No heteros in this heterotopia: *Harry Potter* slash fanfiction as heterotopian space Beatriz Brito do Nascimento



2019



CICLO DE ESTUDO ÁREA DE ESPECIALIZAÇÃO

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No heteros in this heterotopia: *Harry Potter* slash fanfiction as heterotopian space

Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos, orientada pela Professora Doutora Maria de Fátima de Sousa Basto Vieira

Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

setembro de 2019

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Membros do Júri

Professor Doutor Faculdade - Universidade ...

Professor Doutor

Faculdade - Universidade ...

Professor Doutor Faculdade - Universidade Classificação obtida: valores

To fandom.

Sumário

Declaração de honra	12
Agradecimentos	13
Resumo	14
Abstract	15
Introdução	16
Capítulo 1 - Recensão da Literatura	21
1.1. Introdução	21
1.2. O que é fanfiction?	21
1.3. Estudos de Espaço	42
1.4. Metodologia	55
Capítulo 2 – Análise de dados	71
2.1. Introdução	71
2.2. AO3 como heterotopia	71
2.3. Fanfiction como heterotopia	76
2.3.1. An Issue of Consequence	77
2.3.2. It's not the Wanting (but the Having)	83
2.3.3. A Cure for Nightmares	91
2.3.4. From the Sea	97
2.3.5. The Love of a Good Wizard	106
2.3.6. In the Red	119
Conclusão	128
Referências bibliográficas	132
Anexos	146
Anexo 1: Dicionário de termos émicos	147
Anexo 2: Figuras	150

Index

Declaration of honour	12
Acknowledgements	13
Abstract (Portuguese)	14
Abstract (English)	15
Introduction	16
Chapter 1 – Literature Review	21
1.1. Introduction	21
1.2. What is fanfiction?	21
1.3. Spatiality Studies	42
1.4. Methodology	55
Chapter 2 – Data Analysis	71
2.1. Introduction	71
2.2. AO3 as heterotopia	71
2.3. Fanfiction as heterotopia	76
2.3.1. An Issue of Consequence	77
2.3.2. It's not the Wanting (but the Having)	83
2.3.3. A Cure for Nightmares	91
2.3.4. From the Sea	97
2.3.5. The Love of a Good Wizard	106
2.3.6. In the Red	119
Conclusion	128
Works Cited	132
Annexes	146
Annex 1: Dictionary of Emic Terms	147
Annex 2: Figures	150

Declaração de honra

Declaro que o presente trabalho/tese/dissertação/relatório/... é de minha autoria e não foi utilizado previamente noutro curso ou unidade curricular, desta ou de outra instituição. As referências a outros autores (afirmações, ideias, pensamentos) respeitam escrupulosamente as regras da atribuição, e encontram-se devidamente indicadas no texto e nas referências bibliográficas, de acordo com as normas de referenciação. Tenho consciência de que a prática de plágio e auto-plágio constitui um ilícito académico.

Porto, setembro de 2019

Beatriz Brito do Nascimento

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my advisor, Professor Fátima Vieira at University of Porto. Thank you for believing in my idea and taking me in despite your herculean work at the University. Your advice and support throughout this process was invaluable and something I do not take for granted.

I must also express my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to my parents and to my friends, Lils, Mafi, Star, and Tha, for being with me every step of the way and providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. Thank you for reminding me to leave the house every so often, and lifting me up when I needed the boost.

Lastly, I would like to thank the fandom communities I have been a part of in these last thirteen years, and most of all the writers for all of the fics I read during this period. Your work is as valuable as it is sidelined, but this dissertation would not exist without it. I would not be the same without it. Thank you.

Resumo

Apesar da importância crescente das chamadas "Humanidades Digitais" e da emergência (lenta), na Academia, da área de Estudos de Fãs, a fanfiction é ainda um género sub-representado da literatura digital, estando também por estudar devidamente a sua vertente slash. Recorrendo a ferramentas concetuais da área dos Estudos sobre o Espaço, o presente estudo visa caracterizar a slash fanfiction do fandom *Harry Potter* como um espaço heterotópico. Para o efeito, a autora investiu no estudo de caso de seis obras de slash fanfiction de *Harry Potter*, examinando, em relação a cada uma delas, a presença de seis características heterotópicas, comprovando assim a pertinência da classificação da fanfiction como um espaço de heterotopia.

Keywords: *fanfiction*, estudos de fãs, humanidades digitais, estudos de espaço, *Harry Potter*.

Abstract

Despite the increasing importance of the so-called "Digital Humanities" and the (slow) emergence, in Academia, of the area of Fan Studies, fanfiction is still an underrepresented genre of digital literature, lacking also to be studied in its slash facet. Recurring to conceptual tools of the area of Spatiality Studies, the present study aims to characterise slash fanfiction from the fandom of *Harry Potter* as a heterotopian space. To this effect, the author invested in a case study of six works of *Harry Potter* slash fanfiction, examining, in relation to each one, the presence of six heterotopic characteristics, therefore proving the pertinence of the classification of fanfiction as a space of heterotopia.

Keywords: fanfiction, fan studies, Digital Humanities, spatiality, Harry Potter.

Introduction

Someone who, after years of reading fics and thinking "why can't I find a story with this", finally realised that, if it didn't exist, she could create it.

The year is 2005. I am thirteen years old and finishing what counts as middle school in my country. Bands like My Chemical Romance and Panic! at the Disco are gaining global momentum, denouncing the start of the emo trend, *Supernatural* has just premiered on the CW channel, and the first video is uploaded to Youtube. Most importantly for me, however, the *Harry Potter* saga has its sixth novel released, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, as well as its fourth cinematic adaptation, *Goblet of Fire*¹.

Harry Potter was already an established powerhouse prior to these two events. Totaling over half a billion copies sold for its books, making them the best-selling book series in history², as well as a multibillionaire film franchise, there is hardly a person in the Western world who has not heard of the adventures of this boy wizard. I was drawn to the saga as soon as I saw the first movie at the cinema, and counted myself as a fan shortly after: going through puberty alongside its major stars led to the classic "Mrs. Radcliffe"³ scribbles on my school notebooks. However already a fan, the release of new content both in its literary and mediatic forms during that year hugely propelled my engagement with the source material, greatly helped by the fact that that was also the year in which I began using the Internet in full force (though at the time still restricted by the use of the single shared family computer, connected to the web via dial-up access). The combination of new material to be gathered about something I was

¹ Throughout this dissertation I will often make reference to the novels of the *Harry Potter* saga in their shortened version, that is, without including the words *"Harry Potter and the"*, which preclude all titles in the saga.

² <u>https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/best-selling-book-series.html</u>, accessed 20/08/19.

³ Daniel Radcliffe portrayed the title character in the story's movie adaptations.

passionate about and a new way to access it provided the perfect catalyst: suddenly I was visiting Potter-exclusive websites, joining Potter-related communities on Orkut (Facebook was not popular yet in my country), and eagerly seeking out spoilers and speculations for the next installments. Within this period of overexposing myself to easily-accessible material, it was only a matter of time until I would come across fanfiction and, inevitably, slash⁴ fanfiction.

Broadly speaking⁵, fanfiction is any story written with pre-existing characters. For the world of Harry Potter, that would entail stories about Harry, Ron, and Hermione, for example. Other than that, there are hardly any restrictions for a given work of fanfiction: narratives can be written about anything, from ones that depict Harry's life as an adult, to ones that talk about his parents' school adventures, to ones in which the characters are in outer space. What many of these stories seem have in common is their focus on romantic relationships, and those that concern queer pairings are labelled slash. For as long as there have been organised communities surrounding pop culture, the practice of fanfiction writing, and specifically of slash, has also existed. Of course, due to our society still being largely patriarchal and heterocentric, this practice has consistently been relegated to a marginalised status. At first contact, my understanding of (slash) fanfiction was induced by the bias of what I had been known to expect in overall society: those stories had no value, for they were not what had been originally intended by J. K. Rowling for her characters. However, my curiosity ultimately overpowered my estrangement and soon enough I was fully inserted into the intriguing world of slash. Not only that but, encouraged by the communities I belonged to and the friends I had made, I started not only reading but writing fanfiction as well. The epigraph at the beginning of this chapter was taken (and loosely translated, since at the time I wrote only in Portuguese) from my first profile on a fanfiction-hosting website. Create I did, though not nearly as extensively as I enjoyed other people's

⁴ Many fandom-specific terms will appear throughout this dissertation. For their definitions, see Annex 1.

⁵ These notions will be elaborated upon in the next chapter.

creations. Since 2005 many things have changed, but the space of slash fanfiction is still one I am proud to be a part of.

My personal interest in all things fandom led to an academic interest, as often is the case with researchers in this area⁶. It being such an incredibly rich and broad field, there were countless topics and approaches available to be drawn from fandom studies. However, most studies seem to focus on fandom as a community—which it undeniably is, and those studies are extremely important—and on the strictly social aspect of it. As I come from the first generation to be in contact with digital resources from an early age, fandom established itself to me as more than a community, but a community intrinsically tied to a space. This was even more so the case in regards to fanfiction: there was not a way for me to enjoy this aspect of fandom if not through the Internet. From being shared in mailing lists to blog posts to fanfiction-hosting websites, fanfiction always appeared to me as born-digital literature. In short, while there have been many studies about the spaces of fandom, and of the importance of new media in expanding it, there still seems to be a distinctive lack of work on the intersection of fanfiction, space, and the digital sphere.

Having decided this approach, it was only natural that the methodologies of Digital Humanities would prove appropriate for my research. Much is said about the current relevance of applying digital resources to unveil and resolve humanistic questions, but as of yet there is not a considerable bibliography which connects the Digital Humanities with fanfiction. As aforementioned, fanfiction is increasingly becoming a majoritarily born-digital genre of literature, therefore it is essential to understand how it works through the lens of digital tools. The connection of these areas of interest and gaps in academic knowledge led me to a desire to study fanfiction, specifically slash, as space. Naturally, the first question to be asked is: what kind of space is slash fanfiction? Based on the previously mentioned characteristic of slash fanfiction as a marginalised practice, it is not unreasonable to think of marginalised

⁶ More will be said about the "aca-fan" in the following chapter.

spaces in society in order to reach an analogous conclusion. Thus, the notion of heterotopia, that is, a different space within a larger one, seemed to fit. With that parallel established, the question evolved into: *how* can slash fanfiction be considered a heterotopian space? The answer to that question would have to come from a comparative analysis, extracting characteristics seen in "ordinary" heterotopias and transposing them to works of slash fanfiction in order to verify if they apply. Seeing as slash fanfiction is such a broad genre, some restrictions would have to be put in place. For that, I decided to concentrate on only one fandom, *Harry Potter*, due to both my personal interest in it as well as given its considerable size, which would allow for a more comprehensive population of works. Using a small corpus also seemed more efficient than a large one, as a close-knit analysis of works might reveal minute details which could corroborate my hypothesis. However, some decisions could be made in order to diversify the corpus, and for that reason I chose to work with various pairings and tropes, in order to prove the all-inclusiveness of the heterotopian theory.

Thus was created the structure for the present dissertation. The following chapter includes a thorough background explanation of the two areas to be connected, those of Fan Studies and Spatiality Studies, as well as an exposition of the appropriate Digital Humanities tools with which to explore them. Definitions central to the present research such as fan, fanfiction, slash, and heterotopia, are given with the needed necessary basis, and discussions of the reasoning behind particular corpus choices and methodology techniques are also had, establishing the common ground before proceeding with the investigation.

After that, in chapter three, the data analysis develops the aforementioned methodology, by means of close reading. With a selection of six works of fanfiction from six different pairings (namely Draco Malfoy/Harry Potter, Fred Weasley/George Weasley, Sirius Black/Remus Lupin, Scorpius Malfoy/Albus Severus Potter, Tom Riddle/Harry Potter, and Harry Potter/Severus Snape), combined with six tropes (Hogwarts Eighth Year, Incest, Muggle AU, Veela, Time Travel, and POV Shift), and

using them as examples of the appearance of six heterotopian qualities (disruption of time, ambiguity, disruption of space, restriction, juxtaposition, and discursivity), the analysis effectively proves that slash fanfiction can be classified as a heterotopian space. Lastly, a conclusion chapter reinforces the findings of the previous chapter and provides openings for further research.

For now, however, the most pressing question to be resolved, thus the first one to be addressed, involves a clear understanding of the term *fanfiction*.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

This chapter serves a dual purpose: first, it brings an overview of the fields of research from which the methodological tools used in the project were extracted—those being the fields of Fan Studies and Spatiality Studies—, then it explicits the methodology for data collection and subsequent analysis. Hopefully it will further enlighten the motives behind the relevance of the present study, by means of exposing the connections between Spatiality and Fan Studies, as well as by presenting its innovative methodology.

1.2.What is fanfiction?

Discussing fanfiction is a hard task, not only because of the stigma surrounding it, but also because the term itself has a plethora of possible definitions. There is not even a consensus of whether it should be written as one word—fanfiction—or two—fan fiction (its common abbreviations of "fanfic" and "fic" are also used amply). Throughout this dissertation I will favour the spelling with one word, for reasons which I shall explain further on. It is also not entirely clear when the term first appeared in the vernacular. Though there are some appearances going as far back as the 1940s, it is reasonably established that it caught up in earnest with the advent of science-fiction television media in the 1960s (the original series of *Star Trek* playing a great part in that, a topic which will be later discussed at greater length).

Considering the term "fanfiction", then, it is easy to see that the name is an amalgamation of the words "fan" and "fiction". Based on this fact, the most basic definition of fanfiction would simply be "a work of fiction written by a fan". Right off

the start this broad explanation proves inadequate, seeing as not all literary works are fiction. And here we encounter the first obstacle of defining fanfiction: is it literature?

Many would not consider it so. Fanfiction is at times thought to be non-professional texts written for topical consumption and therefore with no literary value. But what about the incredibly successful novels of E. L. James, the Fifty Shades of Grey trilogy? The story famously started as a piece of Twilight fanfiction, and was later commercially published and spread worldwide, spawning an equally profitable movie franchise. Are these books still fanfiction when they hit the local bookstore shelves, or do they cease to be so the moment they achieve recognition? What about novels which did not start out as self-identified fanfiction, but are still the work of fans? Books such as Pride and Prejudice and Zombies by Seth Grahame-Smith, based on the influential Victorian novel by Jane Austen, or Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard, based on characters of Shakespeare's Hamlet, pertain to this category. Shakespeare himself wrote Romeo and Juliet inspired by the 1562 poem The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet, by Arthur Brooke. It is not my objective here to claim that all fanfiction has a Shakespearean level of worth, but is a work of fiction less literary simply because it may be considered "bad"? In other words, is aesthetic value an objective and quantifiable category? I do not believe so. In the end, what differentiates Romeo and Juliet from the Sirius/Remus fanfic I posted on Fanfiction.net when I was sixteen is... Well, many things, but mainly the fact that only one of these works is commercially available.

There is a strong culture of copyright and trademark enforcement in contemporary Western society, copyright infringement being considered a serious legal and moral offence. But the truth is that the culture of owning ideas is somewhat recent in historical terms. Jamison (2013) notes that "[r]eworking an existing story, telling tales of heroes already known to be heroic, was the model of authorship until very recently" (35). In fact, the first copyright laws only emerged in the United Kingdom under the Statute of Anne of 1710; in the United States, the first law concerning copyright emerged in 1790, with protection of intellectual property being guaranteed by the country's Constitution⁷. So, understandably, sixteenth century Shakespeare was not concerned he was "stealing" the characters of Brooke's poem. In the same fashion, the people who, for many centuries, passed along oral stories and engaged in the practice of folklore were not worried about being sued for copyright infringement. The sharing and communal construction of narratives is a practice that long precedes any law against it, and so it is perfectly reasonable that members of society feel impelled to continue this tradition, even though they now might have to find ways to circumvent legal issues in order to do so. As Henry Jenkins (1997) remarked in a now much-quoted statement, fanfiction is "a way of the culture repairing the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk".

The way fanfiction writers have found is to simply not monetise their work: fanfiction is inherently not commerciable. That does not mean that fanfiction writers (and other participatory fans) did not endure strife in order to be allowed to publicise their non-profit work, especially during the nebulous beginnings of the virtual facet of fandom. Jenkins describes one famous case of legal debate in "Why Heather Can Write", a chapter in his 2006 *Convergence Culture*. Heather, a teenager at the time of the events (circa 2001), was a *Harry Potter* fan who wanted to engage in her fandom, and for that chose to create a website which would serve as a "Web-based 'school newspaper' for the fictional Hogwarts", including articles "that [led] the readers to believe this fanciful world of *Harry Potter* was real" (171-172). The only fault in Heather's plan was that she named the website "The Daily Prophet", therefore making use of a term under Warner Bros. (who bought the film rights to the series in 2001) copyright. The company then sent her a cease and decease letter, a procedure which they repeated with many other fans who had had similar ideas. The ensuing "Potter

⁷ Article I Section 8 Clause 8: [The Congress shall have power] "To promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries". Extracted from <u>https://constitutionus.com/</u>, accessed 02/03/19.

War" was a newsworthy clash essentially between a capitalist powerhouse and a number of (mostly underage) enthusiastic fans. In the end, Warner Bros. lost the dispute, as it was proved that "there is literally no case law concerning fan fiction" (188). The process served to shed light on issues of copyright infringement on the age of the Internet and, since then, fans have had more freedom to explore their creativity in fandom, including via sharing fanfiction.

News of the legality of fanfiction spread slowly, however. Proof of that is seen in a very common practice when publishing fics in the 2000s and prior (that is, in the period before it was made clear that there was no crime in publishing fanfiction), in which writers used to headline their stories with a disclaimer. No longer than a sentence or two, a disclaimer is "a statement that indicates that the fan is not claiming to own, or to have invented, any copyrighted characters or concepts that she is writing about" ("Disclaimer", Fanlore.org). This element probably held little value in the eyes of fans from the start, as oftentimes creators provided nonchalant, humorous disclaimers, with typical examples including "Written by a Fan of Lemony Snicket—a phrase which here means 'Someone who is most certainly not Lemony Snicket and would greatly appreciate it if he did not sue her", "I own the characters of Haruhi Suzumiya... as plushies. I don't own the show", and "Jo owns the characters, the plot, and my soul. I own only the spaces inbetween"⁸. Nowadays, hardly any piece of fanfiction includes a disclaimer in its publication, and that is partially due to the OTW's effort in informing fans that fanfiction falls into the law of fair use.

The Organization for Transformative Works (OTW), a non-profit organisation aimed at promoting fan works and whose projects include the wiki Fanlore, the academic anthology *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader*, and the fanfiction hosting website Archive Of Our Own, defines fair use as such:

⁸ Extracted from <u>https://allthetropes.fandom.com/wiki/I_Do_Not_Own</u>, accessed 15/03/19.

fair use and fair dealing laws provide that certain uses of copyrighted material are not infringing, even if they are done without the permission of the copyright holder. Fair use laws favor uses that transform the meaning or purpose of an underlying work, that are distributed non-commercially, that use limited amounts of the underlying work, and that do not compete with the underlying work in the market. Fair dealing laws also favor transformative uses such as parody, commentary, criticism, and noncommercial user-generated content⁹.

Based on this definition, for example, a fan story that places Harry in Slytherin and puts him in a romantic relationship with Draco Malfoy, and which is then posted online for the free consumption of other Draco/Harry fans, falls perfectly within the legal rights and cannot be shut down by J. K. Rowling or any of the companies which own the copyright for *Harry Potter*. To put it simply, fanfiction is not illegal because it does not copy the original work: it transforms it. Francesca Coppa leans into this side of the argument, coming up with an interesting definition of fanfiction: stories which make use of "characters that have previously appeared in works whose copyright is held by others" (2006: 219).

There are those who do wish to capitalise on their fanfiction, though, and they find it very easy to tweak a story so as to bypass copyright issues. When E. L. James sold the story of *Fifty Shades of Gray* to a publisher, she simply renamed the characters and settings which were directly extracted from *Twilight*, a practice commonly known in the community as "filing off the serial numbers". So Edward and Bella became Christian and Anastasia, and voila, she was free to do whatever she chose with her story. Easier still is to publish works already out of copyright protection: any one fan of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes adventures could turn their fic directly into an

⁹ Extracted from

http://www.transformativeworks.org/happy-fair-use-fair-dealing-week/#more-63984, accessed 02/03/19.

original novel if they¹⁰ so wished, no filing off needed (as long as they did not make Sherlock to have a great resemblance to Benedict Cumberbatch's portrayal in the recent BBC series, of course). But it does not even cross most fans' minds to make money from their fics—they write purely for the joy of it. In a capitalist society obsessed with the notion of "time is money", that concept may be hard to grasp, but it is nonetheless true.

And it is not only fans who can profit from the writing of fanfiction. The entertainment industry, which at first poked fun at and minimised fannish behaviour, finally realised it could be capitalised upon, which of course changed its behaviour towards geek culture. Nowadays it is par for the course to see marketing campaigns aimed at fans, often making cringeworthy use of fanspeak in order to cater to the community. And while it is undoubtedly a step up from being viewed as the screaming over-emotional girl or the insecure inexperienced man, this trend of pandering to fans can also be inconspicuously detrimental. Minkel, when discussing the (mostly free) fanfiction platform Wattpad, wisely noted that "[i]f you are not paying, you are the product" (2015).

Going back to the idea of fanfiction being a transformative work, this ties in with the notion of participatory culture in fandom, and the concept Jenkins introduced of fans being textual poachers (1992). Appropriating the term "poaching" from de Certeau, Jenkins posits that fans are poachers because they take control of meaning construction in their enjoyment of the source material. In this conception, fans go from being mere consumers to producers, or at least *prosumers*, of content. Kustritz (2003) comments on this aspect of fan activity, relating it to the already discussed separation between formal appreciation of "art objects" and superficial enjoyment of popular content:

¹⁰ My choice for the use of singular they is in accordance with the overall consensus in academia to to promote gender inclusive language, an issue of extreme relevance especially in the context of the present study. For a more thorough understanding of the topic, see http://www2.ncte.org/statement/genderfairuseoflang/.

What occurs in fan rewrites is that these products are not merely accepted, but rather analyzed with the same amount of care, appreciation, and religiosity that is otherwise only bestowed upon art objects. Fans discuss the narratives and characters provided for them by the mass media, and then alter those hegemonic messages to reflect their own needs, experiences, and desires. (...) Fan fiction offers individuals lacking the necessary educational background to enter the discussion or production of art objects (and those who are unable to write a narrative that easily enters the realm of mass consumption) the chance to critically interpret and rescript the hypnotic entertainment objects that were meant to be a part of their reproduction as patriarchal, capitalist subjects (...). (Kustritz 2003: 373-374)

As we can see, the understanding of what is a "fan" makes itself essential in the process of defining fanfiction. To think of fanfiction, one must first think of the fan who writes it and who they may be, and the various possibilities for responses make for another highly contested concept. Is it anyone who likes a particular source text? What level of commitment is "enough" to be granted access to fandom? Must you choose to identify as a fan to be one, or is that an intrinsic characteristic? Do you have to produce content for a fandom in order to be a part of it? We can broaden this discussion even further, and ask what constitutes a fandom in the first place. Can anything be a fandom, or only media works? Clearly not, seeing as there are fandoms for celebrities and bands (usually called bandoms, as the community seems to enjoy their portmanteaus). Where is the line drawn, then? Can you like anything and thus be a fan of it? Are there fans of scented candles, and when they interact, are they the candle fandom?¹¹ These questions are all points of contention in academia, and I am under no assumption that I will be

¹¹ See *Fansplaining* episode 6, "The Meme Librarian" (2015), for a discussion on candle fandom.

able to give the final answer on any of these issues. Nevertheless, I do have my own take on them. For the purposes of this study, I will consider that a fan is someone who self-identifies as such, who engages (whether actively or passively) with a determinate mediatic source text, and who does so in the context of a fandom space.

This final notion is crucial: there is no fan without a community, without a fan space. The very word for this space—fandom—is again a neologism, this time a combination of "fan" and the suffix "-dom"—the same that appears in "kingdom", for example, meaning "the realm of". Thinking about the etymology of the word, a fandom is a space inhabited by, and most importantly, under the control of its fans. Fans are not the subalterns, the serfs who are bound to and who must respond to the big corporations, the lords of the land (those who are called in fandom The Powers That Be). Instead, fans are the queens and kings of this kingdom, the ones who ultimately shape it however they want to. In this participatory culture, they are the producers of the content they wish to see.

So how do they accomplish that? Fandom may come in all shapes and sizes, be it a mailing list, a convention, a book club, or an online forum. It may also be represented through uncountable forms: a video collage, a drawing, a written review, an oral debate, a fanfic. All that matters is that there is new content being created. In short, fans have to communicate and share fannish practices for there to be a fandom. We then come to the inevitable conclusion that fandom is a socially constructed space, as indeed any and all other spaces are.

One particular fandom may (and often does) have many spaces, and any one fan may (and surely does) choose which space is more suitable for them to fulfill their own fannish needs. Some may prefer to participate in large conventions such as the San Diego Comic Con, while others might feel more comfortable discussing the latest episode of their favourite tv show in a close-knit LiveJournal community. Some might draw fanart and post it on DeviantArt, as others reblog headcanons on their personal Tumblr. No experience, regardless of its dimension, is "less fannish" than the other, but they all indicate the process of actively creating fan space.

The same egalitarian view is true when considering the analysis of fandom—the academic interdisciplinary field of fan studies. Fan studies have occurred since the modern concept of fandom was established, but the early nineties brought a boom in works of this field, propelled in great part by the release of the 1992 cornerstone books *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, by Henry Jenkins, and *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth*, by Camille Bacon-Smith. Though containing wildly different approaches, both of these texts were revolutionary in bringing to light a new view of fans, who are no longer seen from a psychological perspective, which tended to pathologise their behaviour, but who are now considered from a more favourable standpoint.

Constructing her work as an ethnography, Bacon-Smith studied the most academically prolific fandom of the twentieth century, the television series *Star Trek*. In true ethnographic fashion, she was not part of the Trekkie (as fans of the show are called) community when she conducted her study, providing instead an outsider's point of view of their culture. For that very reason, her approach is criticised by many, who feel that fan studies should be conducted by fans. This person who merges the identities of fan and academic, the aca-fan, is an identity Jenkins claims as his own, and the one he suggests as having the optimal perspective for dealing with fan studies. According to him, the long-lasting view in academia that research should be completely impartial and objective is faulty when analysing a space created, at its core, by affective behaviour. In order to be fully able to understand the phenomenon, this very same affective behaviour must also be present in its researcher. This notion is arguably what made the methodology of autoethnography rise as the prevalent approach in the field, and is indeed the reason why I chose it for the present dissertation.

Within fan studies, fanfiction is one of its most fertile topics. Of course, depending on the academic who is studying it and the fields they come from, fanfiction

can be analysed through many perspectives. As literature by literary studies (Derecho 2006, Sandvoss 2007); as insight into the reception of the original content by media studies (Jenkins 1992 and 2006); as representation of cultural habits by anthropology and sociology (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998, Bacon-Smith 1992); as educational method by pedagogy (Black 2005); as performance by dramatic arts (Coppa 2006), to name a few. Even surprising areas such as biology (Salmon and Symons 2004) seem to have attracted an interest in fanfiction. As for my approach, I intend to view fanfiction as space, specifically heterotopian space, by using the conceptual tools of Spatiality Studies.

That said, what is my final definition of fanfiction, then? Taking into consideration the embedded notions that have been exposed thus far, I define fanfiction as a piece of fictional writing based on pre-existing material, produced by a fan with the intent to be shared in a non-commercial context within fandom. This definition is somewhat similar to the one Hellekson and Busse come to in the introduction to their collection of essays The Fan Fiction Studies Reader, when they describe it as being "situated in the last 40 years, tending to respond to a specific form of media texts, and encompassing a specific amateur infrastructure for its creation, distribution, and reception" (2014: 7). The concept then having been defined, it only leaves the matter of spelling: is it written as one or two words? As stated in the beginning of this chapter, I have chosen to spell it as one, and that is intrinsically linked to my perspective of the concept. A literary approach to fanfiction, which points out its communal aspect, as it was in the oral tradition of storytelling, could very well understand fanfiction as a type of fiction: fan fiction, as there is romance fiction, or gothic fiction. Ultimately, its central focus would be the same, that is, studying and analysing texts for meaning. While I respect and encourage this framing of fan fiction, it is not my intent to analyse the aesthetic value (or lack thereof) in the works I have chosen for my corpus. Coming from the field of cultural studies, merging it with spatiality studies, and making use of Digital Humanities methodologies, my aim is to study fanfiction as a space within

fandom. The focus would not be on the "fiction", but on the merging of "fan" and "fiction"—therefore fanfiction as a single concept. With that, fanfiction has been thoroughly explained. But my focus will not be on fanfiction in general, but a subsection of it: slash fanfiction. We must then define what slash is.

The etymology of slash is relatively more simple than that of fanfiction: the term surged in the very same 1960s science fiction fandom context which also resulted in the popularisation of fanfiction. Star Trek brought women into a previously male-dominated space, that of science fiction, and with that, new fannish practices came about. As it was before the age of the Internet, these new fans had to actually use physical means to engage in fandom, and one of these means was the production and distribution of fanzines (henceforth called "zines"), as always an amalgamation, this time of the words "fan" and "magazine". As the very name dictates, zines were printed collections of fan works-be them essays, drawings, or fanfiction. They could not be printed in large scale or for profit (due to the legal reasons mentioned above, as well as logistic reasons), so they were sold for cost of production, and mostly distributed in the biggest space which fans had at the time: conventions. The first major all-Star Trek zine, Spockanalia, hit convention floors in 1967, briefly after the first season of the show aired on American television. Originally intended as a one-shot, the publication ran for five issues due to high demand. The zine included different sorts of creative works, most especially fanfiction about the main characters, Captain James T. Kirk and half-Vulcan Commander Spock. In order to differentiate the content present in the fanfics, distinct terminology was created: stories which depicted platonic involvement between the characters were labelled KS (representing their initials), whilst stories portraying a romantic relationship between the two were dubbed K/S. Given that it was the first substantial case of unambiguous¹² homoerotic content in modern fandom, the name of

¹² See "queerbaiting" for discussions of ambiguous homoerotic undertones in contemporary media fandom. (Brennan, 2018)

the punctuation symbol "/"—slash—became commonplace to describe this type of story, and is used to this day¹³.

Nowadays, a definition of slash as a genre of fanfiction is often one similar to that given by Jones in the essay "The Sex Lives of Cult Television Characters" (2002): "erotic encounters between television characters (or, more rarely, film characters) of the same sex" (116-117). Jones might have been a bit too specific in this definition, as certainly slash spans every variation of fandom, from indeed television and film, to literature, musicians, Youtube celebrities, *ad infinitum*. It appears to be true, however, that "it's only when stories get embodied that they seem to generate truly massive waves of fiction" (Coppa, 2006: 222)—a literary work such as *Harry Potter*, for example, might have gathered a good following ever since its inception, but it was undoubtedly propelled by the series' adaptation into blockbuster movies. Another common misconception of slash is that it always contains sexual content—"erotic", as Jones proclaimed—, when in fact most slash is not explicit¹⁴. Slash does not equal porn, but explicit fic is actually the most popular type of fic, which could contribute to the building of the stereotype. In the end, people are more willing to read explicit fic than to write it.

Speaking of statistics, it becomes relevant to mention that slash is actually the prominent category of fanfiction. Figure 1 (presented in Annex 2) shows the disproportionate inclination towards slash on AO3. The data shows that almost half of all content published on AO3 falls within slash, or M/M (male/male) as it is categorised on the website. Interestingly enough, gen fics (general works which do not depict romance) are the second most popular, followed by het (F/M), and only then comes the

¹³ Though nowadays all ships can be written in the A/B format, only homoerotic works are labelled "slash".

¹⁴ Destinationtoast provides quantitative information regarding what ratings are most popular for fanfiction writers and readers (while the data is not limited to slash, an educated guess could be made that proportions would not vary wildly):

http://destinationtoast.tumblr.com/post/65586599242/popularity-word-count-and-ratings-on-ao3 -faq, accessed 21/03/19.

second category of homoerotic content, femslash or F/F. This high proportion of male/male relationships in fanfiction may have several explanations, all of which have been exhausted by academia. Hellekson and Busse note how slash is studied for its subversive readings and extensively explored for sensationalism, summarising this phenomenon of popularity and subsequent abundance of academic works as such: "not all fan fiction is slash and not all slash is explicit, but most discussions of fan fiction focus on explicit homoerotic fan writings" (2014: 76).

It has been acknowledged that slash, and therefore studies of slash, began in the mid-twentieth century with Kirk/Spock. It seems that this specific pairing, with all of its idiosyncrasies, helped shape much of what is thought to be intrinsic to slash pairings in general. The practice of slash is commonly equalled with ideas of subversion, transgression, freedom¹⁵. The first wave of fan studies (led by base names such as Penley and Jenkins) viewed slash as resistance to patriarchal values, especially of the male gaze in media, and gave it the role of reshaping traditionally female roles (man now as nurturer, emotional). Slash is thought to have embedded notions of romance and deep connection between the two male characters, as well as sharing many of the key points seen in traditional romance novels, such as love and intimacy, with the difference that slash believes these emotions to only be truly achievable through a relationship between two equals-men. As Lamb and Veith comment, "[t]he characters are male because this relationship between strong, heroic equals can be imagined more easily in a fictional male-male relationship" (1986: 112). There is a decidedly utopian element to slash: equality within a romantic relationship can only be achieved when there is no power imbalance, when both parties are absolute equals. That partially explains why it is "easier" to slash male than female characters: female-female relationships would still be enclosed in a patriarchal society, and therefore would still have to deal with the obstacles and lack of power imposed by it. It also explains why there is, to this day,

¹⁵ See Russ (1985) for a view of female communities' alleged use of homoerotic texts as empowering and freeing.

hostility towards slash: as noted by Penley, such hostility is "politically charged by a phobia about equality" (1997: 186). In this heteronormative, patriarchal society we live in, anything that could possibly destabilise the current power structure is viewed negatively. The negation, or outright elimination, of these power dichotomies can lead to a notion that one's sexuality is inconsequential in slash¹⁶.

Taking into consideration the element of power imbalance, it becomes evident why the study of slash is commonly tied in with feminist theory. Various established academic works that deal with slash tend to do so from that perspective, and a consequence of the influence of these works and the views they portray is the fixed maxim that fanfiction is dominated by (white, middle-class) heterosexual cis women. Let us then analyse some fanfiction demographics, comparing two censuses, the first collected by Tumblr user centrumlumina in an online survey conducted in 2013, and the second performed by Flourish Klink and Elizabeth Minkel using the same methodology in 2019. First, though, some disclaimers regarding the limitations of this data are in order: they were collected as part of voluntary online censuses, and the links for the surveys were mostly shared on Tumblr and Twitter, arguably the most popular interactive communities for fanfiction writers at the time of the surveys¹⁷, resulting that the respondents were most likely also Tumblr and Twitter users. Due to the scope of the surveys—just over 10,000 respondents for the first census and 17,000 for the second—, it is not to be considered irrelevant data, but it must be noted that they (and in fact all user-based quantitative data used on this study) do not comprise the full population of the categories analysed (respectively AO3 users and shippers), and are thus not representative of them. Also, while the terminology for both censuses is not exactly the same, as the centrumlumina one is aimed directly at AO3 users, and the Klink and Minkel one being more generally geared towards shippers, it is a safe assumption that these two groups overlap to a degree that enables the comparison of their results. The

¹⁶ See MacDonald (2006).

¹⁷ A more detailed account of the use of blogging platforms in fandom will follow on the Methodology subchapter.

data presented cannot be used to draw definite conclusions about this fanfiction space, but it allows for educated speculations to be made.

That being said, the first demographic to be analysed is that of gender, with figures 2.1 and 2.2 (Annex 2). Their results make it undeniable that women dominate the fanfiction space. Also worthy of noting is that more people identified themselves with a non-cis term (16% of total respondents in the first survey, 30% in the second) than as male. The rise in non-cis identification from the first to the second survey, especially in regards to the transgender community, shows that self-acceptance of non-heteronormative identities is a growing issue within the fanfiction space. In general, the given data indicates that this space is not as unquestioningly cisgender as many of the early fan studies works have led us to believe.

Following this assertion, it behooves us to analyse the sexuality demographic, shown in figures 3.1 and 3.2 (Annex 2). Here is where we find our first point of contention with academic knowledge. Out of all respondents, only 29% identified themselves as heterosexual in the first survey, and 19% in the second. Based on that, we can conclude that fanfiction is not a heterosexual space as it may have been thought to be. In fact, considering the most recent demographic, more people identify as bisexual/pansexual or within the asexuality spectrum than as heterosexual. As with gender, it can be understood that the rise in non-heteronormative responses is related to the spread of information concerning non-conforming identities, as well as the likely convergence of people within those groups to a more accepting space such as fandom. This information affirms that the space of fanfiction is in fact largely a queer space.

Lastly, let us visualise, in figure 4 (Annex 2) the type of works AO3 readers are interested in. Comparatively, all categories receive roughly the same amount of attention, with the exception of slash, which was chosen as a preferred category by double the percentage of respondents than any other category. Overall, almost 90% of the total respondents of the survey claimed to read M/M fics.

How do we translate this data, then? Comparing it to previously made claims, we are able to reinforce the fact that fanfiction is a female-dominated space, and that slash fanfiction is its most popular subcategory, at least on AO3 (different platforms may provide different results in this regard, as will be discussed in the Methodology subchapter). The most notable divergence in the provided stereotype of a typical fanfiction reader comes when we look at sexuality: most fanfic readers are some type of not-straight. Based on these assumptions, paired with the knowledge of fanfiction we have constructed thus far, we can attempt to understand why these are the demographics we find in fanfiction¹⁸.

Specifically in regards to slash, women are said to be drawn to it for various reasons: first, there is the already mentioned aspect of the appeal of true gender equality. Then, there is the objective fact that there are few prominent female roles in mainstream media, meaning that most significant relationships fall between two men, in a context of homosociality which can then easily be read as homoeroticism. Lastly, slash, again tied to the notion of freedom, in this case freedom from patriarchal values and the male gaze, is then considered a space "where women can be strange and unusual and/or do strange and unusual things" (Tosenberger, 2008: 190). This idea links slash to another theory of study, as we discover that, more than being a female space, slash is a *queer* female space.

Queer theory, broadly put, is a set of practices that challenge the social norms. That is obviously related to, but goes beyond, homosexuality. To queer a text is to view it in a way that does not follow mainstream expectations, be they of sexuality, of gender performance, etc. These heteronormative, patriarchal standards shape how we view others (and ourselves), which is why they must be taken apart in order for new perspectives to appear. The act of queering is deconstructive, yes, but it is nonetheless a

¹⁸ I have chosen to focus on the demographics of gender and sexuality as they are the most relevant in the context of slash fanfiction. However, no discussion of these two groups is complete without an intersectionality with race. For an essential in-depth elaboration on this topic, see *Squee from the Margins: Fandom and Race* (Pande, 2018).

way of making sense of a text, no more or less valid than any other, especially when taking into consideration notions such as the death of the author and reader-response theory. Slash, which is often ridiculed as "misreading" a text, falls perfectly in line with this idea, for "rather than interpreting the absence of romantic entanglements as heteronormativity, the fans appropriate and redefine the empty spaces and read the text against its industrial and historical context" (Hellekson and Busse, 2014: 76). It need be said, though, that since slash first appeared as an academic topic, many changes have occurred in society vis-à-vis LGBT+ rights, and that slowly increasing acceptance of queer people in Western society has translated into more representation in media of such relationships. Some would argue that these canonical homoerotic relationships are no longer slash, but to consider only non-canon pairings as slash is to give canon an inherent heteronormativity and to assume that queer readings of the source text must be deviant. Through the use of queer theory we are able to understand that, as Tosenberger notes, "slash writers are only pointing out the possibility of other readings of a text, rather than there only being the obvious one, in other words, the heteronormative one" (2008: 15). Not exactly filling in the gaps, but "revealing the gaps" (Willis, 2006) instead.

As was previously noted, slash plays with gender roles, usually attributing both stereotypical male and female characteristics to the characters. Taking for example the paradigmatic Kirk/Spock ship, Kirk is portrayed in fics with "masculine" qualities such as leadership, promiscuity, and hotheadedness, but at the same time "feminine" qualities such as beauty, emotional intelligence, and sensuality. On the other hand, Spock is highly logical, emotionally distant, and physically powerful, all typically masculine traits, while simultaneously being controlled by his sexuality (as per his alien mating cycle), a follower of (Kirk's) rules, and an outsider (once again due to his alienness) (Lamb and Veith 1986). In short, within the homoerotic context of slash fic, both characters must transcend the gender binary in order for their relationship to be fulfilled.

There is, because of that, a widespread notion that slash is an inherently queer space. Though queerness is undoubtedly correlated to non-heteronormativity, slash could at times not be queer. To understand that, we must first return to the fact that K/S has had a significant impact on the way we view slash, especially in the first wave of fan studies (sometimes called the "Fandom Is Beautiful" era, for its optimism and unabashedly positive view of fandom). The fact of the matter is, however, that the dynamics seen in this ship represent only a fraction of the possibilities in slash. Tosenberger (2008) mentions a helpful terminology (originally coined by Dira Sudis in a LiveJournal comment) which broadly explains these possibilities. According to it, any slash ship could fall into one of three types: buddy, enemy, or power slash. Buddy slash depicts pairings with characters who are canonically in amicable terms, and enemy slash is comprised of characters who are originally rivals/hostile towards one another. In both of these cases, the characters are at an even ground, neither one having absolute superiority over the other. When that happens, the result is power slash, in which the characters, be them on friendly terms or not, have a disparity of power imbalance between them (differences of age, prowess, and job hierarchy are some examples).

Kirk/Spock is a clear example of buddy slash: they are best friends, both equally capable (though Kirk is Spock's superior officer, it is always made clear that he respects Spock's opinion, sometimes above all others). More than that, their equilateral sharing of feminine and masculine traits allows them to be the unquestioning equals that slash overall has come to be associated with. However, not all ships throughout fandom share the same characteristics as this one specific pairing. One of the most famous current femslash ships, Regina Mills/Emma Swan from the television show *Once Upon a Time*, can be considered an enemy (fem)slash pairing, as the characters begin the series in antagonistic roles. Another famous pairing which does not follow the buddy slash model, and one which I will further elaborate on during this dissertation, is that of Harry Potter/Severus Snape within the *Harry Potter* series. Snape is undeniably in a position of superiority vis-à-vis Harry in the story, not only by being older and his teacher, but

by proving himself to be more skilled in magic. The ship is a standard example of power slash. In ships such as these, some of the traditional tenets of slash, of true equality and deep emotional connection, lose their strength. And that is true not only when analysing different ships, but when comparing tropes as well.

A trope in fanfiction refers to a regularly used plot device, from general ones such as friends with benefits, which may appear in traditional fiction, to ones which are born in and remain specific to the space of fanfiction itself, such as Alpha/Beta/Omega dynamics¹⁹. Some tropes are fandom-specific, such as the Vulcan mindmeld in Star Trek, while others span all corners of the fanfiction world, like bed sharing. Each trope can be combined with whichever ship, resulting in varying degrees of queerness. Queerness here is being treated as non-conformance with heteronormative ideals: the more heteronormative a trope is, the less transgressive it is, and consequently the less queer it is. In short, the context in which the characters are placed within a particular transformative work of fanfiction matters more to its level of queerness than the characters' dynamics in canon, or what archetype of slash their relationship falls into. For example, a Kirk/Spock fic which makes use of the trope of crossdressing is arguably more queer than a Harry/Snape fic which depicts cuddling for warmth. This is undoubtedly a very subjective area, and each case is unique in a degree which makes comparison just about inapplicable, but nevertheless this exercise helps us understand that not all slash is the same, and that slash is not necessarily a synonym for queer. Slash is then a space which allows for and invites queerness, though it does not mandate it.

A digression into the use of tropes in fandom makes itself necessary at this point. Klink and Minkel (2016) ran another large-scale online survey, this one having gathered over 7,500 responses, to determine which overarching tropes fans like, dislike, or simply do not care about either way (these sentiments were classified in the survey as respectively "Yay!", "Nay!", or "Meh" responses). The survey displayed 144 tropes, those being only general, non fandom-specific tropes, and none of them kinks (tropes

¹⁹ See Busse (2013) for an elaboration on this phenomenon.

intrinsic to explicit content). There was also an option if the respondent was not familiar with a particular trope. The results of this survey, though having limitations and not being representative of the entire fanfic-reading population, elucidate some key points of the respondents' experience. Though the survey was not catered specifically to slash readers, 87% of the respondents claimed to read male/male pairings, the most popular category within the survey, so it is possible to analyse the data with this group in mind. Another important aspect of the data is that it takes into consideration the popularity of tropes within readership—as we have seen with explicit content, we can assume that a popular trope is not necessarily equivalent to a prolific trope. Further on I will make use of basic quantitative data to arrive at the choice of tropes for my corpus, but this initial mixed methods approach is fundamental to provide a better understanding of the appeal (or lack thereof) of certain tropes.

Figure 5 (Annex 2) shows the ten most popular tropes found on the survey—that is, the ones which received the most "Yay!" responses. That "Friends to lovers" is the most broadly enjoyed trope is worthy of discussion. One could present the argument that the popularity of this trope is one of the reasons why, to this day, the buddy slash model is considered the default in academia. Favouritism towards similar tropes such as "Teamwork" and "Fluff" seems to corroborate this idea, as well as the absence on the top of the list of tropes related to enmity and/or power dynamics, e.g. "Enemies/Rivals to Lovers" or "Rentboy/Prostitute/Escort AU"²⁰.

On the other end of the spectrum, figure 6 (Annex 2) represents the ten most disliked tropes, the ones which received the most "Nay!" responses. This collection of tropes goes against the notion that (slash) fanfiction is inherently subversive. Most of the tropes that fell into this group, from rape to bestiality, include themes that are taboo, frowned upon, and overall non-conformative. In other words, some of the queerest possibilities within fanfiction. These results of course are not equivalent with saying that these tropes are not used in fanfiction, or are not respected by those who do not

²⁰ These two tropes landed #21 and #102 on the list, respectively.

personally like it (these were, after all, the responses of averagely half the respondents, so the other half was either indifferent to them or actively enjoyed them), but it is indicative that queerness is not as inherent to slash fanfiction as we would have been led to believe by academia.

Analysing the information thus presented, not only in the survey but also in the academic works here discussed, we arrive at the conclusion that the presence of same-sex desire is possibly the only element which truly unites all slash fics, as generalisations of any kind end up bypassing non-stereotypical works. Thrupkaew (2003) sums up this problem rather well: "The more slash—and slash theory—I read, the more convinced I became that no one analysis could explain the varieties of slash, the bent of all slash writers, the political leanings, the gender fuckings, the story rogerings that happen on a daily basis on the Internet." Thus, though a truly comprehensive analysis of slash might be in fact a utopian endeavour, efforts in this direction, when possible, must strive to branch out in order to demonstrate a more accurate representation of this space. I have chosen to do so by constructing my corpus using different tropes and different ships within one fandom, thus broadening the view of slash in it. The choice of the fandom itself is another attempt at bringing diversity to my analysis: Harry Potter is one of the biggest fandoms in contemporary Western society, both in terms of overall number of works produced as well as in variety of pairings (due to the large number of characters in canon). This combination allows for one of the widest samples of combination of tropes and ships, and though my corpus is only comprised of six of these combinations, their high visibility within the fandom will hopefully provide a reasonable insight into slash in general. In the following Methodology subsection I intend to elaborate on my choice of corpus, as well as the procedures undertaken in order to collect the data.

I wish to end my section on fanfiction with an illustrative account by Henry Jenkins. In a co-authored article entitled "Normal Female Interest in Men Bonking:

Selection from The Terra Nostra Underground and Strange Bedfellows", Jenkins talks about his personal experience of having to define slash:

When I try to explain slash to non-fans, I often reference that moment in *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* where Spock is dying and Kirk stands there, a wall of glass separating the two longtime buddies. Both of them are reaching out towards each other, their hands pressed hard against the glass, trying to establish physical contact. They both have so much they want to say and so little time to say it. Spock calls Kirk his friend, the fullest expression of their feelings anywhere in the series. Almost everyone who watches that scene feels the passion the two men share, the hunger for something more than what they are allowed. And, I tell my nonfan listeners, slash is what happens when you take away the glass. (Green et al. 2003: 19)

The metaphor of the glass, of a barrier separating slash from reality, makes itself extremely valuable when we consider the spatial quality of fanfiction. Before that comparison is drawn, though, a brief history of spatial theory is in order.

1.3. Spatiality Studies

For most of its history as a disciplinary subject, geography was considered in absolute terms. Cartesian thought shaped our objective perception of space, that is, space as purely *res extensa*, as the Kantian *a priori* category (Lefebvre 1974). This oftentimes resulted in an opposition of geography and history, as well as one of space and time, with the subsequent primacy of the latter constructs over the former ones. History relayed the temporal sequence of so-called important actions, and geography was merely the secondary, passive description of where these actions physically occurred. Such ideology culminated in the nineteenth century with what Foucault (1986) termed a "great obsession" with history. This subjugation of geography was

intrinsically linked to notions of imperialism and capitalism typical of the modern era, for "[t]he projection of Western power across the globe necessitated a Cartesian conceptualization of space as one that could be easily crossed, a function well performed by the cartographic graticule" (Warf and Arias 2009: 62). Post-colonialism and postmodern globalisation brought about a relativisation of these concepts, with the help of the introduction of theories such as Marxism and Critical Social Theory. During the sixties, influential French philosophers such as Lefebvre and Foucault revolutionised the way we understand urban space as affecting social behaviour, bringing forth new concepts such as spatial justice (Soja 2010). Though epistemological changes have been made since the time of Descartes, the process is recent enough that "[s]pace still tends to be treated as fixed, dead, undialectical; time as richness, life, dialectic, the revealing context for critical social theorization" (Foucault 1980: 70).

This relativisation of geography occurred in the late twentieth century with what has been called the "Spatial Turn". It is important to highlight that the Spatial Turn was not a movement against history, but first and foremost an attempt to give equal value to the spatial and historical perspectives. Alternatively, it highlights how "we need to both historicize space and spatialize history" (Elden 2001: 3). The Spatial Turn aimed at seeing geography not only as a practical field, but as a tool to understand how space is relevant to the building of society, or in the words of Warf and Arias, as an effort to propagate the idea that "space is a social construction relevant to the understanding of the different histories of human subjects and to the production of cultural phenomena" (2009: 1).

A few key concepts of the Spatial Turn become clear with this definition. First, the notion that it is an interdisciplinary effort: no longer should there be a separation of geography and history into mutually exclusive binaries such as empirical-conceptual or objective-subjective, nor should there be hierarchical values placed upon them, but instead an intimate correlation between them is needed in order to create a deeper, more complete comprehension of the functioning of society. One of the most influential current spatial thinkers, Soja leans on Lefebvre's work to make the argument that social theory must rely on a triangular foundation of time, space, and social structure, none of these concepts being more important than the other. The concept Soja creates to address this issue, which he calls *Thirdspace* (1996), indicates a movement away from the binary of space and time, towards a "thirding-as-Othering" approach that allows for a more nuanced perspective of the construction of social spaces.

This socio-historic-spatial trialectic is essential to understanding the Spatial Turn. Within this theory, space ceases being the Kantian a priori category and starts being seen as a constant and active transformative process. Therefore, the notion of space being socially constructed becomes central to the field of spatiality. Lefebvre (1974) endeavours to put forth this theory by classifying three concurrent parts within the constitution of space: *spatial practice*—a more concrete understanding of space—, representations of space—an epistemological approach to space—, and spaces of representation-the actual communal practices that establish lived space. In this sense, the construct of "space" distances itself from that of "place", as it becomes evident that space, though partially shaped by physical boundaries, is also largely constructed by the cultural and sociological activities which combine to frame how we perceive social life (Black 2007). From that, it becomes clear that spatiality must be an interdisciplinary field, as has been proposed by Lefebvre and Soja, who believe in a "rebalancing of spatiality, historicality, and sociality as all-embracing dimensions of human life" (Soja 1996: 10). Just as it has been discussed before in regards to fan studies, spatiality is a lens with which to see various sides of the same phenomenon. For example, the spatial can be used in combination with sociology, information technology, politics, literature, architecture, and uncountable other areas to enlighten how these practices are socially constructed. Consequently, spaces of representation become the emphasis of Lefebvre's and Soja's work, not because they are more important, but due to a political choice: they are marginalised spaces, therefore "the chosen spaces for struggle, liberation, emancipation" (68).

The contrast of space and place deserves a more thorough examination. This is not a severance meant to create a new binary dichotomy, and to say that space is an abstract construct whereas place remains in the purely physical domain. Space and place are still both fluid categories, each of which integral to the construction of social relations. They do, however, operate in different instances towards this construction. As posited by Massey, if "the spatial is thought of in the context of space-time and as formed out of social interrelations at all scales, then one view of a place is as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings" (1994: 5). That means that place is often thought of in more specific terms, be it on a local or global scale, while space is usually relegated to discussions concerning the organisation of a certain society. In other words, space as "the interlocking of 'stretched-out' social relations" (22), and place as "particular moments in such intersecting social relations" (120).

Massey also notes how the notion of place usually comes embedded with gendered symbolic meaning. Western history of delegating different roles for men—the provider who goes out and brings home the bacon—and women—the nurturer who stays at home and takes care of the children—translates into romanticised ideas of nostalgia that are linked to the private sphere and which can be synthesised in the old saying "There's no place like home". This dichotomy of the universal being viewed as masculine while the local is viewed as feminine (and consequently belittled) is, alongside all of the other dichotomies thus far discussed, one that should be dispelled. Especially in the context of the present study, which discusses a female-dominated practice, it is important that these preconceived ideas are not carried out, though at the same time keeping in mind that gender does indeed play a role in the construction of space.

It has been noted that globalisation and postmodernity permitted the Spatial Turn, and nothing represents these two concepts as perfectly as the advent of the Internet. A culmination of technological advances in the late twentieth century provided that, in a short period of time, Internet access was made available to large amounts of people at increasingly more accessible prices, which has propelled an information revolution on a scale not seen since the invention of the press. Being a recent development as it is, there is no consensus regarding long-term effects of large scale Internet use, but nevertheless it is undeniable that this invention has changed the way we perceive the world and, consequently, how we create spaces.

Considering that cyberspace is not a physical, concrete place, much has been said in the means of comparing it with utopia. Indeed they are both "non-spaces", that is, spaces of nowhere (Robins 1995: 136). As is the case with utopia, cyberspace is at times seen as an ideal place, a "global village" that will recover the experience of community in society. As it was in the original concept of More, the postmodern utopia of cyberspace is more concerned with space than time, a prospect made possible by the Spatial Turn. However, not everything about cyberspaces is considered in a positive light. As summarised by Robins, "we can see virtual culture, then, in terms of utopia (...). But we can also see virtual culture from an opposite perspective: instead of hopes for a new world, we would then see dissatisfactions about, and rejection of, an old one" (1995: 152). Ultimately, of course, it is impossible to completely dissociate the virtual and the "real" worlds, as the implications of this technology are given by real institutions, and online practices in general have implications on our social and political lives. The seductive idea of escapism to an online alternate reality remains, in the end, unreachable, therefore utopian.

Some level of escapism is possible, however: maybe not from the "real world", but from our self-identity within it. The fact that cyberspace allows for anonymity means that completely new identities can be forged in an online space. According to Lanier (1990), societal constraints of race, gender, class, and many others signify that "not only are we forced to live inside the physical world, we are made of it and we are almost powerless in it" (apud Robins 1995: 139). Therefore, it is tempting to inhabit a space in which you can omit any undesirable part of your identity, or create a new one entirely. For that reason, it is common to see studies of cyberspace within fields of resistance such as feminist studies²¹. Sherman and Judkins, for instance, argue that cyberspace facilitates the fragmentation of self which is so central to postmodernity, as it presents the allure of hiding in a perfect virtual reality which is more comfortable than the imperfect reality (apud Robins 1995: 136). This mobile space becomes one in which people are (somewhat) free to enact their innermost desires and shun unwanted real-life interactions with little to no consequences. On the one hand, this can be seen as utopian in the sense that people are judged on their character rather than on any pre-determined characteristic; on the other, it can prove detrimental, as the possibility of anonymity online can sometimes lead to amoral behaviour—the widespread pandemic of cyberbullying attesting to that.

Indeed, this duality implicates that not all analyses of cyberspace are utopian. Han describes it as what he calls "the transparency society", one in which this accessibility leads not to freedom, but to imprisonment, as "[w]herever information is very easy to obtain, as is the case today, the social system switches from trust to control" (2015: vii). This control is exercised mainly through the use of social media, which Han calls "digital panoptica"²². Within this theory, people surveil each other, in a system that is all the more shatterproof because they are not forced to do so, but instead want to expose every aspect of their lives constantly. But cyberspace is not, however, always viewed in these extreme poles of utopia or dystopia. At times, it can be viewed as neither an ideal nor a faulty space, but merely a different one. For that perspective, we must delve into the concept of heterotopia.

The term "heterotopia" was coined²³ by Michel Foucault, who introduced it in a lecture to a group of architects in 1967. Its notes were later published (without the author's revision) by the French journal *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* under the

²¹ See Haraway (1985) for a discussion of "a world without gender" as utopian tradition in a cybernetic context.

²² The concept of panopticon will be elaborated upon later in this subchapter.

²³ In a spatial context, as it is also used in medicine.

name "Of Other Spaces"²⁴ in 1984, and translated into English in 1986. Foucault, who as previously mentioned helped push forward the Spatial Turn, believed that the twentieth century would be "above all the epoch of space" (1986: 1). He certainly endeavoured to make it so, his contribution to the field of spatiality studies being to this day fundamental. In "Of Other Spaces" Foucault made clear that, "among all these sites [that make up the space we live in, he was] interested in certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to denigrate, mirror, or reflect" (3). There are two types of spaces which fall into Foucault's description: the first one is the utopia, the imagined no-place that we have already discussed. The second type is that which Foucault calls the "effectively enacted utopia", that is, real counter-sites which directly converse with the other spaces that surround them. These spaces are the ones Foucault calls heterotopias. Foucault illustrates these two spaces by giving the example of the mirror. The mirror is at the same time utopia and heterotopia: the image it produces is not actually real, it is only a reflection of what is real, and therein lies its utopian quality; concurrently, the mirror itself does exist in reality, and it is "where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that [we] occupy" (4). It is at the same time a virtual and a concrete place—a utopia and a heterotopia.

As for how these heterotopias are constituted, Foucault also delineates two main categories. First there are *heterotopias of crisis*, "primitive" heterotopias that exist to contain people who need to be separated from predominant society for a specific period in their lives, usually a transitional period such as adolescence or pregnancy. According to Foucault, these heterotopias are somewhat declining in modern society. In turn, there has been a rise in what he calls *heterotopias of deviation*. Such spaces serve as contention to individuals who do not conform to the rules of hegemonic society. These heterotopias can take many forms depending on the transgressive nature of their inhabitants, such as the psychiatric hospital or the prison. The aforementioned

²⁴ In the original French: "Des Espaces Autres".

panopticon, originally designed by Bentham in the eighteenth century and also analysed by Foucault in his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975)²⁵, is a central construct behind the ideal heterotopian prison.

This structure, composed of a central guard tower surrounded by a circular arrangement of cells, meant that the guards could have unlimited sight of all prisoners, and in turn, due to the design of the guard tower, meant that the prisoners were never aware of when they were being watched. In theory, this supposed omniscience would result in increased discipline in the prisoners, who would behave as if they were constantly being observed, even if they were not. Foucault (1975), in an argument which would later be recovered by Han, used the panopticon as a metaphor for the encompassing idea that social control affects all members of society, be it represented by authority figures or institutions. According to him, the panopticon would prove to be the ideal prison for it combined "an organ of surveillance generalised and constant, (...) the putting into place of a complete discipline of life, time and energies (...) [and a] definition of norms [and] exclusion and rejection of those who do not conform" (apud Elden 2001: 149). This aspect of physical and moral isolation of non-conformative beings, which Foucault also highlights as occurring to the mad in psychiatric hospitals, is paramount to the establishment of heterotopias and to the importance of space in the exercise of power.

Returning then to his description of heterotopias in "Of Other Spaces" (an effort he calls "heterotopology"), Foucault states that, be them heterotopias of crisis or deviation, there are certain principles all heterotopias share²⁶. The first of these principles is that heterotopias are essential to the very construction of society or, in his words, "there is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias" (4). Considering the etymological definition of heterotopia as a "different space", it becomes obvious that any and all cultures comprised of multiple spaces will

²⁵ In the original French: Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison.

²⁶ These principles will return in the Methodology discussion subchapter.

contain heterotopias. The second principle relates to that conclusion as it claims that, in the natural evolutionary course of any particular society, its heterotopias may take on different functions through time. To illustrate this principle, Foucault gives the example of the cemetery: once held in high regards, the cemetery was placed at the heart of the city. However, with the overall ideological shift in the perception of death from gift to curse, cemeteries were consequently relegated to the outskirts of towns. More recently still, the stigma of death somewhat subdued, cemeteries were allowed back into the configuration of the city, "no longer the sacred and immortal heart of the city, but the other city (...)" (6). In the same fashion, evolving cultural relations and technological advancements result both in the extinction of obsolete heterotopias as well as the birth of new ones.

The third heterotopian element he introduces is that of its capacity for juxtaposition. In any given heterotopian place, different spaces are superimposed, oftentimes producing a jarring effect. A garden which contains plants from around the world, or a museum with works of art from various eras are examples of the juxtaposition of heterotopias. These same examples can also justify Foucault's next heterotopian principle, which posits that heterotopias are intricately connected to the concept of time, and are therefore also heterochronies. This aspect can be viewed in heterotopias which amass an accumulation of time within one place, such as the aforementioned museum, but also in heterotopias that expose time at its most fleeting and ephemeral, such as the carnival. In a way, heterochronies exist outside of time, as they do not follow the rules that pertain it.

The following principle denotes a restrictive quality in heterotopias. This principle, which Foucault called a "system of opening and closing" (7), served to separate the heterotopia from the outside hegemonic space—there must be a barrier separating them, either a physical or an ideological one. Of course, doors work both ways: the same barrier that can keep people out can also keep them in, and how each heterotopia is viewed in this regard depends on the subjective perspective of its barrier.

For example, while an asylum is created to ostracise the mad, a sacred place such as a temple is constructed to enclose divinity within. This is correlated with the sixth and last principle Foucault describes, as it considers heterotopias must have a function vis-à-vis the outside space. In this view, a heterotopia can function to oppose, contradict, and revert the values of the dominant space, or else it can expose in order to reaffirm these same values.

After dissecting this cardinal construct of spatial studies, and armed with the previously discussed notions of fan studies, it seems relevant to pose my research problem, which links these two fields to ask how is the fandom space of slash fanfiction understood in regards to its heterotopian potential. Firstly, considering all of the heterotopian principles thoroughly delineated above, I argue that Foucault could have included a seventh one, regarding a characteristic he definitely touched upon even though he did not give it its own distinct category. For this imagined seventh principle, I would claim that heterotopias are more than spaces: they are communal spaces (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008). Undoubtedly, considering the definition of space brought about by the Spatial Turn (with the aid of Foucault himself), and keeping in mind key terms such as Lefebvre's spaces of representation and Soja's Thirdspace, we come to the conclusion that to think of space is to think of the social construction of space. This implies that spaces, and that must include heterotopian spaces as well, exist when they are constructed by social relations; consequently, they also cease to exist the moment those relations are no longer in practice. The opposite is also true, as "all social relations become real and concrete, a part of our lived social existence, only when they are spatially 'inscribed'-that is, concretely represented-in the social production of social space" (Soja 1996: 46). Slash fanfiction definitely falls within the scope of communal practice. As part of fandom, and specifically online fandom, fanfiction exists to be shared by fans for fans, insofar as there is interest in a particular source text. For the communal practice of fanfiction to be "real and concrete", there must then also be a space of fanfiction.

Speaking of fans, it is natural to think of them in a heterotopian context, considering how they have been historically segregated in society. Due to the pathologising view of fans, who have been (and sometimes still are) ridiculed for their passionate engagement, there is a tendency to relegate them to spaces of their own, excluded from normative society. This segregation refers to Foucault's fifth heterotopian principle, as well as Jenkins' glass metaphor: ultimately, there is a barrier between fans and "moral people". What is interesting to realise is that this separation is implemented from both sides. As Cenzatti (2008) notes, "[m]odern heterotopias, then, are 'other spaces' on the one hand because they are made other by the top-down making of places of exclusion; on the other hand, they are made other by the deviant groups that live in and appropriate those places" (77). In the context of slash fanfiction, fans are segregated to fan-specific spaces for not conforming to the oppressive heteronormative, patriarchal values of society; at the same time, they find safety in these fan spaces, not wanting them to be intruded by outsiders²⁷. To quote back from Tosenberger, fanfiction becomes a space where fans are free to do " strange and unusual things".

It is also undeniable that this space is incredibly specialised, and we can conceive its relational aspect to other spaces in differing magnitudes. Slash fanfiction is a subsection of fanfiction in general, and though there are many similarities between fanfiction genres, the communal groups formed in any of them usually remain somewhat enclosed in themselves, having little intersection with one another. A person who likes slash will probably have friends who are also slashers, people with whom they will discuss slash and practices related to it and not, for example, het and its consequent intrinsic qualities²⁸. Broadening this panorama, we can oppose fanfiction to the plethora of other fannish practices present in fandom, from cosplaying to fan

²⁷ Minkel (2014) details one recent case of the awkwardness that takes place when clashing fan content with The Powers That Be:

https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2014/10/why-it-doesn-t-matter-what-benedict-cumberb atch-thinks-sherlock-fan-fiction, accessed 21/03/19.

²⁸ Arguably, there might be a bigger interception of slash and femslash than among other genres.

activism, fan art, or filk, to name a few. Within the realm of fandom, fanfiction is one of its many different spaces, that is, heterotopias. More broadly still, fandom itself is a heterotopia of overall society, based on the very history of separatism mentioned above. In short, this encompassing view allows for a veritable matryoshka of heterotopias to be considered.

Slash fanfiction is a heterotopia of deviation in more ways than one. It is comprised of, in accordance with Foucault's definition, people who do not conform to certain societal norms. However, since these norms are in the domain of sexuality, another influential work of Foucault comes to mind. In The History of Sexuality²⁹ (1976), Foucault highlights certain sexualities which are deemed "perversions": the sexuality of the child, of the mentally ill, of the homosexual. These sexualities have been thoroughly shunned to the periphery of normative society, analysed only through the psychiatric gaze. I would argue that the sexuality of the fan has also suffered the same discrimination, referring back to its history of contempt in mainstream media and pathologising academic works. Even though steps are progressively being made in the interest of including these marginal sexualities in a more general conversation, they are still inserted "in the machinery of production and consumption as niche markets, as pools of labour, as sources for new commodifications" (Cenzatti 2008: 79). As of yet, these groups are still considered other, different. Naturally, they exist nonetheless, and different spaces-heterotopias-have been created to accommodate them. As Foucault notes, these social relations are imbued with power relations, and wherever there is power, there is resistance.

The last point I wish to argue in favour of slash fanfiction as a heterotopia is in regards to its resilience. This space has undergone many structural changes since its inception in the 1960s. From the limitations of being printed in zines to the trial and error methods of the incipient Internet age and until now, with the use of comprehensive tools such as AO3, fanfiction space has taken various shapes and forms to adapt to

²⁹ In the original French: L'Histoire de la Sexualité.

current environments. Considering the Internet develops at galloping speeds, I have no doubt many shifts are still to come in this regard. For now, however, it seems relevant to analyse how the space of slash fanfiction is constructed within the contemporary environment. The present study is an effort to demystify the heterotopia, a space that, as Soja has argued, has been deemed mysterious and clandestine (apud Cenzatti 2008), and which some, such as Genocchio, believe "can never be fully understood, since we cannot know the 'other' and the group-specific cultures, codes, interactions and the 'unknowable and secretive' spaces the 'other' produces" (apud Cenzatti 2008: 82). In order to accomplish that demystification, it seems logical that the most reasonable approach would be to present an informed inner perspective of this other. A similar idea to this was postulated by Russ when discussing the analyses made of explicit fanfiction:

I'm convinced, after reading through more than fifty volumes of K/S material (most of it "X-rated") that only those for whom a sexual fantasy "works," that is, those who are aroused by it, have a chance of telling us to what particular set of conditions that fantasy speaks, and can analyze how and why it works and for whom. Sexual fantasy materials are like icebergs; the one-tenth that shows above the surface is no reliable indicator of the size or significance of the whole thing. Sexual fantasy that doesn't arouse is boring, funny, or repellent, and unsympathetic outsiders trying to decode these fantasies (or any others) will make all sorts of mistakes (Russ 1985: 89).

This theory can be expanded to the study of fanfiction itself, and in fact to any and all heterotopias: only those who are actively a part of it are able to truly understand its intricate mechanisms. This is why autoethnographies are so popular in fan studies—distant, detached perspectives simply cannot work out the nooks and crannies of such a widely complex space. To further elaborate on this, a more concrete delineation of my research problem is due, and it shall begin with a detailed account of this study's methodology.

1.4. Methodology

The present study constitutes an autoethnography which makes uses of a mixed methods approach to analyse data collected through the use of a computer-based application programming interface combined with participant observation. Such analysis forms an instrumental case study of the *Harry Potter* fandom via a specialised corpus of six individual works of fanfiction, with the ultimate aim of providing construct validity to slash as a heterotopian space. Shaping this research as an autoethnography allows me to combine my epistemological knowledge obtained in academia and my empirical knowledge as a fan to enhance the descriptive validity of my analysis. It is also why I make use of participant observation to help me make choices in regards to sampling. This sample was extracted from the population of interest of this research, which is comprised of the works published in the website Archive Of Our Own in the fandom of *Harry Potter*. In order to arrive at the reasoning behind this optimal population, it is first necessary to compare the pool of available platforms.

The space of fanfiction has greatly evolved since its inception in the mid-twentieth century. The advent of the Internet revolutionised how we share information, and it has affected fanfiction in such a profound way that we nowadays cannot think of it without thinking of an online context. Starting in the late nineties, hundreds of thousands of websites surged to give fannish experience a bigger stage for communication and distribution of content. In the myriad of available sites for fandom space, there are many in which fans post, read, and share fanfiction. Some of the most prominent sites include the blogging platforms LiveJournal (henceforth LJ) and Tumblr, as well as fiction-based websites such as Fanfiction.net (FFN), Wattpad, and the Archive Of Our Own (AO3).

LJ, incredibly popular in the first decade of the twenty-first century, was revolutionary in the expansion of fannish experience through use of the Internet. Allowing for individual blogs as well as mediated communities in which fans could interact based on a specific fandom or subfandom, LJ was one of the first global fandom spaces. Fans used their own blogs to expose their fannish passion and gathered at the communities to interact, create meaningful bonds, start wank, obtain fresh information (thus establishing in earnest the culture of spoilers), and, of course, share transformative content. As a blogging space, however, it lost momentum with the 2007 launch and subsequent growth of the social media platform Tumblr.

Tumblr, even though it is a purely individual blogging space and cannot be fractured into communities, is still considered one of the current biggest online fandom spaces, with more than 450 million individual accounts as of Jan. 2019³⁰. Neither LJ nor Tumblr are exclusively fandom spaces, however, and though Tumblr is a relevant source for sharing fandom content, its poor tagging system and somewhat incompatible design with long-text format make it so that it is not the most common fanfiction hosting platform. That job falls for the three juggernaut websites FFN, AO3, and Wattpad.

FFN was launched in 1998 as the first major website catered specifically for sharing fanfiction. It remains to this day the biggest online fanfiction platform, with over ten million registered users and works published in over forty languages. However, several limitations to the website, such as prohibition of sexually explicit content (first implemented in 2002 with the website massively deleting works in an episode now referenced to as "The Purge"), as well as a ban on certain genres such as Real Person Fiction (RPF) and Songfic, resulted in a migration of fans to other platforms such as FictionAlley (specific for the *Harry Potter* fandom), Adultfanfiction.net (for explicit works) and, more recently, AO3.

³⁰ <u>https://www.statista.com/statistics/256235/total-cumulative-number-of-tumblr-blogs/</u>, accessed 10/03/19.

AO3 is one of the projects of the non-profit Organization for Transformative Works (OTW), an organisation founded in 2007 "to serve the interests of fans by providing access to and preserving the history of fanworks and fan culture in its myriad forms. [Its founders] believe that fanworks are transformative and that transformative works are legitimate."³¹ AO3 went into open beta on Nov. 14 2009, and to this day has not been properly launched. Nonetheless, it is utilised by over two million registered users, and contains over five million individual fanworks. Differently than any other competitive platform, AO3 was conceptualised by fans, for fans—it is the only platform of the ones mentioned which does not run ads, being maintained exclusively through donations and volunteer work. That, combined with the greater freedom of expression provided (allowing for RPF and explicit content, for example—the website suffered a boom in registration shortly after FFN's second X-rated purge in 2012), makes AO3 the preferred fic-posting platform for many fans. However, one other platform has been gaining attention in fandom circles: Wattpad.

The platform Wattpad was launched in 2006 and, differently from FFN and AO3, it was not initially conceived as a fanfic-hosting website. Wattpad also hosts original fiction, a fact which makes it impossible to calculate the exact number of users which comprise the website's fanfiction category. Wattpad claims to have over thirty million fanfiction works, but that is in fact the total number of individual chapters, and each story commonly consists of multiple chapters, meaning that the overall accurate number of discrete works is unknown; still, it remains an impressive figure. A piece of fanfiction-related data which is actually possible to be gathered from Wattpad is the popularity of different fandoms within the website³²: it is clear that the platform is dominated by RPF, specifically bandom, even more specifically the One Direction fandom. Basically, fandom space in Wattpad is so specialised that if a fan is not a part of one of its very few large fandoms, they will likely not use the platform. Advantageous

³¹ <u>https://archiveofourown.org/about</u>, accessed 10/03/19.

³² https://www.vulture.com/2015/03/fanfiction-guide.html#stats, accessed 11/03/19.

features of Wattpad, however, especially when considering fanfiction as a space, include its capacity for collaborative work—"inline commenting" lets readers share input throughout the story and help the original writer improve it if they so choose—as well as legal profiting from fanfiction—the Wattpad Futures program "helps writers earn money by inserting ads between chapters of their Wattpad story. Every time a reader views an ad, the writer earns money"³³. On the other hand, the high fandom-specificity and diverging demographics (approximately 45% of Wattpad users are in the 13-18 age group³⁴, whereas 61% of AO3 users fall in the 19-34 age group³⁵), as well as the combination of transformative and original fiction, means that Wattpad would not be the most appropriate archive to gather data for this research.

Considering the pros and cons of working with each of these fanfiction spaces, I was able to make an informed decision about the most appropriate website from which to gather data. As I want to analyse fanfiction, using a site which hosts other types of content (such as LJ and Tumblr) would be counter-productive. Within fanfiction, I wish to look closely at slash: both Wattpad and FFN tend more into het, whereas approximately half of AO3's works are labelled slash. FFN has by far the largest amount of *Harry Potter* fanfiction (over 800,000 works, compared to "just" over 200,000 at AO3) but, other than the fact that AO3 has more slash and allows for more types of content (in particular explicit content), FFN has been consistently dropping in popularity in opposition to AO3 and Wattpad. Combining all of this information, it is made clear that AO3 is the optimal website from which to retrieve the necessary data. What follows now is a dissection of the inner workings of this website.

33

https://company.wattpad.com/blog/2016/08/17/writers-can-earn-cash-with-in-story-ads-on-wattpad, accessed 22/03/19.

³⁴

http://destinationtoast.tumblr.com/post/117753986884/toastystats-some-deets-on-wattpad-the-lovely, accessed 10/03/19.

³⁵ <u>http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62805734754/age</u>, accessed 10/03/19.

The site's homepage (figure 7, Annex 2) includes an area for user login, as well as general information about the site, links for various types of search, a freeform search bar, and updates in the form of posts and tweets about the site's parent organisation, OTW. After logging in, information about the user such as username and post options appear in the upper-right corner, and the general statement about the website disappears. If the user has unread messages in their inbox (new comments on their own works or replies to comments they have posted), these also appear in the homepage.

By using the search bar or search categories, one is able to find works based on their title, author username, or any tags they may contain. When searching for works within a particular tag, the site provides multiple statistics in the form of a "sort and filter" search bar (figure 8, Annex 2), available in the right-hand side of any tag page of the website. This bar, as its name states, helps sort the works based on various clusters of tags. The search bar includes the following pre-determined tags (meaning that every work must contain at least one of the tags in each of these categories): Rating (divided into Teen And Up Audiences, General Audiences, Explicit, Mature, and Not Rated), Warning (No Archive Warnings Apply, Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death, Underage, and Rape/Non-Con), and Category (M/M, F/M, Gen, Multi, F/F, and Other). The Rating tags are mutually exclusive, meaning that only one at a time may be chosen for each work, while the Category and Warning tags can be cumulative.

The website also provides the space for freeform tags (optional tags, the author being able to use as many or as few as they desire, relying on canonical tags or writing up their own), which are bundled into Character tags, Relationship tags, and Additional tags. Canonical tags are those which are officially labelled by the website and which appear in search results: users can also resort to non-canonical tags when publishing their work, but these will not show up in search results unless they're wrangled. AO3 works with a team of volunteer tag wranglers who work continuously to relate non-canonical tagged works into canonical tags (for example, a fanwork tagged "ABO" will have to be wrangled to appear in the "Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics" canonical tag). It is also possible to filter works by excluding any freeform tags. When considering a specific work, other numerical data is provided, such as number of words, chapters, hits³⁶, kudos³⁷, bookmarks, and comments, as well as the date in which the work was published or last updated. For any one of these categories, readers are also able to sort in descending order, as well as alphabetical order for Author and Title. Lastly, the site permits visualisation of works in a specific language, the reader being able to select one language or language variety for works among 68 given options. The tag system of AO3, though at times flawed and incredibly complex, has a degree of thoroughness which greatly helped the sampling of my selected corpus.

Based on a population of 206,092³⁸ total works in the *Harry Potter* fandom tag, I selected a final specialised corpus of six works. For that, I began by using the Application Programming Interface (API) contained in the website Fandomstats.org to facilitate tag correlation and narrow down the scope of works. According to the website itself, "[t]he purpose of the API is to make it easy to fetch and display basic stats about any type of AO3 tag"³⁹. When inserting one or more AO3 tags into the website's search bar, it returns information in the form of charts (or in JavaScript Object Notation—JSON—format) regarding the most frequent fandoms, relationships, characters, and other freeform tags related to these tags, as well as a percentage of all works in these tags concerning the pre-defined rating, category, and warning tags. In short, the software "simply return[s] to you the same numbers that you [would] see in the AO3 Sort & Filter sidebar if you clicked on the tag on AO3—but without having to record the numbers by hand every time you want to check a tag, and in a format ready to be processed further". This approach allows for quicker data visualisation, but it also

³⁶ The total number of views in any particular work.

³⁷ Equivalent of Facebook's "like" button, readers leave kudos to express a positive reaction to an individual work.

³⁸ As of 22/03/19.

³⁹ <u>http://fandomstats.org/ao3-tag-stats</u>, accessed 22/03/19.

requires knowledge of the AO3 tagging system, as it only recognises canonical tags within the website—for example, searching for the tag Harry Potter/Draco Malfoy would produce no results, as the canonical AO3 tag for the ship is Draco Malfoy/Harry Potter.

This is where the participant observation aspect of the data collection comes in use, as I am capable to navigate the system better by making use of empirical knowledge to help me determine which useful tags to feed into the system. Even so, this way of accessing data solely by use of canonical tags renders inconsistency in values, for AO3's tag wrangling helps increase the number of total works in many cases. For instance, at one point feeding the canonical tag "Alternate Universe—Modern Setting" into Fandomstats gives me a total of 114,469 works; however, when searching for the same tag on AO3 itself, 116,266 results appear. As the job of tagging each work falls freely to their writer, one author might prefer not to use the canonical tag, tagging it as "Modern AU" instead. The unceasing work of tag wranglers on AO3 allows for this fic to be found within the canonical tag search anyway, though the same does not occur within Fandomstats, resulting in quantitative discrepancies.

The concept of self-tagging is crucial to understanding these statistical results, and is one of the biggest caveats in choosing to work with these numbers. An individual writer's discretion when tagging their work is how the whole system of tags operates on AO3, and it is therefore a widely subjective area. How one author chooses to tag (or not to tag) their work influences how this work will be found (or not found), and it is almost impossible to be completely accurate in this regard. Any and all tropes and elements present in a given work can be tagged or not, but the work will contain those theme regardless—for example, a Ron/Harry story which includes the two characters beginning a romantic relationship may be tagged with "Getting Together", but oftentimes it is not, and this alters the proportion of "Getting Together"-tagged fics overall. A central point of contention related to this is in regards to ship tagging: some authors tag for secondary/background ships, and these works end up appearing in the

ship tag even though they do not actually focus on this pairing. This is a very common occurrence for femslash ships, where het and slash ships inundate the femslash tags because they are frequently used even when appearing as minor pairings of bigger ships (for instance, there are 1,296 works tagged Luna Lovegood/Ginny Weasley on AO3, but only 640 of them are exclusively in the F/F category).

What, then, are the tags I chose to examine, and why? As previously mentioned, I have selected a final sample of six works, all considered Harry Potter slash. In the interest of variety, I wanted these six works to be from six different ships. Feeding the tags "Harry Potter-J. K. Rowling" and "M/M" to Fandomstats produced the results shown in figure 9 (Annex 2). As it can be noted there, het ships such as Ron/Hermione appear on the list regardless of my input of M/M, due to the aforementioned issue of tagging background ships-many Draco/Harry fics, for example, contain Ron/Hermione as a secondary ship, though the author may still tag their work as M/M. Still, it is possible to gather relevant data from these numbers, and as such I have conducted a process of analytic hierarchy to choose the following ships from this list: Harry Potter/Draco Malfoy, Sirius Black/Remus Lupin, Harry Potter/Severus Snape, Harry Potter/Tom Riddle, and Scorpius Malfoy/Albus Severus Potter. Based on my own empirical knowledge, I made the choice of adding a slash ship which does not appear on this list to complete my corpus: Fred Weasley/George Weasley. These ships will be henceforth referred to as, in order of mention, Drarry, Wolfstar⁴⁰, Snarry, Tomarry, Scorbus, and Twincest⁴¹. Now it is necessary to explain my choice of tropes regarding each ship.

A crucial analytic resource I was inspired by when collecting my data came from a grid referencing the characteristics of heterotopian spaces in a comparative

⁴⁰ A rare ship name that is not an amalgamation of the characters' names, likely due to the inability of mashing the rhyming names Sirius and Remus. Instead, the ship name refers to characteristics of the two characters, as one is a werewolf and the other is named after the brightest star in the night sky.

⁴¹ Rather than including the characters' names, an amalgamation instead of the words "Twins" and "Incest".

fashion⁴². Based on the principles originally delineated by Foucault, the characteristics are as follows: Ambiguous, Relational/Discursive, Disruptive of Space, Disruptive of Time (Heterochronia), Juxtaposed, and Restrictive. These six categories are what led me to comprise my final corpus of six fics, enabling me to pay attention to each individual category discretely. Making use of participant observation with the aid of Fandomstats analytics, I arrive at a final selection of six tropes commonly used in the *Harry Potter* slash fandom which I believe best represent each heterotopian category. It is important to note that, hopefully, all of these works will contain more than one (or, ideally, all) of the mentioned categories, which would ultimately prove that *Harry Potter* slash in general is a heterotopian space. Nevertheless, each trope was chosen based on its overall popularity in the fandom as well as its relevance to one particular category of the grid. The final correlation is as follows:

CHARACTERISTIC	TROPE	SHIP
Ambiguous	Incest	Twincest
Disruptive of Time	Eighth Year	Drarry
Disruptive of Space	Muggle AU	Wolfstar
Juxtaposed	Time Travel	Tomarry
Relational/Discursive	Minor Character POV	Snarry
Restrictive	Veela	Scorbus

Table 1: Grid of *Harry Potter* slash fanfiction tropes and ships in relation to heterotopian characteristics

Before announcing the works themselves, it is necessary to explain the meaning behind the categories contained in each row of the table above. Firstly, in the left

⁴² This referenced material was conceptualised by Jonathan Lewis and is as-of-yet unpublished. It was gratefully shared by him in a private context and is used with permission.

column, I placed the six heterotopian characteristics. The ambiguous quality of a heterotopia relates to how it is viewed in opposition to the external hegemonic space. In many cases, the way those contained in the heterotopian space interpret it is different from the way it is seen from the outside. There is no inherently good or bad judgement of value in a heterotopia-it is merely a different place. Based on that definition, I looked for a trope of fanfiction which could potentially have instances of negative or positive reaction, depending on the position of the interlocutor as coming from inside or outside the community. I arrived then at the trope of incest, a practice which is widely frowned upon in general society, but which is embraced, or at least accepted, in fanfiction spaces (usually under the fandom motto that "Your Kink Is Not My Kink But Your Kink Is Okay"). Within the Harry Potter fandom, incest is usually seen within the Malfoy and Weasley families⁴³, and a search in Fandomstats of the tags "Harry Potter-J. K. Rowling" and "incest" denounced the ship Twincest as the most prolific. Not only that influenced my decision, but also the fact that the ship is somewhat infamous in the fandom, with the notorious episode of the Phelps twins (real-life brothers who played Fred and George on the Harry Potter movies) posing for a photograph holding signs which said "Twincest is wrong" and "Twins against twincest" ⁴⁴. The polemic history and continuing popularity of this ship within the trope are what led me to choose it for the first heterotopian category.

Next, we must consider how heterotopias are disruptive spaces. There is a break which separates it from the hegemonic space, and that break can be presented as a disruption of time, space, or both. When considering a disruption of time, we may think of a heterotopia as existing for either a brief period—Foucault gives the example of a festival—or be representative of the accumulation of time, such as a library. They may also cease to exist at any moment. When considering this heterotopian element in the form of a trope, I knew instantly exactly which one I had to choose: Hogwarts eighth

⁴³ See Tosenberger (2007) for a detailed account of this phenomenon.

⁴⁴ LJ user ex_lumos_sol804, who took the photo, provides a bit of context behind it: <u>https://afamilyaffair.livejournal.com/30009.html</u>, accessed 21/03/19.

year. In this trope, characters from Harry's school year, who did not have the opportunity to finish their seventh and last year at Hogwarts due to the ongoing war, return to school for a so-called "eighth year". This was in no point mentioned in canon, but is nonetheless one of the fandom's most famous tropes. Fandomstats reveals that, for Drarry, "Hogwarts Eighth Year" appears as the fifth most frequent freeform tag, only falling behind the generic tags of fluff, romance, angst, and humor. Considering that Drarry is the most prolific *Harry Potter* ship on AO3, and that Hogwarts eighth year is such an emblematic trope for the ship, it was paramount that it be used as one of the analysed tropes. However, it is important to note how much the tag serves the purpose of demonstrating the heterotopian category of disruption of time. In canon, there is no such thing as an "eighth year"—this is a period of time completely detached from the hegemonic space, a fact which ultimately grants it heterotopian, and specifically heterochronian status.

Concerning disruption of space, one must consider the isolation of heterotopias. As I mentioned above, heterotopias cannot be considered in isolation, that is, without taking stock of the outside space, but that does not mean they are not isolated, that is, spatially (oftentimes physically) separated from the remaining space. In *Harry Potter* there is a very clear spatial separation in canon, as the main character transits between two worlds: the (ordinary, human) muggle world and the wizarding world. Cases have been made for considering Hogwarts itself and the wizarding world in general a heterotopia (Cantrell 2010, Froese 2016), but in the context of fanfiction, in which the wizarding world is the norm, I consider the muggle world to be the one which is heterotopian. For that, I chose the trope "Alternate Universe—Muggle" (henceforth Muggle AU) as representative of the heterotopian disruption of space in slash fanfiction. This AU, like any other AU, places the characters in a different setting from the one they are originally placed in. The AU is one of the most common tropes used throughout fanfiction, fans from every type of media being interested in the dynamics of their favourite characters when removed from their comfort zones—from *Supernatural's*

Dean and Castiel working together in a coffeeshop to *Star Wars*' Rey and Kylo Ren far, far away from their home galaxy, AUs abound. In *Harry Potter*, Muggle AUs are some of the most common—the characters being stripped of their magic and made to live like regular people is an enticing prospect, especially when the characters' actual canonical lives are sometimes too dire to deal with.

Wolfstar is the clearest example of this: best friends as teenagers, doubt and the pressure of war tore the two apart, as Sirius was framed for the murder of James and Lily Potter, remaining in Azkaban prison for twelve years until his escape on the third novel of the series, *Prisoner of Azkaban*. After a brief reunion, Sirius and Remus are once again forced apart as Sirius dies in the end of the fifth novel. That tragic backstory, combined with the physical and emotional toll of Remus being a werewolf, makes a good case for Wolfstar being one of the angstier ships in the fandom. This overwhelming level of canonical distress translates into the ship's fics, as they are more often than not written out of their misery and into Muggle AUs—within this tag, they are the most prolific slash ship (coming after only James Potter/Lily Evans Potter, who also have their filled quota of canonical angst). The popularity of this combination of trope and ship, compounded with the fact that Muggle AUs are the most glaring instance of disruption of space in *Harry Potter* fanfiction, led me to making it my final choice.

Another characteristic of heterotopias is related to the idea of juxtaposition. These spaces have the capacity to bring together groups which would not have the ability to coexist elsewhere. This can lead to the unsettling effect Foucault mentions in "Of Other Spaces". Thinking at a macro level, the very juxtaposition of the heterotopia in relation to its external space is also cause for a disturbance in its perception. I have chosen to represent the juxtaposed quality of the heterotopian slash fanfiction through the use of the trope of Time Travel, combined with the ship Tomarry. As is the case in the fic to be analysed, bringing Harry to the 1940s to share in Riddle's (not yet as Voldemort) school years would mean juxtaposing these two apparently incongruent

states: Harry's canonical trajectory, with the professors and fellow students he is known to have, and the new temporal background imposed by the fic. Time is perhaps the most blatant concept in relation to the jarring effect of juxtaposition, seeing as it is impossible to overlap different times. The fantastic universe of the *Harry Potter* saga, however, allows for seemingly impossible things to happen, and serves as the ideal background for the trope to take place. My choice of combining Time Travel and Tomarry was influenced by the raw data provided by Fandomstats that this is the most prolific ship to make use of this particular trope tag.

Following that comes the relational/discursive concept. When considering a space as heterotopian, one must undoubtedly think also about the bigger space which envelops it. Heterotopias do not exist in isolation, and they must present something new in relation to the total, whether in direct opposition to it or as an affirmation of its values. This relation is discursive in the way that it presents truths about the predominant space, be it by challenging its rules or subscribing to them. A trope I believe could exemplify this notion is that of minor character POV. In works that make use of this trope, a character which is secondary or accessory in canon gains prominence as they become the one whose perspective is shown. In Harry Potter, the titular character canonically serves this role, so any work of fanfiction that chooses another character as its focal point will be included within the trope. More often than not, fics will be told through the perspective of one (or both, if the POV is alternating, as a few of the fics chosen for the corpus are) of its main ship. This trope is representative of the relational/discursive category of heterotopias because the change of perspective undeniably will result in differences throughout the story, these changes being of the most varied sources. Choosing a representative character that differs in any way from Harry will provide new perspectives, and oftentimes new spaces to be explored. Choosing a character that did not attend Hogwarts as a Gryffindor, like Draco Malfoy, or was not at school at the same time as Harry, like Tom Riddle, or is even not of the

same gender, as Hermione Granger, results in an incalculable range of new scenarios to be explored.

My final choice in ship for this trope is Snarry, because Snape is the arguably the most mysterious character in the *Harry Potter* saga. He spends the first six novels as an apparently committed spy for Dumbledore, then proceeds to kill him at the end of the sixth book and proclaim his allegiance to Voldemort, then is finally revealed to have been a double-spy for the good side after all. To this day fans argue about the nature of his character, with fervorous supporters and haters present in equal amounts. This enormous freedom given to play with the character's morale guarantees that analysing Snape's perspective is highly valuable from a relational standpoint.

Lastly, we must consider the restrictive category of heterotopias. As we have seen, them being a separate place oftentimes translates into the instauration of a physical or ideological barrier. This implicates on the "system of opening and closing" mentioned by Foucault—entrance into a heterotopia depends on the permission of those who control it, who act as gatekeepers⁴⁵ of the heterotopian space. In a concrete heterotopia, such as the emblematic prison, this acts as a method of involuntary confinement, and can be considered a form of censorship; however, in fandom, and especially when considering slash fanfiction, its restrictive quality often comes to the benefit of fans, who pride themselves in being part of a special space. One of the ways in which this restriction makes itself visible is through language: as it has been showcased through the course of this dissertation, fans rely heavily on neologisms, using abbreviations, portmanteaus, and other linguistic techniques in order to create an ideological wall between their fannish space and the rest of society. If I were outside of a fannish space and said to a fellow fan "Yesterday I read a 50k slash ABO mpreg AU" ⁴⁶, no one but them would understand me, which creates an immediate safe space to

⁴⁵ See Bacon-Smith (1992) for a dissection of the gatekeeping practice in fandom.

⁴⁶ Translation: a 50,000-word male/male story set in an alternate universe and containing the elements of Alpha/Beta/Omega dynamics and male pregnancy. For more emic definitions, refer to Annex 1.

discuss fannish engagement outside of the judgement of non-participants. In the *Harry Potter* fandom there are some specific terms which allow for this process to occur. The one I chose is "Veela"—a magical species created by J. K. Rowling who is "described as looking like incredibly beautiful women, with moon-bright skin and white-gold hair (...) [and who] seem to be quite an irascible race" ("Veela", Harrypotter.fandom.org). A person who has never read the *Harry Potter* books would not know what a Veela is, and would therefore be excluded from the process of creating meaning for a Veela fic, which is the final trope of my corpus.

Now that all of the categories in the grid have been clarified, I can provide brief commentary on how I arrived at the specialised corpus of six fies. Armed with my correspondent ships and tropes of choice, I conducted individual searches on AO3, using its sort and filter tab to include the selected trope tag within the ship tag. Based on the resulting population, I sorted the works in descending number of kudos. The reasoning behind this decision is to attribute criterion-related validity to my data: the more kudos a particular story has, the more popular that particular execution of the trope is in the fandom, thus more representative of its overall category. In the interest of time optimisation, I chose to restrict my initial sampling to only include completed works with a maximum of 80,000 words. Within this restricted sample, I made use of participant observation in order to choose the final story that would represent each construct. I am unconscious of intentional bias in this approach, but nevertheless do not exclude the possibility of such bias. The corpus, then, is as follows. The format in which I present the fics is of, respectively, *fic title*, author username, pairing, word count, and date/period of publication.

- It's not the Wanting (but the Having), LadyMerlin, Fred Weasley/George Weasley, 2,236 words, published in 12/09/15.
- An Issue of Consequence, faithwood, Draco Malfoy/Harry Potter, 20,798 words, published between 09/04/14 and 15/04/14.

- A Cure For Nightmares, picascribit, Sirius Black/Remus Lupin, 36,083 words, published between 29/09/10 and 19/05/14.
- 4. *The Love of a Good Wizard*, SweetSorcery, Harry Potter/Tom Riddle, 75,027 words, published between 19/10/11 and 24/10/11.
- In the Red, Dinkel, Harry Potter/Severus Snape, 75,896 words, published between 26/04/13 and 23/06/13.
- From the Sea, WantsUnicorns, Scorpius Malfoy/Albus Severus Potter, 78,575 words, published in 27/04/12.

This comprises the final corpus of the present research. It is not my intention to provide a close reading of these works, or to imbue aesthetic validity to them. Instead, by making use of a text mining methodology, I will endeavour to extract qualitative data from these works which will hopefully corroborate the expected answer of my research problem that slash fanfiction is a heterotopian space. The positions contained in this research are not those of the works' respective authors, but only my own.

2. Data Analysis

2.1. Introduction

Throughout this chapter I intend to study how slash fanfiction constitutes a heterotopian space; for that, I will use the fics themselves to examine how well they fit within that definition. However, these fics do not appear scattered through the universe—before analysing fanfiction as space, we must first take a look at the space of fanfiction. There are certain points of convergence for this phenomenon to take place, and some of the main ones currently in use have already been discussed in the previous Methodology subchapter, but as I have collected my corpus from only one of these sources, it makes sense to give it a larger focus here. While the methodology delineated the organisation of AO3, how the website is structured and how it functions on an objective basis, my interest now is to see it through the lens of spatiality, to see not how it works, but *why* it works: what aspects of it are of interest to the fanfiction community, why this space in particular is chosen for this practice, in short, what makes it different than other spaces—what makes it a heterotopia.

2.2. AO3 as heterotopia

In 2019 the Archive of Our Own won for a Hugo Award in the category of "Best Related Work", becoming the first fanfiction website to have ever been recognised by this award which celebrates achievements within science fiction and fantasy literature. The mere fact that the site as a whole, not one specific work published in it, was granted the nomination indicates the importance of this space within the practice of fanfiction, as well as its representativeness at a macro scale. Thinking of fanfiction as heterotopia, then, implicates the notion that AO3 must also be characterised as such, given that the site (mostly) exists to cater to it⁴⁷. Thus, in order to arrive at a conclusion similar to the ones I will later provide on my analyses of specific works of fanfiction, I shall make use of the same heterotopian categories to gauge the intensity with which AO3 qualifies as a heterotopia.

That being said, the first category to be analysed is that of ambiguity. There are many instances that prove that AO3 is an ambiguous space: being an exclusively fannish space grants it either a positive or negative connotation based on who is interacting with it. A transformative fan who actively engages with their fandom might view AO3 as a convenient, even safe space for such practices, whereas someone who does not identify themselves as a fan could consider the space either neutrally or even negatively, if they consider fanfiction to be a waste of time, or disrespectful towards the source material, for example. But it is not only outside the fannish community that AO3 might be understood ambiguously. Fans themselves may have differing opinions towards the site, which might lead them to pursue other fanfiction spaces, such as FFN or Wattpad. Considering the sites' demographics, a younger fan might not feel as accepted on AO3 as they are on Wattpad, and a more conservative fan might not agree with AO3's policy of allowing works which contain explicit content, turning to FFN instead. Slash is a reasonably widespread fanfiction genre within AO3, so a fan who does not take part in this practice might choose a ship-specific archive in order to avoid those works (though arguably such archives have been losing prominence since the late 2000s). Being even more specific, there are multiple possibilities of reception within any given work published on AO3. While there is no "dislike" button on works such as there is for approval in the form of kudos, the comment section is usually where readers are able to express distaste for a specific work. It is certainly not in accordance with fanfiction etiquette to do so⁴⁸, but nevertheless it happens. Fics might receive negative comments for a plethora of reasons, from issues of the fic itself such as OOC

⁴⁷ There are also other types of fan works posted to AO3, such as meta and fan art, but those constitute a small percentage of the total works published on the website.

⁴⁸ <u>https://fanlore.org/wiki/An Open Letter to Fanfic Readers</u>, accessed 01/04/19.

characterisation or spelling mistakes, to frustration with the author over an abandoned/slowly updated work. Ultimately, it is extremely subjective if AO3 is considered, either in general or in regards to specific works, a positive or negative space, thus making it highly ambiguous.

The relational aspect of heterotopias might be the strongest one within AO3. The website exists solely to host works that converse in any way with the source material (transformative works, as has already been established). AO3 was born out of the fannish desire to share works that expand, invert, problematise, dialogue with another text-intertextuality is central to the concept of fanfiction, and thus makes AO3 an inherently relational space. Of course, we may also think of the relational dynamics of AO3 in regards to its inner functions: slash, for example, exposes issues of gender and sexuality more prominently than other genres present on the site; in the same fashion, the numerous tropes featured in the works relate not only to the source material but also to other visions of fanon, creating multiple subfandoms depending on the view brought out by a particular section of works. For example, fics that depict Draco Malfoy in a good light⁴⁹ are in conversation not only with canon but also with fics that portray him otherwise. Fics may have Draco being good, evil, French, female, a ferret, sexy, insecure, any other House than Slytherin, an Auror, a musician, or having literally any other characteristic, and all of these interpretations combine to create how the character is presented in the space of fanfiction, and in the space of AO3. The possibilities for relational discursivity are endless.

Considering that AO3 was created to be a fanfiction-hosting platform, it is undeniable that it is disruptive of space. Within the larger scope of fandom, fanfiction is somewhat of an isolated practice: you are either a part of it or you are not. As mentioned above, there are certain conversations that are born out of a fanfiction context, and the ambiguous reception of this practice makes it so that it is often relinquished to specific spaces, not only in regards to society in general (where fanfiction is often ridiculed and

⁴⁹ See Tosenberger (2007) for a detailed account of Fanon!Draco.

mentioned for comedic effect) but within fandom itself (which may also ostracise fan readers and writers). A solution to these problems has often been to create safe spaces in which the practice of fanfiction can exist (somewhat) without judgement, and AO3, being the biggest cross-fandom entirely fan-made space, uniquely represents this dimension. AO3 is still very much a part of fandom, but the segregation of fanfiction readers and writers within the expanse of the website provides the disruption of space characteristic of heterotopias.

AO3 is also intensely disruptive of time, though for quite different reasons. Being a digital archive, AO3 is capable of amassing content from the entire period of its existence (and even earlier, as the website allows for works to be imported from other fanfiction archives). Fics from 2009 share space with fics from 2019, and there is no primacy of one over the other. All works contain the date of publication (or latest update, if it was published in chapters), and work search can be conducted through this filter, but it is only one of the many possible categorisations available—the passage of time is visible, but it is not the axis through which the website is centred. Concurrently, if AO3 is an example of the overlapping of time, it is also representative of its ephemerality. As with any other online source, works published on AO3 may remain there indefinitely, but they may also be removed at any moment. Whether the work is deleted by AO3 itself for violation of content policy, for example, or by its author by any particular reason, the existence of a work on AO3 is not inherently everlasting. This duality of temporal convergence and transience constitutes a strong heterochronia.

The aforementioned characteristic could also serve to exemplify the heterotopian element of juxtaposition within AO3. It is undoubtedly so in regards to the published works themselves, but this space elevates the concept of juxtaposition not only to the fics but also to the people engaging with them. As presented in the previous chapter, AO3 unites readers and writers from all age groups, genders, and sexualities. Given the global quality of online content, it is also to be expected that it brings together people from all over the world. This juxtaposition, broad as it is, can at times cause the jarring effect Foucault mentions that is typical of heterotopias: such a varied collection of people would normally not have the opportunity to form bonds outside of this context. While it is true that the relationships that are formed can be viewed by some as unsettling (especially in the context of age difference, a topic which is the source of much discourse in fandom), others would in fact argue that this crossing of borders is one of the appeals of fandom culture: people have the opportunity to be judged on their character rather than any external feature. The virtual space makes this blurring of definitions incredibly easy, and AO3 expands this notion even further: any level of identity presentation within the scope of the website is entirely optional. Writers publish works under usernames, and it is under their discretion to divulge any personal information whatsoever, from gender to age to their real names. For non-registered users (only available in the capacity of readership), anonymity is possible when publishing comments or giving kudos, so that you do not even have to be linked to an account to actively engage in this space.

The topic of user accounts segues into a commentary of the last heterotopian quality, that of restriction. AO3 is technically an invite-only platform: though usage of the site in general is open to the public, certain features are allowed only for registered users, such as posting works, creating bookmarks, following works' updates, and even accessing some user-locked works. Getting an invitation is a simple process: providing your email to the website and consenting to the Terms of Service basically guarantees you will receive an invitation after a short waiting period. Nevertheless, this vetting process is a barrier that restricts usage to those willing to comply with the website's rules. Other than this rather concrete barrier, there are many other restrictions in place when dealing with fanfiction. Over the course of time, the community has created plenty a specific term that facilitates communication within the fanfiction space, at the same time that it alienates those who do not make part of it. Knowledge of fandom terminology is necessary to competently navigate the website, ranging from genre-specific terms such as "fluff" and "angst", to structural ones like "beta" and "prompt", to nomenclature of tropes, and many others. The Archive of Our Own has a language of its own, and it further consolidates its heterotopian restrictiveness.

Now that the space in which fics are posted has been understood as heterotopian, there remains the issue of the fics themselves. Making use of the same heterotopian categories seen above, the remainder of this chapter will focus on six specific works of *Harry Potter* slash fanfiction in order to gather how these works are constituted in spatial and heterotopian terms.

2.3. Fanfiction as heterotopia

The corpus of six works of fanfiction will be individually analysed in order to fulfil the grid presented in the previous chapter, focusing on one specific category of heterotopias for each work. However, there might be answers to be found when combining and comparing the six works among themselves, and contrasting them to the *Harry Potter* novels. In order to find out what new information I could gather from the corpus as a whole, I proceeded to insert the individual texts on the Voyant software for text mining. With the input given, the software provided data visualisation about the fics such as number of unique words, relations between terms and overall most frequent terms.

This last element provided an insightful discovery, as it made clear that the works of fanfiction within my corpus have a higher rate of words related to the body than the average *Harry Potter* novel. Out of the ten most used terms in each fic (excluding stop words and character names), almost⁵⁰ all of them contained either the term "eyes" or "hands". Running the same process with the text of *Deathly Hallows* showed the term "eyes" appearing only at number 21 of most frequent terms, and "hand" at number 37. This disparity indicates that there is a higher focus on physicality within fanfiction when opposed to this specific source material. When taking into

⁵⁰ The exception being *It's not the Wanting (but the Having)*, which is a much shorter work than the rest.

consideration that *Harry Potter* is an adventure story, which does not give great primacy to amorous relationships, and that this is a frequent focus of fanfiction, especially the ones which contain ships, as the six chosen for this corpus are, it is understandable that the writing choices for each one differ. This difference, in turn, allows for a consideration of fanfiction as having unique characteristics, and strengthens the argument that it is a heterotopian space. It is also worthy to consider this in relation to Lefebvre's spaces of representation, which he also called "lived spaces". According to Soja, "[f]or Lefebvre, lived spaces were passionate, "hot," and teeming with sensual intimacies. Conceived spaces were intellectual, abstract, "cool". They too inflamed passions, but these were centred more in the mind than in the body" (1996: 30). Lefebvre's lived spaces are analogous to Soja's Thirdspace and Foucault's heterotopias in the sense that they are "an-Other" perspective, outside of the binarisms that dictate much of our critical thought. The fact that these spaces are "teeming with sensual intimacies", combined with the data that shows fanfiction as having a higher frequency of sensual-related words, corroborates the idea that fanfiction falls within this category.

To go along with this initial comprehensive statement, an individualised dissection of the following fanfiction works will hopefully provide a deeper, more nuanced exploration, ultimately exposing methods that enable the space of fanfiction to be categorised as heterotopian. At this time, it is important to highlight that each work contains multiple, if not all, of the heterotopian categories delineated in this research. The choice of giving focus to one over the others is simply didactic, though at times comments regarding other categories may be made in order to exemplify such multiplicity. That being said, we begin with the first examination.

2.3.1. An Issue of Consequence

The first work to be analysed is *An Issue of Consequence*, written by user faithwood and published in 2014. Within all of the over 220,000 *Harry Potter* fics published on AO3 as of August 2019, this work is currently the seventh one with most

kudos: over 17,000 people have given it this mark of approval. It is also interesting to note that, out of the top ten *Harry Potter* fics with most kudos on AO3, nine are Drarry (the other being Wolfstar), and four are written by faithwood. In the world of fanfiction, where the measure of success is not the number of sales but the number of hits and kudos, these figures show that both the ship and the author have high status within the space. Hopefully the choice of *An Issue of Consequence* for my first analysis will illuminate much of what the community in the fanfiction space expects, as it is an example of one of its most revered works.

Fandomstats provides the statistical information that, out of all the other tags used in relation to the *Draco Malfoy/Harry Potter* relationship tag on AO3, two of the ten most frequent are "Hogwarts Eighth Year" and "Harry Potter Epilogue What Epilogue | EWE". These two tags are unavoidably connected: seeing as Harry did not return to Hogwarts to complete his education in the books, any and all stories which put him in this situation must qualify as EWE—that is, as disregarding the events of the nineteen-year-later epilogue as presented by J. K. Rowling. *An Issue of Consequence* is one of these stories: in it, both Harry and Draco return to school for a supposed "eighth year" (one year after their assigned final seventh year). The concept of an eighth year of education, never once mentioned by Rowling, was created by and for fanfiction purposes. It is a clear example of how restrictive this space can be: only someone who is inserted in the context of *Harry Potter* fanfiction is aware of the implications of an eighth year.

Differently from canon, the story is told from Draco's perspective, and so the readers are able to gain insight as to why he chooses to go back to Hogwarts:

If he'd had any say in this, he would have never come back to Hogwarts. But apparently in order to have a future, one must have a good reputation, a good education and loads of gold. He had certainly lost the good reputation, and his father was the one with all the gold, so a good education was all he could aspire to. (faithwood)

This is certainly a common thread in Eighth Year fics in regards to Draco: as his family aligned themselves with Lord Voldemort during the war, after it was over they—especially Draco himself—must fight to regain whatever social status they once had. For Draco, this often translates into finishing his education with top marks in order to improve his chances of getting a job in the Wizarding world. As it will be mentioned later in the analysis, going back to Hogwarts also gives Draco the opportunity to distance himself from the identity he had previously constructed in canon of a spoiled, mean bully. Eighth Year Drarry fics often showcase a more mature Draco, one weighed by his past mistakes.

Hogwarts is the most familiar space for readers of *Harry Potter*: it is where the main character spends most of his time during the first six books, where most of the saga's critical moments are located, and the place with the most opportunity for development, as it is thoroughly described by Rowling while also permitting plenty of room for a variety of new, undiscovered nooks and crannies, given its size and magical properties. As such, it is not surprising that fic authors find themselves wanting to return to that space, even after Harry's official journey in it is over. Considering that Harry never got to have closure on his Hogwarts adventure—he decides to not return for his seventh year and never graduates—, fic writers and readers feel compelled to give it to him, self-incumbents of filling this gap in the character's narrative. As this ultimately means a digression from the original timeline presented in the books, this trope constitutes a disruption of time, and thus exemplifies this category of heterotopias.

In *An Issue of Consequence*, this lingering nostalgia for Hogwarts felt by the fan community is also expressed by Draco:

It hit him suddenly: three more months and he'd leave the school, its familiar routine and the company of a thousand students forever. Many of them he'd never see again, except in passing. He'd be at home, with his parents, figuring out his future career path, searching for a job. It was likely he'd be trapped in the manor for months, if not longer. This wouldn't have been a problem two years ago, but these days his home was a darker, damper place. (faithwood)

This paragraph represents much of what Eighth Year fics provide their readership: a return to halcyon days, moving away from the "darker, damper place" that constitutes the last installment of the *Harry Potter* saga. This desire to place the characters at Hogwarts once again, combined with the extreme popularity of Drarry, might constitute some of the reasons why this particular work is so popular. As it is, this fic is not a simple Eighth Year fic: more often than not, fics make use of multiple tropes in the course of one narrative, and this fic also contains the trope of amnesia. Draco has been Obliviated (a canonical spell that erases memories) by his father to forget his relationship with Harry. As a result of that, and being that the story is told through Draco's POV, we navigate the fic unaware of this fact, sharing Draco's confusion as to why Harry is acting differently towards him.

Maybe he was stuck in some bizarre parallel universe where they shipped off people with nervous breakdowns. Or he was actually in St Mungo's, staring blankly ahead, and this was just a dream. Draco pinched his arm. It hurt a lot. (faithwood)

The whole fic is filled with a sense of displacement: Draco does not understand why Harry (and, to a lesser extent, his friends Blaise and Pansy) is behaving the way he is, and alternates between thinking that Harry is under the influence of a love potion, or that he himself is losing grip on reality. This element brings an even greater disruption of time to the fic, as Draco has lost months of memories due to his father's spell, and must work his way into connecting the pieces of the puzzle until he finally understands what has happened:

But Blaise was still staring at him as though Draco held the answers. "What do you remember? Do you remember what you did this week? This month? The month before?"

That was a stupid question. "Of course I do! I was studying. Our N.E.W.T.s are approaching. I had to study. So I did." He remembered studying. He remembered studying a lot. "Why are you asking me that? Barnaby is making things up! My father wasn't here. It's a lie."

Blaise just wouldn't stop staring. (...)

"Do you remember meeting Brian? Two weeks ago? You found us here, like you did today."

Draco shook his head; he shook it so hard it hurt. "That didn't happen."

"It did happen. We thought you'd tell the whole castle. But you didn't. Instead, you told us about the bloke you like. That you're with."

"I'm not with ... With anyone. Certainly not a bloke."

"You are. You were. And you were happy. Do you remember being happy?"

Draco's vision blurred. He had to blink a few times to clear it. He didn't even know why he felt like crying.

"Draco?" Blaise said his name gently, the way one whispered when talking to someone gravely ill. "You get what happened, don't you?" (...) "Draco?" Blaise shook him. "Draco, you've been Obliviated." (faithwood)

The twist of Draco having been Obliviated exposes a temporal duality within the fic: there is the "real" timeline, in which Draco started a relationship with Harry, met Brian, and fought with his father, and then there are Draco's implanted memories of not

doing much else other than studying. There are two levels of disruption of time within the fic: an internal one, presented by the time that was stolen from Draco's memories, but also an external one, at the level of the Eighth Year trope which separates this work from the canonical background.

As soon as Draco discovers what has been done to him, he resorts to getting help from Hogwarts' matron, Madam Pomfrey, who promptly gives him back his memories, returning Draco to his rightful internal timeline. When this happens, the readers get to experience some of Draco's memories of his budding relationship with Harry:

They talked about Quidditch all the time. It was a safe subject. It was even safe to fight about it. But he remembered other conversations, too. More serious ones about the war. It was never safe to fight about that but fight they did. About who they were and who they should be, about charging forward and clinging to shadows. (faithwood)

Eighth Year fics, as they happen in the direct aftermath of the war with Voldemort, deal with many of its consequences, ranging from grief over people lost to guilt and repentance about past alliances. In the context of Drarry fics, it allows for the full redemption of Draco, something many fans of the ship believe is paramount for the character's development, and which was never fully addressed in canon. If this trope allows for a distancing of the "darker, damper place" of the war, it at the same time allows for characters to move past it, using it as a stepstone to promote serious conversations about it such as the ones Harry and Draco shared in this story, promoting catharsis as the characters are given the time and opportunity to "charge forward". Considering that this entire process happens outside the temporal limits of canon, it is safe to say that the trope fits within the heterotopian category of disruption of time.

2.3.2. It's not the Wanting (but the Having)

The second fic to be analysed is also the shortest and most obscure of this corpus: at 2,336 words, It's not the Wanting (but the Having), published on AO3 by user LadyMerlin in 2015, stands at the opposite end of the popularity spectrum in comparison to An Issue of Consequence, having just over 3,500 hits and 240 kudos as of August 2019. However, this is not a hindrance in the choice of this work, or an excuse to minimise its value: it is important to showcase the variety of reception within the space of fanfiction, using not only works which attract thousands of readers, but also those smaller works which comprise the bulk of AO3's archive 51. As for the length, it is representative of most of what is found within this ship: out of the 508 Twincest fics on AO3 at the time of this writing, only 144 have 5,000 words or more, and 80 have over 10,000 words. Narrowing the population to finished works only, these numbers drop to, respectively, 84 and 42. Another relevant figure comes when comparing side ships. As has been mentioned in the Methodology subchapter, the AO3 sort and filter bar does not distinguish between primary and secondary ships within a fic, which sometimes results in misleading statistics. It does, however, allow for other ship tags to be excluded in a search, and after manually removing any other ship tags within the Fred Weasley/George Weasley tag search, we are left with a drop from 508 total works to 239 works that are exclusively Twincest. Therefore it can be concluded that Twincest, much like a variety of other minor ships in the Harry Potter fanfiction universe, occurs most often as a side pairing instead of being the main focus of the narrative. All of these humble figures are the first indication of the level of ambiguity present in the trope of incest, and how it fits this heterotopian category.

⁵¹ According to Destinationtoast

⁽https://destinationtoast.tumblr.com/post/102920936231/toastystats-AO3-word-counts-dates-an d, accessed 14/04/19), 50% of all the works on AO3 have less than 1,642 words, 395 hits and 12 kudos.

These fics deal with a topic which is highly contentious even within the space of slash fanfiction, one usually known for being accepting of even the most unorthodox subjects. This contentiousness results in the authors often choosing to save face in case they should be harassed for the content of their work, and as a result of that, disclaimers are often present in works of ambiguous reception. In the case of the current fic, the author notes: "[w]arning: This fic contains sibling-incest. If this is not your cup of tea, please do not proceed further", as well as making clear that "[t]he opinions expressed herein do not in any way reflect the author's opinions". This distancing between the positioning taken within the work and that of the author themselves is typical of incest and other ambiguous fic tropes such as non-con and bestiality. As we have seen, those tropes are among the most disliked by fanfiction readers, so it makes sense that those who write such content present caveats to be exempt from culpability should a potential reader take their work at face value.

Oftentimes, however, this apparent negative reception of incest fic is taken in stride by the authors, who might make fun of the issue of morality at play in these circumstances. Still in the space for author's notes of this work, LadyMerlin jokes "here we go everybody better buckle up it's gonna be a bumpy (heh) ride (to hell)". The author denotes their own work as morally perverse by describing it as a "ride to hell". Nevertheless, they are obviously interested in the topic, and do not seem to worry about the repercussions of such a ride, as they laugh about the matter. In the work's final notes, presented after the fic itself, the author comments: "What. *shrugs* Otherwise known as: "fucking *damn* will I never learn? Why can't I ever ease into fandoms the *normal* way?!" (emphasis in the original). Once again the author shows opposing feelings towards their own practice: they start by appearing to be unaffected by possible adverse reactions from readers, literally shrugging it off, and then immediately and drastically revert their positioning by appearing frustrated with themselves by choosing to write for this trope, calling it not "normal". Even within the scope of slash fanfiction, stereotypically known for deviating from standards, this trope is still seen as

unacceptable, alienated even in the face of a non-normative space. The ambiguity regarding the trope is not only external—from the point of view of the rest of the community towards the work—as also internal, coming from the author and the choices they make to present it.

These choices which represent the ambiguity of the trope are noticeable in the non-narrative elements of the fic, such as the author's notes (though interestingly the author has not chosen to do so in the space of tags, including only neutral or positive information about the work, like the tag "Happy Ending"), as well within the very construction of the narrative. While on the topic of extra-narrative material, it is worthy of notice that, from the ten reader comments on this work (the other ten comments being replies by LadyMerlin themselves), not one of them provides negative input based on the premise of the work, or in fact any negative input whatsoever. This might be linked to the already discussed fanfiction etiquette culture of not posting antagonistic comments, but nonetheless it is proof that there are circles within the space of fanfiction where readers and writers are allowed to express and share even their most polemic opinions about a certain aspect of fandom. As for narrative indications of ambiguity, the very summary of the work provided by the author, extracted from the fic itself, is the first example:

No matter what anyone says, it's not wrong. What's between them is not wrong. Fred and George to each other are sure things in the best possible way. (LadyMerlin)

This short synopsis exemplifies and summarises quite well the opposing nature of the trope—while the characters (and the author, at least within the space of the actual narrative) do not consider the incestuous acts to be "wrong", they are aware of the possible understanding of it as such by the dominant society. The ambiguity inherent to the trope is the central point within this work. Throughout the story the idea presented in the summary is expanded, as Fred (the character whose perspective we read through, as he is the third-person narrator) muses on the reproaches he gets for being physically close to his twin brother:

What Fred and George are to each other is the most natural thing in the world, and he never understood why people looked wary when he hugged his brother, or when his brother kissed his cheek. He always asked, *why not*? It's *not* wrong. (...) It had been years since George had so sweetly kissed his cheek. Because it wasn't wrong, but no one understood. (LadyMerlin, emphasis on the original)

The characters themselves must go through the process of initially repressing their natural desires and conforming to societal expectations, and then liberating themselves from them. The struggle of the characters' incestuous feelings is the centre of conflict in the fic, and they must come to terms with the inner aspect of this duality in order to be able to externalise it later. Ambiguity permeates every aspect of the fic, making it an ideal example of the ambiguous nature of heterotopias being present in fanfiction.

Of course, heterotopias have other inherent characteristics, and it is important to note whenever many of them are present in the same work, as this corroborates the strength of this particular space as heterotopia. There is a passage in *It's not the Wanting (but the Having)* which exemplifies the restrictive aspect of fanfiction, as Fred describes one instance of finding and interacting with the Mirror of Erised:

They'd discovered the Mirror of Erised years before Harry had, in his first year at Hogwarts. They'd stood in front of it, in the great empty stone room, still young in their mischief making, and they'd seen the exact same thing. Even though they hadn't understood what they were seeing. (LadyMerlin) Only someone who is knowledgeable of the events in *Philosopher's Stone* would understand this passage: the Mirror of Erised shows not one's reflection, but their heart's greatest desire. As it is presupposed that the readership of a Fred/George fanfic would inevitably be composed of *Harry Potter* fans, the author skips the explanation behind the use of this canonical object. In fact, it is quite surely a given that any and all *Harry Potter* fics will contain examples of restrictive language, as the source material provides numerous neologisms created by J. K. Rowling and which, when applied to fics, create a semantic barrier that can only be transposed by those with previous knowledge. This creates a space which, as Foucault notes, "both isolates [it] and makes [it] penetrable" (1986: 7).

The Mirror of Erised is arguably the most important object in this fic. The symbol of the mirror, so essential to the study of heterotopias, is also a key metaphor for this ship: Fred and George, or as the author puts it: "FredandGeorge. It's as simple as that. Fred and George, George and Fred, Gred and Forge" are indistinguishable from one another. Being twins, and presented in canon as a unit, two pranksters with a tendency to finish each other's sentences, they are a mirror of each other, one and the same. The importance of this symbol for the narrative is confirmed when looking at the list of most frequent terms presented by the Voyant analysis: out of all non-stop, non-character words, "mirror" appears as the second most frequent term, confirming the centrality of this metaphor. This can be seen most clearly as the story reaches its decisive point when Fred is, not for the first time, mesmerised by scenes unfolding in the Mirror of Erised and gets caught by his brother:

And for long, foolish minutes, Fred's short life flashed before his eyes. He thought of everything George could say, everything his mother could say, everything that could ever be said by *anyone* in the world, and he knew he was *sick* for wanting something everyone said he shouldn't, and he was *sick* for lusting and aching and desiring but he had never meant – he had never thought –

George looked devastated, and it would have been enough to kill him, if he hadn't spoken then in a mirror of Fred's own thoughts, as if he'd picked them straight out of his brother's mind.

"We could have had *years*, brother," he whispered, and it was like a bell pealing in his head and there were echoes ringing and seconds drained while Fred processed...

And then they were on each other, like the distance between them had just melted into nothing, and they were kissing like they'd *die* if they parted, and it was so easy, so *easy*. (LadyMerlin, emphasis on the original)

This excerpt shows how Fred was deeply troubled by his feelings, and how the constant imposition of moral values was drilled in his conscious so that he believed "anyone in the world" would oppose his thoughts. This external-turned-internal pressure led him to feel that he was "sick" for not conforming to those expectations, reason at war with emotion. However, George does not react in an antagonistic fashion-instead he kisses him, a complete opposite of what would be expected from "anyone in the world". George's reaction once again aligns him with Fred, a culmination of the mirror metaphor. Observing the same reaction in his brother as he himself had, Fred goes through the aforementioned process of liberating himself from societal expectations, his "sick" thoughts becoming "easy" actions, once shared. When the scene evolves into the physical realm, this utter compatibility continues: instead of there being a level of uncertainty, either to their being somewhat inexperienced teenagers or due to any lingering shame in their act, "[t]here was no awkward fumbling. They already knew each other's mouths. There was no hesitation, because they knew each other's minds". The physical union of the two characters is just another level of intimacy to be achieved, as they are already mentally connected, and it must come naturally, as they are mirror images of one another. Thus the internal ambiguity is resolved.

Even with the consummation of the incestuous act, the ensuing romantic plot does not follow that of other slash fanfiction narratives. Oftentimes, and increasingly more as queerness continues to be more accepted in general society, slash fics which depict the "First Time" trope (that is, characters beginning a romantic relationship in the course of the narrative instead of having it already established at the start of the fic) do not concern themselves with any societal repercussions of the realisation of the relationship presented. Slash fanfiction either cares about the homosexual aspect of the ship in order to shine a light on prejudice and present an obstacle to the romantic fulfilment of the work or does not comment on it whatsoever. Comparing it with the other work analysed thus far, An Issue of Consequence falls within this second category, not making space within the narrative to discuss homophobia or other like issues—Draco's father Obliviated him not because he was in a relationship with a man, but because that man was Harry Potter. On the other hand, A Cure for Nightmares, a fic which will be analysed further on, touches on this topic from the perspective of a character who had been abused by a man as a child. The development of his own sexuality in the wake of this trauma, and the reactions of other people around him, exemplify a real argument surrounding the discussion of homosexuality in our society.

It is interesting to notice that, of the three fics mentioned, the only one which focuses on real-life obstacles to queer identity is the fic set in the Muggle world. It appears that faithwood, by immersing their ship in the fantastic Wizarding world, is able to mould societal conventions to their own advantage, choosing not to oppress their characters in this way. As for *It's not the Wanting (but the Having)*, the setting of the narrative is indeed the Wizarding world, but in this case the relationship is oppressed not for its homosexual element, but for its incestuousness. After the relationship is established, it remains a secret:

There are problems ahead of them, they know. More than they can ever count (Percy was the one who was good at Arithmancy, but this is not a question they will ask him, or anyone else). They will never be able to tell anyone else. No one they know can find out. They cannot kiss each other on the family picnic, and they can't invite anyone to their home without mocking up a second bedroom, pretending that there is space for two in the apartment when they only ever needed space for one. (LadyMerlin)

It is clear that the stigma surrounding their relationship stems not from the fact that they are both men, but that they are brothers. At the beginning of the fic it is mentioned that George is dating another man, and not once is that relationship problematised within the narrative. The incestuous element of the relationship is what impedes its unhindered fruition, and is ultimately the element which brings ambiguity to the scope of this work. Slash fanfiction in general still receives this polarisation in reception from general society, oftentimes due to misinformation: it is considered lazy, offensive, and lacking literary worth by those who are not inserted in the space. However, this example shows that, even within the community itself, certain aspects might still be viewed dubiously. Slash fanfiction is not a homogeneous space, and be it the choice of platforms, fandoms, or tropes, some internal choices also suffer from ambiguity.

The choice of title for the fic is also noteworthy when considering the trope of incest and, more broadly, fanfiction in general. It is likely inspired by a scene from the story: shortly after Fred and George confess to being in love with each other, Fred, even though feeling the same, finds himself shocked by his brother's revelation, and muses: "(...) it was one thing to want, and to hope, and another thing altogether to have". Thus comes the issue at play: it seems that, to Fred, he was somewhat content in having internalised thoughts, but could never have hoped they would have come to fruition, based on all of the judgement he would receive from hegemonic society. This very same idea, brought to extreme lengths when considering a topic as taboo as incest, can be transposed to the act of producing and consuming fanfiction in general. There is still a

large feeling of shame and ridicule when fanfiction is brought to surface outside of its own space: from television presenters embarrassing actors by publicly reading fanfiction involving their characters, to fans hiding their own fanfiction practices due to fear of rebuke, there is an overt stigmatisation of fanfiction—especially of slash—in society. It seems to produce highly antagonistic feelings of either complete repulsion or adoration (though that last one is more often constricted to active fanfiction spaces), and its ambiguous reception characterises it as a heterotopian space.

2.3.3. A Cure for Nightmares

The following analysis is based on the work *A Cure for Nightmares*, written by user picascribit and published on AO3 in 2010. The work is accompanied by a hyperlink to a podfic—that is, an audio recording of the fic. This is a somewhat frequent practice: as of August 2019, there are slightly under 20,000 works with the tag "Podfic" on AO3, which shows the multimedia aspect of this practice, consequence of the greater freedom within the genre. Besides podfic, fanfiction can also be paired with art (such as drawings or mood boards) or music (in the form of Songfic or as playlists attached to author's notes), and authors often collaborate with other artists to create this type of complimentary content for their work, proof of the collaborative and social dynamics of this space.

The heterotopian category to be discussed in regards to the present work is that of disruption of space. As mentioned earlier, many of the spaces included in the *Harry Potter* series can be considered heterotopias in their own accord, Hogwarts being the most obvious example⁵². However, in order to analyse fanfiction as disruption of space, it is necessary to consider in in relation to the source material, not to real-life spaces. Consequently, if Hogwarts and other places in the Wizarding world are the norm in the *Harry Potter* canon, for a work of fanfiction to demonstrate a disruption of that space it would have to consider other spaces than those. *A Cure for Nightmares* not only does

⁵² See Cantrell (2010) for an in-depth analysis of this subject.

so, but it goes a step further (or perhaps back), extracting the characters from their original magical setting and placing them in the Muggle world, with no magic whatsoever present in the narrative. This constitutes a particular kind of AU trope of the *Harry Potter* fandom—the so-called Muggle AU. According to fandomstats, "Alternate Universe" is the sixth most used tag in Wolfstar works published on AO3, indicating how relevant this trope is in regards to this ship. Out of all the works in the *Harry Potter* - *J. K. Rowling* fandom tag, the "Alternate Universe" tag rises to fourth place, so it is undeniable that disruption of space is a common element in fanfiction.

Considering Soja's trialectics of spatiality, it becomes clear how this trope in particular fits into the category of Thirdspace, which we have already established is analogous to heterotopias. If Thirdspace is a combination of Firstspace and Secondspace, that is, of real and imagined spaces, then the trope of Muggle AU exemplifies this union because it contains both a real and imagined space. The space is real because it is concrete, empirical within the story, but it is also imagined because it was created by the fic's author and does not make part of canon. It exists at the same time as it exposes its non-existence, very much like the heterotopian metaphor of the mirror Foucault unveils.

In *A Cure for Nightmares*, the canonically real setting of Hogwarts turns into the real-and-imagined St. Godric's⁵³ boarding school. Hogwarts itself being a boarding school, there are bound to be similarities between the two spaces, though with the obvious differences that come from transposing a magical into a Muggle setting. As mentioned, the setting of a boarding school is a heterotopia in and of itself, and it constitutes a disruption of space, though in the case of St. Godric's there is a second level in this disruption, coming not for it being a boarding school, but for the fact it is a *Muggle* boarding school—the displacement of the magic world into the non-magic world being the central point of divergence within this fic, and throughout the story

⁵³ A reference to Godric Gryffindor, founder of one of the Hogwarts Houses, specifically the one Sirius and Remus are originally sorted into.

there are various instances of this parallel. Sirius Black and James Potter have many characteristics brought over from canon, though at times these are slightly altered to fit the new setting: they are still the school pranksters, both coming from rich (in the canon, pureblood) families. James is captain of the rugby club, in acquiescence with his status in canon as Quidditch player. The first central point of discrepancy in the plot structure is that Remus is a transfer student, only meeting Sirius, James, and Peter as a teenager. The dynamics of the Marauders (a title the four boys elected as their group name in canon) are changed as Remus is first seen as a "swotty stranger" who could come and disturb the peace among the three established friends. As the fic is being told from Sirius's POV, the readers can fully experience the initial distaste and gradual bonding of the others in relation to Remus. At first there is tension, especially from Sirius's part, who at first acts antagonistically when faced with the prospect of welcoming the new boy into their space:

If this was how Lupin normally behaved, then it was no wonder if he had been beaten regularly at his old school. Sirius felt rather like punching the quiet boy himself. (picascribit)

Remus maintains here the mysterious quality he originally presents in canon, though for different reasons. In the books, he distances himself from James, Peter, and Sirius for fear of them realising he is a werewolf; in this fic, Remus's trauma stems from having been kidnapped and abused as a child (by Fenrir Greyback, the one who canonically turned him into a werewolf). The private behaviour of the character does not impede the other boys from finding out his secret in either narrative. They ultimately discover his werewolf status in their second year at Hogwarts, and in *A Cure for Nightmares* the same curiosity can be seen as the readers gather insight into Sirius inner monologue:

For the first time, Lupin's quietness struck Sirius not as boring, but as secretive and mysterious. He resolved to keep an eye on the new boy. (picascribit)

The author is able to keep Remus's personality traits and personal background as close to canon as possible, reinterpreting it to the Muggle world whenever necessary. The physicality of his canonical ailment, the scars he bears, are translated into the fic as self-harm, and his dismay at his traumatic past is still present, such as when he confesses: "Sometimes I wish he had killed me,' he said, voice hollow". Though his encounter with Greyback is of a different nature, the feelings produced by it remain the same. As for Sirius, his own trauma is internalised: such as it is in the books, the Sirius of the fic has a "stew of guilt, self-loathing, and loneliness bubbling inside him", though the reasons for it are not borne out of his perceived guilt over his best friends' murder, but instead both by his brother's accidental death as well as his untoward interest in Remus. Sirius' relationship with his parents are not positive in either iteration, in the books stemming from his refusal to conform to pureblood expectations, and in the fic as a result to his part in his brother's accidental death. Both the characters' history of trauma and self-deprecation is a common thread that links them in Wolfstar fics, and *A Cure for Nightmares* is no exception:

He wouldn't be who he is, if it hadn't been for that.

The thought made Sirius feel funny all over. He liked a lot of things about Remus. Would he have been so drawn to a Remus who had never known suffering? Remus might never have come to St Godric's in the first place, if not for his past. Sirius's feelings wove themselves into such a confused tangle of disgust and longing that he decided it was best not to think about the "what ifs". (picascribit)

It is interesting to follow this train of thought in the face of the fact that AUs, and fanfiction in general, serve precisely that notion: playing with infinite "what if" scenarios and discovering what changes and what does not in a character's representation given certain tweaks. The tweak presented in this fic is that the characters are deprived of their canonical magical abilities—discovering that Remus was a werewolf brought the four boys closer together in Rowling's story, culminating with the three others performing highly advanced magic in order to help him in his transformations. In this Muggle AU, the original context is removed but they still manage to find friendship (and here, it being a slash fic, even more than that) with each other.

As touched upon earlier, slash set in the "real world" unavoidably brings about discussions of sexuality. In dealing with Sirius, the issue is taken from a personal, patriarchal perspective, as he comes from a distinguished, traditional pureblood family. He is known to have disagreed with his family on other issues of prejudice, such as the treatment of non-pureblood wizards and witches, and so it makes sense that fanfiction writers often make the leap to characterise queer Sirius as having homophobic parents. At the same time, much of Sirius's angst comes from the clashing feelings he has towards his family, as expressed in the fic:

"They hate me. My family hates me. And I hate them." He lifted his head to look at Remus. "Does that make me a terrible person? Hating my family? I come from them. What if I'm just like them?" (picascribit)

Sirius struggles with not agreeing with his family's ideology at the same time as he understands the weight of familial bonds, and any possible influence their upbringing might have on his own morality. In a scene set in Sirius's home, where he brings Remus over, a veiled argument takes place at the dinner table: The vicar shook his head mournfully. "Boys' schools can be dangerous, if one is not vigilant. Without the civilising influence of women, young men can fall into all kinds of trouble, and even sinful behaviour."

The Countess's mouth tightened. "Well, we do not tolerate that sort of nonsense in this house."

"No, of course not!" the vicar blushed. "I never meant to suggest -- Please forgive me, m'lady."

"There is nothing to forgive, Father." The Countess waved a dismissive hand. "I have heard such rumours as well. I hope there is little truth to them, but I imagine such animalistic tendencies are more common among the lower classes. Well-bred gentlemen do not engage in such behaviour." (picascribit)

This is the most blatant example of a prejudiced view of non-heterosexual behaviour present in any of the fies of this corpus, and it is not a coincidence that it comes from the only story set in the "real" world. This exemplifies how the change of setting, that is, the disruption of space, enables new conversations to be formed, and new approaches to the same issues to be had. While it is true that placing Wolfstar in a Muggle AU setting allows for a certain degree of levity to be brought to their dynamic—Remus is no longer a werewolf, Sirius does not spend over a decade in prison only to die shortly after his escape—, hardship is so intrinsic to these characters that any endeavour to portray them accordingly (that is to say, not to make them highly OOC) means transposing these misfortunes to this new context. Usually, that translates into Remus having some sort of chronic illness (though interestingly enough, rarely is he portrayed as being HIV+, the illness J. K. Rowling explained as the intended metaphor for the character's lycanthropy in canon⁵⁴); Sirius in turn is often portrayed as having opposing views from his family for a plethora of reasons which report back to their canonical disagreement in regards to allegiance to Voldemort. In the end, the

⁵⁴ <u>https://www.pottermore.com/writing-by-jk-rowling/remus-lupin</u>, accessed 19/08/19.

disruption of space must serve a purpose, to expose a certain aspect of the source material either by reinforcing or negating it, in true heterotopian fashion.

2.3.4. From the Sea

The following work is entitled From the Sea, having been published on AO3 in 2012 by user WantsUnicorns. In a similar fashion to It's not the Wanting (but the Having), the present fic also falls within the more unrecognised side of the fanfiction spectrum, though for somewhat different reasons. While the Twincest work fails to get much acknowledgement in the community for being a contentious, ambiguous topic, From the Sea probably does so due to the combination of ship and trope. According to fandomstats, there is a non-insignificant amount of Scorbus content on AO3-over 2,800 works as of August 2019, reasonably more than the 500 Twincest works. However, when combining it with the Veela tag, only six works appear. The Veela trope stands out from the rest used in this corpus in one regard: of the top ten ships that make use of this tag, half of them are het ships. Analysing categories tagged for the works, this proportion alters as 67% of them are tagged M/M and 38% are tagged F/M. Keeping in mind that these category tags are not mutually exclusive, and that secondary ships are also tagged, this method may provide a more accurate result. Comparing it with another trope already discussed in this chapter, for works tagged "Hogwarts Eighth Year" the proportions are 80% M/M and 21% F/M. As such, and considering that, of the 769 works tagged as Veela, 346 are Drarry, I was not particularly concerned in choosing a popular ship for this trope. My ultimate choice in Scorbus and particularly with From the Sea, however, stemmed from the fact that Scorbus is oftentimes considered "Drarry light", as Albus and Scorpius look like their parents but without the negative emotional baggage. Though I will not touch upon this fact in my analysis, From the Sea actually contains Drarry as a side ship, demonstrating the deep connection between this ship and trope.

Though my focus when analysing this work is seeing the restrictive element of the Veela trope, there are multiple other instances throughout the fic which also exemplify this same heterotopian quality. Rowling created a plethora of neologisms to describe the various species, spells, locations and activities exclusive to her Wizarding world. These new words appear frequently on most fanfiction in this fandom, and when they do not digress from the original meanings given in canon, they are not given any explanation. In *From the Sea*, for example, there is a thorough account of the writer's specific interpretation of Veelas; however, when using other fandom-specific words such as Apparition, Healer, splinching, and many others, there is no explanation given. The author makes the assumption that the readership of their fic, being included in the *Harry Potter* fanfiction space, is aware of these concepts. There is an invisible barrier that separates meaning creation and restricts this process to only some pre-designated users, who are able to seamlessly navigate this space due to their prior knowledge.

An important caveat to note is that this work was published in 2012. The so-called "next generation" of *Harry Potter* characters appeared only in the very last last scene of the saga, in an epilogue that takes place nineteen years after the events of the main story. In it, we are introduced to the children of the main characters, who are boarding the Hogwarts Express for their own magical adventures. We meet Rose and Hugo Weasley, James Sirius, Albus Severus, and Lily Luna Potter, and become aware of Scorpius Malfoy, though he is only mentioned in passing. Right after the release of *Deathly Hallows* in 2007, a fanbase formed around both Albus and Scorpius, and it quickly became the most prominent next-gen ship, following the steps of their fathers, who to this day still constitute the most popular ship in the entire fandom. For years, Scorbus fans had almost no canonical information with which to base their fan works, therefore fics varied wildly in characterisation. However, in 2016 new canonical material was released and greatly expanded the next generation: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* debuted as a play in London's West End, with the simultaneous release of the script in book format. The play focuses heavily on the friendship between Albus and

Scorpius, and their characters, both separately and as a unit, are considerably more developed. This obviously translated into a boost in the production of Scorbus fanfiction, as authors now had more material to work with. But not all Harry Potter and Scorbus fans were interested in this new content: there is great contention within fandom towards considering Cursed Child canonical within the Harry Potter universe. Such controversy led to some fans not engaging with it whatsoever, and disregarding any new information pertaining to it. When it comes to Scorbus, there appears to be a large consensus in accepting the characters' House designation (both being placed in Slytherin), as well as their strong friendship bond. Other aspects gathered from the play, such as their having made use of a Time Turner, are more often discarded. The bifurcation in the topic of canon within the Scorbus fandom leads to restriction inside the subfandom itself: fans that are not aware of the play's developments might not be able to create the same meaning within a particular fic as those who know and accept Cursed Child. For the interest of the fic considered in this analysis, however, such distinction is made irrelevant as the work was written and published in the in-between period between Deathly Hallows and Cursed Child, thus not making use of any of the more recent material.

As mentioned above, *From the Sea* deals with Veelas, a species created by J. K. Rowling for the *Harry Potter* saga. There is not much information contained in the source material about these creatures, other than that their beauty has alluring powers and that they physically transform when angered. There is no Veela character in canon, though a minor character, Fleur Delacour, is said to be part-Veela. Creature fics are common in this fandom (though usually concerning creatures that can be described as traditionally beautiful or powerful, such as vampires, werewolves, and Veelas, with very little content dedicated to turning characters into house-elves, for example), and the fact that the source material does not provide much background information on them means that fanfiction writers have a reasonable degree of freedom to come up with their own lore. This fic in particular begins with a historical account of Veelas, how they came into existence and how they first mingled with ordinary wizardkind. The first scene is a prologue meant to inform the readers of the lore to be expected within the narrative, but at the same time previous knowledge of Veelas within *Harry Potter* canon is necessary to create a deeper understanding of the setting for the fic. Interestingly, the whole lore is not given at the beginning of the story, meaning that both the characters and the readers are left in the dark about the condition that has caused the deterioration of Draco's health and the reasons behind it. It is said early on that his frail health is linked to his Veela heritage, but no explanation is given as to why his condition was kickstarted or what can be done to revert it. Following the POV of both Albus, here portrayed as a medical researcher in charge of finding a cure for Draco's mysterious illness, as well as Scorpius, an inventor and adventurer concerned with helping his father, the readers gradually become aware of what is happening to Draco, and in fact what might also happen to Scorpius, as consequence of his genetic Veela heritage.

As is common in Veela fics, consequence of the limited amount of information regarding the species, the author adds information which is not canonical, shaping the lore to their own benefit. More often than not, as is the case here, the qualities granted to the species are of a positive nature. When explaining the history of Veelas at the beginning of the work, the author explicits that "[t]hey had always been blessed with long life and intelligence, but now strength and the ability to communicate without words were added to their talents". Another common trope that is usually combined with Veela fics is that of mating: the concept that these creatures mate for life and can share some of their supernatural traits with their assigned mate is frequent in those fics. Within these traits, one commonly seen, including in the present fic, is a telepathic connection between the two parts. Mating, as multiple other fandom tropes, might have its roots in *Star Trek*, a conclusion many authors (Arnaiz 2018; Busse 2013; Bacon-Smith 1992; Russ 1985; among others) have already discussed at length. The Vulcan species created for this television programme also mates for life, goes through a

period of compulsory mating (called *pon farr* in the series), and is able to link consciousness with another being (*mind meld*). Considering the following excerpt of *From the Sea*, it becomes clear that the intertextuality of certain established tropes can create interfandom cohesion, unifying the fanfiction space:

Their scientists eventually came up with a way to implant their offspring with those parts of their knowledge and talents that hadn't been passed on before. The means to this were installed in the facilities they had built. The process involved a merging of minds and required both mates to go through it simultaneously. Should the merging succeed they would henceforth be able to communicate telepathically. Shortly after going through this, there would be a period of change. The knowledge had to take hold and the recipient would lose some of his humanity. He or she didn't have any control over their form, and would be driven by their most basic urges. Unmated soldiers sought out their intended and during those times a merging was usually initiated and in many cases further offspring were conceived. (WantsUnicorns)

Anyone familiar with either the *Star Trek* fandom or with fan studies will be able to see the blatant influence of Vulcan physiology into the construction of Veelas in this fic. Such borrowing can be attributed to the similarities between fanfiction and traditional romance fiction: in both scenarios there are certain formulaic situations which are repeated time and time again, the audience's interest in certain motifs justifying this apparent redundancy. One such overarching trope in the fanfiction space is the so-called "Soulmate AU". The premise of the trope is that people have soulmates, one person who is destined to be their most compatible partner. Depending on the fandom and any specificities brought by characters involved, other elements can come to play, but the basis for the premise remains somewhat the same throughout. The tag "Alternate Universe - Soulmates" on AO3 contains over 32,000 works from various fandoms, attesting to the popularity of the trope across the space. *Harry Potter* is one of the most prolific fandoms within this tag, having over 900 works. The communal construction of what a soulmate AU entails is by now embedded in the collective subconscious of the fanfiction space, whether a particular reader is or not personally invested in this trope. This in turn allows for not only the continued popularity of fics containing this topic but also the possibility of establishment of meaning across fics and fandoms, sometimes with very little prior explanation. The meaning created in fandom allows for restrictive experiences to take place, thus strengthening its heterotopian validity.

Earlier studies on K/S prove just how much this formula has not changed since the very beginnings of modern fanfiction. Lamb and Veith (1985), for example, already discussed the implications of bonding in K/S fics:

The K/S zines repeatedly rework the possibilities inherent in this process of discovering the "mate," which is fraught with greater difficulty and consequently more drawn out because the two protagonists are of the same sex and of alien species. Kirk and Spock are like Romeo and Juliet: They should not love each other, but they do. (105)

Considering the combination of the tropes of Soulmate AU and Veelas—not an alien species but nevertheless a humanoid creature—, the very same process is observed in both. They primarily deal with overcoming obstacles to the relationship, so-called "first time" fics that irrevocably end with the concretisation of the relationship. Referring back to the data on the fanfiction tropes that are more broadly enjoyed throughout fandom, the appearance of tropes such as "Friends to Lovers", "Slow Burn" and "Mutual Pining" proves just how much the concept of "first time" is appreciated. The appearance of "Hurt/Comfort" on the list of favoured tropes adds another layer to this concept, and again is one that has been pointed out by Lamb and Veith, who

recognise the underlying idea behind the use of the trope: "[t]he adventure itself is merely a mechanism to get the two protagonists alone (or off with a few others, who then conveniently die) so that they can explore their relationship as it truly is—or deepen it. It provides them the opportunity to be physically close and to recognize the inevitability of their physical love" (107). Removal of agency is a common motif in fanfiction (and, as a matter of fact, in traditional romance as well), and Soulmate AUs act in the same way. These physical bonds usually manifest themselves mentally as well, and from the Vulcan mind meld to the Veela mating present in *From the Sea*, the trope provides a "vision of a new kind of intimate relationship" (108), providing writers with the opportunity to create the ultimate monogamous relationship, as oftentimes the two characters involved in the bond cannot be physically or emotionally involved with anyone else. This clearly relates to traditional romance fiction, which dictates the importance of emotional compatibility and more often than not includes a marriage denouement. In Soulmate AU fics, the marriage is replaced by the bond, but the message remains the same: utmost commitment.

This shows the prevalence of emotions over rationality, both in fanfiction in general as well as in bonding fics in particular. In the following excerpt, Albus had only just come to the conclusion that he himself was possibly under the thrall of a Veela (most likely Scorpius), and was aware of the involuntary reactions his body and mind could have if he indeed were a Veela's mate, but still he considers his infatuation to Scorpius to be separate from it. Ultimately in Soulmate AUs, and bonding fics in general, the bond does not create the feelings between the characters; instead, it merely serves to expose (or at most enhance) previously curated feelings. The romantic idea of "true love" behind this trope could not function if said love were machinated out of biological constraints: the bonding does not create love, it merely propels the characters to divulge prior, real feelings:

What you don't know, Al, is that a merging isn't possible unless there's already a strong emotional connection between the individuals. Whatever you've been telling yourself, it's wrong! Everything you felt, everything you feel, is real! (WantsUnicorns)

In the interest of deepening the construct validity of the corpus, I want to point out a few instances which exemplify other heterotopian categories which are not the restrictive one in focus for this particular analysis. First, it is worthy of notice that the fic not only alternates between the POVs of Albus and Scorpius, but also between time periods: Albus's passages are set in the "present day", while Scorpius's start from a year before, every one of his sections coming closer to the present time period. The style of writing chosen here also reflects this disparity: actions are described in Albus's scenes in the present tense, e.g. "[t]he sound of the music is deafening and Albus is disoriented when it assaults him as he enters the room", whereas in Scorpius's scenes the verbs are in the past tense, such as "[t]he room seemed unnaturally quiet after the door fell closed behind them". This presents a juxtaposition of time that constantly disrupts the narrative and creates a final work that can be considered jarring due to this back-and-forth.

There is a scene in which one of Scorpius's ancestors, Uriel, makes him relive some of his memories of Albus in order to determine if he is indeed a suitable mate. The scene is highly heterotopian as it constitutes an intense disruption of time. The temporal juxtaposition allows Scorpius to see things from a new perspective and to make new meanings of old memories:

The last of the memories at Hogwarts shifted so fast that Scorpius couldn't distinguish between them anymore. Beside him Uriel had grown quiet. He looked pensive and his hands moved as if he was quickly sifting through a photo album; in a way, he was. (...)

It was a revelation to see the memory unfold again, but to be able to see it from the outside. Albus was smiling at Scorpius' younger self warmly. He rested his hands on younger Scorpius' shoulders and told him about how, as a child, his Aunt Hermione had given him the telescope and books about the universe and constellations after he complained that he didn't quite fit in. (WantsUnicorns)

The fic is still set in the Wizarding world, but the places in which the characters find themselves vary wildly from canon, so they can still be considered disruptive of space. Sites central to the fic include a mixture of known canonical places as well as entirely new ones: Albus and Scorpius reside in Malfoy Manor, a location shown in Deathly Hallows; however, they are secluded to a separate wing, which includes labs for their research, and these spaces are a creation of the fic's writer. Other than that, the two main characters have their fair share of adventures in exotic locations, from Iceland to the Himalayas, which constitutes a displacement from the canonical setting of Britain. This veers back to the other intertextual sources material for this work, Stargate SG-1 and Iron Man. In the sci-fi television series, the characters explore many alien civilisations, often with the help of the resident historian's expertise—a clear inspiration for the characterisation of Albus in this fic. As for Iron Man, Scorpius being heir to his father's company, and an inventor, are clear nods to the superhero franchise. I am not as familiar with SG-1 as I am with Iron Man, so my empirical knowledge has differing levels, but it is interesting to have both sides of the experience, that is, knowing exactly what instances of Scorpius were inspired by Tony Stark and being somewhat in the dark about what of Albus was taken from SG-1. The experience of being within and without the restrictive barriers imposed by extra-fandom knowledge improves even more my perception of this heterotopian quality.

2.3.5. The Love of a Good Wizard

Continuing the analyses, we move now to The Love of a Good Wizard, a Tomarry fic written by user SweetSorcery and published on AO3 in 2011. The fic makes use of the time travel trope, and I intend to relate it with the heterotopian category of juxtaposition. The premise of the fic involves Harry and Pansy Parkinson (a minor character in canon) going back in time to stop Tom Riddle becoming Voldemort. Instead of killing him, their plan is to make him fall in love with Pansy, as they heard in a History of Magic lesson that love once helped a powerful wizard stray out of the Dark path. Interestingly, the time travel is not fulfilled through the use of a Time Turner—an object which allows characters to go back in time, used as central plot points in both Prisoner of Azkaban and Cursed Child. Instead, Pansy uses a crystal ball to move them to the past, where they will attend Hogwarts under the pretence of being cousins and transfer students. Ultimately, the morals behind this fic and Cursed Child are quite similar-the consequences of meddling with time-though it can be argued that the results are opposite in both scenarios,. Cursed Child indicates that one should never attempt to change the past for it leads to catastrophic results, while The Love of a Good Wizard promotes the advantages of it, as it ends with Harry ultimately saving Tom (and the whole Wizarding world) by changing the past.

Indeed, many other literary works also concern themselves with this incredibly enticing wondering of "what if?". In these counter-narratives, also given the name of alternative histories, allohistories or even uchronias (Hellekson 2001), we are able to see the butterfly effect in action—how changing even a small event can influence the outcome of history at a larger scale. Philip Roth, an author of influential works within this realm of literature, calls it an "exercise in historical imagination" (2004). His own *The Plot Against America* is perhaps one of the most popular postmodern counter-history novels: in it, Philip, a semi-autobiographical character, is a Jewish child living in a world where aviation prodigy and Nazi sympathiser Charles Lindbergh wins

the 1942 American presidential election. There is no time travel in this novel: these are the events as they occur within this universe, the only history they will ever know. The effort of considering it as alternate history must come from the readers themselves, as they are able to compare their own historical past with the concretisation of the "what if?" scenario of America having a quasi-fascist president during the events of World War II.

The notion of the "counter" is also present in spatial analyses, specifically in regards to Lefebvre's spaces of representation. According to Soja and based on Lefebvre's ideas, if spatial practice is materialised space, and representations of space are the spaces of power and control, then the spaces of representation, which contain the previous two, must be "counterspaces", as they provide "spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (1996: 68). Resistance is undoubtedly a keyword for fanfiction in general, as it exists to provide an alternate perspective on the source material, oftentimes going against heteronormative expectations. Within the present trope of time travel this is made explicit by actively showing the process of creating the counterspace. Even the fact that most fanfiction nowadays is born-digital exacerbates this notion into a macro level, as in itself the non-physical space of the Internet can also be qualified as a counterspace. These notions are corroborated by Gavriel Rosenfeld, who notes that "the information revolution, by liberating human beings from the constraints of real space and time through cyberspace and virtual reality, has given us the confidence to break free of the constraints of real history as well" (2002: 92).

Both canonically in *Cursed Child* and in the fanfiction space with *The Love of a Good Wizard*, we are presented with a more direct approach to alternate history than is common in postmodern literature, this being made possible by presenting it in the context of fantasy literature. The "what if?" questioning is now experienced not only by the readers but by the characters themselves, who take it upon their responsibility to change history. This temporal juxtaposition presents a jarring effect as we are able to

experience time and space from diverging perspectives. *The Love of a Good Wizard* is set in 1942, during Tom Riddle's fifth year at Hogwarts. Although this period coincides with Voldemort's canonical student years, the events that unfold in the course of the fic are part of alternate history as the mere fact that Harry and Pansy are included in this era puts forward an entirely new set of actions. Both the time-traveller characters and the fic readers are able to superimpose the knowledge of what happened in the "original" 1942 with what happens as Harry and Pansy inhabit it. This proves incredibly difficult for Harry at the beginning, as he struggles to differentiate the people he knows in his own timeline with their younger counter-selves—one such case being Minerva McGonagall, previously his professor and now his fellow student:

McGonagall smiled at him. "I'll make sure to look after your cousin, Potter." (...) "Thanks," he said. "And please call me Harry." It was very weird to get this fresh-faced girl muddled up in his head with his wrinkly Transfigurations teacher, and the sooner he could mentally separate the two, the better. (...) It took some getting used to these familiar, and yet entirely new, faces. (SweetSorcery)

Though the greatest effort of juxtaposition comes when Harry regards Tom Riddle, his arch-nemesis and a person for whom he initially holds a great deal of contempt, if not outright hatred and disgust. Harry must quell his negative feelings towards Riddle for the sake of the mission, but at the same time he finds himself confused as the Riddle he faces in 1942 does not act quite like the one he is used to knowing and fearing. As they formally introduce themselves to one another, Harry has to consciously separate the "two Riddles" in his mind:

Harry reluctantly took [Riddle's] hand and forced a smile onto his face. 'He does not hate me, and I do not hate him,' he chanted to himself. "Harry Potter. Nice to meet you," he said cautiously. The last time Voldemort had touched him skin to skin, it had sent agony from his scar through his entire body. Feeling the warm, smooth palm of Riddle's hand against his own, he found it hard to make a connection. (SweetSorcery)

Later, finding that he will have to not only share a dormitory with Riddle but sleep directly beside him, Harry has another moment of distress, arguing with himself as he tries to keep his bias in check:

Once they arrived in the fifth year boys' dormitory, Riddle went and perched on the bed furthest from the door, then indicated the one beside it. "This is yours." Harry fought down yet another bout of hysteria. He might have guessed that he'd be the one sleeping next to him as well since clearly, there would be no other volunteers. 'He's just a boy, not a monster yet, you idiot,' an inner voice which sounded annoying like Pansy informed him. Another voice entirely his own replied, 'If that's the case, why is everyone keeping well out of his way?' There was no answer, naturally. (SweetSorcery)

At this stage, Harry still does not know enough about 1942-Riddle to be able to form a full-fledged opinion about his behaviour, so he relies on his previous knowledge of the man. However, he actively tries not to hold Riddle accountable for the crimes of his future self, initially based on the premise that they must be on friendly terms if his and Pansy's scheme is to be successful:

"You intrigue me, Harry."

The nape of Harry's neck tingled, and he wasn't too happy about the heat in his cheeks either. "Wonderful," he stammered, tossing bundles of socks into the bedside drawer. Being intriguing to Voldemort had not been his life's ambition. But prickly or not - and he could hardly deny that one - he did know that he would

need to make the best of being intriguing to Riddle. And he'd have to start thinking of him as Tom if he wanted to have any hope of telling his memories and the boy before him apart. (SweetSorcery)

The strategy of using different names for the Riddle he knows and the Tom he will still have to be acquainted with (something he also does by mentally separating "Professor McGonagall" and Head Girl student "Minerva") helps distinguish the two timelines in Harry's mind, and consequently the readers' as we read through Harry's point of view. Calling counter-selves differently is a common strategy in allohistories, as we need to find a way to create separate identities for these same people in order to understand in what other ways they might differ.

Harry constantly muses about his predicament, his inner monologue at one time describing the experience as such:

He was finding it very hard to get used to the other boy showing normal emotional reactions like being surprised, or pleased, or protective. He'd spent years telling himself that Riddle and Voldemort were one and the same - and they were, of course - but had never given any thought to a gradual progression from one to the other. It was so much more disconcerting to deal with 'Tom' - a boy who not only appeared not to hate him, but who even seemed fond of him. It was ludicrous and frightening, and he was entirely unprepared to deal with it. (SweetSorcery)

Though Harry cannot seem to stop himself having these negative thoughts, they do not show themselves on the surface; on the contrary, his interactions with Tom are amicable and true, as he seems to share quite a bit with his nemesis: his constant nightmares, his love of snakes and, of course, his lack of interest in girls. As Harry slowly comes to the realisation that he himself has more chances in seducing Tom than Pansy, he once again feels conflicted:

Harry sucked in a breath and his eyes were hard with anger. "Don't you dare call me a coward for not wanting to fancy the man who killed my parents!" Pansy's hands suddenly covered Harry's on his knees, and she squeezed them. "I'm not. But Harry - I'm going to be completely blunt now. Your parents do not exist yet. Don't look at me like that - they don't! They're not even a twinkle in anyone's eye yet. And you know as well as I do that we're here to prevent them ever getting hurt once they do exist."

Harry opened his mouth to contest Pansy's words, but he couldn't. "That doesn't mean I don't remember what he did to them. And other people I love."

"Might do, not did," Pansy corrected. "I know you can't stop remembering these things, but you have to stop thinking of them as having happened already, because they haven't. And you have to stop thinking of them as inevitable." She sighed. "Can you see this Tom - the one who fell for you for all to see the moment he laid eyes on you, the one who looks at you as if you're all his birthdays wrapped up in one package - can you see him killing your parents? Doing anything that would hurt you that much?" (SweetSorcery)

This excerpt explains why the author chose not to bring Harry and Pansy to the past by using a Time Turner: according to canon, one using a Time Turner cannot change the past, only relive it. There can be no temporal paradoxes, as there is ever only one timeline and anything apparently changed by using the Time Turner has happened all along (which is why Harry knows he can cast a Patronus charm at the end of *Prisoner of Azkaban*: he had already seen himself do it). Using a Time Turner could not stop Voldemort coming to power; they needed to be able to change the past, not just revisit it. In a way, this strategy results in a more heterotopian scenario, as we are faced

with juxtaposed times, the one Harry knows as his own past and the one he is currently living. The resulting unsettling feelings Harry harbours come from trying to equate the Tom Riddle from the two timelines, and it is why Pansy encourages him to separate them into two people. The very act of interacting with Harry as they are both teenagers changes the way Tom behaves towards him, and is indeed proof that their original plan—saving Tom Riddle by making him fall in love—can still work.

As has been established by now, the temporal shift allows for a different interpretation of characters than as they appear in canon. But that is true not only for the main characters in the fic as for minor ones as well. The most glaring example might be of Dumbledore: not yet Headmaster, 1942-Dumbledore is a Transfiguration teacher and Head of Gryffindor House. In *Half-Blood Prince* readers become acquainted with the relationship between Dumbledore and Riddle during the latter's Hogwarts years, as it is revealed that Dumbledore has kept a close eye on Riddle from the very start, aware of the boy's propensity for violence and manipulation. This dynamic between the two characters is also represented in the fic, but now, as we are meant to sympathise with Riddle, Dumbledore's actions take a more unfavourable perspective:

Tom got in ahead of him. "Professor Dumbledore, sir," he said, sounding deceptively calm while his eyes were dark with anger. "That... boy and his friend were attacking Harry."

Dumbledore looked around for the second boy, and not seeing anyone, stared at Tom disdainfully. "Something for which we have only your word, Mr Riddle."

"And mine!" Harry protested. "Tom was only helping me. He warned them, but they wouldn't leave."

Looking back and forth between them, Dumbledore said coldly, "Even if a student provokes you, Mr Potter, you cannot attack and hex him. And to make sure you remember that, I'm taking 50 points from Slytherin." He turned to Tom. "For each of you. Because you, Mr Riddle, should know that being well versed in hexes and curses does not give you the right to use them freely. I've told you so before." Harry gaped like a fish. "That's not fair," he protested.

"And detention for you both," Dumbledore added. "The trophy room needs a good clean. Meet me there tomorrow evening after dinner." With that, he swept down the corridor towards the main stairs. (SweetSorcery)

Later on, Tom explains to Harry that, in Dumbledore's eyes, "Gryffindors can do no wrong". Having been a Gryffindor himself during his original stay at Hogwarts, Harry had never been negatively affected by Dumbledore's apparent bias; now, being a Slytherin alongside Tom, Harry gets to see Dumbledore's actions from a new perspective. A similar process occurs in regards to Hagrid. The half-giant, who is one of Harry's best friends in the future, is now his fellow student. This too is a canonical fact, for Riddle was indeed the one who framed Hagrid for murder and caused him to be expelled from Hogwarts, as shown in *Chamber of Secrets*. In late 1942, however, these events have not yet happened, and Harry first comes across Hagrid during a party. There is clear animosity from Tom's part towards Hagrid, but the reasoning behind it might not be one that is expected from *Harry Potter* readers:

Harry looked at Tom sternly. "You don't like Hagrid, do you?"

Tom seemed surprised. "To be honest - no, I don't. How can you tell? I don't think even Minerva knows how much I dislike him, and she has plenty of reason herself."

(...) Tom sighed. "During my first year - Minerva's third, obviously - Hagrid was keeping some... pets he never should have been allowed. I've no idea how he got them, or what on earth they were meant to be. Anyway, one of them got out, because he doesn't keep them locked away well enough, and it bit Minerva. She was terribly sick in the hospital wing for more than a week, all swollen up and

vomitting (sic). It took them that long to find a cure." The muscles of his jaw were twitching tensely. "Minerva is very forgiving, or he would have been expelled then; mind you, I don't think she'll ever quite trust that big oaf again. And Dumbledore was very forgiving as well, because after all..." Here Tom sneered. "It's not as if Hagrid meant to hurt her". (SweetSorcery)

Here the timeline becomes a bit jumbled: in the books, Hagrid was in his third year when he was expelled, Riddle's fifth, therefore he could not have been at Hogwarts during Tom's first year. Nevertheless, the point here is, as it was with Dumbledore's passage, to show that Tom's dislike towards these characters may actually have a respectable reasoning behind it. Dumbledore is unreasonably biased against him for being a Slytherin, and Hagrid is actually dangerous in his carelessness towards magical creatures. As it will be explored more thoroughly in the analysis of the Snarry fic, the different character perspectives portrayed in this fic definitely make a case for the relational aspect of a heterotopia: the characters in *The Love of a Good Wizard* are not the same as they are presented in canon, not necessarily by acting differently than they normally would, but by having different motivations behind their actions. This is proven on one of Dumbledore's last scenes on the fic, when he admits to his misjudgement and apologises to both Harry and Tom, an attitude most worthy of his canonical counter-self.

Hagrid's subplot culminates when his pet Acromantula (a deathly kind of magical spider) almosts kills Myrtle, who is ultimately saved by Tom. The scene is reminiscent and yet completely opposite to Myrtle's canonical death: in *Chamber of Secrets*, Harry discovers that during his fifth year Riddle was communicating with a Basilisk (a deathly kind of magical snake), and one such case of releasing the Basilisk on the school grounds results in it killing Myrtle. This very same death is the one Riddle frames Hagrid and Aragog, his Acromantula, for causing, resulting in Hagrid's expulsion. The role reversal presented in the fic casts Hagrid as the real culprit and Tom as the saviour, another instance of the conflicting juxtaposition between Harry's future

and his present. Dumbledore's response to the events may also appear dissonant to his canonical characterisation:

Harry was by Tom's side, brushing against his arm and whispering, "You saved her."

"I think so, yes," Tom said, sounding surprised.

Harry couldn't quite suppress a smile, which slipped off his face when he heard Dumbledore's hissed words to Dippet.

"I'm not so sure about all this, headmaster. I've never known Tom Riddle to protect anyone, let alone a muggleborn."

Harry saw red. "Maybe you shouldn't presume to know Tom! It's very clear that you don't," he spat, loudly enough for every student within earshot to hear him. (SweetSorcery)

As previously mentioned, it is canon that Dumbledore was mistrustful of Riddle in his Hogwarts years, and well within reason; considering the events as they happen in the fic, however, Dumbledore's demeanour turns rather unnecessarily hostile, seeing as Tom has done nothing during the course of the narrative to justify this lack of trust. In the end, both Hagrid and Dumbledore behave much in the same way as they do in canon, the only difference being how their actions are interpreted by Harry himself, and consequently by the readers:

[Harry] wondered whether he should feel worse about Hagrid than he did, but remembering his own encounter with that very same acromantula, and Hagrid's history - or rather, future - of pets, he couldn't help but think that Hagrid's expulsion was safer for the rest of the students, no matter the timeline. (SweetSorcery) In the fic's most glaring digression from canon, it introduces the historical setting of World War II, as the main characters find themselves in the midst of an air raid in London after Apparating to the Muggle part of town by mistake. The scene puts Tom in direct contact with Muggles, people he has canonically been known to hate and feel prejudice towards. Harry once again must confront the notion he has of a Muggle-hating Riddle with the Tom he sees in front of him, who acts with some aversion to Muggles (at one point calling them "these… people"), but not anywhere nearly as antagonistic as his canonical counter-self. While waiting for the raid to end, magically sheltered within an empty shop, Harry attempts to risk his life to save a Muggle child:

"Tom! Extend the barriers, quickly!" There was a little boy standing behind the counter, peering longingly into the empty shop display and trying to peel a piece of toffee from a tray it was stuck to with age. The child looked hungry enough not to care about the mayhem all around him.

"I can't, Harry. If I extend it further, it'll be too weak to protect all of us. Why?" When Harry pointed to the boy, Tom blinked at Harry in confusion. "Let the muggles find him; they started this bloody war."

"These muggles didn't!" Harry hissed at him. "And certainly not that child. How do I get out of the barriers?"

"No!" Tom gasped, his eyes wide. "No, Harry. You could get killed. Don't!" He pulled Harry back as he was about to leap out into the shop.

"I'm not letting him die!" Harry protested, trying to tear himself away from Tom. "I'm not letting you die!" Tom yelled, yanking Harry back into the barrier before rising to sprint across the shop. There, he snatched the boy up in his arms and made it back a split-second before the roof collapsed in front of them, its remnants left hovering above their little group and held there only by magic. (...) The boy clung to Tom, his short, sticky fingers making a mess of Tom's lapels and half pulling his scarf from around his neck, and his cries slowly turned into muffled little sobs.

Tom looked down at the child as if it was a hideous toad, but he was holding it against his chest anyway.

Minerva couldn't help it - she giggled nervously, and Pansy joined in a moment later.

Tom growled with annoyance, awkwardly extracting a small finger from his buttonhole. He looked thoroughly put out.

(...) For a horrible moment, [Harry] had expected that Tom would simply draw his wand and kill the child rather than bring it inside the barriers. But Tom had looked so terrified of losing Harry. And he had never even reached for his wand." (SweetSorcery)

Tom acts with indifference towards the child, willing to let him die in order to keep himself save. However, when faced with the fact that Harry will attempt to save the child at the cost of his own life, Tom refuses to let it happen and does the saving himself. He continues to show no empathy towards the Muggle, but instead of it being perceived as villainy or cold-heartedness, his attitude of looking "thoroughly put out" does nothing more than provide an amusingly endearing moment, as the child refuses to be separated from his saviour. A scene such as this might provide a reasonable degree of dissociation not only for Harry but also any reader familiar with Riddle's violent actions towards the Muggle community—the behavioural juxtaposition presented here thus shows the heterotopian quality of the work.

Still in regards to this scene, another type of juxtaposition can be noticed: opposing the war-torn 1942 Muggle London to the safe, ordinary Wizarding one, both of which are so physically close yet so spatially different, creates a whole new level of disparity to the narrative: Diagon Alley should have been a sight for sore eyes after the mayhem of Muggle London. Instead, its bright colours and happily smiling shoppers and carefree child wizards demanding sweets and pet owls and broomsticks - and as a rule, getting what they wanted - were jarring and discordant, and all four of them felt it to varying degrees. (SweetSorcery)

As Harry compares the two spaces, even he is aware of the unsettling effect it causes. Juxtaposing the Wizarding and the Muggle worlds shows how intense is the disruption of space in the Harry Potter saga, but in this fic it is felt more strongly than ever, as it shows how the same city can at the same time be plagued by a war and blissfully unaware of it. A semblance of this disparity can at times be perceived in the novels, for instance during Prisoner of Azkaban when the Muggle community is aware of Sirius Black as a dangerous, escaped convict, or even more explicitly in the first chapter of Half-Blood Prince, when the former Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, visits the Muggle Prime-Minister to discuss his replacement, and the Prime-Minister realises that some catastrophes he had been dealing with were actually caused by wizardkind. These examples denote the proximity between the two worlds, mostly the influence of the Wizarding war over the Muggle world. In the fic, it is clear that the Muggle war in turn does not affect Diagon Alley, even though they are both inserted within the larger space of London. This constitutes the most blatant disruption of space in The Love of a Good Wizard, but other instances throughout the fic are also examples of this heterotopian category.

The fic is set at Hogwarts, a space already established as the most described within the series, and most of the spaces presented in the fic are as they appear in canon: the Great Hall, classrooms, and the Room of Requirement being the most common. However, even these spaces are not used in the exact same way: we now experience the Great Hall, for example, from the Slytherin table, where Harry has been re-sorted, instead of the usual Gryffindor table which is the setting of multiple scenes in the books. A few scenes are set in dormitories, but again there is a difference as scenes with Harry now show the Slytherin dormitory, and scenes with Pansy show the girls' Gryffindor dormitory, a space Harry has never entered in the books. When Tom is made prefect, he is granted a private room, and that too is a space added only within the context of the fic. These non-canonical spaces within a canonical one demonstrate how the disruption of space within fanfiction does not have to be as blatant as the two Londons the characters experience.

At the end of the fic, it is confirmed that Harry has managed to derail Tom from his villainous path, averting the war and his parents' death:

"This, Tom... this is our new life. Everything else was another reality. Another world. All those people you-- They don't exist yet. My parents don't exist yet. None of it will happen, and my memories of it fade more with each day. And I forgive you everything, Tom." (SweetSorcery)

In this excerpt Harry summarises his thoughts and perceptions of everything he has been through during the course of the narrative: there is a gradual shift on the fic which culminates then, as the reality he has lived for the past sixteen years becomes less and less important whereas his life in 1942 gains prominence. At this moment, the "new life" he has created solidifies itself as the axis and the one he left behind is relegated to being nothing but "another reality". The juxtaposition remains, though the overlap is turned upside down as what was secondary becomes primary, and vice versa.

2.3.6. In the Red

The last fanfiction to be analysed is *In the Red*, a Snarry work written by Dinkel and posted on AO3 in 2013. It was chosen to exemplify the relational aspect of heterotopias, because it contains the trope of minor character POV, specifically Severus Snape. This fic takes place after the events of the books, making use of the already dissected trope EWE. After the seventh book was released and the canon was completed (at least at a primary level, if we do not consider other official media such as *Pottermore* and *Cursed Child*), many fans were left unsatisfied with the ending J. K. Rowling gave to her main characters. For slash fans, some of that dislike was linked to how heteronormative the epilogue was, pairing off the three main characters with their childhood sweethearts and depicting them as having an incredibly average life. Therefore, it is logical that the selected trope will more often be used in fics which have a non-normative ship: fandomstats relays that, within the EWE tag, some of the most prolific ships include Drarry, Dramione (Draco/Hermione, not a slash ship but still one that does not conform with Rowling's normative ideas as it contains Draco, an antagonistic character), and ships involving Snape, including Snamione and Snarry.

Morally grey and contentious as Snape was in canon, he nevertheless gathered a large following from the beginning⁵⁵, and his death in the final installment left many a fan reeling with the wish to correct this apparent wrongdoing, inevitably turning to EWE fics. Bringing beloved characters back to life is one of the most recurrent elements of EWE fics, and Snape is often a focus of this strategy: according to fandomstats, the tag "Severus Snape Lives" appears in a whopping 682 fics, more than the results for similar tags concerning other canonically-killed beloved characters such as Fred Weasley or Sirius Black.

As for *In the Red*, the timeline of the narrative is a bit after the end of the war, as Harry mentions he had not been Snape's student for "more than five years". Harry's slight ageing might have been implemented to reduce the perception of age discrepancy between the two characters, oftentimes a point of contention against fics which involve Snape and one of his former students. Referring back to the terminology presented by Tosenberger, Snarry definitely classifies as a power slash couple: Snape is older, more magically competent, and in a position of power in regards to Harry by having been his

⁵⁵ For a detailed account of Fanon!Snape, see Millman (2005).

teacher. Fics of this pairing might work on this imbalance to create some sort of power play, or might try to diminish the imbalance altogether, taking the characters out of the school setting, ageing Harry up and overplaying his magical prowess so that he can stand at a fairer ground to Snape. The present fic seems to follow the latter route.

The premise of the fic is that Harry wishes to collect a life debt on Snape by making him marry him (so that Harry could escape marriage from Lucius Malfoy instead)—thus resorting to the arranged marriage trope, one of the ways of achieving the previously established removal of agency also characteristic of the traditional romance genre. As much of the fic is centred around issues pertaining the Wizarding War and its lasting consequences, we are able to see things from Snape's perspective and understand exactly what he feels about his part in the war, being a double-spy for Voldemort and Dumbledore, and how he resents being once again made to follow someone else's orders:

After all these years, he was finally free of his two masters, free of having to hide, steal and lie just to prolong his miserable life by one more day. He wouldn't trade that in for anything, least of all for Potter. (...) The Dark Lord, Voldemort – nowadays it was all the rage to call the Dark Lord by his childish nickname as the Daily Prophet had made quite clear – had stolen years of his life, forced him into servitude, treated him with scorn and outright hatred, and Potter planned to hold the rest of his life hostage. (Dinkel)

More than just gaining insight into another character's perspective, the POV shift allows the readers to see Harry from an outsider's position. As the main character in the novels, Harry is the one whose trajectory we follow and the only one whose thoughts and inner monologues we are privy to. In the realm of fanfiction, on the other hand, there is *carte blanche* for the writers to choose whichever POV they wish to portray, and oftentimes that coincides with one of the characters in the fic's main ship.

In the case of *In the Red* we follow Snape's view, and placing the POV outside of Harry's psyche allows the readers to make sense of actions which may not coincide with how Harry himself has seen them. In the following excerpt we can see one such example: Harry has consistently admired and respected Dumbledore, going so far as to claim himself "Dumbledore's man through and through" (Rowling 2005: 357); having a third-party view of the same happenings gives the reader new insight into characters and plots as they are presented in canon:

Potter, on the other hand and contrary to Dumbledore's assurances that he had never done such a thing, had been groomed since birth to be the Saviour the Wizarding World had been clamouring for. Brave, sacrificially obedient, selfless and in the end deadly. But Potter had never been designed to take control and use his power for anything but the greater good. Potter was not made for ambition; he had always been just a pawn in Dumbledore's elaborate scheme to save the world, moving when told, capturing when told, sacrificing himself when told. Potter didn't see the bigger picture, didn't understand the game plan because he only knew one direction: forward. (Dinkel)

In a similar vein, taking the POV away from Harry also means we can see him differently from how he sees himself, and consequently the author has more leeway to change his characterisation accordingly. He behaves exceedingly mature throughout the fic, especially in the first chapters, very much composed and professional while he argues for the resolution of Snape's life debt, providing a thorough contract drafted with the help of his lawyer. Snape might at times still think of Harry as the boy he knew at Hogwarts but, faced with the change in Harry's demeanour, his prejudiced resolve slowly crumbles: [Snape] was unused and disturbed by Potter's matter-of-fact, business attitude, all calm and collected, no unnecessary shows of emotion, no temper tantrums, no pouting, no muttering under his breath about how Severus was ruining his life. It was unnerving. (Dinkel)

This shift is perhaps done to help further the idea that Harry has grown and matured since the end of the war, made so in order to facilitate the relationship between him and Snape both in the eyes of the reader and of Snape himself, who gradually begins to distance this Harry from "the immature brat Severus knew him to be". However, the process is gradual, as initially Snape still finds fickle reasons to revert to the caustic judgement of Harry's character in a way that is so paramount to his canonical characterisation:

"I hope that by calling in your life debt what was predicted will not come to pass, but it is impossible to foresee a future that has not yet been set into motion." "So you still let others do the thinking for you," Severus taunted". Potter had the gall to roll his eyes. (Dinkel)

The lexical choice "taunt" here demonstrates that Snape is the one still clinging to their past antagonistic relationship, saying rude things deliberately to incite Harry back into their old dynamic. Harry must then be the one to rise above it and maintain a certain level of professionalism in their discussion. Of course, given that this is a work of slash, these perspectives might be skewed to justify the characters' behaviour—in this case, Snape acts sullen in order to hide his desire for Harry's attention. Knowing the canonical background of these two characters is essential to understanding how their interactions change during the course of the fic, reason why the POV shift can be considered as a relational trope.

During a scene in which Harry and Snape go looking for a new home, we gather some information on Snape's past. A few details in that regard are provided in canon, especially in relation to his shared childhood with Harry's mother, Lily. Snape's memories, given to Harry on his dying moments in Deathly Hallows, provide the material for a chapter filled with snippets of Snape's life from his perspective, a rare canonical POV shift within the novels. Nevertheless, even in this chapter we are only presented with objective events-though at times deducible, Snape's internal thoughts and emotions are still very much constrained to his own mind. In the Red, however, presents a full immersion into Snape's rationale, as readers gain insight into his thought process, his secluded dreams and desires. In turn, we lose any glimpse into Harry's thoughts, being left only with what Snape considers they might be. Snape's past is presented as a device for rationalising his canonical behaviour, as the added information and the fact that it is given through Snape's eyes leads readers into sympathising with his actions. In the following excerpt, Harry has just invited Snape to join him in a shower, to which Snape ignores. Instead of simply interpreting this a sign of disinterest, readers are able to dig deeper into Snape's motivation:

There was no changing his mind because Severus knew exactly how this would play out. Sirius Black had made sure of that, making a lonely, desperately lonely, Severus believe that he not only stood a chance with the gorgeous, self-centred Gryffindor, but that he only had to reach out, take a tiny step (forget all the taunts and pranks), a non-existent risk (invite disaster) and Sirius Black would be his. Sirius Black, James Potter, Harry Potter, was there a difference? Not for Severus hook-nosed, greasy-haired, anti-social loser - for him they were all unattainable and Potter Jr.'s laughter would sound just as jeering, as taunting, as derisive as his father's had sounded when he had stepped from behind the curtain and had mocked Severus for daring to hope that Sirius Black was really interested in him. (Dinkel) This digression includes a non-canonical instance from Snape's past, as he is tricked into believing Sirius Black fancies him only to be humiliated for it. This circumstance created solely for the purposes of this fic enriches Snape's characterisation, as readers are able to move past his impassive façade and create a new level of meaning for the character, something possible here only because the fic is told from his point of view. As far as relation with the source material goes, the fic could be seamlessly integrated into canon, as it does not directly contradict any objective information. Nothing impedes this sequence of events to have actually taken place within Rowling's universe—as we are only privy to what Harry knows and experiences, what happens to other characters is very much any man's game.

Further along in the fic, Snape receives an invitation to speak at a symposium, which he cannot answer in time due to Harry's increased security measures. The ensuing scene is highly relational to canon as it provides another side to Harry and Snape's relationship:

"It's the opportunity of a lifetime, Potter," Severus raged. "I've been waiting for twenty years to finally get accepted and acknowledged by the Symposium and when finally, finally they have deemed me worthy... Your infantile security measures and your meddling interference in my life have destroyed any chance I ever had!"

For a moment, Severus thought Potter wouldn't answer and sulk at the unfairness of being scolded when he had done nothing wrong, when he had only tried to help, when it had been Malfoy's fault all along, when his potion had been perfectly fine and not about two seconds from blowing the entire dungeons to pieces. But Potter didn't withdraw into a corner to lick his wounded pride or tried to defend himself with words Severus had no desire to hear. Instead he turned to Creevey. "Can you get me the name and Floo address of whoever is responsible?" It wasn't really a question though and Creevey hastened over to the fireplace, popping his head in.

"What are you going to do, Potter?" Severus sneered. "Think you can just make an appearance and everything will be right as rain again?"

"I do have considerable influence, Severus," Potter informed him mildly. "And I never wanted my life and my need for security to complicate your life (...)." (Dinkel)

In the books we see things from Harry's perspective, and as readers are made to sympathise with his woes whenever he is on the receiving end of Professor Snape's ire. Now, we are presented instead with how Snape interprets the events, but still we are not made to disagree with Harry's response, precisely because he does not act in the fic in the same way as Snape deems he used to when he was his student. We follow Snape's reasonings, but at the same time we do not have to distance ourselves from sympathising with Harry, as he himself also changes.

A final example of the relational aspect of this trope comes when Harry and Snape discuss Harry's injuries that he has sustained on his highly secretive job:

"What happened?" Severus demanded, wrapping an arm firmly around Harry's waist when the younger man stumbled.

"Please don't ask, you know I can't answer," Harry sighed.

"Was it my spell again?" Severus challenged, feeling a horrible twisting in his stomach of being culpable, in whatever abstract way, for Harry's injuries. "Sectumsempra?"

Harry opened his mouth, made a small choking noise and furiously shook his head; he then furrowed his brow and stopped to look up at him. "I... haven't used that spell in a long time." (Dinkel)

Sectumsempra is a spell that deeply connects Harry and Snape: during Harry's sixth year at Hogwarts, he comes in contact with Snape's own Potions textbook, learning from it the extremely harmful spell created by Snape. When Harry inconsequentially uses the spell on Draco Malfoy, nearly killing the other boy, we are able to glimpse at Harry's inner conflict over his action, while Snape's thoughts remain at large inaccessible:

The door banged open behind Harry and he looked up, terrified: Snape had burst into the room, his face livid. Pushing Harry roughly aside, he knelt over Malfoy, drew his wand, and traced it over the deep wounds Harry's curse had made, muttering an incantation that sounded almost like song. The flow of blood seemed to ease; Snape wiped the residue from Malfoy's face and repeated his spell. Now the wounds seemed to be knitting. Harry was still watching, horrified by what he had done, barely aware that he too was soaked in blood and water. (Rowling 2005: 523)

In the fic, however, the shift of perspective allows readers to see how Snape feels about the use of his spell, at least when directed at Harry, while Harry's thoughts are now the ones beyond reach. There is a constant dialogue between canon and fanon, every thought and action irrevocably traced back to the source material either by affirming it or otherwise opposing it. Considering the ship (not the fandom one this time, mind, but the actual vessel), Foucault's heterotopia "par excellence" which "exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea" (1986: 9), we can think of this trope, and indeed fanfiction itself, as the self-contained unit which thrives when immersed in fandom's sea of imagination.

3. Conclusion

Various conclusions can be drawn from this study. The primary one, which answers the main research question, is that slash fanfiction can indeed be considered a heterotopian space. The way this conclusion was reached within the data analysis was with the aid of a grid-like methodology that highlighted the relationship between one narrative trope and one heterotopian category for each work.

With *An Issue of Consequence*, the trope of Hogwarts Eighth Year demonstrated that fanfiction stories do not have to be limited to the constraints of the original plot's timeline, thus being evidence for the presence of the heterotopian characteristic of disruption of time within fanfiction. With a combination of a highly popular ship, trope, and fic, *An Issue of Consequence* is perhaps the paradigmatic example in this corpus of the relevance of studying slash fanfiction.

It's not the Wanting (but the Having), being representative of a contentious trope such as incest, was an example of the many topics within slash fanfiction which have ambiguous reception. Though it is undeniably a more open-minded space than the rest of society, slash fanfiction still contains tropes which are largely unfavoured and which may receive differing reactions even within the community. That relates to the idea that the perception of heterotopias is also ambiguous, and that they do not possess an inherent moral value.

A Cure for Nightmares is the only example in the given corpus of a Muggle AU, that is, a work of *Harry Potter* fanfiction in which the characters are no longer magic. This is only one of the infinite Alternate Universes available when producing fanfiction, and attests to the heterotopian quality of disruption of space. By removing the characters from their original setting, it is possible to explore their psyche from different perspectives, playing with their defining traits and exposing how they would behave in different (yet often parallel) scenarios. As heterotopias are in their core different spaces, the AU trope is highly representative of this heterotopian aspect. *From the Sea* exposed yet another characteristic present in both slash fanfiction and heterotopias: its restriction. Containing a plot centred around the notion of Veelas, the work demonstrated how there is a clear barrier when it comes to meaning construction in fanfiction. As they are stories written based on previously published material, there is already a pre-established pool of knowledge that is expected of fanfiction readers. This is what creates the system of opening and closing doors that Foucault mentioned as being characteristic of heterotopias, and is another instance of the validity of the classification of slash fanfiction as such a space.

The Love of a Good Wizard is a work that depicts the trope of Time Travel, and places two of its main characters in two temporal settings: their original one and the one they are transported to. This trope was chosen to reveal the juxtaposition present in slash fanfiction, which is also a characteristic of heterotopias. Like the heterotopian museum, *The Love of a Good Wizard* presents the same space being shared by objects from different times. This grouping may oftentimes cause a jarring effect to those who observe said space, as Foucault mentioned in his lecture. Therefore, the chosen trope further strengthens the idea of slash fanfiction as heterotopia.

Lastly, *In the Red* contained a trope that is widely employed in fanfiction: a shift in POV. The original series being told from Harry's point of view, any and all works of fanfiction that diverge in this aspect can be considered as representative of this trope. Within this corpus itself, only *The Love of a Good Wizard* uses Harry's perspective, therefore all others are too examples of character POV shift. The choice of analysing the trope with this specific fic comes from mainly two reasons: first, unlike *It's not the Wanting (but the Having)* or *A Cure for Nightmares*, it is a fic that contains Harry himself in the main ship, allowing for a closer comparison between the portrayal of this character in the novels and in works of slash. Secondly, the other half of the ship being comprised of Severus Snape, arguably the most ambiguous character within canon, exemplifies how a repositioning of perspective might result in a new understanding of the characters. Ultimately, this trope exemplified the relational aspect present in slash fanfiction, which is also a heterotopian category.

It is also important to reiterate that any given work of fanfiction could be analysed for any and all of the aforementioned categories with similar results. This effort was shown throughout the previous chapter, and a few examples can be given here to reinforce this idea: for instance, *The Love of a Good Wizard* is undoubtedly representative of the category of disruption of time given as it displays time travel, and the institutionalised homophobia present in *A Cure for Nightmares* could be seen for its relational aspect if we consider that there is no mention of it in canon. In the same fashion, only one trope was foregrounded for each fic, but it is clear that each one is made of many tropes, and those in turn have their own heterotopian qualities. For example, *From the Sea* is also a Next Gen fic and it could therefore be seen for its juxtaposition value, and *In the Red* contains a teacher/student relationship, surely a topic of ambiguous reception. In short, the present case study exemplified how the aforementioned grid can be used to analyse any fic for its heterotopian potential, no matter the ship, trope, or even the fandom it originates from. Hopefully further research will be made in that regard, continuing the exploration of this valuable methodology.

A reason behind this exercise, and another conclusion to be drawn from the effort of this research, is that fanfiction is not a fixed entity, but instead serves many different purposes and can be seen from as many different perspectives. The present study focused on the spatial dynamics of slash fanfiction, but other researchers, given their own academic strengths, might prioritise other facets of it such as the sociological, the literary, or the political. The fluidity of interdisciplinary fields within Fan Studies allows for such creativity and innovation in exploring new and interesting positions. As of the writing of this dissertation in mid-2019, the latest Fan Studies Network presented a vast body of works being done in the area, and presentations were given on the most varied topics, from fan/producer relationships to fandom and national identity to shipping practices in fanfiction. A fishbowl conversation about the structured whiteness

of fandom was also held, bringing light to this equally important and underdeveloped issue within the field. The event, while being one of the only conferences devoted to Fan Studies, is nevertheless still tragically small, which indicates that there is clearly still much to be done in the ways of expanding and recognising this field in academia. Studies such as the present one, and the ones presented at FSN19, are a necessary and important step in guaranteeing the future success and thriving of the area.

Given the current prominence of the Digital Humanities, it is paramount that fanfiction be given more attention within this branch of research also, as fanfiction is a significant part of born-digital literature produced in the twenty-first century. With the continuous effort to destigmatise and shed light upon this practice, future generations will be more open and knowledgeable about the intricacies of fanfiction writing, and of their rights and duties pertaining to it. Hopefully this can lead into fans having more freedom and opportunity to create spaces of their own, out of the margins and closer to the centre.

As for me, I still read and write fanfiction, though my involvement in fandom is ever-developing. In the same way that my personal history in fandom informed my academic work, so does my academic knowledge allow me to understand deeper levels of meaning within fandom. Slash communities are usually rather cognisant of their own transgressive power, but it is interesting to be more fully aware of the intricacies of micro and macro power relations implicated in the process of constructing these spaces. Of course, going back to Lefebvre's opposition of lived and conceived spaces, being the first ones "hot" and passionate and the latter ones "cool" and abstract, it can be said that having intellectual notions of fanfiction is undoubtedly worthy, but it would quite frankly be lost without honest fervour. So, as long as there are moments when I think "why can't I find a story with *this*", there will still be a space for fanfiction in my heart.

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Anexos

Annex 1: Dictionary of emic terms

! — Presented between a personality trait and a character's name, this symbol usually represents characterisation which deviates from canon, or is otherwise not explicit in it, e.g. "American!Hermione" or "Tall!Draco".

Angst - A genre of fanfiction in which the characters are put in emotionally distressing situations.

Alternative Universe - A work that transports the characters from the original setting presented in their source material. Often abbreviated to AU.

Canon - The collective information included in the source text. Opposite of fanon.

Disclaimer - A statement of purpose usually at the beginning of a work of fanfiction, expressing non-ownership of the source material by the fic author.

Epilogue What Epilogue – In clear reference to the overarching trope PWP (see below), it is a trope exclusive of the *Harry Potter* fandom, containing a disregard of the series' epilogue. Often abbreviated to EWE.

Fanon — As opposed to canon, represents the collective imagery created by a certain fan community.

Headcanon — A piece of information not contained within the source material but which is considered canon by a fan, or fandom.

Het - Short for "heterosexual"; ships which depict one male and one female character.

Meta — Inspired by the self-referential literary device, signifies a non-fiction, fan-made analysis of a particular element of the source material.

Moodboard – A collection of images curated to represent anything, from a character to a fic or a whole fandom.

Non-Con - Short for "non-consensual", a fandom-specific term for rape.

OOC - Acronym for "Out of Character", describes any characterisation in fic which does not conform to the one presented in canon.

POV — Short for "point-of-view", delineates from which character's perspective a particular work of fanfiction is told.

PWP — Short for "Plot? What Plot?" or "Porn Without Plot", used to describe short works of fanfiction which focus mainly or exclusively on sex acts.

Real Person Fiction (RPF) – Fiction written about real people instead of characters.

Ship — Short for "relationship", describes two or more characters or real people placed in a romantic or sexual context. May be used as a noun or verb.

Slash – A ship containing two or more characters or real people of the same gender.

Songfic - A work of fanfiction which includes song lyrics in the body of the text.

Trope – A recurrent theme present in works of fanfiction through or across fandoms.

Wank — "A loud and public online argument, often involving many participants outside of the initiating members, and often devolving into side-taking, hyperbole, and personal attacks" ("Wank", Fanlore.org). Nowadays also called "discourse".

Annex 2: Figures

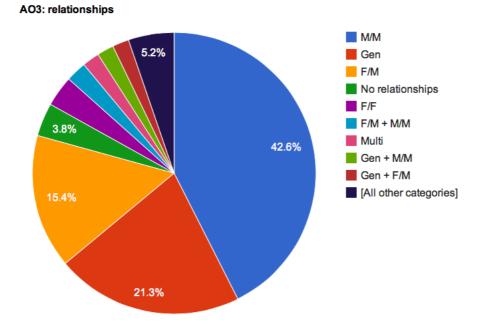
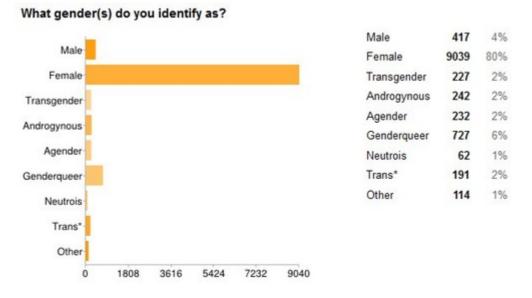


Figure 1: Ship categories on AO3

Source:

http://destinationtoast.tumblr.com/post/52261319793/next-up-in-my-ongoing-series-onao3-stats-a, accessed 21/03/19.

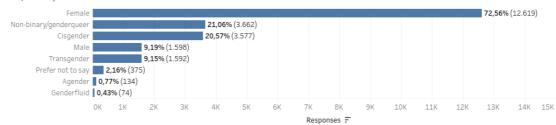
Figure 2.1: Gender of AO3 users - centrumlumina census



Source: http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62816996032/gender, accessed 12/03/19.

Figure 2.2: Gender of shippers - Klink and Minkel census

How do you describe your gender? (All respondents, check as many as you like, with space for free response)



Source:

https://public.tableau.com/profile/fansplaining#!/vizhome/TheFansplainingShippingSur veyResults/SurveyDemographicsGenderandSexuality, accessed 31/05/19.

Figure 3.1: Sexuality of AO3 users - centrumlumina census

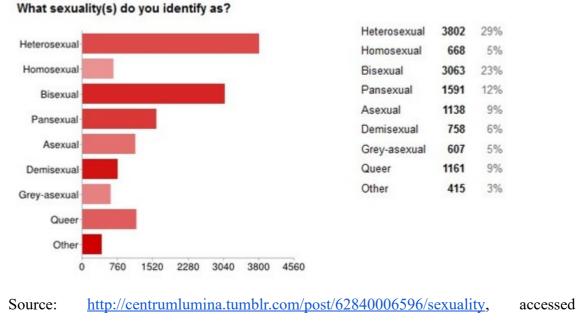
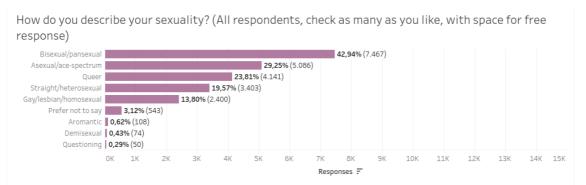




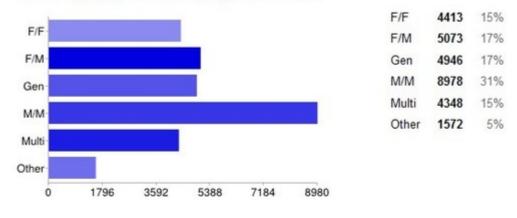
Figure 3.2: Sexuality of shippers - Klink and Minkel census



Source:

https://public.tableau.com/profile/fansplaining#!/vizhome/TheFansplainingShippingSur veyResults/SurveyDemographicsGenderandSexuality, accessed 31/05/19.

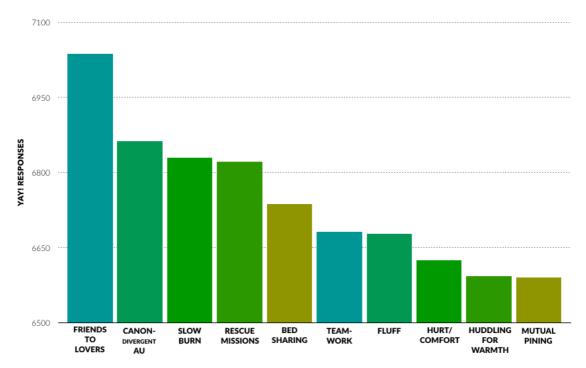
Figure 4: Preferred categories of AO3 users - centrumlumina census



What category(s) of work do you prefer to read?

Source: http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62996687070/categories, accessed 12/03/19.

Figure 5: Most popular tropes



Source:

https://www.fansplaining.com/articles/five-tropes-fanfic-readers-love-and-one-they-hat e, accessed 14/03/19.

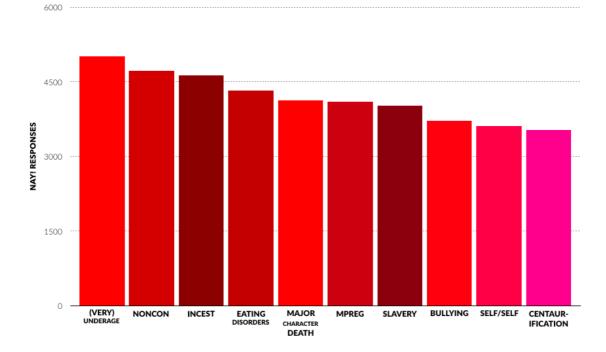
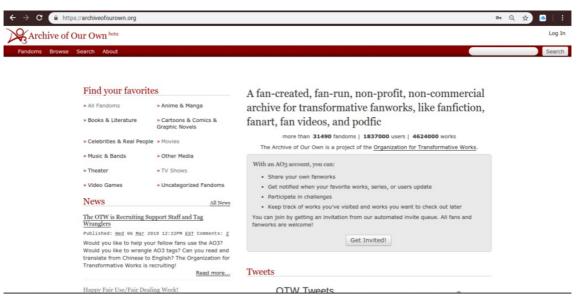


Figure 6: Least popular tropes

Source: ibid.

Figure 7: AO3's homepage (not logged in)



Source: <u>https://archiveofourown.org/</u>, accessed 11/03/19.

Sort and F	filter
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Crossovers	
Completion Status	
• Word Count	
Date Updated	
Search within results 💿	
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Sort and F	ilter

Figure 8: AO3's Sort and Filter mechanism

Source:

https://archiveofourown.org/tags/Harry%20Potter%20-%20J*d*%20K*d*%20Rowling/ works, accessed 09/03/19

Figure 9: Most frequent relationships containing the tags "Harry Potter—J. K. Rowling" and "M/M" on AO3

Relationships

First 10 most frequently appearing ships for this tag, both romantic (designated with a "/") and platonic (using "&").

Draco Malfoy/Harry Potter		29,589
Sirius Black/Remus Lupin	11,993	20,000
Harry Potter/Severus Snape	9,513	
Hermione Granger/Ron Weasley	4,306	
James Potter/Lily Evans Potter	2,733	
Harry Potter/Tom Riddle	2,541	
Scorpius Malfoy/Albus Severus Potter	2,365	
Remus Lupin/Severus Snape	2,335	
Harry Potter/Ginny Weasley	1,943	
Credence Barebone/Original Percival Graves	1,738	

Source: <u>https://fandomstats.org</u>, accessed 11/03/19.