

Fantasy Literature is a Significant Part of World Literature

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Abstract:

This article reflects the genre of Fantasy and its roots.

Keywords: Fantasy literature, fantasy novels, children and adults, of science fiction, horror.

Introduction: Fantasy literature is literature set in an imaginary universe, often but not always without any locations, events, or people from the real world. Magic, the supernatural and magical creatures are common in many of these imaginary worlds. Fantasy literature may be directed at both children and adults.

Fantasy is considered a genre of speculative fiction and is distinguished from the genres of science fiction and horror by the absence of scientific or macabre themes, respectively, though these may overlap. Historically, most works of fantasy were in written form, but since the 1960s, a growing segment of the fantasy genre has taken the form of films, television programs, graphic novels, video games, music and art. Many fantasy novels originally written for children and adolescents also attract an adult audience. Examples include *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the *Harry Potter* series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Hobbit*.

Stories involving magic and terrible monsters have existed in spoken forms before the advent of printed literature. Classical mythology is replete with fantastical stories and characters, the best known (and perhaps the most relevant to modern fantasy) being the works of Homer (Greek) and Virgil (Roman).¹

¹ John Grant and John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, "Taproot texts", p 921 ISBN 0-312-19869-8

The philosophy of Plato has had great influence on the fantasy genre. In the Christian Platonic tradition, the reality of other worlds, and an overarching structure of great metaphysical and moral importance, has lent substance to the fantasy worlds of modern works.²

With Empedocles (c. 490 – c. 430 BC), elements they are often used in fantasy works as personifications of the forces of nature.³ India has a long tradition of fantastical stories and characters, dating back to Vedic mythology. The *Panchatantra* (*Fables of Bidpai*), which some scholars believe was composed around the 3rd century BC.^[4] It is based on older oral traditions, including "animal fables that are as old as we are able to imagine".⁴

It was influential in Europe and the Middle East. It used various animal fables and magical tales to illustrate the central Indian principles of political science. Talking animals endowed with human qualities have now become a staple of modern fantasy.⁵

The *Baital Pachisi* (*Vikram and the Vampire*), a collection of various fantasy tales set within a frame story is, according to Richard Francis Burton and Isabel Burton, "the germ which culminated in the *Arabian Nights*, and which also inspired the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, (2nd century A.D). Boccaccio's *Decamerone* (c.1353) the *Pentamerone* (1634, 1636) and all that class of facetious fictitious literature."⁶

The Book of One Thousand and One Nights (*Arabian Nights*) from the Middle East has been influential in the West since it was translated from the Arabic into French in 1704 by Antoine Galland. Many imitations were written, especially in

France. The Fornaldarsagas, Norse and Icelandic sagas, both of which are based on ancient oral tradition influenced the German Romantics, as well as William Morris, and J. R. R. Tolkien. The Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf* has also had deep influence on the fantasy genre; although it was unknown for centuries and so not developed in medieval legend and romance, several fantasy works have retold the tale, such as John Gardner's *Grendel*.⁷

Celtic folklore and legend has been an inspiration for many fantasy works.^[12]

The Welsh tradition has been particularly influential, owing to its connection to King Arthur and its collection in a single work, the epic Mabinogion.

Fantasy worlds created through a process called world building are known as a constructed world. Constructed worlds elaborate and make self-consistent the setting of fantasy work. Worldbuilding often relies on materials and concepts taken from the real world. Despite the use of magic or other fantastic elements such as dragons, the world is normally presented as one that would function normally, one in which people could actually live, making economic, historical, and ecological sense. It is considered a flaw to have, for example, pirates living in lands far from trade routes, or to assign prices for a night's stay in an inn that would equate to several years' income.

Furthermore, the fantastic elements should ideally operate according to self-consistent rules of their own; for example, if wizards' spells sap their strength, a wizard who does not appear to suffer this must either be putting up a facade or have an alternative explanation. This distinguishes fantasy worlds from Surrealism and even from such dream worlds as are found in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass*.

² Prickett, Stephen *Victorian Fantasy*. Indiana University Press. p. 229. ISBN 0-253-17461-9 1979.

³ John Grant and John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, "Elemental" p 313-4, ISBN 0-312-19869-8

⁴ Doris Lessing, *Problems, Myths and Stories* Archived 2016-05-09 at the Wayback Machine, London: Institute for Cultural Research Monograph Series No. 36, 1999, p 13

⁵ Richard Matthews *Fantasy: The Liberation of Imagination*, p. 8-10. Routledge. ISBN 0-415-93890-2. 2002.

⁶ Isabel Burton, Preface Archived 21 May 2017 at the Wayback Machine, in Richard Francis Burton (1870), *Vikram and The Vampire*.

⁷ John Grant and John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, "Beowulf", p 107 ISBN 0-312-19869-8

Methods: Studying the literature of fantasy we can see a lot of information related to this genre and its roots, these facts are required to follow certain rules, criteria and principles when researching these kinds information. The methods used for researching are divided into two basic categories:

- Collecting information about Fantasy Literature.
- Analyzing the facts related to the Fantasy Literature.
- The collection of information about Fantasy literature includes: inscriptions, documents, manuals, books, monographs, and websites, which are used afterwards for mapping purposes. And we also used comparative method and historical, socio-linguistic methods while we researching these facts of information.

Results: Many fantasy authors use real-world folklore and mythology as inspiration; and although another defining characteristic of the fantasy genre is the inclusion of supernatural elements, such as magic, this does not have to be the case.

Fantasy has often been compared to science fiction and horror because they are the major categories of speculative fiction. Fantasy is distinguished from science fiction by the plausibility of the narrative elements. A science fiction narrative is unlikely, though seemingly possible through logical scientific or technological extrapolation, where fantasy narratives do not need to be scientifically possible.

One influential retelling of this was the fantasy work of Evangeline Walton. The Irish Ulster Cycle and Fenian Cycle have also been plentifully mined for fantasy. Its greatest influence was, however, indirect. Celtic folklore and mythology provided a major source for the Arthurian cycle of chivalric romance: the Matter of Britain. Although the subject matter was heavily reworked by the authors, these romances developed marvels until they became independent of the original folklore and fictional, an important stage in the development of fantasy.

Romance or chivalric romance is a type of prose and verse narrative that reworked legends, fairy tales, and history to suit the readers' and hearers' tastes.

Miguel de Cervantes famously burlesqued them in his novel *Don Quixote*. Still, the modern image of "medieval" is more influenced by the romance than by any other medieval genre, and the word *medieval* evokes knights, distressed damsels, dragons, and other romantic tropes.⁸

At the time of the Renaissance romance continued to be popular. The trend was to more fantastic fiction. The English *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory (c.1408–1471), was written in prose; this work dominates the Arthurian literature. Arthurian motifs have appeared steadily in literature from its publication, though the works have been a mix of fantasy and non-fantasy works. At the time, it and the Spanish *Amadis de Gaula* (1508), (also prose) spawned many imitators, and the genre was popularly well-received, producing such masterpiece of Renaissance poetry as Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Ariosto's tale, many marvels, and adventures, was a source text for many fantasies of adventure.⁹

During the Renaissance Giovanni Francesco Straparola wrote and published *The Facetious Nights of Straparola* (1550–1555), a collection of stories, many of which are literary fairy tales Giambattista Basile wrote and published the *Pentamerone* a collection of literary fairy tales, the first collection of stories to contain solely the stories later to be known as fairy tales. Both of these works includes the oldest recorded form of many well-known (and more obscure) European fairy tales.¹⁰

⁸ John Grant and John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, "Beowulf", p 107 ISBN 0-312-19869-8

⁹ John Grant and John Clute, *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, "Ariosto, Lodovico" p 60-1, ISBN 0-312-19869-8

¹⁰ Steven Swann Jones, *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of Imagination*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1995, ISBN 0-8057-0950-9, p38

This was the beginning of a tradition that would both influence the fantasy genre and be incorporated in it, as many works of fairytale fantasy appear to this day.

In a work on alchemy in the 16th century, Paracelsus (1493–1541) identified four types of beings with the four elements of alchemy: gnomes, earth elementals; undines, water elementals; sylphs, air elementals; and salamanders, fire elementals. Most of these beings are found in folklore as well as alchemy; their names are often used interchangeably with similar beings from folklore.

Fantasy literature was popular in Victorian times, with the works of writers such as Mary Shelley, William Morris and George MacDonald, and Charles Dodgson, author of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Hans Christian Andersen initiated a new style of fairy tales, original tales told in seriousness. From this origin, John Ruskin wrote *The King of the Golden River* a fairy tale that uses new levels of characterization, creating in the South-West Wind an irascible but kindly character similar to Tolkien's later Gandalf.¹¹

The history of modern fantasy literature begins with George MacDonald author of such novels as *The Princess and the Goblin* and *Phantastes* the latter of which is widely considered to be the first fantasy novel ever written for adults. MacDonald also wrote one of the first critical essays about the fantasy genre, "The Fantastic Imagination", in his book *A Dish of Orts*. MacDonald was a major influence on both J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.¹²

In humans, magic or the lack thereof is an inborn attribute. It is usually inherited, carried on "dominant resilient genes". Magic is the norm for the children of magical couples and less common in those of Muggles. Exceptions exist: those unable to do magic who are born to magical parents are known as Squibs, whereas a witch or wizard born to Muggle parents is known as a Muggle-born, or by the derogatory term "Mudblood". While Muggle-borns are quite common, Squibs are extremely rare.¹³

Discussion: At the heart of every fantasy is something unreal, impossible, or at the very least, so extraordinary as to take us outside the universe we think we live in. Fantasy world-building surrounds those unreal things with recognizable furniture and plausible emotion, so that Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" can kick in. As writers from Tolkien to Pratchett have taught us, the task for both writers and readers is easier when the impossible involves motifs and storylines we recognize from oral narratives such as tales, legends and myths. That also ties most fantasy literature, up to the turn of the millennium, to European culture, because the myths we know are likely to be Greco-Roman or Norse; the tales, German or French or sometimes Scandinavian.

However, in this century, a new wave of fantasy challenges that European dominance. Writers of color and writers from indigenous cultures use magical narratives to depict experiences and express viewpoints difficult to convey within the constraints of realism. One of the effects of fantasy is the way it forces us to consider the categories of the real, the possible and the ordinary – all the norms that fantasy violates. And, in particular, the new fantasy reveals how culture-bound those norms are. Non-European traditions mark off boundaries differently and include as natural entities things we might think of as supernatural. Out of those different ways of setting the limits of the possible and assigning meaning to the impossible come different versions of the fantastic. Several fantasies aimed at an adult readership were also published in 18th century France, including Voltaire's "contes philosophique" "The Princess of Babylon" 1768 and "The White Bull"

¹¹ Prickett, Stephen *Victorian Fantasy*. Indiana University Press. pp. 66–67. ISBN 0-253-17461-9. 1979.

¹² Gary K. Wolfe, "George MacDonald", pp. 239–246 in Bleiler, E. F., ed. *Supernatural Fiction Writers*. New York: Scribner's, 1985. ISBN 0-684-17808-7

¹³ Doris Lessing, *Problems, Myths and Stories* Archived 2016-05-09 at the Wayback Machine, London: Institute for Cultural Research Monograph Series No. 36, 1999, p 13

The other major fantasy author of this era was William Morris (1834–1896), a socialist, an admirer of Middle Ages, a reviver of British handcrafts and a poet, who wrote several fantastic romances and novels in the latter part of the century, of which the most famous was *The Well at the World's End* (1896). He was deeply inspired by the medieval romances and sagas; his style was deliberately archaic, based on medieval romances. In many respects, Morris was an important milestone in the history of fantasy, because, while other writers wrote of foreign lands, or of dream worlds, Morris's works were the first to be set in an entirely invented world: a fantasy world.¹⁵

Authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Oscar Wilde (in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*), also developed fantasy, in the telling of horror tales. Wilde also wrote a large number of children's fantasies, collected in *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (1888) and *A House of Pomegranates*.

H. Rider Haggard developed the conventions of the Lost World subgenre with *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), which sometime included fantasy works as in Haggard's own *She*. With Africa still largely unknown to European writers, it offered scope to this type. Other writers, including Edgar Rice Burroughs and Abraham Merritt, built on the convention.¹⁶

Several classic children's fantasies such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, as well as the work of E. Nesbit and Frank R. Stockton were also published around this time. Indeed, C. S. Lewis noted that in the earlier part of the 20th century, fantasy was more accepted in juvenile literature, and therefore a writer interested in fantasy often wrote in it to find an audience, despite concepts that could form an adult work. Rather than creating their own fantasy world, many authors choose to set their novels in Earth's past. In order to explain the absence of miraculous elements, authors may introduce "a retreat of magic" (sometimes called "thinning") that explains why the magic and other fantastic elements no longer appear:^[22] For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, the destruction of the One Ring defeated Sauron, but also destroyed the power of the Three Rings of the elves, resulting in them sailing to the West at the end of the story. A contemporary fantasy necessarily takes place in what purports to be the real world, and not a fantasy world. It may, however, include references to such a retreat. J. K. Rowling's *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* explains that wizards eventually decided to conceal all magical creatures and artifacts from non-magic users.¹⁷

Conclusion: Fantasy genre is significant tool in the Literature. So I can research a lot of inquire-based materials. Then I conclude these points of view. In the nearly any given fantasy magical system, magical ability is limited. Limitations can add conflict to the story and prevent characters from becoming all-powerful with magic, although characters with unlimited power (such as deities or transcendental beings) are not unheard of in fiction. Fantasy writers use a variety of techniques to limit the magic in their stories, such as limiting the number of spells a character has or may cast before needing rest, restricting a character's magic to the use of a specific object, limiting magic to the use of certain rare materials, or restricting the magic a character can use through its negative consequences. Some works feature magic that is performed through the use of certain words or incantations to cast spells. While many works use this method without offering an explanation for it, others do offer an explanation.^{[2]: 134[3]: 167–168}

Hard magic is a magic system with specific rules and regulations; a soft magic system is usually much more vague and undefined with a mysterious aspect to it.

¹⁴ Doris Lessing, *Problems, Myths and Stories* Archived 2016-05-09 at the Wayback Machine, London: Institute for Cultural Research Monograph Series No. 36, 1999, p 13

¹⁵ Carole B. Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*, p 38 ISBN 0-19-512199-6

¹⁶ Carole B. Silver, *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*, p 38 ISBN 0-19-512199-6

¹⁷ L. Sprague de Camp, *Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers: The Makers of Heroic Fantasy*, p 11 ISBN 0-87054-076-9

Authors introduce magic into their stories, and to their characters, in varying ways.

Although there is great variation in how spontaneously magic occurs, how difficult it is to wield, and how the guidelines to the magic are implemented, there are a handful of methods for introducing magic found in many fictional works. In many fantasy works, writers depict magic as an innate talent, equivalent for example to perfect pitch. Magic may also be gained through a pact with a devil or with other spirits, a characteristic common in folklore. In some works, such as fairy tales, magic items either endow the main characters with magical powers or have magical powers themselves.

A variety of mythical animals appear in the art and stories of the classical era. For example, in the *Odyssey*, monstrous creatures include

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS. The results and examples of this article can help to distinguish some facts about fantasy genre. Fantasy genre in English Literature has not been detailed studied and explored. It is important to prepare monographs and leaflets about fantastic novels for using lectures and demo lessons for University students. It can be used English Lessons and Seminars at the University. It is may be a good tool for the researches.

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