

Fandom, fan fiction and the creative mind
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Table of contents

Introduction.....	2
1. From fanzine to online-fiction, a short history of modern fandom.....	5
1.1 Early fandom, the 1930's.....	5
1.2 The start of media fandom, the 1960's and 1970's.....	6
1.3 Spreading of media fandom and crossover, the 1980's.....	7
1.4 Fandom and the rise of the internet, online in the 1990's towards the new millennium.....	9
1.5 The new millenium, fandom's postmodern moment.....	10
2. Fan fiction, what is it all about?.....	13
2.1 fan fiction: the professional and the fan.....	13
2.2 fan fiction: archontic literature.....	14
2.3 So, fan fiction, what is it? A concrete example.....	15
2.4 Genre and textual poaching: the world of the fanfic-writer.....	17
3. Creativity.....	21
3.1 The creative mind: Margaret Boden.....	22
3.2 Creative fandom : motivation, attention and the 'novel' within fan fiction.....	26
4. Methodology.....	28
4.1 Data gathering and research questions.....	28
4.2 The analysed cult: Megami Tensei.....	29
4.3 Analysis.....	31
4.3.1 analysis of the formal elements.....	31
4.3.2 comparison of the analysis with the original artefact.....	34
4.3.3 establishing the fanfic's creativity.....	34
4.4 Sample analysis: A Dark Trial.....	35
5. Results.....	45
5.1 The fanfic as a stand-alone story.....	46
5.2 The fanfic as archontic literature.....	49
6. Conclusions and discussion.....	53
7. Thank you.....	57
References.....	58
Appendix I: Analysed fanfics.....	60
Appendix II: A Dark Trial + analysis.....	61
Appendix III: The Bel for Whom The Throne Tolls + analysis.....	71

Introduction

William Shatner, the actor who's portrayal of the character of James T. Kirk in the Star Trek TV-series became a cultural icon once he told his fans to “get a life”(Jenkins, 1992). He got sick of fans who kept on living out their fandom as an integral part of their daily life. “Fans”, they were called, and the object of their fandom was the Star Trek universe.

They may not always dress up as their favourite character from Star Trek or speak the Klingon language¹ all day but that doesn't mean they abandon their fandom for parts of the day. Being a fan means being able to fall back onto familiarity when one needs it, whenever one needs it. Indeed, fandom is no laughing matter at all, for some people being a fan is just being who they are.

Being a “fan” does not equal being a “mindless consumer”. Being a fan means being “fanatic”, which implicitly translates to something more than merely consuming something of, or related to the object of their fandom. They actually live out their fandom and in the process, they create.

How they create and the process of creation itself will be explained in chapters 1, 2 and 3. But why exactly is creation and the act of creativity so interesting? The answer is pretty simple: we want to be surprised whenever we experience art. The surprising factor comes from the 'novel' in art, and something 'novel' is most of the time a product of creativity. Creativity is not something that is easy to define but somehow, when we let ourselves be surprised when experiencing works of art, we often attribute this surprise to the creativity within a work of art.

This research focuses on that problem. I want to find out if it is possible to say that something is creative or not, and I want to do this by analysing fan fiction. But why fan fiction? After all, even if people are familiar with a cultural niche that is inherent to most fandoms, most people will likely deny fan fiction certain creative attributes. For a lot of these people fan fiction is nothing more than a derivative, as “something less” than the original artefact. As a fan, I would defend fan fiction by use of the honest claim that I am often surprised by works of fan fiction, and thus, a certain element of creativity could be present in those works. As a researcher, this little bit of introspection was enough to see this as one of the main reasons to do this study.

Many questions boiled up along the way. One question I asked myself before starting, and this question became fundamental for this study. This question is:

¹ Klingon Language is a fictional language designed for the Klingon race of extra-terrestrials as they appear on Star Trek. The language became enormously popular with Star Trek fans and nowadays consists of an established alphabet and ...

To what extent can a work of fan fiction be called 'creative'?

With this question, I started my research. I had to answer many others to be able to answer this particular question. Questions like: what is creativity? How does creativity work? (see chapter 3). What is fan fiction? (see chapter 1). What constitutes a fan? (see chapter 2). Can a “derivative” be considered creative? (see chapter 2.2). Especially the last question, which a lot of people will answer straight away with a strict “no”, served as fuel to really dive into fan fiction culture in order to discover if it really is just a derivative. I found out that there is another way of looking at fan fiction, one that does justice to everyone involved and the work they produce in whatever fandom they reside in. Instead of a derivative, I used Jacques Derrida's concept of a text being an archive: always open, and always open to changes (1995). This concept, the concept of *archontic literature*, is discussed in chapter 2.2. This concept helped me to solve the problem of fan fiction being somehow “less” to the source material on which it is based. However, the question of creativity remained, whether we see literature as being of an archontic nature or not, that's why I formulated another question:

If fan fiction establishes an entry or extension to an already existing entry in an archive, can the story in question be called creative?

When asking myself this question I hadn't really thought about a method to establish whether a story was creative or not, a lot of stories just *seemed* creative to me. This was probably the best reason for doing this research, to see if my hunch was right and see if fan fiction could be considered creative. Important to note though, is that at all times I tried to be as objective towards my data as possible, even though a lot of claims made during the analyses could be considered subjective. After all, analysis is and remains always subjective, and truth in interpretation is in the eye of the beholder. In other words, I tried to be as honest as possible by treating all data from a neutral standpoint and analysing data on its own merits, no matter how much I knew about the artefact or that which was told in the stories I analysed. My research questions and productive science drove this study, not my personal interest in fan fiction.

And so I started reading on creativity, on fiction, on fandoms, on analysing stories and so on. The result of this work you now hold in your hands. This work is born out of a curiosity towards fans and their fandom, curiosity towards creativity and curiosity towards fans creatively extending

their fandom through the realm of fiction. I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed analysing fan fiction as well as writing this research report.

1. From fanzine to online-fiction, a short history of modern fandom

1.1 Early fandom, the 1930's

Fandom has its origins in sports and theatre, where certain people, called 'fans', would cheer on and support their favourite team, athlete or actor or actress rather than the sport or the play itself (Jenkins, 1992). Fandom as is seen nowadays is said to originate in Hugo Gernsback's science fiction magazine *Amazing Stories* (1926). On the letters page of this magazine, readers of the magazine could talk to the editor and also talk to other readers. Also, the addresses of the readers were printed under the letters, so that readers could contact each other.

From this, fans began to gather and organize themselves. One of the first things that is mainly associated with fandom is the so-called fanzine, fan-created magazines with a certain fandom as its main subject. Stephen Perkins on Zinebook.com claims that *The Comet* is generally seen as the first fanzine to see the light of day. The first issue was printed in 1930 by the Chicago-based Science Correspondence Club. Gradually, more and more fans began to organize and with it, so did the number of fanzines and subjects grow.

In the late 1930's the first conventions were held and this can be seen as the real start of modern fandom, something that encompasses the written word. Perkins notes three points concerning fanzines that are of relevance to fandom this day and age:

- *Fanzines are uncommercial, nonprofessional and irregular small run publications which have taken advantage of the cheapest and most accessible technologies in any given period, i.e. mimeography, spirit duplicating (ditto) and xerography, as well as more traditional printing methods such as offset printing.*
- *Fanzines are published by and for special interest groups and they provide a physical link between these communities and, equally importantly they provide a place for networking and exchange within this community. The inclusion of correspondents' and contributors' addresses establishes the fanzine as an 'open system', and one in which interaction and reader involvement is essential.*
- *The distribution of fanzines takes place principally within the community that generated it (small print runs and the uncommercial ethos mitigating against wider circulation). Aside from subscribers and contributors, editors frequently adopt a fairly idiosyncratic approach to who receives copies, with some fanzines not for sale and some for exchange only.*

(Perkins, S. [not dated]. *Science Fiction Fanzines*. The zine and e-zine resourceguide)²

2 Retrieved from <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/perkins/perkins2.html>

Here we already see a certain attitude of the editors towards the object of their fandom and their fellow-fans. Fanzines were not born out of the idea to get as many people “aboard”, to get as many readers for the fanzine so that the group of fans would grow. No, the main reason behind the somewhat hostile attitude of editors of fanzines is that they already acknowledged their fandom as an established fact: these fanzines were written for people who were already fan themselves. Sure, if other people got interested in the object of their fandom then that's great but most fanzines were not written for recruitment, but for enjoyment and debate. In order to enjoy the fanzine and enter the discussions hold within fanzines, one had to be a fan already or at least know the ins and outs of (aspects of) the subjects spoken of in fanzines.

1.2 The start of media fandom, the 1960's and 1970's

Fans and their fandoms as it exists today might have started in the 1930's but media fandom, fandom which centers around a particular piece of media instead of encompassing a whole genre like science fiction, did not arise until the 1960's. *Star Trek* (1966-1969) is often cited as the first media fandom. Up until today it has one of the strongest followings in the world. But *Star Trek* wasn't the first series that attracted a large group of people. In her Phd. dissertation (2001), Cynthia Walker claims that *The Man From U.N.C.L.E* (1964-1968), a television series having strong ties with the science fiction community³, created the first real media fandom. She points out that many *Star Trek*-fans previously embraced *The Man From U.N.C.L.E*. so both series share at least partially the same audience, and that audience has already been described as 'fanatic' in a memo from the NBC research department to the vice president of programming, Mort Werner:

"... not just because they dislike other programs that are on ...[but] because they are fans, fanatics... They talk about the program with other fans and go beyond that: they proselytize, they want to convert non-viewers!"

(J. Burns, personal communication, February 5, 1965)⁴

3 Several well-known science fiction writers such as Harlan Ellison rewrote scripts from the series. Also, paperback tie-ins were created that were written by well known writers such as Joan Hunter Holly, Robert Coulson and David McDaniel.

4 Walker, C.W. [not dated]. *The Gun as Star and the "U.N.C.L.E. Special"*. Retrieved from <http://www.manfromuncle.org/gun.htm>

In the fanzines created by these 'fanatics', a lot of different types and genres of fanzines can be distinguished. The German-American psychiatrist Fredric Wertham summed up a few genres in his book *The World of Fanzines* (1973) including *satirezine*, *humorzine*, *parody fanzine*, *reviewzine*, *rockzine*, *artzine*, *Tolkeinzie*, *articlezine*, *newszine*, *strip zine*, *communicationszine* and so on.

As already mentioned, *Star Trek* is the series that is mostly associated with fandom nowadays. The first run of the original TV-series ran from 1966 and ended abruptly in 1969. These series spawned a huge following and the diversity in fiction mirrored this growth:

“From the start, Star Trek fans produced not simply the critical discussion typical of science fiction fandom but creative responses to their favourite show. From the first, Star Trek zines included fan art – poems, songs, stories, drawings, teleplays [...] Indeed, a creative Trek culture rapidly developed through the proliferation of fanzines like Spockanalia, ST-Phile, T-Negative, and Warp Nine: A Star Trek Chronicle.”

(Coppa, 2006)

In 1975, *“Star Trek” Lives!* (Lichtenberg et al.) was published, a book dedicated to the history of early *Star Trek* fandom. Although the book describes all aspects of fandom, including fanzine culture and early conventions, it also includes a chapter which focusses on fan fiction, This book is the earliest traceable venture into serious examination of fan fiction as literature. As Coppa mentions: *“The authors of “Star Trek” Lives! don't think these stories are important as examples of “fan communication” but for what they're saying in themselves, as stories in “a whole new genre of science fiction””*. (Coppa, 2006).

1.3 Spreading of media fandom and crossover, the 1980's

The 1980's are the years where media fandom really took off. Some might call it 'geek culture', where fans not only explored the numerous possibilities within space exploration through *Star Trek*-fandom. Instead, they broadened their interests by turning to media artefacts within different genres. This interest is proven by the success of blockbuster movies like Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner*

(1982) and Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones*-trilogy (1981/1984/1989) and television series like *Hill Street Blues* (1981-1987) and *Cagney and Lacey* (1982-1988) through the fandoms these artefacts gained. This widened interest had much to do with the fact that more complex narrative and characterization became a household trend in media. Where in the 1960's and 70's a lot of narrative and characterization was deepened by the fans themselves (through discussions in fanzines and on conventions, as well as through fan fiction), in the 1980's broad story arcs and deeper characterization was implemented in the media artefacts themselves:

“...television series like *Hill Street Blues* and *Cagney and Lacey* introduced more complex narrative arcs and characterization issues, changing the ways fan fiction writers thought about television, and leading to what longtime fan Jessica Ross calls “a non-genre fandom explosion – everything became zineable”

(personal communication, June 21, 2005, in: Coppa: 2006)

As “*everything became zineable*”, different media artefacts were paired by the fans. This is called *crossover*; a genre which is still one of the most popular genres in fan fiction. The crossover-genre exists since the start of media fandom⁵ but really took off when other artefacts came to play a role in fandom culture as a whole, and with the broadening of media fandom in the 1980's, this was exactly what was happening.

Not only a crossing of multiple artefacts into one piece of fan fiction took place, also a more thorough exploration of well-known (at least by fans) relationships between characters in the source material was something that was and is extensively explored in fan fiction. One of the most popular genres in this regard is K&S- or *friendship*-fiction, and K/S- or *slash*-fiction⁶. Where K&S explores a non-sexual friendship between characters, K/S is the erotic variant. While K&S has always been around since fan fiction arose, K/S is thought to originate from a story in the third issue of the fanzine *Grup*, namely Diane Marchant's “*A Fragment Out of Time*” (*Grup* #3, 1974):

5 Coppa notes that *Star Trek/Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Crossover fiction exists as early as 1979, but I personally find it highly unlikely that there was no crossover fan fiction before, since both series shared much of the same audience, an audience that founded many zines and were very active within their fandom.

6 K/S stands for Kirk and Spock, indicating a same-sex relationship between the two *Star Trek* characters.

“...which depicted two nameless people (one male, one whose gender was not revealed) making love; Marchant acknowledged in the next issue of *Grup* that she intended these characters to be Kirk and Spock.”

(Coppa, 2006)

The several genres and crossovers that that entered media fandom broadened fan-culture, but polluted it at the same time. There were so many fanzines covering so many topics that a decline was almost inevitable, simply because a fan wouldn't know what fanzine would cover the subject of his or her interests. The introduction of Usenet and later the Internet in the 1990's remedied these problems by introducing several technologies like mailinglists, messageboards and fan fiction archives. This enabled fans to better filter out what they where searching for. However, this would also drastically change the realm of fandom.

1.4 Fandom and the rise of the internet, online in the 1990's towards the new millennium

Usenet is seen by most people as the Internet's predecessor⁷ and in several ways, this holds true. Usenet was a system which was used to exchange messages. Each interest had an own Usenet-group, for example *Alt.tv.twinpeaks* was a Usenet-group dedicated to the TV-series *Twin Peaks* while *Alt.sex.fetish.startrek* was a group dedicated to erotic fiction focussed around *Star Trek* characters. Within these groups, people could discuss their interests, exchange messages, organize meetings, and exchange files. They could also join mailinglists, by which all subscribers would regularly receive news about their collective interest.

Usenet at the end of the 1980's and early 1990's meant a good haven for every fandom. Like mentioned earlier, at the end of the 1980's, a lot of fandoms got polluted, simply because there was too much of everything to keep up with for the dedicated fan: too much fanzines, too much genres, too much crossovers, too much conventions, too much fans.... The Usenet-groups formed a good

⁷ A personal note: although (academic) literature mostly recall Usenet, its main rival here in the Netherlands was the BBS or Bulletin Board System. Although Usenet has more in common (in looks) with the way internet forums work today (as a matter of fact, one can still (2011) enter Usenet-like archives as well as enter Usenet-like discussions through Google Groups) than the BBS system, it is important to note that both systems were used mainly for the same purpose: to socialise and to exchange information and files.

way of storing every piece of information that was normally written in fanzines. In other words, Usenet-groups became the ultimate archive for every fandom out there.

Next to an archival function, there is globalisation factor of online fandom. Fans from all over the world could access and interact on Usenet-groups:

“Formerly, most fans had been mentored by older fans or had attended a convention in order to meet others who shared their particular obsession. Now people could just google their favourite show, join the available lists, or start reading fiction – even erotic fiction – on a public online archive.”

(Coppa, 2006)

No longer were constraints like language (to a certain extend of course, within online Usenet-groups English was the main language so at least a rudimentary knowledge of the English language was necessary) and borders a problem. It's safe to assume that the shift towards online fandom helped to increase audiences greatly.

Also, new types of media made the transition online. Or, to put it more accurately, more types of media gained a wider audience through online technologies. Not only (science fiction) TV-shows and movies were the artefact of online fandom, also anime, manga, videogames and comics gained their own momentum within the archives of Usenet. All these different types of media already had their own history and following (and by that, also their own history of fandom), but because of the wide exposure online archives gave these media, many who were previously not aware of these media or only had a slight interest in them before, could join the conversation and creation within the fan communities online.

1.5 The new millenium, fandom's postmodern moment

We now live in 'the age of the internet', and significant portions of our lives is spent online. This holds true for work, but also for free time and the way people carry out their fandom. While the mailinglists are disappearing in a rapid pace, other technologies come into being filling the gap. For

example, social media websites like Facebook.com give people more options of interacting with each other on the subject of their fandom. Blogging is another example of how people personalize their experiences with their fandom, be it by creating fan fiction, posting news stories etc..

Coppa (2006) argues that “*media fandom may now be bigger, louder, less defined, and more exciting than it's ever been*” and that this is “*fandoms postmodern moment, when the rules are “there ain't no rules” and traditions are meant to be broken*”. If we look at the way early fandom (from the 1960's up to the late 1980's) developed there is a pattern where eventually the growth of media fandom destroyed itself. The amount of media fandoms and the fanzines and conventions attached to these fandoms was so enormous, that it was almost unthinkable for new fans to enter these fandoms. The archival function of the internet (most websites dedicated to a certain fandom present a clear navigation to its contents) together with the introduction of improved search engines (which enabled people to search exactly for what they were looking for) made it so much easier to enjoy their fandom, but also to contribute and create to communities dedicated to a fandom.

Websites like Fanfiction.net, dedicated to the creation and posting of every kind of fan fiction, and Deviantart.com, dedicated, but not solely, to graphical art of media artefacts enable people to share their creativity with the world in the easiest way thinkable. It is, like already mentioned, a perfect example of the way the internet archives its own contents while at the same way being completely open and searchable for users to find whatever it is that they are looking for.

Of course, these websites would not exist if it wasn't for the input of its users. Users shape these sites by the content they themselves create. Now more then ever, we see a participatory culture blossoming, where users take matters into their own hands; users who shape their media experiences the way they deem appropriate. Henry Jenkins, a director of the Comparative Media Studies degree program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1993 to 2009 is one of the first scholars to closely examine the role of the user within digital contents. In his book *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers, Exploring Participatory Culture* (Jenkins, 2006) he explores the way users approach and use media content. He argues that the participatory culture “*is taking shape at the intersection between three trends:*

1. *New tool and technologies enable consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content;*
2. *a range of subcultures promote Do-It-Yourself (DIY) media production, a discourse that shapes how consumers have deployed those technologies; and*

3. *economic trends favoring the horizontally integrated media conglomerates encourage the flow of images, ideas, and narratives across multiple media channels and demand more active modes of spectatorship.*

(Jenkins, 2006)

The first trend is one which seems to be the “meat” of the new way fandom culture operates, if we see the internet and all of its functions as tools of new technologies. The second trend is one which has always been the way how fandom operates. After all, a fandom is created by the fans and it exists by their rules (to a certain extent, a media conglomerate can of course facilitate a fandom, for example, by creating fan clubs and organise fan gatherings). The third trend is probably the most important. It implicitly holds the idea of “convergence”, a coming together of different streams of media:

“A process called the “convergence of modes” is blurring the lines between media, even between point-to-point communications, such as the post, telephone and telegraph, and mass communications, such as the press, radio and television. A single physical means – be it wires, cables or airwaves – may carry services that in the past were provided in separate ways. Conversely, a service that was provided in the past by any one medium – be it broadcasting, the press or telephony – can now be provided in several different physical ways. So the one-on-one relationship that used to exist between a medium and its use is eroding.”

(Pool, 1983)

A combination of new tools and technologies together with the convergence of media, radically changed the way in how fans lived out their fandom. The internet is rapidly becoming a one-way stop for everything a fan could desire, be it to socialize with other fans through social networks or to relive classic moments of their favourite TV-series (through webservices like Youtube.com). And it doesn't stop there. I already mentioned websites like Fanfiction.net and Deviantart.com. These websites encourage people to get creative and produce content themselves through easy-to-navigate user-interfaces. Then it's easy to see why fan fiction became so popular: because people were given the option to actually produce and distribute content.

2. Fan fiction, what is it all about?

According to the Oxford dictionary, to be a fan, means to be “a person who has a strong interest in or admiration for a particular sport, art form, or famous person”.⁸ I would like to add the term “artefact” to this description, a term already used a few times throughout the previous chapter. An artefact is an object made by humans. I will use this term to describe the original work on which works of fan fiction are based.

2.1 fan fiction: the professional and the fan

Fan fiction is often described as a derivative of a certain media artefact. This means that there has to be a source-text (if we see every artefact as text, be it literature, TV-shows, videogames etcetera) which creates a response, fan fiction. This is nothing new and has been happening since mankind began creating artefacts. Let me give an example of how this works. One of the great novels of China, *Journey to the West*,⁹ has been re-written and reworked many times. Although its original writer is thought to be Wu Ch'eng-en, a Chinese writer and poet who lived under the Ming-dynasty in 16th century China, scholars are still not sure if he is the original author since it was published anonymously. The story describes the pilgrimage of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang to India, to obtain certain sūtras, holy scriptures of the Buddhist religion. The story itself has a background in old Chinese folktales and still resonates with people today by the timeless imagination of exciting adventures it presents, but also because it can be read in several ways. It can be read as an “ordinary” adventure, as a spiritual journey to enlightenment or as an allegory. Through the centuries, this story has been re-imagined¹⁰ many times by different authors. From very tight translations that are based on the original novel, for example the abridged novel *Monkey: a Folk-tale of China* by Arthur Waley (1942) to contemporary videogames like *Enslaved: Odyssey to the West* (Namco-Bandai, 2010).

But can we take the above example of re-imaginings of *Journey to the West* and consider them a form of fan fiction? Not really, because if this was the case then every re-imagination could be regarded a form of fan fiction. What I would like to propose is a dividing line between the

⁸ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/>, accessed on 28 April 2011

⁹ Available online as part of the Gutenberg Project: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23962>

¹⁰ One could also call them remakes, if the new product is build from the ground up but is still based on an earlier artefact, or we could even call them intertextual works, if we see the works as texts.

professional and the fan. Re-imaginings might be born out of fandom, an intense appreciation of an original artefact, but there is a difference in the goals set by authors. In that sense, fan fiction is first and foremost written for the fans, and not for a market of consumers, as is the case with re-imaginings like the examples of *Journey to the West* mentioned above. Sure, these re-imaginings might be marketed as a “catering for the fans”, but are meant to draw an audience as big as possible. The difference is clear: whereas re-imaginings are aimed at a market with a general audience, fan fiction is aimed at a fandom and its fans.

2.2 fan fiction: archontic literature

But what is fan fiction then, if it isn't a re-imagining? Abigail Derecho (2006) proposes an interesting way of approaching fan fiction. She calls the type of writing associated with fan fiction *archontic*. The word *archontic* is based on the idea of texts being archives. It is taken from Jacques Derrida's work *Archive fever* (1995) in which he claims that:

“By incorporating the knowledge deployed in reference to it, the archive augments itself, engrosses itself, it gains in auctoritas. But in the same stroke it loses the absolute and meta-textual authority it might claim to have. One will never be able to objectivize it with no remainder. The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. I opens out of the future.”

(Derrida, 1995)

I think *archontic* is the most accurate description of what fan fiction means in relation to the original artefact. This is because, if we see the original work as an archive, we can approach fan fiction as an entry to this archive. Fan fiction is often described as a “derivative”. This description has several connotations that go along with it. These connotations, whether they are negative or positive, present a non-neutral starting point in a debate about fan fiction. Saying that something is a “derivative” implies that it has lost something of the original work on which it is based in the process of coming into existence, and that it is somehow inferior to the original. By describing texts as archives, we don't have to deal with these connotations but instead see the text as an entry to an open archive with the original artefact as the basis for this same archive.

So now we have two aspects of fan fiction covered:

- Fan fiction is done by the *fan* for the greater good of his or her *fandom*, as opposed to other intertextual re-imaginings which are done by *professionals* for a *general audience*.
- Fan fiction is *archontic* literature, which means that a work of fan fiction contributes to the archive established by the original work or artefact on which the fiction is based.

2.3 So, fan fiction, what is it? A concrete example

Up until now, I have spoken mainly about fan fiction as something which is closely related to fandom and which is created by fans. I also spoke about it being part of an archive established by an artefact, the original work on which the fan fiction is based. But we still don't know what fan fiction really is, how it is created, what rules and habits constitute a general work of fan fiction and so on. This poses a problem because, how can we talk about fan fiction, draw conclusions on it (by establishing it as *archontic* literature) and not giving concrete examples about what it actually is? So to show what is considered typical fan fiction I will present here a small sample.

The following story, a *fanfic*¹¹ based on George Orwell's *1984* called “*An alternet ending*” is written by C. Banker, a member of fanfiction.net, one of the biggest on-line communities dedicated to fan fiction.¹² The story itself is pretty short, that is why I chose to print it here in full instead of adding it as an appendix.

11 For clarity, I will use the term *fanfic* to indicate a particular story of fan fiction.

12 I will elaborate more on fanfiction.net in chapter 4.

Summary: What if Winston decided to stand up and fight at the end instead of just lying down and taking it.

Winston's body was racked with pain from the previous beating but his mind was still resisting. He knew in his heart that this was wrong and so his anger turned to his strength to push on and instead of taking the beating the following day he would strike back at them with full force. Threw his anger he ignored the pain and the betrayal. His eyes hardened to a light stone like blue and he was going to fight.

When the thought officers came to get him in his cell he just smiled at them when one tried to wipe that smirk off of his face. The only thought going threw his mind was 'Either now or never.' He caught the hand as it sailed towards his face and struck back with vengeance at his tormentors left temple. A sickening crunch reverberated around the cell as the officer fell over dead. Winston's eyes got dark as the second officer tried to pull out his taster to stop him dead in his tracks but he was too slow and before the officer knew it he was on the ground getting the shit beat out of him. With one officer dead and the other knocked out Winston took their clothing and went incognito out of the ministry of secrets.

Numerous officers tried to stop them but they meant the same fate as all of the others stopped dead with a bullet in the head. A single thought was going threw his mind 'When the people are afraid of the government that is tyranny and this is tyranny.' Many other people saw what he was doing and some decided to join him as they fought to the officials palaces ransacking and killing all that big brother was. Finally they made it to the center of the city and stormed the main buricratic building. The cowered that was big brother was under his desk whimpering like a little baby for all of this to stop. Winston just said to him "You disgust me." Everyone that was there agrees that Winston was the hero now that Big Brother and all of his corrupt government were finally over.

It has been twenty years since the rebellion and the people have not been happier, light seems to have returned to the streets and I am happy that Winston made that difference. Things would be a lot different if he did not stand up and fight to become the first president of a new order on that the government is afraid of the people.

A government can only go so far before the people decide enough is enough and revolt against the government. For we hold theses truths to be self-evident...

Text 1: An alturnet Ending, fanfiction.net,
http://www.fanfiction.net/s/6377703/1/An_balturnet_b_ending

The first thing we notice when we read the story is a certain freedom with the source material. What is presented here is an alternative ending to George Orwell's novel *1984* (1949). In the original story, the protagonist Winston Smith is resisting the party doctrine of superstate Oceania through his journals, something that is highly offensive and will be answered with the death penalty. He starts a love affair with Julia, thinking the Thought Police, Oceania's intelligence on people who might challenge authority, isn't aware of his rebellion and his affair, but they knew about this all along. When Winston and Julia get caught, Winston is severely beaten and tortured after which he is to be rehabilitated for reintegration into Oceania's society.

The story above takes place during the torture-sessions Winston had to endure. Instead of taking the beatings, Winston stands up and defends himself from the beatings the Thought Officers would give him. He strikes them down, and rampages out of the Ministry of Secrets to establish a new order where the government is afraid of the people.

First of all, it is not clear if Banker read the original story correct. For example, there is no Ministry of Secrets. The Ministry where Winston is held in the original story is thought to be (by

Winston himself) the Ministry of Love, one of the four ministries in Oceania. Also, it would be almost impossible for Winston to escape the ministry for several reasons: he wasn't aware of how the ministry was structured and therefore couldn't possibly coordinate a successful escape, telescreens would be able to see him trying to dress up incognito and see through his ruse, et cetera. However, in fan fiction, what is and what is not possible does not matter. This is a so-called *AU*¹³-fanfic, describing something that does not happen in the original story. Dan A. explains his motivation for writing this alternative ending at the beginning of his fanfic:

“Hey guys I have posted a little story to keep you busy, I just finished reading 1984, and good book in itself but the ending was something to be desired for. I honestly hope you can read 1984 by George Orwell. Well you know the drill I do not own anything of George Orwell except for the printed copies of Animal Farm and 1984.”

(Banker, C., 2010)

Note that he appeals to the knowledge of his audience when disclaiming the copyrights of Orwell's heritage. This is an example of how fan fiction is primarily written by fans for fans. Also, the lack of professionalism (without judging its value) shows in the writing. Spelling mistakes are abundant throughout the text and there are several other mistakes that show the story is written by a fan, more than a “professional”.

2.4 Genre and textual poaching: the world of the fanfic-writer

It should be clear by now that fan fiction has a pretty turbulent history leading up to the point where we are now. I would like to quote Coppa (2006) again: “*media fandom may now be bigger, louder, less defined, and more exciting than it's ever been*” and that this is “*fandoms postmodern moment, when the rules are “there ain't no rules*”. It certainly seems that there are no rules but somebody unbeknownst to the world of fan fiction is only one query on Google away of being totally dazzled by the amount of terms and habits fan fiction-writers seem to employ. In my opinion, these employed terms count as rules in a way: every seasoned fanfic-writer knows what you mean when you say you enjoy “*Slash fic without Gary Stu characters the most*”. To gain some insight into the broad world of fan fiction, I like to present a small list of genres and terms in the table below:

13 Short for *Alternative Universe*. See 2.4 *Genre and textual poaching: the world of the fanfic-writer* for more information on this genre.

Gen	<i>Gen</i> is short for <i>General</i> . These stories do not focus on pairings of characters in the story. Pairings are possible, but are considered a part of the story, and not the plot.
Het	<i>Het</i> is short for <i>Heterosexual</i> . In these stories, relationships between characters are of a heterosexual nature.
Slash	<i>Slash</i> (sometimes abbreviated with '/') are stories revolving around same-sex relationships between the characters in the story.
AU	<i>Alternative Universe</i> are the sort of stories with a “what if” premise. Several elements of the original artefact are replaced or did not happen at all by which this alternative universe comes into existence.
Crossover	<i>Crossover</i> is a genre in which two or more different artefacts form the basis of the fanfic. For example. A <i>Starsky & Hutch/Starrek</i> fanfic.
PWP	<i>PWP</i> stands for <i>Porn Without Plot</i> and is just that: a porn story with no plot at all. Its existence is only justified by the desire of fanfic-writers to portray a pornographic relationship within the universe of an artefact.
Mary Sue/Gary Stu	<i>Mary Sue</i> is the female portrayal of the “perfect” character. <i>Gary Stu</i> is the male variant. Its main purpose is a wish-fulfilment fantasy by the person who wrote the fanfic. These characters are most of the time fan-created and not part of the original <i>canon</i> of the artefact. However, there are exceptions. For example, James Bond is a typical <i>Gary Stu</i> -character with no noticeable flaws.
Crack	<i>Crack</i> is the term to describe stories that are so bizarre and absurd that they seem to be written on drugs and/or can only be understood when reading them while on drugs. For example, a <i>Harry Potter</i> -fanfic where all the characters are speaking in rhyme would be bizarre enough to be categorized under <i>crack</i> .
Bodyswap/Genderswap	<i>Bodyswap</i> describes stories where characters literally swap bodies. <i>Genderswap</i> is the genre of stories where characters literally swap gender, so boys become girls et cetera.
Dark	<i>Dark</i> is the genre where stories enter a more “mature” space. It involves such topics as death, rape, torture et cetera. Horror-stories are also a part of this genre.
Drabbles	<i>Drabbles</i> is the name given to short fanfics. <i>Drabbles</i> used to describe fanfics of 100 words or less, but fanfics of a 1000 words or less are nowadays also seen as <i>Drabbles</i> .

Table 1: Main genres of fan fiction, mostly based on the list as printed on <http://hubpages.com/hub/fanfiction>, accessed on May 4, 2011

The list of genres in Table 1 is nowhere near complete. There are many subgenres and fanfic-writers regularly use elements of multiple genres into one story. It would be too much to list every genre here. The reason I chose this list is meant to show a recurring element in the realm of fan fiction, namely the recurring foray of stories into the examination of relationships between characters. While there is much academic literature written on this very subject,¹⁴ it all boils down to a certain 'power' the fanfic-writer has.

Henry Jenkins, in his essay *Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten* (2006) coins the term *textual poaching*. *Textual poaching* is a way of having control over the interpretation of a certain text, in this case a media artefact. It is a term borrowed from Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday*

14 See for example Hellekson, K., Busse, K. (Ed.)(2006). *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*. Jefferson: McFarland, an excellent collection on the topic of fan fiction.

Life (1984). De Certeau makes a distinction between *strategies* and *tactics*, where *strategies* are the rules forced upon the consumers by producers and *tactics* are the way consumers bend the rules to their own liking. Consumers are *poaching* on terrain originally conceived by producers by applying *tactics*, largely ignoring the *strategies* laid out by the producers on this terrain. The terrain here is the media artefact, while *strategies* can be seen as an intended or preferred reading of the artefact and *tactics* as a re-reading of the original artefact by the creation of fan fiction. This process of re-reading and creation is called *textual poaching*.

Returning to the relationship-issue with the knowledge of *textual poaching* indicate that the reinterpretation of relationships within fan fiction is a form of negotiation. Within fictional stories characters are the building blocks on which the narrative rests. To change their relationship by either rewriting the relationships in the original artefact, or changing characteristics like gender and sexual preferences, fans are able to negotiate with the original text to recreate their idealized texts. By changing the characters, the narrative is also changed in a certain way (which depends on the amount of influence characters have on the narrative). From this it's easy to see why there is something like *Gary Stu/Mary Sue* characterisation. These are instruments for writers to gain creative control over familiar artefacts, to explore unexplored cavities present in those artefacts, and for most writers, the most attractive cavities are the relationships between fictional characters.

Even if the bulk of fanfics revolve around relationships between characters, this is just one tactic a fanfic writer can employ. Take for example AU-stories, stories that take place in a universe where certain events within the original artefact didn't happen, or where the whole world is different than that within the original artefact.¹⁵ This is different than changing characters and relationships in the text, but it is still a tactic a writer employs to make a text his or her own work. Here, a writer negotiates not through redefining relationships, but by recreating the imaginary world itself.

Another tactic of negotiation would be Crack-stories. These stories are so absurd and bizarre that it might seem that they are written under the influence of drugs or can only be understood when one uses drugs when reading them. This gives a writer a clean slate to work on during their negotiations with the original artefact. Everything is possible, and everything is permitted.

This brings us to an aspect core to fan-created literature: the aspect of *fanon*. Fanon describes aspects in stories that in fan-created literature are used as facts but are made up by the fans, and not the creators of the original artefact. Canon on the other hand is limited to that which is actually described in the original artefact. So everything that is either not described in the original artefact or (somewhat) different in the original artefact can be considered fanon.

¹⁵ Note that AU bears a similarity with the Crossover-genre. Placing characters of a certain artefact into the universe of another artefact is both AU and Crossover, for example.

The tactics employed by writers as well as the use of genres and 'fanonised' elements bring us to the aspect of creativity. The following chapter will explain the general creative process in as much detail as possible, together with how archontic literature fits in with this process.

3. Creativity

Creativity and fan fiction, it seems to contradict itself. After all, how can something be called creative when it is based on something (a media artefact in this case) that already exists? A possible answer to this question requires criticism of the somewhat short-sighted definition we give creativity. “To be creative” is often linked to something novel, something new, something that “wasn't there before”. Looking at the definition of creativity the Oxford Online Dictionary gives us, it tells us that creativity relates “*to or involving the use of the imagination or original ideas to create something*” and that being creative means “*having good imagination or original ideas*”.¹⁶

In this chapter I like to present a view on creativity from which I will derive a method to analyse a selection of fanfics later on. The viewpoint is that of Margaret Boden. Her book *The Creative Mind, Myths and Mechanisms* (2nd edition, 2005) is interesting since it focusses largely on artificial intelligence. If we want to have an artificial intelligence behave like a human (and thus, be creative like a human being), we have to understand human creativity itself. In order to be able to do that, Boden introduces several concepts that give us insight into the process of human creativity.

For starters, the concepts that she tackles are sometimes pretty hard to grasp. This shouldn't be surprising, since creativity itself is already a pretty vague concept. The archontic nature of fan fiction is proof of this, since fan fiction can be creative while at the same time offering something familiar, or at least parts that cannot be considered 'novel'. The crucial word here is 'novel'. We tend to see creativity as something that is 'novel', 'new', something that 'wasn't there before'. But this is a description that is hard to work with. Boden presents us with a set of concepts and descriptions to go with that, concepts to refine our understanding of what creativity is. This can help us to actually see what it means when something, a work of art for example, is considered creative.

First of all, she sees the human mind as a space; a space where every human decides his or her actions. Some of these actions are fully automatic, like breathing for example. What I am interested in, are the semi-automatic functions of the human mind, the domain on which the concept of creativity also moves. The human mind is a space in which we can project our own thoughts. Most of these thoughts just seem to 'pop-up', as if we have no control about the things we think of (that is why it is called semi-automatic). However, the moment we think of something, we are able to focus our thoughts onto that of which we think (again, that is why it is called semi-automatic). For example, thinking about a tree has certain effects that differ between human beings. Some people think of a Christmas tree, others might think of a tree as painted by Van Gogh, while again

¹⁶ <http://oxforddictionaries.com/>, accessed on 4 May 2011

others think of the tree in their own backyard and so on. With this, related thoughts pop up: singing Christmas carols in front of the Christmas tree, deciding that Rembrandt is a better painter than Van Gogh, having to cut down the tree in one's backyard because it is sick and so on. The point is, thoughts never stand on their own, and all thoughts together form a projected image in our mind. This image is projected in a space we call *conceptual space*.

Within this *conceptual space*, while focussing our thoughts on whatever we set our minds to, we are able to ask ourselves questions about every thought. This sets in motion the act of creativity, since it is questioning our thoughts that decides whether or not we actually *know* something, and what it means to our actions *if* that which we thought of is knowledge. When doing this we can either *map* knowledge (what do we know, what is the truth on whatever it is that we think of et cetera.), we can *explore* it (by grabbing related thoughts that might not be closely related at first but may be important later on in the process) and we can *transform* it (by using our knowledge in a way that it hasn't been used before). This forms the core of the creative mind as is presented by Margaret Boden.

3.1 The creative mind: Margaret Boden

For some, creativity is the new, while for others it is unpredictability. In fact it is both to a certain degree. Saying this should make you think, “to a certain degree?” Yes, creativity is, as Margaret Boden states, not “*an all or nothing affair*”, it is more a question of “*how creative is it*” and “*in which way*” (Boden, 2005). Boden argues that everybody is creative to a certain extent, something that is more a given than that it is questionable. However, stating the obvious isn't an answer. We as human beings like to categorize those things we want to understand, and by categorizing we at least have a broader understanding of a phenomenon. This does not mean we understand creativity as a whole, but it does give us an inquiry in how creative processes might work.

Boden distinguishes two categories of creativity: *historical creativity* and *psychological creativity*, where the first is a brand new idea to the world, and the second is a brand new idea to the person who comes up with that idea. Out of this logically follows, that *historical creativity* is also always *psychological*. For example, I might come up with a great joke which I thought up myself. To me, this joke is totally new. It is therefore *psychological creativity*. There is a possibility however, that somewhere somebody thought up the same joke before I did. Then, my joke remains only creative on a psychological level, since it isn't brand new to the world. Would I be the first to thought up the joke, than it creative on a historical level (as well as on a psychological level).

However, this is just a simple categorisation of creativity, which makes it easier for us to talk in terms of 'old' (psychological) and 'new' (historical) creativity. Note also, that it is hard to say whether something is actually *historical* creative. After all, one can never be sure of any creative act has been acted out somewhere already. These terms do not really say *what* creativity is. In the *précis* of her book, Boden (1991) also makes a typology of creativity which is more interesting and in line with answering the question of what creativity is. She again specifies two kinds of creativity: *improbabilist creativity* and *impossibilist creativity*. According to Boden, “*improbabilist creativity involves (positively valued) novel combinations of familiar ideas*”, whereas *impossibilist creativity creates ideas that “could not have been created before”* (Boden, 1996).

To apply them to something (texts, speech, music or something else that is 'acted') that could be regarded as a product of creativity (and if so, to what category it can be attributed to) and to have it tell us if something is creative to a certain extent or not, the concepts need to be operationalized. But how do these kinds of creativity come into play? How can we identify if something is creative or not? How is it possible for a human being to think of 'something' out of 'nothing' where *impossibilist* creativity is concerned? For that, Boden uses the notion of *conceptual space*, a style of thinking “where its dimensions are the organizing principles which unify, and give structure to, the relevant domain” (Boden, 1991). In other words, it is a space in our minds where we connect pieces of knowledge relevant to the domain in which we act out our creativity.

In *conceptual space*, Boden argues, we use our knowledge as far as it is appropriate and applicable to a certain domain. For example, in making a certain chess move, we use conceptual space to so try and outmanoeuvre our opponent on a chess board. This can be done by activating the conceptual space attached to the domain of chess, where the conceptual space contains a chess board, the rules of chess, our knowledge about our opponent, and the past, current and possible futures of the state of the game etc.. This domain is linked to knowledge appropriate for that domain, which is activated when we recreate a mental image of that domain.

The way we use conceptual space differs, and this leads to three levels of creativity. According to Boden, there are three levels of activating knowledge about a certain domain: mapping, exploration and transformation.

To map conceptual space means making a mental representation of conceptual space in our mind, in which we use our knowledge to connect it in such a way to apply this to what it is we want to achieve. Mapping is used to find out what we are (and are not) capable of where our knowledge is concerned. It is as if we travel through the mental representation in our mind, along the corridors of our knowledge of the domain which we are mapping, so we can pinpoint our limits of knowledge

on the subject of that domain.

Exploration is related to mapping, but goes a lot further (and touches already more on aspects we usually associate with the idea of creativity). Where mapping refers to the retrieval of known knowledge about the domain from the conceptual space, exploration uncovers implicit knowledge, that is, knowledge that we didn't realize we had before, or using our knowledge in such a way to come up with a new solution. Boden herself gives a great example of what exploration is all about:

“When Dickens described Scrooge as “a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner”, he was exploring the space of English grammar. He was reminding the reader (and himself) that the rules of grammar allow us to use seven adjectives before a noun. That possibility already existed, although its existence may not have been realized by the reader.”

(Boden, 1991)

Transformation is the most rigorous of the three processes within conceptual space. Here, our knowledge is applied in a way that is unpredictable, but still based on intuition, “gut feeling” or whatever vague term applies (and thus, still is based on something we know. I asked myself earlier how it is possible to create 'something' out of 'nothing'. The answer is that we aren't.) This is related to mapping and exploration in such a way, that one makes a representation of conceptual space (mapping), one explores this conceptual space (exploration), and then one pushes its boundaries so that something new, a novel idea, emerges (transformation). In other words, transformation actually creates new knowledge by use of already existing knowledge.¹⁷

These three processes all follow one another, as we can't explore our knowledge of a certain domain without mapping it first, and we can't transform our knowledge without exploring it first. So these processes can be seen as serial. This is not to say that, for example, transformation is more creative than exploration just because it is the highest achievable stage within a creative process. This raises a very important question, the question when creativity “matters”. Is transformation of

¹⁷ Boden does not mention at all how this process works, but I could not shake off the feeling that the mapping, the exploration and the transformation of conceptual space is a (partly) serial process, meaning that these processes occur after one another. Also, the nature of the processes force me to suggest that all processes depend on each other. For example, how can you explore a certain conceptual space if you have not mapped it before? The same goes for transformation, meaning you need to have mapped it and explored it, before you can touch upon, and transform the 'contents' of this space.

knowledge always something to strive for, more than exploration, just because it pushes the boundaries of already present knowledge? There is not really a fixed answer to this question because it all depends on the context. What do we want to achieve by applying our knowledge? If we look at creativity as something to strive for, then the answer seems to be pretty straight forward: when we want to go on creative endeavours, we strive for transformation of our knowledge so that novel ideas can emerge, since transformation is the most creative use of knowledge and so novel ideas actually appear to be as such.

However, an alternative answer relates to two aspects that are just as important to the creative process as the way we use our knowledge in *conceptual space*: motivation and attention. In his essay *From Above And Below: Problems With Boden's Model Of Human Creativity* (n.d.), Jonathan Nightingale criticises Boden for failing to address these two aspects. While ignoring motivation is partly justified by Boden on the grounds that there is not a good computational model of motivation (and thus, motivation cannot easily be 'charted', so to speak), she does not even mention attention. And that poses a problem for Boden's model if we take into account Csikszentmihalyi's *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention* (1997), in which he shows that “*attentional control and selectivity are among the most significant predictors of creative performance*” (Nightingale, n.d.).

Is this model still applicable for researching fan fiction? Yes, because the aspects of motivation and attention are already part of the equation where creative fandom is concerned, as I will further elaborate on in chapter 3.2.

To summarize,

- *Historical* and *psychological* creativity is a categorisation of the degree of creativity from the point of view of the person who creates in relation to the outside world;
- *Improbabilist* and *impossibilist* creativity is a categorisation of the degree of creativity concerning the act of creation itself;
- The mapping, exploration, and transformation of knowledge in *conceptual space* is a model of the types of creativity, to be interpreted as a serial process in which knowledge is used to create something 'novel'.

3.2 Creative fandom : motivation, attention and the 'novel' within fan fiction

When applying the notion of creativity as it comes into being in *conceptual space* onto fan fiction inspired by a certain artefact, we try to find out how the fanfic relates to the original artefact and on the basis of that relation, we establish the degree of creativity. This degree goes from the lowest amount of creativity (mapping) towards the highest (transforming).

As mentioned, one of the most serious points of criticism of Boden's model is that it does not take into account the aspects of motivation and attention, but this point can be discarded where fan fiction is concerned. The main reason for this is that both motivation and attention are already implied in the process of writing fan fiction.

Motivation is an important determiner throughout the process of creation as is shown by Theresa Amabile (1984). She found that intrinsic motivations (motivations internally triggered by people who actually want to do something themselves) for any creative act foster the creativity during this endeavour. By contrast, extrinsic motivations (motivations triggered external, for example students who are forced to do homework) undermine creativity. It is almost a given that motivations for writing fan fiction are always intrinsic (unless writing a fanfic is a school project or something similar). Since the act of writing fan fiction is born out of being a fan and therefore linked to fandom, it's safe to say that the motivations for writing fan fiction is based on an (at least slight) interest in the artefact on which the story is based. In other words, motivation is already present in the process of writing fan fiction.

Attention, as in being attentive and carefully selecting words and phrases while performing the act of writing, has proven to be of considerable importance while performing a creative task. In focussing our attention on the task at hand we are able to perform better (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). In fan fiction, this does not pose a problem. The attention has already been spent on writing the story, so there is no way we can return to the act of writing to say something on the creativity of the produced text while taking the writer's attention into account. Sure, it has been an important factor in creation and I'm not trying to discard it just because the attention has already been spent, but the fact of the matter is that we cannot distinguish anymore between texts that had a lot of attention given to them and those that didn't, when we look at it from an analytical standpoint. The point of departure in this study is that writers spend a notable degree of attention to the act of writing, in line with the intrinsic motivation for writing a fanfic.

The last problem with Boden's model I would like to address here is the idea that something creative always has to be 'novel'. I already tackled parts of this issue in chapter 2.2 but I like to stress here again, that novel ideas can be constructed out of familiar knowledge. As one actually transforms familiar knowledge into something novel, something new, one does not think of 'something' out of 'nothing'; even if a novel idea does not *seem* to stem from present knowledge, it is always linked to present knowledge some way or another. I called it “gut feeling” or intuition earlier, but a novel idea doesn't have to be born out of personal knowledge, it can also be based on the work (and thus, knowledge) of other people. This is something that happens regularly in the arts, where original creators seldom get the credits for their pioneering role in a certain artistic genre, but their successors do by fine-tuning said genre. It should be clear that fan fiction is also balancing on this same pole by being based upon an already existing work of art. This is exactly the reason I chose to introduce the idea of fan fiction being archontic literature: by using the term archontic you acknowledge that it is literature based upon an existing work of art (or artefact as I like to call it) while at the same time the term doesn't deny its own novelty.

4. Methodology

4.1 Data gathering and research questions

The case study presented here is a selection of fan fiction based on criteria set beforehand, and with good reason. There is an enormous number of stories within every genre, style and medium to be found online, in fanzines, magazines and so on. In order to be able to actually explore the creativity within, one simply has to decide which stories to include, meaning a lot of potentially interesting fanfics for this research won't be part of the case study.

For building an interesting and meaningful set of data to be analysed, I used the website [fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net), which hosts the biggest collection of fan-created stories on the internet.¹⁸ On this site, the fiction itself is broken down into nine main categories: *Anime/manga*, *books*, *cartoons*, *comics*, *games*, *movies*, *plays/musicals*, *TV shows* and *misc.*. Furthermore, there is a crossover-section where two or more *cults*¹⁹ meet in fiction. Users can create an account and post their own fanfics, as well as review the works of others and build lists of personal favourite fics. There is a community-section for social interaction between users and the site also holds a forum for debate.

For this research, I chose to stick to one category, namely *games*. Within this category there are literally hundreds of cults. The main criterion I used to choose a cult was quantity. I wanted to have a cult with at least one hundred stories. This to make sure there was enough material for me to research. I chose *Megami Tensei*²⁰, a cult with more than 1400 stories archived. Another important criterion in selecting fan fiction was that I wanted the fanfics to be completed. A lot of fanfics are works in progress, and taking a work of progress for analysis would be unfair, given the possibility that creativity might occur in a later version of the story. This is the main reason that most of the fanfics analysed are so-called one-shots: stories which have a clear ending and consists of approximately one to three chapters.

The main reason I chose *Megami Tensei* was familiarity. To say something meaningful about fan fiction one has to be familiar with the source material. I am very familiar with both video games

18 Based on the ID of a story, which it receives when added to the database. At the time of writing, the total number of stories on the site according to the latest post is 6918476

http://www.fanfiction.net/s/6918476/1/The_witch_with_White_Hair

However, this is a rough estimate since the ID a story gets is always the next number up, but a deleted story and its ID is still calculated towards the total. This is pointed out by FFN Research, two fanfiction readers who took it upon themselves to research the statistics behind fanfiction.net: <http://ffnresearch.blogspot.com/2010/07/fanfictionnet-story-totals.html>

19 A *cult* is a way to refer to a particular work or object around which a fandom has organised itself.

20 Which can be found here: http://www.fanfiction.net/game/Megami_Tensei/

and *Megami Tensei* so reading and interpreting fan fiction of this cult wasn't exactly a chore for me. Just to make sure I didn't let my personal interest in this cult get the better of me as well as trying to get familiar with fan fiction as a literary genre, I also read a lot of other fan fiction in other cults and categories, just to get a feeling for fan fiction in general.

Before gathering data I formulated one basic question, namely

To what extent can a work of fan fiction be called 'creative'?

One question kept nagging me, since it implicitly is about the very nature of fan fiction, namely that it is fiction based on something else or, as I wrote in chapter 2.2, its archontic nature. This question is:

If fan fiction establishes an entry or extension to an already existing entry in an archive, can the story in question be called creative?

These questions are the fundamental reasons for this study and constantly inform the analyses. A definitive answer to these questions will be given in chapter 6.

4.2 The analysed cult: *Megami Tensei*

Megami Tensei is a cult that has its roots in the cyberpunk culture of the 1980's. In 1986 Japanese writer Aya Nishitani wrote a trilogy of novels called *Digital Devil Story*, of which the first novel was called *Megami Tensei*. Central in this novel is the Jusho High School, in the suburbs of Tokyo. On this school two student factions compete with each other: the gifted student-faction to which all the good students belong to and who get the best facilities and teaching, and the normal student-faction who are treated as lower-class students. In turn, the normal student-faction abuse the good student-faction out of anger for being mistreated. The protagonist of the story, Akemi Nakajima, belongs to the good student-faction and is sick of being beaten up by members of the other faction. With his computer skills he decided to write a program to summon demons by studying the similarities between computer programming and magic. He succeeds in summoning the demon Loki from the underworld to act out his revenge. However, he soon loses control over Loki and has to summon other demons in order to defeat Loki.

This story formed the beginning of a long standing franchise of video game-series beginning

with the release of Megami Tensei (Namco, 1987) on the Nintendo Entertainment System and the MSX home-computer system. Although the series spawned several subseries like Majin Tensei (a strategy RPG game) and Persona (an RPG with a less serious tone than the main franchise), everything bearing the name Megami Tensei has some things in common, and it is those similarities, elements that define the Megami Tensei-series, that I will focus on in my analyses.

Megami Tensei has always drawn inspiration from all sorts of cultures, mythologies and legends. For example, biblical mythology goes hand in hand with Japanese Shinto mythology in the video game Devil Survivor, where the story is a modern-day telling of the Cain and Abel parable. In that game it is possible to 'summon' demons whose mythological origins differ greatly: some have Norse origins, other Shintoist origins, again others have Jewish origins et cetera.

Another constant presence in the franchise is the aspect of 'reason'. This entails certain choices that the protagonists (and thus, the player) in the iterations within the franchise have to make. These choices determine the outcome of (aspects of) the story and enable multiple outcomes where the video games are concerned. They also confront players with an almost philosophical approach. Choosing a certain path in a Megami Tensei-game has huge consequences for the rest of the game and places a certain burden on the shoulder of the player. These paths require of players that they think about their own stance concerning the issue at hand, and choose a path according to that stance. There is no clear 'good' or 'bad' path, so there is no way you can play the game 'wrong'.

The last thing to address concerning the original media-artefact is its very origins. The Megami Tensei novel by Aya Nishitani started out as a fan-story on a BBS²¹ itself. In that sense the whole franchise has its origins in fan-culture. It is interesting to see that the products of fan-culture and its professional counterparts intertwine in such a manner. This is proof that the work of a fan can be extremely productive and is able to establish an archive all by itself.

21 BBS is short for 'Bulletin Board System', which pre-dates the internet as we use it today, but which shares a lot of similarities. An electronic bulletin board is just that: a virtual environment to which people log on by use of modems attached to their computers. People could leave messages and stories for other users to read and to react on, so this system has striking similarities with an internet-forum. The BBS on which the Megami Tensei-story has its origins had Cyberpunkculture and the works of Cyberpunk-author William Gibson (mainly his groundbreaking work *Neuromancer* (Gibson, 1984)) as its main topics.

4.3 Analysis

To be able to analyse the level of creativity in fan fiction, several steps have to be taken, specifically the three steps explained in this section. The first step is analysing the story itself, which consists of elements that are generally perceived as being present in most stories. For this I use a structuralist method based on the three levels that constitute a story according to the structuralist theory of narrative (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983): *story*, *text* and *narration*. Each of these levels is broken up into several dimensions.

After describing the formal elements of the story, I will link these elements to the original artefact by closely examining, comparing, and analysing the elements of the story and the artefact. How do these elements relate to the original artefact and how exactly does the fanfic contribute to the archive as established by the artefact?

The third and last step will be to look at the creative elements of the story. To be able to do that, I will look at the results derived from the second step and interpret these results in the light of Boden's model of creativity. Then, I can decide what the level of creativity is a work of fan fiction has achieved.

4.3.1 analysis of the formal elements

The formal elements (which means those elements that serve the story and not the artefact on which it is based, see also chapter 5.1 for more information regarding the fanfic as a so-called stand-alone story) of the story move from an abstract towards a concrete description of elements over three levels, *story*, *text* and *narration*. These three levels consist of several dimensions, which are described below.

Story is the most abstract level. It consists of three dimensions which constantly cross and interweave with each other as the reader progresses through the story. It describes the logic of why certain sequences take place within the story. The three dimensions are:

- Actions: the actions taken in the story. This is not to be taken literally. Instead, it is a combination of everything that happens in the story, and the elements that can make it happen. Roland Barthes distinguished between *functions* and *indices* (Barthes, 1981). *Functions* have a

'cause and effect'-logic, meaning that certain events in the stories either cause or prevent an action to be taken in the story. For example, a ringing telephone can either be answered or not. *Indices* are the sum of elements that force the reader to produce meaning. For example, when a character is described as “a grim looking character with an angry look on his face”, it is safe to assume that the character in question is not happy. It is not literally stated in the text, but the meaning is produced by the reader through the words “grim” and “angry”.

– Actants: the actants in the story bring the actions about. Note that they are called 'actants' and not 'actors'. Actants can be human as well as non-human (for example, objects or emotions). They are the elements that are responsible for actions and move the story forward. If a character is described as “a grim looking character with an angry look on his face”, then the “grim look”, “the angry look on his face”, as well as the character itself are all actants, telling us something about the character.

– Setting: the setting, seen as a background décor, connects actions with the actants. They form the backbone of the whole that make up the story. This is pretty much a given, if we consider that actions taken or facilitated by actants cannot function properly without a setting that forms the space in which these actions happen. For example, if the setting is “a cold and rainy street” where a “a grim looking character with an angry look on his face” is walking, then the setting may tell us why the character has an “angry look” on his face (he or she doesn't like rain or coldness, for example).

Describing elements of the story on a *textual* level is a way of finding the implicit reasoning behind actions that happen in the story to the reader. This level consists of three dimensions:

– Time: time in the story happens on two different axes: history and story. This means that, according to Gérard Genette (1983), there is a difference between actual history as it unfolds in the story, and history as it is read by the reader. To analyze this, Genette categorizes time using three dimensions: *length*, *sequence* and *frequency*. *Length* measures the difference between the actual reading of the story and the history that is taking place within the story. For example, in the story a whole century might be described within one sentence. The difference between time in our physical world and time as it unfolds in the story is the actual measurement of *length*. *Sequence* measures the difference between the actual reading of the story and the events that take place within it. For example, a flashback is a way of describing the past through the present, which is an a-synchronous way of presenting a set of events. The reading of this set of events is the actual measurement of

sequence. *Frequency* measures the relationship between the events that happen within the history of the story and the number of times they are actually narrated; something that happened only once within the history of the story may be described and referred to multiple times, and this gives us a measurement of its *frequency*.

- Characterisation: the way characters are introduced to the reader. This can be done in an explicit manner, an implicit manner or an analogous manner. An explicit manner would be a story in which the writer literally sums up a list of typical characteristics that make up a character. An implicit way of introducing a character would be to describe him or her by his actions, as if the actions are typical of certain characteristics. An analogous manner would be a description of the character and his or her characteristics through the use of metaphors and symbolic references. The name of a character for example, could be an analogy to his characteristics when the character in question is an antagonist named 'Devil'.
- Focalisation: focalisation is concerned with the point of view in a story and how situations and events are presented. We distinguish between that which is focalised (an object, a character) and the focaliser (the one who holds a certain point of view). Internal focalisation means that the focaliser is part of the story itself, where an external focaliser is one who observes the story unfold and presents it as such to the reader.

Narrative is the most concrete (or least abstract, if you will) level of presenting the story to the reader. It is mainly concerned with the actual presentation of the story, for example how characters in the story talk to each other. It consists of two dimensions:

- Narration: this describes the relation of the one who tells the story with that which is told. The way narration is perceived by the reader depends on the actual relation between teller and story. If the storyteller is an actual character within the story and he or she speaks of a character telling another story (a story within a story), the narration and its narrator changes accordingly.
- Imagination: the way the narrator presents the awareness of characters within the story to the reader. For example, the narrator can paraphrase and describe the thoughts of a character in such a way that it encloses several connotations that would not be a part of the narrative when a factual account of 'that which is thought' had been presented to the reader. In other words, it is the difference between something that is actually thought literally translated in the text, and a description by a narrator (which can of course change the meaning of 'that which is thought', which

depends on the relation the narrator has with said character).

4.3.2 comparison of the analysis with the original artefact

The analysis as conducted in the first step will be examined and compared with the original artefact in order to see how the fanfic actually contributes to the archive. For example, are characters totally new characters, not present in the original artefact? If this is the case, then it can be considered a new entry to the archive (but only where the characters are concerned!). Of course, subtle changes or unknown characteristics of characters can also be considered a contribution to the archive, as a continuation of an already existing entry .

In order to do this I use the results from the analysis conducted in step 1. When I refer to actual characters in a story for example, I will use the information that I analysed at the level of *story* [action, actans], *text* [characterisation] and *narrative* [imagination], since the dimensions between brackets literally refer to these elements. However, when I talk about the world in which the story unfolds, I will only use the information analysed at the level of *story* [setting].

Note that in the comparison I do not elaborate on categories that speak for themselves. For example, several stories that have been analysed share the same protagonists and thus have the same background. There is no use in a constant elaboration on this background in every analysis that have those particular protagonists. That is why some formal elements seem to be neglected but are in fact cut short since they didn't show anything meaningful for this research.

4.3.3 establishing the fanfic's creativity

To establish creative elements in fan fiction, I will take the results gathered in step 2 and interpret them using Boden's model of creativity. For clarity and transparency, the table below summarizes the method by which creativity within fan fiction is identified:

<i>The creative process in conceptual space according to Boden</i>	<i>The story's contribution to the archive</i>	<i>Amount of creativity</i>
Mapping knowledge	extension	Low
Exploring knowledge	extension/new	Medium
Transforming knowledge	new	High

'Low' is the lowest amount of creativity, meaning that there always is a certain level of creativity, so no creativity whatsoever isn't an option. Note that this table is only intended for clarity purposes; I try to avoid talking on fanfics being “low” on creativity and will instead focus on the extend of creativity within stories. This is not to say that some fanfics aren't more creative than others, but talking like this only fuels negative connotations that I really want to avoid in this research. Instead, I judge every story on its own merits, how it relates to the artefact, and in what way the story is creative.

4.4 Sample analysis: A Dark Trial

Here I present a sample analysis of one work of fan-fiction so that readers may gain insight in how the fanfics are analysed. This analysis is also part of the appendix of this research. I will quote parts of the story where it is needed for clarity. The whole story can also be found in the appendix. In other words, this is an extended version of the original analysis.

Note that although I try to be objective as is possible within the confines of interpretation, some value judgements are unavoidable. However, every judgement I make is always explicitly linked to the element I am analysing and is important for the aspect of creativity one way or another.

Formal elements

Story (actions, actants, setting):

The actions in the story can be described briefly as “what would happen if a normal human being gets thrown into a supernatural situation”. The main protagonist in the story, Zeke Kurosawa, is a

boy who wakes up one morning at the sound of a radio alarmclock. He is described as a 'normal' human being, doing 'normal' human things. His waking up at the sound of the alarmclock and the realization that he overslept is something everybody can relate to. This link with our physical, real world is again implicitly shown when his mother is introduced; he seems to have a typical parent/child relation with his mother: Zeke finds out his mother reset his alarm clock so he could sleep since he wasn't going anywhere with the snowfall outside:

Zeke quickly shut the door he opened and shivered. "I'm guessing you're the one who changed the time on my alarm?" He said to his mother with a glare in his eyes. His mother laughed. "Yup! Sorry I didn't tell you, but it's a snow day, sweetie." She said with a large smile on her face. Zeke sighed softly and began to walk back to his room. He entered his room once again, inspecting for any changes, he always did this out of reflex. He then walked to the window near his large bed and looked at the view.

The setting of the story seems to be Central or Northern Japan (typically of the Megaten franchise is that practically every artefact, whether they are books, videogames or animes, have a Japanese setting), since snowfall is practically guaranteed in these regions between November and May. Its not clear if the story is set in a village or a city. The story mentions nothing other than Zeke Kurosawa's house and its immediate surroundings.

Very soon after the start of the story the actions and actants take a turn when we get introduced to a new character, a superatural being (later it is explained that he is in fact a demon) called Jack Frost, and a mysterious human that seems to posses telepathic powers to converse with Zeke and is only known as The Demon Tamer:

"Hee ho!" Said a small voice. Zeke blinked and turned to the window, and saw nothing. He turned his back again. "Heeeeeeeeeeeee HOOOOOOOOOO!" the volume of the call was much louder than before. Zeke turned to the window and opened it suddenly, he saw a small speck of dark blue in the distance. "What the..." He said.

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"AGI!" He heard a deep, masculine voice say. A small blast of fire flew out of the white of the snow and towards the monster, blasting it. The monster melted, leaving nothing but the small dark blue hat he hadn't noticed while fending it off. He stared into the direction of where the flame came from. A tall, muscular man in a dark black trench coat walked out of the white background. "Who are you?" Zeke asked the figure.

Zeke gets attacked by Jack Frost but is able to defend himself, something the Demon Tamer, who

watched Zeke getting attacked from a distance, finds very curious. He decided to help Zeke by casting an 'Agi'-spell. By doing this he frees Zeke from his attacker and explains to the overwhelmed Zeke about demons, demon tamers and the relationship both have with humans:

"Who are you?" Zeke asked the man. "My name is Jake Coerinth, my Demon Tamer Codename is Dark Equinox." Zeke blinked. "D-d-DEMON Tamer?" He asked while sweat began to bead at his forehead. He would not be believing his ears if he hadn't just been attacked by a demon.

"Yes, Demon Tamer, we fight to make a world where the creatures of this world and those beyond it can live in peace and harmony." Jake explained. Zeke shook his head. This was impossible! Not only did demons exist on Earth, there is a secret force that tames them!

"Why did you help me?" Zeke questioned further. He felt he had a right to answers. "I was in the area at the time, and heard there was a demon on the loose. So, I helped you out, nothing special." Jake explained

"Where did you come from?" Zeke questioned further. "My mother, now, it's time for you to stop asking irrelevant questions and my turn to ask you some things." Jake said sternly.

"Firstly, how were you able to hit the demon away from you like that? Do you have any fighting experience?" Jake asked.

"Not really, but I train by myself, by instinct and things I see on TV..." Zeke answered.

Actions:

The literal actions in the story are straightforward, meaning that there is a *functional* relationship between 'that' which is described, and 'that' which happens after that. However, there are instances where *indices* come into play within the story. Most of these indices have to do with fixed aspects of the Megaten-franchise. For example, the 'Agi'-spell is a fire-based spell used against Jack Frost who is presented as a snowman. From this, we can see why this spell is effective against Jack Frost, fire and cold oppose each other after all. This is clearly an indexical element. From the story however, it is not clear that this is in fact a recurring element in the Megaten-franchise and can even be considered one of the most important aspects of the artefact: opposing elements fighting for domination. Here we see a recurring aspect of fan fiction: stories expect a certain pre-knowledge from their fans.

Another example would be the relationship between Zeke and his mother. However brief the shared moments between mother and son are, we can see that they have a typical mother-son relationship. How Zeke acts towards his mother and how Zeke's mother acts towards him is something we can relate to, since this relationship, seen as an *index*, refers to our physical world. It is something we as readers are familiar with. By using this relationship to set a stage, the writer is implicitly setting a stage for a normal world we are familiar with which contrasts with the supernatural beings and their actions introduced later in the story.

Actants:

Except for Jack Frost, all characters are OC, short for “original characters”. This means that most of the characters do not have origins that are canon to the artefact.

- Zeke Kurosawa, a (presumably) teenage boy
- Mrs. Kurosawa, Zeke's mother
- Jack Frost, a demon whose elemental alignment is ice
- The demon tamer, a human being with special gifts to protect humans against demons

Setting:

I assume the story takes place in Japan knowing that the original artefact has Japan as a basis for most of its stories. This is further cemented by the name 'Kurosawa', which is a Japanese surname. It is snowing in the story, which means that the story probably doesn't take place in Tokyo, Osaka or Kyoto.²² This is interesting since the bulk of stories of the original artefact have Tokyo as a setting. The setting isn't further described in the story, so I base my claims mostly on personal inference.

Text (Time, characterisation, focalisation):

Time:

While the short length of the story ensures a pretty short reading time, time within the story flows fast. The sequence is chronological, meaning that there are no events or scenes where the past or a (possible) future event is narrated. There are only short references to scenes that happened right before the actual reference, which is why the chronology is pretty straightforward. The frequency is normal, meaning that everything that happens in the story is only told once. There are no events that get retold one or more times.

Characterisation:

Characters are introduced in an implicit manner or in an analogous manner. Zeke Kurosawa is introduced implicitly. His actions (the way he overreacts to his alarmclock and gets up to dress in a school uniform) and his relation to Mrs. Kurosawa tell us that he is probably in his teens. He is also a normal character with no special ability whatsoever and oblivious to the world around him, a

²² For more information about snow in Japan, see <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2265.html>

world which also inhibits demons and demon tamers, hence his constant surprise about everything that happens around him:

"Hee ho!" Said a small voice. Zeke blinked and turned to the window, and saw nothing. He turned his back again. "Heeeeeeeeeeeee HOOOOOOOOOO!" the volume of the call was much louder than before. Zeke turned to the window and opened it suddenly, he saw a small speck of dark blue in the distance. "What the..." He said.

...

Zeke blinked in confusion. Who was that man? Why was he carrying so many weapons? How did he make fire hit that snowman? How was that snowman alive? These thoughts flooded Zeke's mind. The cold suddenly took Zeke's body and he shivered violently, he decided to head inside and think on this more.

...

"Who are you?" Zeke asked the man. "My name is Jake Coerinth, my Demon Tamer Codename is Dark Equinox." Zeke blinked. "D-d-DEMON Tamer?" He asked while sweat began to bead at his forehead. He would not be believing his ears if he hadn't just been attacked by a demon.

Also implicitly introduced is the demon tamer. We don't know much about him, but we do know that he is a character that has a certain 'cool' around him, the way he talks nonchalantly about demons and fighting them.

Jack Frost is introduced analogously. His name refers to a mythical character originating from European folklore, where Jack Frost was the personification of cold winters. The fact that he is presented as a snowman therefore makes sense. The Megaten-franchise uses mythical and religious characters and their features very liberally, and Jack Frost is a perfect example of this.

Focalisation:

Focalisation in the story constantly shifts between an invisible focaliser, observing how certain actions unfold, to the protagonist as focaliser who describes how he feels and what he thinks. This shift, it turns out, is not a deliberate shift, but shows a writer not able to choose between points of view. This does have merits and downsides. The merits are that some actions cause surprise (for example, the scene in which Zeke detects a tracking device on his uniform), but the downside is a lack of stability in the telling of the story, which makes the positioning of the characters, like that of the demon tamer towards Zeke, not very clear, up to the point that it frustrates a clear reading experience, and fails in creating a nice tension within the story.

The focalised object in the story is Zeke's own constant oblivious stance towards the world around him. This makes the story a nice introduction for a fanfic in development, but it poses more questions than it answers. Again, this makes reading this story more frustrating than should be. In

itself, nothing is wrong with a development like this, but one gets the feeling there should be more to this story than there actually is. It hurts the overall imagination of the story by the reader because of blanks that are impossible to fill up by the use of ones own imagination by the reader.

Narrative (narration, imagination):

Narration:

The narration in the story is done by an outside, invisible authority. Sometimes the narration shifts between this authority and Zeke Kurosawa, but this shift only takes place whenever Zeke is contemplating his own thoughts on what is happening in the story.

Imagination:

The way characters are brought to life is really straightforward. All thoughts, feelings and actions are explicitly stated. Not a lot of imagination (or none at all) is needed to understand the characters. Only two times in the story a kind of imagination is activated. The first time occurs when the demon tamer explains to Zeke that demons only attack humans when they have something they want and why it was possible for Zeke to hit the demon. Because the story does not further elaborate on this aspect, there is definitely something more to the attack than currently described, which sparks the imagination. The second time is when the demon tamer gives Zeke three options: erase his memory with the risk of being attacked again, kill him here and now, or become a demon tamer himself. These choices can be linked to the first time, again, there is something more to it. Why is the third choice the only reasonable choice? Most likely, this is deliberately incorporated in the story, it has a “to be continued”-ring to it, since the story ends right there. [note: this is pretty strange considering that the fanfic is marked as 'completed']

Comparison of the analysis with the original artefact

Here I literally compare elements from the story with elements found in the original artefact. All elements play a role in the perceived creativity of the fanfic. The amount of which these elements contribute to the amount of creativity depends on how these elements are, in a way, novel compared with their artefact counterparts. For example, an OC is already more novel than a canonical character.

Story:

Actions are flat in that they are straight to the point and do not really hold a deeper meaning other than pushing the story forward. In other words, the story feels more like an introduction to, than an actual story. However, there is the daily life-aspect (Zeke who wakes up and gets ready to go to school) which contrasts with the dystopian cyberpunk setting of the Megaten-franchise. In this sense, this story cannot be considered canon at all. Further more, there is no mention of a demon summoning program (or something similar) at all. Instead, the setting of the story resembles our own realm mixed with supernatural elements that borrows from the Megami Tensei canon, such as Jack Frost.

Dark trial is a fanfic consisting primarily of OCs, and by that presents a new look on the original artefact, not bound by past histories of already existing characters. However, the character of Jack Frost is canon. This becomes more evident when Jack Frost is defeated by an 'Agi'-spell, which is an actant bound by canon.

Then there is the setting. Assuming the story takes place in Japan, one can recognize a pattern in line with other stories in the Megaten-franchise, since most of them all have Japan as a setting.

Text:

Time in the story is pretty straightforward and this is in line with most of the stories told within the franchise (stories that are considered canon).

Characterisation is also in line with the artefact. Within the Megaten-franchise, these elements are almost exclusively presented in an implicit and analogous manner, although sometimes explicit descriptions of certain characters in canon takes place.

On focalisation, there is not much to say. This shifts in the story, but the same holds true for stories that are canon. Further more, there isn't a focalisation technique that stands out in the story or in some way or another takes the story into a direction that is not considered canon.

Narrative:

Narration is totally in line with the artefact, meaning that a narrative being steered by an outside authority or by a character can both be considered canon.

Imagination is also in line with the artefact. In the Megaten-franchise it is very common that characters' motivations and intentions are not explicitly stated. In fact, this can be almost considered a rule. This makes the story pretty hard to grasp so to speak. What the different characters in the story want and need isn't literally or even implicitly spelled out. Surprisingly, this added to the

imagination more than that it derailed present knowledge on story and characters

To summarize:

The story partly stays true to the canon where the characters, setting, time and characterisations are concerned. Other actants, like the 'Agi'-spell and the demon tamer are canon, and make returning appearances throughout the Megaten-franchise.

Actions however, are a whole different story. Here, the story departs fully from the franchise, giving the reader a new, dare I say, 'fannish', look on a canonized franchise, by mixing a slice-of-life element with the canonized elements of demons and magic.

Establishing the creativity

- On story:

Other than the setting (which is only *mapping*, since it uses a canonized setting, namely Japan), most of the fanfic on the level of *story* can be considered *exploring*. It does not directly relate to the original artefact. For example, the characters are an exploration of how OC's fit in with canonized actants such as Jack Frost or the 'Agi'-spell. On this level, the story does something new but at the same time relies heavily on canonized elements.

- On text:

Text is *mapping* knowledge. There is no part that even remotely resembles *exploring*, let alone *transforming*. On this level the story is completely in line with the original artefact.

- On narrative:

While I consider narration *mapping* as it is in line with the artefact, the *imagination* is really *exploring* knowledge: something new (the slice-of-life elements) is mixed with something familiar (the appearance of demons and the demon tamer, as well as the use of magic) on this level of the story.

- The overall contribution to the established archive:

The story is largely an extension, but it also establishes on certain levels. In all, the fanfic really treads middle ground, and so it both extends existing entries and establishes new entries to the archive. From this it follows, that the story as a whole *explores* knowledge, and its creative level is medium.

Final notes on the analysis and Boden's model and my overarching judgement on creativity

It is important to note that while I analysed the fanfics I did not use Boden's model to provide the final say in what is considered creative within the stories and what is not. It has been a strong guiding force during the analysis, and the theory underlying the model is the basis on which concluding arguments are built. However, blindly following Boden's model didn't work. I evaluate the model in chapter 6, where I will point at certain flaws, the most important one being Boden's focus on the 'novel' as the ultimate determinant of creativity. While there is a reason for why Boden goes with novelty as the most important factor deciding whether something is creative (something 'new' often seems more creative than already known information), it does pose a problem for this study, since fan fiction is never 100 percent novel, thanks to its archontic nature.

I remedied this problem by acknowledging the flaws in Boden's model and using my own knowledge about the artefact and my own interpretation of the story in conjunction with the parts of Boden's model that are usable throughout all analyses that I have done. To give an example: in the above analysis I point out that the story is partially slice-of-life. Going by Boden's model this would mean that it is not creative at all. After all, daily life-situations can hardly be considered novel. Here, I used my own knowledge about the artefact, by stating that within the realm of the artefact, this *is* a novel situation. Then, this story is to be considered creative to a certain extent (as mentioned in the analysis) since it breaks out of the confines imposed upon the story by the original artefact. In other words: where Boden's model clearly fails to recognize this source of creativity, I use my personal knowledge about the artefact to correct this. This issue is further elaborated on in chapter 6, but it is important to note early on that I do not follow Boden's model blindly in the analyses.

I am aware that parts of my analyses consist of interpretative judgements. For example, in the sample analysis in chapter 4.4 while talking about the role of Zeke in the section on focalisation, I mention his obliviousness. In itself, there is nothing wrong with presenting a character as oblivious. However, this must be seen in connection with the overall story and the amount of creativity with which the story contributes to the archive by either establishing a new archive, or extending an existing one. If the focalisation, characterisation etc., or other overarching formal elements (story, text, narration) contribute in a creative way (for example, by presenting non-canonical elements), it is taken into account in the final judgement. Returning to the mention of Zeke's obliviousness, this element also contributes to the story. However, in my analysis I present it as a negativism. This element hurts other elements by contributing in a negative way (in this case, present the reader with story blanks without options for the reader to fill these blanks with their

imagination), and certainly doesn't work in conjunction with other elements. One could almost say that it hurts the creativity of the story, but that is only if seen not in conjunction with the other formal elements.

In short, every formal element contributes to the creativity in the story. The more it contributes (by analysing the dimensions of the formal elements), the higher the story scores on creativity. From this it follows that a story that scores high on creativity also has a high chance of actually establishing a new entry in the archive.

5. Results

In this chapter I present the results of the research. The chapter is broken down into two sections . First, I will analyze the fanfics as stand-alone stories; subsequently I will compare them with the artefact, the source material on which the fanfics are based.

The analyses of fanfics as stand-alone stories is based on the analysis of the formal elements (see chapter 4.3.1). A stand-alone story means that the results of the analyses are discussed without constantly linking the story to the archive (established by the artefact) it belongs to. The formal elements in a story do not necessarily depend on the original archive, and are able to bring in some interesting and noteworthy aspects of creativity. Although some artefact elements will be discussed (because one cannot ignore the fact that fan fiction is archontic by nature), their role in Section 5.1 is minor.

In Section 5.2, I report on the analysis of fan fiction as archontic literature (see chapter 4.3.2). This is where the comparison of the formal elements with those of the artefact are discussed.

During the reading of the stories as well as during the analyses, notes were taken which served as my guide for detecting shared patterns and features between the stories. After the analyses were done, recurring patterns and features were selected and used to categorize fanfics. These categories are printed in bold below, and are either of a general nature and thus categorize stand-alone fanfics, or they link the story with an artefact and categorize archontic fanfics.

See the next page for a table which provides a quick overview of the total scores of the 30 stories analysed.

Stand-alone tactics	Total amount of fanfics using said tactic	Low creativity	Medium creativity	High creativity
<i>Experiments with new formats</i>	10	3	2	5
<i>Two sides of creative endeavours in storytelling</i>	9 (of focussing both on story and artefact)	3	2	4
<i>One focalised object in most stories</i>	6 stories have either multiple, or no clear focalised object	1	1	4
Archontic literature tactics				
<i>Allusions (fanfic - artefact - physical world)</i>	20	6	7	7
<i>An interplay of knowledge between artefact and fanfic</i>	23	8	7	8
<i>The amateur at work, authors and the goals they set themselves</i>	6 (the amount of stories that had author's notes which elaborated on the goals set by the author)	2	1	3

5.1 The fanfic as a stand-alone story

- Experiments with new formats

From the total of 30 fanfics analysed in this study, ten stories experimented heavily with new formats in which the story was presented to the reader. Of these, seven stories created a new entry to the archive by greatly transforming knowledge. This is done by establishing a new or unexpected format (in contrast with a regular story) and can be seen as a tactic where writers poach on new, unexplored terrain for familiar elements. For example, the story “Bullying” shows that when a

fanfic only maps knowledge storywise, and is therefore low on creativity in that department, its format can have a huge influence on the creativity of the fanfic as a whole. This story is presented as a school essay where a boy named Junpei Iori is writing about his experiences with being bullied by people he considers his friends. By choosing this format one might think the writer is hugely constrained (for example, there is no other focaliser possible since the story is a personal schoolessay). However, it is this limitation that proves to be a powerful instrument to draw the reader into a familiar world in a whole new way. By presenting the story as a personal reflection through an essay instead of a standard story, the limitation to only one narrator brings in a mysterious element which intrigues the reader. Who is that 'him'-character that bullied Junpei? The reader might have a clue if he or she is familiar with the artefact on which the fanfic is based but even then it remains a guess.

Another example of a story with an experimental format is “Persona: Alice Human Sacrifice”, where an abstract story is told about a voyage into a land of dreams, and where parts of the story are told through the use of lyrics from the song “Alice Human Sacrifice” by Yagami-P.²³ Where the story remains quite abstract and also sloppy in parts, the alternation of the narrative with song lyrics makes for a very interesting read, especially if the reader actually makes the effort of looking up the song and linking the lyrics with the story. This story truly transforms knowledge, even when the execution is lacking in literary quality (something the writer him/herself acknowledges at the end of the story with an author’s note).

- Two sides of creative endeavours in storytelling

Practically all writers constantly choose between either focussing their creative efforts on the story that is being told, creating an interesting story by itself (stand-alone); or they choose to closely relate their story to the original artefact, creating a type of fan-service (artefact-related). Writers seldom choose to combine the two. This could be because of the “amateur” at work, or because using fan fiction instruments (for example, choosing a certain genre for their fanfic) constraints creativity as it is perceived by the writer one way or another. However, if writers do focus their creative output on both the story being told as well as on aspects related to the artefact, this pushes the story immediately into higher creative areas.

²³ “*Alice Human Sacrifice*” is a song created by using Vocaloid-software, computerprograms that create vocals for use in music. The song is based upon the literary works of Lewis Carroll but brings a more abstract and mature twist to it.

Nine stories used both types of creative endeavours, of which six establish a new entry in the archive by mainly *transforming* knowledge. The most often used tactic in these stories is using a minor character from the artefact and place him or her in the role of protagonist. This way, a point of view in the story is created that is not explored in the original artefact while the possibility for this exploration is in fact implicitly present.

Another tactic is used in the story "*Fairy Tale*" where a very unexpected event is placed within the story arc of the artefact. Here, one of the characters from the artefact dies, something that originally did not happen. Everything else in the story is perfectly in line with the original artefact but this death changes the story in an unexpected way without altering familiar elements. It is the atmosphere described by the several characters (as they come to terms with the loss of a friend) that greatly transforms knowledge and can thus be considered highly creative.

- One focalised object in most stories

The object around which the story revolves (and who most of the time is focalised through the point of view of a protagonist) is often only one object (either a relationship, a person, an event etc.). There are seldom multiple objects focalised in one story. One purpose of focalised objects is to create interesting, multiple story arcs. The more focalised objects there are in a story, the more possibilities for multiple interesting story arcs. Thus, writers tend to keep it simple where the focalised objects are concerned. This could be an effect of the fact that most stories analysed being one-shots, and therefore do not offer the room for expanding upon multiple focalised objects or again, it could be the "amateur" at work.

Only six of the stories broke with this habit, either by having more focalised objects or by having no clear focalised objects at all. The main effect is that it directly influences the creativity observed in the story. For example, the story "*The Games Played by Gods*" is a story where there is no clear focalised object. The result is that as a reader, you keep guessing where the story leads you, the purpose of the story as well as elements within the story do not readily present themselves to the reader. In turn, the writer creates an environment that enables multiple possibilities to carry the story onwards. Instead of focussing on a certain outcome in the story by clearly focalising an object, the writer expands his or her possibilities with the plot, enhancing possibilities for *transforming* knowledge that can only be considered highly creative

5.2 The fanfic as archontic literature

- Allusions (fanfic - artefact - physical world)

The stories analysed make a lot of allusions to physical world events. In the case of *Megami Tensei*, this is a source of unlimited inspiration for writers, since the original artefact already uses mythology and legends as sources for the stories they tell (for example, the game *Devil Survivor* (Atlus, 2009) is a *Megami Tensei*-game which is in fact a modern day Cain and Abel retelling).

There are twenty stories that clearly use allusions with a certain intent. These intents are of an extensive nature. Some allusions just toy with the knowledge of the reader without having far reaching consequences for the plot of the story, some are just a play on allusions already present in the artefact while yet others actually form the body of the story. In general, writers use two types of allusions in their stories: allusions of a mythical, cultural or literary nature, and allusions that are so-called “slice of life”. Slice of life is a genre mostly popular in Japanese manga and anime, and focusses on daily life, relationships, school and so on. In short, it refers to everything we consider 'normal' and thus, these stories are about things we as normal human beings can relate to.

An example of the first type of allusion would be the story “*Wonderland*”. This story is partly based on the works of Lewis Carroll²⁴ but is mixed with a Scandinavian myth of a girl with the same name that is said to take children away if they didn't behave.²⁵ The story is presented through the point of view of Alice herself. This in itself is already a powerful way to use an allusion, because it offers writers numerous possibilities to either go along with the allusion and form a plot around that, or to use it as a springboard for their own crafted imaginations. Throughout the story the reader is constantly reminded of the allusion but in an uncomfortable way. Instead of feeding the readers expectations of possible story arcs (that is, if the reader is actually aware of the allusion of course), it is used to by-pass expectations on the plot; it explores unknown territory while still being familiar in a sort of eerie way. In short, knowledge is *transformed* in such a way that it treads upon unexplored territory to re-envision familiar material which in itself can be considered highly creative.

The second type is somewhat less adventurous. It consists of stories that place characters from the artefact in daily life-situations, often with either a very humorous or very melancholic undertone. The story “*Girls Only*” is an example of such a story. It revolves around the female-cast

²⁴ *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871).

²⁵ Retrieved from <http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Alice>

of Persona 4 (Atlus, 2008), a spin-off of the Megami Tensei-games. In the story we follow the girl Naoto when she goes out shopping for clothes with her best friends. A small drama ensues, when Naoto confronts her friends with the criticism that she is always being forced by them to do things against her will, like going out shopping. Still, this is very quickly resolved and not much else happens after that. This kind of story is often used as a tactic by writers to create situations in which popular characters are just normal human beings. These kinds of stories do hold possibilities for an interesting plot. Since these stories aim to paint an “as normal as possible”-picture of (fictional) life, readers won't find many surprising things happening in them. This often translates to *mapping* or *exploring* creativity, and thus low or medium creativity.

- An interplay of knowledge between artefact and fanfic

To be familiar with the artefact helps understanding most fanfics. However, it was unexpected to notice that this works both ways: reading certain fanfics helped in understanding the artefact. Some even gave the original artefact more meaning by (deliberately²⁶) establishing a new entry to the archive. This is done for example by filling certain gaps which are not necessary for the full understanding of the artefact, but which do tend to extend its world as imagined by the reader.

Of the analysed fanfics, 23 broaden the understanding readers might have of the artefact on which it is based. The story “*Moving Forward*” for example is a fanfic of Persona 3 (Atlus, 2006). This story takes place right after the game, so it is not about events experienced by those who are familiar with the artefact. Instead it explores possible events that transpired after those events that unfolded in the artefact. What this story does is compromising between what is canon, and what can be considered an alternative universe-telling: it expands upon what we know from the artefact by continuing where the story left of.

In “*Moving Forward*”, the reader just gets a slice of life-story without so-called fanonized elements expanded upon the already existing backstory.²⁷ But it is possible to do so and by doing that, a writer can really push creativity by employing a tactic of imagination and create story where empty plotoles existed before. An example of this is found in the story “*Echoes in the Darkness*”. This fanfic revolves around Souji, the main protagonist from Persona 4 (Atlus, 2008). In the game the player just follows the main story but never gets *into* the head of Souji. What he thinks and what

26 Deliberately, since some writers actually want to expand the existing universe of the artefact by creating fanon-facts, facts that aren't present in the artefact but which are a possibility and are thus created by fans to fill in certain gaps.

27 One could argue that the story is in fact fanonized, since it isn't part of canon. However, because the story doesn't shed new light on our knowledge that we have from the original artefact, it does not expand upon anything that is canon.

he feels is occasionally mentioned but is never really elaborated on in the artefact. “*Echoes in the Darkness*” takes exactly this issue and tackles it by diving into Souji's mind and explores the possibilities of what he might think about everything that happens to him and how he might feel about everyone around him. Here the one-dimensional character Souji suddenly becomes multi-dimensional. A different light is shed upon him and he really becomes a character with feelings, opinions and so on, and thus a fanonized character is created that fuels already present knowledge on the artefact with new information. This is *transforming* knowledge, since the character is in line with his artefact counterpart, but his characteristics are expanded without compromising the character itself.

- The amateur at work, authors and the goals they set themselves

Often, before the start of a story, writers give some standard copyright information about the original artefact. These so-called 'author notes' are pretty common in fan fiction. Sometimes these notes are just there for legal reasons, but often they also include the goals the authors had in mind. These goals describe why and how did what he did.

Of the stories analysed, 21 had extensive author notes either preceding the story or written right after the end of the story. Of these, six stories elaborated in the author's note on the goal as set by the author of the story. Most of them give summaries and the goal the writer had with the story. They explain the purpose of the story, the genre, the pairings of characters, etc. However, most stories are multi-interpretable, meaning that the goal as set by the writer doesn't necessarily meet the reading of the story by the reader. For example, a story might focus on a pairing of two characters (according to the writer), but the focalised object in the story may invalidate this focus. Goals can have the effect of a positive influence on creativity, probably because demarcating possibilities for stories helps focussing the writer to concentrate on story arcs that are actually interesting for achieving the writer's goal.

A good example of a story where the goal does not meet the story is “*Effects*”. Before the story starts the writer writes:

So this fic is primarily trying to get into the head of somebody during Digital Devil Saga 1. I chose Gale, as he's aloof for the longest time. I wanted to keep him in character, and I wanted his narration to sound a little stilted, like his speech (hence why there are no contractions in the narrative). It's set fairly early on in the game. Feedback much appreciated! :)
In other news, I still suck at endings.

First of all the writer sets a goal with the story, namely “get into the head of somebody”. One would think that the writer would actually pursue this goal when reading the story. Gale is indeed the focaliser but my analysis points out that it is not his point of view that is being focalised in the story, but the world around him in general. With the goal the writer set himself a tactic to achieve that goal would be for example, a first person description of the world around him, and not a general description partly voiced by the protagonist. His portrayal of Gale in the story is in line with his goal (“I wanted his narration to sound a little stilted, like his speech (hence there are no contractions in the narrative)”) but focalising in general instead of making his goal the focalised object immediately puts the story out of focus: the narrative goes nowhere and leaves the reader with a rather bland story which, in the end, can only be considered medium on creativity. This because the knowledge we have from the artefact is *mapped* throughout the story, but is *explored* through the focaliser.

An example of a story where a writer actually succeeds in achieving his or her goal which influences creativity directly would be the story “*The Bel for Whom the Throne Tolls*”. Before the story starts the author notes:

Note: This contains spoilers, as it concentrates on the antagonist characters of the game with "Bel" in their names and their back stories as it relates to the game, and was written partially because I wanted to explore them, and partially because it's my first story in Shin Megami Tensei/Megami Ibrunoku universe, and I hope I did a good job.
Set just after the game starts.

and at the end of the story:

This was my first Devil Survivor Fanfic, and I hope it reads well.
Belzaboul/Beelzebub is not included due to the fact he was only fighting for the Throne of Bel on behalf of Lucifer.
I tried to mix official history with the Devil Survivor mythos (which the latter derives from the former), and this is how the villains saw themselves as opposed to the light that God (i.e. - YHVH) painted them in.
Hope I did a decent job.

Throughout the story the writer pursues his/her goal by constantly presenting a different point of view through the eyes of the several demons with 'Bel' in their name. Every point of view relates to each other, creating a very tight story in line with the mythos and the story of the artefact. The analysis of this story shows that the writer succeeded in achieving his goal and it can definitely be attributed to the tight design of the story around the goal set that this story on every level *transforms* knowledge, and therefore scores high on creativity.

6. Conclusions and discussion

It is now time to present the conclusion of this study, starting with an answer to the questions already posed a number of times above:

To what extent can a work of fan fiction be called 'creative'?

and

If fan fiction establishes an entry or extension to an already existing entry in an archive, can the story in question be called creative?

The answer to the first question is two-fold, and depends on whether we see the stories as stand-alone, or as stories of an archontic nature directly relating to an artefact. Ten of the fanfics analysed used an alternative format in writing which bolstered creativity in several ways. Nine stories focussed both on telling a new story as well as on aspects that relate to the artefact. Focussing on both greatly enhanced the creativity. Creativity also gained a boost when stories had no focalised object or chose multiple objects to be focalised. Six stories used this tactic. Usage of an alternative format, focussing creativity on an original story together with focussing on artefact related elements, and exploring alternatives to the often-encountered stories with one focalised object, all enhance creativity, at least when analysed through the usage of Boden's model. These three tactics belong to the realm of the stand-alone story.

When we analyse the creativity of fanfics as they relate to the artefact the creativity clearly ramps up. Of the thirty analysed fanfics, twenty use allusions as a tactic. The degree of creativity in stories depend on the kind of allusion used. If stories allude to the already intertextual nature of the Megami Tensei-franchise, or to other works of art, then creativity in general is high. However, if the stories allude to daily life and are so-called “slice-of-life”-stories, the creativity dwindles greatly. 24 stories actually broadened the knowledge on the original artefact and were capable of *transforming* knowledge on the artefact and treading new territory with familiar elements. These stories scored high on creativity. 21 stories had extensive author notes and whenever analysis showed that the goals as set by the writers were met in the story, creativity was positively influenced, and stories regularly *explored* and *transformed* knowledge.

In short, the answer to the first question is that fanfics can be called creative, especially when they are seen as counterpart to an artefact, as they are usually intended. This was surprising,

because I expected creativity to be balanced in fan fiction, and that it wouldn't matter if stories were read as stand-alone or as part of an archive established by an artefact.

The second question has already implicitly been answered above. The answer is 'ye:', if and when fan fiction establishes a new entry to an archive or when it extends an already existing entry, it can be called 'creative'. I would like to be even more specific based on the results of my analyses: the degree of creativity is extremely dependent on the degree to which a story is related to the artefact. Analysis shows that when a story is seen as archontic (and its analysis is carried out accordingly), its creativity is able to really flourish and higher levels of creativity can be reached. This could be because of already present elements which do not have to be imagined and incorporated into the stories by the writers themselves anymore. This enables them to focus more on other aspects of the stories, where creativity is easier to establish.

This brings us to the core of where the theory on which the model used to determine creativity is based, fails. According to Boden, creativity is somehow bound to 'novel' ideas, something 'that wasn't there before' and is created seemingly 'out of nothing'. In chapter 3.2, I already elaborated a bit on a problem with Boden's model, by claiming that *motivation* and *attention*, two important determiners in creative processes, are already incorporated in the creation of fan fiction. I also said that the main reason of why I chose to call fan fiction archontic literature, is to prevent certain negative (or, less likely, positive) connotations that are associated with terms like "derivative", which imply that the story is in one way or another inferior compared to the source material.

This research has shown that if a fanfic is seen as archontic, the perceived creativity goes up. However, according to Boden, it is the 'novel' that should be seen as truly creative. Her theory does not take into account already familiar aspects that can be used in a creative manner. Somehow, Boden's theory contradicts itself, since by use of her model we actually established that a high degree of creativity is present in the analysed stories, as long as the story is seen as part of an archive. This is in line with Jonathan Nightingale's critique (cited in chapter 3.1) of the model:

“Finally, there are intuitions we hold about creativity that do not seem to be borne out by this model. Most notably, the model places highest creative value on those ideas that could not have occurred before, that essentially mark the creation of a new way of thinking about something (Boden 1990, 1994, 1995). However, if one examines the success

of artists, especially in music and visual art, it is often not the creators of an artistic genre that get the highest accolades but rather their successors who fine tune, or perfect the art form. Boden's theory cannot account for our ascriptions of creativity here, since the successors are merely exploring a space, not performing a radical transforming, as the founders of an artistic school might have. In truth, Boden's theory seems more apt here for describing scientific creativity, where we accord the first person to bring forth a concept the highest creative insight."

(Nightingale, n.d.)

This is exactly what I found and why I was surprised (as I explained when I answered the first research question at the beginning of this chapter) that creativity wasn't balanced in both the analyses of fanfics as stand-alone and as archontic literature. In fact, if Boden's theory is right, then it would make sense that stories which are analysed as stand-alone should score higher on creativity, since these stories are at least more novel overall than when they are seen as part of an already established archive. This is why I agree with Nightingale: Boden's theory does not take into account the creativity of refinements. In the light of the analyses carried out in this research, *tactics* employed by writers can be used to *poach* on unexplored terrain originally conceived by the producer of the original artefact. The products of these tactics can sometimes be considered creative. The product might be considered 'novel', but this certainly isn't a pre-requisite of being creative. In other words: Boden puts too much emphasis on the idea that only acts of the novel kind can be considered creative, which automatically disregards refinements of already existing ideas, as is the case with fan fiction.

So Boden's model doesn't encapsulate the full scope of creativity. She puts too much emphasis on the 'novel' and disregards everything else. My analyses show that a story can be highly creative, while at the same time *mapping* knowledge on formal elements of the story. This remains very interpretative (and therefore subjective) since it is based on pre-existing knowledge about the subject-matter (in this case knowledge about the artefact on which fanfics are based) and one's interpretation of both the artefact and the fanfic. Still, it does point at a very important aspect of creativity that the model of Boden does not take into account: the fact that *transforming* knowledge doesn't necessarily lead to a high creative output and vice versa, that *mapping* and *exploring* knowledge doesn't necessarily lead to low or medium creative output. So, is Boden's model still applicable? Yes, because it does give us insight into the creative process as well as into the output of this process. Without the model, this research wouldn't have seen the light of day, but without a

critical stance towards this model, creativity wouldn't be done enough justice. This leads to a point where we have to re-evaluate our thoughts on what creativity entails. I suggest that we should drop the idea of the hierarchy Boden proposes. Creativity isn't a low-medium-high-affair (which corresponds to *mapping-exploring-transforming*). Instead, it is the interaction of these three types of knowledge that ultimately determines the degree of creativity. In other words, it isn't hierarchically layered as Boden suggests, but it is the several layers within every act of creativity working together that enables us to decide whether or not to see the act as creative.

To end this thesis with such a negative tone on Boden's model would be inappropriate. After all, Boden's model *does* work on some level, actually yielding meaningful and objective results on the subject of creativity. It only fails because of her theory, not the model itself. We can draw one final conclusion out of this: research on creativity as well as the creative mind is far from finished. This thesis is my minor contribution to the whole field of research on creativity.

7. Thank you

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Appendix I: Analysed fanfics

All fanfics are extracted from, and can be found on:

http://www.fanfiction.net/game/Megami_Tensei/3/0/1/1/0/0/0/2/0/1/

[author - *title*]

D.Alice - *Persona: Alice Human Sacrifice*

David L.J.J. - *Crush*

Ein Naturei - *A Genuine Attraction*

Emerald Embers - *Belonging*

Emeral Embers - *Ebb and Flow*

Emerald Embers - *Human Behaviour*

Kiara Arisato - *Girls Only*

Leather Sky - *Bullying*

Leather Sky - *Savoir Faire*

M14Mouse - *Echoes in the Darkness*

Masamune11 - *Dreams*

MelodicFlan - *Persona 4: Hobbies*

Minunlike - *Wonderland*

Not Jack Frost - *The Games Played By Gods*

Pikagalmish - *Fairy Tale*

Prince Arjuna - *Reunited*

RaineCaelum - *I'm Sorry*

Roxius - *Naoto The Nazi*

Rpgingmaster - *The Bel For Whom the Throne Tolls*

Sapereaude13 - *Break Time at Junes*

Shade the Raven - *All or Nothing*

SoulSlayerNick - *Shin Megami Tensei: A Dark Trial*

Superhiki - *Devil Summoner: Hobbies*

Timydamonkey - *Effects*

ToastedWhiskers - *A Tale of Communications*

Togane Shiro - *Fall in Love*

Trimurti - *One-Eyed Man*

VengefulMoon - *Moving Forward*

XAvaAdore - *Mistakes and Regrets*

[author unknown] - *To Be Wiped off From the Face of Earth*

Appendix II: A Dark Trial + analysis

A Dark Trial

Hello readers! I'm going to start a new fanfic! This time, for Shin Megami Tensei! But, it has a few added concepts, and concepts from the games themselves! So I hope you enjoy this!

Chapter One: The Cold Shoulder.

"Good morning! This is your host Shiaki Tomuro, and it's time for Morning M-" The voice was cut off suddenly. A hand slid off the alarm clock slowly. "Monday..." A young boy's voice said under the sheets of a queen sized bed. He threw the blankets off of himself and sat up. He rubbed the sleep out of his blue eyes and ran his hand through his dark, black hair.

The young boy, named Zeke Kurosawa, stood up slowly. He stretched his arms out to his sides. He walked over to his closet and opened it, revealing his clean, hanged, blue school uniform.

Zeke took his uniform out of the closet and began to get undressed. His sight shifted towards the clock he had silenced seconds ago. "8:10..." He said with sleep heavy in his voice. The realization then hit him like a bag of bricks. "8:10? OH CRAP! Why didn't the alarm go off sooner?" He screamed as he quickly took off his clothes. He got dressed as quickly as he could, and ran downstairs.

He ran into the small kitchen of his home, nearly tripping over his own feet. The middle aged woman in the room gazed at him. "Sorry Mom! No time for breakfast! I gotta' go!" He screamed as he reached for the door. The woman spoke. "Honey, wai-" She was cut off by the sound of a cold wind and snow flying through her home.

Zeke quickly shut the door he opened and shivered. "I'm guessing you're the one who changed the time on my alarm?" He said to his mother with a glare in his eyes. His mother laughed. "Yup! Sorry I didn't tell you, but it's a snow day, sweetie." She said with a large smile on her face. Zeke sighed softly and began to walk back to his room. He entered his room once again, inspecting for any changes, he always did this out of reflex. He then walked to the window near his large bed and looked at the view.

Everything was white, the snow had made seeing something even five feet away nearly impossible. "What the heck... everything was fine yesterday, it barely snowed at all!" Zeke said, confused by the sudden change of weather. He shrugged and turned his back to the window.

"Hee ho!" Said a small voice. Zeke blinked and turned to the window, and saw nothing. He turned his back again. "Heeeeeeeeeeeee HOOOOOOOOOO!" the volume of the call was much louder than before. Zeke turned to the window and opened it suddenly, he saw a small speck of dark blue in the distance. "What the..." He said.

Suddenly, a small, seemingly made of snow being with sharp teeth clung to his face. "HEE HO!" It said. it pulled him towards the window. "MRRMMF!" He tried to scream, but the snowman was stuck to his face. He felt his knees touch the wall, and he suddenly leaned forward. He grabbed the small snowman and threw it off his face.

He opened his eyes to realize that he was almost completely out the window. "OH CRAP!" He screamed as he tried to regain his balance. It was to no avail, he began to fall out his window. "AHHHH!" He screamed as he fell out of the window.

He felt the sudden impact of his side. A sharp pain flooded his body. "GAH!" He gasped in pain. He picked himself up off the cold snowpile. "... Woah... that was too lucky that there was a patch of snow here." He said. He felt a surge of pain in his side. He gasped suddenly, obviously, the snowpile had only reduced the damage.

"Hee ho!" He heard again. He quickly stood and looked around himself, the snow made it impossible to see. He suddenly saw a flash of black in the white. "HEY! Who's there?" He screamed. "HEE HO!" The snowman flew towards him again. This time, he punched it in mid air to prevent himself from getting grabbed again. His fist collided with the cold snow the small monster was made of.

"Hoooooo!" It screamed as it flew backwards.

"AGI!" He heard a deep, masculine voice say. A small blast of fire flew out of the white of the snow and towards the monster, blasting it. The monster melted, leaving nothing but the small dark blue hat he hadn't noticed while fending it off. He stared into the direction of where the flame came from. A tall,

muscular man in a dark black trench coat walked out of the white background. "Who are you?" Zeke asked the figure.

The man leaned over and picked up the small hat left behind by the snow monster. He placed it on his head and turned to face Zeke. "I'm an elf from the North Pole" He said, his tone of voice and face seeming as cold as the snow. Zeke chuckled lightly. "Ok, now what are you really?" He asked. The man in black stepped closer, Zeke noticed that the man was carrying a katana on his belt, a broad sword on his back, and a dagger on his leg. "I can't tell you, goodbye." The man said as he turned his back on Zeke and began to walk away.

Zeke blinked in confusion. Who was that man? Why was he carrying so many weapons? How did he make fire hit that snowman? How was that snowman alive? These thoughts flooded Zeke's mind. The cold suddenly took Zeke's body and he shivered violently, he decided to head inside and think on this more.

END OF CHAPTER 1!

Whew, finally, got back into writing again! I know this chapter is short, but it's just the beginning! I hope you enjoyed this intro! Thank you for reading!

Hey guys! Sorry it takes so long for me to update, I'm busy with a lot of crap lately! Also, laziness, lots and lots of laziness. But, who cares? NEW CHAPTER! In this chapter, Zeke heads back inside to explain to his mother how he got outside, and to think about what happened last chapter. Please, enjoy your read!

Chapter 2: Demons.

Zeke opened the door to his house slowly. His mother's bright blue eyes looked at him with confusion. "Uh... how did you get outside?" She asked while tilting her head in confusion. Zeke laughed nervously. There was no way she would believe a snow monster jumped at him and tried to kill him, or that a man magically summoned fire and killed it. "I fell out the window when I tripped over my own feet." he said. "WHAT? When did you open your window?" she asked frightened that her son could have died. "I was checking the weather outside... sorry Mom..." He lowered his head in embarrassment.

"Just be more careful... you could have died..." Mrs. Kurosawa said with a sigh. She couldn't bother arguing with her son or punishing him if it was truly an accident. Zeke nodded. "Sorry for worrying you. I'll go back into my room and close the window. Don't worry I'll be more careful this time." He said with a reassuring smile. Mrs. Kurosawa smiled back at him.

Zeke rushed up the stairs and ran into his room. He closed the door behind him and ran over to the window.

He saw nothing but white, just like before. Zeke let out a sigh of relief, close the window, and sat down on his bed and let out a long, drawn out, exhale. "You were lucky..." Said a deep voice from seemingly out of nowhere. Zeke jumped off his bed and looked around his room quickly. "Calm down, I'm not in your room or even anywhere near you at the moment. It's me, the man you saw kill that monster."

Zeke stood still. "H-h-how... can I hear you?" He asked nervously as he stepped back and scanned the room carefully with his eyes. "When I stepped closer to you, I planted a tracking beacon on your sleeve, it doubles as a speaker." The voice said.

Zeke searched his uniform and found a small grey computer chip on his right sleeve. It had a small flashing red light. "Why are you tracking me?" Zeke asked the voice.

"Safety purposes. Demons attack humans only when they have something to gain. Which means, you have something they want." The voice explained. "DEMONS? What do I have that they want?" Zeke nearly screamed. "If I knew, I would have stolen it before leaving." The man's voice said. "I'll answer any questions you have, if you need me to." The man said calmly.

"Who are you?" Zeke asked the man. "My name is Jake Coerinth, my Demon Tamer Codename is Dark Equinox." Zeke blinked. "D-d-DEMON Tamer?" He asked while sweat began to bead at his forehead. He would not be believing his ears if he hadn't just been attacked by a demon.

"Yes, Demon Tamer, we fight to make a world where the creatures of this world and those beyond it can live in peace and harmony." Jake explained. Zeke shook his head. This was impossible! Not only did demons exist on Earth, there is a secret force that tames them!

"Why did you help me?" Zeke questioned further. He felt he had a right to answers. "I was in the area at the time, and heard there was a demon on the loose. So, I helped you out, nothing special." Jake explained

"Where did you come from?" Zeke questioned further. "My mother, now, it's time for you to stop asking irrelevant questions and my turn to ask you some things." Jake said sternly.

"Firstly, how were you able to hit the demon away from you like that? Do you have any fighting experience?" Jake asked.

"Not really, but I train by myself, by instinct and things I see on TV..." Zeke answered.

"Interesting... Ok, now a very important question." Jake began. "Now that you know these things exist, you have to choose one of three things to happen to you..."

"One, I make one of my demons wipe you and your mother's memory so you remember nothing about this whole day, but, those demons will still most likely come after you." Jake explained.

"Two, I kill you to keep you from talking, you will be dead, but at least you'll be free from those creatures in the afterlife." He continued with a serious tone.

"Or three, you join us, The Demon Tamer's, and help us make these attacks stop." Jake finished.

Zeke's eyes widened, his world had just turned upside down, and he knew his next decision would shape his destiny...

End of Chapter 2!

Whew, finished! Short chapter but better than nothing, right? Cliffhanger was obligatory, one is needed in every fanfiction, especially in the Adventure Genre! So, anyway, I hope you enjoyed reading as much as I enjoyed writing! Please, review if you have the time to do so! Slay you later!

A Dark Trial – analysis

Formal elements

Story (actions, actants, setting):

The actions in the story can be described shortly as “what would happen if a normal human being gets thrown in a supernatural situation?”. The main protagonist in the story, Zeke Kurosawa, is a boy who wakes up one morning at the sound of a radio alarmclock. He is described as a 'normal' human being, doing 'normal' human things. His waking up at the sound of the alarmclock and the realization that he overslept is something everybody can relate to. This link with our physical, real world is again implicitly shown when his mother is introduced; he seems to have a typical parent/child relation with his mother: Zeke finds out his mother resetted his alarmclock so he could sleep since he wasn't going nowhere with the snowfall outside.

The setting of the story seems to be middle- to northern Japan (typically of the Megaten franchise is that practically everything artefact in the franchise, whether they are books, videogames or animes, are set in Japan), since snowfall is practically guaranteed in these regions between November and May. It's not clear if the story is set in a village or a city. The story mentions no other surroundings than Zeke Kurosawa's house and its immediate surroundings.

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Very soon after the start of the story the actions and actants take a turn when we get introduced to a new character, a supernatural being (later is explained that Jack Frost is in fact a demon) called Jack Frost, and a mysterious human that seems to possess telepathic powers to converse with Zeke and is only known as The Demon Tamer.

Actions:

The literal actions in the story are straight forward, meaning that there is a *functional* relationship between 'that' which is described, and 'that' which happens after that. However, there are instances where *indices* come into play within the story. Most of these indices have to do with fixed aspects of the Megaten-franchise. For example, the 'Agi'-spell is a fire-based spell used against Jack Frost who is presented as a snowman. From this, we can see why this spell is effective against Jack Frost, fire and cold oppose each other after all. The story however, does not state that this is in fact a

recurring element in the Megaten-franchise and can even be considered one of the most important aspects of the artefact: opposing elements fighting for domination. Here we see a recurring aspect of fan fiction: stories expect a certain pre-knowledge from their fans.

Another example would be the relationship between Zeke and his mother. However brief the shared moments between mother and son are, we can see that they have a typical mother-son relationship. How Zeke acts towards his mother and how Zeke's mother act towards him is something we can relate to since this relationship, seen as an *index*, refers to our physical world. It is something we as readers are familiar with. By using this relationship to set a stage, the writer is implicitly setting a stage for a normal world we are familiar with which contrasts with the supernatural beings and their actions introduced later in the story.

Actants:

All characters (except Jack Frost) are OC, which is short for “original characters”. This means that the characters do not have origins that are canon to the artefact.

- Zeke Kurosawa, a (presumably) teenage boy
- Mrs. Kurosawa, Zeke's mother
- Jack Frost, a demon who's elemental alignment is ice
- The demon tamer, a human being with special gifts to protect humans against demons

Setting:

I assume the story takes place in Japan knowing that the original artefact has Japan as a basis for most of it's stories. This is further cemented by the name 'Kurosawa', which is a Japanese surname. It is snowing in the story, which means that the story probably doesn't take place in Tokyo, Osaka or Kyoto.²⁸ This is interesting since the bulk of stories of the original artefact have Tokyo as a setting. The setting isn't further described in the story, so I base my claims mostly on personal inference.

²⁸ For more information about snow in Japan, see <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2265.html>

Text (Time, characterisation, focalisation):

Time:

While the length of the story is a pretty short reading, time within the story flows a bit faster. The sequence is chronological, meaning that there are no events or scenes where the past or a (possible) future is being told. There are only short references to scenes that happened right before the actual reference, which is why the chronology is pretty straight forward. The frequency is normal, meaning that everything being told in the story is only being told once and there aren't any events being retold multiple times.

Characterisation:

Characters are introduced in an implicit manner as well as in an analogous manner. Zeke Kurosawa is introduced implicitly. His actions (the way he overreacts to his alarmclock and gets up to dress in a schooluniform) and his relation to Mrs. Kurosawa tell us that he is probably in his teens. He is also a normal character with no special ability whatsoever and oblivious to the world around him, a world which also inhibits demons and demon tamers, hence his constant surprising reactions to everything that happens around him.

Also implicitly introduced is the demon tamer. We don't know much about him, but we do know that he is a character that has a certain 'cool' around him, the way he talks nonchalant about demons and fighting them.

Jack Frost is analogous introduced. His name refers to a mythical character originating from European folklore, where Jack Frost was the personification of cold winters. The fact that he is presented as a snowman therefore makes sense. The Megaten-franchise uses mythical and religious characters and aspect very liberally, and Jack Frost is a perfect example of this.

Focalisation:

Focalisation in the story constantly shifts between an invisible focalisator, observing how certain actions unfold, to the protagonist as focalisator who describes how he feels and what he thinks. This shift is not a deliberate shift, but shows a writer not able to choose between points of view. This does have merits and downsides. The merits are that some actions surprise (for example, the scene in which Zeke detects a tracking device on his uniform), but the downside is an unstable telling of the story, which makes the position of the characters, like the demon tamer towards Zeke, not very

clear up to a point that it does frustrate a clear reading experience instead of creating a nice tension in the story.

The focalised object in the story is Zeke's own constant oblivious stance towards the world around him. This makes the story a nice introduction for a fanfic in development, but it poses more questions than it answers. Again, this makes reading this story more frustrating than should be.

Narrative (narration, imagination):

Narration:

The narration in the story is done by an outside, invisible authority. Sometimes the narration shifts between this authority and Zeke Kurosawa, but this shift only takes place whenever Zeke is contemplating his own thoughts on what is happening in the story.

Imagination:

The way characters are brought to life is really straight forward. All thoughts, feelings and actions are explicitly stated. Not a lot of (or none at all) imagination is needed to understand the several characters. Only two times in the story a kind of imagination is activated. The first time occurs when the demon tamer explains Zeke that demons only attack humans when they have something they want and how it was possible for Zeke to hit the demon. Because the story does not further elaborate on this aspect, there is definitely something more to the attack than currently described, which sparks the imagination. The second time is when the demon tamer gives Zeke three options: erase his memory with the risk of being attacked again, kill him here and now, or become a demon tamer himself. These choices can be linked to the first time, again, there is something more to it. Why is the third choice the only reasonable choice? This is probably deliberate incorporated in the story, it has a "to be continued"-ring to it, since the story ends right there. [note: this is pretty strange considering that the fanfic is marked as 'completed']

Comparison of the analysis with the original artefact

Here I literally compare elements from the story with elements found in the original artefact. All elements play a role in the perceived creativity of the fanfic. The amount of which these elements contribute to the amount of creativity depends on how these elements are novel compared with their artefact counterparts, and how novel these elements appear. For example, an OC is already more novel than a canonical character.

Story:

Actions are flat in that they are straight to the point and not really hold a deeper meaning other than pushing the story forward. In other words, the story feels more like an introduction to, than an actual story. However, there is the daily life-aspect (Zeke who wakes up and gets ready to go to school) which is contrasted by the dystopian cyberpunk setting of the Megaten-franchise. In this sense, this story cannot be considered canon at all. Further more, there is no mention of a demon summoning program (or something similar) at all. Instead, the setting of the story is more a resemblance of our own realm mixed with supernatural elements that borrows from Megami Tensei canon, like Jack Frost for example.

Dark trial is a fanfic consisting primarily of OCs, and by that presents a new look on the original artefact, not bound by past histories of already existing characters. However, the character of Jack Frost is canon. This becomes more evident when Jack Frost is defeated by an 'Agi'-spell, which is an actant bound by canon.

Then there is the setting. Assuming the story takes place in Japan, one can recognize a pattern in line with other stories in the Megaten-franchise, since most of them all have Japan as a setting.

Text:

Time in the story is pretty straightforward and with that, is in line with most of the stories told within the franchise (stories that are considered canon).

Characterisation is also in line with the artefact. Within the Megaten-franchise, these elements are almost exclusively presented in an implicit and analogous manner, although sometimes descriptions of certain characters in canon takes place.

On focalisation, there is not much to say. This shifts in the story, but the same holds true for stories that are canon. Further more, there isn't a focalisation technique that stands out in the story or is some way or another take the story into a direction that is not considered canon.

Narrative:

Narration is totally in line with the artefact, meaning that a narrative being steered by an outside authority or a character both can be considered canon.

Imagination is also in line with the artefact. In the Megaten-franchise it is very common that characters motivations and intentions are not explicitly stated. In fact, this can be almost considered a rule. This makes the story pretty hard to grasp so to speak. What the different characters in the

story want and need isn't literally or even implicitly spelled out. Surprisingly, this added to the imagination more than that it derailed present knowledge on story and characters

To summarize:

The story partly stays true to canon where the characters, setting, time and characterisations are concerned. Other actants, like the 'Agi'-spell and the demon tamer are canon, and make returning appearances throughout the Megaten-franchise.

Actions however, are a whole different story. Here, the story departs fully from the franchise, giving the reader a new, dare I say, 'fannish', look on a canonized franchise. This by mixing a slice-of-life element with the canonized elements of demons and magic.

Establishing the creativity

- On story:

Other than the setting (which is only mapping, since it uses a canonized setting, namely Japan), most of the fanfic on the level of *story* can be considered *exploring*. It does not directly relate to the original artefact as setting does. For example, the characters are an exploration of how original characters fit in with canonized actants like Jack Frost or the 'Agi'-spell. On this level, the story does something new but at the same time relies heavily on canonized elements.

- On text:

Text is *mapping* knowledge. There is no part that even remotely resembles *exploring*, let alone *transforming*. On this level the story keeps completely in line with the original artefact.

- On narrative:

While I consider narration *mapping* and therefore establishes itself as in line with the artefact, the *imagination* is really *exploring* knowledge: something new (the slice-of-life elements) is mixed with something familiar (the appearance of demons and demon tamer as well as the use of magic) on this level of the story.

- The contribution to the established archive:

The story extents largely, but it also establishes on certain levels. In all, the fanfic really threads

middle ground, and so it both extends existing entries as well as establish new entries to the archive. From this follows, that the story as a whole is *exploring* knowledge, and its creative level is medium.

Appendix III: The Bel for Whom The Throne Tolls + analysis

"The Bel for Whom the Throne Tolls"

A Devil Survivor Fanfic by Rpgingmaster

Rated Teen

Note: This contains spoilers, as it concentrates on the antagonist characters of the game with "Bel" in their names and their back stories as it relates to the game, and was written partially because I wanted to explore them, and partially because it's my first story in Shin Megami Tensei/Megami Ibrunoku universe, and I hope I did a good job.

Set just after the game starts.

Beldr's POV

A long time ago, I was a mighty warrior, one of great renown.

Why you ask?

I shall tell you. I was the second son of Wodan, though most mortals refer to him as Odin. As for the warrior part, I was one of the mightiest of Valhalla's Aesir, and all things on Earth trembled at my name.

Or so I had thought.

In truth, this was almost revealed to me in a dream in which I saw my own death, and I confess it made my heart heavy, for up until then, I had thought myself Death's master, not its servant.

At first, I tried to let it pass. It was obviously a night terror, a whisper from the underworld saying untruths into my sleeping ear, and when I found out my mother Frigga had the same dream, I was comforted at the time when she told me she felt it was unimportant, and that I should not let it distract me from glory.

Unfortunately, I should have worried, but at the time, how was I to know that not only had she had the same dream, but she had been so worried she made all the beings on Earth swear to never stand against me? And furthermore, how was I to know that mistletoe had not made the vow, and she had disregarded this as unimportant because she had felt mistletoe had not the age to properly swear.

In retrospect, how was I to know that my doom had been nigh?

In fact, it was in this I made a foolish error. Seeking to establish how indestructible I was, I proposed that my brothers would gather one day and hurl spears at my body to prove to all doubters I was indeed Death's master, and I had no idea at the time that miserable scum Loki had heard of my mother's extollation of vows from the beings of Earth, and hence he conspired to take me down, so when my blind brother Hoor threw his spear, it was tinged with the essence of mistletoe.

As a result, when it struck me, the spear lanced my heart, and thus I was sent to the underworld

Later, even though I was promised release if all the beings of Earth entreated my return, that infernal bastard again conspired to have my soul rot for his amusement by disguising himself as a giantess who wished me remain dead, and by the time his trickery had been discovered, my soul's chance at reentering the world and again proving my power had been lost.

Or, it had then.

Now, however, it seems that the gates for the place the lowly and the dishonored were flung open into the human city of Tokyo, and my spirit once again gained a chance at reclaiming my honor not only as the mightiest of Valhalla, but I also had a chance to claim the Throne of Bel, the crown to which all demons would acknowledge, and make more than just Death my servant.

Of course, knowing the father YHVH whom even my own father Odin bent knee to would regard me as my enemy was a fact I had to accept, but since the heavens were denied me, I promised myself on the day I struck down all the other who would claim the Throne of Bel, I would not only take Valhalla for my

own, but it, the mistletoe that brought me to dastard, and all like Loki who wished me ill tidings would be brought to the Abyss in my place.

And once it was all over, my might would again go unquestioned....not only in the heavens, but to everything on Earth.

Belial's POV

Fire.

It is a force that humans cowered from in my day. It was mighty, it was monstrous, it was needed, but it was feared and respected, and I was the god whom all bowed to as Fire's herald. All of humanity once worshiped me as the one who brought Fire to heel, and as long as I was given glory, I would not turn the force they knew was unstable and merciless into their unending bane, and instead would allow them to use a portion of my largesse to their pathetic kind as a token of my willingness to accept their mewling cries of sycophantic adulation at the awe of my presence in their pitiable lives.

And then, that damned YHVH changed everything.

HE claimed Fire was but one of his creations, that he shaped the heavens and the earth into what it was, and while it's true his pathetic efforts did contribute some order to chaos that was the universe, at least in his view, all he did was shift a few meaningless mountains and fathom some oceans, and, I must admit, fashioned the weak species who soon knew me as the true god whose power was greater than his efforts, and whose capriciousness could destroy those works of creation, as Destruction could ruin all that YHVH had inspired.

Unfortunately, I had underestimated YHVH's cunning. Not only did he seduce my followers into his bosom, he turned the other deities who acknowledged me as their better, especially the lesser flame spirits who served as envoys and messengers, and he inspired them to rise up against me and steward the domain of Fire in my stead, claiming it was not usurpation, but that my reign was tyrannical, and that all he wanted was to make sure that all the spirits who shepherded the elements could share in the effort to guide the continuing bounties of Creation.

It was an overthrow, pure and simple, and sadly, quality such as my own could not stand up to the numbers he had assembled, so I was stripped of my power and cast into Makai along with all the others YHVH had deposed, where I waited long for the day when I would regain my place.

Thankfully, it seemed that YHVH's tactics of coercion and intimidation into compliance worked against him, for Cain, the man who first murdered the ingrate who stole his birth right much like I regret not doing to that damned god of the Hebrews, decided to give all demons a chance to strike back against that arrogant deposer of the true powers behind all that humanity worshiped, and I was soon released into the human city of Tokyo where I waited for the chosen Bel of YHVH to attempt taking my chance at regaining my throne.

While I waited, I promised myself I would not only defeat the usurper's champion, but that I would also take YHVH's kingdom and his Angels, and they, once they saw that miserable dog dead at my feet, would acknowledge my burning power as the source of all wisdom.

Jezebel's POV

Lust.

It is seen as evil by YHVH and his damned cronies who believe that humans should reject the pleasures of the flesh, but I say he was and still is a fool.

After all, if the pleasures of the flesh were not present, what would distract those foolish beings from challenging the throne of the true god, which I was?

Was he so stupid an attempt at a deity he was willing to invite rebellion by eliminating distraction?

Well, that was why I possessed the willing body of that Phoenician high priest's daughter, and when she became a queen and married that human king of the Hebrews known as Ahab, I used my vessel's influence over that half hearted shell to bend YHVH's chosen to my will and have them so drunk on their own pleasure the only thoughts they had of me, when they could be bothered to think, was their gratitude at opening up the world of desire that foolish fool who called himself a god had denied them in his idiocy.

However, let it not be said I'm not willing to, as mortals put it, "share the spotlight". Belberith, another god who like me believed in the celebration of gluttonous desire and want, considered me his subordinate, and while it wasn't true, he had been a boon to my mortal vessel spreading my message of reveling in the pleasures of the flesh, so I decided to indulge his illusions and promoted his glory aside my own, and while on the surface it seemed as if I was his vassal by promoting his glory, he was merely a front for myself, and since I knew YHVH was turning wrathful his people had forsaken him, Belberith, or Baal Berith, as he was known then, would serve as a easy target for that foolish deity.

Unfortunately, my plan worked too well, for even though I laughed in the face of his servant Elijah after he promised dogs would feast on my mortal shell's corpse, Belberith was soon brought low as YHVH ambushed him prior to the showdown on Mount Carmel to prove who could summon the clouds, and thus Belberith, who had been castigated to the Pit, was powerless to prevent his power from being revealed as nothing while YHVH seized the spotlight with a fancy display in front of those mindless, traitorous sheep who deserted Belberith, and by proxy, me.

At the time, I had planned to cut my losses and end the life of YHVH's prophet, knowing he was the voice of YHVH's campaign, but that's when that bastard sent another servant of his named Jehu to my window to demand my death.

I laughed in his face as I tempted him away from YHVH's designs with my shell's beauty, and when his will faltered, he turned away as he demand the eunuchs who served as my shell's attendants throw my body from the window.

Unfortunately, even though their inability to feel physical pleasure had been more than compensated for by wielding the kind of temporal power most mortals would kill for, some of those eunuchs revealed themselves stupid enough to actually believe YHVH would ever grant them the same power I had as they grabbed my shell and threw her body from the window to its death, and as my soul left her shell as the dogs savaged the body I once used, YHVH's Powers and Principalities descended on me like dogs themselves, and that arrogant bastard didn't even give me a chance to face him on equal terms before his servants strong armed me into the Abyss where he had left Belberith in destard.

Thankfully, now that is at an end, and now that Cain has avenged the humiliating mark YHVH placed on him by granting a chance for me to become a true queen of Bel, I shall regain the place YHVH took, and even though I again now help Belberith, it is but temporary, for once it is just me and my former partner in opposing the alleged "I Am's" chosen Abel, and we are the only true Bels left, I shall leave Belberith to rot in the dust with the worms like my mortal shell's father left his king to rot in the dust as he usurped the Phoenician throne.

And, like him, I shall depose YHVH, and under my rule all humans and demons who want unending succor shall be granted my mercy, as not only will it secure my reign, but it shall be my mark of eternal shame upon that interloper against my designs.

Belberith's POV

At one point, all, even YHVH's chosen, knew me as the true god.

And why not? Along with Jezebel, who also embraced and encouraged Man to enjoy all the fruits YHVH had denied them in his cruelty, I was far more benevolent and loving to humanity than he. Of course, I also punished defiance harshly, but as opposed to YHVH, I at least let people have some fun while I was at it.

In fact, for quite some time, despite his prophets cajoling otherwise, I knew YHVH was making little headway, as too many humans preferred my benevolent rule to his own, so in retrospect, I grew incautious, which is what he had been waiting for, for not long after his prophet Elijah challenged my priests to prove whose god was greater, I was ready to humiliate YHVH.

Unfortunately, that's when that cheating bastard jumped me with all of his forces, denying me a fair chance to stand against him like I had been willing to do, and thus that was why when my priests asked me to call down fire to light the offering they sent up to me, I could do nothing. YHVH, on the other hand, decided to use my absence to humiliate me by showing more of his glory than I at my most arrogant would have done, simply so he could win by fraud.

However, that is in the past, and now that the human whom YHVH first spurned opened the gates of the miserable prison YHVH commandeered for his own use, I and Jezebel, along with all the other Bels, shall now eliminate any foolish mortal pretenders to the Throne, then I shall emerge victorious, using those humans who now worship me again as my lamp stands, so that the way to my throne shall be lit by the adulation of those who acknowledge the true god.

Babel's POV

A long, long time ago, Man was fascinated with the powers above.

So much so, they planned to build a tower to reach the heavens, so they might gain the wisdom they needed to become gods themselves.

Yes, it was foolish, and yes it was doomed to failure, but unlike YHVH, I merely savored their arrogance, hence when the tower to their arrogance was being built, I simply encouraged that arrogance, as it gave me power, and even though it was foolish, I decided to give those pathetic beings the belief they were opening the doors to progress.

In truth, I was the gatekeeper of the underworld, and as the tower grew and grew, the doors to the Abyss were cracking open wider and wider.

And then, YHVH took that from me, by splitting mankind into many languages, forcing disunity, so the great tower eventually came to nothing, and as they forsook me, YHVH's servants overpowered me and threw me into the Abyss I once managed.

However, that is at an end now, for Cain, the human who was spurned by the same would be god, reopened the gate, once again restoring me to my rightful place, and once I eliminate all the pretenders to the Throne of Bel, not only shall YHVH be brought to heel along with his "chosen people", but the demons shall finally be allowed to let their unfettered arrogance reign supreme, for I shall hold upon those gates with the power of the Throne for eternity.

And YHVH shalt never prevail against me in preventing humanity from damning themselves.

Afterword

This was my first Devil Survivor Fanfic, and I hope it reads well.

Belzaboul/Beelzebub is not included due to the fact he was only fighting for the Throne of Bel on behalf of Lucifer.

I tried to mix official history with the Devil Survivor mythos (which the latter derives from the former), and this is how the villains saw themselves as opposed to the light that God (i.e. - YHVH) painted them in.

Hope I did a decent job.

The Bel for Whom the Throne Tolls - Analysis

Formal elements

Story (actions, actants, setting):

This fanfic is based on the *Devil Survivor* (Atlus, 2009) tie-in of the Megaten franchise. The title refers to the several angels and demons in the game who are fighting for the Throne of Bel. The story holds multiple point of views, namely that of all the antagonists in the game with the word “Bel” in their names. The story explores the backstories of all these characters and how they are incorporated in the game.

One of the most important thing to mention about the artefact is that it is in fact a modern day retelling of the biblical story Cain and Abel, where the nameless protagonist takes on the role of Abel and his cousin Naoya represents Cain.

Actions:

Actions in the story are extremely interwoven with the actans. This means that every character in the story can be considered a function of the actions by which the other actants acts. For example, during Jezebel's point of view, Jezebel refers to Belberith as a demon which considered Jezebel its subordinate. Jezebel then explains how she tried to trick Belberith so that YHVH's wrath would rain down upon him. Belberith however didn't see Jezebel as a subordinate at all, all the more reason he was surprised to find out Jezebel deceived him by which YHVH could strike at Belberith. All through the story, actions of one demons, fueled by the personal feelings of a demon towards another demon, activates the actions of other demons, in other point of views within the story.

Actants:

A focus in this story is on the demons, and not Naoya or the protagonist of the videogame. Very interesting is that the writer chose to incorporate mythical facts about the demon's in question. For example, he refers to Beldr as the son of Odin and Frigga, which is in line with the songs found in the Edda, the collections of songs on which Norse mythology is based and where said demons find their origins.

In the story there are no protagonists, only the intertwined fates of the demon's with the word “Bel” in their name, and the way YHVH (which is one of the Hebrew name for 'god').

- Beldr: son of Odin and Frigga. Killed by his blind brother Hoor and cast into the underworld through a plot schemed by YHVH.
- Belial: a Judeo-Christian demon known as the demon of lust. He refers to the underworld as 'Makai', which is the Shintoist version of the underworld.
- Jezebel: an ancient Hebrew princess of Phoenicia who later became queen of Israel. In the story she is presented as the demon of lust.
- Belberith: Also know as Baäl, the god of thunder in Eastern mythology, in the story he is presented as the counterpart of Jezebel as a demon of lust.
- Babel: the personification of the tower with the same name. He represents the wish of humans to gain the wisdom of the gods. In the story he is presented as the gatekeeper of the underworld.
- YHVH: the personification of god. A scheming entity who tries to let things happen his way.

Setting:

Although there is no formal setting, there are to places worth mentioning: the underworld, where most demons stayed until the gates of the underworld were opened in Tokyo, Japan. Tokyo is the second important place. It is this place from which the demons contemplate their situation towards the reader.

Text (Time, characterisation, focalisation):

Time:

Length in the story is longer than its history as is read by the reader. Since all the demons contemplate their memories, the events that are described by the demons can span centuries, from mythological an biblical times towards this modern day era.

The sequence in the story is shorter than our reading of the history, for the same reason as mentioned when length is discussed. All the point of views are memories, and thus happen in a flash, while reading these memories take up quite a lot of time. They can be considered flashbacks, since most of the described events happened in the past leading up to the point where the demons are now.

Characterisation:

Characterisation in the story is in line with their mythological personae. The way characters are presented is through the characters themselves. All the characters are presented as a sort of victims of God, who is plotting his own schemes on the backs of the demons. The demons suffered for it and now try to get back at YHVH by working together despite their (mythological) differences. These differences are being described by the demons which give all the characters more 'colour' so to speak. It's safe to say all characters are explicitly introduced by other characters, as well as implicitly by their actions.

Focalisation:

The focalisation constantly moves with every point of view. The character presented in every point of view is the focaliser and the only focaliser. The fight for the Throne of Bel is implicitly focalised. It is important to mention though, that the Throne of Bel as a focalised object can only be regarded as such when one is familiar with the original artefact.

Narrative (narration, imagination):

Narration:

Narration is done by every demon whose point of view is described in the greater scheme of things (meaning: the fight for the Throne of Bel after the gates of the underworld are opened). Here, the demon's can be considered the protagonists while YHVH is the main antagonist.

Imagination:

Imagination is handled very colourfully in the story by clever use of points of view. Every character describes his or her reasons for acting in a certain way, as well as describing his or her thoughts on other demons. When the reader reaches the point of view of another demon, a different account of the same event is given so at the end of the story there is a complete 'mosaic' of several characters and their intentions and motivations within the story.

Artefact Elements

Story:

The fact that demons fight for the Throne of Bel is the main element of the original artefact. This is however the only comparison one can make. In the artefact for example, reasons behind intentions of demons are seldom given, so the player can only guess what lies behind the intention. In the story however, within every point of view a clear list of actions really fills in the gaps of the original artefact.

Text:

The flow of time within the story in the way presented to the reader, as a memory from different points of view, is pretty original. This aspect is completely not in line with the original artefact. The same holds true for characterisation. Only through a few conversations in the original artefact do we know of the intentions of the several demons presented in the story here. However, those conversations are realtime, instead of contemplations within the demons as they are presented here in the story. In short, the elements of the text are completely different from the original artefact.

Narrative:

Narration compared to the original artefact is very different. The several points of view as described in the story are totally new and completely rehaults the image one might have of the demons after the original artefact is experienced.

The imagination is presented very clearly but, just as the narrative, in a total new way if one compares it to the original artefact.

Establishing the creativity

On story:

Although the story is wholly fictional (as in: not drawing parallels with the original artefact), it still manages to feel in line with the artefact by the coming together of otherwise not comparable mythological entities. Therefore, it threads on middleground where story is concerned and I consider the story thus *exploring*.

On text:

Text is very experimental. This is established by employing a set of typical fanfic instruments like a different points of view-method (which has a special effect on characterisation). Drawing from mythological sources while at the same time *transforming* their role so to fit in within the overarching storyline of *Devil Survivor*, it is really a transformation of knowledge that takes place on this level of the story.

On narrative:

As already mentioned, narration is very interesting brought to life which has an effect on the imagination. The writer employs a tactic of introducing elements know to the reader (by playing the game), drawing from mythological sources and adding his/her own fictional elements to it. This makes narrative a *transformation* of knowledge.

The contribution to the established archive:

While the story largely establishes known facts on the characters and their implementation in the original artefact, text and narrative clearly demonstrate a push of boundaries of the original artefact. Therefore it creates a total new entry to the archive.