Exploring the relationship between the fan fiction community and the publishing industry

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Glossary

Word	Explanation
Aca-Fan	Academic fan
Affirmational fandom	Fandom oriented around the creator, focused on debating the source material
Archive Of Our Own (AO3)	An online fan fiction archive, run by the OTW
Alternate Universe (AU)	Fan fiction that takes place in a different fictional universe than the source material
Alternate Universe/All Human (AU/AH)	Fan fictin that takes place in a different fictional universe than the source material, and where all the characters are human.
Beta reader	Someone who reads through and edits a story before it is posted
Canon	The source "text", what fans consider to be the authoritative source material for fan creations
Fan	Someone who has a strong interest in a particular person or phenomenon
Fandom	A community of fans
Fan fiction	Fictional stories based on the original works or characters of someone else
Fanfiction archive	An (online) archive of fan fiction stories
Fanfiction.net (FF.net)	Online fan fiction archive
Fanzine	A fan made magazine, previously called fan mags
Headcanon	Personal theories or ideas about the source material
NC-17	Rated age 17 and up
Organization for Transformative Works (OTW)	An organization dedicated to preserving fan history and culture
Real Person Fiction (RPF)	Fan fiction written about real people, as opposed to fictional characters
Ship	Relationship between two or more characters
Shipname	Nickname referring to a specific ship
Slash	Fan fiction focused on homosexual relationships
Transformational fandom	Fandom oriented around fan works, focused on fixing or altering the source material
Wattpad	An online fiction sharing website that also allows fan fiction

Introduction

Fan fiction is a genre of writing in which authors takes characters or settings from an already existing piece of media, literature, or pop culture, and writes their own stories using these characters or settings. I have always found the fan fiction community to be a very interesting part of internet culture, partly because of the wide variety of stories that can be found within it. As will be explored in this thesis, fan fiction has existed for a long time, and the response the community has gotten from outsiders has been varied. A common concern has been whether fan fiction constitutes a copyright violation.

Therefore, I find it very interesting that some fan fiction writers are now getting stories that started off as fan fiction professionally published. It seems to me as if the publishing industry is starting to see the commercial value in these stories that potentially have an already established audience. When writing fan fiction everyone you are writing for are already interested in and familiar with the characters and settings you are writing about. I believe that particularly following the success of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy, which started off as fan fiction of the popular young adult series *Twilight*, publishers have seen that there is an audience for these types of stories, as well as that publishing former fan fiction is possible. As will be more thoroughly explored in chapter 3 of this thesis, a number of other former fan fiction novels based on the *Twilight* books have been published, as well as novels based on fan fiction from other media.

This thesis will explore the relationship between the fan fiction community and the established publishing industry and will attempt to determine whether the reputation of fan fiction has improved. In order to do this, I will first be exploring the history of fan fiction, looking at how the phenomenon has developed and how it has traditionally been received, as well as how it is viewed today. I will also be exploring the relationship the fan fiction community has with the established publishing industry by using a total of ten case studies, looking at authors who have taken stories they originally wrote as fan fiction and reworked them into original stories for publication. To analyse these case studies, I will be using the writings of Michael Bhaskar and Pierre Bourdieu, looking at the development of the publishing industry in the digital era, and the concept of symbolic capital. While fan fiction is being written all over the world, this thesis will primarily focus on contemporary, English-language fan fiction, largely based on Western media, literature, and popular culture.

The first chapter will be an explanation of some core terminology relevant to this thesis. In this chapter I will explain the terms fan fiction and fan fiction archive, as well as

explain the difference between the established publishing industry and self-publishing, both of which will be terms relevant to the overall thesis.

The second chapter will be a comprehensive history of fan fiction as a genre, starting with early science fiction clubs created in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. This chapter will explore how and where fan communities as we know them today first developed, and how fan fiction came to develop from within these communities. I will also be looking at how fan fiction has developed from early fan fiction communities starting off with amateur magazines, to the early internet era, and finally looking at the creation of the Organization for Transformative Works (a non-profit organization advocating for the rights of fans), and some of the events that led to its creation.

The third chapter will be exploring the specific phenomenon of fan fiction authors who have reworked their fan fiction into an original work for publication. In order to look at the relationship between the fan fiction community and the publishing industry I will explore a total of ten case studies, consisting of authors who have had their fan fiction published as original fiction. The authors I will be looking at have either taken a work of fan fiction they have previously written and reworked it into a piece of original fiction, or they have written original fiction wherein they have used or taken inspiration from parts of fan fiction they have previously written. I will be analysing these case studies using the works of Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Bhaskar, looking at how the reputation of fan fiction as well as individual fan fiction authors may have contributed to the changing perception of fan fiction in the publishing industry.

The sources I have used are a mix of academic articles, theories of publishing and capital, blog posts, and various online resources. The second chapter is written based on academic sources, blog posts that provide first-hand accounts or context to events that have happened in fan fiction history, as well as articles from the online fan wiki Fanlore, which functions as an online resource providing history and explanations of terms from within fan culture. The academic sources are largely written by academics within the field of fan studies, who therefore provide valuable insight into the topic of my thesis.

Chapter 1: Terms and concepts

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and define a number of terms and concepts, while at the same time connecting these terms and concepts to the overarching theme of this thesis,

which is to examine the relationship between the fan fiction community and the publishing industry.

1.1 Explaining fan fiction and fan fiction culture

Fan fiction can most broadly be defined as a fictional story written by a fan, usually about characters or settings from an already existing fictional work. However, fan fiction can be written about virtually anything – the most common is perhaps fan fiction based on books, movies, or TV shows, but fan fiction can also be written about video games, comic books, or even real people like actors or musicians. In order to fully understand what fan fiction is, one also needs to understand the culture and communities surrounding fan fiction. A community of fans is typically referred to as a fandom. Fan fiction writers are included in this, but not everyone who considers themselves a part of a fandom writes or reads fan fiction.

In an essay written on the social networking site and blogging platform Dreamwidth by user 'obsession_inc' in 2009, fandom is divided into two broad categories – affirmational fandom and transformational fandom. Affirmational fandom is creator-centric, and usually concerns itself with debating the source material. Transformational fandom is fan works-oriented, and usually concerns itself with taking the source material and fixing or otherwise altering the it, for example by writing fan fiction.[1] While fan works come in many shapes and sizes – fan art, fan videos, fan songs etc. – this thesis will concern itself with the specific phenomenon of fan fiction.

The creation of fan fiction involves taking a piece of media that has already been released and writing stories that alter this piece of media in some way, whether that is by rewriting the ending or by removing the characters from the established setting and transplanting them into an entirely different universe.

Fan fiction has traditionally been a genre overwhelmingly created by women, as well as other groups of people who normally do not see themselves represented in the media. As Catherine Tosenberger writes:

> Since the vast majority of English-language Western literature and
> entertainment assumes a default straight, white, cisgender male audience, it's
> not surprising that transformational fandom is often populated by those

[1] Obsession_inc, 'Affirmational fandom vs. Transformational fandom', June 1 2009, <http://obsession-inc.dreamwidth.org/82589.html>, (accessed May 16 2020).

considered marginal audiences, who are more likely to feel a need to rework a beloved story to suit their own desires.[2]

Fan fiction allows marginalized people to create their own narratives. This often involves writing so-called 'slash' fan fiction, where two characters engage in a homosexual relationship.[3] These stories are often, but not always, written with characters who are not depicted as queer in the source material. This ability to freely create their own narratives can often play an important part in allowing people to explore their sexuality or gender identity, in a safe environment.

Some people claim that fan fiction has existed for pretty much as long as storytelling has existed, and that works such as the legends of King Arthur or Shakespeare's plays, are also fan retellings of stories that were already written. These works make use of characters – both fictional and non-fictional – taken from already existing works. This is, however, not fan fiction in the modern sense, as these stories were created in a time before copyright, and in a time where stories and characters were seen as a more communal resource than they are today.

1.1.1 A note on copyright

The topic of whether fan fiction constitutes copyright infringement is a complicated one, partly because a work of fan fiction has never actually been challenged in court. An argument often used is that fan fiction is not created with the intention of making money, and that therefore it does not present competition for the original work. Some also argue that fan fiction can bring new fans to the original work, and that therefore fan fiction may actually positively contribute to the original creator's exposure.[4] The Fair Use doctrine, which "provides exceptions to what constitutes copyright infringement" has often been cited to prove that fan fiction is legal.[5] However:

> [T]here is no concrete answer to whether or not fan fiction constitutes fair use. It must be taken on a case by case basis according to the facts individual to both the work of fan fiction and to the original copyrighted work, at least until some legal precedent is set.[6]

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[2] C. Tosenberger, 'Mature Poets Steal: Children's Literature and the Unpublishability of Fanfiction', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 39 (2014), p. 8.

[3] A.S. Callis, 'Homophobia, heteronormativity, and slash fan fiction', *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 22 (2016), n.pag.

[4] Ibid., p. 282.

[5] K. Christian, 'Fan Fiction and the Fair Use Doctrine', *The Serials Librarian*, 65 (2013), p. 278.

[6] R. Tushnet, quoted in K. Christian, 'Fan Fiction and the Fair Use Doctrine', *The Serials Librarian*, 65 (2013), p. 284.

This article was written in 2013, but as far as I have been able to tell, there is so far no legal precedent declaring fan fiction to be either legal or illegal. This means that fan fiction still operates in a sort of legal grey area.

1.2 Explaining fan fiction archives

A fan fiction archive is a digital collection of fan works, usually with a focus on fan fiction, but other types of fan works may also be allowed. Today, these archives typically function as databases where users can post their fan fiction as well as find and read other people's stories. Fan fiction archives are dedicated to hosting and preserving works of fan fiction as parts of fan culture, as well as making these works accessible to anyone who wants to read them.

Today, the three largest and most well-known fan fiction archives – at least when it comes to Western media fan fiction – are Fanfiction.net (also known as FF.net), Archive Of Our Own (also known as Ao3), and Wattpad, all of which largely allow fan fiction written about any source material. While Wattpad is not an exclusive fan fiction archive, but rather a general fiction sharing platform, I have included it here because it hosts a large amount of fan fiction, and because of its connection to the publishing industry.

Fanfiction.net is the oldest of these archives, having been around since October 1998.[7] It was considered the largest fan fiction archive for a long time, and it is still one of the most popular fan fiction archives on the Internet. As of summer of 2010, it was estimated to host more than 5.4 million stories.[8] I have not been able to find more recent statistics. Fanfiction.net allows works to be rated between K (suitable for people aged 5 or older) and M (suitable for people aged 16 or older). It does not allow stories that are sexually explicit. When searching for fan fiction stories, FF.net allows users to apply a series of filters, allowing users to find fan fiction that fits certain parameters.
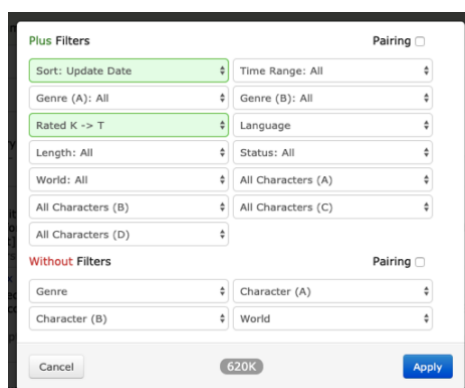

Figure 1 Screenshot from Fanfiction.net.[9]

[7] Fanlore, 'Fanfiction.net', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/FanFiction.Net>, (accessed May 18 2020).
[8] A. De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, (Cambridge, Massachussets: The MIT Press, 2016), p. 338.
[9] Fanfiction.net, 'Harry Potter', <https://www.fanfiction.net/book/Harry-Potter/>, (accessed May 18 2020).

Fanfiction.net has a fairly simple setup, showcasing different categories of fan fiction on their front page, such as fan fiction based on 'Anime/Manga', 'Books', 'Cartoons', 'Comics' etc. Within these categories users can find fan fiction based on specific sources.

Archive Of Our Own is another of the largest fan fiction archives, with more than 6 million posted works and about 2.5 million users as of May 2020.[10] Ao3 was created in response to a growing request from within the fan fiction community for an independent, fan run, non-profit archive. The site was created in 2008 and went into open beta in 2009. It is still in open beta today, which means that you need an invitation in order to create an account on the site. However, as of May 7, 2020 there were just over 2000 people on the waiting list, and Archive Of Our Own reports that it sends out up to 15 000 invitations per day. You do not need an account to access and read the fan fiction posted on the site, but you do need one to post your own stories. The archive was founded by academics and members of the fan community Francesca Coppa, Naomi Novik, and Rebecca Tushnet.[11] The filters on Archive Of Our Own are divided into several groups, allowing users to choose the rating, warnings, categories (referring to the type of relationship), fandoms, characters, relationships (referring to relationships between specific characters), and additional tags. This archive also allows users to write in their own tags to include in the search.
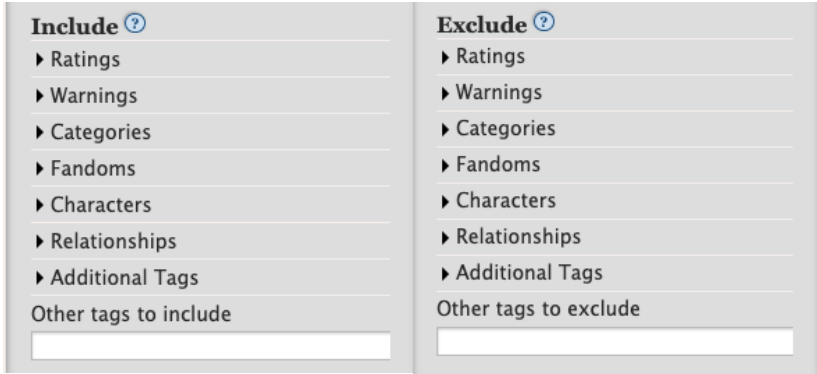
Figure 2 Screenshot from Archive Of Our Own. Screenshot May 13 2020.[12]
Figure 3 Screenshot from Archive Of Our Own. Screenshot taken May 15 2020.[13]

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[10] Archive Of Our Own, 'AO3 Statistics 2020: A Look Behind the Scenes', <https://archiveofourown.org/admin_posts/15931>, (accessed May 18 2020).

[11] C. Busch, 'An Archive Of Our Own: How Ao3 Built a Nonprofit Fanfiction Empire and Safe Haven', *Syfy Wire*, February 12 2019, <https://www.syfy.com/syfywire/an-archive-of-our-own-how-ao3-built-a-nonprofit-fanfiction-empire-and-safe-haven>, (accessed August 3 2020).

[12] Archive Of Our Own, 'Works in Harry Potter – J. K. Rowling', <https://archiveofourown.org/tags/Harry%20Potter%20-%20J*d*%20K*d*%20Rowling/works>, (accessed May 18 2020).

[13] Ibid.

Below this there is also an identical option for excluding elements the user does not want to see in the search results. Archive Of Our Own allows any content, including sexually explicit content, provided it does not contain or link to anything they deem illegal or inappropriate.[14]

The third and final fan fiction archive I will discuss in this subsection is Wattpad. Wattpad is not a pure fan fiction archive, but rather a site that accepts both fan fiction and original works.[15] Wattpad has existed since 2007, and reports having over 80 million users. It is unclear, however, how many of these users are fan fiction writers and how many are writers of original fiction, or how many write both. The tagging system on Wattpad seems somewhat disorganised, though that may be because of my inexperience with the site. There is no filtering system, only a search bar allowing you to search for the tags or story you want. Wattpad is also known for helping writers of popular stories to get published, and one of the most well-known examples of this is Anna Todd's *After* series, which started as One Direction fan fiction before it was published by Gallery Books in 2014.[16]

1.3 The established publishing industry

R. Lyle Skains describes traditional publishing as "the royalty-based publishing model that dominated the twentieth century, particularly in terms of fiction, as opposed to government, religious, or author-subsidized publishing."[17] The established publishing industry refers to what most people probably think of as publishing today, where an author will submit a work for consideration, and if the publishing house agrees to publish the work, the work will then go through a series of edits before it can move on to publication. Getting a publishing deal means that a lot of the work involved in publishing a novel is done by people other than the authors. A publishing house typically has an entire team ready to edit, design, print, distribute and market your book, meaning that this is not something the author has to do themselves.

There are several writers who have successfully made the move from fan fiction to the traditional publishing industry, as will be explored in chapter 3. The process of removing fan fiction from the internet in order to have it published professionally and removing any references to the source material is referred to as "pulling to publish", or "filing off the serial numbers" and is generally viewed negatively by fan communities.[18] Pulling to publish is seen as taking advantage of and making money from the creator of the source material, but it is

[14] Archive Of Our Own, 'Illegal and inappropriate Content', <https://archiveofourown.org/tos#IV.H.>, (accessed August 4 2020).

[15] Fanlore, 'Wattpad', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Wattpad>, (accessed May 18 2020).

[16] Anna Todd, 'My Story', <http://www.annatodd.com/my-story/>, (accessed May 14 2020).

[17] R.L. Skains, *Digital Authorship*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 4.

[18] Fanlore, 'Filing Off The Serial Numbers', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Filing_Off_The_Serial_Numbers>, (accessed May 18 2020).

also seen as taking advantage of fan labour. Fan fiction authors often build upon previously established tropes or practices, and fan fiction authors often make use of beta readers when writing fan fiction. A beta reader is more or less an amateur editor, who usually voluntarily reads through fan fiction before it is posted.

1.4 Self-publishing

Self-publishing is the process of publishing a work on your own, as opposed to through a publishing house. When engaging in self-publishing, the author must do all the work that would normally be done or arranged by the publishing house. This means that all editing, design, production, distribution, marketing, and everything else involved in publishing a book must be done by the author, and that authors must pay for everything themselves. While this means more work for the individual, it also provides a sense of independence, both for authors who feel that their creative freedom is stifled by publishers, and for authors who cannot find a publisher willing to publish their work. For a long time, self-publishing was looked down upon because it signalled to professionals that the author was unable to find a publisher willing to invest in their work.[19]

Self-publishing is becoming more popular as this negative stigma against self-published books is becoming less prevalent. Self-publishing sites are becoming more common, allowing authors to have more control over what happens to their writing. Next to the self-publishing platforms owned by larger publishing houses, Amazon is a company that has largely been supportive of self-published works.[20] The Amazon owned service CreateSpace allows authors to self-publish to Amazon either as e-books or as print on demand books, or both. Digital technology and the rise of the e-book has allowed self-publishing to become much easier than it used to be, and through services such as CreateSpace authors can get their works published more easily than before.

Fan fiction archives allow authors to essentially self-publish their works, though many archives have policies that prevent users from making money from fan fiction posted on their site or from actively asking for money from readers by linking to crowdfunding sites such as ko-fi or patreon. However, there are also sites specifically created to help fan fiction authors to self-publish their works and make money from them. One of these sites was the Amazon run site Kindle Worlds, which existed from 2013 until 2018. Amazon licensed the rights to certain TV shows and movies, allowing them to use Kindle Worlds to publish fan fiction

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[19] T. Laquintano, *Mass Authorship and the Rise of Self-Publishing*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016), p. 35.
[20] Ibid., p. 49.

written about these shows, and therefore allowing the fan fiction authors to make money off their writing. Wattpad has also, as previously mentioned, helped authors (both of fan fiction and original stories) to come into contact with publishers, if their stories were popular enough. There is even a site on their support page titled 'What If I'm Contacted by a Publisher?' offering advice to authors on how to spot legitimate offers versus potential scams.[21]

Chapter 2: The history of fan fiction from pre-internet until today

Fan fiction as we know it today did not emerge until the late 1960s, but there is still a long history of fan activity before this. While the term fan has existed since the 17th century, this chapter will be starting in the 1920s, with the rising popularity of the science fiction genre. This chapter will explore the history of fan fiction and fan communities from the 1920s until today.

2.1 Amazing Stories and the first fan mags – pre-internet fan activity

The term fan was first used in the 1680s, referring to dedicated followers of sports.[22] In the late 1920s and early 1930s readers of science fiction literature began referring to themselves as fans and using the term fandom to refer to the science fiction societies being created across the United States.[23] These societies were places where fans of literary science fiction could get together and meet and create communities around their shared interest.

One of the first science fiction magazines, *Amazing Stories*, was created by writer Hugo Gernsback in 1926. The magazine accepted and published fan letters from the beginning, and in the first issue Gernsback specified that "[w]e will welcome constructive criticism – for only in this way will we know how to satisfy you."[24] Gernsback welcomed and engaged with opinions and criticism from fans, leading to other fans engaging with each other in similar ways, by creating communities where they could interact with each other and discuss their shared interests.[25]

The creation of *Amazing Stories* also led to the first fan-made science fiction magazines being created, the first of which was called *The Comet. The Comet* was created in Chicago in 1930, followed by many similar fan made magazines. [26] As Karen Hellekson

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[21] Wattpad, 'What If I'm Contacted by a Publisher?', <https://support.wattpad.com/hc/en-us/articles/202746340-What-If-I-m-Contacted-by-a-Publisher->, (accessed May 14 2020).

[22] Oxford English Dictionary, 'fan', <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68000>, (accessed August 3 2020).

[23] Fanlore, 'Fandom', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Fandom>, (accessed August 3 2020).

[24] H. Gernsback, 'A New Sort of Magazine', *Amazing Stories*, 1 (1926), p. 3.

[25] K. Hellekson, 'Fandom and Fan Culture', *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 154.

[26] Ibid., p. 154.

writes, these early fan magazines – which were then called 'fan mags', as the term fanzine, which is used today, did not emerge until the 1940s – were pieces of paper that were stapled together and distributed to fans.[27] Fan fiction as a term was coined at this time, but it did not refer to fan fiction as we know it today, but rather original science fiction written by fans.[28]

Early science fiction fan culture is also the origin of the fan convention. The first science fiction convention was held in New York in 1939, during the weekend of the New York World's Fair, which had the fitting theme "The World of Tomorrow". The convention was called the World Science Fiction Convention, or Worldcon.[29] This and subsequent conventions gave fans across the United States and the world a space where they could come together and discuss their common interests. The conventions also contributed to the distribution of fanzines, because while most fanzines were made only to cover the number of subscribers they had, they were also sometimes sold at conventions.

Fan communities like these continued to exist and grow until the 1960s. Until then, most of the fan activity of the science fiction communities concerned itself with literary science fiction. The next major change in fan culture came in 1967, when the first science fiction media fanzine was created – *Spockanalia*. This marked the rising popularity of science fiction movies and TV shows, as opposed to the literary science fiction that dominated the 1920s and 30s science fiction fandom.[30] The TV show *Star Trek* had begun airing in 1966 and was quickly gaining popularity. This was also when demographics of fandom started to change. In the 1930s, fan communities were largely comprised of men, but by the mid-1960s, large numbers of women were engaging with fandom.[31]

In the 1960s and 1970s, fans also began creating fan videos, fan music, fan fiction, as well as many other transformative fan creations. *Star Trek* fans also embraced the fanzine culture of the 1930s, but where early zines had been mostly filled with news, reviews, essays and analysis, zines now turned to fan fiction.[32] It was also during this period that modern use of the word fan fiction was first recorded, meaning fiction written by fans using the characters or settings of an already existing piece of media.[33]

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[27] Ibid., p. 154-155.
[28] M. de Zwart, ''Someone is angry on the internet': copyright, creativity and control in the context of fan fiction', *Research Handbook on Intellectual Property in Media and Entertainment*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017).
[29] K. Hellekson, 'Fandom and Fan Culture', p. 155.
[30] Ibid., p. 156.
[31] Ibid., p. 156.
[32] Ibid., p. 157.
[33] Science Fiction Citations, 'fan fiction, <https://www.jessesword.com/sf/view/223>, (accessed August 3 2020).

Zine publishers would often act as both publisher and editor, as well as having to take care of production and distribution. Unlike established publishing houses, fanzines were often published by individuals or small teams, with multiple people holding several positions. These fanzines mark the beginning of what would eventually become a long history of self-publishing within fan fiction communities.

This was also the time period when the homoerotic genre of slash became popular. The genre is called slash because of the forward slash used to separate the names of the characters when indicating a romantic relationship. This practice is still in use today, and while the system is used both for same sex and opposite sex relationships, the term slash specifically refers to homosexual relationships. Slash fan fiction received a significant amount of attention from academics, partly because of "the recognition that slash dealt with rupture, rewriting, and the Other, thus placing slash, just like [science fiction], in contrast to the mainstream."[34]

Many of the traditions and conventions that were established in this pre-internet era are still around today, such as disclaimers at the beginning of a story assuring the reader that no profit is being made. This largely comes from the fear of receiving cease-and-desist letters from producers or authors who may disapprove of fan fiction. This early period of fan activity provides the foundations that Western fan culture is built on today. The next major shift in fan communities occurred in the 1980s, when fandom and fan fiction began moving online.

2.2 From Usenet to LiveJournal - Early online fan fiction

The first online fan fiction communities originated on Usenet, which is a system for the exchange of information that predates the World Wide Web and is functionally similar to the discussion forums that can be found on the internet today. Usenet was established in 1980, predating the World Wide Web by over a decade, and was initially restricted to use by government agencies and universities. This meant that every fall, Usenet would experience a new influx of users as new students started university and gained access to university servers. Because of this limitation, Usenet was inaccessible to most people for a long time. That changed in September of 1993, when America Online (AOL) made Usenet available to all of its users. Usenet was divided into forums, more commonly called newsgroups, each organized into one of nine overarching hierarchies. Most fan activity on Usenet took place either in the rec. (recreation) or alt. (alternative) hierarchies.[35]

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[34] K. Hellekson, 'Fandom and Fan Culture', p. 157.
[35] Fanlore, 'Usenet', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Usenet>, (accessed May 29 2020).

Usenet as a platform was well-suited for early online fandom, because it allowed for individual newsgroups to be created for individual fandoms. This meant that fans could create online spaces specifically targeted at fans of specific topics, such as *Star Trek*. Usenet also gave fans the first space to post their fan fiction online. For the *Star Trek* fandom, fan fiction was posted on the group alt.startrek.creative, or alt.startrek.creative.erotica, the latter of which also allowed slash pairings. These newsgroups were created as subsections of the original alt.startrek because of how many fan works were being posted. There needed to be separate spaces for posting creative works. In addition to *Star Trek*, there were also significant Usenet presences for other fandoms, such as *X-Files*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.[36]

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, after the creation of the World Wide Web, mailing lists became popular for fan fiction communities. This was because Yahoo! Groups was created, which was a service that allowed users to create mailing lists for free, as well as discussion groups similar to Usenet newsgroups. Mailing lists were frequently used by fan fiction communities as a way of communicating with large groups of people. Once a person subscribed to a mailing list, they would automatically receive every email sent within that group, which could become quite a large number of messages depending on the size and activity of the group. Mailing lists could be public or private, and were usually dedicated to specific fandoms, although there were also multi-fandom lists such as Virgule-L, which was one of the first mailing lists dedicated to slash fan fiction.[37]

Another large hub for early online fan fiction communities was the free web-hosting service Geocities, which was created in 1994. Geocities was one of the first webhosting services that allowed users to make websites for free, making it extremely popular within fan communities.[38] Because sites could be created for free, anyone was free to make a fan site dedicated to whatever they wanted. Many early fan fiction sites were hosted using this service, often consisting of simply links to fan fiction stories with little other information.[39]

In addition to these sites there were other early attempts at offering access to fan fiction. One of the biggest of these projects was *The Gossamer Project*, which was a group of archives dedicated to collecting and preserving fan fiction from the *X-Files* fandom. In the late 1990s *The Gossamer Project* was the biggest and most well-known single fandom fan fiction archive, and it would remain the biggest archive until the early 2000s.[40]

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[36] For an extensive list of fandom newsgroups, see Fanlore's 'List of Usenet Newsgroups'.
[37] A. De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, p. 211.
[38] Fanlore, 'Geocities', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Geocities>, (accessed May 21 2020).
[39] For an extensive list of Geocities fansites sorted by fandom, see Fanlore's 'List of GeoCities Fansites'.
[40] A. De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, p. 91.

The blogging platform LiveJournal was founded in 1999 and became very popular within fan communities in the early 2000s. LiveJournal allowed fans to create smaller communities for posting and discussing fan fiction and other parts of fan culture, and many fan activities moved there in the early 2000s. LiveJournal had several features that made it attractive as a space for online fandom and fan fiction, such as threaded comments, friends lists and a larger ability for self-expression.[41]

Fanfiction.net was one of the earliest multi-fandom archives, and to this day it is still one of the biggest, as highlighted in Chapter 1. The archive has however received criticism from fans because of some of their policies. In September of 2002 Fanfiction.net announced that NC-17 (rated age 17 and up) fan fiction would no longer be allowed.[42] The reasoning that was given for this decision was that the site managers had received complaints about NC-17 fan fiction on the site, and because of the growing number of stories the Fanfiction.net staff decided to remove the entire category. "Though they are very small portion of the site the adult stories have generated almost all of the complaints filed on record in the past year."[43] It is not known who these complaints were from. The date for the removal of the NC-17 category was set to October 2002, a month after the initial announcement. This meant that writers who did not create a backup by this time had their stories deleted, as well as any reviews attached to the story. The stories could sometimes be salvaged if there were copies saved elsewhere, but the reviews only existed on Fanfiction.net, and many writers value reviews because they show how readers react to their stories.

The reaction from fans was immediate, and several petitions were created in order to appeal to Fanfiction.net to convince them to reverse their decision. The biggest of these petitions was created on September 13 2002, one day after the Fanfiction.net announcement. This petition was started by JoSelle Vanderhooft and was titled "Reverse the NC-17 Ruling on Fanfiction.net!"[44] On the day it was created it gathered 8000 signatures, and by the time the petition ended it had a total of 27,197 signatures. The petition read:

> Fanfiction.net has long been one of the Internet's leading fanfiction sites. In
> order for this site to remain so, we the undersigned strongly disagree with
> fanfiction.net's recent decision to ban NC-17 fiction from this site and remove

41 Fanlore, 'LiveJournal', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/LiveJournal>, (accessed May 21 2020).
42 Wayback Machine, 'Fanfiction.net',
<https://web.archive.org/web/20020929011210/http://www.fanfiction.net:80/>, (accessed August 3 2020).
43 Ibid.
44 WebCite, 'Reverse the NC-17 Ruling of Fanfiction.net!', <https://www.webcitation.org/6d7iSs2Sm>,
(accessed August 5 2020).

the ones currently posted. Although necessary precautions must be taken to protect children on the internet, MOST of the NC-17 stories that would fall under this ruling are in only the most excellent of taste and are clearly markied (sic), which is the most any author or site manager can do. We also strongly feel that this decision flies in the face of everything that the on line fan fiction community is about; freedom to write, explore, and share ideas. Please do not trample on the rights of the innocent in order to protect the rights of the few.[45]

Despite the large number of signatures, the ban remained in place, and purges of NC-17 fan fiction continued to happen in the years following the initial announcement.[46]

As previously mentioned, cease-and-desist letters were a common part of the fandom experience. Creators or copyright holders who were unhappy with online fan activity could demand to have their websites shut down. One such instance of a company attempting to shut down or otherwise control online fan activity took place when Warner Brothers bought the film rights to the *Harry Potter* series. While J.K. Rowling, the author of *Harry Potter*, had a positive relationship with fan fiction and fan creators, Warner Brothers wanted more control over what fans were posting about *Harry Potter* online. "In many cases, the original site owner would be issued permission to continue to use the site under the original name, but Warner Bros. retained the right to shut it down if they found "inappropriate or offensive content.""[47] Warner Brothers were attempting to police fan activity and make sure that it was inside the parameters of what they considered to be appropriate. Heather Lawver, creator of the site *The Daily Prophet* (named after a newspaper from the *Harry Potter* books) formed the organisation *Defense Against the Dark Arts* (named after a class taken by students in the *Harry Potter* books) to challenge Warner Brothers' attempt at taking control of fan sites that were utilising their intellectual property.

Warner was very clever about who they attacked…. They attacked a whole bunch of kids in Poland. […] They underestimated how interconnected our fandom was. They underestimated the fact that we knew those kids in Poland and we knew [their] sites and we cared about them.[48]

Lawver, who was 16 at the time, argued that fans and fan sites had helped bring attention to *Harry Potter* and that they had contributed to the international success of the series. Lawver

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[45] Ibid.
[46] A. De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, p. 132.
[47] H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008), p. 195.
[48] H. Lawver, quoted in H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture,* p. 195.

and the other fans trying to fight back against Warner Brothers assumed they were continuing a tradition of pushing back against companies attempting to control fan activity, but in reality, they were not. "I figured with the history that *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* fan writers had, people would have done this before. I didn't think much of it. I thought we had precedence but apparently not."[49] Other groups had tried before, but never had there been the same degree of success as what was accomplished by Heather Lawver and *Defense Against the Dark Arts*.[50] Warner Brothers eventually backed down and even began collaborating with some fan projects. Many people praised them for this, but others saw it as a public relations tactic to combat the media attention this incident had brought them.[51]

Incidents like these have led to a long tradition of adding disclaimers to your fan fiction, in order to avoid a cease-and-desist letter from the original creators, and many fans continue to do this when posting their fan fiction today.

Disclaimer: Everything belongs to J.K. Rowling.

Figure 4 Disclaimer on fanficiton.net. Screenshot taken May 26th 2020.[52]

Fan fiction communities did not have much visibility on the internet during this period and was generally very spread out across different corners of the internet. Usenet, Yahoo! Groups, Geocities, Fanfiction.net and LiveJournal were all used liberally and with a lot of overlap, but there was no one central hub for fan fiction communities.

2.3 "I want us to own the goddamned servers" – the creation of the OTW and its initial impact

The Organization for Transformative Works, or the OTW, is a non-profit organization created in 2007 that runs the Archive Of Our Own – one of the largest fan fiction archives on the internet – as well as a series of other projects centred around preserving and protecting fan fiction history and culture, as well as defending fans' rights to legally create transformative works. There were several events that contributed to and immediately preceded the creation of the OTW, and this subsection will explore two of the most significant of these events.

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[49] Ibid., p. 197.
[50] H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture,* p. 197.
[51] Ibid., p. 195-196.
[52] Eilyfe, 'Magicks of the Arcane', <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/8303194/1/Magicks-of-the-Arcane>, (accessed May 26 2020).

For most of the 2000s the blogging platform LiveJournal was one of the largest platforms for fan fiction communities. In May 2007, Six Apart – the company that owned LiveJournal at the time – suspended a large number of accounts. This event is referred to as Strikethrough, because suspended users were shown as crossed out in friend's lists. It was eventually revealed that Six Apart had been sent a list of users compiled by right-wing Christian group Warriors for Innocence. These journals had been deemed by Warriors for Innocence to contain "offensive sexual content".[53] It has not been confirmed that the reason why Six Apart took this action was because of the list sent to them by Warriors for Innocence, but the group reportedly took credit for it. The group claimed that their goal was to warn Six Apart of blogs supporting child pornography and other sexual crimes, but it is not known if any of the users affected were actually engaging in such criminal activity. It is, however, known that a number of the groups affected were not in any way engaging in the activity Warriors for Innocence claimed. Among the groups affected by the Strikethrough were book discussion groups, several survivors of sexual assault, as well as a large number of fan communities.[54] Six Apart later apologised, and many users had their accounts restored, but this event shook the fan fiction community. Many were critical of the fact that Six Apart had not done their own investigation into the complaints brought to them, but instead simply removed the users Warriors for Innocence had told them the remove. Even though Six Apart apologised, a similar event took place a few months later, dubbed Boldthrough because this time suspended users were shown as bolded instead of crossed out.

Another event that also took place around May 2007 was the creation of the site FanLib. FanLib was a site that tried to establish itself as a central fan fiction archive. The site had been around since 2002, under a different name, but it officially became FanLib in 2007. They started off by trying to create collaborations between media creators and fan fiction writers, by getting producers to host official fan fiction contests. This would ensure that fan fiction writers could write stories within some select fandoms and publish them on FanLib's site without having to worry about receiving cease-and-desist letters, which had been and was still at this point a prevalent fear in many fan fiction communities. The problem with this was that FanLib was not created by fans, and it was not only trying to profit from the labour of fans without giving anything back, but there was also a clause in their Terms of Service

[53] A. De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, p. 132.
[54] Fanlore, 'Strikethrough and Boldthrough', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Strikethrough_and_Boldthrough>, (accessed May 22 2020).

saying that FanLib owned the rights to any stories posted.55 "In effect, FanLib's business plan was to use the archived fan works to create eyeballs it could sell to advertisers."56 Fans have, as already mentioned, been wary of using fan fiction to make money, and this was especially true as FanLib was not created by fans. As Aca-Fan Henry Jenkins states:

> It was a business, pure and simple, run by a board of directors which was entirely composed of men. This last point is especially relevant when you consider that the overwhelming percentage of people who write fan fiction are women.57

This blog post was written less than three months after FanLib entered its beta phase, showing that reactions from the community was almost immediate. FanLib was acquired by Disney in August of 2008 and announced its closing shortly after. FanLib never had time to do any damage to the fan fiction community, but it left a lasting impression on the fan fiction community, as it highlighted the very real chance that outsider would try to take advantage of their work.

These two events collectively contributed to fans' growing distrust of platforms and companies trying to take advantage of fans. It was around this time people first began talking about creating a central fan fiction archive run by and for fans. Because they felt they could not trust outsiders to have fans' best interests at heart, many fans wanted to create their own space.

On May 17th 2007, LiveJournal user astolat made a blog post titled "An Archive Of One's Own", where she outlined the need for the fan fiction community to have its own centralized archive that was owned and operated by fans and not by some outside force attempting to make money or gain control of fan labour.

> We need a central archive of our own […]. Something that would NOT hide from google or any public mention, and would clearly state our case for the legality of our hobby up front, while not trying to make a profit off other people's [intellectual property] and instead only making it easier for us to celebrate it, together, and create a welcoming space for new fans that has a sense of our history and our community behind it.58

55 H. Jenkins, 'Transforming Fan Culture into User-Generated Content: The Case of Fanlib', *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, May 22 2007, <http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/05/transforming_fan_culture_into.html>, (accessed May 22 2020).
56 C. Cupitt, 'Nothing but Net: When cultures collide', *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 1 (2008), n.pag.
57 H. Jenkins, 'Transforming Fan Culture into User-Generated Content: The Case of Fanlib', (accessed May 22 2020).
58 Astolat, 'An Archive Of One's Own', *Astolat's LiveJournal,* May 17 2007, <https://astolat.livejournal.com/150556.html>, (accessed May 22 2020).

This was the earliest proposal for what would eventually become the Archive Of Our Own. The discussion surrounding this was extensive, and on May 30th 2007 the domain names transformativeworks.org and archiveofourown.org were registered by founding member of the OTW Rebecca Tushnet.59

The first official post introducing the Organization for Transformative Works was posted in the LiveJournal community otw_news on September 28th 2007. In this post it was explained that their first priority was creating a fan fiction archive, but that they also had other projects they wanted to work on.

> We're dedicated to doing everything possible to protect and archive fanworks across the board. Our goal is to be as inclusive of fandom as we can possibly be; our legal team is determining how best to protect fannish works that fall into non-mainstream genres. We as an organization want to celebrate fannish activity, to work for legal and societal recognition of the legitimacy and creativity of fannish works, to protect fanworks legally, to nurture fandom and fan creations, and to give all fans as much access to fan activity as we possibly can.60

While the OTW continued to work on the archive, discussion continued within the fan fiction communities. On January 9th 2008, LiveJournal user Cesperanza (also known as Speranza) made a blogpost entitled "Why I Support The OTW, by Speranza, aged mumble-mumble" wherein she presents some of the reasons why she supports the Organization for Transformative Works. Cesperanza outlines in her post many of the reasons why the OTW was created, and why it is important. This post is where the phrase "I want us to own the goddamned servers" originated, which became a rallying cry for the people who supported the creation of the OTW and the Archive Of Our Own.61 As she writes:

> I would sit through a 30 second flashwave ad to get a new story by fiercelydreamed or see a new vid from sockkpuppett. But I don't think I should have to, because I don't see why THEY--someone else! someone not in fandom! […]--should get a nickel from me, or from you, or from this community that we built. It's not even that they want to make money off us: they want to make money off us but not give us equal value back. We make Livejournal […] etc., profitable companies, but our status in these for-profit "communities" is highly uncertain […]. It comes down to this: I'm not

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59 Fanlore, 'Timeline of Organization for Transformative Works',
<https://fanlore.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Organization_for_Transformative_Works>, (accessed May 29 2020).
60 Femmequixotic, 'An Introduction to the Organization for Transformative Works', *OTW_News*, September 28 2007, <https://otw-news.livejournal.com/9256.html#comments>, (accessed May 28 2020).
61 A. De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives*, p. 133.

their user-generated content. I'm a fanfiction writer, and I write for free, for you, and I gratefully read what you give me.[62]

The Archive Of Our Own (Ao3) has always been ad-free, and the OTW is dedicated to serve the interests of fans. This is why the OTW had supporters from the beginning. Ao3 went into closed beta in October 2008 and moved to open beta in November 2009, and it is still in open beta today. It has since grown to become one of the largest fan fiction archives on the internet, with over 2.5 million registered users, and it allows users to self-publish their fan fiction stories without fear of having them deleted.

The creation of the OTW was significant because it was the first organization that was fan-run and fan-founded, and that is dedicated to fighting for fans' rights. The OTW is dedicated to protecting fans' rights to produce creative fan works, and the Archive Of Our Own is funded by fans through donations, meaning they do not have to rely on ads or other forms of funding, unlike sites like Fanfiction.net and LiveJournal, which are both supported by advertisements.

The OTW dedicates itself to preserving fan culture, not just through the Archive Of Our Own but also through projects such as Fanlore, which attempts to preserve fan history, and Open Doors, which "offers shelter to at-risk fannish projects".[63] When Yahoo, the owners of Geocities, announced that the site was being shut down in 2009, the Organization for Transformative Works announced the 'GeoCities Rescue Project', which endeavoured to archive and preserve fan fiction and other fansites hosted on Geocities before they were deleted.

The fan fiction community responded to outside forces trying to control the kind of content they were allowed to make and responded by creating their own space. Repeatedly being pushed off platforms by people deeming their stories copyright violations – despite there being no legal precedent determining that fan fiction is illegal – contributed to the notion that fan fiction communities needed their own space on the internet. A space where they were free to post whatever they wanted without fear of an outside force – whether that force was an internet provider, a traditionally published author, a producer, a right-wing Christian group, or anyone else – coming in from the outside and attempting to control the community they had built.

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[62] Cesperanza, 'Why I Support the OTW, by Speranza, aged mumble-mumble', *Cesperanza,* September 1 2008, <https://cesperanza.livejournal.com/190204.html>, (accessed May 22 2020).
[63] Organization for Transformative Works, 'Our Project', <https://www.transformativeworks.org/our-projects/>, (accessed May 22 2020).

Chapter 3: Case studies

3.1 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will be analysing a total of ten case studies by utilising the theories of Michael Bhaskar's writings on the publishing industry and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital.

In *The Content Machine* Michael Bhaskar outlines what he considers to be the most central aspects and tasks of the publisher, particularly in the age of digital technology. Bhaskar has several different terms that he uses to explain how publishing works and how content is selected and published. These terms are filtering, models, amplification, and framing. I will explain all of these to create a full understanding of Bhaskar's theories of publishing, but when analysing the case studies, I will mostly be using the terms amplification and framing, as these are the parts of Bhaskar's writings that are most relevant to this thesis.

The term filtering refers to the selection process content must go through in order to be published. In other words, publishers must select content that they think will be noticed by readers. In the digital age distribution is no longer a limiting factor, because on the internet content can be immediately distributed, but this means that instead publishers must increasingly compete for a reader's attention.[64] They do this according to what Bhaskar calls models, which represents what the publishers want the books to achieve.[65] The term amplification refers to the task of getting the published content out to the reader. Framing refers to the context the content is presented through. Bhaskar writes: "As framing technology is digitised, the amplificatory weight of frames shift from the distributional element, making it available, to the subjective, finding an audience."[66] Amplification is no longer exclusively about making content available. With the enormous amounts of content that book publishers now have to compete with, the task becomes to first find the content and then to find the right audience for that content.

The second theory I will be using is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capital. Bourdieu proposes that there are four types of capital; economic, cultural, social and symbolic. These different types of capital contribute to the resources and opportunities available to different people in society. This thesis will particularly concern itself with the term "symbolic capital", which refers to your reputation, the recognition you get for your work. As explained by John

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[64] M. Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, (London: Anthem Press, 2013), p. 108.
[65] M. Bhaskar, "Curation in Publishing: Curatorial Paradigms, Filtering, and the Structure of Editorial Choice" in *The Oxford Handbook of Publishing*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
[66] M. Bhaskar, *The Content Machine*, p. 116.

Thompson, in the case of publishing, symbolic capital is particularly complicated, because "authors as well as publishers can accumulate symbolic capital, and while the reputations of authors and publishers can reinforce one another, they don't coincide."[67] An author's reputation is separate from a publisher's reputation, though they can both contribute to the sale and attention given to books.

These theories will be used to explore the relationship between the fan fiction community and the publishing industry. In the case of Michael Bhaskar, I will be exploring this relationship using his term amplification, exploring how and why fan fiction writers are approached by publishers. Bhaskar's writing is particularly relevant when it comes to the issue of audience building, as fan fiction stories often have an already established audience. This could mean that publishers are interested in publishing fan fiction because some of the work of amplifying the content is already done.

In the case of Bourdieu's theories, I will be exploring the symbolic capital of fan fiction writers, and how this can impact fan fiction writers' interactions with the publishing industry. Some fan fiction writers are able to gain a reputation within fandom, and I will attempt to determine whether the symbolic capital acquired by writers within the specific confines of the fan fiction community can contribute to these writers being published professionally.

The case studies will be determining when the works were published, and by which publishers. They will also mention whether these publishers are major publishers or independent ones, and whether they specialize in any specific genres. I will also examine whether the fan fiction was significantly rewritten before being published, and what the relationship between the published work and the source material is. I will also examine what is known about the commercial success of these novels. Following this I will analyse the individual case studies in light of the theoretical framework I have outlined above. The overall findings will be summarized at the end of the chapter.

3.2 Case studies

I will be looking at a total of ten authors who in some form have either professionally published their fan fiction, or incorporated parts of their fan fiction into their professionally published works. They are listed in this chapter in the order in which their novels were published. The case studies have been chosen to represent authors from different fandoms and genres, though it should be noted that most of these authors write within the romance genre.

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[67] J. Thompson, *Books in the Digital Age*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 33.

Of the ten case studies I have chosen, eight of the books are categorized as romance novels, though some of these also belong to other genres in addition to being romance novels. The number of romance novels are likely explained by the fact that most fan fiction is focused on romantic relationships, so-called relationship stories, and this may translate to the number of former fan fiction that has been published that is romance.

It should also be noted that out of the ten authors on this list only two are male. This is representative of fan fiction in general, which is mostly written by women.[68] That does not mean that men do not write fan fiction or participate in fan fiction communities, but most of the male authors I identified when choosing these case studies were either authors who were already professionally published before writing fan fiction, and whose writings therefore did not originate within the fan fiction community, or they were authors who wrote a transformative work without being familiar with the phenomenon of fan fiction or the community surrounding it. All the authors on this list have, at some point, participated in fan fiction communities and did so before being professionally published.

I will also utilize some statistics where these are available such as number of kudos or favourites on individual fan fiction stories to give an impression of the size of the audience and the writer's reputation within fandom. Kudos are used on Archive Of Our Own, and functions similarly to a like button, showing broadly how many people have expressed that they like as story. Favourites, also known as favs, is a function on the site Fanfiction.net that essentially allows a user to bookmark their favourite stories. The number of favourites is displayed on each individual story and indicates how many users have marked the story as a favourite. Kudos and favourites are both limited to one per story per person, meaning that the numbers reflect individuals who have expressed their general enjoyment of a story. I will also in one case use number of reviews to illustrate the engagement one fan fiction inspired, as well as individual positive reviews in some cases.

1. **Cassandra Clare**

Cassandra Clare is the author of the young adult book series *The Mortal Instruments* that was published between 2007 and 2014. It was published by Margaret K. McElderry Books, which is an imprint of major trade publisher Simon and Schuster, specialising in fiction and nonfiction for children and young adults. Clare was a very influential part of the early online fan community, particularly the Harry Potter fandom, where she wrote under the pseudonym Cassandra Claire. Both names are pseudonyms for the authors real name, Judith Lewis. Clare

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[68] A. Jamison, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, (Dallas: Smart Pop, 2013)., p. 18.

was particularly well known within the *Harry Potter* fandom for her fan fiction *The Draco Trilogy*, a series of stories that focuses on the character Draco Malfoy from the *Harry Potter* series.

Clare's series is not directly based on a work of fan fiction, but some similarities have been noted between Clare's characters and the characters from her fan fiction. In a blog post written in March 2012, WordPress user bellumina writes about these similarities in a blog post titled "Why I have a problem with Cassandra Clare & why you should too". In this post bellumina explains how they immediately saw similarities between the characters from *The Draco Trilogy* and *The Mortal Instruments*:

> When I opened the book, I knew that Clary was Ginny. Alec was Harry.
> Isabelle was Clare's version of Blaise […]. Valentine was a strange mixture of
> Lucius and Voldemort. And Jace, of course, was undeniably Draco.[69]

From this it is clear that some fans who are familiar with both Clare's fan fiction and her published novels still recognize the similarities between the two works, despite the fact that the character names have been changed. There are also some broad similarities between this series and the *Harry Potter* series Clare originally wrote fan fiction for. Both series feature characters who have grown up thinking they are normal, only to later be introduced to a fantastical part of the world they previously did not know existed. While the stories are very different, and take place in different settings, some broad similarities can be found.

Clare's books have received numerous awards, and many of her books have spent time on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and according to her publisher, her books have "more than 50 million copies in print worldwide", in addition to being made into a movie and a TV show.[70] Her latest novel, *Chain of Gold*, which is the first book in a trilogy set in the same fictional universe as *The Mortal Instruments*, is currently (as of August 17 2020), number 4 on the *New York Times* bestseller list for young adult hardcover books.[71]

Analysis:

Clare was, as mentioned, a very influential member of the *Harry Potter* fan community. She was one of the first Big Name Fans within the *Harry Potter* fandom, a term referring to a fan

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[69] Bellumina, 'Why I have a problem with Cassandra Clare & why you should too', March 14 2012, <https://bellumina.wordpress.com/2012/03/14/049-why-i-have-a-problem-with-cassandra-clare-why-you-should-too/>, (accessed May 18 2020).

[70] Simon & Schuster, 'Cassandra Clare', <https://www.simonandschuster.com/authors/Cassandra-Clare/35026200>, (accessed August 17 2020).

[71] New York Times, 'Young Adult Hardcover', <https://www.nytimes.com/books/best-sellers/young-adult-hardcover/>, (accessed August 17 2020).

who is well-known and highly regarded within a fan community.[72] When she was still writing fan fiction, Clare had a substantial following, particularly because of her writing in *The Draco Trilogy*.[73] This could translate to Clare having symbolic capital within the fan fiction community, and while this may not be the direct cause of her success as a published author, her reputation and her already established audience may have contributed to her success. If fans who were familiar with her work as a fan fiction writer discovered her published novels, they may have chosen to read them because they are already familiar with her writing. Clare did change her pseudonym from Cassandra Claire to Cassandra Clare, but this change is insubstantial enough that fans may still recognize her if they are already familiar with her work within the fan fiction community.

2. Sylvain Reynard

Sylvain Reynard is the author of the *Gabriel's Inferno* trilogy. This series was first published by independent publisher Omnific publishing in March 2011, before being bought and re-released by Berkley in September 2011. Berkley is an imprint of major trade publisher Penguin Random House that specializes in "women's fiction, romance, science fiction/fantasy, and mystery/suspense".[74] The series was first written as fan fiction of the young adult series *Twilight* and was initially called *The University of Edward Masen*.

GalleyCat, which was a blog covering news from the publishing industry, wrote a blog post comparing Reynard's *Twilight* fan fiction to the published book version. This post compares two outtakes from the fan fiction and the published version, showing that apart from character names being changed, the writing is almost identical.[75] The blog post does not comment on whether the rest of the book is similarly identical to the original fan fiction, but this could indicate that the fan fiction was largely not rewritten before being published.

The University of Edward Masen is so-called AU/AH, or Alternate Universe/All Human fan fiction.[76] These are stories where the characters are taken out of the context of the original story and transplanted into a new universe, with the *Twilight* community having the particular addition of all human characters. Because the original *Twilight* books are young adult fantasy novels about vampires, changing the setting and turning all the characters into normal human beings results in stories that are relatively easy to transform into original

72 Fanlore, 'Big Name Fan', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Big_Name_Fan>, (accessed July 30 2020).
73 C. Tosenberger, 'Mature Poets Steal: Children's Literature and the Unpublishability of Fanfiction', p. 18.
74 Berkley, 'Overview', <https://www.penguin.com/publishers/berkley/>, (accessed August 18 2020).
75 GalleyCat, 'Twilight Fan Fiction History of *Gabriel's Inferno*', *Adweek,* August 1 2012, <https://www.adweek.com/galleycat/sylvain-reynard-fan-fiction/56301>, (accessed August 17 2020).
76 J. Brennan and D. Large, 'Let's Get a Bit of Context': Fifty Shades and the Phenomenon of 'Pulling to Publish' in *Twilight* Fan Fiction', *Media international Australia*, 152 (2014), p. 28.

fiction. In Reynard's case, he has taken the characters from their original setting – a small town high school – and written a story set at a university, where one character is a professor, and another is a student. AU/AH stories are particularly suitable for traditional publication because these stories are, "by nature, suitably distanced from the universe of the source text."[77]

It has been reported that Reynard's books were acquired by Berkely Books in a seven-figure deal, which may indicate that Berkley Books expected these books to be a commercial success.[78] Reynard's books have been nominated for several awards and have appeared on several bestseller lists. As Reynard himself states on his website:

> I am honoured to have had all three of my novels appear on the New York Times and USA Today Bestseller lists. I was a Semifinalist for Best Author in the 2011 and 2012 Goodreads Choice Awards.[79]

In addition to this, his first book, *Gabriel's Inferno* has also been turned into a three-part movie. The first part of the movie was released in May 2020, and the second part was released in July 2020.[80]

Analysis:

In an essay written about the relationship between Reynard and fellow *Twilight* fan fiction author E. L. James, it is said that: "Both benefited directly and tangibly from the feedback, encouragement, interaction, and publicity their readership offered".[81] According to this Reynard benefited from his notoriety within the fandom, which could indicate that he acquired symbolic capital within this community that later may have contributed to his books being published. He also reportedly received a seven-figure book deal for his two books *Gabriel's Inferno* and *Gabriel's Rapture*.[82] This may indicate that Reynard's symbolic capital and the fact that he had an already established audience was of enough interest to publishers that they were willing to pay him a substantial amount of money.

3. **E. L. James**

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[77] Ibid., p. 29.

[78] Omnific Publishing, 'Berkley purchases Sylvain Reynard's Gabriel's Inferno Series from Omnific Publishing', July 31 2012, <https://www.prlog.org/11938328-berkley-purchases-sylvain-reynards-gabriels-inferno-series-from-omnific-publishing.html>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[79] Sylvain Reynard, 'Sylvain Reynard', <https://sylvainreynard.com/>, (accessed August 17 2020).

[80] Syracuse.com, ''Gabriel's Inferno, Part II': How to watch steamy new movie shot in Syracuse', *Syracuse.com,* July 17 2020, <https://www.syracuse.com/entertainment/2020/07/gabriels-inferno-part-ii-how-to-watch-steamy-new-movie-shot-in-syracuse.html>, (accessed August 17 2020).

[81] A. Jamison, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, p. 225.

[82] A. Jamison, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, p. 224.

E. L. James is the author of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy, and she is perhaps the most well-known example of an author publishing their fan fiction commercially. The series was first self-published as e-books and print-on-demand paperbacks through virtual publisher The Writer's Coffee Shop in June 2011. The rights were later bought by Penguin Random House imprint Vintage Books. The entire series was revised and re-released in April 2012. The series started off as a *Twilight* fan fiction titled *Master of the Universe*, before being removed from the internet in 2010 in order to be rewritten into the original work *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Vintage Books has defended the series as being completely original, and having very little resemblance to the fan fiction it was based on, but according to a comparison conducted using the similarity-detection software *Turnitin* there was an 89 percent similarity between *Master of the Universe* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*, indicating that while character names have been changed, the book still largely remains the same as the fan fiction it originated as.

Master of the Universe was also Alternate Universe/All Human fan fiction, meaning that the work is quite far separated from the *Twilight* series. In *Fifty Shades of Grey*, the story surrounds a businessman and a university student, and their developing relationship.

The *Fifty Shades of Grey* series received massive commercial success. According to writer Andrew Shaffer, the series sold "a combined 100,000 print and ebook copies of the trilogy" within a year.[83] By February 2014, the series had sold more than 100 million copies, and spent more than 100 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list.[84]

Analysis:

Searching for E. L. James' fan fiction username 'SnowQueens IceDragon' on Google between the years 2009 and 2011, there are several positive reviews and recommendation lists that mention her and her story *Master of the Universe*. This could be an indication of the reputation James had within the fan fiction community at the time. To further highlight this, *Master of the Universe*, which eventually became the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy, was one of the most reviewed stories on Fanfiction.net. According to Fanlore, by the time *Master of the Universe* was removed from Fanfiction.net in 2011, it had more than 56,000 reviews.[85] While the number of reviews does not necessarily reflect James' reputation, as reviews are not necessarily all positive, it does reflect the massive engagement the story inspired within the

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[83] A. Jamison, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, p. 268.

[84] J. Bosman, 'For 'Fifty Shades of Grey,' More Than 100 Million Sold', *The New York Times,* February 26 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/27/business/media/for-fifty-shades-of-grey-more-than-100-million-sold.html>, (accessed August 17 2020).

[85] Fanlore, 'Master of the Universe', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Master_of_the_Universe>, (accessed August 19 2020).

fan fiction community, as well as the audience the story had. It should also be noted that *Master of the Universe* was likely one of the, if not the most reviewed story on Fanfiction.net. By contrast, as of August 2020, the most reviewed *Harry Potter* fan fiction (the largest category on Fanfiction.net) has 35,515 reviews.[86]

James is also known to have interacted with fans of her story, reading responses from fans detailing their reaction and where they hoped the story would go, and this may have furthered her reputation within the fandom.[87] It has been claimed that part of the reason *Fifty Shades of Grey* was published was because of a launch party organized by readers for the launch of the third book in the series, and that this party was attended by an executive at Vintage.[88] This shows that James' reputation within the fandom may have helped her get published, as well as that the established audience is important, in this case possibly being a direct cause of James' books being bought by a major publisher.

4. Marissa Meyer

Marissa Meyer is the author of the young adult science fiction series *The Lunar Chronicles*, which was published between the years 2012 and 2015 by Feiwel and Friends, which is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers specializing in children's fiction and nonfiction.[89] Meyer's novels are not directly based on a work of fan fiction, but she has stated that she found inspiration for the novels in a fan fiction she wrote for the Japanese anime series *Sailor Moon*.[90] The fan fiction that inspired her first book, *Cinder*, is called *Luna version 42*. *Cinder* is an original work, Meyer has stated that some of the world-building from *Luna version 42*, is also present in *The Lunar Chronicles*.[91]

Because *The Lunar Chronicles* is not directly based on a work of fan fiction, but rather inspired by one, there is, as far as I can tell, little resemblance between the published work and the anime series *Sailor Moon*, which the fan fiction was based on. *Luna version 42* was an Alternate Universe fan fiction, meaning it featured the characters from the anime, but the fictional universe was different. In Meyer's case, she chose to set her fan fiction in a futuristic universe, and she chose to do a re-telling of a fairy tale. These are the elements that eventually

[86] Fanfiction.net, 'Books > Harry Potter', <https://www.fanfiction.net/book/Harry-Potter/?&srt=3&r=103> (accessed July 3 2020).

[87] A. Jamison, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, p. 228.

[88] J.L. Pecoskie, 'Beyond traditional publishing models', *Journal of Documentation*, 71 (2015), p. 619.

[89] Macmillan Publishers, 'Feiwel & Friends', <https://us.macmillan.com/publishers/feiwel-and-friends/>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[90] M. Meyer, '"Luna v.4.2" (The Origins of Cinder)', *Marissa Meyer,* July 31 2012, <https://www.marissameyer.com/blogtype/luna-v-4-2-the-origins-of-cinder/> (accessed July 29 2020).

[91] Ibid.

made their way into Meyer's original fiction, as *The Lunar Chronicles* is a series of books about futuristic science fiction retellings of well-known fairy tales.

Meyer's first novel, *Cinder*, debuted as number 10 on the *New York Times* bestseller list in January 2012.[92] The series as a whole has also reached the list, and it is marketed as a "#1 *New York Times*-bestselling series".[93] The second book in *The Lunar Chronicles*, *Scarlet,* reportedly sold over 100,000 copies in 2013.[94]

Analysis:

Meyer's fan fiction stories did not have the same level of engagement as some of the other authors on this list, though most of her stories on Fanfiction.net received more than 100 favourites, with at least one having almost 900. While these numbers are not as high as other published fan fiction authors on this list, this level of engagement is still far above average. The average number of favourites per story on Fanfiction.net was as of 2015 9.2.[95]

"If you're here because you heard a rumor that Marissa Meyer used to write Sailor Moon fanfiction, you found me! In addition to the fanfics below, I am the author of the New York Times-bestselling series The Lunar Chronicles"[96] This text is written on Meyer's Fanfiction.net account, where readers can still find her fan fiction, including the work that inspired *The Lunar Chronicles*. Therefore, based on engagement it could be said that Meyer had some symbolic capital within the fan fiction community, and that she has attempted to use this symbolic capital to promote her published books, but that there is not necessarily any evidence that her symbolic capital directly impacted her books' publication.

5. Alice Clayton

Alice Clayton is the author of the contemporary romance novel *Wallbanger*, which is the first book in the *Cocktail* series. *Wallbanger* was initially published by the independent publisher Omnific publishing in 2012, before the rights were bought by Simon and Schuster imprint Gallery Books. The book was republished by Gallery Books in 2013. *Wallbanger* was originally written as a *Twilight* fan fiction titled *Edward Wallbanger*.

[92] The New York Times, 'Children's Chapter Books', January 22 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/books/best-sellers/2012/01/22/chapter-books/>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[93] Macmillan Publishers, 'The Lunar Chronicles Boxed Set: Cinder, Scarlet, Cress, Fairest, Stars Above, Winter', <https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250774071>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[94] D. Roback, 'Facts & Figures 2013: For Children's Books, Divergent Led the Pack', *Publishers Weekly,* March 14 2014, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/61447-for-children-s-books-in-2013-divergent-led-the-pack-facts-figures-2013.html>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[95] Toastystats, '[Fandom stats] FFN vs. AO3: comments, reviews, kudos', *Archive Of Our Own,* January 19 2015, <https://archiveofourown.org/works/16931982>, (accessed August 18 2020).
[96] Fanfiction.net, 'Alicia Blade', <https://www.fanfiction.net/~aliciablade> (accessed July 30 2020).

I have not found any concrete evidence that the fan fiction was substantially rewritten before being published. According to one blog post, Clayton always intended to change the character names and have her story published.[97] This could indicate that the story largely remains the same, but with the characters' names changed.

Wallbanger is another AU/AH story, meaning that the story was already far removed from the source material before being rewritten. Reviews I have read indicate that the book's former fan fiction status comes as a surprise to some readers, showing that the story likely does not bear much resemblance to the *Twilight* series.[98] While it seems like the story largely remains the same as it was originally written, the setting it was written in may have been sufficiently removed from the source material.

Wallbanger reportedly sold more than 100,000 copies in its first month after publication.[99] The book also reached the *New York Times* bestseller list, indicating that the book achieved significant commercial success. It has also been reported that *Wallbanger* surpassed both *Gabriel's Inferno* and *Fifty Shades of Grey* in initial sales, becoming "the most successful release of a former Twilight fanfiction ever."[100]

Analysis:

One review of *Wallbanger* describes Clayton as having been a "very famous" fan fiction author before being published.[101] Her work also appears on several lists of recommended fan fiction stories from between 2009 and 2010, showing that her work was widely read in this period. This could be an indication of Clayton's symbolic capital within the fan fiction community, though the evidence of her reputation is not substantial.

Clayton wrote fan fiction under the username feathersmmmm, and this Fanfiction.net account still exists. There are no stories on the profile, but instead there is a picture of the *Wallbanger* book cover, and a text in the profile that reads: "It's time to bring him back into the world. WALLBANGER November 27th 2012."[102] From this it is clear that the author is

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[97] Utterlyprepossessing, 'Wallbanger Review', February 24 2013,
<https://utterlyprepossessing.wordpress.com/tag/wallbanger/>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[98] Sidneykay, 'Wallbanger by Alice Clayton', August 21 2013,
<http://sidneykay.blogspot.com/2013/08/wallbanger-by-alice-clayton.html>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[99] Cision, 'Following success of Fifty Shades of Grey, WALLBANGER by Alice Clayton sells 100,000 copies in first month', January 8 2013, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/following-success-of-fifty-shades-of-grey-wallbanger-by-alice-clayton-sells-100000-copies-in-first-month-186023412.html>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[100] Ibid.
[101] Utterlyprepossessing, 'Wallbanger Review', February 24 2013,
<https://utterlyprepossessing.wordpress.com/tag/wallbanger/>, (accessed August 17 2020).
[102] Fanfiction.net, 'feathersmmmm', <https://www.fanfiction.net/u/1753937/feathersmmmm>, (accessed July 14 2020).

attempting to use her symbolic capital and her already established audience to promote her professionally published book. By using her Fanfiction.net account to promote her book, she is marketing directly to the audience who followed her fan fiction. As previously mentioned, her book was also the most initially successful publication of a former *Twilight* fan fiction. This could indicate that her own reputation within the *Twilight* fan fiction community, as well as the reputation of the *Twilight* fan fiction community in general, was part of the reason she was published and that it contributed to her success.

6. Christina Lauren

Christina Lauren is the pseudonym of the author duo Christina Hobbs and Lauren Billings, and their first book, *Beautiful Bastard* was published in February 2013 by Simon and Schuster imprint Gallery Books. *Beautiful Bastard* originated as a *Twilight* fan fiction titled *The Office*, which was written by Christina Hobbs in 2009, before being reworked in cooperation with Lauren Billings.

According to interviews, while *Beautiful Bastard* has been heavily reworked from the original piece of fan fiction and that only about twenty percent of *The Office* actually made it into *Beautiful Bastard*, the book still remains true to its fan fiction origins.[103] This illustrates that the published work is likely quite different from the fan fiction it originated as.

This book is another former *Twilight* fan fiction that falls into the category AU/AH. This means, once again, that the setting of the story is far enough removed from the source material that recognizing it as having been inspired by *Twilight* is difficult. In this case, the novel takes place in an office setting, with the main characters being co-workers.

The *Beautiful Bastard* series had reportedly sold 1.3 million copies worldwide as of April 2014.[104] According to Hobbes and Billings' website their books have been translated into more than 30 languages.[105] Their website also reports that *Beautiful Bastard* is a "NYT, USA Today and #1 International bestselling erotic romance".[106] This combined shows that Hobbes and Billings have achieved massive commercial success.

Analysis:

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[103] A. Lewis, ''Twilight Fanfiction Hit 'The Office' Scores Two-Book Deal (Exclusive)', *The Hollywood Reporter,* November 8 2012, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/twilight-fanfiction-hit-office-gets-387539>, (accessed August 17 2020).

[104] A. Lewis, ''Beautiful Bastard' Authors Announce New Novel', *The Hollywood Reporter,* April 25 2014, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/beautiful-bastard-authors-announce-new-698988>, (accessed August 17 2020).

[105] Christina Lauren, 'Bio', <http://christinalaurenbooks.com/bio/>, (accessed August 19 2020).

[106] Christina Lauren, 'Beautiful Bastard', <https://christinalaurenbooks.com/books/beautiful-bastard/>, (accessed August 19 2020).

Following the publication of *Gabriel's Inferno* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*, some people speculated which fan fiction stories would be the next to be published. *The Office* was one of the stories people thought had the potential to become as successful as *Fifty Shades of Grey*.[107] This indicates the reputation *The Office* and Hobbes had within the *Twilight* fan fiction community, showing that people thought it was on the same level as *Fifty Shades of Grey*. This could be an indication that Hobbes had symbolic capital within the fan fiction community.

Editor at Gallery Books Adam Wilson said that he used the book's fan fiction origin and its already established audience to help get it published. "I was able to say, 'Look, 2 million people already read this and loved it.' That was part of a platform that helped me get it through acquisitions."[108] The book's former fan fiction status has also been used in the marketing of the book, showing that the publishers are attempting to use the already established audience to attract new readers. "Originally only available online as The Office by tby789 — and garnering over 2 million reads on fanfiction sites — Beautiful Bastard has been extensively updated for re-release."[109] Pointing out the book's already significant audience could contribute to the continued success of the novel.

7. Anna Todd

Anna Todd is the author of the *After* series, the first of which was published by Simon and Schuster imprint Gallery Books in 2014. Todd's novels are slightly different from the other novels on this list, because Todd's novel started off as so-called RPF, or Real Person Fiction. This is fan fiction that is written featuring real life people. In Todd's case, she wrote fan fiction starring musician Harry Styles, and the other members of the boy band *One Direction*.

From what I have read, the work largely remains the same as its original fan fiction version, though the published version has been edited to remove grammatical errors.[110] The names of the characters have been changed in the published version, as well as personal details such as the design and placement of Harry Styles' tattoos.[111]

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[107] 'J. Brennan and D. Large, 'Let's Get a Bit of Context': Fifty Shades and the Phenomenon of 'Pulling to Publish' in *Twilight* Fan Fiction', p. 31.

[108] H.C. Cuccinello, 'How Christina Lauren Went From Fanfiction Fame To 14 Bestsellers', *Forbes,* June 6 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hayleycuccinello/2017/06/06/how-christina-lauren-went-from-fanfiction-fame-to-14-bestsellers/#20faf21b48ca>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[109] Goodreads, 'Beautiful Bastard', <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16102004-beautiful-bastard> (accessed July 10 2020).

[110] Goodreads, 'Is there any significant difference(s) between the Wattpad version and the published/printed version?', <https://www.goodreads.com/questions/200673-is-there-any-significant-difference-s>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[111] J. Contrera, 'From 'Fifty Shades' to 'After': Why publishers want fan fiction to go mainstream', *The Washington Post,* October 24 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/from-fifty-shades-to-after-

The relationship between the published novel and the source material is not easy to determine, considering the source material in this case are the lives of real people. From what I understand, her fan fiction is largely set in an Alternate Universe. In her story the members of *One Direction* are not in a band, but instead they are college students in America. This means that once the story has been rewritten, it could be quite difficult to recognize that this story began as *One Direction* fan fiction.

The series has received massive commercial success. According to the BBC *After* has sold more than 11 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 30 languages as of August 2018.[112] The books have also been included on the *New York Times* bestseller list. The books are also being turned into movies, the first of which released in 2019, and the second of which is expected to be released in October 2020. It has also been reported by *The New York Times* that Todd was offered a six-figure multi-book deal, which could indicate that the publishers were reasonably sure that this book would become a best-seller.[113]

Analysis:

As of August 2020, Anna Todd has 1.9 million followers on the online fiction sharing platform Wattpad.[114] While there is no way of knowing how many of these followers are from within the fan fiction community, as Wattpad is not a dedicated fan fiction site, it is clear that Todd at the very least has a large following within the specific community that is Wattpad. Her large audience and her reputation have likely contributed to both her books being published and the success of those books. Todd's publisher has also attempted to use the story's former fan fiction status in the marketing of the book.

> Now newly revised and expanded, Anna Todd's After fanfiction racked up 1 billion reads online and captivated readers across the globe. Experience the Internet's most talked-about book for yourself![115]

This is once again trying to use the book's already established audience to attract new readers, by showing potential new readers that this book has already had a large number of readers, further contributing to the commercial success of the novel. It is also marketing to the already established audience, by telling them that the story has been expanded.

why-publishers-want-fan-fiction-to-go-mainstream/2014/10/24/825d6a94-5a04-11e4-b812-38518ae74c67_story.html>, (accessed August 18 2020).

112 A. Rackham, 'Anna Todd: From 1D fan fiction to feature film writer', *BBC,* August 2 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-45006031>, (accessed August 17 2020).

113 A. Alter, 'Fantasizing on the Famous', *The New York Times*, October 21 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/22/business/media/harry-styles-of-one-direction-stars-in-anna-todds-novel.html>, (accessed July 29 2020).

114 Wattpad, 'Anna Todd', <https://www.wattpad.com/user/imaginator1D>, (accessed August 18 2020).

115 Goodreads, 'After', <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22557520-after>, (accessed July 30 2020).

8. Zane Riley

Zane Riley is the author of the young adult romance novel *Go Your Own Way*, which was published in 2015 by independent publisher Interlude Press which specializes in publishing LGBTQ fiction.[116] Before it was published, it was a fan fiction with the same title inspired by the TV show *Glee*.

In a post on the Interlude Press blog, it is announced that the fan fiction has been "completely reimagined from the ground up".[117] In this same post, Zane Riley is also quoted as saying:

> I really wanted to take my time with rewriting and revealing these new characters, their nuances, their world, and their lives. For me, it was really important that they get the chance to tell their story well, for it to be fleshed out and expanded on, instead of being rushed into one story.[118]

This indicates that the story has been extensively rewritten, and that the characters have not only had their names changed but are completely new characters.

While the book takes place in the same setting as the source material – an American high school – the characters are different enough that having the same setting is not a problem. The original fan fiction takes place in the same setting as the source material, but the characterizations within the fan fiction are very different from the characterizations present in the TV show *Glee*. The fan fiction takes place in the same fictional universe as the source material, but the character Blaine Anderson has been given a very different past and characterization. The fact that the characters were already distanced from the source material may be why it was possible for Riley to rework this fan fiction into an original story.

From what I can tell, this novel does not seem to have had much commercial success. There are several favourable reviews available, and one source describes the book as "popular"[119], but I have not found any sources commenting on the actual number of sales.

Analysis:

Zane Riley's *Go Your Own Way* has almost 6000 favourites on Fanfiction.net, which indicates that his story was well liked within the fan fiction community.[120] While this story

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[116] Interlude Press, 'About Us', <https://interludepress.com/about-us>, (accessed August 18 2020).
[117] Interlude Press, 'Coming in May 2015: Go Your Own Way', December 21 2014, <https://interludepress.com/post/105795703179/coming-in-may-2015-go-your-own-way>, (accessed August 18 2020).
[118] Ibid.
[119] K. Batchelor, 'Why Fanfiction Should Be Taken Seriously as a Medium', *BookHive,* July 22 2017, <https://www.bookhivecorp.com/blog/writing/fanfiction-taken-seriously-medium/>, (accessed August 18 2020).
[120] FanFiction.net, 'Go Your Own Way', July 27 2011, <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7222219/1/Go-Your-Own-Way>, (accessed August 18 2020).

does not have as big an audience as some of the more successful novels on this list, it still shows that Riley's story was well regarded. This could further indicate that Riley has symbolic capital within the fan fiction community. This is also supported by the fact that Riley was part of the original group of authors selected to be published when Interlude Press was first founded. Many of these authors came from the *Glee* fandom, as did the founders of Interlude Press.[121]

In the initial announcement post from Interlude Press Riley is referred to by his fan fiction username, Zavocado.[122] While Riley's novels may not have received substantial commercial success, he still seems to have been published on the basis of his symbolic capital within the *Glee* fandom.

In the announcement stating that *Go Your Own Way* would be published, Interlude Press directly referenced the fans of the original fan fiction. "Fans of Go Your Own Way have been guessing at this one for months, and now it's confirmed: Zane Riley's fan favorite […] is coming to Interlude Press in May 2015."[123] This is directly referencing fans of the original fan fiction, and the designation "fan favourite" may be a sign of the story's reputation within the *Glee* fandom.

When the final novel in the series was announced, Interlude Press once again appealed to the fans of the original fan fiction, promising that this final novel included new material.

> Readers fell in love with it in fandom, and followed it into a new world when @zane-riley adapted his beloved GO YOUR OWN WAY into two novels. Now the story is ready to conclude with a finale that never made it into fan fiction.[124]

In this they are once again appealing to the established audience of Riley's original fan fiction in order to further the success of the published novel. This could also indicate that the audience Riley built when the first two books in the series were published was largely based in the fans of his original fan fiction.

9. Roslyn Sinclair

Roslyn Sinclair is the author of the romance novel *The Lily and the Crown*, which was published by independent published Ylva Publishing in 2017, which specializes in publishing

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[121] Interlude Press, 'inthedreamatorium asked', <https://interludepress.com/post/87143109669/apologies-if-youve-answered-this-already-but-i/amp>, (accessed august 19 2020).

[122] Interlude Press, 'On Authors & Publishing', April 16 2014, <https://interludepress.com/post/82928370516/on-authors-publishing>, (accessed August 19 2020).

[123] Interlude Press, 'Coming in May 2015: Go Your Own Way', December 21 2014, <https://interludepress.com/post/105795703179/coming-in-may-2015-go-your-own-way>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[124] Interlude Press, 'Every Story Has an Ending...', January 9 2011, <https://interludepress.com/post/169518316259/every-story-has-an-ending>, (accessed August 10 2020).

lesbian and queer fiction.[125] This book started off as fan fiction by the same name, based on the book *The Devil Wears Prada*.

The story was extensively rewritten and added to before being published. On the Archive Of Our Own page for *The Lily and the Crown,* Sinclair writes that the published version is "Twice the length" of the fan fiction.[126] This shows that Sinclair has clearly added a lot of new material to the book. A review written by someone who has read both the fan fiction and the published book writes that the book has been significantly expanded, and that the characters are more developed.[127]

The Lily and the Crown started off as an Alternate Universe fan fiction, where the characters from the source material – which is a book about a fashion magazine – are put into a science fiction universe.[128] Once again, the Alternate Universe distinction means that there is little resemblance to the plot of the source material. *The Lily and the Crown* also depicts the main characters as being in a homosexual relationship, which is not the case in the source material, further distancing Sinclair's work from the source. The names of the characters have also been changed in the published version.

As far as I can tell, this book does not seem to have had much commercial success.

Analysis:

According to Fanlore, Telanu was a very influential fan, particularly within the *Harry Potter* fandom.[129] Though her *Harry Potter* fan fiction has been removed from the internet, she remains an active online presence. Of the fan fiction she has written that is still available on her Archive Of Our Own profile, the story with the most kudos has more than 3400 kudos. This could indicate that she has some symbolic capital within the fan fiction community, as several thousand people have indicated that they like her work.

Several of the reviews I have read of *The Lily and the Crown* reference Sinclair's fan fiction username, showing that her reputation within the fan fiction community has helped her promote her published novel.[130] The independent publisher Sinclair's book was published

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[125] Ylva Publishing, 'About Ylva Publishing,' <https://www.ylva-publishing.com/about-ylva-publishing/>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[126] Telanu, 'The Lily and the Crown', April 6 2013, <https://archiveofourown.org/works/750438>, (accessed July 14 2020).

[127] T. Scott, 'Lesbian space pirate romance. Enough said.', *Curve,* April 27 2018, <https://www.curvemag.com/book-club/book-reviews/the-lily-and-the-crown-roslyn-sinclair/>, (accessed August 18 2020).

[128] Telanu, 'The Lily and the Crown', *Archive Of Our Own,* April 6 2013, <https://archiveofourown.org/works/750438>, (accessed July 14 2020).

[129] Fanlore, 'Telanu', <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Telanu>, (accessed July 29 2020).

[130] Goodreads, 'The Lily and the Crown', <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/34828410-the-lily-and-the-crown#other_reviews>, (accessed August 19 2020).

with – Ylva Publishing – also publicly celebrates the former fan fiction status of some of their books.[131] This could be an indication that Sinclair was published at least partly because of her symbolic capital within the fan fiction community.

10. Jazzy Mitchell

Jazzy Mitchell is the author of romance novel *You Matter*, which was published by independent publisher Desert Palm Press in 2019. Desert Palm Press specializes in publishing lesbian and LGBTQ+ fiction. *You Matter* was originally written as a fan fiction of the TV show *Once Upon a Time* and was originally titled *The Savior*.

According to Mitchell's Fanfiction.net account, *You Matter* contains more than 40,000 words more than *The Savior* did, showing that it has been rewritten and expanded significantly before being published.[132]

The source the fan fiction was based on – *Once Upon a Time* – is a fantasy TV show revolving around fairy tale characters. Mitchell's fan fiction was an Alternate Universe fan fiction, that featured the characters working together at a law firm, showing that this story is significantly different from the source material. The character names have also been changed in the published version.

This book does not seem to have achieved significant commercial success.

Analysis:

On Mitchell's Fanfiction.net account she explains why some of her stories are no longer available on the site, but that they are available for purchase, including links to where readers can buy her books. This shows that she is attempting to use her symbolic capital to promote her books. However, Mitchell is likely the author on this list with the smallest already established audience. The most favourited story on her Fanfiction.net account has 550 favourites.[133] While this is significantly above the average number of favourites, as mentioned previously in this chapter, this is also significantly fewer favourites than other authors on this list. This could indicate that while Mitchell had some symbolic capital within the fan fiction community, there may have been other factors involved in why she was published.

3.3 Findings

This subsection will summarize what I have found through the analysis of case studies in the previous subsection and attempting to contextualise it within the framework of the theories of

[131] L. Winter, 'When Fanfiction Writers Go Pro – Lesbian Books Inspired By Fanfiction Pt. II', *Ylva Publishing*, October 28 2018, <https://www.ylva-publishing.com/2018/10/28/fanfiction-writers-pro-lesbian-books-inspired-fanfiction-2/>, (accessed August 20 2020).

[132] Fanfiction.net, 'jazwriter', <https://www.fanfiction.net/u/2741467/jazwriter>, (accessed July 13 2020).

[133] Ibid.

Michael Bhaskar and Pierre Bourdieu, as well as looking at other findings that I see as particularly significant.

3.3.1 Bourdieu and Bhaskar

Using Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, I attempted to determine whether symbolic capital within fan fiction communities could contribute to an author having their work professionally published. What I found was that in some cases, I believe that symbolic capital may have partly contributed to both the publication of novels and their commercial success. While symbolic capital alone may not be the entire reason these authors were published, it could be part of the reason.

One of the examples of this is that in the case of E. L. James, a release party celebrating the self-publishing of one of her books may have contributed to her books being bought and re-published by Vintage. In that case, her reputation and the reputation of her books may be partly responsible for her success, because it helped get her noticed by a major publisher.

Another example is Zane Riley, whose symbolic capital within the *Glee* fandom was likely part of the reason why he was chosen as one of the initial authors when Interlude Press was first founded. Because Interlude Press was started by people within the *Glee* fandom, they may have been looking for fan fiction writers whose work they personally enjoyed or authors who they recognised by their reputation within the fandom.

For other authors, the symbolic capital may have contributed to their getting published because of their fan fiction becoming well-known even outside the fan fiction community. Particularly in the case of the *Twilight* fandom, I believe that once *Fifty Shades of Grey* was published, publishers started looking for other writers within the *Twilight* fandom. Then, the reputation of the authors may have contributed to which authors were eventually published.

According to Bhaskar's concept of amplification, one of the major tasks of a publisher is to find an audience for their content. As has been explored in this chapter, in many cases fan fiction stories already have an established audience, and therefore these stories could be seen as desirable for publishers.

The authors' already established fan fiction audience has in some cases been used to promote the authors' professionally published work. As has been seen in several cases, authors have used their own accounts on various fan fiction archives to promote their books, most likely in order to introduce the readers of their fan fiction to their professionally published books, in the hopes that their audience would be interested in buying and reading

Some cases also show that the authors appeal directly to their fan fiction audience, for example by telling readers how many more words have been added to the story in the published version. This way the author can possibly make their audience interested in reading the published version, in order to read parts of the story that was previously not available to them. In one case, the author also marketed her novel by saying that the fan fiction version, while still available online, was not completed, and that the novel version was.

In several cases the book's former fan fiction status is also being used in the marketing of the book, showing that publishers are attempting to use the already established audience to reach new readers, by for example using the number of readers the original fan fiction had, to showcase the novel's extensive readership.

3.3.2 Twilight

This section is meant further elaborate on the significance of the *Twilight* fandom when it comes to fan fiction authors being published. While *Fifty Shades of Grey* was not the first piece of *Twilight* fan fiction published, it seems clear that this series, as well as the *Twilight* fandom in general, has had a big influence on how fan fiction is viewed both by publishers and by the general public. *Twilight*, when it was first published in 2005, was already a hugely popular phenomenon, so it makes sense that publishers would be interested in publishing stories that could be marketed to the same demographic. While *Twilight* is a young adult series and mainly targeted at teenagers, it has come as a surprise to many that the series is also overwhelmingly popular with adult women.[134] This is why *Fifty Shades of Grey* was written in the first place – because there was a community of adult fans interested in this type of story.

The publishing of former *Twilight* fan fiction may also be connected to the fact that genres such as romance that have traditionally been undervalued are now being recognised. Romance is a genre that has historically been written by and for women, and this may have contributed to the way it has been viewed both by publishers and by the public. The same is true for fan fiction. It has been noted that journalists "frequently us[e] Victorian era gendered words like 'fever,' 'madness,' 'hysteria,' and 'obsession' to describe [fans of *Twilight*]."[135] Fan fiction is often, though not always, focused on relationships and romance, and it is written largely by and for women, meaning that it has a lot of similarities with the romance genre. Therefore, the fact that such a large number of the former fan fiction stories that have

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[134] L. Paris, 'Fifty shades of fandom: the intergenerational permeability of Twilight fan culture', *Feminist Media Studies*, 16 (2016), p. 678.
[135] C. Tosenberger, 'Mature Poets Steal: Children's Literature and the Unpublishability of Fanfiction', p. 7.

been traditionally published come from the *Twilight* fandom, shows that the commercial value of these stories are being recognised.

The *Twilight* fandom also has the added caveat of most fan fiction written within the fandom being written about heterosexual relationships. While the publication of queer literature has become more common, it is still easier to sell a novel if it is about a straight couple than if it is about a queer couple. "Publishing houses tend to perceive that only LGBT readers will buy LGBT materials, and therefore that the market for such books is limited"[136] This is might also be the reason why the three authors on my list who write about queer relationships were all published by independent presses who specify in publishing queer books, as publishing a story that is both a former fan fiction and a queer romance could be seen as too risky for a major publisher.

3.3.3 Community reactions

Fan fiction writing is largely built on collaboration. While fan fiction will always be based on some kind of source material, any fan fiction written will also build on what that has already been created within that community. Kristina Busse quotes LiveJournal user Seperis, who writes: "you can read a fandom's history in some stories, in some *groups* of stories, in the trends they follow, from narration to characterization and style".[137] Because of this collaborative aspect of the community, as well as the relationship fan fiction communities have historically had with media companies, some people are sceptical of fan fiction writers getting their fan fiction professionally published.

Some see it as exploiting the work of fans, because readers of a fan fiction often help shape it while it is being written, by leaving feedback or offering suggestions to the author. Fan fiction writers also often make use of other writers in the community for so called beta-reading, where another writer reads through and edits your work for free. When the fan fiction is then taken offline to be published, this is seen by some as exploiting the community for your own personal gain.[138] And if a writer is perceived as having exploited the fan fiction community, this may damage their reputation within the community.

3.3.4 Copyright

The topic of whether publishing former fan fiction constituted a copyright violation of the original source material is also a relevant one. Throughout the history of fan fiction, copyright

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[136] H.M. Sandy, B.M. Brendler, and K. Kohn, 'Intersectionality in LGBT Fiction', *Journal of Documentation,* 73 (2017), p. 434.

[137] Seperis, quoted in K. Busse, *Framing fan fiction: Literary and social practices in fan fiction communities*, (Chicago: University of Iowa Press, 2017), p. 113.

[138] A. De Kosnik, '*Fifty Shades* and the Archive of Women's Culture', *Cinema Journal*, 54 (2015), p. 122.

claims and cease-and-desist letter have been used to remove or otherwise hinder people from writing fan fiction. However, there has not, as far as I am aware, been any attempts made to stop the publication of a novel that started off as fan fiction. As has been shown, most of the authors I have written about wrote so-called Alternate Universe fan fiction, meaning that their story was already significantly removed from the source material before it was professionally published. Editor at Gallery Books Adam Wilson has also commented on the copyright aspect of publishing a work that started off as fan fiction, saying: "The legality of it wasn't really a big issue because we weren't copying anything. I couldn't even understand how [*Beautiful Bastard*] came out of Twilight fanfiction."[139] This could show that, provided the story is far enough removed from the source material, copyright is not an issue when publishing novels that started off as fan fiction.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore the relationship between the fan fiction community and the publishing industry, and to determine whether there has been a rise in the general appreciation of fan fiction. The way I approached this task was by first examining the history of fan fiction in general, starting with how fandom developed from the early science fiction communities of the 1920s and 1930s, before moving into the 1960s with the emergence of the *Star Trek* fandom and the early fan fiction communities. Following this fan fiction began to move online, with the creation of Usenet and later the World Wide Web allowing for the creation of mailing lists and online web hosting platforms such as Geocities, both of which were widely used by fans.

Following several events in which companies either tried to exploit or control fan fiction communities, the Organization for Transformative Works was created as an organization meant to advocate for the rights of fans and fan fiction writers. The creation of the OTW may have helped the overall perception of fan fiction, because they openly argue for the validity and legality of fan fiction. Where fan fiction has historically been seen as an exploitative practice in which writers steal from other creators, the OTW is promoting a view of fan fiction as transformative instead of derivative.

In the third chapter I explored the relationship between fan fiction writers and the publishing industry, using a total of ten case studies of authors who have had their fan fiction

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139 H.C. Cuccinello, 'How Christina Lauren Went From Fanfiction Fame To 14 Bestsellers', *Forbes,* June 6 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hayleycuccinello/2017/06/06/how-christina-lauren-went-from-fanfiction-fame-to-14-bestsellers/#20faf21b48ca>, (accessed August 18 2020).

published as original fiction. Using the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Michael Bhaskar, I looked at individual authors' reputation within the fan fiction community as well as their established audience, and whether these factors may have contributed to publishers choosing to publish novels that originated as fan fiction.

I also looked at how these authors have been marketed and received, showing that several of the publishers have utilized the former fan fiction status of the book, and the audience the original fan fiction had to reach new readers. Some authors have also chosen to promote their books directly to their fan fiction audience, using their accounts on online fan fiction archives to tell readers about their books, sometimes also attempting to entice the readers by announcing that the published version has material that was not included in the original story.

One work that may have particularly influenced the publishing industry's view of fan fiction is the *Fifty Shades of Grey* series written by E. L. James, which was a massive success partly because of its fan fiction origins. *Fifty Shades of Grey* had a significant audience who followed its journey from fan fiction, to self-published novel, before finally becoming a traditionally published novel, and some reports suggest that the success of the novel partly comes from the promotional work of the author and fans of her books.

Looking at the history of fan fiction and how it has traditionally been viewed and seeing that authors are now having their former fan fiction published, it seems that the reputation of fan fiction has improved. I think that this comes down to a combination of the fact that fan fiction is more generally accepted and understood than it used to be, and that following the success of books such as *Fifty Shades of Grey*, publishers have seen that there is a market for books that started off as fan fiction, and that these stories often have large audiences already attached to them. Following this, several novels have been published that started off as fan fiction, and this may also be an indicator that publishers will continue to publish these stories in the future.

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