

# THE PARADOX OF FANFICTION AS A DEMOCRATIC DISCURSIVE PRACTICE: THE CASE OF ANIME FANFICTION WRITING

Ivy J. Antonio, La Salle Green Hills High School, the Philippines

This paper attempts to expand the relatively unknown conversation about fanfiction studies in the Philippines through characterizing the properties of fanfiction as a genre. It specifically seeks to uncover the prevailing convention on the writing of selected anime fanfiction stories with particular attention to how it shows translocality and heteroglossia, how these concepts translate into a specific discourse community of fanfiction writers, and the way these features encode the broader social and ideological conditions of the practice. A corpus of thirty (30) stories were identified and analyzed through simple statistical techniques such as statistical frequency and percentage. After examining the texts, the paper concludes that the global nature of fanfiction necessitates that the participants in this global space use the different linguistic, stylistic, and discursive resources available to them in order to craft end-products which explores their desired outcome of the source material and at the same time position their story in the fan community as an informed fanfiction. Even if fanfiction is a means of expression and reappropriation of writers of the source material, the very product itself is still very much determined by the rules created and maintained by the fanfiction writer's discourse community. As such, fan fiction as an expression of absolute freedom, though seemingly liberating at first glance, is merely a fiction.

Keywords: globalization, fan studies, fan communities, popular culture, anime and manga, fan fiction, fan fiction writers, fan fiction writing, translocality, heteroglossia, genre analysis

## **Globalization, the Internet and the Youth**

Globalization is often described as the increased flow of ideas, media, finances, technology and capital across borders (Appadurai, 1994 as cited in Black, 2009) and inevitably, this process is in a way mediated or propagated by the presence of the internet. In effect, it is increasingly becoming a globalized site for communication (Leppanen, forthcoming a) in that it enables people from different parts of the globe to communicate, share their resources, and to disseminate and appropriate cultural capital.

Not surprisingly, such “flows” come in tandem with questions as to what is local and what is global and since the youth, as Black (2009b) comments, is “at the cutting edge of technology use” and is “likely to be impacted by this global restructuring”, it is important that we look into how the youth interact with these flows and inevitably, contribute to the massive change brought about by the globalizing world through their linguistic, social, and cultural practices in their respective discourse communities.

### **Significance of the Study**

This paper will attempt to expand the relatively unknown conversation about fan fiction in the Philippines through characterizing the properties of fan fiction as a genre. In relation to this, these three questions will be answered:

- A. What are the typified genre features of fan fiction?
- B. What genre practices have developed with fan fiction?
- C. In what way does fanfiction show translocality and heteroglossia?
- D. How do these actually translate in a specific discourse community of fanfiction writers (i.e. fan communities)?
- E. In what way do the features encode the broader social and ideological conditions of the practice?

## **Theoretical Framework**

Genre, as defined by Swales (1990), is a class of communicative events with some shared set of communicative purposes. However, he notes that, the examples of these genres may vary in their prototypicality in the sense that an example maybe typical of a particular genre and another instance may not. The standards of a genre (i.e. content, positioning and form) are created by the discourse community who also in turn helps in maintaining the discourse community and the genre itself.

Another description of genre by Martin (1984, as cited in Paltridge, 2001) has genre described as “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture.” Genres then, in this view, are what users of a language can draw on to get things accomplished such as narrative or reports. Lastly, Miller (1998, as cited in Herring, et.al, 2004) then defines genre as “a typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations,” with genre analysis as an exercise in classification of these rhetorical actions based on substance and form which is similar to what Swales argued.

These criteria then of genre as typified, communicative, and shared by a discourse community makes fanfiction an example of genre as it exhibits common structures and substance.

Translocality is used to describe socio-spatial dynamics and processes of simultaneity and identity formation that transcend boundaries—including, but also extending beyond, those of nation states (Greiner & Sakdapolrak, 2013). Simply put, it is where the global and the local collide and converge. It is in this description that internet is positioned in that on the one hand, it could be used as a mediator of different global flows but at the same time it could also be a site where users interact, combine and reappropriate the different flows it makes accessible, therefore making it local. It is in the internet that the local and the global intertwine and reinforce each other (Grixti, 2006). Internet then becomes a collective space, a space wherein people “shar[e], discuss[...] and critiqu[e...] images of globalization (Beck & Beck-Gersheim, 2009 as cited in Leppanen, forthcoming).

It is in this context of translocality that fanfiction comes into picture. Fanfiction is a fan’s reworking of a cult material such as television shows, video games, or in the

context of this study, anime and/or manga usually posted in a fanfiction archive such as fanfiction.net or wattpad.com. Today, many young fan fiction writers gather in online communities formed by common media preferences rather than other identity markers such as class, gender or race (Berkowitz, 2012 as cited in Antonio, 2014). It is in the writing of fanfiction where translocality is specifically iterated in that the writers combine elements from their native language (i.e. in English) in tackling a source material that is originally in a foreign language (i.e. in Japanese) while at the same time mixing it with some other source material such as a song, a line from a novel or an entire poem which may or may be in the same language as the languages used in the source material or the writer's native language, thus traversing the traditional lines of national boundaries.

Heteroglossia, in Bakhtin's words (1981, as cited in Leppanen, et.al, 2009) , can be seen as the combination of forms and contents that show "the coexistence of socioideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socioideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth." Linguistic and stylistic heteroglossia are key means of translocality (Leppanen, et. al, 2009). It is in the writing of fan fiction that writers select and combine resources (such as the features, register, and style) from more than one language and at the same time borrow features of one language thus re-creating something that is completely different and similar to the original, with its features still recognizable by the readers. And, in effect, will contribute to further reimaginings.

The very nature too of fanfiction as seemingly a hodge-podge of different linguistic and cultural resources makes it at the same time, a hybrid artefact. Hybridity is described as the rearticulation of accepted "modes of meaning" such as discourses, languages, and genres in order to create new meanings (NLG, 1996, as cited in Black, 2005). Research on fan studies position fan fiction as a kind of web writing in which the authors express their emotional attachments to the characters of the source material "in processes of bricolage, hybridity, quotation, and modification of stretches of discourse produced by someone else," (Leppanen, forthcoming b). In this process of continuous remixing then, we end up with a text that is at the same time local and global.

## Review of Related Research

A growing number of research about fan fiction studies it through the lenses of the New Literacies Framework, proponents of these included Black (2005, 2006, and 2009) who studied the creation of online identities of fan fiction writers, their textual resources and agency, and their composition practices and Chandler - Olcoll and Mahar (2003) who called for educators to harness the composition practices of the writers and make it relevant in the classroom setting.

Research on genre analysis of computer-mediated communication practices focuses on the identification of these practices as genres such as in the pioneering work of Yates and Orlinowsky (1992) which focused on electronic mail as an organizational communication genre, Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, and Wright's (2004) analysis of weblogs as "a hybrid genre that draws from multiple sources," and Sherlock's (2009) examination of the characteristics of collaborative work and activity systems in the online game, *World of Warcraft*.

## Results and Discussions

Table 1: Move-step analysis of fan fictions.

Move-Step		f	%	QD
<b>Move 1: Announcing the story's beginning</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>Obligatory</b>
Step 1	Summarizing the story to come	26	86.66	Obligatory
Step 2a	Claiming the right to tell the story	3	10	Optional
Step 2b	Suggesting that the story is good	4	13.33	Optional
Step 3	Relinquishing audience's speaking rights	0	0	N/A
<b>Move 2: Setting the scene</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Obligatory</b>
Step 1	Introducing the	19	63.33	Obligatory

	characters			
Step 2	Introducing the temporal setting	11	36.66	Optional
Step 3	Introducing the physical setting	17	56.66	Obligatory
Step 4	Introducing the situation	17	56.66	Obligatory
<b>Move 3: Recapitulation of series of events</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>93.33</b>	<b>Obligatory</b>
<b>Move 4: Stating what was interesting or unusual</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Obligatory</b>
Step 1	Giving comment on the story from outside	22	73.33	Obligatory
Step 2a	Attributing evaluative commentary to characters	17	56.66	Obligatory
Step 2b	Giving extra detail about characters	14	46.66	Optional
Step 3	Suspending action	9	30	Optional
Step 4	Comparing what happened, did not happen or will happen	14	46.66	Optional
Step 5	Telling what was simultaneously occurring	20	66.66	Obligatory
Step 6	Explaining what happened	2	6.66	Optional
<b>Move 5: Releasing tension (Resolution)</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>63.33</b>	<b>Obligatory</b>
<b>Move 6: Announcing the end of the story (Coda)</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Optional</b>
Step 1	Providing a short summary	6	20	Optional
Step 2	Connecting the	4	13.33	Optional

	world of the story to the present			
--	--------------------------------------	--	--	--

Legend:

f - frequency of the move present in the fan fiction

% - percentage of the frequency

In the table above, it is to be noted that four (4) out of six moves are found to be obligatory, i.e. *Move 1 - Announcing the story's beginning* with a frequency of 27 or 90%, *Move 2 - Setting the scene* with a frequency of 30 or 100%, *Move 3 - Recapitulation of the series of events* with a frequency of 28 or 93.33%, *Move 4 - Stating what is interesting or unusual* with a frequency of 30 or 100%, and *Move 5 - Releasing tension* with a frequency of 19 or 63.33%. However, out of the six moves, one is found to be optional, which is *Move 6 - Announcing the end of the story* with a frequency of 12 or 40%.

The steps under *Move 1* namely *Step 1- Summarizing the story to come* is also found to be obligatory as it received a frequency count of 26 or 86.66% while *Step 2a - Claiming the right to tell the story* and *Step 2b - Suggesting that the story is good* are found to be optional with a frequency of 3 or 10% and 4 or 13.33% respectively. In addition, the last step, which is *Step 3 - Relinquishing audience's speaking rights* is found to be optional since it received a frequency of 0 or 0%.

This means that fan fiction writers tend to summarize or give the readers a sense of what the story will be at the very beginning of the story. Summarizing the fan fiction is a usual move in fan fiction writing mainly because there is an explicit norm developed in the fan fiction site itself to inform the readers what kind of content, language, and rating a certain story will have.

Example (1)

**Summary: It begins with a kiss. It ends with a bullet.**

Fullmetal Alchemist - Rated: T - English - Romance - Chapters: 1 - Words: 583 - Reviews: 2 - Favs: 4 - Follows: 1 - Published: Sep 11, 2013 - Edward E., A. Heidrich - Complete

The example above (1) shows the detailed way the writers are supposed to inform their readers about how the story will unfold. In fan fiction sites such as fan fiction.net, writers usually use the first sentence of their fan fictions as the summary of the entire

story (MIS1 - 86.66%). Also, writers are expected to inform the readers who the main characters are or the pairing in the story, and they are also to rate their story based on its maturity or theme as stipulated in the site's guidelines such as *T* (suitable for more mature children, 9 years and older, with minor action violence without serious injury. May contain mild coarse language. Should not contain any adult themes). (<https://www.fanfiction.net/guidelines/>).

As for the optional steps 2a, 2b, and 3, these are also embedded in the way fanfiction writers are expected to summarize their story. Meaning, if ever they are going to summarize their fan fiction, they can opt whether to claim the story as good or to claim the right to tell the story. However, for step 3, this is mainly optional mainly because fan fictions are usually published as a written story and not a digital story as the case of digital stories discussed by Wang (2010), so there really is no need to relinquish audience's right to tell the story for themselves.

#### Example (2)

Characters: Alfons and Edward

Summary: What would you do, Edward, if you knew that my opinions had changed?

Warnings: Nothing

**A/N: Written in 1st person, Alfons' POV. Was originally intended to just be some random little drabble until I realized I could work it to fit the 'What If' prompt~ Many thanks to my beta, Spandy.**

Another one of the discourse communities practices is for the writers to claim their story through relaying in the summary or in the author's notes how they got their idea for the story as is shown in the example (2) and in this very act, simultaneously suggesting that their fan fiction is good. According to Leppanen (forthcoming), "fans describe the ethos of fan fiction writing with the question, 'What if'" and that a writer will only be able to claim such expert status in the discourse community if he/she could spin-off probable situations for the characters of the source material side-by-side by his/her ability to put much detail into the stories whether or not the details included came from the canon.



As for the steps in *Move 2 - Setting the scene*, which this is found to be obligatory with a frequency of 30 or 100%, the steps *Step 1 - Introducing the characters*, *Step 3 - Introducing the physical setting*, and *Step 4 - Introducing the situation* are found to be obligatory with frequencies of 19, 17, and 17 or 63.33%, 56.66%, 56.66%, respectively.

In fan fiction, writers strive to create texts that constitute a bricolage in which objects are reconfigured “to communicate fresh meanings” (Clarke, 1976 as cited in Leppanen, et.al, 2013). In terms of the characters, plot, or settings, the writers are expected to manipulate it, thus, necessitating the need to orient the readers as to what, where, and when an action in the fan fiction will happen. In relation to this, the findings reveal that for the discourse community, even though it is assumed that the reader already knows the characters from the original text, writers are expected to introduce the characters at the beginning of the story. Also, as what is shown in table 1, they are also expected to introduce the physical setting where their story is happening mainly because in fan fiction, the characters, though retained, may or may not be interacting or operating in the universe of the original story, as in the case of AUs or alternative universes or cross-over fan fictions (i.e. Harry Potter in the Twilight universe or vice versa). For example, writers can use the characters in a modern times AU for an original text set in the early twentieth century. Writers are also expected to introduce the situation since the readers will have little to no knowledge as to how the story will unfold.

However, as for *Step 2 - Introducing the temporal setting*, this is not always the case, since in fan fiction, it is possible that the writer has already oriented the readers as to the time frame of the story as early as in the summary of the story (*Move 1 Step 1*) thereby eliminating any need to describe the temporal setting of the story such as in this example (3):

Example (3)

“Alfons have always waited for that entity to take him away. He waited for this day. **Movie timeline.**”

*Move 3 - Recapitulation of Events* is found to be obligatory with a frequency of 28 or 93.33%. Since the characters are moving in the universe of the writer’s universe, it

necessitates that fan fiction should recapitulate events in the story.

In *Move 4 - Stating What Is interesting or Unusual*, *Steps 1 - Giving comment on the story from outside* has a frequency of 22 or 73.33%, *Step 2a - Attributing evaluative commentary to characters* has a frequency of 17 or 56.66%, and *Step 5 - Telling what was simultaneously occurring* has a frequency of 20 or 66.66% are found to be obligatory.

The findings reveal that the writers usually move the plot of the story through one of the characters commenting on what is happening in the story. As shown in this example,

#### Example (4)

“Besides, you’ve said a million times in the span of two years that you want to go back, and now that your way home is already on top of your head, you ought to grab it. It’s your only chance.”

The findings also reveal that the writers tend to evaluate characters and this step usually coincide or appear with Step 1. It could be said then that the discourse community tend to describe the characters and give commentary as a way to move the story even if it is already assumed that the readers already know to a certain extent that the characters are. However, the giving of comments and evaluative commentary reflect the usual fan fiction practice of extending the canon of the original material in the sense that writers extend the character’s actions, motivations, and feelings that may not be present in the original material, thus, the additional commentary.

#### Example (5)

...Alfons is not a religious man, until he finds a god.

...Alfons was a scientist, rational, reasonable, spiritual, but not religious. Not until he'd found god, anyway.

The example (5) above shows another practice of the discourse community, that of which connecting both ends of the fan fiction. This practice also be considered as an announcement that the story will finally come to an end mainly because of the similarity in the structure and vocabulary of the last sentence to the first. However, though this is a

practice, the finding tells that *Move 6 - Announcing the end of the story*, is found to be an optional move with a frequency of 12 or 40%. This reveals that the given discourse community do not seem to want to end their stories as supported by the fact that even the steps in the move i.e. *Step 1 - Providing a short summary and Step 2 - Connecting the world of the story* to the present are also both optional with frequency counts of 6 and 4 or 20% and 13.33% respectively. This is in congruence with the fact that fan fiction merely extends the storyline of the original material and may not necessarily give an end to it. However, it is a possible practice in fan communities to give away a particular fan fiction for adoption for the purpose of ending or extending that particular story. In a sense, then, using the concept of “remixes” discussed by Knobel and Lankshear (2008), there seems to be no end to remixing and reappropriation of these media products (i.e. fan fictions) since a reappropriated product could be a source to further reappropriation.

At this point, the “obligatory moves” are lifted from the previous results generated from PEN moves. In sum, the preferred structure of fan fictions is as follows:

1. Summarizing the story to come;
2. Introducing the physical setting;
3. Introducing the situation;
4. Introducing the characters;
5. Recapitulation of series of events;
6. Telling what was simultaneously occurring; and
7. Releasing tension.

The stories in the corpus are either (1) in English, (2) in a mixture of German and English, (3) in a mixture of German, English, and Japanese, and/or (4) in a mixture of different genres such as “songfics (i.e. stories in which the narrative is built upon the lyrics of a song)”, stories based on one-liners from other textual resources such as a line from a poem, or an entirely different sampling from a different literary genre.

## Heteroglossia in Fanfiction

Leppanen (forthcoming a) claims that fanfiction is heteroglossia in action, in that it is where writers use take a language practice in their “original” space (Jacquemet, 1995 as cited in Leppanen, forthcoming a) and transplant it to somewhere else via modification, imitation, or repetition, with the purpose of providing a “new” or “remixed” product to the fan community.

### Example (1)

(14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan, Passover, 1923)

...

Finally, after everyone had eaten their fill, the traditional third cup of wine was poured and the *birkat ha-mazon* was recited as grace along with a blessing.

*Eliyahu ha-Navi, Eliyahu ha-Tishbi, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu ha-Giladi.*

(Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah, Elijah, Elijah the Gileadite)

*Bimhayrah v'yamenu, yavo aleynu, im Mashiach ben David, im Mashiach ben David.*

(Speedily and in our days, come to us, with the messiah, son of David, with the messiah, son of David.)

Everyone sang together as the fourth cup for the Prophet Elijah was poured and the front door was briefly opened. Then after more psalms and another blessing the cup was drunk and the Passover Seder was completed.

*"L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim!"* old Oscar Nachash raised his glass. "Next year in Jerusalem!"

*"L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim!"* Everyone chorused and raised their own glasses in a toast.

"There's plenty of food left over," Hannah reminded Alfons. "Don't forget to take some back to your apartment for your friend, Edward. You boys both need more decent food in you."

"Thanks', *Fräu* Nachash! Ed'll be glad for an excuse to take a break from our research." Though the team had noticed their newest member becoming less enthusiastic about their rocketry projects lately.

- The translations are provided by the fanfiction writer.

The use of foreign language in fanfiction is particularly common in anime

fanfiction writing mainly because of the cultural product, that is, Fullmetal Alchemist, being a Japanese product. However, in the case of the Fullmetal Alchemist fandom, a layer of complexity is added into the picture mainly because of the characters being assumed as English-speaking, in that in the storyline, we have the main character, Edward, being transported into London at the end of the series (roughly towards the end of World War I). And in the canon of the original anime, his fictional world is a parallel of our world, thus, the people, the places and the languages in his world will always have a parallel in our world. With this in mind, it is almost an imperative to fanfiction writers that if they want their story to have more accuracy, that is, historical accuracy, then they will have to research on the culture and language of the peoples in Germany in the early '20s.

In the example (1), the writer used the Hebrew prayer for Passover in telling a story as one of the characters is a Jewish girl. At the same time, the use of the honorific “*frau*” at the end also tells the reader that the story is set in Germany as what is expected in this particular fanfiction. Despite the fact that in this example only the German “*frau*” appeared, the accurate use of language expressions is highly-valued in fanfiction communities in that it makes the story more authentic and more in touch with the source material even if the source material itself is not in its “proper” language (i.e. *Fullmetal Alchemist* is a Japanese anime dubbed in Japanese, English, and German versions).

It is shown in this example that language is doing two things here, on the one hand, it shows the potential linguistic hybridity of the entire story since it talks about a Jewish festival in a German municipality in a time in history where anti-Semitism is starting to brew, but on the other hand, it also shows that the writer is framing the story in such a way that it is historically and culturally accurate. Language, in fanfiction then, is not merely a stylistic device, it is also a way of positioning the story as a “good” story.

Another example on the attention of linguistic detail is shown in this example (2)

Had anyone troubled to take them, the minutes of the 24 December 1922 meeting of the *Münchener Raketenklub* would have declared the event memorable for two reasons. The first, a happy accident of the calendar, saw Christmas Eve coincide with the club's hundredth meeting. Thus it seemed fitting to solemnize the occasion with toasts and a brief speech from each of the three founding members (Alfons

Heiderich, Ludwig Eberhardt, and Hans Unger) as well as celebrate the holiday with a potluck supper.

The second was purely an inside joke: Edward Elric returned home from the party too full to sleep.

He hadn't meant to eat until his waistband felt uncomfortably tight (and he'd been damned if he'd pop the button to ease the pressure, like some middle-aged burgher after a hearty feed), but he also hadn't expected the spread to be so lavish. He hadn't set out to make a pig of himself, either. He'd barely touched the anise-flavored *Springerle* and refrained altogether from cutting himself a slice of the *Stollen* their landlady had baked for him and Alfons to bring. (After all, an identical loaf was sitting wrapped in cloth on the kitchen counter for tomorrow's breakfast.) He'd nursed a single mug of *Glühwein* all evening despite Gottschalk's increasingly insistent offers to top him up; the stuff smelled better than it tasted, steaming in its pot on the gas ring, the sugar and cinnamon and cloves barely taking the edge off the cheap red wine that was all they could afford. All right, he had cut quite a swath through Klein's sister's *Lebkuchen* -- and who'd have marked Eberhardt for such a dab hand at *Reiberdatschi*? He'd brought the potato-and-egg mixture ready-made in a big, covered bowl and fried up cake after golden cake over the fire in the yard -- the perfect accompaniment to the inevitable *Weisswurst*.

The example (2) actually shows a generic feature of fanfiction, and that is the use of another language in an anime-inspired fanfiction. The use of a foreign language, even if it is just parts and parcels, already positions the writer and the fanfiction to status in the fan community. The use of different languages not merely embellishes the fanfiction, stylizes the characters and ultimately, the universe that the characters are living into. Thus, the ethos of fanfiction, to expand the “what-ifs” and “how-about’s” of the source material. In this, it is only imperative that the writers use other linguistic resources to “authenticate” their work. Interaction between writers and readers illustrate a shared appreciation for multiple languages, different cultural perspectives and alternative forms of texts (Black, 2006). However, it is to be noted that this use of multiple languages is also inevitably dictated by the source material thus leading to the use of the former.

Example (3)

*Ed tallied the constellations he could see, familiar from countless journeys across Amestris and unchanged here: the Little Bear, with the Pole Star in his tail; Cassiopeia's chair and Auriga's chariot overhead; Orion down south, his dogs playing hide-and-peek behind the rooftops -- names so old his father had learned them as a child, half a millennium ago. Only the newer objects, picked out with*

*ever-stronger telescopes and numbered in long catalogs, had unfamiliar titles. Somewhere among them, waiting to be discovered, lay his way home, maybe. He turned to Alfons and saw that he, too, was stargazing. They grinned at each other, exchanging a wordless promise: Ad astra, frater!*

Ed wasn't sure what had brought on this cheerful mood -- in the shadow of the old *Nördlicher Friedhof*, no less! -- but sharing a pot of coffee or tea while they burned the midnight oil studying was so normal, he didn't want to challenge it. "Sounds good to me, but I thought you were saving that bottle to celebrate with." If they ever had something to celebrate -- although the way the current rocket designs were progressing, that day might not be far off.

Alfons looked down his nose. "It is Christmas, Edward," he explained.

And next year you're spending it at home, if I have to dose the coffee with chloryl hydrate. "Oh, right," Ed said, and dug through his memory for a recent quotation. "*In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis?*"

In the example (3) above, the writer uses linguistic heteroglossia in using the resources of German and Latin to position the characters in the story as both German with the knowledge of Latin. The use of "Ad astra, frater!" which means "To the stars, brother!" on the first paragraph was explained by the writer in the author's notes (i.e. paratext) as being the motto of a fictional organization (i.e. Münchener Raketenklub - simply, Munich Rocket Club) that the writer provided for the characters. On the other hand, the phrase, "In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis," which means, "And on earth, peace, goodwill to all people," is a line from the Gospel of Luke which also appears in Gloria, most commonly known as one of the ordinary chants of the Roman Catholic Mass.

The text is doing several things here at the same time. One, the use of Latin for a motto of a rocketry club and from a line from the Bible is not random in that it echoes one of the main conflicts of the two characters in the story. You have two rocketeers with Alfons as the religious one and Edward as the staunch atheist whose religion is science. These two characters get along in their passion for rocketry, however, throw in religion into the picture and you see one of the characters shaking his fist to the heavens. This fact is then harnessed by the writer to produce a text that is filled with religious imagery. Furthermore, the choice of religion, which is Roman Catholicism, is not a random choice in that Munich, or Bavaria in general, is a predominantly Roman Catholic region. On the

same vein, the choice of the constellations in the first paragraph of the example extends the canon of the source material since the two characters are rocketeers, thus it is imperative that they have knowledge of astronomy at the same time with chemistry and physics.

In this example, we see that the author does not only harness linguistic resources through the use of the different languages itself but also discursive heteroglossia in the sense that the author uses both the discourse of rocketry and religion to create an informed fanfiction.

### **Gaining Status in the Fandom**

The nature of the source material, Japanese animation, is a part of a global culture which embraces adolescents from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds thus, giving rise to a multilingual community. Despite the presence of English as the lingua franca, it does not necessarily mean that those who can write in impeccable English will gain status in their respective communities.

#### **Example (4)**

"Alphonse," I said, my voice cracking from the pain and love that single word made me feel.

The not-AI must have heard me, because he snapped his head up. Great, now he will think I'm a weirdo, not the greatest way of meeting people.

"Entschuldigen sie bitte, haben sie meinen namen?"

"Nein" he looked crestfallen, and I felt like I had to add something so he wouldn't feel bad, I had called his name after all. "Ich bin Edward"

"Alfons," I replied grinning in the most AI-like way. "Alfons Heidrich."

And then he did the most weird, also AI-like, thing he could do, he stood up, crossed the aisle to my seat and hugged me. I was being hugged by a guy who looked like my brother, on a bus on a Thursday, Thursday just became my favorite day of the week.



As what is shown in the example (4) above, even if the fanfiction is mostly written in English, the German is used as a linguistic and semiotic resource acting as a kind of authentication of the story. On the one hand, it makes the reader think that the characters are fully speaking in German and on the other; it positions the text as a “good” fanfiction story in that it uses another language to make the story more authentic. Truly, in fanfiction communities, it has become the norm that writers embellish their stories with foreign words as necessitated by the source material. This kind of linguistic hybridity is common in fan fiction communities that authors either ask for fellow writers and readers as to the translation of words and at the same time provide readers with paratexts in the form of author’s notes to inform the reader what the snippet of the foreign language meant.

#### Example (5)

Notes:

The Ludwigskirche, like every other location in Munich mentioned by name in this piece, actually exists; you can take a virtual tour of the building at the parish website, [www.st-ludwig-muenchen.de](http://www.st-ludwig-muenchen.de) (and discover that I've used my artistic license to move the pews a bit in relation to the nave's supporting columns). Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München also offers an online tour of its campus, including a view of the Siegestor, at its website, [www.uni-muenchen.de](http://www.uni-muenchen.de). If you are unfamiliar with the various Christmas delights served at the Raketenklub's party, I suggest an experimental approach: find the local German bakery and investigate the sweets yourself (but be mindful of Ed's example and don't overdo it!).

Notes

\* I did some studying about Passover traditions, the geography, architecture, history and politics of Munich at the time, so any glaring errors are my own.

\* For anyone who's seen "A Friendship In Vienna" (or read the book which inspired it) the Nachash family is based somewhat on the Doranwalds, who were based loosely on the author's own family.

Another route to status is how well a writer can combine different discourse in his/her story, an example of which is the combination or the expansion of the universe of the source material through research of information about the setting of a target country’s history and culture. As what Black (2007) observed in encoding the practices of fan communities, many writers request information about daily life in the different countries

where their fanfictions are set. Possible information included in the research are, “marriage practices, school schedules, and common foods as well as ‘clarification of culturally specific symbols, [...] and folklore (Black, 2005 as cited in Black, 2007). In these examples (5), we see the author informing the readers about her sources which includes websites and books, encouraged the readers to browse through the links, and disclaimed that any historical errors are hers, thus, eliminating potential violent reactions from the readers.

In the fanfiction space, in spite of the predominance of English, a fanfiction writers’ knowledge of these cultural discourses can and will potentially place a writer to status in the discourse community. It is expected from the members of the fan community to come up with stories that are at the same time cohesive, authentic, and in touch with the source material.

The potential multilingualism and hybridity of the fanfiction necessitates that the members get resources from different languages and resources in our for them to expand the universe of the source material.

### **Fanfiction and Globalization**

The previous discussions have shown how fanfiction is globalized in the sense that it is dependent on user-generated content, that it is free, and that it is assured of a global audience. Also, this global character necessitates that the writers must also use linguistically and stylistically heteroglossic discourse in order for them and for their stories to have status in the fan community. This online and global space assures that there is social interaction around content. This in itself is what makes fanfiction a globalized and globalizing space in that its being place-like assures that it will be at the same time, multilingual, multimodal and heteroglossic. In addition, the fact that communities within different sub-spaces, in this case, fanfiction communities, are growing rapidly only makes the space all the more complex, thus contributing to endless multilingualism, multimodality and endless hybridization. Drotner (2008, as cited by Benson, 2011) posits that the internet, in this case, fanfiction writing, impacts on social relation in that it “serves to widen users’ option of creation, communication and

participation across space and these become increasingly globalized.” As what was shown in the discussion of the examples, fanfiction writers use fanfiction sites as a way to express themselves and to practice their different “multiliteracies” in coming up with a bricolage of resources (i.e. fanfiction) that is at the same time conservative and transgressive. This presence of new media allows for a degree of autonomy for fanfiction writers that is less apparent in traditional spaces such as classrooms or in the arena of traditional publishing. However, it is not to be assumed that these practices of producing fan products (i.e. fanfictions) to be new. Today’s production of these fanfictions only echo its existence in an era before new media. It is only now that these fanfictions have been globalized and that access from a global audience has become easier, also necessitating a transformation and negotiation of discourse practices where the local meets the global and converge in different ways.

However, as liberating as the practices of fanfiction writing could seem to its writers, it cannot be denied that fanfiction writing also has its mechanisms of control and normativity which serves a policing function, thus, making the supposedly liberating process an un-democratic one.

### **The Paradox of Fanfiction as a Democratic Discursive Practice**

Fanfiction, as described earlier, is a product of fans’ emotional response to the original material and it is in its writing, fans claim certain identities and share these identities to the fan community as well. As Leppanen (forthcoming b) put it, it is “where fandom, youth, culture...can be constructed without much external censorship. This is in line with much of the research about fan fiction especially those within the New Literacies Framework that would argue that it is in fan fiction where writers could freely express themselves, construct space (Black, 2007), and create affiliations (Chandler - Olcott & Mahar, 2003), thus, enabling them with the necessary skills needed to survive a globalized world.

Although at first glance, it may seem that there are limitless possibilities in fanfiction writing, it is not without the policing of specific norms. Though there are the possibilities of reworking the “what-ifs” and “how-about” of fanfiction writing there are

structures within the fan community and the fan community itself that smother the freedom these writers seemingly have in a supposedly globalized space.

#### Example (6)

**Summary: It begins with a kiss. It ends with a bullet.**

Fullmetal Alchemist - Rated: T - English - Romance - Chapters: 1 - Words: 583 - Reviews: 2 - Favs: 4 - Follows: 1 - Published: Sep 11, 2013 - Edward E., A. Heidrich - Complete

The example above (4) shows the detailed way the writers are supposed to inform their readers about how the story will unfold. In fan fiction sites such as fanfiction.net, writers usually use the first sentence of their fan fictions as the summary of the entire story. Also, writers are expected to inform the readers who the main characters are or the pairing in the story, and they are also to rate their story based on its maturity or theme as stipulated in the site's guidelines such as *T* (suitable for more mature children, 9 years and older, with minor action violence without serious injury. May contain mild coarse language. Should not contain any adult themes). (<https://www.fanfiction.net/guidelines/>)

In fanfiction, writers strive to create texts that constitute a bricolage in which objects are reconfigured "to communicate fresh meanings" (Clarke, 1976 as cited in Leppanen, et.al, 2013). In terms of the characters, plot, or settings, the writers are expected to manipulate it, thus, necessitating the need to orient the readers as to what, where, and when an action in the fan fiction will happen as is shown in the paratexts of the stories such as the summary and author's notes.

Though the production and the structure are dependent on the individual writer's discretion, fan fiction structure is actually still dictated by the norms of the discourse community. These norms are constructed and maintained by the fan writers themselves. The sites already have built-in constraints to dictate how the fan fictions will be written down, as the case of writing summaries and attaching author's notes at the beginning and at the end of the story. Also, the other fan's knowledge of the original material also dictates how they are going to respond to a text, an example of which is this reader review:

### Example (7)

Lol, you've been reading the manga. If you have turned Selim into Pride that would explain why he's still alive, but not why his adoptive mother isn't looking after him (unless he killed her) and what he could possibly hope to achieve in a remote place such as Risembool. Unless he starts spying on Alfons, perhaps... Not meant as criticism ; just trying to find the logic behind it.

In this example, the reviewer acknowledges that the writer has the cultural capital that a fan needs to write what the community will consider as good fanfiction. However, we have a reviewer questioning the writer as to the plausibility of what she has written in her fan fiction.

Here, we can see that participation in the discourse community goes beyond the writing of fan fiction. Though writers are expected to manipulate the story, the characters, and the different elements of the source material, the writer also has to take into account how his/her fan fiction is evaluated by the community in order to address the needs of the said community. So that, in the end, he/she will be seen as an “expert” valued in the community mainly because of his/her knowledge and cultural capital. As a fan puts it, fans “must learn the terms [...] in order to participate and become members of the group.” (Herzog, 2013).

Also, the perceived ethos of fan fiction writing, the construction of the “what-ifs” and “how-about” has already been considered as the norm and the norm has been created and is being perpetrated by the discourse community as a way of initiating the “newbies” and also in identifying who the “experts” are.

### Conclusion

In this paper, the researcher has attempted to decode the narrative structure of different fanfictions. It has been found then, that the preferred order of fanfiction writers is orientation, recapitulation, stating what is unusual and releasing tension. The structure is explained through the discourse practices of the community. The paper also has attempted to exemplify translocality and heteroglossia present in anime-inspired fanfictions. It has been found that the global nature of fanfiction necessitates that the

participants in this global space use the different linguistic, stylistic, and discursive resources available to them in order to craft end-products which explores their desired outcome of the source material and at the same time position their story in the fan community as an informed fanfiction. Through the discussion of the selected fanfictions' narrative structure, translocal, and heteroglossic features, certain discourse practices have also been uncovered and it has been found that even if fanfiction is a means of expression and reappropriation of writers of the source material, the very product itself, which is fanfiction and also the process related to it, is still very much determined by the rules created and maintained by the fanfiction writer's discourse community. As such, fan fiction as an expression of absolute freedom, though seemingly liberating at first glance, is merely a fiction.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

It can never be denied that fan fiction and the process of writing it does not exist in a vacuum. As such, it is necessary that further studies be done tackling how different fanfiction and fanfiction writers transgress the discourse practices of the community, or if these practices can actually be resisted. Further inquiries can also be done as to how the discourse community perpetrate and regulate the practices in fanfiction cites and as to why there is an hierarchy of "good" and "bad" writers and "good" and "bad" fan fiction when the space where the community meet is supposed to be global and all-embracing.

## Works Cited

- Antonio, I. (2014). *A genre analysis of fanfiction: The fiction of transgression*. (Unpublished course work). University of the Philippines. Diliman, Q.C.
- Antonio, I. (2013). *Under construction: Narratives of fanfiction writers*. (Unpublished course work). University of the Philippines. Diliman, Q.C.
- Benson, P. (2011). *Informal learning and globalization of internet social media*. [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved March 1, 2014, from <http://www.slideshare.net/pbbenson/informal-learning-and-the-globalization-of-internet-social-media>
- Berkowitz, D. (2012). Framing the future of fanfiction: How the New York Times portrayal of media subculture influences beliefs about media literacy education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education, 4*, 199 – 212. Retrieved March 14, 2014 from <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1102&context=jmle>
- Black, R. (2005). Access and affiliation: The literacy and composition practices of English language learners in an online fanfiction community. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 49*, 118-128. doi:10.1598/JAAL.49.2.4
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2006). Language, culture, and identity in online fanfiction. *E-learning, 3*, 170 - 184. DOI: 10.2304/elea.2006.3.2.170
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007). Fanfiction writing and the construction of space. *E-learning and Digital Media, 4*, 384-397. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2007.4.4.384>
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2009a). Online fanfiction, global identities, and imagination. *Research in the Teaching of English, 43*, 397-425. Retrieved September 1, 2013, from [coe.utep.edu/ted/images/academic\\_programs/.../RTE0434Online.pdf](http://coe.utep.edu/ted/images/academic_programs/.../RTE0434Online.pdf)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2009b). English language learners, fan communities, and twenty first century skills. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. Retrieved September 1, 2013 from [http://culturemediaed.pressible.org/files/2011/09/rblack\\_ells21stcentury.pdf](http://culturemediaed.pressible.org/files/2011/09/rblack_ells21stcentury.pdf)
- Chandler - Olcott, K. & Mahar, D. (2003, April). Adolescents' anime inspired fanfictions: An exploration of multiliteracies. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 46*. Retrieved September 1, 2013, from

- [https://resources.oncourse.iu.edu/access/content/user/mikuleck/Filemanager\\_Public\\_Files/L750%20Electronic%20Lang%20and%20Lit/New%20Forms/Adolescent%20anime-inspired%20fan-fiction.pdf](https://resources.oncourse.iu.edu/access/content/user/mikuleck/Filemanager_Public_Files/L750%20Electronic%20Lang%20and%20Lit/New%20Forms/Adolescent%20anime-inspired%20fan-fiction.pdf)
- Greiner, C. & Sakdapolrak, P. (2013). Translocality: concepts, applications and emerging research perspectives [Abstract]. *Geography Compass*, 7, (5), 373 – 384.  
DOI: 10.1111/gec3.12048
- Grixti, J. (2006). '*Glocalised*' youth culture as linguistic performance: Media globalization and the construction of hybrid identities. Retrieved March 10, 2014, from <http://www6.gencat.cat/lengcat/noves/hm08hivern/docs/grixti.pdf>
- Guinto, N. (2012). *Genre analysis of contemporary Philippine English narrative essays: The Youngblood experience*. (Unpublished course work). University of the Philippines. Diliman, Q.C.
- Güldenpfennig, P. (2011). *Fandom, fan fiction and the creative mind*. Retrieved October 13, 2013 from [ilk.uvt.nl/downloads/pub/papers/hait/guldenpfennig2011.pdf](http://ilk.uvt.nl/downloads/pub/papers/hait/guldenpfennig2011.pdf)
- Herring, S., et.al. (2004). *Bridging the gap: A genre analysis of weblogs*. Paper presented at the 37<sup>th</sup> Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences – Hawaii.  
Retrieved March 14, 2014 from [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221179453\\_Bridging\\_the\\_Gap\\_A\\_Genre\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Weblogs/file/60b7d51e15ba71315c.pdf](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/221179453_Bridging_the_Gap_A_Genre_Analysis_of_Weblogs/file/60b7d51e15ba71315c.pdf).
- Herzog, A. (2013). *The power of "AH, E/B, Very OOC: Agency in fanfiction jargon*. Retrieved October 13, 2013, from <http://copas.uni-regensburg.de/article/download/158/204>
- Jenkins, H. (1992). *Textual poachers: Television fans and participatory culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Knobel, M. & Lankshear, C. (2008). Remix: The art and craft of endless hybridization. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52, 22-33. doi:10.1598/JAAL.52.1.3
- Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1997). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In *Oral Versions of Personal Experience: Three Decades of Narrative Analysis*. Bamberg M. (Ed.). Retrieved March 14, 2014 from <http://www.clarku.edu/~mbamberg/LabovWaletzky.htm>.



- Leppanen, S., et. al. (2009). Young people's translocal new media uses: A multiperspective analysis of language choice and heteroglossia. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 14, 1080 – 1107.  
doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01482.x
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2013). *Entextualization and resemiotization as resources of (dis)identification in social media*. Retrieved October 13, 2013 from  
[http://www.tilburguniversity.edu/upload/a3d5524e-4413-4772-9f96-9fe0ee714c6f\\_TPCS\\_57\\_Leppanen-et.al.pdf](http://www.tilburguniversity.edu/upload/a3d5524e-4413-4772-9f96-9fe0ee714c6f_TPCS_57_Leppanen-et.al.pdf)
- Leppanen, S. (in press a). *Linguistic and discursive heteroglossia on the translocal internet: The case of web writing*. London: Routledge. Advance online publication. Retrieved from  
[http://www.academia.edu/613377/Heteroglossia\\_in\\_web\\_writing](http://www.academia.edu/613377/Heteroglossia_in_web_writing)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (in press b). *Playing with and policing language use and textuality in fan fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars' Press. Advance online publication. Retrieved from  
[https://www.academia.edu/613408/Playing\\_with\\_and\\_Policing\\_Language\\_Use\\_and\\_Textuality\\_in\\_Fan\\_Fiction](https://www.academia.edu/613408/Playing_with_and_Policing_Language_Use_and_Textuality_in_Fan_Fiction)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (in press). *Playing with and policing language use and textuality in fan fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars' Press. Advance online publication. Retrieved from  
[https://www.academia.edu/613408/Playing\\_with\\_and\\_Policing\\_Language\\_Use\\_and\\_Textuality\\_in\\_Fan\\_Fiction](https://www.academia.edu/613408/Playing_with_and_Policing_Language_Use_and_Textuality_in_Fan_Fiction)
- Paltridge, B. (2001). *Genre and the language learning classroom*. USA: University of Michigan Press.
- Pavlenko, A. (2009). Narrative analysis. In *The Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism*. Retrieved April 1, 2014 from,  
[http://astro.temple.edu/~apavlenk/pdf/Narrative\\_Analysis\\_2008.pdf](http://astro.temple.edu/~apavlenk/pdf/Narrative_Analysis_2008.pdf).
- Sherlock, L. (2009). Genre, activity, and collaborative work and play in World of Warcraft: Places and problems of open systems in online gaming. *Journal of Business & Technical Communication*, 23, 263 - 293. doi:10.1177/1050651909333150
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. USA:

Cambridge University Press.

Yates, J. & Orlinowski, W. (1992). Genres of organizational communication: A structural approach to studying communication and media. *Academy of Management Review*, 17. Retrieved March 14, 2014 from <http://www.ics.uci.edu/~corps/phaseii/YatesOrlikowski-GenresOrgComm-AMR.pdf>

Wang, X. (2013). *A genre theory perspective on digital storytelling*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd.../WangXiqiaoDissertation.pdf](http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd.../WangXiqiaoDissertation.pdf)