

Fiche

Theme I: Fantasy (« Imaginaires »)

Fantasy can be artistic, intellectual, socio-cultural or political. You are already familiar with many examples of fantasy in English literature and arts *Frankenstein*, *Game of Thrones*, *Dracula*, *Harry Potter*, *Narnia*, *Hunger Games* or *Twilight*.

In genres like gothic or horror, fantasy enables artists to explore their own fears and fantasies as well as those of their audience. In other genres such as science fiction, utopia or dystopia, imagination plays with reality, prolonging it in a deformed mirror image.

Fantasy also plays an indispensable role in science, technology, sociology and politics, enabling thinkers to understand, transform or reinvent the world. The power of imagination enables man to create inventions or to develop his thoughts and brings about progress, be it positive or negative.

The official programme suggests three possible fields of study.

1: Creative and visionary imagination (« l'imagination créatrice et visionnaire »)

This field of study focuses on fantasy's ability to explore beyond the rules of the real world, inventing an extraordinary world (*Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, the series *Game of Thrones*), creating a dreamlike universe (Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Coleridge's visionary poetry, the artwork of William Blake, Henry Fuseli or the Pre-Raphaelites), or going beyond the boundaries of science (Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Isaac Asimov's novels, films like Stanley Kubrick's *2001, A Space Odyssey* or Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* as well as forward-looking essays in *The Economist* or any document showcasing science in scientific reviews such as *The New Scientist*).

2: Awesome fantasy (« imaginaires effrayants »)

This field of study explores how the imagination gives substance to what man fails to understand or to master, to his most extreme fantasies and terrors, his metaphysical torments and places them at a reassuring distance in a supernatural environment. You can examine the motif of the monster (in works as varied as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* or David Lynch's *Elephant Man*) or study the specific techniques used in gothic and horror genres (Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*). You can also look at scientific, technological and socio-political evolution in documents covering robots, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), cloning, transhumanism, etc.)

3: Utopias et dystopias (« utopies et dystopies »)

Novels like those of Aldous Huxley or George Orwell's *Brave New World* can be compared to and contrasted with films like Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca* or Stephen Spielberg's *Artificial Intelligence*, or even TV series like *Black Mirror*, *Westworld* or *The Handmaid's Tale*. At the other end of the range, you can also analyse the utopic dimension of certain architects like Ebenezer Howard or Frank Lloyd Wright and their quest for the ideal city or home.

 [Exercice n°1](#)

 [Exercice n°2](#)