

# PhD Thesis Summary

## Windows of Fantasy: The Significance of Science-Fiction and Fantasy Film and Television Posters

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The doctoral research explored science-fiction and fantasy posters, specifically those related to films and television shows, from the perspective of their owners, examining their potential as sources of cultural significance and meaning. The research explored these in terms of the components (e.g., content) of the poster, the room they are displayed in, their placement, the media texts (films or television shows) they reference, morals, behaviour, identity, sense of self, well-being (through emotional responses), self-expression, other opinions and levels of investment. Given that science fiction and fantasy are otherworldly and imaginative genres, exploring their posters offers a unique lens, akin to exploring the fantastical worlds they depict.

### Aim

The research aimed to explore the significance of science-fiction and fantasy posters for individuals and groups as a source of cultural significance and meaning.

### Methodology

Data were collected through an online survey (N = 273) and semi-structured interviews (N = 28) with adult science-fiction and fantasy film and television show poster owners.

### Framework

Two conceptual models guide the analysis:

- The Three Significances: Aesthetic, Functional, and Significance (both spatial and personal)
- The Big Three: Content, Design, and Colour

### Key Findings

- Content held the greatest significance for owners.
- Posters served as tools for self-expression, reflecting their owners' identities, affinities, and convictions, while also reinforcing their connection to films and TV shows they reference.
- Rather than shaping moral beliefs, posters were more likely to reinforce their sense of self and fan identity and evoke emotional responses.
- The space in which posters are displayed shapes their meaning and significance, just as posters influence the atmosphere and function of that space.
- Official posters tend to be accurate depictions of the media text, while fan art posters offer creative reinterpretations of already reimagined worlds.
- The type of poster, physical or digital, plays a crucial role in shaping 'The Three Significances', influencing its availability (both in terms of content and accessibility) and its presentation/display (how it is showcased and experienced).

### Contribution

This research revealed that science-fiction and fantasy posters are not just ads for movies and TV shows; they are personal, meaningful objects that reflect who we are. By studying how fans collect and display them, the project shows that posters can express identity, spark emotion, and connect people to imagined worlds. It also introduces new ways of understanding why these posters matter, whether they're official releases, fan art, physical prints, or digital wallpapers, and how they transform ordinary rooms into windows of fantasy.

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