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**David Allen and Agata Handley:  
‘Aventures’ in ‘Faërie’: Romantic Visions of Fairyland**

The concept of ‘fairyland’ (or ‘Faërie’) was central to the Romantic movement. This did not refer simply to fairy tales; but rather, to the idea of an ‘Other world’ or ‘spirit dimension’. It was a Mythosphere, with generic motifs and tropes shared across authors, texts, and media. As Julian Eilmann notes, the concept was a key influence on the emergence of Fantasy literature – evident, for example, in the work of MacDonald and Tolkien.

The concept was also closely related, in Romantic thought, to the idea of the *locus amoenus*, the mythic *garden* (in the Spenserian tradition). In Coleridge’s poem ‘The Garden of Boccaccio’ (1829), the narrator gazes at an engraving of a scene from *The Decameron*; and then imagines stepping into the picture and exploring the ‘garden’. The poem, then, evokes the desire to enter the imaginal realm, and experience ‘aventures’ in ‘Faërie’. It is filled with archetypal motifs and characters, as well as mythical creatures; and references other art forms and texts, both visual and literary, in a conscious form of transmediality.

The English landscape gardens of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were designed to create immersive experiences of ‘fairyland.’ In Stourhead, the park was laid out as a kind of ‘story map,’ based on scenes from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, thus reflecting the continuing appropriation of classical myth in the Romantic tradition. Its settings, moreover, echoed the ‘enchanted landscapes’ of artists such as Claude Lorrain – as if transformed in the idealizing mirror of a ‘Claude glass.’ The park itself, then, was an example of the transmediality of the Mythosphere. The visitor was invited to imagine ‘stepping into the picture,’ and following the journey of the hero (Aeneas) – to experience what Novalis called the ‘romanticization’ of the world.

*Dr David Allen and Dr Agata Handley have co-authored several conference papers and journal articles including ‘“Being Human”: Edward Bond’s Theories of Drama’ and ‘“The Most Photographed Barn in America”: Simulacra of the Sublime in American Art and Photography.’ David is Artistic Director of the Midland Actors Theatre. He was previously Senior Lecturer in Drama at the University of Wolverhampton. He authored Performing Chekhov, Stanislavski for Beginners, and several articles on Disney simulacra for the European Journal of American Culture. Agata is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Philology at the University of Łódź. She is the author of Constructing Identity: Continuity, Otherness and Revolt in the Poetry of Tony Harrison and is continuing her research on contemporary British literature. Her main areas of academic interest are contemporary British and Canadian poetry, with a particular focus on the cultural history of the English North.*

**Michelle Anya Anjirbag:  
Endless Wonder: Libraries as Portals to Urban Fantasy**

Books such as Polly Shulman’s *The Grimm Legacy* series, and made-for-television films and television series such as *The Librarians* and *Warehouse 13* have reconfigured the idea of myth, folklore, and fairy tale – in terms of how and where narratives might be accessed and by whom – in the contemporary public imagination. Each series incorporates the idea of a library or repository where artifacts connected to various stories are stored (e.g. Cinderella’s slippers) that facilitates contemporary adventures. These series rework narratives embedded in the contemporary public consciousness not through retelling, but by using the space of the library as a contact point for people to encounter the artifacts, linking the past and the present. Though not adaptations per se, they challenge ideas of fidelity and sanctity in adaptation and offer a new way to access different narratives. The library embedded in the book is a focal point for a societal nostalgia for libraries as potential spaces for knowledge and wonder, reflecting the push to protect libraries in contemporary society. The library artifacts become mechanisms for new, wondrous experiences, connected to and informed by knowledge from the past. The mechanism of the fantasy relies on a meta-construction of the library within the story as a portal, insofar as it relies on the recognizability of the stories embedded within the narrative as symbolically constructed “artifacts.” The library here is not just an archive, but a contact zone for wonder in an increasingly digitized age, and a departure point for a new fantastic journey. These narratives become as much about adapting the library as a concept – recalling, renewing, and renegotiating the potential for wonder, discovery, and egalitarian access to knowledge that they can symbolize – as they are about incorporating old stories into new narratives.

*Michelle Anya Anjirbag is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Research in Children’s Literature at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education. Previously, she earned a BA in English with a creative writing concentration and a double minor in Anthropology, and Native American and Indigenous Studies from the University of Connecticut, and an MSc in Literature and Society: Enlightenment, Romantic, Victorian at the University of Edinburgh. Her current research examines depictions of diversity in film adaptations of fairy tales, specifically those from the Disney Renaissance (1989-1999) through the contemporary.*

**Amy Barkhaus:  
Journeying through Fantasy Literature: A Reflective Consideration of Bernard Sleigh’s *Anciente Mappe of Fairyland***

This paper discusses a rendering of the Mythosphere of historical fantasy literature from Grecian classical to Edwardian Children’s literature in the form of a collective paratext. In 1918, artist and eccentric folklorist Bernard Sleigh contrived a map where many classic fantasy stories are cohabitants in one island realm, one of pervasive imagination, which he titled *An Anciente Mappe of Fairyland: Newly Discovered and Set Forth*. Bernard envisaged storied figures all residing in this one place, and so, “out of one territory, one map, can bloom a thousand geographies.”. This map functions as a paratext, as defined by Stefan Ekman in *Here be Dragons: Exploring Fantasy Maps and Settings*, illustrating the thematic connectivity between tales which burgeons into the combined genre of fantasy half a century later. In a tripartite consideration, the author’s subjectivity will be taken into account with a brief discussion of sociohistorical influences and personal preference. Along with the map, Sleigh produced a pamphlet ‘*Guide to the Map of Fairyland*’, which includes a dedication, introduction, and listing of all included figures and their literary counterparts. Though whimsical, his introduction mirrors certain visions of voyaging across thresholds from preeminent fantasies, and when these materials are juxtaposed, they illuminate the readers’ experience upon finding themselves newly immersed in a secondary world. Germane to this, is the significance of the elemental ‘Ocean of Story’, which leads to the *Fairyland*. There, each primary literary domain—Grecian mythology, Arthurian Romance, Fairy Tales, Nursery Rhymes, Edwardian Children’s stories, the Monstrous— as well as meaningful features like the division of Night and Day, will be semantically considered, in a figurative topographical survey of the map. Lastly, the potential for the theoretical expansion of this paratextual map to include eminent fantasy literature of today is contemplated.

*Amy Barkhaus is currently a postgraduate student on the Masters of Letters in Fantasy programme at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests are fairy tales, Romantic poetry, Edwardian Children’s Literature, and the various forms of Otherworlds encountered within Fantasy Literature, such as dreamscapes, alternate realities, and the pastoral realms of Classicism.*

**Andrew Barton:  
“This is but one of the legends of which the people speak”: Myth-making and Legend in *The Legend of Zelda***

In Diana Wynn Jones’ *The Game*, she discusses the Mythosphere using examples from the Greek pantheon rich with intertextuality. However, not all branches of the Mythosphere have such an extended reach: new myths are created every day, especially in emerging media such as video games. Stories in the Mythosphere must be adapted to suit the medium in which the story is told, such as how video games consider gameplay in their narratives. I propose to examine the Mythosphere of the popular *The Legend of Zelda* series, investigating how games in this long-running franchise relate to each other through and in spite of differing gameplay elements.

Each game in the *Zelda* series presents and reinterprets common elements of the adventure story. The lore in the *Zelda* series establishes multiple timelines, and the various reinterpretations and reinventions reveal how mythmaking incorporates gameplay in video games. In my paper, I select prominent titles from the series and investigate how they work together to form a Mythosphere. The *Zelda* series illustrates how the narratological function of the myth must be built around the ludic functions in a video game. For example, the gameplay of *The Wind Waker* centers around sailing a boat, and the game’s narrative explains this with the destruction of the world through a massive flood centuries earlier. Because of this tension between the gameplay and narrative, the *Zelda* games challenge fans to make sense of a difficult and often conflicting chronology. As part of my examination, I explore the ways that fans engage in this myth-making, as well as the ways in which the series attempts to navigate the tension of narrative and play.

*Andrew Barton is Lecturer at Texas State University, where he recently graduated with a master’s in literature. His specific areas of interest are medieval literature, speculative fiction, and popular media. He received his bachelor’s in English and Psychology from Texas A&M University before working for a nonprofit for six years. His return to academia signaled a renewed interest in medieval literature and its connections to fantasy and speculative fiction. He is currently applying for PhD programs to continue his research into medieval and fantasy literature.*

**Sarah Boyd:  
Reclaiming the Mythosphere: Fanfiction’s Role in Contemporary Mythmaking**

Henry Jenkins famously stated that ‘Fan fiction is a way of the culture repairing the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk.’ For Jenkins, fanfiction is a means of facilitating active engagement with the myths that corporations and copyright bar access to. Fanfiction writers fly under the legal and corporate radar to reshape and reimagine both classic and contemporary myths, thereby creating an underground extension of the Mythosphere.

Fanfiction also creates new myths. The popular fanfic genre ‘Omegaverse’ is an adaptation of werewolf mythology, overtly concerned with social and sexual mores, particularly gender roles. ‘Hanahaki Disease’ is a fan-born trope in which the disease carrier coughs up flower petals as a result of unrequited love, a fairy tale-esque motif that comes in both tragic and comic forms. Yet these myths are only known to those involved in fanfiction, with no obvious path to cross over to the mainstream.

Drawing on ethnographic research of the fanfiction site *Archive of Our Own* and fan-dominated social media platform Tumblr, this paper aims to demonstrate how fanfiction interacts with and extends the mainstream Mythosphere, as well as building its own network of myths. It will investigate whether fanfiction is inevitably isolated from mainstream mythmaking by its subcultural, sublegal status, or whether it can be acknowledged as an active, dynamic part of the Mythosphere. It will also examine the role of copyright in restricting the development of the contemporary Mythosphere and how fanfiction can push back against this process in order to reclaim myths and mythmaking at a grassroots level.

*Sarah Boyd is a third-year PhD student in Publishing Studies at the University of Stirling. She holds an MA in English Literature,an MLitt in Shakespeare Studies and an MLitt in Publishing Studies. Her current research focuses on fanfiction as a digital publishing model; her general research interests lie in fan studies, digital fiction and publishing, and gender and sexuality. As an active fanfiction writer and reader, she uses her position and experience within the fanfiction community to perform ethnographic research into its functions as a digital publishing culture. You can reach Sarah on Twitter @seviebee.*

**Amy Bromley:  
Bringing Magic to Storybrooke: Finding Hope in the Literary Geographies of *Once Upon a Time***

*Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018) in many ways speaks to, and attempts to account for, the idea of the Mythosphere described by Diana Wynne Jones. As a series of inter-related narratives, the show both structurally and thematically challenges narrative and geographic boundaries, and it explores the function of storytelling as world-making. In Storybrooke, Maine – a ‘fictional’ town created by the Evil Queen’s curse and inserted into a ‘real world’ location – the fairy tale characters from the Enchanted Forest have no memory of who they ‘really’ are. Unable to cross the town line, they are trapped in a ‘land without magic’ where time stands still. With a consistent message of hope and belief, the *OUATverse* expands over seven seasons to incorporate many familiar fantastic locations including Wonderland, Oz, Camelot and the Underworld (as well as original, self-referential realms like The Land of Untold Stories). In its mapping of these realms, *OUAT* explores the relationships between writing, memory and world-making; traversing the terrains of fairy tales, Greek myths, Arthurian legend and other literary worlds, it combines nostalgic belief in a magical past with hope for a redeemed future. This paper will perform a ‘critical literary geography’ of the Mythosphere as it is enacted in *OUAT*, exploring the crossing of realms and troubling of borders as integral to the show’s politics of hope, arguing that it posits both an interconnected unity of all worlds and an open-ended set of generative possibilities in fiction and in life. Drawing from Marina Warner’s idea that we should ‘imagine the history of fairy tale as a map’, the paper will examine the show’s interventions in, and openings up of, the landscape of ‘the storybook’ as a heterogenous, magical text still/always in the process of being written.

*Amy Bromley completed her PhD in English Literature at the University of Glasgow in 2018, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Her thesis examined Virginia Woolf’s use of the literary sketch, and her main interests are in modernism, critical theory and genre studies, with a particular focus on short forms. She is the co-editor, with Dr Elsa Högberg (Uppsala University), of Sentencing Orlando: Virginia Woolf and the Morphology of the Modernist Sentence (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018). She currently teaches undergraduate courses in English and Comparative Literatures at the University of Glasgow.*

**Bettina Burger:  
A Most Accurate Way of Describing Reality – Breaking Boundaries in Nnedi Okorafor’s Organic Fantasy Tales**

The concept of the Mythosphere is an engaging one that accurately reflects the global nature of the fantasy genre – however, it neglects to take into account the power hierarchies that emerge when the fantasy field is seen as world literature. In order to do justice to a truly global view of Fantasy as a polycentric network of texts, it is especially important to examine fictional as well as metafictional texts by diverse writers. This allows readers and scholars alike to avoid relying solely on Eurocentric tropes and generic conventions to describe fantasy while enabling them to acknowledge the unavoidable influence of Western cultures. It also helps scholarly discourse to address fantasies from countries which may define both Fantasy and reality differently.

Nnedi Okorafor is a Nigerian-American Fantasy writer who draws extensively on her Nigerian background while being acutely aware of Western fantasy conventions. Her novel *Who Fears Death?*, for example, follows the Portal-Quest Fantasy paradigm relatively closely, but Okorafor not only subverts the generic tropes, she also integrates Nigerian mythology into an instantly recognisable Fantasy story, thus broadening what is seen as part of the Mythosphere. Furthermore, her conception of Fantasy as a means of describing reality helps to understand her Fantasy not as in opposition to reality but rather as an extension of it.

This paper aims at analysing how Western Fantasy tropes are used in Okorafor’s *Who Fears Death*? to portray a non-Western mythology as well as the way in which Okorafor uses fantasy to describe reality, which blurs the boundaries between the two. It will further examine how Okorafor’s own theory on “organic fantasy” informs her writing in *Who Fears Death?* and the two short stories ‘The House of Deformities’ and ‘Biafra’.

*Bettina Burger completed her BA in English Studies and History at Heidelberg University in 2012. She gained an MSc in Literature and Society at the University of Edinburgh in 2013 and an MA in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at Bonn University in 2016. She currently teaches Anglophone Literatures at Heinrich-Heine-University, Düsseldorf, where she is also working on her PhD thesis on anglophone fantasy literatures.*

**Sarah Courtis:  
Sub-creation of Culture: Poetry and Music in the Mythosphere of Middle-Earth**

The connecting tissue of any culture is found in its language, art, traditions, and shared history, but within works of fantasy such a rich heritage often plays a minor part in the narrative. This is not so in the works of J. R. R. Tolkien, self-proclaimed poet and sub-creator. In the collected writings on Middle-earth, language, history, and art each have an important part to play, yet it is the songs that connect these together, offering insight into the cultures and history of Middle-earth. The phonaesthetic choices, rhyme schemes based off of ancient epics, and deep thematic meanings lend themselves to adaptation and have inspired many bands and composers to craft music to complement the words. However, while the song cycles, essays, and collected poetry texts often compile the songs together and offer individual critique, it is rare for songs to be considered together as parts of a bigger picture. In this paper I will examine the ways in which song enriches the reader’s understanding of culture and history in Tolkien’s work, discussing the use of particularization in poetry and the impact that song has on the grander narrative of the Mythosphere. I shall use a hermeneutic approach, with a focus on semiotics in order to interrogate the text and enrich readers’ understandings of the songs and poetry. I shall focus on the songs of *The Lord of the Rings* and the ways they give clues about character development and culture while hinting at the untold vistas, the “…interrupted, never finished song of the history of Middle-earth,” as Verlyn Flieger puts it. The songs on their own give tantalising glimpses of the grander narrative, but put together they craft an understanding of the Mythosphere from a unique perspective.

*Sarah Courtis is a PhD candidate at Murdoch University researching the lyric in musical theatre. Her other specialty areas include Shakespeare, Theatre in Education, mental health in the arts and academia, and Tolkien studies. Sarah has taught at Murdoch University for five years in the Theatre and Drama department, and has recently begun teaching research skills. She is also a practitioner, working as an actor, director, stage manager, and lyricist around Perth, Australia.*

**Amelia Crowther:  
The Legacy of the Witch-Hag: Female Monstrosity as Feminist Resistance in Contemporary American Cinema**

The witch-hag has pervaded Western mythology since the fifteenth century, when she was constructed through visual art, literature, witch hunting pamphlets, and folktales as an image of female transgression. An exaggeratedly old woman, ugly and unkempt, she dwells in the woods, flies through the night sky, feasts on infant flesh, and uses her demonic magic to attack the family, shrieking with laughter as she does so.

This paper examines the pervasive power of this image of female monstrosity by exploring contemporary cinematic images of the witch-hag with reference to early modern images. Addressing a variety of films such as *The Lords of Salem* (2012), *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013) and *Into the Woods* (2014) this paper will demonstrate the ways in which this female figure continues to be represented as abject, a horrific image of Barbara Creed’s monstrous-feminine, and particularly as horrific monstrous mother. As such, the legacy of the witch-hag suggests the continuation of fears of disorderly femininity as threatening to patriarchal order.

However, in the centuries since the early modern witch trials, the witch-hag has been appropriated as a symbol of female power and resistance. That is, the myth has been altered. This paper thus goes on to explore the ways in which these contemporary representations speak to the witch-hag’s feminist potential. Particularly through positioning the witch-hag as a model of Mary Russo’s female grotesque, I argue that these images deconstruct and negotiate the category Woman, and open up discursive spaces for female subjectivity and pleasure in the disruption of patriarchal order. As such, I contend that the image of the witch-hag is an invaluable tool in a feminist politics of social change, despite the continuing attempts to control and condemn her.

*Amelia Crowther is a PhD candidate at the University of Sussex researching the changing face of the witch through cinematic history, exploring how these images construct, re-construct, and negotiate the category Woman within their specific cultural climates. Amelia is habitually attracted to the gothic, the horrific and the monstrous, particularly in relation to gender and sexuality. She can be found on Twitter @ameliacr0wther*

**Kerry Dodd:  
‘Will of the People’ – The Holy Grail Quest and Artefactual Wonder**

Behind every myth lies a grain of truth, or so archaeological fiction would often have us believe. Certainly, the Holy Grail is one of the most enduring tales which, whether depicted as a wish-granting conduit or validation of lineage, comes to represent the pursuit of human desire. The myth of the Grail, or *san graal*, has experienced a multitude of permutations – originating in Arthurian and Christian theology, the chalice is also represented by the hearts suit in a deck of cards and would even become a tool to validate heritage in such texts as Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). While the myth of the Grail may cross cultural boundaries, as evidenced by the *Fate/stay night* series (2004), it is continually defined as exhibiting ‘wonderous’ qualities: an object which can fulfil the deepest of human desires. Yet, how could such an object comprehensively understand our wishes? Is there something unique about encountering this relic? For as *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) suggests, it takes specific knowledge to differentiate the Grail from the multitude, an artefact from the object collective.

This paper will explore a range of Holy Grail tales to demonstrate not only the object’s development, but how its changing interpretation is integral to the interconnection between myth and artefact formation. Exploring definitions of relic identity and propositions of an object-orientated ontology, I argue that literary media utilise myth to imagine such meetings and thus challenge the very process of encountering materiality. In so doing, I aim to demonstrate how the development of the Grail myth (particularly from a benevolent conduit to something perhaps more sinister) reflects an evolving interrogation into the ‘heart’ of object ontology itself.

*Kerry Dodd is a PhD researcher at Lancaster University and acting Head Editor for Fantastika Journal. His thesis, entitled “The Archaeological Weird: Excavating the Non-human,” examines the intersection between archaeology and weird fiction. Utilising a post-structural materialist framework, his thesis focuses on how archaeological framings can offer a re-conceptualisation of object-orientated ontology through the Weird. Kerry also works more widely in the fields of science fiction (particularly cosmic horror and cyberpunk), the Gothic, and glitch aesthetics.*

**Miasol Eguíbar Holgado:  
Beyond the Black Atlantic: Subversions of Gender, Sexuality, and Race in Nalo Hopkinson’s *The Salt Roads***

Jamaican-Canadian author Nalo Hopkinson is one of the most celebrated writers of contemporary black speculative fiction, a group that includes names such as Octavia Butler, Samuel R. Delany and Nnedi Okorafor. Hopkinson’s fiction includes elements from Afro-Caribbean history and folklore blended with science fiction, fantasy and dystopian scenarios. This combination produces a particular form of speculative fiction, one that expands on the traditional role of black subjects as the Other or aliens and includes an Afro-Caribbean aesthetic and ontology.

This paper analyses her novel *The Salt Roads* (2003), specifically how its intersections with gender, sexuality, and race add new, unexplored dimensions to a Mythosphere of the fantasy genre. The novel follows the stories of three women developing in three different timelines: Thais, an African prostitute living in the fourth century; Mer, a slave from a Saint-Domingue plantation; and Jeanne, a Haitian mistress of French poet Baudelaire. Their stories and consciousness are linked by the sea goddess Lasirén, who possesses their bodies at different times in the narration.

The paper analyses how this novel creates a Mythosphere that is eminently female and queered. By connecting Africa before the transatlantic slave trade with plantation slavery and later migrations from the United States to Europe, this novel departs from the Eurocentric concept of the diaspora and the male-centred context of the Black Atlantic. Instead, it creates an alternative set of routes, the salt roads, that rely on a female water spirit as unifying thread. A focus on the enslaved female black body and on gay relationships among some of the characters implies a subversion of the traditional heterosexual male roles that dominate works of fantasy.

*Miasol Eguíbar Holgado holds a degree in English Philology from the University of Oviedo, Spain, and a MPhil in Literatures of the Americas from Trinity College Dublin. She was awarded a scholarship to carry out her PhD, which she completed in 2015 at the University of Oviedo. She currently works in the Research Group ‘Intersections: Contemporary Literatures, Cultures and Theories’ and as a Part-time Professor at the University of Oviedo. Her research focuses on diasporas in contemporary Canadian literature, particularly on the Scottish and African settled diasporas of Nova Scotia.*

**Karen Graham:  
The Water Has Memory: Expanding the Mythosphere of Oz in Gregory Maguire’s *The Wicked Years***

I […] found [*The Wizard of Oz*] full of useful inconsistencies and lapses that allowed me scope to invent without trespassing or betrayal. Fairy tales, old and in some ways incoherent, offer the same useful knobbiness. (Maguire)

The re-telling and re-writing of myths is prevalent in contemporary literature. Moreover, the prominence of novels spanning various genres and styles is testimony to the sticking power of re-worked myths. Gregory Maguire’s novels show an enthusiastic and determined commitment to the re-writing, revision and appropriation of mythic narratives for contemporary audiences. This is most notable in Maguire’s contemporary fantasy novels, *The Wicked Years* series (2000-2011).

Through the reconfiguration of the numerous narratives set in the land of Oz, Maguire’s critically responsive act of revision transforms and greatly expands the Mythosphere. Characteristic of Maguire’s approach to transformation is the exploration of the natural inconsistencies and contradictions that emerge when a fantasy world is created through a long-running, multi-author series. For Maguire, this ‘useful knobbiness’ is what allows him to dive into the text and expand it by filling in gaps or interrogating contradictions. One such gap that provides a useful tool for mythic expansion is a question addressed in *Wicked*: why does the Wicked Witch melt when Dorothy throws water on her? In answering this question through characterisation and the principles of fantasy worldbuilding, Maguire also approaches the role of water in creation myths, and in its subsequent political and social value.

This paper proposes to explore the mythic construction of water in Maguire’s Oz, and to show how the seemingly simple question of why water melts the Wicked Witch leads to a dramatic and hugely successful expansion of the Mythosphere of Oz.

*Karen Graham has a PhD in myth and contemporary fantasy from the University of Aberdeen. Her research interests include the adaptation of myth and fairy tale, intertextuality, the literary vampire, supernatural hybridity, and the fantastic. She currently works in Higher Education as Senior Faculty Administrator (Academic) at Strathclyde Business School. She is an experienced editor of creative short fiction and academic research anthologies, as well as a Trustee for ShortbreadStories, an educational charity for new writers.*

**Alex Gushurst-Moore:  
Mapping the Middle Ages: The Medieval as Palimpsest in Victorian Fantasy Art**

This paper will evidence how the artists of Victorian Britain used medieval motifs and themes to fashion fantasy realms in paint and in the decorative arts. It will outline the thesis that Victorians adopted the idea of the Middle Ages as an ideal to strive towards after the demise of the classical idyll of the Republic during and after the Napoleonic era. The resultant fantasy world, adorned with and sustained by references to the medieval, marks a distinctively Victorian approach to the world of the imagination, but one that is still referenced by and present in contemporary fantasy art and literature. This paper will first grasp how events such as the 1843 Westminster Cartoon Competition and the Great Exhibition of 1851 were stoking the imagination of artists towards the middle ages. Following this, an analysis of three aspects of the art of the latter half of the Victorian era will help to focus in on how artists were reclaiming familiar symbols and motifs and using them in novel ways. Through examining the presentation of 13th century Gothic architecture and architectural motifs, the use of non-contemporary perspectives in paint, and the explosion in craft and the presence of Kelmscott, this paper will evidence how artists were able to fashion a nostalgic otherworld that never was, priming the British arts for the emergence of high fantasy art at the end of the century, replete with the familiar symbols of the medieval such as armour and knights, dragons and unicorns, princesses and angels. Thus, it will be shown how Victorian visual artists helped to curate an aspect of the Mythosphere that has transcended time.

*Alex Gushurst-Moore is a second-year history of art PhD student at the University of York, working on a thesis entitled ‘The Making of Modern Fantasy in the Visual Arts of England, c. 1854-1914’ with Professor Elizabeth Prettejohn. She studied at the Universities of Edinburgh and Oxford and is interested in applying literary theories surrounding the fantastic to visual subjects. Since beginning her PhD, she has set up a fantasy discussion group at the University of York and recently co-organised a conference on Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones at the Ashmolean, where she volunteers digitising the 19th and 20th century British works on paper.*

**Amber Hancock:  
Crossing the Bounds: An Exploration of World-building and the Other in Diana Wynne Jones’s *Homeward Bounders***

Diana Wynne Jones’s concept of the Mythosphere as a world built out of interlacing stories and mythologies acts as a blueprint behind the many worlds and universes that she has created within her work. From the Related Worlds in the *Chronicles of Chrestomanci* to the Infinite Expanse of *Deep Secret*, she presents imagined worlds as structures defined by the cultural signifiers of traditions, language and folklore. Recognizing the interconnective nature of these elements is often dependent upon the introduction of an outsider, or other, coming into the space. It is through this character’s observations that that the concepts of boundaries/borders and home are brought to the forefront of the narrative and further illustrate the various spaces along binary lines. *Homeward Bounders* is a prime example of this kind of world-building dynamic. Run as a gameboard by the mysterious Them, the exploration of the universe takes place through the eyes of the Bounders – individuals who are taken out of ‘play’ and forced to walk the different worlds and the boundaries-between searching for Home. Using the Prometheus myth as an anchor, this novel investigates the nature of ‘boundaries’, ‘home’ and ‘other’ in the literary unfolding of the worlds within the narrative’s Mythosphere; this acts as both a means of gaining understanding of the cultures being represented but more significantly as essential elements in maintaining the societal and cultural structure of the universe itself.

*Amber Hancock is originally from Chino, California, and received her BA and MA in English from California State University Fullerton in 2008 and 2014 respectively. She is currently working on her PhD at Bangor University in North Wales, and her focus is on border representation across prose genres within Late Modern/Contemporary Welsh and Scottish-based literature.*

**Lucinda Holdsworth:  
The Glasgow Girls: The Forgotten Women Who Drew the Map**

While many of us have heard of the group of artists known as the Glasgow Boys, their sister group, the Glasgow Girls, has mostly been forgotten by history. Unlike the oil paintings of their male counterparts, the Girls’ book illustrations were considered to be a low art form, and thus unworthy of critical attention. Yet despite their relative anonymity, the Glasgow Girls’ fantastic and otherworldly images found their way into homes across Britain in the early 1900s, in texts such as William Morris’ *The Defence of Guenevere* and Oscar Wilde’s *A House of Pomegranates.* In this paper I will argue that the Glasgow Girls’ illustrations, particularly the plethora of fairy tale illustrations by Annie French and Jessie King, laid the essential groundwork for the emergence of high fantasy. Their use of the ‘Glasgow Style’ brought the Celtic revival to readers across the country and, I will argue, likely inspired J. R. R. Tolkien’s creation of Middle-earth, as echoes of Jessie King’s art can be seen in his original sketches for *The Hobbit*. The influence of the romantic elegance, medieval splendour, and magical natural imagery that typifies their illustrations can be found in nearly every major fantasy author since. By tracing this line of influence, I will demonstrate that the Glasgow Girls first sketched some of the most familiar landmarks on our map of the Mythosphere, shaping our understanding of fantasy as a genre.

*Lucinda Holdsworth is a PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow. Her research centres on modern depictions of Lucifer and the way this cultural archetype is activated to express discontentment with hierarchical and patriarchal structures. Lucinda earned her bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Nottingham, where she was published in the University’s journal Innervate and awarded the Bond Prize for Outstanding Literary Achievement. She also holds an MLitt in Fantasy from the University of Glasgow.*

**Ginger Lee Thomason:  
Cooking Up a Theory: How Food Unites the Pixar Universe**

Since 2003 there has been speculation that the movies of Pixar Animation Studios share a single universe, in spite of the variety of genres, narratives, and even non-human characters. This theory, and the mythos it relies on, has spawned many memes examining numerous Easter eggs connecting the movies. It has even become the subject of Jon Negroni’s blog and his 2013 book *The Pixar Theory*, in which he relies on the gradual chronological personification of animals and objects finding themselves sharing in the human condition and its subsequent desires. In this paper, I will demonstrate how the films of Pixar in this shared Mythosphere are also connected through food imagery and the ways in which characters connect to food or food-like experiences.

The paper will be a short journey through the cinematic release of the Pixar films, examining how the Pixar theory works and why food is an additional thread to connect the universes. The paper will examine the films before the release of *Ratatouille*, the middle (or meat) of the paper will look at the most food-forward film of the studio and how it fits into the Pixar theory mythos, and the final third will examine the post-*Ratatouille* films continuing to flavour the subsequent mythos.

The paper will look at the connecting threads across the various elements of the Mythosphere including the importance of family-style dinners (*The Incredibles*, *Brave, Coco,* and *Inside Out*), unusual takes on common food stuffs (*A Bug’s Life*, *Monsters, Inc.*), and the reoccurring Pizza Planet truck and the connotations of pizza (*Toy Story* movies and *Inside Out)*. Finally, the paper will explore how the newest short *Bao* is a nexus of this theory and how it fits into the Pixar universe.

*Ginger Lee Thomason was born and raised in Utah. She is currently working on her PhD in Creative Writing at Anglia Ruskin University. Her thesis is a high fantasy novel titled How to Cook a Dragon, which can be described as The Lord of the Rings meets The Great British Bake Off. The critical commentary focuses on how food imagery and tropes are used in worldbuilding and characterization within speculative fiction. Ginger completed her BA in Creative Writing and English at Southern New Hampshire University and her MFA in Writing at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Her other research interests include queer theory, poetry, American history, Tudor history, and the Ancient World.*

**Ben Littlejohns:  
“Hostes Humani Generes” – Rehabilitating the Fantasy Pirate Through Stories**

Today, pirates are remembered almost exclusively in the world of popular culture. This paper will explore how the legacy of the pirates who operated during the Golden Age of Piracy (c.1712-c.1728) has been mapped on to the Mythosphere, turning them into a creature of fantasy. I will begin by looking at Charles Johnson’s *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724), published during the decline of the Golden Age, which purports to recount the lives and deeds of many figures who have become almost mythological figures today, including Blackbeard, Henry Every, and Bartholomew Roberts. I will then go on to examine two of the most influential pirate texts: Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island,* and J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan,* and how they built on the groundwork laid out by Johnson. From here, I will chart a direct line of influence to the pirate stories of today, in particular Walt Disney’s *Pirates of the Caribbean* films and the Starz series *Black Sails*. In so doing, I hope to demonstrate that the mythologisation of the pirate was, at least in part, as a response to the needs of Empire. Most of the Caribbean pirates were formerly British sailors, objecting to conditions within the British merchant marine, making them a particularly British phenomenon; by erasing the historical fact of the pirate in favour of the myth, they were able to control the narrative, and leave out inconvenient details. I will conclude by looking at some of the ways in which pirate stories have attempted to retain some of the anti-establishment power of their source material, with a particular focus on *Treasure Island* and *Black Sails.*

*Ben Littlejohns gained his MLitt in Fantasy from the University of Glasgow in 2017, and will be starting a PhD looking at the influence of pirates on development of the early novel. When not indulging his love of all things pirate, he can often be found reading fantasy novels or playing video games.*

**Chris Lynch Becherer:  
Unreal Estates and Misleading Mapps: Commercialisation, Creativity, and Conflict  
in Terry Pratchett’s Discworld**

*Discworld* is a modern phenomenon. Selling millions of books worldwide, the Disc is made up not only the novels themselves, but almost innumerable ancillary products; it is one of our most beloved fantasy worlds, with stories extending well beyond its narrative texts.

In this paper, I will study the merchandise at the edge of Discworld. Specifically, I will examine the guides and maps to the Disc such as *The Discworld Mapp* (1995) and *A Tourist Guide to Lancre* (1998), as well as more recent examples of Discworld memorabilia, including an “Unreal Estate” welcome pack to a fictional property in Ankh-Morpork. These guides suggest a resolved world and a safely settled space; for Denis Wood, maps are ‘definitive descriptions of the way things “are”‘, therefore potentially at odds with Pratchett’s irreverent texts.

For Pratchett, long averse to mapping the Disc, the merchandise industry posed a problem. His attempts to interrogate the memorabilia project lend a tension to these works, which makes these products so valuable. Pratchett interrogates the scope of these texts, shifting the creative onus back onto the reader: ‘the only accurate map is the one inside my head. And yours.’ *A Tourist Guide to Lancre*’s introduction consists of a duel for the meaning of the rural landscape between Nanny Ogg, the canny, mercantile insider, and Eric Wheelbrace, the upper-class, academic hillwalker.

*Discworld* memorabilia exists at the edges of its own world, bordering the literary and the commercial, dancing on the line between satire and comfort, potentially operating as a form of protest map deep at the heart of the Discworld industry. The texts prod and provoke, and this paper will explore how the Discworld memorabilia can challenge the boundaries of the narrative medium in the Mythosphere.

*Chris Lynch Becherer is a PhD student at the University of Glasgow. He has an MA in English Literature and an MLitt in Fantasy Literature, both also from the University of Glasgow. In September 2015 he received the Thomas Reid Bursary, awarded by the University of Glasgow’s College of Arts for students of outstanding merit. His current research centres on Terry Pratchett’s Discworld series, specifically how it interacts with neo-Victorian fiction, cartography, and ecocriticism. He has been the co-editor of the creative writing journal From Glasgow to Saturn from 2015 to 2016, and co-founder and Vice Chair of GIFCon 2017.*

**Meg MacDonald:  
From Wicker Women to Wishing Wells: Peeling Back Mythic Layers to Find A Grain of God**

The proliferation and layering of myths is a powerful and dangerous thing; as humanity evolves so do its stories. Beliefs are fostered and then forgotten. It is in this forgetting that danger lies, because nothing really disappears and gods never really die. Papering over past beliefs by refusing to acknowledge their origins results in a misunderstanding of their evolution, and the shifts in power dynamics that have accompanied those incremental layers. How do we steer where we are going if we do not understand from whence we came? When, and how, do we refute Neil Gaiman’s charge, that “People …will not take responsibility for their belief”?

This mythic layering becomes the perfect space for fantasts to explore the truths and lies that we use to claim the world. These are the ‘crude and dangerous’ layers of Diana Wynne Jones’ Mythosphere. In the beliefs that we have left lurking in the dark corners of the collective unconscious, the gods become monsters and the sacrifices become superstitions. A key example of mythic layering and belief evolution is the recurrent figure of the fertility totem. This paper will examine how Jones, Susan Cooper, and Frances Hardinge offer the reader sanitised fertility myths and totemic representations of fertility gods in order to then peel back the safe superficial presentation of them, profoundly destabilising a sense of the ‘known’ and revealing the powerful layers beneath.

This paper will consider how these god-proxies have become disconnected from their original sacrificial significance, becoming disregarded as childish myths; what gender power dynamics are at work in this societal disempowerment of traditionally female practices; and what the implications of the reinstatement of their societal status might be.

*Meg MacDonald is studying for a PhD in English Literature at Anglia Ruskin University. She is concerned that her thesis, “Gods Wall to Wall: The Rise and Fall of Gods in Fantasy 1989-2018,” might form its own belief structure and deify itself when her back is turned. However, when being properly sacrificed to, it looks at concepts of religious belief and godhood in genre fantasy in the UK and North American markets. She took her bachelor’s and master’s in Literature from the University of Glasgow. She takes responsibility for all her bad puns.*

**Christine Mains:  
The Triple Goddess and the Friday Nite Fish Fry: Mapping Narrative Worlds in Patricia McKillip’s *Kingfisher***

American fantasist Patricia McKillip crafts stories that challenge genre boundaries and defy our expectations of what Fantasy is. To borrow the title of Brian Attebery’s recent book, McKillip writes “stories about stories,” stories about the art of storytelling and the effect that stories have on readers and on the world. Many of her award-winning novels can be described as “alethic dyadic worlds,” to use the terminology coined by narratologist Lubomír Doležel: a storyworld divided into two that are contrasted along the lines of possibility /impossibility, such as the natural / supernatural worlds of mythology, where ordinary human beings encounter gods and creatures that are impossible according to natural laws. Such narrative worlds can be read as arguments about fact and fiction, about past and present, and about opposing value systems.

In McKillip’s alethic dyadic worlds, characters inhabiting a Primary Narrative World (PNW) that seems fantastic to the reader but natural to them experience a Secondary Narrative World (SNW) informed by the tales, myths, and legends of their past. This encounter changes them, much as the experience of reading a book changes the reader. McKillip’s most recent novel, *Kingfisher* (2016), constructs a PNW that draws on the archive of inter-related narratives that is the Arthurian mythos, in particular the tales of the Grail Quest and the Fisher King (albeit with mobile phones, motorcycles, and laser guns). Layered over and behind this world is a SNW in which the archetypes of the Dying God and the Triple Goddess are made manifest. The quest to recover an object with symbolic value in both worlds comments on real-world debates about gender politics, empire-building, and faith.

*Christine Mains taught fantasy and popular culture at University of Calgary and Mount Royal University, and now works as an editor at Oxford University Press. She has published on the work of American fantasist Patricia McKillip and other authors of fantasy literature, as well as on science fiction television. She is the Managing Editor of the Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts.*

**Andreas Michaelides:  
A Semi-Imaginary Topography of New Orleans**

When creating an imaginary setting based on a real locale, one does not merely research the historical background, but the various imaginary constructs, be they mythological, folkloric or literary, based on the various written works that have come before, especially when there is a desire to integrate particular elements from said mythoi. In essence, when using an existing locale, one dips into its Mythosphere and dabbles in its literary geography. One such prime example is the city of New Orleans and the broader area of the Louisiana bayous. In fact, New Orleans has the rather rare particularity of being a city literally shaped by the 19th century writings about it, especially those of Lafcadio Hearn. Hearn’s perceptions of the city, openly challenging the societal and racial norms and boundaries of his time, were so widely circulated and popular that the city eventually conformed to those perceptions. This made New Orleans a fertile ground for all sorts of mystery and supernatural fiction, written into and woven with its history and cultural background, but especially the “cracks” thereof, which made it so appealing to writers such as H.P. Lovecraft, Anne Rice and Poppy Z. Brite. This paper is a presentation of said research, as I have undertaken it so far, for my own series of books, through the eras of the city and its environs, focusing mainly on semi-legendary personas (such as Marie Laveau and Pepe Llulla), voodoo lore and selected writings of Lafcadio Hearn. The paper also briefly explores how these elements can be woven into a narrative that lies at the intersection between Lovecraftian horror, vampire fiction and noir mystery.

*Andreas Michaelides is a translator, writer and oral storyteller. He has translated books between Greek, French and English, on subjects ranging from popular science, to history, young adult fiction and fantasy. To date, he has written four books (Tales from the Anvil of Songs and three novellas in The Addiction of Christian Ambrose series), a number of short detective stories and self-published comic books. He uses storytelling for a number of performances, as well as educational workshops combining science and literature. He is a founding member of both the Greek Crime Fiction Club and the House of Oral Tradition “Mythologion”.*

**Stephanie Millar:  
Zeus, Hades and The Final Pam: An Analysis of Greek Mythology in the Influence of Modern Myths via the *Monster Factory***

Greek mythology has a profound influence on Western fantasy: from the hero’s journey as a template to the hordes of fantasy creatures that are ubiquitous to the genre, its footprints are wholly embedded in the Mythosphere. Even when considering pantheons and myths created for various texts or media, the influence of Greek mythology can still be found as a clear inspiration.

As such, when we start to consider playable characters within fantasy video games, the actions of these characters often correlate with ancient heroes. Compared to the likes of Heracles, the playable character could be considered as both breaching the liminal zone between mortal and immortal, and influencing how people respond to or understand other myths both within the setting and within the greater Mythosphere.

A prime example of a playable character reaching mythical notoriety online would be The Final Pam, a character created in the Polygon series *Monster Factory* by Griffin McElroy and Justin McElroy. From her initial design as a psycho-pomp within the apocalyptic fantasy setting of *Fallout 4* to her escape from Sisyphean imprisonment to her break from the confines of the video game to wage war against the company who published the game itself, her influence and popularity online continues to grow.

In this paper, I will take a close reading of the myth created within the video series and compare this to Greek myths, particularly those concerning Zeus, Hades, and Hecate. Additionally, I will discuss what changes divine mythology has had over time – from Homer to Griffin McElroy – and how these myths can further change in response to our changing reality.

*Stephanie Millar is a part-time writer and full-time administrator based in Dumbarton, Scotland. She graduated from the University of Strathclyde with a BA (Hons) Psychology in 2013 and has taken a break from academia to explore what else the world has to offer. Her interests include cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, podcasting, animation, and tabletop games.*

**Emeline Morin:  
(Un)veiling the Sordid: Metamorphosis in Marie Darrieussecq’s and Marcela Iacub’s ‘Pig Tales’**

When first published, both Marie Darrieussecq’s *Truismes* (1996) and Marcela Iacub’s *Belle et bête* (2013) generated intense media excitement in France. Within a web of references to fairy tales, the two genre-breaking texts depict characters who turn into pigs and whose metamorphosis is closely tied to sexuality and violence. Both authors use to controversial ends the supernatural’s ability to express what their narrators would otherwise deem inexpressible. Thus, subverting the idea of happy ending, the supernatural is bound, in each work, to the complexity of representing what is deemed sordid and abject.

On the one hand, Darrieussecq’s narrator opens the novel with a warning: because of her animalistic urges, what she is about to write will be shocking, difficult to read and might stir trouble. In her caricature of 1990s France, Darrieussecq uses metamorphosis to comment on taboos attached to female bodies and sexuality. On the other hand, Iacub’s book relates her affair with politician and former head of IMF Dominic Strauss Kahn. Not only was this depiction enough to start a debate around the book (and a court suit), but the author’s justification for her choice sparked vehement reactions within French literary circles: Iacub describes the metamorphoses as pure fantasies which ‘enabled [her] to tell events which would have been otherwise too sordid or petty to tell as they truly happened.’ Therefore, contrary to Darrieussecq, Iacub uses the supernatural to hide the truth rather than reveal it.

Thus, by bringing together and comparing these two works, this paper will aim to analyse their apparently diametrically opposed goals and evaluate these approaches to the supernatural by placing them within a French literary context generally dismissive of Fantasy.

*Emeline Morin is a lecturer in French and Francophone Studies at the University of Stirling. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Glasgow and her doctoral thesis examined rewritings of fairy tales in contemporary Anglophone and Francophone literature and film. She has published on Neil Gaiman’s fairy-tale rewritings, as well as the urban fairy tales in recent television series. She is particularly interested in contemporary women writers’ uses of myth and fairy tale, and is currently working on a monograph which evaluates the role of food in fairy-tale rewritings and its links with gender and representations of the body.*

**Alba Morollón Díaz-Faes:  
Queer Fairy Tales 2.0: Contesting Disney’s Hegemony Through Web-Based Counter-Discourses**

Disney films have significantly shaped our cultural expectations of the fairy tale genre, leading Jack Zipes to claim that most people’s ‘first and perhaps lasting impression of these tales . . . will have emanated from a Disney film’. Disney is thus situated as the primary fairy-tale canon-maker of our times, with the power to dictate what a fairy tale looks like, how it should unfold, and what morals must underpin each story. This paper will investigate how texts emerging from online queer counterpublics contest Disney-inflected fairy-tale narratives, particularly in relation to the representation of sexuality and gender. To this end, I will analyse Tim Manley’s illustrated collection *Alice in Tumblr-Land* (2013), Todrick Hall’s music video *Cinderfella* (2012) and José Rodolfo Ontiveros Loaiza’s *Disenchanted* art show (2012).

According to Nancy Fraser, counterpublics are alternative discursive spaces where members of subordinated groups ‘invent and circulate counter-discourses’. Nowadays, the existence of counterpublics is almost inseparable from the internet, where queer fairy tales are often produced and disseminated by independent creators. The chosen texts indeed went viral on Tumblr, YouTube and Instagram, respectively, where Manley’s Mulan was revealed to dress as a man because he was trans, Hall’s male Cinderella went to the ball to meet his prince ignoring the musical taunts of his drag-queen stepsisters, and a piece of art by Ontiveros Loaiza showed the princes from Disney’s *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Little Mermaid* getting married to each other in a ceremony officiated by Pope Francis. By analysing these parodic engagements with Disney, I will explore how these fairy-tale counter-discourses effectively expose the company’s pervasive cisheteronormativity, how they challenge its cultural and economic hegemony, and how they, ultimately, test the representational boundaries of the fairy tale.

*Alba Morollón Díaz-Faes is a PhD research fellow at the University of Oslo. Her research focuses on contemporary retellings of fairy tales that challenge the heteronormativity of the genre. This is a topic she has long been fascinated by, and has indeed researched over the years, including during her early BA days at the University of Oviedo, and as the topic for her master’s dissertation at the University of Edinburgh.*

**Thomas Moules:  
Blurring the Boundaries of Text: Pseudotext in Literature of the Fantastic**

Pseudotext is a term referring to texts that exist wholly or partly inside another text. An early example is *The Murder of Gonzago*, the play within Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* that functions as a narrative device. In works of the fantastic there is another dimension to be considered. Pseudotext provides an important element of realism when considered as part of the creation of a fictional world. This paper will examine the differing uses of pseudotext in three works: Jeff VanderMeer’s *City of Saints and Madmen* (2004), Susanna Clarke’s *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* (2004), and Terry Pratchett’s *Thud!* (2005). In *City of Saints and Madmen*, pseudotexts are used for different functions across various sections of the text. The first section, ‘Dradin, In Love’, uses a pseudotextual play as a refrain throughout significant points in the narrative. Other sections cite a wide variety of pseudotextual works and even discuss a fictional publishing house. *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* makes use of pseudotext as part of Clarke’s recreation of the style of the three-volume novel. The extensive use of footnotes and the variety of pseudotextual citations ground the text in an alternate history that mirrors our own while remaining separate. This allows Clarke a huge degree of creative freedom while still permitting the use of recognisable historical events. Pratchett’s use of pseudotext is somewhat different, and this is partly an issue of scale. The Discworld is a sprawling fictional universe created across several decades, and there are a great many pseudotextual references scattered throughout. In *Thud!*, we find something of a unique example: a pseudotext that was subsequently made into a physical book. Through these three examples, this paper examines the different functions pseudotext can have in the creation of fantastical worlds.

*Thomas Moules studied for an MLitt in Fantasy Literature at the University of Glasgow. They are currently focused on writing non-fiction, with a chapter forthcoming in Luna Press’s A Shadow Within: Evil in Fantasy and Science Fiction later this year.*

**Sarah Neef:  
Blood is Thicker Than Water: A Geopolitical Approach to Aaronovitch’s *Rivers of London***

Urban fantasy literature frequently focuses on exploring the undiscovered layers of the fantastic, hidden below the urban mundane. In Ben Aaronovitch’s *Rivers of London* (2011), a combination of police procedural and urban fantasy novel, this is achieved through constructing multiple interconnected layers of London’s geography, history, and mythology. The novel describes a conflict between the river Thames and its tributaries, which are depicted as anthropomorphised localities in the form of deities presiding over the respective areas of the city. By making use of this geographical setup and combining it with references to the historical background of Great Britain, the novel builds its own mythosphere and superimposes it on London in a heterotopic fashion.

In my paper, I aim to demonstrate that a geopolitical approach can be highly beneficial for an analysis of the text’s setting and its function. As I will argue, the novel explores the themes of territorial conflict and ethnicity and advocates hybridity of identity. Territoriality and ethnicity are used to pit a white, old masculinity against a black and modern femininity. By imbuing the characters with magical powers, a mythological layer is added to these visible aspects. As the deities preside over London with their hybrid identities of human and river, old and new mythology are used to exemplify a new Great Britain.

*Sarah Neef has an MA in British and American Literary and Cultural Studies. She is currently a PhD candidate and research assistant in British Literary Studies at TU Dortmund University, Germany. Her research interests include cultural geography, children’s literature, and urban fantasy. She is currently working on her PhD thesis focusing on identity construction and cultural geography in British fantasy literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.*

**Siddharth Pandey:  
Of Sacred and Profane (and Much In Between): Modernity and Enchantment in Contemporary Indian English Fantasy**

This paper charts some key attributes of Indian English fantasy fiction, a fairly modern literary phenomenon that has significantly impacted the country’s publishing industry. With the massive success of the *Harry Potter* series around the turn of the millennium, fantasy writing in India received an extraordinary fillip. A novel kind of imagination was born that liberally experimented with a variety of indigenous tales while mixing them with Western genre conventions. The resultant Mythosphere thus gave (and continues to give) creative nods to an internationalism that is both local and global at the same time. How do these interactions come to be? What does it mean for them to get expressed through particular spatialities, temporalities, and affective terrains? When so many of these new fantasies gesture towards the already prevalent and much revered mythological narratives of South Asia, to what extent does the boundary between the sacred and the profane, the ‘auratic’ and the ordinary, get sustained? These are some of the key questions that my paper will focus on. Beginning with a broad, generalized socio-cultural perspective on the status of ‘fantasy’ in the Indian subcontinent, the paper shall move into a consideration of the fantasy boom in English writing post-2000, and will lay out some key features regarding the look and feel of the new imaginative realms (spanning both content and form). Having done this, a significant part of the paper will be spent in close readings of primary texts, such as Giti Chandra’s *The Book of Guardians* series and David Hair’s *The Return of Ravana* series, that are emblematic of the cross-cultural and intra-cultural interactions strewn across contemporary fantasy books with a distinctly modern flavour.

*Siddharth Pandey earned his PhD from the University of Cambridge. His doctoral thesis focused on the ways in which craft and craftsmanship contribute to the production of the magical in the fantasy genre. His presentations and publications have spanned a variety of topics, from architecture and colonialism to visual culture, education, cinema, and literary aesthetics. As a landscape photographer, he has seven local and international photographic solos and a commission from the Victoria and Albert Museum. He is a regular cover story writer for Indian national newspapers. In the summer, he will join the Ludwig Maximillian University of Munich as a Research Fellow in Global History.*

**Maayan Priel:  
Multiple Sides of the Same Coin: Mapping the *Merlin* Fandom**

In her paper ‘Will the Real Ending Please Stand Up? Experimental Multimedia Narratives and Fan Fiction’ (2006), Kristina Busse argued that fan fiction – the decades-long practice of fan-written stories about books, movies, television shows, etc. – can only ever be understood in relation to the community that originated them. In other words, the way fandom interacts with the original material, with itself, and with other fandoms is inherently linked to the content it produces.

In this paper, I argue that fandom interactions can be mapped as a sort of Mythosphere, a map of connections, adaptations, and relationships between people, media, and the internet. I will attempt to illustrate this map with a specific focus on the *Merlin* (2008-2012) fandom, which was especially prolific in the myriad of challenges, competitions, and community events that it produced between the years 2008 and 2013. The *Merlin* fandom is an especially interesting case to study in reference to the Mythosphere, as the series itself is already part of a larger map of Arthurian storytelling throughout the ages. How did the fanfics, fanarts, podfics, fanvids and other content made by *Merlin* fans interact with the longer history of Arthurian lore? How was this same content then changed by the lore created by the fandom itself? I will draw on the research conducted by Busse into internet fan communities, as well as research of tropes and adaptations conducted in the larger media studies field.

*Maayan Priel completed a BA in American Studies and Archaeology at Tel-Aviv University and an MA in Queer History at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her master’s dissertation was focused on the connection between queer history and 1970s gay erotic Star Trek fanzines, and her other research interests lie in the production of fandoms. She has contributed to various Hebrew-language webzines and websites, writing about topics ranging from anime to comics to video games. She has also given talks at a number of Israeli fantasy and sci-fi conventions, as well as GIFCon 2018 and the Publishing Queer/Queer Publishing conference.*

**Akylina Printziou:  
Rewriting Fairy Tales for Adults: The Case of Angela Carter and Kurahashi Yumiko**

Fairy tale retellings have been widely popular in the past few years, with new, subversive retellings and film adaptations arising every few months. However, fairy tale retellings are hardly something new, and definitely not the monopoly of Western culture. Authors like Angela Carter (1940-1992) have become famous for their subversive fairy tale rewritings, which often contain adult themes and are told from a feminist perspective.

Similar to Angela Carter, Kurahashi Yumiko (1935-2005) was a Japanese author who “wrote dark, erotic updates to fairy tales”. Using a wide variety of fairy tales and folk stories such as Greek mythology, classic Western fairy tales and Japanese folk stories, Kurahashi created her own tradition of fairy tale rewritings. Both Carter and Kurahashi lived and wrote in the same period, and, even though they had never met or overtly influenced each other, their fairy-tale-inspired works seem to create a common ground between them, such as the feminist voice of their tales or the gruesome twists they have both added to their respective versions, despite belonging to different literary cultures.

In this paper I will explore some of Carter’s and Kurahashi’s common fairy tale retellings, such as ‘Bluebeard’, ‘Snow White’, ‘Puss in Boots’ etc., in order to determine the similarities as well as the differences that occur in each author’s version. Can we distinguish any English or Japanese influences in their retellings, and how does the culture of each author affect their rendering of the fairy tales they chose? How does the Mythosphere of the original tales shift and how is it shaped in each author’s retelling? Is there a global aspect to fairy tales, or do cultural renditions also alter their themes and morals taught?

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**Mary Reding:  
The Concentric Mastery Model, a Conceptual Framework: Mapping the Hero’s Journey Cycle across Cognitive Space**

According to mythologist Joseph Campbell, in order for a hero to be a hero, he or she must complete a complex, cyclical journey between worlds, traveling from known space to unknown and back again. While the known space is recognized simply as the “Home World,” the world of the mundane and everyday, the unknown space may be called by several names: the “Foreign World,” the “Otherworld,” the “Land of Trials,” or the “Fateful Region of Treasure and Danger.” These are the realms of the new, strange, and fantastic. This juxtaposition of worlds is vital to the process of hero-making, and particularly evident within the *Bildungsroman* fantasy tradition: the conventions and characteristics consistent and recognisable across fictional storyworlds such as C. S. Lewis’s Narnia, Neil Gaiman’s Faerie, and J. K. Rowling’s Wizarding World.

In an effort to expand the apparatus available to describe and conceive of such spaces in all their complexity, I present the Concentric Mastery Model as a compliment to and extension of the Hero’s Journey paradigm. Based on a combination of structuralism and literary and anthropological space theory, this model offers a framework for conceptualizing the imaginary realm of the heroic not only as a two-dimensional, circular cycle but also as a three-dimensional, spherical progression. The deeper the hero is able to move within the Foreign World – traveling centripetally across an alternating series of thresholds and liminal spaces – the closer he or she comes to achieving mastery of that world and fulfilment of the Hero Cycle narrative.

*Mary Reding has earned advanced degrees in English and Creative Writing with specialization in medieval studies, magic, and heroism. She divides her time between tending various pets and plants on a farm in the Middle of Nowhere, Iowa, and dreaming up new fantasy worlds for children. In the in-between she teaches English and directs the Writing Center at Upper Iowa University. In the after-ward she plans to haunt bookshops. Mary’s work will appear in the forthcoming volume The Pedagogy of Harry Potter. You can reach her on Instagram @maryredingwrites or visit her webpage* [*www.maryredingwrites.com*](http://www.maryredingwrites.com)

**William Redwood: Mapping the Magical Mythosphere: Permanent Work-in-Progress?**

This paper focuses on the Mythosphere as manifest within the lived spiritual experience of contemporary individuals whose practice is often referred to as ‘new age’ but is more correctly conceptualised as modern esotericism or modern esoteric magic. Their community constitutes a form of sociality which they term a “scene” and can be viewed as a subculture in the formal sociological sense. The basis for the conclusions offered is ethnographic fieldwork carried out in London for a period of over ten years.

The paper begins by surveying sites of magical practice and explores what makes places significant in an esoteric sense. It analyses how old animistic notions such as that of spirits of place now underlie rich semantic strata comprising ‘accepted’ history plus ‘alternative’ history, by urban legends, myth, folklore, poetry (Blake), books (Moorcock, Gaiman, Burroughs), graphic novels (Moore, Morrison), film, and television. Inextricably intertwined with the ‘empirical’ city is an otherworldly London of the tale, the trance and the dreamtime; this is a dimension which is no less real (within magic, at least). Multiple meanings may result in struggles over the use of esoteric sites and the polysemy often features notions of politico-spiritual pollution. Esoteric ideas of the city range from the clear-cut to the contested, ambivalent, and oneiric. Magic—like so much of late modernity—is de-traditionalised: it is an individualistic, even anarchic phenomenon with many and various manifestations, and it exhibits distinct diachronic instability. If ‘thoughts are things,’ if ‘the only way is your own way,’ and if ‘change is the only permanence’ in the esoteric Mythosphere, then familiar ideas need to be refined. Maps must be protean palimpsests which acknowledge unstable assemblages; mapping the magical Mythosphere of contemporary London is ongoing and ‘always already’ incomplete.

*William Redwood studied anthropology at UCL. He has carried out ethnographic research on magical London for over a decade. He completed his PhD and still teaches and writes in the city, which seems strangely reluctant to let him leave.*

**Mariana Rios Maldonado:  
Mapping Myth and Trauma in *Hellblazer***

Graphic novels and animated movies such as Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* and Ari Folman’s *Waltz with Bashir* exemplify how visual narratives can aid us in processing real traumatic events and their impact on collective memory. Horror and fantasy comic book series share this potential and have also sought to address the most brutal episodes in human history. This paper will discuss how the graphic and narrative elements of #25 and #26 of the horror comic book series *Hellblazer* – “Early Warning” and “How I Learned to Love the Bomb” – create an intertextual parable that articulates strategies employed by art and fantasy to understand gruelling social realities.

Set in a fictional town in northern England at the end of Margaret Thatcher’s premiership, the storyline of these two *Hellblazer* numbers intertwines elements of the recent past and present – the political and economic crisis at the end of the 1980s in Britain, the upsurge of nuclear power during the Cold War, and the generalized crisis of Christian faith in the West – with the endurance of paranormal beliefs, myths and pagan traditions in popular culture. As a result of this conjunction, the reader witnesses a society not too distant from our own that self-destructs after flipping its social hierarchies and materializing its most transgressive and repressed desires in a horrifying carnivalesque ritual. This visual narrative, while considering the positions that magic, myths and traditions occupy in our modern *Weltanschauung*, disrupts the expectations placed on horror and fantasy comic books by displaying their ability to portray historical traumatic events in their full complexity. The theoretical framework of this paper is constituted by the concept of the carnivalesque developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, Jan and Aleida Assmann’s research on culture and memory, and Jeffrey Kripal’s reflections on modern mythemes, superheroes and the paranormal.

*Mariana Rios Maldonado is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Glasgow researching ethics and femininity in J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth narratives. She completed her bachelor’s in Literature and Spanish Linguistics at the Autonomous University of Zacatecas, Mexico, and her master’s in Comparative Literature at the Freie Universität’s Peter Szondi Institute, Germany. Her research focuses on the influence of Germanic mythology and culture in contemporary literature, German-speaking authors of the Romantic period, and fantasy literature. She has presented papers at the Coloquio Internacional de Literatura Fantástica in 2013 and 2016. Her last paper was published in Escrituras locales en contextos globales: Literaturas, lecturas y sujetos en tránsito.*

**Eliza Rose:  
Whose *Malafrena*? Mapping Fantasy’s Invented Easts with Ursula K. Le Guin**

Anthony Hope’s romance novels gave us Ruritania. Tintin toured us through Borduria and Syldavia. William Burroughs birthed Annexia, and Steven Spielberg – Krakozhia. Ursula Le Guin’s *Malafrena* is set in Orsinia – an imagined, hybrid realm with Slovenia’s landscape, Croatia’s intellectual history, and Albanian-sounding surnames – “an unimportant country of middle Europe,” Le Guin tells us, “not too far from Czechoslovakia or Poland, but let’s not worry about borders.” Le Guin circled back to the land she called “my other country” with stubborn fidelity between the ages of twenty and sixty-one. Daughter of anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, she did her usual due diligence and developed a complex world-system for Orsinia complete with folksongs, folktales, and a convincing Slavic-Latinate language. *Malafrena* lays bare Fantasy’s fraught kinship with ethnography as the mapping of *terra incognitas* – land perceived as lying just beyond the edge of discourse. This paper explores Orsinia as a rigorously conceived but problematic region of the crowded map of invented Easts contrived by Western literature. In the spirit of “loving critique,” I will use the case of *Malafrena* to pose the questions: How do the terms of worldbuilding change when the territory in question is inhabited by real people and its history suffered by real populations? What liberties can we take with historical fodder that is not ours? Can we compensate for a deficit of personal affiliation with a surplus of research? Can Fantasy be a bridge by which the writer (novelist; scholar) gains passage into another’s domain? In *Malafrena,* fine-tuned attentiveness mitigates the cognitive violence of orientalism and all its cousins (Maria Todorova’s *Imagining the Balkans* is particularly relevant here). The question nonetheless persists: are some regions of the Mythosphere not ours to map?

*Eliza Rose is a PhD Candidate in Slavic Languages at Columbia University. Her research explores science fiction, the technological sublime, and dynamics between art, labor, and industry in East and Central Europe. Her dissertation is on the Polish artists, filmmakers, and writers in the 1970s who explored commonalities between artistic and manual labor. Her translations of Polish academic and art writing have been published widely. She is an alumna of the 2018 Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers’ Workshop, and her writing can be found in Interzone. She organizes a reading series called Terran Lemons at New York’s Topos Bookstore that pairs speculative fiction writers with writers of autofiction, realism, and New Narrative.*

**Parinita Shetty:  
Online Fan Communities and the Collaborative Construction of the Mythosphere**

This interdisciplinary paper will present the findings of a study of two Facebook fan communities of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and Rick Riordan’s *Percy Jackson* series. Through an analysis of intertextual and multimodal fan texts, it argues that online fan communities offer a space for readers of fantasy texts to construct and expand the Mythosphere in creative ways. The playful and experimental conversations and texts in such spaces reorient traditional boundaries of established fantasy worlds.

Advances in communication technology allow readers from diverse backgrounds to share their ideas with an increasingly global audience. Fans engage in a collective construction of knowledge through complex analyses of themes, events, and character motivations. Fan communities offer room for individualised understandings of the source text based on personal contexts, thereby resulting in multiple interpretations and diverse perspectives and opinions. Fandom – and, by extension, the Mythosphere – is thus constantly in flux and fan texts respond to social, political and cultural contexts. Additionally, fan communities offer opportunities to question normative sociocultural practices within the fictional world and the real world it reflects. Fans often draw on examples from their own lives and experiences in innovative ways. They use the fictional framework to explore complex issues, wrestle with real-life limitations, voice their concerns and fears, and explore real-world social, cultural and political issues.

The paper features three fields which are often marginalised in mainstream discourse: fantasy, children’s literature, and fan texts. However, all three offer alternative ways of viewing the world, creative opportunities to comment on the real world and critique the way things are, and new ways of making sense of the world and imagining new possibilities. Social interaction around fantasy worlds creates a dynamic Mythosphere where diverse norms and principles can and do constantly evolve through ongoing dialogue between the readers.

*Parinita Shetty is a PhD candidate from Mumbai at the University of Leeds. She has worked with young people and books in India as an author of three children’s books, a children’s bookseller and editor, a reading programme developer, and a children’s literature festival coordinator. She completed her M.Ed in Children’s Literature and Literacies at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests include young people’s culture in digital and social media and online fan communities, specifically their potential to develop critical literacies and provide space for marginalised cultures and transcultural perspectives. A scholar-fan, she identifies as both a Ravenclaw and a Hufflepuff. She should be writing but is probably watching Doctor Who.*

**David Stokes:  
Bringing Brazilian Mythology to the World through Fantasy: *The Elephant and Macaw Banner***

A way of expanding the borders of Fantasy literature is by incorporating mythologies from cultures not typically included in the genre’s canon. One culture that has been underutilised is the rich folklore of Brazil. Brazil’s unique culture emerged from a mixture of European/Portuguese colonisers, African slaves, and indigenous Natives. For much of the 20th century, Brazilian fantastic literature based on local folklore was discouraged by education authorities and reviewers describing it as “crude popular superstition”. In the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of works utilising aspects of Brazilian folklore, although they still remain a minority.

One fantasy series spotlighting Brazilian folklore is *The Elephant and Macaw Banner* by Christopher Kastensmidt. By setting his story in the 16th century colonial era, he shows each of the contributing cultures at the time when they were interacting to form the Brazilian synthesis. His heroes encounter native tribes, colonists, Jesuit missionaries, slave traders, and a host of monsters drawn from the mythologies which have merged into Brazilian folklore. Adventure Fantasy is used to highlight the cultural convergence that produced modern Brazil.

*The Elephant and Macaw Banner* is one of the few Brazilian Fantasy works to be published in languages other than Portuguese. The bilingual author has composed stories in both English and Portuguese, and has overseen translations into several others. He has interpreted the stories in multiple media, including graphic novels, games, and animation, which further extends its audience. The Portuguese language editions serve to reconnect Brazilian people with their own history and folklore. It has been used in Brazilian schools to help students understand their heritage. The foreign language editions help introduce readers around the world to Brazilian mythology, which they may otherwise not encounter.

*David Stokes is originally from Austin, Texas, but he has lived in Scotland for over a decade. He has a PhD in History from the University of St Andrews, where he studied Renaissance diplomacy, cultural contacts, and intellectual history. Now he runs Guardbridge Books, a small press publishing fantasy and science fiction. One line by his press is devoted to fantasy inspired by folklore from outside of Europe.*

**Kate Stuart:  
Magic Across Media: The Difficulty of Adapting High Fantasy to Film**

Fantasy in literature thrives on a delicate balance between familiar and unfamiliar, with new worlds stretched between pages and magic fizzing through words. As seen in a number of high fantasy film adaptations, however, translation to film can disrupt this balance and therefore lose a story’s inherent magic. This paper will examine the treatment of magic within a practice-based research adaptation of Garth Nix’s *Sabriel* (1995) against a selection of other high fantasy film adaptations, highlighting the conflicts and compromises necessary in the translation between media and ultimately demonstrating how the type of magic in a text and its connection to the wider fantasy Mythosphere influences its survival in the film adaptation process.

The discussion of what makes an adaptation “good” has raged since the inception of adaptation studies, and through it all is the question of fidelity. But fidelity to what? For fans, loyalty to the text is of utmost importance and deviations are the ultimate betrayal. For practitioners, the adapted text must also conform to the traditions of the new medium in order to appeal to an unfamiliar audience. Adapting fantasy requires a two-tiered balance of familiar and unfamiliar against medium norms and the expectations of knowing fans. This paper compares a selection of adaptations, including *The Golden Compass* (2007) and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (2005), against the results of a practice-based research project, attempting a “faithful” screenplay adaptation of Garth Nix’s *Sabriel* into film, to demonstrate the difficulties of this balance and highlight the centrality of magic in high fantasy adaptations.

*Kate Stuart is a first-year PhD student at Bangor University. Her current focus is on authorship and innovations in book culture through practice-based research, for which she is writing an evolving fantasy novel, but she also dabbles in folklore and adaptation. You can reach her on Twitter @KateStuart4*

**Jonathan Thornton:  
Insects Unbound in *Tainaron* by Leena Krohn and the *Castle* series by Steph Swainston**

Maps are a key part of fantasy’s iconography. But as they boil a land down to a representation, they also become explicit in building up boundaries and partitions. This paper will look at how insects are used in two works of weird fiction to represent freedom from the restrictions of physical and social boundaries: *Tainaron: Mail From Another City* by Finnish author Leena Krohn (1985) and the *Castle* series by British author Steph Swainston (2004-2016). I will explore how both authors use insects to represent a way of being freed from the restriction of maps and boundaries, and hence from the social and cultural restraints of Western civilisation and even the generic conventions of mainstream commercial fantasy, in direct contrast to fantasy orthodoxy. As Jant says in *The Year of Our War* (2004), the first *Castle* novel: “Like I can go any direction in the air when I fly, Insects scurry between worlds without being restricted by their boundaries. They don’t see the difference between them – to Insects, all worlds are one.” In the *Castle* books, the giant Insects that besiege the Fourlands are able to travel between the more conventional fantasy setting of the Fourlands – represented by a map at the beginning of each novel – and the strange and surreal world of the Shift which Jant can visit when he overdoses on drugs. No map of the insect-inhabited city of Tainaron is possible: the city is constantly being demolished and rebuilt, making any representation of it useless. As beings unbound by maps and borders, insects in these novels provide us with an alternative to the constraining geographies of nation states and late-period capitalism.

*Jonathan Thornton is studying for a master’s in Science Fiction Studies at the University of Liverpool. He is interested in the portrayal of insects in speculative fiction and fantastika. He has a master’s in Medical Entomology, and works as an insectary technician at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. He also writes criticism and reviews and conducts interviews for internet publications Fantasy Faction, The Fantasy Hive and Gingernuts of Horror.*

**Georgina Wilkinson:  
Various Feasible Dimensions and their Affect on Fantasy Literature**

Definitions of Fantasy literature often unconsciously constrain themselves by unnecessarily assuming that impossible events can never happen. This assumption is fundamental to many attempts to define the fantastic: Clute’s “literature of the impossible” excludes anything except events that could not happen in our world, or other worlds which themselves are impossible; Todorov’s famous hesitation is focused around the choice to believe in events which appear impossible; Jackson’s ideas are centred around oppositions to what is considered to be real or possible. This reliance on limitation seems almost antithetically un-fantastical, although an easier shorthand by which to refer to it, or constrain it for the purposes of study or debate, may perhaps be reached through the inter-disciplinary application of multiple universe theory.

Although multiple universe theory is best characterised as an umbrella term covering myriad disciplines and lenses of study, the overarching philosophy which collects these is deceptively simple; “if space is infinite and the distribution of matter is sufficiently uniform on large scales, then even the most unlikely events must take place somewhere”. If “even the most unlikely events must take place somewhere”, definitions of fantasy based around perceptions of the impossible become defunct. This argument is compounded by similarly founded assertations that there are worlds in which basic assumptions of physics cease to be true, suggesting perhaps that even the more incredible fantasy worlds must exist somewhere.

This paper will discuss the application of multiple universe theory to our understanding of the literary fantastic, with particular reference to the works of Terry Pratchett and Phillip Pullman, to demonstrate how the application of multiple universe theory undermines several prevalent definitions of the fantastic and why is should be considered fundamental enough to affect our understanding of the genre

*Georgina Wilkinson grew up near enough to St Andrews to be infected with academia, a bug which she has not yet been able to shift. Moving to Glasgow five years ago gave her the opportunity to complete an undergrad at the University of Strathclyde, with a focus on postcolonial theory, before completing the MLitt in Fantasy at the University of Glasgow. This has informed her current interdisciplinary interests – and entailed far more maths than she expected from a literature degree.*

**Josephine Yanasak-Leszczynski:  
Manifest Fantasy: The Facts and Shared Mythology of an Imaginary Western United States**

Beginning with Manifest Destiny in the 19th Century, the American West (“The West”) is a geographically defined region shrouded in its own mythological history. This paper suggests that all stories set in the West (“Westerns”) could exist within the same sphere, and possibly the same space, as they all draw from a strongly defined history of storytelling ingrained in nation creation.

The facts of population, distribution of work, and personal experience reveals a very different picture than is presented in creative media. Whereas other mythologies seek to explain the unknown and warn against danger, Westerns obscure the truth to create a system of propaganda about American History. They sold the West to specific populations and continued to express their value to the American populations as a whole, long after the area was settled.

These myths and works of fiction reflect the masculinity valued during the period. Their permanence has granted it a longevity that outlasted other more recent forms of gendered storytelling, as evidenced by the popularity of shows like HBO’s *Deadwood*. These stories solidify white intolerance of people both who were brought to the region or already living on the land.

Yet it is not beyond reclamation, with authors of colour like Percival Everett attempting to examine the ideologies that make up the West through a new lens. A shift in the perceived audiences of media covering these topics has also resulted in creators attempting to target demographics that they previously would have narratively abused. Such is the case with Netflix’s *Godless*: whether or not they were successful is ultimately up to consumers, but they still propagate the series of ideologies that make up the West.

*Josephine Yanasak-Leszczynski is a storyteller, RPG game designer, and aspiring historian living in Chicago, Illinois. She is the founder of queer RPG community/publisher PanopLit and author of an anti-Lovecraftian novella, “A Coven in Essex County.” Occasionally she takes photographs and learns programming languages.*