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Composition II

Palmer

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Literacy Critique (AKA Fanfiction: Actually Is Totally Real Writing, You Anti-Creativity Shitlords)

FIRST OPTION: BASICALLY AN ESSAY (not really utilizing the blog's full potential!!)

<intro>

Okay without all the flowers, here’s what I’m trying to say. this essay is written for the audience of…… uhhhhhhh……. I guess people who want to know why fanfiction isn’t lazy?? The teacher? Someone who doesn’t already know much about fanfic, but wants to know more. So tell them. So (1) here’s what fanfic is (static definition, how it’s used, where, why, how it’s really popular among teenagers, why?? Should that be in here?). (2) here’s what people think it is, and here’s why (quickly). also tell how this leads into it being the negative stereotype. (3) BUT! Here’s why you SHOULDN’T THINK OF THAT NEGATIVE STEREOTYPE AS THE TRUTH. (T) transition into first paragraph! Lets do transitions last

</intro>

<body>

(1) here’s what it is!

A method of writing

real popular with teens (teens because pop culture? And also they might be too young to realize or care about the stigma attached to fanfic? Creative kids just getting started with expressing themselves? Creative writing completely new to them? Get to experiment with writing by using characters they’re already really into?).

you take characters you already like and put them into situations that you think are neat

literary “what-if” basically

(2) how people see it!

The authors see it as a creative outlet, but popular opinion (people who don’t really know what it is or what it means to the ACTUAL WRITERS) says that it’s:

LAZY WRITING (but it’s not!!! Everyone has a different idea of a character, regardless of how developed they are in their canon. (also, it’s common for writers to flesh out a background/rarely-mentioned character so they can write in their personality and shit). Anyway so authors tend to write the same character in VERY VERY DIFFERENT WAYS not just stylistically, but as for their actions and the way they act. Because different people might view the same character differently)

a whole bunch of self-inserts (not always omg :((( )

and shittily written stories. (NOT TRUE. Dude some fanfics are so damn well written. Omg.)

Also they have a bunch to do with sex. (this isn’t wrong, but like….. teens like writing love stories? It’s a fun genre to write, especially with “ships” (explain ships)??? Most fanfic authors are girls, and girls tend to be into love stories? Because they’re geared towards caring about those stories? And they’re fun ? to ? write ?)

I need data for how many people see it this way. fuk

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(2.5!!!!) here’s WHY PEOPLE THINK THAT WAY. HERE’S WHY. SO THE READER CAN IMAGINE THEMSELVES AND BE LIKE “HMM IS THAT WHY I THINK THAT WAY?” MAYBE SO, READER. MAYBE SO, YOU SUSCEPTIBLE-TO-BIAS FUCK. YOU SHITTER. WHO DOESN’T ACTUALLY LOOK AT THINGS BEFORE MAKING AN OPINION ON IT?? A L L O F U S.

(3) ANYWAY HERE’S WHY WE SHOULDN’T THINK THAT WAY. It’s kind of the parentheses parts in part 2.

</body>

<concl>

Sooooo here’s a summary of what happened. We now know that fanfic is <these things., and that people think of it as a lazy shit hobby. But what it actually is is a nice hobby with good parts and bad parts, and the only reason people think it’s a shit hobby (lazy, never good/well-written, entertaining writing , etc) is because they didn’t know what it was actually about. Thanks for reading~~~~~ \*peace sign\* itadakimasu or whatever. Oyasumi or some shit

</concl>

SECOND OPTION: LISTICLE (will this give me enough words??) I actually think the first option might give me more words ;\_;

I should get a job at buzzfeed for this

3 Misconceptions about Fanfiction (That Fanfic Authors *Really* Wish You Knew)

Fanfiction: probably the most informal writing style you've ever only slightly heard of. Even though it’s a decades-old medium of writing mostly popular among people who consume large amounts of media (read: almost everyone nowadays), it’s not exactly well-known. It’s talked about (frequently), but most of the time only in online articles written by people with very little experience or research into fanfiction culture. As a result, these stories and the people who write them are commonly misrepresented.

Maybe you’ve heard these misconceptions most of your life, or maybe this is your first time learning about the wonderful world of fanfiction and you want to hear the truth about it straight from the horse’s mouth before being poisoned by popular opinion. Either way, as both an author and contributor (once upon a time) to the plethora of fanfiction on the internet, allow me to tell you just what fanfiction really is, and, perhaps more importantly, what it *is not.*

Let’s start with the first and most dismissive stereotype. People new to fanfiction are quick to believe that…

1. Fanfiction is Lazy

THE MISCONCEPTION

As fanfiction authors, we've heard it all before: “Why don't you just make up your own characters? Are you not creative enough?” People new to the concept of fanfic think that writing it is sort of like making a collage: cut out pictures of people from magazines, slap some speech bubbles on them, and you're done. No real effort involved, right?

Wrong.

THE REALITY

Fanfiction isn't just using other people's characters as your literary glue. Within any given fandom (a 'fandom' being a group of people who follow a certain show/book/movie/etc.), there are multiple fanfiction authors, and chances are, if you read two fanfics by different authors that feature the same two or three characters, the differences you find will be more than stylistic. Fanfiction authors are, at the end of it, just people, and people tend to have differing views on what a character is like, regardless of how developed they are in canon: what their goals are, how they would act in different situations (link to AU wiki page), imagined backstories for them. Think <an example of when two people argued over what a character would do>.

Fanfiction authors have an opportunity that is almost nonexistent in any other medium. They have the chance to take a skeleton of a character and flesh them out using their own, personal idea of the character. There isn't any room for cutting and pasting a character into their work, because there's no such thing as a set character to cut and paste. This is especially true if the character isn't well-developed in canon, a subject about which we fanfiction authors in general are fond of writing (see <author>'s fanfic featuring <character>, who only showed up in <#> episodes of the hit <show/movie/book> <title>).

Also, fanfiction authors routinely create their own original characters (OCs) and write them into their stories. But it seems like this is fuel for another misconception…

2. Fanfiction Is Filled With Self-Inserts

THE MISCONCEPTION

Great. It seems like authors can’t win. No original characters? LAZY. Any original characters at all? Must be some desperate author trying to write themselves into the story. Can you say frustrating?

The idea goes like this: the only reason to write fanfiction is so you can create a character repesenting yourself to put into your favorite pop culture universe. Ever wanted to interact with the band members of One Direction? Then write a story and do it. Why else would you write fanfiction other than to vicariously live out your delusional fantasy through your OC?

THE REALITY

As with any widely-used medium, there's a bunch of variety in writing type, genre, and (of course) quality. Sure, every once in a while you get a story with a ridiculously powerful, no-flaws original character, but there are also a whole lot of fics with no original characters at all, self-insert or not. And for that matter, there are a bunch of fics with original characters that aren't self-inserts. These are written for tons of reasons: maybe someone wanted to take a character they loved and stick them into a completely new place, so they created new people for the character to interact with. Maybe the author wanted to continue a series that was cancelled, and doesn’t need to create any new characters at all. The possibilities are limitless, really.

The worst self-insert offenders tend to make their inserts the dreaded Mary-Sue, a character who has no real flaws and is liked by everyone in the story to the point of being boring. But the threat of making a Mary-Sue character is so well-known among fanfic authors (even newer ones) that creating one is easily avoidable. There's even this handy litmus test to help authors decide whether their characters are well-defined, reasonable characters or not.

Along the same lines as this stereotype, people for some reason believe that…

3. Fanfiction Is Always Poorly Written

THE MISCONCEPTION

The public idea of fanfiction is that it’s filled with shameless self-inserts (see my previous point), poor grammar and spelling, repetitive word choice, and everything else that people associate with irredeemably terrible writing. Fanfiction authors are predominantly teenagers, and teenagers are notorious for being awful at stuff. Everybody knows that.

THE REALITY

First things first: not all fanfiction writers are teenagers. Forget what you’ve heard. *Not all fanfiction writers are teenagers.*

As for the quality of the work, this is another “bunch of variety in the medium” thing. Some (okay, a lot of) authors, when they're just starting out, tend to get sucked up in the glitz and glamour of Mary-Sues (especially teenage girls, and this article might explain why) and forgetting to proofread, but that's just how people grow. Fanfiction is a medium with a lot of people just starting to discover their love for writing, and as a result, you're definitely going to get some bad fics. There's no quality bar to reach before you publish something to the internet.

But look on the bright side: there are TONS OF FICS. And as many crappy fics as there are, there are even more high-quality fics: stories written by authors who have a real passion for writing, and have honed their skill for years. Maybe they started off writing awful fics, too.

The Long and Short of It

So now you know: fanfiction is one of the most mainstream forms of writing on the internet, right next to writing articles and blogging. It’s so widely used that there’s almost no way to describe it; its userbase is just too diverse. But people try to describe it anyway (we’re only human, after all): the medium is lazy, the writers are uncreative, the writing itself is poor, etc. All lies.

What I hope you guys take away from this is that fanfiction is open to everyone, and even though it might be misunderstood by non-fanfic-authors and –readers, it’s actually a completely normal and common hobby to have. If the only thing stopping you from writing about your beloved TV show characters—or maybe your favorite superheroes, or whatever—is the fear that you’ll be associated with lazy, inept, teenage writers, then I’d say, congratulations! All of those qualities are wholly misrepresentative of this very large, very *fun* genre. Write your stories. You can’t let people who don’t understand your interests stop you.