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석사학위논문

A Genre Guide for Web Novel Authors
- Fantasy -

(웹소설 작가를 위한 장르 가이드 : 판타지)

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A Genre Guide for Web Novel Authors
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Introduction

The term "web novel" began to catch the public's attention around 2010. Before web novels, there were webtoons. Webtoons, online comics that could be viewed on the internet, started showing tangible outcomes. Renowned authors like Kang Full and Jo Seok entered the scene, and Yoon Tae-ho's "Misaeng" was published as a physical comic, selling over two million copies and even being adapted into a drama. What began on the internet as a means to capture people's interest has now solidified its position at the heart of popular culture. Web novels can be seen as following the path laid down by webtoons.

However, internet novels already existed. In the 1990s, before the internet became widespread, novels posted on PC communication bulletin boards gained popularity. Works like Lee Young-do's "Dragon Raja," Lee Woo-hyuk's "Toemarak," posted on comic board like "My Sassy Girl," and Kwi-yuni's "Temptation of the Wolf" were the talk of the town. Many netizens passionately read these internet novels, and they were eventually published as physical books, selling tens of thousands, even millions of copies. "Toemarak" and "Temptation of the Wolf" were adapted into movies, and "The Bizarre Girl" became not only a Korean sensation but also saw adaptations in Hollywood and China, enjoying immense popularity. The massive popularity of internet novels on a mainstream level quickly waned, but the die-hard fans remained.

Readers always crave interesting stories. According to recent surveys, foreign novels outsell domestic novels in the publishing market. When choosing domestic novels, readers prioritize the author, while foreign novels are chosen for their compelling stories. Domestic novels are still

predominantly associated with literary works, emphasizing writing style and thematic depth. This is why readers seeking enjoyable and engaging stories turn to foreign novels. Authors like Bernard Werber, Haruki Murakami, and Keigo Higashino are some examples.

The popularity of internet novels was also due to their ability to appeal to the emotions and stories of the younger generation at the time. At one point in Japan, internet novels, or "keitai" novels as they were known, were very popular. Works like "Yongong" and "Red Thread" are representative examples. The reasons why "keitai" novels were popular among the younger generation in Japan are as follows: Genre enthusiasts directly wrote the novels. The authors and readers belonged to a similar age group, creating a close relationship. Real-time interactions and feedback influenced the development of the story. These novels were heavily focused on providing entertainment. The reasons for the popularity of internet novels were quite similar, and the web novels, which are now considered the successors of internet novels, share these characteristics. In the past, these stories were predominantly consumed on computers, but with the shift to mobile devices, they are now referred to as web novels.

Today, the term "snack culture" is in vogue, where there is a preference for easily consumable and entertaining content. In this regard, web novels are a genre that can be consumed even more easily and conveniently than webtoons. While both storytelling and illustrations are important, compared to webtoons where illustrations are essential, web novels have a lower entry barrier. This accessibility allows more writers to participate, resulting in the creation of a greater variety of stories at a faster pace.

Major platforms such as Naver Web Novels, Joara, Munpia, Bookpal, KakaoPage, and others are already hosting a tremendous amount of web novels. When Naver Web Novels hold competitions, they receive around 4,000

to 5,000 entries in each responding genres. This illustrates the substantial number of aspiring authors. On some platforms, it is reported that more than 30 authors earn over 10 million won (approximately \$8,500 USD) in profit per month. Naver likely surpasses this number. In the traditional literary world, it was a rare to find authors who could make such earnings solely through their creative work.

The decline of internet novels in the past was due to the fact that the only way for authors to earn substantial income was through traditional paper publications. Posting internet novels on bulletin boards did not provide any income, making it difficult for authors to create content steadily.

Now, with the foundation laid by webtoons, web novels are also moving towards monetization policies. As the popularity of web novels increases, so do the profits. It's still challenging to claim that web novels are well-known in the mainstream, but there's no doubt that they are establishing themselves as an industry. Moreover, their popularity is steadily growing, particularly among the younger generation. In comparison to physical books, web novels might not have as much public recognition, but their sales figures in the light novel category are on par with regular novels.

Web novels are currently in a phase of significant growth, and the demand for talented authors is high. However, the number of exceptional authors is relatively scarce. Many authors who can capture the hearts of not only web novel enthusiasts but also general fiction readers remains limited. Therefore, if you embark on a career as a web novel author today, there are ample opportunities for success.

In terms of format, web novels can be considered popular genre fiction. They encompass a wide range of stories created using genre conventions like romance, fantasy, martial arts, science fiction, mystery, horror,

and more. Genres in novels and films were established to make it easier for the public to choose based on their preferences. When readers find their preferred genres, they continue to enjoy them consistently. Similarly, Japanese light novels encompass a wide array of genres. Popular genres include romantic comedy, urban fantasy, space opera, youth mystery, historical horror, and more. Western "Harlequin" novels, when combined with fantasy elements and fan fiction, encompass a wide range of genres. The same applies to young adult literature, which spans numerous genres.

So, if you're thinking about writing web novels, it's important to start by considering the genre. You need to think about what genre you like the most, and which genre you can write best. Typically, writing in a genre you enjoy is the easiest path. You're essentially writing the kind of story you'd like to read. To do that, you need to have a more detailed understanding of the genre, even if you've read a lot within that genre. If you label your work as fantasy but your setting and structure are completely different in the eyes of readers, you might receive criticism, regardless of the quality of your work. This is because certain genre enthusiasts often have specific preferences and genre conventions.

"The Genre Guide for Web Novel Authors" is a series designed for people aspiring to be web novel authors. It began with lectures for aspiring web novel authors held at the KT&G Sangsangmadang. While there are many courses on creative writing, surprisingly, there were very few that focused on genres. Most of them were about finding material, improving writing skills, and developing a sense of theme. However, to write within a specific genre, you need knowledge and techniques. For instance, if you want to write mystery, you first need to understand what mystery is. You need to know about classic mystery, its sub-genres, and what's currently popular in the genre. Similarly, if you want to write romance, you should know how

romance as a genre started, what constitutes classic romance, and what the term "Harlequin romance" means, among other things. Writing a novel based on your daily life or one that isn't confined to any specific genre is certainly possible. However, if you want to write novels based on a specific genre or utilize a combination of genres, you must first have a good understanding of those genres. Nowadays, even within the romance genre, it's common for elements like time slips or fantasy to be incorporated, resulting in genre fusion.

Web novels are a form of popular fiction that aims to entertain. They revolve around crafting engaging stories where characters can freely interact. These novels are essentially works of entertainment, so the reader's preferences, tastes, and satisfaction should take precedence. Following this, comes the quality of the work. While they are primarily for leisure, sometimes web novels can provide significant emotional impact or offer profound insights. This is how genres evolve. Web novels may currently be on the fringes, but they are gradually moving closer to the center. To achieve this, more authors and works are required, but what's even more crucial is the need for outstanding authors and works. That's why you are needed.

Kim Bong-seok

Table of Contents

Introduction	01
Chapter 1. What is Fantasy?	08
The definition of fantasy	08
Fantasy and Science Fiction (SF)	09
Chapter 2. Sub-genres of Fantasy	12
Chapter 3. The History of Fantasy	28
Fantasy's Birth from Myth	28
Inspiration in Folktales and Myths in Fantasy	29
The Age of Heroes	31
The dawn of modern fantasy	32
Chapter 4. The Evolution of Visuals and Fantasy	36
The Dawn of the Film Industry	36
Rise and Fall of Special Effects	37
Diversification of Fantasy Culture	39
Development of Animation	41

Chapter 5. The Era of Games and Fantasy	<u>44</u>
The Birth of Role-Playing Games	<u>44</u>
The Growth of Computer Games	<u>45</u>
The Era of Online Games	<u>47</u>
The Evolution of Fantasy Culture from Games	<u>49</u>
Chapter 6. The Potential of Fantasy in Korea and Korean Fantasy Genre	<u>51</u>
The Emergence of Korean Fantasy Culture	<u>51</u>
Expansion of Korean Fantasy Culture	<u>54</u>
Changes and Trends of the Times	<u>55</u>
The Potential of the Fantasy Genre	<u>57</u>
Writing Method _{Park Ae-Jin}	
Learning how to write fantasy novels from a fantasy writer	<u>59</u>
Appendix 1: Fantasy and Game Storytelling	<u>74</u>
Appendix 2: Books That Help Understand Fantasy	<u>80</u>

Chapter 1. What is Fantasy?

The definition of fantasy

Fantasy is a narrative or world-building genre that prominently features supernatural and fantastical elements, such as magic or monsters, at its core. As such, most fantasies typically take place in fabricated worlds with fantastical elements, but on occasion, they may also unfold in the real world.

As a genre, fantasy often exhibits a tendency, especially in Western literature, to be set in medieval-style settings, involving swords and magic, with a focus on the triumph of good over evil, as exemplified in works like "『The Lord of the Rings』". However, at its essence, fantasy can be set in contemporary or future settings, devoid of swords and magic, and the struggle between good and evil is not a prerequisite. For example, a fantasy story could revolve around a sorcerer solving puzzles with their magical abilities or a child shrinking to the size of ants and flying on bees or having a romantic relationship with a ghost. In other words, fantasy is about 'life stories unfolding within a world that possesses fantastical elements.'

One crucial condition in fantasy is that the magical and fantastical events that occur in it should have some form of rationale. While there are exceptions in sub-genres of fantasy, such as "magical realism," in most cases, there is a valid reason behind the fantastical occurrences, and events that transpire are governed by rules. For instance, in the manga "Fullmetal Alchemist," alchemy operates under the law of equivalent exchange, and all events in the story adhere to this law.

In summary, fantasy is 'a genre where stories unfold in a world enriched with fantastical elements, and events occur according to the mystical

laws within that world.' If a work adheres to this definition, there are no specific constraints, allowing for creative and imaginative freedom in crafting both the world and the narrative. As a result, fantasy is incredibly diverse and individualistic.

Fantasy and Science Fiction (SF)

Fantasy is a genre that involves imaginative tales set in fabricated worlds, making it somewhat akin to other genres, particularly Science Fiction (SF).

Both fantasy and SF are based on the actual world, to which we make a change. In these alternative worlds, elements like magic, advanced scientific technology, extraterrestrials, and witches, which do not exist in the real world, emerge, giving rise to unique narratives. While the worlds in fantasy and SF may resemble our own in some aspects, the worlds created by authors in these genres fundamentally possess a different 'worldview,'¹⁾ crafting stories through this distinct perspective.

In both fantasy and science fiction (SF), it is not just the unique settings but also the perspectives of the characters to see the world within the narrative that often yield captivating stories. For example, in <Star Wars>, the distinctive world and characters like the Jedi may appear impressive to the audience, but for those living within that world, the Jedi are depicted as revered figures while also being depicted as a fearful character.

In this regard, both fantasy and SF with their unique background settings emphasize the importance of portraying the worldviews of the characters inhabiting those worlds, not just the eyes of the audience or

1) Worldview encompasses not only the broader settings, including the history, background, ecology, and character relationships within these worlds found in works like fantasy and SF, but also the outlook through which the inhabitants of these worlds perceive their reality.

reader. While fantasy and SF may seem similar in this aspect, they are generally distinguished as follows:

When a mysterious event occurs, what is the cause?

- Magic, symbolism, divine power, or unknown origins → Fantasy
- Scientific laws, special devices, superhuman abilities → SF

Where does the event take place?

- Past, countryside, ruins → Fantasy
 - Future, city, space → SF
-

In essence, if a witch appears and uses magic in a historical setting, it's considered fantasy, while if a scientist or someone with superhuman abilities solves a problem using advanced technology in a futuristic context, it falls into the SF category. Thus, the common distinction between fantasy and SF relies on the criteria of magic and science, as well as the temporal settings of past and future. However, in practice, SF sometimes creates fictional scientific principles to weave its narrative, while fantasy may systematize explanations for practices like alchemy or magic to resemble scientific laws, making it challenging to differentiate the two genres solely by the presence of magic or science. As Arthur C. Clarke said, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," highlighting the blurred boundaries between magic and science. Let's suppose that a wizard advises a princess, who is being pursued by bandits, to escape into a maze-like forest,

telling her, "This stone always points north. If you follow this stone, you can escape." Modern individuals would recognize it as a magnet or a rudimentary compass. However, to people in ancient times unfamiliar with the concept of magnetism, this magical stone could indeed be seen as a magical artifact.

Randall Garrett's novel series 'Lord Darcy' features a logical application of magic, almost like science, to solve crimes and uncover culprits. On the other hand, Sasaki Ichiro's novel 『Scrapped Princess』 revolves around a magical conflict involving a princess destined to destroy the world, set on a colony planet inhabited by extraterrestrials who have captured humans. Using the past and future as criteria to differentiate between fantasy and science fiction is also challenging. Settings like a space station can serve as the backdrop for fantasy, just as a primitive era can be the setting for science fiction. Additionally, scenarios where a seemingly historical setting is actually set in the future, or vice versa, are commonly found in these genres.

Following the basic definition of fantasy mentioned earlier, if a story is crafted appropriately and fits within that framework, it can be termed as fantasy, thus expanding the scope of fantasy even further. Authors like Kamachi Kazuma, in works such as 『A Certain Magical Index』 combine magicians and espers, pit characters against enhanced armored soldiers, and incorporate nanomachines to restrict magic, creating unique and hybrid narratives. Therefore, the distinction between fantasy and science fiction can vary depending on the author's perspective and the reader's interpretation, and it is not always necessary to draw strict boundaries between them.

Fantasy and science fiction both represent two facets of imaginative storytelling set in fabricated worlds. While many fans and authors distinguish between the two genres, they are like closely related twins, influencing each other and continually evolving in a diverse manner.

Chapter 2. Sub-genres of Fantasy

Fantasy has given rise to various sub-genres. Understanding the forms and features of these sub-genres can make it easier to comprehend the different facets of fantasy literature and culture.

High Fantasy

High fantasy refers to works set in a created world distinct from the real world. Originally, it denoted epic narratives, such as 『Lord of the Rings』 but now it's used more broadly to encompass all fantasy set in fabricated worlds, including stories that feature a few unlikely heroes. These stories are known for their solemn and grandiose narratives, often depicting the adventures of great heroes. They frequently feature unique settings and content. In Korea, what is commonly referred to as "fantasy" falls under this high fantasy genre.

Works like J.R.R. Tolkien's 『Lord of the Rings』, C.S. Lewis's 『The Chronicles of Narnia』, Ryo Mizuno's 『Record of Lodoss War』, Hajime Kanzaka's 『Slayers』, or Hirohiko Araki's manga 『Full metal Alchemist』 can be classified as high fantasy. However, there are also works like J.K. Rowling's 『Harry Potter』 series, where it's challenging to draw a specific genre since the actual world and the virtual world are interconnected.

Creating high fantasy requires the preparation of a fictional world and settings that are distinct from the real world. Details such as races, nations, characters, tools, magic, and laws may vary from work to work, with only the necessary elements included to craft the story. Some authors, like J.R.R. Tolkien, have even created artificial languages for their worlds, but this was done based on what he think that if was necessary, as Tolkien was a linguist.

In the creation of high fantasy settings, it is common to draw inspiration from real cultures, artifacts, history, or mythology. For instance, Yoshiki Tanaka's 『The Heroic Legend of Arslan』 takes inspiration from the Crusades. Additionally, since high fantasy is set in fabricated worlds, there are no limits to how the world can be depicted. Extraordinary worlds with elements like elephants on the backs of turtles like in Indian mythology, unique value systems, or distinctive customs can be crafted. However, these elements should be made understandable and feel natural to the audience. In Frank Herbert's novel 『Dune』, for example, he included the practice of spitting on one's face as a sign of respect. This was easily comprehensible because it aligned with the arid desert setting, where every drop of moisture was precious, even the ones from a deceased body.

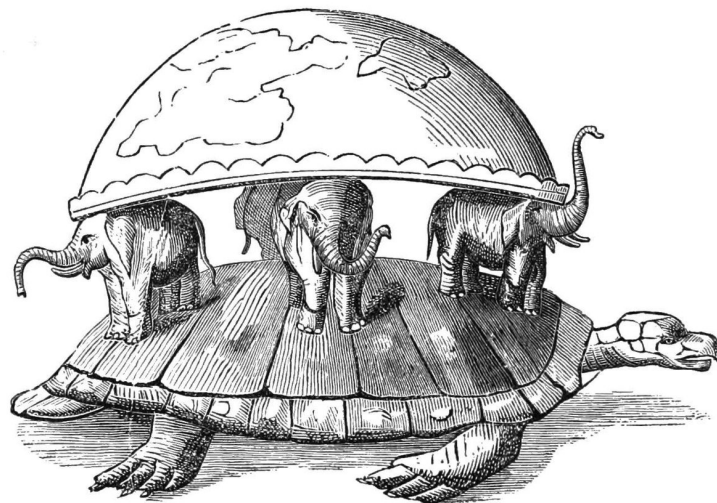


Figure 1: The world of Indian mythology where four elephants are atop a tortoise's back.

Low Fantasy

Low fantasy was originally a term used in English-speaking regions to refer to comic fantasy. Nowadays, it denotes stories primarily set in the real world, in contrast to high fantasy.

Low fantasy, being set in the real world, typically features fewer supernatural elements and emphasizes realistic settings and content in comparison to high fantasy.

Since many high fantasy stories draw inspiration from the real world's history and mythology, it can be challenging to make a strict distinction between high and low fantasy. For instance, George R.R. Martin's 『A Song of Ice and Fire』 is set in a fictional world with dragons and magic, yet it draws inspiration from real history, such as medieval England and the Wars of the Roses, leading some to categorize it as low fantasy.

Low fantasy, modeled on the real world, tends to place less burden on world-building and offers settings and situations that are easier to understand. It's for these reasons that low fantasy set in everyday spaces, like 『Twilight』, is quite popular. However, it also requires creating a natural and well-crafted world, along with efforts to differentiate it from other works.

Dimensional Travel Fantasy (Stories of Otherworld Adventure)

Dimensional travel fantasy is a story where the protagonist from the real world embarks on adventures in a fantasy realm. While many fantasy tales involve characters transitioning from their everyday lives to a fantasy world, dimensional travel fantasy differs in that the protagonist's original world and the fantasy world are distinct, and the protagonist can't freely move between them. Sometimes, the story unfolds as the two worlds merge or as the protagonist gains the ability to traverse between them. However, stories like 『The Dream of the Red Chamber』, where the protagonist experiences a dream world without their original memories, are less likely to be considered dimensional travel fantasy.

Dimensional travel fantasy typically focuses on the amusement of a character who suddenly finds themselves in a strange world, as seen in works like "『The Wizard of Oz』" or 『Alice in Wonderland』. However, there are also works that, like Ono Fuyumi's 『The Twelve Kingdoms』 series, emphasize introducing and explaining the peculiar world through the eyes of a character from the real world. 『The Twelve Kingdoms』 set in a unique world based on ancient Chinese mythology, showcases the protagonist's adaptation to an incredibly unusual and strange world where people are born from trees and kings and subjects do not age. It accomplishes this through the perspective of an ordinary high school student, offering a compelling portrayal of the 'Twelve Kingdoms' realm.



Figure 2
『Alice in Wonderland』

In dimensional travel fantasy, stories sometimes revolve around characters using modern technology and civilization to transform underdeveloped worlds, similar to Mark Twain's 『A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.』 Others, like 『The Settlers』, depict groups, armies, or entire nations transported to different worlds, resulting in clashes of civilizations and profound changes. In many dimensional travel fantasies, once characters find themselves in another world, they cannot return to their original one and must rely on the resources they brought with them. However, some stories, like Yanai Takumi's 『Gate - Thus the JSDF Fought There!』, explore ongoing interactions and free movement between two worlds. In this particular work, a Japanese cosplay magazine spreads throughout the fantasy world, leading to a sudden fashion revolution and other intriguing developments.

Game Fantasy

Game fantasy is a sub-genre of fantasy where the world of a video game serves as the setting for the story. While it often incorporates scientific concepts such as virtual reality or augmented reality, it can also evoke the atmosphere of dimensional travel fantasy, similar to the "middle-earth" in "The Lord of the Rings."

Game fantasy typically blends elements of role-playing games, including concepts like character levels, magical systems, and resurrection systems, into its world-building and storytelling. It strives to create unique worlds and narratives distinct from traditional fantasy. Some works, like "Moonlight Sculptor," depict characters becoming heroes by mastering in-game skills and characteristics, while others, such as "OxTale Chronicles," focus on bringing in-game abilities into the real world. Some stories revolve around characters who find themselves trapped in a game world and are unable to escape, like "Dot Hack," "Sword Art Online," or "Log Horizon." These stories explore the lives of the characters who adapt to a world where the boundaries between the game and reality become blurred. It's fascinating to see how the relationships, friendships, and love developed within the game world spill over into reality and lead to transformation in both realms.

Some dimensional travel fantasies involve characters whose spirits or consciousness are transferred into different life forms or species, experiencing life with the memories of being human. This creates engaging stories of individuals living as different beings while retaining human memories.

Moreover, a recent trend in dimensional travel fantasy, often referred to as "game fantasy," has been gaining popularity. These stories feature characters embarking on adventures in the world of video games.

Sword and Sorcery

Sword and Sorcery is a term that originated from American writer Fritz Leiber, who used it to describe heroic fantasy works where heroes fight using swords, such as 『Conan the Barbarian.』 However, it has now evolved to encompass a broader range of works where characters use both swords and magic to engage in adventures, including epic fantasies like 『The Lord of the Rings.』

While many works are set in constructed worlds reminiscent of Western antiquity or the Middle Ages, some, like the anime <Himem>, take place in futuristic space or modern settings. Consequently, Sword and Sorcery now refers to any work in which characters, regardless of the time or place, utilize both swords and magic to combat villains, making it an inclusive term.

Sword and Sorcery is one of the most popular sub-genres. It generally includes minimal supernatural elements, focusing on action and battle themes that are easily comprehensible, making it accessible for a wide audience. These works can be categorized into sub-genres, ranging from epic fantasies that depict grand wars between forces of good and evil to heroic fantasies focusing on the exploits of a few heroes.

Fairy Tale

A fairy tale refers to a work where mystical beings like fairies are central to the story. Talking animals, dwarfs, giants, and the involvement of witches or



Figure 3 TV Animation <The Wonderful Adventures of Nils>

wizards, along with other fantastical elements, naturally occur, and the narrative revolves around them. In this kind of world, there are no specific rules or special reasons for the events unfolding; they simply happen. Typically, the settings in fairy tales lack clear time and place, and societal norms like status or class are not strictly applied. Fairy tales depict a world where seemingly ordinary individuals, like in 『Cinderella,』 can marry a prince or where people, for no apparent reason, can shrink in size and become friends with geese and swans, similar to 『The Wonderful Adventures of Nils.』

Folk tales and fairy tales passed down to people have been collected and compiled by figures like the Grimm Brothers in Germany and the poet Charles Perrault in France. Under their influence, original works created by writers like Hans Christian Andersen developed into a diverse array of stories.

Yojaiji

"Yojaiji" refers to a collection of strange stories created by the Qing Dynasty scholar Chuo Fosong Ling. It contains several hundred tales that naturally blend fantastic elements such as demons, spirits, and magical practices, much like the film <A Chinese Ghost Story> where spirits and humans share love. These stories feature spirits or ghosts that are often more human-like than actual humans. They provide social criticism and commentary, and towards the end of each story, they introduce a character named "Isassi" to convey the author's opinions.

Although these works were published more than 50 years after the author's death, they had a significant impact on Eastern fantasy literature and contributed to the culture of Asian fantasy stories. These tales provide a glimpse into the cultural and artistic context of the time and are valuable for those interested in Eastern fantasy narratives.

There are other collections of Chinese folklore and supernatural stories from different eras, like the "Xu Xing Ji" from the Six Dynasties period and the "San Hai Jing" from the modern era. However, these are more like encyclopedias introducing various mythical creatures and supernatural entities, and they are not presented as engaging narratives like "Yojaiji."

While there are many works for children in fairy tales like 『The Bremen Town Musicians』 or 『Mrs. Pepper Pot』, explicit sexual content has led to the selection and presentation of well-known stories like 『The Adventures of Sinbad』 or 『Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves』 in abridged and child-friendly

versions. However, there are also works such as "A Thousand and One Nights" and "Yojaiji," which contain more explicit content.

Paranormal Fiction

Although many works in children's literature include fantastic elements, and some may not classify fairy tales as fantasy, the various fantastical elements within fairy tales have significantly influenced the culture of fantasy storytelling, along with myths and legends. Paranormal fiction revolves around supernatural entities like ghosts and spirits that are difficult to explain scientifically. It features stories of exorcism, such as <The Exorcist> or ghost hunters like in <Ghostbusters>, as well as love stories involving supernatural beings, akin to the <Twilight> series. In some cases, the main characters are the supernatural entities themselves, such as in the movie <Ghost>, which features ghosts, vampires, or werewolves. These supernatural entities in the stories are often depicted as hidden creatures lurking in the shadows of

society, not greatly impacting the world and people within the story. For example, in <Ghostbusters>, ghosts may rampage through the city, but within a few years, even that fact is forgotten, and the ghost hunters struggle to find work.



Figure 4 <Whispering Corridors>

Paranormal fiction deals with otherworldly beings and bizarre events that don't exist in reality, yet because it unfolds in a familiar real-world setting, it feels relatable and may even evoke a sense that such supernatural events could be happening somewhere at this very moment.

Dark fantasy

Dark fantasy refers to works that revolve around dark, gloomy, and tragic developments, often characterized by gruesome and violent depictions. While many dark fantasy works contain explicit sexual content and graphic violence, there are also examples aimed at younger audiences, such as the <Darren Shan> series, which tells the story of a boy who becomes a half-vampire.

Generally, dark fantasy pursues a serious tone and delves into the cruel aspects of human psychology and inner conflict through expressions and descriptions, as well as the presentation of intense and grotesque scenes, often avoiding the cheerful and fairy-tale-like happy endings. Dark fantasy has a tendency to avoid the idealized battle between good and evil, typical of Tolkien-style epic narratives, and instead it offers realistic portrayals of grim realities, including plagues, torture, witchcraft, love, plunder, and slaughter during wars.

Dark fantasy is not confined solely to a 'dark and gloomy atmosphere with graphic descriptions.' It includes a variety of works that may have elements of horror, blending supernatural elements with reality, like Clive Barker's <Books of Blood> and Neil Gaiman's <The Sandman>, as well as those set in constructed worlds with elements of "swords and sorcery," such as Kentaro Miura's manga <Berserk>.

Urban fantasy

Urban fantasy is a genre of storytelling that blends supernatural elements with real-world settings, often featuring cities as the primary backdrop. While it predominantly takes place in contemporary urban environments, there are examples set in various time periods, including Victorian-era London where

characters like Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper were active or future cities like Tokyo.



Figure 5 <Durarara!!> skillfully exemplifies the appeal of urban fantasy by portraying a unique world where the headless rider, Celty Sturluson, dons a helmet and rides a motorbike.

juggles her studies and a delivery job, effectively showcase the appeal of urban fantasy.

Historical fantasy

Historical fantasy is a genre where fantastical elements are introduced into actual historical settings. These stories often involve supernatural beings behind real historical events or reinterpret historical figures as individuals possessing supernatural powers, such as magic or alchemy.

Urban fantasy is similar to paranormal fiction in that it combines the supernatural with reality, but it distinguishes itself by using the protagonist's everyday life as a backdrop. This allows for diverse depictions of a city's various aspects and characters from different perspectives. The genre excels in showing how supernatural phenomena impact daily life. Since it uses the cities we live in as a setting, urban fantasy often creates a realistic and familiar atmosphere among various sub-genres of fantasy.

Notable works in this genre include the movie "Blade," the "Shin Megami Tensei" video game series, the novels "The Dresden Files," the "Bartimaeus" series, and the anime "Durarara!!."

Additionally, beloved stories like "Kiki's Delivery Service," in which a witch in a constructed city juggles her studies and a delivery job, effectively showcase the appeal of urban fantasy.

While many historical fantasies maintain the actual historical backdrop and merely add fantasy elements, there are also works like "Imjin War" that use the Imjin War as a setting but completely change history by introducing supernatural elements like precognitive abilities or magical prowess of key figures. In contrast, alternative history, which is sometimes called "alternative historical story" in Korea, typically features a changed historical backdrop, where events unfold differently from our own history. Works like "Daasi's Chronicles" take place in a modified English Empire and feature magical deductions, or "The Alchemist's Stone" presents a world where Franklin becomes Newton's apprentice and faces off against enemies using alchemy. However, in South Korea, if the story doesn't significantly alter historical events or individuals but merely features supernatural elements set in the past, it may not be considered historical fantasy.

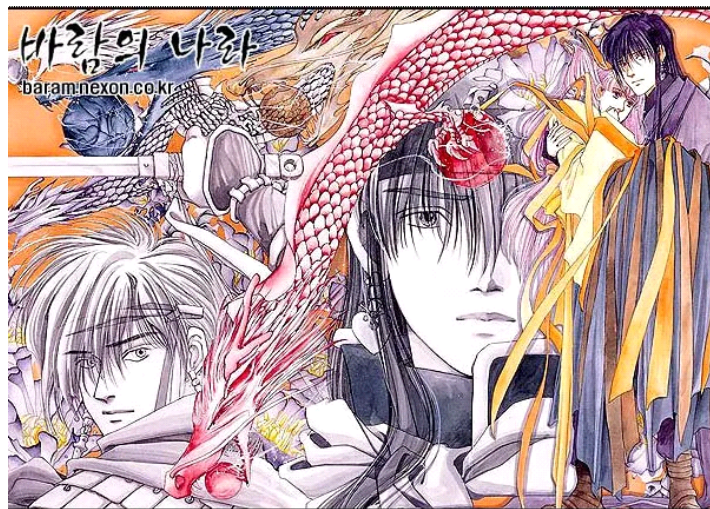


Figure 6 <The Land of Wind> which showcases the potential of historical fantasy in Korea.

Superhero Fantasy

Superhero Fantasy is a genre where super-powered heroes, who gain their abilities from magic or supernatural beings like gods or demons, take center

stage in the story. Many works in this genre explore the struggles, loneliness, and moral dilemmas faced by these superhumans. While superhero fantasy shares similarities with heroic fantasy in the sense that a small group of heroes' battles villains, it distinguishes itself by featuring superhumans who possess overwhelming powers beyond those of regular humans.

Popular examples of superhero fantasy include "Spawn," "Ghost Rider," "Wonder Woman," and many short stories collected in "Wild Cards," an anthology edited by renowned science fiction writers. Series like "Boogiepop" and "R.O.D. (Read or Die)" also qualify as superhero fantasy since they revolve around characters with special abilities.

Magic Realism

Magic Realism is a genre of storytelling that blends the everyday with the extraordinary. In magic realism stories, there are no constraints or rules. Unlike science fiction, which follows scientific laws, or traditional fantasy with consistent rules like "you must memorize a spell to use magic" or "vampires are weak in sunlight," magic realism features narratives that completely break away from the order of reality. In these stories, seemingly magical or surreal events occur without the characters reacting with astonishment. Events such as money raining from the sky, two people merging into one, or waking up as a bug are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the characters, allowing the story to unfold. Magic realism encompasses the extraordinary and non-realistic events and, at the same time, offers a lens through which human inner experiences and the true nature of society can be revealed.

Magic realism is often associated with Latin American literature, with authors like Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Luis Borges, and Julio Cortázar being notable practitioners.

However, this genre has appeared in various forms worldwide even before its Latin American recognition. Korean authors like Cheon Myeong-gwan and Kim Do-yeon have also contributed to the magic realism genre.

Gods and demons fiction

Gods and demons fiction is a term coined by the Chinese novelist Lu Xun. While it originally referred to works featuring deities and supernatural beings based on Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, in the West, it generally encompasses all of East Asian-inspired fantasy. Similar genres include Bizarre Novel²⁾ and Pseudo-historical Fantasy Novels³⁾, with Korean and Japanese literature more commonly using the term "demon fiction" instead of "gods and demons fiction."

Works such as "Journey to the West," "Yojaiji," and "Bongshinyeonui" blur the boundaries between time, life, and the realms of gods and demons, transcending the rigid concepts of good and evil.

In contrast to the Western tradition where even a demigod like Hercules couldn't ascend to godhood without shedding his human body and where the relationship between God and humans is strictly defined in Christianity, the Eastern tradition has a more fluid concept of the boundaries between gods and humans. In "Journey to the West," the main character is a stone monkey demon, while in "Yojaiji," humans fall in love with spirits, and people become friends with fox spirits over a drink. In this genre, interaction

2) Strange stories written during the Qing Dynasty in China. They feel more like collections of bizarre tales without the author's thoughts or arguments.

3) Short stories from the Tang and Song Dynasties in China, or later works inspired by them. These stories cover not only strange events from folklore and legends but also fictionalized historical narratives, blurring the lines between reality and the supernatural, often featuring characters with unique abilities.

between spirits and humans is natural, transcending life and death, space and time. Humans, spirits, and even rocks and trees can become gods, a characteristic not commonly found in Western fantasy.



Figure 7: InuYasha depicts a tale where a group of demons and humans work together to combat evil.

While gods and demons fiction often features plots of defeating evil spirits, the distinction between good and evil is usually ambiguous. In many cases, even supernatural beings, which would be considered evil or monstrous in Western fantasy, are portrayed as more benevolent than humans. This is influenced by the philosophical ideas of Buddhism and Taoism, setting it apart from the Western tradition, which typically defines good and evil more starkly. For instance, in Western fantasy adaptations of Greek mythology, Hades, the ruler of the underworld, is often portrayed as a demon, reflecting the influence of the Christian concept of the underworld being synonymous with Hell.

Therefore, gods and demons fiction, where humans befriend goblins and spirits while supernatural beings join in the struggle against evil, has had a profound influence on the fantasy cultures of China, Korea, and Japan. It has also contributed to works like "3x3 Eyes," "InuYasha," and "The Devil King

Is Bored," which blend mythologies from various cultures worldwide.

Chapter 3. The History of Fantasy

Fantasy's Birth from Myth

Fantasy culture has its roots in mythology and legends. As the same goes that the stories of spirits and gods were followed by the birth of legends like <Gilgamesh> and <Perseus>. These myths and legends were transferred into images and text, evolving into literature. Influenced by heroic tales like <Beowulf>, <Nibelungenlied>, and <Arthurian legend>, romance literature⁴⁾ flourished with the adventures of knights. Together with Greek mythology and tales of heroes from religious texts, mythology and legends laid the foundation for the genre of fantasy.

"History became legend, and legend became myth," as the saying goes, myths and legends themselves have served as classical fantasy works based on history, influencing other works as the origin of fantasy. Influenced by Christianity and various myths, works like Dante's "The Divine Comedy" and John Milton's "Paradise Lost" were born.

In modern fantasy works, there are those that blend various mythological inspirations to create new worlds, such as 「The Lord of the Rings」, but there are also movies like <Clash of the Titans> that utilize ancient heroic myths as they are. Additionally, some works bring mythological beings into the modern age, such as <Percy Jackson & the Olympians> and <Oh My Goddess!>, while others use mythological stories in a futuristic space setting, like <Elysium> and <Captain Ulysses in the Space>.

Fantasy works often incorporate unique mythologies that can be

4) Romance literature, originating from the vulgar Latin language spoken by Romans and evolving into various languages, primarily featured knightly adventures and noble love stories, giving rise to the genre known as romance.

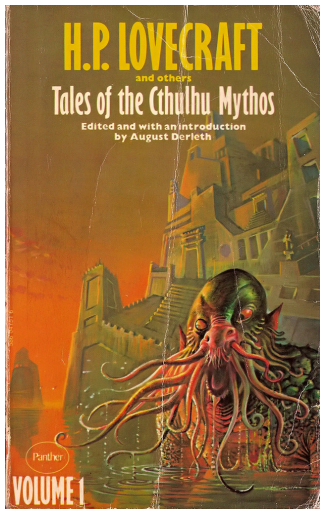


Figure 8: Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos

borrowed by other works. The "Cthulhu Mythos," based on the cosmic horror of H.P. Lovecraft, is an example of a creative mythology that many authors have drawn from, even during Lovecraft's lifetime. Even after Lovecraft's death, many works continue to emerge based on this mythos, refined and supplemented by various individuals, forming the foundation for numerous current creations.

Inspiration in Folktales and Myths in Fantasy

The birth and development of fantasy culture cannot be discussed without considering the influence of fables and folklore stories, which were created to impart moral lessons. <Aesop's Fables>, attributed to a Greek slave from the 6th century BC, and Indian collections like the <Panchatantra>, have left their mark on regional oral traditions and have served as the foundation for the development of fantasy culture through folklore and fairy tales.

The Hero's Journey in Myth and Fantasy

Mythologist Joseph Campbell studied and structured various hero archetypes in his book 「The Hero with a Thousand Faces」. He categorized the hero's adventure into stages of departure, initiation, and return, inspiring many works, including <Star Wars>.

Hollywood producer Christopher Vogler further distilled Campbell's research into a storytelling pattern called the "Hero's 12-Step Journey" in his

book "The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers." These frameworks make it easier to create captivating hero stories.

In China, various works like ghost stories, folklore, and mythological fiction have emerged. In Europe, following classics like "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," series like "The Wizard of Oz," "Peter Pan," and the 「Mary Poppins」 series have been beloved by adults, expanding the realm of fantasy culture.

Folktales and fairy tales were originally stories that used animals and supernatural creatures to satirize human life. However, the anthropomorphized animals and supernatural beings that appeared in these tales transcended traditional fairy tales and evolved into races found throughout the broader fantasy culture. For example, in Korea, Lee Young-do's "Birds That Drink Blood" introduced the Korean goblin from folklore as a species and received critical acclaim. Folktales and fairy tales are not limited to novels but are also beloved sources for animations and movies. Many companies, including Walt Disney, have been producing animations and films based on folklore and fairy tales for a long time, and they continue to be popular today.

Works based on folktales and fairy tales often take the motifs from the original stories and provide new interpretations rather than directly depicting the source material. As satirical works, folktales and fairy tales are usually short in length but contain diverse content within them. Therefore, even when using the same source material, they can turn into entirely different stories, like the animation "Frozen," which is based on the Russian fairy tale "The Snow Queen."

The Age of Heroes

Modern fantasy culture began as a reaction against the rapidly growing literary realism of the time. Initially, it developed mainly in children's literature as a counterbalance to realism, but over time, it began to influence and be influenced by science fiction, gradually expanding to target adult audiences as well.

In the 19th century, fantasy literature with abundant elements of the fantastic found its footing in the genre of horror. This era saw the emergence of works like "Frankenstein," which introduced a monstrous creation brought to life through electricity, and "Vampyre," the precursor to the commercialized vampire, followed by "Carmilla," an early vampire story, and "Dracula." In the early 20th century, pulp magazines became the primary medium for producing mythic-style heroic tales. Stories like "The Princess of Mars" and the adventures of the barbarian Conan, such as "Conan the Barbarian," became popular, featuring fantastic and heroic adventures.

Carmilla

A gothic novel by Irish writer Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu. The story of the beautiful female vampire Carmilla, based on Irish vampire legends. This story unfolds from the perspective of a 19-year-old girl named Laura. Unlike most other vampire stories where the antagonist is revealed early, Carmilla keeps the vampire's identity a mystery until later in the story, creating a sense of mystery and fantasy throughout. The portrayal of Carmilla's obsession with Laura from a young age not only gives the story a touch of lesbian undertones but also hints at the vampire's loneliness and sadness,

making it all the more intriguing.

Vampire tales are found in various forms in myths and legends from all around the world, and Carmilla is not the progenitor of vampire stories. However, the aristocratic and seductive atmosphere surrounding vampires, as well as the idea that they are killed by driving a stake through their hearts, influenced numerous vampire tales through works like "Dracula."

Carmilla might not have gained the same level of popularity as "Dracula" or "Nosferatu" as it has a milder sense of horror and fewer seductive elements. Nonetheless, as a work that focuses on the human relationship with vampires, it stands as a notable pioneer of vampire romance literature.

In the worlds of magic and fantasy, heroes wielding swords defeat villains, save the world, and often find love. These works have influenced many derivatives and contributed to the creation of superhero stories like "Superman" and space operas such as "Captain Future." On the other hand, works that incorporate time-travel elements like "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" and "The Portrait of Jennie" have received critical acclaim for their unique and captivating narratives, expanding the horizons of fantasy literature for adults.

The dawn of modern fantasy

In the 20th century, the realm of fantasy expanded widely, encompassing mystical fairy tales, weird horror, fantastical romances, and heroic adventures, thanks to the influence of pulp magazines. As the demand for fantasy grew,

in 1939, Ziff Davis founded the specialized fantasy magazine "Fantastic Adventures." However, at that time, the lines between science fiction, fantasy, and adventure genres were not as clearly defined, leading to various genres intertwining.

A significant turning point in modern fantasy culture was ushered in by "The Lord of the Rings," which realized J.R.R. Tolkien's dream of "creating a new mythology." This work, which began as a sequel to "The Hobbit," was characterized by its meticulously crafted world, distinctive customs, and constructed languages, weaving a profoundly moving narrative that captivated many. The grand trials and countless struggles for the fate of the world provided a persuasive and narratively distinct form of fantasy, setting it apart from traditional hero fantasy and adding depth to the realm of fantasy culture.

The development of modern fantasy literature cannot be discussed without mentioning works like "The Chronicles of Narnia," which draws upon a Christian mythological world, or the "Earthsea" series by the renowned science fiction author Ursula K. Le Guin. In particular, the "Earthsea" series introduces the concept of a "true name" for magic and explores an individual's journey to discover their true self. This work received acclaim for adding personal introspection and profound humanity to a genre that had previously focused on adventures and struggles against external threats.

Fantasy culture, which had been growing independently in the UK, the US, and various other countries, diversified with the spread of information and communication technologies. Furthermore, works that fused science fiction and fantasy or introduced fantasy into the real world became more common. The advancement of media such as film, animation, and games introduced a wider array of source material.

In this context, we witnessed the emergence of various unique works, including Richard Matheson's "I Am Legend," which offered a fresh interpretation of vampire lore influencing the zombie genre, Roald Dahl's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," the combination of voodoo and vampire legends to create modern-style zombies in "The Night of the Living Dead," popularizing the concept of exorcism in "The Exorcist," and works like "Field of Dreams," where past baseball heroes return to play games, and "Ghostbusters," where scientists use proton guns to battle ghosts. Other unique works included Ken Grimwood's "Replay," where the passage of life's moments is replayed, and James Morrow's "Towing Jehovah," where the body of God is towed to the North Pole. These diverse creations expanded the realm of fantasy.

While the development of fantasy culture in the late 20th century was primarily led by the UK and the US, notable authors from Germany also made significant contributions. Authors such as Michael Ende, known for "Momo" and "The NeverEnding Story," and Ralph Izau, who wrote "The Forgotten Museum of Lost Memories," left their mark on the genre. France also produced excellent works, such as "The Little Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and the "Tara Duncan" series by Sophie Audouin-Mamikonian.

In the realm of media, particularly in the domain of games and animation, Japan's influence was undeniable. Japan, where tales of youkai, spirits, and gods had flourished for centuries, saw the popularization of folklore due to advancements in printing in the 19th century. Furthermore, the introduction of Western fantasy culture occurred as a result of paperbacks from US military bases after World War II. This blend of Eastern and Western themes and subject matter gave rise to diverse works within Japan's fantasy culture.

Japan's fantasy culture, which began with works like Kazuma Oosamu's



Figure 9 <Knight of Ribbons> a fantasy tale that weaves together a setting and story with a tomboyish girl as the protagonist.

"Knight of Ribbons," where a princess born with a male soul takes on the role of a knight, later expanded into novels. Extensive hero fantasies like "Record of Lodoss War," and medieval fantasies capturing the atmosphere of a traditional setting, such as "The Heroic Legend of Arslan," gained popularity. In the world of manga, the tradition primarily continued in shoujo manga, but by the 1990s, fantasy works began to appear in shounen and seinen manga as well in adolescent youth animation.

Japanese fantasy often combines elements from science fiction and Eastern traditions. For example, works like Hideyuki Kikuchi's "Vampire Hunter D" blend vampire fantasy with superhuman abilities and SF elements like robots. Yumemakura Baku's "Onmyouji" faithfully incorporates traditional Japanese Yin-Yang divination.

In the present day, Japanese fantasy, predominantly in light novels and manga, showcases a wide range of subgenres such as urban fantasy, supernatural fiction, electric novels, and fantasy with elements of science fiction. These works often incorporate fantastical elements, regardless of the specific narrative or theme. Japanese fantasy extends beyond just high fantasy as seen in series like "Slayers" or "Magician Orphen." It also includes urban fantasy like the "Boogiepop" series, "Durarara!!," and supernatural fiction with exorcism themes like "Ghost Sweeper Mikami" and "Duke of Death," further enriching the realm of fantasy culture and exerting a significant influence on Korean fantasy culture.

Chapter 4. The Evolution of Visuals and Fantasy

The Dawn of the Film Industry

Fantasy media, which began as a masquerade in religious ceremonies, transformed into theatrical productions featuring gods, fairies, and wizards with the introduction of performance stages. Theatrical productions with fantastical elements, such as Shakespeare's 『A Midsummer Night's Dream』 and Mozart's <The Magic Flute> emerged, becoming beloved fantasy media for the masses.

One of the pioneers of the film industry, Georges Méliès, can be considered a trailblazer for fantasy films. He directed works with various

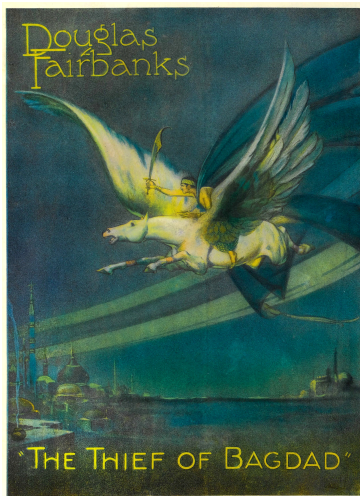


Figure 10 The masterpiece <Thief of Bagdad>, skillfully capturing the charm of <One Thousand and One Nights>

special effects, portraying adventures in the depths of the sea or explorations of imaginary worlds. The growth of the fantasy film genre can be attributed to other studios imitating his techniques.

The fantasy film industry, evolving into feature-length works such as Douglas Fairbanks' <The Thief of Bagdad> and Fritz Lang's <Die Nibelungen> experienced a dramatic transformation with the groundbreaking special effects of <King Kong>. Those captivated by this film, where a colossal gorilla rampages through the heart of New York, including enthusiasts like

Ray Harryhausen⁵⁾, ventured into the field of special effects, leading the

5) An American film producer who, during the 1950s to 1970s, significantly contributed to numerous science fiction and fantasy works, earning recognition for shaping the history of special effects in 20th-century cinema. George Lucas once remarked, "Without Harryhausen, there would likely have been no 'Star Wars.'" He received public acclaim for his contributions to film, winning the Academy Special Award in 1992. His influence extended

developments in the latter half of the 20th century. They played a pivotal role in expanding the possibilities of fantasy and science fiction films.

Released in 1939, <The Wizard of Oz> was notably exceptional in the fantasy film genre, receiving Academy Award nominations in five categories and winning three, creating a buzz. Despite its significant production costs preventing it from achieving commercial success at the time, the beloved film ranked 6th in the 1998 "AFI's 100 greatest american movies of all time" list, demonstrating that <The Wizard of Oz> is more than just a spectacle in fantasy films.

Rise and Fall of Special Effects

The rapid advancement of special effects following <King Kong>. further expanded the possibilities of fantasy films. People enthusiastically embraced films like <Jason and the Argonauts>, where mythological creatures such as the bronze giant, harpies, hydra, and skeletal soldiers from Greek mythology came to life, or works like <One Million Years B.C.>, showcasing epic battles with colossal dinosaurs. In this atmosphere, the production costs of fantasy films continued to rise, resulting in an increasing number of films that, focusing solely on spectacle, failed to connect with audiences and found little success at the box office.

On the other hand, small films armed with unique ideas, such as <Night of the Living Dead>, which gave birth to the zombie genre based on vampire legends, or parodies like <Monty Python and the Holy Grail>, based on the Arthurian legend, succeeded and expanded the diversity of fantasy films.

In 1988, <Who Framed Roger Rabbit> introduced a groundbreaking blend of live-action and animation, showcasing a new visual style never seen before. This film, featuring cartoon and live-action characters interacting on

to Japanese films like "Godzilla."

the same screen, injected new vitality into the previously stagnant field of stop-motion effects. Subsequently, the success of <Jurassic Park>, which featured computer-generated dinosaurs, marked the end of stop-motion effects in Hollywood, transforming the visual landscape of fantasy films entirely. Films like <Dragonheart>, where a dragon engages in banter and conspires in bounty scams, and <Dungeons & Dragons> based on the game of the same name, filled the theatrical screens with vivid dragons, astonishing audiences. However, despite their vibrant visuals, these films did not receive favorable reviews. <Dragonheart> garnered some positive feedback but failed to turn a profit, while <Dungeons & Dragons> struggled even with its promotional efforts.



Figure 11 <Jason and the Argonauts>

From the mid-1980s to the 1990s, the growth of special effects significantly elevated the potential for high-fantasy films featuring dragons and monsters. However, most major high-fantasy productions during this period, except for the charismatic <Conan the Barbarian> starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and George Lucas's <Willow>, faced commercial failures. While there were successful films like <Jumanji> and <The Mummy> with innovative concepts, the era of astonishing audiences simply by introducing gigantic creatures like dragons had already passed. Instead, works set in

familiar real-world settings, such as <Raiders of the Lost Ark>, <Ghostbusters>, and <Gremlins> received acclaim.

The advancements in special effects also elevated the quality of TV dramas. Low fantasy series like <Buffy the Vampire Slayer> and <The X-Files>, as well as large-scale high-fantasy productions like <Game of Thrones> became possible.

On the other hand, computer graphics greatly benefited animated films like <Toy Story>. Computer-generated animation, initiated by Pixar, triggered the 3D animation boom, leading to the success of popular films like <Shrek> and the triumph of <Frozen>. In the 2010s, reinterpretations of classic fairy tales, such as <Alice in Wonderland>, <Jack the Giant Slayer>(Jack and the Beanstalk), and <Maleficent>(Sleeping Beauty), were consistently produced.

In Korea, fantasy-themed dramas like <The Fox with Nine Tails>, <Night Watcher> and <Cheo Yong>, utilizing computer graphics, gained popularity. Particularly, many recent popular Korean dramas incorporate fantasy or science fiction elements, reflecting the audience's desire for fresh and original content in a genre saturated with similar themes.

The history of fantasy films is closely tied to the history of special effects. While fantasy films once captivated audiences solely through special effects, the landscape has shifted. With computer graphics eliminating the limits of special effects, numerous productions now rely on eye-catching visuals. As a result, compelling storytelling and innovative concepts have become more crucial than ever.

Diversification of Fantasy Culture

In the realm of fantasy films, the year 2001 was a significant turning point. Despite its three-hour runtime and being the first part of a trilogy, <The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring> succeeded at the box office despite potential drawbacks. Despite these factors, <The Lord of the Rings:

The Fellowship of the Ring> showcased the potential of high-fantasy by earning immense profits nearly ten times its production budget of \$93 million, revitalizing the declining prospects of the genre. Additionally, the tremendous success of <Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone> further amplified the fantasy frenzy. DreamWorks' ambitious creation, <Shrek>, which presented an ugly ogre as the protagonist and concluded with an unexpected ending where a beauty transforms into an ogre, also achieved tremendous success. Pixar also triumphed with <Monsters, Inc.>, and <Spirited Away> became the first Japanese animation to win an Academy Award in 2002. <Lara Croft: Tomb Raider> also proved the potential of video game adapted movie by achieving commendable success.

The significant changes that occurred in the year 2001 led to a boom in creating numerous fantasy films, especially those adapted from novels. Following 『The Lord of the Rings』, 『The Chronicles of Narnia』 was adapted for the screen, and 『A Wizard of Earthsea』 was made into an animation by Studio Ghibli in Japan. Works like 『Eragon』 were succeeded by films such as 『The Golden Compass』 and 『Inkheart』, achieving considerable success.



Figure 12 <D-War>

Meanwhile, <Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl> reignited the potential of pirate films after the setbacks of <Cutthroat Island> and <Treasure Planet>. Additionally, the tremendous success of <Night at the Museum>, which sparked a museum craze in the United States, and the popularity of series like <Twilight> and <Underworld>, which gained traction despite lower production budgets, further expanded the diversity of fantasy films. However, films like <Reign of Fire>, relying solely on special effects, were thoroughly disregarded.

The consecutive successes of fantasy films that adorned the 2000s demonstrated the outcome when excellent storytelling and planning meet special effects. However, it also highlighted the increasing likelihood of failure for works that rely solely on special effects. This trend was observed in both Korea and Japan. Despite drawing 8 million viewers amidst debates about patriotic marketing, the heavily budgeted film <D-War> suffered significant losses and faced ridicule in the United States. In Japan, productions based on popular animations like <Devilman> and <Science Ninja Team Gatchaman> were created but were disregarded even by fans of the original works.

Development of Animation

In the animation field, a diverse range of fantasy works has been introduced early on. In the United States, not only Disney but also companies like Warner Bros., Columbia, and others consistently produced animated adaptations of fairy tales. France, Germany, and even China have ventured into creating fantasy animations. Particularly, works such as <La Planète sauvage>, directed by René Laloux from France, were highly regarded by many even domestically.

In the United States, most animations are geared towards children, but director Ralph Bakshi's 1983 film <Fire and Ice> deserves attention as an adult animation. Created during the rise of heroic fantasy, similar to <Conan the Barbarian>, this film utilized rotoscoping for realistic action and animation, earning critical acclaim but unfortunately failed to succeed commercially, leaving a sense of regret.

Japan showcased a diverse range of fantasy animations. <The White Snake Enchantress>, the first full-length color animation based on a Chinese epic directed by Taiji Yabushita, <The Great Adventure of Horus, Prince of the Sun>, which presented a captivating visual style distinct from Western medieval fantasies based on the legend of Ainu, and animations adapted

from foreign fairy tales like 『The Wonderful Adventures of Nils』 and 『Mrs. Pepperpot』 widened the spectrum of fantasy animation, using both foreign folktales and Japanese manga as source materials. Particularly, works like 『GeGeGe no Kitarō』 by Shigeru Mizuki, which delved into Japan's traditional Yokai stories, contributed significantly to the unique development of Japan's fantasy culture in animation.

In the realm of Japanese fantasy animation, Studio Ghibli stands out prominently, beginning with fairy tale-like works such as <My Neighbor Totoro> and <Kiki's Delivery Service>, and consistently presenting films like <Princess Mononoke> and <Howl's Moving Castle>. Although some productions, such as 『A Wizard of Earthsea』, received mixed reviews, Studio Ghibli showcased numerous acclaimed works, including the Academy Award-winning <Spirited Away>, which garnered recognition globally, exhibiting their exceptional prowess on a worldwide scale.

Japanese fantasy animations, such as <Record of Lodoss War>, <Slayers>, and <Fullmetal Alchemist>, primarily derive from novels or manga. Recently, light novel adaptations like <The Irregular at Magic High School> and <Is It Wrong to Try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?> have garnered acclaim in the genre.

Due to Japan's media mix system's focus on product promotion, there was a trend to create shorter works, approximately ten episodes, highlighting popular content at that time. However, in 2015, there was a deviation from this norm when Hiroshi Arakawa, the creator of 『Fullmetal Alchemist』 adapted the 1980s novel series 『The Heroic Legend of Arslan』 into a manga, subsequently leading to the production of a feature-length animation based on this adaptation.

The diverse styles and themes present in Japan's fantasy animation not only influence the growth of fantasy cultures in other Asian countries such as Korea and China but also many works beyond Studio Ghibli are

being introduced to the West, spreading Japan's unique fantasy culture.

Korea has been producing fantasy animations since the 1960s with titles like <Hong Gildong jeon>, <Dinosaur Ttori of a Million Years>, and <General Ttoli>. More recently, works such as <Leafie, A Hen into the Wild> and <Yobi, the Five Tailed Fox> have received acclaim for their fairytale-like qualities. Additionally, the unusual production and direct DVD sales of <Ghost Messenger> in Korea, which combined the unique elements of the Korean underworld and mobile phones, garnered considerable attention and popularity among fans.

The success stories of fantasy animations like <Toy Story>, followed by films such as <Frozen> and <How to Train Your Dragon>, showcase animation as an excellent medium that seamlessly integrates the extraordinary theme of fantasy. While in Korea, animations were once considered exclusively for children, works from Hollywood and Japan have elevated the status of animation as content that both children and adults can enjoy together.

Chapter 5 The Era of Games and Fantasy

The Birth of Role-Playing Games

When discussing the development of modern fantasy culture, one cannot overlook the influence of games. Fantasy games began with the desire to explore crafted worlds like in <The Lord of the Rings>, connecting with board games. This led to the creation of Table-top Role-Playing Games (TRPGs), where players take on roles, engaging in dialogue and actions to progress through the game, similar to acting out a story but following rules, much like board games. In a typical TRPG, players assume roles within a basic setting, performing actions on the stage of adventure. (There are games, like Jason Morningstar's <Fiasco>, where players proceed without a game master.)



Figure 11 The original TRPG,
<Dungeons & Dragons>

For instance, if the Game Master describes a situation like, "You stand at the entrance of an ancient underground ruin surrounded by mysterious light. Rocks block the entrance," each player decides how their character will react from their character's perspective. There is no singular correct answer;

as long as it aligns with the rules or common sense, players can do anything. They can even choose to abort the adventure without entering the underground ruins. When events occur or actions are taken, success is determined by rolling dice or drawing cards according to the rules.

In this way, TRPGs allow players to make choices and actions based on rules and craft their own stories, providing a creative play experience. Despite the drawbacks of requiring multiple players and the initial need to read at least one rulebook, TRPGs are still cherished for their freedom and diverse experiences. Starting with the inaugural TRPG <Dungeons & Dragons> introduced by TSR in 1974, various works such as <GURPS>, <Sword World>, <Shadowrun>, <World of Darkness>, <Fate>, <Numenera>, and others have been produced and showcased at TRPG or miniature game events like Gen Con.

The Korean TRPG culture, developed mainly through PC communications, spread enough to hold events like RPG conventions in the mid-1990s but didn't maintain long-lasting popularity. However, recently, interest has been reignited as specialized companies consistently introduce translated rulebooks through crowdfunding, drawing attention once more. Additionally, there's a diverse ongoing production of original rulebooks within Korea.

The Growth of Computer Games

The fantasy game culture that started with TRPG transitioned into computer games, birthing titles like <Ultima> and <Wizardry>. Explosively popular titles such as <Dragon Quest> and <Final Fantasy> emerged in Japan. Computer RPGs, born from the desire of those who wanted to experience solo adventures akin to TRPGs but through computers, garnered popularity due to

their diverse settings and stories. While computer games required following predefined stories and rules, they gained immediate prominence by allowing gameplay without the need for acting or reading rulebooks. Action RPGs, starting with 1982's <Dungeons of Daggorath> by DynaMicro, continued by games like T&E Soft's <Hydride> and Nihon Falcom's <Dragon Slayer>, introduced real-time combat that TRPGs relying on dice rolling couldn't offer, leading a new RPG boom. Though RPGs like <Dragon Quest> or <Ultima> were turn-based, games like Nintendo's <The Legend of Zelda> garnered public favor, and hack-and-slash games like <Diablo>, where players continuously defeat pouring monsters, gained popularity.

Fantasy games born from RPGs evolved into various genres such as strategy, shooting, and action, spawning masterpieces in the gaming arena like Atari's <Gauntlet> and Capcom's <Dungeons & Dragons>. While gaming primarily shifted from arcade to console gaming after Nintendo's Famicom, the popularity of computer games remained strong in RPGs, with titles like <Diablo>, <Dragon Age>, and <The Elder Scrolls> still attracting attention.

Meanwhile, Korea's fantasy game culture started in 1987 with the release of the country's first commercial game, Nam In-hwan's <Legend of the Sword>. Despite successful titles like <Astonishia Story> and <The Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms>, the package game market, except for online and mobile gaming, almost disappeared due to rampant piracy, bundled games, and the dishonesty of development studios.

Ultima

A classic computer RPG created by British-born American game developer

Richard Garriott. Ultima laid the foundation for Western computer RPGs, beginning with the game <Akalabeth> based on <Dungeons & Dragons>. Set in a fictional world called 'Sosaria,' where Earthlings act as one of the rulers, it offers high freedom, allowing players to live various lives without strictly following the story. Starting from the fourth installment, the introduction of the Eight Virtues added internal depth to the fantasy game by depicting the pursuit of these virtues, going beyond just fighting external enemies like demons. <Ultima Online>, an MMORPG, expanded into a game where players could do everything from committing crimes to begging, fostering the fun of living a crafted life within a fantasy world. It also introduced the term 'Avatar' as the player's alter ego, popularizing it among the masses.

The Era of Online Games

From the late 1970s, Multi-User Dungeon (MUD) games spread across university networks, starting as simple text-based games with elements of conversation similar to TRPGs. With the advancement of networks and graphics, more people joined, leading to the evolution of Massive-Multi Player Online Role Playing Games (RPGMMORPGs).

Through games like Lucasfilm's <Habitat> and then, in 1991, Stormfront's <Neverwinter Nights>, MMORPGs officially began, offering the allure of numerous players simultaneously accessing a single virtual world to collaborate, compete, and experience life within it. <Ultima Online*> in 1997 attracted a wide fan base by providing almost every aspect of life in the fantasy world, beyond mere combat, including activities like cooking and begging. Games like <EverQuest>, implementing systems like raids for many players to engage together, and <Dark Age of Camelot>, depicting



Figure 14 The world's first MMORPG, <Neverwinter Nights>

large-scale wars, followed, leading to the growth of the MMORPG market. In Korea, starting with <The Kingdom of the Winds> in 1996 and <Lineage> in 1998, many MMORPGs emerged, offering the excitement of activity in a crafted world and demonstrating the potential for creating new stories together. The 'Bartz Liberation War*' event in <Lineage 2> garnered attention, involving hundreds of thousands of users in a large-scale event.

Bartz Liberation War

An internet war that took place on the Bartz server of <Lineage 2> from June 2004. It unfolded as the 'Bartz Alliance' comprising all server users united against the 'Dragon Knights,' a powerful guild that aimed to dominate servers.

This internet war, conducted in two major phases, gained significant attention as the largest-scale event, witnessing incidents akin to real-world politics such as competition and division. Notably, it highlighted digital storytelling driven by a large user base, where users voluntarily crafted 'history' and 'stories' within the game, diverging from the story provided by game developers. This

phenomenon served as a prime example of digital storytelling by a massive user community, showcasing cyberworld social phenomena that were distinct from those in reality. The event was adapted into the novel <The Bartz Historia> in the literary world, inspired Kang Hee-jin's novel <Ghost>, and in August 2011, even led to an art exhibition titled "Bartz Revolution" held at the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art.

Korean MMORPGs were initially known for combat-focused hack-and-slash mechanics. However, games like <Aion>, <Tera>, and <ArcheAge> pursued diverse changes and gained recognition overseas as well. Presently, while Korea focuses on simple smartphone games like <Seven Knights>, <Raven>, and <MU Origin>, the popularity of MMORPGs continues, and new games are still in development.

Meanwhile, games like <Ultima Online> and <Mabinogi>, which allowed experiences beyond combat such as cooking and farming, faithfully conveyed a sense of a virtual reality world. These games contributed to the creation of 'game fantasy novels,' using stories within the game as material. Starting with <Children of Okstakalnis>, numerous works emerged, and even now, works like <Moonlight Sculptor> continue to garner popularity.

The Evolution of Fantasy Culture from Games

Becoming a hero in a fantastical world and embarking on a grand journey to defeat evil villains makes fantasy games endearing, fostering familiarity with the fantasy world. Such games and the worlds within them have served as inspiration for novels and other creations. Particularly in Japan and Korea, where the Western fantasy genre wasn't as familiar, many people embraced

fantasy culture through games, leading to the creation of new cultures.

The Japanese novel <Record of Lodoss War> is a representative work based on TRPGs. Created by adding new worlds and characters to game sessions, this novel was adapted into an anime and introduced in Korea. The setup of companions composed of elves, dwarves, thieves, and clerics, and understanding situations, greatly influenced the fantasy boom in Korea.

In the United States and Japan, creating novels, animations, etc., based on games has been active for a long time. Game-related products based on <Dungeons & Dragons>, such as the <Dragonlance> series, initially gained popularity from the game but later attracted new gaming fans through novels, comics, and animations. Even now, games like <World of Warcraft> and <Diablo> have game novels, alongside comics, animations, and movies.

In Korea, after Kim Jin's <The War of Genesis>, various works emerged. While game novels like <Rohan> and "Aion" didn't gain much attention, game comics like "MapleStory," "Dungeon Fighter Online," and "Monster Taming" gained massive popularity. "Comic MapleStory Offline" produced up to 80 volumes.

In Korea as well, various works emerged after the manga <The War of Genesis> created by 'Kim Jin.' Game novels like <Rohan> and <ArchAge> didn't receive much attention. However, game-based comics such as <MapleStory>, <Dungeon Fighter Online>, and <Monster Taming> gained significant popularity among the general audience. For instance, <Comic MapleStory Offline> ran for up to 80 volumes.

Chapter 6 The Potential of Fantasy in Korea and Korean Fantasy Genre

The Emergence of Korean Fantasy Culture

Though Korean fantasy culture has started with oral storytelling, folklore, and <Hwawanggye> written by Seol Chong, the initiation of this culture was Kim Si-seup's <Geumo Shinhwa> in earnest. Following the influence of Chinese literature, the birth of <Geumo Shinhwa> was succeeded by the introduction of Gods and demons fiction and Pseudo-historical Fantasy Novels like <The Dream of the Red Chamber>, <Hong Gildong jeon>, and <Jeon Uchi jeon>, fostering the lineage of fantasy culture. This cultural trajectory extended into beast fables such as <Ho Jil>, eventually leading to works like An Guk-seon's <Geumsuhoeuilog> in 1908. After Korea gain its independence, various foreign works made their way into Korea; however, the predominant narratives primarily focused on fairy tales rather than stories revolving around 'sword and sorcery.'

The story of swordsmen, initiated from <Hong Gildong jeon> born under the influence of <Water Margin>, continued into martial novels like <Sagakjeon>, forming the genre of Knight Errant novels. Originating from Kim Gwangju's <Jeonghyupji> in 1961, Korea's Knight Errant culture progressed significantly with the introduction of works by Chinese authors such as Wolong Sheng in the 1970s. The real creation of Knight Errant fiction began in the late 1970s. Knight Errant novels, developed by writers such as Kim Dae-sik using the pseudonym Euljesang, including authors like Geumgang, Samadal, Yaseolrok, and Seo Hyowon, were acclaimed for their heroic and fantasy-like tales. Presently, Knight Errant novels is considered a distinct genre from fantasy. However, it aligns with fantasy culture due to the

presence of powers similar to magic, Internal Prowess, various martial arts techniques, fantastical beings, immortals, and spirits that live for thousands of years. Such Knight Errant novels have significantly influenced the development of fantasy culture in Korea.

The modern fantasy culture centered around Western 'swords and magic' stories began to flourish in the early 1990s with the advent of PC communication and gaming magazines, marking the onset of the substantial influx of foreign genre cultures. This development saw the rise of exceptional characters like 'Deedlit,' who brought about an elf boom in 'Record of Lodoss War.' Popular TV animations such as 'Slayers,' 'Dungeons & Dragons,' 'Sword World,' indicative of the Tabletop Role-Playing Game (TRPG) culture, and games like 'Ultima,' 'Wizardry,' 'Final Fantasy,' alongside Western fantasies such as 'Lord of the Rings' and 'Dragonlance,' were introduced. Gaming magazines and PC communication, which stood at the forefront of introducing subculture, rapidly expanded as a result.

The creation of fantasy culture in Korea can be traced back to the introduction of "Twayama-rok" by Lee Woo-hyuk in 1993, but the subsequent rise of the dominant trend in the development of fantasy, centered around 'swords and magic' stories, can be attributed to Lee Young-do's "Dragon Raja" in 1998. Prior to this, there were works such as Lim Dal-young's "Regios" (1994) and Kim Geun-woo's "Wizard of the Wind" (1996), but the heightened interest in fantasy stemmed from the commercial success of "Twayama-rok" and "Dragon Raja."

From the late 1990s onwards, a fantasy boom emerged with the release of works like Lee Soo-young's "The Story of Return Syndrome" (1998), Hong Jung-hoon's "Soaring Hawk" (1999), Jeon Min-hoe's "The Passage of Time" (1999), and Lee Sang-gyun's "White Ronyaf River" (1999). During this period, creative works were initially a mishmash and closer to fanfiction, as

they began with the infusion of foreign cultures and elements. However, as time progressed, these works gradually found their own identity and uniqueness, evolving beyond a mere blend of foreign elements. Following "Dragon Raja," there was an increase in high-quality, more refined works.

The emergence of South Korean fantasy culture cannot be overlooked without considering the influence of comics. South Korea's fantasy comics evolved through works such as Lee Doo-ho's "<Master, Master, Oh Our Master>" (1984), Shin Il-suk's "<Four Daughters of Armian>" (1986), and Lee Bo-bae's "<My Dream Partner>" (1989). Particularly, "<Four Daughters of Armian>," set in a fictional country called Armian within the backdrop of Chunggeundong, depicting the lives of four princesses, garnered significant popularity due to its depth in direction and content. Shin Il-suk later authored the mythic heroic story "<Lineage>," which attracted attention with its traditional fantasy style and was produced as a popular MMORPG.

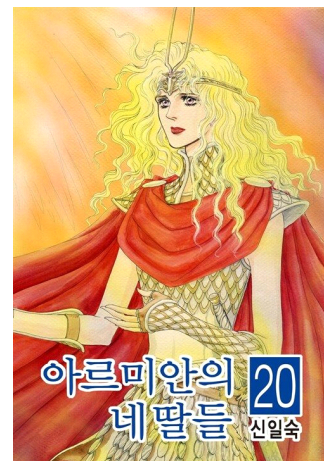


Figure 15 <Four Daughters of Armian>, intertwining the fate of a kingdom

One cannot overlook Kim Jin's historical fantasy "Land of the Wind" (1992) as an oriental-themed fantasy work. Focused on Goguryeo's King Daemosin (Muhyul), "Land of the Wind" gained popularity for Kim Jin's distinctive and detailed artwork, profound psychological portrayals, and intriguing elements like divine creatures and mystical arts. It was adapted into MMORPG, musical, and drama formats.

Korean fantasy comics were primarily produced as romance comics, but with the emergence of boy's magazines like "IQ Jump," works such as Park Sung-woo's "Legend of the Eight Dragons" (1993), Yang Kyung-il's "Mythical Chronicles of the Somas" (1993), Lee Myung-jin's "Ragnarok" (1997),

and Hyung Min-woo's "Priest" (1998) began serialization. Many of these works gained popularity and were exported abroad, adapted into various media such as games. "Priest" even became a film in the United States in 2011, but it couldn't replicate the original charm and thus did not perform well commercially.

Expansion of Korean Fantasy Culture

The fantasy culture in Korea, triggered by "Twayama-rok" and "Dragon Raja," underwent a significant expansion in quantity with the emergence of diverse works thereafter. At that time, book rental shops played a substantial role in the growth of the fantasy culture. With the increase in book rental shops, there was a large influx of translated Japanese manga, and following the success of martial arts novels, fantasy novels began to receive considerable attention. Starting from the 2000s, with the number of book rental shops expanding to over ten thousand, the fantasy market experienced a rapid and substantial growth.

In the process of the fantasy market's growth, Korean fantasy has pursued various styles such as alternate history, dimension-traveling narratives, fusion fantasy, and game-related fantasy. Concurrently, it also sought expansion into different media like games and comics. While the foray into other media didn't yield significant results, several fusion cultural works beyond conventional fantasy literature gained popularity in novel form, eventually establishing themselves as a distinct genre.

The fusion of Knight Errant novels and fantasy in Jeon Dong-jo's "Mukhyang" (1999) is considered a prime example of the so-called fusion fantasy material. "Mukhyang" was a work that transitioned from the Knight Errant world to the fantasy realm, but conversely, there were also works transitioning from fantasy to Knight Errant and even those infused with a science fiction atmosphere. In the emergence of fusion fantasy,

dimensional-travel narratives also became trendy. Dimensional-travel fantasy, along with the rapid increase of book rental shops, led to the creation of numerous imitative works with similar content and structure, often called mass-produced fantasy novels (commonly referred to as "yangmanso" in Korean). This inundation of mass-produced fantasy novels was linked to book rental shop culture and led to a decline in the overall assessment of the fantasy culture. However, there are exceptions like "Dragon Raja," which received acclaim not only in book rental shops but also in sales markets, transcending the usual limitations.

Meanwhile, serialization that began on PC communication has shifted its stage to the internet and continues through large-scale serialization sites such as Joara and Munpia. These sites primarily focus on popular and widely appealing stories involving swords and magic, emphasizing martial arts fiction. On the other hand, smaller-scale serialization sites have pursued various forms of fantasy styles diverging from sword and magic narratives. Particularly, the fantasy culture webzine, "Mirror," has created a distinct flow by focusing on unique short stories, deviating from lengthy narratives typically associated with swords and magic.

Changes and Trends of the Times

The fantasy market centered around rental shops, due to its large scale, initially contributed to sustaining the market. However, it gradually faced structural limitations of self-replication without growth. As a multitude of poorly crafted works flooded the market, qualitatively superior pieces often became buried and overlooked.

As the fantasy market centered around rental shops declined, publishers such as Daewon began importing Japanese light novels. Departing from the rental shop distribution, the introduction of light novels through direct sales gained immense success in the fantasy market, owing to the

wave of Japanese anime influx through the internet. The success injected a new vitality into the fantasy market. With an increasing number of companies publishing light novels, actively nurturing new writers through competitions, and transforming original fantasy works into the format of light novels, the light novel market experienced rapid growth thanks to the proactive marketing strategies of publishing houses. However, light novels, closer in style to comics and animation, failed to expand beyond the scope of Japanese anime fans, leading to intensified competition and declining profitability. Consequently, this transformation alongside the shrinkage of the rental shop market altered the landscape of the fantasy market.

The emergence of smartphones and tablets brought changes to the stagnant fantasy market. The introduction of the e-book market through smartphones and tablets, along with systems like online rentals or paid serialization, activated the industry. As a result of this system that directly channels profits back to authors, writers began creating new styles of works suitable for the characteristics of smartphones and tablets. With increased capital and attention from authors toward these works, there has been qualitative growth as well.

In the mid-2000s, fantasy comics, which had declined due to the downturn of comic magazines, have recently seen rapid growth through webtoons centered around online portals. Many works are emerging as a result. Webtoons that employ a scrolling format, eliminating the need to flip pages, gained popularity among the public due to their unique storytelling and easy accessibility. Initially, sitcom-style works depicting everyday life were popular, but presently, various lengthy works on diverse subjects are consistently receiving praise. Moreover, the advent of smartphones dramatically boosted the potential of e-books, offering individuals the ability to publish books without the need for establishing a publishing house and enabling direct entry into the global market, achieving unbelievable success.

In reality, works like Jang Jae-yeon's comic 'Bibi' have topped the Apple iBooks e-book charts for 30 weeks, marking a direct entry into and success in the global market.

Alongside these changes, recent fantasy works are not merely imitations of Japanese or Western creations but are evolving into our unique representations within the fantasy world, reflecting aspects of our daily lives. Korean fantasy culture, showcased not only in Korea but also in Japan, China, Taiwan, and beyond, is receiving love and acclaim as one of the most popular and dynamic genres within Korean genre culture.

The Potential of the Fantasy Genre

Like the examples mentioned so far, fantasy has a long history and has evolved in various forms and shapes. However, Korean fantasy culture hasn't shown as much diversity.

In Korea, aside from foreign works and fairy tales, thousands of fantasy novels are published annually. More works are presented on serialization sites like Joara or Munpia, yet most of them tend to replicate 'sword and magic stories' or 'dimensional adventure tales.' This repetitive trend has led readers to turn away from the genre. Recently, even light novels are undergoing the same replication, causing fans to lose interest.

To attract readers who have turned away from fantasy, it is essential to explore diverse possibilities beyond the confines of the typical 'sword and magic stories' based on medieval knight tales. Just as 'Twaymlök' once mixed exorcism stories from various parts of the world to create a new style, and 'The Bird That Drinks Tears' created races based on creatures from legends and myths, one should seek more freedom in imagination without being bound by the conventions of fantasy. To achieve this, one must not only explore and enjoy various forms of fantasy, as introduced earlier, but also strive to find a style that resonates with both the author and the desired

audience. Furthermore, there is a need to attempt new styles of writing and creation suitable for new media such as the web or apps.

Mizuki Shigeru Road, filled with over 150 yokai statues, is a place created in commemoration of Mizuki Shigeru, a manga artist acclaimed for diverse yokai creations like 'GeGeGe no Kitaro.' Every year, numerous tourists visit this location, where people enjoy the stories of yokai excavated by Mizuki Shigeru, reveling in Japan's diverse yokai culture. Japan is a place rich in yokai stories, evident by the ability to create over 150 yokai statues on a single street. With numerous shrines across the country and the tales of yokai and gods, Japan's creative culture is enriched. However, the widespread use of yokai as a theme in manga owes to Mizuki Shigeru's fondness for yokai stories he heard during his childhood, which led him to explore and transform yokai stories from various parts of Japan and even globally into narratives.

Andersen, by adding his own interpretations to the folktales unearthed by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, delighted people with creative works, while Tolkien, by creating the marvelous world of Middle-earth based on myths and legends, led modern fantasy culture. Similarly, fantasy culture embodies the efforts of creators who sought to find something unique rather than settling for existing works.

Posong-ryeong sat on the streets, treating passersby to tea and alcohol while collecting folklore and legends. The tales and legends he collected were crafted into a masterpiece called 'Yojaiji,' which had a significant impact on Eastern fantasy culture. Just as Posong-ryeong collected existing stories but didn't settle, establishing a new style, I hope that through exploring the various sub-genres of fantasy introduced in this book, discovering multiple works and themes, we can lead our own new fantasy culture. Fantasy is 'the story of life unfolding in a fantastic world.' It's a genre that unfolds free dreams, unrestricted by anything specific.

Writing Method

Learning how to write fantasy novels from a fantasy writer

by Park Ae-jin

If I were to start talking about my case, I have had a habit of daydreaming since I was young and loved books. In the fairy tales I read as a child, there were princesses no bigger than a thumb, trolls terrifying at night but turning to stone in sunlight, frogs plugging up holes of urn to save kind girl, and even boys born from peaches. I would immerse myself in books until the call to eat interrupted me, abruptly bringing a strange reality into view. Instead of a silent city where everyone, from people to animals, had fallen asleep under a curse, I found myself on an old, worn-out sofa surrounded by ancient wooden walls.

It wasn't just about getting completely immersed in stories all the time. Sometimes, there were things I couldn't understand. Would not being invited to a birthday party really make someone that upset? Why is it that the youngest daughter is always pretty, while the older sisters who constantly bully her are not as attractive? As I grew up, I began to add my solitary daydreams to the questions that naturally floated in my mind and started to put them into writing. Anything was possible in fantasy novels. Riding on dragons through the sky, encountering a handsome boy in a coffee cup, or cities moving like tanks, chasing and devouring other cities.

After earnestly beginning to write, I realized, through numerous trials and errors, that like any other novel, you can't just write whatever you want in a fantasy novel. Fantasy novels unfold in a boundless realm of imagination, breaking free from the boundaries of reality. Above all, they require a free-spirited refusal to be confined by conventions. Yet, at the same time, they need certain reins to contain the wild gallop of imagination into

the framework of a novel.

Based on my modest experience of writing fantasy novels thus far, this piece is structured around the challenges encountered by a writer—specifically one delving into the realm of fantasy fiction—during the actual process of writing. It touches upon the difficulties faced, the beneficial habits to cultivate, and the aspects within writing that, when infused, significantly enhance the richness of the narrative. I hope this piece serves as even a small aid to aspiring writers venturing into the world of writing fantasy novels.

Dream of Becoming a Writer, Path to Becoming a Writer

Many people reading this piece might have at one time written, desired to write, or are currently engaged in writing. The impetus for initially starting to write is often quite similar. It begins with reading something inspiring, watching a movie or a comic, finding it relatable yet different, and then creating one's own unique story. The written work is then shared with friends or posted on the internet. If friends or readers respond positively, it sparks enthusiasm, encouraging further dedicated writing.

Beginners often find inspiration readily at their doorsteps. Stories surge forth unexpectedly, even when not sought. While writing, a corner of the mind harbors the thought, 'Could I possibly be a genius?' It's a thought that lingers within anyone who writes. I'm still an undiscovered genius to the world.

However, one day, the initial 'inspirational ideas' fade away. Stories that used to flow effortlessly suddenly hit a wall. The enthusiasm from friends diminishes. Despite ambitious submissions, they end up unsuccessful. At this point, regardless of the reason, most people who once wrote, holding onto memories of their past writings, nurture a vague desire to write again and eventually stop. Only a very few move beyond this stage and continue

writing.

Here, for those who encounter barriers, the aim is to surpass them, and for those still at the stage of drafts, the goal is to write better by delving into the fundamentals of writing fantasy fiction and discussing beneficial practices. Of course, this will also be helpful for those who have only vague ideas but haven't yet tried writing in reality.

① How to Get an Idea

Fantasy novels typically revolve around worlds operating under different laws from reality. However, one doesn't need to venture too far to find the idea for writing a fantasy novel, the core material of the story, or the characters. Even in the smallest aspects of daily life, by breaking away from fixed ideas about how the world, relationships, or social order should be, naturally occurring elements in one's life can serve as material for a fantasy novel. To do so, one must constantly question and exercise imagination. For instance, why does studying classical Chinese make one so drowsy? Could it be that the classical Chinese teacher is an extraterrestrial gaining energy every time students doze off? Did Socrates truly say, 'Know thyself'?

In Kim Ihwan's <Sphere of Despair>, a black sphere, seemingly insignificant, chases and swallows people. In Kim Hyunjung's compilation <Master of the Mind>, the character Wangson from the short story 「Prince Wangson」 anthropomorphizes a forkrain. Sometimes, merely changing one word's original meaning can transform a story into a fantasy novel. In the short story 'My Beloved Doll, Neme,' featured in the collection 'Primitive Instincts feat. The Handsome Boy,' Neme, though a plant resembling a human, isn't technically a doll by definition, yet naming it as such imbues it with a sense of fantasy. Granting new meanings to everyday objects commonly encountered in the surroundings or in daily life can lead to fruitful inspirations. Declare yourself as a writer in possession of the 'One Ring.' The

moment you name your target of inspiration, whether it be 'doll,' 'city,' or 'library,' it creates a unique 'city' exclusive to the author, departing from the dictionary definition. The 'One Ring' is powerful but equally hazardous. If misused, it can become venomous and potentially consume the writer. While writers have the liberty to create the laws of their worlds, once established, these laws must be upheld, and stories must operate within those rules.

Inspiration can also be found within oneself. Drawing from real-life experiences and the emotions felt in those moments, one magnifies the necessary aspects for the story while boldly discarding the unnecessary elements. Many people have experienced unrequited love for a long time, unable to confess due to shyness or missed opportunities. When exaggerated, these experiences can depict dramatic tales such as a servant's unrequited love for the master's daughter or King Kong's affection for a beautiful blonde woman. If one has been betrayed by a lifelong friend of 20 years, from elementary school to adulthood, it can lead to stories of betrayal akin to being stabbed in the back by a comrade fought alongside for a century on the battlefield.

Cultivating the habit of writing a diary every day is also crucial. Recording in detail the good, the sad, the angry, and even the aspects that one might be reluctant to acknowledge allows one to revisit and apply those emotions and situations when needed. I once read an interview where an actor mentioned imagining their mother's death to induce tears during a scene where they were supposed to cry after a breakup with their partner. Though situations may differ, tears are tears, and sadness is sadness. If you've experienced intense emotions, it's essential to hold them back and preserve them. However, it's important not to get too immersed in the characters and situations while writing. After all, readers desire a compelling story in a fantasy novel, not a diary.

② Start from a Familiar Story

I used to read the submissions of aspiring writers on the fantasy literature webzine Mirror(<http://mirror.pe.kr>) for several years and provided brief reviews while also selecting outstanding works. When reading the submissions from aspiring writers, I noticed a common weakness: the inability to distinguish between the stories they wanted to write and the stories they were capable of writing.

When starting to write, it's advisable to create characters who resemble the gender and share a similar age with the writer as much as possible. A teenager writing about a character in their 40s might not authentically capture the speech and behavior of someone in their 40s. Understanding of an age group is crucial when portraying an unfamiliar age range. Similarly, depicting a past age without a deeper understanding could be challenging. The teenagers of my time and present-day teenagers differ despite seemingly being the same. Particularly when portraying childhood or young children, precise observation and insight are essential. If uncertain, it's recommended to read books and watch movies featuring characters from that age group or ask people belonging to that age group. If that's not feasible, as mentioned earlier, it's best to depict characters from an age group one knows well.

Similarly, one should start with a subject they know well when crafting a story. Stories about unfamiliar topics often fail to persuade anyone. Writing about something unfamiliar may depict a centuries-long war but may fail to explain why people argue over trivial matters when they are alone. Starting from a known story can demonstrate why conflicts persist in human history through simple scenes, such as elementary students drawing lines on shared desks and declaring, 'Anything over the line is mine,' showcasing why conflicts in human society endure.

Start from familiar stories and gradually expand your knowledge.

Observe people around you, read newspapers or watch the news, and explore specialized books, not just novels. Begin with simple stories like elementary students drawing lines and fighting, then progress to narratives involving internal struggles within an organization, conflicts between nations, and battles between different races, thus broadening the scope of the story.

③ **You must finish what you started**

The most significant reason for abandoning a piece of writing before completing it is simply because writing is far more challenging than imagined. When conceptualizing a piece of writing, ideas flow effortlessly, focusing on the desired aspects. However, when one starts writing, unexpected difficulties often arise.

Scenes or dialogues might not flow as smoothly as expected, the stories created beforehand might expand beyond control, leading to difficulties in managing them, or despite serializing, there might be a lack of response, causing enthusiasm to wane, resulting in writer's fatigue, and so on. There are numerous obstacles. It's impossible to satisfy everyone with the first attempt. Receiving an enthusiastic response from readers right from the first piece of writing is not an easy feat. Writing is inherently a solitary battle, an intensely lonely endeavor.

To translate envisioned scenes into writing, there's no alternative but to read good literature and practice writing oneself. Even for scenes that are challenging to write at the moment, giving them your best effort without rushing through ensures that the scenes you truly wanted to write shine. For uncertain scenes, referencing movies or dramas can also be a method.

The inability to resolve a story often stems from not having a clear vision of the ending or the process leading up to it. Regardless, one must find a way to tie up loose ends. Giving up without completing it will only lead to the repetition of the same mistakes in subsequent writings. There is

no alternative. It's necessary to overcome moments of reader indifference or internal doubts about the story. Whether it's an uncharted path, a treacherous mountain with no clear route, or a desert without water in sight, taking one step at a time eventually leads to a conclusion.

Every time I start a new piece of writing, I realize how inadequate my writing skills are. It's because each time I write, it reveals areas where I fall short. Instead of giving up when things don't unfold as intended, I aim to improve the shortcomings found in this piece of writing in the next one. It's through completing each work and striving for enhancement that one's skills truly improve.

④ **Expose your writing**

The completion of writing is its publication. Just as a child doesn't grow up exactly as their parents intend, once a piece of writing is published, it gains a new life. There's no need to be discouraged if readers don't interpret it as intended. Perhaps what the readers comprehend might be more accurate than the author's intent.

Today, there are countless spaces available for publishing writing. By presenting our work to a wider audience rather than just friends, we can see our writing through the eyes of others. An example of this is when typos that were previously unnoticed suddenly become visible after posting on an internet forum.

Generally, people tend to be strict with others while lenient with themselves. When evaluating someone else's writing, they do so objectively, but when assessing their own work, they see the effort and time invested, noticing the imperfections more prominently and highlighting the intended parts. That's why it's crucial to showcase your work to others and receive feedback.

⑤ Authenticity is key

The essence of novels and what moves experienced readers trained by writers' words lies in authenticity. Authentic writing, in simple terms, is writing imbued with sincerity. While some technically flawless writings might feel dull, there are also writings, albeit unpolished, that touch the heart. This difference emanates from sincerity and authenticity. To achieve this, one must seek stories that move their own hearts more than just a vague sense of being interesting.

What story do you resonate with the most? Whether it's the unfairness encountered in everyday life, akin to apartment residents preventing delivery trucks despite ordering goods, silent suffering in unrequited love, workplace harassment by superiors, family love and conflicts, or the passion to achieve dreams amidst adversity... Among these, or any other story, one needs to find narratives that deeply resonate within their own hearts in the real struggles of life.

The bias that fantasy novels are merely for 'killing time' and not considered 'literature' stems from a misconception that fantasy fiction and reality are unrelated. Surprisingly, even among aspiring writers, there are those who hold such biases. In many cases, fantasy novels can vividly depict reality more than novels that deal exclusively with reality. <The Hunger Games>(written by Suzanne Collins) tells the story of a revolution sparked by the oppressed, while <Watership Down>(written by Richard Adams) encompasses numerous human traits.

Continuously questioning myself about why I want to write this story and what I aim to convey through it is crucial.

⑥ Recognize the strengths of your writing

More than fixing the weaknesses in your writing, it's important to identify

your strengths and hone them. There's no piece of writing without room for improvement. Every piece has its strengths and weaknesses. Focusing solely on fixing weaknesses can sometimes make the writing ordinary. It's crucial to cover the flaws with your unique strengths. However, it's also necessary to overcome those weaknesses whenever possible.

Setting a specific goal for each piece of writing is also a good approach. For instance, in this piece, I'll accurately depict the inner world of the character 'Gildong.' In the next piece, I'll strive to vividly portray a scene so sweet that it makes readers feel as though their hands and feet have disappeared. This method allows for building skills one step at a time.

⑦ **The basics are equally important in fantasy novels**

Many aspiring writers of fantasy novels claim that in such stories, the plot's entertainment value outweighs the importance of the sentences themselves. Whenever I hear this sentiment, it feels like they're undermining the significance of sentences. Saying that if a story is entertaining, the sentences don't matter is akin to asserting that it doesn't matter how a song is sung as long as it's well-sung. Sometimes, singers with astounding vocal abilities turn ordinary songs into exceptional ones. Well-written songs remain great, even when sung by someone who isn't a good vocalist. So, if a talented singer sings a well-written song, one can easily imagine how exceptional the song will be.

Those who claim sentences are inconsequential often misunderstand the essence of good sentences. Good sentences are those that most accurately express the situations and emotions within a novel. It's not about using elaborate or complex sentences filled with flashy tricks and metaphors; it's about using various metaphors or descriptions to accurately convey the situation and emotions.

When facing a difficult situation and confiding in a friend, if that

friend manages to articulate your feelings and situation more accurately than you could have done yourself, it provides immense comfort. Stories within fantasy novels often depict situations that readers might not experience in their reality. Good sentences allow readers to empathize with extreme and unfamiliar circumstances, and intense emotions they might have never encountered before.

The protagonist, who finally reached the dragon's lair after overcoming numerous obstacles, violently swung the sword, slicing through the dragon's Achilles tendon. If the dragon just thudded to the ground, it might be hard for the reader to feel the thrill and excitement in this scene. Similar to a young bee that has just emerged from its cocoon, facing an experienced hornet, the premise of an essentially unwinnable battle requires a narrative that goes beyond this and depicts overcoming that seemingly insurmountable challenge and achieving victory. Novels are written with sentences. The statement implies that sentences should vividly paint landscapes, evoke sounds, and invoke fragrances for readers as if experiencing a 4D movie right before their eyes.

I'll provide a few guidelines. First, it is advisable to avoid onomatopoeia as much as possible. Onomatopoeic words limit the reader's imagination. It's more effective to express the sound of a massive object falling with a metaphor that evokes that sound, rather than simply writing 'thud.' Secondly, it's best to avoid repeating the same words within a paragraph. Similar to singers adjusting their tone to convey rich emotions when repeating lyrics, enriching words can also make writing more abundant.

When the word changes, the sentence changes as well. One should expand the range of available words and sentence structures. If suitable words don't come to mind, consulting a thesaurus can be helpful. It's also beneficial to read Korean classic novels and explore books on sentence composition like "Writing Our Sentences Correctly" by Lee O-deok, frequently

checking for any erroneous habits or overly literal translations that might have been inadvertently adopted.

A Few Formulas That Make Fantasy Novels More Flavorful

Here, I aim to discuss various devices within writing that, when given attention and care, can bring brilliance to the text.

① Subtle subplots add depth to the story

Subplots don't exist solely for dramatic twists. Even small subplots can enrich a story.

In an episode of the British drama <Doctor Who>, the protagonist, the Doctor, is seen licking a spoon after eating ice cream in the opening scene. Later, while crossing a wooden bridge in the woods, Robin Hood confronts the Doctor for a sword fight. The Doctor, initially unarmed, unexpectedly pulls out the spoon from his pocket instead of a sword. Facing the sharp blade, the spoon seemed insufficient. However, at a crucial moment when Robin Hood almost gains the upper hand, the Doctor unexpectedly turns, pushing Robin Hood off balance with a nudge from his rear. Towards the climax, Robin Hood faces the antagonist atop a metal structure resembling the earlier wooden bridge. Losing his sword, Robin Hood faces defeat against the antagonist. At that moment, echoing the Doctor's earlier action, Robin Hood turns and nudges the antagonist off balance with a push from his rear. What started as a small subplot with the spoon licking becomes a significant element contributing to the story's climax.

In <The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy>(written by Douglas Adams) the character Arthur lies down in front of his house, opposing the contractors who plan to demolish it to make way for a bypass. Simultaneously, the Galactic Hyperspace Planning Council seeks to demolish Earth to build a hyperspace express route. Just as it's unfair for Arthur's house to be

demolished, it's equally unjust for Earth to face the same fate. Arthur finds himself powerless against the situation, mirroring the helplessness of political leaders facing the Galactic Hyperspace Planning Council. Placing Arthur's house demolition story earlier allowed for a poignant setup to depict the impending demolition of Earth.

By actively utilizing these small subplots or devices, a story can be made tastefully delightful, much like a chef's special touch that enhances the flavor.

② Kill characters after reaching its climax

In epic fantasies, characters often meet their demise. For those who survive, the story can continue. However, for those who perish, their story concludes there. Hence, everything that character could do or say must happen before their demise. At the very least, they need to be highlighted or spotlighted before their death. In many dramas, minor characters are introduced to the audience, establishing a slight connection, only to die shortly after. This is to allow the audience some time to empathize with that character. In novels, it's similar. Describing the events leading up to a character's death is more crucial than depicting the sadness after their demise. Whether revealing a past secret never mentioned before, summoning courage they have always lacked at a critical moment, or finally confessing a love long held within, these moments before a character reaches their life's peak and then perishes allow for a brief description of grief afterward. Elaborately describing the grief of someone who has lost a friend, family member, or colleague demands that the reader be saddened. Sadness cannot be coerced. It's when a character reaches their peak and then meets their demise that readers naturally begin to feel sadness.

③ Even in a world of fantasy, it's everyday life for those who live within

Paradoxically, but particularly, fantasy novels require realism. In order for readers to vividly accept a world where dragons reign as the top predators in the food chain, and where elves, dwarves, and werewolves coexist with humans, the author must depict the reality of that world as convincingly as the real world we live in.

I once went on a backpacking trip to Thailand a long time ago. In a small Thai town, when I went to board a bus, I noticed a sign on the vehicle indicating that chickens, ducks, and other birds were not allowed on board. It was a sign not commonly seen on buses in Korea, likely because it's uncommon for people to bring chickens or ducks onto buses. Seeing that sign was a realization that Thailand was a foreign country with different rules than where I lived, even more so than when I saw temples covered in gold leaf.

In the movie <The Host>, a monster emerges from the Han River in broad daylight. People enjoying their peaceful time nearby hastily flee in panic. However, through the bus window passing over the Han River, an elderly woman nonchalantly observes the scene. Her gaze, halfway between screaming and running away like the others, maximizes the sense of unfamiliarity brought by the sudden intrusion of fantasy and horror into everyday life.

In a fantasy world, depicting the ordinary aspects is crucial for the peculiarities of that world to stand out. If there were about ten thousand absolute rings rolling around, no one would consider it extraordinary. If genies from lamps granted unlimited wishes, allowing people to fly in the sky or breathe underwater for as long as they pleased, the concept of wishes would lose its essence, blurring the distinction between the ground, sky, and water. Even in a world where people can ride dragons and fly in the sky, the experience of riding a horse would become more special if it were prohibited. To illustrate a grand palace almost touching the sky in the

fantasy of flying, contrasting it with tiny figures resembling ants below is necessary. To evoke the sense of wonder and fantasy in a fantasy novel, portraying the mundane daily life within that world is essential to create a striking contrast.

④ **Invincibility has no charm**

Strong characters need limitations, or in other words, weaknesses. In the classic 1970s animation <Mechander V>, Mechander V was an invincible hero protecting the Earth, yet could only fight for three minutes at a time. Vampires, immortal beings, perish in sunlight, and the legendary hero Achilles from Greek mythology could be wounded only at his heel. The One Ring in 'The Lord of the Rings' trilogy corrupts the bearer's mind.

Invincibility is tedious and unrealistic. Whether protagonist or antagonist, having at least one weakness makes strengths shine and adds vitality.

Waiting for the Fantasy Writers of the Future

The most crucial aspect of writing is dedicating time to the act of writing itself. The difference between a writer and a dreamer lies in whether they actually write or merely imagine becoming a writer. Even if it's just 30 minutes a day, one must sit at the desk and write, even a single word. Writing isn't something done after all other tasks are completed. To write, one must sacrifice something. If it's impossible to write every day, at least set aside one day a week to sit in front of the computer. There will be days when, despite sitting for hours, not a page gets filled. Nevertheless, by sticking to the designated time, whether the inspiration comes or not, whether the writing flows or not, eventually there will come a day when the blockage ends and the words start to flow like a breakthrough on a highway.

What kind of story do you want to write, how can you write it, what

are the strengths and weaknesses of your writing? If you can read and refine yourself accurately, you will be able to write a good story.

Lastly, as someone who has written about how to write fantasy novels, I may be contradicting myself, but I hope you don't get caught up in the idea that "fantasy novels should be written this way." Exploring someone else's method of writing a fantasy novel is just a starting point; you need to find your own approach and story.

I wish all readers of this book the best in their writing endeavors.

Appendix 1: Fantasy and Game Storytelling

As introduced earlier, games have played a significant role in the development of modern fantasy culture. However, despite the influence of games in the Korean market, there remains a significant lack of research or understanding regarding storytelling through gaming. To aid in this understanding, this section introduces fantasy game storytelling.

Unlike novels, comics, or movies where the audience merely observes the story, games involve users, referred to as players, who directly 'experience' the game world by immersing themselves within it. They take control of characters, becoming the Hulk to demolish cities, a market vendor constructing buildings, or even a demon king defending fortresses against heroes, creating their own stories. Throughout the progression, the scale of crises changes, the atmosphere shifts, and, in some cases, players may even experience endings where enemies dominate the world. Game storytelling can be classified into several forms as follows.

1. Crisis Intervention

It is a method where users intervene in crises, such as battles, within a predetermined story, similar to movies or novels. The story itself does not change, but users control characters to overcome critical situations. The crisis intervention method progresses through various segments of the story, allowing users to actively engage in longer and more diverse content than watching a movie, especially when controlling characters during combat scenes that occur while watching a movie.

In the movie-based game "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the

King," users control characters in a scene from the movie to engage in combat. In one scene, as the wizard Gandalf stands beyond the castle wall, facing a horde of enemies rushing forward, the user takes control of Gandalf to confront the foes. Amid the chaotic battle with ladders on the walls and skirmishes erupting from all directions, wielding swords and staffs to defeat the enemies, the user pushes back the ladders, driving away the enemies. In a situation where enemy troops fill the castle walls, the user discovers a siege tower being pushed forward by the enemies, and in a critical moment, destroys it by shooting a catapult, only to suddenly face a monster that flies in and destroys the catapult.

If the user fails, the castle becomes overrun by enemies, leading the world to fall eternally into the hands of evil. Even if victorious in the battle, the flow of the story remains unchanged. Yet, for a brief moment, the user experiences the thrill of defending the castle as Gandalf. Game developers need to create and direct systems to make such experiences enjoyable for players.

2. Branching Paths Based on Choices

While "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" allows experiencing battles from the movie, in the "Fate" series, the story's progression itself changes based on the choices made by the protagonist.

What will I choose when a formidable enemy appears and my comrades are in combat? I might remain powerless, silently watching, or strive to somehow assist. If I've been distant with my comrades before, they might not trust me, leading to betrayal in the final confrontation. Also, being kind to an unwanted heroine might result in parting ways with someone truly cherished. In various situations like these, multiple choices arise, shaping the story into diverse outcomes based on these decisions.

In the branching path method, game developers create various branching points and subsequent storylines. Users experience different endings based on their choices. It's not only about choosing between right or left but also about numerical values like affection or trust changing according to choices, altering the outcomes. Sometimes, to explore different options, users need to reach specific endings, prompting them to replay the game several times, enjoying diverse narratives. Although each story starts similarly and concludes differently, the sense of accomplishment lies in the user's chosen ending. Therefore, game choices should be convincing and naturally integrated. For instance, how many people would choose not to save their lover hanging on a cliff? Simply listing obvious choices would resemble a novel or movie presenting only one ending, detracting from the enjoyment.

3. Journey of a Hero

<Dragon Quest> is an RPG where the protagonist defeats the Demon Lord to save the world. Although the story doesn't change, the feeling about the narrative alters depending on the progression style, allowing the player to experience the hero's journey. Unlike 'Crisis Resolution', where the ending remains the same, the 'Hero's Journey' method resembles it but differs in the sense that, instead of only participating in predetermined situations within the story, it involves freely exploring a vast world to seek out solutions.

In the game <Dragon Quest>, the castle of the dragon king, who kidnapped the princess, is nearby, but initially, even the subordinates of the dragon king cannot be defeated. How can one defeat the dragon king and rescue the princess? While defeating numerous enemies and growing stronger, the protagonist gains allies and obtains the sword and shield of a warrior, gradually approaching the goal. At times, unexpected events may

lead to losing comrades or falling into danger, yet each time, the protagonist makes desperate efforts, experiencing the journey of defeating the dragon king. As the protagonist becomes stronger, achieving victory in the final showdown against the evil dragon king and rescuing the princess, the player can experience the greatest sense of accomplishment. Although the start and end are the same, the process feels different for each user, and even for the same user, the experience varies each time they play the game.

Meanwhile, in the game style known as 'Hero's Journey,' instead of embarking on an adventure to defeat evil by controlling the protagonist and allies, there are works like <Warcraft>, where one leads a massive army to conquer enemies. Users are free to choose their strategies and tactics, and they can even choose their desired faction to shape the outcome they wish for. In the game <The Lord of the Rings: Battle for Middle-earth>, players can experience the thrill of conquering the Middle-earth by controlling monsters like orcs and Nazgûl, not fairies or humans, representing the sinister forces of Mordor.

4. Adventure Journey

In <The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim>, the protagonist freely explores the world of Skyrim and embarks on various adventures. Unlike "Dragon Quest," which has a clear objective of rescuing the princess from the dragon king (and defeating the demon king to save the world), the protagonist of "Skyrim" narrowly escapes execution after being mistaken for a foe but then freely chooses their subsequent purpose and experiences a wide array of adventures.

Though the ultimate conclusion involves defeating the antagonist named 'Alduin,' the adventures in "Skyrim" do not conclude there. The world is teeming with numerous adventures, and people live their lives, allowing the

protagonist to experience their stories. Moreover, players can create their own adventures or enjoy those crafted by others, offering a diverse range of choices that affect the course of the adventure based on various situations within the game's world.

Users can fight enemies, negotiate, and perform both good and evil deeds in the game. Every choice made by the player determines who their character becomes, altering the storyline accordingly. Players can become heroes saving the world or, at times, become villains destroying it.

There are multiple possibilities for the player. While there is an initial setup, the protagonist changes with each moment's choice. For instance, even if initially portrayed as a noble knight, they may evolve into a villainous criminal based on their actions, providing an engaging experience. Sometimes, the story may end with the protagonist's death. However, since it's the user's choice, they find satisfaction and enjoyment in the experience. To create such a free environment, developers need to prepare various situations and possibilities. They also need to clearly communicate to the player 'what they can do' within the game world.

5. Large-Scale Online Play

In an internet forum where individuals write their posts and various scenarios unfold, similarly, in large-scale online games with numerous participants, many players engage, unfolding a multitude of possibilities. As multiple players interact, they battle together against formidable foes, sometimes forming alliances or organizations among PCs, cooperating or engaging in wars, creating their own unique stories and situations. Similar to the previously mentioned 'Batz Liberation War', these interactions can result in massive wars and their unique adventures.

The game's direction determines the diverse unfolding situations. For

instance, in games like 'Mabinogi', everyday activities such as farming or cooking can hold importance alongside battles, while in <Dark Age of Camelot>, the storyline revolves around religious wars among three nations.

The game storytelling that changes based on the player's 'experience' offers a wide array of forms, providing different types of enjoyment depending on how players engage. This unique storytelling method in games, distinct from media like novels or comics, not only influences the gaming sphere but also impacts other forms of media. It creates new possibilities, such as the 'Game Fantasy Genre' set in virtual reality online games like 'Children of Octacalnis' and 'Moonlight Artisan', contributing to enriching the fantasy culture even further.

Appendix 2: Books That Help Understand Fantasy

<Fullmetal Alchemist>

A manga by Hiromu Arakawa that has been adapted into an anime twice. It is a recommended work if you want to weave mystical stories set in modern times. From start to finish, every story is created and structured around the concept of alchemy, providing entertainment.

<Gate: Thus the Japanese Self-Defense Force Fought There>

A novel by Japanese author Takumi Yanai, originating from the Self-Defense Force. It depicts a clash of civilizations in a fantasy world connected to Japan through a dimensional gate, similar to Stargate.

<Guin Saga>

A novel by Kaoru Kurimoto. It portrays the heroic deeds of Guin, a hero with a leopard's head. The series consists of 150 volumes, including prequels, published from 1979 until the author's death.

<Noble Detective Diashi Kyung" series>

An alternate history tale by Randal Garrett. Set in a fictional Anglo-French-North American empire, it showcases the exploits of an investigator who solves cases using magic. It offers a unique thrill by utilizing magical stories not for combat but for 'sleuthing'.

<The Neverending Story>

A novel by Michael Ende. It narrates the adventure of a boy who loves fantasy and enters a realm of imagination through a book he accidentally acquires. While it presents the typical appearance of dimension-travel fantasy,

it captures attention by highlighting the necessity to sacrifice 'memory' for achieving anything in this fantasy realm. This work showcases the potential of fantasy novels and their idealistic representations by presenting a tale where one can travel to a fantasy realm through a book and grow within that realm, something that creators might find worth reading.

<I Am Legend>

A novel by Richard Matheson, often regarded as the origin of zombie tales. It tells the story of a human protagonist left in a world inhabited only by vampires, prompting contemplation on the meaning of legends or monsters.

<The Chronicles of Narnia>

Introducing C.S. Lewis' work might seem trite, but "The Chronicles of Narnia" stands as a noteworthy piece for those aspiring to write fairy tales aimed at children (yet enjoyable for adults as well). C.S. Lewis' skill in creating the enchanting world of Narnia, which is a typical dimension-traveling story, along with the richly realized ideas embedded within, contributes significantly to fantasy creation, appealing universally to all ages.

<The Song of the Nibelungs>

A medieval epic portraying the death of the dragon-slaying hero Siegfried and his wife's revenge. It was adapted into Wagner's opera and had an influence on "The Lord of the Rings."

<The Wonderful Adventures of Nils>

A fairy tale by Swedish author Selma Lagerlöf. Commissioned by the Swedish Ministry of Education, this work received the Nobel Prize in Literature.

<Daren Shan>

A novel by Darren Shan (Darren O'Shaughnessy). It depicts a boy who becomes a half-vampire in an attempt to save his friend and gets entangled in a vampire war.

<Durarara!!>

A novel by Ryohgo Narita. It portrays the extraordinary daily life in a city where the headless rider, Cely Sturluson, roams around on a motorcycle. It was also adapted into an anime.

<Dracula>

A novel by Bram Stoker. While drawing from various existing works, this novel essentially laid the foundation for modern vampire lore. It has been adapted into numerous films, animations, and comics.

<Dragonlance>

A novel by Margaret Weis, based on "Dungeons & Dragons." It's a good piece to understand the typical high fantasy system and structure, and most importantly, it's entertaining. While works like "The Lord of the Rings" depict massive wars, "Dragonlance" often portrays the adventures of small groups, making it easily accessible with its presentation and development, resembling watching a game.

<Dragon and George>

A novel by Gordon R. Dickson. This work portrays the adventures of a protagonist who, due to a scientific experiment called "astral projection," ends up in the body of a dragon in another world. It was adapted into an animation titled "The Flight of Dragons," and several sequels were released, collectively known as the "Dragon Knight" series.

<"The Dresden Files" Series>

A fantasy detective novel series by Jim Butcher featuring Harry Dresden, a magical detective operating in New York. This series enhances understanding of urban fantasy set in cities. Besides the drama, the volumes "Storm Front" and "Fool Moon" introduced in Korea are recommended.

<Log Horizon>

A light novel by Mamare Touno. It portrays the lives of protagonists stranded in an online game world for unknown reasons. This work not only through the novel but also via its anime adaptation effectively introduces the concept and features of an "online game," offering significant insights into understanding this world.

<Record of Lodoss War>

A war fantasy novel by Ryo Mizuno set in the fictional world of Lodoss Island. It's one of the works that introduced the traditional fantasy style, often labeled as medieval fantasy, to South Korea.

<R.O.D>

A novel by Hideyuki Kurata. It tells the story of a bibliomaniac who can manipulate paper freely, fighting against enemies. There are also manga and anime adaptations.

<Replay>

A novel by Ken Grimwood. It portrays the life of a person who goes back in time to live life again, repeating it to rediscover their present. It has had a significant impact on what is known as the 'replay genre.'

<The Magician of Offen>

A fantasy novel by Yoshinobu Akita. The protagonist, a magician active as a troubleshooter despite learning assassination techniques, engages in various incidents. It gained popularity along with "Slayers," contributing to the boom of light novel fantasy.

<Mary Poppins>

A series by Pamela Lyndon Travers, a British author of Australian origin. It showcases the intriguing daily life of Mary Poppins, a governess who helps people using magic.

<Momo>

A novel by Michael Ende. Through the story of an ordinary orphan girl named Momo and the town she lives in, it offers a fresh perspective on the 'modern individual chased by time.' It's a work that resonates more fittingly in our current moment, encouraging us to reconsider our happiness.

<Children of the Water>

A fantasy novel by Charles Kingsley, an Anglican priest and writer from the UK. This tale follows the adventures of a chimney sweep boy who becomes a 'water baby' after befriending a rich girl and getting evicted. Kingsley's critical awareness of society, stemming from his socialist inclinations, is well embedded in this work.

<The Lord of the Rings>

A fantasy novel by J.R.R. Tolkien. It's not only the origin but also an epitome of all fantasy works, including games. It's strongly recommended to read. Some creators even suggest reading "The Lord of the Rings" instead of a hundred other fantasy novels. What stands out the most in Tolkien's work is his portrayal and execution of the high fantasy world as if it truly exists,

distinct from our own. His writing makes the realm of Middle-earth vividly appear, offering a sense of genuinely traveling through that realm. If time permits, it's recommended to explore "The Hobbit" and the mythological and historical narrative "The Silmarillion," but watching the movie adaptation of "The Lord of the Rings" may give a better insight into Tolkien's imaginative realization. Especially, the extended edition DVD (Blu-ray) with its production documentaries provides a more comprehensive experience than numerous lectures on fantasy movies, games, or illustrations.

<Vampire Hunter D>

A novel by Hideyuki Kikuchi. Set in a future where humans are dominated by vampires referred to as nobles, the story follows a hunter who possesses supernatural powers and battles against these noble vampires.

<Dracula>

A novel by British author John Polidori. Regarded as one of the early vampire stories, it's recognized as the first successful vampire genre work.

<Beowulf>

An epic poem depicting the adventures of the hero Beowulf. It's one of the oldest surviving pieces of English literature and one of the longest among Old English texts.

<The Curious Case of Benjamin Button>

A short story included in F. Scott Fitzgerald's collection "Tales of the Jazz Age." Through the protagonist who is born old and ages backward, it presents the journey of life.

<Feng Shen Yan Yi>

A historical fantasy work attributed to He Zhonglin, a renowned figure in Chinese Ming Dynasty literature. Combining elements of history regarding the transition of the Eunjū Dynasty with mythical aspects, the story revolves around battles between gods and demons shaping history. While its literary evaluation might not be high, its depiction of mystical techniques significantly influenced Eastern fantasy. It serves as a reference for creating Oriental fantasy alongside "Journey to the West." Although its literary completion might lack, the confrontation between numerous demons and gods unfolds like an engaging comic book. The diverse mystical techniques and tools referred to as "law skills" are also charming elements of this work.

<"The Boogiepop" series>

A novel series by Kouhei Kadono. Set in a world where the urban legend of Boogiepop, who confronts threats to the world, exists. The series is known for establishing a style of light novel mixing unreal settings within reality.

<Journey to the West>

A novel by Wu Cheng'en, a renowned figure in Chinese Ming Dynasty literature. Based on the "Great Tang Records on the Western Regions" written by a scene investigator during the Tang Dynasty, it blends tales of demons and incorporates characters like Sun Wukong, who gained popularity to the extent of being worshipped as a deity in Daoism. It's an essential work for anyone attempting to craft Eastern-style fantasy, not just because of its adept combination of Yin and Yang doctrines but also due to its depiction of Eastern demons and mystical techniques. This work has inspired countless adaptations, from movies, comics, and animations to games. It particularly enjoys popularity as a game theme in China.

<Scrapped Princess>

A novel by Ichiro Sakaki. The story revolves around a surviving princess who was prophesied to bring about the destruction of the world, depicting the changes in the world with her as the main character.

<Slayers>

Known mainly in South Korea through animation, this work by Hajime Kanzaka is regarded as an influence on the country's so-called 'Munchkin Fantasy.' However, even by today's standards, the original novel series exhibits unique world-building and a considerably dark storyline, offering profound entertainment. Particularly, the diverse stories unfolding from the system of black magic, which involves drawing power from the very demons they combat, feels almost like exploring a science fiction narrative using principles akin to those of science.

On the other hand, the comedic spin-off short stories, "Slayers Special" and "Smash," are also worth exploring. While not officially released in South Korea, some introductions are available through comics, animations, and personal translations. It adeptly twists various elements of fantasy, overflowing with ideas such as using magic to create an air conditioner or applying magical abilities akin to technological advancements. Rather than focusing on the comedic elements prevalent in the animated adaptation, it's recommended to explore the original novels.

<Twelve Kingdoms>

A novel by Fuyumi Ono, inspired by the mythology of a fictional world called Juuni Kokki. The setting where eternal kings and kirin rule each of the twelve kingdoms, and both humans and animals are born from trees according to the will of the heavens, stands out distinctly from Western fantasy, capturing attention with its unique ambiance. Despite adhering to the typical structure of portal fantasy in depicting the journey of a high school girl from our

world becoming the queen of the Twelve Kingdoms or her growth into a queen, its original world-building and direction add an enticing charm.

<The Heroic Legend of Arslan>

A novel by Yoshiki Tanaka. This story draws inspiration from medieval Persia and its neighboring countries, incorporating Persian mythology, portraying the growth of characters amid warfare.

<A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court>

A novel by Mark Twain. It narrates the tale of a 19th-century American who travels back to King Arthur's era and becomes a magician, subsequently altering the civilization of that period.

<Legend of King Arthur>

One of the representative knightly tales from the Middle Ages, offering insights into the traditions and settings of knightly tales. In Korea, it's well-known through Thomas Malory's "Le Morte d'Arthur," but faithful content can also be found in novels like Philippa Gregory's "The King Arthur Trilogy" or Jack Whyte's "Avalon Series."

<Conan the Barbarian>

A series of novels by Robert E. Howard featuring the muscular hero Conan. It has also been adapted into movies and online games. As a typical heroic fantasy work, it helps in understanding the style and characteristics of hero fantasy.

<"Earthsea" series>

Regarded as one of the 'Big Three Fantasies' along with "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Chronicles of Narnia." Written by Ursula K. Le Guin, known

also as a science fiction writer, these works go beyond depicting the grand battle between good and evil in fantasy. They make one feel that it's not just about that but also about personal contemplation. Through the story of a young man called Ged, known as Sparrowhawk, and the various interconnected narratives, it presents the lives of diverse people living in an intriguing world.

<'Ice and Fire' Series>

A novel series by George R. R. Martin, which is the original source material for the American TV series "Game of Thrones." Above all, it stands out as a work that 'shocks with unexpected betrayals.' The unpredictable deaths of characters that seem like protagonists and the survival of characters one might expect to die till the end evoke a romantic atmosphere and provide deep emotional impact. The unique depiction of a world modeled after Britain without prominently featuring fantastical elements yet faithfully capturing the essence of fantasy adds to its appeal. Given the considerable volume of the novel series, if reading seems daunting, exploring it through the television series or graphic novels is also acceptable.

<The Wizard of Oz>

A fantasy series by L. Frank Baum. It portrays various adventures in the world of Oz. Apart from the 14 main books, several authors have written spin-offs, but "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," depicting the first adventure of a girl named Dorothy, is the most famous.

<Wild Cards>

A series of short stories written by authors, including George R. R. Martin, and other science fiction writers living in New Mexico, based on a shared universe. It features various superheroes in a world where people develop

special abilities due to an extraterrestrial virus altering their DNA.

<Yin-Yang Master>

A novel by Yumemakura Baku, depicting the story of Abe no Seimei, an onmyoji during Japan's Heian period.

<Alice's Adventures in Wonderland>

A novel by Lewis Carroll, a British mathematician, and writer. It follows a girl's journey into a strange world through a rabbit hole, experiencing fantastic adventures. Its sequel is "Through the Looking-Glass."

<Aesop's Fables>

A collection of works written by the ancient Greek author Aesop, who lived around the 6th century BCE. It contains various moral stories using animals, objects, and natural phenomena as characters. While existing copies date much later, many believe numerous elements were added in later retellings.

<Ilium>

An SF novel by American author Dan Simmons. It reimagines Homer's "Iliad" in a future setting on Earth and Mars, featuring an impressive scene of the attack on Olympus Mons, the world of the gods on Mars. Its sequel is "Olympos."

<Jenny's Portrait>

A novel by American poet and writer Robert Nathan. It tells a fantastic romance where a poor painter creates the portrait of a mysterious woman, Jenny, who rapidly ages from a child to an adult in a short time. A film adaptation was released the same year.

<Charlie and the Chocolate Factory>

A fantasy work by Roald Dahl. It narrates the story of children who visit a mysterious chocolate factory, emphasizing the consequences when children get lost in 'immersion.'

<The Philosopher's Stone>

A novel by Gregory Keyes. It tells the story of Newton, who interprets alchemy, and his disciple Franklin, as they confront supernatural entities threatening humanity. It intriguingly weaves actual history into a situation where alchemy is considered science.

<Tara Duncan>

A fantasy series by Sophie Audouin-Mamikonian. It follows a girl from a powerful lineage of sorcerers who learns magic on a magical planet, engaging in adventures. Praised for its depth, it's comfortably readable like the Harry Potter series.

<"The Twilight" Saga>

A long fiction series by Stephenie Meyer. It intertwines a girl's love story with supernatural beings like vampires and werewolves, offering a high-quality fantasy romance.

<Panchatantra>

An ancient Indian collection of fables. Although the original isn't extant, it has been translated into various languages since the 6th century, starting with Persian. It's believed to have influenced the "Thousand and One Nights."

<Frankenstein>

A novel by British writer Mary Shelley. Introducing the prevalent theory of

vitalism, it depicts Dr. Frankenstein's attempt to create a perfect human, resulting in a confrontation with the monster. A classic work of science fiction, the monster introduced here often appears in SF and fantasy under the name "Frankenstein."

<Peter Pan>

A novel by J.M. Barrie. It portrays the adventures of boys who visit a mysterious world called Neverland, where Peter Pan, a boy living there, takes them on fantastic journeys. Starting with "Peter and Wendy," several works exist, receiving acclaim as an animation as well.

<God's Debris>

A satirical novel by Scott Adams. It narrates the story of hauling a giant deity's corpse to the polar regions to prevent it from decaying, prompting a reconsideration of religion.

<White Wolf of the Hartz Mountains>

A short story included in the Gothic novel "The Phantom Ship" by British author Frederick Marryat. It's regarded as the origin of modern werewolf tales.

<"Harry Potter" series>

A series depicting the adventures of Harry Potter. Highly popular, it's a meticulously crafted work presenting the story of a wizard boy in such a way that it feels like he could exist in our reality.

<The Hobbit>

A prequel to "The Lord of the Rings," this story presents the adventures of hobbits in a fairytale-like narrative. Unlike "The Lord of the Rings," it's more

suitable for children but still possesses a deeper, inner meaning.

<Mrs. Pepperpot>

A fairytale by Norwegian author Alf Prøysen. It recounts the adventures of a shrinking auntie, which was adapted into an animation called "Spoon Auntie" in Japan and introduced domestically.

<The Princess of Mars>

An SF adventure novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs, the first installment in the Mars series. It follows an American who teleports to Mars and defeats the villain to find love, employing a heroic adventure structure. This work influenced many others such as "Star Wars" and "Avatar."

Domestic Works

<"Gyunmong" by Kim Man-jung>

A classic Korean novel created by the scholar Kim Man-jung during his exile period, intending to alleviate his mother's idleness and worries. The narrative revolves around Sungjin, a character who, after experiencing a night of indulging in wealth and glory within a dream, awakens to realize that dreams and reality are indistinguishable. This work has been translated and introduced in China and Japan, marking the first Korean novel to be translated into English.

<"Kumohsinwha" by Kim Shi-seup>

Authored by Kim Shi-seup, a poet, author, and monk of the Joseon era, this is the first classical Chinese novel in Korea. The collection comprises five short stories reflecting Buddhist and Taoist ideologies, involving interactions

with spirits, debates with King Yeomma, encounters with dragon kings, and stories about love and ghosts.

<"The Bird That Drinks Tears" by Lee Yeongdo, Hwangmungaji, 2003>

This work by Lee Yeongdo, author of "Dragon Raja," deviates from the archetypal Western fantasy realm established by works like "The Lord of the Rings," creating an original world. It stands out not only for its easy and engaging narrative but also for its distinctive portrayal of original races such as goblins, lekons, and nagas, contributing to its unique and captivating essence.

<"The Settler" by Lee Wi, Dong-A, 2008>

A novel by the Korean author Lee Wi. It narrates the adventures of a space fleet that departed from Mars's colonial construction and ventured into a fantasy world through dimensional travel.

<"Dragon Raja" by Lee Yeongdo, Hwangmungaji, 2008>

A novel by Lee Yeongdo centered around adventures involving dragons and the protagonist, Hu Chi. It marked a commercial success in the realm of fantasy.

<"Legios" by Im Dal-young, Toesoldang, 1995>

A full-length novel by Im Dal-young, which is the first fantasy work in Korea, deviating from the exorcism style. Serialized in PC communication SF serials, it is remembered for introducing fantasy culture to people.

<"The Bearded Monk" by Lee Duhu, Cheongnyeon, 2004>

An engaging tale that intertwines Korean goblins and monks. Particularly, the "108 Goblins" segment offers fun with various spellbinding techniques and

confrontations with goblins having diverse traits such as diseases and adversities. The unique spellbinding techniques of the bearded monk, such as raising and blowing his hair, are captivating.

<"Mo Sal Gi" by Kwak Jae-sik, Onwoju, 2013>

A collection of works demonstrating how meticulous research by the author can bring vividness to unfamiliar worlds while ensuring an enjoyable read.

<"The Land of the Wind" by Kim Jin>

A historical fantasy centered around Daemushin, the third king of Goguryeo (King Muhyul). Seamlessly intertwining elements of creatures and magic into the actual history of Goguryeo, it vividly showcased the potential of historical fantasy in Korea. Kim Jin's distinct depth in plot, character composition, and an intriguing universe contributed to its popularity, even spawning game series by Nexon.

<"The Magician of the Wind" by Kim Geun-woo, Book Box, 2006>

Kim Geun-woo's full-length novel, the first authentic fantasy work commercially published in Korea.

<"The Children of Octcalnis" by Kim Min-young, Hwangmungaji, 1999>

Kim Min-young's novel where games and reality intertwine. As Korea's first game novel, it attracted attention by portraying situations in a virtual reality world that affect reality.

<"Imjinrok" by an unknown author>

A military novel set during the Imjin War in the Joseon Dynasty. With an unknown author, it contains unconventional historical content like a diplomatic envoy threatening to sink Japan with supernatural powers or a

deified Guan Yu defeating the enemy general, diverging from real historical events.

<"The Tale of Jeon Woo-chi" by an unknown author>

Based on the real figure Jeon Woo-chi during the Joseon era. Though it denounces the corrupt officials known as Tamhwanori influenced by the story of Hong Gildong, its focus on Taoist expressions and supernaturalism is distinct.

<"The Road Back Home" by Kim Ee-hwan, D&C Media, 2010>

A fantasy novel that revives ordinary yet special and heartfelt memories and experiences from childhood through the author's imaginative lens, resonating with many who once treasured their toys as special friends and may have felt the urge to escape from life's burdens at times.

<"The Terrorist" by Song Kyung-ah, Moonji, 1999>

This work, although not initially labeled as fantasy upon its release, showcases how imparting new meaning to commonly known words can twist reality into a unique fantasy novel.

<"The Exorcism Records" by Lee Woo-hyuk, Elixer, 2011>

A fantasy novel centered around occult themes. Set in modern Korea, it follows the endeavors of an exorcist who aids people tormented by evil spirits or curses. Mixing various mythologies, legends from around the world, and even martial arts elements, it creates a unified world. With its extensive content divided into sections covering the domestic and global aspects, there are accompanying guidebooks introducing this world.

<"The Story of Hong Gildong" by Heo Gyun>

A Korean novel authored by Heo Gyun. Set in the heavily class-discriminatory Joseon era, it narrates the story of the righteous Hong Gildong, who uses his martial arts and supernatural abilities to fight injustices.

<"The Kingdom of Flowers" by Seol Chong>

A work attributed to the scholar Seol Chong of the Silla Kingdom. Known as Korea's first folklore, it personifies flowers, advising closeness to righteous ones and distance from the deceitful.