Reading Authors/Authors Reading: Navigating Textual Worlds through Rainbow Rowell's *Carry On*

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In the realm of fantasy fiction, each word-in-print can be seen as representing a fragment of an author's imagined fantastical 'world.' The same words-in-print, as they occur in the work, contribute to forming a fantastical 'world' for the reader to imagine and navigate. This sense of navigation, often brought about by paratextual material, suggests the possibilities of inhabiting a world that is daunting, yet inviting; which seems exclusive (requiring 'instructions' towards various imaginings) but also inclusive (if one traces these 'instructions') through the processes of reading. The processes of reading engender the writing of possibilities for each reader to negotiate different paths to navigate the 'world' offered by the author. The two-way action of the words-in-print—of representing and forming—not only indicates transmission, but also a difference between the author's 'world' and the readers' worlds formed through imaginative navigations.

The multiplicity generated by the processes of reading and responding inhabits virtual spaces on internet based media, especially communities of fans or 'fandom' spaces, like LiveJournal, Tumblr, and Archive of Our Own. These fan communities with their specific codes, structures, and idioms, either created or manipulated by readers, mark a reversal—authors of Young Adult (YA) and fantasy fiction now navigate versions of their fictional 'world' as interpreted by readers. Echoes of authorial presence in fandom spaces have manifested themselves in various ways: Cassandra Clare is in the process of publishing a series of alternative occurrences to the events in the *The Mortal Instruments* series; J.K. Rowling assimilated the fan-work *The Cursed Child* by declaring its events to be 'canon'; John Green actively engages with his readers on Tumblr, often referring to their interpretations. While fan-work may not offer competition to these authors commercially, these interceptions show authors to be continuously asserting their presence in fan-populated virtual communities, even as readers develop and assert their responses in various media forms.

What is important is not to mark a specific division between spaces of authorial imperative and interpretive fan/reader-based spaces or a *moment* of transfer between the two, but to trace a strained navigation of shared interests: both readers and authors seem to be working with their texts, and the texts of themselves, long after the text-as-book is published. Rainbow Rowell's *Carry On* is instrumental towards studying this emerging author-reader relationship because of the precarious specificity of its position. In Rowell's *Fangirl*, the protagonist Cath writes fan-fiction for the fictional "Simon Snow" series, written by fictional author Gemma T. Leslie, loosely based on J. K. Rowling. *Carry On* is a narrative located by Rowell in the fictional "Simon Snow" universe. It is not a published version of Cath's fanfiction, but significantly different from it. In being a reworking of a fictional universe, *Carry On* locates itself in fandom spaces; simultaneously, it is legally and economically privileged in the marketplace. *Carry On* offers a prototype for the possibilities of readers' interventions in systems of authorial privilege and control, but is simultaneously an assertion of capitalized production in fandom spaces. It therefore offers a point of convergence for re-examining theories of textuality in fan scholarship and media studies.

This paper explores the issues outlined above—the shared navigation of media spaces, the emerging author-reader relationship in the YA-fantasy genre, and the possibilities of applying and extending theories of textuality in fan scholarship, specifically the theory of media paratexts as outlined by Jonathan Gray, Matt Hills' theorization of affect in fan-scholarship, and Barthes' "From Work to Text." In order to do this, it will examine the changing understanding of the processes of 'reading' in keeping with expanding media interfaces; the concepts of ownership and legality in terms of fan-work; the place of affect in interpreting YA-fantasy fiction; the problems posed by pedagogy and self-positioning in academic scholarship on YA-fantasy fiction; and how these apply particularly to *Carry On*. Further, it will explore the possibilities of using the methodology and structures of fandoms on Tumblr to interpret Rowell's *Carry On*. In doing so, the paper intends to trace the ways in which issues of ownership, access, and representation brought up by fan communities may further the possibilities of accommodation of 'fandoms' within a marketplace which tends to co-opt fan-work and frame readership largely in terms of consumerist narratives.

Readers negotiate their relationship with a work through adaptations, fan-art, fan-videos, networks of communication on websites which house fan-work, and shopping for products which refer to the

work and mark them as fans. As the processes of production and reciprocation of a work multiply and traverse both marketplace production and fan-responses, the understanding of what constitutes 'reading' expands. In terms of web-based fandom spaces, a 'work' could refer to both an electronic or physical copy of the published book and fan-works which attain a virtual 'physicality.' Platforms like Tumblr which house fan communities highlight the textuality of fan-'works'—including processes of production; the activities through which they are accessed, understood, and spread; the profiles of those who create or share them; and the varying content amongst which they are consumed by users. The interactive frame-'works' of Tumblr continuously encode these layers, and highlight the importance of studying the textuality of Tumblr itself, i.e., the processes through which devices like hashtags, embedded text posts, the 're-blog' and 'ask' functions, continuously produce the interface.

Participatory interfaces on the web lay the grounds for readers' (re)-definition of their identities. On Tumblr, the title of a user's blog, their bio, and their username may all indicate the position from which a user approaches a work, the estimable time-period of their presence, and the popular or marginal currents of the fan-community they have experienced. The way a user presents himself/herself on a user-interface hints at the ways in which he/she have mapped a fictional universe. Scrolling through their blog, viewing their archives, indicates their affinities to different approaches to a work. To use metaphors of cartography to study user-based navigation is to mark readers' 'discoveries' of, lingering(s) at, and returns to, various 'locations' at which they place themselves vis-à-vis a work of fiction.

One of the ways to theoretically accommodate users' acts of 'marking' their identities and positions online is by viewing these actions as paratextual productions. In his work on mediated consumption of films and television shows, Jonathan Gray borrows from Gerard Genette in order to speak of paratexts in terms of arrival, classifying them as texts which "prepare" and "condition" the reader for other texts (Gray 25). Published books may contain paratexts such as cover pages, a page of contexts, acknowledgements and author-pages to name a few. Similarly, paratexts like author-interviews, advertisements, and trailers may also be produced by the author or the publishing industry. In a list of paratexts, Genette also seems to have included factors like typesetting and paper as conditioning elements (Gray 25). In *Fangirl*, chapters are grouped under semester-wise divisions, with pages devoted to marking section changes. These classificatory pages paratextually re-inforce the tension between Cath's formal coursework

in her writing class and the time she spends writing her fan-fiction, especially since the latter is banned in the classroom by a professor who classifies all fan-fiction as plagiarised material. *Fangirl* is also interspersed with snippets from Cath's fan-fiction, which often parallels Cath's feelings in fantastical contexts, and complicates readers' initial responses. These examples show that while paratexts may inform or instruct readers, they also present possibilities of interrupting and even intercepting trains of thought. However, to locate the former with professionally produced paratexts and the latter with mediated fan-work would be far too simplistic. Both authors and fans negotiate their relationship with, and control over, texts through media paratexts.

To understand the nature and functions of media paratexts on Tumblr, it is important to note that the framework of Tumblr codes several basic movements on its interface as production. On Tumblr, posts 'liked' by a user may be viewed under the 'Likes' tab on their profile by other users. The 'Likes' tab becomes a continuously growing paratext which informs users about the affinities of their fellow users. Similarly, the codes of the 'text post' reproduce a post and its entire comment (called 'note') thread on users' 'dashboards' every time a new 'note' is added. The 're-blog' function and the classificatory potential of 'hashtags' indicate the possibilities of changing contexts and meanings through users' actions at the very inception of posts. What differentiates paratextual production on Tumblr from physical and other media paratexts is this potential for continuous re-organization. Another significant point of difference is the extent to which blogs on Tumblr allow movements between different fan communities and, by extension, different professionally published works. Jonathan Gray suggests that consumers, encountering paratexts on various media platforms, engage in acts of "speculative consumption"—consumers choose works based on their estimations of the pleasures being offered (Gray 24). The interface of Tumblr hosts avenues for such 'speculations,' as a user may 'follow' blogs that share content from multiple 'fandoms.' Different fan-communities often intersect with each other. Several books and TV shows now have 'incorrect quotes' blogs, where users make sense of characters and situations from a particular work through similar dialogues or images from another work. Users may also write 'multi-universe' fan-fiction or create videos juxtaposing scenes from several works. These interactions between 'fandoms' not only create paths for readers to move from one work to another, but also put authorial personas in conversation with one another. Readers' 'paratextual' movements become entry-points into commercially published works. Rowell's *Fangirl* is

structured around Cath's anxiety about finishing her fan-fiction before the professional author Gemma T. Leslie publishes the final instalment of her series. Cath perceives the author to be an intrusion in her thought-process, whereas some of Cath's readers regard Cath's work as changing the way they interpret Gemma's characters. The impending publication of the author's book becomes a 'paratext' which informs Cath's responses, while Cath's work becomes a 'paratext' which informs readers' position vis-à-vis the professional author and her work. The author-reader relationship thus becomes one organized around textual power.

In addition to noting the specificities of paratextual production on Tumblr in terms of speed and interconnectivity, it is also important to note the varied ways in which authors and readers channel possibilities offered by such paratextual productions. In particular, this paper focuses on authors' borrowing of popular tropes and narrative styles from fan-work. Different kinds of fan-work then become paratexts, conditioning authors in the ways in which they renew and modify several aspects of their work. Fan-works act as paratextual material which help authors arrive at, and depart from, their own work in different ways.

'Fandom' spaces like Tumblr allow authors to tap into jokes, idioms, stereotypical behaviour, and repeated tropes familiar to fans. The power dynamic between authors and readers is often tempered with the pleasure of recognition of similar affinities in the manner of a shared secret. *Carry On* offers a point of intervention in the alternating dynamics of the author-reader relationship through its parodic nature. The parodic can be interpreted as a medium where power and pleasure coalesce, as recurrent tropes—reproduced and recognized by both readers and authors—are critiqued through humour. The specific ways in which *Carry On* is a parody mark Rowell as having travelled through fans' navigations of, and returns and affinities to, various locations in fantasy narratives. Authors' growing familiarity with fandom spaces, however, also implies the possibility of manipulation of the codes of reader-based forums.

The conceptual vocabulary within fan-scholarship reflects both, collaborative relationships between authors and readers, and the hostility of authorial assertion. Jessica Seymour notes that fandom spaces allow consumers to become "prosumers" in the process of engaging with the text as "secondary producer[s]" (Seymour 3). The term 'prosumer' seems to locate fan-work as agentic, creative, and interpretive work, and validates fan participation in textual formation.

Henry Jenkins' use of the term "textual poachers" for fans captures the sense of hostility and power play—it shifts the impetus of meaning in 'prosumers' from the act of creative secondary production to fan production outside of corporate ownership (qtd. in Gray 145). A sense of territoriality manifests itself between what is considered to be the authors' writing of a fictional 'world' and readers' alternative navigation, expansion, and displacement of these authorial 'worlds' in the process of understanding them. The play of pleasure and power in the author-reader relationship necessitates the study of how both authors and readers transform their texts and personas while accounting for (or dismissing) each other's presence.

The problematics of creative production and navigation indicate that the 'reading,' consumption, and re-use of published material is not limited to readers/fans but extends through media frameworks to commercially published authors. A recurring mode of 're-use' practised by the authorial-industry copyright is the commercial co-opting of narratives developed by fans over time in various contexts. The following tweet brings up one such co-option:

> *jk rowling wakes up* what's today's tweet
> *spins large bingo cage* hagrid…is…pansexual
> and…he later joined isis
> (@bafeldman)

Feldman's tweet critiques Rowling's tendency to 'declare' the sexuality of the characters in her work post-facto. While fan-works explore the sexualities, explorations, and experiences of characters, fans have been known to consider Rowling's declarations of sexual orientation to be weak attempts at 'progressive' representation, as sexuality is dealt with in her works only in heterosexual parameters. Hanna Flint records fans' critiques of the "retroactive character changes."[1] Similarly, Michelle Smith points out that Rowling's declaration rather than narration of Dumbledore's queerness could be considered as "tokenistic."[2] A critique of 'token' representation can also be located in specific forms of fan-work. The 'gif,' a form which endlessly replays a moment encompassing only a few seconds, allows viewers to re-examine the particularities of desire, often encapsulated in slight movements and the continuing emotional response to these

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[1]See Flint, Hanna. "Fantastic Beasts Isn't Racist, but JK Rowling Should Stop Tweaking the Source Material." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 28 Sept. 2018.
[2]See Smith, Michelle. "It Doesn't Matter What J.K. Rowling Has to Say about Harry Potter Anymore." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 21 Dec. 2017.

movements. Fan-fiction writing-challenges on Tumblr often call for specific situations and themes, and generate different textual strands of understanding relationships between characters, suggesting that issues of self-exploration need to be examined as processes in specific contexts.

These forms of writing can be placed within the indications of an alternative "gift exchange" economy, where fan-work may be generated in the format of requests and fulfilment within a fan-community (Seymour 2). Fan responses to *Carry On* on Tumblr seem to imbibe this format. In a text-post on Tumblr, user dragon-simon writes,

> rainbow rowell has given me the too-good-too-dumb-chosen one-who-doesnt-even-know-what   hes-doing-but-he-tries-his-best queer wizard i was denied by jk rowling and im forever thankful. (dragon-simon.tumblr.com)

Another text-post, by starlight-sanders, reads, "do you ever just remember that snowbaz is canon and just,,,,life is so good" (starlight-sanders.tumblr.com). Traversing both marketplace production and fandom spaces, Rowell seems to participate in multiple economies of payment and recognition. starlight-sander's post celebrates Rowell's professional publication of the male-on-male relationship between Simon Snow and Baz ("snowbaz"). dragon-simon marks the difference between Rowell's 'canonical' representation and Rowling's attempts at the same. In *Carry On*, Rowell seems to employ formats which reflect the temporalities of both fan-works and the organizational networks on which they are shared. A popular hashtag in the *Carry On* fandom on Tumblr is 'Chapter 61,' in which Simon and Baz share their first kiss. The chapter is written in Simon's and Baz's quick alternating voices, documenting the kiss from moments before it happens to when the boys separate, through lines like: "I just want to kiss him, then go" (Baz), "I just want him to shut up and stop talking like this" (Simon), "Is this a good kiss? I don't know" (Baz), "*I'm kissing a boy*" (Simon), "Snow has done this before" (Baz) (Rowell 341-343). This style of writing records action and response simultaneously, in the manner of a fan-video. It is also similar to the form of fan-fiction writing-challenges, as it fleshes out a specific situation to draw out characters. The alternating perspectives are separated from each other with the characters' names in bold over the sections they are narrating, which isolates them in the format of 'gifs,' repeatable and opening up to analysis as small moments of self-exploration.

Rowell's 're-use' of recurring tropes and methodologies of writing from fan-works is accompanied by her acknowledgement of this usage. In the "Author's Note" placed at the end of *Carry On*, Rowell describes Simon Snow as: "A *fictional*-fictional character. Kind of an amalgam and descendant of a hundred other fictional Chosen Ones" (Rowell 521). Rowell's description seems to be locating possibilities of naming an almost confusing intertextuality. The repetition of the word "fictional" with varying emphasis, as well as the unsureness indicated by the phrase "kind of" and the combination of "amalgam and descendant," seems to underline the issue of placing the re-worked usage of fictional works and concepts available within frames of categorized writing. In the "Acknowledgements" section of *Fangirl*, Rowell writes: "Reading fic was a transformative experience for me…[s]o thank *you* for writing it" (Rowell 1441). While the italicized "you" could be read as an emphatic recognition of the sources from which Rowell draws material for her writings, it also indicates the difficulty of marking a precise space for these sources. It is important to note Rowell's self-conscious participation in a 'gift-economy' model, but it is also necessary to explore how such a model could be accommodated in commercial spaces.

Rowell's acknowledgement of the influence of fan cultures on her works needs to be read in the context of a larger discussion on legality and ethics in the fan-community and fan-scholarship. Currently, the 'Organization of Transformative Works' (OTW) provides frameworks to consider the question of 'legitimacy' of fan-works. The OTW curates a growing archive of fan-works, a 'wiki' which minutely records the histories of various fandoms, and publishes a recognized academic journal. It not only crowd-funds projects to defend fan-works legally, but also hosts users who post extensively on formulating ethics for the 're-use' of fan-works. The OTW responds to the problem of placing fan-work, seen in Rowell's acknowledgements in terms of an almost inarticulable confusion, by drawing attention to specific instances of intertextuality. The organization's various archives highlight a movement beyond the recognition of a blurring of boundaries, to minutely marking specific textual processes which inform this 'blurring' (transformativeworks.org).

The question of 're-use' and acknowledgment not only informs the relationship between texts, authors, and fans but also is a factor in the relationship between fan-work and fan-scholarship within literary and media studies. Matt Hills notes that there is a binary in play in scholarship on 'fandoms,' differentiating academics who are "scholar-fans"—who identify themselves as fans of the work they are

engaging with—and those who are "scholar anti-fans," who identify the formers' judgments as being affectively coded and hence a "threat to academic identity" (Hills 69, 71). Hills records a critique of the "scholar-fans" of the show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* by Levine and Schneider, who claim that 'scholar-fans' of the show "make the show out to be…something more" than 'entertainment' by "erecting their own fictions and fantasies" around it (qtd. in Hills 69–70). While this critique is dismissive of 'scholar-fans,' it is important because it highlights an overlapping connection between academic writing and fan-work, which in turn brings up the question of the academic possibilities of interpretive fan-work. Members of fan-communities, especially on the largely student-based Tumblr, are not dissociated from 'academic' concerns but are often humorously self-reflexive about their interpretive capabilities. A text-post by Tumblr user nephilimgirlbooks elucidates this:

> You guys reading Carry On fanfiction is so meta...
> I mean, you're literally reading a fanfiction for a book that was inspired by the fanfiction written by a character in another book, about a book that she loves that is essentially a fanfiction of Harry Potter. It's a fanfiction of a fanfiction of a fanfiction of Harry Potter.
> Yet here I am. (nephilimgirlbooks.tumblr.com)

nephilimgirlbooks's post intertwines critical analysis with emotional affinity—an exhaustive decoding ("fanfiction of a fanfiction of a fanfiction") of the meta-textuality of *Carry On* is followed by the humorous declaration, "Yet here I am," signifying an attraction that both struggles with and is enamoured by the textual layers of the work. The following post by pressed-roses-and-tea-stains does something similar:

> So I hate the Mage as much as the next Baz obsessed human, but I have a thought regarding him. In chapter 7, when the Mage comes in the tell Simon he wants him to leave Watford, Simon describes him "giving Baz's bed a wide berth – even the Mage is afraid of vampires." But we know by the end that the Mage has definitely had interactions with vampires, seeing as he sent them to Watford that time (I doubt there's an app you can use to order a fleet of vampires.) He probably isn't completely unafraid of them, but it would be a bit much for him to go around Baz's bed simply because of that. I think that the Mage feels a kind of guilt about what happened to Natasha and Baz and to interact with anything pertaining to Baz

gives him these emotions that he doesn't want. In this essay I will." (pressed-roses-and-tea-stains.tumblr.com)

The post begins by taking a strong position ("So I hate the Mage"), and then enters into an interpretation that notes situations, quotes, and minute movements, and includes an intuitive study of character. What ties these responses together is the format of the 'In this essay I will' meme, used to frame long interpretive posts which often give nuanced character studies, but self-reflexively mark the interpretations as that of a fan's. The intensity of the rant-like interpretation is broken by the phrase "In this essay I will" which subsumes the interpretation into the terms of 'obsessive' fan culture. This post critiques through humour what it perceives as academia's condescension towards popular emotional responses to published works.

What is striking about interpretive methods used by fans on fan-based forums is that these acts of interpretation are already coded as fan-work. They both add to and occur within multiple layers of textuality—the professionally published work and the networks which inform its production and circulation; fan-work with the codes of various genres and styles; interpretive commentaries; the networks in which these fan-works and interpretive commentaries are posted, to name only a few. These modes of interpretation, and the webs and layers they exist in and extend could be seen as an illustration of Barthes' postulation in "From Work to Text," that "… [t]he Text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation…but to an explosion" (Barthes 159). On forums like Tumblr, any un-weaving of professionally published works or fan-works becomes a weaving of the textual currents of Tumblr in more layers of fan-work. The intertwining of interpretive frameworks and personal responses works in the manner of an "explosion," throwing out currents of postulations and affinities—which are both sustained by the codes of the forum and broken by a reference to these codes—like the use of hashtags, which both coalesce posts by acting as endings and offer possibilities of infinite multiplication by acting as systems of classification.

In many ways, *Carry On* is a parody of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*—interestingly, Rowling's final instalment seems to open itself up to continuation and retellings. Harry discovers and accepts Dumbledore's final plan for him—self-sacrifice in order to destroy his enemy. Unknown to Harry, however, the "flaw in the plan" which will ensure his victory and survival is already in play, with occurrences that stretch over the course of the series to times even be-

fore his birth (Rowling 724). Harry's decision to sacrifice himself is undercut by the interwoven currents of the text. This is reflected in the phrase "I open at the close," an almost unsolvable riddle that haunts Harry throughout the book, but which reveals to him the spirits of his parents on the verge of what he considers will be his death (Rowling 698). At a point of uncertainty, the text regurgitates itself and displays possibilities of alternative narrative paths.

Keeping in mind the textuality of fandom spaces, "I open at the close" offers multiple possibilities of meaning-making. The phrase could occur as an 'inspirational' quote on various posts, possibly accompanied by fan-art, interpreted with reference to specific contexts, and further appearing as tattoos. It could be printed on several fan objects perpetuating the commercial gains of the franchise. It could function as an allegory for the meta-textuality of the work. Used with a hashtag, it could possibly pull up limitless variations of all these fan-responses. With posts appearing one after the other on Tumblr's search page, the phrase becomes inhabitable—a textual 'world' of its own that informs the fictional 'world' of the author, readers' navigations of this 'world,' and the affinities and conflicts between the two. The phrase offers readers a space from which to locate themselves and the author, and to minutely trace their relations.

The phrase exerts an influence on *Carry On*—possibly because Rowell's work seems to "open" at the "close" of Rowling's work; or because the phrase "Carry On" seems to possess some fragments of the meanings of the phrase "I open at the close"; or because readers might find their way to *Carry On* looking for an extension of 'magical' fictional spaces; or other multiplicities of reasons. Because of its location, *Carry On* perpetuates a confusion of 'worlds'—In *Fangirl*, Cath writes a fan-fiction of Gemma's professionally published work, and *Carry On* has the same characters and a similar fictional 'world' as Gemma's and Cath's fictions, but is a markedly different fiction from both. The readers of Rowell's work may then locate themselves in the contextual 'world' of *Fangirl*, in the fantastical 'world' of *Carry On* itself, or at the intersection of the two. A Google search for "Carry On Rainbow Rowell" lists the question "Is the Simon Snow series real?" under the tab titled "People Also Ask." The location of *Carry On* puts into question the way concepts of 'reality' are understood in reference to fan-cultures and draws attention to the way fans make textual sense of 'reality' by exploring selfhood, desire, sexuality, and interpersonal relationships through 'fictionality' and 'virtualness.'

The concept of 'magic' in *Carry On* contributes to its meta-textual nature, while also bringing up processes of meaning-making. In *Carry On*, popular phrases including idioms, song lyrics, nursery rhymes, and famous quotations, attain their literal meaning when spoken by wizards. For example, the phrase "Clean as a Whistle" works as a cleaning spell, "Get well soon" acts as a healing spell, and so on (Rowell 282, 156). An instructor at Simon's school tells him that for 'spells' to work, it is not enough to speak the words, but necessary to "summon[] their meaning" (Rowell 107). It is this process of collective or generalized meaning-making that Simon seems to fall short of—his spell-casting either has no effect, or overflows its bounds. However, the processes of meaning-making are not only literalized but also work in an interpretive framework. For instance, the spell "Tyger, tyger, burning bright" acts as a self-immolation spell, commenting on Blake's poem as a play of power, creation, and destruction (Rowell 232). Spells are also based on the caster's feelings like "On love's light wings," which is said to work only when one is "stupidly in love" (Rowell 483). The 'world' of magic is not separated from consumerism as even slogans from advertisements like "Have a break, have a Kit Kat!" work as spells (Rowell 444). The text points to multiple possibilities of deriving meanings as well as indicates the ways in which different strains might intertwine in it—Simon's inability to cast spells 'correctly' results from an intermixing of interpretive faculties and an unsureness which is evident in his first-person narrative style, wherein he often contradicts himself with the use of parentheses. What Rowell's concept of magic seems to indicate is that linguistic possibilities of interpretation depend on socio-cultural, economic, and personal contexts.

The spell that seems to sustain the plot is one which speaks of the coming of a redeemer/saviour figure—"And one will come to end us,/And one will bring his fall,/Let the greatest power of powers reign,/May it save us all" (Rowell 34). On one level, this rhyme seems to be a 'formula' for the writing of fantasy fiction—the first two lines indicate the binary of 'evil' and 'good,' while the last two lines speak of heroism, victory, and redemption. The rhyme opens up portals of intertextuality, weaving together the structural similarity of multiple fantasy narratives. Within *Carry On*, the rhyme also demonstrates the 'lure' of power—the Mage, unable to satisfactorily arrive at a literal manifestation of the rhyme (in terms of how spells work in Rowell's 'world'), decides to birth the "greatest power of powers" on his own terms. An allegory of authorship is evident in the manner in which the Mage births but then abandons his son, Simon. In an interview published in 'The Toast' and publicized on her website, Rowell describes

her relationship with fantasy fiction, saying that she "always inhaled Chosen One stories."[3] Having written excerpts containing Simon and Baz from Gemma T. Leslie's and Cath's points of view in *Carry On*, Rowell declares her wish to "play around" in the "world" of those characters (the-toast.net). These opinions can be interpreted as Rowell's play on the rhyme, an intertwining of the pleasures and desires of reading and writing, consumption and production. Her statements in the interview also place her as a fan, and further offer ways in which readers can interpret the rhyme through their writings.

This paper explores the conflicts and affinities in the emerging author-reader relationship in the YA-fantasy genre, examining how fan-cultures on reader-based forums interact with professionally published authors. As both authors and readers continuously engage in developing and virtually positioning their identities, the author-reader relationship becomes one involving the constant navigation of textual power and pleasure.

The self-reflexivity in fan-cultures about fans' position as interpreters in relation to academic production furthers the layers of textuality that can be studied through an intertwining of affective and interpretive frameworks. Rowell's *Carry On* marks a movement from capitalized authorial control to encouraging readers' precedence in interpretation, meaning-making, and the writing of responses, providing a framework for authors to acknowledge the influence of fan paratexts on their works and a framework for readers to merge creative and critical responses in the forms of the content they create.

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[3]See Chung, Nicole. ""I've always inhaled Chosen one stories": Rainbow Rowell on Fantasy, Love, and *Carry On*." 6 October 2015.

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