

A new vocabulary for fantasy scholarship
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Stiegler’s terminology

	characterized by	historical period	subjectivity	genre
subsistence	absolute lack of meaning	postmodernity	animal	horror
existence	meaning/being out of step	modernity (history proper)	human	sf
consistence	alignment of meaning/being	premodernity	god	fantasy

Stating story

Statement	Example	Variant	Example
story exists (as an embrace)	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> <i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i> anything by David Eddings	story exists (as a constraint)	<i>Titus Groan</i> <i>The Magicians</i> (maybe) <i>The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms</i>
story is for the human	same	story is not for the human	<i>The Broken Sword</i> <i>The Iron Dragon’s Daughter</i> <i>Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrel</i>
we must return to story	same	we must question whether we return to story	<i>Viriconium</i> <i>The Steel Remains</i> <i>Who Fears Death</i>

- Whether story exists in a fantasy is a question of its **positivity**. The thematic concern with positivity is called **might** (as in Uther Doul’s Mightblade and the sense of “it might be this, or it might be that”).
- How (and if) story exists in relation to the human subject in a given fantasy is a question of its **affectivity**. The thematic concern with affectivity is called **magic** (which refers not so much to spells, talents, or powers as to a fundamental, non-material connection between subject and object.)
- Whether a fantasy seeks to return the subject to story is a questions of story’s **desirability**. The thematic concern with desirability is called **ending** (which encompasses a longing for return, and thus an end that does away altogether with the logic of beginnings and endings, as well as the opposite of this longing, namely the fear of the “end of all things” which would render return forever impossible).