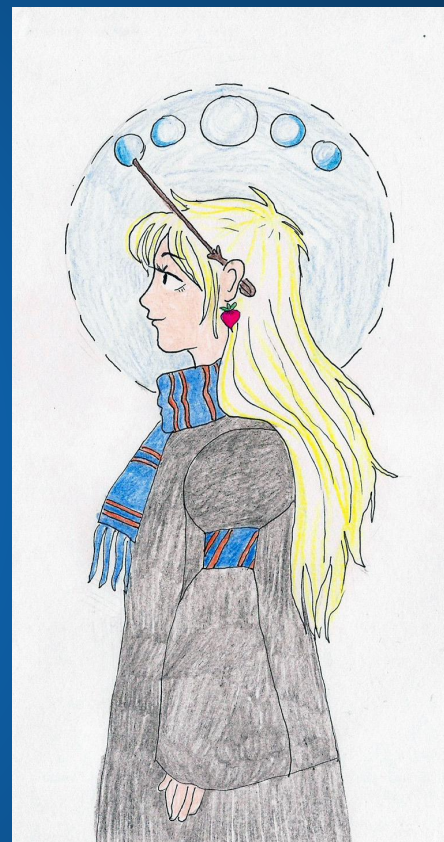


Thematic Harmony In Fanfic & Canon

Presented by Catherine F. King
LeakyCon West '22



You are about to go on a journey...

The Basics

Amateur writing that extends, supplements, or reworks an original work:

Fanfiction

Harry Potter series first published in Britain in 1997

Within a few years, a global phenomenon: Pottermania

Reams upon reams of fanfics shared online

Timing: the Internet becomes a household fixture

But what is it about Hogwarts? Well...

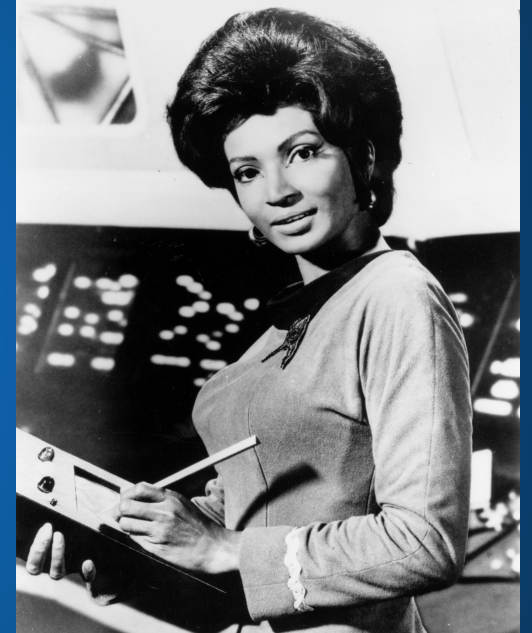
To explore strange new worlds!

Star Trek: The Original Series (1966-1969)

- Small budget, good characterization, love of its science fiction setting

Fan writers circulated handmade zines to continue the adventure

- Always another mission: a never-ending story
- Diversity & inclusion



Nichelle Nichols as Lt. Uhura

But back to Hogwarts...

Hogwarts of 1999

Three *Potter* books have been published

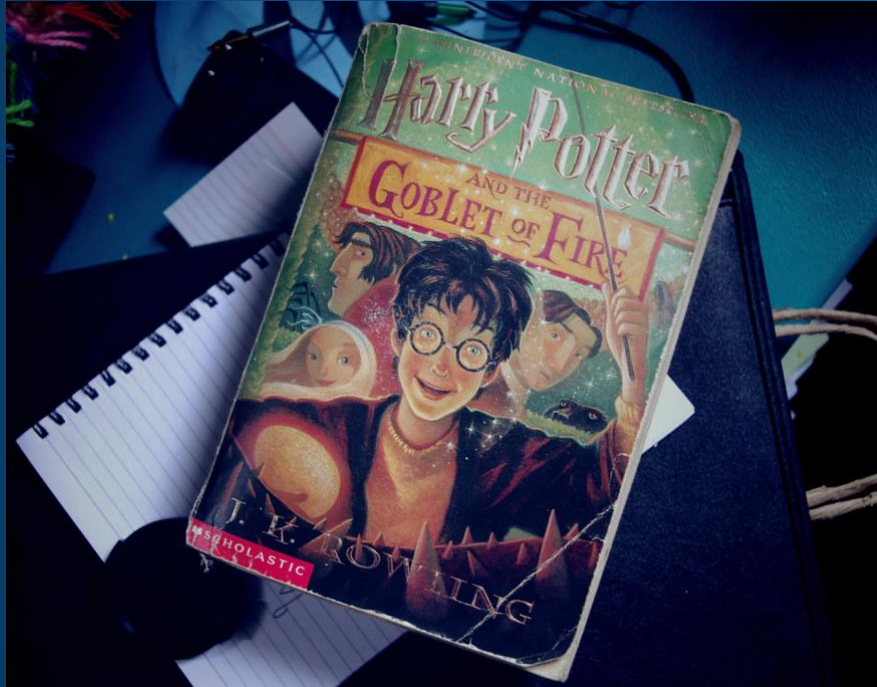
Harry has four more years to go at Hogwarts

The story is far from over!

A good cast of well-drawn characters

Fun to read, & fun to write





Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
released July 8, 2000

World outside of Hogwarts expands

Harry thinks of the future

Voldemort's unholy return

What will happen next?

The Three Year Summer begins.

Let's Get Academic

- Reader Response Criticism
 - Post-structuralism, Stanley Fish
 - Work has no meaning until the Reader *creates* meaning
 - Interpretive communities
 - “Shipping”

The ships! Tell ‘em about the ships!



Renier Nooms, Before the Battle of the Downs

- Culturalism

- Henry Jenkins
- Does the writer shape the culture, or the culture the writer?
- *Harry Potter*: from British book to global phenomenon
- The Yule Ball becomes an American Prom

To invoke culturalism means that fanfiction reflects the culture of the amateur creator in addition to the original text that inspired it.



Fantastic Themes & Where to Find Them



- **Theme:** the big conversation that the work is about
- Some themes in *Potter* include
 - Love & friendship
 - Truth & the cost of speaking it
 - Faith & grief
- Literature explores themes through characters, narration, and action
 - Fanfiction can engage with these themes as well
 - *Harmoniously*



Interwoven

Fanfiction by Katinka

Archived on the Sugar Quill & fanfiction dot net

Written before the release of *Order of the Phoenix*

Life of an ordinary Hogsmeade shopkeeper

Where do Invisibility Cloaks come from?

Abigail Loomis is a Weaver, struggling to finish her first Invisibility Cloak.

Dumbledore has overseen her entire life

She encounters a large black dog, and calls him “Snuffles”

Snuffles saves her from a Blast-Ended Skrewt; later Snuffles reveals himself as Sirius Black

Abby realizes the key to Finishing a Cloak is payment for a “Life-debt”

Goblet mandates that Sirius must leave; Abby gives him his Cloak, the never-ending story continues

Contrast to Canon

Sirius Black dies in *Phoenix*

Artistic choice, serves the theme of death & grief

Life-debts, set up spectacularly, paid off with a whimper

Harry is *the ideal consumer*

Only has agency when the right magical doodad comes into his grasp



Mind's Eye, Soul's Reflection

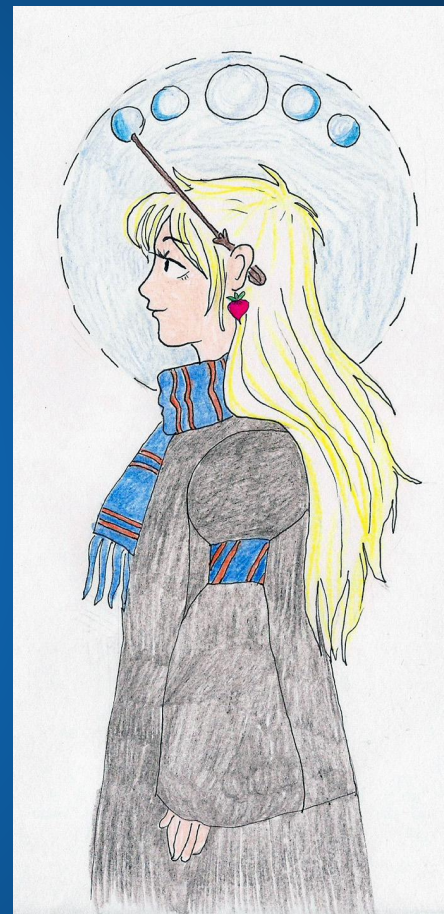
Fanfiction by MysteriousMuggle

Archived on the Sugar Quill

Written before *Half-Blood Prince*

Retells *Order of the Phoenix* from the point of view of Luna Lovegood

How far will you go for truth?



Luna Lovegood, since her mother's accident, sees things no one else does

Her father, Samuel Lovegood, publishes *The Quibbler* out of Diagon Alley

Luna's experience at Hogwarts mirrors Harry's

- Disturbing dreams

- Detention with Dolores

- Chat with Dumbledore at the end of the year

Luna works through grief, despair, and trauma

Contrast to the Canon

Xenophilus Lovegood strongly resembles the Pardoner from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (pictured at right)

The Pardoner's Tale → Tale of Three Brothers

Is Luna an iconoclast or a parroting child?



Separated at birth?!

Of course this is all happening in a fanfic...

But why on Earth should that mean that it is not real?

“A literature made entirely of apocrypha, of false attributions, of imitations and counterfeits and pastiches...”

Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*

“A literature that feeds only on itself; without an origin, without a destination, without a point. A literature of chaos, which, once upon a time, focused on a fictional place called Hogwarts.”

Catherine F. King's “Thematic Harmony in Fanfic & Canon”

Conclusion

There is comfort & strength to be found in good art

Fifteen years since the last *Harry Potter* book was published

We are still working with the canon

Engaging with the story

Interpreting the text

Writing fanfiction



About this Presentation

This presentation began in 2011 as my thesis paper for my English major at Whittier College

My advisor suggested I follow my passion

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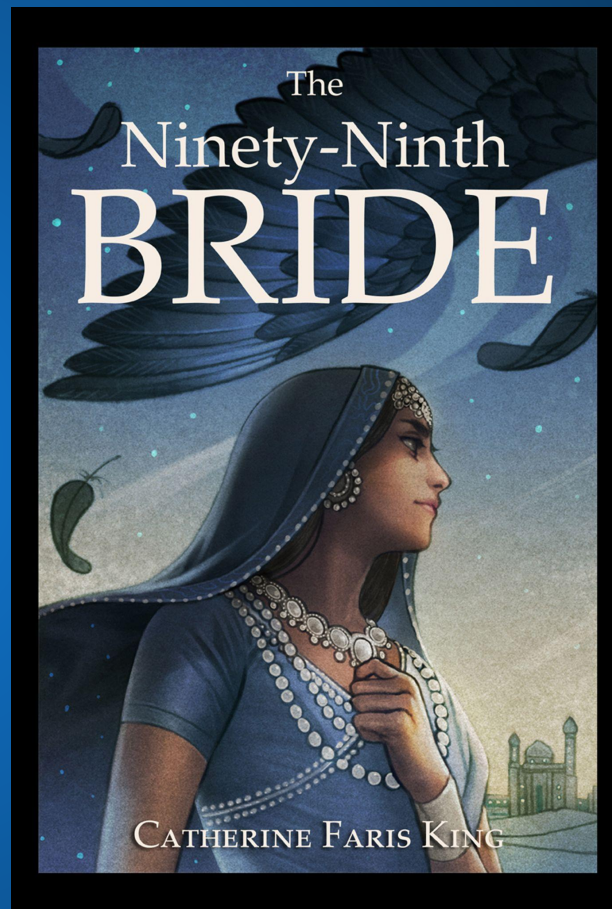
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House: Ravenclaw

Wand: Dogwood & unicorn hair

Thank you

