REKEYING, CONTRASTIVE INDIVIDUATION AND OTHERING

An Intertextual Analysis of "White-Knighting" in an All-Women fandom

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THE INTERNET AS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- In the age of web 2.0 we increasingly see communities on the web
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Livejournal
- These communities might be best understood as communities of practice (Eckert & McConell-Ginet 1992)
  - Members are engaged in processes of meaning-making
  - Performance of individual and group identity

FANDOM

- a group of fans organized around a single source work, which might be a television show, a comic book series, a film series, or a book series
- discussion of the source itself as well as items related to the source (e.g. actors)
- instantiate themselves as communities unto themselves, with norms unique to both a particular fandom (e.g. X-files) but also to fandom at large
- most of fandom communication currently takes place online in a number of different spaces
  - Usenet
  - discussion boards
  - fan fiction archives
  - livejournal communities

TWIDOM

- *Twilight* saga, by Stephenie Meyer
- Primarily female
- range from preteens to women in their 50s and 60s, with bulk of active fandom members in their twenties and thirties
- >100,000 members
- relatively compact
  - 3 main websites for posting of fanfiction
  - Relatively small number (~20) of livejournal discussion communities (Only 2 with >1,000 members)

WHITE-KNIGHTING

- known on internet boards and chat rooms
- correlate of "trolling"
- contested

The line is crossed for me when people have no valid reason for disagreeing with me other than they're friends with the author

If you get defensive to the point of being insulting/condescending

when people start making specific replies…replying directly to me with all this 'don't like, don't read' and 'why you gotta be so bitchy'

INTERTEXUALITY

- coined by Kristeva (1980) to further explain and extend Bakhtin's (1984) notion of dialogicality

Dialogicality = the idea that each "voice" found in a text contains not only itself, but the remnants of voices which have come before it and which might come after it

- the way in which a text (of any medium) forms its meaning through its relationships to other texts

FANDOM AND INTERTEXTUALITY

- fan art and fan fiction are necessarily intertextual tasks
- Interactions based in written media via message boards and livejournal communities
  - allow for literal requoting of prior text

Bauman & Briggs (1990)

- entextualization
- decontextualiztion
- recontextualization

Tannen (2006)

- recycling
- reframing
- rekeying

Agha (2005)

- contrastive individuation
- biographic identification
- social characterization

DAWNINGS

- Twilight-only fan fiction archive
- >100,000 members
- discussion boards
- characterized by the BE NICE rule
- Formed a publishing company, Derivative Publishing, in early 2010

by El█████████ Sat Jan 16, 2010 9:32 am

> " Lalice wrote:
>
> > " kittenchips wrote:
> > This discussion brings up the question of why someone would put their original work on the internet and call it fanfiction if they wanted to publish and profit from it. Wouldn't they want to try sending it to literary agents first, and only after it had been passed over by all available options, then publish it as fanfic as a last resort?
>
> Because maybe they never imagined they'd have an original piece of work hidden in their brains until they wrote it out as fanfiction first.

I can understand this position to a point, but I still maintain that the *means* authors are using to publish these questionable works are a gray area at best. Obviously it would be ideal if authors simply kept the stories as fanfic and used their talent to write new stories, but if they truly thought that story was their best shot...

They could take the manuscript, completely rework it, give it a new title and submit it to publishing houses independently. They would market it without mentioning it used to be fanfic, without posting notes on their FF profile as a link for readers to purchase a copy, etc.

Instead, they are taking the manuscript, I'll say (to give them the benefit of the doubt) completely reworking it, having it published by a publishing house closely related to Twilight fan fiction (because psymem owns both and uses the website of one to promote the other), keeping

Elaine

Leopard

I asked the author of B&B and she said she completely reworked it. When it comes out, I will tell you for sure, because I plan on getting it.

> " . . . using their profile to advertise that readers can now pay for that book they formerly enjoyed for free as fan fiction.

Why shouldn't they use their profile to pimp themselves? Besides, the books are being marketed to a different audience. T is young adult. B&B is romance. The fan base is not the target audience.

> " but I worry that eventually it may mean FF.net getting a C&D order.

They are more likely to get a C&D order for stories where the author's beloved characters are made into pedofiles (like one just recently on FF.net where Edward is an adult and Bella is 10), or the S&M and slasher stories. I don't think SM wants to see her characters as murderers, S&M junkies and pedofiles. That is more likely to get SM to pull the plug on ff then authors taking their own original premise and totally reworking it to remove all reference to T. Who cares how it started? I don't think SM will since she has always supported young authors.

> " While I want that handful of authors to find success, I don't think that asking the hundreds of thousands of readers and writers who post Twilight stories there never to be allowed to again is a fair price to pay.
> .
> .
> It just seems like we're careening towards a big mess and I worry it's going to stink for the fandom.

Who is asking them to pay that price? Has that even been threatened by anyone? Again - fear with basis. Speculation. As I said above, it is the stories taking the actual characters and making them do horrible things that will kill ff.

Also, since the series is over, T ff writers and readers' interest are probably going to start to wane. It's the natural course of things. I bet many of us have moved on to other things or have added to our list of loves.

> " B&B was at least finished before it was pulled.
> .
> .
> The list of fics that are disappearing seems to grow every day.

Do you know of any fic that was pulled before it was finished to go to Omnific? Do you know O's policy on that? I personally do not think that any unfinished story was pulled since O seems to want finished works since it is asking for a word count. You cannot give a total word count if you have not finished.

> " I can sympathize with readers who say they would never read an author again once they pull a fic.

Elaine: I can understand this position to a point, but I still maintain that the *means* authors are using to publish these questionable works are a gray area at best. Obviously it would be ideal if authors simply kept the stories as fanfic and used their talent to write new stories, but if they truly thought that story was their best shot....

Leopard: Why? They spend so much time and energy creating their own original premise. Why should they have to abandon it as fanfiction and not try to get their idea published? As for the means, they are being published by a new company who is giving otherwise unknown authors a chance. This is a good thing.

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Leopard: Why shouldn't they use their profile to pimp themselves?

Elaine: ….I don't think that asking the hundreds of thousands of readers and writers who post Twilight stories there never to be allowed to again is a fair price to pay.

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Leopard: Do you know of any fic that was pulled before it was finished to go to Derivative? Do you know D's policy on that?

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- Rekeying from discussion to personal attack is responsible for the piece crucial in the creation of a WK situation and the acknowledgement of Leopard as a white-knighter.
- Leopard's questions are not responding to an actual attack by Elaine, but rather frame her as an attacker by responding to an anticipated subsequent text
- Leads to *contrastive individuation* (Agha 2005)
- This allows for the *entextualization* (Baumann & Briggs) of this conversation as an instance of WK

- Process of white-knighting relies heavily on the ways the white-knighter's voice connects to the past voices of others and anticipates future voices which might argue with it
- These ties ultimately result in the voice being identified as an "other voice" which is then ascribed to a particular social character (white knight) and the entextualization of the character's actions as an instance of white-knighting.

CONCLUSIONS

- Framework of intertextuality is useful in understanding the ways in which interactants make meaning in an online community of practice.

- Combining more than one explanation of the workings of intertextual processes sheds light on how these processes work together in intraction.

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Thank you!

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