parody;
to "heavily influenced," and finally ending with "pure"
creation (which is never pure).

I would argue that William Shatner's Star Trek novels are blatant fanfic. Mary Sue fanfic, at that.

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 19 Jun 2001, 15:23 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

Me on parasitism:

...the existence of fanfic is completely dependent on, and
draws its energy from, the primary creator of the fictional
world.

I'm not certain I'd agree with that. The point of fanfic is
to create works which fulfill a need that the original
author's work doesn't fill, whether that desire is to see
Kirk and Spock doing it or seeing how Xena reacts to meeting
Patty Duke.

H'mmm. Perhaps rather than "energy" I should've said "power"; in any case, my point is that
fanfickers don't have to create things like characters and settings, they use pre-existing ones
and depend on conditioned responses (their own and other readers') to provide much of the
buy-in. That is: if you keep the characters' behavioral and speech patterns pretty much
consistent with what's in their original shows/stories, you can rely on the reader investing them
with a lot of the life (energy, power, whatever) the original writer/director/actor/ whatever gave
them. So you don't have to do very much with K and S; set up the right circumstances (the
"hurt/comfort scene," a term I'm ripping off from Joanna Russ's essay on fanfic), and let the
biology roll.

(Besides, the biologists I studied under in college said
that the term "parasite" was falling out of favor because
it was impossible to define clearly....)

So are "species" and "organism." ("Ecosystem" and "biome" actually turn out to be a little
easier.) Like "parasite," the terms are too damn useful (and too damn well-embedded in
biological discourse) to go away any time soon.

Perhaps, though, the right word would be "saprophytic"? (Though I gather that these days fanfic
starts before a show even finishes its run...)

I would argue that William Shatner's Star Trek novels
are blatant fanfic. Mary Sue fanfic, at that.

And I would argue that Shatner probably agrees with you; remember his line in the
Shatner-vs-Shatner fight scene in the last TOS movie:

Shatner 1: I can't believe I kissed you.

Shatner 2: It must have been your lifelong ambition.

Whatever else Shatner may be, he is aware of his ego "problem" and not afraid to have fun with
it. (See also "Free Enterprise.")

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William Ansley — 19 Jun 2001, 22:59 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

At 1:38 PM -0400 6/19/01, Kevin J. Maroney wrote:

At 09:10 AM 6/19/01 -0700, Blattid wrote:

The term is specific, refers to the parasitic

Not that we're loading up with judgmental terms here, no, no.

creation of new stories in a _fictional_ world _created_ by some other person or corporate entity_, on an amateur or not-for-profit basis, and usually (but not always) quite _bad_. The best-known, if not actually dominant, forms, are the [erotic|pornographic] "slash" fiction* and the MaryJane.

"Mary Sue".

But your basic point is right; whatever Hoof and Hide are doing, it's not "fanfic".

For all of those who were as puzzled as I at this reference to Mary Sue, here is a useful definition:

<<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/9537/marysue.txt>>

If this link doesn't work then search for "Mary Sue fan fiction" on Google.

Now I really, really don't want to offend anyone, but I feel compelled to make a comment here. I have been reading SF/F for over 35 years now but I have always kept my distance from any "fannish" activities. I always found that whole world fascinating but vaguely repellant and frightening.

After glancing over a few fan fiction web sites on my search for Mary Sue that feeling has greatly intensified, especially the fear. <G>

William Ansley

*This is WHORL, for discussion of Gene Wolfe's Book of the Long Sun.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 20 Jun 2001, 08:23 · follows William Ansley

William Ansley wrote:

... I have been reading SF/F for over 35 years now but I have always kept my distance from any "fannish" activities.

William, William, William... I don't know how to tell you this, but this list is a fannish activity, or, as they used to say -- do they still? -- "fanac."

Granted, it's the kind of fanac that isn't usually referred to as "fannish," but only because within fandom "fannish" was (is?) generally used in contrast to "sercon," short for "serious and constructive," where "fannish" was more the "partying with a few thousand of your closest friends" sort of thing.

Much of the traffic on this list tends toward the sercon, but it's all fannish in the larger sense.

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Kevin J. Maroney — 20 Jun 2001, 12:15 · follows Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

At 10:59 PM 6/19/01 -0400, William A wrote:

For all of those who were as puzzled as I at this reference to Mary Sue,
here is a useful definition:

"A Mary Sue is a character who is smarter than Spock, braver than Kirk, and more
compassionate than McCoy, and sleeps with all three."

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Michael Straight — 20 Jun 2001, 12:37 · follows Kevin J. Maroney

On Wed, 20 Jun 2001, Kevin J. Maroney wrote:

At 10:59 PM 6/19/01 -0400, William A wrote:

For all of those who were as puzzled as I at this reference to Mary Sue,
here is a useful definition:

"A Mary Sue is a character who is smarter than Spock, braver than Kirk, and
more compassionate than McCoy, and sleeps with all three."

And isn't a Mary Sue generally thought to be the author's fantasy-self? Isn't that a major part of
the ickyness of it: watching the author imagine herself a terrific-in-every-way character in an
existing universe?

-Rostrum

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William Ansley — 20 Jun 2001, 23:41 · follows Michael Straight

At 8:23 AM -0700 6/20/01, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes wrote:

William Ansley wrote:

> ... I have been reading SF/F for over 35 years now but I have
> always kept my distance from any "fannish" activities.

William, William, William... I don't know how to tell you this,
but this list is a fannish activity, or, as they used to say
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Granted, it's the kind of fanac that isn't usually referred to
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constructive," where "fannish" was more the "partying with a few
thousand of your closest friends" sort of thing.

Much of the traffic on this list tends toward the sercon, but
it's all fannish in the larger sense.

--Blattid

You know, it did occur to me that such a reply might greet my message and I agree with it. I should have said "... I have for, the most part, kept my distance from any 'fannish' activities." But I do have three things to say in response.

-As you note, this list is really not what I meant by "fannish." I certainly am not familiar with the jargon of fandom you keep tossing about.

-Aside from this discussion list, which I won't deny has suffered from a great deal of my turgid prose, and some postings to rec.arts.sf-lovers, oh, ever so long ago, I **have** avoided any fannish activities, aside from reading way too much SF/F and watching a relatively few movies and tv shows.

-There have been a few postings to this list which have struck me as vaguely repellant and frightening. <G>

William Ansley

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