RHETORICALLY FANTASTIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FANTASY LITERATURE AND ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP AS SEEN THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF *THE NEVERENDING STORY*

By

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A thesis submitted to

The University of Findlay

In partial fulfillment

Of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Writing

2016
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A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Findlay in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Rhetoric and Writing

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Forward and Dedication

A Note on Tone

Before you venture into this text on fantasy and rhetoric please note that though this is an academic thesis, the tone will not be as formal as expected. There are rules about styles and formats in scholastic work that are deliberately disregarded in this work. As I desire this text to be accessible to anyone who loves fantasy literature, the tone will not be as formal as is customary.

Dedication

I’d like to dedicate this thesis to Michael Ende without whom I would have never set pen to paper at the age of ten and written the worst fairy tale in the whole of Fantastica. I hope he’d enjoy my interpretation of his work and be proud of the novel I wrote in reply to his plea for dreamers to do what they wish. Also to Falkor who didn’t make it into this piece but whose luck really got me through.
Introduction

Though all the crannies of the world we filled with Elves and Goblins, though we dared to build Gods and their houses out of dark and light, and sowed the seed of dragons, 'twas our right (used or misused). The right has not decayed. We make still by the law in which we're made.
~J.R.R. Tolkien Mythopoeia

Once upon a time, good speaking and writing were taught alongside poetics and creative thinking. A well-rounded education in all things historical, romantic, political, and moral was not separated into specialties; each influenced the other and was necessary to a greater understanding. There was a science to tragedy and comedy; Aristotle told us, "Poetry is a core part of human nature, and the impulse to write poetry comes from an innate curiosity, a tendency to imitate the things around us. Like this desire to emulate the things around us, the pleasure taken in poetry—in works of imitation—is a natural response in all men" (Aristotle). Research is a result of curiosity as well and is a deep-rooted aspect of rhetoric.

For years, humans have been taught stories through fables and fairy tales. Such fantasies still hold truths and messages, no matter how old one is. There is no one place for truth and meaning to be told and no expiration date for the need of imagination and creativity. As humankind, we have a right to dream and learn through creativity if that is our way. That is what fantasy tells us. Rhetoric tells us to create meaning and value—that is our moral obligation as the old masters of oratory and rhetoric will tell us. Rhetoric also has a right to investigate fantasy. How was this story written? What is the creator doing to make meaning? In addition, fantasy has a right to try on rhetoric. Is there a deeper meaning to that dragon than we thought? Is this
floating city saying something about politics today? Jonathan Swift asked such philosophical and political questions during the reign of Georg I. Edmund Spencer wrote his poem *The Faerie Queene* to discuss his ideas of moral virtue and politics in the safe place of poetry. Over the years, fantasy and creative writing have been the outlet for the most taboo or passionate of beliefs to be discussed.

Very few composers or academics believe there should be a tie between fantasy and scholarship or academic works. In our modern times with the push for digital, one would think that doors to a more creative angle are being opened. Perhaps some brave composers are opening those doors, but it is slow and just enough to peek through. Someone needs to bridge that gap and open those doors.

In the 1970s, fantasy movies and novels were popular and are slowly becoming so once again in our twenty-first century. This means the old compositions are in need of a fresh eye and that the new compositions should be well informed of writings from the past. Michael Ende wrote one of his most popular novels in this era, *The Neverending Story*, understood by many to be a children's book. Ende's book was only a fraction of the success in the USA as it was over in Germany (its native land) and Japan. To this day, the Germans perform it as an opera, play, a musical, and the book is always in print. In the USA however, the book dwindle away into obscurity after an author-disapproved film and unsuccessful sequels.

However, Ende’s book is that bridge between all varieties of writing and fantasy. *The Neverending Story* is not a children's book. In this thesis, I will argue that it is a manifesto, or a how-to, for writers. It addresses how to write, how to create meaning in our compositions, and how we as readers and writers are to behave. It also discusses what good writing is and the good (or bad if it is bad writing) effects on the world we live in and the future of other works. All of
these meanings are hidden deep in Ende's rhetoric: allegory and fables that can be revealed through a rhetorical analysis of three fantasy themes. Ende uses his story as a parable, stuffed with symbolism and meaning hiding behind characters and Fantastica itself. Through analysis of his rhetorical devices, I will decode his great work and show how it applies to the field of writing. Taking what I find from Ende's rhetoric and applying it to the academic areas though is only halfway across the bridge. I will then illustrate through the framework of Ernest G. Bormann and his fantasy narrative theory how Ende's use of rhetorical devices should also be applied to fantasy literature to keep it fresh and meaningful, marrying rhetoric and fantasy for a breath of fresh air into both. In short, both rhetoric and fantasy can be read through Ende’s work to establish a relationship between them and how they can play into each other, each making the other stronger.

With a passion in the footsteps of Wayne C. Booth and W.R. Irwin, this thesis will examine *The Neverending Story* through a rhetorical lens inspired by Booth and shaded with other great rhetoricians of the past who share similar philosophies as Booth and Quintilian. I will show through my research how Ende wrote a guide for writers of all genres on how to create works that inspire, persuade, have meaning, and how his book is a useful guide for scholars of rhetoric.
Chapter 1: The Literature Review

In this section of my thesis, I will create a review and summary of the literature I found in my research studies on the subject of the rhetorics of fantasy I later took and applied to my final thesis research idea of Michael Ende and his book *The Neverending Story*. There was not a lot to be found on Ende or his novel, and the bulk of what I could find was in German. In this literature review, one will find most of the literature that I read and studied on this topic, gathered to the best of my ability. Some authors I will review are literature specialists, some are authors in fantasy, and a few are rhetoricians. I chose these pieces and writers based on their immersion in the fantasy genre or their link to literature and rhetoric together. What follows is a summary of the work I found in English and how they help support my project and rhetoric or explore Ende’s work rhetorically notable ways.

Maria Nikolajeva is a literature professor at Stockholm University in Sweden. She is not a rhetorician. However, she delves into Ende's rhetoric with a literary analysis lens. She interprets and uses the literary stand of a reader response to analyze her views on Ende's novel. Her essay, "How Fantasy is Made: Patterns and Structures in ‘The Neverending Story' by Michael Ende", she uses one of the definitions of rhetoric to analyze the book: repetition and structure. Nikolajeva uses a structuralist approach, while admittedly an approach in literary studies, and has its place among rhetoricians. Her analysis is necessary because she takes the first steps in helping us see Ende's work as more than a children's novel.

The author starts with saying that she will be using a structural approach to the novel, which she says, is very useful in this case. She utilizes this approach to show how Ende follows a standard framework and then breaks out of it to create a more dynamic story. However, I noted that she used more than just this as she dips into a read-response approach shortly later. The
structure that chose to use to analyze *The Neverending Story* was Vladimir Propp’s model for Russian fairy tales. Nikolajeava never defines this model, but from research outside of this source, I have found that Propps studied a collection of Russian folktales and found similarities and tropes in them all and wrote them down as a model that has been published in many books and used by many researchers of folklore and fairy tales.

Nikolajeava quickly states, however, that there is difficulty in getting *The Neverending Story* to fit just right, which is to be expected when the book is hardly a fairy tale. She says, "First, fantasy does not follow the rigid pattern of the narrative built up by centuries of oral tradition, but instead is shaped by a particular author's arbitrary will" (Nikolajeava 35). The will of the author is important to note as it also means that an author of fantasy has a specific motivation or writing, which will usually be the message or meaning of a piece. "Secondly," she says, "fantasy is a synthetic genre that has assimilated traits and motifs from the adventure story…Third,…fantasy involves a 'many move' narrative structures" (Nikolajeava 35). This is about Propp's model where fairy tales have one-step, which consists of a series of actions. From here, she moves through scenes and parts (what she calls 'moves') of the novel, showing how each section or character kind is repeated throughout the story. It is worth noting here that repetition is sometimes thought of as a rhetorical tool. Therefore, we can see already how Ende's work may be considered in a rhetorical light even though Nikolajeava is a literary writer.

She touches briefly on the Closed World (Fantastica), the story-within-a-story framework, and a little on the symbolism within the book. The Closed World is a motif of fantasy that Nikolajeava states that Ende had to be aware of while he was writing. Most fantasy writers know this term and understand it means the world that is shut off from all other worlds, particularly our world. Nikolajeava's definition of Closed World also means that there is still some
indirect contact with the world through the reader (Nikolajeva 37). Nevertheless, the story-within-a-story framework takes over when Bastian is taken into Fantastica and we, the readers, are left to be outside the Closed World that is now the entire world of the novel (the Germany that Bastian lives in is closed to us).

While delving into the symbols, Nikolajeva enacts the reader-response theory as she takes a guess at what Michael Ende was implying with his beautiful symbols, as she calls it. She asks if Ende was trying to prophesize a great Golden Age for literature or does Fantastica mean that "someday Fantastica and the world of humans will be one" (Nikolajeva 39)? Nevertheless, she brings her argument back to folklore; she says that the contact between the two worlds is linked through AURYN, which is the magical talisman in the novel that Atreyu and lastly Bastian each wear, in turn, making them the hero of their respective moves according to Propps’ model.

Linking her thoughts to LeGuin, Nikolajeva also writes on the importance of names in Fantastica: "To save Fantastica from the Nothing, a new name must be given to the Childlike Empress," she says after noting Bastian Balthasar Bux's full name and the bookshop owners name is Carl Conrad Coriander. She gives no meaning behind these names, but only says that the names must have been chosen out of fun to add to the natural feel of the novel.

Near the end of her article, Nikolajeva notices a few more fantasy tropes and symbols Ende has used that other writers have as well. Part of Nikolajeva's argument, I believe, is that Ende uses tropes and familiar clichés to get his point across and make his novel something that parallels many other stories and books. One of these, Nikolajeva notes is C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. "The whole part two--Bastian's adventures in Fantastica--is a series of narratives, each of which draws on a well-known story: the myth of creation, the myth of death
and resurrection…” (Nikolajeva 40). Most notably, there are ties to biblical lore as with Lewis's Narnia. She parallels Grogman the lion in Fantastica to Aslan in Narnia as both die and are resurrected. She also points out the mule that carries Bastian, which I admit, is a parallel I did not think of until she mentioned it. This is an allusion to the donkey that spoke when an angel blocked its path from the Christian story of Balaam. "Biblical allusions appear with the presentation of Bastian as Savior, and the wise mule carry him is, of course, a direct quotation" (Nikolajeva 40). She does not say to what it is a direct quotation, but my guess was either the talking mule or the donkey that carried Christ (the Savior). Moreover, of course, Nikolajeva asks us to consider if Xaiyde, the evil sorceress, is borrowed from Lewis's evil witch Jadis. This is the structuralist theory at work again that she is using: Believing that other stories influences all stories.

However, in closing her article, Nikolajeva asks if Ende was a great original genius or if everything he wrote has roots in earlier works of literature. She says that readers would already be acquainted with such previous texts and therefore, makes Ende concise and skillful in his use of clichés. She ends with saying that "this is how an author of fantasy may work with familiar patterns and mold them according to his purpose," which points to W.R. Irwin's argument that good fiction is an author who is able to pursued his readers. On the other hand, as is the case with Nikolajeva, it is an author able to make them read something that may well be a parody of old clichés.

Following Nikolajeva is Pouchali Bhadury and her mind-bending piece “Metafiction, Narrative Metalepsis, and New Media Forms in The Neverending Story” and the Inkworld Trilogy”. For this thesis, I will not be summarizing the great places where Cornelia Funke's, also German-to-English books are discussed. It is enough to mention that Funke's and Ende's novels
have much in common. Bhadury explains Patricia Waugh's definition of metafiction and how Ende's novel falls into the construct of "self-conscious narratives that display an extraordinary consciousness of books as both material artifacts and imagination objects that occupy a dual position in the world" (301). This applies to *The Neverending Story*: the book is self-aware and mentions itself many times throughout the story. I have discussed the theme of duality in Ende's novel lightly, but it is not an important one. What is important to take away from the quote is that *The Neverending Story* is aware it is a book in a reader's hands. This is part of Ende's meaning, as he wants the readers to know that the characters inside the book know that they are being read. This point of contact makes readers concerned for their wellbeing. The characters look up to the readers, asking to be taken care of.

Bhadury also touches on my theory. She says that Ende practices a morally ambiguous didacticism in his story. She says explicitly that he also refuses to provide a good/bad readership. Didacticism implies a kind of philosophy that emphasizes instruction and teaching. She is not wrong, as this is what I am attempting to point out in this thesis: *The Neverending Story* is a how-to book for writers, which is self-aware in the metafiction sense. However, this idea that Ende gives no direct answer is reminiscent of other rhetoricians. Many modern orators say there is no one answer for a question or one way to interpret a word, phrase, or meaning. Bhadury is saying she has found this to be true of Ende.

Bhadury also discusses a subject often glossed over for Ende's novel: what is the point of it? What does it mean? She claims and outlines how Ende's novel is, in fact, a didactic novel; meaning the book emphasizes a kind of literary instruction intended for teaching or education. By this account, Bhadury explains the types of readers *in* books. She takes the article into a moral angle then, outlining "good" and "bad" readers and how they are shaped within the novel
to become good or evil people. Bastian makes a transition, she says, from being a good reader to a bad reader. At first, he is a good reader in that he uses his earthling powers to help Fantastica, but once he crosses over into the fantasy world, he becomes egotistic and lets his authority over the text get away from him, thus becoming a bad reader (Bhadury 306). Bastian later loses his identity as a reader, forgetting his world and his name, which we know is dangerous in fantasy. Names are important, especially in *The Neverending Story* as we see Bastian as a good reader, with control over the text, naming people, places, and items. The idea of names ties it into the argument from Nikolajeva about the importance of names.

Bhadury also touches on the heart of Ende’s novel: the meaning behind it I hope to uncover in more detail. She says, “Books about readers often delve…into the theory of narrative, simultaneously testing the limits of the creative process in the depiction of story making/telling…The central concern in Ende’s *The Neverending Story* is how to create a (fantastic) narrative through the power of imagination, propelled by the author's wishes. Thus laying down the fundamental authorial power to determine the identities of one's creations" (Bhadury 310). This is part of the message that Ende wishes us to take away from his novel, and Bhadury is one of the few who have written on *The Neverending Story* to spot that truth in his epic fantasy.

Continuing with my research for pieces that discuss *The Neverending Story*, I found two, which ventured into an analytical discussion of what the book means, or what it is the author is trying to say. A popular view in literature and TV and films today is the "what if it was all in their heads" question. While some try and fail to apply this to the Harry Potter series, for example, Hamida Bosmajian attempts in her article "Grief and Its Displacement Through Fantasy in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*" to do something similar. Bosmajian asks if
Bastian’s trip to Fantastica was all in his head and his way of coping with his grief and the loss of his mother. While I don’t believe this is at all what Ende was saying, Bosmajian makes some valid points that perhaps Bhadury would entertain since she too was on the side of the dark themes of the novel.

Bosmajian starts by calling *The Neverending Story* one of a special kind of fantasy: a death-wish fantasy: "In a death-wish fantasy, the ego imagines the escape from its boundaries into an ecstatic swoosh of cosmic energy or a gentle melting into the nothingness" (120). Bastian is a sad child who craves his father's attention but cannot get it. Naturally, Bastian's father is also grieving and cannot give his son the love he so desires. According to Bosmajian, Bastian runs away to worry his father, then comes back with a fantastic story to tell him to garner his love and attention. In addition, Bastian will cope with his mother's death: "fantasies are by no means unambiguous in their value for personal maturation," she states. Bosmajian's thesis then is that fantasies "prepare us for the future and enable us to come to terms with the past and present, they let us imagine our own death and the death of others…fantasies also crystalize and stereotype feelings, persons and experiences…” (120). As stated above, fantasy is the perfect grounds for exploring the deepest feelings, and personal opinions of the individual Bosmajian here is saying that readers can learn to deal with real-life issues through the experience of a safe, fantasy story. Lastly, she says that we can live vicariously through common (she says stereotyped) feelings or experiences. Where perhaps shouting your passions in scholarly writing is not seen as professional, one could use rhetorical devices in fantasy to express themselves.

Taking us through a fast detailing of Bastian's head-games, Bosmajian points out instances in the novel that back up her claims. Her most engaging aspect is when she begins to show all the female characters in Fantastica, good and evil, as mother images. She also points out
a bizarre relation between AURYN (given to him by a female) and its physical appearance as "two uroboric serpents forming an oval, a mandola iconographic of the vaginal opening" (121). This is a very farfetched reading of AURYN and is so far the only one I have seen in my studies. Nevertheless, aside from this, Bosmojian names other mothers for Bastian in his quest for healing. One is Morla, the Aged One, who symbolizes depression, apathy, and a mother who dies because she no longer cares. Then there is Ygramul the Many who is in fact not one body, but made up of several insects. Bosmijian says this image is to create an illusion for hiding death under many images of decay who draws life out of its victims. Last, when Bastian is nearly not himself anymore, he comes to Dame Eyola who is essentially Mother Nature and who nourishes Bastian and tells him that nothing is lost, everything changes. Bosmijian says the mother is the one who lights in Bastian the desire to give love and find that one wish different from all of his other wishes: to go home.

Ending her article, the author again repeated her claim: "...orphaned children invented and creates recursive definitions. Such definitions never define something regarding themselves, but always regarding simpler versions of themselves as they create ‘nesting, and variations of nesting' postponing the most difficult task for the easier task" (123). She ends by wishing that Ende had told readers why this was essential to the human dilemma. That is not what Ende's book is about, so naturally, he will not tell.

The next author looking at interpretation is Kath Filmer, a writer for the magazine Mythlore. In her, article “Religion and Romanticism in Michael Ende’s The Neverending Story" she attempts to tie in another famous literary view: all fantasy literature is religious. Most likely thanks to C.S. Lewis (whom she brings into the argument as well), Filmer deconstructs Ende's novel with Derrida and Jung at her side showing how it can be read as a religious text like so
many other fantasy novels before its time. However, Filmer also notes the lack of scholarship on Ende's book, a question I hope to answer and a gap I hope to fill.

Filmer starts by stating that *The Neverending Story* is a profoundly religious text, saying that the author has a priestly role in his novel. Being a fantasy within a fantasy makes the author a kind of god in his world, which is then mirrored by Bastian is being called the savior of Fantastica. Nevertheless, Filmer goes deeper into Ende's philosophy and meta ideas: "The role of Bastian in the metafictional world parallels the role of the reader in the act of reading any text" (Filmer 59). As Bastian reads *The Neverending Story* in our Neverending Story, we too are asked to join Bastian and become gods and create worlds. I will explore this idea in length in my analysis section.

Filmer then explores the idea of infinity within the novel. The author claims, “Infinity can be contemplated by the endless retelling of the tale which, without input from the human imagination, is destined to be endlessly repeated, a never-ending story… But as with every other imaginative element in the novel, neverendingness can be both good and evil” (Filmer 60). The human imagination is a duality, Filmer explains. It is everything, like a god, Bastian must create, or it is nothingness (the Nothing). On the dark side of *The Neverending Story* is the Nothing or a non-presence according to Derrida; an endless deferral, like the repetition when the Old Man of Wondering Mountain must retell the story repeatedly. Here, like for Derrida, a referential meaning is never achieved (Filmer 61).

Bringing her argument back to a specifically religion, Filmer quotes David Jasper on Coleridge's theory that all texts of the imagination are theological: "Jasper remarks in the context of his discussion on Coleridge that ‘The poet's task is a religious one. Poetic inspiration lays upon him the prophetic burden of mediating divine revelations to mankind' (19). This is precisely
the calling of the writer of fantasy, the role of the priest/prophet who articulates hope to an increasingly despairing humankind…” (Filmer 61). So how to fill this despair? Filmer takes up the standard where LeGuin left it and said it is all in the names.

Like many other scholars, Filmer recognizes the power of names in Fantastica and how the Empress is only saved by Bastian giving her a new name. Nevertheless, she adds one more element: the power of names is fine and dandy, but is a great power to those who know how to use them. What she means is that one cannot just name things: it must have to mean. Nevertheless, in his naming of things in Fantastica, Bastian loses his name. Here, Filmer brings in Jung and the theory of *anima* and *animus*. She says in Atreyu and Xayide, Bastian confronts Jungian images of himself, his light and dark side, respectively the animus and the anima of Jungian psychology, the male and female elements within himself (Filmer 62). This use of the idea of duality that I spotted many times in Ende's novel reinforces Filmer’s idea of religion in the texts pointing to perhaps a holy trinity. She uses this to transition into the image from Bosmajian’s piece of Dame Eyola, the good female or the nurturer.

Finally, drawing back the images of religion, Filmer suggests that Eyola helps Bastian become like a child again to be reborn: There are unyielding allusions here to the biblical message that unless you become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven (Filmer 62). Bastian reverts to a newborn in this scene where Eyola must feed him from her body, and he sleeps enveloped in her leaves. She ties this into C.S. Lewis's stable in his final Narnia book The Last Battle. "Imagery such as that of the Water of Life and the House of Change (which is, as Dame Eyola points out, bigger on the inside than out) is undoubtedly metaphysical, and very close to Lewis' own imagery in the Narnian Chronicles, especially the Stable in *The Last* Battle, which the Narnians enter as their old world comes to an end
outside…While Lewis's allusions are clear, Ende's are much more oblique" (Filmer 63). Meaning, Ende's uses more rhetoric; there are more layers to be discovered, and it will not be easy. One must dig; spend more time with Ende to find his meaning.

Relating back to Bosmajian's article, Filmer also states that Bastian must learn Love to leave the House of Change. Filmer draws another parallel to Lewis' Stable here. The Stable, she says, represents Christ's love and the way to the Narnian heaven, so it makes sense that the House in Fantastica is a kind of Love that can save Bastian. Filmer states wonderfully, "…avoiding Lewis' Christian didacticism as skillfully as he avoids Le Guin's insistent Taoist polemic, Ende nevertheless touches on human need, both psychological and spiritual. And for Bastian to learn to love, he must taste the Water of Life, and take some of it to his world" (Filmer 63). Filmer draws her last religious parallel here: Through love comes life.

Ending her article, Filmer states something rather poetic: “…to become God, or at least what Tolkein would call the Sub-creator, we must be born again” like Bastian in the House of Change (Filmer 63).

The first book that appeared when I did a general keyword search was *The Language of the Night* by Ursula K. Le Guin. Le Guin is a well-known science fiction author for works such as *Left Hand of Darkness, Planet of Exile*, and *The Farthest Shore*. Le Guin is an award-winning author and someone who did not dabble into young reader’s fantasy until later in her career with her wonderful *Earthsea* series. She also wrote a considerable amount of non-fiction, being an activist for the need of Science Fiction and Fantasy's involvement in reading lists and the necessity to a well-rounded literature-reading list, which makes her a great candidate for my project's research. This collection of essays *The Language of the Night* was published in 1979. Though based mostly for Science Fiction (Le Guin's forte) this collection of essays explores her
thoughts on the genres. The author also goes into some discussion on where Fantasy and Science Fiction belong in our society. She has many good and exciting points worth discussing that have influenced my thoughts while working on this project.

One of her first essays within the book, "Why are Americans Afraid of Dragons" applies to this thesis in that it asks a question I was wondering when hunting for information about Ende and his novel: Why are most of the works on Ende not in English or written by Americans? Le Guin writes that Americans have a deeply rooted moral disapproval of fantasy (Le Guin 39); something we will see later by famous rhetorician Susan Delagrange. This essay explores the American ideals behind reading novels. She claims that fantasy is only read when it is a best seller (read: successful), or if it gives great pleasure and delight. It is not meant to be taken seriously or looked to for advice or "real" reading.

In her essay "Myth and the Archetype in Science Fiction", Le Guin argues that myth is "an attempt to explain, in rational terms, facts not yet rationally understood." She counters that with "To pretend that [myth] can be replaced by the abstract or quantitative cognition is to assert that the human being is, potentially or ideally, a creature of pure reason, a disembodied Mind" (Le Guin 74). She means that humans must dream and that not everything we do can be explained logically or scientifically. In this essay, she attempts to reveal the archetypes of science fiction and fantasy through examples of universal archetypes and symbols. Le Guin explains how symbols function in science fiction and how to determine what they could mean.

Le Guin argues throughout her essays many shared passionate thoughts of writers everywhere: fantasy matters, it requires clever minds to interpret it, it is necessary to be human and have imagination, and most importantly to rhetorics, as she states in her novel "The Left
Hand of Darkness": "for as I was taught on my home world…The truth is a matter of the imagination" (Le Guin 131). Though she is not a rhetorician, Le Guin's thoughts and evaluation of "what is fantasy" are fundamental aspects of the genre "the fantastic".

W.R. Irwin was a professor of English in Iowa in 1976 when he wrote The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy. Though the book is no doubt somewhat dated, it was one of the first of its kinds. Irwin's book was written in the 70s putting it just before Ende's novel. Irwin's thesis is that the world of fantasy operates solely through the wit and intelligence of the author, or what I would call the voice. Some publishers would agree that the voice is the unique flavor of a novel and indeed the author. Irwin also suggests in the chapters that fantasy will never be more than a diversion from real life. This idea points back to Le Guin's argument that most audiences see fantasy as an escapist read rather than something to be taken seriously. The title comes from Irwin's argument in the early chapters that fantasy will only function, as it should if the author is intelligent enough to make it plausible and if the reader is willing to believe: hence, this is to be the impossible game.

Irwin starts his book by discerning the difference between Fantasy and the fantastic in the first chapter, "Fantasy versus the Fantastic". He states that while the fantastic is not limited to a genre and is something of a mind game, Fantasy is "a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is accepted as possible" (Irwin 4). Irwin often pulls from Jung, Todorov, and even Wayne C. Booth to validate his statements. This shows that he is not pulling from creative writers, which only furthers the argument that they are not taken seriously. The chapters used for this thesis were selected on for their relevant content. In the chapter entitled "The Nature of Fantasy", the author asks what kind of belief fantasy asks readers to engage in and, more importantly as a writer, what principles and devices do the author use to displace belief? Being in
contact with traditional rhetoric, Irwin starts the chapter asking what are the effects of this kind of rhetoric on style. Irwin answers these questions with a discussion on rhetorical devices in fantasy and the nature of illusions in writing, eventually declaring that the purpose of the fantasy is for the author to pursue the reader that they involved in a country that does not exist (60). Using rhetorical tools such as allegory and creative tools like a good story, the reader should easily be wooed into the story.

In chapter five, “What Fantasy is Not”, Irwin says that fantasy strictly relies on discriminating what is possible and what is impossible—not evidence. Irwin also draws the line between fairy tales and fantasy. He points that while they may have similar tropes (and while fantasy usually means to communicate some larger meaning or moral), they are entirely different.

The last chapter I chose to review for my thesis was chapter eleven: "The Value of Fantasy". The worth of fantasy is a topic that has been covered in numerous books articles by every kind of author. For Irwin, the value lies in how it functions as denying realism but not attacking those norms either; the value is in persuading the reader to spend time in a place and time that does not exist. He says that to read fantasy requires a kind of freedom that readers must try to have. Meaning, it is not something that comes naturally. Simply, fantasy is an intellectual play designed by the author to create a feeling or in Ende's case a meaning to be discovered through an understanding of the text.

One of the few authors I have on my list that is recognized by the field of rhetoric and writing is Wayne C. Booth, whom Irwin quoted from in one of his chapters. Booth was a literary critic from the Chicago school of literary criticism. In his most popular book, "The Rhetoric of Fiction" Booth argues that all narrative is a form of rhetoric. He leans heavily on the old
rhetorical law that speech and writing are used to persuade. This is the backbone of many of his arguments in his book. Booth covers a variety of topics in his book, but like the others, I will only focus on a few.

Like most rhetoricians, Booth spends a lot of time philosophizing about the relationship between the author and the reader and the details in a narration. He breaks these up into three parts in his first chapter: The work, the author, and the reader. The work (in this case being fiction) must be convincing in that it "finds a way to perform the traditional rhetorical tasks in an essentially dramatic way" (23). The author must choose which kind of narrator to be as Booth discusses in later sections: Reliable, intrusive, or some other breed of the narrator. Booth does not spend too much time on the reader as the focus of rhetoric is for a "good" writer to appear. As a critic, Booth is drawn to give out three criteria for "real" rhetorical drama. These qualified standards required in the work itself as described by Booth are to ensure that the novel grabs hold of reality, for the:

Some critics would require the novel do justice to reality, to be true to life, to be natural, or real, or intensely alive. Others would cleanse it of impurities, of the inartistic, of the all-too-human. On the one hand, the request is for ‘dramatic vividness,’ ‘conviction,’ ‘sincerity,’ ‘genuineness,’ ‘an air of reality,’ ‘a full realization of the subject,’ ‘intensity of illusion’; on the other, for ‘dispassionateness,’ ‘impersonality,’ ‘poetic purity,’ ‘pure form.’ On the one hand, ‘reality to be experienced,’ and, on the other, ‘form to be contemplated (37-38).

Booth is saying that sometimes authors sacrifice good fiction for all too-structured reality. He does not say it outright, but those "impurities" are what make good fantasy and are what must be included in scholarly writing. Booth goes on to discuss illusion, reality, and realism in novels
and all the criteria for those in a successful novel. When asking writer's to keep the reality alive and avoid the intrusive narrator, Booth says, “avoid omniscient commentary altogether" simply because if "we suspect for a moment that he is behind the scenes, controlling the lives of his characters, they will not seem to be free." An interesting quote considering Ende will ignore this rule in many ways. Booth also pairs structure to the author saying,

> The invention of a structure thus becomes a kind of rhetoric to support the illusion, rather than the other way around. ‘With motive and external action replaced by psychic being and functioning, what is to unify the fiction?’…Moreover, the author invents his works as serial devices for ‘differentiation and variation,’ for getting lights and shadows' (p.88). An extraordinary inversion of the traditional rhetorical problem! (55).

Booth does not define the traditional rhetorical problem, but it could be inferred that it may not have anything to do with narrative. He mentions structure as it applies to illusion, which fits in with Bormann's fantasy theory: themes are used to create a rhetorical vision, or as Booth would say illusion.

Still, Booth never touches on discussions such as the fantastic and does not talk much about poetics. He never mentions fantasy literature. He was chosen for this project because he is one of a very few who have tried to tie together narration and rhetoric. He lays out many rules for fiction, as he is a critic, and does discuss the author.
Chapter 2: The Reverie

In this chapter, I will explore what the theory of rhetoric is I have created over my years of study. What does rhetoric mean to me and how will I be applying it to this research project and analysis? I will also give a brief *raison d’être* for my theory’s place in rhetorical studies. The third part will be a small summary of *The Neverending Story* showing only the most important scenes and the kairotic moment of the book's message. I will iterate in brief the struggle I had in finding scholarship on this book and make a case for its need of a revolutionary comeback. I will end with a short explanation of my personal beliefs influenced by the novel, and my reaction to Ende's call to action, as I believe it is meaningful to the message Ende is sending out, this part will also double as a small methodology section, which in the case of this project, was mostly hands-on searching and finding. I hope that this little example of my workflow will illustrate the kinds of research that might go into an off-meta research topic in the field of rhetoric studies.

My Theory May Not be Your Theory: What is My Rhetorical Theory and What is Fantasy?

I wanted to mention my personal rhetorical theory last as it is an ever-changing, evolving idea, much like everyman's rhetoric. However, for this project, when I mention rhetoric, what I am implying is the meaning behind words or symbols of any kind. When I say “Ende’s rhetoric," I mean, “he says this to convey this idea." My methodology for using rhetoric is observing a piece, understanding the surface meaning (in Ende’s case, a fantasy novel), but then decoding the elements given to find a new, or other meaning of the piece. It is a cipher. On the other hand, an allegory. For example, *The Neverending Story* is not a children’s book. It is instead, *The Neverending Story: An Allegorical Manifesto on the Craft of Writing as It Applies to Creative and Scholarly Narrative*. Is it rhetoric? Plato says rhetoric is the art of enchanting the soul.
Fantasy does indeed open the mind to new worlds and magic—both often found as enchanting. Francis Bacon says rhetoric is to apply reason to the imagination. Ende’s novel is indeed imaginative. I am here to apply the reason and thus discover his manifesto. George Campbell says, “[Rhetoric] is that art or talent by which discourse is adapted to its end. The four ends of discourse are to enlighten the understanding, please the imagination, move the passion, and influence the will.” All four corners are touched on in Ende’s allegorical manifesto: Through his argument, we will understand what meaningful writing is; his tale is pleasing to the imagination; it inspiring, and should influence writers in the ways of bettering their arguments.

My personal philosophy, it turns out, was already heavily aligned with Wayne Booth before I had even read him. Booth argued in many of his works that writing and criticism should be an act of ethical judgment. In his book *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, he says:

> Overt ethical appraisal is one legitimate form of literary criticism…Anyone who attempts to invite ethical criticism back into the front parlor, to join more fashionable, less threatening varieties, must know from the beginning that no simple, definitive conclusions lie ahead. I shall not, in my final chapter, arrive at a comfortable double column headed ‘Ethically Good’ and ‘Ethically Bad.’ But if the powerful stories we tell each other really matter to us – and even the most skeptical theorists imply by their practice that stories do matter – then a criticism that takes their ‘mattering’ seriously cannot be ignored. (Booth 4).

Booth and I both believe that ethical criticism is viable in writing. However, he is warning us that it will not be easy for any writer to use values or a moral center as an argument. He also says that there is no one-way to say an idea is right or wrong. Therefore, Booth says, be ready to fight for what you write. As rhetoricians, writers perfect the art of being able to speak well and bring
people to see their point of view. In this quote, though, Booth warns us though that we cannot win them all. However, it is our moral duty to tell the stories that matter to us.

My theory is heavily based on the belief that there is such a thing as good writing and that there is a Truth to be understood. I have read many new rhetoricians, and my liking for them is limited. I dislike how they speak of rhetoric but do not seem to know, for themselves, what it means. They base their arguments mostly on the idea that “Rhetoric is everything”. I agree everything has a rhetoric to it. However, to me, rhetoric is simply the answer to the question, “What does it mean” and “How did they convey that meaning.” What Booth is saying in the quote above is that ethical sense is not a popular subject. As I.A. Richards says, there will be no satisfactory answers. Booth says as much when he warns that he will not make two columns full of definitions for good and bad. For me, however, good rhetoric (or good writing) are pieces (or arguments) that can have meaning extrapolated from them and that have imaginative ways of being conveyed. Or practical ways of being conveyed.

One of my favorite rhetoricians said one of the tropes of old rhetoric: the idea that rhetoric is a good man speaking well. Quintillion believed as holders of the power of rhetoric; we also had a responsibility to be good people. This, of course, infers that rhetoric is indeed a power as it can pursue a people and redefine logic with the power of convincing words. This also means that as writers, we have a responsibility to write well. Of course, the debate of what is "good writing" has gone and will go on for centuries more. For my personal theory of rhetoric, good writing is one that can be understood by every man, can be discussed in opposition and agreement, and does its best to convey one meaning. Of course, the joy of interpretation will never be lost even if an author has one meaning. However, a writer must know what they are saying to write well.
Francis Bacon said that the purpose of rhetoric was to apply reason to the imagination. Bacon is an old rhetorician who believed the rhetorical cannon should be followed, but passion and vision were a significant part of rhetoric as well. Ancient rhetoricians thought the purpose of rhetoric was to persuade. Part of persuading someone is to convince him or her there is a reason in the madness that is writing and speaking. Applying this to my personal theory of rhetoric, this means that something as ridiculous a concept as the Nothing in *The Neverending Story* has lots of meaning to be applied to real life. The meaning behind the Nothing is that humans no longer dream (or use their imagination) so the land where dreams come from is vanishing. Ende means to say that writers and stories are empty without meaning behind them. If we apply Bacon here, we see that the reason is to encourage writers to write meaningfully. However, the tool used was the imagination of Ende. Hence, there is a reason in the fantasy sickness of his novel.

Fantasy literature, like *The Neverending Story*, is a rhetorical tool that can be read by every man and understood in its dual way: it can be read as an adventure and as a rhetorical argument. When I use the term "everyman", I do not mean one must simplify the writing or write so easily a child could understand. What I mean is if one is a good writer, everyman should be able to discern your meaning. Everyman is a term I have used most of my writing life I borrowed from the old play *Everyman* in which the character, Everyman, is a simple analogy for all the people in the world. This term is relevant because I believe Old and New rhetoricians alike have ignored everyman and write to their peers, people they deem highly intelligent, and they also write to confuse those coming into rhetoric—which is a jolly game of course!

The other term I am using, well, (related to the rhetorical Truth) is dangerous ground, and Booth agrees with me. He calls other ideas of rhetoric "more fashionable, less threatening varieties." It is difficult to discuss Good because scholars and philosophers would have us
believe that everyman's Good is different. Speaking of what is good (morally) is hard work, Booth says. He paints the image, as a parlor full of rhetoricians discussing various topics are safe and acceptable in the field of rhetoric. Good, is a threatening stranger and anyone who wishes to discuss it should know "from the beginning that no simple, definitive conclusions lie ahead" as Booth says. However, we must try to create good fantasy stories to speak our minds in that safe environment. We must write meaningful essays to aid education and not lead people astray.

Lastly, what is fantasy? Sadly, fantasy is placed under the umbrella of science fiction as though it is some offshoot from that genre. If we go by dates, fantasy is older and therefore created first with myths, tales of gods and goddess and fairies and witches. Fantasy is a genre all on its own. Imagine it sitting next to science fiction on the bus. Fantasy is also a style where ideas and allegories can come to life in a non-threatening way. Jonathan Swift wrote about the flappers on Laputa as a funny way to get the attention of the Laputians back on track. We were supposed to believe it was because they were so much more intelligent than Gulliver (who is an excellent example of everyman) but really, the Laputians were just stupid and too high up to think. Fantasy begs to be explored. The story of Gulliver is a well-known satire about the England and the monarchy of its time. However, it is also a fantasy story.

Fantasy is a little known rhetorical tool. It is even a safe place to discuss morals and right and wrong. Tolkien took the opportunity to create the greatest battle of good versus evil ever known and in the meantime created one of the world’s best-known fantasy creatures, the orc, which features in many modern fantasy worlds now. Tolkien is now an I, however, but is still pointed to as a great fantasy master. Nevertheless, even his novels have a deeper meaning. This deeper meaning (of good versus evil, which is indeed a moral argument) is a rhetorical argument. As can be seen on the internet, the keyboard warriors argue for the point of view that
maybe Sauron being a hero and the elves and men of Middle Earth were the narrow-minded villains. They practice rhetoric to argue their points and bring up new perspectives. However, no matter the side one is on, fantasy is a great rhetorical tool to be used by writers everywhere in all genres. Not that an academic essay should include magic, adventure, and a lesson at the end, but Ende’s novel is about writing and how to create meaning in your writing.

This makes Michael Ende’s *The Neverending Story* the perfect manifesto on how to write good fiction, as we will see once his symbols and stories are deconstructed. His ideas can also be applied to rhetoric to give it new life and more everyman-esque relatability. In the next section, I will describe four features of Ende’s work that are useful for this project.

The Great Marriage of Rhetoric and Fantasy: Why it Matters to Rhetoric.

There are many kingdoms in the land of English Studies. The rich and romantic area of Literature and the mysterious cave kingdom of Poetry. An urban city of composition with its ports always open to trade and the mysterious glow of space-age narratives, beeping and humming in the night with their luminous hyperlinks and multimodal magic. Also amongst them is the land of Rhetoric, ruled by no particular king, as its peasants cannot decide on who the rightful ruler is. Some of us loyal subjects of the land of English Studies live in the romantic land of Literature but also want to have a loud, clear voice as the people of Rhetoric. I am one of those peasants who believe the kingdoms of Rhetoric and Literature should not be so far apart and can learn a great deal from one another. There is a gap between the two that needs to be bridged. Michael Ende attempts to bridge the disciplines of literature and rhetoric with his book *The Neverending Story*. Ende's book has been misread for years and eventually ignored in the English-speaking world. There is hardly any scholarship written on this masterpiece, and the most recent one was in the early 1990s. Though often categorized as a work of fiction, Ende's
book is an epic manifesto, driven by his unique rhetoric, calling his readers to write and to write with meaning. Once *The Neverending Story* has its rhetoric decoded, it will help bridge the gap between Rhetoric and Literature, and inform writer’s everywhere what it means to write well and with purpose.

The book in question is an epic fantasy, a genre which, according to great fantasy editor Philip Athans, is "huge in scope, most of them are long—more than 100,000 words—and they deal with the biggest possible issues within the novel's milieu…In epic fantasies, a band of heroes will gather to do nothing less than save the world, or reduce an entire universe from millennia of darkness, fight the final battle between good and evil…" etc. (Athens 3). He cites Tolkien as the creator of the genre and gives the examples of Robert Jordan's "Wheel of Time" series and Terry Goodkind's "Sword of Truth" novels. Michael Ende's Fantastica is not as richly realized as Rand-land or Middle-Earth, but this is because Ende chose not to form Fantastica in such detail; Fantastica is everybody's land. It lives in the imagination of everyone and therefore must be realized by each specific reader.

This epic adventure clearly fits into its field of literature and the fantasy genre. Some have even argued that its simplicity puts it into the genre of fairy tales. However, what is misread is the simplicity. Ende's novel is often sold in the children's section of bookstores, but Ende was never pleased with that much like Tolkien and his "The Hobbit". Ende wrote many children's stories, and perhaps it can fit into that section. However, that is not all this book is. This novel fits into the rhetoric field because it is a manifesto to fantasy writers, novelists, and even academic writers everywhere. The message Ende wishes to convey should be enjoyed and practiced by all writers—even rhetoricians. In addition, the famous rhetorician Wayne C. Booth
already took this first step in bridging the gap between literature and rhetoric in his book "The Rhetoric of Fiction" and I intend to take another step in his direction.

Booth wrote about what literature means and how it achieves this message: for Booth, that is rhetoric. This may seem like something of an "old rhetoric" view, meaning Booth lays his argument a lot into persuasion. As the first title of his book "The Rhetoric of Fiction" suggests, fiction must be realistic. But Booth knows this is not true, and hence the author must pursue the reader. Literature is more like rhetoric than one would think; in discussion James Preface, Booth shows us there’s a million ways to tell a story. He says, "…the house of fiction has ‘not one window, but a million,’ that there are, in fact, ‘five million' ways to tell a story, each of them justified if it provides a ‘center' for the work" (Booth 24). Those who study rhetoric do so because there is not one definition and not just one working theory or outline for rhetoric. Like great, classical works of literature that stand the test of time because they are read repeatedly in various formats, from different angles, and because the meaning is obvious yet illusive. There is no one interoperation of "The Great Gatsby" and there may well be another way to read Lewis's Narnia series outside of the Christian theology standpoint. Even among rhetoricians, however, such debates are argued: what is rhetoric? What does it mean? If one is to argue what the rhetoric of another man's work is, he must understand his rhetoric and know what it means.

Booth’s personal philosophy of rhetoric inspired me to map out my own finally. Throughout his works, Booth uses the words “ethical” and “criticism” many times. I was glad to find a rhetorician who shared my opinion on moral grounds. I am a strong believer in “good” writing and impress on writers the moral obligation they have to use rhetoric and writing for the good of education and information. In his book “The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction” Booth writes:
Overt ethical appraisal is one legitimate form of literary criticism...Anyone who attempts to invite ethical criticism back into the front parlor, to join more fashionable, less threatening varieties, must know from the beginning that no simple, definitive conclusions lie ahead. I shall not, in my final chapter, arrive at a comfortable double column headed ‘Ethically Good’ and ‘Ethically Bad.’ But if the powerful stories we tell each other matter to us – and even the most skeptical theorists imply by their practice that stories matter – then a criticism that takes their ‘mattering’ seriously cannot be ignored.

What Booth is saying here is amazing. Firstly, he is saying that ethical criticism is a genuine, recognized, and a useful form of criticism. This means he did not just come up with it to enrage those who would rather just write well, not caring what they are writing about. Secondly, he gives out a fair warning, one I have had experience with. If one tries to argue that morals and ethics have to do with writing, watch out because it is not a popular theory (or opinion). Not only do readers like less, what they may call, judgmental writing, but they may not like the conclusion or lack thereof. Lastly, Booth goes back to the stories. He says that even the most skeptical theorists say, perhaps without knowing, that stories matter. Ethical criticism says we must take stories seriously, and other "serious" theorists imply that that is true. Somewhere along rhetoric's long life, science was introduced to her (perhaps during the Enlightenment era) and science has been trying to quantify the need for writing and rhetoric as though it will sink into obscurity and become an art that is pursued fun—it will not be necessary or matter anymore. But this is false. Literature is still needed and taught because people have taken the time to read it, understand it, and apply it. Literature can help rhetoric stay alive, and rhetoric can help literature.

A Quick Summary of The Neverending Story
The Neverending Story is the story of Bastian Balthasar Bux, a chubby, bullied boy whose father is in deep grieving over the loss of Bastian's mother. Bastian loves to read, and it has been theorized that he does this as an escape from the dreary world he lives in. His father does not speak to him much except to inquire about school. The story begins with Bastian hiding from bullies in Mr. Coriander's bookshop. It is here that Bastian finds a book called The Neverending Story, steals it, and hides in his school's attic to read the book that he presumes never ends. At this point, Bastian and the reader are introduced to Fantastica, a land bursting with every magical and mythological creature. We learn from a centaur named Cairon that the ruler of Fantastica, The Childlike Empress, is ill and dying, and someone must find a cure for her. The Fantasians choose a warrior boy named Atreyu to leave his tribe in the grassy planes and search for the cure. Atreyu is now the protagonist whose adventures the readers, and Bastian, follow on his quest.

The novel is divided up almost perfectly in half and in each half; one of the boys is the hero who wears AURYN, the magical gem, the symbol of the Empress. The first half is Atreyu's quest, which is a catalyst to bring in an earthling from beyond the borders of Fantastica. This earthling is Bastian, who then crosses over into Fantastica and becomes the protagonist. Atreyu's adventures are terrifying and magical at the same time. He travels to see Moral, the Aged One, who tells him that the only one who knows about a cure for the Empress is the Southern Oracle, which is a set of sphinxes he must pass. On his way, Atreyu meets a monster that poisons him, nearly killing him; a set of gnomics who heal him and show him the way to the Three Magic Gates; the Voice of Silence that has no body, and lastly, he comes to Spook City where he meets the first antagonist the Gmork. This is a pivotal moment in Ende's book. Grommet, the werewolf, is something of a planes walker. He lives not only in Fantastica, but in Bastian's world too and—
most horrifyingly—he claims to live in the world of the reader. This is a kairotic moment where readers understand that the book is about them, addressed to them, and calling to them. Just as *The Neverending Story* within Ende’s book called to Bastian, so the reader must understand that they are the third protagonist. The Gmork says to Atreyu:

‘You ask me what you will be there. But what are you here? What are you creatures of Fantastica? Dreams, poetic inventions, characters in a never-ending story. Do you think you’re real? Well yes, here in your world you are. But when you’ve been through the Nothing, you won’t be real anymore. You’ll be unrecognizable. And you will be in another world, In that world, you Fantasticans won’t be anything like yourselves. You will being delusion and madness into the human world. Tell me…what do you supposed will become of all the Spook City folk who have jumped into the Nothing?

‘…They will become delusions in the minds of human beings, fears where there is nothing to fear, desires for ain, hurtful things, despairing thoughts where there is no reason to despair’ (Ende 131-132).

After this chilling encounter, Atreyu makes it away as Gmork is taken away by the Nothing and flees to the Ivory tower. Here the Childlike Empress takes over and goes to the Old Man of Wandering Mountain, who is, in fact, the writer of *The Neverending Story* within the book. To save Fantastica, before it is too late since no human child has come to aid them, the Old Man tells the story over again and again until finally, Bastian gives the Empress a new name—her cure. With that, Bastian crosses over into Fantastica and becomes their savior. It is now just the author and the reader who share Bastian's story. This is a form of meta literature that I will discuss later but is all part of Ende's hard to find any rhetoric.
Now that Bastian and the outside reader are in Fantastica, the journey of reader has turned to creator as now Bastian holds AURYN and can use it to do anything he wants. The Empress tells him that the more wishes he makes, the grander Fantastica will be. The first thing he wishes for is to be handsome and strong and adorns himself like a prince, complete with a magic sword that will leap only into his hands. The price for this magic being that the more wishes he makes, the more he forgets about his world. In this section of the book, the protagonist is now Bastian (Atreyu is still around though) and the antagonist has switched from Gmork and the Nothing to a sorceress named Xayide and a force consuming the insides of Fantasticans everywhere: the Emptiness. Everything in Fantastica is becoming empty and, essentially, meaningless.

The emptiness is mirrored in Xayide's empty giants who carry out her every will, in the mindless knights who are so chivalrous and brave to Bastian that they lose their purpose altogether. Bastian goes through very different stories than Atreyu did. He sees the City of Old Emperors where other earthlings just like him are now empty and mindless because they used up all their memories of the other world. Feeling lost here, he leaves with only one memory left and finds Dame Eyola, a symbol of mother nature who grows fruit from her body and nourishes the weeping Bastian back to health. Bastian is essentially born again in the care of Dame Eyola and goes underground to mine a picture of his last memory from the Picture Mine.

While in the Mine, Bastian finds a picture of his father and remembers that Dame Eyola said for everything to be all right, Bastian has to find the Water of Life and then he will be able to love—the only thing he has not been able to do since the start of the book. Dame Eyola also told him that he could not go back to his world unless he brings some for others as well. After a terrible run-in with creatures of his own making, Bastian is reunited with Falkor and Atreyu. At
last, all is done, and the AURYN transforms into a fountain of water and creates two gates with its serpent form: the white snake leading out into Bastian's real world and the black one leading back into Fantastica. After speaking with the Water, Bastian passes on his story making to Atreyu, scoops up some Water, and makes it through the white snake back into his world.

The Missing Link: If It Is Not English, Should It Matter?

In my research on this topic, I combed the internet and physical libraries I had access to find writers and scholars who had taken a rhetorical look at *The Neverending Story*. In fact, it was difficult to find any scholarly sources in English about the book or Ende himself. The film, of course, is far more popular and is another reason the book deserves a new look for rhetoricians. However, even the movie has only a cult following and is usually lumped into what the internet may call "creepy 80s fantasy" with the movie *Labyrinth* and *Legend*. This is also similar to how the book is treated as children’s literature when it should be read more seriously, but by no means cannot be read by children. Putting a book (or the film) in these categories, however, makes one-draw conclusions about the spirit of the message that are incorrect. Much like what Booth said about unpopular opinions, *The Neverending Story* tells a message that perhaps not all readers want to hear or cannot understand because they do not know how it applies to them. Some scholars have come close to seeing Ende’s manifesto within his epic fantasy.

A few of the articles I was able to find in English discussed meaning in *The Neverending Story*. The aforementioned Nikolajeva, Bradbury, and Bosmajian are all literary scholars. If it were not for the genius of Booth, these writers would not have been chosen for this project. A literature scholar looks at a piece of writing differently than a rhetorician does, but what they find is how rhetoricians should be looking at literature. Literature scholars tell us what the
symbols mean, what is happening in a scene, and that what is on the surface is not the intent of a work of creative writing. A rhetorician would be able to tell an audience how that came to be and how the meaning was created. In fact, there is no reason why a rhetorician cannot be a literature scholar and a literature scholar cannot be a rhetorician. They are two sides of the same coin. Since the Enlightenment, however, scholars have been trying to find a reason to keep all writing studies relevant and the easiest way to do that was to quantify them and make them more of a science than art. This where the readings of literature, especially Ende's novel, have gone wrong. No matter how one reads The Neverending Story—be it a rhetor or a literature scholar, most interpretations are off the mark.

What scholars and rhetoricians do not know about Ende's book is that it is a manifesto. It is a how-to for fantasy writers, but it is also very useful for looking at how to use rhetoric. I will unpack the text for rhetoricians and other theoretical writers. Scholars miss the mark; The Neverending Story is about how dreaming is essential to writing (all forms of writing) and how to write a message that everyone will read—weather he or she knows they are getting a message or not. Some might call what Ende is doing "preaching" as he is so passionate about his purpose that his novel is two parts long and very lengthy with seemingly unrelated events happening abundantly, especially in the second half. What the novel does is allow the audience to be anyone, even though it is directed at fantasy writers specifically. Scholars also miss that The Neverending Story is not meant to fall neatly into the categories already established like Bosmajian and the others try to do.

This brings me to the gap in the scholarship that is to be addressed by my research: the English-speaking world is not reading fantasy the way it should be read, and it is not reading Ende at all. The most recent mention of The Neverending Story I have found was in Farah
Mendelssohn’s book “Rhetorics of Fantasy”, where she mentions it in her chapter “Portal Fantasy” only once, using *The Neverending Story* as an example of what portal fantasy is (where a person from the "real world" is transported into the fantasy world). I did a search in Google Scholar just to see if I missed anything and not everything I saw was in English. If I even wanted to look at a bigger picture, so much scholarship is missing on fantasy literature in general. Yes, there are many books out on the subject, but there are no new big name authors philosophizing and rhetorically looking at fantasy literature. I believe the earliest book I read was published in 1979. It is a time that fantasy is observed again, critically, and for the first time rhetorically.

Not only is *The Neverending Story* due for a checkup, but the scholars who are writing about it are literature based. This promotes bias and blocks other lenses from looking into fantasy, as it seems to be only a “literature thing”. However, these scholars are limited to literary theories and viewpoints and are not capable, or allowed in their circle, to look at it for its true meaning and message.

**My Own Journey to the Ivory Tower and the Missing Manuscript**

In the fall semester of 2011, I read about the thesis process for the first time in my life there and could not believe I had had no prior idea what a graduate thesis was. I began to plan my master's thesis that year, even though I still had a few years left in my undergraduate degree. However, when fate took me to Ohio, I did not waver from my creative writing degree and finished at the University of Findlay where I wrote a capstone project. This project was what I thought I would take into a master's program. I wrote a roughly 102,000-word novel that was my response to Ende's work. I wrote a portal fantasy about a girl transitioning from high school to college and her struggle to find herself while saving the magical, fantasy land of Revary. This was the kind of reaction Ende was hoping for from his manifesto on writing: there would be a
writer who would read it, and reply, putting his rules into action. I had taken action as Ende had asked in his manifesto. After I was accepted into graduate school, I ended up in rhetoric and writing instead of an MFA. Looking back, I think that defending fantasy literature and exposing Ende for the rhetorical genius he is a much better use of my thesis and research skills since I have already done the big part of putting Ende's novel into action with my response.

I came into my master's program from a substantial creative writing background. I did not have advanced research skills and in fact have only picked up some of those skills recently in the last year that I have utilized. Deciding how to research and what to look for was a hunt-and-peck kind of procedure. Most of my ideas were originally very influenced by my creative writing ideas and the original idea I had for my master's thesis many years ago when I was still an undergraduate. I took those ideas and put them through a rhetorical lens to see what would come out. Matching this thesis with what I had written up previously, I began the long haul of trying to find scholarly works from rhetoricians that used a creative writing lens instead. I had to come up with my method, filing system, and key word searches to find what I was looking for.

I started with what I knew. I knew about the movie adaption of *The Neverending Story*, I knew Ende’s rage over it, I knew Ende had already passed away, and I knew that other books were similar to his. I had never read a scholarly piece on him or *The Neverending Story* ever. Therefore, I began my search in old familiar databases like Jstor and AcademicOneSearch. In these searches, I found Bhadury and Nikolajeva as well as a few books. I will admit right away that there is one book out there that contains a whole chapter on *The Neverending Story* that I was not able to get a hold of. As far as I know, this is the only well-known text in English that I have missed. With my research turning up fewer sources the more I searched, I turned to the cited texts inside the ones I already had.
I began to make Excel sheets to keep track of my sources even though they were few. I had started in a black, three-ring binder that I had traditionally used for short story and novel plotting but found that it was not conducive to my thesis research. In one cell of Excel, I had the title of the piece and then after that; I had details about the work. The author, what pages where my themes discussed, what pages they mentioned other authors I was reading, and then sources I wanted to look up as well. This of course then led to more cells of works. With this, I was able to search ideas and tags I had created in my worksheet to find what I was looking for quickly and where I had read it. This enabled me to draw parallels and find cross references simply. I am sure there may be software out there for this kind of thing, but I wanted to work with my limitations and knowledge.

In the next chapters, I will outline my personal rhetorical philosophy and address the influences on my stance. Then, I will go into greater of The Neverending Story and show how Ende speaks to authors and how rhetoricians should be reading his novel. I hope to end this thesis with a bridge pulling together fantasy literature and rhetoric and disclosing the manifesto Ende created.

**An introduction to the last chapters**

In the next chapters, I will demonstrate my research. I will analyze The Neverending Story for its rhetorical meaning. To do this, I will pull elements from the book to explore my research findings and actively show what I have been attempting to explain. However, the novel is an epic so I will focus on just a few points in the novel for this project. Though I only mention two or three examples of Ende's flawless rhetoric in his manifesto, in actuality, the entire novel is set up this way. Every character, place, plot point and the name have a meaning that is a piece of guidance for writers. First, I will discuss the character of Bastian and how he is a rhetorical
device as a reader and a writer; a creator and a destroyer. Throughout the novel, Bastian's role changes the deeper he reads into *The Neverending Story*. We are the other side of binary: Character and reader. We are also called upon to write worthy words, just as Bastion must make good choices for Fantastica. Otherwise, our knowledge is empty and nothing.

In the following chapter, I will apply those lessons taught by Ende to rhetoric and lastly to creative writing. How this manifesto can apply to rhetoric asks that rhetoric open its doors to agents of change. Giving rhetoric a more creative spin and allowing itself to be fantastic is where the new breath for rhetoric will come from. Bastian can be seen as a symbol of academic rhetoric: Just as he cannot leave the world, he has created unless he learns to give love, so rhetoric will not grow and be more applicable as a study unless it allows for creativity. In the opposite way, creative writing will never be taken as a serious form of literature unless it takes on the modes and ways of rhetoric with its deeper meanings, symbol-decoding, and knowledgeable research. No one reads *The Time Machine* and comes away not wondering why humankind has spliced itself into two very different races. Could that happen? Is it possible than man will live off the meat of itself? Are we already doing that? We read and scream, "What does this mean?" I propose that the scales be balanced and that rhetoricians look into creative rhetoric as a means of refreshing themselves and finding new ways to write their theories and rhetoric. I do not suggest that researches apply creative writing to their methods because I do not count statistical research as rhetoric. It is a means to a rhetorical argument.

Lastly, from my research, what does that mean for the future of rhetoric? My hope is that it will bridge the gap between creative writing and more work that is “academic”. I have tried to bring a new meaning to rhetoric through the use of a fantasy novel. My hope is that my research shows that rhetoric is an art form and not a science and must be treated as such. Research,
teacher-writing, journal articles—none of that is rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art of creating meaning, of hidden values that tempt the human soul to understand life and the search for a deeper message. For the future of rhetoric, this will help bring the old values to a new era. The rhetoric written about by Plato, Quintilian and Sappho need not change. It must be applied. Ende argues in his novel that the ideas we have, the dreams we dream, and stories we tell must have meaning: a deeper, philosophical meaning that touches the human soul and asks us to question our social realities. Rhetoric is the art of finding that meaning and then applying that to our writing or creating our meaning through symbols, stories, and theories.

What this idea means for rhetoric is for a radical breath to be breathed into it. It will not be a rhetoric that the old Olympians of modern rhetoric will recognize at first. Alternatively, perhaps it is the thing they have been dying for but have not given in to for the sake of fame and recognition in the field. Meaning must be found out through a study of the work. Make all the graphs and show all the statistics available, but creativity cannot be scientifically found out.
Chapter 3: Trinity Force: The Three Themes

A rhetorical analysis of a text or any composition piece can help us understand the meaning of the piece. There are many kinds of rhetorical analysis. Some look at word usage, the way in which a piece was composed, or a framework or theory created by a third party. One could use a study in psychology to study a novel's protagonist for example. Using a lens or framework for rhetorical analysis allows us to see a piece from a different angle and uncover meaning readers may not have seen before. I chose to use a framework dealing with themes as a means of creating meaning.

Ernest G. Bormann created his fantasy theme theory to show the convergence of shared worldviews. While my focus is not any shared societal worldview, Bormann's framework provides the perfect lens through which to analyze Ende's rhetoric as he creates his rhetorical vision using three distinct themes. Bormann says that communication inside a fantasy theme creates the reality of the world in which the characters are interacting. The communication is created via symbols shared by the characters and an individual's understanding of those symbols (Bormann 399). Because Bormann states that fantasy is the creative interpretation of events shared by a community, but for this study, I will use my previously established definition of fantasy within Bormann's framework.

A fantasy theme is the means through which the interpretation is communicated. A fantasy theme could be anything that interprets the events within the fantasy. The theme will also help show the reality for those involved and is the unit with which should be dealt with rhetorically in this case. Bormann also states that fantasies are characterized by their artistic quality, each theme in Ende's novel are exquisitely artistic to the point of being allegory or parable-like.
To interpret Ende's message, I will be using the three fantasy themes Bormann created: the theme of setting, action, and character. The setting is the place in which the action is taking place. Setting is vital to Ende's rhetoric as Fantastica (the place in which most of the action happens) symbolizes the life and health of all literature, dreams, and magic. Fantastica is fading and must be saved by Bastian because it is no longer being taken care of by earthlings. Humans are losing hope and no longer creating meaningful dreams. Actions themes are shown via Bastian and his actions as creator and reader. His first action is to read passively the fantasy without making himself a part of it. However, once he realizes that he is the hero, he crosses over to execute new actions as the creator of Fantastica. I will focus on character themes last because the ones I will focus on are Bastian's creations; the results of his actions. For character themes, I will focus on a select few from Fantastica and describe their qualities and how they interact with their fantasy world. It will become evident that the characters are doing more harm than good within Fantastica, as they are shallow, meaningless creations of Bastian's exigent actions once he is part of the fantasy setting.

After identifying the fantasy themes of setting, characters, and actions, then I will reveal the rhetorical vision created by these themes shared within the book. The functions of the rhetorical vision created by these themes will be identified through the strategies Ende utilizes: allegory, parable, and children’s literature. We will then see how his novel is not strictly children’s literature as it is masquerading as. It is a manifesto, or rulebook or a how-to, for writers of all genres. Once we find Ende’s vision, it will be clear how it applies to rhetoric and fantasy. Bormann’s theory is useful in decoding Ende’s rhetoric because it will allow us to see what he says about good, meaningful writing. Once that meaning is established, it will help to bridge that gap between creativity and academic work.
The Setting: Fantastica’s Illnesses the Nothing and the Emptiness

Before I can move too much further into this analysis, we need to establish the world in which we are working. Bormann's theory tells us we must determine the setting because that is where the action is taking place and ties the rhetorical vision together. Therefore, we must ask what Fantastica is if Ende is writing a manifesto for writers. The world of Fantastica is the symbol of all pieces created by composers. I say pieces because I believe the inclusion of digital, oral, audio, and kinesthetic along with the traditional forms of texts whether scholarly or creative. By composers, I mean those who create such pieces whether they are written texts, music, or any other form of communication. I will use these terms in this text interchangeably with the words author or writer. Because Ende is a rhetorical writer, his work can apply to any form of inventive communication. This is also, why Fantastica is home to so many creatures, spirits, beings, and events: it is everything created narratively by earthlings.

Fantastica is the world of creation (or writing). In the novel, it is presented as a magical world where Bastian can do whatever he wishes. As I have established, Bastian is the author, creator, or writer. He is also a symbol of us. Fantastica can only be real or alive and well if Bastian makes it so with good stories. As we have seen, not all pieces (characters or stories) are good or meaningful. Ende presents Fantastica as a world being eaten by the Nothing. Once we find out what Fantastica is through the scene with Gmork and Atreyu, we understand the Nothing. The Nothing, unlike the Emptiness¹, is the lack of writing, imagination, and invention.

The kairotic moment of Ende's manifesto, come in the middle where Atreyu meets Gmork, the servant of the Nothing, face to face at last. This chapter is intense, sparkling with fear and the sudden understanding of Ende's meaning. This is also the scene where Bormann's

¹ Ende never used the title of the Emptiness. It was a word created for the 1990 movie sequel "The Neverending Story Part II: The Next Chapter" by Warner Bros. Studio. I use the title for annalistic purposes and because the second illness is described as emptiness.
theme setting creates the rhetorical vision. We learn in this scene that Fantastica is a rhetorical allegory for the wellbeing of written creations. Breaking the fourth wall, Gmork explains to Atreyu, and thus Bastian and thus us readers, what *The Neverending Story* is and the Nothing.

Earlier in this chapter, "Spook City", Atreyu witnessed frightening Fantasticans (vampires, ghosts, witches) throwing themselves into the Nothing—a black nothingness. Deeper into the city Atreyu finds Gmork, a dying werewolf who is the servant of the Nothing and has been hunting down Atreyu throughout the whole book. Not knowing this, Atreyu engages in a conversation with Gmork, thinking he has failed his quest. He asks why the spooks leaped into the Nothing. Gmork replies. "Because they had given up hope. That makes you beings weak. The Nothing pulls at you, and none of you has the strength to resist it for long" (Ende 129). Atreyu notes that Gmork calls the Fantasticans "you beings" as we too note. This is because Gmork is not Fantastician. He is not human either. In the human world, Gmork appears as a man. In other worlds, like Fantastica, he appears as a wolf. Atreyu, desperate to find a human child to save Fantastica, asks Gmork if he, Atreyu, can cross over into the human world to find an earthling child to save Fantastica. "For you and your kind, it is easy…You must leap into the Nothing" (Ende 130). Nevertheless, once on the other side of the Nothing, Fantasticans are no longer themselves. They turn into lies. Since the people of Fantastica are dreams, stories, poetic inventions—in the real world they are lies. As Ende describes, "They will become delusions in the minds of human beings, fears where there is nothing to fear, desires for vain, hurtful things, despairing thoughts where there is no reason to despair" (Ende 132). Like invented stories, lies are made up fantasies or false teachings.

From the analysis, we can see what Ende is saying. First is Fantastica, our thematic setting. That is the land of invention, creation, writing, composition. Ende tells us it is alive and
well only because readers and writers like Bastian make up stories or create pieces. Good, meaningful pieces. The Nothing is the absence of that. It eats away Fantastica (the world of scholarship and writing) leaving nothing there. Without dreams and hope, Gmork says, people are easy to control. Without scholarship, people are ignorant. Without education, those pieces pass through the Nothing and become lies in all their forms. The same way we make stories and write scholarly pieces, we create lies. Alternatively, as Plato would have it, we create false rhetoric. Words are powerful means of persuasion and teaching whether they are lies or truths; "Because, you see, humans live by beliefs. In addition, beliefs can be manipulated. The power to manipulate ideas is the only thing that counts," Gmork says (Ende 133). Ende takes us back to Bastian, for our own time to reflect on what has passed, and we see Bastian confess to himself that he has destroyed Fantastica by lying and giving up on hope. Bastian realizes that his world is being destroyed by lies and manipulation as well. As writers and creators, this is also our cue. Ende begs us to create and keep knowledge, hopes, dreams, and wisdom alive through our writing; Bastian heals Fantastica by making up new stories and dreaming his way into that world.

However, we are not finished. So what if we write? How do we know if what we are spreading is lies or truth? On the other hand, more simply and less Platonian, how do we know if it is good or bad writing? Ende answered that also once Bastian crosses over into Fantastica to battle a new foe: the Emptiness. The setting theme is still the same: Fantastica. Now we get to experience it in a new light as Bastian interacts with it and converges the next theme of action. All the themes must come together, Bormann says, to create the rhetorical vision. As Bastian crosses over into the setting theme, we see Ende take us to the next stage of creating a body of work.
Like the Nothing, the Emptiness is all around but seems to be confined to Fantastica, our setting. It is never said where the Emptiness came from, but my belief is that Bastian brought it over or created it. This is also a rhetorical vision created from Bastian's actions, showing once again a convergence. As analyzed later, the Knights and other creations of Bastian's imagination were flat, unimaginative, or useless thus harming the setting. They were not inspiring or useful and turned out to be more trouble than they were worth like the Shlamoofs. The theory of mine holds true in Ende's story and would be a rhetorical explanation and another point of convergence of the rhetorical vision, captured by symbolic cues.

If Bastian is the writer now, everything that is happening is according to his invention. His stories are empty and meaningless now because he must learn his lesson. Now let us focus on Bastian and ourselves as writers as we act inside this setting. Ende asks us to explore what might happen, allegorically speaking, in the future if all writers stopped inventing and produced empty, useless pieces. In the chapter “The City Old Emperors”, we see the answer illustrated as Ende creates a horrifying rhetorical vision of a city of emptiness and other earthlings who have lost their way.

After defeating Atreyu in battle, Atreyu and Falkor fled and so Bastian gave chase, determined to finish the job. On his way, Bastian enters a city with buildings "jumbled every which way without rhyme or reason, as though they had been emptied at random out of a giant sack. There were neither streets nor squares nor was there any recognizable order" (Ende 338). The city is described as crazy, with front doors in the roofs of houses, stairways that cannot be accessed, and floors where walls should have been. These homes mirror the inhabitants of the city. As the name suggests, it is the city of other earthlings like Bastian who made themselves emperors and succumbed to the emptiness. Whenever Bastian made a wish with AURYN, he
gave up part of his memories, creating mindlessly with no intention of finishing all the stories he started or filling out the characters, he created.

The people in the city look normal but dress as if they had no idea what piece of clothing goes where and do not understand what clothes even are as they are also wearing other objects like lampshades on their heads and wearing carpets instead of clothes over their pants. They are also hoarders: "Many were pushing or pulling handcarts with all sorts of junk piled up on them, broken lamps, mattresses, dishes, rags, and knickknacks. Others were carrying enormous bales slung over their shoulders" (Ende 339). It gets worse as Bastian goes further into the city and learns the truth. He also realizes this is his future.

What Ende is telling us is that we are not alone in our search for meaning, and we are not the only ones who have written empty meaningless words. Many of the stories Bastian has created have no endings, no purpose, and no point. He made them up because he was expected to. He was also drunk on the power of creating. Ende is not saying that involving ourselves in our writing is going to dilute us from reality and that we will lose touch with our lives. He is saying that we become what we write. First were just the empty, stupid knights and the unfinished stories. This emptiness infected Bastian as well, making him a hallow shell. He even gives up his name in the end because he sees no reason to keep on creating since it is all empty and hurting Fantastica. What we write or create should not be meaningless or hallow. No good writing should be; that includes creative writing and stories.

Creative writers also draw on rhetoric to add depth and meaning to their work. More than one layer of meaning can be formed with good, strong words. Teaching a lesson through creative writing, or simply creatively, brings logic to the dreaming and vice versa. Where Ende asks writers to write deeply in their fantasies, I ask rhetoricians to write creatively in their scholarship.
Ende's novel is the bridge that gap. This is the first theme from Bormann that helps us understand Ende's rhetorical vision created through his rhetorical strategies. These strategies could be used in academic scholarship as well, providing a more creative angle. Ende is addressing all writers, not just fiction writers.

**Action Theme: Transformation From Reader to Creator**

Bastian is the main protagonist of *The Neverending Story*. It could be argued that for the first half Atreyu is, as he is the one whose adventures we are sharing. However, with Ende’s clever story-within-a-story narrative, or portal fantasy, we are privy to Bastian’s thoughts as he reads *The Neverending Story*. This makes him our point of view character and the one through which we understand the setting and characters. In fact, having Bastian as the hub for the action theme allows us to see Bormann's convergence theory at work even more. The convergence happens when Bastian seamlessly passes from his world into Fantastica. There are many instances of action in Ende's novel, but the point of convergence is here. In addition, since Ende is using Bastian as an example of a reader/writer, it is his actions we want to criticize. Using his strategy of the parable, Ende shows us how to be good writers through Bastian's actions.

Like us, Bastian is a reader of the literature. We read Bastian's story, and he reads Atreyu's. What Ende is saying here is that we all start as readers, avid readers if we are to be like Bastian, and we are to seek out the best literature offers. When Bastian finds *The Neverending Story*, he cannot believe he found the thing he has been looking for all his life: “Staring at the title of the book, he turned hot and cold, cold and hot. Here was just what he had dreamed of...A story that never ended! The book of books!” (Ende 7). Bastian’s desire to read infinitely is admirable. Fortunately, for him, his version of *The Neverending Story* does go on forever.

Moreover, I believe that *The Neverending Story* is the book of books. It illustrates how to read
and how to write rhetorically and creatively. Bastian's actions as the reader are the focus of this part. His actions affected the setting theme and will create the character themes. Ende tells us here that we must first be readers of good writing before we can cross over and become good creators.

During the first half of the book, Bastian is the reader as we are. He follows Atreyu’s adventures, and the novel goes back and forth between his thoughts on what he is reading and experiencing and the adventure in his version of *The Neverending Story*. To show us how much, we need to be invested in Bastian's book; Ende describes what it looks like and real life readers will be astonished to read that it is the same book we are reading: "Leafing through the pages, he saw the book was printed in two colors. There seemed to be no pictures, but there were large, beautiful capital letters at the beginning of the chapters (Ende 6). We hold this exact book in our hands as readers. This device was orchestrated by Ende to say, "You are Bastian. Watch closely. This is you." From then on out, we must realize that we are being spoken to. Not in a typical "we are the audience" kind of way, but one that says there is no wall between the reader and what happens in this book. This book was written to us and about us. We are meant to see Bastian's actions as our own. As a rhetorician, one should see Bastian as a rhetorical tool. Rhetorically, he is the creator of scholarship, and he is on a power trip, creating as much as he can to be powerful. His name is known throughout Fantastica, but his legacy is hurting the world. A rhetorician can see this message and should take it to heart, mixing it with some Booth-morals, and creating the only scholarship that is meaningful to them and helpful to the rest of the beings in the literary world.

Kath Filmer points this out in her essay saying, "The role of Bastian in the metafictional world parallels the role of the reader in the act of reading any text…the author is dead, and the
meaning resides only in the subjective engagement of the reader…” (Filmer 59). What this should tell readers of a rhetorical mindset is there will be more parts like this where Ende shows us a design in the book that is to have another meaning outside the walls of the cover. This also engages the reader. Readers see from some passages they have a role to play in the story; they are holding the same book Bastian is and reading, not only the same story but his story as well.

This message is confirmed when, in the final chapters of the first half of the book, the Childlike Empress (inside Bastian's copy) states she knows of *The Neverending Story*, that Atreyu’s quest was told just for Bastian to read so that he would love Fantastica and the characters in the book and be willing to save them with his actions. Ende utilizes the colored text now to emphasis that and writes in red when Bastian reacts to the Empress speaking of him. This is setting up the action for Bastian to cross over. His action thus far has been to read and to understand his role.

Once the Empress realizes that Bastian is not going to cross over into Fantastica without some more prodding, she has the Old Man of Wondering Mountain (the scribe who writes everything in existence down in a book called *The Neverending Story*) read the story over again from the beginning. However, it is not Bastian’s beginning with the rock biter and the will-o-the-whisp. It is our beginning with the bookshop. This means we are characters in the story of *The Neverending Story*. We have something to do with it, and that is, to be a creator. Ende has told us to now pay attention to the rest of the novel (manifesto) because we are going to see a writer (Bastian) in action.

Once inside Fantastica, Bastian is told he must make wishes for Fantastica to stay alive. The Childlike Empress tells Bastian that he must wish the new Fantastica into being and name everything. He saved her, of course, by giving her a new name. The action of naming has already been established as a great value. That was Bastian's first action of the creator (or author) was to
rename the Empress. Names are important, as Le Guin mentions in her essays and we see throughout her books. In Ende's case, words—every word—is important. Authors must choose every word carefully. For instance, Bastian names the Empress after his mother. This name means everything to him. Ende encourages writers to pick every word with as much care as Bastian did.

The Empress asks Bastian to name his newly created land, and he does. He is also gifted with AURYN, which is the source of his power. On the back of the medallion are Ende's words for writers to follow with all of their hearts: "Do what you wish." What this symbol means is that only wishes done with your heart are the best. Your secret wishes. That is the fire in words and where the originality comes in. This should apply to rhetoricians and academic writers. Let the words be full of flavor and creativity. The vision Ende creates a plea to all writers to heed these words, as every kind of creator is present in Fantastica. Readers and writers have the power to influence through words. We start as readers to find out what is going on and then can join the conversation. However, we need to make sure what we write is Good. So far, Bastian's actions were good and well meaning. However, after his conversion action, his meaning begins to dwindle, as he is now the author of the story.

The actions of Bastian have a powerful and dangerous effect on Fantastica. Following Ende's argument of how to write well, we see his example of a bad composer (also a selfish one). Filling the Fantastica with stories is the point, Bastian knows, but what he does not do is create meaningful ones. His actions, in this case, are harmful to the world of stories. The characters he creates are not strong, fleshed-out manifestations of his dreams. They are empty.

The rhetorical vision will now be complete once we visit the character themes in this next section where it will be explained how the character themes show the fruits of Bastian’s labors.
The theme of the characters shows how writing (seen through Bastian’s creating of characters) can be unmeaningful and even harmful to the world of literature. This section will also show how giving in to an abundance of meaningless writing makes one lose themselves and not know who they are or what they stand for any longer.

**Character Themes: Knights and Butterflies**

Lastly, we come to characters themes. By “characters” in this instance, I will look at the characters that Bastian has created through his action theme. Bastian, Atreyu, and Falkor are characters as well but since the convergence Bormann has specified happens within Bastian’s version of *The Neverending Story*, these are the characters we will focus on. I have chosen the knights that accompany Bastian on his journey and follow him into war, and his transformation creation of the Acharis to the Shlamoofs. These two sets of characters are manipulated by Ende's strategies of parable and allegory. The knights are stupid, useless fairytale-like characters that are no more useful than empty armor. They have no character development and do nothing to enhance the story. They have no will of their own either. The Acharis are creatures who were not happy with their life and whom Bastian tried to aid in transforming them into better creations. However, in the end, they do not know what to do and serve no purpose to Fantastica, thus furthering the Emptiness and harming Fantastica.

Starting with the Knights since they were first chronologically speaking, they are something that comes back to haunt Bastian in Fantastica. Ende created these knights to show us what empty, meaningless words or pieces (of writing or any other scholarship) are and how they influence us. They seem important at first and maybe a writer will even believe they are, but deep down, the truth is they are not. The Knights (or heroes as they are called) are Hynreck, Hykrion, Hysbald, and Hydorn. They are feasting in a clearing with a princess and discussing a
tournament they are to take part in. This all sounds adventurous until we realize that Bastian is bored with it, as it is a story, or plot, that has been told too often. They are flat, lifeless characters, and he does nothing to make it better. It could be said they are about as dimensional as fairy tale characters; those only there to serve some good, moral fable or purpose, which is essentially what Ende uses them for. When the knights fight the giants under Xayide's control, they cannot defeat them. These giants are of course full of emptiness as well. The knights are captured and made useless. Ende also only mentions them all together, many times, in the same way: "The three knights, Hykrion, Hysbald, and Hydron…” They are never apart as if they are one person. This is because they are shallow, useless characters. They are buffoons as well, throwing themselves into combat with glee when Atreyu and his rebels are attacking the Ivory Tower (Ende 329).

They become lost in the battle and are just one of many unfinished, meaningless stories Bastian leaves behind. "They, however, felt bound by the oath of fealty they had sworn to Bastian…That was all well and good, but which way were they to go? They couldn't agree, so deciding that each would search separately, they parted and hobbled off each in a different direction." As we can see, not even the creator, Bastian, sees any worth in the characters and stories he leaves behind. Behind him in Fantastica is a string of abandoned characters that do not see their worth. The meaninglessness of all of these creations is what is harming Fantastica (which, remember, is the symbol for all literature, hopes, and dreams).

In chapter 18, we meet perhaps one of the best failures Bastian will ever create as they will come back to haunt him in later chapters and even prevent him from going home. The Acharis are the only characters (of Bastian's making) we see twice. They first appear in Chapter 18 as ugly foot-long worms crawling in the darkness. They had slimy little limbs sticking out of
the folds of their skin, and their lidless eyes were gushing tears (Ende 260). The creatures, the Acharis, panic, and cry more because someone has seen their ugliness. They explain that they live under the earth, and their tears wash out the indestructible silver that Bastian has seen, and they weave it together into the magnificent towers that they passed earlier. At this point, the ugly Acharis have a purpose to their lives. However, the power Bastian has makes him wish them into what he considers better beings. He wishes them to fall asleep, and when they awake, they will crawl out of their ugly skins and be like butterflies, called the Shlamoofs, the Everlasting Laughers (Ende 262). Bastian is pleased with himself, but Atreyu wonders what it will cost Bastian in his memories.

In the morning, Bastian awakes to see the new creatures bounding around the glen before him: all are colored with mismatched patches of color, their faces are painted like clowns, and their faces are distorted. However, worst of all, they are smashing up the glen, trying to pull down the silver tower the Acharis made, and just bringing destruction. This symbolic cue brings us back to the destruction of the Nothing in the first half of the book. We see this in a similar light as the destruction that can be brought from meaningless characters or creations.

Bastian attempts to forbid the Shlamoofs from destroying the beautiful silvery things the Acharis made, but they will not listen. What follows is a Lewis Carrol-like shouting match of word play and pronoun switching that drives Bastian insane as he tries to control the silly Shlamoofs. Soon they best him at his own game, calling him a "whatchamacallim" and then mixing his name up so much while he shouts it, that in the end even Bastian cannot remember who he is.

The themes these sets of characters display are ones of uselessness, shallowness, and even stupidity. These help to create the rhetorical vision of the damage done to literature (all
literature) through bad writing. The symbolic cue here helps us see the relation to the Nothing and the Emptiness. The ideas Bastian created do not help Fantastica become better. He damages the setting and himself with the perpetual emptiness until he loses himself entirely.

**Practical Application to Rhetoric**

As a result, Ende's manifesto is a great contribution to rhetorical writers across all the fields. Now that we have explored his themes of character, action, and setting, we can understand his message: write and dream, do as you wish, and do it well. In the last chapter, I will show how this applies to rhetoric and creative writing. Ende's rhetorical vision, created using his strategies of allegory and parable, tells us that writing, no matter what should be creative and fantastic. He also tells us that even fantasy literature, if it so desires to be good and meaningful, should be rhetorical.

Ende’s manifesto is a great contribution to rhetorical writers across all the fields. Now that we have explored his themes of character, action, and setting, we can understand his message: write and dream, do as you wish, and do it well. In the last chapter, I will show how this applies to rhetoric and creative writing. Ende's rhetorical vision, created using his strategies of allegory and parable, tells us that writing, no matter what should be creative and fantastic. He also tells us that even fantasy literature, if it so desires to be good and meaningful, should be rhetorical.

I’ve mentioned how rhetoric influences fantasy literature by the examples of Swift and Tolkien for starters. As we have seen in my analysis of Ende’s novel we have experienced his rhetoric as well. We see that he has written a fantasy novel but that the themes of character, action, and setting are actually his arguments for writing well. He uses rhetoric and his strategies
of parable and allegory to make his point. So what does this mean for rhetoricians then? Or academic writers who want a little fantastic element or something engaging and inspiring?

A few scholars have taken Bormann’s themes and applied to speeches and political talks already. Some have also used what is called the symbolic convergence theory, which is a similar framework but outside the tight genre of fantasy. William T. Wells wrote a short essay for the Communication Institute for Online Scholarship (a wonderful digital magazine that’s been around since 1986!) on Nixon’s “Checker’s Speech”. In this essay, Wells uses the three themes to show how Nixon painted himself as a patriot, a man of high moral character, and the American ideal. Wells also says that this helps him find the speakers motive. In this case, it might be to persuade or for Nixon to show himself as these various characters in order to help the people relate to him.

How to use fantasy in rhetoric requires a lot of planning. Like fantasy novels, one needs a motive for their character. Is the speaker or writer (composer) the character? Usually, yes. Then the composer wants to elicit an action or feeling out of her audience. What does the composer want them to do after they experience their piece? Sometimes, an audience will react as desired but other times, the composer must imitate the action they are vying for in order for the action to be complete. Leading by example is the best idea. This puts the composer as the main character in their story. Their actions will influence the sub characters around them and create ripples that will start more actions.

Setting is also important. As we move into the digital world, composers must be mindful of the space around them. They must understand that the ambiance is important. I remember the rainforest building from the zoo in my childhood. I don’t remember the animals or how I felt there but I remember the smell. That earthy, hot, wild air. I remember what it felt like to breath
the humidity into my lungs and get that slight tight feeling. I remember how the air felt on my skin. I remember the feel of the rubbery plants. What is the setting of a composer’s research? Take readers there. What is the feeling the audience should walk away with? When it comes to digital, this is far simpler than a tradition text essay. Composers choose colors, effects, and sounds to go onto the webpage. If one is writing about a class room, describe the smell of erasure dust if it applies to the image to be created.

There are many ways one can invent setting and open up the doors for that kind of visual impact. Fantasy has a stereotypical setting we all know: mountains, streams, rivers, forests, and a dragon. Audiences love setting. It’s what they walk away with if nothing else. This could also mean “what is the feeling the audience walks away with from a composition?” Maybe a traditional text creates a setting through passionate words. Or painting an image of the way the subject of the essay could be. Once fantasy is involved, there are literally countless ways to create setting, character, and action.

Further examples might include Susan Delagrange and her truly eye-opening, online book *Technologies of Wonder*. Her main argument involves the female body and how it is seen in a similar way to images (specifically) in scholarship. She is a prime example of setting, characters, and action. Her action is to show people (by example) how to use images in scholastic writing. Her characters are women who have been labeled as shameful because they have a female body. Her setting is *wunderkammern*. This German word means “cabinet of curiosities”. Images of old anatomy books, old fashioned apothecary bottles and medicine cabinets pepper Delagrange’s digital book. When I wrote a review of her book, also in digital, I wanted to preserve her setting of wonder. Clockwork, parchment, mysterious cabinets, and old
anatomy drawings gave her the perfect setting to discuss wonder. She is doing fantasy scholarship.

I’d like to end this section with a small allowance on the side. This kind of work is not for everyone. As composers, it is their job to understand the audience (characters) of their story (scholarship). As I have argued, fantasy scholarship has a place in any field, but that doesn’t mean it has to be done. I believe there will always be tradition work for those audience members who want it. Just as there will always be book for those frightened of the eReaders. But fantasy scholarship should be created and used. There is an overabundance of traditional scholarship and it is time for a new kind to be born and to rise up for those have long desired it. Getting past the stigma of “that is not correct to the format” and “this is unprofessional” is not an easy road and must be traveled by a fellowship of scholars passionate about changing the world and how we communicate scholarship.
Chapter 4: Creatively Rhetorical: Keep Moving Forward

The application of Ende’s argument should be applied to all forms of writing. His audience was fellow writers of creative works and fantasy. Nevertheless, just as we can understand his argument through the deciphering of his rhetoric, the goal is to build a bridge between non-creative and creative works; adding creativity to scholarship and deeper value to fantasy. Two ways rhetoric is, batting to be more creative is its move to the digital frontier and the inclusion of graduate student work.

Whether creativity comes in the form of digital scholarship, the inclusion of images in essays, or creative non-fiction it must come all the same. Creativity is looked upon with suspicion by a majority of academics and seen as un-authoritative. In the same way, a fantasy that argues a point or communicates a lesson can be seen as "preachy", but we must not stop writing parables. Writing rhetorical fantasies is a way of creating classics that will last and leave impressions on the readers like the science fiction and epic fantasy of the past.

Making Rhetoric Fantastic

Irwin quotes R.G. Collingwood, an English philosopher, in the first chapter of his book *The Game of the Impossible*: “A society which thinks…that it has outlived the need of magic, is mistaken in that option, or else it is a dying society, perishing for lack of interest in its own maintenance” (Irwin 3). Collingwood is not talking about writing in this quote; he is talking about magic. Irwin says we have a desire for strangeness or things we do not understand. Magic is faith based and not scientifically explorable. Society is not scientifically explorable. There are too many factors in humans for there be a how-to or a simple guide on humanity. Humans, whether they believe it or not, have faith in something. Faith is a thing that cannot be explained. A society that thinks it no longer has a need for magic or faith is one that will not live long. Just
like the English language itself, societies change and evolve to stay current or relevant.

Imagination is faith. Imagining a new structure for an architect is a dream. Creating new medicines is a dream for a doctor. Dreams are powered by the faith one has to complete them. Imagination, dreams, and even desires cannot be scientifically explained; they are magic. Fortunately, there are dreamers amongst rhetoricians such as Susan Delagrange and her Le Guin-like argument that says perhaps professionals and scholars are ashamed of creativity.

When one has a dream to create something, whether it is a composition, building, a new cuisine, or activity, they take into account that which already exists; the products of previous dreams. An idea for something new starts as a fantasy. “A fantasy,” Irwin says, “is…based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility” (4). Going against the grain of what is socially acceptable takes great faith and even more dreaming. Without this violation of what is thought possible, man would have never left Earth. The radio would not have led to the Internet. There would be no fight over open access and the moral ground surrounding it. Pushing boundaries is what writers are supposed to do. It is our passion. We have an idea, and we write it down so others can hear it and agree or argue. However, how we present our arguments is just as important. We need to know what can be understood. Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle say the art of speech or oratory are an art that good, educated people should be aware. They insist that if an individual wants to speak, or write, then they must do it well. This applies to rhetoric and literature.

I have found that there is little magic in rhetorical writing. The shame here is that the topics rhetoricians write about are their passions. They have strong faith in their research and genuinely want to understand what they are finding and want to share that with the world. No scholar desires structural anarchy, but the boundaries for how that research is shared need to be
pushed. Rhetoric needs life breathed back into it. Even Aristotle and the ancient Greeks did not separate poetics from rhetoric. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, he lays out what good writing is, and that includes artistic invention. Booth says we may find ways of performing traditional rhetorical tasks in a dramatic way (Booth 23). The basics of rhetoric—Ethos, Logos, and Pathos—tell us to be ethical, logical, and passionate. Where is the passion and creativity in Nietzsche, Bakhtin, or Toulmin? Can they not tell their rhetoric as stories as Sojourner Truth and Cixous do?

I have learned that there is rhetoric to everything. Rhetoric is the answer to ‘What does it mean’. It is the search for patterns, symbols, mythological ties, and meaning. Rhetoric is what is being said and why it is being said. It should be done creatively, not scientifically. I understand the need to crunch the numbers of how many students improved in a freshmen composition class since the beginning of the semester, or the genre of writing about the writing center. However, why are these items the focus in rhetorical studies? Rhetoric is about people, humans, and passion. We cannot relate and do not wish to relate to statistics and formulas as they try to explain humans and human inventions and discovery. We want to hear Cixous describe her language and her fight to publish her stories in her native, strange, tongue. We want to hear this through her stories and experiences because it means something to us as humans to hear another tell of a trial and success. Through her stories and determination, we understand that her language is important and deserving of publication. Creative rhetoric, or passion, is that dragon Le Guin mentioned her book that people fear: anything of the imagination is suspect or contemptible (Le Guin 40). Creativity is not valued. Creative rhetoric is like the female body: we are ashamed of it, hide it away, and hope it does not show up, or someone will be in trouble (Delagrange).
This argument is not about anarchy as I said before. Le Guin says that to be free does not mean to be undisciplined. She says that the mind must be disciplined to execute good technique and methods for art and science (Le Guin 43). Aristotle did not separate rhetoric from art either and in fact, most of what he says in *Rhetoric* should be applied to creative writing. However, what is most evasive is why scholars keep creativity, feeling, and passion out of their written scholarship. Do they fear that creativity means untruth? Le Guin says that fantasy is not factual, but it is true (Le Guin 44). There is truth in the fantasy stories of Ende. Many truths are depicted through a story, an allegory, or a fable. It is not a fact that there is a talking dog who was jealous of his reflection's bone. Nevertheless, it is true that one can be fooled into thinking that illusion is better off than the reality.

Creativity is mysterious and taboo to the scholarly world. It is the dragon we fear and the body we wish not to see and yet long to touch. Our modern pioneers of creative rhetoric need encouragement as well. In a male-dominated culture, women must fight to be heard. The female form is still taboo and an object to be hidden and treated as unequal. Creativity and fantasy are treated like this in scholarly work. However, some see it as a help to rhetoric. Cindy Selfe, Susan Delagrange, Gesa Kirsch and others are trying to embrace the digital world and feminist theory and personal stories as a start. With that great leap, the way can be paved perhaps for more creativity and passion in scholarly writing.

If rhetoric were to trumpet any scientific aspect, let it be this: Always research, try new ideas and experiments, look for something different. In my studies, I have found that rhetoric, as a field is eager, at least in theory, to expand and find more niches to investigate. The move for digital rhetoric is very strong in our generation. The online magazine *Kairos* is a great example with its interactive, multimodal compositions. Digital rhetoric asks us to look at layout, colors,
sound, images, and many more mediums all in one composition to argue a point. It is taking the ideas the Aristotle and Cicero and applying them to technology. Those two argue for well-rounded educations (one must know HTML, visual composition, etc.), poetic touches, and a strong countenance (in a speaker). Susan Delagrange wrote a fantastic and edgy discourse on the theory of women's bodies and the use of images in academic writing. She argues for new media and use online text as a kind of contact ground for old formats (books) and new formats (digital).

Like Booth, Delagrange wants to bridge a gap but is not so much a genre-bender. She urges people who see images in writing and creativity as suspect to give it a chance. Why not include illustrations to highlight your point? How are images and other examples like analogy or personal narrative suspect or unprofessional? Because it simply isn't done? Perhaps we need to redefine "professional". When a piece is professional, it needs to be understandable (so make sure your images are necessary and highlight your point), clean, organized, and respectful. There is nothing that cannot function in rhetoric if it is done well. Delagrange also illustrated the dislike for images and creativity in scholarly writing with the comparison to the female body as I mentioned before. Where Le Guin says we fear dragons, Delagrange says we fear the female body. It is all the same at the heart of the matter: segregation of the genres but even more terrible, the belief that creative writing (creative academic, creative scholarship) is a lesser form of writing that ought not to be allowed in academia. Creativity is the great engine of thoughtful inquiry, but that does not stop academics from denying creative touches to scholarly work.

All of these ideas could apply easily to digital rhetoric; the one direction rhetoric has looked to for creative sustainability. Everything is evolving to remain viable in the digital age, and that includes the ancient art of rhetoric. Other than the allure of the glowing, digital frontier, rhetoric has not had a serious upgrade since perhaps the Enlightenment era where it made itself
applicable by claiming to be a science. This was a turn from the old rhetoric where many philosophers and teachers thought it was an art and something born partly out of talent and to be paired with poetry. Nevertheless, as the times changed, so did rhetoric. What needs to happen instead is that rhetoric should apply to our new ways of creating a scholarship.

For example, *Kairos the* online magazine is almost strictly for the writing and composition field. I had the great pleasure of doing a research project into some of their articles. One that was mostly successful in engaging a modern audience was entitled *Crossing Battle Lines* and was created by graduate students of University of Texas-Austin. The article was the graduate students' reflection on a class they taught. *Battle Lines* is also the name of the game the authors created for the students in their class. This was an alternate reality game (ARG) where the students would have to find clues around campus and online (via a fake Twitter account and email account) to find out about a fictitious fellow student named Amanda who was investigating a scandal from back in the early 1900s. The clues were jumbled in a video, an image from Photoshop that had to be de-layered to find the smartphone code, HTML code in an email, and other places that required the students to learn a skill that could then apply to a multimedia project at the end. This may seem strange and even weird to someone engrained in the field of rhetoric, but this is also the future. Looking for inspiration for the future will help bring in creativity. However, where can new, creative ideas be found?

Gail Hawisher, Founding Director of the Center for Writing Studies, said in an interview that perhaps graduate students were the key to broadening research and creating more viewpoints and bringing in fresh ideas (Hawisher). However, graduate students are looked upon similarly as creative writing: suspect, non-authoritative. After all, they are still students. Graduate students must, as Derrida says, remove themselves from underneath the tutelage of others--we (graduate
students) must be enlightened. Alternatively, as Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, also says, "Have the courage to use your own understanding" (Kant). As seen in more than just Crossing Battle Lines on Kairos, graduate students have ideas and knowledge as well. They can utilize that knowledge and experience. Given the opportunity to present it, however, they deem necessary opens doors for brilliant and engaging research. I am not asking for courtesy or professionalism to be negated, however. However, I would note that professionalism is simply showing respect to the ones being spoken to, and being adept in the field in which one is composing.

Ways that rhetoric can be more creative and, dare I say fun, is to stop looking at invention and imagination as taboo and unprofessional. Let the magic back in. Ende tells us the only way to keep writing alive is by magic. By faith. By creativity. Do not fear the dragon, explore that dragon. Let images and allegory become part of a scholarly argument. Delagrange asks us to illustrate our point however, we see fit. New eyes in the field, like graduate students, bring fresh ideas and rather than be suspect of those ideas, let them play out and see where they lead. The digital frontier is a prime space for images and magic to happen. The move to creativity is slow, but with this first step, the bridge is being crossed.

**Making Fantasy Rhetorical**

Creative writing is not getting off the hook either. It took needed to take something away from Ende's rhetoric: Value, meaning, purpose, and ability to inspire. Rhetoric is meaningful because it communicates more than one idea at a time. The rhetoric of fantasy, Ende argues, should communicate through inspiration and intellectual substance. As has been shown, writing can be empty and meaningless; frivolous to the point of damaging our imaginations or
circulating lies. With how glutted the genre is right now, it is easy for writers to pump simply shallow fantasies that mean nothing and are uninspiring.

During my research, I ran across a post on one of my favorite author's Facebook pages. He was discussing author meaning in his fantasy books, and how he did not write in symbols. It grieved me to see this post as I had intended to do a longer piece about how his writing and how it mirrored that of certain classic novels, but this shows other wise. As you can see, the author does not think his story has any deeper meaning than what he wrote. The meme of the English teacher has also been around for a few years now and has bothered me ever since. I do not believe that what your English teacher said in high school or even under graduate classes is the right or only answer to one author's words. Yes, you put your sense over the words and draw your meaning but writers should encourage that. They should write so that emotions, feelings, value, and significance can be garnered. The author in our example says that a story is "just" a story. However, it should never be just that. For then we are creating as Bastian does in the second half of the book: needless knights, simple creations that do nothing but bother us into senselessness—we lose our meaning as we create nothing with substance.

Cicero argues in his piece De Orator that a man who speaks must be well educated in all arts. Well-spoken creators, he says, are ones who have "mastered everything they could whether by scientific investigation or by the methods of dialectic" (Cicero 290). Dialectic is speech,
conversation, or writing. One finds not only meaning through scientific methods but through writing, which is a creative task. Cicero lists many things an educated man must have to be considered accomplished and some are not so different from what Ende says to his writers. Know what you are saying. You must know and understand. The study creates knowledge and understanding and understanding is an open door for creativity.

The author in the example above has one book I thought was similar to the story of *Frankenstein* in its plot and side characters. In it, his character runs away from his terrifying race of people and breaks into a new world where he must hide because his race is traditionally thought evil. I once used to ponder what could the implications mean for making the character (whom we know is good) as that of Frankenstein's creature? What does it mean? These are the questions fantasy should make us ask. As readers and scholars, we have the propensity to think deeper than the surface offers. We are naturally curious and thirst for meaning. A well-educated creator can make us ask these questions. We all feel a little let down, or even cheated, when an author tells us, "I have no idea what I was thinking. It is just that way. No reason." Then why did you start writing if you had nothing to say? Why did you think the world needed your story?
Addressing the issue of publishers and what society reads is an issue with that question, but that is another argument for another time.

In summation, my argument is two-fold. The field of rhetoric needs not be afraid of creativity or ashamed of those who practice creativity. With a little artistic or fantastical push, rhetoric could be more accessible to Everyman. It could be more passionate, more exciting, and have myriads more opportunities for publishing, which I will discuss in the next chapter. However, it is a two-way street, and there is no reason the two shall not meet. Fantasy is a popular and glutted genre today. To be amongst the greats and to question the world, it must take from rhetoric that which rhetoric does so well: Have meaning, more than one layer, and ask us to look again.

Rhetoric is the meaning found in the study of work. It is the composer's tool for creating meaning and creativity. Ende has written a perfect manifesto for writers (composers) everywhere of all genres. Fantasy literature, if it desires to live into classical eternity, must work its rhetoric. There must be meaning behind the words and a fiery, passionate argument. The classics are still read (like *Narnia* and Le Guin and even today's Brandon Sanderson) because they hold deeper truths than magic, talking animals, and shape-shifting wizards. However, as Delagrange offers, we must not be afraid of those other elements that create good fantasy faith, thoughts on humanity, maybe even a chance to shout out a personal argument.

**Final Thoughts: Keep Moving Forward**

The future of rhetoric is essentially now. With so many great philosophers and composers currently asking for a radical breath of fresh air, it can only be a matter of time before rhetoric and scholarly writing become full of flavor, emotion, and passion. However, the fight is not over nor as simple as allowing for a creative nonfiction composition to be rhetorical scholarly work.
The composition has to be good work. The design must have meaning. The idea has to have value. For a composition to be alive and passionate, it must have the personality of the writer in it. This is why Bastian loses his memories, but also why he loses himself. He puts so much of himself into his stories. Forgetting himself is one thing, but in the end, he has created so much garbage and so many useless characters he forgets how to love. To return home, Bastian must learn to love again and thus gain his identity back. Without that love, nothing in Fantastica or his world will be healed. How do composers know if the creation is good? Ende argues in his novel that the ideas we have, the dreams we dream, and stories we tell must have a deeper, philosophical meaning that touches the human soul and asks us to question our social realities.

The same for the scholarship. As Donald Maass, the literary agent and editor says, the fire in your writing is you. However, not a rhetorician, Maass deals in a sub-genre that is addressed in some rhetoric and composition studies: editing and publishing. Maass says, "Start by making sure to put yourself into your [writing]...the more you let your passionate self-inform your [writing], the more it will strike your reader with a moral force" (Maass 248). He may sound like a romantic, but what he says is true for all forms of writing or composing. Nothing is blander than an essay written for a grade or a publication ground out by a reluctant tenure hopeful. Our rhetoric must be on fire to be powerful.

Our writing is good and meaningful when it is thus to us, the writers. In the ending chapters of *The Neverending Story*, Bastian is called the boy without a name because he has forgotten who he is and wasted all of his wishes. He must find himself before he can finally return home. Sadly, on his way he reunites with the Shlamoofs who demand he make himself their chief after he transformed them. Bastian asks them why and they reply, "We want you to give us orders. We want you to order use round, to make us do something, to forbid us to do
something. We want you to give us an aim in life!" (Ende 379). The Shalmoofs reappear throughout Bastian's adventures and here at the end to show how our projects, publications, sermons, and words come to haunt us. Bastian thought he was doing the Shlamoofs a favor by changing them, but they were useless and did not know what to do now they existed. They also destroy the painting that Bastian had mined, which was his ticket back to the real world. In the end, his useless creations block him from doing anything of value and discovering his identity as the creator.

However, someone else's story can save him. Atreyu and Falkor arrive just in time to save Bastian. I say someone else's story because Atreyu is special in some very mysterious ways. Someone else had to write him or else he would not exist. He is special in a sense because he is Bastian's age and can relate to his reader (Bastian in the first half). He is also everything Bastian is not; he is brave, selfless, wise, cunning, and willing to sacrifice himself for ideals he cannot understand. Like a reader who has read other stories and been inspired (or saved) by those, Atreyu and gives up AURYN of his free will, creating the fountain where the Water of Life flows, rescue Bastian. Bastian must give up his Fantastician gifts (his handsome face, strong body, and brave mind) and bathe in the Water. When he does, he returns to himself and finds joy, loving himself. "And much later," Ende writes, "long after Bastian has returned to his world, in his maturity, and even in his old age, this joy never left him entirely. Even in the hardest moments of his life he preserved a lightheartedness that made him smile and that comforted others" (Ende 386).

This joy and love of his identity sets Bastian free and allows him to return home partly. He must also finish all the stories he started in Fantastica; the Water tells him before he can go home. However, Bastian knows he will never be able to go back and complete every story he
started. Atreyu's importance comes in here as he volunteers to finish all the stories Bastian started. However, how can Atreyu, a story within a story, finish something only an earthling can do? Falkor says with luck they can. Nevertheless, as a reader of Bastian's story, this is a very subtle call to action for us readers. We are meant to look, to wonder, and ponder. With this little action, Ende has planted the seeds of curiosity in us.

Thus, asking, "can I do that in this work" should turn into "how can I make this work engaging and inspiring". While writing your next tenure-winning article on the writing center, tell us how it is a cave of wonders that supports every kingdom above the science papers, the history papers, the veterinary research essays, and the composition herd. Alternatively, make another allegory or analogy that puts the writing center in a new light that makes us excited. When writing the next great American fantasy, let anger at society show and tell readers how the world needs to change before the zombie apocalypse. Whatever you do, let it be passionate and valuable. Give Fantastica life through your unique thoughts. I know I will be “but that’s another story and shall be told another time” (Ende 396).
Works Cited


**Images**

Figure 1. The Writer’s Circle. Facebook. February 9, 2016. Web.

Figure 2. The Writer’s Circle. Facebook. February 9, 2016. Web.