From Folklore to Fanfic: An Examination of Transformative Texts through Subversion, Sexuality, and Social Commentary

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Contents

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Abstract

Fan fiction may be a relatively new form of transformative storytelling, but it is one that has polarised views from critics, scholars, and the general public. As a practice concerned with the amateur writing produced by fans derived from existing media, it has earned both critical condemnation as an unauthorised, illegal, and 'transgressive' practice, as well as the fascination of scholars concerned with participatory culture and media fans' reinterpretation of existing material. This thesis explores the ternary relationship between creators, content, and community in relation to the retelling of stories (how individuals, communities, and online subcultures appropriate, adapt, and transform stories to new purpose). It does so by first examining myth, folklore, and fairy tales in a sociohistorical and sociocultural context and establishing the fundamental characteristics of transformative storytelling, then applying this analysis to fan fiction, both as a cultural practice and regarding its critical and legal reception. To explore the transformative roots of storytelling in a contemporary setting, it examines the intertextual relationship between professionally published and fan published works: the *Harry Potter* series (1997 – 2007) by J. K. Rowling, *Carry On* (2015) by Rainbow Rowell, and *rebel rebel* (2018) by BasicBathsheba. In doing so, it considers queerness in contemporary literature and the inherent queerness of producing/consuming queer 'slash' fan fiction, participatory culture, the legalities of transformative works, and how transformative texts trouble the assumed dichotomy between professionally published and fan published fiction. It argues that if new forms of transformative texts, such as fan fiction, are deemed 'transgressive' then this legacy of transgression is a long one, and that transformative texts hold cultural value not despite their transgressive nature, but because of it.

Glossary

AO3: Archive of Our Own. The non-commercial and non-profit fan fiction platform which serves as a central hosting place for fanworks, as well as the site *rebel rebel* is hosted on.

Canon: The source text/s agreed upon by fans as an authoritative account of what is accurate and true within a certain media fandom. For example, the events and details documented within the *Harry Potter* novels and films are generally held as 'canon', whereas the authority and validity of other sources may be disputed.

Crossover literature: The genre of literature which blurs traditional aged-based marketing by appealing to both children/Young Adult (YA) audiences and adult audiences alike.

Fandom: A group of fans of a particular media. E.g., fans of *Harry Potter* would collectively be referred to as the *Harry Potter* fandom.

Fan fiction/fanfic: Stories produced by fans of an existing work of media (e.g., a film, television series, book, or game) which is then published online, often in a series of instalments over a period of months or years, for other fans to consume, celebrate, and critique. Sometimes referred to simply as 'fic'.

Fanon: Unlike canon, fanon (a portmanteau of 'fan' and 'canon') refers to what is generally agreed to be an accurate and true account of events and details within fandom, even though it is unconfirmed – or directly contradictory to – what is documented in canon.

LGBTQ+: The initialism referring to people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Queer/Questioning, and/or another sexual/gender identity. While there are many initialisms available (e.g., QUILTBAG, LGBT, LGBTTTQQIAA, and 2SLGBTQIA), I consciously choose to use 'LGBTQ+' in this thesis because of its careful balance of inclusivity and brevity.

Mainstream literature: Professionally published literature produced by major commercial publishers rather than by small, independent publishing houses or work that is self-published. I.e., 'the Big 5' (Penguin/Random House, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Simon and Schuster, and Macmillan Publishers) and other major publishers (such as Bloomsbury and Scholastic).

OTW: The Organization for Transformative Works. The non-profit organisation which maintains AO3 and, in their own words, is run "by and for fans" in order to "provide access

to and preserve the history of fanworks and fan cultures" ("Frequently Asked Questions"). As well as AO3, the OTW also maintain Fanhackers (a blog for the discussion of fannish topics and media studies), Fanlore (a fandom wiki), and *Transformative Works and Cultures* (a peer-reviewed academic journal). But one of the most important roles the OTW has undertaken is their legal advocacy work to protect fanworks from commercial exploitation and legal challenge.

Profic: Professionally published fiction.

Prosumer: A portmanteau of 'producer' and 'consumer', referring to a person who both consumes and produces media. E.g., a fanfic-writer may be described as a prosumer because they both *consume* the source material and then *produce* fan fiction based on it.

Queer literature: Drawing from Diversity in YA's criteria, in this thesis I qualify queer literature as that contains a main character who identifies as LGBTQ+ and/or which deals with LGBTQ+ issues overtly and centrally to the novel's plot.

RPF: Real Person Fiction. Fan fiction written about real people – usually celebrities – instead of fictional characters.

Shipping: A term for fans desiring a romantic relationship (i.e., 'ship') between two fictional characters. E.g., some *Harry Potter* fans 'ship' Harry and Draco together, and this 'ship'-name would be known as 'Drarry'.

Slash: A subcategory of fan fiction which contains a romantic/sexual pairing between two (or more) characters of the same gender. E.g., 'M/M' slash features a pairing between two men and 'W/W' slash features a pairing between two women.

YA fiction: Young Adult fiction. The genre of literature marketed towards adolescents aged 12 to 18 years and often dealing primarily with themes relevant to this age group (e.g., coming-of-age, self-identity, romance, and conflict between the protagonist and their parents or peers).

Introduction

Who owns stories? Seldom has this question caused more legal or critical controversy in the modern era than in the case of fan fiction. Previous scholars have established fan fiction as, traditionally, the pastime primarily of women, thereby recognising the influence of sexism in critical attitudes regarding the practice's cultural value (Bacon-Smith 1986, Jenkins 1992). However, innocuous as this practice may seem to patriarchal and heterosexist critics, fan fiction has toppled internet platforms, ruffled the feathers of multi-millionaire authors, and been dragged like a circus act across the glittering stages of popular talk shows such as *The Graham Norton Show* (2007-present) for their audiences' amusement. This transformative form of storytelling has gained a subversive, rebellious, and often, *transgressive* reputation for itself because of its legal ramifications and cultural reception. Michel de Certeau categorises these active readers as engaging in textual "poaching" (qtd. in Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 23), Camille Bacon-Smith described them as "rebels" (*Enterprising Women* 4), but I argue that fan fiction writers are simply the latest in a long line of transformative storytellers. Because, when broken down, stories become a rich tapestry of characters, themes, tropes, and interwoven narratives; the building blocks of what make a story a story. It is these building blocks storytellers use to transform existing stories into those with new purpose or meaning.

Here I casually refer to 'stories' in a broad sense, but there are many sub-classifications of what constitutes a storytelling narrative. In this thesis I will be examining folklore, fairy tales, and myth, and how they inform published literature and online 'fan fiction', and then how fan fiction continues to build from these texts, with an emphasis upon the ternary relationship between creator, content, and community. As I explore in later chapters, older forms of transformative storytelling do not dichotomize these roles with the same severity. I am interested in how contemporary copyright laws have altered this dynamic and in the tensions between modern media creators and media consumers as they relate to fan fiction. Fan fiction, or 'fanfic', refers to fictional writing produced by fans of an existing work of fiction (e.g., a film, television series, book, or other form of media) which is then published – most frequently online – for other fans to consume, critique, and discuss. While there is no monetary gain involved in fanfic due to it – by its very nature – being primarily formed around the copyrighted works, worlds, and characters of another, transformative

fiction can arguably be seen as a new classification of storytelling. It is this generation's version of sitting around a communal firepit and retelling a story that shaped a part of their cultural identity.

To explore this topic, and to support my diachronic analysis of storytelling, I will primarily be focusing on three core texts, or sets of texts: the *Harry Potter* series (1997 – 2007) by J. K. Rowling, *Carry On* (2015) by Rainbow Rowell, and *rebel rebel* (2018) by BasicBathsheba, who I will from here on refer to as 'Ban'[1] (see Appendix for full list of published works). While all are fascinating works of fiction in their own right, it is their interconnectivity that best highlights the fascinating yet fraught relationship between creator, content, and community. *Harry Potter* is a world built on, and constantly subverting, elements of classic folklore and fairy tales; *Carry On* is a published novel whose world is deliberately and obviously informed by the characters and world of *Harry Potter*; and *rebel rebel* is a 183,211-word fanfic inspired by the characters from *Carry On*. Though originally marketed as children's literature, *Harry Potter* resonated so strongly with older audiences that it soon became a leading example of 'crossover' literature at the turn of the millennium and gained an incontestable position within mainstream literature and popular culture. 'Crossover' literature refers to the genre of literature which blurs traditional aged-based marketing by appealing to both children/Young Adult (YA) audiences and adult audiences alike. The seven-part book series was adapted into an eight-part film series by Warner Bros. Pictures between 2001 and 2011, spawned Universal Parks & Resorts' *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter* chain of theme parks worldwide, and became a household name. However, despite the franchise's unanticipated international acclaim, both it and its creator have been involved in multiple controversies within the courts of legal and public opinion. Rowling and Warner Bros. have defended the franchise against multiple copyright infringements, serving as a formative legal example of the limitations of the 'Fair Use' doctrine, and Rowling has faced mass criticism for her controversial position defending women's rights at the expense, and exclusion of, trans women. Nonetheless, *Harry Potter* remains a prime example of the potential of literary works to transcend strict divides between literary genres.

It prompts one to question: what other elements of mainstream literature also have the potential to be transcended, and how do the traditional divides between author/media and

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[1] 'Ban' is the name the author refers to themselves by most frequently, and which connects their online persona to their offline self (i.e., Ban's original pen-name on AO3 and Tumblr was 'BasicBanshee' and their real name is Ban Gilmartin).

media fan/consumer (or 'prosumer' as I will later explore) affect this divide? *Carry On* and *rebel rebel*, for instance, were always targeted at dual-aged audiences, yet possess vastly different target markets due to their publishing methods. *Carry On,* a meta-textual spin-off of Rowell's earlier novel *Fangirl* (2013), successfully navigates the line drawn between fan-published fiction and professionally published fiction by paying clear homage to Rowling's work while also differentiating itself enough to profit financially and appeal to new readership. *rebel rebel* differs in that it was self-published on an online fan-fiction platform over the course of several months,[2] is profitless, and caters to a very specific audience (readers who are existing fans of *Carry On*). The relationship these texts have with one another makes them an excellent example of literary interconnectivity and how this translates to participatory culture. *Carry On* would not exist without passionate *Harry Potter* enthusiasts, just as *rebel rebel* would not exist without *Carry On* fans. With the creation of each new text, its predecessor shifts to become the 'source' or 'adapted' text, thereby altering the nature of their relationship and subverting, or reconstituting, previous analysis. To expand on this notion, I will also be supporting my analysis with Rowell's *Fangirl* and the meta-analysis it provides through Cath, its fanfic-writing main character. In *Fangirl*, it is Cath who writes *Carry On, Simon* – an online work of fan fiction in which the characters Simon Snow and Tyrannus "Baz" Basilton Grimm-Pitch are first introduced to Rowell's readers. This fanfic is explicitly based off the fictional Gemma T. Leslie's *Simon Snow* series, Rowell's version of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. While Rowell's own interpretation of her characters changed between their brief mentions in *Fangirl* to their fully developed state in *Carry On*, Cath's existence as both protagonist of her own story as well as the 'creator' of *Carry On, Simon* thereby allows for a novel, first-hand representation of intertextuality and self-examination.

My chapters will be broken down into four key areas, and will draw from feminist and queer theoretical frameworks, as well as literary-cultural analysis, with an emphasis upon key literary works as (pop-)cultural texts, rather than a formal analysis of literary features. The first chapter will set up my thesis by providing a historical overview of transformative storytelling (from myth, folklore, and fairy tales to fan fiction) in order to propose that individuals and communities have, historically, always been interested in the appropriation, adaptation, and transformation of existing tales. In essence, I argue that if new forms of

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[2] Though some works of fan fiction can take years to complete (as they are updated around the demands of the writer's professional and personal commitments), or may, in fact, never be completed.

transformative texts, such as fan fiction, are deemed 'transgressive', then this legacy of transgression is a long one. In the second, I will perform a close reading of *Harry Potter* to question the extent to which stories are 'original' or owned, and the author's ability to control readers' interpretation and appropriation of them. My third chapter will examine *Carry On* and professionally published transformative fiction – specifically, queer fiction – to navigate the tensions between media creator and media consumer in mainstream fiction. It will consider how these fans who both produce and consume media (i.e., 'prosumers') re-interpret professionally published fiction to create non-linear narratives and queer temporalities in their derived works. Finally, my fourth chapter will employ *rebel rebel* to explore participatory culture and gender/sexuality in these online fandom spaces in order to consider how transformative texts trouble the assumed dichotomy between professionally published and fan published fiction.

Throughout my thesis I will draw from bodies of literature that explore participatory culture, fan studies, and queer theory to both support my assertions and highlight areas that may have been neglected. Scholars such as Henry Jenkins and Camille Bacon-Smith have been highly influential in establishing the academic field of fan studies; Jenkins with his ethnographic focus on the cultural practices, interpretive strategies, and participatory culture of media fans, and Bacon-Smith with her focus on science fiction fandom, gender in fandom spaces, and slash fiction. More contemporary scholars, such as the essayists of Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse's edited collection, *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays* (2006), have explored subjects ranging from homosocial bonding, 'archontic' and 'intimatopic' literature, and the queer nature implicit in the relationship between fanfic readers and writers. Kathryn Bond Stockton, Hannah McCann, and Whitney Monaghan's queer theories have also formed cornerstone arguments and considerations for my research into queer temporalities and non-linear progression within fiction, as well as queer representation within mainstream literary media. But while these scholarly articles focus on key aspects independently, I am interested in how they interrelate. I am also curious about the extent to which the internet, new resources (such as the massive self-published fan fiction archive, Archive of Our Own (AO3)), and new media have affected fan and participatory culture in the years since these texts were published. Scholarship on *Harry Potter* is extensive, but scarce to non-existent where *Carry On* and *rebel rebel* are concerned. It is my hope that this thesis will add to the academic field not only by providing analysis on these newer texts, but also by considering their intertextual relationship from a

contemporary perspective, with an emphasis on queerness, and by specifically focusing on the points of tension between creators, content, and community in relation to the retelling of stories.

It is also worth establishing my personal interest in the field of fandom – as both fanfic reader and writer. Like many scholars of fan and participatory culture before me, I bring to my analysis a certain degree of protectiveness towards the online spaces in which I have engaged with mutuals in fic recommendations, support, and discussion. My status as a member of this fan 'community' brings with it a certain degree of bias – which I acknowledge here, at the outset – but also allows for a unique understanding of the more 'problematic' elements of fandom. My love of fanfic and fandom spaces is balanced against my intimate knowledge of its fetishisation, controversial categories (e.g., fanfics containing rape and incest), and familiar themes of harassment and bullying present in any online space allowing for anonymity. It is also worth noting that I use the term 'community' in my thesis, most commonly when discussing fans and fandom spaces, but also when referring to the queer 'community', but that this term itself can be problematic. Both 'communities' I refer to in this thesis encompass a diverse range of opinions and interests – often conflicting ones. It is with these caveats acknowledged and this informed understanding of fandom that I challenge hegemonic views surrounding fanfic and its cultural value. Because, while older forms of transformative texts – folklore, fairy tales, and myth – are commonly communally viewed as acceptable, even comforting, mainstream attitudes towards fan fiction often view this latest iteration as 'transgressive'. These attitudes often centre around the notion of appropriation, or of 'misreading' or 'misinterpretation' that sets the source text as gospel and allows no room for alteration or critical analysis. I propose that fan fiction can be seen as a 'natural' evolution in storytelling: another branch in the tree of how communities consume and reproduce stories. At its heart, the process of retelling stories and contributing individual alterations or interpretations is something so intrinsically human, but in modern culture when legalities and other obstacles enter it, the transformative art of storytelling becomes far more complex. The question, therefore, of who *owns* stories must be reconsidered; the question should be: how will they evolve next?

Chapter One: Origins and Originality

Once upon a time is a phrase as familiar and comfortably worn as an old, favourite book.[3] It signals to the reader that they are about to embark on a story – perhaps an adventure, perhaps a romance, but likely a story of heroes and villains (the latter to be vanquished). Though the term lends itself to familiarity by harking back to older story archetypes and plot patterns, when a reader hears 'once upon a time' in the present-day they are not expecting to hear an original fable straight from the mouth of a Grimm, Andersen, or Perrault. They expect to hear something new that has been subverted and reimagined; something that pertains to the current sociological, political, or environmental concerns relevant today. In short, they expect to hear a story transformed. But the nature of transformative texts and how we, as communities and individuals, adapt and interpret stories over time, is one far more complex than might first be imagined. While the term 'transformative works' is generally applied to content created by fans of an existing 'source material'[4] – rather than the source material's original author/creator – the concept of transformative storytelling is not a new one and historically dates back further than notions of 'fan fiction'.[5] According to the Organization for Transformative Works (OTW), a transformative text "takes something extant and turns it into something with a new purpose, sensibility, or mode of expression" ("Frequently Asked Questions"). Contextually, the OTW uses this definition to establish an understanding of fan fiction specifically, however this definition can also be applied to older forms of storytelling, such as myth, folklore, and fairy tales.

Over the course of this chapter, I will give a brief historical overview of these forms of storytelling, as well as fan fiction, in order to consider the extent to which each form meets the above definition and examine them within their sociocultural context. This will allow me to first analyse the elements which differ between them (e.g., their purpose and format), then form the basis of my argument for the cultural validity of fan fiction as a form of storytelling by highlighting the elements they share (e.g., narrative structure, plot devices, and themes),

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[3]Though the phrase was used previously, it became popular from the 1600s onwards through the translations of foreign fairy tales into English. Translations of stories by Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Andersen, and the Brothers Grimm all include the phrase as a stand-in for similar wording in French, Danish, and German respectively.

[4]I use 'source material' in this context to refer to the earliest known text or other form of media created within a particular archive or canon, as opposed to any later adaptations, translations, or reinterpretations of said material.

[5]While the term 'fan fiction' was not popularised until the 1960s, the term was used as early as 1939 by Bob Tucker when differentiating it from 'pro fiction', in the science fiction fanzine, *Le Zombie* (1939).

and finally examine how these older forms of storytelling inform and influence fan fiction culture and what they teach us about the tradition of transformative works. Fan fiction, as a storytelling medium, is often demeaned by academics, authors, and in popular culture as a 'low' form of art that does not meet hegemonic views of cultural value. Its unedited (or peer-edited) status renders it amateurish, its use of pre-existing content is conflated with plagiarism, and its deviation from canon renders it transgressive. The term 'transgressive' is mostly used to describe the action of "violating or challenging socially accepted standards of behavior, belief, morality, or taste" ("Transgressive"), but in the context of fanfic, it is the act of reinterpreting, repurposing, or adapting canon into something with new purpose or meaning which becomes a transgressive act. As I argue, fan fiction employs similar – sometimes identical – methods of reinterpretation and adaptation as myth, folklore, and fairy tales, and therefore 'transgressive' should not automatically equal cultural 'worthlessness'.

To support this argument, I will outline and challenge the main reasons fan fiction is viewed as transgressive: legal (on grounds of plagiarising the copyrighted work or 'intellectual property'[6] of another) and sociocultural (due to damaging stereotypes surrounding fan fiction because of its subversive content or inability to meet hegemonic definitions of 'taste'). While the legal implications of fan fiction as unauthorised adaptations of copyrighted source material present justifiably complex debates on its ethics, the sociocultural content I will be unpacking is no less complicated. My focus will be on gender within fandom spaces, themes of homosocial bonding or homoerotic subtext present within mainstream source material, and how the latter ties in with queer or queer-coded characters. Finally, I will link my debate on the transgressive nature of transformative works back to my thesis' overall focus on the ternary relationship between creators, content, and communities by examining how this relationship has evolved and *transformed* over time due to shifting cultural opinions and key historic events such as the invention of copyright, the printing press, and the internet.

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[6]Here I am using 'intellectual property' as a blanket term for the intangible work of a creator as opposed to the comparatively clear-cut legal protection copyright provides.

Myths

Not only does myth exemplify one of the oldest narrative forms of storytelling,[7] but its influence is also one of the most enduring, both in academic fields such as Classics or Mythology and in storytelling tradition. Myths showcase the shift from oral to literary tradition (later echoed by the shift from folklore to fairy tales), provide an example of early archival literature (in which multiple authors add to an archive of body of literature while borrowing from each other's work), and establish the tradition of hero archetypes through classical epics (which becomes relevant for the later texts I will be examining). Traditionally, myths can be defined as narrative tales concerned with the origins of the world and with gods, heroes, and other supernatural creatures or themes. According to Barry Powell, in his comprehensive examination of the subject, the term 'myth' stems from the Greek word *mythos*, meaning "authoritative speech", "story", or "plot", and is used to share "inherited wisdom" and "explain society to itself, promulgating its concerns and values" (2-3). In antiquity, myths were originally relayed orally ("Myth").[8] It is only through the process of literary transcription that myths encompassed in epic poems such as the *Iliad* were attributed to set authors. As Powell states, "literary works based on myth may have authors, but not the myths themselves" (3). These myths' original creators remain undocumented, and therefore anonymous. For example, the first documented appearance of the mythological character Achilles comes from the opening lines of the *Iliad*: "Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus…" (Homer 75). Homer likely did not invent the tale of the Greeks' epic war with Troy, nor Achilles' character, but since any preceding stories would have been passed down through oral tradition, no earlier historical figure can be attributed with authorship of the character Achilles.

Following on in the same thematic vein as my examples, in this segment I will be focussing on classical Greco-Roman myths due to their continuing popularity in Western culture, and therefore, in Western literature and media. Many Greco-Roman myths and mythological characters are recognisable in popular culture due to their use in literature (e.g., from Virgil and Shakespeare to more contemporary literature such as Madeline Miller's *The*

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[7] One of the earliest examples of storytelling in literary form (as opposed to earlier examples of iconographic storytelling from cave drawings) comes from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, a Sumerian poem dating back to 2100 B.C.

[8] Even once Greco-Roman myths were transcribed into a literary format, the dactylic hexameter they commonly employed harked back to the poetry's oral roots. In dactylic hexameter, each line possesses 'six feet' and each 'foot' is comprised of one long and two short syllables. Its cadence is similar to the rise and fall of music and allows epic poetry to be repeated at length and from memory in rhapsodes or other performative settings.

Song of Achilles (2011) and Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* series (2005 – 2009)) or due to their status as part of 'high culture' and being in 'good taste.' According to Jenkins:

> Concepts of "good taste," appropriate conduct, or aesthetic merit are not natural or universal; rather, they are rooted in social experience and reflect particular class interests…[and] are shaped by our earliest experiences as members of a particular cultural group, reinforced by social exchanges, and rationalized through encounters with higher education and other basic institutions that reward appropriate conduct and proper tastes. (*Textual Poachers* 16)

Therefore, social preconceptions of classical myths as being in 'good taste' become learned opinions reinforced by these exchanges and education systems' rationalisations, rather than being derived, necessarily, from their own aesthetic merit. In which case, media currently considered 'low culture' may conceivably be considered 'good taste' or 'classic' in future. The term 'classics' itself comes from the Roman word *classicus*, literally meaning 'pertaining to the highest class of citizen' which builds on the notion of classics as part of high taste or culture. While the intellectual and aesthetic value provided by classical Greco-Roman myths may have secured its position in 'high culture' by the intelligentsia's criteria, it stands to reason that the popularity of these myths among even non-academic readers must stem from something more than the excellence of their style, prose, and philosophy. Richard Martin, in his introduction to Richmond Lattimore's translation of *The Iliad of Homer* (1951), theorises that "its enduring value lies in the poem's recognition that even the worst enemies are deeply, fundamentally the same" and that its power comes from the realistic depiction of mortals' "existential recognition" of their own mortality – an anxiety that "transcends the anxieties of tribe or state" (2). As I argue, the deeper emotional connection individuals and communities have developed with these myths indicates that either the 'inherited wisdom' and moral value they provide must have remained applicable over time or that the meanings attributed to them through adaptation has allowed them to remain relevant in new cultural contexts, even as their subject matter becomes outdated.

Different authors or creators in both oral and literary tradition, such as Statius and Virgil, have left their mark on classical myths through either adaptation, translation, or additions made to the 'source material'. As Powell notes, "during oral transmission, a traditional tale is subject to constant change. Different narrators of a story have different

motives and emphasize or embroider on different aspects" (5). But the meaning and emphasis of these traditional tales were also subject to alteration through translation. Roman culture and literature are widely considered to be heavily influenced by the Greeks, both due to Greece pre-dating the Roman Empire as an established civilisation and because of their proximity to one another. The territory that would eventually form the basis of the Roman Empire was originally made up of smaller colonies and city-states, and Sicily, along with the area consisting of what is now southern Italy, were originally settled by the Greeks. The influence of local traditions on Roman culture saw the Romans imitate and appropriate key elements into their own culture and literature (Boatwright et al. 24). The Roman poets Virgil and Ovid, for instance, exemplify Roman transformation of Greek myths through translation and altered emphasis. Virgil's *Aenied* (19 BC) borrows extensively from Homer's work both in its depiction of the sack of Troy and through its use of Greek mythological characters such as Heracles. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8 AD) is considered one of the most substantial repertories of Greek myth, but as Powell notes, "in Ovid's literate and urbane retelling the old Greek tales have lost their religious overtones" as Ovid's translation of the Greek source material shifted its focus to romantic plotlines which would appeal to the refined tastes of the Roman elite (78).

Not only do these translations and appropriations of mythic source material display a disregard for the notions of authorship or ownership which would become relevant in later decades when the Statute of Anne and Copyright Act were established, they also provide an example of authors adding and borrowing from an archive of work. As Mary Boatwright et al observe, both Greek and Roman authors "composed their works in ways that nowadays we would more or less equate with plagiarism, since they often incorporated segments of the works of others into their own" (33). These authors were all contributing to a mythic canon of work, not claiming ownership over the original ideas. But there is often a difficulty in separating "the myth from the work of literature that embodies it" (Powell 78). Both Homer and Virgil have contributed to the canon of myth surrounding Heracles (or 'Hercules,' as per the Roman spelling) but neither *own* him; just as Homer does not own Achilles or the tale of the sack of Troy. I would argue that no author can truly own an idea and keep it safely in their possession always. They can only own their own interpretation or creation regarding that idea. But it is through this open ownership that the characters, themes, and elements present within myth can live on.

There are also cases where additions to the Greco-Roman mythic canon have become more popular than, or *improved upon*, the original texts. Authors have been reinterpreting or recreating the stories from ancient myths since their inception and adding new elements or emphases depending on the historical, social, and cultural circumstances of the time. This bears true in contemporary literature as well as in antiquity. For example, in his interview with author Madeline Miller, Eric Molinsky notes that "the most famous thing we know about Achilles – that his main vulnerability was in his heel…. was *not* in the Iliad. That was in another retelling of the story written centuries after Homer had died" ("Episode 111: Reimagining the Gods" 00:10:02-00:10:25). It was the Roman poet Statius, not Homer, who popularised Achilles' origin story in the *Achilleid* (96 AD), and it is because of his contribution to canon that the term 'Achilles heel' has become synonymous with a person's weak-point or vulnerability. As Molinsky articulates, the story and characters of the *Iliad* likely weren't Homer's to begin with:

> He was just the person who told them most vividly, and memorably. Good stories have the power to captivate us, but in their DNA is also the power of reinvention. They give us permission to retell them in any way that speaks to us. ("Episode 111: Reimagining the Gods" 00:28:17-00:28:38)

Consequentially, communal contributions to an archive or 'canon' or archive of work in antiquity may be concluded as an acceptable mode of conduct and a contribution rather than a transgression. It is through myths' evolution, translation, and improvement that its transformative nature becomes apparent, and may arguably be why stories such as Achilles' remain popular to this day, even finding themselves the subject of contemporary forms like podcasts or literary adaptations.

Miller's *The Song of Achilles* (2011) serves as a contemporary example of an addition to classical myth which arguably improves on the 'original'. Her novel retells Homer's *Iliad* but draws from additions to canon by authors such as Statius, Plato, and Aeschylus to focus on the developing romantic relationship between Achilles and Patroclus rather than on the siege of Troy. Achilles' flaws of pride and bloodlust are tied irreversibly to his legacy. In both Homer and Miller's texts Achilles is fated to die young and be remembered eternally, or else grow old and be forgotten. As such, he views his reputation as paramount and when Agamemnon dishonours his reputation by taking Briseis – Achilles' 'war prize' – from him, Achilles chooses to abstain from fighting on behalf of the Greeks until he receives an

apology. His choice leads to the death of many Greeks and emphasises the worst of this 'hero' – Achilles's callousness and ego. But Miller adds new layers to this myth by focussing on the story through the eyes of Patroclus and exploring not only the hero's legacy, but the way in which Achilles is remembered. It is through Patroclus' love for and his romantic relationship with Achilles that Miller recasts the *Iliad* in shades of intimacy, thus driving home to tragedy of their tale. She explores Achilles' empathy as well as his cruelty and delves into his emotive motivations in re-joining the battle following Patroclus' death, to right perceived gaps in the original text.

Thus Miller, alongside Plato and Aeschylus,[9] serves as an example of interpretive readership by navigating themes of homosocial bonding and the homoerotic subtext present within Homer's text. This critical communal engagement with source material demonstrates the same interpretative readership fan fiction writers display, and the same intertextual relation as between my core sets of texts. Just as Miller draws on Homer, Rowell, as I will later examine in more detail, builds on the homoerotic elements present within Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy's antagonistic relationship by making it explicit in Simon and Baz's relationship, drawing from the source material but transforming it through her own reinterpretation. Myth's rich narrative tradition also serves as the building blocks for key narrative themes within the core texts that I will be touching on in later chapters: tragedy within queer romance, heteronormative temporality, and the limitations presented to queer or queer-coded characters. Like Achilles, Harry and Simon become aware they will likely die young without getting to explore life and love in all its complexities, but just like with Homer and Miller, new writers are able to transform the source text and provide new outcomes for its heroes.

Folklore and Fairy Tales

While myths focus on the big picture – creation, deities, and divine events – in order to make sense of the world, folklore and fairy tales by comparison focus on the little picture. They are concerned with the traditions, culture, and stories of the common 'folk' or everyday people. Though kings and queens often play a role – generally as a result of the hero or

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[9] In Plato's *Symposium* (c. 385–370 BC) the characters discussing Achilles and Patroclus' relationship assume the two were lovers, and in fragments of Aeschylus's his lost tragedy *The Myrmidons* (5th century BC), Achilles laments Patroclus' death in a romantic context. Plato and Aeschylus are not the only classical authors who believed the two fictional characters were in a romantic relationship however, just two notable examples.

heroine's rise to royal status through conquest, completion of 'impossible tasks,'[10] or marriage – these tales most commonly detail the lives and actions of peasant people or the lower-to-middle classes. Here I perform a historical analysis of folk and fairy tales in unison – due to their intertwined evolutionary nature – to examine the shift from oral to literary format and how folk tales were subsumed into fairy tale tradition, how the Statute of Anne introduced concepts of ownership and copyright, and the temporal authority given to source materials over their derivations. Each of these factors affected the ternary relationship between creator, content, and community over this period, either by increasing communal ability to access, engage, and interpret literary content or by challenging the authority assigned to source material over derivations. This historical analysis is to provide context, a genealogy, for the discussion of fan fiction to come, and my chosen examples will highlight key elements (e.g., heroes and narrative structure) which will become relevant to later discussions. I focus on European examples of folk and fairy tales because of their continued popularity in Western literature and media, such as *Harry Potter* and *Carry On*.

A core criterion for a story's retelling is for it to continue to hold relevancy or interest for its audience. Folk heroes like King Arthur have remained relevant figures in contemporary popular culture (as evidenced by recent films, such as *King Arthur: Legend of The Sword* (2017)) as have fairy tales from authors such as Charles Perrault and Brothers Grimm (e.g., *Cinderella* (2015) and *Gretel & Hansel* (2020)). I highlight the 'continued popularity' of these texts as important because it *evidences* how texts survive through adaptation and transformation. In the same manner that myths survived through transcription by authors such as Hesiod and Ovid, folktales survived through appropriation by fairy tale writers like Perrault and the Grimms, and all these forms of narrative storytelling survive because they have continued to be transcribed, appropriated, and adapted through literary or media transformation in the centuries since.

King Arthur serves as an example of a folk hero whose popularity has been sustained by multiple authors adding to an archive or canon of work while adding their own emphasis or elements depending on the tastes of the time. While his folk hero status stems from oral

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[10] The 'Impossible Task' trope is as old as the twelve labours of Hercules (from the Greek poet Peisander, c. 600 BC) but appears frequently in folklore, especially Slavic folklore. The challenger sets the hero or heroine a task/series of tasks to complete in order to receive a boon, and a dire punishment should they fail. For example, in Alexander Afanasyev's version of *Vasilisa the Beautiful* (1855), Baga Yaga the witch sets Vasilisa a series of three impossible tasks: she must separate a mountain of mildewed corn kernels from dried ones, sift through an enormous pile of dirt to split out the poppy seeds, and prepare Baga Yaga dinner and clean her magical hut. Baba Yaga informs her that if she should fail, she will eat Vasilisa for supper.

tradition,[11] the first literary reference of Arthur's character comes from Geoffrey of Monmouth's pseudohistorical *Historia regum Britanniae* (The History of the Kings of Britain) in the 12th century. His literary canon has been added to by multiple authors over the years. Chretien de Troyes, Thomas Malory, and Wolfram con Eschenbach, for example, have all contributed to Arthurian legend with their own alterations. But, as with myth, while each of these authors has added to Arthur's canon, they can only be attributed with ownership of their own interpretation of his tale. They cannot claim ownership over Arthur's character itself as this is drawn from communal body of oral tradition. Their characters and function change over time to suit what readers and communities need from them based on the social, economic, and cultural struggles of the time in which they are written. Different authors have chosen to focus on or emphasis different relationships, themes, and morals depending on shifting tastes or other factors. Arthur's character has been greatly affected by medievalism, Romanticism, and the Gothic Revival. I argue that in instances such as these it is not only the popularity of these stories, but also their transformative and participatory nature which has allowed them to survive.

While folk tales were created to and contributed to by many authors, the process of documenting these oral folk tales into written format meant they underwent a process of adaptation – and often appropriation – as they were altered to suit the religious, political, or ideological viewpoints of the person/s transcribing them. For example, Irish folk tales transcribed by Christian monks often underwent reformatting in order to meet the "religious ethos" of the monks involved, rather the pagan origins of the tales (Herbert 164). In his podcast discussion with Jack Zipes, Molinsky emphasises how the Brothers Grimm carefully compiled and appropriated folk tales in order to promote the idea of a united 'Germany' at a time when it was geographically and politically fragmented ("Episode 1666: This Ain't No Fairy Tale" 00:03:35-00:04:13). Molinsky goes on to note that:

> [T]he Grimms went into the villages to get these stories directly from the common
> folk. They tried to do that but didn't get far. So instead, Wilhelm went to his next-

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[11] There is much scholarly debate on whether folk tales of Arthur's character stem from a genuine historical figure or are purely fictional. John Morris' *The Age of Arthur* (1973) argued in favour of Arthur's legitimacy, but his scholarship and methodology were widely criticised by his peers, such as David Dumville. Dumville's scathing rebuttal states, "The fact of the matter is there is no historical evidence about Arthur; we must reject him from our histories and, above all, from the titles of our books" (187-8).

door neighbour, a banker, and interviewed the banker's daughters about the books

they were reading. ("Episode 166: This Ain't No Fairy Tale" 00:04:36-00:04:52)

Ironically, not only were their sources members of the middle class, not folk class, but the fairy tales they were reading were primarily French. While the Grimms' motive in collecting and transcribing these fairy tales was to promote a united sense of 'Germany' and prove there was a single 'German folk', their sources underline the fallibility of their methods. Nevertheless, their goal was realised in the 1870s when the fractured German provinces were united into the German Empire. However, the Grimms were not the only writers with a political motive when it came to fairy tales, nor were they the only authority on their promotion or policing.

During the reign of Louis XIV there was great disparity between the regard held for mass-marketed 'blue books' and oral folk tales shared among the lower classes, and the those held in esteem in French court. This disparity was due to hegemonic concepts of value and 'good taste'; however, the criteria for what constituted "good taste" was policed by the court. "Taste" becomes one of the important means by which social distinctions are maintained and class identities are forged. Those who "naturally" possess appropriate tastes "deserve" a privileged position within the institutional hierarchy and reap the greatest benefits from the educational system, while the tastes of others are seen as "uncouth" and "underdeveloped" (Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 16). Zipes argues that it was not until Louis XIV and his intelligentsia realised fairy tales could be "codified" in order to "reinforce an accepted discursive mode of social conventions" that they received courtly approval (3). This codification through literature allowed the upper classes to influence the ideological and social mores of the common people. Most commonly, the folk tales appropriated into fairy tale format were done so in order to serve as moralising or socialising tools for children (especially girls). As Zipes notes:

> Almost all critics who have studied the emergence of the literary fairy tale in Europe
> agree that educated writers purposefully appropriated the oral folk tale and converted
> it into a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners so that children
> would become civilised according to the social code of that time. (3)

These folk and fairy tales possess clear moral and practical lessons. They both teach children the behaviour expected of them so they can grow into well-mannered, functioning, and

desirable members of society, and also warn them of the dangers awaiting them outside their bedroom door.

However, the perils child protagonists are faced with in these tales are often recast into fantastical format, because wolves and gingerbread houses are less psychologically frightening at surface level than the concepts of rape, abandonment, and murder they metaphorize. By warning children about the consequences of straying from the path, staying out after nightfall, or trusting in strangers, parents/caregivers were teaching children subconscious real-life lessons to aid in their survival. While fairy tales were mostly used as socialising and civilising tools for children, women were also included in their target audience. As I argue, the fairy tales written by male authors (such as the Brothers Grimm) can be read as intending to promote an internalisation of the set behaviours expected in young women, reenforce the gender hierarchy, and suppress female sexuality, wilfulness, and disobedience. The Grimm's adaptation of Sleeping Beauty, *Little Briar Rose* (1812), strips the female protagonist of her agency and reduces her to an object to be consumed by her future husband. Charles Perrault's *Bluebeard* (1967) teaches young women to fear their curiosity when it punishes its protagonist for disobeying her murderous husband, while also drawing parallels to Christianity.[12] While the male protagonists in fairy tales are allowed agency and have their activity and enterprise rewarded, Zipes notes that a heroine is only able to "find her 'true' salvation by sacrificing herself to a man in his house of castle, symbolical of submission to patriarchal rule" (34).

Zipes also recognises how, through the process of literary appropriation, folk tales underwent a successive "patriarchisation" as the matriarchal mythology from the Middle Ages was regulated by male fairy tale authors and the "goddess became a witch, evil fairy, or stepmother" (Zipes 7). Stepmothers in particular earned a bad reputation. *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Hansel and Gretel*[13] all portray the stepmother as a wicked character, devoid of maternalistic empathy or nurturing. In *Hansel and Gretel*, the neglectful father who abandons his children is even rewarded at the end of the tale, reenforcing misogynistic double-standards and literary stereotypes. However, not all authors shared this viewpoint. Ludwig Bechstein was a contemporary of the Grimms who, at the time, was far more popular with

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[12] Parallels can be drawn between the key Bluebeard's wife is given and the apple in the story of Adam Eve. Both Bluebeard's wife and Eve are given a firm instruction – not to open the locked room, not to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree – and both allow their curiosity to lead to disobedience. Psychoanalyst and author Clarissa Pinkola Estés likens the key in *Bluebeard* to consciousness and exploration of the psyche (1995).
[13] All three tales were published in *Grimms' Fairy Tales* (1812).

readers. He published *Deutsche Marchen* (German Fairy Tales) in 1845 and in its foreword
subtly critiqued the Grimms' methods by declaring that stepmothers had a difficult enough
time without being constantly maligned in literature. But in general, the shift from oral to
literary tradition also witnessed a shift in narratorly power from women to men. Later
adaptions of these fairy tales, especially by the Grimms, remove the subtleties of life and
womanhood present in earlier versions,[14] perpetuate violence against women,[15] and transform
active female roles into passive ones. This in turn reflects the patriarchal role of society in
supressing women's voices, overwriting women's matrilineal lineage, and subsuming
women's identities into those of their husbands.

The invention of the Gutenberg printing press[16] and subsequent increased literacy and
demand for reading material amongst the lower classes across Europe also affected the
relationship between creator, content, and community by recasting common "folk" into the
role of "consumers of fairy tales, rather than as producers" (Bottigheimer 103). Folk tales
were originally told orally because their storytellers were often poor and illiterate; books in
13th and 14th century Europe were not as readily available and were usually only owned by
the wealthy, by scholars, or by members of the clergy. However, Johannes Gutenberg's
invention of the printing press in 1440 signalled a dramatic shift in the literacy and reading
consumption of the masses across Europe. This began with the translation of the Vulgate
Bible from its original Latin into the vernacular languages of English, German, French,
Italian, and Spanish. This allowed the text to be conveyed in an understandable medium to
these folk classes, thus imparting readers with the power of critical readership. While this
process began with the bible, the invention of the printing press allowed a multitude of texts
to be distributed on mass. By the 15th century, chapbooks (also known as *livres bleus* or 'blue
books' in French and as *volksbuch* or 'people's book' in German) were circulating and
providing affordable reading material for the lower classes. Chapbooks were small volumes
generally following an 8vo format, "*i.e.* they consisted of a sheet of paper folded in eight, and
making a book of sixteen pages" (Ashton vii),[17] and because they were made from low-

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[14] The Grimms' *Rapunzel* (1812), for instance, is far more puritanical than earlier versions which deal more
explicitly with the feminine realities of love and sex.

[15] These tales often see women killed in childbirth, punished for curiosity or disobedience, or subjected to rape
or threats of sexual violence for the sake of plot progression.

[16] For the purpose of this thesis I examine the first printing press created in *Europe*, as it is Western media my
thesis focusses on, but it is worth noting that printed texts were being created in China far earlier.

[17] Chapbooks followed an 8vo format in the 17th century, but this varied across time and areas. John Ashton
notes that by the 18th century most followed a 12mo format instead, where a sheet was folded in twelve to
make twenty-four pages (vii).

quality material they were inexpensive to produce and easily affordable. Between the 17th and 19th century when the popularity of fairy tale literature was at its height – with fables produced by the likes of Charles Perrault, Madame d'Aulnoy, Hans Christian Andersen, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms, and Ludwig Bechstein – chapbooks were an easily accessible source of this content. Ruth Bottigheimer notes that:

> [F]airy tales' marketability is a key element in their history. Measurable by the extent to which the public consumed them, marketability is an indirect rather than a direct 8 form of evidence for human longings and individual hopes as expressed in specific fairy tales. (107)

While the shift from oral to literary tradition in storytelling initially moved control of textual narratives away from the community and into the hands of designated authors, through chapbooks and other forms of accessible reading material readers were once again able to engage with these stories, thus highlighting that this relationship continuously remains dynamic.

Though time grants source texts an "axiomatic primacy and authority" over adaptations and normalises myth, folklore, and fairy tales as 'tasteful' forms of narrative storytelling in academic consideration, fan fiction, as a more contemporary phenomenon, is often viewed as transgressive (Hutcheon 16). Linda Hutcheon argues that "…in both academic criticism and journalistic reviewing, contemporary popular adaptations are most often put down as secondary" and "derivative" (2). However, I would argue that fan fiction's adaptive and transgressive nature also makes it potentially the most *transformative* form of storytelling. While myth, folklore, and fairy tales either take from oral tradition to share communal tales or appropriate fables with a specific personal or political ideological agenda, fan fiction is an explicit comment on the source material it is taken from. It is important to consider adaptations in context "not only as autonomous works" but as "deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (Hutcheon XIV). Whether that source is a film, television series, book, or other form of media, fans write fan fiction either as an expression of love for the source material or as a criticism against its perceived shortcomings. Therefore, I would argue that fan fiction is *reactionary*. Unlike other forms of media, fan fiction is generally written without a potential financial motivator due to the legal ramifications of attempting to profit from an author or creator's copyrighted work. The motivation for recreating and reinterpreting source material through adaptation is therefore

driven by fans' critical and emotional response to said source text and fan reactions to one another's derived work. [18] The process of adaptation is a reaction – a process of intertextual literary transformation – and highlights the relationship between community (i.e., fans) and content (i.e., source material) as well as creators (i.e., authors of the source material). In this section I will give a brief overview of fan fiction's historical roots in order to examine this relationship. I will also discuss key themes important to my analyses of core texts in later chapters, such as the legal and sociocultural reasons fan fiction is viewed as transgressive, homosocial bonding and homoerotic subtext in source material, gender, censorship, and the temporal precedence and authority assigned to source texts.

Fan Fiction

Though there are certainly instances of adaptive or reactionary literature written previously, the term 'fan fiction' only became popularised in the 1960s. It gained traction due to fans 'shipping' (a fan term for fans desiring a romantic relationship, or 'ship,' between two fictional characters) James T. Kirk and Spock from the television show *Star Trek: The Original Series* (1966-1969). This popular 'ship' became known as Kirk/Spock and is also considered the origin for the term 'slash.'[19] Slash fiction is termed such because of the slash used between two characters' names to indicate a romantic and/or sexual relationship between them. While 'slash fiction' refers to works written about two characters of the same sex, it is often confused and used interchangeably with 'fan fiction.' The two terms signify different genres or sub-genres because, in the same way that not all transformative literature is made up of fan fiction, not all fan fiction is made up of slash. While the term 'fan fiction' encompasses stories categorised as 'het', 'slash', or 'gen',[20] the sub-category 'slash' specifically refers to same-sex pairings. Sheenagh Pugh suggests the intertwined association between fanfic and slash is because slash "attracts more notice and comment from outside the fanfic writing and reading community than any other form of fanfic" (91). Kirk/Spock slash fiction was originally printed in *Star Trek* 'fanzines,' unofficial publications produced and

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[18] This is not to say that some writers have not attempted to make money out of fan fiction. But such attempts are generally condemned within the 'fandom' as they are seen as plagiarism and a direct violation of the 'Fair Use' clause fan fiction operates under.

[19] Kirk/Spock is considered the origin for the term 'slash' by Jenkins (1992) and Bacon-Smith (1992) and, as two of the most influential fan fiction scholars in the field, their opinions have widely informed or impacted those of scholars after them.

[20] In this context (i.e., within fandom culture), these colloquialisms refer to stories featuring heterosexual relationships, homosexual relationships, or generic stories with no romantic or sexual pairings.

distributed by fans, their name derived from blending the words 'fan' and 'magazine,' such as *Spockanalia* (1967). The content of these fanzines and unbridled enthusiasm of 'trekkies'[21] earned fans a negative reputation in the eyes of the public. *Star Trek* actor William Shatner (James T. Kirk) once memorably told fans in a satirized *Saturday Night Live* skit, "get a life, will you, people?! I mean, for crying out loud, it's just a TV show!" (1986).[22] This reaction echoes Jenkins' analysis that:

> The fan still constitutes a scandalous category in contemporary culture, one alternately the target of ridicule and anxiety, of dread and desire. Whether viewed as a religious fanatic, a psychopathic killer, a neurotic fantasist, or a lust-crazed groupie, the fan remains a "fanatic" or false worshipper, whose interests are fundamentally alien to the realm of "normal" cultural experience and whose mentality is dangerously out of touch with reality. (*Textual Poachers* 15)

The interpretation of fans as 'fanatical' both damages the reputation of fans as socialised, well-adjusted, 'normal' members of society and discredits their enthusiasm and opinions on the media they engage with. However, fan engagement through fan fiction and fanzines proved pivotal in paving the way for fan interpretations of source material and critical readership/viewership.

The reputation of fan fiction as 'transgressive' has been affected by both mainstream academic opinions on slash fiction, and the gender disparity in authorship, given women make up most fan fiction writers and readers. In the same way that the Gutenberg printing press increased public accessibility to a wide range of printed texts, the invention of the internet increased fans' ability to access and anonymously promote their fan fiction to a wider audience. Instead of fanzines, which were accessible only by a few, consumers were able to form online communities and networks with fans from all around the world who shared interests and tastes which dominant cultural hierarchies and authorities might dispute (e.g., LGBTQ+ pairings, uncensored erotica, kink, Real Person Fiction (RPF)). But even with this increased online presence of fans on fan fiction-reading sites, the overwhelming majority remain female. As early as 1986 Bacon-Smith estimated that "women have accounted for

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[21] A term first used by Arthur Saha in an interview in 1967.

[22] This incident should be considered contextually, however. It is worth noting that Shatner has had a complicated relationship with fans' enthusiasm for Kirk's character, and the impact *Star Trek* had on his career. He has spoken at length in his autobiography, *Get A Life* (1999), about coming to terms with his status as a cultural icon to fans and how his opinions regarding fandom have softened over time. The incident is most damaging because of the stereotypes around fans it has perpetuated.

over 90 percent of the writing and graphic arts and for almost all the editing of the "Star Trek" fan publications" ("Spock among the Women") – an estimation that was revisited by Jenkins in 1992 when considering slash as an almost exclusively feminine genre (*Textual Poachers* 191). In the decades since, a significant amount of scholarship has considered why fan fiction, and slash fiction in particular, is such a female-dominated field, and what psychological or emotional needs are met that are not satisfied for fans by the original source material or other available medias. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse suggest two primary reasons: slash fiction is treated through the female gaze (i.e., written by women, for women) and allows women to express their desire for equal partnership without assumptions based on heteronormative gender roles (17). While fan fiction literature obsessed with male/male pairings[23] might be criticised as misogynistic due to lack of female representation, Eden Lackner et al. point out "women have always been present in slash. The writers and readers *are* the women, and as our cultures and fandoms change, it becomes possible to write more women like us into slash" (195-6). Despite this interpretation of female representation, scholarship on the subject tends to settle on one of two extremes: either celebrating slash written by women as subversive or dismissing it as submissive.

Academic opinions on slash vary greatly, but can be summarised with Catherine Driscoll's interpretation of slash as a 'pornographic force' at one end of the spectrum and Elizabeth Woledge's interpretation of slash as 'intimacy adventures' intended to soothe perceived discrepancies in source material at the other. While Driscoll presents a compelling historical-contextual analysis of the relationship between the romantic novel and slash fiction, her analysis does focus heavily on the pornographic elements of slash. Though Driscoll allows that "fan fiction recasts sex in terms of intimacy" (82), her argument is that "even fan fiction stories that involve little or no sex are surrounded by the possibility of sexual representation" (85), and are therefore a form of romantic pornography, as fan fiction historically draws from both. Woledge offers a different approach by suggesting that, rather than focussing on sexual desire and culmination, female fans perform critical readings of the homosocial bonds between fictional characters and homoerotic subtext present within source material to write slash that reflects their desire for emotional intimacy. She dubs this term

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[23] While female/female slash fiction does exist, it constitutes a much smaller portion than male/male orientated pairings. For example, M/M pairings make up 172,041 of the fanworks written under the *Harry Potter* category on AO3, whereas W/W pairings make up only 27,966 (as of July 2022).

"intimatopia"[24] to describe the sub-set of slash fiction concerned with a plot arc of *emotional* intimacy between two characters (Woledge 99). In this type of slash, vulnerability and loyalty are used as tools to further the natural homosocial bond and "facilitate the growing erotic relationship between the male protagonists" (Woledge 102). Sexual intimacy may be – and often is – present, but it is not the end result. Rather, it is used to express the culmination of the protagonists' romantic love for one another (or as a side-plot irrelevant to their developing relationship).

The purpose of my analysis is not to concur with either Driscoll or Woledge at the expense of the other, but to suggest that each of their opinions exists on a spectrum and that slash fiction may encapsulate more than one idea or truth. Driscoll's analysis focusses on slash as a pornographic force whereas Woledge's skims over some of its erotic nature. Woledge's focus on emotional intimacy, however, sets slash fiction apart from media traditionally targeted towards male audiences: pornography and television shows that cater to assumed male tastes, preferences, and viewing habits, and which delineate sex from emotional intimacy and vulnerability. This is not to imply there are not women who enjoy watching pornography (which itself caters to a diverse range of tastes and preferences) or men who enjoy reading slash fiction, but is rather to give an indication of the target audiences each media usually caters to and the gender disparities within them. In an online Reddit discussion of this gender disparity, user crotchety_young_adult says, "I'm as male as it gets, and yet, I've been writing/reading fan fiction since I was a kid. A lot of my early stories, when I was on deviantART, would get comments like 'YOU GO, GIRL,' and I always got a kick out of it" and user SaintEpithet proposes that, "It probably has something to do with "men are more visual" and therefore not as drawn to seek out written media, even if they are hardcore fans" ("Gender Survey"). It is also worth noting that, while 'intimatopic' fiction constitutes a generous percentage of slash fiction, smut and erotica also make up a healthy sub-set (often tagged as 'PWP' or 'Porn Without Plot'), and both can be viewed as equally meaningful contributions to slash fandom.

Other criticisms of fan fiction are based on arguments that position fanfic as unfaithful or unoriginal to the source text. Fan fiction has been called everything from "derivative" to "appropriative" (qtd. in Derecho 63), but it can also be read as consumers embracing textual and ideological nonconformity. Instead of being mere receptacles for an

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[24] This is influenced by the term 'romantopia,' coined by Catherine Salmon and Don Symons in *Slash fiction and human mating psychology* (2004) to describe the world mainstream heterosexual romance novels exist within.

author or creator's message, consumers engage in critical thinking and repurpose texts to evoke their own message. The allegedly unfaithful interpretation of the source material or the 'misreading' of canon by consumers has been one of the main factors provoking authorial outrage. This is highlighted by my earlier example of the Vulgate bible. In this scenario, the Vulgate is 'source material' and the author is not the actual author (i.e., Jerome) but the authority with control over this source material: The Papacy. The Papacy opposed translations of the Vulgate, citing fears that mistranslations would lead to misapplications or misunderstandings by the uneducated masses (Dickens 35). However, translators such as Martin Luther and Erasmus of Rotterdam disagreed with such notions, stating that if the Papacy was concerned lack of education could cause misinterpretations, then the lower classes should be better educated. This constitutes an early example of the contentious relationship between the authority of the author (or person/group with authority over the source material) and the critical readership of its consumers. Fears of the masses 'misreading' the text indicates a fear on the part of the author/authority that their self-asserted control over the text and implied ownership are being challenged. But this implies that only the author or creator can dictate how the source material should be read and sets their interpretation up as sacrosanct, which was not even possibly with the Vulgate. Because, as discussed previously, if even the holy word of God – or rather, the Catholic Church's officially promulgated Vulgate Bible – was up for translation and reinterpretation by everyone from Martin Luther to Erasmus of Rotterdam, it stands to reason that lower-profile texts would be too. Because the Vulgate was a product of translation and transposition from the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts into Jerome's Latin one. Hutcheon notes that in these situations, "the source text is granted an axiomatic primacy and authority" (16). As the Vulgate was not the true source text but merely an adaptation of earlier work, this poses the question of whether any text can be granted true authority over another or whether adaptations should be given the same authority as their predecessors.

Other criticisms directed at fan fiction centre on perceptions that it regurgitates of preceding literature and subsequently lacks originality. For example, in April 2000, Anne Rice posted a message on her website banning readers from writing fanfic based on her characters. Others have taken a different approach. Abigail Derecho offers the poststructuralist counterargument, suggesting that all literature is interlinked on some level and that fan fiction should therefore be classified as "archontic." She takes "archontic" from the word "archive" in Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995) and uses it to embody

Derrida's claim that every archive remains forever open to "new entries, new artifact, new contents" and therefore is never complete or closed (qtd. in Derecho 64). Derecho asserts that:

> The adjective *archontic* better describes the intertextual relationship at the core of the literature than the words *derivative* or *appropriative* do. Although *derivative* and *appropriative* both imply intertextuality, an interplay between texts – one preceding and providing the basis for the other – these adjectives also announce property, ownership, and hierarchy. (64)

That Derecho's opinions are influenced by Derrida's, whose opinions in turn are informed by Roland Barthes',[25] is interesting in that this mimics the intertextuality and progression of ideas within the literature they are discussing. Barthes separates the "author" from their authority and relegates them to the role of "scriptor" and by doing this also separates the text from the author's creative influence over it (145-7). His position challenges the traditional notion of authorial intentionalism (the viewpoint that a text should be constrained by the intentions of its author) by his critique of the perceived limitations this method imposes on texts (Barthes 147). Based on Barthes' argument, if authorial intent and control over the meanings assigned to a text can be disrupted, it stands to reason that the authorial *ownership* over a text can also be disrupted, thereby allowing for a separation between source material and adaptations added to the potential archive of work derived from it. This ties in with Hutcheon's argument that, "an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary" but instead is "its own palimpsestic thing" (9). By separating the author from their authority over a work, suggesting that adaptations (i.e., fan fiction) add to a communal archive of work rather than existing purely to pervert the creator's original content, and asserting the merit these 'derivations' possess by nature of their diversity and adaptability, the debate can be moved away from concepts of originality to focus on what adaptations *add* to through reinterpretation and recreation.

Fan fiction has not only faced criticism externally of the fandom, but also from within. The first archival website created to house these 'archontic' works was FanFiction.Net (FF.net) in 1998 but was closely followed by blogging platform LiveJournal (LF) in 1999, self-publication platform Wattpad in 2006, and dedicated fanfic repository AO3

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[25] That Derrida has read and been influenced by Bathes work is explicit both due to the crossover of ideas their essays cover and Derrida's earlier homage to Barthes in his essay *The Deaths of Roland Barthes* (1988).

in 2008.[26] FF.net was originally the most popular and influential of these fan fiction archives, but lack of maintenance, limited usability, and several 'Purges' led to migration of fans to more user-friendly and inclusive platforms. In both 2002 and 2012 FF.net removed all stories rated NC-17[27] from their site, resulting in the sudden disappearance of thousands of fanfics, forums, and categories. The intent of these purges was to remove adult content from a site accessible by children, especially in categories targeted specially towards children (e.g., the Harry Potter fandom). These purges prompted outrage from many fans and petitions to reverse the NC-17 removal. The 2002 petition gained 23,453 signatures (Vanderhooft), and 2012 petition gained 44,193 signatures (Weatherly), however, neither were successful. This censorship had a noticeable effect on fandom culture. Fan discourse on the purges highlighted centred on how fan contributions which had felt permanent and secure became susceptible to erasure and how the sense of community cultivated by fans seemed to come under attack:

> Ever since it was opened, Fanfiction.NET had always been a place for avid fans-- of ANYTHING-- to feel at home…Now all of a sudden, FF.net has decided to go through a massive upheaval and remove thousands of stories from its library, some of the best fanfics ever written, gone, never to be read again. (Weatherly)

The censorship also sparked debate over what constituted free speech and what content should or should not be allowed in fanfics. Among the more controversial categories were rape, Real Person Fiction (RPF), incest, and paedophilia. This is not to say that these categories reflect the best of literature, but rather to question the extent to which literature should be censored. After all, if professionally published literature containing controversial subject matter remained banned to this day, we would not have *Lolita* (1955), *The Colour Purple* (1982), or *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960); controversial books which are today, widely considered to be classics. The subject of censorship is a complex one that, again, relies on the *interpretation* of the individual or community defining which content should be censored.

What makes subject matter like rape problematic in fan fiction is that there are many different forms a 'rapefic' (i.e., fanfics in which rape is a central element) can manifest in. Firstly, there are rapefics which deal with the emotional trauma and aftermath experience by

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[26] This is just to name a few. Many other fan fiction archival platforms or forums exist on the internet, but I mention these four because of their influence and popularity with fans.

[27] This refers to the 'No children 17 and under' rating assigned to films by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). This rating advises viewers that the film in question contains violent, sexual, or other content unfit for young viewers.

rape/sexual abuse survivors. These fanfics often tie in with the 'hurt/comfort' genre (i.e., fanfics in which one character suffers physical or emotional hurt and is cared for by another character) or focus on emotional and psychological recovery. Secondly, there are fanfics containing content qualifying as dubious consent. This category may contain everything from sex pollen[28] and fuck-or-die scenarios[29] to 'aliens made us do it'[30] or omegaverse heats/ruts.[31] The tradition of dubiously consensual sexual content in fan fiction dates back to 'pon farr'[32] in Kirk/Spock fanfic but continues to be the matter of debate. Because one or both characters in fanfics tagged as 'dubious consent' may either be not entirely cognisant or consenting, some readers might interpret this as rape whereas other readers may not interpret this as rape because, in these scenarios, there is no true 'perpetrator' or rapist consciously *choosing* to engage in sexual acts with or violence against another character without their consent. Thirdly, there are rapefics which make no apology for their content or any morally reprehensible acts of sexual violence they contain.

The enjoyment of rapefics or noncon fanfics has been defended by writers/readers of the genre such as AO3-user Anarfea, who, in her meta essay addressing the polarising topic, asserts readers' rights to consume this material and opposes online harassment targeted towards it. She argues for divorcing the rape fantasy role-play readers engage in while reading it from the actual act of condoning rape itself:

> I am turned on by rape fantasies. But to say this means that I "think rape is sexy" is to
> conflate actual rape with the fantasy of rape. Actual rape is not sexy, and everyone I

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[28] This refers to fanfics in which one or more characters is infected with some form of 'sex pollen' (which might be magical, alien, or other) that leads to a lowering of inhibitions and/or increased libido, and generally results in sex between these characters.

[29] 'Fuck or die' in this content is an umbrella term encompassing, but not limited to, some of the aforementioned categories and refers to any scenario in which one or more characters will die if they do not engage in sexual intercourse.

[30] This refers to fanfics in which the characters are either forced to engage in sexual intercourse through threats of violence (e.g., aliens threaten to kill or harm the characters if they do not have sex with each other as a part of the aliens' experiment) or through diplomatic coercion (e.g. the aliens misunderstand and assume two characters are in a sexual relationship and in order to keep the aliens happy – and from killing them – the characters engage in sexual acts to keep up the charade).

[31] In 'omegaverse' fanfics, people typically possess one of three secondary genders (alpha, beta, or omega), and often possess a number of primitive habits or drives to go with them. These may include heightened senses of smell (e.g., the ability to smell whether someone is distressed, angry, happy, or horny), the urge fight (e.g., alphas fighting other alphas in displays of dominance or to protect their land, pack, or mate), nest, or mate. Omegaverse fanfics often contain sexual content, usually either an omega undergoing their 'heat' or alpha undergoing their 'rut,' in which they are driven to have sexual relations as a part of the primitive urge to mate.

[32] Pon farr refers to the Vulcan time of mating, during which adult Vulcans grow increasingly mentally unstable and risk death if they do not either take a mate or undergo a challenge fight, or 'kal-if-fee' to alleviate it.

know who has rape fantasies knows this…In a space like fandom, which prides itself on supporting diversity of sexual expression, on supporting the exploration of sexualities, and extending one another the benefit of the doubt as we learn and grow together, I feel like this should go without saying. (Anarfea)

That Anarfea's essay and her fan fiction containing this subject matter are hosted on AO3 is relevant to my examination of this topic, because AO3 possess what is potentially the most inclusive – or at least, the most lenient – approach to controversial content. AO3's site does not censor the content of fan fiction published on their website however, users are able to use the filtering system to either include or exclude graphic depictions of violence, major character death, underage, or rape/non-consensual content from their search. They also have a rating system broken down into 'Teen And Up Audiences', 'General Audiences', 'Mature', and 'Explicit', to give users an idea of the fanfic's suitability for their age and interests, users accessing Mature or Explicit work are given warning that the work they are about to read may possess adult content, and on top of these safe-guards it is also common for fanfic-writers to explicitly tag for 'triggers.'[33] This questionable content plays into critical opinions of fanfic as 'perverted' or 'deviant'. AO3's parent organisation, the OTW, plays a part in protecting and defending fanfic from legal challenge, and the site therefore has very little in the way of censorship. However, content censorship varies between different online fanfic platforms.

Legal challenges to fanfic content have mostly come in the form of authorial condemnation. Not every author or creator is happy to have their content repurposed by fans for transformative purposes. Rice's abhorrence for fan written fiction about her series, *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976 – 2018), is particularly notorious. In April 2000, Rice posted the following statement on her website:

I do not allow fan fiction. The characters are copyrighted. It upsets me terribly to even think about fan fiction with my characters. I advise my readers to write your own

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[33] Trigger warnings (commonly listed at the beginning of a fanfic or in the Author's Note) let users who may be triggered by traumatic content know there is content which may negatively affect them and to proceed with caution. Common trigger warnings include rape, child abuse, domestic violence, suicide, and death of a child, but there is much debate on whether fanfic-writers are required to tag for triggers at all and, if so, how specific they need to be in their warnings. For example, Anarfea notes that "sex on office furniture" is one of her personal triggers due to her past history with abuse, but that she would not expect writers to tag for this as many triggers are "specific to individuals, and there is no way for content creators to anticipate every possible trigger" ("On the Subject of Noncon Fanworks: Thoughts of a Reader, Writer, Survivor").

original stories with your own characters. It is absolutely essential that you respect my wishes. ("Important Message From Anne on "Fan Fiction"")

She followed this up by sending Cease & Desist letters to prominent fanfic authors, promising legal action should they fail to take down their *Vampire Chronicles* fan fiction, and using personal information dug up by her assistants to threaten fans' businesses and harass them via email. Furthermore, in May 2001 Rice's lawyers demanded FF.net remove all *Vampire Chronicles* fan fiction from their site and were successful. While Rice's attack on fans served as a warning for fanfic authors, the Marion Zimmer Bradley fan fiction controversy of 1992 is often used as a cautionary tale for published authors. As the author of the popular *Darkover* series (1958-96), Bradley initially encouraged fan fiction based in her stories' world and even edited fanzines, anthologies, and fannish newsletters. However, controversy arose when it became apparent that her next Darkover novel, *Contraband*, shared notable similarities with a fan fiction she had read and reviewed for Jean Lamb, titled *Masks* (1991). It is unclear exactly how much of Bradley's novel was either influenced or directly taken from Lamb's work, but in 1992 Lamb was offered a $500 pay-out and acknowledgement of her material in Bradley's novel.[34] According to Lamb, "I was told that I had better take what I was offered, that much better authors than I had not been paid as much" ("Copyright and Filk Songs"). An agreement was never reached; Bradley's novel went unpublished and Lamb's attempt to submit original work to Bradley's publishing agency, DAW Books, was quickly shut down. Neither party sued, but the legal ramifications have impacted the opinions of authors in the time since. A notable example of this comes from George R. R. Martin, author of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series (1996-), who posted on his 'Not A Blog' that the episode with Bradley "had a profound effect on me and, I suspect, on many other SF and fantasy writers of my generation," and thereby highlighting the long-term implications of this event on authorial opinions of fan fiction ("Someone Is Angry On The Internet").

Martin is one of the many authors against fan fiction, but there are plenty who support it, including Neil Gaiman, Leigh Bardugo, Lev Grossman, and Naomi Novik.[35] J. K. Rowling has stated in a press release that she is "flattered people wanted to write their own stories"

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[34] Bradley had also suffered a series of strokes which had impacted her health and ability to write. It is theorised that much of her published stories after this period were either written by or aided by ghost writers; a factor that may have impacted her attempt to potentially plagiarise Lamb's work.
[35] Novik is particularly notable because of her role as one of the founders of AO3.

based on her characters as long as "it remains a non-commercial activity to ensure fans are not exploited and it is not being published in the strict sense of traditional print publishing" (Waters). However, even when authors do condone fan fiction, they often regard it as acceptable only if used as a transitional form of art. Rice in a 2012 interview: "If I were a young writer, I'd want to own my own ideas. But maybe fan fiction is a transitional phase: whatever gets you there, gets you there" ("How fan fiction is conquering the internet and shooting up book charts"). Similarly, Rowling's spokesperson ended the aforementioned press release by stating, "Hopefully the fan fiction will help people become writers in their own right" (Waters). If fan fiction is used as a form of storytelling for young writers to practice developing their creative writing skills before creating original work, this is deemed allowable. But in this vein of thinking it is only the fan's original work which will be worthy of merit, not their fan work, and only by creating something original will they become a 'true writer'.

While some authors' opinions on fan fiction have changed over time – Rice's stance has notably softened, though she will still not allow her work on FF.net – and some author's experiences or controversies and with fans have gone on to affect how other authors view fan fiction, this only serves as another example of how fans, authors, and their stories (whether fan fiction or professionally published literature) are constantly affecting each other. No idea is original. No story is born from nothing. In the same way that certain fans have linked key aspects of George Lucas' *Star Wars* universe to Bradley's books,[36] ideas themselves are constantly being appropriated and adapted and, as proven by the examples above, are difficult to censor. I would argue that this is what fan fiction represents: new ideas, new (re)creations and (re)interpretations, and above all *transformation.* Whether authorial opinions on fan fiction will change over time remains to be seen, but it is possible that just as fan fiction has changed and adapted as a storytelling form, so too will cultural opinions and criticisms of it as an art form.

Having now given a historical-contextual overview of myth, folklore, fairy tales, and fan fiction, I will compare and contrast them in order to elucidate their transformative nature. Their differences can be broken down into two categories: purpose and format. Myths were

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[36] In Darkover Newsletter #6 (1977), the Ted Bryan points out that 'Alderaan' is a name lifted from Darkover, Tatooine closely resembles the Drylands, they both share a rebel base on a red moon, and that the Force bears close similarities to manifestations of Laran, amongst other things. Lucas also drew from director Akira Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* (1958) when working on *Star Wars* (1977).

originally used for religious or spiritual purposes to explain life, the universe, and fundamental realities of human existence. Folklore encompasses the customs, traditions, and culture of a group of 'folk' people to create a shared communal understanding of themselves as a collective. Fairy tales serve a similar purpose, but in literary format, and promote social, behavioural, political, or ideological characteristics and values for a set group of people. Fan fiction is used for the purpose of celebrating or critiquing a source text through adaptation and recreation. Myths and folklore both stem from oral tradition; however, myths were transcribed into written format whereas folklore was appropriated into the category of fairy tales before it evolved into written form. [37] Fan fiction is also created and viewed in written format, however in a digital form instead of traditional print. As for their similarities, as all four are narrative forms of storytelling they share certain characteristics in terms of narrative structure, plot devices, and themes. The 'Hero's Journey' narrative structure created by Joseph Campbell is broken down into seventeen stages over three separate acts, but can be summed up as:

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered, and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (23)

Though Campbell's originally applied this narrative structure to Greco-Roman myths, elements of it can easily be applied to folk/fairy tales. In the *Iliad* the first stage or 'The Call to Adventure' is when Achilles is called to fight for the Greeks in the war against Troy, and in *Cinderella* the first stage is when Cinderella receives word of the ball being thrown by the Prince to find a bride. Certain plot devices are also used across multiple categories. 'The Impossible Task' trope which commonly appears in Slavic folklore (e.g., the series of three impossible tasks set in the tale of Vasilisa the Beautiful) also appear in Greek myth (e.g., The Twelve Labours of Heracles). Common themes used across these categories deal with fundamental human concerns that have remained relevant over time, such as food, shelter, survival, love, and a sense of belonging (the lower tiers of Maslow's hierarchy of needs), as well as principle human fears like poverty, hunger, domination, oppression, and death. So,

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[37] This is my own interpretation. That said, there is a great deal of crossover between the two categories which makes a complete distinction between folklore and fairy tales difficult.

while these narrative forms of storytelling possess notable differences, they also share several characteristics which have been passed on as transformative texts evolve over time.

Each of these four categories of storytelling can be classified as transformative in their own way. They each "take something extant and turns it into something with a new purpose, sensibility, or mode of expression" ("Frequently Asked Questions"), but with different emphasis on the relationship between creator, content, and community. This emphasis is due to a number of factors, including legal and sociocultural constraints, censorship, oral versus literary traditions, and hegemonic ideologies. The oral tradition of myth and folklore stress 'community' before 'creator,' as their fables are communal in nature and their origins therefore cannot be attributed to a single author. However, the literary tradition of fairy tales and introduction of the Copyright Act changes this dynamic to bring the content's 'creator' to the foreground. The creator (or legal representative e.g., the publisher) is given sole authority over their texts and any consumer who challenges this authority by reinterpreting their work and upsetting their ideological motives is seen as misreading the text. Fan fiction once again stresses 'community' over 'creator' like folklore. It creates a unique sub-culture with an esoteric set of shared interests and a communal repurposing of creator's content in either celebrate or critique. Fan fiction, as the most recent form of storytelling, can be viewed as potentially the most transgressive and reactionary form of storytelling. I would certainly argue that it deals the most explicitly with transformation. But it is only able to do so due to the long traditions in storytelling it draws from. Mythic heroes like Achilles, folk heroes like King Arthur, and contemporary heroes from media like Kirk and Spock are all hero-types after their own fashion. It is their legacy that the 'Chosen One' hero archetype is derived from; the archetype I will be examining the characters of Harry Potter and Simon Snow against in later chapters.

Traditionally the 'Chosen One' is a protagonist marked with special powers or talents who is prophesised to perform a heroic task. Harry is prophesised to defeat Lord Voldemort just as Simon is prophesised to defeat the Insidious Humdrum, and both are gifted with specific abilities. Harry is the only known person to have survived a killing curse from Voldemort and possesses the unenviable[38] ability to speak 'parseltongue' (the language of

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[38] Unenviable because this trait earns him the distrust and suspicion of his fellow schoolmates in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998). They believe this ability indicates he is the 'heir of Slytherin' (i.e., the heir of Lord Voldemort), and is using this ability to open the Chamber of Secrets and release the Basilisk into the school to attack Muggle-born witches and wizards. This is because speaking 'parseltongue' would allow him to speak to the Basilisk, and supposedly, command it.

snakes), among others. Simon, by comparison, has an unprecedented amount of magical power, which aids as often as it hinders him. They also possess hero's weapons and items to aid them on their journeys. Just as Achilles has his armour, Arthur has Excalibur, Kirk has his phaser, and Spock his special Vulcan abilities, Harry possesses a cloak of invisibility and the ability to call forth to Sword of Gryffindor in times of crises, and similarly, Simon has the ability to call forth the Sword of Mages. I have outlined this heroes' tradition and the history of transformative texts – in all their varying forms – in order to set up the key areas I will be examining over the course of my next three chapters. Setting up an understanding of how the methods of appropriation, adaptation, and transformation have been implemented and of the factors which have affected sociocultural opinions of fan fiction, will be essential for me to later analyse my core texts against. While each form of narrative storytelling I have discussed within this chapter meet the aforementioned definition of transformative, it is what they teach us about storytelling tradition and their impact that interested me the most. I believe that as the most explicitly adaptive and – due to its controversial legalities and subject matter – transgressive nature, fan fiction is also potentially the most *transformative* form of storytelling.

Chapter Two: Harry Potter and The Magical Art of Adaptation

While J. K. Rowling's "magical" *Harry Potter* series (1997 – 2007) earned her widespread popularity among readers and critical acclaim for her "storytelling wizardry," the originality of the characters, creatures, and narrative structure of her stories are the matter of some debate (Dirda). *The Scotsman* lauded the first novel of the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), as "fresh" and "inventive", stating that the "originality" of her storytelling delivered a complex and entertaining tale that defied the standard formula of genre fiction ("From the Archives"). However, other critics have been quick to point out that Rowling's work owes much to pre-existing literature and older sources. The seven novels of Rowling's series follow Harry, a young orphan with a lightning-bolt scar, as he learns he is a wizard and is introduced to a world of magic. *The Philosopher's Stone* begins at number 7 Privet Drive, where Harry has been living with his unpleasant and unkind relatives – Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and his cousin Dudley. They bully and neglect him, forcing him to sleep in a cupboard under the stairs, treating him like a domestic servant. This changes when Harry turns eleven: he receives an invitation to attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Despite the extensive interference of Harry's relatives, who try to evade the magical invitation, Rubeus Hagrid, half-giant, and groundskeeper of Hogwarts, is able to deliver this message in person. Hagrid reveals that, not only were Harry's parents wizards, Harry is a wizard too, and is also the only known wizard to have survived a killing curse cast by the dark Lord Voldemort (also the wizard responsible for murdering Harry's parents). The series follows Harry's adventures and exploits at Hogwarts, the close friendships he develops with Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, and his school-boy rivalry with Draco Malfoy, culminating in his final battle against Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007).

Though the series is aimed at young readers, its themes of friendship, bravery, and moral complexity when dealing with issues of identity or authority have resonated powerfully and proved popular with audiences of all ages. The series was adapted into an eight-part film series from 2001–2011, and, according to Rowling's official website, "[t]he books have been translated into over 80 languages, won multiple awards, and sold more than 500 million copies worldwide, becoming the best-selling book series in history" ("Writing"). But Harry and the world of Hogwarts did not spring forth from Rowling's imagination fully formed like

Athena from the head of Zeus. In this chapter, using Rowling's *Harry Potter* texts as my primary examples, I aim to consider how notions of 'originality' influence professionally published fiction and fan published fiction, to analyse their influence in turn. The concept of 'originality' in literature is central to my analysis because of the precedence placed on texts deemed 'original' over texts which are explicit adaptations. Therefore, building on my sociohistorical examination of transformative storytelling in the previous chapter, I will analyse the extent to which professionally published fiction is built on 'transformative' foundations. By performing a close reading of key examples and passages from the *Harry Potter* texts, I will argue that Rowling's extensive borrowing from myth, folklore, and fairy tales, as well as from pre-existing literature, is evidence that professionally published fiction is built on the same foundations of transformative storytelling as fan fiction. I will also examine how the legal and critical reception of two professionally published *Harry Potter* adaptations illustrates the way source texts and their adaptations rely on an unsteady truce derived from legal criteria, but that these criteria are open to interpretation, thus challenging the extent to which adaptations can be policed by authors or other authority figures. Finally, I will consider how an author's persona influences their work and its reception – something particularly important in the realm of fandom. As such, I argue that the criterion of perceived 'originality' is not a useful way of considering the literary merit of derivative works.

The Transformative Foundations of Professionally Published Literature

Professionally published literature, like Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, is built on the same foundations of transformative storytelling as fan fiction. I use the term 'professionally published fiction' – or 'profic' – here to differentiate this form of literature from self-published fan fiction because, while profic undergoes a traditional editing profess, fanfic is usually unedited, self-edited, or edited by 'beta' readers,[39] resulting in final products of varying quality. Some fanfics contain typos, grammatical errors, over-long word counts which – in the age-old tradition of 'kill your darlings'[40] – require pruning for the sake of plot progression and overall flow, or which possess an excellent premise but incoherent execution. In this manner, fan fiction is absolutely an amateur pursuit. It can be produced and published

[39] In this context, 'beta reader' refers to other fans who volunteer to read, edit, and/or provide feedback on a fanfic-author's work before they publish it online.

[40] A phrase popularised by William Faulkner and essentially meaning that writers must ruthlessly edit or cut the elements of their work which they love, but which do nothing for their story.

online by any person, with little to no censorship of content on the part of fanfic-publishing sites,[41] and with less rigorous editing processes than mainstream profic. As previously discussed, this can result in a diverse range of quality which, in turn, feeds into discriminatory views on fanfic's cultural value. However, in other cases it produces work that readers prefer to some published works. We can see this in responses to the fan-authored work, *rebel,* I return to later in this thesis: "no words. this is 10 times better than the source books. I can't even express how much this fic means to me and I have decided that it is canon" declares AO3-user prongsism in the work's comment section – a sentiment echoed by many other comments. 'Professional publishing', on the other hand, implies a certain degree of legitimacy; it indicates this work has been edited to a high standard for reader consumption, as well as being produced or authorised by the individual or organisation owning the legal rights to it. In short, it implies 'quality' (though the actual quality of professionally published literature may vary, even in mainstream publishing). However, profic is constrained by factors which fanfic is not. It operates within a commercial industry and must adhere to the priorities of target audiences, editors, and publishers, whereas fanfic is usually written for the writer's own pleasure and/or to meet the interests of a select audience (i.e., their fellow fans and peers). Ban's short Dev/Niall fic, *What Do I Get?* (2019), for example, which romantically pairs characters from Rainbow Rowell's *Carry On*, is written as a gift for friend and mutual fan, tbazzsnow (Artescapri), specifically catering to a 'ship' they enjoy:

> HAPPYYYY BIRTHDAYYYY TBAZZ! This fic is for you, my humble offering on your birthday. Thank you for all the beta reading, brain storming, conversations and friendship! In honour of our joint love of Dev and Niall, I offer you this deep dive into Dev's brain. (author's note)

Rowling on the other hand, would have had the advantage of assistance from professionally trained editors, but the potential constraints of editorial influence from her publishers – Bloomsbury in the United Kingdom and Scholastic Press in the United States – who would have had to ensure the content of her texts met their requirements. This is not to suggest that Rowling did not have control over her own work, simply to highlight the unrestricted nature of fanfic when compared to profic. By comparing the editing process, content matter, and potential influence from involved parties, I aim to emphasise how these factors affect the

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[41] When censorship is involved, it tends to come from either an author, an author's publishing company, or, as I will explore in later chapters, governmental organisations.

critical the critical reception of profic and fanfic rather than claiming one is superior to the other. I am interested in how profic and fanfic's modes of production, presentation, and consumption affect the cultural value assigned to them and tensions between creator, content, and community.

Despite profic and fanfic's differences in editorial process, content matter, and potential outside influence, both forms of storytelling draw from pre-existing stories and storytelling elements in the same way. Rowling borrows from myth, boarding school narratives, and British mythology using the same methods of appropriation and repurposing that fanfic writers use. The centaurs, giants, basilisks, sphinxes, and sirens that populate Rowling's wizarding world all stem from Greco-Roman myth, and even Hagrid's three-headed dog Fluffy serves as reference to Cerberus, the hellhound which guards the gates of the Greek Underworld. Rowling also references figures from Arthurian legend, such as Merlin and Morgana, adding to themes of 'Britishness' and 'otherness' for readers outside the UK. Her use of a British boarding school setting also contributes to these themes of 'otherness' by melding the fantastical with the mundane; she crafts a world in which there are uniforms and homework like in any other boarding school, but one in which school supplies include familiars and cauldrons, and homework might involve practicing vanishing spells or gathering potions ingredients. There is the same celebration of boarding school culture, the focus on tight-knit friendships contrasted against bullies/antagonists, and the freedom from parental authority combined with a natural homesickness (in Harry's case, a homesickness for parents and a homelife he has never had). But her literature also discounts or avoids the unpleasant and unglamourous aspects of boarding school culture. As Karen Manners Smith notes, in her critical examination of Rowling and the British boarding school narrative, there is no corporal punishment, 'fagging'[42], or gruel at Hogwarts and, as it is a coeducational institution, Rowling modernizes the traditional friendship themes by her inclusion of a strong female character to complete Harry and Ron's trio – Hermione (75). The *Harry Potter* novels reflect the (perceived) best of the traditional British boarding school experience, thus enhancing Rowling's distinctively British literary landscape while also tapping into themes of the 'exotic' for readers unfamiliar with this culture. Her use of setting revives the boarding school genre most prolifically contributed to by Enid Blyton and Thomas Hughes[43], and

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[42] The traditional practice in boarding school settings where younger boys were required to act as servants to older boys and were sometimes the recipients of physical and/or sexual abuse.

[43] While the boarding school genre was popular from the late 1800s to the end of WWII, it later declined in popularity until *Harry Potter* renewed interest in it (Whited 142).

Rowling has also admitted to being influenced by the likes of C. S. Lewis, E. Nesbit, Noel Streatfield, Paul Gallico, and Elizabeth Goudge (Manners Smith 70).

Consequentially, while the specific combination of themes and elements, tropes and creatures used by Rowling to create the wizarding world of *Harry Potter* may be deemed 'original', the content in it has all drawn from older source material and pre-existing traditions. Rowling has acknowledged these literary predecessors with varying degrees of credit. She is open with her use of British folklore and mythology, saying:

> I've taken horrible liberties with folklore and mythology, but I'm quite unashamed about that, because British folklore and British mythology is a totally bastard mythology. You know, we've been invaded by people, we've appropriated their gods, we've taken their mythical creatures, and we've soldered them all together to make, what I would say, is one of the richest folklores in the world, because it's so varied. So I feel no compunction about borrowing from that freely but adding a few things of my own. (Fry)

But her acknowledgement of the contemporary professionally published literature which influenced in her world-building has proved more uneven, and critics who laud Rowling for her 'originality' have often overlooked her predecessors in the literary tradition of magical schools and 'chosen one's.

The first novel in Ursula K. Le Guin's high fantasy *Earthsea* series (1968-2001)[44], for example, was published almost three decades before Rowling's first *Harry Potter* novel and possesses several similarities. In *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968), Le Guin introduces a young mage named Ged (also known as 'Sparrowhawk'), who is born into obscurity before attending a magical school for wizards. The series follows Ged's adventures as he learns magic and attempts to rid himself of the Shadow Creature (an antagonist created by his own foolhardy actions and hubris in the first novel). The protagonists of both *Bildungsroman*[45] series also share a number of personality traits and physical characteristics. Ged and Harry are both brave, reckless, and foolhardy on occasion, each possess a facial scar that warns them when their enemy is nearby, and Ged's fear of possession and the erosion of his identity

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[44] Though the first three books in the series were published between 1968 and 1972 and were initially thought to be complete as a trilogy. Le Guin's next book in the series, *Tehanu* (1990), was published nearly twenty years later and written in a different style to the original trilogy.

[45] A term referring to a literary genre concerned with the psychological, moral, and emotional growth of its protagonist through childhood into adulthood as they come of age.

mirror Harry's anxieties and attempts to amputate himself from his connection to Voldemort – his own shadow self. The similarities between Le Guin and Rowling's work incited some backlash from readers because of Rowling's apparent 'failure' to acknowledge the credit due to her predecessors. When interviewed on the topic of *Harry Potter*'s originality and potential connection to her own work, Le Guin said:

> I didn't feel she [Rowling] ripped me off, as some people did…though she could have been more gracious about her predecessors. My incredulity was at the critics who found the first book wonderfully original. She has many virtues, but originality isn't one of them. (Jaggi)

Le Guin's work also borrows from pre-existing sources; she has appropriated elements of Native American tales and Norse myth (in the same manner as Rowling borrows from Greco-Roman myth and British folklore) and draws from the same pool of literature (citing Philip K. Dick as a major influence in the integration of Taoism and Eastern influences into her fantasy literature and T. White for his throwaway reference to a magical school in *The Sword and the Stone* (1938)). In this sense, Le Guin's novels are no more 'original' than Rowling's. The distinction, as she argues, lies in the difference between imitation and emulation.

Emulation is described by Le Guin as "applying techniques learned from a text to your own work" and owning the influence of these texts "freely and with some pride" (para. 4). She goes on to argue that Rowling's "apparent reluctance to admit that she ever learned anything from other writers" is a tacit agreement with critics who credit her with inventing the idea of a wizard's school (Le Guin). But Rowling's 'apparent reluctance' to acknowledge these influences demonstrates a potential 'anxiety of influence.' This field of literary criticism, first established Harold Bloom in 1973, describes the creative struggle writers face as they attempt to create something original while still bound by the influence of pre-existing works. Bloom argues that the influence of literary predecessors hinders the creative endeavours of writers in creating something new, yet he also allows that 'strong' writers can create original works despite this influence: "Weaker talents idolise; figures of capable imagination appropriate for themselves" (5). Though Bloom's theory is primarily concerned with the poetry of nineteenth-century romantics, it is applicable to the authors of novels as well. Both poets and novelists are subject to intertextual influence and adapt, appropriate, and *transform* pre-existing themes, character archetypes, and narratives into something new – no matter how weak or strong the resulting literature is. Bloom's theory bears parallels to Le

Guin's argument of literary emulation over imitation, but ultimately, both theories support the transformative foundations professionally published literature is based upon. Rowling and Le Guin each borrow from the existing 'cauldron of story' and contribute to it through their own interpretations and emulations for future authors to borrow from in turn. What differs is their acknowledgement of this influence.[46] Rowling's purported actions – or inactions – showcase that admitting the influence of folklore and myth may be easier than acknowledging the influence of other authors, potentially because of the 'anxiety of influence'. This then raises the question of how authors are affected by those adapting from their work in an explicit manner (e.g., fan fiction writers). As established, profic stems from transformative foundations – as all storytelling does on some base level – but these transformative intertextual relationships become more difficult when there is a specific author involved.

The Legality of Transformative Texts

Professionally published literature may be built on transformative foundations, but explicitly transformative texts must meet certain criteria to be considered legal. Even then, the legality of transformative texts is a matter of some debate. The OTW argues that fan fiction is legal because it falls under the terms of Fair Use,[47] which the United States Copyright Act of 1976 outlines through the following four factors:

1. the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for non-profit educational purposes;
2. the nature of the copyrighted work;
3. the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
4. the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. ("Title 17")

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[46] To some extent anyway, as Rowling has acknowledged the influence of some sources.

[47] It is worth noting that the legal definitions surrounding 'Fair Use' vary depending on country and that I am consciously choosing to focus on US Copyright Laws because of the texts/sources I am using. For instance, the OTW is a US site primarily concerned with American fanworks, Rainbow Rowell an American author, and while Rowling's *Harry Potter* series was initially published in the UK (by Bloomsbury Publishing) it is also published in the US (by Scholastic Press), and the film franchise who owns the rights to it are Warner Bros., another American company.

While copyright is intended to protect the rights of the author (and any associated publishing/film companies'[48]) to profit from their creative work, Fair Use allows future creators to make use of this copyrighted material without the author's express consent. The OTW argue that transformative texts are legal and that copyright "does not preclude the right of others to respond to the original work, either with critical commentary, parody, or, we believe, transformative works" ("Frequently Asked Questions"). In contrast, Martin claims that fan fiction "is NOT fair use" and that the lack of consent involved is a core issue: "If a writer wants to allow or even encourage others to use their worlds and characters, that's fine. Their call. If a writer would prefer not to allow that... well, I think their wishes should be respected" ("Someone Is Angry On The Internet"). Dissension over transformative texts' legality lends complexity to this area and, ironically, the result of any legal case is largely dependent each judge's *interpretation* of the factors listed above. However, there are two very different forms of transformative texts to consider: professionally published, and fan published. In this section, I examine the legal and critical reception of two professionally published transformative texts to consider how the relationship between 'creator' (i.e., author) and 'community' (i.e., fandom) is affected by the monetisation of transformative works.

One of the earliest examples of a *Harry Potter* adaptation which provoked legal controversy was the attempted monetisation of *The Harry Potter Lexicon*. What began in 2000 as a free, fan-run, online encyclopaedia of Harry Potter information ended in a two-year lawsuit (from 2007-8) that ultimately soured the relationship between J. K. Rowling and her fans. The case also served as a formative legal example of how the transformative element in the first factor of Fair Use potentially affected the outcome. *The Harry Potter Lexicon* originally existed purely as a fan-run site, analysing and describing "all the characters, places, spells, creatures and physical objects found in the seven novels" ("Defendant RDR Books' Memorandum of Law in Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion for A Preliminary Injunction" 2). In this state, Rowling had nothing but praise for the website, saying, "[t]his is such a great site that I have been known to sneak into an internet café while out writing and check a fact rather than go into a bookshop and buy a copy of Harry Potter" ("Fan Sites – The Harry Potter Lexicon"). However, in 2007 when Steve Vander Ark, the site's creator, attempted to create a for-profit printed form of this work, Rowling criticised his attempts as "atrocious", "sloppy",

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[48] Bloomsbury Publishing, Scholastic Press, and Warner Bros., for example, all profit from the *Harry Potter* series and thus, all have a vested interest in protecting its copyright to protect their own profits.

and a "wholesale theft of 17 years of [my] hard work" ("I've made enough money"). It led to a high-profile lawsuit between the two parties, before Vander Ark was eventually allowed to publish a modified version as *The Lexicon: An Unauthorized Guide to Harry Potter Fiction and Related Materials* (2009).

Vander Ark's initial attempts to professionally publish the *Lexicon* failed because his work did not meet the terms of Fair Use. To reiterate, the first factor judges consider when measuring Fair Use is: "the purpose and character of the use" ("Title 17"). As a third-party reference guide, the *Lexicon* almost met this criterion, as Vander Ark and RDR Books' legal representatives argued that "[t]he value of reference tools like the Lexicon is well-established in [that]…[t]hey help readers analyze, approach, and make sense of printed texts, and often spur further research and discussion" ("Defendant RDR Books' Memorandum of Law in Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion for A Preliminary Injunction" 8-9). Rowling's legal representatives contended this, arguing that "the *Lexicon* is not transformative because it merely "repackages" the Harry Potter Works and contains no original analysis" ("Defendant RDR Books' Memorandum of Law in Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion for A Preliminary Injunction" 7). Defining what is and is not 'transformative' is subjective and challenging at best, but where the *Lexicon* truly fell short was when it came to meeting the third and fourth factors of fair use: "the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole" and "the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work" ("Title 17"). Judge Patterson ruled that the *Lexicon* "appropriates too much of Rowling's creative work for its purposes as a reference guide" ("Judge Patterson's Ruling" 66), and Rowling's legal representatives were quick to point out that Vander Ark's work posed a potential risk to future profit Rowling might earn on a Harry Potter companion encyclopaedia of her own.[49] While this case served as a pivotal moment in fandom history in terms of authorial control vs adaptational challenge in the relationship of author and adaptor, what it underscores is how fine the line is drawn between legality and illegality when attempting to professionally publish transformative texts.

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[49] Rowling had repeatedly indicated she intended to publish her own definitive Harry Potter encyclopaedia but, after the legal issues with Vander Ark began, stated that she had stopped work on such a project. She cited the legal stress as having "decimated [her] creative work" and leaving her uncertain if she had the "will or the heart" to continue with it ("Rowling testifies in Potter case"). Whether Rowling would or would not have published such an encyclopaedia remains unclear. As Vander Ark's representatives pointed out, Rowling had had ten years to publish said encyclopaedia and never had.

In contrast to Vander Ark's *Lexicon,* Rainbow Rowell's novels, *Fangirl* and *Carry On* (both commercially published by Macmillan), met no legal opposition from Rowling and Warner Bros because her texts meet the terms of Fair Use. *Fangirl*, a young adult romance novel, follows its main character Cath through her first year at college while struggling with social anxiety, academic expectations, and familial worry for her father and twin sister. The only time Cath feels truly at peace and able "to get free of [herself]" is when writing fan fiction (Rowell, *Fangirl* 23). Using the pseudonym 'Magicath' (Rowell, *Fangirl* 15), she publishes online fan fiction of Gemma T. Leslie's *Simon Snow* series and is considered one of the most popular fanfic-writers in the fandom (also referred to as a 'Big Name Fan' or 'BNF'). Here, Rowell offers direct meta-intertextual commentary both on the relationship between source material and transformative texts, and on sub-cultures defined by their interest in transformative texts (e.g., online fandoms or fan fiction writing sites/forums). The fictitious 'Gemma T. Leslie' and her 'Simon Snow' series are explicitly based on J. K. Rowling and her *Harry Potter* series, and its main characters Simon and Baz are derived from Harry and Draco. According to *Fangirl*'s introduction, the Simon Snow series is a "series of seven fantasy books" telling the story of Simon Snow, "an 11-year-old orphan from Lancashire who is recruited to attend the Watford School of Magicks to become a magician" (Rowell, *Fangirl* 3). Though it was already explicit that Rowell's work is based on and informed by Rowling's, she took this intertextual commentary a step further by publishing a *Carry On* novel of her own outside the pages of *Fangirl* two years later. In *Fangirl*, two versions of Simon and Baz's characters exist: canonical depictions from 'excerpts' of Gemma T. Leslie's professionally published series and fanonical depictions from Cath's fan-published *Carry On, Simon* posts, which appear as epigraphs throughout the novel. The Simon and Baz in Rowell's published novel, however, are all her own:

> The most common question I've been asked is whether I'm writing as Cath or as Gemma T. Leslie … The answer is, I'm writing as me…So, even though I'm writing a book that was inspired by fictional fanfiction of a fictional series …I think what I'm writing now is canon. (Rowell, "Carry On")

The canon of *Carry On*, therefore, is based on content from *Fangirl* which in turn is based on Rowling's pre-existing work; a transformative cycle of appropriation and reimagination. While *Fangirl* first introduces Rowell's Potteresque adaptation, this novel focuses on Cath's

female *Künstlerroman*[50] plotline as she comes of age as a writer and as a young woman. By contrast, *Carry On*'s focus is centred around its status as an adaptation and the way it transforms pre-existing material.

Unlike Vander Ark's, Rowell's work truly *transforms* the original content into a unique literary work with new purpose and meaning. Though Rowell's work shares a number of parallels with Rowling's, *Carry On* moves beyond the status of fan-published fiction, and into the realm of professionally published transformative fiction. This makes the similarities between the two works even more interesting. For example, Harry and Simon are both orphans who were unaware of their magical lineage until the age of eleven and faced neglect and emotional abuse from their guardians growing up. Harry is denied or given less food than his other family members, especially his cousin Dudley, treated like a servant, and locked in his "cupboard under the stairs" (Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* 20) when his relatives are displeased with him. In short, he spent much of his life pre-Hogwarts "being clouted by Dudley and bullied by Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon" (Rowling, *The Philosopher's Stone* 62) and "had suffered periods of near starvation at the Dursleys" (Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* 148). Simon faced similar negligence from his caregivers during his upbringing in various boys' homes, as well as implied underfeeding. His malnourishment is documented by his best friend, Penelope Bunce,[51] who, upon his return to Watford at the beginning of each year, describes Simon as looking "too thin" with skin that "just hangs off his cheekbones" (Rowell, *Carry On* 32). He also suffered a speech impediment as a child as a result of this neglect:

> I don't remember when I learned to talk, but I know they tried to send me to specialists. Apparently, that happens to kids in care, or kids with parents who never talk to them— they just don't learn how. (Rowell, *Carry On* 108)

Each protagonist also possesses an archetypal nemesis[52] who aims to kill him and destroy the magical world he belongs to (i.e., Voldemort and the Insidious Humdrum), as well as a more

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[50] A literary subclass of the *Bildungsroman* genre which deals specifically with the coming of age/youthful development of an individual who becomes an artist in some form (e.g., a musician, poet, or, in Cath's case, a writer).

[51] Whose character is conjectured to be an amalgamation of the clever Hermione Granger and brave Ron Weasley.

[52] Because what is a hero without a villain to oppose him?

generic, schoolboy adversary (i.e., Draco and Baz). But this is fundamentally where such parallels end.

Unlike fan fiction, which transforms yet remains tied to its original source material by use of identical character names, places, or events, Rowell's work transforms Rowling's into a separate entity – a derivative work that borrows from and delicately critiques the original in several ways, yet is imbued with fresh characterisation, events, and overarching themes. She navigates this process of (re)creation and (re)interpretation in two core areas: the inclusion of an explicit homosexual relationship between Simon and Baz and of more diverse characters, and the explicit critique of the relationship between Simon and the Mage (a character based on that of Albus Dumbledore, headmaster of Hogwarts in Rowling's series). While the fan 'ship' known as 'Drarry' (i.e., the 'ship'-name for the desired romantic relationship between Draco and Harry) has remained popular amongst fans,[53] fan interpretations of the duo's relationship as romantic have remained strictly in the realm of 'fanon' rather than canon. Rowell's text makes fan interpretations of the homoerotic undertones, sexual tension, and potential for emotionally intimacy in Draco and Harry's relationship canonical through her romantic pairing of Simon and Baz. Like Harry and Draco, Simon and Baz also share a schoolboy rivalry but, unlike their predecessors, their relationship leads to a lot more kissing.

Rowell also includes several LGBTQ+ characters,[54] as well as those from varied racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds,[55] which Rowling was criticised for not including in her series but mentioning at a later date. Giselle Liza Anatol claims that "Rowling makes a strong move towards encouraging multiculturalism" through her exploration of the prejudices "Mudbloods" (the slur used to describe witches and wizards born to non-magical parents) face, and the inclusion of several students of colour (174). However, Anatol also notes that Rowling "undermines this reading" as "the novels portray not integration and acceptance, but the complete assimilation of [students of colour] into the all-white landscape of Hogwarts"

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[53] As of July 2022, Drarry fanfics make up 59,026 of the works listed under the "Harry Potter - J. K. Rowling" category on AO3, whereas 'Hinny' fanfics (i.e., fanfics written about the canonical romantic pairing of Harry and Ginny Weasley) make up only 14,377.

[54] Baz is canonically gay, Simon is presumed to be bisexual (though I discuss this area in greater detail later in my thesis), Agatha Wellbelove (originally Simon's love interest) ultimately enters into a romantic relationship with female schoolmate, Niamh Brody, in a subsequent novel, and Agatha's roommate, Trixie the Pixie, is also canonically lesbian.

[55] Penelope and Baz are both canonically of mixed heritage, for example. Penelope's mother is Indian, her father is English, and she is described as having "light brown skin" (Rowell, *Carry On* 12). Similarly, Baz's father is English while his late mother was of Egyptian descent, and while he originally inherited her darker skin tone this has since been replaced with a pale grey skin tone due to his vampirism.

(174). Grace Lapointe, on the contrary, argues that the characters of colour mentioned within *Harry Potter* are "marginal, token, and barely names on a page" and condemns Rowling for claiming to have thought about the issue of illness and disability early on, only when questions were raised regarding the lack of diversity ("Diversity and Continuity, or Lack Thereof, in J. K. Rowling's Work"). She argues: "if [Rowling] considered disability and chose not to include it, that's worse, not better! She seems to be evading or misunderstanding a clear question that we disabled fans repeatedly asked her" (Lapointe). Despite the similarities the two series possess, Rowell's work does not infringe upon Rowling's copyright, and arguably elevates the original through her reinterpretation and implicit critique of the original source content.

Authorial Intentionalism Versus Reader Interpretation

The transformative foundations of professionally published literature, such as *Harry Potter*, and the interpretive nature of Fair Use raise several key questions about what it means to be the 'Author.' Is an author only an author if their work is 'original'? If so, how does one judge a text's 'originality' given that most, if not all, texts display some level of appropriation and transformation? And how does the role of 'Author' impact the relationship between themselves, their texts, and their readers? In this section I examine the role Rowling's public image plays in perpetuating certain 'myths' surrounding her as an author and consider the extent to which a media creator's content may be divorced from their authorial influence. To this end, I will be drawing on the theories of authorship put forth by Roland Barthes (1967) and Michel Foucault (1984) to inform my analysis. Barthes is notable for his arguments in favour of individual reader interpretation over authorial intentionalism, while Foucault considers the relationship between author, text, and reader, in order to navigate the functional limitations the ideological figure of the author casts over their content. Like Foucault, I also examine this ternary relationship, but by considering these theories in the context of fan fiction and fandom culture I recast 'reader' as 'community' in order to accurately capture the fluid and versatile role these media content consumers retain. Where I use 'community' I am referring to fans who are readers of the *Harry Potter* texts as well as, in some cases, occupying the role of readers and/or writers of *Harry Potter* fanfic. I do not presume such a community to be homogeneous. In this manner, the 'reader' sometimes usurps the original creator's role as 'author' and thus upsets the presumed hierarchal relationship between

content creator and content consumer in a manner unique, I would argue, to fan fiction and fandom culture.

Barthes' argument in favour of eliminating authorial intentionalism in favour of reader interpretation contradicts many scholarly opinions surrounding fanfic as 'transgressive' due to its supposed 'misreading' or 'misinterpretation' of source material. If Barthes' argument is applied, there is no possibility of 'misreading' or 'misinterpreting' source material because the power of interpretation lies in the hands of the reader, rather than author. In his essay, he proposes the concept of 'author' be replaced by that of 'scriptor'; a modern figure removed from influence over their content. In Barthes' view, "a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (146). He goes on to suggest that, once this 'Author-God' is removed, "the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile" and that "[t]o give a text an Author is to impose a *limit* on that text" (Barthes, 147, emphasis mine). I emphasis the *limitations* an author has on their work, according to Barthes, because fan fiction, through the power of reader interpretation, becomes *limitless*. Foucault, on the other hand, suggests that the 'author' or 'author-function' still has a role to play for the purposes of appropriation, discourse, attribution, and authentication. Though Foucault's essay never mentions Barthes, it has often been presumed that his work serves as a direct rebuttal because of how he specifically addresses arguments Barthes had made, and even goes so far as to comment that "the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death" (303), which could be construed as a reference to the death of the 'Author' and 'Author-God' in Barthes' earlier essay. What I am most interested in, however, is how Foucault's stresses the importance of a continued relationship between author and text due to the potential consequences and/or influence said text may have. He states that the "author of a novel may be responsible for more than his own text; if he acquires some 'importance' in the literary world, his influence can have significant ramifications" (Foucault 310). Therefore, it is worth considering how Rowling's position as 'Author' or 'Author-God' has impacted her texts and how status as a celebrity author of some 'importance' has influenced readers' relationships with her texts.

Rowling's role as 'author' exemplifies how their importance, influence, and reputation – the 'myth' surrounding the author – can impact their literary legacy in positive and negative ways. Rowling serves as an excellent example of this, considering the extent to which her *Harry Potter* series generated international acclaim, the extent of her personal

influence over its literary canon, and the ways public perception of her has changed in recent years. At the height of her popularity, the image of Rowling as an "unemployed single mother who spent her afternoons staying warm in Edinburgh coffee shops, writing while her baby slept" was a familiar one (Jones 56). Her public image was that of a poor, single, mother down on her luck, but one which was sympathetically balanced against her respectability as an educated,[56] philanthropic,[57] member of the middle class. Scholars such as Marc Shapiro heralded Rowling's story as "one of bravery, determination, and triumph over seemingly overwhelming odds" (xiv), though others, like Julia Park, offered the more restrained view that Rowling's "rags-to-riches story improves with each media retelling" (179). Either way, it formed the perfect myth to accompany Rowling's world of magic and make-believe. Rowling's rise from destitution to wealth and fame matched that of classic fairy tale narratives in which the protagonist miraculously achieves their 'happily ever after.' But Rowling's personal mythology also caters to the more modern achievement ideology,[58] in which hard work is ultimately rewarded with success. The fairy tale aspect of her mythology lent charm and whimsy to her brand of children's literature, and her adherence to this achievement ideology mirrored that of her protagonist; Harry, "with his unruly hair, broken glasses, and slight frame" is exactly the literary "underdog-turned-hero for whom we are conditioned to cheer" (Anatol xii).

Rowling's personal mythology may have aided in the popularity of her texts with reader in the beginning of her publishing career, but her later controversial position on trans women added complexity to reader's enjoyment of her work due to the intertwined relationship between author and text. In recent years Rowling has become a high profile and increasingly vocal supporter for groups and individuals who seek to critique the rights and identities of trans women through an appeal to biological essentialism, an ideological stance that is part of a larger push-back against trans rights in general. Between the 6th and 10th of June 2020, Rowling posted a series of tweets which triggered controversy from the *Harry*

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[56] According to her website, Rowling attended Exeter University where she studied, among other subjects, French and Classics ("About").

[57] After university, she worked as a researcher at Amnesty International. "There in my little office I read hastily scribbled letters smuggled out of totalitarian regimes by men and women who were risking imprisonment to inform the outside world of what was happening to them […] My small participation in that process was one of the most humbling and inspiring experiences of my life." ("About").

[58] That this ideology overlooks factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, and economic background is mostly irrelevant in this case. As a white, well-educated, member of the middle class, Rowling's gender is the factor most likely to have impacted on her achieving success. However, Rowling combatted sexism on this front by using the androgynous initials 'J. K.' instead of the more feminine 'Joanne Kathleen.'

Potter fandom and LGBTQ+ community, and resulted in a surge of readers distancing themselves from her novels.[59] Her original tweet criticised the term "people who menstruate," citing concerns that such gender-neutral terms erode the concept of womanhood as defined by biological sex rather than gender identity (@jk_rowling). In her words: "If sex isn't real, the lived reality of women globally is erased" (@jk_rowling). Her tweet incited backlash from a number of LGBTQ+ organisations, including GLAAD who, in a tweet, called Rowling's views both "cruel" and "inaccurate" and criticised her for aligning herself with "an ideology which willfully distorts facts about gender identity and people who are trans" (@glaad). Rowling was also publicly criticised by cast members from the *Harry Potter* film franchise, such as Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint, Bonnie Wright, and Katie Leung, as well as Eddie Redmayne from the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* prequel series (2016-22).

In a subsequent 3,600-word essay, posted on the 10th of June, Rowling defended her opinions on opinions of sex-based womanhood at the expense of trans-women, which earned her the label of 'TERF' (trans-exclusionary radical feminist) from her critics – a label Rowling has rejected. But Rowling's views have also proved to have a profound effect upon her readers. Some fans were not affected by Rowling's views or, in fact, shared them. According to her tweet on the 15th of July 2021, Rowling had received a "tsunami of supportive emails and letters" as a show of "solidarity" (@jk_rowling). The hashtags #IStandWithJKRowling and #IStandWithJKR also proved popular on Twitter before they were spammed by K-pop accounts and online activists intent on suppressing these messages of support. But the most vocal dissenting factions of her reader fanbase have been divided into two camps: those who chose to continue reading the books but ignore Rowling's part in creating them, and those who were unable to divorce the texts from their author and have chosen to shun both the series and Rowling together. For example, one Tumblr-user likened Rowling's apparent transphobia to Enid Blyton's accusations of racism and Roald Dahl's of antisemitism and stated, "I will celebrate their worlds and characters, but not the authors" (ThoughtsAboutSnape). Similarly, another declared "If it's not in the story, then I don't care what [Rowling] has to say about canon […] To hell with authorial intent, Rowling is dead to me" (Kate's Attic). But other readers have found the two more difficult to separate, as they

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[59] It is worth noting that Rowling had already been facing public backlash since December 2019 when she tweeted her support for Maya Forstater, a woman whose contract was not renewed because of her 'transphobic' tweets. I am choosing to focus on the period between the 6th and 10th of June 2020 of the extent of its impact and controversy within the Harry Potter fandom.

consider Rowling too deeply entrenched in the world of *Harry Potter* to be entirely removed. This then raises the question of if, and to what extent, a text may be divorced from its author, especially in the case of fandom and fan fiction.

Returning to Barthes' analogy, Rowling's position as author can, therefore, be contrived as having produced *limitations* on her work. Not only because, as the 'Author-God', she has the power to declare what is and is not canon (and has added to this canon long after the last of her texts had been published), but because her relationship with the text has produced *limitations* upon readers' engagement with it. It is the power implicit in this relationship which "sets aside, ignored, smothers, or destroys" readers' implicit enjoyment or personal interpretation of its message (Barthes 148). Adding to Barthes' commentary on this subject, Rhiannon Thomas approaches this topic from his position as a former fan, in her essay questioning the moral implications of continuing to support Rowling's work. She claims, "there is no Harry Potter without JK Rowling" because the author is so "deeply integrated with every part of the series" that she "controls everything" (Thomas). Thus, reader enjoyment of her novels may be limited by Rowling's influence over them and the difficulty of untangling the texts from their author. This ties in with Foucault's views that the author's influence "can have significant ramifications" (310). These ramifications present because the *Harry Potter* series, as a cultural phenomenon, has arguably transcended literary form. Fans do not only read the texts; they have built personality traits around them, formed friendships on fan-run forums, celebrated them through fan fiction, fan art, and cosplay, attended events, and waited in line for hours outside bookstores ahead of the next book's release. I would therefore argue that Rowling's "function as an author exceeds the limits of her work" (Foucault 310, quote originally discussing Ann Radcliffe). The inability of readers to divorce the texts from their author may be because of their inability to divorce the texts from the experiences and emotions they associate with them. It is these experiences, emotions, and the wider fandom and culture that Rowling's views have arguably 'betrayed' and consequently cast *limitations* upon. As Thomas argues, readers should be able to judge their feelings and level of comfort in continuing to support the books because novels are "partly constructed by the reader" influenced by their "thoughts and beliefs and life experiences" which therefore means the author "only does half of the work; the reader does the rest" ("Myth, Death of the Author and JK Rowling"). The ability to divorce the text from the author then becomes an emotional one, and a choice undertaken by each reader based on their own feelings, whatever they may be. This choice is made more complicated when

readers are must also negotiate their feelings in relation to fan fiction. However, as I will explore in my next chapter, reading/writing fanfiction can also become its own method of divorcing text from author and reorientating it as it relates to the fan. In this manner, fan fiction offers a space in which queer reading and queer writing become more powerful than the Author-God's original intentions.

Chapter Three: Carry On and the Crossover Novel

Queer literature has occupied a limited, censored, and often illegal space in the literary market, yet recent decades have seen the number of LGBTQ+-themed literary works published by mainstream publishing companies increase substantially in number. Among these is American author Rainbow Rowell's *Carry On*, which is set in Britain and was first published in 2015. Not only does this novel occupy a space in queer literature, but it also exists as 'Crossover' literature (bridging intergenerational target audiences) and as a transformative text. *Carry On* transforms pre-existing literature readers are familiar with (i.e., Rowling's *Harry Potter* series) in order to bring queerness and fan fiction culture into mainstream, professionally-published literature. As with works of fan fiction, the novel *Carry On* assumes that most readers already possess a baseline of understanding of its key intertexts, in this case, the world of *Harry Potter*. My aim here is to build on previous chapters to examine further a subset of professionally published transformative fiction – specifically, *queer* fiction. I do this in order to navigate these tensions between media creator and media consumer in mainstream fiction, and consider how these consumers-turned-creators re-interpret 'profic' in order to create non-linear narratives and queer temporalities in their derived works. In doing so, I will argue that the tensions I have already identified between media creators and media consumers also highlight how transformative texts can specifically subvert hegemonic literary tastes by appealing to the interests, experiences, and desires of minority groups in a mainstream literature.

Rowell's novel follows the adventures of its protagonist Simon Snow, "the worst Chosen One who's ever been chosen," and his roommate, rival, and eventual love interest, Baz, through their final year at Watford School of Magicks (Rowell, *Carry On* back book cover). Though the pair have butted heads ever since they first met, this year circumstances conspire and force them to team up in order to solve an old Watford mystery and defeat the Insidious Humdrum (the evil force attempting to destroy the magical World of Mages). As previously discussed, the concept for *Carry On* stems from Rowell's earlier novel, *Fangirl* (2013), and the characters Simon and Baz are explicitly based off Harry and Draco. In *Fangirl*, two versions of Simon and Baz's characters exist: canonical depictions from 'excerpts' of Gemma T. Leslie's professionally published series and fanonical depictions

from Cath's fan-published *Carry On, Simon* posts, which appear as epigraphs throughout the novel. The Simon and Baz in Rowell's published novel, however, are all her own:

> The most common question I've been asked is whether I'm writing as Cath or as Gemma T. Leslie … The answer is, I'm writing as me…So, even though I'm writing a book that was inspired by fictional fanfiction of a fictional series …I think what I'm writing now is canon. (Rowell, "Carry On")

The canon of *Carry On*, therefore, is based on content from *Fangirl* which in turn is based on Rowling's pre-existing work; a transformative cycle of appropriation and reimagination. While *Fangirl* first introduces Rowell's Potteresque adaptation, this novel focuses on Cath's female *Künstlerroman*[60] plotline as she comes of age as a writer and as a young woman. By contrast, *Carry On*'s focus is centred around its status as an adaptation and the way it transforms pre-existing material. While heterosexist critical and general opinions tend to relegate the 'transgressive' activity of fan fiction to separate spaces (e.g., online forums, fan-fiction-writing sites, and other distinct fandom subcultures) and consign queerness to the borders of literature, television, and film,[61] Rowell's *celebration* of both fan fiction and queerness in a professionally published format. In doing so, as I argue, she signals that both belong in mainstream, hegemonic literature, and tacitly advocates their normalisation in a wider cultural context.

In *Carry On*, Rowell makes the implicit explicit by taking 'fanon' (i.e., the commonly held fan opinions and interpretations of Harry and Draco's characters, sexualities, and experiences, which are extrapolated from, but never acknowledged within canon) and using it as the foundations for Simon and Baz's characters to portray queer issues, experiences, and non-linear narratives. In examining Simon and Baz's non-linear narratives and queer temporalities, I draw from the theories expressed in Kathryn Bond Stockton's *The Queer*

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[60] A literary subclass of the *Bildungsroman* genre which deals specifically with the coming of age/youthful development of an individual who becomes an artist in some form (e.g., a musician, poet, or, in Cath's case, a writer).

[61] While legal, social, and political changes made in recent decades have advanced LGBTQ+ equality in most parts of the world, queer organisations and individuals have critiqued the misrepresentation and underrepresentation of queer characters in media. Queer characters have commonly been included only as token characters, meant to advance the character arcs of cis heterosexual characters, but without the same level of consideration given to their own character arcs or even the depth of their personal characterisation. In other instances, queer characters included have failed to move past basic stereotypes and thus, have become mere caricatures of queerness that further prejudice rather than educating cis heterosexual audiences to the diversity of LGBTQ+ people. But perhaps the most damaging trope present in media is the 'Bury Your Gays' trope, which presents the deaths of queer characters as far more likely than their heterosexual counterparts and furthers the notion of queer inclusion as acceptable only if their character arc ends in tragedy.

Child, Or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century (2009) and Hannah McCann and Whitney Monaghan's *Queer Theory Now: From Foundations to Futures* (2019). Stockton examines the queerness of the 'child' and proposes the notion of 'growing sideways' rather than 'growing up' in a linear trajectory toward full stature, marriage, reproduction, and the relinquishing of childish ways. McCann and Monaghan consider how queer life narratives fail to fit within the dominant temporal logic. Heteronormative temporality is obsessed with progression and order of the life events which constitute a 'good' life; for example, women face societal pressure to have children and have them at the correct time, as they are linked to their reproductive temporality and ruled by their biological clock, and a person's respectability and normality are governed by generational temporality and time of inheritance, through which values, wealth, goods, and morals are passed through family ties from one generation to the next. Conversely, queer temporalities often disrupt these dominant narratives are progress out of order or not within a socially acceptable timeframe (McCann and Monaghan 216). They are therefore, 'non-linear,' as they recognise the spatiotemporal dimensions of nonnormative subjectivities, relations, practices, and experiences of sex and sexuality that are viewed by hegemonic societal opinions as unacceptable or perverse (McCann and Monaghan 216-7).

Queering YA Literature

In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the availability and popularity of queer literature – something evidenced by the availability and popularity of Rowell's overtly queer, commercially published work. This shift represents significant progress after the hundreds of years of censorship and legal persecution queer texts and their authors have faced. Same-sex sexual activity was not fully decriminalised in the United States until 2003,[62] in the United Kingdom until 1967, and remains a criminal act punishable by imprisonment or execution in many parts of the world. [63] Even with the repeal of legislation criminalising same-sex activity, LGBTQ+ people continue to face systematic legal, medical, and workplace discrimination, bullying, social ostracization, violence, and abuse. As such, it is unsurprising

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[62] Same-sex sexual activity had been gradually decriminalised by most states from the year 1962 onwards, but it was only in 2003 that the Supreme Court eliminated them entirely, and thereby affecting the remaining 14 states who had not decriminalised it. However, it is important to recognise that the Supreme Court's ruling has not been recognised by all states, or all police enforcement agencies and individuals, and so the legal decriminalisation of same-sex sexual activity has not protected all the LGBTQ+ people it affects.

[63] I mention the US and UK specifically as they are the countries in which my chosen texts were published, and which my thesis focuses on primarily.

that so little queer or queer-coded literature existed before the 20th century, because the legal ramifications made it extremely dangerous to own or publish. It is worth noting that 'queer literature' is a contemporary term which I am applying backwards against a wide range of historical literature in certain places. Though the field of queer literature is vast, encompassing a wide range of books written by or for queer readers and including biographies, histories, and self-actualisation books, for the purposes of my topic I will be examining queer fiction specifically, and within that category I will eventually focus on queer YA novels. Laws against same-sex sexual activity did not prevent queer literature from being published, but authors who included queer themes in their texts often chose to use pseudonyms, publish anonymously, or 'codify' queer themes through references to characters from Greek or Roman mythology. This functioned as "code that gay readers would recognize" and "a way of identifying an author or book's sympathy with gay readers and gay themes" (Healey). Queer themes were also commonly consigned to subtext, particularly prevalently in the homoerotic subtext of 18th and 19th century horror fiction; perhaps because queer-coded or openly queer characters appeared less controversial to readers when presented in what was, arguably, an already "transgressive genre" (Healey). Themes of queerness, monstrosity, and transformation have inspired plenty of scholarship examining the crossover between horror fiction and homosexuality, yet it is important to clarify that, here, where I use the word 'queerness' I refer to the word's original meaning: strange, abnormal, or peculiar. 'Queer' then became used as a slur against LGBTQ+ people, before eventually being reclaimed by the queer community in the 1980s as "an umbrella term to designate resistant and non-normative sexuality" and "being different, but unapologetically so" (McCann and Monaghan 2). It is also worth reiterating that, while I refer to the 'queer/LGBTQ+ community' in this section, this group embodies a diverse group of people with differing and sometimes conflicting opinions. I am interested in how this diverse group of people are represented within mainstream professionally published literature, and how *Carry On* meets modern definitions of queerness.

Though the availability and popularity of queer literature may have improved, according to the American Library Association half of the books most challenged by libraries and schools in 2021 were reported because they contained LGBTQ+ content ("Top 10 Most Challenged Books Lists").[64] The availability of queer literature for queer youths is

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[64] It is also worth noting that the American Library Association estimate that this represents only a fraction of reported book challenges: "Surveys indicate that 82-97% of book challenges – documented requests to

particularly important because data suggests that, in the United States, "45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year" and that "nearly 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth attempted suicide and LGBTQ youth of color reported higher rates than their white peers" (*2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health*). The last several decades have seen a definite increase in the amount of queer literature published in the UK and US, especially queer YA literature, produced by mainstream publishers, but while this increase is consistent with shifting cultural opinions and increased social acceptance of LGBTQ+ people, the diversity of works produced has not necessarily matched the quantity produced. Contemporary queer literature has been criticised by various members of the LGBTQ+ community for its lack of diversity and inclusivity, particularly when it comes to including people of colour, characters with various religious or cultural backgrounds, disabled characters, or transgender characters. Malinda Lo, blogger, co-founder of Diversity in YA and author of queer YA novels such as *Ash* (2019), states that, while the number of queer YA novels produced by mainstream American publishers has risen from 27 novels in 2009 to 108 novels in 2018, the number of texts with cisgender protagonists remains the overwhelming majority (Lo). [65] Lo's self-directed study found that the number of queer YA novels featuring a transgender, nonbinary or genderfluid, genderqueer, gender-destabilizing, or intersex main character sat at around roughly 1-4% in 2018 (Lo).[66] However, as Lo notes, her study also found an increasing number of YA novels with multiple LGBTQ+ characters, and that these novels were more likely to include a diverse range of queer characters (such as transgender or genderfluid) alongside their cisgender protagonist/s (Lo).

In 2015, *Carry On* made up part of the 55% of queer YA novels featuring cisgender protagonists, but did at least include multiple supporting queer characters (as discussed in previous chapters). *Carry On* does not, however, depict any transgender or gender-diverse characters and, while it is worth remembering that not every queer text can cater to all tastes or represent all sexualities and gender identities in a single novel, this is generally indicative of a lack of broader diversity within mainstream queer literature. While YA novels featuring

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remove materials from schools or libraries – remain unreported and receive no media" ("Top 10 Most Challenged Books Lists").

[65] By 'mainstream,' Lo refers to publishers Hachette, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Penguin Random House, Simon and Schuster, Disney Book Group, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Scholastic, and other general interest publishers not focusing specifically on LGBTQ+ books. She states that she has chosen not to include the output of LGBTQ+ presses or self-published books in her study because her interest is in analysing mainstream representation of LGBTQ+ characters.

[66] This percentage refers to each category respectively. I.e., in 2018 1% of these novels represented gender-destabilizing characters and 4% of these novels represented nonbinary or genderfluid characters.

transgender characters, such as Kacen Callender's *Felix Ever After* (2020) and Aiden Thomas's *Cemetery Boys* (2020), have begun to emerge in popularity, queer YA novels featuring transgender or gender-diverse protagonists tend to be scarce for the most part. Callender's novel centres around its protagonist, Felix, on his journey of self-discovery and identity. As a black, queer, and transgender man, Felix fears he may be one marginalisation too far to ever find love, but after his attempts to catfish a transphobic classmate for revenge end with Felix falling for him, Felix is forced to re-evaluate his ideas about love and about himself. Similarly, Thomas' novel also deals with themes of gender and identity but, in his novel, this occurs through its protagonist, Yadriel, struggling to make his traditional Latinx family accept his new gender. The YA novel has plenty of mystery, magic, and romance, but ultimately comes back to Yadriel's determination to prove himself a true 'brujo'. Considering both authors are black, queer, and transgender or nonbinary,[67] it is notable that their works have not only proved popular among YA readers, but also that they have been published at all.

Nonetheless, the arguably disproportionate representation of gay men and lesbians and the cissexist homogenising of queer experiences within queer YA literature may be in part owing to the relative newness of bisexuality, transgender, and gender diverse identities being socially recognised historically. While the terms 'gay' and 'lesbian' have been popular since the 1970s, the terms 'bisexuality' (or 'B') and 'transgender' (or 'T') were only added to form the popular 'LGBT' acronym in 1988.[68] Hannah McCann and Whitney Monaghan point out that "the use of the term "LGBTIQ" distracts from the disproportionate focus given to L and G (lesbians and gay men) compared to BTIQ (bisexuals, transgender persons, intersex persons and queer identifying people)" (10). But while the increase in queer literature and the slow increase in diversity within the genre is serves as evidence of the effect that young, queer, and/or female readers' attitudes and desires have on creators and on hegemonic literary

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[67] Callender identifies as a trans, nonbinary person (Callender), while Thomas identifies as a transgender man ("Meet Aiden"). Both accept the pronouns they/them and he/him.

[68] It is worth noting that bisexuals and transgender people were not immediately universally accepted by other members of the queer community. Ironically, these sub-groups were sometimes discriminated against (and remain discriminated against by some queer persons even today) by lesbians and gay men. Bisexuals, for example, are usually discriminated against under the assumption that they are either a 'confused' heterosexual or homosexual, or that they are merely 'experimenting.' Transgender persons, on the other hand, have faced discrimination or exclusion because gender identity differs from sexual orientation, and there are some that have criticised it being used under the same umbrella term: LGBT.

tastes, the extent to which queer literature produced by mainstream producers retains its sense of queerness is debatable.

Though *Carry On* features two queer protagonists and deals explicitly with queer themes – as Simon comes to terms with his same-sex attraction and he and Baz explore a same-sex relationship for the first time – the extent to which Rowell challenges heteronormative ideologies, traditional values, and the standard format of romance literature is open to interpretation. According to McCann and Monaghan, "from its early use in theoretical terms, "queer" operated as a wish and a hope for a different kind of thinking and engagement with questions of sexuality, gender, identity, power and the politics of oppression" (3). This sentiment is echoed in Markus Thiel's discussion of queer theory:

> It questions socially established norms and dualistic categories with a special focus on challenging sexual (heterosexual/homosexual), gender (male/female), class (rich/poor), racial (white/non-white) classifications. It goes beyond these so-called 'binaries' to contest general political (private/public) as well as international binary orders (democratic/ authoritarian). (97)

As a novel written by a cisgender, heterosexual, white woman, the degree to which *Carry On* embodies the spirit of queerness remains a matter of debate amongst fans and scholars. Librarian and queer blogger Casey Stepanuik argues that *Carry On*'s depiction of queer sexuality is "deeply monosexist (enforcing the assumption that people are either gay or straight and therefore erasing bisexuality)" and that, despite the positive influence having a queer relationship featured in mainstream YA literature will have on queer teens, by "using monosexism as a narrative device" Rowell is presenting a harmful narrative for bisexual readers ("Bisexual Erasure and Monosexism in Rainbow Rowell's *Carry On*"). This contemporary bisexual erasure in American literature Kenji Yoshino argues, is "because the two most powerful sexual orientation constituencies – self-identified straights and self-identified gays – have mutual investments in the erasure of bisexuals" (qtd. in Heffer 3). Audrey T. Heffers compounds this viewpoint by claiming that the "legitimisation of bisexuality (and, indeed, of any non-monosexual identity) would complicate the distinct compartmentalization of homosexuality and heterosexuality" (3), which, in a literary context, can be read as the author's desire to not complicate traditional binaries by challenging hegemonic ideologies.

However, I argue that Rowell introduces other elements of queerness into her texts, *Carry On* and *Fangirl*, through her employment of fan fiction. This is because of the "performative" and "erotic" nature of women writing fan fiction erotica, pornography, slash, or smut for other women (Lackner et al. 201), and because fan fiction sites, as traditionally "predominantly female space[s]," allow women a break from heterosexist agendas and serve as safe spaces for the queer to be celebrated, supported, and encouraged. This frames slash fan fiction and fan's interest in homosexual relationships in a different light. As discussed in previous chapters, while not all fan fiction is slash, slash fiction does constitute a significant portion of fan fiction on popular fan fiction sites such as AO3. In their essay, "Cunning Linguists: The Bisexual Erotics of Words/Silence/Flesh," Eden Lackner, Barbara Lynn Lucas, and Robin Anne Reid argue that, in writing slash fan fiction:

> even the "straight" woman are doing something that can arguably be seen as pretty "queer" (producing writing designed to give sexual pleasure to other women, whether the texts are called erotica, pornography, slash, or smut, whether the texts are defined as het or queer or bi) and interacting with each other through and by means of writing. (201)

In July 2021, *Supernatural* pairing Castiel/Dean was ranked the top 'ship' on AO3, along with Sherlock/Watson in 2nd from BBC's *Sherlock* (2010-2017), and Derek/Stiles in 3rd from MGM's *Teen Wolf* (2011-2017) (*AO3 Ship Stats 2021*).[69] Interestingly, Harry/Draco remains 4th most popular ship, even though the original book series ran from 1997-2007 and the film series from 2001–2011, making it the oldest media ship present in these statistics. In fact, as of July 2022, AO3 had 380,341 fanfics listed under the "Harry Potter" category (encompassing both novel and film-based stories) making it one of the largest fandoms on the site (along with the Marvel fandom at 504,262 stories and Real Person Fiction at 411,219 stories).

The popularity of these M/M relationships with readers can be partially attributed, as I argue, to the queer-coding of and unacknowledged sexual tension between these characters. Many popular television networks, purposefully or unwittingly, produce shows containing homoerotic undertones between same-sex characters without ever allowing these characters to act explicitly queer on-screen or defy homonormative viewing expectations. Often these

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[69] It is worth noting that while this information comes from a fan-compiled and published set of data, it is substantiated by the rankings on AO3's home page (which lists the most popular fandoms, and then the most popular ships first when editing a search).

networks are criticised by fans for deliberately 'queerbaiting' or, if one or more of the characters is allowed to exhibit explicitly queer behaviour, they then negate this by fulfilling the classic 'bury your gays' trope and killing them off. Queerbaiting is considered "the practice of implying non-heterosexual relationships or attraction (in a TV show, for example) to engage or attract an LGBTQ+ audience or otherwise generate interest without ever actually depicting such relationships or sexual interactions" ("Queerbaiting"), and is often viewed as a capitalistic and cruel manner of taking advantage of LGBTQ+ audiences. For example, while a romantic relationship between the characters Castiel and Dean had been desired by *Supernatural* fans for over ten years, the angel Castiel only confesses his romantic love for supernatural-hunter Dean in the show's final ever episode (a confession Dean does not have time to either accept or reject) before immediately sacrificing himself to save Dean's life.

It is actions such as these that fuel fans' desire to write and read fan fiction that explicitly acknowledges queer characters and deals with LGBTQ+ themes in an empathetic and considerate way, in order to right the perceived wrongs done to these characters within canon. As Willis argues, fan fiction therefore becomes a method used by fans to reorientate canon around the "demands made by a reader's subjective engagement with canon" (153). Willis goes on to compare her unfulfilled desire for the recognition of queer desire within canon, because of the "lack of a sustaining fictional world within which queer desire can be recognized," to the homophobic tactic of "cutting queer children off from information about the possibility, the validity, and the liveability of queer desires and lives" (160). The action of writing fan fiction acknowledging queer desires and portraying explicitly queer characters, therefore, becomes an action of more than just self-serving reorientation and vindication; it provides young queer readers with a space in which their desires can be recognised, and their identities and sexualities supported. An anonymous user on Tumblr's *Asexual Advice* page commented on how fan fiction helped them realise their sexuality, for example, saying:

> I understood the concept, but always stereotyped aces into the cool, suave and serious types of people. One of my OTP's features a character like this, so he's often portrayed as asexual - cool beans. It wasn't until I read something where his partner, the bubbly, silly and obnoxious character, was portrayed as asexual that I realized, "Holy dang, that sounds like me!" So, yay asexual representation (in fanfics)! (*Can I just say fanfiction helped me realize my…*)

Fan fiction sites, such as AO3, can therefore serve as a 'safe space' for queer readers because they are both able to express themselves and their themselves reflected in the online literature they are consuming.

These fan fiction sites may also be considered queer because of the way they in which they defy traditional hierarchies. They are not subject to the constraints of editors, publishers, boards, or other authorities present within mainstream media networks or publishing houses. Therefore, power over the romantic relationships depicted, whether they are heterosexual or homosexual, monosexual or polysexual, and monogamous or polyamorous, lies with the fans and not with traditional authorities. This restructuring of traditional hierarchies and redistribution of power is inherently queer, as it rejects hegemonic authorities and binaries. By writing a novel featuring explicitly queer characters and themes and introducing fan fiction culture into mainstream literature, Rowell not only challenges hegemonic literary tastes by redefining what belongs in this public space, but also introduces new readers to the transformative methods employed by fan fiction readers/writers in challenging set hierarchies and traditional ways of thinking. Because while the "possibility of homosexual desire is absent from the conceptual organization of the *Harry Potter* books," Rowell creates a world in which queer desire is sustainable and the romantic tension identified by fans between Draco and Baz is made explicit in the characters of Simon and Baz (Willis 160). In *Fangirl*, the main character Cath understands that reading and writing slash fan fiction is viewed as a transgressive activity. The novel constantly contrasts Cath's fan fiction against her 'real' fiction, and explores the merit assigned to each comparatively. In one scene, Cath encounters another fan in the library who identifies Cath's interest in fan fiction because of the shirt she is wearing (which bears the name of Cath's popular novel-length fan fiction). Their interaction is fleeting, but their language is that of two people sharing a mutual interest which is socially subversive and taboo: "this is why people think we're crazy perverts" (Rowell, *Fangirl* 213). Though this societal perception of Cath's interest in slash fan fiction has nothing to do with her own sexual identity (as far as we, the reader, are aware, Cath identifies as a straight, cisgender woman), it does affect the way she is viewed by other characters, as "the idea of straight girls writing about gay boys" is still perceived as "deviant" (Rowell, *Fangirl* 427). But, in reading *Carry On*, even readers who identify as straight are tacitly engaging in this perceived 'deviancy' in the same way straight women writing and reading slash fiction are arguably engaging in queer behaviour.

Queer Children in Literature

By making the implicit explicit, I argue that Rowell aids in the visibility of fan theories, opinions, and interpretations of the *Harry Potter* texts present in online forums, fan-fiction-writing sites, and other distinct fandom subcultures (i.e., interpretations existing in separate spaces from the source material) to mainstream media (i.e., literature professionally published by a major commercial publisher). These fan interpretations, or 'fanon,' stem from concepts introduced in canon that were either never mentioned again, or reflect ideas commonly held as true amongst many fans, even if not expressed in canon. As previously discussed, heterosexist critical and general opinions of fanon often view it with derogation in comparison to canon and fan works as a 'transgressive' activity that should be sequestrated from mainstream media. For example, Graham Norton, on his popular, self-named television show, *The Graham Norton Show* (2007-present), has introduced multiple celebrity guests to fan fiction and fan art in a manner designed to make them uncomfortable and to present fan works as a concept to be ridiculed and rejected. Norton has introduced *X-Men: First Class* (2011) actors, Michael Fassbender and James McAvoy, and *Harry Potter* star, Daniel Radcliffe, to fan fiction written about them (i.e., 'Real Person Fiction'[70]) using language mocking language and describing the "various scenarios [fans] dream up" as "nuts" (BBC 00:02:30-00:02:41).

However, fan fiction is more than just the cringe-worthy examples employed with the intention of shocking celebrities and audiences alike. Fan fiction offers readers and writers both a space to see their interpretations of source material and their personal identities and sexualities celebrated in literary form. In *Harry Potter* fan fiction, this can commonly be seen in 'fix-it fics'[71] or in fanfics that deal comprehensively with implied issues in the texts. These include the neglect and emotional and physical abuse Harry suffered at the hands of the Dursleys, the perceived ways in which his mentor and headmaster, Dumbledore, failed him, and how his non-linear childhood and passionate, queer-coded interactions with other men mean his character could be read as a late-bloomer in discovering his own sexuality. AO3-user raitala's fanfic, *Shine, Even in the Darkness* (2014), for example is set fifteen years after

[70] Even amongst fans, Real Person Fiction (RPF) is controversial. Some fans enjoy engaging in RPF, while others have questioned the morality of this form of fiction and its objectification of actual people. A common counterargument to this by pro-RPF fans is that the persona celebrities present to the public eye is not necessarily their true selves and is only another character they are creating for public consumption.

[71] According to Fanlore, a fix-it fic can be describes as "fanfiction that changes something about canon that the fan writing the fic wasn't happy with" and "can be anything from explaining plot holes or inconsistent characterization to bringing a favorite character back from the dead" ("Fix-it").

the events of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007) and explores a Harry who, after marry Ginny Weasley and raising children with her (as he does canonically), slowly realises he is in fact bisexual, and reconnects with Draco after his divorce. Draco is treated similarly by fans and is treated as a disenfranchised character, often depicted as gay rather than bisexual, and prevented from expressing his sexuality due to his family's traditional views, expectations, and inheritance. Using the same example as above, Draco, in raitala's fanfic, is depicted as having been aware of his homosexuality, but having repressed it because it would mean his disinheritance and the end of the Malfoy line (as he is the last male heir). Rowell takes these common fan interpretations of Harry and Draco's characters, sexualities, and experiences, and deals with them comprehensively through the characters Simon and Baz in order to fulfil contemporary readers' increased desire for LGBTQ+ representation in mainstream literature.

While many fans of the *Harry Potter* series adore the eccentric and benevolent Hogwarts Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, there are also fans who have interpreted his actions and *in-actions* as manipulative and villainous. Dumbledore plays an integral role in the series, often acting as Harry's mentor, guide, and protector, and is also responsible for advancing the plotline both during and prior to the series of events depicted within the series. It was Dumbledore who brought the newly orphaned Harry to live with his abusive and neglectful relatives at Privet Drive – against the advice of Professor McGonagall – and in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* it is revealed he was always aware that Harry must die in order to vanquish Lord Voldemort and had been "raising him like a pig for slaughter" (Rowling 687). This has led fans such as Tumblr-user Miccaeli to argue that Dumbledore abuses his position of power by using it to "manipulate and emotionally traumatise Harry and batter him into a weapon to use against Voldemort" ("What Did Dumbledore Do That Makes Him A Bad Person"). In *Carry On*, Rowell builds on these fan interpretations Dumbledore's character to construct the Mage. Like Dumbledore, the Mage is Headmaster of Watford School of Magicks, responsible for bringing Simon into the World of Mages at age eleven when his magic first presented itself and intends to use Simon to defeat the Insidious Humdrum and fulfil the prophecy: "*And one will come to end us. And one will bring his fall. Let the greatest power of powers reign, May it save us all*" (Rowell, *Carry On* 34, emphasis original).

However, unlike Dumbledore, the Mage is also responsible for creating the Insidious Humdrum and is willing to murder Simon in cold blood to further his own delusions of

'saving' the World of Mages. Later in the book it is revealed that the Mage was obsessed with what he perceived to be terrible flaws in the World of Mages (e.g., the classism and exclusion of minority groups from education and politics) and, after waiting in vain for the 'Chosen One' who would come to save them all, experimented on his pregnant partner in order to create the Chosen One. That child is revealed to be Simon, and while he does in fact possess enormous power, the consequences of the Mage's spell also created the Insidious Humdrum, who is bent on consuming magic. The Mage's manipulative tendencies and destructive character traits are apparent to other characters (such as Penelope and Baz) but because of Simon's lack of parental figures and his disrupted childhood, he latches onto the Mage as a 'father figure' of sorts and proves himself easy to manipulate. As well as sending Simon back to neglectful care homes over the summer months (just as Harry was sent back to the Dursley's), he also attempts to isolate Simon by forbidding his friends from writing or calling him over the holidays (Rowell, *Carry On* 14), and by preventing him from establishing a support network amongst the wider magickal community. Other wizarding families attempt to introduce themselves to Simon in his first year but, according to him, "the Mage wasn't having any of it…I'm glad now that he was so protective. It'd be nice to know more magicians and to feel more a part of a community, but I've made my own friends…" (Rowell, *Carry On* 35). Though Simon interprets the Mage's actions as protective, to the reader, these actions are clearly intended to be interpreted as manipulations. In preventing Simon from forming relationships with those who might also influence him, the Mage keeps Simon dependent on himself for support.

Because Simon clearly possesses internalised notions of heteronormative temporality, *Carry On* explores queer temporalities through Simon's nonnormative progression and life experiences. The lack of healthy emotional support from the adults in Simon's life, paired with his disrupted childhood, mean that Simon clings even harder to traditional ideas surrounding family and linear developmental progression. As a child, Simon's desire for a traditional familial structure presents itself through his dream that one day his parents will return for him:

> My dad would be a footballer. And my mum would be some posh model type. And they'd explain how they'd had to give me up because they were too young for a baby, and because his career was on the line. *"But we always missed you, Simon,"* they'd say. *"We've been looking for you."* And then they'd take me away to live in their mansion. (Rowell, *Carry On* 8)

When this dream remains unfulfilled, Simon clings to the idea of the Mage as a substitute father-figure, even though Simon himself is aware that he never promised to fulfil that role: "The Mage has never presented himself to me that way. As family. He's always treated me as an ally-even when I was a little kid" (Rowell, *Carry On* 47). As a young adult, Simon's desire for a traditional family and linear developmental progression is evident through his idealising of his classmate Agatha and their relationship. To him, she represents the perfect wife in their future nuclear family and embodies his long-awaited 'happy ending':

> Agatha and I will work through whatever this is; we always do. We make sense together. We'll probably get married after school – that's when Agatha's parents got married. I know she wants a place in the country….I can't afford anything like that, but she has money, and she'll find a job that makes her happy. And her dad'll help me find work if I ask him. It's nice to think about that: living long enough to have to figure out what to do with myself. (Rowell, *Carry On* 40)

Simon's fixation on graduation, marriage, and employment – key developmental milestones – betray his concerns with meeting heteronormative standards for progression and thereby also reflecting dominant cultural scripts. This fixation reflects Kathryn Bond Stockton's discussion of the anxieties surrounding children's vertical movement, or "growing up," in a traditional manner that meets hegemonic societal expectations concerned with key milestones (4). These milestones include reaching bodily maturity, getting married, pursuing a career, and having children of one's own, amongst others (Bond Stockton 4). Failure or delay in meeting these milestones may be met with societal derision, pressure, or contempt, as it is conflated with a failure to 'grow up' correctly. But, as Bond Stockton addresses, queer people often fail to meet this heteronormative developmental model in the correct order, timeframe, or at all, which leads to her suggestion of the queer child 'growing sideways.'

Because Simon and Baz fail to 'grow up' in a traditional sense – meeting hegemonic expectations of developmental milestones at the correct rate and in the correct order – they are instead forced to 'grow sideways,' and consider what their futures will look like in a nonnormative sense. Rowell's use of the characters Simon and Baz in portraying real-life issues and challenges faced by young queer people (such as grappling with their identity, sexuality, and balancing these with how society and their loved ones view their identity and sexuality) in mainstream literature serves to validate them in the public sphere. She does so by attributing her protagonists with queer narratives of self-discovery that are relatable to

young, queer readers, and by challenging heteronormativity within modern culture through Simon and Baz's non-linear developmental progression. *Carry On*, as a novel within the YA/Crossover fiction occupies a very specific genre within literature. It is the genre that most appeals to coming of age stories, the issues and problems addressed through the in-between of adolescence and adulthood, but also appeals to the wide array of complexities and mature issues that relate to both youths and young adults. As Rachel Falconer notes, the popular and critical success of children's literature such as the *Harry Potter* series demonstrates how this genre of literature can appeal to dual-aged audiences (2), and goes on to suggest that the emergence of this new literary genre may be a response to "cultural crisis and change," as it forces people to address the lack of consensus about what constitutes "appropriate reading" for youths as opposed to adults (3). Falconer also argues that Crossover literature, as a genre, highlights the "difficulty in maintaining traditional distinctions between childhood and adulthood" (3). The popular and critical success of *Carry On* therefore, may be seen as an emergence of literature which is even more multifaceted in its audience appeal; the novel appeals to both youths and adults, queer and straight audiences, and readers of fan-fiction and professionally published fiction alike. In this manner, I argue that it challenges the heteronormative and chrononormative nature of traditional literary genres before one even considers the subject matter. Falconer's consideration of Crossover literature as an emerging genre also ties in nicely with the aforementioned theories of Bond Stockton.

Bond Stockton's analysis of queer child development can also be applied to Rowell's characters of Simon and Baz, as they each exemplify non-linear temporal progression and queer anxieties around their perceived 'failure' to meet heteronormative developmental milestones. As previously discussed, Simon's physical and emotional development as an adolescent has been hindered by neglect from his caregivers. Not being spoken to enough, being fed enough, or being provided with the emotional support he needed at key development periods of his life have left him with a lingering speech impediment, a 'starved' appearance whenever he returns to Watford at the beginning of each school year, and seen him latch onto parental figures such as the Mage, even when these adult figures have not always had his best interests at heart. Furthermore, Simon holds tight to aspirations of a traditional life with Agatha, even when other characters (such as Baz, Penelope, and even Agatha herself) recognize fundamental issues in his relationship with her. Penelope suggests that Simon and Agatha's "relationship has had better…years" (Rowell, *Carry On* 149), and while Simon is able to recognise on a surface level that "things had got dodgy with Agatha

last year" and that she had been "distant and quiet" towards him (Rowell, *Carry On* 56), he is unable to separate her from his pre-conceived notions of a traditional life. Agatha too remains with Simon as long as she does because of her concerns with meeting societal expectations: "I just don't love Simon enough. [.... But] I may as well stand by Simon, shouldn't I? If that's where he wants me? If that's where everyone expects me to be?" (Rowell, *Carry On* 75). When Agatha finally confronts Simon regarding the unhealthy nature of their relationship, Simon argues that Agatha is his future, to which Agatha responds, "You just want a happy ending" (Rowell, *Carry On* 141). For Simon, the idea of a 'happy ending' is irrevocably twisted with his learned ideas regarding a traditional life (just as Agatha's is with the expectations of those around her). These notions are challenged by his attraction to, and eventual romantic relationship with, Baz, as this relationship disregards all conventional notions of vertical movement and traditional 'growth.'

Baz's character places similar importance on these heteronormative developmental milestones but, unlike Simon, he is self-aware of his inability to meet them and has, thus, resigned himself to unhappiness. Baz's non-linear growth manifests in two ways: his sexual orientation and his vampirism. While Simon is slow to realise his intense feelings towards Baz stem are not only due to antagonism, but also attraction, Baz is much more self-aware. Upon self-reflection he realises his homosexual desires began as early as second year (Rowell, *Carry On* 356), though he didn't fully realise his attraction to Simon until fifth year: "Those were my fifth-year fantasies: kisses and blood and Snow ridding the world of me" (Rowell, *Carry On* 201). To Baz, this attraction is problematic on two counts; he believes his interest in men means inevitably disappointing his family's expectations in him, and his interest in Simon specifically – his sworn enemy – means his feelings will never be requited. Because he is gay, he does not wish to marry a woman and, because he is a vampire, he suspects he would not be able to produce children even if he tried: "I'm fairly certain vampires can't have babies" (Rowell, *Carry On* 279). His father's attempts to ignore Baz's homosexuality and vampirism only add to his self-hatred because of them:

> I think if I got married, to a girl from a good family, my father wouldn't even care that I'm queer. Or who fathered his grandchildren. If the idea of passing on my mother's name that way didn't turn my stomach, I'd consider it. (Rowell, *Carry On* 279)

His mother's widely known hatred of vampires is arguably even worse for Baz's mental state. Natasha Grimm-Pitch, former Headmistress of Watford and an exemplary witch, died

defending her son from a vampire attack when Baz was only nine (the same vampire attack in which Baz was bitten). She defeated the vampires, but was also bitten, and made the choice to kill herself rather than turn. Once Baz is old enough to understand this, he is forced to live with the knowledge that his mother would have preferred him dead over being a vampire and, if she had realised her son had been bitten, "would never have let [him] live" (Rowell, *Carry On* 338). Believing himself to be a "monster," he tries to carry out his mother's wishes and commit suicide by flame, and is only prevented in succeeding by Simon's quick interference (Rowell, *Carry On* 339). Baz has internalised this dominant cultural script of linear progression and doesn't expect a 'happy ending'; he doesn't even expect to live past the Wizarding War, believing he and Simon will eventually be forced to fight and that Simon will kill him. If constantly antagonising Simon all throughout their adolescence was his way of garnering his crush's attention, then dying by his hand is the ultimate unhealthy conflation of interests. His limited prospects and expectations mirror the non-linear experiences of queer youths growing up in the same manner that his vampirism serves as an allegory for his queerness: "vampires love and desire one another in unabashedly erotic terms; their hunger is a sexual bloodlust and their nocturnal ramblings make them seem like John Rechy's sexual outlaws cruising the streets in search of one more anonymous encounter" (Benshoff 270). Baz dies, then lives; Simon's childhood is disrupted, and he learns emotional and social cues at a later date. Both suffer near-death experiences and are forced to confront their expectations for the future – Simon's self-deluded dreams of Agatha and a white-picket fence, Baz's pessimistic dreams of death by fire and Simon – and learn to grow in non-traditional, non-heteronormative, and non-linear ways. In this manner, Rowell is able to elevate the implicit queer-coded messages and experiences fans have read into Rowling's characters, Harry and Draco, by making dealing with the challenges of growing up queer, and, arguably, 'growing sideways.'

By transforming pre-existing literature readers are familiar with into an entirely new – yet professionally published – text, Rowell brings fan fiction culture and queerness into mainstream literature in a way that is both compliant with and subversive to hegemonic literary tastes. Her work follows traditional romance plotlines, focusses on monosexist and cissexist relationships, and does not extensively challenge traditional hierarchies within the World of Mages (and, by extension, the world in a wider context), and can therefore be read as compliant with hegemonic ideologies expressed within literature. However, because *Carry On* transforms and *critiques* issues present within the *Harry Potter* texts, it also subverts

these ideologies and tastes. The fact that Rowell uses fan interpretations, or 'fanon,' to critique a series largely upheld in contemporary culture as a 'classic' further challenges these traditional views. Her work demonstrates that even classics may be critiqued and that the views of fans (traditionally relegated to separate spaces) are valid and belong in mainstream media. While it is clear that queer literature is lacking in transgender and gender-diverse characters, queer people of colour, and queer narratives concerned with plotlines other than 'coming out' or 'coming of age,' the acceptance and publishing of queer literature by mainstream publishers is a recent enough development that Rowell's novel constitutes a notable addition to diverse literary representation. Though the "possibility of homosexual desire is absent from the conceptual organization of the *Harry Potter* books," Rowell creates a world in which queer desire is sustainable, the romantic tension identified by fans between Harry and Draco is transformed into something explicit, and traditional binaries drawn between heterosexual and homosexual are blurred by 'straight' readers engaging in arguably queer behaviour (Willis 160). Rowell's text also validates the tastes and opinions of minority or underrepresented groups by building this literary world on a traditionally empowering space. She therefore advocates the normalisation of these tastes in a wider cultural context – a way of further enriching and complicating the ternary relationship between creator, content, and communities, in relation to the retelling of stories, with which this thesis is concerned. As I argue, while Rowell exists as both 'creator' (as the professionally published author of *Carry On*) and 'community' (as a member of the *Harry Potter* fandom and an interpretive reader of these texts) in this context, her role of 'creator' is the more important one here. It demonstrates the shifting power in this ternary dynamic and that members of the community may be seen as possessing an increased control over the narrative in recent decades. This affects the form of content they can access in mainstream literature. While diverse queer representation, women's voices, and the interests of those traditionally consigned to separate spaces still have a long way to go, I view *Carry On* and its kin as a reflection of the communal desire for increased LGBTQ+ representation in mainstream media and a shift in traditional storytelling.

Chapter Four: rebel rebel and Rebellious Fiction

Myths, folklore, fairy tales, and profic might bear roots in the 'transformative' tradition of storytelling, but fan fiction forms a class of transformative storytelling that is entirely its own. In my final chapter I will examine Rainbow Rowell's professionally-published *Carry On* against *rebel rebel*, an 183211-word fanfic by AO3-user BasicBathsheba's (also known as BasicBanshee on Tumblr and as Ban Gilmartin offline). *rebel rebel* was constructed using the characters and world of Rowell's *Carry On* as its source material, which in turn was constructed using *Harry Potter* as its source material, and therefore provides an excellent metatextual example of how transformative texts trouble the assumed dichotomy between professionally published and fan published fiction. I examine how Rowell (a straight, white, cis woman) and Ban[72] (as an openly queer author) capture notions of queerness in their texts, thus considering the author as part of their work. This will include performing a close reading of excerpts from the texts to identify key differences and supplementing my reading with the theories expressed in Kathryn Bond Stockton's *The Queer Child.* In the current structure of contemporary mainstream publishing, the concept of a single 'author' or 'creator' has been promoted through the progression of oral storytelling to literary storytelling, copyright laws, and the monetisation of stories. This stresses the idea of storytelling as a solitary occupation wherein the author has sole control over the narrative. Authors also, as a matter of financial and legal necessity, are required to protect their creative and intellectual property from any potential copyright breach as these threaten both their livelihood and professional legacy. Thus, there is a clear separation between the motivations of professional authors and their readers. By contrast, fan fiction offers a more collaborative and interactive form of storytelling. Fanfic-writers are often influenced by one another's work and so tropes, trends, and popular tags tend to multiply and be shared amongst their peers. This manner of communally shared and prompted storytelling, I suggest, bears far more in common with older forms of transformative storytelling, such as oral myths and folklore, because of the shared nature of group discourse, support, and critique. However, even in this context this slightly romanticised view of fandom as a 'community' is troubled by the fractious nature of inter-fandom disagreements and disharmony. Comparing the concept of the individual

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[72] Ban has stated on her Tumblr that she chooses to use 'they/them' pronouns but that she is also comfortable with 'she/her' ("FAQ").

'author' against that of 'community' in a fandom-orientated context provokes a rich field of potential conflict and interpretation.

Authorship and Gender Identity/Sexuality

Of all the derivative fan fiction *Carry On* has inspired, Ban's *rebel rebel* is undoubtedly one of the most influential within the *Carry On* fandom. It remains one of the most popular *Carry On* fanfics on AO3, currently sitting at number four in the category (in which the first and third-most popular fanfic spots also belong to Ban). While the *Carry On* fandom is far smaller than the *Harry Potter* fandom, Rowell's novels were published more recently, meaning some of the sites the *Carry On* fandom were/are most active on differ from those used by fans of the *Harry Potter* series (1997–2007 (main series books) and 2001–2011 (main series films)), due to the fact that these sites did not yet exist when the first *Harry Potter* novel was released. While *Harry Potter* fandom has been most active on FF.Net, LJ, DeviantArt, fan-run sites, and forums (many of which have now been subsumed into AO3), the *Carry On* fandom has been most active on AO3, Tumblr, Instagram, and Discord. Like Cath (or her username 'Magicath') in *Fangirl*, Ban is what is known in the fandom as a 'BNF' or 'Big Name Fan'. Their AO3 fanfics generate a large amount of 'kudos' (which essentially equate to user 'likes') as do their posts on Tumblr. They are also credited with the popularisation of certain tropes and character names (where they were unknown in canon) within other users' fan fiction. For example, they created surnames for the Mage (Lllewelyn), Dev (Grimm), and Niall (Kelly), as well as names for Baz's siblings (Acantha and Ophelia for his twin sisters and Magnus for his baby brother). Ban is also arguably responsible for the popularisation of DeNiall (Dev/Niall) as a side-pairing and the semi-popularisation of a friendship between Agatha and Baz. Their fic is popular enough that there is a running joke within the fandom wherein fans – myself included – have to remind each other what happened in canon and what happened in *rebel rebel*.

rebel rebel, specifically, is an 'alternate universe' (or 'AU') fanfic, written primarily from Baz's point of view, which follows his life through all eight years of Watford. However, unlike its source material, *rebel rebel* follows how events may have taken place had Baz lived with his punk aunt instead of his more traditional father. In canon, Baz's mother dies protecting him from vampires when he is still an infant. Both he and his mother are bitten during this incident, but his mother chooses to commit suicide rather than turn into a vampire. Whether she knew her son had been bitten and chose to spare his life or whether she would

have killed him had she known is an area much-pondered by Baz over the course of the *Carry On*. But while, in canon, Baz lives with his devastated father, who eventually remarries and produces several half-siblings for Baz with his new wife, in *rebel rebel* Baz's father suffers a breakdown and his aunt Fiona eventually intercedes and takes Baz away to raise him as her own. While Ban's characterisation of Baz remains just as problematically classist, clever, and cruel as the character from the source material, this Baz is also a punk, a music-lover, and an especially great fan of David Bowie. This is added to by the title, which was taken from Bowie's 1974 song of the same name.[73] The summary for the *rebel rebel* reads:

> *Baz Pitch loves, in no particular order; David Bowie, punk music, the feel of old vinyl, the smell of coffee (but not the taste), classic books, magic, David Byrne, the fact that he was raised by his aunt Fiona, and maybe, sometimes, Simon Snow.* (Ban)

While the 'alternate universe' trope is popular for SnowBaz fics, *rebel rebel* is particularly interesting as not many fanfic writers choose to detail the full eight years of Baz and Simon's life at Watford, instead choosing to focus on their eighth-year onwards. Ban instead takes a simple trope and proceeds to flesh out an exhaustive number of perceived oversights or missed opportunities in the source text. Their work explores the nuances of Baz's relationship with his aunt and his father, allowing for their failures as parental figures while also allowing for them to be humans who make mistakes. Ban also chooses to put far more detail into side-characters such as Dev and Niall, therefore exploring relationships that the source material did not or could not (due to word count limitations in mainstream professional publishing). Readers have been open about their appreciation for the fic's scope and quality, and Ban's treatment of *Carry On*'s characters. AO3-user Venessa Kelley says:

> [It's] particularly moving to read this incredible story told through the eyes of a boy who grows into a man. …You've treated these characters as a parent would - loved and cared for them, granted them space to breathe and fuck up and learn lessons - and we are all better for your efforts. (*rebel rebel*, comments section)

In a similar vein, sharpbutterknife says:

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[73] In fact, the titles of many of Ban's stories on AO3 are taken from songs of this era, including *Take on Me* (2018), *Tainted Love* (2018), *Paperback Writer* (2019), and *Twist and Shout* (2020). In an interesting moment of commonality, this also reflects Rowell's own habit of writing Simon Snow novels based on old song titles: *Carry On* (2015), *Wayward Son* (2019), and *Any Way the Wind Blows* (2021) (see Appendix).

[I've] reread this for the fifth time and sometimes i love this fanfic more than the actual book. this story feels like youve grown up with it- it nestles in your heart as childhood stories do and its such a comfort. (*rebel rebel*, comments section).

Though Ban has chosen to move away from writing fan fiction and focus on writing and publishing their 'original' work instead, *rebel rebel* remains, for many in the fandom, a triumph.

rebel rebel has been particularly praised for its exploration of queer themes, particularly that of bisexuality, which is an area *Carry On* has been critiqued for. This raises the question of how much an author's own sexuality and understanding of queerness affects these themes within their work. At this point in time Rowell has not chosen to identify as anything other than cisgender or heterosexual and so, for the purpose of my argument, that is what I assume about her gender identity and sexuality. Ban, meanwhile, has confirmed they are a lesbian and, given their choice in pronouns, may potentially identify as genderfluid or gender-diverse. It is worth re-iterating here that my focus on gender is not whether people form one group identity group can authentically write as another, but to consider how identity may affect this content and highlight this as a current point of friction in the relationship between creators and their content and community. Rowell, for instance, when asked in-interview how she researches the elements of falling in love unique to queer kids, in order to write them effectively, Rowell responds:

> *Chung (interviewer): Because when you're writing about a boy and a girl who fall in love, you do not necessarily have to bring up the question of their sexual identity — but when you're writing about two guys or two girls falling in love, you have to figure out if and how to address the identity issue….How do you figure out what's common to young people falling in love everywhere, and what might be unique to queer kids, and research and write that effectively?*

> Rowell: That's a really interesting point – that in hetero love stories, the characters don't have to say, "So, yeah, I'm straight." Because that's where are our culture just puts people, automatically…I was thinking about the people in my life, especially the people I've known for a long time, and how we all sort of figured ourselves out. Or didn't. I've had friends who have known they were queer since grade school, and friends who didn't figure it out until college, and friends who are just figuring it out

now. And my own understanding of sexuality has changed so much since I was a teenager. (Chung)

Choosing to reference her *friends'* experiences in figuring out their sexualities rather than her own is, I believe, an important distinction. Of course, sexuality and gender identity are both deeply political and incredibly personal and therefore there is always the potential for new information to come to light. Nonetheless, an analysis that centralises authorship, as it relates to sexuality, needs to consider what the author has chosen to discuss about herself, with the assumption that this information is true and accurate.

As stated above, Ban chooses to use 'they/them' pronouns but has stated that they are also comfortable being referred to by 'she/her'. This would indicate Ban is most likely genderfluid or gender-diverse, but it appears that, as of this point in time, Ban is still figuring things out: "it's a mess, when are pronouns not a mess! It's fine it's totally fine not confusing or weird at all I definitely know what I'm doing!" ("FAQ"). This in and of itself it remarkably queer, as it indicates a fluidity of thought which allows a person to continuously question their identity and sexuality, rather than adhering to a rigid set of pre-created identities. Ban has also confirmed in several Tumblr-posts that they identify as a lesbian, even jokingly referred to themselves as a "themsbian" ("FAQ"). In the first they post:

> *Tonight at the gym a man who looked like fuckin Thor asked me out and when I told him I was a lesbian he goes "oh. Chill. You know, my sister and I work out a lot together. She'll be here tomorrow, same time."*
>
> *Like…did Thor just wingman me?* ("tonight at the gym a man who looked like…")

The second post follows a wittily-written account of how Ban accidently fell into a fake-dating scenario with her friend-turned girlfriend – to the evident amusement of the 383,253 users who liked or reblogged it ("I keep using my girlfriend with unusual work hours…"). I choose to describe Ban as 'openly' identifying as a lesbian because of these posts and their Tumblr introduction, which reads: "Ban // your scottish gay aunt" ("I am the Bantichrist"). There is also the matter of the environment in which these authors first experienced fandom, which leads me to question: to what extent does the sexuality of the author impact their story and its reception when said story centres around queer characters? And: how does the environment in which the author first experienced fandom contribute to the story's content and overarching message?

These areas of tension provoke interesting potential when considering causality, consequences, and LGBTQ+ literary representation. Rowell, for instance, comes from a rich tradition of fan fiction that stemming from female writers of slash fan fiction, sharing and consuming fan works in physical and then online spaces, and brings many of the same assumptions and influences into her own work. In an interview with *TIME* magazine Rowell states that:

> When I wrote *Fangirl* I had to explain what fanfiction was to a lot of people, and I don't have to explain that much [today]. That will continue because the Harry Potter generation is growing up. The Harry Potter generation is the generation where fanfiction really became a big deal. (Feeney)

Ban, by contrast, has been active in the *Carry On* fandom in much more recent years, and therefore may possess a different experience of environment within the fandom. While I cannot make sweeping claims regarding the opinions and tastes of all fan writers/readers from either Rowell or Ban's 'generation' of fandom – or claim temporal progression in the ideologies and social mores of the later generation – there are certain facts I can highlight. Rowell was born in the early 1970s – a decade before the invention of the internet – when participatory culture and organised media fandom were just beginning to grow in popularity.

While the 1960s had seen the popularisation of fan works – and, most relevantly to my topic, the popularisation of *slash* fan works – through *Star Trek* and its 'Kirk/Spock' pairing, the fan fiction Rowell grew up with would have been accessed via fanzines sold at conventions or mailed out by order. According to Jenkins, these fan works were also largely produced by women, the "largely female composition of media fandom" having reflected a historical split from literary fandom, which was a "traditionally male-dominated" field (*Textual Poachers* 48). In fact, Jenkins states that:

> Women, drawn to the genre in the 1960s, discovered that the close ties between male fans and male writers created barriers to female fans and this fandom's traditions resisted inflection or redefinition. The emergence of media fandom can be seen, at least in part, as an effort to create a fan culture more open to women, within which female fans could make a contribution without encountering the entrenched power of long-time male fans; these fans bought freedom at the expense of proximity to the writers and editors. (*Textual Poachers* 48)

As well as a divide between male literary fans and female media fans, Bacon-Smith also notes the characterisation gap between male and female characters portrayed within media of the time, causing tension in how female fans perceived and wrote these characters. Female characters, even when depicted well, not always given much to go on, whereas characters like Kirk, Spock, Bones, and Scotty, all received disproportionately more screen-time and dedicated character development on-screen. This meant that fanfic-writers creating stories about male and female characters from the show either had very little to build from, or had to rework the existing material and existing female character to a point that they ran the risk of creating a 'Mary Sue' character.[74] She views the "creative failure" of female fans in "portray[ing] their own sex" authentically as being due to the poor and repetitive material provided by the *Star Trek* writers (143). The ensuing attempts by fans in including or celebrating female characters from their favoured media in-fanfic soon became riddled with fan discourse about 'Mary Sue's versus 'strong female characters' which, Bacon-Smith argues, "turns viewers to slash fiction instead" (*Enterprising Women* 143). Because, in stark contrast to the shallow relationships depicted onscreen between men and women, characters such as Kirk and Spock had rich, intimate, and authentic relationships to extrapolate from.

All these tensions in the early age of media fandom sits in stark contrast to that from later years, and so too does fans' methods of discussing it. For those with close friends interested in the same media, discussions would have taken space at viewing parties, over drinks, or by the photocopier at work, but for those without people in their acquaintance who shared their interests in media and popular culture, discussions would have taken place via mailing lists and later, via email. Merchandise would have largely been purchased at conventions rather than from widely accessible websites (such as Etsy), and fan-fiction sites such as FanFic.Net, LiveJournal, Wattpad, and AO3 did not yet exist. Rowell says:

> I sort of missed the beginning of Internet fandom because it happened when I was having my kids…This book was definitely inspired by the time I spent as an adult reading Harry Potter fanfiction. I kept thinking about how different my teen years

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[74] A 'Mary Sue' refers to a young, female character who is written as being unrealistically free of weaknesses. This type of character is most commonly associated with younger writers who have not yet developed the nuances of writing well-rounded females but may be connected to writers of all ages. The term was first coined by Paula Smith in 1973 in the short satire she wrote, criticising other 'Trekkie' writers' use of idealised female characters.

would have been if I'd had access to fanfiction and to the community of fandom.

(Rowell, *Fangirl* FAQ section)

As such, *Fangirl* and *Carry On* are informed by Rowell's experiences of fandom and fan works from her youth, and her ideas of what it *would* have been like to take part in fandom and write fan fiction in an online space during her youth. During the 1980s (i.e., during Rowell's early years and the time-period in which her understanding of and engagement with fan fiction and fandom culture would have been most impacted), public perception of fans tended to characterise them as "childish adults" and "people with little or no "life"" (Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 11). As Jenkins details in his ethnographic account of media fandom – and its tumultuous relationship with mass media and consumer capitalism – satires such as *Saturday Night Live*'s notorious "Get a Life" skit (1986) or news articles such as *Newsweek*'s "Live Long and Prosper: 'Star Trek's' 9 Lives" (1986) depict fans and fandom culture in a manner which is no doubt accurate in part, they also offer a selective characterisation. The example used by the *Newsweek* article Jenkins is discussing, is of a *Star Trek* fan who got married in Disneyland wearing a Federation uniform to a bride wearing Vulcan ears. He argues that such accounts offer a "distorted picture of their community, shaping the reality of its culture to conform to stereotypes" already held by the general public (Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 11). While true that some fans engage in such behaviour, the pictures painted by *Saturday Night Live* and *Newsweek*'s representations of fandom cast such behaviours as the norm, rather than as one example of fan engagement, and thus ignoring a diverse and wide-ranging set of tastes and behaviours held by media fans. And while these stereotypes of fan behaviour as 'childish' or fanatical were not necessarily upheld by all member of the general public, they have affected the public perception of fans in the decades since. Jenkins even states that "these representations won widespread public acceptance and have often been quoted to me by students and colleagues who question my interest in fan culture" (*Textual Poachers* 12).

By comparison, Rowell argues that the public perception of fandom and fan fiction has changed, even since *Fangirl*'s release: "It was already changing. It's such a huge and a popular thing that I don't think it was going to stay counter-culture and quiet" (Feeney). Ban, meanwhile, has been heavily active in the fandom within recent years, suggesting that they may have begun writing at a later date than Rowell, and may have grown up more familiar with the online aspect of fandom in the age of the internet. As with the online identities, there is much that remains nebulous and unknown about Ban's offline identity, and much of which

is only known because they are such a dominant influence in the fandom. Their full name, for example, is only publicly known because Ban has also published two original novels which are linked to from their AO3 and Tumblr accounts. As a fan, there are certain factors I can assume. I can assume they grew up with the internet readily available, that they had access to mainstream literature such as the *Simon Snow* trilogy, and that social media platforms played a significant role in how they met and connected with other media fans. Ban has a steady online presence; they have published thirty-one stories on AO3 between 2018 and 2020 – though the period between 2018 and 2019 was their most prolific (see Appendix). Of these, 13 are between 800 and 5000 words, 9 are between 5000 and 20,000 thousand, and 9 range from 20,000 and upwards. *rebel rebel* itself is longer than the average length of most YA, Crossover, or New Adult novels. The agreed upon length of these three genres varies, but most YA tend to be between 70,000 to 80,000 words, with genres aimed at older readers stretching to a cap of 100,000 to 120,000 words. Most of Ban's works are either edited by AO3-user 'breadofgod' (also known as 'frog-and-toast' on Tumblr and Anna, offline), who they have also co-written several fics with (much like Cath and Wren in *Fangirl*) and who edited her two professionally published novels, *Weak Heart* (2019) and *There is a Light* (2020). The former is "an LGBT+ horror fantasy featuring blood, sea salt, magic, and banter" (Ban, *Weak Heart* book cover), and the latter is a Scottish New Adult novel that follows Jude and Jamie through 80s music, childrens' fiction, communism and climate change as they figure out if it's really possible to start over, and if life is safe to live" based off of one of Ban's SnowBaz fics, *Take On Me* (2018) (Ban, *There is a Light* book cover). Ban has also been present and active in the *Simon Snow* fandom discourse on Tumblr for roughly the same time period, sharing and re-blogging fan theories, fanart, and prompts for fic ideas. As such, I suggest that it is reasonable to contend that Ban's experience of fandom has been very different from Rowell's and, as I argue, this has impacted the fanworks and original works they have produced.

Queering the Queer Child

While Rowell and Ban may operate in overlapping spheres of fandom – in that they both consume literary media and produce literary texts derived from said media – the clear delineation of the publishing fields in which they operate serves to highlight how sexual orientation and queerness within these respective fields may have influenced their depictions of queerness in their texts. In this section I will examine the queer characterisation of Simon

and Baz in *Carry On* and *rebel rebel*, respectively, with particular focus on Stockton's analysis of the 'queer child' as a retrospective figure and on multi-media fan engagement. In *Carry On*, Baz clearly identifies as gay, but Simon's sexual orientation is less clear – to the readers, to Baz, and to Simon himself. After he and Baz share their first kiss Simon's internal monologue is both confrontational and avoidant: "*I want to kiss a bloke. That is a change, but not one I'm prepared to think about right now*" (Rowell, *Carry On* 351). This ambiguity is frustrating to Baz, and he desires clarity surrounding Simon's sexual orientation so he can confirm Simon views him as an authentic romantic candidate and is not merely confused. He confronts Simon, asking him:

> "…[H]ow do you know you're gay?"
>
> "I just do. How do you *not* know?"
>
> "Dunno," he says. He laces his fingers in mine and holds my hand loosely. "I try not to think."
>
> "About being gay?"
>
> "About anything…it hurts to think about things that you can't have or help. S'better not to think about it." (Rowell, *Carry On* 355)

Simon's methods of avoidance are in keeping with Rowell's characterisation of him as a late bloomer and emotionally repressed individual. This manner of self-denial also ties in with her depiction of him as a character suffering from low self-esteem and underlying mental health issues. Fans have commonly read Simon's attributes and behaviours as symptoms of anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and rejection sensitivity dysphoria, but he compartmentalises these issues in the novel in order to deal with whatever the current threat is. Rowell's characterisation of Simon sits in stark contrast to her characterisation of Baz, who was aware of his own homosexuality from a young age. This then presents an interesting temporal question on the topic of realising one's queerness: how young is too young and how old is too old?

In *The Queer Child*, Stockton touches on the paradox of queer children understanding their queerness at an early age, while at the same time their parents declaring they are too young to understand this core element of their personality. She claims children are forced to grow 'sideways,' in part, because they cannot "advance to adulthood" until adults authorise it (Stockton 6). So much of children's agency and identity is tied into this temporal progression

and limited to gateway periods when the child comes into their own and is bestowed the ability to make choices based on information, they themselves perhaps knew far earlier. She uses the example of an episode of Oprah where queer persons talk about when they knew they first realised they were queer – some of whom knew as early as age four or six – versus the age when their parents believed them. According to Stockton:

> The phrase "gay child" is a gravestone marker for where or when one's straight life died. Straight person dead, gay child now born, albeit retrospectively (even, for example, at or after the age of twenty-five). This kind of backward birthing mechanism makes the hunt for the roots of queerness a retrospective search for amalgamated forms of feelings, desires, and physical needs that led to this death of one's straight life. And yet, by the time the tombstone is raised ("I was a gay child"), the "child" by linguistic definition has expired. (7)

This delayed advancement in personal agency and the retrospective study of childhood can be applied to Rowell's queer characterisation of Simon. He is denied agency by the Mage – his only parental figure/caregiver – from a young age and repeatedly forced to conform to his expectations. Therefore, any identification or re-examination of his childhood as a 'gay child' would be retrospective; the feelings, desires, and physical needs that led to Simon's realisation of his feelings for Baz are all in the past.

It is only once Simon is pushed into realising his romantic feelings for Baz that he is able to confront his own sexuality and retrospectively analysis his childhood:

> I'm not sure why I'm so happy. Nothing's changed. *Has* anything changed? The kissing. That's new. The wanting to kiss. The looking at Baz and thinking about the way his hair falls in a lazy wave over his forehead…Yeah, nope. I've thought about that before. (Rowell, *Carry On* 350-1)

Compared to the queer persons interviewed on Oprah, Simon realised his sexuality quite late in the game, but, in the grand scheme of things, he still came to terms with his sexual orientation relatively early. He is only eighteen at the beginning of *Carry On*. Baz's character, however, realised his own homosexuality comparatively young. The reader is not informed of the exact age at which Baz began to question his sexual orientation but, like the interviewees on Oprah, we are told he came to terms with it before the events of the novel begin. According to Baz, he's wanted to kiss Simon since he was twelve (Rowell 356). However, Baz does not try to convince his father of the authenticity of his sexual orientation;

he does not mention it at all. Like his vampirism, Baz's homosexuality is carefully ignored by his father and stepmother. They are all aware of it but ignore it with the expectation that Baz will conform to familial responsibilities. Despite this, Baz's character is depicted by Rowell as having both more and less agency than Simon's. Baz possesses a greater understanding of his own person and preferences, he plots, manipulates, and holds himself above Simon and their peers to give off the impression that he is unaffected by the events which threaten them both emotionally and physically. But at the same time, he lacks agency in the same way a Stockton's discussion of a young queer child is when informed they are too young to make their own decisions.

Baz's character in *Carry On* allows himself to be led by the expectations of his father and the Old Families, conforms to their ideals of what a 'Pitch' should accomplish and how he should behave, and is resigned to his eventual demise by Simon's hands in their mutual war between the Mage's faction and the Old Families. He not only possesses a fatalistic disregard for his future but also an unhealthy suicidal ideation. But when viewed through Stockton's examination of the ghostly figure of 'the gay child,' Baz's queerness can be read as conflated with his vampirism. In this text, he has become something 'other,' something 'taboo'; a "monster" (Rowell, *Carry On* 339). His parents and caregivers ignore this part of him and, following their example, Baz tries to ignore it as well but cannot. In this manner Baz constitutes the "gay child [who] illuminates the darkness of the child" and his "understandable pangs of despair or sharp unease" represent the unease of queer child fearing they are something monstrous (Stockton 3). Stockton claims:

> The gay child shows how the figure of the child does not fit children – doesn't fit the pleasures and terrors we recall. And though the gay child can't escape our fancy – that should be obvious – I see this notion figuring children as fighting with concepts and moving inside them, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. (6)

Rowell's queer characterisation of Simon and Baz can be directly contrasted against Ban's queer character representation of their characters by the fact that Ban chooses to focus on these elements of despair and turmoil. In a professionally published novel, there are elements which must be edited and sacrificed in order for the story to progress, as well as to meet the cost of materials in publishing the physical content. In fan fiction, stories are allowed to be more self-indulgent in length, because there is no editorial authority for the fanfic writer to report to and no physical costs associated with their story's production. Fan fiction is often

beta-read[75] and therefore is far more likely to include elements, subplots, and text that might be cut from a professionally published work of fiction. In *Carry On*, Baz's struggle with his sexuality occurs mainly off-page, before the events of the novel begin. In *rebel rebel* – which begins from Baz and Simon's first year at Watford – his queer childhood is essentially re-written by a queer adult in order to flesh out this process of realisation and self-discovery.

If Stockton argues that the 'queer child' can only exist retrospectively – as adults apply expired terminology backwards onto their past identity – then I argue that fan fiction such as *rebel rebel* represents the 'queer adult' rewriting their own childhood by seizing narrational control of the literature which most impacted them as a child or young adult. This metaphorical usurpation harks back to Barthes' separation of the "author" from their authority, and subsequent relegation to the role of "scriptor" in order to separate the author's text from their creative influence over it (145-7). In doing so, the reader is able to remove the source material from the negative connotations or unrealised queerness of their childhood and creative the story they wish they had lived or recreate the queer story they wish they have been able to access at the time. Rowell's reimagining of the characters Harry and Draco allows them to be together through Simon and Baz. Ban's extremely long fan fiction allows Simon and Baz to work through the issues with family, identity, and love in great detail, with a queer focus they cannot apply retrospectively to their own lives. Rowling's work belongs to traditionally published fiction, and it draws from classic boarding school fiction and British folklore. Rowell's work shares an affinity with the work of women who were writing fan fiction before and during the earlier years of the internet, into the Web 2.0 era of blogging platforms like LiveJournal. Ban represents a newer generation of 'fans'[76] who grew up with the internet as a ubiquitous presence, have greater experience with participatory culture, and often (arguably) possess a greater understanding of the nuances of gender identity, sexual orientation, and related queer terminology. Barthes' argument that authorial intent and control over a text's assigned meanings can be disrupted suggests that and authorial ownership can therefore also be disrupted, and that adaptations (i.e., fan fiction) can therefore add to a communal archive of work through reinterpretation and recreation.

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[75] *rebel rebel* was beta-read and edited by Ban's friend, breadofgod, who also edited their two professionally published novels at a later date.

[76] Used here to refer to those participating within fandom through the writing and/or reading of online fan fiction.

In the context of *rebel rebel*, I argue that this allows fan fiction writers to reinterpret key literature aimed at younger audiences from their childhood/adolescence and reframe it in a manner that addresses the perceived shortcomings in those texts that do not address key themes from, or the queerness of their own childhood, in a satisfactory way. Stockton states that children are assumed to be straight but, in reality, are "not-yet-straight" because they "cannot, according to our concepts, advance to adulthood until we say it's time" (6). By this argument, children are therefore too young to be able to substantially say whether they identify as straight or as gay and are often denied the language and opportunities to express their identity as they live it. It is only once they advance to adulthood and are granted agency by adults that they are allowed to confirm their own sexual or gender orientation. Even then, phrases such as "it's a phase" or "you'll grow out of it" are still applied to young adult's 'coming out of the closet' or beginning to apply queer identity terminology to themselves in order to figure themselves out – echoing the comments fanfic writers receive that their work is simply a phase they'll grow out when they become 'real' writers'. By re-establishing their connection with core literature from their adolescence, queer fan fiction writers and readers allow these experiences to be validated, and this literature to be 'reinterpreted' and 'recreated' in a manner which affirms their queer childhood and experiences.

This aligns with the sentiments expressed in Julian Gill-Peterson's *Histories of the Transgender Child* (2018), which reconstructs the history of transgender child through the twentieth century following the medicalisation and racialisation of children's bodies, with particular focus on the exclusion of trans children of colour and the concept of gender's plasticity. He states:

> We make children vulnerable by the force of the law, the deprivation of their economic earnings, and the infantilization of their personalities, only to raid their bodies, minds, and souls to enrich an order of things that cannot stomach their savvy and enviable divergences from normativity. (Gill-Peterson viii)

Both Stockton and Gill-Petersen highlight the problematic nature of adults denying children agency and authority over their own minds and bodies while, simultaneously, idealising children as a 'pure' and 'innocent.' In Stockton's view, it is "a mistake to take innocence straight" because "[t]his view of innocence – the growing-up view – leaves one open to its peculiar dangers. Innocence, that is, works on its own violence on adults and children…" (12). She goes on to paraphrase James Kincaid who expresses that "[i]nnocence and purity

are purely "negative inversions" of adult attributes" that connotate the *lack* of adult attributes such as "guilt," "knowingness," and "experience" (Stockton 12). In reality, children possess a wealth of knowledge – merely knowledge of a different kind. Perhaps they lack the full understanding of social mores, values, behaviours, and strict patterns of thinking that adults, with their '' are expected to possess, but society as a whole is quick to remark on the value of a 'childish imagination'. Children are also viewed as seeing life in good and bad without the politics and are often the ones 'wise beyond their years' when adults behave childishly. Perhaps then, applying a binary to this progression of age – children as 'naive,' 'creative,' and 'unknowing,' and adults as socially behaved and correct, 'grown-up,' and 'experienced' – is the most problematic things we've achieved as a society. Mass cultural delusions that are damaging in both ways. Why can't adults be 'childishly creative' or children as 'knowing' as adults? And really, children do have knowledge – just of a different kind. It adheres to different rules, and concepts, but doesn't mean that children don't know things and know themselves.

In fan fiction, readers or writers are able to partake in a communal therapy of sorts – a mass reconstruction of their respective childhoods – by reapplying their own knowledge backwards, and recreating that childlike wonder and imagination by taking existing stories and going 'I wonder what this story would be like if X were transgender…' or 'how would this read if Y and Z were gay and in love with each other?' This is split into two categories within fandom: characters who are canonically transgender, and characters who fans commonly write as being transgender. While the late twentieth century to early twenty-first century period has seen an increase in canonically transgender characters in popular media (whether explicitly stated or merely implied), fanfiction written about characters fans believe are, or should be written as, transgender remain some of the most popular. Among these, Peter Parker/Spiderman from *Spiderman* (various media) and Pidge Gunderson/Katie Holt from *Voltron: Legendary Defender* (2016-2018) represent some examples of the top transgender-related fan fiction.[77] None of these characters are canonically transgender, but all three possess physical attributes which allow for fans to argue their case for the characters to be viewed as such, and which also present other points of tension within fandom. Peter (who

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[77] As of July 2022, there are 2,813 works on AO3 with Pidge tagged as being transgender or gender-neutral (438 related to "Trans Pidge | Katie Holt", 819 works in "Nonbinary Pidge | Katie Holt", and 1,556 works in "Gender-Neutral Pronouns for Pidge | Katie Holt") and 1,959 works with Peter tagged as being transgender (1,785 works in "Trans Peter Parker", 87 works in "Trans Male Peter Parker", and 87 works in various other tags).

is portrayed as a cisgender male) is skinny, lanky, and, due to his age, may be viewed as androgynous to some degree. Pidge is frequently headcannoned as being transgender, genderfluid, or agender, partially owing to the fact that they cut her hair short and assumed a gender-neutral name when they enrolled as a cadet with the Galaxy Garrison. This, paired with her short stature and flat chest, led to those at the Garrison assuming she was male. It was not until later in the series that she reveals she is in fact female. In the original *Voltron* series (1984-1985), Pidge's character is male. The actor who voices Pidge's character in the 2016-18 series also came out at gay in 2016 and non-binary in 2018, stating that they preferred to be referred to using they/them pronouns. These factors likely contributed to the popularity of the fan theories of Pidge as transgender, nonbinary, or agender.

In applying this mode of thinking to the characters Simon and Baz in *Carry On*, I contend that, while Rowell transformed a beloved literary classic with an existing fandom and significant online archive of archontic work, fan fiction, and adapted it into a professionally published work of literature that celebrated the tropes, themes, and culture of fandom, Ban transformed *Carry On* by taking the story back *into* its fan fiction environment and systematically breaking down the queer themes and areas of tension glossed over in the source material. Fan fiction allows for retrospective reimagining of the perceived emotional 'gaps,' issues, or missed potential in the source material, and therefore, in the case of some queer writers, a potential retrospective reconstruction of the author's own queer childhood. Some core areas where Ban's fanfic differs from the source material is that: Baz grappling both with his vampirism and his sexuality is examined in much further detail, and that side characters play a much larger role, allowing for the friendship between Baz and Agatha, romantic relationship between Niall and Dev, and the 'OC' (original character), Charlie Hollow, to be introduced and play an important role. In *rebel rebel*, Baz is allowed a more supportive and loving childhood. In this version of events, instead of his father continuing to raise Baz following the death of his mother and his vampirification, his father has an emotional breakdown and is unable to deal. Baz's aunt, Fiona, steps in to care for him instead and, thus, Baz has a much different upbringing. He is still recognisable as the snooty, classist, and canny Baz from Rowell's books, but this Baz is unapologetically 'punk' (something his father never would have allowed), and the emotional support he receives varies from the source material. Baz grappling both with his vampirism and his sexuality is examined in much further detail.

In *rebel rebel* instead of Baz's sexual orientation being tacitly ignored, as it is in *Carry On*, it is directly confronted again and again – in keeping with the queer process of 'coming out' again and again to different people. The first of these 'coming out' interactions in *rebel rebel* occurs when Baz is confronted by his professor, Charlie Hollow. Charlie is an original character created by Ban to fit into the *Carry On* universe and has a profound impact on Baz for several reasons. He is both a positive influence on him academically, as he encourages Baz's interests and recognises his need for more advanced work, but is also the reason for Baz's gay awakening, because of his youth and attractiveness. He also briefly dates Baz's aunt and caregiver, Fiona, which causes a rift between both Baz and Fiona and Fiona and Charlie. When Baz discovers Fiona and Charlie are dating, he reacts badly; at this point in the story, he has also been struggling with his vampirism and growing need to feed on blood (which he has managed to avoid up until this point in his 'vampire puberty') and his self-medication by marijuana to alleviate the pain from not feeding. In the ensuing fight Fiona calls Baz 'gay' as a slur, without knowing he is gay, and it is this action that causes him to cut off all contact with her for months. But it is also what leads to his 'coming out of the closet' to Charlie. When Charlie asks Baz why he and his aunt aren't speaking, Baz is too worn down by the other problems in his life to hide his sexual orientation anymore:

> My head is heavy and I'm starving and I don't want to be here and I don't want to be having this conversation, and I kind of hate him, because he's supposed to be a professor and he's being wildly casual with me, and also I'm a teenage gay vampire and the absolute ludicrousness of this is only now starting to hit me.
>
> "Because I'm gay," I sneer, and let the word hang there. In an awful, ironic way, it seems fitting that he's the first person I come out to.
>
> It's out. No going back. I realise, belatedly, that there's a chance he might tell Fiona this, but I don't care. Fuck her. Let her realise just how badly she's cocked this all up. (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 4)

Ban fleshes out Baz's first experience with his sexuality, his first confrontations regarding it, and all the nitty gritty elements which are not mentioned in the source material. It also highlights the duality of the queer child's 'coming out' experience. Baz experiences both despair and terror, as well as joy and feelings of support as he realises his sexual orientation and comes out to those around him. And while he does not always react well, Baz also highlights the flipside of these interactions.

Because Ban fleshes out Fiona's character – a character who plays a much smaller role in the source material – and depicts her as someone strong-minded, loyal, and who always has Baz's best interests at heart (as exemplified by the opening scene of the fanfic), her fight with Baz highlights how messy the 'coming out' experience can be for the adults these 'queer children' are coming out to. Following their fight, Baz chooses to go and live with his father, Malcom (who has recently been asking Baz to return home to live with them in order to maintain appearances), and essentially runs away from home. He and Fiona don't speak again for seven months; a period in which Baz's vampirism fully develops and he is forced to start feeding on rats he can catch in the catacombs or small animals from the Wood. It is this period of time that he most needed Fiona's support and which he struggles the most without her. Her anger at herself for her mishandling of the situation highlight the imperfections and clumsy human handling of complex emotional situations. The two of them only begin speaking again after forced into close proximity at the funeral of Niall's grandmother. When Fiona learns Baz has finally had to begin feeding, her response is:

> "Why the fuck didn't you tell me?" she asks. She's not shouting, but her voice is dangerously low. "Why did you let us scream at each other, instead of just telling me? Why did you let us stop talking for seven fucking months? I could have helped you. I was supposed to help you."
>
> "I don't need help," I bite back. "I have it under control."
>
> "You might not need help," Fiona says, flicking her cigarette out of the window and rolling it back up aggressively, "but I wanted to help you. Fuck, Baz. I wanted to be there. I never wanted to have you cut me out of your life and run away back to fucking Malcolm. You ran away from home, kid. Do you realise that? You tossed me aside." (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 5)

Though this series of events is no less messy than much of what occurs in *Carry On*, it is interesting to see one fan's interpretation of how Baz's 'coming out' and coming of age could have gone. It is these perceived gaps that fanfiction writers choose to fill and explore and this retrospective rewriting of childhood queerness that proves particularly interesting the field of fandom.

Transmedia Storytelling and Intertextual Narratives

Just as communities (i.e., social units) are sustained through a shared sense of identity, common customs, and practices, storytelling relies on a certain level of assumed cultural knowledge and awareness of popular references to be understood. Both Rowell and Ban include popular references within their texts in order to capitalise on their readers' pre-existing cultural knowledge and evoke intertextual emotional associations. The references they use range from common phrases and idioms to song lyrics and film quotes because, in the World of Mages, magicians use these to create and cast spells. In *Carry On*, it is explained that phrases gain power through their consistent and repeated use by Normals (i.e., non-magic users). For example, 'head over heels' and 'early to bed and early to rise' become spells to trip assailants or heal allies, while film quotes such as 'come out, come out, wherever you are!' and 'these aren't the droids you're looking for' become spells for revealing or invisibility.[78] Spells created from phrases that fall out of common use, on the other hand, lose their power and may stop working entirely. This parallels the generational evolution of language as it is affected by use, but also uses the characters' cultural understanding to reflect that of the readers. By building on references readers are familiar with, Rowell and Ban imbue their texts with additional layers of meaning. However, there is a clear delineation in their methods of doing so due to their respective formats.

Carry On is published in traditional print format, whereas *rebel rebel* is published digitally. The digital nature of fan fiction like *rebel rebel* means that this form of storytelling allows for interactive, intertextual, multimedia engagement across a range of online platforms, therefore classifying fan fiction as 'transmedia storytelling' in a manner that its predecessor does not. I am of course conscious that Carry On is printed in digital format as an e-book as well as being published in print, but my point here is to highlight the static level of interaction allowed to the reader. As with printed books, e-books do not allow the same multimedia and multiplatform interaction that fan fiction allows its readers; they are also tightly bound by copyright restrictions in their dissemination and content. Thus, I will not be distinguishing e-books from their printed counterparts in my discussion, as they serve the same purpose in this scenario. In this section I will use music as an example in order to compare the role of cultural references in *Carry On* and *rebel rebel*. I will then consider how

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[78] It is worth clarifying that the spells used in *Carry On* reflect British vernacular specifically. However, in *Wayward Son* Rowell does explore how the linguistic variation between countries affects spellcasting within that nation.

the digital format of fan fiction and fannish works upsets the traditional binary relationship between author and reader, supplementing my discussion with theories from Louisa Ellen Stein and Henry Jenkins. This will allow me to situate transmedia texts (i.e., fan fiction) against their printed counterparts (i.e., profic) and consider what their differences may indicate about the potential trajectory of transformative storytelling in the digital age.

The concept of transmedia storytelling was first introduced by Jenkins in *Convergence Culture Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006). Here, Jenkins maps the territory between old media (e.g., television, radio, and print media,) and new media (e.g., computer animations, computer games, human-computer interfaces, interactive computer installations, websites, and virtual worlds) and explores the creative tension between media producers and media consumers. Jenkins describes transmedia storytelling as "the art of world making", in which:

> consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating to ensure that everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer entertainment experience. (*Convergence Culture* 21)

In essence, transmedia storytelling constitutes the art of storytelling across multiple platforms, mediums, and digital formats, and demands active participation from the consumers of these narratives rather than passive consumption. As I argue, fan fiction can be read as one such example of transmedia storytelling – though an unauthorised one, given that transmedia storytelling is usually driven by the media creator. Fans of popular media – for example, *Carry On* fans – become these 'hunters and gatherers' as they chase down facts, details, and discrepancies from their favoured media online, discuss these canons and create head canons with other fans in online discussion groups, and collaborate with other fans in order to create, consume, and inspire new fan fiction. It is also common, in this "era of media convergence", for fannish works to be interconnected via multiple platforms and across multiple forms of media (Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* 22).

We see this interconnectivity on AO3, where fanfic authors frequently link their work to their Tumblr accounts, to Spotify playlists inspired by their characters, or to fanart created by their readers on external sites such as Instagram, DeviantArt, or Discord. It is also commonplace to see AO3 works dedicated to other users, inspired by other fanfics, or with

fan suggestions included in their plotline. An example of this is another of Ban's fanfics, *Twist and Shout* (2020), in which the author's note reads:

> HAPPY BIRTHDAY CSCB! This fic is dedicated to you, my dear friend, and was crafted using the tropes and things you love best. I even polled your friends to find out exactly what would make you shout. It is.... well, it's a ride. I sincerely hope you like this ridiculous thing I have created. (author's note)

Therefore, I argue that while old media (such as a printed text) offers a more binary relationship between author and reader (i.e., wherein the author creates and the reader consumes), new media (such as a digitally published fanfic) offers greater interaction and a more circular relationship (i.e., where the author creates, the reader consumes, discusses with other readers, communication between readers and author, author's creation is affected by discourse) by opening up the creative process to collaboration.

Music is a prevalent example of media convergence in fannish spaces, as it highlights the influence of popular culture on fans and fan works, as well as intersecting a number of different cultural spheres. Examples of music's influence on fandom range from filk music and fan songs to songfics and more generic musical references. Filk music refers to the genre of folk music created by fans primarily relating to the science fiction genre. The word 'filk' originated as a typo of 'folk' in Lee Jacobs' "The Influence of Science Fiction on Modern American Filk Music" (unpublished but written in the mid-1950s) but became commonly used to describe the genre of music created by fans to celebrate fannish work. Jenkins describes this musical genre as a fan method for creating a common identity out of geographically and socially dispersed groups (*Textual Poachers* 252). Fan songs is a broader term for musical fan works, and may include songs from the filk genre, but contains other categories. While filk music was more common in early fandom history (e.g., from the 1970s), the term 'fan songs' has gradually replaced it as the folk style and culture of this music has faded. Whereas filk music was commonly published in fanzines or performed by fans in person as a part of filk clubs (Jenkins, *Textual Poachers* 252), fan songs are generally published online and therefore the term carries different connotations. Songfics are fanfics which include song lyrics, often interposed between the author's own blocks of text, and are disdained by certain areas of fandom because of the unequal ratio of 'original' work to song lyrics – a distinction that is itself ironically provocative. What I am choosing to focus on here

however, is the use of song titles and lyrics in transformative fiction to build on readers' pre-existing cultural knowledge.

Unlike songfics, the custom of using a fragment of a song's title or lyrics in naming a fanfic is a common one in the fandom. For example, of the thirty-one fanfics listed by Ban on AO3, at least half are titled after the songs of popular musical artists (e.g., David Bowie, Talking Heads, and The Beatles) and many also include a Spotify links to fic-specific playlists or include fragments of song lyrics in the story itself. Rowell's novel engages with this fandom practice in the naming of her own professionally published works. In an interview with *Vanity Fair*, Rowell confirmed that while the title "Carry On, Simon", used for Cath's fanfic in *Fangirl* (2013), was taken from the phrase "keep calm and carry on," the title of *Carry On* was inspired by Queen lyrics from "Bohemian Rhapsody" (Robinson). Rowell went on to confirm that the titles of all three *Simon Snow* novels were crafted after the lyrics from popular songs, and more specifically, songs relevant to the country in which each novel is set; *Carry On*'s sequel, *Wayward Son* (2019) takes its title from "Carry On Wayward Son" by the American band, Kansas, in order to reflect the change in setting as the characters journey to America, and the final novel, *Any Way the Wind Blows* (2021) returns to its British theme and setting by once again using lyrics from "Bohemian Rhapsody" (Robinson par. 16). In doing so, Rowell employs an economical method of evoking cultural associations from the reader; increasing the novel's overall themes of 'Britishness' in the same manner that her use of a boarding school setting does. "Bohemian Rhapsody" is not only a British classic but has also been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and remains one of the most popular rock songs of all time.

By using it, Rowell also adds additional layers of meaning to her text through because of the themes and emotions readers associate with the song. Freddie Mercury's persona's sense of fatalism is echoed by Simon and Baz's conviction that their lives are pre-destined and unalterable – that "nothing really matters at all" (Queen Official 00:05:13-00:05:16). Similarly, the themes of regret and uncertainty elicited as Mercury recounts, in the first person, the narrator's crimes can similarly be compared to Simon's uncertainty regarding his role as the 'Chosen One' and if the actions he took in the name of good were justifiable. Other analyses of Queen's lyrics have gone so far as to argue its message reflects Mercury's own struggle with his sexuality, connecting the passage where he recounts his 'crimes' to his mama to the struggle of coming out to one's parents and also as reflective of Britain's sodomy laws at the time when the song was released (Brunum). This in turn may be read as

reflecting *Carry On*'s LGBTQ+ themes and the main characters' own struggles with their respective sexualities. The climax of Rowell's novel takes place at Watford School of Magicks, where Simon finally confronts the Mage amidst thematic explosions and blinding light; reminiscent of "Thunderbolt and lightning - very very frightening" (Queen Official 00:03:14-00:03:17). Here, Rowell's use of Queen progresses from the implicit to the explicit: "***"Easy come, easy go. Little high, little low…"*** the Mage sings, using a powerful spell crafted from Queen lyrics, before he continues on to use the titular ***"Carry on, carry on"*** (*Carry On* 474, emphasis original). In doing so, Rowell relies on the reader's own cultural knowledge and awareness of popular music in order to evoke emotional associations from the reader – both implicitly and explicitly.

    rebel rebel similarly references music, both in its title as well as in-text. Ban's text is named for David Bowie's song of the same title, and therefore evokes additional layers of meaning and history linked to the original song. Ban is a self-described music-lover, and celebrates multiple artists and bands from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s onwards, including the Talking Heads, T. Rex, Queen, Velvet Underground, Buzzcocks, and Led Zeppelin. Each chapter in their story is named after a song title, and there are multiple song references or quotes included as Baz listens to them throughout the story. Ban has also created multiple playlists for *rebel rebel* and its sequels (which are part of what is known as 'the rebelverse'). These include "rebel rebel" (from the main fic), "tired punks and little puffs" (the playlist Baz makes for his younger sister, Mordelia), "Mordelia isn't pining" (in *Golden Years*), "SIMON & MICAH'S DEEP CUTS" (in *Golden Years*), and "Fiona and Charlie Cordially Invite You" (in *Golden Years*). The inclusion of these songs allows fans to engage with Ban's content on a multi-media level, but it also allows for *rebel rebel* to take on the auditory aesthetics of these assorted punk rock, glam rock, electronic, avant-garde, heavy metal, new wave, and funk (among others) bands and nostalgic longing for an era they were never apart of. Like Baz, many younger readers will not have been alive for the earliest of these bands and will be experiencing the intergenerational cultural, political, and social implications and feelings of these second-hand through Ban's fic. The most important example of this comes from the text's own title. David Bowie's 1974 "Rebel Rebel" helps underlie Baz's central struggle with three central 'antagonists' (though they are not necessarily antagonists in the traditional sense – several are family members who want 'what is best' for Baz): the Mage, his father, and his aunt Fiona.

Rebellion is a central theme in *rebel rebel* – understandably, given the title – and in the story's opening scene Baz sets up the internal conflict between Baz's anti-authoritarianism and non-conforming ideologies (taught to him by his punk aunt) and the traditions and expectations he has inherited from his family and his late mother's legacy. In the opening scene, where Fiona is delivering an eleven-year-old Baz to Watfords for his first day, she encourages him to play pranks, double-checks he has his contraband mobile phone, and insists he bring his punk jacket with him. Baz initially resists the idea of bringing his patch-covered denim jacket:

> The jacket is perfectly fine for wearing at home in London. Things like denim jackets and patches are fine in that regard, but I'm about to go to Watford, and I'm a Pitch. There are expectations. I'll be representing my mother. A denim jacket with the Velvet Underground banana on it is not appropriate. (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 1)

Fiona eventually convinces Baz to bring the jacket with him, "just in case," and thus, prefaces the novel's later conflicts by establishing the reader's baseline understanding that Fiona just wants Baz to be happy, and to be himself (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 2). She uses Baz's hero, Bowie, to convince him that, while upholding familial expectations and traditions are important, it is also important for him to be true to his own desires, and to remember to "have fun" at Watford:

> You're a good kid, Basil. A fun kid. There's a war coming, and you're going to be on the front line. You've got a lot of nasty shit waiting for you. But it's okay to have fun first. (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 2)

This interaction is important, as it establishes the internal struggle which fuels all three of the authorial conflicts Baz is faced with across the events of the story – even with Fiona. It also lets the reader know that no matter how differently Baz and Fiona may view matters, she is a character who loves and supports Baz. Unlike Fiona's character in the source material – who appears to save Baz from 'numpties'[79] but otherwise has little to do with him in his day-to-day life – Ban's Fiona is established as a parental character and a caregiver by choice who wants him to be able to be himself, even in the hardest moments he will have to face.

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[79] Numpties are "like trolls, but even more hideous" (Rowell, *Carry On* 156). These lumbering creatures are "big and stupid" and are hired by the Mage to kidnap Baz early in order to keep him from uncovering the Mage's secrets. The term 'numpties' is also slang for 'idiot's or 'useless people', adding an extra layer of meaning to these creatures' name.

Conversely, Baz's struggle against the Mage is his most straightforward. In Baz's own words, the Mage has been "suppressing the Old Families for the past six years, and pushing his reforms through" (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 2). More importantly, though, the Mage has taken over the role of Headmaster of Watford from Baz's mother and is systematically undoing or undermining everything Natasha Pitch built, and thus desecrating her legacy. Baz quickly establishes his desire to be seen as "an anti-Mage rebel" like his aunt (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 2). He spends his time talking back to the Mage, ignoring his anti-technology rules (in order to listen to music in his dorm room), and playing pranks designed to frustrate him (such as bespelling the gargoyles outside the Mage's office to sing Queen songs). But while much of the anti-Mage propaganda Baz spouts to Dev, Niall, Simon, Penelope, and Agatha is reminiscent of a schoolboy repeating things he has heard from adults in order to sound clever, it quickly becomes apparent that the Mage is indeed misusing his authority. When Baz is set the insensitive political history assignment to "[d]escribe the events and factors leading up to the election of the current Mage. Cite historical record" (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 7), he responds by handing in a perfectly cited essay detailing the Mage's rise to power through totalitarian methods and accusations of "dragging [his] mother's name through the mud and using the Coven for personal gain while dismantling her legacy" (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 7). The Mage takes Baz's actions personally and not only fails his paper but also confiscating Baz's contraband music collection and the box of books he inherited from his mother (which are unfortunately stamped with 'Property of Watford School of Magicks' from her time as Headmistress). The records and books represent the only physical items Baz has left from her, and this transgression constitutes a breaching of the realistic bounds of how the Mage, an adult, could be reasonably expected to respond to Baz, an adolescent's actions against him. As Baz says:

> He made me write an essay about how my mother's death helped his rise to power, and when he didn't like what I had to say, he failed me and came to the room and took all my mother's records and all my mother's books. He left me with nothing. He had no right. He had no right to her books. He has taken everything she ever had. (Ban, *rebel rebel* ch. 7)

Here Ban highlights the importance of rebellion without glamourising the consequences that come with it. Baz's internal monologue here also reminds the reader of Baz's relative youth and naiveté. While he may have experienced trauma and life-threatening events that have given him more life experience than some of his teenage peers, in this passage he reverts to a

young boy dealing with the loss of his mother. And just like when he was a young boy, mimicking Bowie's fashion and attitude, he reverts back to his habit of idolising his hero by rebelling against authority figures.

While both Rowell and Ban incorporate music into their texts to evoke certain emotional associations from their readers and add layers of meaning, the format of their works does alter the relationship between creator, content, and community. As a professionally published novel in print format, *Carry On* is not naturally able to link out to other media interfaces and engage in fan and genre discourse in the same manner *rebel rebel* does. When reading *rebel rebel* in its online format, readers can link to the author's Tumblr for FAQs (Ban, "FAQ"), discourse, and added commentary, to the Spotify playlists Ban has created from the songs mentioned in the story, or to view art on various sites (e.g., Instagram, DeviantArt, and Discord). *Carry On* does not have access to this digital linking but makes use of the fandom custom of naming stories for song titles or lyrics and by incorporating the lyrics of "Bohemian Rhapsody" into the climax of her novel, thus, mimicking the fan reader's experience of transmedia intersection.[80] However, in old media like traditional printed text there is a clear divide between the creators of content (i.e., Rowell) and the content's readers (i.e., Rowell's fans/community). Rowell interacts with her fans on social media (such as Tumblr and Twitter, until she left the latter in 2021) but has stated she "[doesn't] read fic about [her] own characters" because "it would be too weird. Like reading fanfiction about [her] own kids ("Ask the Author: Rainbow Rowell"). This creates a divide in the relationship between creator and community, and limits creative engagement between them.

Ban, on the other hand, has been more active in multiple online spaces within the fandom and often engages collaboratively with fellow fans. She has co-written fanfics with fellow fan and editor, breadofgod (e.g., *Family & Genus* (2019), *Local Hero* (2020)), crafted fanfics for friends and fellow fans to expressly meet their literary preferences (e.g., *What Do I Get?* (2019), *network connectivity problems* (2019), written 'remixes' of other's fanfics (e.g., *origin of love [lust royale remix]* (2019)), and incorporated specific elements into her work due to the influence of other fans (see Appendix). For example, Ban cites AO3-user, Nox Moon, as her reason for her work's heavy emphasis on Niall in *rebel rebel*. In response to Nox Moon's comment praising her fanfic, Ban responded: "Your fic definitely inspired me to give Niall a bigger role in this fic than he was initially planned to have, so you're entirely to

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[80] It is worth noting how expensive it is for authors to include song lyrics in professionally published texts, as all references need to be paid for.

blame for some later chapters, heads up" (Ban, *rebel rebel* comments). This reflects a shift in how and in what forms fans engage with content and with each other. Within the fandom community, fans are not only influenced by the original author and source material; outside of authorial influence and the constraints of canon, fans create their own community, shared concepts of 'fanon', and shared control over the narrative.

To consider the shift in this dynamic as it relates to transformative storytelling in the digital age, I turn to the theories of Stein and Jenkins on fan engagement and new media. Stein's essay links new media theory's focus on technology, genre theory's conception of genre discourse as a shared, shifting, cultural category, and fan studies' focus on fans as users and authors of media texts, as they relate to online fan texts. Her argument is that by merging these areas of interest, new and tangible ways of understanding fan engagement with new media and popular media can be realised. Stein claims that fan creativity is created through the negotiation of limitation and expansiveness. Fan fiction is naturally limited by the source text on which they are based yet are able to expand in potentially infinite directions through the expandability of their structure. She argues:

> As fandom and fan fiction have grown in the cultural spaces carved out by new media in the past two decades, new media interfaces provide another layer of limitation and expansiveness, and it is within this context that fan creativity flourishes online. (Stein 247)

By this logic, fans possess limited agency and therefore join together to pool resources, encourage and inspire one another, and provide critique and commentary on each other's works, as they are equals in these spaces they have 'carved out' for themselves. Therefore, as I argue, there is no clear divide between them in the same manner that there is between media producers and media consumers (i.e., media prosumers). On AO3 for example, the tools for collaboration are quite literally built into the infrastructure; when posting a fanfic there are options to dedicate it to another user, identify that the work was inspired by another, or that works have been inspired by it (all of which appear on the fanfic with links to these profiles or stories). This highlights how "new narrative forms build on traditions within fan fiction and at the same time are shaped by the technologies of the new media with which they are created and shared" (Stein 246). Online platforms such as AO3 are shaped and reshaped to meet the needs and traditions of the fan communities inhabiting them.

While Stein notes the role online spaces and the limitations of new media play in building the relationship between fans, Jenkins highlights the power struggle between corporate media producers' reliance on audience participation and investment with their media as well as their recognition of fan participation as a threat. Jenkins argues that, while:

> Corporations imagine participation as something they can start and stop, channel and reroute, commodify and market…Consumers, on the other side, are asserting a right to participate in the culture, on their own terms, when and where they wish. (*Convergence Culture* 175)

The tensions between corporate media producers and media consumers are increased by the online spaces new media creates for these consumers to assert their own form of participation in a manner which old media would not make accessible. For example, as I discussed in earlier chapters, Anne Rice's attempt to have all fan fiction derived from her *Vampire Chronicles* series were not entirely successful. Though FF.NET removed these fanfics in accordance with the author's wishes, they have since cropped up on Wattpad, LJ, and AO3, proving how much harder these online spaces are for corporate media producers to police. Indeed, even one of the most successful examples of policing fan fiction, the Xiao Zhan incident, in which AO3 and other fan fiction sites were banned in China following new censorship law, was enforced on a governmental rather than corporate level. New media and "new digital cultures" also provide "support systems" for this new generation of media consumers in the twenty-first century, which allows them to "improve their core competencies as readers and writers," "receive feedback on their writing, and gain experience in communicating with a larger public, experiences that might once have been restricted to student journalists" (Jenkins, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*). This process of literary transformation and communal engagement showcases a shift towards interrelated storytelling across different media platforms and widespread engagement with a story, which might once have remained separate. Thereby, fan fiction and fandom culture allow for additions to an archive of storytelling and stories, and not only in literary form, just as adaptations of folklore have done so in the past. And just as folklore and fairy tales focus on the little picture – concerned with the everyday traditions, culture, and stories of the common 'folk' – fan fiction allows people to focus on the smaller detail; the missed opportunities, the homoerotic subtext, the perceived gaps in a story's plotline. Only think what these digitally literate, assertive, and communally focussed media consumers could

create in the decades to come. It is exciting to consider how transformative storytelling will, itself, transform in future.

Conclusion

"But in the end, stories are about one person saying to another: This is the way it feels to me. Can you understand what I'm saying? Does it feel this way to you?" – Kazuo Ishiguro, in his Nobel prize (2017) acceptance speech.

Once more, I return to my original question: who owns stories? Foucault might argue: the author. Barthes might argue: the reader. Jenkins might argue: no one and everyone at once. But when considering their arguments, alongside the wealth of scholarship on the topic of participatory culture, fan culture, and queer literature, it is clear that transformative storytelling challenges traditional notions of 'ownership' as much as it does the distinction between contributions of the reader and the author. In this thesis I set my pre-existing biases aside (as much as possible) in order to critically analyse these texts from a neutral position. Yet I grew up on the tales of a young wizard in a cupboard under the stairs and hold his tales of bravery and adventure close to my heart. Similarly, Cath's anxieties, mortifications, and triumphs helped me laugh at my own university experiences and navigate these to the best of my ability. I critique these works not because they were bad, but because part of loving any literary work is in being able to see their flaws and love them anyway. The difference here is that transformative fiction allows the possibility of reimaging these flaws and patching holes in the literary loopholes you don't agree with. Just as *Carry On* critiques and pays homage to *Harry Potter*, so too does *rebel rebel* critique and celebrate *Carry On*. But it is not simply *rebel rebel*'s adaptation that interests me, it is how fan fiction and fan culture in the age of the internet build off of the old – using the themes, tropes, and critical elements of older stories, right back to myth, fairy tale and folklore, to engage with queer topic matter and other diverse ranges of topics.

The importance of queer representation in literature has never been more important. Because the agency afforded queer people, and specifically young queer people, is what allows them to figure themselves our and orientate themselves in society, claim a place in society, instead of being boxed into heteronormative temporal concepts of what their life should look like. For a child to be able to say, 'I'm queer!' and be believed, for a trans child to say they were born the wrong gender and be allowed access to medical treatment earlier is *important*. The more often a child, young adult, or even adult, can pick up a novel with queer

content, or go online to AO3 and read a story in which their favourite characters shared their gender or sexual identity, the more often our society reenforces the idea that these positions hold value. Queer representation allows readers to reimagine their conceptualisation of the child, what they represent, what a 'queer' child looks like and how we re-examine our own childhoods.

While some hegemonic critical views may never perceive the cultural value fan fiction affords its readers, or the wider implications of participatory culture in our digital age, I argue that fanfic is the next iteration of transformative storytelling; one which will go on evolving as long as storytellers do. There are so many small elements that go into a story – so many moving parts that are built and integrated – and which we, as consumers and creators carry on through us into something else, into another tale. Stories are all interconnected, and it is through this interconnection that we create something new, something that speaks to a community of readers beyond us, and something that these readers may use in turn to create something 'new'. Perhaps it is the hegemonic perceptions of that cultural value that have been too narrow. If anything, the tensions between professionally published mainstream fiction and fan published online fiction highlight how the relationship between creators, content, and community has changed, historically from what it was in the days of myths, folklore, and fairy tales. Though the communal aspect of playfulness, sharing, support, and discourse still exists in these online spaces, mainstream publishing and the divide between media creator and consumer is far more marked than it was in times prior to Copyright laws and the financial and legal burdens associated with intellectual property. This is not to suggest that professional authors do not have the right to (and, usually, the necessity of) protect their work. It is merely to shed light on the tensions between these sectors of our contemporary literary market.

It is not a question of castigating this form of storytelling as 'transgressive'. Fan fiction *is* transgressive. The question we, as individuals and as communities, as media consumers and producers, have to consider is whether 'transgressive' is a term that should frighten us. Perhaps instead 'transgressive' in these storytelling spaces should be aligned with notions of progress, of transformation, and feelings of childlike awe. The stories that once captivated us as children are stories we can appropriate, adapt, and reimagine in any way we so choose, and that power of reinterpretation and recreation is a magical thing.

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Appendix

This list contains a guide to the written works of the three primary writers discussed in this thesis for those unfamiliar with their works.

<u>J. K. Rowling</u>

Summaries sourced from J. K. Rowling's official website ("Writing").

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (1997) – published as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the US

> Summary: When mysterious letters start arriving on his doorstep, Harry Potter has never heard of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.
>
> They are swiftly confiscated by his aunt and uncle.
>
> Then, on Harry's eleventh birthday, a strange man bursts in with some important news: Harry Potter is a wizard and has been awarded a place to study at Hogwarts.
>
> And so the first of the Harry Potter adventures is set to begin.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (1998)

> Summary: Throughout the summer holidays after his first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry Potter has been receiving sinister warnings from a house-elf called Dobby.
>
> Now, back at school to start his second year, Harry hears unintelligible whispers echoing through the corridors.
>
> Before long the attacks begin: students are found as if turned to stone.
>
> Dobby's predictions seem to be coming true."

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (1999)

> Summary: For Harry Potter, it's the start of another far-from-ordinary year at Hogwarts when the Knight Bus crashes through the darkness and comes to an abrupt halt in front of him.

It turns out that Sirius Black, mass-murderer and follower of Lord Voldemort, has escaped – and they say he is coming after Harry.

In his first Divination class, Professor Trelawney sees an omen of death in Harry's tea leaves.

And perhaps most frightening of all are the Dementors patrolling the school grounds with their soul-sucking kiss – in search of fresh victims.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2000)

Summary: The rules of the Triwizard Tournament, which is about to take place at Hogwarts, only allow wizards over the age of seventeen to enter.

So Harry can only daydream about winning.

Then, to his surprise, on Hallowe'en when the Goblet of Fire makes its selection, his name is picked out of the magical cup.

Harry will face life-endangering tasks, dragons and Dark wizards.

He'll have to rely on the help of his friends if he is to make it through the contest alive.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2003)

Summary: After the Dementors' attack on his cousin Dudley, Harry knows he is about to become Voldemort's next target.

Although many are denying the Dark Lord's return, Harry is not alone, and a secret order is gathering at Grimmauld Place to fight against the Dark forces.

Meanwhile, Voldemort's savage assaults on Harry's mind are growing stronger every day.

He must allow Professor Snape to teach him to protect himself before he runs out of time.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2005)

Summary: One summer night, when Dumbledore arrives at Privet Drive to collect Harry Potter, his wand hand is blackened and shrivelled, but he will not reveal why.

Rumours and suspicion spread through the wizarding world – it feels as if even Hogwarts itself might be under threat.

Harry is convinced that Malfoy bears the Dark Mark: could there be a Death Eater amongst them?

He will need powerful magic and true friends as, with the help of Dumbledore, he investigates Voldemort's darkest secrets.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (2007)

Summary: Harry Potter is leaving Privet Drive for the last time. But as he climbs into the sidecar of Hagrid's motorbike and they take to the skies, he knows Lord Voldemort and the Death Eaters will not be far behind.

The protective charm that has kept him safe until now is broken. But the Dark Lord is breathing fear into everything he loves. And he knows he can't keep hiding.

To stop Voldemort, Harry knows he must find the remaining Horcruxes and destroy them.

He will have to face his enemy in one final battle.

Rainbow Rowell

Summaries taken from Rainbow Rowell's official website ("books").

Fangirl (2013)

Summary: Cath is a Simon Snow fan.

Okay, everybody is a Simon Snow fan, but for Cath it's something more. Fandom is life. It's what got her and her sister, Wren, through losing their mom. It's what kept them close.

And now that she's starting college, introverted Cath isn't sure what's supposed to get her through. She's got a surly roommate with a charming, always-around boyfriend, a fiction-writing professor who thinks fanfiction is the end of the civilized world, a handsome classmate who only wants to talk about words . . . And she can't stop worrying about her dad, who's loving and fragile and has never really been alone.

For Cath, the question is: Can she do this? Can she make it without Wren holding her hand? Is she ready to start living her own life? Writing her own stories?

And does she even want to move on if it means leaving Simon Snow behind?

Carry On (2015)

Summary: Simon Snow is the worst Chosen One who's ever been chosen.

That's what his roommate, Baz, says. And Baz might be evil and a vampire and a complete git, but he's probably right.

Half the time, Simon can't even make his wand work, and the other half, he sets something on fire. His mentor's avoiding him, his girlfriend broke up with him, and there's a magic-eating monster running around wearing Simon's face. Baz would be having a field day with all this, if he were here—it's their last year at the Watford School of Magicks, and Simon's infuriating nemesis didn't even bother to show up.

Wayward Son (2019)

Summary: Simon Snow did everything he was supposed to do. He beat the villain. He won the war. He even fell in love. Now comes the good part, right? Now comes the happily ever after… So why can't Simon Snow get off the couch?

What he needs, according to his best friend, is a change of scenery. He just needs to see himself in a new light…

That's how Simon and Penny and Baz end up in a vintage convertible, tearing across the American West.

They find trouble, of course. (Dragons, vampires, skunk-headed things with shotguns.) And they get lost. They get so lost, they start to wonder whether they ever knew where they were headed in the first place…

Any Way the Wind Blows (2021)

Summary: In Carry On, Simon Snow and his friends realized that everything they thought they understood about the world might be wrong. And in Wayward Son, they wondered whether everything they understood about themselves might be wrong.

In Any Way the Wind Blows, Simon and Baz and Penelope and Agatha have to decide how to move forward.

For Simon, that means deciding whether he still wants to be part of the World of Mages -- and if he doesn't, what does that mean for his relationship with Baz? Meanwhile Baz is bouncing between two family crises and not finding any time to talk to anyone about his newfound vampire knowledge. Penelope would love to help, but she's smuggled an American Normal into London, and now she isn't sure what to do with him. And Agatha? Well, Agatha Wellbelove has had enough.

Ban Gilmartin/BasicBathsheba

List sourced from BasicBathsheba's AO3 Profile page ("Works").

Large Black Coffee by BasicBathsheba (2018)

> Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

> Summary: "I glance at the cup before I raise it to my lips, and one eyebrow goes up when I see what ridiculous insult he's written on the cup today."

> Every day Baz comes in to get coffee, and every day he finds a new insult on his cup.

carry that weight by BasicBathsheba (2018)

> Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

> Summary: Penny has always taken care of Simon. But who takes care of Penny?

I Believe This Is Yours by BasicBathsheba (2018)

> Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

> Summary: "Cinderella soul mate — when you lose things it ends up with your soul mate."

> Simon's soul mate loses a book a day. Baz's soul mate never loses anything.

Get Well Soon! by BasicBathsheba (2018)

> Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

> Summary: Baz comes back to Watford early from Christmas holiday, and finds Simon ill. In the process, he discovers Simon's hidden secret.

This Must Be The Place by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Simon is stuck in juvenile care over the summer. He's lonely, disillusioned, and desperate to talk to Penny. But when he makes a Snapchat to try to contact her, he ends up talking to the most unlikely person.

He never thought he and Baz could be friends. But as the summer unfolds, two boys become best friends, companions, and support in more ways than they ever expected.

On The Pitch by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Simon Snow and Baz Pitch are roommates, teammates, rivals, and friends. They fight on the field and off. After seven years though, Simon is sure of at least one thing: No one moves like Baz Pitch.

Mind Games by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Seventh year Watford students are required to take part in the eighth year Psychology of Magick lab studies. Simon loves it. Baz hates it. But when they get paired together for a school project that requires deep, personal conversation, little do they know, there's more to the project than just getting to know each other.

#AND THEY WERE LAB PARTNERS

'cause I'm a creep by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Simon knows that it's creepy to keep stalking the Instagram of his old roommate. But Baz looks different in these photos. Older. Happier. More carefree.

And also, there's the boy. The boy is in all the photos. And Simon hates him.

THE WEEKEND by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: The Magical Adaptability Weekend is miserable. It's freezing, there's no food, and not enough beds. Simon's unhappy enough about being stuck in the middle

of nowhere with his homicidal roommate, but to make things worse, his classmates are being dicks, there may be a banshee on the prowl, and Baz is trying to summon a demon.

Bergamot by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: "I didn't mean to wake you," he says, reaching a hand out to brush through my curls absentmindedly before resuming his typing.

"When did you get here?" I mutter, shifting myself so I can press a kiss to the cool thigh next to my head. I don't think he brought pyjamas, because he's just in his pants and a jumper, which is not even close to his usual sleepwear.

night moves by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: His hand finds mine on the gear shift and he gives my fingers a light squeeze. Out of the corner of my vision I can see him silently mouthing the words. His eyes flick to me and he smiles again.

Keep driving, the smile says.

So I do.

Are You There Floor? It's Me, Simon by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: "Why is Basilton vomiting in the bathroom?" the Mage asks. I can't tell if he's smiling or frowning. His entire face looks wrong. His mustache is throwing me off. It's like an upside down mouth. I can't tell which one is curved up and which one is curved down.

"Uh," I say. "He got poisoned."

The Mage's eyebrow goes up.

"And you?"

"I got poisoned too," I say, because now that I've started lying, I can't stop. "We poisoned each other."

Take On Me by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Baz Pitch is an overworked uni student who -- between his heavy course load and his shifts at his aunt's bookstore -- is stressed all the time. There are expectations on him to follow the family footsteps, and he doesn't want to deal with that right now. His aunt Fiona's bookstore is his one oasis in this (except for on poetry slam nights) and he's glad to have her -- even if she does come with her own brand of crazy.

But when Simon Snow, a lit student with a short temper who's trying to distance himself from his bad history, starts working at the bookstore, Baz's life gets infinitely more stressful. Amidst bad poetry slams, author signings, getting locked in storerooms and gaining a (unwanted) roommate, Baz comes to realise that Simon Snow is so much more than he's prepared to take on.

say you'll be there by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Soulmate AU - You can Summon your soulmate once in your life, no matter where they are, when you really need them.

Baz Pitch's soulmate Summoned him when he was eleven years old.

Off The Pitch by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: "Sometimes it hits me heavily that without football I'd be nothing. I'd have nothing. I'd be completely alone."

Tainted Love by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: For Simon Snow, everything about dating Baz Pitch has been a dream come true.

Except for his aunt Fiona's habit of showing up unannounced.

Never Gonna Give You Up by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: How I react in the next few minutes is crucial. This is one of those big Relationship Tests. And thus far I haven't been very good at passing those.

"I'm going to call for tikka masala," I say slowly, and Simon blinks up at me. "And then we're going to plan a murder."

rebel rebel by BasicBathsheba (2018)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Baz Pitch loves, in no particular order; David Bowie, punk music, the feel of old vinyl, the smell of coffee (but not the taste), classic books, magic, David Byrne, the fact that he was raised by his aunt Fiona, and maybe, sometimes, Simon Snow.

network connectivity problems by BasicBathsheba for great_merlins_beard (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: [UNKNOWN NUMBER]: (10:45): i mean like, how should I fix this

BAZ PITCH: (10:46): Why would I know?

[UNKNOWN NUMBER]: (10:46): you're tech support?

BAZ PITCH: (10:47): I most definitely am not.

Family & Genus by BasicBathsheba, breadofgod (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: "It wasn't that he didn't love Pitch Manor. He did. He loved it terribly, viciously, horribly, with a wriggling possessiveness deep down in his belly. He was a Pitch, and the Manor was his. He was a Pitch, and he was the Manor's."

Baz is twenty-three and weighed down by the responsibility of fixing up Pitch Manor. He's rattling around in a large house in the country with only a dog and a mean housekeeper for company. Simon is chasing down his family, starting in Watford. He has only his motorcycle, his name, and the blanket he was left with as a baby. And the

answers to his life questions may reside in the crumbling manor at the edge of the New Forest.

After The Pitch by BasicBathsheba (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: "It's his choice," I'd insisted, even though I agreed.

"I just don't think he knows what he needs—"

"He needs football." I pulled my hands through my curls and let them stay there. "He needs it, Malcolm. More than anything."

What Do I Get? by BasicBathsheba for tbazzsnow (Artescapri) (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: "This is your life, mate," Niall says quietly. "Start treating yourself like the main fucking character."

Paperback Writer by BasicBathsheba (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Baz Pitch loves his job. He's a junior editor in his mother's publishing company, and life would be perfect if it weren't for two things: his boss, Davy Mage, and Sir Scone.

Sir Scone is the bane of Baz's life. Trite children's fantasy with a golden hero and ferocious dragons and intrepid princesses. They're wildly popular, and Baz hates editing them almost as much as he hates the man who writes them: Simon Salisbury, Mage's pet project author, and also maybe, possibly, the most handsome man Baz has ever met.

California English by BasicBathsheba (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: I even told Minty that I didn't like them. Just liked the idea of them. I was looking for something in each of them: a future, adventure, something different. And I never found it. It never fit.

The thing is, I've spent so long chasing myself in other people, and then chasing myself in grand ideas, and now I'm wondering if all this time I've been looking for myself when I'm literally right here.

I'm right here.

13.) Stuck In The Middle With You by BasicBathsheba (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Simon Snow didn't mean to do it. Baz Pitch needs to vomit. Fiona causes a crash on the A1 and Johnny Cash strikes again. Everything changed when the anxiety attacked.

Poetry In Motion by BasicBathsheba (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: No one at Watford is Welsh. No one feels lucky. No one feels grateful. No one wears shirts with small holes in the collars. No one marvels at scones and tea with cream and sugar and the never ending supply of cigarettes that flow through the campus like manna from Heaven. No one feels the need, every moment of every day, to prove their place. To prove that they deserve to be here. That they were right for being chosen.

Everyone — even the best of them, even Penny — is like Baz Pitch.

1961. Watford University has just become co-educational, the world is changing, and autumn is coming to a close. Simon Snow is far from home in Wales, out of place at Watford, and obsessed with a mystery. And the boy in the flat next door.

Golden Years by BasicBathsheba (2019)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Baz Pitch used to fight demons. Now he fights teenagers. Ten years after killing the Humdrum, saving the day, driving into the sunset with Simon and arguing about New Wave, Baz still loves vinyl, sweet coffee, David Bowie (and sometimes Simon Snow). But now he hates his family, tomato plants, lesbian crises, being asked when he's getting married, and Simon Snow's dad music. Part two of the Rebelverse. Still crazy after all these years.

Local Hero by BasicBathsheba, breadofgod (2020)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: There is nothing Simon Snow loves more in life than football. And there's really nothing in Baz Pitch's life other than football.

Baz Pitch is the star player of Mummers United FC, a low tier club he's singled-handedly put on the maps, along with the tiny northern town of Watford-on-Mummers. Simon Snow is a footie fanatic, founder of the MumU supporter section, and owner of the Sun and Goat pub. He's built a living out of watching Baz play, and it doesn't even matter that they haven't spoken since they were kids. Simon knows, no matter what, Baz Pitch is going to be the greatest player England has ever seen.

So why is Baz Pitch living in a middle terrace in the middle of nowhere, day drinking and doing (bad) yoga?

Twist and Shout by BasicBathsheba for tbazzsnow (Artescapri) (2020)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Baz Pitch can't jump anymore, but that hasn't dulled his desire to be the world's best figure skater. Simon Snow is surprisingly bad at hockey, but that won't stop him from wanting to make a splash with the Winchester Wyverns. The two have nothing in common, except that they both like the same treadmill--and they both want ice time at Watford Ice Arena. What starts as a gym feud quickly leads to a begrudging friendship, a musical education, and an unexpected opportunity for both of them.

origin of love [lust royale remix] by BasicBathsheba for lovelessinmanhattan (2020)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Simon and Baz, heirs to their respective thrones, are soulmates. They are predestined and predetermined. But soulmate stories can be dangerous. Soulmate stories can be twisted.

storm chaser by BasicBathsheba (2020)

Fandoms: Carry On Series - Rainbow Rowell

Summary: Shepard Clark is 17, reckless behind the wheel, and looking forward to a whole summer of storm chasing across the midwest. It's the thrill of the chase. But when he encounters something unexpected, Shepard begins to wonder if there are things out there more dangerous than tornados.