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The Writing and Reading of Fan Fiction and Transformation Theory

Veerle Van Steenhuyse
Ghent University

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Veerle Van Steenhuyse,
"The Writing and Reading of Fan Fiction and Transformation Theory"
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Abstract: In her article "The Writing and Reading of Fan Fiction and Transformation Theory" Veerle Van Steenhuyse discusses the experience of immersive reading fan fiction offers to fans based on her analysis of fan fiction about the television series *House, M.D.* (2004-). Van Steenhuyse postulates that a text is immersive when it evokes a mental construct with the presence of a text-independent reality. In the case of fan fiction, this reality is a "transformed universe" that builds on and deviates from particular primary texts. Following the work of Marie-Laure Ryan and Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, Van Steenhuyse argues that readers feel immersed when they re-center their consciousness and she clarifies this process with transportation theory. Further, Van Steenhuyse uses schema theory to elaborate on transportation theory in order to specify the temporal dimension of immersive reading of fan fiction.

Veerle VAN STEENHUYSE

The Writing and Reading of Fan Fiction and Transformation Theory

Fans are fans by virtue of their enthusiasm and commitment. Unlike "mundanes," they are dedicated enough to seek out fellow-fans, to gush over their object of affection, or, indeed, to write about it. Over the years, fans have produced an impressive body of fiction about their favourite TV shows, films, novels, video games, and the like. This writing, known as fan fiction, features characters, settings, concepts, and/or plot elements of the writers' chosen source texts. Texts of fan fiction have appeared in fan magazines and other forms of print since the 1930s (Coppa 42-43) and their number has increased dramatically since the arrival of the internet (Thomas 142). This corpus is as varied as it is vast, diversified by the preferences of individual authors and the fan communities for whom they write. Fan fiction studies have typically respected this framework by either taking an ethnographic approach to the subject or considering the motivations, interpretations, and metatexts of fans (Busse and Hellekson 17-24). While fans have been discussed as readers of media texts and as writers of fan fiction, they have rarely been considered as readers of fan fiction. Relevant is that in fan communities readers are encouraged to leave comments about the fan fiction they read (Parrish 34).

For the present study, I examined a corpus of thirty-two texts of fan fiction and the comments accompanying them posted online in 2008 and 2009 in *livejournal*, an online journal for social networking. The corpus researched comprises fan fiction texts about Gregory House and Allison Cameron, two characters from the medical television series *House, M.D.* (2004-). The material I studied did not simply reproduce the universe of *House*, however. Several scholars have emphasized that fan writers are no slaves to their source text. For example, in *Textual Poachers*, Henry Jenkins characterizes fan writing as an act of "poaching" and fans as "readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests" (23). Because fan fiction writers root for a romantic relationship between two of the main protagonists in *House, M.D.* — House and Cameron — they tend to focus on moments which relate to this relationship rather than, say, on the show's medical elements. The metaphor of "poaching" is too narrow to capture the true extent of fan creativity, however (Parrish 69-70). Some scholars have dropped the metaphor in favor of a broader concept: Abigail Derecho argues that fan writers add artifacts to an archive surrounding the source text and "all texts related to it" (63-65) and Juli J. Parrish insists that fan writers "reimagine the preserve itself" (67-68). In line with these postulates, I characterize the textual worlds of fan fiction as "transformed universes" and argue that fan fiction is highly immersive because the language independent worlds fan fiction authors appear to describe are transformed versions of the universe of and in the primary text.

Readers are "immersed" when textual worlds acquire the "presence" of a text-independent reality (Ryan, *Narrative* 14). The experience of presence is related to, but not exactly the same as immersion. Marie-Laure Ryan etymologizes "immersion" as "being inside a mass substance," such as an ocean, and "presence" as "being in front of a well-delineated entity," such as a coral reef (Narrative 68; emphases in the original). These experiences are two sides of the same coin: you have to be submersed to come close to a reef, just as you have to be confronted with underwater life to feel enveloped by the ocean. Although a textual world is not a mass substance, the experience of immersive reading is often theorized in similar terms and metaphors used to describe immersion imply that the reader enters into an imaginary world (Ryan, *Narrative* 93). Richard Gerrig compares immersion to physical travel: by means of a text, readers are "transported" to a world which they help to construct (10-11); Kendall Walton argues that readers play a game of make-believe (11-12), agreeing to react to the fictional world as if they were a part of it; and Marie-Laure Ryan has developed a model which connects these two sides, based on possible-worlds theory (*Narrative* 99-105; "Literary Theory" 114-15). Possible-worlds theory conceptualizes "reality" as a system of elements called worlds (Ryan, *Narrative* 99). One of these, the "actual world," is the center of the system; the others are either "possible worlds" connected to the epicenter or "impossible worlds" bordering the system (Ryan, *Narrative* 99-100). Ryan believes this system underlies "images of reality, rather than reality itself" (101) and she argues that every person superimposes onto the "hypothetical real world" a private system of actual and possible worlds and as such, some people

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may count alien abductions as "actual," while others classify them as "possible" (100). Mimetic texts evoke similar universes, centered around an objective reality and the characters' views on that reality, and delimited by the possible worlds of their hopes, dreams, and aspirations: in the process of immersion, interpreters re-center their consciousness to this universe (Ryan, *Narrative* 103-04). They feel immersed, in other words, the moment they adopt a textual world as their actual world, temporarily backgrounding their own.

How strong an interpreter's sense of immersion is, depends on how complete a textual world the interpreter can construct. In a prototypical case of "spatio-temporal immersion," the interpreter is transported to "the heart" of the storyworld (Ryan, *Narrative* 130). In literary narratives, this means that the reader feels surrounded by the world in which the plot unfolds. This is the case when he or she adopts the position of the narrator, or rather, of the "virtual body whose perspective determines what is perceived" (132), when that perspective gives direct and complete access to the world in question. A text may, for instance, represent phenomena as they would be perceived by a character or a random observer "on the scene" of the story (132). Consider, for example, the following excerpt from jlneveloff's fan fiction text "Parasitic Beginnings": [Cameron] opened the glass door and calmly entered … [she] allowed her gaze to drift from the decorations to the rest of the conference room. Not much had changed since she left; the same number of chairs circled the table, the white board still held the key to the diagnosis and unfinished paperwork was scattered about the small desk in the corner." Because the text appears to describe a fictional space, systematically tracing its salient features, it projects "a map" in the mind of the reader (see Ryan, *Narrative* 124-25). Fan readers can imagine this space's layout with great accuracy. They know that relative to the door, the table is located on the left with the whiteboard in front of it and that the desk is in the far right corner. They also know that Cameron is standing with her back to a corridor and next to House's office. What is more, they can fill out generic references (for example to a "small desk in the corner") with specific images from the show (in this case, of a desk with a computer, positioned near a large window). While the text establishes a body on the scene, the reader's projection helps to create an impression of complete access. Things are not always that straightforward: fan fiction author scullyseviltwin's "Future on Resin" consists predominantly of Cameron's thoughts, desires, and memories and these mental activities point toward one "mind" (that of Cameron), just as jlneveloff's description points toward one observing consciousness. In theory, this mind is located wherever Cameron completes her mental activities just as jlneveloff's Cameron is situated in the heart of the storyworld. Rather than being anchored in one world, however, the perceiving center of "Future on Resin" provides varying degrees of access to "possible" worlds.

In accordance with the above suggestion of how fan fiction authors "interpret" the text, fan readers are not clueless about the world that surrounds Cameron in "Future on Resin." On the basis of the fic's frame and the protagonist's memories, they can reconstruct the story's broader context. "Future on Resin" was posted with a spoiler warning for season five of *House* and it hints at aspects of the season's "objective reality" (e.g., Cameron's being in a relationship with Chase) and the characters' views on that reality (e.g., House's doubting that Cameron is perfectly happy). A "knowing" readership can read this fan fiction text with the actual world of *House* in mind. In addition, "Future on Resin" makes clear Cameron's views on that reality, or rather, scullyseviltwin's interpretation of them. scullyseviltwin colors the textual world of *House* with her take on Cameron's viewpoint and her protagonist sees "untapped potential" in Cameron's relationship with House, which is past and all but forgotten on the show. There is no doubt that scullyseviltwin's Cameron still has feelings for House, while this is never confirmed in the show. While readers have an idea of the world which surrounds Cameron, the perceiving body of the text does not give access to it. Instead, it makes present Cameron's mental images.

Fan fiction authors and readers both play an important part in the production of textual worlds and their cooperation also contributes to the process of immersion. To explain this, I draw on transportation theory, an approach which builds on the work of Richard Gerrig (see also Green, Brock, Kaufman, "Understanding"; Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney, Sabini, "Transportation"). In accordance with Gerrig's emphasis on reader participation, transportation theorists examine the psychological components of immersive reading and the most important of these are "cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and mental imagery" (Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney,

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Sabini 514). Further, the cognitive engagement of "transported" readers is marked by their single-minded attention to the text: their "thoughts and attention" are focused to such an extent that they "lose track of time" and "fail to notice events going on around them" (Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney, Sabini 513). This understanding of reading resembles Mihály Csikszentmihályi's concept of "flow" (see Green, Brock, Kaufman 315; Douglas and Hargadon 163). In *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* and *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life* Csíkszentmihályi postulates that reading, immersive or otherwise, is the most frequent flow activity. This suggests that the activity of reading encourages flow. Considering Csíkszentmihályi's argument, this implies that reading is difficult enough to try one's skills, but not difficult enough to break one's stride. In the case of mimetic texts, it is a challenge "to convert the temporal flow of language into a spatial configuration of meaning" and it only feels "subjectively effortless" when readers have honed their skills with practice (Ryan, "Literary Theory" 125). How much the task tries our cognitive abilities appears when "situational" factors force us to divide our attention (Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney, Sabini 514). Transportation can become "difficult or impossible" when certain stimuli "attract attention to the real world rather than the media world," for example a radio playing in the background or a movement in one's peripheral vision (Green, Brock, Kaufman 321).

Readers can reach a state of flow only when their focus is "smooth" as well as undivided (Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney, Sabini 514). Their attention needs to move easily from one thought or action to the next, in a flow-like motion. It has been argued that this factor is key to transportation. In the "fluency perspective," reading is approached as a form of "processing" (Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney, Sabini 514-15). This is usually specified as the reader's constructing schemata (Douglas and Hargadon 154-56) or mental models, depending on the researcher's paradigm of choice. When this processing runs smoothly, readers are transported and when it does not, they are unable to lose themselves in the text. J. Yellowlees Douglas and Andrew Hargadon have formulated this hypothesis in terms of schema theory, according to which the processing of information functions through "schemas" or schemata (154). These are, literally, the diagrammatic knowledge structures to which memory reduces real-life input (Keunen 8-9) whether that input comes from reading novels, listening to the experiences of others, or experiencing events first-hand (Douglas and Hargadon 154). By producing a "store" of schemata we can process information more efficiently, as we can match new experiences to "similar occurrences and understandings" (Douglas and Hargadon 154). Some schemata are fairly basic, such as the ones we use to recognise objects or to complete simple tasks (Douglas and Hargadon 154). Others are highly complex and specify a great number of "scripts," that is, actions "appropriate" to the context (Douglas and Hargadon 155). Fiction is typically read with such elaborate, "superstructural" schemata in mind (Keunen 5-7), which create reader expectations about the "characters," "events," "plot," and "outcome" of particular texts (Douglas and Hargadon 154-56). Readers may approach romance novels, for instance, expecting to see an "emotionally withdrawn," "physically, and/or sexually aggressive" hero, a heroine in distress, a rescue, and a marriage (Morrissey 4, 45; Cawelti 42). Douglas and Hargadon believe that such "normative schemas" make romance novels and other forms of "light reading" particularly immersive (156) and that the "immersive affective experience" occurs when a text suggests "a single schema" with a limited number of scripts (156). If this is not the case and a text evokes "contradictory" schemata or "elements that defy conventional schemas," the reader is forced to "assume an extra-textual perspective on the text" and its workings, a position which necessarily precludes immersion (Douglas and Hargadon 156; see also Ryan, *Narrative* 199, 284).

Although Douglas and Hargadon do not explicitly take this step, I connect the concept of "immersive affective experience" to Csíkszentmihályi's flow. On the one hand, genre schemas ensure fluent processing as they enable readers to understand the text with a familiar schema. On the other hand, they do not specify "the minutiae of the narrative" (Douglas and Hargadon 156) forcing the reader to imagine new elements. While the first circumstance encourages us to read in a "steady, unbroken rhythm," the second makes us apply all of "our cognitive capacities" to the text (Douglas and Hargadon 156). I argue that this situation is likely to induce a state of flow. It is also possible to add a temporal dimension to Ryan's model of immersion on the bases of Csíkszentmihályi's and Douglas's and Hargadon's findings. The textual world of a mimetic text is a mental construct which is felt to contain characters and objects, arranged in a spatial model and subject to the workings of time:

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this means that characters are animated, and objects influenced, by intentional and accidental events (see also Ryan, "Theoretical" 4). Readers experience these aspects from a "prospective" perspective (Ryan, *Narrative* 113): they discover gradually more about the textual world, who the characters are and whether they are implicated in particular events, and so on. As such, readers must incorporate new information in their construct as they read along. Forging these new connections poses a challenge, but one that matches the reader's skills. To process new information fluently, the reader has to match that information with personal schemata. When such a match can be made and when the personal schema does not contradict previous ones, the new connection seems to "flow" naturally from the rest of the construct. Depending on the construct, this creates a particular feeling of immersion. I illustrate this with an excerpt from scullyseviltwin's "Future on Resin": "The thing that [Cameron] misses the most is the slick scratch of the dry erase marker on the whiteboard. The dull 'pop' as the tip of the pen touches the surface, the sweet hiss as it moves along, adopting his messy penmanship. The wafting, phantom, sharp-alcohol scent as he'd write an S with an insane flourish. The way the ink would pool just slightly in the dip of a 'p,' when the lines would meet in a capital 'D'." This description is immersive because its details (the scent and sound of the marker) seem to flow naturally from the situation (House's writing on the whiteboard). As a result, we can almost feel the sensory dimensions of Cameron's memory. When read in context, however, this excerpt creates a feeling of surroundedness that is less complete than the feeling created by jlneveloff's text, because it only provides momentary access to the world of Cameron's memory while jlneveloff's perceiving body moves around the textual world for an extended period of time (see also Ryan, "Literary Theory" 112).

As I note above, according to Csíkszentmihályi a state of flow can only be reached when a text is as challenging as the reader is skilful. This gives new importance to fan fiction's evoking a transformed version of the textual universe. Fans approach fan fiction with highly detailed schemata in mind: of the characters, for example. If writers of fan fiction simply described the primary text, readers would no longer have the challenge of imagining something new and such texts would be too boring to be immersive. In effect, fans tend to value fics the most when they both adhere to canon and diverge from it (see Parrish 34, 138; Busse and Hellekson 10). The schemata of fan readers are not only based on the texts they are writing about, however. Louisa Stein and Kristina Busse have pointed out that fan fiction texts are also shaped by other "constraints," such as "community expectations" and "cultural expectations of genre" (192). I illustrate how fan writers manage to adhere to and diverge from these "restrictions," too (Stein and Busse 192). For example, reader community expectations are influential: most fan writers, "especially those who choose to share their work with other fans, are aware of and engage with already existing fan communities and traditions during their creative process" (Stein and Busse 196). This shapes their work, as fan communities are also "interpretive" communities — members tend to agree on particular readings of the primary text(s) (see Stein and Busse 197; see also Costello and Moore 126).

Fan communities typically "defend" their readings in fan fiction, but also in reviews and other metatexts (see Busse and Hellekson 7). The best fan writers fulfil a number of "expectations that have already been established intertextually," but also manage to "transform community-held expectations" (Stein and Busse 197). For example, a fan fiction text such as "Parasitic Beginnings" (jlneveloff) confirms the fan community's belief that House and Cameron are right for each other, but also suggests that Cameron has always taken the initiative in their relationship. Fan fiction texts are also shaped by "broader cultural generic discourses" (Stein and Busse 195): by the ideas which producers and consumers form of genres on the basis of the texts they consume, the textual characteristics they notice, and what they hear from others (see, e.g., Stein <http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/43/65>). This fluid concept of genre makes it possible to explain how generic themes can appear in fan fiction texts while their writers are unfamiliar with the genre texts they "belong" to. Katherine E. Morrissey has found, for example, that while few fans read romance novels, many present love and lust as two sides of the same coin, as is the genre's wont. In the texts of fan fiction I analyzed House's attraction to Cameron and her attraction to him is rarely limited to the physical and this echoes the way Cameron's love for House is represented in the primary text (see also Protasi 204-05). The love-lust binary, then, is not bound to the romance novel as a genre category, but appears in several "romantic" discursive threads. Genre associations such as these are similar to Douglas's and Hargadon's schemata and

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function similarly. When fan fiction texts follow generic conventions, readers can make a number of associations that match associations they have made before and this allows them to focus on their reading and the way in which the genre's conventions are worked out. It has been argued that fan writers transform the romance novel by retaining the romance but casting aside a formula that does not express "women's desires" (Driscoll 82). In effect, unlike most romance novels, fan fiction texts in the corpus I analyzed do not end in marriage. Yet it cannot be denied that fan writers also apply some of the romance novel's generic themes to the primary texts they read (see Woledge 98). A prototypical romance novel "proves" the power and permanency of love, demonstrates how a hero and a heroine develop a strong and fulfilling love relationship despite "social" and "psychological barriers" (Cawelti 41-42). Many of the fan fiction texts I analyzed show how a love relationship burgeons between House and Cameron and how their love prevails over psychological barriers established in the primary text.

When fans are immersed in fan fiction, they are transported to a universe that confirms a wide range of expectations, but also offers them something new. This transportation may be so complete that they respond emotionally to the events portrayed as if they were situations involving real-life people rather than characters — that they become, in other words, emotionally immersed (see Ryan, *Narrative* 121, 148). Indeed, fans have a reputation for becoming emotionally immersed in their favorite texts. As Sheenagh Pugh notes, the "level of emotional engagement" fans feel with characters (75) and the way they talk about them (221) tends to make "outsiders" believe that they see them as real people (see also Kustritz 375). This behavior is stigmatized, as are other instances of fan affect (see Davisson and Booth 33; Jenkins, *Textual* 12). However, I move beyond this stigma by discussing the "love" fans feel for characters in light of emotional immersion. I postulate that fans respond to characters as if they were real people because they have a whole store of memories about them from the source text and other materials, about how they behaved in certain situations, about their past, about their likes and dislikes. This stored memory can be extensive: Ryan has noted that by virtue of the narrator's "omniscience" and focalization, readers may know more about a character's "mental life" than about the "thoughts or emotions" of their closest friends (*Narrative* 149). Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl (1956) have made a similar argument for television characters. Viewers "know" a television character as they "know their chosen friends: through direct observation and interpretation of his appearance, his gestures and voice, his conversation and conduct in a variety of situations" (216). In television series such as *House*, the lives of characters are represented with "an unfolding and episodic narrative structure that moves progressively toward a conclusion," as they would in a soap opera (Creeber 8-11). Viewers learn more about the characters with each episode, while the conclusion towards which their story seems to move is endlessly deferred (Creeber 4). This accumulative structure, as well as the running time available to work it out, make television series well-suited to create the "intimacy" Ryan, Horton, and Wohl describe.

With their store of memories, fans process new character information fluently and as a consequence new actions, reactions, and behaviors seem to "flow" from their character construct, creating a "self" coherent enough to feel real. As interpretive communities, fan communities tend to agree on the core traits of this character profile**,** such as Cameron's strong and caring nature. When fans read fan fiction, they expect to encounter the characters they "know" and love. Therefore, fan writers cannot alter the character's "self" without a valid explanation (Pugh 65-66). As Pugh notes, writers can "set the story in a different timeline, cross it with other fictions, write before it began or after it ended or even make it go in a different direction," but they must ultimately "work with a particular set of people," who have to "behave and speak like themselves" in every "situation" (67). This does not mean that writers cannot be creative. Many of the fans in the fan fiction corpus I analyzed respect Cameron's strong and caring nature, but fill out her personality in an individualized way. My point is that a character's actions, behavior, and thoughts must "flow" from a "self" which is felt to respect the "self" of canon. In television fandom, especially, fan writers do something new with something familiar. Audio-visual media may provide a "vivid, concrete set of images" and sounds, but they offer less "direct insight" into the characters' "thoughts and emotions" than literary texts do (Green, Kass, Carrey, Herzig, Feeney, Sabini 517-18). This mental life has to be inferred from "facial expressions or other nonverbal behaviors" (516-17). By fixating their canon in fan fiction, fan writers can explore in depth the inner life of characters (Thomas 145-52). Fan readers, on their part, can

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process such explorations fluently, because the associations made are similar to those the character has made before in the primary text. However, because they are not a perfect match, readers also have to produce something new. As I have shown, this match of skills and challenges is conducive to immersion. Because fan readers are familiar with the characters of the primary text, but have to process specific transformations, they can get immersed quickly.

A fan reader's familiarity with characters can inspire other emotions, for example when those characters are portrayed in specific situations and fan fiction writers make these situations feel "present," which they can do in much the same way as other authors do. Writers of fan fiction texts in my data collection tend to use free indirect discourse: although formally linked to the narrator, the narration's content is dictated by the characters' present (see Ryan, "Immersion" 134). The narrator, in other words, seems to mention thoughts, emotions, and observations as they occur to the character. This creates a perceiving body close to, or in the exact position of, the characters (see Ryan, *Narrative* 133-35). In most cases, this body is also situated "on the scene" of the action, because the character's thoughts and emotions are apparently inspired by the world in which the text's plot unfolds. Dialogue is often represented with "speech tags," for example, to make clear how "characters react to one another" and "what they may be thinking while they are speaking" (Thomas 152). This closeness to the characters — both literally and in terms of intimacy — makes readers respond emotionally, although it is still unclear why: Linda Williams argues that viewers mimic emotions they see on screen (4; see also Jenkins, *Wow* 53), while Amy Coplan suggests that readers empathize with characters, feeling emotions from their "psychological perspective" (143). It is certain, however, that certain types of fan fiction target specific responses. While angst stories are "filled with heartbreak, arguing," and the like, fluff stories are "warm and fuzzy," and smut stories focus on sex (see, e.g., "House/Cameron" <http://community.livejournal.com/hc_fanficawards/profile>). To fully understand these texts, one needs to understand immersion, and its importance for fan fiction. Davisson and Booth come close to acknowledging this and they argue that fan fiction allows fans to gain control over their relationship with characters in and of the primary text, because this allows them "to enter the universe of a show and engage the characters," fixating them for future interaction (35). However, I argue that texts of fan fiction do more than that: they do not simply open a window onto the universe of the primary text; rather, they draw readers into a transformed universe.

In conclusion, fan fiction studies have long focused on fan writers characterizing them as textual poachers, as rewriters, as creators of transformed universes. I emphasize that fan fiction is not just written but that it is also read. As such, I examine the principles of fan writing and reading to understand why many texts of fan fiction are immersive and argue that immersion is conditioned on several features as follows. Immersive texts must, by definition, appear to describe a text-independent world. In essence, this means that they have to evoke a mental construct in the reader, which is experienced as a world. This is the case when it is felt to contain a set of characters and objects who are surrounded by a rich, multisensory environment in which intentional and accidental events can take place. These features are suggested by the text, but filled out by the reader. This is particularly clear in the case of fan fiction. Fan fiction alludes to universes which resemble those of the source text but which are also transformed in accordance with the writer's creative impulses and with reference to generic conventions and interpretive conventions of the fan community. Fan readers approach fan fiction with general knowledge, their knowledge of the source text, and their knowledge of such conventions. In order to make this "transformed universe" feel present, texts of fan fiction have to evoke a perceiving body inherent to their textual world. Depending on the degree of access this body provides, texts can create different experiences of immersion. To feel immersed at all, however, readers have to re-center their consciousness to the text's "actual world." Further, readers will only cross this imaginary threshold when texts challenge them in proportion to their skills. Reading fictional texts is challenging because it involves textual world construction and it takes a considerable amount of effort and concentration to build a mental world. During the reading process, readers must continually incorporate new information in their mental images. They can only do this fluently when two conditions are met: 1) the information suggested in and by the text has to belong to a schema or at least to a number of complementary schemata and 2) readers must be able to match the text's schema with similar schemata of their own. Fan writers create such a balance of ease and effort when they negotiate the schemata of the source text, of their interpretive community, and of genre

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characteristics. As a consequence, the connections fan readers make "flow" smoothly enough to make their constructs feel "real" and that makes them feel as "present" as a text-independent reality. Thus, with their stored memory of the source text's universe and with their construction of the new universe based on the text(s) they are fans of, fan authors engage their readers in a transformed universe.

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Author's profile: Veerle Van Steenhuyse is working towards her Ph.D. at Ghent University with a dissertation entitled *The Construction and Experience of Fictional Worlds in Jane Austen Fan Fiction*. Her interests in research include fan fiction and the dynamics of fan writing and reading. Van Steenhuye's publications include "Jane Austen Fan Fiction and the Situated Fantext: The Example of Pamela Aidan's *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman*," *English Text Construction* (2011). Email: <veerle.vansteenhuyse@ugent.be>

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