

Imen, El Bedoui	“Bio-fantastic as an aesthetic concept: bio art as a field of research”
University of Tunis & University of Kairouan, Tunisia	<p>In this paper we will explore how bio art introduce through its artworks a different vision of what we consider as fantastic. Artists seek to create new life forms by using life as a raw material and by exploring the biological process as a part of artistic process.</p> <p>It put into question to rethink the challenging biological and social foundations of what determine human identity versus other living being. By creating new life form that are mostly the actualizations of science fiction imaginary like transgenic being. This artistic practice where art and science are intertwined together and the artworks are reflecting a transhuman vision and a posthuman philosophy. The vital aspect and the wet character of bio artworks like Worry dolls of the group Tissue Culture & Art or the Cactus of Laura Cinti. Bio art constitute in this sense a playground of limitless possibilities of actualization of the fantastic. Bios generates it owns concept and I coined the neologism of “Bio –fantastic” as a specific aesthetic concept conducted from the bio-aesthetic. In which means Bio-fantastic could be a view of a dystopian vision? How could the biotech era invade our world conception for imagining a dystopian world?</p>

Koch, Ulla	“Fantastic Knowledge - ancient scripts as fantastic bridges to knowledge”
University of Copenhagen, DK	<p>Ancient scripts, hieroglyphs, runes, semitic alphabets, fictionary ancient writing systems, and recently also the very real cuneiform, are a staple in fantastic literature and film. Antiquity is in a way a fantastic world in itself, and the more distant in time and place, the more we have to use our powers of imagination and empathy to cross the literally impassable border of cultures long gone. When we consider and study the ancient world, we try to transcend time and space, we try to superimpose our shared humanity on the traces this distant world left. One of the media that speaks most potently to us is writing. Writing represents knowledge, thoughts and words spoken by people from this other world – potentially a direct link by which the gap between the worlds can be bridged. Ancient scripts, whether real or fictionary, are famously (and truly) quite difficult to read, and this inaccessibility imbues them with a fantastic quality, they are not of this world, they</p>

	<p>are displaced and require special abilities to read. This alone lends them a special status, veracity and authority since we are prey to cognitive biases which makes us trust experts with skills which are hard to acquire. Here I will focus on the use of cuneiform and references to the ancient languages Sumerian and Akkadian in the 2017 film Wonder Woman. What is the function of cuneiform and the stone cold dead language sumerian in the film? What kind of knowledge does it reveal? How is it used and by whom? Is it a fantastic bridge to special knowledge?</p>
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<p>Golovacheva, Irina</p>	<p>“War, Revolution, and Numbers in <i>Brave New World</i>”</p>
<p>St. Petersburg State University, Russia</p>	<p>The accent in the paper will be made on biographical and historical roots of Aldous Huxley’s <i>Brave New World</i>, his first utopian text providing a meaningful and comprehensive view of modernity. Huxley’s anti-war attitude gradually shaped during the WW I – he was then a student at Oxford. He never witnessed the slaughter as such. Still, what he saw and read finally made him a conscientious objector who never failed the course. In the inter-war period when <i>Brave New World</i> was conceived and written, many British intellectuals, pacifists among them, believed that the battle against totalitarianism in Europe would be lost and that the new war, much more destructive, was inevitable.</p> <p>Strangely, <i>Brave New World</i> is hardly ever seen as an anti-war novel. However, it is not a matter of chance that this Menippean satire on stability and prosperity is based on unbreakable peace. The imagery of rationality is supported, among other things, by abundant and remarkable numbers scattered in the text. The numerical coincidences underline the war and peace paradigm carefully constructed by Huxley.</p> <p>Apart from the Great War, there was another historical event that influenced Huxley’s views. It was the Russian Revolution of 1917, namely the October Bolshevik revolt. The writer spoke about it rather disdainfully in a short essay “Bolshevism” (1920) where he claimed that barbarism and mob rule was at the heart of the revolution. Huxley’s essay anticipated a few major ideas of</p>

	<p>Nicholas Berdyaev whose <i>Un Nouveau moyen age</i> (1924) contained passages on the Revolution as a rationalized lunacy and calamity leading first to fanaticism and then to dictatorship. Huxley's choice of Berdyaev's book as a source for <i>Brave New World's</i> epigraph is quite notable: both the treatise and the novel reveal striking similarity in commenting on the modernistic tendency to discipline 'human anthills', to social-drill people in a utopian factory-like organism.</p>
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<p>Brataas, Delilah Bermudez</p>	<p>“Restart: Fantasizing Creation, Cosmogony and Utopic Nothingness in <i>Lucifer</i> and <i>The Sandman Universe</i>”</p>
<p>Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway</p>	<p>Neil Gaiman's <i>Sandman</i> (1989-1996) is widely considered the benchmark series of the graphic novel form. The storylines from his original series continue in several new series. One of the series' most engaging characters, <i>Lucifer</i> has appeared in two new series (2000-2006, 2015-2018) as well as a television series loosely based on Gaiman's original storyline (2016-). This popularity is unsurprising, given that Lucifer, and his many incarnations across cultures and mythologies, has intrigued writers of fantasy for centuries. From Dante to Milton, Lucifer was always the most singularly fascinating character as much for his divine beginnings as for his rebellious freedom - appearing as a seductive charmer as easily as a rebellious hero. In this article, I consider the mythopoesis of the <i>Sandman Universe</i> and its reimagined cosmogony through Lucifer, who gains the means to creation several times during the series, and several other characters who later gain the same power. I consider how each series uses the fantastic to reimagine creation, repeatedly, as a nothingness reached only by dystopic means. While the “real” world, clearly suggestive our own, remains steeped in an increasingly dystopic reality, the only way to improvement—the path to utopia—is imagined by the several writers and illustrators, across several series, as a “restart” of absolute nothingness—visualized as emptiness—to conceptualize utopia. I offer a close reading of the several new creations in the series which offer us a variety of creators—from Lucifer to Elaine, the last creator in a series that</p>

	constantly disorders mythologies in the renegotiation of gender in the divine in many forms thereby constructing new cosmogonies.
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Green, Stephanie	“Playing at being a Superhero: Trish Walker in <i>Jessica Jones</i>”
Griffith University, School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science, Australia	<p>The superhero fantasy <i>Jessica Jones</i> has now completed its third and final season, having offering a sustained exploration of (dis)ability, social responsibility and the female superhero. How the series develops its overt gender politics, has already been discussed (Green 2019). In this essay, I want to examine the tensions between play and responsibility, in relation to the character of Trish Walker, Jessica Jones’s adoptive sister and friend.</p> <p>Trish Walker’s ambition is to be a superhero like Jessica and she eventually attains this, first through the use of chemical enhancement (S01). In the episode ‘Playland’ at the end of Season Two she gains enduring physical powers of agility and strength through a medical experiment, improving her new abilities through intensive physical practice, and sets out to become a vigilante like Hellcat in the original comic (Marvel 1944/1976). She begins spending her time on the streets with the intention of fighting crime, but loses perspective after her mother is murdered in Season Three, and sets out on a path of punishment and revenge without ethical restraint.</p> <p>Can Trish’s transformation be seen as a form of ‘play’ – at attempt to express the sense of selfhood that has been subsumed under her mother’s needs? Is her determination to become ‘super’ a way to break-out from her famous persona as the cute little girl of a television show? Is it instance of flow – the directed use of attention to gain advantage? (Csikszentmihalyi 2014) Can it be seen as a form of ‘dark play’ (Linderoth and Mortensen 2015) in which the audience, along with the character of Trish, is invited to see what happens and how it feels to take revenge? Or, is it a negative compulsion in which self-determined autonomy and social responsibility are undermined by the imperative to act at all costs? This paper will consider persona of the female superhero in the light of Trish Walker’s transformation.</p>

Hundertmark, Svea	<p>“Who’s the unfairest of them all?” – Depicting the Political Dimension of Fairy Tales in 21st Century Fairy Tale Films”</p>
Christian Albrecht University at Kiel, Germany	<p>Many fairy tales relate a hero’s or a heroine’s search for a better life. Their quest takes place in a magical realm where righteous kings and queens rule over their loyal subjects. Or do they? Several fairy tales suggest that the reign of those in power is not always just. The story’s protagonist then usually becomes the one to right the wrongs that result from the abuse of power.</p> <p>This political dimension of the fairy tale is addressed in detail in many recent filmic adaptations of the genre. Even stories that do not deal with politics in their literary versions become politically charged, for instance “Snow White” by the Brothers Grimm: The evil queen is rendered evil because of her actions towards her (step-)daughter. Nevertheless, nothing is said about her qualities as a ruler. Still, her vanity and her jealousy seem to be enough evidence to depict her as someone who would exploit the land and her people out of greed, as is done in <i>Mirror Mirror</i> and <i>Snow White and the Huntsman</i> by showing nature dying and citizens starving.</p> <p>Analyzing <i>Mirror Mirror</i> (Relativity Media, 2012), <i>Snow White and the Huntsman</i> (Universal, 2012), <i>Maleficent</i> (Disney, 2014) and <i>Pan</i> (Warner Bros., 2015), this paper investigates the political aspects of fairy tales and their depiction in 21st century fairy tale films. In particular, I focus on instances of resistance to a dystopian society, war and child labor. I argue that the political dimension is not only highlighted in film adaptations to explore these aspects of the fairy tale further but also to associate fairy tale films with the likewise popular genre of young adult dystopian fiction, represented by narratives like <i>The Hunger Games</i> (S. Collins, 2008), <i>The Maze Runner</i> (J. Dashner, 2009) and <i>Divergent</i> (V. Roth, 2011).</p>

<p>Fabricius, Charlotte Johanne</p>	<p>“Imagining the Super-Girl: The Fantastic in Contemporary Superhero Comics”</p>
<p>University of Southern Denmark, DK</p>	<p>As the superhero genre dominates Hollywood movies and streaming-platform television, the genre is experiencing a revival in its native form of comics. Superheroes are becoming increasingly diverse and challenging to the ideological mainstays of the genre. In particular, a number of girl-led superhero comics have taken print and, particularly, digital markets by storm. The fantastic figures into the heart of this matter, as the super-girls in question are situated in larger-than-life superhero multiverses. This representational mode holds sway over the ways in which intersections of gender, race, ability, and class are explored in girl-led narratives.</p> <p>Because comics spatialize time and represent bodies as iterative and morphable, and because the superhero genre frames the bodies of its protagonists in a fantastic mode of extra-realistic representation, the bodies of super-girls “shimmer with potentiality,” to use a phrase coined by Kate McCullough (2018). In this presentation, I will focus on the work of genre and the fantastic mode in these comics, asking the following question: What does the superhero genre and its inclusion of fantastic elements contribute to this ‘shimmering potentiality’?</p> <p>To begin an answer to this, I will be turning to series such as <i>Ms. Marvel</i> (2014-2019) and <i>The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl</i> (2015-) and discussing how these titles grapple with the fantastic in their figurations of superheroic, agentic girlhood. As this is ongoing research, I hope to engage with the insights offered at the conference in order to further develop my thinking about the role of the fantastic in these comics and offer this presentation as a starting point for discussions centering girls in the fantastic.</p>

<p>Jiménez-Varea, Jesús</p>	<p>“Real-World Logics as the Cognitive Door to Dystopia: Alan Moore’s Influence on the Serial Figure of the Superman in Contemporary Narratives”</p>
<p>Universidad de Sevilla, Spain</p>	

	<p>According to some sources, the <i>Watchmen</i> TV series may well be HBO's chosen successor to <i>Game of Thrones</i>, and <i>The Boys</i> has been one of the most striking additions to Amazon Prime's offer in 2019 and 2020. Both shows are characterized by a disenchanted look at the superhero myth that subverts these traditional figures to such extent that some of them become the veritable villains of their respective narratives. The first is a sequel/remix/retelling of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' homonymous ground-breaking comic-book limited series, whereas the latter is a transposition of Garth Ennis and Darick Robertson comic-book series of the same name, with Ennis having often admitted his admiration towards Moore's work.</p> <p>In turn, Moore himself has pointed at Harvey Kurtzman and Wally Wood's spoof "Superduperman" in <i>Mad</i> #4 (1953) as the not-so-secret origins of his revisionist approach to superheroes in so far as he understood very soon that Kurtzman's application of real-world logics to the conventions of this fantastic subgenre for humorous effects could just as well be oriented in a darker –even horrific– direction. Thus, Moore's career includes some of the most influential examples of the almost omnipotent superman turned dystopic, from a Doctor Manhattan nullified by his own existential apathy to a Kid Miracleman bent on finding new twisted ways to massacre human beings. On the other hand, Moore later regretted that some of his characters contributed to the so-called grim'n'gritty age of superheroes, and went on to produce some poignantly nostalgic pastiches, like <i>1963</i>, <i>Supreme</i>, and <i>Tom Strong</i>.</p> <p>In this paper, I propose an exploration of Alan Moore's deconstruction of the superhero subgenre, borrowing from Genette's modalities of hypertextuality (parody, travesty, transposition, etc) and their possible moods (playful, satirical, serious) in order to assess the cognitive impact of Moore's take on the serial figure of the superman.</p>
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Lubawa, Katarzyna	<p>“Utopia Inspired by African and Asian Cultures: Literary Realization of Solarpunk Ideas”</p>
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<p>Kazimeirz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland</p>	<p>Anticipating the development of our civilization has been a vital part of fantastic for a long time. Imagining the future is one of the driving forces behind science fiction and its subgenres such as cyberpunk or speculative fiction. Solarpunk is a relatively new subgenre that focuses on creating quasi-utopian visions of future world. Its setting depicts a community and technology powered by renewable energy. It envisions a world with high level of cultural awareness, gender equality, self-expression. Among many changes regarding current state of society solarpunk postulates artistic and aesthetic shift from what we recognize as mainstream, Western culture to creations inspired by indigenous cultures of Africa and Asia. This paper aims to study the presence of those ideas in existing works and whether they remain in the sphere of theory or are executed by the writers. Through the analysis of anthologies: <i>Sunvault: Stories of Solarpunk & Eco-Specualtion</i>, <i>Wings of Renewal: a Solarpunk Dragon Anthology</i> and two volumes of <i>Glass and Gardens</i>, all by various authors, the author researches the presence of those initial rules set by solarpunk creators in published stories. The analysis serves as a way to answer the question whether solarpunk is an example of representation, very needed in modern culture, or purely an aesthetic choice like Japanese inspiration in cyberpunk worldbuilding. The wide spectrum of perspectives in researched stories allows to find the answer to a question about the reason behind the shift and its substance – whether it is based on giving the voice to people of color or is purely connected to artistic choices. The author explores the solarpunk narrative in connection to culture appropriation and fetishization of non-Western cultures. Through the analysis of short stories and their setting author tries to place solarpunk in the ongoing discourse about representation in media.</p>
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<p>Hardack, Richard</p>	<p>“The Fantastic Nature of Corporations: Outer as Inner Space in <i>Avatar</i>”</p>
<p>US</p>	<p>I argue that <u>Avatar</u> insinuates that nature was always a virtual reality. In the age of Halliburton and privatized security, the military in numerous science fiction films, such as <u>Aliens</u> and <u>Avatar</u>, is indistinguishable from a corporation.</p>

	<p>These corporations mimic nature, but also reveal that nature was always a kind of corporate commodity.</p> <p><u>Avatar</u> dramatizes the transcendentalist premise that the world is a sentient being—a conceit that American pantheists, like <u>Avatar</u>'s writers, developed from aboriginal cultures. Melville depicted a similar entity throughout <u>Mardi</u>, whose planet is a pantheistic deity and collective being: "There are more things alive than those that crawl, or fly, or swim. Think you there is no sensation in being a tree? Think you it is nothing to be a world? . . . <u>Mardi</u> is alive to its axis." Here, the world attains personhood.</p> <p>But Pandora, <u>Avatar</u>'s living world, repeats transcendentalism's ulterior message. <u>Avatar</u> dramatizes the premise that nature not only no longer exists on a post-industrial earth, but that it always existed in virtual space as a cultural and technological construct. Pandora's Navi also interact with "nature" as avatars: they plug into animals with the equivalent of organic USB cords. In this new-age posthuman fantasy, nature is a cyborg. The film's premise that the miners seek "Unobtainium"—a recurring satirical science fiction motif that perhaps unwittingly represents the Lacanian lack of Western ontology—suggests that colonization allows us to seek fantasized utopias in digitized versions of primitive worlds we've destroyed. Žižek contends that ""This new notion of life is thus neutral with respect to the distinction between natural and cultural (or 'artificial') processes—the Earth (as Gaia) as well as the global market appear as gigantic self-regulated living systems." In <u>Avatar</u>, we become corporate cyber-bodies that efface distinctions between nature, technology, and corporation.</p>
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Khalifa-Gueta, Sharon	"Daenerys Targaryen and the Woman and the Dragon Motif"
Haifa University, Israel	<p>Daenerys Targaryen is one of the leading characters of the television series <i>Game of Thrones</i>. In the last chapter of the first season she goes through a metamorphosis, from wife in an arranged marriage and the beggar descendant of a banished ruling household, to the mother of dragons and a figure worthy of the "Iron Throne." In this scene, Daenerys is visualized in accordance with a long iconographic tradition from fantastic</p>

	<p>visual art: the motif of an erotic, completely or almost naked woman with a dragon, in flirtation, and sharing fate with a dragon.</p> <p>This lecture searches for the meaning of this motif in ancient and Early Modern visual traditions, suggesting that it embodies themes of holiness and defilement. The iconology of these fantastic art images relies on the neoclassical admiration of and upholds women and manifests the expanding appreciation of the female body, yet it is filled with stereotypes and biases against women, particularly when they are in unusual positions of power. This iconology, which has existed for a millenium, creates an identification and communication between women and dragons that sometimes even results in their fusion. The woman and the dragon motif is a branch that has grown, but was separated, from the male dragon-slayer topos.</p> <p>This investigation is unique because the scenario of Daenerys Targaryen’s metamorphosis is approached using art historical methods. The double-fire cycles, the witch, and cremation will be examined as signs. Fantastic visual art, as defined by its fan culture, has not been attended by the field of art history thus far and should also be differentiated from science-fiction art. This lecture will offer an initial definition and framing of this neglected field. Examining the iconology of the motif, therefore, will give profound and much-needed scholarly attention to fantastic visual art and support the case for its importance.</p>
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<p>Hilarius–Kalkau Philipsen, Heidi</p>	<p>“A Narrative Investigation – with focus on contemporary Danish television dramas”</p>
<p>University of Southern Denmark, DK</p>	<p>In my presentation I will take you through what I have chosen to call a ‘narrative investigation’. It is based on a study of the tv-series <i>The Investigation (Efterforskningen TV2 & Miso Film 2020)</i>. This series is a new Danish production but already sold to international distributors, e.g. HBO. My focus is to research how audience can be dragged into a series that build upon real and extra-ordinary dark and dystopian event, they already</p>

	<p>know the resolution of. The fictional story closely refers to the so-called 'U-boat case' where the Danish inventor, Peter Madsen, in 2017 murdered and tried to hide the body of Swedish journalist, Kim Wall. According to scholar, Peter Brooks (1984), the audience is normally drawn towards decoding narratives because they covet the end plot. It is the desire to reach the end and a denouement in relation to the pre-emptively known resolution that drives the audience. But the reading of <i>The Investigation</i> is different. So, what does it offer its (inter)national audience? In order to answer this question I put focus on the orchestration of time based on theories of the film-philosopher, Gilles Deleuze (2013), and his so called 'time image'. This approach is relevant because time is constantly blocked in the narrative journey of <i>The Investigation</i>. My primary focus in this study lay in analysing the series itself. A case-study (Swanborn 2010) of the six episodes gives me room to close study the use of time-orchestration and the way dystopia is turned into a new meaning and reading at a micro level in the drama. I also explore the reception of it in terms of reviews and audience numbers. The method chosen is therefore primarily qualitative. My analyses especially build upon cognitive and narrative approaches (e.g. Bordwell 2014) as well as film philosophical ones (e.g. Deleuze 2013). In <i>The Investigation</i>, through the depiction of time, we notice new ways to provoke reflections of modernity and a new and even darker 'Nordic Noir' mood than seen before in contemporary Danish dramas (Creeber 2015). This will, however, be addressed as an approach in my presentation for the conference.</p>
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Sprott, Zoë E.	<p>“The ‘Great Un-Thoring’: Grappling with Hegemonic Masculinity and Patriarchal Power in <i>Thor: Ragnarok</i>”</p>
University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, US	<p>The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) is unquestionably the largest superhero film franchise in history with enormous worldwide viewership; thus the rhetorical analysis of these films is an increasingly vital task. Each film in the MCU is connected, forming what Barry Brummett refers to as a “mosaic” of rhetoric and meaning. I am particularly interested in the ways that Marvel films question and often reinforce expectations and exhibitions of masculinity. <i>Thor: Ragnarok</i>, the third installment of the Marvel</p>

	<p>superhero Thor’s films, is an apt example of this exploration of masculinity and gender.</p> <p>In order to understand the complex ways (that are quite unique within the MCU) in which <i>Ragnarok</i> deals with gender, it is important to consider the role Taika Waititi, known for his satirical and often meta films, played in the production of the film as its director. I argue that, when Waititi took over the <i>Thor</i> franchise, <i>Ragnarok</i> stopped simply being a movie about Thor and became a movie about superhero films, creating a mashup of the superhero film and satire <i>within the largest superhero film franchise to date</i>.</p> <p>As Jeffrey Brown points out, though, superhero satires, while usually critical of gender expectations, often resolve with a message of support for hegemonic masculinity. I argue that, while <i>Ragnarok</i> mocks its prequels and other superhero films and appears to make strides away from previous visions of super-masculinity, it is simply a rebranding of the same hegemonic masculinity. Although Thor is the least powerful figure and the butt of every joke while he is on Sakaar, a liminal space run by an effeminate man and his butch bodyguard, once he returns to Asgard, hegemonic structures are reinstated. I also consider the ways in which Hela’s hunger for power is problematized and situated as incurable, whereas equally ambitious Loki is repeatedly forgiven over the course of the franchise.</p>
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Marchetti, Emanuela	<p>“Human Rights Games and Negative Brainstorming - Dystopia and Sense Making in Games”</p>
University of Southern Denmark, DK	<p>Dystopian storytelling has been successfully employed in literature, movies, and animation to foster reflections about existential and social topics. In design practice the counterpart of dystopian storytelling is represented by negative brainstorming, in which designers explore creatively how to worsen the issue that they are trying to solve. This method is appreciated for enabling designers to think out of the box and for making designers aware of potential unintended consequences, which might go unnoticed otherwise. Moreover,</p>

	<p>negative brainstorming can be regarded as an ice breaker, eliciting humor and familiarity within the design team, an acknowledged pre-condition for creative thinking.</p> <p>In this paper, I reflect on the use of gamified forms of negative brainstorming, framed within a dystopian game called <i>Human Wrongs</i>, a simulation-game aimed at exploring social inequality and human rights related issues. The simulation was designed through a participatory design process, involving the local network <i>Young with a Purpose</i> (Unge med Mening), engaging teenagers in political discourse. A low-fidelity prototype was designed and tested with circa 15 teenagers from the network and an initial high-fidelity prototype was tested with circa 20 graduate students from the Media Studies program, who were still in the target group and had expertise in media sociology. The simulation presented two worlds plagued by unequal distribution of resources. The first is a fantasy world populated by octopus-looking characters with different colors, the second is populated by chubby-looking characters showing Caucasian and Asian features.</p> <p>Test results show that playing with the dystopian worlds elicited exploration of inequality, as the students enjoyed playing the harsh dictators towards the two populations. On the other hand, the human-like world elicited empathy and reflections on character representations, regarding race and gender, two sensitive topics in contemporary society.</p>
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<p>Albertsen, Anita Nell Bech</p>	<p>“Transmedia Worldbuilding and Mashup Cosmology in the Penny Dreadful TV series and Comic Book Series”</p>
<p>University of Southern Denmark, DK</p>	<p>A crucial element of building fantastic worlds is the construction of cosmologies (mythology, religion and culture), adding aspects, depth and complexity to an imaginary space and its inhabitants – that is its characters. This paper examines the transmedia worldbuilding and storytelling in the Penny Dreadful TV series (<i>Showtime</i> 2014-16) and Comic book series by focusing on the merged and interfigural nature of the characters of this continuing series. Many characters in the TV series are of literary origin. Furthermore, they are woven into a complex cosmology that</p>

	<p>blends a great deal of mythological source material – for example Egyptian and Christian mythologies with classical gothic elements. This mashup cosmology is further elaborated in the comic sequel <i>The Awakening</i> (29'017) and <i>The Beauteous Evil</i> (2018) contributing to build up and expand the Penny Dreadful universe and its complex mythology (an amalgamation of Christian theology, elements from Egyptian mythology and nineteenth century spiritualism) by merging it with elements from Jewish Folklore. Penny Dreadful's cosmology, however, is closely tied to its transmedia characters rather than the storyworld and its Victorian London-setting itself.</p> <p>By analyzing the mashup cosmology of the Penny Dreadful universe, this paper seeks to discuss the relationships of fantastic worlds and transmedial characters, which are fictional figures whose adventures are told in different media platforms, each one adding details to their story, as they are rewritten, altered or extended. Using the Penny Dreadful universe as an example of transmedia worldbuilding, I will argue that character is one of the major constituents of transmedia worldbuilding. By demonstrating a mere character-centric approach to worldbuilding, this paper seeks to problematize not only the world-centeredness of transmedia theory but also its core idea of a certain symbiosis between the character and his/her context.</p>
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<p>Juul, Jesper</p>	<p>“What just happened? Subjective Realities in Independent Video Games”</p>
<p>The Royal Danish Academy of Architecture, Design and Conservation, DK</p>	<p>This paper concerns a recent development in how experimental video games represent their worlds. In their traditional form, video games have been characterized by the continuous representation of a <i>ground truth</i> within the game – where, regardless of the game setting, games have consistently communicated game events, successes and failures (including GAME OVERs) to players in unambiguous terms, such that there is no ambiguity as to which events have actually taken place in a game. In short, video games (and all other games) tend contain a function, or position, that I will call the <i>referee</i>. The referee evaluates the player's efforts and communicates the results of this to the player using graphics, sound, text, and so on. Games may contain subjective realities</p>

	<p>(such as occasional protagonist dreams or conflicting worldviews between characters), but traditional game form has worked in such a way that the player is almost always aware of what has <i>actually</i> happened in the game.</p> <p>Compare to this to more recent experimental independent games such as <i>The Beginner’s Guide</i> (2015), <i>Undertale</i> (2015) or <i>What Remains of Edith Finch</i> (2017), where part of the experience is to be radically uncertain about whether to understand many of the presented events as actual, hypothetical, counterfactual, or simply as expressions of an altered psychological state.</p> <p>The paper therefore presents a theory of subjective reality representation in video games, and shows how it has historically become more prevalent in independent and experimental video games of recent years, as a way to express new experiences, and as a way to reject traditional game form.</p>
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Jacob Bøggild	“Hans Christian Andersen and the Literary Fantastic”
The Hans Christian Andersen Centre, University of Southern Denmark, DK	<p>Hans Christian Andersen employed the literary fantastic in sophisticated ways on several occasions. The way he did it is a testimony to his acute awareness of questions of genre. In this paper I will first briefly discuss why the fantastic in Todorov’s sense of the term is perhaps first and foremost a literary genre or modality. I will then render an example of Andersen employing the modality in a quite traditional way in “Auntie Toothache” (1872), one of his last tales and a kind of literary testament of his. Hesitation is here of the “do I dream or am I awake”-type. But, as I shall discuss, if we follow Todorov, the fantastic is here threatened by the mode of allegory. According to Todorov, a degree of realism is needed for the fantastic proper to occur. Andersen appears to be very much aware of this in “The Snow Queen” (1845). At the same time, he is aware that the fantastic often depends on the literalization of a figure of speech. But in this case the literary fantastic gives way for the genre or modality of the fairy tale which belongs to Todorov’s category of the marvelous. In “The Story of a Mother” (1845) we begin in a realistic environment which is then invaded by something supernatural. The realm the mother then enters is a fairy tale one,</p>

	<p>however. Yet literalizations play a big part anyway. In “The Shadow” (1847) we again encounter hesitation of the “do I dream or am I awake”-type. But in this case, it is kind of misplaced. It is not related to the scandal of the returning shadow. There is, in fact, no hesitation connected to the Shadow and this means that Andersen – strikingly! – foreshadows Todorov’s notion of the modern or generalized fantastic, which is very difficult to distinguish from the modality of the absurd.</p>
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<p>Hermida, Alberto & Hernández-Santaolalla, Víctor (TWO PRESENTERS)</p>	<p>“Technological alienation and dystopian detour in alternative worlds: Cognitive-aesthetic interactions in tv series”</p>
<p>Universidad de Sevilla, Spain</p>	<p>Technological advances have always been analyzed by society from an ambiguous perspective, applauding the progress and improvements, while fearing the negative consequences and condemning the dangers they entail. From this perspective, certain postulates of media ecology are particularly relevant, underscoring the pernicious trade-off that any technological advantage brings for the sake of progress. On this matter, novels, films or television series have represented dystopian universes in which science or technology is blamed for the decline of humanity. Although, in most of these cases, the real responsible is not usually the scientific-technological component, but the use that human beings make of it and the society they build on it.</p> <p>From this point of view, there are many stories that propose a figurative world, an alternative to real life, built as an escape from everyday life through technology. It is an a priori utopian environment, in which, however, the idea of safe refuge ends up becoming a condemnation. It becomes a space for the loss of privacy, identity or awareness of reality; for constant monitoring and vigilance and for new forms of slavery in its ultimate consequences. Specifically, titles such as <i>Black Mirror</i> or <i>Westworld</i>, among others, echo these conflicts through proposals with an outstanding aesthetic value. In this sense, the main objective of this research is to analyze the interactions between the prominent cognitive value and the aesthetic properties</p>

	of these television series in order to highlight the alienation and self-condemnation of the human being in societies in which monitoring and surveillance, alternative reality and dystopia go hand in hand.
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Toft-Nielsen, Claus	“Fantastic franchising. Reading Star Wars toys as paratextual gendering of a fan space”
Aarhus University, DK	<p>While Disney’s <i>Star Wars</i> films thus far have all been championed by various commentators and critics as feminist and progressive, the lack of leading female characters amongst the merchandise and toy action figures tells a quite different story. The fan movements¹ of #whereIsRey² and #WheresRose will serve as a lense to explore how media franchising strategies and fan critique can be read as a rich site of paratextual struggle that opens up for a nuanced understanding of media franchises as highly gendered media spaces. Building on the theoretical framework of media paratexts³, toy studies⁴ and fan studies⁵ as well as media franchising⁶, this presentation explores how paratexts serve powerful gatekeeping functions of a fantastic franchise. Moving from the tentpole feature films of a franchise to toys and action figures, underscores the trouble with ‘transmediation’⁷ – how transmedia police certain aspects of a franchise while, at the same time, often invalidates or erases certain fan practices. What is at stake in this fantagonism⁸ of the producer-text-fan relationship is the complexities of merchandising and consumption, a transmedia struggle between commercial products and fan responses to them, which both maintain heteronormative structures as well as challenge conventional gender binaries.</p>

Walther, Bo Kampmann & Larsen, Lasse	“Even Better than the Real Thing: Thoughts on Epic Fiction, Wild Historicity, and Player Empowerment in the Realm of Computer Games and the Fantastic”
University of Southern Denmark, DK	In this paper we outline a framework for ‘The Fantastic’ in relation to video games, paying special attention to the concept of ‘the epic’. Taking off from the Blizzard Entertainment games, MMOG

	<p>based World of Warcraft and the 3D hero-shooter Overwatch, we depict how elements of The Fantastic are manifested in fiction, mechanics, and game feel.</p> <p>We operate on the basis of the following five characteristics of epic fiction: 1) Players must fight against and defeat gargantuan beasts, titans and cyclops, wild dragons, composite snake and bird creatures, dogs of hell, all of which resonate in Rudolf Otto’s seminal thoughts of/in <i>Das Heilige</i> (1917) and the experiences of facing divinity. 2) Stories and plots within the fiction of such games take place in a faraway past, e.g. 10.000 years ago, as they unfold in the depths of immense prehistoricity at a time of fantastic beings. 3) It is essential that players really experience game characters as ‘fantastic’; and that all agential relations feed from forces of The Fantastic: The fantastic character equipped with fantastic abilities engages in fantastic battle against other fantastic entities set in a fantastic environment. 4) Ways of interacting with the game world must also be fantastic; that is, the mechanics must be designed to enable (fantastic) respawn, trigger enormous, Chinese dragons from bow and arrow warfare, or fantastically enabling mind-blowing journeys through (parallel) time and space. 5) Finally, the sheer presence inside the game universe must be perceived as fantastically embodied – ‘I killed the titan’, instead of ‘something killed the titan’.</p> <p>The important hypothesis here is that The Fantastic does not only manifest itself ontologically in the structure and organization of the game but also, epistemologically, in the player’s knowledge and perception of the game’s fiction, mechanics and ‘feel’. Rather than just being a perception of a structure (a game, a book, a representation), the ‘epic’ transform into its base form: It plays out. The latter curiously by revitalizing the ancient, rhetorical trope of the hyperbole (Ernst Robert Curtius) and the locus amoenus/terribilis of <i>Das Erhabene</i> (as described by Longinos).</p>
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Yoshinaga, Ida	“The Fantastic Precariat: The Politics of “Scripting” and the Participatory Magicks of Immaterial Labor Inequality”
University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, US	This paper focuses on the unequal structures of labor supporting the creative work of Hollywood writing

	<p>auteurs who construct fantastical screenplays during the production of twenty-first century scripted screen stories. Drawing upon the scholarship of scriptwriting researchers Steven Maras, Marc Norman, and Ken Dancyger, I map the production structures of taken-for-granted creative workers employed in the collaborative “scripting” of science fiction, fantasy, horror, and fairy-tale TV, film, and digital narratives—who do not belong to progressive but elite professional unions such as the overwhelmingly white-male Writers Guild of America. I analyze the current historical conjuncture, where such hidden storytellers who contribute to the fantastic have demanded equitable or just career recognition, pay, and/or work conditions from the creative industries for their narrative contributions—discussing the very gendered, classed, and racialized 2019 Hollywood assistants’ strike, influenced by the #MeToo movement as well as wider efforts to organize digital labor; the twin #MeToo and #TimesUp Fourth-Wave feminist advancements for greater workplace safety from sex assault and sexual harassment (2006-present, especially from 2017 with the highly publicized, serial-sexual-assault news stories of powerful producer Harvey Weinstein); and the ongoing efforts to unionize visual effects workers (2013-present), kicked off by these workers’ Oscar protests outside of the ceremony where <i>The Life Of Pi</i>’s famous director and technical crew won Academy Awards but where laid-off workers from the bankrupt VFX firm behind <i>Pi</i> and their industry colleagues vocally demonstrated against unequal Hollywood studio-VFX worker relations. Through these case studies as well as through labor analyses of participatory fantastic storytelling within the Disney empire, I challenge the hegemonic, director-centered concept of the auteur with Marxist explanations of participatory, immaterial, and precarious work from Dallas Smythe, Ursula Huws, and Jodi Dean.</p>
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Howell, Amanda	<p>“The American Dream and the American Nightmare: US Social History in the Funhouse Mirror of Jordan Peele’s <i>US</i> (2019)”</p>
Griffith University, Australia	<p>Jordan Peele’s horror film <i>Us</i> takes place across two timelines: the Reaganite 1980s and the present day, commencing with the memory of an unexpected encounter between a little girl and her double in an abandoned seaside funhouse. The historical marker</p>

	<p>orienting its double timeline of past and present is the media stunt, 'Hands Across America', whose aim was to raise money for the hungry and homeless by creating a human chain across the continental US. Inspired by the success of other such celebrity-driven charity events, it sought to do for America what Live Aid and Band Aid had done for Africa in a decade when US poverty rates had reached their highest point since the 1960s (15.2% of the US population overall in 1983, and over 20% of children under 18 [Bureau of Commerce – Dept. of Census]). Peele's allegorical tale of a contemporary middle class African-American family stalked by their own uncanny lookalikes literalises the aims of the 1980s media event—to transform America by drawing attention to the disenfranchised, to make poverty visible—with horrific effect. This discussion considers how Peele's film brings class-based fears of America's putatively classless society into the light, delving into those anxieties of disenfranchisement that trouble utopian myth of the 'American Dream' with a special focus on the interplay of class and race. Peele's film exemplifies how genres of the fantastic can participate in the cultural work of historical meaning making, orienting us (or prompting us to orient ourselves) in time, drawing memory and the past into a 'cultural order of significance and meaning' (Rüsen 1).</p>
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Demkina, Anna	<p>“The Images of Children and the Ecological Catastrophe: The Fear of the Future in the Late Soviet Science Fiction and Movies”</p>
Russian State University for the Humanities, Russia	<p>The Soviet “official” and “mainstream” science-fictional stories always seemed to be optimistic and told us about different ways of overcoming any difficulties by the strong and brave Soviet heroes. (The same was in most of the realistic stories, especially before the “Khrushchev Thaw”). The far and unpredictable cosmic space, dangerous creatures etc. are shown in such fiction as not so dangerous, or, at least, people are described strong and clever enough to get there and to win any battle with those creatures. The Future seemed exciting, except in the stories, which were read in “samizdat”, but even the stories by Strugatsky brothers were inspired by the optimistic Ivan Efremov. Sometimes there could be more pessimistic stories, but the main part of them are about some abstract and faraway worlds, not about the “real” future.</p>

	<p>After the Chernobyl catastrophe and during the “perestroika” politics something changes in the official rhetoric and in the fictional stories as well. More and more authors think about the future without such optimistic ideas, and more such short stories and novels are officially published (if we compare the situation to the 70-s). The figures of children become the part of those catastrophic narratives. Was it something new indeed for the Russian and Soviet science fiction, or was it a traditional topic and image for the genre? I am going to show it through the evolution of such images from the Stalker’s daughter (1979) to the children from the “The Dead Man’s Letters” (1986) and compare it with some short stories from the almanacs and books of that period.</p>
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<p>Mousoutzanis, Aris</p>	<p>“Bare Life, States of Exception and the Biopolitics of Dystopia”</p>
<p>University of Brighton, UK</p>	<p>The paper will present my research on the relations between utopianism/dystopianism and biopolitics. To date, there is a striking lack of critical attention to this area in either utopian/dystopian studies or in biopolitical theory. And yet, the work of Michel Foucault, one of the philosophers whose work has been fundamental to this theory, is marked by a pivotal interest in the relations between space and power – in the ways in which different configurations of space reproduce or challenge existing power relations. Indeed, major ideas in his philosophy, such as panopticism, are recurring tropes in dystopian discourses and texts whereas Foucault himself explicitly theorised the dynamics of alternative spaces in his work on ‘heterotopias’. More specifically, this research explores the ways in which, during modernity, utopianism demonstrated an increasing preoccupation with issues and concerns pertinent to biopolitical governance, such as the importance of citizens’ bodily health and fitness in the service of the State, the monitoring of procreation and reproduction, and the management of populations. The <i>topos</i> of utopia became less a territorial space and more a corporeal space, in a shift of focus within utopianism from outer space to inner space, from geopolitics to biopolitics. The paper will focus on the ways in which the emergence of dystopianism - the uncanny counterpart of the utopian - from the late nineteenth century</p>

	<p>onwards imbues the above issues and concerns with a more distinctly nightmarish element and tone. When exploring the issue of the management of populations, the discussion will turn to the work of Giorgio Agamben and identify ways in which these texts associate dystopianism with what he refers to as ‘states of exception’ as well as with the identification of certain types of citizens as <i>homines sacri</i>, subjects whose lives can be expendable for the sake of the state.</p>
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<p>Rieder, John</p>	<p>“Genre and the Fantastic in Mass Culture”</p>
<p>University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, US</p>	<p>Although fantasy and the fantastic refer to modes of storytelling found at the very beginnings of human culture, the way these terms function today depends on much more recent developments. Modern non-realist or fantastic genres such as horror and science fiction belong to a relatively recently formed system of genre designations that also re-defines and re-purposes older terms such as fantasy, romance, and the fairy tale. This genre system grows out of the commercial milieu of mass cultural publication and the writing and reading practices it encourages. As I have described at length in <i>Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System</i> (Wesleyan UP, 2017), a set of closely connected narrative and publishing practices based on fostering habitual, brand-related consumption emerged in the late nineteenth century in conjunction with the development of commercial advertising (and its political first cousin, organized state propaganda). The main features of this set of practices are, 1) seriality, the predominance of repetition and predictability within a narrative continuity that aims not so much to gratify the audience’s desires as to leave them wanting to purchase the next installment; 2) stratification, as age-old distinctions between high and low culture shift away from issues of class origin toward vectors of availability and market presence; and 3) subculture, the complementary formation of regional, topical, and cult-like subcultures in contradistinction to the overwhelming pressure towards homogeneity mass culture imposes. Advertising functions as a kind of keystone that organizes this entire system of mass cultural production, distribution, and reception insofar as the contradictions that shape commercial publicity from the inside</p>

	(incitement vs. pacification, information vs. entertainment, intimacy vs. anonymity) impose themselves as external pressures on both mass market and niche market narratives, albeit with effects that vary crucially across different venues.
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Schubart, Rikke	“Physical Trauma as Deep and Dark Play in <i>Maleficent</i> (2014) and <i>Maleficent: Mistress of Evil</i> (2019)”
University of Southern Denmark, DK	<p>This paper examines the use of trauma to transform villainess Maleficent from Disney’s <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> (1959) into female hero in <i>Maleficent</i> (2014) and <i>Maleficent: Mistress of Evil</i> (2019). The paper uses play theory (Geertz 1972, Roach 2011), narrative medicine (Frank 1995), and trauma studies (Pederson 2014) to analyze trauma as deep and dark play. In <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Maleficent was killed by the Prince. In the two recent movies, Maleficent (Angelina Jolie) is a fairy who turns evil only when she is attacked and mutilated.</p> <p>The paper has two sections. First section examines the Hollywood star persona of Jolie, who publicly shared her preventive double mastectomy in 2013, her preventive salpingo–oophorectomy in 2015. Jolie co–worked with scriptwriter Linda Woolverton to create Maleficent as a nuanced character and Maleficent is thus designed as a role model overcoming physical trauma, not unlike Jolie herself.</p> <p>Second part discusses trauma as deep and dark play. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defines <i>deep play</i> as play where much is at stake in terms of money and one’s honor. Theater scholar Joseph Roach describes <i>dark play</i> as risky play behavior balancing on the edge between life and death. This paper explores how Maleficent offers audiences a character and an actress surviving trauma. Sociologist Arthur Frank talks about the function of wounds in what he calls the “quest narrative,” which is when patients “combat” illness: “The quest narrative recognizes that the old intactness must be stripped away to prepare for something new” (1996: 171). From trauma emerges a new body and a new person.</p>

	Trauma is put into deep and dark play by Jolie in her character Maleficent. The paper theorizes dark play as site of regeneration and forger of a new self.
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Hill, Rachel	“A Pop Star Demonology:” Planetary Personifications and The Fantastic in Grimes”
University of London, UK	<p>The Fantastic has long played a crucial role in the transmedial work of auteur musicians such as Bjork, FKA twigs and Janelle Monáe. With flaming swords, girl gangs and dystopian landscapes, the artistic output of Canadian musician Grimes is defined by a fusion of Fantastic iconography. Her fifth album <i>Miss Anthropocene</i> (2020) is not only exemplary of the electronic Fantastic’s world-building strategies and affects, but extends these aesthetic speculations to the level of the planetary. Historical representations of planetary goddesses, such as Gaia and Venus, demonstrate that planetary personifications are not a new phenomenon, but a key constituent in the genesis of the Fantastic. However, no longer a symbol of planetary harmony and perfection, <i>Miss Anthropocene</i>’s contemporary myth-making is perhaps a Fantastic version of what Anna Tsing has formulated as an “art of living on a damaged planet.” Indeed, with her new pantheon of synthetic Anthropocene-era goddesses, Grimes has stated that her newest album is an attempt to "make climate change fun...so maybe it'll be a bit easier to look at if it can exist as a character and not just abstract doom." With attempts to bring planetary scales into increasing comprehensibility, perhaps <i>Miss Anthropocene</i> could be understood as one method through which the Fantastic enables a drawing closer to, rather than pulling away from, the immensity of environmental collapse. Understood thusly, Grimes’ newest iteration of the Fantastic returns us to the unreal and unevenly distributed realities of the climate collapse. Or conversely, are her antics a mode of decadent nihilism which elides the present lived realities of climate collapse for many-- particularly in the global South--where escalating environmental precarity is not an “abstract doom” but a deadly immediacy. This paper will interrogate how Grimes uses the (often playful) tools of the Fantastic as a means of reconceptualising relationships with climate collapse.</p>

Honore, Christie	“The X-Files: Critical Realism in the Fantastic”
University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, US	<p>Actively designed as a cult sci-fi television show tasked with attracting more viewers to Fox network in the 1990’s, The X-Files experienced unusual success for an example of intentionally produced cult media. Rather than being “discovered” by audiences as most cult shows are, The X-Files captured cult audiences by deliberately deploying an ambiguous style through its aesthetic elements and deferred plot structure to allow space for fan-consumer creation and multiple interpretations. It also accommodated mainstream and quality audiences of all genders by providing both an enjoyable surface-level viewing experience and an intriguing broadscale storyline. However, what became known as the show’s “mytharch” narrative strategy, with protagonists Mulder and Scully investigating a conspiracy by the US government to cover up the “truth” about extraterrestrials, proved all too adept at displaying Americans’ worst anxieties on screen in the era immediately before and after one of the most significant tragedies in American history: 9/11. In March 2001 the show’s spinoff The Lone Gunmen premiered with the plot of an attempted hijacking of a commercial airliner into the Twin Towers. In this paper I examine how The X-Files skillfully reflected the anxieties of pre- and post- 9/11 America, and how the effectiveness of the show’s cult TV recipe began to waiver when the sensibilities of American audiences changed after the attack. Though the show achieved success early on by expressing Americans’ fears of the alien as monster amidst rapid globalization and distrust of the government, the show’s grounding in critical realism was less appealing after the dystopian reality of 9/11, which prompted Americans to look towards escapism and visions of a more auspicious future for the country. By examining The X-files and its reception across two distinct points in American political history, this paper considers the relationship between American political culture and the fantastic in popular media.</p>

Schaefer, Alan	“Fantasy, Dystopia, and Detective Instinct: Jess Franco’s <i>Diabolical Dr. Z</i> and <i>Attack of the Robots</i>”
Texas State University, US	<p>Jess Franco’s cinema mines the genres of excess, resulting in a sprawling body of work that includes women-in-prison fiascos, psychedelized erotic horror, and radical adaptations of gothic literature. Franco made three films in 1966, a relatively low number for a filmmaker who made twelve films in 1973 alone. And while one of these 1966 films, <i>Residencia para espías</i>, remains a decidedly difficult title to track down, <i>Diabolical Dr. Z</i> and <i>Attack of the Robots</i> are accessible Franco films in which cold-war anxieties collide with the fantastic. In <i>Diabolical Dr. Z</i>, Franco revisits the medical-horror genre he and Georges Franju helped popularize in the early 1960s. It’s a film that traffics in monstrous sexualities and indicts abuses of medical science and mind control. <i>Attack of the Robots</i> riffs on the sci-fi detective thriller, along with some sly nods to Jean-Luc Godard’s <i>Alphaville</i>, for both films feature American expatriate star Eddie Constantine. The film foregrounds dystopic visions of reassembled identities and scientific progress gone awry. These two early Franco films offer a useful entry into his dense filmography and exemplify his parodic and playful engagement with the dystopic and the fantastic.</p>

Joyce, Stephen	“Fantasy Video Games and Transmedia Worldbuilding”
Aarhus University, DK	<p>A key driver of fantasy’s popularity in the 21st century is the emergence of transmedia worldbuilding. Where once stories were self-contained in one medium, now fans of <i>Star Wars</i>, <i>Harry Potter</i>, or <i>Game of Thrones</i> can search out information about the storyworld and its characters across a variety of platforms. Typically, transmedia worldbuilding has involved a mothership platform that is both the narrative and industrial core of the franchise, which provides the canonical scaffolding for ancillary tie-ins and fan creations. This mothership is usually the film or TV series as these have the widest audience and generate enough revenue to finance transmedia</p>

	<p>expansions. However, the rising cultural and industrial power of video games has created an unusual situation for Hollywood: now there is a medium with the financial power to become the industrial core of a transmedia franchise, even one with film and television elements. Increasingly, we are seeing transmedia fantasy franchises developed from video games, such as <i>World of Warcraft</i>, <i>Tomb Raider</i>, or <i>Assassin's Creed</i>. Do such fantasy franchises develop in a different way to those rooted in more narrative-driven media?</p> <p>This paper looks at transmedia fantasy worlds that are anchored in both video games and film or television, what we may call dual industrial core franchises. In such fantasy worlds, the canonical scaffolding is rooted less in specific plot points and narrative events, the world's <i>mythos</i>, and more in the storyworld <i>topos</i> and <i>ethos</i>. Game-centred transmedia fantasy worlds retain coherence through familiar environments and recurring types of narrative situations rather than a linear chain of events, which affords greater flexibility across platforms in world development. This enhances the appeal of for creators of developing fantasy worlds that allow shared IP while facilitating creative autonomy.</p>
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Christensen, Jørgen Riber	<p>“The three fantastic worlds of Location Based Mobile Gaming”</p>
Aalborg University, DK	<p>Within the theoretical framework of fantasy with its concept of subcreation and a double universe, the paper poses the question of what the phenomenological implications are of location based mobile gaming for the gamer's perception of real space?</p> <p>The case is the Harry Potter franchise game <i>Wizards Unite</i> (which is <i>Pokémon Go</i> inspired). Fantasy theory is used because location based mobile gaming, like fantasy, features two interconnected worlds, the primary world of the gamer and the secondary world of the game. The social and spatial practice of mobile gaming will be addressed with regard to the level of augmentation of the gamer's real world, which may become ambiguous in light of the modality of the space created by the interaction of the real world and the virtual world in games of this type. In other</p>

	<p>words, it is the in-between space between the primary and the secondary world that is in focus for the paper. This liminal space is created by the mobile phones' interface, which combines the space of the game and the real-world space of the gamer.</p> <p>It will be argued that the result of the augmentation of the real or primary world is a double phenomenological hesitation of the Todorovian kind. Both the space of the game and the space of the gamer are thrown into doubt. Finally, it will be proposed that location based mobile games in general involve an addition to the two worlds of fantasy, namely a third world or borderland between the two, in which the ontological aspects of gaming are created. The paper will, hopefully, be able to conclude that location based mobile games are characterized by liminality and by a double level of phenomenological hesitation.</p>
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<p>Graulund, Rune</p>	<p>“Desert Dystopias: From <i>Dune</i> to <i>Mad Max</i>”</p>
<p>University of Southern Denmark, DK</p>	<p>Deserts in science fiction are often portrayed negatively. From the crazed cannibal marauders of the <i>Mad Max</i> franchise, on to the brutal Fremen nomads of Frank Herbert's <i>Dune</i>, on to Paolo Bacigalupi's merciless corporate mercenaries of <i>The Water Knife</i>, the desert is a place that leaves little to no room for the sentimental and the kind. Even in the case of Walter M. Miller's monks of <i>A Canticle for Leibowitz</i> – inhabitants of a future desert that are at least not out for blood – the postapocalyptic ruins of World War III is hardly a pleasant place, and certainly not preferable to that which came before. In narratives like these, the desert more often than not stands as a warning against the follies of the present (pollution, the emissions of fossil fuel, the devastation of nuclear war, deforestation and other forms of wasteful behaviour), a dystopian place we do not want to end up. Yet there are Utopian elements to be located in the future desert too. Kim Stanley Robinson's <i>Mars Trilogy</i> continues a development towards a greener world, for instance, just as otherwise largely dystopian visions can also offer redemption. The conclusion to <i>Mad Max: Fury Road</i> ends on a note of hope in the oasis, just as Herbert's Fremen over time manage to turn their desert planet into a verdant paradise. The presentation will map the</p>

	<p>utopian/dystopian impulses of desert science fiction texts and films in order to examine the manner in which the desert has been employed in Eurocentric science fiction as a space of alterity in which various social, environmental and political thought experiments can be carried out free of the constraints of the realism of present day.</p>
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<p>Bacchilega, Cristina & Greenhill, Pauline (TWO PRESENTERS)</p>	<p>“Monsters in the Forest: <i>Pokot</i> (2017), “Little Red Riding Hood” Crimes, and Ecologies of the Real and Fantastic”</p>
<p>University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, US & University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada</p>	<p>Whether in the forest or in the city, monsters are not found but made, constructed of deep human fears and desires, super-sized projections of prejudices, and far-out transgressions of socially upheld norms. In popular culture, the villain’s cruelty in fairy tales and the serial killer’s crimes in realistic fictions become “monstrous” because they are larger than life, raising questions of what being human is. In this joint paper, we present on the 2017 “Little Red Riding Hood” (LRRH) crime film <i>Pokot</i> [<i>Spoor</i>], which draws on the 2009 bestseller <i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead: A Novel</i> by Olga Tokarczuk (translated to English 2019), who co-wrote the script with co-director Agnieszka Holland. We read <i>Pokot</i> in the key of popular green criminology—which intervenes at the intersection of popular criminology and green criminology—in order to explore the film’s representations of the monstrous as tied to fairy-tale metaphors and wondrous storyworlds.</p> <p>Searching contemporary film and television texts that mash up detective/crime and folk/fairy stories locates the monstrous as a shapeshifting sign of issues, transgressions, and promises. Across form (cinema and TV), genre (crime but also drama, fantasy, horror, mystery), and country, contemporary references to the traditional LRRH fairy tale (ATU 333) connect to ecological devastation and preternatural monsters.</p>

	<p>While most of these fairy-tale/crime LRRH films and television series tend to make the supernatural explanatory, the 2017 Polish-Czech-German-Swedish-Slovakian-French co-production <i>Pokot</i> glimpses a more expansive sense of the quotidian that, as in fairy tales, admits the preternatural into the everyday with no expectation that it will clarify mysteries. Our focus is on how the popular green criminology of the movie <i>Pokot</i> is enhanced by references to LRRH and on how the monstrosity of the protagonist is linked to her counterhegemonic ways of knowing and sensitivity to others, human and non-human.</p>
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<p>Mittermeier, Sabrina</p>	<p>“The Society of Explorers and Adventurers (S.E.A.): Fantastic Immersive Storytelling at Disney’s Theme Parks”</p>
<p>University of Kassel, Germany</p>	<p>With the opening of Tokyo Disneyland in 1983, the Disney theme parks expanded beyond the United States for the first time, and owed to the massive success to this park, soon also opened their gates in Paris (1992), Hong Kong (2005), and Shanghai (2016). Yet only much more recently, Walt Disney Company’s strategy has shifted towards a more global approach, and one way this is noticeable is through the immersive transmedia storytelling narratives at work in the parks’ – and more recently, cruise ships – attractions.</p> <p>The Society of Explorers and Adventurers (S.E.A.) offers a story world completely unique to and originating from the Disney theme parks. Originally based on a now-defunct night club at Walt Disney World’s entertainment district, the story world currently encompasses attractions in a variety of immersive spaces, incl. the themed lands Adventure Isle at Shanghai Disneyland and Mystic Point in Hong Kong Disneyland, the Tower of Terror attraction at Tokyo DisneySea, the Oceaneer Lab kids club on the Disney Magic and Wonder cruise ships, and even the classic Jungle Cruise ride via the Skipper Canteen themed restaurant at Walt Disney World’s Magic Kingdom. S.E.A.’s storyworld constitutes itself largely through several characters and their residences, among them Lord Henry Mystic (in Mystic Manor) and Harrison Hightower III (in the Hotel Hightower) and their fantastical backstories of colonial artifacts</p>

	<p>come to magical life and wreaking havoc, if not revenge, on their illegitimate owners. The story world thus is weaved in with colonial narrative present at the parks since Disneyland’s original opening in 1955; something I have elsewhere called “armchair colonialism”.</p> <p>In my presentation, I want to engage with this fantastic, immersive storyworld through a postcolonial lens, engaging John Urry’s famed “tourist gaze”, as well as more recent scholarship on transmedia/fan tourism (in particular, Williams 2020).</p>
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Taylor, Audrey	“Disability and Dystopia in Anne McCaffrey”
Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College, US	<p>Anne McCaffrey is best known for her dragons and the world they inhabit, Pern, but the worlds she created outside of Pern bear analysis as well. This is particularly true in terms of those worlds that have dystopic and utopic elements. McCaffrey herself was interested in utopias, and wrote her BA thesis on <i>We</i> and <i>Islandia</i>. McCaffrey created a range of worlds to contain her stories, and though they each deserve scrutiny, it is when they are compared, and analyzed as utopias and dystopias, that new knowledge can be gleaned. The Ship Who Sang and Crystal Singer series take place in what can appear, at times, to be a utopia, with advanced technologies, and many different, thriving, human civilizations out among the stars, but with closer inspection, they are more dystopic than otherwise. This is important because it changes how disability in both series may be read. Ria Cheyne in ““She Was Born a Thing”: Disability, the Cyborg and the Posthuman in Anne McCaffrey's The Ship Who Sang” attacks McCaffrey for what Cheyne considers a number of ableist assumptions, but these only bear out if the universe is considered as a model, or a utopia. When the Ship Who Sang universe is looked at as a dystopia very different readings are possible. Other of her works similarly contain utopic elements, but these are usually leavened with the addition of human foibles, or, more significantly, dystopic elements. This balance gives her works nuance, but also enables discussions of how utopias and dystopias function not only as elements within themselves, but</p>

	also as frames for other concerns like world-building and disability.
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Brugué, Laura Luque	<p>“Subverting Gendered Magic Conventions in Fantasy: Pratchett’s Portrayal of Witches and Wizard’s Magic in the <i>Tiffany Aching</i> series”</p>
<p>Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain</p>	<p>Undoubtedly, fantasy has become one of the most popular genres and it reaches all types of public. Consequently, many authors have appropriated the genre and bent it to fit their own perception of fantasy worlds and stories. Sir Terry Pratchett (1948 -2015), author of the <i>Discworld</i> novels, is one of the novelists who has subverted some traditional characteristics of the fantasy genre to challenge different conventions and styles. A widely known and loved writer, his oeuvre provides room to analyze, from a gender studies perspective, how the subversion of traditional characteristics might encourage readers to challenge their own views not only on fantasy but in their everyday lives. As Sinclair (2015) argues, “gender has long been a powerful source of imagination for fantastical literature” and therefore many fantasy novels are examined from a gender studies perspective. This article explores in which ways Pratchett’s gendered magic in the Discworld, and specifically in the <i>Tiffany Aching</i> series, challenges the view on the representation of witches and wizards in fantasy. As Martin (2016) suggests, “Pratchett thus retells familiar stories, whether they are fairy tales or a part of folklore and deconstructs them in order to show how women’s magic was and often still is misunderstood, misjudged and/or underestimated”. In addition, I will explore in the paper the main differences between witches and wizards in the Discworld universe in relation to what type of magic they wield and why and how magic in the Discworld is gendered. By portraying magic as gendered but ultimately deconstructing this depiction, Pratchett is challenging classical views on fantasy which might in turn influence the readers of novels aimed at a young adult audience. Through the subversion of the classical traits of fantasy, the <i>Tiffany Aching</i> books provide a vision of the witch that differs from the classical witch of fairy tales.</p>

Schweitzer, Dahlia	<p>“The Ghost Down the Street: How (and Why) Haunted Homes Have Invaded Hollywood”</p>
Fashion Institute of Technology, US	<p>The Suburban Gothic is a sub-genre of the American Gothic that dramatizes anxieties arising from the mass suburbanization of the United States, where minorities (if they appear at all) are seen as marginalized or dangerous outsiders. Significantly, in this sub-genre, the greatest threat is always from people in the house, not from external threats. The standard narrative structure inevitably features a series of supernatural events that gradually intensify, either psychologically or physically (or both). These events serve to isolate the family from people outside the house’s walls, as well as to sow discord between family members. The resolution comes only once the family has fled the house, destroyed the house, or both.</p> <p>By exploring the fragility of the home, these narratives examine the fragility of modernity as well as the tenuous nature of the family structure. This paper looks at the rise in “haunted house” films and their significance as symptoms of “points of rupture,” where the past returns to shape the present. As Barry Curtis writes in <i>Dark Places</i>, “ ‘Ghosts’ and the dark places where they dwell have served as powerful metaphors for persistent themes of loss, memory, retribution, and confrontation with unacknowledged and unresolved histories” (10). After all, ghosts represent anxieties over the potential porousness of the barrier between life and death.</p> <p>Much as horror narratives provide an allegorical outlet for exploring our fears and anxieties about poorly repressed grief and trauma, the Suburban Gothic—with the suburban home as its centerpiece—makes repeated attempts to portray the home as we are afraid it might be: the locus of debt, dysfunction, and death. A close examination of the home, and everything that hides within, exposes the rot at the heart of suburbia, the ugliness behind the misogyny, oppression, and racism barely concealed behind the white picket fence.</p>

Ekman, Stefan	“Urban Fantasy: A Genre of Mixing and Mashing”
University of Gothenburg, Sweden	<p>Urban fantasy is one of those labels that are wielded with careless abandon by creators, consumers, and critics alike. I have previously observed, briefly, that urban fantasy has been described as a generic hybrid [1] and that it ought to be thought of as a hybrid genre rather than a “subgenre”. In this paper, I will discuss how urban fantasy is not only a generic hybrid, but how it combines, crosses borders, and resist definitions; and how this refusal to fall into categories contributes greatly to its ability to address the shades of grey that make up modern society.</p> <p>I will begin my discussion in how urban fantasy has been defined in relation to Attebery’s distinctions between genre and formula [2]. Can a genre that draws on so many generic roots be thought of as the fuzzy set in the same way that Attebery suggests for the fantasy genre? Are there any useful prototypes for a combination of gothic horror, fantasy, fairy stories, ghost stories, dystopias, crime fiction, and urban novels? How are these root genres brought together to form a coherent whole? And is there a single formula for urban fantasy or many?</p> <p>I will also address some other mixes of the genre: how urban fantasy settings exists in a spectrum of worlds, ranging from a primary world almost indistinguishable from the actual world (London in Aaronovitch’s books and graphic novels) all the way to fully realized secondary worlds (Alt Coulumb in Gladstone’s novels and games), worlds that, despite their differences, all manage to remain modern. What plot types are employed to navigate urban environments and maintain a focus on the Unseen? And how the settings are constructed in terms of fantastic and mundane domains and what that does to the social commentary that is ubiquitous in urban fantasy.</p> <p>I will illustrate my discussion with examples from e.g. Tom Pollock, China Miéville, Ben Aaronovitch, Max Gladstone, and Kim Harrison</p>

Spiegel, Simon	“THE EPCOT FILM – Walt Disney’s Failed Utopia”
University of Zurich, Switzerland	<p>There is a wide agreement in utopian studies that in film, a positive utopia in the tradition of Thomas More’s <i>Utopia</i> (1516) is not possible, since it lacks both a conflict which drives the plot forward as well as round characters with individual traits – both of which are required by feature films in the Hollywood tradition. Research on cinematic utopias has therefore focused almost exclusively on dystopias which fit a typical feature film framework much better.</p> <p>But as I am arguing, scholars of film and utopias have just been looking at the wrong place. The literary utopia is characterized by its hybrid nature, it is a blend between narrative and philosophic dialogue, and the fictional story only serves as a frame for the detailed description of the utopian state. The primary goal of this description is not an exact implementation but rather a reminder that alternatives to the (bad) present can be conceived. Utopias are much more tightly bound to a specific historical reality, they are “reality-laden”. I therefore argue that nonfiction films are much more suited for utopias.</p> <p>In my talk I will use Walt Disney’s last film The EPCOT Film (also known as The Florida Project) as an example of a utopian nonfiction film. The EPCOT Film was a promotion film for Disney’s original concept of Disneyworld. For Disney, his newest enterprise was meant to be much more than a simple amusement park. Its heart was supposed be an <i>Experimental Prototype City of Tomorrow</i> – short EPCOT –, where a population of 10,000 people would serve as a living example of the future. It never came to be, Disney died shortly after the completion of the film. Nevertheless, The EPCOT Film is a fascinating example of a utopian film.</p>

Schepp, Lukas	“Fantastic Maturation: Overcoming Trauma Through Disobedient Symbolism in Guillermo del Toro’s <i>Pan’s Labyrinth</i> and <i>The Devil’s Backbone</i>”
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany	In In Del Toro’s films <i>Pan’s Labyrinth</i> and <i>The Devil’s Backbone</i> , child protagonists experience psychological traumata as they are

	<p>forced to conform to repressive environments that hinder their individuation and thus, their maturation. These repressive environments manifest both on the macro-level (Civil-War Spain) and on the micro-level in the form of nuclear families: tyrannical fathers and manipulative mothers produce 'defective dolls' - children that do not fulfill their expected roles as their parents' marionettes. Meanwhile, the processes of coercion are invisible and inaudible due to their psychological nature, and are thus difficult to grapple with for the child protagonists.</p> <p>Consequently, fantastic representations of intangible realities become necessary to depict the child protagonists' character arcs through coded symbolism. Magical helpers in the form of mythical creatures or ghosts help the children confront their traumata audiovisually. In this process, Del Toro frequently subverts traditional meanings of individual symbols and freely combines symbols of different categories such as Greek and Egyptian mythology, Mexican esotericism, Christianity, and Northern European pre-Christian paganism. Moreover, Del Toro's symbolism is layered with inter-textual references to related works of both 'realist' and fantastic fiction, thus rendering it even more ambiguous.</p> <p>Through interacting with the symbolic representations of their psychological realities, the children undergo a process of 'wicked alchemy' that allows them to integrate, and thus overcome, past traumata, and to become their true selves. By disobeying authorities both on the micro- and the macro-level, the child protagonists learn to balance within themselves rationality and intuition, cyclical time and linear time, and individuality and healthy community. In their process of "making the subconscious conscious" (Jung), they understand that they need not be afraid of the dark, which instead offers guidance and truth.</p>
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Coopey, Louise	“Representation, Otherness and Fantastic Storyworlds: Smashing Gender Binaries and Reworking Identities in <i>Game of Thrones</i>”
University of Birmingham, UK	<i>Game of Thrones</i> (2011-2019) is one of the most influential long-form narrative television shows of the twenty-first century, pushing the boundaries of what is possible on the small screen

	<p>while providing scope to interrogate social, cultural and political norms and ideals. Gender is one such area of interest, with <i>Thrones</i> taking full advantage of the fantasy genre’s conventions to directly challenge representational binaries.</p> <p>As the ‘key to the originality and, thus, to the appeal and popularity of the GoT universe’ (Schubart & Gjelsvik, 2016:1), the majority of the female characters that appear in the show capitalise on fantasy’s evasion of the realities and limitations of the human condition (Jackson, 1981). Daenerys Targaryen, Cersei Lannister, Arya Stark and Brienne of Tarth, amongst others, push back against the gendered norms and ideals imposed on them by the established patriarchal society that governs, maintains and polices the values by which the people of Westeros are required to live. Moreover, they ultimately smash the gender binaries that constrain them, transgressing the dividing line between the Self and Other in order to rework their own identities to achieve their individual goals and forge their own paths. In rejecting the expectations of Westerosi society, they test the boundaries of the possible and facilitate the exploration of the modern complexities of gender.</p> <p>This paper will explore the development of Cersei Lannister and Arya Stark in the <i>Game of Thrones</i> diegetic storyworld in terms of how they challenge the patriarchal status quo from their respective positions within and outside of the structures of power. In doing so, it will reflect on the complexity of modern gender identities in relation to societal expectations and comment on the importance of the fantastic in providing the freedom for characters to push back against the binaries that ultimately fail to hold them.</p>
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Andersen, Tem Frank	<p>“Making the Fantastic Real: From Design Fiction to Engineering Fandom”</p>
Aalborg University, DK	<p>This study - <i>Making the Fantastic Real</i> - provides research on the subject of design fiction, fandom, sharable digital media content on one hand, and real-life engineering artifacts on the other. The study has selected the case of <i>The Hacksmith</i> in order to understand the space of meaning (science and fiction) the production of this specific Youtuber presents to its users, fans, followers, and general public.</p>

	<p><i>The Hacksmith Industries</i> is the trademark name of the YouTube channel <i>The Hacksmith</i>(https://www.youtube.com/user/MstrJames) created by Canadian engineer James Hobson in 2006. One of the signature elements of Hobson’s interest in the Fantastic is the lightsaber and the <i>Star Wars</i> franchise. But Hobson explores many other dimensions of popular culture, ranging from nerf wars shooters to superhero artifacts of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. His focus is on how to make elements of the Fantastic real, not to change any storyline or story arc, but to see how far the innate human capability of play and creation can be taken from the fictional realm to reality.</p> <p>The research question for this study is: Where does <i>The Hacksmith Industry</i> lead us in relation to the demarcation line of the Real and the Fantastic, between science and fan- and design fiction? <i>The Hacksmith</i> can be considered a model for exploring the border between the Real and the Fantastic, creating the notion of a fangineer, a fan becoming an engineer by expressing their fannishness through the feat of engineering.</p> <p>An analysis of selected YouTube videos, including the comments sections, as well as an ethnographic approach to various online fan forums have been conducted to ensure a broad understanding of the transformation of the fantastic into reality by engineering fans. The work is ongoing.</p>
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Thompson, Kirsten Moana	<p>“Global Fantasy and Indigeneity: Appropriation, Storytelling and New Markets”</p>
Seattle University, US	<p>One lineage in the etymological history of fantasy traces back via Old French and Late Middle English to the Greek 'phantazéin', meaning to "make visible, or display," connecting fantasy to the construction of fanciful, improbable or impossible worlds. In this paper I want to take up this idea of "making visible", not (only) in this traditional understanding of visualizing or spectacularizing an imaginary world, but rather in thinking through the ways in which fantasy 'makes visible' or displays indigenous peoples, mythologies or cultural practices.</p>

Under pressure from #MeToo and #OscarsSoWhite, Hollywood has begun diversifying its production crew and screen casting practices, from *Black Panther* to *Wonder Woman*, and hiring more directors and writers who are women and/or people of color, from Taika Waititi (*Thor Ragnarok*) to Ava DuVernay (*A Wrinkle in Time*) and Shonda Rimes (*Sunshine Scouts*). In a related move, studios like Disney have recently attempted to address widespread criticism for its representational practices, by consulting an Oceanic Cultural Trust for *Moana* (2016) and signing an agreement with the Sámi peoples for *Frozen II* (Lee & Buck), in each case with the aim of engaging with indigenous communities and seeking critical feedback on its storytelling practices.

At the same time, alt-right groups have also been appropriating fantasy referents from *The Matrix* and other fantasy and science fiction films as an emblem of affiliation and insider address to fellow believers. Alt Right supporters storming the US Capitol on Jan 6 flew The Republic of Kekistan flags, referring to a fictional country in which the god Kek lives. Republican conservatives have signaled that they are about to release a conspiracy theory onto social media, with the touchphrase "Release the Kraken", a reference to *Clash of the Titans* (1981) and Ray Harryhausen's famous creature. And appropriation of Pacific imagery even extends to the Boogaloo Bois, an alt right gun-rights group, who wear Hawaiian shirts and use the hibiscus flower as a symbol of membership.

This paper takes is interested in how fantasy speaks here to an inherent distance from, or interrogation of material realities, and how is it nonetheless engaging with contemporary political issues especially among the alt right? What role do indigenous cultures play in the creative production of American fantasy films? How do indigenous mythologies hybridize with particular Hollywood script practices and dominant storytelling formulas? And what are some of the tensions that have emerged between fantasy worldbuilding and questions of cultural authenticity, integrity and appropriation?

With particular reference to Disney's *Moana* and *Aquaman* and the rise of the alt right in the US context as case studies, I will examine some of the ways in which indigenous cultures and myths are becoming new territories for global fantasy industries.

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<p>Sebastian-Martin, Miguel (PART OF PANEL)</p>	<p>“Robotic Sex-Dolls or Terminators in Drag? The Ambivalences of <i>Westworld</i> (2016-) as an Estranged Critique of the Commodification of Reproductive Labour(ers)”</p>
<p>University of Salamanca, Spain</p>	<p>This paper examines Lisa Joy’s and Jonathan Nolan’s series <i>Westworld</i> (HBO, 2016-) as an estranged critique of the commodification of reproductive labour, one which allegorises the structures of patriarchal oppression via the sf setting of an android-populated theme park. It is argued that the series’ critical edge lies in representing the capitalist-patriarchal exploitation of reproductive labour from the perspective of reproductive labourers themselves —respectively, the perspectives of the housewife and the prostitute, two figures once taken as the paradigmatic two sides of capitalism’s exploitation of women as well as (potentially) revolutionary subjects (Fortunati 1995). Accordingly, this analysis shall revolve around two of the lead characters —gynoids Dolores and Maeve—, who depart from a position of helpless victimhood, since they are built and programmed to play housewife and prostitute within the theme park’s interactive narratives, and are coded to remain oblivious to the abuses of (male) visitors-customers, who rape and murder <i>en masse</i> with no consequences. Gradually, however, the two gynoids acquire an awareness of their oppressed positionality within the park’s commodifying structures, eventually embarking upon a revolutionary struggle against their (male) human adversaries. In these manners, the series critically allegorises real structures of oppression while also looking towards an emancipatory horizon.</p> <p>Nonetheless, this paper shall pay attention not only to the ways in which Dolores and Maeve function as revolutionary subjects within a critical allegory of patriarchal-capitalist structures —it shall also scrutinise how the series simultaneously falls into some of the commodifying mechanisms that it ostensibly criticises. Thus, the main argument is that <i>Westworld</i> functions not only as critique, but also as an ideological mystification, especially insofar as it confirms —and often eroticises— male-chauvinist anxieties about the (presumed) danger of femininity and of (feminised) technologies.</p>

<p>Lopez-Serrano, Lucia (PART OF PANEL)</p>	<p>“Fighting the Reproductive Dystopia: Strategies of Resistance in Leni Zumas' <i>Red Clocks</i> (2018)”</p>
<p>University of Salamanca, Spain</p>	<p>In Leni Zumas’ dystopian novel <i>Red Clocks</i> (2018), the author imagines a reality where a Personhood Amendment has been added to the U.S. constitution giving “the constitutional right to life, liberty and property to a fertilized egg at the moment of conception” (32). Consequently, abortion is criminalized and equated to murder. This has not been prompted by an environmental cataclysm like in Atwood’s <i>Handmaid’s Tale</i>, but happened quietly, through laws proposed by a president with a history of <i>Christianist</i> rhetoric on reproductive issues, and ratified by a majority in congress. The narration is polyphonic, but focuses on Roberta Stephens, who stands at the centre of a tapestry of women’s lives affected by the new legislation, dealing with the fallout while writing the biography of Eivor Minervudottir, a 19th century female polar explorer that had been cast out of her village for her infertile womb.</p> <p>The objective of this paper is twofold: first, I aim to analyze the strategies of resistance developed (or avoided) by the female characters in Zumas’ work, and also to reflect upon reproductive dystopias <i>as</i> strategies of resistance, taking Ro’s efforts at biographical writing as an illustration that can be linked to the rise in publications of reproductive dystopias after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. When addressing resistance to power, I will draw from Foucault’s conceptualization of the term in <i>The History of Sexuality</i> as “mobile and transitory points” (96) but also from Judith Butler’s more contemporary actualization of the affective dimensions of politics as outlined in the introduction to <i>Vulnerability in Resistance</i> (2016).</p>

<p>Guerrero, Paula Barba (PART OF PANEL)</p>	<p>“Trading (M)other Flesh: Reproductive Bioeconomies in Octavia Butler’s <i>Xenogenesis</i> Trilogy”</p>

University of Salamanca,
Spain

In her *Xenogenesis* trilogy—*Dawn* (1987), *Adulthood Rites* (1988) and *Imago* (1989)—Octavia Butler introduces a post-nuclear future in which the surviving humans are enslaved by the Oankali, an alien species that saved them from ravaged Earth to interbreed with them and ensure survival. Hundreds of years after the destruction of the Earth, Butler’s protagonist, Lillith, wakes up captive on an alien spaceship to discover the Oankali’s intent to create “construct children” via symbiogenesis. The Oankali share a desire to hybridize with other species, remaining in perpetual transformation. Their drive to appropriate genetic material from other species in order to evolve—a pseudo-Darwinian reproductive urge that replicates colonial structures (Dowdall 2017)—contrasts sharply with humans’ reluctance to change. In the novels, humans insist (and resist) to preserve the integrity of their bodies from unwanted genetic trade. It is Lillith that, over time, shifts the paradigm *mothering* Akin, her construct son. Later in the novels, human-Oankali relations improve. They resettle on Earth and continue interacting, though not always in peaceful terms. Only in *Imago* can we see both communities coexisting peacefully.

Aside from its interest in challenging sociocultural constructs and alleged biological imperatives, Butler’s trilogy links ecocide to forms of reproductive colonization ingrained in the machinery of late capitalism (Dowdall 2017). *Xenogenesis* criticizes the commodification of body and land and is deeply concerned with issues of sexual and reproductive rights. It introduces the Oankali as both predatory parasites and survival guarantors, commenting on the plausible reproduction of biocolonial economies in the future. This is not surprising given that Butler’s sf is riddled with references to chattel slavery, eugenics and their colonial legacies (Dubey 2013). What seems striking is the correlation of this heritage of ‘flesh trade’ with posthuman potentialities, hinting at the “unlimited possibility” (White 1993) of difference. Drawing on Weheliye’s notion of ‘racialized assemblage’ (2014), this paper examines bioeconomic precarity from the theoretical lens of postcolonial and gender theory to trace the effects of these ‘economies of the flesh’ as seen in *Xenogenesis*. I intend to read the trilogy as a reconstructive dystopia that ambivalently questions neoliberal structures insinuating after-violence solidarity and hope. “Humans fear difference,” warns *Imago*. Yet, only in the acceptance and reception of difference is genetic determinism undone in favor of

	<p>alternative kinship structures. This paper approaches the act of ‘trading flesh’ both literally and figuratively, as <i>becoming capital</i> and also <i>becoming other</i> in/through (forceful) symbiogenesis. It critically assesses <i>Xenogenesis</i>’ reproductive economies as a reenactment of (bio)colonialism and xenophobia and, also, an escape route from them through a re-positioning of difference that enables the re-interpretation of the (m)other and, broadly, human categories.</p>
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Stephan, Matthias	<p>“Unknown Depths: Utopia, Cli-Fi and The Supernatural in Nnedi Okorofor’s <i>Lagoon</i>”</p>
Aarhus University, DK	<p>Our world remains dependent on fossil fuels, not least oil, and as a consequence and cause, is filled with political turmoil, corruption, and an increasingly divided society. In many ways, and in many parts of the world, these aspects have a dystopic feel, so much so that many novels of the fantastic, across genres like science fiction and fantasy, have a distinctly negative tone, and a pessimistic outlook. However, there are some ‘quests to discover utopian dreams’ and novels which, through different means, present the possibility of a future utopia even here on earth.</p> <p>Nnedi Okorofor’s <i>Lagoon</i> is a fantastic novel, not only due to the excitement its plot drives in the reader, but in its interaction with tropes from science fiction, fantasy, and the Gothic, all while presenting a novel which ultimately presents an optimistic future for, at least some of, the population. At the same time, the novel interacts with tropes of climate change and postcolonial theory, in its presentation of the struggles that need to be overcome – and those become highlighted in the presentation. Set in the African city of Lagos, the novel invokes a supernatural intervention, an alien intervention (it is difficult to call it an invasion) akin to that found in the Wakanda backstory, with a promise to intervene to solve climate change and provide harmony between creatures of the sea and residents of the city. It also draws on innate supernatural abilities of some its own citizens. These extraordinary gifts allow the community to solve its various problems, and ultimately lead to a utopian vision.</p>

	<p>This paper will use ecocritical and africanfuturist lenses to explore the consequences of Okorofofor’s presentation. It will consider the implication of external intervention (savior) as well as the trope of innate supernatural ability inherent to certain individuals. The latter will be considered specifically in its relationship to ecocriticism – considering the power of an increased awareness of the connection with nature – land, water, and human nature – as well as one’s own past. The Gothic themes of excavation and spectral criticism will also inform the presentation, reflecting the independence of nature from the desires and needs of man. Finally, the implications of an Africanfuturist presentation, coupled with postcolonial theory, will be considered through exploration of its use of utopia and dystopia, and their juxtaposition throughout the novel.</p>
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<p>Andersen, Marc Malmndorf & Clasen, Mathias (TWO PRESENTERS)</p>	<p>“Playing with Fear: Empirical Investigations in a Haunted House”</p>
<p>Aarhus University, DK</p>	<p>Fear is a scientifically well-understood emotion that evolved to allow organisms to swiftly mobilize large amounts of resources in times of need. Organisms universally respond with fight, flight or freeze behavior when faced with actual or potentially dangerous situations (Öhman & Mineka 2001). What is much less well understood is how fear becomes the engine in pleasurable activities—what we call “recreational fear” (Andersen et al. 2020). Recreational fear ranges from mildly scary children’s activities, such as playfully being chased by a parent or caregiver, to full-blown horror media, such as horror films and haunted attractions (Clasen, Kjeldgaard-Christiansen & Johnson 2020). Haunted attractions are particularly intriguing as they provide an immersive context for embodied encounters with the fantastic in the form of monsters and uncanny settings.</p> <p>This paper reports on a series of empirical studies conducted in the period 2016-2020 at a Danish haunted attraction, Dystopia Haunted House. We argue that a commercial haunted attraction such as Dystopia provides an ideal context for the empirical investigation of recreational fear given the ecological validity of</p>

	<p>such an immersive site, in contrast to lab-based studies of recreational fear. The studies conducted include an investigation of the fear-regulation strategies employed by haunted house guests (Clasen, Andersen & Schjoedt 2019), an investigation of the physiological characteristics of recreational fear (Andersen et al. 2020), and forthcoming work on the motivations of different kinds of guests (white-knucklers, adrenaline junkies, and dark copers). Our studies suggest that recreational horror may serve important psychological and social functions in terms of simulation, coping, and bonding and point the way to future empirical research on the fascinating phenomenon of playing with fear.</p>
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<p>Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, Jens</p>	<p>“The Voice of Evil: An Empirical Analysis of Regan’s Voices in <i>The Exorcist</i>”</p>
<p>Aarhus University, DK</p>	<p>In a documentary on the making of William Friedkin’s horror movie <i>The Exorcist</i>, a sound engineer describes his team’s extensive experimental efforts to make the voice of Regan, a demon-possessed girl, sound “evil.” This seems like a category mistake. Morality is about what one thinks and does, not what one sounds like. How could prosodic features of speech production evoke immorality?</p> <p>In this paper, we discuss the notion of evil voices in horror fictions. We suggest that judgments of the “evilness” of voice commonly rely on a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) of morality-as-purity (Zhong & House, 2014; see also Horberg et al., 2009). According to this metaphorical way of thinking, what is moral is what is natural and pure, and what is immoral is what is unnatural, impure, or corrupted. Therefore, unnatural and sickly voices can signal immorality in fictional characters. Fantastic horror media represent an ideal testing ground for this theory because the voices of supernatural agents are not constrained by the natural physiology of the human vocal tract. They can therefore be made to sound “evil” even if that means vocalizing in a way that is exaggerated, artificially corrupted, or otherwise unrealistic.</p>

	<p>As a proof of concept, we apply this perspective to demon-possessed Regan, suggesting that the sound designers hit on a voice that, for a young girl, is maximally unnatural and corrupted. We test these claims through acoustic analyses of Regan’s voice before and after she is possessed. These technical analyses are unfinished at the time of writing this proposal, but we predict that possessed Regan’s voice will shift toward indicators of disease and counter-normativity: low pitch, low formant dispersion, tenseness, hoarseness, and creakiness. Such shifts would be consistent with our proposal that impurity of voice can come to signal impurity of moral character.</p>
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<p>Üsekes, Çiğdem</p>	<p>“From Dystopia to Utopia: <i>The OA</i>”</p>
<p>Western Connecticut State University, US</p>	<p>Brit Marling and Zal Batmanglij’s mystery science fiction drama series <i>The OA</i>, which <i>The Atlantic</i> recently included in its list of “The 15 Best TV Shows of 2019,” has garnered cult following but was canceled by Netflix soon after the release of its second season. The cancellation decision was followed by widespread protests against Netflix, including online petitions (which collected close to 100,000 signatures in a matter of days), crowd-funded flashmobs, a digital billboard in Times Square urging Netflix to renew the show, and even a hunger strike launched outside of Netflix headquarters in Los Angeles. In my paper, I will explore the reasons for the unexpected popularity of an ambitious and mind-bending show about interdimensional travel, which despite its limited run has left its mark on the imagination of millions of viewers.</p> <p>The first season of <i>The OA</i> was released in December 2016, a month after the election of Donald Trump as the 45th U.S. President. While Marling and Batmanglij may not have created the show with Trump’s presidency in mind, what their American audience saw in it was an answer to and escape from the dystopia they discovered themselves in: migrant children locked in cages (similar to the characters of <i>The OA</i>), the rise of white nationalism, an all-out war on the rights of women, trans people and refugees, and political isolationism. Instead, the utopian vision</p>

	<p>of <i>The OA</i> celebrates community, empathy, collaboration and diversity. The show’s female protagonist, Original Angel (OA), offers female audiences a sense of true agency, as she navigates several dimensions and versions of entrapment by Hap and the “great evil” he represents. The broad appeal of <i>The OA</i> can best be explained by its spiritual as well as its sociopolitical subtext and its hopeful outlook, which has been cathartic for Americans suffering from despair about their country and its future.</p>
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<p>Atasoy, Emrah</p>	<p>“Hope in Speculative Literature: Utopia & Dystopia on the Screen”</p>
<p>Cappadocia University, Turkey</p>	<p>Speculative fiction offers a possibility to look beyond the reality and to imagine alternative world scenarios, which enables us an opportunity to question the existing social order through its potential to break existing boundaries of normality and imagine the impossible and the unknown. Therefore, the figures who have been traditionally accepted as “abnormal” or socially excluded are given a voice in the imagined or fantastic realms of speculative works. Speculative texts, which have become especially popular with the COVID-19 pandemic, have a strong potential to function as warnings through their worldbuilding capacity, as they draw particular attention to numerous problems and issues such as ecological crisis, climate crisis, population problem, and the use of technology.</p> <p>In this regard, utopia and dystopia, which can be categorized as the subgenres of speculative literature, have gained popularity both in academia and among the general public, as people are attracted more and more by dystopian futures and quests to discover utopian dreams. Dystopia, which the eminent utopian scholar Lyman Tower Sargent describes as “a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which the reader lived” is traditionally considered to be lacking in hope, as dystopian narratives illustrate nightmarish world scenarios but hope in dystopian fiction can be ascertained through a close reading of such relevant works (“The Three Faces,” 1994: 9). In this regard, the aim of this paper is to seek hope and utopian</p>

	impulse in speculative fiction through the discussion of selected utopian and/or dystopian works, especially critical dystopias, and their screen adaptations.
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Kristjansen, Thomas	“How the Brain Builds Fantasy Worlds”
Aarhus University, DK	<p>Fantasy fiction, by its nature, takes virtual and impossible worlds as its setting. These worlds are not construed in complete isolation. Rather, the narrative strategies of fantasy fiction mobilize the reading mind’s ability to intuit, to project, and to reflexively generate vast and meaningful expectations based even on scarce information. Fantasy imports concepts from a vast variety of extratextual sources in order to - paradoxically - create self-contained and coherent fictional worlds.</p> <p>This allows fantasy texts to economize in their amount of presented information. Some fantasy stories are deeply concerned with detailed, even naturalistic, descriptions of their world’s idiosyncrasies and minutiae. Others lean heavily into historical, cultural and/or mythological frames of reference. Both approaches (and everything in between) interface with brain structures that innately construes virtual scenarios by the shortest possible cognitive route.</p> <p>The evolved human brain is very adept at imagining hypothetical scenarios and outcomes from sparse information. This capacity carries over into the world of stories. In short, a text does not need to infinitely explain its own concepts and mechanisms. When fantasy fiction speaks of kings, rivers, and mountains, it appeals to the brain’s ability to carry over relevant information tacitly and effortlessly from outside the text. Through strategic language use, fantasy fiction can leverage considerable repositories of information rather than forcing itself to regressively and endlessly explain its own ontologies.</p> <p>The worlds of fantasy reward rather than frustrate the mind’s intuitive systems and inferential mechanisms. By the means of related mental capabilities, fantasy stories provide a powerful space for concept-play and reconfiguring of established</p>

	ontologies. With even modest cueing, reading minds are able to construe vast and reward virtual worlds of fantastical nature, and fantasy fiction appeals to this imaginative ability profoundly.
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Harkin, Stephanie	“Slaying the Wolf and Playing the Wolf: Reapproaching <i>The Last of Us</i> series”
Swinburne University of Technology, Australia	<p>Across the post-apocalyptic videogame series <i>The Last of Us</i> (2013-2020), heroine Ellie transforms from the smart-mouthed and curious fourteen-year-old to a hardened and animalistic avenger by the age of nineteen. This paper traces Ellie’s trajectory from hunted to hunter across the two main instalments of the series, identifying possible feminist uses of horror within the game medium. I situate the series’ engagement with the horror genre as a contemporary continuation and revision of the feminine instruction found in the darker traditions of fairy tales. I consider Ellie’s transformation from hunted to hunter within the context of the tale <i>Red Riding Hood</i> and its postmodern reworkings from Angela Carter’s <i>The Bloody Chamber</i> (1979). Ellie may be likened to the self-saving heroine of the tale’s early oral variations when she slays the pedophile David in a sequence reflective of the killer of horror cinema. The fairy tale heroine thus represents an early articulation of horror’s own Final Girl.</p> <p>The transgressive potential of the tale, however, is explored further in Carter’s work. Recalling Carter’s imaginings, Ellie’s transformation into the predatory wolf itself may be read as further amplifying her resistance to normative feminine conduct. In this way, horror and the fantastic become a powerful platform through which to disrupt the status-quo. Ellie’s perpetration of violence rewrites misogynistic gender scripts that allocate violence and corruption to men and moral altruism to women (Halberstam, 1993). Moreover, her queerness opens up interpretations for her violence and rage to occupy broader political imaginings. Her primal hunt reflects a forbidden pleasure, where the Othered subject violently refuses containment. The horror videogame space is a promising site for feminist resistance as it cultivates the girl player’s own transgressive performance (Jørgensen and Mortensen, 2019) and allows the safe rehearsal of difficult emotions like pain and rage (Schubart, 2018).</p>

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Austin, Izzie	<p>“The Power of Friendship: Community Building and Queer Solidarity in <i>Cloudpunk</i> and <i>Motor Crush</i>”</p>
Swinburne University of Technology, Australia	<p>The videogame <i>Cloudpunk</i> (ION LANDS 2020) and the comic series <i>Motor Crush</i> (Tarr et. Al. 2017-) both depict grim, hypercapitalist futures where hope can only be found in community building. In <i>Cloudpunk</i>, you play as Rania as she attempts to survive her first night as a driver for a semi-legal delivery company. The protagonist of <i>Motor Crush</i> is Domino Swift, a champion motorcycle racer who spends her nights competing in street races for Crush—an illegal performance enhancer and the only treatment for her rare medical condition. In both texts, characters are encouraged to succeed through individual hard work in jobs that leave them in precarious financial positions. Rania is perpetually one bad night away from homelessness, and Domino is a high-profile athlete whose chronic illness threatens her health, her career, and her freedom.</p> <p>In each text, the individualistic approach to success under a capitalistic system is shown, again and again, to fail the people who try to make it work. The only time characters in either text succeed is through community building and mutual aid. I will be basing my reading of <i>Cloudpunk</i> and <i>Motor Crush</i> on readings of José Esteban Muñoz’s <i>Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity</i>, and on J. Jack Halberstam’s <i>In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives</i>. Muñoz describes queerness as inherently utopian, a striving toward and longing for a future, and Halberstam theorizes “queer time” and “queer space”, in which people may gather together to live their lives in rejection of dominant expectations. A queer reading is especially useful to read <i>Cloudpunk</i> and <i>Motor Crush</i> and the relationships formed in them—they are both queer in the sense of sexuality (Domino is a lesbian, and <i>Cloudpunk</i> is full of transgender allegories), and queer as in outside of the expected (both protagonists build lives outside of what capitalism demands of them).</p>

Bouzó, Xiana Vázquez	<p>“From enmity to empathy: the evolution of dinosaurs in the <i>Jurassic Park</i> and <i>Jurassic World</i> sagas”</p>
University of Vigo, Spain	<p>The fantastic genre enjoys today a wide acclaim by all kinds of audiences, and in a large variety of audiovisual media. What used to be the terrain of a quite specific fandom is currently widespread and adapted to consumerist needs and mainstream aesthetics. But what is it that attracts these diverse audiences, and what is the relationship of the fantastic with the wider framework of contemporary culture?</p> <p>Dina Khapaeva (2017, 2020) has observed a celebratory trend of death since the 1990s in the West, influenced by French Theory’s critique of the subject of Humanism, together with the development of animal rights movements. According to her, both ideological frameworks share an antihumanism that has made human-hunting monsters more interesting than ever. Human-eating creatures like dinosaurs, vampires or zombies used to be represented as disgusting, scary antagonists, but they have now evolved to become the central character(s) of the narrative, whose thoughts the audience is now expected to identify with. She maintains that this commodification of death in fiction ultimately entailed a rejection of the relevance of human life. However, there is also an affirmative analysis of this “rejection”, developed by posthumanist theorists like Rosi Braidotti (2012) or Cary Wolfe (2003), which states that the questioning of human exceptionalism does not only not deny human rights, but also reinforces them.</p> <p>The <i>Jurassic Park</i> and <i>Jurassic World</i> sagas are an illustrative example of what Khapaeva maintains, and also of the analysis that could instead be done from a posthumanist, antispeciesist perspective which stands for a new understanding of the relationships between humans and nonhumans: giving voice to human-eating monsters can open a space where vulnerability, the ethics of care, and embodied compassion are discussed in relation to our position in the world, about which the fantastic has long been concerned with.</p>

<p>Tosca, Susana & Klastrup, Lisbeth (TWO PRESENTERS)</p>	<p>“Performing Dystopia: Transmedial World Memes”</p>
<p>Roskilde University, DK & IT University of Copenhagen, DK</p>	<p>This paper will discuss how fantastic transmedial worlds are used to project and share visions of dystopian futures become reality. We build upon Sargents view of dystopia as a worse version of contemporary society, a result of human misdeed (Sargent, 2013)</p> <p>We take our point of departure in our many years work on transmedial worlds which combines an aesthetic and a reception perspective (2019). Our definition of a transmedial world is that of an "abstract content system from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms." (2004). We can use the shared understanding of the transmedial world’s mythos, topos and ethos to analyze different media materializations and interrogate their audiences, who both intimately experience and collectively negotiate a sense of worldness.</p> <p>In this paper, we will focus on transmedial world memes (TMWM) and their role in audiences’ everyday lives, in order to explain how and why TMWMs are currently used as means to share and project visions and experiences of what is for many an experience of a dystopian future which has suddenly become reality due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. TMWMs are fast and sharable complex conducts of emotion and frustration, easily decodable by fellow networked fans, In our recent book (2019) we examined about 1500 memes, and analyzed how these memes gave insights into both the posters’ private worlds as well as serving as a commentary to the world outside, drawing on the shared knowledge of pivotal world scenes and characters. This resulted in a typology of different meme content categories and speech acts. We will present and expand on this analytical framework through a study of transmedial world memes related to the covid19-pandemic and the dystopian worlds they conjure up (see select examples below).</p>

Kostecka, Weronika	<p>“Children’s and young adult fantastic in the face of the ecological challenges: Motives of ecofeminism in 21st-century popular literature for young readers”</p>
University of Warsaw, Poland	<p>Ecofeminism, according to Karen Warren (1997, xi), is “the position that there are important connections between how one treats women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other.” The aim of this paper is to examine 21st-century children’s and young adult novels that apply and develop, but also deconstruct, the understanding of ecofeminism quoted above. As the fantastic seems to be the literature most often chosen by young readers – and therefore, it can be assumed that it has an important role in the transmission of cultural patterns – I will focus on diverse creations of heroines of pop-cultural novels created in such conventions as fantasy, science fiction, and speculative fiction. The key issues that I intend to analyze are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relationships between female characters’ emancipation and their ecological attitudes; - the ecofeminist ethics of care in literary heroines’ activities; - literary creations of women particularly associated with nature (understood as atmospheric phenomena, fauna, and flora) – witches, hermits, outlaws, etc.; - literary strategies of presenting relationships between women’s rights (and, in the wider meaning: human rights) and eco-justice. <p>My analysis will contain novels written by Anglo-Saxon as well as Polish, German, and Spanish authors. As a theoretical framework, I will apply concepts developed on the ground of feminism (R.S. Trites) – including the core ideas of ecofeminism (A. Curry, M.W. Copeland) and the notion of postfeminism (A. McRobbie) – in reference to literature for young readers.</p>

Webster, Guy	<p>“Weird Modernism’: Mapping the Relationship Between Weird Fiction and Modernist Affect”</p>

<p>The University of Melbourne, Australia</p>	<p>‘Have you a little T. S. Eliot in your home?’ writes H.P. Lovecraft in his biting satirical, <i>Wastepaper</i> (1923). The satire – the poem is a clear reference to Eliot’s <i>The Wasteland</i> (1923) – belies a literary relationship I look to examine in my research paper. Lovecraft is at the centre of the Fantastic mode of fiction known as ‘Weird Fiction’. As Lovecraft’s poem suggests, this mode of fiction is associated with an antagonism to Eliot and the experimental literary movement associated with Eliot - modernism. Yet, as Roger Luckhurst and Ib Johansen have shown (among others), the relationship between both modes of fiction is wrongfully relegated to antagonism alone. In my paper, I will identify the nuances which underpin the literary interests and conventions of High Modernism and Weird Fiction. With reference to Lovecraft and Virginia Woolf, among others, I propose a method of analysis that flips the pathway of influence often used in modernist studies. Rather than identify the modernist tendencies of Weird Fiction, I draw on the 1920s <i>Weird Tales</i> magazine to expose the ‘weirdness’ at the heart of Woolf’s writing. Such a mode of analysis – pre-empted by scholars like S.T. Joshi and James Machin – exposes the presence of speculative, fantastic, and Gothic influences on High Modernism by drawing on literary convention, as well as Affect. At the end of my paper, I will look to the legacies of modernist authors like Woolf to emphasise the importance of using the affective interests of these Fantastic modes of fiction to encounter modernist affect and analysis.</p>
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<p>Favaro, Marco</p>	<p>“Antiheroes in the Rubble: Exploring the possibility of heroism in the dystopias, from Alan Moore to <i>The Last of Us</i>”</p>
<p>Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Germany & University of Verona, Italy</p>	<p>What have in common V for Vendetta’s fascistic dictatorship, the US on the verge of a nuclear conflict of Watchmen and The Last of Us’ zombie apocalypse? They are dystopias even if of a different kind, catastrophic realities in which the society as we know it ceased to exist. We can consider them to explore the common characteristic of a dystopic world and analyse the hero’s role in these kinds of reality – if we can still talk about heroes, of course. In fact, both V of Alan Moore and Joel and Ellie created by Naughty Dog have strong heroics qualities, but they are also forced to decisions and actions that we would define</p>

	<p>“evil” in a normal situation. Typical of the antiheroic narrative, both universes put us in front of impossible moral choices.</p> <p>V for Vendetta and Watchmen’s choice is not random: Moore’s graphic novels are two of the best examples of (super)hero deconstruction. Through these works, it is possible to define the concept of hero and his role inside a dystopia. If the society collapsed and there is nothing left to save, what role does the hero have? Is it possible to be a hero in a condemned world?</p> <p>The answers to those questions will be confronted with the post-apocalyptic world of The Last of Us. The player in Joel and Ellie’s America is also forced to immoral actions to survive and go on in the game. However, to what end if there is nothing left to save? To survive a dystopia, the player is forced to adopt a new moral compass and confront himself with different and extreme worldviews. How long can we stare into the abyss without becoming monsters ourselves? Which actions can be justified to save humanity? Where can we trace a line between justice and revenge? These questions lead this analysis, which finds its philosophical bases, especially but not only, on Friedrich Nietzsche and Albert Camus’ works.</p>
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<p>Feldt, Laura</p>	<p>“Religion, magic, and fantastic beasts: world-construction and media aesthetics in <i>Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them</i>”</p>
<p>University of Southern Denmark, DK</p>	<p>This paper analyses and discusses the nexus of religion and media aesthetics (Plate 2017; Grieser/Johnston 2017) in <i>Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them</i> (Rowling/Yates 2016). The extension of Rowling’s immensely popular Potterverse with the publication of <i>Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them</i> in 2001, a fictive book embedded as textbook at Hogwarts School of Wizardry and Witchcraft, and David Yates’ film adaptation from 2016 provides interesting materials for a discussion of the use, role and functions of the fantastic (cf. Feldt 2012). The analysis focuses on world construction in the book and in the film, as well as on how traditional religion, magic, and the fantastic beasts are represented vis-à-vis each other in the film. The analysis shows that the film connects to a broader trend that portrays traditional religion as ossified and authoritative, whereas “fantastic” religion, that is, magic, fantastic beasts, and green spirituality (Taylor 2009) are represented as attractive (Feldt 2016a+b). Furthermore, the media aesthetics of the film support a blurring of boundaries</p>

	between worlds (Muggle/Magic/Monstrous worlds) within the film, between, the human and the non-human world, and between the diegetic and the afilmic world.
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Ndalianis, Angela	“Covid-19, pandemic media and the social imaginary”
Swinburne University of Technology, Australia	<p>This paper will examine the dialogue taking place between pandemic media – films, TV shows, social media – and human perception of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Google Trends, the month of March 2020 recorded sudden spikes in searches for films about pandemics and viral outbreaks. The most watched film on online platforms was the 2011 film <i>Contagion</i>, which is about a deadly viral pandemic inspired by the 2009-10 H1N1 Swine Flu Virus. <i>Contagion</i> rose from the 270th most-watched Warner Bros. film to the second most-watched in March of 2020.</p> <p><i>Contagion</i>, <i>28 Days Later</i>, <i>World War Z</i>, <i>The Walking Dead</i> and so many other examples are popular stories about pandemics that are embedded in the minds of millions of people. Their fantastic narratives raise questions about what happens to society – its ethics and morality, its political and social structures, its health services, its sense of community, its scientific community – during pandemics.</p> <p>In particular, the focus will be on how individuals living through Covid-19 drew upon this rich resource to create memes that drew on the fantastic fictions of pandemic media (especially zombie films/ TV) in order to make sense of – seriously, critically, comically – the pandemic. This paper will examine how the social imaginary that is rehearsed in fantastic fictions can be a powerful discursive form that reflects real-world social, moral and ethical issues. In broad terms, the social imaginary is how people make sense of their collective social life. It will be argued that, whether taking the form of films, social media exchanges, or memes, since the arrival of the coronavirus, pandemic media have taken centre stage in mediating collective life on a global scale, and have become embedded in and give expression to our social imaginary.</p>

Ilina, Olga	“Gender aspect in Modern Russian dystopia of Victor Pelevin”
University of Tsukuba, Japan	<p>In Russian science fiction, the ratio of male and female authors is such that the priority always belonged to men. When the 21st century came, nothing changed. Male Russian authors mainly write books on topics that are interesting primarily to men, and the main characters in these books are male in the most of cases. In this regard, the popular writer Victor Pelevin, known not only in Russia, but also abroad, takes an interesting position. In his several later dystopia novels, along with the main characters, women with an inclination to feminism appear, and Pelevin’s view of these feminized and independent women is highly correlated with the typical ideas of feminists in modern Russia. Often he portrays them with male attributes (“woman with balls”) or gives them typical male qualities (ruthlessness, cold calculation, cruelty), for which some critics accuse Pelevin of misogyny. If in his early novels readers could find positive images of independent and intelligent women, then in later works an increasingly negative image of the “sinister” masculine feminist appears. Critics have traditionally called Pelevin a “translator” of the mindsets that prevail in modern Russia, implying that every year he writes a novel in which he postulates and reinterprets the events of this year in a postmodern way. In this sense his observations are of value to the researchers of modern mass culture, since they provide them with the most relevant material.</p> <p>In this presentation, I am going to analyze the heroines from the two late works of V. Pelevin (“iPhuck 10” (2017) and “Secret Views of Mount Fuji” (2018)) in order to create a portrait of the modern Russian emancipated woman as she appears to Pelevin.</p>

Wille, Jakob & Steijn, Arthur	“Flash Forward – Story World and Speculative Design teaching”
The Royal Danish Academy– Architecture, Design, Conservation, DK	<p>Story World Building or the creation of imaginary worlds is mostly thought of in the context of the making and designing of fictional worlds especially within the context of visual media entertainment and trans media franchises. In addition, the idea of story worlds is most often related to genres of fiction as fantasy and science fiction. The potential of story world building however reaches beyond media entertainment and fiction and touches on present design methodologies or</p>

approaches addressing (so-called) real-life design problems. A way to examine possible upcoming real-life problems in the design world is through speculative and/or scenario design. This paper investigates the intersection between story world building and speculative design (and science fiction and design fiction) in relation to a series of artistic experiments conducted with students of Visual Design at the Royal Danish Academy in 2020-21. The experiments were part of an artistic research project and workshop based course in story world, installation and interaction design, entitled Flash Forward. At the Flash Forward workshop phenomena as design fiction and diegetic prototyping was discussed and additionally story world and speculative design methods was used in order to produce a series of interactive prototypes exhibited at the Academy. This paper discusses the methods used at the workshop and the resulting prototypes in order to show the potential in science fiction and story world building methods in and outside the world of media entertainment.