

Science Fiction and Fantasy



Seminar paper from the year 2013 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0, University of Trier, language: English, abstract: What makes a text a science fiction text? What makes it a fantasy text? In this study, I would like to discuss why it is impossible to clearly draw a line between these two genres. In order to do so, I am going to focus on the justification of the unreal, respectively, the supernatural elements of a story. I shall be discussing why a text can be considered a science fiction text or a fantasy text - and why, in some cases, there is no clear answer to the question of which genre a text belongs to. While one might answer the two questions put at the beginning of this study rather quickly by stating a rule of thumb - scientific elements make a text a science fiction text, magical ones make it a fantasy text - it is obvious that this would lead to a very broad definition. It is thus necessary to go into detail, which I am going to do. In order to investigate what, apart from the technical and the magical elements, are the characteristics of the respective genres mentioned at the beginning, I am going to give the definitions of these terms which can be found in standard reference texts. In order to go into detail, I shall add more information from academic literature about the fantastic genre, which both science fiction and fantasy are part of. I would then like to go a step further by testing the definitions with the help of three texts - H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* as an example for the science fiction genre and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as an example for a fantasy text. In addition, I shall be discussing Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In this text, there are elements of both science fiction and of fantasy. After this, I would like to conclude my study. Any selection of texts will necessarily be arbitrary, as it is impossible to include everything into a study like this.

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