

ANTI REALITY PERVERSION VOID

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ANTIREALITY PERVERSION VOID: A REFERENCE TEXT

FANTASY

A fantastical realm exists solely in the imagination but is sometimes mistaken for reality. Today we might think of the Netflix series *Stranger things*, where characters move between real and imagined realms, but the ultimate fantasy epic would be Frank Oz and Jim Henson's film, *The dark crystal* (1982), and its stylistic cousin *Labyrinth* (1986). Both retain a cult following to this day, whereas *Stranger things* is perhaps generally nostalgic for the 1980s, so is less focused on fantasy. *The dark crystal* represents important aspects of the fantasy genre: it favours character and worldbuilding over an efficient plot. This has led to the film being an ongoing treasure trove of meaning and visual richness for fans of the genre.

GOTHIC

A style of medieval European architecture, but also a style of fiction characterised by the use of desolate or remote settings. Think Jane Eyre or Lady Macbeth (women of the macabre). Gothic narratives may also include supernatural encounters, remote locations, ancient manor houses, dark secrets, an atmosphere of suspense and terror. Aotearoa has its own gothic genre known as *Antipodean gothic*.¹ Our colonial society is isolated within a striking landscape that can feel unsettling at times.

PUNK

Primarily originating in the 1970s and centred on loud and aggressive rock music, punk is an established identity, a subculture, and a style. Punk can refer to being a troublemaker—being overtly alternative or visually loud. To be a punk is to speak out, to be anti-authority, anti-establishment, question traditional conventions, and be all-out riotous about all of the above. Often punk culture can suffocate in its own excesses, failing to get across its original intent.²

MACABRE

From an old French term *danse macabre*, meaning the dance of death. Macabre relates to all things surrounding our feelings about death: it is gruesome, horrifying, ghastly and disturbing. To make macabre work is to dance around ideas of death in a way that can collectively disturb an audience, such as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) which creates a consistent tone of 'the macabre' through language just as much as plot.

MYTHOLOGY

A universe of traditional stories involving deities, heroes, and creatures, both imaginary and historical. Greek, Indian, Roman, and Celtic stories are often referred to as mythologies as they combine history with timeless truths, sagas, or legends. A myth can be quasi-historical and epic, adding in fanciful detail. Mythologies are designed to be remembered through oral storytelling across generations.

MAGICK

This 'misspelling' of magic is purposeful; it defines ritual magic rather than stage magic. According to occultist Aleister Crowley, magick describes the reconciliation of freewill and destiny.³ In other words, it is the ability to tap into one's true will in order to cause change. I cannot help but think of Roald Dahl's book, *Matilda* (1988). It has also been theorised that the letter k is significant in indicating the kind of magick being employed. It could refer to *shakti*, creative energy, or the ancient Egyptian word for magical power, *khu*.

BAROQUE

A style of the arts that means irregularly shaped in French. It was first used to describe pearls but then came to describe an extravagant style of art associated with 17th century Europe: elaborately curving lines, generously applied gilt and gold. Baroque music is audibly ornamental, as much as baroque art is visually so. To be baroque is to be inherently self-confident, dynamic, and extravagant.

SCIENCE FICTION

Speculative fiction explores imaginative, futuristic concepts such as advanced technology, space and time travel, alternative futures, and so much more. Sci-fi is a hugely influential genre for mainstream and niche audiences, often set in a parallel universe, zombie apocalypse, or dystopian post-climate disaster world.

Science fiction has been known to embrace diversity and inclusivity much earlier than other genres of literature, film and art, and is often used as a vehicle to explore identity. For example, Octavia E. Butler (1947–2006) turned science fiction into a home for black expression in her many novels.⁴ Rachel Ingalls (1940–2019) wrote of a love affair with a green-skinned monster in *Mrs Caliban* (1982) that no doubt inspired filmmaker Guillermo del Toro's interspecies love story, *The shape of water* (2017). Science fiction is a warm and welcoming home to many, and it continues to evolve alongside social anxieties around climate change and cultural evolution. The character Lily in the series *Sex education* (2019–present) feels socially liberated when existing within her alien erotica adventure stories.

A common misconception is that *Star wars* (1977–present) is a science fiction film. It is actually a space opera, which is a subgenre of science fiction. Space operas host much more melodrama, romance and intergalactic warfare. Other subgenres of sci-fi include 'hard science fiction' where logic and fact are prioritised. And the self-explanatory subgenres: science fantasy, sci-fi horror, etc.

HORROR

As a noun, the word horror is simply one of hundreds of ways to name a feeling of dread, apprehension or fright. Yet, it is also an entire genre that does this, and so much more. Hollywood would be nowhere without the horror film industry, designed to scare but also delight and invigorate. What makes this genre so popular is that a horror story could come from an ancient origin, a recent news item, or simply elaborate on a classic psychological fear or phobia. Both Mary Shelley's story *Frankenstein* (1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) are timeless examples of the way in which horror has become such a well established and loved literary form.

According to a Wikipedia list of horror anthologies, *Unheimliche geschichten* (Uncanny stories) was the first of its kind, released in 1919. At midnight in a closed antiquarian bookshop, three figures, Death, the Devil and the Harlot, step out of paintings and read five macabre stories. The anthology framework suits the horror genre and has remained a popular storytelling device, seen in the five stories of the film *Creepshow* (1982) and eight of the film *The field guide to evil* (2018).

BODY HORROR

A subgenre of horror that showcases grotesque narratives around the gory destruction of the human body, often seen in fragments or fleetingly within mainstream films such as the *Alien* film franchise (1979–present). You know, the part when Sigourney Weaver births the alien. When the body horror genre isn't being borrowed, it can be seen explored in depth by filmmakers such as Philip Brophy, who created the Australian body horror classic *Body melt* (1993). Liquefied flesh, tentacles growing out of faces, and imploding heads feature in this satirical black comedy that is among the earliest examples of the body horror epic.

AN OTHERWORLD

A spirit world, a realm of the dead, or any metaphysical plane that mythical or supernatural beings possess. There are many otherworlds in historical literature such as Hades' underworld or Mount Olympus and they often require a guided journey to get there. Rarohenga is where Māui found his father, Makeatutara, when he followed his mother down a mysterious hole in the earth. In the 1987 horror film *Hellraiser*, Lemarchand's box (the Lament Configuration) is a mechanical puzzle that opens a door to another dimension, that of hell.

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1. Jasmine Gallagher, "Christchurch, and the heart of the Antipodean Gothic" in *The Pantograph Punch*, 7 December 2015. <https://www.pantograph-punch.com/posts/christchurch-antipodean-gothic>
2. "Rip it to shreds: A history of punk and style" in *Pitchfork* (n. d.). <https://pitchfork.com/features/from-our-partners/9943-rip-it-to-shreds-a-history-of-punk-and-style/>
3. Aleister Crowley, "A lecture on the philosophy of magick" in *The revival of magick* (1998), 207.
4. Stephen Kears, "The essential Octavia Butler" in *The New York Times*, 15 January 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/15/books/review/the-essential-octavia-butler.html>

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