

Transontological Crossover Universes: Where Sherlock Holmes Meets both Tarzan and You

This paper investigates a stunning ontological twist on an already fascinating trope: fictional crossover universes that further cross into our non-fictional world.

In his introduction to the second volume of Win Scott Eckert's *Crossovers*, Jess Nevins defines the crossover as "a story in which characters or concepts from two or more discrete texts or series of texts meet."

What happens when these characters or concepts meet characters or concepts in our non-fictional world?

Transontological crossovers manifest themselves in myriad ways. Geographically, for instance, they do so via plaques: there is one in Riverside, Iowa, that indicates the future birthplace of Captain James T. Kirk, and another at Reichenbach Falls, Switzerland, which commemorates the vanquishing of Professor Moriarty by Sherlock Holmes.

In the introduction to the first volume of Eckert's *Crossovers*, Kim Newman notes, "Through some skewed logic rising from [certain] connections, I can now write myself into the crossover universe. . . . Name-checks in other people's novels... further cement my phantasmal other self," and concludes, "This may be an area of worthwhile future research, since – as Farmer's *Riverworld* already proved – it means we all get to be inhabitants of the Land of Fiction eventually."

I suggest looking at this phenomenon from the opposite perspective: fictional characters get to be inhabitants of the Land of Non-Fiction. My paper is a narratological analysis of fictional worlds that cross over into each other, and also, transontologically, into our non-fictional one.