

Title- A Tower, a League, and a View of the Sea

Program of Study- English

Presentation Type- Oral Presentation

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Category- Textual

Abstract: This paper proposes a new method by which fanfiction, as a genre, should be evaluated. The practice of writing fanfiction, or works based on elements of previously existing stories, has its roots in diverse literature from ancient satire to *Paradise Lost*. Briefly tracing the development of fanfiction studies suggests that critic's habits of both treating fanfiction as an avante garde modern development, and evaluating works of fanfiction divorced from their source material are short-sighted ways to approach the genre. By investigating other literary theories through the works of Gérard Genette and J.R.R. Tolkien, this research suggests the richness of fanfiction can only be evaluated by considering its intertextuality, or the ways in which it relates to other texts, particularly the source material. Overall, the two criteria which should be used to evaluate fanfiction are its intertextual relationship with the source text, which can take a multitude of different forms, and the unique message or purpose of the work which distinguishes it from the original material.

The paper then applies this theory to the evaluation of the film *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, which pieces together elements and characters drawn directly from Victorian era literature. The intertextual relationship between the film and various source texts is one of direct borrowing, as the fan-fictive film seeks to invoke the characters directly from their literary setting. Therefore, in evaluating two characters, the paper takes an approach of direct comparison between the original novels and the film's fanfiction representations to consider how effective the adaptations are. In this research, the film's adaptation of Allan Quartermain and Mina Harker are contrasted with their novel characters in H. Rider Haggard's novel *King Solomon's Mines*, and Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, respectively. Later, the focus shifts to uncovering the purpose behind the creation of the film and the motivation for pulling together various Victorian heroes, concluding the fanfiction's ultimate goal is to serve as a response to the concerns of the Twenty-first century.

In conclusion, the proposed evaluative method reflects positively on *The League* as a fanfiction which effectively manipulates adaptive elements to convey its own unique purpose. Examining the work in light of its relation to the source material highlights the particular quality of the work, emphasizing the importance of evaluating fanfiction based on its intertextual nature. By considering these two qualities of fanfiction which afford the adaptability and nuance to accommodate so diverse a genre, critics are better equipped to effectively evaluate the quality of fanfiction narratives.

Christian Worldview Integration: My Christian worldview inspired the diligence with which I persisted in this research. Longsuffering is truly a work of the Holy Spirit! More directly, although I was sustained through a good deal of research in bringing this project together, my worldview encouraged me to take an open approach and insist on presenting information with integrity throughout. Like many readers, I had a negative outlook on the practice of fanfiction at the outset of my research, but my faith inspired a commitment to delivering a truthful conclusion regardless of personal bias. Through this suspension of my previous ideas, God led me through a growing process as I came to discover the incredible creativity employed by fanfiction authors in relating to and adapting the stories they love. I was humbled to realize that fanfiction is as Tolkien calls it, an act of “subcreation,” when humans creatively imitate God’s own nature as a creator.

I think this research is culturally important because it involves a genre which typically preoccupies the mind of younger people, while older academics tend to focus on more “literary” or acclaimed works. As a Christian, reaching out to a genre which is choked with immoral, sometimes illicit sub-genres seems like a type of mission field. I do not disparage the practice of fanfiction as a whole because of the actions of a few writers, rather I consider the appraisal and study of fanfiction as a way to reclaim creative writing as a human practice which mirrors God’s own creative nature. Fanfiction is an exciting, quickly changing field for critics to explore. Imagine the insights to be gained by a redemption-minded Christian critic who seeks to engage literary culture!