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“Thank you so much for keeping all of us in the Emporium gainfully  
employed” – The Relationship between Fan and Merchant in the  
Wincanton Hogswatch Celebration

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*Abstract: This paper examines relationship between fans and merchants in the Hogswatch celebration; a celebration of all things Discworld held in November in Wincanton, Somerset. Using socioeconomic theories on the different modes of exchange – gift economy (Gavin & Phipps) – the article explicates a relationship between fandom and dealers of intertextually linked products, resembles a gift economy system. This because the fans and merchants share an intertextual common sense, drawn upon in the celebration. Furthermore, the article aims to discuss the mutual benefits of the proposed fan/merchant relationship; showing a process of embedded economy (Cotterrell) and craft consumerism (Campbell). The article is part of my ongoing PhD-project at the department of Nordic folkloristics at ÅAU.*

*Keywords: Fandom, folklore, fan-culture, socio-economics, gift-exchange, fandom-economy, intertext, Discworld, Terry Pratchett.*

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*Discworld* is a satirical fantasy novel series by the English author Terry Pratchett (1948–2015), comprising of forty-one novels as well as numerous other adaptations. The tales of *Discworld* are set on a flat world, atop four elephants, atop a giant turtle floating in space; depicting a storyworld that is satirical, fantastical, and full of folklore adaptations. As a fan of *Discworld* I like displaying bits of *Discworld* paraphernalia in my home. This is quite common amongst fans. When investigating the goings-on in the Hogswatch celebration – a “Christmas-like” celebration, derived from Terry Pratchett’s *Discworlds*-series, held annually in November in Wincanton, Somerset – I have been perplexed by the relationship between my fellow fans and the merchants in the town of Wincanton. We (fans and merchants) enjoy an amicable relationship, often joking about the amount of money we spend on paraphernalia during the celebration. This merchant/buyer relationship is different to the one I have in my everyday shopping experiences. Why is that?

The material discussed in this article was collected by means of participatory observation<sup>1</sup> during the Hogswatch celebrations of 2010, 2011, and 2012. Hogswatch is a midwinter festivity described in *Hogfather* (Pratchett 1999), that have been re-situated by fans of *Discworld* as a celebration of all things *Discworld*. It is a three-day celebration that takes place in different venues, such as pubs and the Memorial Hall in Wincanton, and in the *Discworld* fandom-paraphernalia store *The Discworld Emporium*. Hogswatch comprises many different elements that can be defined as folklore: the consumption of specially prepared food, dressing up, and the giving of gifts (cf. Löfgren). The reason I choose to study this particular celebration is its easy accessibility; in terms of it being a celebration that is smaller than major conventions in terms of visitors, but more importantly in terms of timeframe and venue. These have enabled me to make more detailed observations on the exchange; the number of places of trade in Wincanton is fewer than for instance that of Worldcon or San Diego Comic-Con, at the same time as the visitor number is lower than the *Discworld* conventions worldwide. It is also a fandom I am part of, making participation an easier task; understanding intertext, understanding jokes and participating in the celebration from an emic perspective. All field reports and material discussed are deposited at the cultural archive Cultura, at the department of Nordic Folklore studies at Åbo Akademi University.

## Aim

The purpose of this article is to investigate the relationship of exchange between the fans visiting the Hogswatch celebration and the merchants taking part in actively constructing an atmosphere for *Discworld*-fandom activities during the celebrations. I will examine the relationship between the proprietors and fans by discussing socio-economic theories on exchange and consuming, illustrating the mutual benefits for fans, merchants, and the fandom culture. The purpose of this article is consequently twofold: (1) to discuss the relationship of exchange between merchants and fans and (2) to study who benefits what in said relationship.

## The Concept of Intertext

Before I explicate the relationship between fan and merchant I want to introduce the notion of intertext, because the intertext is utilised by fans and merchants alike, becoming a common stock of knowledge drawn upon in the merchant/fan relationship.

Susan Stewart describes the notion of intertext as a borrowing process between two domains of meaning (Stewart 15), the two domains of meaning being, roughly speaking, our perception of reality and the ordinary and a rewritten perception of reality. Our perception of reality or the real Stewart designates the domain of common sense and the reorganized or fictional domain is termed nonsense (13). Furthermore Stewart explains the notion of “the stock of knowledge at hand” (9), which can be labelled as what everybody already knows and takes for granted. As I will explain further on, in this case the stock of knowledge is the intertextual knowledge of the *Discworld* books. Stewart’s theories are crucial for explaining two things: (1) intertext as a borrowing procedure between reality and fiction, and (2) that fans and merchants possess a communal knowledge (for a more extensive explication see Löfgren).

In their book *Re-situating Folklore: Folk Contexts and Twentieth-century Literature and Art* (2004), Frank de Caro and Rosan Augusta Jordan ponder how the borrowing process is done by authors of fiction. They explain how folklore can be re-situated from socio-cultural contexts to

<sup>1</sup> This article is a part of my ongoing PhD thesis project, which I am pursuing at the department of Nordic Folkloristics at Åbo Akademi University. The first part of the thesis was published as an article called “Death and a Pickled Onion – The Construction of Fan Culture and Fan Identity in the Hogswatch Celebration of Wincanton” in *Gramarye no 3*. I would like to thank my colleagues at the department the Swedish Literature Society in Finland and the Donner institute for their support of my project.

literary contexts in different ways (6–7). In Wincanton the process is reversed in that folklore is re-situated from a literary context (i.e. *Discworld*) into the context of the Hogswatch celebration (cf. Löfgren). The agent doing this re-situation is not an author but the fans and merchants participating in the celebration.

## Fandom

Two key scholars within the field of fandom studies are Henry Jenkins, who adheres to a social constructivist vernacular, and Matt Hills, who adopts a more psychological view on fandom. For the purposes of this article I will utilise the theories of Hills as presented in his book *Fan Cultures*. I do this because of Hills's ideas of "affective play" (90) and his thoughts on the economic models within fandom which I find useful for my study. However, the view of fandom presented by Jenkins has formed my own understanding of fandom. I perceive fandom as a form of community (cf. Jenkins). But since the aim of this article is to investigate the exchange and relationship between fan and merchant I find it useful to turn to Hills. Affective play is a term that Hills uses to explicate two things within fandom: (1) an understanding of fandom as a display of affection in fandom experience, an idea that is based on the works of Lawrence Grossberg (cf. Grossberg 56–57); (2) an understanding of an inherent "playful potential" (Hills 91) within fandom. The affection that Hills speaks of is the affection towards the object of fandom and the play with affection works as a transgressive performance between the boundary of fiction and reality. The playfulness becomes a representation of the fandom itself. Since the playfulness in itself is a representation of fandom the merchants need to take it, as well as the intertextual connection to *Discworld*, into consideration when dealing with the fans. Communality between fan and merchant is of course not exclusive to the Wincanton phenomenon. It is rather to be viewed as a common notion of fandom mercantile activities. The systems described and analysed in this article most likely occur in many different kinds of fandom.

Hills recognises a dichotomy in fans' relationship to mercantile activities. On the one hand, the fan is a "specialist consumer" (29) or even an "ideal consumer since they are highly predicted by the culture industry" (29); on the other hand, Hills also recognises an anti-commercial side to fandom because the commercial beliefs may not be in alignment with fandom as a cultural situation. Another notion that Hills identifies in fandom is the thought of fans as loyal customers, viewed by merchants as something to strive for (36). The fan/merchant relationship can also be viewed in the light of fan culture as a highly niched market, in which the fans seek authenticity by acts of consumerism (cf. Hills 37–38).

In the article "The Craft Consumer," Colin Campbell ponders the different views on the modern consumer and especially the notion of the "craft consumer." Craft consumerism encompasses ideas that are applicable to the fan/merchant relationship in Wincanton. Craft consumerism is closely related to the identity of the consumer in that the craft consumers "adapted consumerism in such a way that it can give expression to their own distinctive cultural values" (Campbell 38). Another of Campbell's thoughts concerns the relationship between the consumer and the object, which can be described in terms of appropriation. Mass consumer products are appropriated to fit the consumers' own world of meaning (Campbell 29). The craft consumer has an agenda in that the act of consuming becomes one of expressing oneself by means of consumer props. This perspective, too, is of use in the case I am interested in.

## The Concept of Gift Economy and Commodity

When debating issues of economics and trade, anthropologists and folklorists alike have often adhered to the study of the bond between two parties of exchange, a discussion I also find to be of interest. This has been done through the use of the term “gift exchange” or “reciprocal exchange” (Gregory 5039–42). The term “gift exchange” was famously pondered and discussed in Marcel Mauss’s work *The Gift* (2002) and has since then been a subject of analysis in cultural and economic studies. Scholars such as Claude Lévi-Strauss have also contributed to the understanding of gift exchange (See for instance Lévi-Strauss’s *Elementary Structures of Kinship*). The subsequently used model of the character of gift exchange, borrowed from Jack Gavin and Alison Phipps’s book *Tourism and Intercultural Exchange: Why Tourism Matters* (2005) on exchange is also mainly based on Marcel Mauss’s notion. Gavin and Phipps discuss one of the more common questions posed on the notion of gift exchange: what is the difference between gift exchange and exchange of commodity?

To understand the difference between gift and commodity exchange, one must first define what *exchange* is. An exchange is a transaction that is reciprocated (Gregory 5039–42). Transaction is the process in which a transactor transfers an object to another transactor (as in:  $A \rightarrow B$ ). Reciprocation is the same process in reverse (as in  $A \leftarrow B$ ). When both processes are done simultaneously it is called exchange ( $A = B$ ) (Gregory 5039–42).

Gift exchange differs from other kinds of exchange in that gift exchange involves an element of interpersonal dependence (Duran). As Duran points out “a gift implies an intention to develop or retain a social relationship between parties” (156). Commodities, in turn, are exchanged in relation to other commodities. Both gift and commodity exchange work on a basis of balanced reciprocity (Duran 157) or an equivalence of value in the exchange. However, Duran argues that “[i]f gift exchange is recognized to be an ongoing personal relationship between parties ... then each person has an apparently firm basis for knowing the amount of utility experienced by the other” (157). This suggests that gift exchange has a community building element. The community expressed by the reciprocity aspect of gift exchange is the key difference from that of an exchange of commodity, stressed by Mauss as well as Duran. Sociologist Olli Pyyhtinen even goes so far as to suggest that gifts are “a precondition for the social or community as such” (5) and the gift (and circulation thereof) is making community visible (7). Since fandom is a social affiliation (Jenkin 19), the question one must ask is: is the relationship between fans and merchants in Wincanton reciprocal in such a way that it could be designated a form of *gift exchange*? I explore this question with the help of the gift exchange-based theory of Jack Gavin and Alison Phipps.

## Different Relationships

Gavin and Phipps have given the guest/host relationship and “exchange” a great deal of thought in their book (2005). They discuss the idea that Western postmodern society has overemphasised commercial exchange as an economic form (26). They suggest that exchange between host and guest should be regarded in terms of exchange of commodities or gifts. This implies that the guest/host relationship functions on reciprocity rather than pure economic benefit. The difference between the two modes of exchange lies in the *rationality* between exchanging a gift and exchanging a commodity, resulting in different views on the relationship between the presenter and recipient (26). The key difference between a gift exchange and an exchange of commodity lies in the *relationship between the presenter and recipient*; making the relationship qualitative, rather than quantitative (i.e. creating community).

**Table 1.** The differences between gift and commodity exchange (Gavin & Phipps 27)*Gift exchange*

- Status increases as one gives things away
- Objects are inalienable
- Establishes a qualitative relation between parties, builds community
- The exchange is backed by the need to reciprocate
- The exchange creates dependence
- The exchange creates worth
- The decision process is based on the demands of community and reciprocity

*Commodity exchange*

- Status increases as one accumulates things
- Objects are alienable
- Establishes quantitative relations between strangers
- The exchange is backed by law
- The exchange maintains independence
- The exchange creates values
- The process is rational, calculative and linear

As can be seen in Table 1, the main difference between the two modes of exchange is an aspect of community building. Although the objects and food traded during Hogswatch are commodities, the relationship – as I will attempt to explicate – created and upheld by the fans and merchants is based on dependence backed by reciprocation.

Tourism scholars Sahlini Singh, Dallen J. Timothy, and Ross K. Dowling challenge the perception of the guest/host relationship in destination communities by questioning whether the inhabitants of the community always perceive themselves as hosts and whether the tourists perceive themselves as guests (10). The visited community and the tourist can be viewed in terms of an imagined community, based on mutuality and emotional bonds (Singh, Dallen and Dowling 8–9). This view implies a close connection to the concept of affection. The fan/merchant relationship can be understood to work in a similar way to the guest/host relationship, since both have an element of affection.

In his article “Tourism and local society and culture,” Michael Fagence explicates the relation between tourist and host when the destination community works as a cultural attraction, in such a way that the destination markets itself by means of a different cultural ambience (57). Fagence distinguishes three different domains of guest/host interaction: spatial, temporal and respect (58). The spatial domain encloses the physical guest/host relationship (i.e. they occupy the same space), the temporal domain encompasses the notion of seasonal fluctuations, and the respect domain enfolds the understanding of respect towards the local community. I want to draw attention to two notions from Fagence: (1) that a host community can actively market itself with cultural ambience; (2) that the guest/host relationship has a dimension of respect and responsibility. Because the fans constitute a niched market, the domain of respect becomes central for both merchant and fan. The respect domain should appear as an exchange constructed by means of reciprocity.

This article is based on three assumptions: (1) that there is an exchange between the participating fans and local merchants; (2) that the exchange shows something about the relationship between them; and (3) that the exchange and therefore the relationship is based on a mutual stock of knowledge that happens to be intertextual.

## Intertextual Trade in Wincanton

If you study the economic benefits of Discworld-fandom in Wincanton you have to identify who the benefactors are. Firstly, the owners and employees of the “Discworld Emporium” shop whose business depends on an influx of fandom-related commerce. Secondly, the pubs that get an economical boost during the Hogswatch celebration, most noticeably the Bear Inn and its proprietor Jo Wainwright. The Bear Inn serves as the stage for most of the Hogswatch-related ceremonies. Third, the inn owners, hotel entrepreneurs, and hostels get a yearly full booking. Fourth, the non-Discworld-related businesses in town, the restaurants, shops, and cafés make money on the fans. Last we have the town of Wincanton as such, which collects tax-revenue and rent, not only from the various merchants, but also from fans that have relocated and now live in Wincanton, due to its connection to Discworld-fandom. Wincanton is officially twinned with Ankh-Morpork, the largest city on *Discworld*.

In this article I will present and discuss two major examples of intertextual trade: the trade of intertextual paraphernalia in “The Discworld Emporium” and the intertextually linked menus at the Bear Inn. The reasons for this demarcation is, firstly, that the Discworld Emporium and the Bear Inn largely constitute the scene (in the physical sense of the word) upon which the celebration takes place. Secondly, both the Emporium and the Bear Inn serve the purpose of explicit examples of intertextual trade. Furthermore, both the Emporium and the Bear Inn see a remarkable influx in revenue during the Hogswatch weekend, as explained by the proprietor of the Bear Inn, Jo Wainwright, in a Facebook discussion in the spring of 2012:

(Jakob) How is the business during Hogswatch?

(Jo) ....the increase in trade is tremendous. The pub trade in G.B. is not as it was and so we depend very much on Hogswatch to pay our bills!

(Jakob) Do you have reoccurring customers?

(Jo) Many of our customers are repeat trade. That is of course due to the programme of events that are organised for us but we also try to put on Hogswatch food and entertainment.

We refer to the b&b trade that weekend as " dead men' shoes as the rooms are booked from one event to another (IF 2012/004 4)

The quotes state that the trade during Hogswatch is of great financial importance and that there is a relationship that manifests itself in “repeat trade” and the fact that rooms are booked from one event to the other. There is also a mention of “Hogswatch food and entertainment,” which suggests there is an element of intertextuality linked to the trade. One could explicate the monetary benefits of trade during Hogswatch, but my concern is the relationship between the fans and merchants and that relationship is in my view *not solely* based on the exchange of money for goods, but is more intricate than that.

The Discworld Emporium is owned and run by Mr Bernard Pearson and associates. The shop deals exclusively in *Discworld* paraphernalia, designed by Pearson and his crew. This includes pottery panoramas of buildings and scenes from the *Discworld* novels, printed artwork, and most noticeably stamps. The Discworld Emporium has, since the publication of Pratchett’s *Going Postal* (2004) which tells the story of the rebirth of the *Discworld* postal system, been printing and selling *Discworld* stamps (pic 1.). The stamps have been a big seller for the Emporium, attracting not only Discworld fans, but philatelists as well, despite the fact that the stamps cannot be used in the postal service.

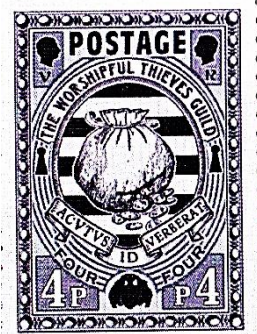


Fig 1. *Discworld* stamp. © *Discworld Emporium*.

All paraphernalia bought and sold in the store have an intertextual connection to Discworld. It also has a distinctive “Victorian” feel. This is because of the depiction of the city of Ankh-Morpork in the *Discworld* novels. Ankh-Morpork has evolved in the novels towards a Victorian, industrialized state of development. This is an on-going theme in Pratchett’s books concerning Ankh-Morpork, describing everything from the rise of the free press (*The Truth*, 2000), postal (*Going Postal*, 2004) and banking systems (*Making Money*, 2007), to the development of the city watch (for instance *Thud*, 2005) and the invention of football (*Unseen Academicals*, 2009). The paraphernalia sold in the Emporium reflects this development in the Victorian design of the items. The making and vending of the items is done to make a bit of *Discworld* “real” (according to Mr Pearson, who made this point on several occasions not only in Wincanton).<sup>2</sup> As I see it, the items in the Discworld Emporium function as a way to enhance the fandom by trading. Mr Pearson enhances the niched market ethos and playfulness by catering to the needs of it. In order to cater to the fandom, the Discworld Emporium needs to understand the fandom establishing a qualitative relationship with his customers rather than a quantitative (cf. Gavin & Phipps 27). Since the Emporium’s staff are fans, establishing qualitative relationships with the customers implies that they draw from the communal stock of knowledge of Discworld-fandom.

The same niched market is literally catered to by the proprietor and staff of the Bear Inn. In similarity to the trade of the Emporium some of the trade, but not all, is intertextually linked to *Discworld*. The Bear Inn gets its upswing in revenue from three different kinds of trade during Hogswatch: (1) from an overall increase in business, (2) from a fully booked B&B service (as stated earlier, the B&B part of the Bear Inn’s business is always booked solid by repeat customers) and (3) from the special meals prepared for the celebration. These meals are linked to *Discworld*.

There is a special Hogswatch dinner during the celebration, on Saturday, which always consists of pork sausages and mashed potatoes. This meal is in itself intertextually linked to the traditional Hogswatch meal in the books that consists of pork sausages (cf. Pratchett and Simpson 340). The meal is booked in advance through the Discworld Emporium and is the “traditional Hogswatch dinner.” However, there is an even more telling example of the intertextual link between the trades at the Bear Inn and *Discworld*: the Hogswatch lunch.

The Hogswatch lunch is an example of how the Bear Inn’s proprietor and staff are actively a part of constructing the Discworld “feel” of the Hogswatch event. The lunch consists of a pork pie called “Mrs Whitlow’s Artery-Hardening Hogswatch pie,” and is made according to a recipe from *Nanny Ogg’s Cook Book*, a cook book with recipes from *Discworld* (Pratchett and Briggs 31). The special Hogswatch lunch menu was instigated by the proprietor of the Bear Inn as a special effort towards the fans. The fans spend time at the Bear Inn anyway, it being the scene for the celebration, so Jo Wainwright came up with the idea of a special luncheon, made with recipes from the Discworld. In 2012 the lunch menu also featured “Slumpie,” a potato dish that is described in *Nanny Ogg’s Cook Book* (Pratchett and Briggs 25)

The lunch needs to be booked in advance and is colourfully advertised with the help of posters printed by the Discworld Emporium (pic 2.). This is also a way for the Bear Inn to contribute to an atmosphere that makes the fans feel welcome and contributes to the intertextual



Fig 2. Hogswatch pie poster by the Discworld Emporium. © Discworld Emporium

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Pearson’s panel at Armadacon 2011: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bB\\_uqOuvUby](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bB_uqOuvUby).

connection between the celebration and *Discworld*. To the question: “Why do you participate in the celebration?” Jo Wainwright answered: “We love the atmosphere and fun that the celebrations bring to our pub and it is vital financially to our business” (IF 2012/004). The quote indicates three things: (1) that the celebrations bring a playful or ‘fun’ atmosphere to the pub; (2) that Jo Wainwright is happy to participate and cater to the fans’ needs; and (3) that this results in an increase in revenue. Wainwright caters to the niched market with the help of the intertextual connection to *Discworld* by a playful display. Playing with her menu with the help of intertextual connections also shows how well Wainwright knows this niched market and therefore also it is a show of loyalty towards the fans, on her part.

The trade of the Bear Inn and the Discworld Emporium serve as examples of the use of intertext and playfulness as ways to tie trade to the *Discworld*, and to the *Discworld* fans. The fans constitute a group of “specialist consumers” (Hills 29). The use of intertext also indicates a form of re-situation on the part of the vendors – re-situation in reverse as parts of the *Discworld* is re-situated from the books to the socio-cultural context of the celebration. It also shows that there is a mutual stock of knowledge between the fans and the vendors. This stock of knowledge encompasses the knowledge of the *Discworld* books and an understanding of playfulness as an ethos of Discworld-fandom. Since the stock of knowledge encompasses playfulness as an ethos for Discworld-fandom, both fan and vendor need to partake in it to have a beneficial relationship. Both fan and vendor comprehend and use the intertextual connection to *Discworld* in a playful manner. This gives rise to a feeling of community and reciprocity.

## The Relationship between Fan and Merchant

As stated earlier on, there is a difference between exchange of commodities and exchange of gifts (cf. Gavin and Phipps 26). I argue that the fan/merchant relationship is expressed in a form of *gift exchange* rather than a straightforward *commodity exchange*.

Most crucial for my investigation are the points that gift exchange “establishes a qualitative relation between parties” (Gavin and Phipps 26) and that the decision process is based on community and reciprocity. Since the exchange is intertextually linked to *Discworld*, the *Discworld* novels work as a form of stock of knowledge that is shared by fans and merchants. This is perhaps best illustrated in that if you *do not know* the intertext between, say, the pie sold at the Bear Inn and the writings of Pratchett, you will probably not care about the pie in the same way as the fans of *Discworld* do. The decision to buy a *Discworld* stamp or a Hogswatch pie can be based on the *intertextual connection*. This shows that the decision to buy something intertextually linked is based on the affection towards *Discworld* and therefore can be viewed as a display of affection (cf. Hills 91; Grossberg 56–57).

Intertextual trade within fandom builds community, since the merchants understand what the fans want and cater to the fandom’s desires. This is then met by loyalty towards the merchants in that, for example, the Bear Inn during Hogswatch is booked solid by repeat customers or that the fans spend vast sums of money in the shop. I have also met fans who exclusively buy all their *Discworld* books and paraphernalia in Wincanton (Cf. IF 2012/004). This shows that the exchange is based on a need to reciprocate (cf. Gavin and Phipps 26).

The trade has created a kind of dependence between merchants and fans. The Discworld Emporium’s entire line of business is dependent on the existence of a Discworld-fandom and is also an expression of the same. Bernard Pearson is most definitely a fan of *Discworld* and within the fandom he (and the rest of the Emporium staff) enjoys a prestigious status. The increase in status is one the elements Gavin and Phipps see as crucial to gift-exchange (27). The question of status and



hierarchy within fandom is not the topic of this article; however, it is a question that has been discussed by both Matt Hills (46) and Henry Jenkins (15).

Mr Pearson is invited to numerous *Discworld* conventions and happenings around the world (see “Bernard Pearson”). The proprietor of the Bear Inn is also dependent on the fan-trade, as is explained by Jo Wainwright: “the increase in trade is tremendous. The pub trade in G.B. is not as it was and so we depend very much on Hogswatch to pay our bills!” (IF 2012/004). The quote demonstrates that the Bear Inn is dependent on the trade that the fans bring during Hogswatch. In return the fans are dependent on the Bear Inn in the sense that it hosts much of the celebration. Similarly the fans depend on the Emporium shop to host the celebration, but also to provide the paraphernalia necessary to express the fandom with; in Gavin & Phipps’s words “the decision process is based on the demands of community and reciprocity” (27).

The trade works as a form of giving and taking because of the community that exists between fans and merchants. This includes the understanding that shopping is a part of the fandom. Fans “seek authenticity, or authenticate the fan culture by acts of consumerism” (Hills 37–38). The community is also revealed in inside jokes that are mutual to the fans and Mr Pearson. Mr Pearson often jokes that: “[i]f you’re not leaving hitch hiking and still have money left, we haven’t done our jobs” (IF 2012/004 2). He can make this joke because of the status he enjoys amongst the fans. The status of Mr Pearson (and that of Mrs Wainwright) seems to increase the *more things they sell*, since fandom embraces consumerism as a vital part of the concept (cf. Hills 37–38). Ten years ago the Emporium was a shop, owned by a group of friends that happened to share the same fandom. Today the Emporium staff and Bernard are distinguished guests and speakers at *Discworld* events all over the globe.

Mrs Wainwright and the Bear Inn have gone through a similar “increase in status” (Gavin and Phipps 7). This increase in status amongst the fans was explicitly shown by the fans in 2011 when they gave Mrs Wainwright a placard stating: “The Bear is the official Hogswatch pub and is frequented by *Discworld* fans as well as Sir Terry Pratchett himself” (IF 2012/ 004). The Bear Inn was also voted the top pub in Britain later the same year in the Famous Grouse-sponsored list of top 30 British pubs. Jo Wainwright commented in an article on the “This is Somerset” site: “We have two large *Discworld* functions each year and I think the popularity of the books certainly helped us win votes for the Famous for a Reason poll” (“Somerset pub toasts award for Terry Pratchett book links”). A sign showing the *Discworld* was also made to commemorate the occasion (see pic 3). This illustrates how the fandom trade has helped increase the status of the pub. The increase in status is a consequence of the Bear Inn’s participation in fandom.

The exchange between the fans and the tradesmen “creates worth” (Gavin and Phipps 27) because fandom seeks authenticity by consuming. The paraphernalia bought and sold creates a worth rather than mere monetary value. Obviously there is money involved in the transaction of a pie or a stamp, but what is bought and sold is not only an artefact or commodity in exchange for money, but rather a piece whose worth is measured in authenticity. The fans buy intertextually linked items *because* they are intertextually linked to *Discworld*. That is the point of intertextual trade. Because of the fandom search for authenticity by acts of consuming, the object (when bought) also becomes inalienable. The item often becomes part of the fans’ private collection; this is so because of the search for authentication-by-consuming process.



**Fig 3.** The commemorative sign from 2011 photo Jakob Löfgren.

One could argue that what is bought and sold in Wincanton during Hogswatch are in fact commodities and that the exchange of them is in fact a commodity exchange.<sup>3</sup> Were it not for the fact that the exchange builds community as it is based on a mutual stock of knowledge, I might have been inclined to agree; there are commodities changing hands after all. However, the exchange in Wincanton creates a form of dependence and the act to consume is based on reciprocity, which is shown in the loyalty the fans display towards the tradesmen. They are part of the community rather than strangers (cf. Gavin and Phipps 27). Intertextual trade within fandom depends on this sense of community. Therefore, I argue that the trade should be viewed as a form of gift exchange.

### Cultural Ambience and Mutuality in the Fan/Merchant Relationship

Since the trade described works on a basis of community and is conditional on the fans and merchants having a mutual stock of knowledge at hand, I argue that the relationship between them emphasises community, based on mutuality and emotional bonds (cf. Singh, Timothy, and Dowling 9–10) and therefore the domain of respect becomes important (cf. Fagence 58). The relationship between merchant and fan resembles that of a host and guest. Also the intertextual trade can be said to be a trade designed to enhance and trade in a “cultural ambience” (Fagence 57).

Whether you take the paraphernalia of the Emporium or the pie as an example, the trade caters to the fandom in that it enhances a cultural ambience. Said ambience is designed to fandom-specific needs. The trade aim at the creation of a feeling of *Discworld*. By trading in intertextual items the merchants actively construct an ambience in which it is possible for the fans to take part of *Discworld* in a tangible way. Furthermore, the ambience is enhanced in that for instance the Emporium shop is refurbished and decorated in a way that it conveys a Victorian feel. This enhances the connection to the city of Ankh-Morpork, described in the novels as a pastiche of a Victorian era city. The Bear Inn is also decorated during Hogswatch to match the *Discworld* ethos, for example by the use of streamers hanging from the ceiling that contain coloured flags as well as socks and underwear. Again, this plays on the connection with *Discworld* in the sense that the humoristic disposition of the novels is conveyed by the use of laundry in the decoration the point being: “If there is such a thing as Discworld streamer, it probably has laundry in it.” The decoration of the Bear Inn and the decoration of the shop can also be viewed as an expression of playing with the boundaries between fiction and reality, and therefore it also constitutes a display of affective play with *Discworld*.

The host community (Wincanton) and its tradesmen actively try to intensify and market the cultural ambience of *Discworld*-fandom. Wincanton, the Bear Inn and the Emporium use *Discworld* as a selling point, and quite proudly so. If you for instance visit the Bear Inn’s website they proclaim that “[f]or fans of Terry Pratchett and his *Discworld* series, Wincanton is twinned with the fictitious city of Ankh-Morpork and regular events are held throughout the year” (*The Bear Inn website*). One could imagine a situation where fans would distance themselves from merchant activity based on a beloved franchise, but in Wincanton it all works. Why?

I argue that since the trade is based on mutuality and a sense of community, the host community, Wincanton, enjoys a great deal of respect from the fans. Would the trade work as a strict form of *commodity exchange* there would be a sense of anonymity between fans and merchants instead of a community. Since the trade *is based on communality* rather than anonymity, the relationship between the fans and merchants generates a mutual respect. That is also why the trade in intertextual items results in a guest/host relationship rather than a buyer/seller relationship.

<sup>3</sup> Fandom scholars such as Nicolle Lamerichs have indeed written about fandom trade in terms of commodities and profit (see Lamerichs 48).

The fans display their respect for the traders in that they allow the merchants a high status within the fan-community. This is shown in the aforementioned official placard given to the proprietor of the Bear Inn or in the status that Bernard Pearson and the Emporium staff enjoy. The respect is countered by the merchants in the continuous enhancement of the Discworld-ambience in the form of new items to buy or eat. Jo Wainwright also states that she and the fans enjoy a “wonderful relationship” (IF 2012/004 4), which I interpret as a sign of respect towards the fans.

The relationship between merchants and fans has been referred to by Mr Pearson on several occasions, noticeably in several Hogswatch thank you notes posted on the Discworld Emporium website forum. The issue of being financially dependent on the fandom is not a topic that is veiled. As can be seen, for instance in the subsequent quote from a Hogswatch post on the forum: “Thank you so much for keeping all of us in the Emporium gainfully employed, for being the best bunch of friends we all have and for keeping me in pipe tobacco and snuff”.<sup>4</sup> Mr Pearson also referred to the fandom as a second family or tribe in the 2010 Hogswatch speech: “Discworld is a family ... We all have become part of this sort of 'tribe' like random iron filings being drawn to a magnet, this 'magnet' of course is a series of books which give us all an uncommon denominator” (IF 2012/004 1). These quotes illustrate that the relationship is indeed founded on community rather than anonymity.

Since the merchants of Wincanton “play along” with the playfulness of the fans, they display respect towards the fans. The enhancement of the cultural ambience as well as the selling of intertextual paraphernalia is community building. The fans and merchants are part of a guest/host relationship in which the merchants’ role is to help create a *Discworld* ethos for the celebration. The fans have to be comfortable – and a part of making the fans comfortable is to play along and sell intertextual items.

## Fandom Consumerism

Matt Hills clearly states that fandom seeks to authenticate fandom by acts of consumerism (37–38). The act of consumerism has been adapted so that it expresses the fandom itself. In a way, fandom-consumerism is a form of intertextual craft consumerism (cf. Campbell 23). The whole intertextual trade can be viewed as craft consuming by means of re-situation. The fans and merchants both adapted consumerism to give expression to specific cultural values. The specific cultural values in question are a cultural ambience of *Discworld*. The intertextual items are in themselves a form of re-situation. The trade is an expression of the re-situated cultural ambience of Hogswatch. To buy and sell intertextually linked items is therefore a craft consumerist expression of a re-situated ethos of *Discworld*. Furthermore, the act of consuming, since it is built on communality and mutual respect, is an expression of the community. To trade in intertextual stuff is an expression of “togetherness.” Said communality is the reason why the trade and the relationship works the way it does in the Wincanton example.

Fans express themselves and their fandom in the use of consumer props (cf. Campbell 40). Therefore the trade can be considered a step in a process of authentication of fandom (cf. Hills 37–38). This notion of “the authentic” also needs to be considered by the merchants. That is why the Emporium’s products are designed as crafted goods rather than mass produced.

The humorously (and appropriately) named “Unreal estate” leasing contract serves as an example of the Victorian era style of the products at the Emporium (see pic. 4). The product is a mock leasing contract in which the buyer gets a lease on an Ankh-Morpork apartment. The paper is designed to look like a contract would, would it have been drawn up by a solicitor in Ankh-

<sup>4</sup> See the forum post by “Bernard the Stout” at Discworld Emporium website: <http://www.discworldemporium.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=20207>.

Morpork. The design gives a distinct feel of “authenticity” and of a Victorian era print, from the “juridical language” down to the font, print, and paper. It features paragraphs on the use of magic and damage liability clause in case of dragon attacks, mixed with more usual, “real,” paragraphs of the type “no excessive noise after 10 pm.” In short, the contract is made to feel authentic to *Discworld*.

In leasing an apartment in Ankh-Morpork the fans authenticate the *Discworld*-fandom by purchasing a product designed to serve that purpose. They act as craft consumers in that they are buying a product specific to suit their own agenda, adapting consumerism so that it expresses their cultural values (Campbell 38). At the same time the merchants appropriate their products to fit the needs of the fans (cf. Campbell 29). This appropriation is



**Fig 4.** 'Unreal estate' leasing contract.  
© Discworld Emporium.

done by means of re-situating products from *Discworld* to Wincanton. The process of authentication and craft consumerism, as described here, works due to the fact that the *Discworld* novels work as a mutual stock of knowledge. The trading of fandom items creates communality between the fans and merchants that is *necessary* for fandom trade. The merchants need to understand the fandoms' stock of knowledge to cater to the fandom market. Since the merchants do understand the fandom, and partake in the fandoms' playful potential (Hills 91), they receive loyalty and respect from the fans. This is crucial to understand when studying fan/merchant relationships, not only in Wincanton, but in other fandoms as well. The same gift-exchange system of reciprocal exchange based on a communal stock of knowledge can also be seen in, for instance, the ongoing campaign “Support your local comic book store” undertaken by comic book fans in the USA, campaigning for loyalty and respect towards your local vendors. The numerous websites<sup>5</sup> and social media groups urging towards loyalty towards local vendors indicate an understanding of shopping as a part of fandom community activities. The community building aspects of trade and the playful elements of fandom are also discussed by Nicolle Lamerichs in connection to fandom/media cons. The reciprocal relationship of fandom economy is, however, better showcased in smaller scale events and shops, such as in Wincanton or the local comic book stores.

## Fandom and Craft Consumerism

Fans authenticate their fandom by acts of consumerism; hence the intertextual goods traded in Wincanton could be viewed as one part of the balance equation. One could argue that the other half of the equation would be the money that is exchanged for the goods. I would argue that the exchange of money is but a part of the balanced reciprocity. This is so because of the fans' and merchants' ongoing process “to develop or retain a social relationship” (Duran 157). The key to understanding the relationship between fans and merchants in Wincanton (and indeed elsewhere) is loyalty. The balanced reciprocity could be seen as an exchange of goods utilized by the fans in their authentication process, in exchange for loyalty towards the merchants. It could also be seen as loyalty from the merchants in the continuous participation in the playful events of Hogswatch in exchange for an equal amount of loyalty from the fans. Jo Wainwright expects her establishment to be fully booked during Hogswatch, not taking any other bookings. The same goes for the *Discworld* Emporium, continuously providing a cultural ambience and goods utilized by fans in their

<sup>5</sup> For instance, Comic Shop Locator (<http://www.comicshoplocator.com>).

authentication process in exchange for loyalty from the fans. The fans choose to use the Emporium for their fan commerce rather than, for instance, making all of the paraphernalia themselves or buying books and paraphernalia online (IF 2012/004). The exchange process in Wincanton becomes an (gift)exchange of loyalty for loyalty, although the merchants trade in commodities.

The fans and merchants have developed a relationship in which they have “an apparently firm basis for knowing the amount of utility experienced by the other” (Duran 157) acting upon this understanding to create a form of imagined community. The utility equivalence experienced is that of loyalty resulting in a gift of mutual and “frequent expressions of appreciation” (157) building communality in the process. The relationship entails an idea of mutual respect, acted out in the exchange process (loyalty for loyalty), visualizing a community building process (cf. Pyyhtinen 7). Since the trade/exchange makes community (imagined or not) visible the fan/merchant exchange can be viewed as a form of gift exchange.

### Gift Exchange-economy as Embeddedness-construction

The notion of embeddedness is a core concept of economic sociology (Roger 50), helping to affirm various ways in which a market is embedded in social life, the idea being that no economy is autonomous from social context. The term embeddedness has, since its revival in the mid-80s, become a somewhat amorphous term within economic sociology, leading to attempts by scholars to redefine it. This has led to various interpretations of embeddedness, as scholars have tried to define the different ways in which a market can be embedded. It is, however, sufficient to say that markets are embedded in community or “networks of community” (Roger 51), upheld by “interpersonal trust in communal relations within them” (Roger 65).

In his article “Spatial’ Relationships? Towards a Reconceptualization of Embeddedness” Martin Hess (165–186) divides embeddedness into the subcategories: *Societal*-, *network*- and *territorial embeddedness*, all of which are interesting in relation to fandom-economy, and the Wincanton case in particular.

*Societal embeddedness* takes into account “the cultural imprint or heritage of actors that influence their economic behavior” (Hess 178). If the participants have a stock of knowledge consisting of intertextual knowledge of *Discworld*, they do in a sense have a “cultural imprint” that influences how and what they purchase. The cultural imprint is described by Hess as a heritage (178) or as a form of “genetic code” consisting of history and culture (180). The common sense I have described can be viewed as an intertextual “code” that shapes the same perceptions and actions, as well as being crucial to the economic success of the merchants in Wincanton. *Network embeddedness* is described by Hess as “the network of actors a person or organization is involved in” (180) and “can be regarded as the product of trust building between network agents” (180). The network that the participants (actors) and the merchants (organizations) share in the Wincanton case is built on trust building between actors and results in a community. *Territorial embeddedness* is described as “the extent to which an actor is ‘anchored’ in particular territories and places” (180). This form of embeddedness is crucial in the Wincanton case, as the participants most certainly have anchored their celebration in Wincanton.

I suggest that the proposed gift-economy model, where the relationship between fan and merchant is built upon an ongoing exchange of loyalty, is a method to achieve embeddedness, societal, network- and territorial. The trust building relationship shows a process toward embeddedness. The reciprocal loyalty between the fans and merchants reveals a process of network embeddedness, since network embeddedness and gift-economy alike are built on a social relation between actors. Exchange of loyalty is one way in which network embeddedness can be achieved. The fact that the merchants know how to cater to the fandom market demonstrates that the

merchants have an understanding of the cultural imprint of the fans. This is most evident in the merchants' participation in the fandom's affective play. In order to trade in intertextual goods, you need to understand the intertext. Since the fans' cultural imprint consists of the knowledge of the intertext, trading in intertextual paraphernalia is a marker of societal embeddedness in fandom. The entire celebration can be viewed as a means to *territorially embed* the fandom in Wincanton. The gift-economy model can be viewed as a way in which reciprocity and loyalty is used to anchor the celebration in Wincanton. In the same manner, the town's twinning with Ankh-Morpork can be viewed as a territorial embeddedness and a display of loyalty to the fans. The fans reciprocate the loyalty to Wincanton by returning there to hold the celebration.

One could also make a case for that embeddedness can create and uphold a gift-economy, the different modes of embeddedness being a precursor to establishing a gift exchange. However, since the fans – in theory – can elect to celebrate Hogswatch elsewhere, I argue that the system of gift-exchange is a way for the merchants in Wincanton to achieve embeddedness through loyalty. If the fans did not feel welcomed and had not loyalty expressed in the exchange, they would not feel as embedded in Wincanton, and could move the celebration elsewhere.

For these processes to take place, interpersonal relationships need to be created and maintained. The manner in which the relationship is upheld is the ongoing exchange of loyalty between fans and merchants.<sup>6</sup> Since the relationship is based on reciprocity and exchange of loyalty, it is a form of gift-exchange resulting in societal, network- and territorial embeddedness of the fandom market.

## Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to investigate the relationship between the fans visiting the Hogswatch celebration and the merchants of Wincanton. I have concluded that the fan/proprietor relationship and the merchant activities in the celebration can be viewed as a form of *gift exchange*. The exchange is based on mutuality and communality. This is so because the trade is built on a mutual stock of knowledge. The fan/merchant relationship seems to work because of the mutual understanding, creating a mutual respect. In this the merchants and fans are part of the same fandom.

As to what the benefits of this kind of trade are, it is clear that the intertextual trade is beneficial to the merchants in loyal customers and an increase in status within the fandom, resulting in increased revenue. The fans enjoy merchants who understand the fandom, authenticate the Discworld-fandom in the exchange, and enjoy the benefits of using the Discworld Emporium and The Bear Inn as a stage for the Hogswatch celebration. The fans are dependent on the merchants' good will and reciprocate in the form of loyalty. The merchants are dependent on the trade the fans bring and therefore make an effort to act as good hosts for the celebration. The mutuality and reciprocal respect can be viewed as a gift-economy system resulting in embedded market.

The mercantile exchange during Hogswatch is built on mutuality. Conversationally one could say that the fan/merchant relationship works on a basis of "I'll scratch your back, you'll scratch mine."

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<sup>6</sup> The exchange process is becoming "a precondition for the social or community as such" (Pyyhtinen 5).

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