

James Joyce's *Ulysses* As A Work Of Fanfiction: Relating To The Cognitive Turn

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Abstract

This paper tries to look at James Joyce's masterpiece *Ulysses*, in the light of the contemporary phenomenon of Fanfiction, which again is part of the broader tradition of derivative works and pastiches. *Ulysses*, clearly based on Homer's *The Odyssey* although reimagined in the context of 1920's Dublin, has many parallels with the praxis and theories of Fanfiction writing, and can itself be called a work of fanfiction. The paper begins by defining the praxis of fanfiction, while embedding it within the historiography of storytelling and writing, and giving examples of other classics that could very well be considered to be works of fanfiction. It also looks at how fanfiction is a fruitful cognitive exercise and how *Ulysses* as fanfiction is a result of such cognitive praxis, which is also true for speculative fiction writing in general. In its conclusion, the paper talks about the afterlife of both Homer's *The Odyssey* and Joyce's *Ulysses* as they live on through contemporary fanfictions, while remaining just as relevant as they had been when conceived.

Keywords: James Joyce; *Ulysses*, Homer; *Odyssey*; Cognitive Science

Introduction

This paper deals with the logic of how James Joyce's *Ulysses* may be seen as a work of fanfiction based on Homer's antiquarian epic, *The Odyssey*. It also looks at fans, who are interpretative (and, in this day and age of internet connectivity and online presence, often interactive) audiences that pride themselves regarding their affinity to a particular media, text or activity which in turn lends them their fan status, and how Joyce is a fan of the character of *Ulysses* and the plot of *The Odyssey*, which propelled him to subtly re-create the same for his novel. It tries to define and introduce fanfiction, which is derivative fiction written by fans for fans based on the particular text/media/activity that they adore. Such fiction writing and re-imagining of existing narratives is then seen in the light of how literary activities have strong ties with cognitive perception and enhancement.

What is Fanfiction

Fanfiction can roughly be defined as fiction written by fans, based on an extant fictional universe and a set of characters, who can either be reworked into an alternate universe or be woven into a possible continuation of the source storyline. Born to pay homage to the source, this adaptation is part of the universal and very human attempt to keep a story going, and weaving new stories with characters we can relate to. In that way, fanfiction can be said to have its origins in the Graeco-Roman dramaturgy, where existing popular narratives were given newer interpretations by different dramatists. However the practice of fanfiction systematically came into being in the published form for the first time in the 1960s Star Trek fanzines. *Spockanalia* was the first of them, and these were published and circulated by dedicated fan groups, featuring amateur fictions (which is also etymologically true, as these efforts were purely labours of love, and funded by small donations from members and substantial quantities of unpaid work). In 1975, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, who went on to become a professional fiction writer, along with two other celebrated fanfic authors, Sondra Marshak and Joan Winston, wrote a How-to-guide for fanfic writers, as a part of *Star Trek*

Lives, which was the first published document that celebrated and theorized fanfiction. This activity was starkly different while seen in comparison with the usual derogatory light it has recently been seen in, on grounds of being unoriginal and purely derivative. The name of the volume suggests our eternal fascination with the continuous nature of a story, keeping it fluid and alive, through reinterpretations and retellings, even if the source narrative has found its official closure. Lichtenberg was also nominated for the prestigious Hugo awards for sci-fi authors, and indeed it has a separate section for fanfictions, cementing its nature as a valid and important enterprise of artistic imagination. Therefore, the existence of fanfictions on *Fanfiction.Net* and *Archive of Our Own*, popularly known as AO3 (two of the internet's largest repositories of fanfiction) as well as on dedicated fansites, other fanfiction sites and the blog sites of the fan-authors is not a freak cultural phenomenon at all. Rather, it is inextricably linked to the ongoing practice of storytelling as a community enterprise.

Why Do People Write Fanfiction?

Writing fanfictions help authors inhabit the world of the source text and allows them to often play "God" with it, that is to change it to their liking, through active world-building and literary terraforming, by bringing in changes to the plotlines, the characters, their lives and lived experience. Also writing fanfiction is primarily about paying a tribute to the source artwork the author must be an avid fan of, which is the most valid reason for writing pastiches and making any kind of derivative artwork. The act of writing fanfiction, or producing any fanwork for that matter (such as fanart, drabbles, headcanon, cosplay etc.) occurs because of the inspiration which the source artwork has jolted in the concerned artist. And it is in no way inferior to the source artwork.

Fanfictions also provide a sort of peephole into the author's preferences, as to how he interprets characters and situations, and how s/he adapts them to his/her purposes and intentions of storytelling. Looking at it from the viewpoint of the historiography of storytelling and narrative building, fanfictions have existed since forever, where oral narratives kept

changing forms, plots, characters, and devices based upon who was telling the story and the audience listening to it.

Writing fanfiction enables the writers to inhabit the world that the source author had built, or they take turns to build for themselves, through characters known as author-inserts, or stand-ins for the authors. A female character thus produced would be Mary Sue and male one would be Gary Stu (generic names for such characters). To give a more illustrious example of this in terms of classical AU (alternative universe) "fanfiction" (the use of the term is most certainly retrospective), we can look at Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, where he traverses hell and meets the people and characters that he has admired. Here we have an example of RPF (real people fiction, Virgil being an example) and of course Dante himself (classic Gary Stu). This way, the fan-authors can live a life of their choosing, unwind from their daily worries, or even make their characters do things that they would not dream of doing in their mundane, real lives. However, here is the twist. In *Ulysses*, Joyce brings down the Homeric heroes to the mock-heroic dusty lanes of 1920s Dublin, where the epic pathos turns somewhat into a kind of everyday bathos, the kind of everyday that Joyce himself felt and lived. He made the classical characters live his life, his day and age, in a crystal clear and lyrically poignant fashion.

How is *Ulysses* a Fanfiction

As Dan Chiasson writes in his *The New Yorker* review for the book by Kevin Birmingham, titled *The Most Dangerous Book: The Battle for James Joyce's Ulysses*, "[t]he hero the Ulysses of James Joyce's 'Ulysses' is Leopold Bloom: a man, like Homer's Hero, killed in all manner of contending a wanderer, a strategist, a man of ...many twists and turns. For Joyce, Homer's s hero was the only complete person in literature." For Chiasson, "[t]he ultimate contender conniver and man for every occasion is Joyce himself. He is its hero..." This logical explanation is enough to clarify how Joyce himself has been, in the language of fandom, an

ardent fan of *Ulysses*, and the plot of Homer's *Odyssey*, so much so that he based his novel on and around it, despite in an alternative universe setting, which was more familiar to him. Moreover, in his novel titled *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom effectively functions as Joyce's Gary Stu/Author Insert within the narrative, which ideally allows him to inhabit that universe. It is thereby extremely fitting to see a magazine Website aptly named "theodysseyonline" explaining how to write fanfiction for beginners as well as the joys of writing fanfiction.

Classics as Fanfictions: Other Examples

There are plenty of classics which can be seen as fanfictions based on earlier classics, and quite often, not-so-famous pieces of literature, obscure memoirs, historical documents, patronized retellings (like commissioned fics or gift-fics), and even sacred texts like *The Bible* (like Milton's *Paradise Lost* can be seen as a fanfiction of the Bible, where Satan begins the narrative as its lead character, however that legitimacy of being the apparent protagonist changes slowly but surely). Due to our limitations in terms of scope, we will look at a small few of these to give us an idea, that the writings of transformative texts like fanfictions, or largely speaking derivative works, have been there since a long time, and the tradition continues in case of *Ulysses*, and in all of the foreseeable times to come.

Virgil's classical epic *The Aeneid* can very well be treated as a fanfiction for both Homer's *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*, both of which had already been quite famous in Rome. This writing was occasioned by the desire of the famed Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar, who had commissioned Virgil to carve an elaborate heroic tale, explaining how the Romans too were a substantial part and rightful claimants of the classical Greek mythography. Therefore, in the classic fashion of fanfic-writing, Virgil teased out the minor character of Aeneas from *The Iliad*, made him the heroic progenitor of the Romans to show how, while the Greeks waned, despite their loss in Troy, Romans were the true winners. In that way, *The Aeneid* serves as a sequel to the narrative of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

Research has shown that the celebrated text of *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas features borrowed characters from an obscure memoir named *Mémoires de Monsieur D'Artagnan*, a book that he, by his admission in the preface to his novel, had checked out of the Marseille Public Library and then never returned. He explains how his intrigue with these characters propelled him to write his own story about their imaginary adventures, as he deemed fit. Just like any responsible fanfiction writer who always takes time explaining their influences and inspirations, Dumas did the same thing, therefore making it "fair use" in today's terminology of copyright.

Most of the works of Shakespeare were in some way based on other texts that he had come across. Especially his historical plays are classic examples of real person fanfiction (RPF), that takes people and events of real-life and manipulates them according to the author's personal desires. There is also the classic case of canon vs fanon in the reception of his texts, since his characters and events were so well-rounded, that for his audience, some elements of his stories were believed to be as good as facts. Here, fanon (narrative reality conceived by fans) gets confused with canon (narrative reality from the source text), to good effect.

Shakespeare's practice of borrowing the plot of an existing piece of writing finds classic use in *Romeo and Juliet*, the chief source for which was Arthur Brooke's 1562 poem, "The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet", which in turn was a compilation of various versions of the popular oral folk narrative. Even the names of the titular characters are kept the same. However, like a good fanfiction writer he inserted his own OCs (original characters who are not there in the source text, and are creations of the fan-authors), like Mercutio and Paris; completely transformed the style and genre of writing, and as research shows, he made the characters' sexuality a lot more ambiguous, like many good fanfic writers do, by teasing out the subtle subtexts of the source narrative.

Shakespeare's *Othello* is based on a didactic Italian folk-tale called "The Moorish Captain." While Desdemona exists in that story under her name, her husband has only been referred to as "The Moor," and the purpose of the story is to serve as a racist warning against interracial marriage. However, Shakespeare's greatness resides in making these stock characters his own by fleshing them out as well as the plot, giving them actual names, and rewriting the cautionary tale into a complicated narrative about love, prejudice, and jealousy.

Sir Thomas Malory's 1485 text *Le Morte d'Arthur* had been a famous and classic compilation of the popular folklores about King Arthur and the Knights of The Round Table, embellished with his readings and personal interpretations of them, the heroic tales of which had been baked into the national pride of the British over the centuries. Mark Twain's hilarious novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* takes this story out for a spin by writing a crackfic (which are shameless, ridiculous fanfictions are written just for the sake of poking fun, where logic and explanation no longer matter) with time travel, and Twain's OC Hank is a Yankee, who manages to chill with the King and the venerable knights at their round table.

***Ulysses* as A Modernist Fanfiction**

Modernism as a literary and cultural movement was engrossed in knowing and depicting existing reality with greater depth than ever before. Its artistic frenzy found an outlet in the extremely realistic depiction of both the physical world inhabited by people and their inner psychological experience of life. Joyce's *Ulysses* did the same, that too with unprecedented levels of realism. And as a renowned pioneer of Fanfiction Studies, Francesca Coppa in the introduction to her book *The Fanfiction Reader* has talked at length about how fanfiction is less about the plot and more about characters, even when it is based on audio-visual media, as prose as a medium allows for internal narratives of the characters, without it being or seeming awkward to the readers. While fanfictions let the authors offer their interpretation of the characters, they also let them re-create and re-cognize these characters, much in the fashion of the Aristotelian concept of anagnorisis, where the characters otherwise

well-known, come forward, bathed in a new light of perspectives, robed in a newer reality, with more internal monologues, stream-of-consciousness narratives and natural-sounding everyday conversation, just like Joyce's retelling of the Homeric characters. In the terminology of fanfiction, Joyce's narrative would be set in an AU, that is an alternative universe than that of Homer's source text, where Homer's classical characters like Ulysses, Penelope, Telemachus, become some ordinary Irish citizens in 1920's Dublin. As is obvious with a classic modernist text, the reader can delve deep within the memories and the psychology of the three main characters of the novel. What might not be so obvious to the uninitiated in the world of fanfictions is that the same can be said true of most fanfictions, where the narratives provide detailed, introspective narratives of the characters involved. Also, in the manner of classic fanfiction, Joyce's tribute to Homer's original seeps in throughout the text, as some of the heroic greatness of the characters and epic proportions of detailed storytelling remains, like a refrain. This makes the reader constantly remember the source text it draws inspiration from, and s/he is almost forced to continually draw parallels between the source and the derivative work. Reading becomes a playful, palimpsestuous exercise, and the reader is much more active in noticing the changes, and how they serve to further enrich the derivative work, which would not have been the case if it was taken out of the historiographic continuum, and read in the manner of new criticism, solely as a lone text.

Joyce's complexity of writing style rewards the reader for his/her close-reading and persistence, as would a good fanfiction spreading across a humongous 12k words, which is replete with allusions and references to the source, and to various sections of its narrative. For the readers, the text illumines new ways of perceiving and interpreting everyday reality, just as fanfiction authors imagine their larger-than-life heroes to inhabit the same space as theirs, and give meaning to that seeming mundaneness. Joyce's allusions to Homer are especially meaningful in the way that they honour the ambivalence of human psychology and the

perceived reality, therefore through their logical coherence across space, time, language, and genre, the classical allusions help to bring forth the nuances and epic complexities of everyday reality itself, elevating the mundane and demeaning the epic, all at the same stance. This is true for fanfictions as well. By adapting extant texts to their purpose, fan-authors speak of personal feelings, perceptions, ethics and moralities, or simply life as they know it, or would like to live it. As is true for many fanfiction authors (who are arguably less talented and often produce amateur works) Joyce too could not resist showing off his acrobatic writing powers, doing somersaults across time, allusions, and contexts, while writing *Ulysses*. The parts in *Ulysses*, as in other fanfictions of today that the readers tend to love are when the characters are their most human selves, despite the lives that they have to live or the feats (often heroic, like Homer's Odysseus or Marvel Comics' Captain America, who is a fan-favourite and has spawned many fanfictions). Some examples of these are the lucid and lively descriptions of Bloom's kitchen, Molly's memories of singing by the piano, Stephen's apprehensions about the future mixed with his sensations of the sea and the sand as he walks along the beach, and many more that are strewn across the text.

Looking retrospectively at *Ulysses* as a work of fanfiction, taking into account the fact that the term "fanfiction" and the associated idea with it had not existed in his time, we realize that many important works of literature were born out of adaptations of existing classics of yore, and this tradition Joyce has tapped into for his work. As we would notice from looking at the large online repositories of fanfiction, for any fanfiction to be popular or even generate income (through Patreon donations), the source work needs a wide audience/readership. Joyce choosing to work on *Odyssey* then follows this logic of writing fanfiction based on a popular work, since, given the classical-inspired school education of the day, his choice of text would make sure that the readers would be somewhat familiar with the source work, and therefore can relish and appreciate the differences that his talent has brought into the "fanfiction".

Cognitive Science in Literary Praxis: The Case of *Ulysses* as a Fanfiction

Through the complex interactions taking place between the fields of literary praxis, criticism and interpretation of narrative fiction, and that of Cognitive Science, which includes the tools and methods found in the fields of psychology, neuroscience and cybernetics, to study how human cognition works, interstices of myriad possibilities have been found. It has been widely argued that knowledge acquired from writing and studying Literature can help to enrich the understanding of human cognition, which is studied in the discipline of Cognitive Science. (Richardson and Steen 6; Turner 56)

Writing speculative fiction, or fanfiction for that matter, have been proven to deliver a plethora of benefits, such as collaborative learning (Littleton 8) improved cognition, better logicizing, enhanced language learning/mastery of language, better conceptualization/simulation (Evans et al. 2) etc., when seen with the lens of cognitive sciences and consciousness studies. According to Keith Oatley, "An empirically based conception of literary art might be carefully constructed verbal material that enables self-directed personal change." (425) As I have previously argued, *Ulysses*, comes under both such purviews, (i.e., writing original speculative fiction and fanfiction) which are not mutually exclusive, and Joyce's fascination with Freudian Psychoanalysis and introspection of his characters lived experiences through the stream-of-consciousness technique have been long discussed in academia. (Shechner 35; Thurston 60; Thwaites 680) What I would like to, however add to this ongoing conversation, (where the "cognitive turn in modernist fiction" has become popular in literary research (Luo 34; Zerweck 152; Mikkonen 18) is that expressive writing through fanfiction (and therefore *Ulysses* too) yields therapeutic results, even as it expresses experiences normally found to be traumatic or painful to reiterate (Johnson). *Ulysses*, sometimes, through its narrative, revels in the pain of its characters, expressing them succinctly, which may be equated with how fanfictions are extremely open with their portrayal of vulnerability, abuse, or gore, since they do not need to undergo censorship. *Ulysses*, too, in

its time, had been quite a scandalous work in its own time (McLaren 18), turning a classical epic into a record of everyday miseries of the mundane.

The idea of writing or conceiving fanfiction as a cognitive exercise that has proven scientific benefits for adults (Thomas 2) and adolescents alike (Black 22) for enhanced cognition and brain function as well as learning languages and overcoming trauma, (a significant study on the LGBTQ community and how their fanfiction empowers them regarding trauma recovery was performed by Dym et al. in 2019). Albeit this being a retrospective approach, (since the idea of "fanfiction" as opposed to "original fiction" did not exist in Joyce's time,) the idea that *Ulysses* is a fanfiction ties up almost seamlessly with modernism's fascination with the "cognitive turn". Much work has been done regarding how fanfiction, in general, helps in building cognitive aptitude and creates a thoughtful and artistic exercise that benefits the mind and fiction writing as a whole. (Berkowitz 200; Godwin-Jones 18)

Fiction has been characterized by Kendall Walton as an invitation towards imagining, which in turn approaches the cognitive process involved in sense-making while providing insight upon the various interactions within the social-technical systems. (cf. Lin et al. 140). This also holds for fanfiction, which has been defined by Jennifer Barnes, a cognitive science researcher, as "extratextual stories written for pleasure by fans, based on an existing media: property" (71). Fanfiction then enables the author in a ludic logic of make-believe, which is "extratextual", since it is at once built upon the source text as well as works toward further developing it. This can be further connected to reception theory, the reader-author's emotional engagement with the source text and their resistance to it, which finds form in the newer fiction that reimagines and reinterprets the older. Comparisons can be drawn between fanfiction writing and the various cognitive exercises like daydreaming and pretend play, through which a child makes sense of the world and carries into adulthood. Following that same logic, a fanfiction writer's imaginative engagement with their beloved works of fiction is

never limited to the time that is spent while consuming the works, which makes them the more "active" readers that put their thoughts and musings about the media consumed onto pen and paper. Bringing in the idea of Alvin Toffler, called the "prosumer", (or the consumer who also produces, cf. Ritzer et al. 379), we may be able to explain this phenomenon of writing fanfiction, where the consumer is not passive, but cognitively active and productive.

As active participants, the fanfiction authors and readers derive pleasure from reading and writing fanfictions, based upon complex cognitive as well as corporeal identifications. The satisfaction that is derived, comes from identification with the characters and events, escapism, testing hypotheses, solving problems, right and wrong predictions, wish fulfilment, and the surprise value of broken rules or thwarted expectations.

Consuming fictional stories and producing reinterpretations in the form of fanfiction, especially those set in an Alternative Universe, like that of *Ulysses*, requires considerable imaginative input on the part of the reader-writer, especially while filling in the gaps of the source text, which gives rise to the fanfiction. Research by Carreiras et al. in 1996 has shown the tendency of readers to project attributes such as gender onto protagonists, whose such attributes are unspecified (639). Readers, and fanfiction writers alike, have been known to import facts from the real world into the worlds of fiction that they are reading or writing about (Weisberg and Goodstein cf. Barnes 70). According to Frederick C. Bartlett, readers tend to misremember the details of any given story to make it more in tune with their line of thought (54). In tune with such logic, fanfiction writers use communally agreed upon storylines which deviate from the source (known popularly as "fanon", as opposed to "canon" or the source text) in the plot, setting, or characterization in their fanfictions. While all of these activities require significant amounts of cognitive exercise, such as imaginary world-building and subsequent logicizing, they depend widely upon the readers' emotional contributions to the narratives they come across (Gerrig 104).

According to research by Jonathan Cohen in 2004, many adults are known to develop strong emotion-based attachments to the fictional characters they encounter in a source text. (188) Immersion in such fictionalized worlds may serve means of escape, (Green et al. 315; Radway 74) or such immersive activities, in the form of fanfiction writing, can give rise to newer worlds based on contemporary reality, which in this instance was Joyce's world, Dublin as he knew it.

Fanfiction is known to frequently alter and reinterpret the source text's setting, adding alternative ending(s), original character(s), exploring minor characters, or modifying character relationships. (Barnes 70; Van Steenhuyse 167; Thomas 20) -- examples almost all of which can be seen in Joyce's work. Joyce's bringing in of self-inserts (characters modelled upon the Author himself) in the form of Leopold Bloom or Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses* is an example of the phenomenon of the parasocial relationships that readers/fanfiction authors build with the fictional characters they encounter in any source text (Cohen 187). The role played by the readers/fanfiction authors' imagination in filling in the gaps in existing narratives, such as remodelling Homer's treatment of Odysseus and the then-contemporary world in *Odyssey*, which has been reconstituted and reinterpreted as part of Dublin in the first few decades of the 20th C., can be substantiated by the research performed by Weisberg and Goodstein in 2009 (cf. Barnes 70).

Fanfiction and Controversies

Most raging controversies about fanfiction, and why people tend to have such a love-hate relationship with it, has to do with fanfiction writer and published fiction author Arkady Martine's idea of the "cult of originality", which decries familiarity in literature and arts on the grounds of being unoriginal, repetitive, and too "full of tropes", to deserve any critical attention. There is an artistic stigma attached to the idea of mimesis, both as imitation and representation. As Martine goes on to say, "[t]hat's the cult of originality: saying that non-referential production is what is intrinsically valuable about literature."

Fanfiction, although quite similar to the practice of "compilation writing" of yore, (a popular term in the study of Byzantine literary history, where subject matter experts borrowed ideas from other masters and reinforced them with their own to create a newer classic, but the trend can be seen in classics and treatises of the Far East as well), adaptations, pastiches, parodies, and other forms of derivative works (works based on or inspired by a source text) are seen in a much more derogatory light. Most people, as queries posted on *Quora* (the largest crowd-sourced Questions-and-Answers site on the internet) show, are confused as to whether writing fanfiction is something bad, or whether dutiful parents should stop their children from writing them, even going so far as to ask whether writing fanfiction is a "sin".

Many people with some expertise and experience in the field of literature, feel solidarity and endorse the idea that has already become hard-baked into literary criticism, that for literature to have some value, it must be "something entirely new". The same people, often published authors would think that fanfictions are written only as practice material before coming out with something "original". Herein come the double standards. While originality is perhaps the most important sign of artistic achievement, many literary classics, ranging from classical Greco-Roman literature, Shakespeare, or even modern-day classics like *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, are true, derivative and transformative works, much in the vein of fanfiction. Looking at the various forms of adaptations that surround us, in the form of prose, poetry, drama, music, visual arts and more, we are overwhelmingly surrounded by art which is not "original", however, is successful and enjoyable, skilled and persistent in their just claim to fame and adoration from the audience. However, more than often we have the overarching problem of copyright, and the related capitalist ideas of intellectual ownership, bringing down its wrath on fanfiction writing as a practice, based on how writing fanfiction is not an "original" exercise, rather simply fooling around with someone else's tools. As Orson Scott Card of *Ender's Game* fame famously commented, fanfiction writing

is akin to turning up uninvited at someone's house and then turning out all of the people who live there. Many would doubt the degree of truth embedded in these biased observations, as the continued flourishing of fanfiction on the internet would show. However, had the internet not been such a huge place, as Francesca Coppa would aptly put it, fanfiction would always have been treated like the "bastard child", the outlawed and the unwelcome. Even E.L. James happened to create her bestselling *Fifty Shades of Gray* and the subsequent series out of her Twilight fanfictions (which were set in AU, just like *Ulysses*), simply by swapping out the names. It helped that the concept of fanfiction had not existed at Joyce's time, since copyright issues with ablaze with present-day fanfiction (whose source texts still have their copyright claims safely in place) face regular backlash from authors whose works are getting adapted, such as Orson Scott Card, Anne Rice, and more, some of whom even ban the fanfiction archives from publishing fanfictions of their texts. Retrospectively speaking, the lack of the contemporary idea of fanfiction helped existing classics be rewritten by literary masters like Joyce, and not having to face legal trouble for their artistic toils.

It would not be right to draw an absolute equivalence between works like *Ulysses* and transformative works, taking into account to the "paradigm shift" and "the horizon of expectations" in place, since they belong to two very different eras in time, and deal with different politics of art. When Joyce wrote *Ulysses* in the 1920s, and the medium used in writing it, and all the tropes and stylistic innovations used served a different purpose than that of the transformative artworks created by fans in the 20th and 21st-century, chiefly based on the media that they love. However, while we look at the very human pleasure involved in re-creating the familiar with traces of the unfamiliar thrown in, we come to realize the social and emotional processes of the artists and their artworks, their success and persistence across history, as old as the first story ever told by the fire-side, by the ancient humans. The trending production of transformative works and the rise in the number of artists and artworks show us,

as did *Ulysses*, the value of familiarity, the power of recognition, mixed with the skills of an expert storyteller, can create a narrative that stands the test of time.

Parallels Between *The Odyssey* and *Ulysses* (and How That Relates to The Genre Of Fanfiction):

One of the reasons fanfictions receive lukewarm treatment from literature aficionados is due to its explicit depiction of intimate scenes between the characters, which authors like J.K. Rowling, who are otherwise in favour of fanworks, find offensive. Sex is, as critic Francesca Coppa has theorized, treated in fanfictions as a way to bring out the deepest recesses of a character's psyche, explore his/her vulnerabilities and to lay them bare, as would be impossible in mainstream fiction under the existing publication models, other than books branded purely as erotica, and having close to no plot at all. Presence of overt sexual scenes in fanfiction have their own genre names, like smut, lime and lemon, and can range from deeply consensual to drugged and dubiously consensual to completely non-consensual or rapefic.

Sex has quite a prevalent presence in *Ulysses* as well, which had been deemed scandalous by many and faced restrictive sanctions during the time of its publication. While Homer's Penelope is an extremely chaste woman waiting for two decades for her husband Odysseus to come back, all the while cleverly chasing away suitors, Joyce's Molly is indulging herself in an affair, which is the pivot of the entire novel.

In the parallel to the Nausicaa episode, both Gerty and Nausicaa pine for the attention of Bloom and Odysseus respectively, however the way the men carry themselves is starkly different. Nausicaa is ladylike and offers Odysseus help while he is in distress. Odysseus is unwilling to strip in front of the ladies, and upon bathing in seclusion, the Goddess Athena makes him look godlike, upon which event Nausicaa feels enamoured by him. The whole episode is one of royal glamour, yet the one in *Ulysses* is almost a parody. Gerty is but a physically challenged teenager trying to appear ladylike, fantasizing about domestic bliss with

a silent, brooding man, like the vision Bloom's sad face bears when he watches her and knows that she knows that he is watching her. Bloom masturbates to her on the beach, covertly watching her with her friends, while all the while Gerty tries to seduce him, knowing the effect her body has on him. There is no conversation between them at all, even the attempt Bloom makes of writing to her is thwarted due to the petty reason of there being not enough place on the piece of paper. However, there is a celebration of humanity in Joyce, where Bloom is actually at his lowest, his wife probably sleeping with someone else while he silently ogles a younger girl, without any Goddess having to toil hard to make him appear more attractive to her. She, herself a teenager with a lame foot, likes him the way he is, sad, and silent, and brooding, and hopes, a naïve hope of gilding his days with happiness.

Looking at fanfictions, these internal monologues, voice-overs, the shift from the third person omniscient to the first-person voice of the character, are what set them apart as stories, stories of humans, in distress, in love, living life. There is no *Deus ex Machina* to rescue them, even if they are the greatest of heroes, they have their moments of human weakness. The fanfictions delve deep into the nature and being of the characters they talk of, and lay them bare, to the bone, for everyone to read.

How is Writing Fanfiction A Modernist Exercise

Many of the usual qualities of modernist literature and art are valid for fanfictions as well, so much so that this section could rightfully deserve a separate paper written about it. However, due to the limitations in scope, we will look at two of the most salient features of modernist literature, and see how the practice of fanfictions forms parallels with them.

Individualism is just as important in case of writing fanfiction as it has been for modernist literature, whether for the author or his/her characters. Just as critic Francesca Coppa has pointed out, the prose medium used in fanfictions has made them more introspective, without sounding awkward, as it would in case of a film. For fanfictions, the emphasis lies on the individual characters, and they explore the workings of their minds or the

reasons behind their actions (whether canon, as in mentioned in the source text or fanon, as in unanimously agreed upon by fans on the grounds of being logical without the actual presence of the act/event in the source text.). The society at large is more than often written off, or is just there as a substratum to hold the characters. Just as modernist writers had been fascinated with the circumstances of an individual adapting to the changes in his/her world, so does fanfiction, revelling in the ways a character can triumph over obstacles, whether physical or emotional. As for the author, modernist literature celebrated the authorial voice and authority, and the succinctness of styles and modes that set one apart from another. Fanfiction too puts a lot of emphasis on the individual author, and since it is generally not written for money, the authors take the chance to write long prefatory notes about themselves, their lives, their connection to the characters, what propelled them to write this story, and more. The texts are often replete with notes about the author's perception of the characters and why they do what they do in the narratives, little anecdotes, and of course, the style features heavily in these texts. Although authors write anonymously under pseudonyms, their styles are often remarkable enough to make readers recognize who the writer is. The style of the texts often reflects the source it is based upon, the time or the place or the language used in the source informs much of the writing of fanfictions.

Experimentation features heavily in many fanfictions which use the prose medium to explore newer forms and methods, especially imagistic writing, where the descriptive passages are geared towards evoking a strong sense of visual experience in the readers. Just as modernist writers were using avant-garde forms of writing, using unfamiliar languages and made-up words in their works, so do fanfiction writers, often resorting to stylistic methods like stream-of-consciousness or long inner monologues of the characters, replete with the use of foreign language, technical jargon and neologisms.

Ulysses' Afterlife:

A work lives on as long as people find interest in it, engage with it, make it more contemporary, in tune with the present-day sensibilities of the audience/readers. While literary stalwarts like Yeats and Shaw professed that they had found *Ulysses* too difficult a read to finish, it enjoys continued interest from present-day readers and authors alike. In the days of prosumers, where the internet and other technological inventions allow the consumers not just to be passive but also to re-produce the works that they like and spread it amongst the like-minded people for mutual enjoyment, in a framework deftly called "convergence culture" by aca-fan Henry Jenkins, both Homer's Odysseus (*Ulysses* in Roman) and Joyce's *Ulysses* see newer fanworks revolving around them, alongwith the passage of time. The continued presence of the character(s) or plot/narrative of *Ulysses* in recent fanfiction has been extremely varied, just like the various subject matters that have been dealt with in them. We find *Ulysses* from the Greco-Roman mythology, in classical-inspired fanfic, a quote from the novel *Ulysses* embellishing the introduction of an anime fanfic, fanfics crossing over different Joycean narratives like *Ulysses* and *The Portrait of An Artist As A Young Man*, to produce a BloomxDedalus (x signifies character pairing) crossover and many more, strewn across fanfiction archives like *fanfiction.net*, *Wattpad*, and the most famous of them all, *AO3 (Archive of Our Own)*, which was setup by fanfiction theorists alongside the *Journal of Transformative Works*. The afterlife of *Ulysses* then looks quite bright, as existing modes of newer world-building keeps it relevant, beloved, and generates conversation around it, keeping it alive and breathing, more than a hundred years from its inception. This in turn reinforces the work's status as a literary classic.

Conclusions

The paper defines the activity of writing fanfiction as something that is no freak cultural phenomenon that has popped up in digital era of widespread cultural reproduction online. Rather, the praxis of fanfiction as a literary/artistic pursuit is anchored in the literary history ever since antiquity. The paper then situates James Joyce's *Ulysses* within the larger

artistic practice of adaptation. It also looks at the praxis of writing speculative fiction as a useful cognitive method in which the concerned author is able to parasocially inhabit the imaginary world that they adore. The paper looks at how *Ulysses* has, anachronistically speaking, used the tools traditionally available to fanfiction writing to revive and rewrite the stories of Homer's characters in *The Odyssey*. This literary effort was put in keeping in mind the contemporary audience (as well as that of times beyond), in a way that they are able to and connect to the very humane portrayal of the heroic characters of Homer. The afterlife of Joyce's *Ulysses* has spawned even more fanfictions about itself, creating a continuum that connects the appreciation for the Modern literary tradition to the literary writings of today.

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