BEYOND THE CANON: FANFICTION, DIVERSITY, AND THE DYNAMICS OF POWER

by

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Situated in the field of fan studies, this thesis compares J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series with one of its fanfictions, All the Young Dudes by MsKingBean89. Harry Potter ideologically aligns itself with systems of oppression and marginalized communities. However, the series also engages in racial tokenism and superficial representations of disenfranchised identity. I employ Rami Shalk's concept of defamiliarization and Katherine Anderson-Howell's concept of "writing through" identity to analyze Rowling's topical application of diverse identities in comparison to MsKingBean89's fanfiction. My analysis concludes that MsKingBean89 employs a more sincere portrayal of marginalization by embedding identity into every level of her characters' lives and by refamiliarizing the ideological metaphor of oppression present in Harry Potter. MsKingBean89's refamiliarization of these metaphors reminds readers that oppression is not only a plot device, but a status of being through which the characters live. Through the study of All the Young Dudes, this thesis challenges the stereotypes of fanfiction as amateur and shameful by demonstrating the genre's potential for transforming problematic portrayals of marginalized identity in mainstream media franchises. My analysis reveals the value of fanfiction as critical discourse and cautions future scholars to the risk of exploitation by media producers for this labor.

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Introduction

Fan culture, or fandom, refers to the social enjoyment of an aspect of popular culture, such as movies, television shows, books, music, or sports. Fanfiction is an aspect of fandom that can be defined broadly as written narrative material that (1) features characters whose copyright is held by others; (2) exists outside of the literary marketplace; and (3) is written within and to the standards of a specific community, be it a particular fandom or the fanfiction community as a whole (Coppa 6-7). Although the act of adapting characters and plots dates to classic texts such as Virgil's *Aeneid,* Dante's *Inferno,* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, modern practices of fanfiction are widely understood to begin in the 1960s.[1] A tight-knit community of female *Star Trek* fans discreetly created and shared art pieces, short stories, poems, and songs. These fans created "an extensive mentor-apprentice system for training newcomers in the structures and customs of the community," which was maintained by a set of "codes and aesthetics of fan fiction", and a collectively created practice of media consumption (Bacon-Smith 81). From the 1990s onwards, the emergence of the internet brought new tools for fans to connect and collaborate on fanwork. Today, fans utilize chatrooms, blogging sites, and social media to discuss fan theories and share transformative interpretations of their favorite franchises. It is through fanfiction that "fans assert their imaginative power over foundational works (the *canon)*[2] and renegotiate the terms set by their original authors" (Vadde & Jean So 2).

Fanfiction is often stigmatized as a "guilty pleasure" or an amateur hobby that leads to an eventual transition into "real" literature (consider *Coulture Magazine's* "Fanfictions: A Resurfacing Guilty Pleasure," *Vox's* "Why We're Terrified of Fanfiction," or *The Artifice's* "Is

[1] For more information on the history of Trekkie fandom, see Bacon-Smith, Coppa, and Jenkins.
[2] Definitions of key terms (italicized) can be found in the Glossary.

Fanfiction for Real Writers Too?"). The scholarly field of fan studies, in which this thesis is situated, sees fanfiction instead as a form of transformative work that challenges many of the problematic aspects of the mainstream media. In his book *Textual Poachers* (1992), Henry Jenkins suggests that the very act of being a fan is to exist within a place of social weakness. Jenkins writes that, "fans lack direct access to the means of commercial cultural production and have only the most limited resources with which to influence entertainment industry's decisions" (27). Fans are relatively powerless in the culture economy, despite being the driving force that funds and consumes most of its content. It is through this social position that intersectional communities relate to each other based on a shared status of marginalization: "using the stigma as a unifying factor to spur a sense of camaraderie and solidarity" (Yodovich 293).

Jenkins draws on Michael de Certeau's (1984) concept of "poaching" to describe the ways that fans adapt popular media to create alternative meanings (24). Certeau's concept of poaching[3] describes how individuals appropriate cultural products for their own use, often in ways not intended by the original creators (31). Jenkins interpretation of this concept applies specifically to fan culture, and describes the act of taking elements from popular media, such as settings, plots, or characters, and reworking them into new creations (24). Textual poaching is, at its core, a power struggle between creators and consumers for control over popular media and their meanings. Poaching calls into question the dynamic of authority between writers and readers, specifically the authority to adapt someone else's legal property. The fanfiction community operates under the shared understanding that "everyone, even readers and editors, are potential creators" (Petersen-Reed 3). It is through this community that fans critique mainstream media by exploring alternative endings, relationships, or entire universes.

[3] "Poaching" is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as trespassing on land or water to illegally catch game or fish.

The media industry lacks diversity at nearly every level of media creation.[4] As a result, mainstream entertainment media are similarly homogeneous in their representations of race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and other disenfranchised identities. Authentic and autonomous representations of marginalized characters in our media landscape are few and far between.[5] "Autonomous" is used here deliberately to emphasize the importance of diverse stories written by diverse people. The television and film industries suffers from a lack of both, often resulting in the tokenization of marginalized identities. *Tokenism* refers to the act of including certain character identities to satisfy the need for diversity, rather than accurately portraying people with those identities (Oxford English Dictionary). Fan communities, on the other hand, are active spaces for people of various racial backgrounds, genders and sexuality identities, abiltities, and other positionalities to take on roles, as both creators and protagonists, that have been historically unavailable to them.

An example of fanfiction combatting the mainstream's problematic portrayals of diversity can be found in *All the Young Dudes,* published in 2017 by MsKingBean89. *All the Young Dudes* contains characters that belong to J.K Rowling's 1997-2007 *Harry Potter* series and has been published to the non-profit website *Archive of Our Own (AO3). Harry Potter* and other forms of speculative fiction are often dismissed from academia due to their perception as

[4] The percentage of minority directors of Hollywood theatrical films rose from 12.2% to only 16.8% from 2011 to 2022 (Ramon et al. 29). In 2022, BIPOC directors made up only 23% of streaming film directors (30). A disparity between male and female creators exists as well: men outweigh women in roles such as screenwriters, TV series writers and developers, and pilot writers (The Writer's Guild of America's 2020 3). Out of 1,600 top-grossing films from the past 16 years, only 6.8% of them were directed by women (Smith et al. 4). Out of 1,784 directors, only 107 of them of were Black, and of these only 15 were women, making up 0.8% of total directors over 16 years (5). The writers of popular media are overwhelmingly white (77% of screen writers), male (70.4%), heterosexual (93.8%), and able-bodied (>99%) (Writers Guild of America West 3).

[5] Only 2.1% of named characters in 100 of 2022's top-grossing films were LGBTQ+, of which 40% were speaking roles that were "inconsequential to the story" (Smith et al. 5). Only 1.9% of all speaking characters in these films had a disability (5). Not only were only 38.3% of onscreen characters non-white, but as demonstrated by the data above, only a small percentage of them were written by writers who have the cultural experiences to authentically represent these narratives.

"nonliterary, mainstream fluff; silly escapist texts marketed toward youth" (Shalk 113). However, this genre is a rich source of cultural work that is "intimately connected to widespread social understandings of (dis)ability, race, gender, and sexuality" (114). It is the widespread success of both *Harry Potter*[6] and its inspired work, *All the Young Dudes,*[7] that make them worthwhile case studies for fanfiction's ability to rehabilitate problematic representations of identity in mainstream media. Further, *Harry Potter* is an overwhelmingly white, *cishet*, abled story. Despite this, metaphors for disability and racial inequality are central elements in the narrative. Beyond the themes within the texts themselves, controversy surrounding J. K. Rowling transphobia, cultural appropriation, and queerbaiting has altered fans' relationship with her books. These factors make *Harry Potter* a site of inquiry for gender, race, sexuality, and disability studies and make any reinterpretations from MsKingBean89 notable examples of fanfiction's reinventive potential.

The rest of this introduction lays the groundwork for my argument by situating fanfiction's negative perception in the mainstream. Fandom is stigmatized in three primary ways: (1) the feminization of fan activities; (2) discrepancies about economic rights and ownership; and

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[6] With over 400 million copies of the series sold since its publication, it has been suggested that J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* was one of the main interventions that saved the publishing industry for children's books (Anderson). Published in 1997, the series has resulted in an eight-film series, countless video game adaptations, film spin-offs such as Warner Bros' *Fantastic Beasts* series, and books like *Harry Potter: Tales of Beedle the Bard*, and *Harry Potter: A Journey Through a History of Magic*. Both film franchises have earned Warner Bros over $9.5 billion in profit worldwide (The Numbers), making it the third highest grossing film franchise of all time (Hartwig). The series has amassed global success and praise for its colorful world-building, relatable characters, and mindful approach to mature themes for its intended audience.

[7] *Harry Potter* is the largest fandom on AO3 under the Books & Literature category, with 507,498 works (Archive of Our Own "Fandoms"). The most popular among them is MsKingBean89's *All the Young Dudes*. Comprised of 188 chapters (whose word count is higher than the first four *Harry Potter* books combined), *All the Young Dudes* has garnered an impressive 14,013,487 hits as of May 6th, 2024 (MsKingBean89). It is currently the most-read fanfiction on AO3 with more than double the number of hits on the runner-up (which also happens to be a *Harry Potter* fanfiction). *All the Young Dudes* follows Remus Lupin, Sirius Black, James Potter, and Peter Pettigrew through their school days at Hogwarts. Impressively, the fanfiction has been translated into 22 different languages by fans dedicated enough to translate the beloved story into their language, making access to the fanfiction even wider. A search on Youtube of reveals thousands of fan edits, fan-made audiobooks, video essays, fan theories, playlists, and fan films.

(3) resistance to fanfiction's inversion of cultural hierarchies. Gender plays a central role in these stigmas as all three stem from cultural roots in patriarchal power structures. I conclude the section by introducing two theoretical frameworks through which I will analyze *Harry Potter* and *All the Young Dudes:* defamiliarization and writing "through" identity. Through these frameworks, I will demonstrate how *All the Young Dudes* rehabilitates tokenism in *Harry Potter*.

Eroticism and Liberation: The Feminist Roots of Fandom

Fanfiction has long been understood as a female craft that allows creative power and nuance to come from a traditionally underserved audience demographic. Fanfiction originated predominantly among women[8] who challenged traditional boundaries and advocated for equal recognition within fan communities (Bacon-Smith 18). More modern practices of fanfiction encompass participants of diverse backgrounds, including various ages, races, sexual orientations, and other social identifiers alongside gender identity. This offers a variety of social lenses through which to investigate fanfiction under. Despite a diversification of participants, the relationship between fanfiction and women's studies is still relevant when considering the perception of fanfiction within the mainstream. According to Christine Dandrow, "female arts have traditionally been dismissed as mere craft, belittled as childish or unworthy of study, or otherwise denigrated and fanfiction is no exception to this" (qtd. in Koehm 6), as does Jenkins, "It is telling, of course, that sports fans (who are mostly male and who attach great significance to "real" events rather than fictions) enjoy very different status than media fans (who are mostly

[8] Scholars such as Abigail De Kosnik, inspired by Lauren Berlant's *The Female Complaint*, view fanfiction as an archive of women's culture "designed specifically to appeal to female audiences" ("'Fifty Shades' and the Archive of Women's Culture" 118).

female and who attach great interest in debased forms of fiction)" (Textual Poachers 19). There is an undeniable relationship between the perception of fandom in the mainstream and misogyny, as Neta Yodovich points out: "when a cultural text receives a great deal of attention from women, it automatically loses both credibility and cultural value" (291). We must acknowledge the misogyistic tendency of our culture to dismiss women's hobbies as low quality.

Women's place in the literary world has been at issue for centuries. Jenkins writes that in the relationship between media creators and consumers, "both the teller and the tale are often 'radically other' for women within a world where publishing, broadcasting, and the film industry are all dominated by men" (*Textual Poachers* 115). For generations, female authors have been silenced by their male counterparts. This is partly due to sexist perceptions of women's abilities in the literary world, as well as fears that their writing might pose a threat to emerging male authors.[9] Despite efforts to keep them outside the realm of literature, women have demanded the opportunity to participate equally with their male peers across history and as a result, make up a significant demographic in these areas.[10] As Ian McEwan once concluded in an article for the Guardian, "When women stop reading, the novel will be dead" (qtd. in Weiner).

Long has societal panic over feminine sexual expression, in both the public and private spheres, served as a restriction on women's literacy. A central argument against allowing women to read stemmed from several fears: (1) Reading would allow women to escape from their

[9] Notable examples of these discriminations can be found in 19th-century novelists like Nathanial Hawthorne, who wrote in 1855 that "America is now wholly given over to a damned mob of scribbling women, and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash" (qtd. in Frederick 231), and modern writers such as Nobel Prize winner VS Naipaul, who said "I read a piece of writing and within a paragraph or two I know whether it is by a woman or not. I think [it is] unequal to me" (qtd. in Coates).

[10] Women readers account for 80% of fiction book sales in the UK, US, and Canadian literary markets (Thomas-Corr). Data from spring of 2021 reveals that women make up 59.5% of all US college students ("Women increasingly outnumber men at U.S. colleges—but why?"). Women writers are responsible for over 50% of the books published in the US yearly and see higher selling rates than their male counterparts (Rosalsky).

responsibilities in the real world; (2) It would grant women a source of privacy and pleasure; and (3) Privacy and pleasure would lead to sexual freedom beyond the sexual responsibilities expected of women by the patriarchy (Busse *Framing Fanfiction*). Bacon-Smith writes about female *Star Trek* fans of the 1960s:

> Infringing copyrights, the law they break, is only the mildest part of the subversion fomented in the ladies' literary group and terrorist society. As their greatest transgression, many of the ladies write about sex in all its permutations. In fact, sex is a primary metaphor in the language of the group; it symbolizes the search for trust and community and security. (6)

Historically, fanfiction has been a place where women have sought sexual exploration and expression within a society that frowns upon the sexual freedom of women.

For many women, fandom provides freedom from the male gaze, where close female friendships were formed and hobbies freely indulged in. It is where women can explore their interests without being tested ("Oh, you like that band? Name five songs!"), ridiculed ("Girls like you only watch this show/movie/sport for the eye candy!"), or accused of trying to garner male attention ("You're just pretending to like that to impress guys!"). It is difficult to accuse female fans of having any kind of ulterior motive in their participation in fandom considering that they are "neither getting paid nor gaining much respect beyond their immediate fan communities" (Busse *Framing Fanfiction* 36). Fanfiction provides female fans with a space outside of the patriarchal confines of the mainstream media landscape to explore their own desires, interests, and enjoyments. This is unsettling to a society that has committed much of its time and energy to keeping women from these things.

Sexism in mainstream culture contributes to the stigmatization of fandom as a whole. Because of this, women are "frequently harassed and accused of tarnishing men's fan communities" (Yodovich 291). Misogyny informs the emasculation of male fans, while female fans are deemed immature, perverse, and delusional (Jenkins *Textual Poachers* 13-14). The texts

themselves are characterized as amateurish, excessively sexual, and "wishful," criticized for reaching for queer, racialized, or otherwise radical subtexts (Cuntz-Leng 95). The dominant culture works tirelessly to keep fans and their participation in media on the outskirts of social acceptance.[11] Consumers who seek to distance themselves from the "misfits and crazies" (Jenkins 11) within fandom engage in similar behavior and are thus equally utilized by mainstream culture as a driving force to keep fans from receiving proper recognition for their efforts.

To regain control of the sexually liberated woman, the mainstream must subvert her pleasure into material for the male gaze. Jenkins notes that the "eroticized fan" is nearly always female: "the feminine side of fandom is manifested in the images of screaming teenage girls who try to tear the clothes off the Beatles or who faint at the touch of one of Elvis's sweat-drenched scarves" (*Textual Poachers* 15). Consider the *groupie* caricature, who is often portrayed as a young, beautiful woman whose devotion to her favorite star is so extreme that she presents herself as an object to him, following him from place to place to offer sexual satisfaction. Jenkins writes that these representations contort female pleasure as "the female spectator herself becomes an erotic spectacle for mundane male spectators while her abandonment of any distance from the image becomes an invitation for the viewer's own erotic fantasies" (*Textual Poachers* 15). By sexualizing the fangirl, the mainstream media re-establishes its control over women's bodies and minds. At the same time, female fans are chastised for expressing their sexual desires. This perpetuates societal shame of women's sexual independence and further invalidates fanfiction as worthy literary material.

[11] All structures of oppression aid in keeping fanfiction from being accepted in the mainstream. Ageism, ableism, racism, sexism, and classism are tall barriers that isolate fanfiction as something to be embarrassed of. Ableist stereotypes of fans within the mainstream ostracize and discredit their behavior. Fans are perceived as crazy, obsessive, childish, and in some cases, dangerous (Barnes Leetal, Jenkins, Yodovich).

Transformative Storytelling: The Relationship Between Fanfiction and Copyright

A defining feature of fanfiction is the borrowing of characters from other works. While fanfiction authors by and large do not receive any financial gain from their works, the genre is entangled in the history of copyright, plagiarism, and ownership.[12] Copyright refers to the legal protection of all original, creative works once they are fixed in a tangible form (University of Oregon Libraries "Copyright & Fair Use"). This protection includes the right to distribute copies to the public through sale or licensing. It prohibits others from copying one's *intellectual property*, using it without permission from the creator, and reaping economic gain from unpermitted use. *Fair use,* however, allows limited use of copyrighted material without needing permission from the copyright owner. Fair use is evaluated individually based on the purpose and character of the use, the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount of the work used, and the effect of the use on the potential market value of the copyrighted work (University of Oregon Libraries).

Copyright poses questionable implications for storytelling: that stories can be "owned" and that one must have a certain level of academic/intellectual authority to properly engage with it. Succeeding in the literary market requires an understanding of the legal parameters of writing and publishing, and a process of external verification rooted in an inaccessible system of intellectualism. This system has operated in favor of those who hold power in the marketplace and has in turn "alienated [the average person] from the process of storytelling" (Coppa 7). Patriarchy has influenced copyright law by historically limiting women's access to education,

[12] Historically, notions of ownership and originality have been defined over the eighteenth century and on. As Paulina Kewes notes in *Authorship and Appropriation*, early definitions of plagiarism and originality were difficult to establish. Whether it was a matter of repeated text, or if similarities in plot were enough to warrant claim to ownership, differed among seventeenth-century playwrights. For example, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* took inspiration from a previous work, Arthur Brooke's *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562).

publishing opportunities, and recognition for their creative contributions. [13] White supremacy has fought to keep people of color from succeeding as academics and authors (Feldman). This has perpetuated disparities in ownership, control, and representation within the creative industries, reinforcing power dynamics that favor white male creators and publishers.

Concerns about copyright and plagiarism make up a large portion of pushback on fanfiction and of using legal property without properly engaging in the legal processes of coyright and fair use. Fanfiction arguably falls under *transformative fair use*, which must add something new to the copyrighted work with the intention of "altering the first with new expression, meaning or message" (Campbell v. Acuff-Rose Music qtd. in University of Oregon Libraries "Copyright & Fair Use"). It is within these legal frameworks that fanfiction manages to utilize copyrighted work, and that fanfiction sites such as AO3, Wattpad, and Fanfiction.net can operate without facing legal repercussions.

Although there is no way to gain financial compensation from publishing fanfiction on AO3, the organization demonstrates its own awareness of the delicate legal position that fanfiction occupies. Their terms of service specify that AO3 is "committed to defending fanworks against legal challenges" and they provide resources to fans facing prosecution for plagiarism (Archive of Our Own). These public notices make clear that fanfiction exists in a legal grey area, with economic gain of any kind being the precursor to legal consequences. MsKingBean89 reaps no financial compensation from *All the Young Dudes* and specifically advocates against paying a third party for printed copies of her work because of the precarious

[13] One example can be found in the 17th-century poet, playwright, and fiction writer Aphra Behn. Behns's play *The Rover* was accused of plagiarizing another popular male playwright of the time (Palmer). Behn's commitment to writing and casting independent, self-reliant women and the feminist undertones of her work has led some scholars to believe that these accusations were in part due to her gender. In light of this, it is heartening to see the emphasis of feminine freedom in both *The Rover* and the practice of fanfiction where "women literally take off one character and put on another, [giving] themselves permission to pursue their own desires" (Palmer).

legal position inherent to all fanfiction: “This is not fine, as far as I understand. It’s illegal for printing sites to make money from fanfic and you could end up in trouble for it. YOU CAN PRINT YOUR OWN COPY FOR YOUR OWN USE, please just don’t pay anyone or sell it to anyone” (lobsterbang via Tumblr 2021). MisKingBean89’s post is an example of the contradictory nature of the community, where stories are meant to be shared publicly but whose engagement must remain, to a certain extent, undetected by the literary market, or else run the risk of violating copyright laws. However, by transforming the intellectual property of others, fanfiction authors subvert the legal system that has historically discriminated against marginalized communities and assert control over popular media, which is often discriminatory in similar ways.[14]

MsKingBean89’s blogpost and AO3’s terms of service reflect the larger social aspect of fandom, where individuals inform and defend each other in order to continue participating in writing and reading fanfiction. The fanfiction community is a rich source of sociocultural negotiation and collaboration. The ability to continually revise one’s work is built into the framework of digital fanfiction, as a work is never physically “published”. Texts are often in a constant state of being uploaded, reviewed, edited, and reuploaded based on author and reader feedback. Therefore, community revision may be just as influential to a particular fanwork as the author’s own editing.

While fanfiction authors eagerly adapt the work of others, this does not mean giving proper credit for work is unimportant to the community. When E. L. James commercialized her fanfiction *Masters of the Universe* as *Fifty Shades of Grey*, she was met with disappointment

[14] See Samtani’s “New Frontiers in Intellectual Property and Human Rights: Copyright Discrimination”, Unrein’s “No Equitable Relief: The Failings of the CASE Act to Protect Middle-Class Creatives from Copyright Infringement”, and Feldman’s “The Discriminatory Effect of U.S. Intellectual Property Law on Black Artists”.

from readers on Fanfiction.net, where the work had been originally published (De Kosnik "'Fifty Shades'"). In publishing her book, James' fanfiction became something different altogether, no longer a collaborative work but a legal entity which was now earning economic gain. Many fans who had engaged with the writing process of James' novel felt betrayed by the rejection of her history with fandom (De Kosnik "'Fifty Shades'" 121). By removing *Fifty Shades* from the context of fandom, James severed her connection to the community that helped shape her work.

The reaction from fanfiction readers to *Fifty Shades* demonstrates the central conflict between fandom and mainstream popular media: a difference in attitude toward the idea of plagiarism and copying. While plagiarism poses legal and economic concerns for the mainstream creators, fandom's relationship with it is social. It is important that fanfiction authors acknowledge the importance of the larger community, in which case being "copied" is not only an inherent aspect of the genre, but a form of respect (Coppa 2015; Michaels 2009; Petersen-Reed 2019). Anyone who has engaged with fanfiction knows that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of different versions of the same story. Fanfiction authors do not aim to stand apart from their source materials and community, as E. L. James did with *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The fanfiction genre is exponential, constantly building on and inspiring itself to such a degree that it's nearly impossible to separate one work from any of the others. For a fanfiction writer, to be copied is to be accepted, to be plagiarized is to be affirmed.

Fanfiction is also archival in nature, as texts often build on one another, forming a "[set] of tightly related texts, like families of multiples that closely resemble one another but are not identical" (De Kosnik "'Fifty Shades'" 120). Within the 494,465 AO3 Harry Potter fanworks alone, there are 220,391 fanworks with the tag *"M/M",* used to identify male/male pairings.[15]

[15] Slash fiction, or M/M was a prominent genre during fanfiction's rise in popularity in the 1960s. Slash is highly sexual and can be considered one of the foundations of fanfiction as we know it today (Bacon-Smith).

Within those, there are 66,762 tagged “Draco Malfoy” and “Harry Potter”. This number can be narrowed down further with any combination of hyper-specific tags a reader prefers, such as “Angst With A Happy Ending” (2,327 fanworks), “Hurt/Comfort” (2,465 fanworks), or “Slow Burn” (1,579 fanworks). Collective-inspired work drives the community to reimagine its favorite characters and stories into its favorite tropes and plots. Failure to acknowledge how communal conventions have shaped one’s work is offensive in this community. Removing a fanfiction’s “markers of its membership in an archive of explicitly intertextual stories, loses many, or most, of the potential meanings it can have for … readers” (De Kosnik “‘Fifty Shades’” 122). To someone without the specific cultural competency necessary to engage with fanfiction, the community must seem strange and, at the extreme, bad for literature.

Disrupting Social Hierarchies: Fanfiction’s Emphasis on Lowbrow Culture

Fanfiction disrupts our cultural hierarchy of taste and aesthetics, and this disruption may explain some of the negative associations of fanfiction in the mainstream. Fanfiction is often negatively stereotyped as amateur or low quality due to its “lack of tastemakers or gatekeepers—and by extension its lack of a consistent standard of quality” (Petersen-Reed 2). Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *cultural capital* refers to the cultural knowledge, skills, habits, and tastes that an individual acquires throughout their upbringing and socialization. It encompasses not only formal education but also informal cultural experiences, such as exposure to art, literature, music, and other forms of cultural expression. Cultural capital plays a crucial role in social stratification. Those who possess more cultural capital tend to have advantages in navigating societal structures and achieving success. Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is often unequally distributed, which reinforces existing inequalities between social classes and contributing to the reproduction of social hierarchy (15).

Fanfiction engages with popular media franchises like movies or television shows which are typically categorized as low culture. Yet, fanfiction challenges the notion that these franchises are unworthy of serious critical attention through the authors' "skillful dissection of a media object" that "signifies expertise when it comes to popular culture" (Petersen-Reed 2). Fanfiction demonstrates that the cultural codes associated with low culture are just as complex as those of high culture and deserve to be taken seriously. Fanfiction operates within existing cultural codes of its source material, while introducing new layers of interpretation and meaning. Just as there are certain identifiers within mainstream genres (science fiction can be broken into cyberpunk, post-apocalyptic, or space opera), fanfiction has "its own preoccupations and obsessions, and its own way of demonstrating literary competence and mastery" (Coppa viii). Fanfiction is organized into specific categories based on likeness, and while this certainly makes it an easy genre to navigate, it also demonstrates how fandom develops its tropes and genres, and the importance of identifying one's place within them.

Everything about fanfiction, from its form to its content, is resistant to the social conventions that dominate our media landscape. Fanfiction authors are constantly negotiating the power dynamic between creation and ownership, concepts heavily guarded by cultural notions of intellect and authority. These communities thrive on the outskirts of the literary marketplace where reciprocation and gift-giving fuel the creation of fanfiction (Coppa). Fans request, trade, gift, and edit works for, from, and with one another, creating a system of creative production built on reciprocity and anti-capitalism. It's within these spaces that hegemonic perceptions of diversity and power are interrogated and challenged. As mentioned previously, fanfiction blurs the lines between producer and consumer, allowing fans to become content creators in popular

franchises. This democratization of creativity disrupts the hierarchical structures that dictate what is considered valuable or prestigious within cultural production.

Combatting Tokenism: Defamiliarization and Writing "Through" Identity

My analysis of *Harry Potter* and *All the Young Dudes* is based on Rami Shalk's concept of defamiliarization and Katherine Anderson Howell's concept of "writing through" identity (4). Defamiliarization describes the act of making familiar social concepts new "to encourage readers to question the meanings and boundaries of these categories" (114). Defamiliarization pushes readers to think critically about social categories and can reveal new understandings of disability, race, gender, and sexuality when utilized properly. J. K. Rowling utilizes defamiliarization throughout the *Harry Potter* series to comment on social concepts such as racism, stigmatization, and normalcy. Rowling also uses a plethora of fantasy races to defamiliarize these concepts, most notably in her use of lycanthropy as a metaphor for illness-related stigma, which MsKingBean89 expands on in *All the Young Dudes* (Rowling *Short Stories from Hogwarts).* Rowling's defamiliarizations have been criticized for enforcing problematic portrayals: goblins are greedy, hooked-nosed creatures that control the banks in the wizarding world, reminiscent of antisemitic stereotypes. House elves are an enslaved race who enjoy their status as slaves and actively dissuade efforts to liberate them. While representations of marginalization exist within the fictional universe, they are often under-developed and engage in stereoytpes. Often, Rowling's metaphors for oppression are removed from her characters' lives, utilized singularly as plot devices to drive the story forward. This results in problematic and insincere portrayals of marginalized individuals.

What few characters of color exist within the *Harry Potter* universe reinforce racial stereotypes, resulting in a small group of tokenized individuals. An important adversary to

tokenism in storytelling is creating complex, well-rounded characters whose identities inform every aspect of their lives. Katherine Anderson Howell describes the relationship between her disability and her writing as a process of "writing through" her impairment (4). This refers not only to the effect on her writing physically, but how she thinks about her characters and stories. According to Anderson Howell, social identifiers such as disability, race, class, gender, and sexuality affect "how knowledge is formed and meaning is made" (4). I want to expand on this concept of writing through disability to describe the full encompassing of a character's social positioning in their story, be it ability, race, sexuality, or gender, which combats tokenistic storytelling. As Elizabeth E. Heilman notes, "It is not simply who is present, but, also, how characters are portrayed and what they do that matters" (223). When characters' social identifiers are embedded into their perspectives, social interactions, and behavior, they become more sincere representations of their identities.

Rowling engages in what I call a "topical" application of diversity rather than an embedded one. I use topical to refer to the way she includes diverse identities as an afterthought, rather than an intrinsic part of their being. For example, Rowling's establishment of Albus Dumbledore as gay occurred outside the confines of the narrative and would not have been detectable without her explicit confirmation ("Rowling Lets Dumbledore Out of the Closet"). Dean Thomas' race is identified when he is introduced to Harry but never referenced again and would, once more, be undetectable without explicit confirmation (Rowling *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* 97). Topical application of identity refers to the use of identity markers in a way that does not engage deeply with the lived experiences or nuances of those identities. While a story may include a wide variety of diverse identities in an effort to avoid tokenism, these

inclusions may still be surface-level. To authentically include characters of diverse social backgrounds, their identities must be applied to every layer of the story.

I present defamiliarization and writing "through" identity as two central forms of creating diverse representations of disenfranchised identities. Fanfiction authors create alternative meanings out of characters by investigating the complex identities that the mainstream often applies topically. To demonstrate this, I will put *Harry Potter* in conversation with one of its fanfictions, *All the Young Dudes*. It is within fan space that *Harry Potter* characters' social stratification is remembered, and where they are "expanded and made epic, loved by their fans into greatness" (Coppa 5). My research is in shameless defense of a genre that is often overlooked for its value in shaping the relationship between consumers and creators of media. A genre that is considered not only childish, but shameful; an act of delusional obsession performed by teenage fangirls or socially outcast nerds. I, along with countless other scholars of fandom, argue for an alternative reaction, one that sees fanfiction as a chance to investigate topics that are often heavily censored and manipulated to fit the ideals established by nonrepresentative mainstream culture. Fanfiction creates a collaborative community that promotes altruistic creativity, critical engagement with culture, social empowerment, and an anti-capitalist system of creation.

An Analysis of *Harry Potter* and *All the Young Dudes*

Depictions of Racial Identity

The vast majority of characters in the *Harry Potter* universe are white. A few side characters in the series are identified as non-white either explicitly in the text or through the use of racialized names. Rowling describes characters like Dean Thomas and Angelina Johnson as Black, and the films depict other Black students such as Lee Jordan and Blaise Zabini. For instance, Dean is introduced as "a black boy even taller than Ron" (*Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone* 97), while Angelina is described as "a tall black girl who played Chaser on the Gryffindor Quidditch team" (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* 261). Rowling uses racialized names to signal ethnicity with characters such as Cho Chang and Padma and Parvati Patil. The film adaptations of *Harry Potter* confirm the racial associations through the casting of Chinese and Indian actresses to portray Cho and the Patil twins. These associations validate an existing system of racial categorization, and by extension, all the baggage that comes with these constructs. However, they do not attend to the complexity of these categories as structures that uphold marginalization, or to the racialized experiences of marginalized people within the text. Rowling's racial diversity ends at categorization, leaving racial tension of any kind out of her narrative. The effect is a small group of token characters who possess racial identities, but do not live "through" them (Anderson Howell). Their racial identity is insignificant in their relationships with their peers and the sociopolitical climate of oppression and segregation in the wizarding world.

It can be assumed that Rowling included these characters of color because she understands the importance of racial diversity in storytelling and recognizes her responsibility to authentically represent a large school set in the 1990s United Kingdom, where many different

racial groups would coexist. However, Rowling's characters of color are isolated. Kingsley Shacklebolt (whose name is reminiscent of slavery) is a lone Black Auror in the heart of the corrupt wizard government. Dean Thomas, Angelina Johnson, and Jordan Lee are not explicitly close despite their shared involvement with Gryffindor's Quidditch team. Cho Chang and the Patil twins' only connection is that they all date one of the main (white) characters. Rowling's characters of color lack connection, which leaves little room for moments of solidarity and community between them. While the characters of color don't all need to be friends, their isolation eliminates the need to explore their positionality in the narrative's systems of oppression. Without references to shared experiences, it is difficult for diverse audiences to believe in a world where race bears no impact on these character's experiences (Goward). Isolating disenfranchised characters is an effective form of tokenism, the symbolic effort to include marginalized identities without genuinely addressing systemic inequalities, as it reduces entire sociocultural groups to the experiences of a single character. In the characters named above, race is applied as a character trait only, rather than a lens through which they live and interact with the world around them. Excluding the racialized experiences of nonwhite characters, both negative and positive, negates any positive impact of their inclusion (Lyubansky). This surface-level form of diversification reflects the larger issue of tokenization in mainstream media.

Despite the lack of racial tension in *Harry Potter*, Rowling uses fictional identities to draw attention to real-world issues of race and discrimination. Witches and wizards exist as either pureblood (descending from magical family exclusively), Muggleborn (born of two non-magic parents), or half-blood (having both wizard and Muggle ancestry). A second uprising of a blood supremacist movement sets the stage for the main conflict of the story where Harry,

having lived with his Muggle aunt and uncle from infancy, discovers his pureblood status, enters the wizarding world, and defeats Lord Voldemort and his followers, who are reminiscent of Hitler's Nazi party. Rowling utilizes blood-status to defamiliarize issues surrounding eugenics and racial supremacy and to demonstrate the harm in these ideologies.

However, Rowling's conclusions are surface level. Racism is portrayed as old-fashioned and no longer conducive to a modern world: "Most wizards these days are half-blood anyway. If we hadn't married Muggles we'd've died out" (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* 58). Everyone who is "good" recognizes that racism is bad: "Harry knew at once that Malfoy had said something really bad because there was an instant uproar at his words" (*Chamber of Secrets* 56). Rowling's exploration of blood status discrimination echoes a *colorblind*[16] approach to fighting racism, where ignoring racial categorization and viewing everyone equally despite ethnic differences is seen as the best way to combat discrimination. However, just as the colorblind approach fails to acknowledge the systemic inequalities and privileges associated with race, the wizarding world's desire to disregard blood status ignores the nuanced experiences that half-blood and Muggleborn students have.

There is little room to explore the impact of blood-status prejudice on mixed-blood students in *Harry Potter,* in part because their stories are seen through Harry's eyes (Cordova), and because they are constantly made to be the bigger people, never stooping to the level of their assaulters by reacting to insult. Hermione, the most common target for blood status attacks, tries to dissuade Ron or Harry from defending her: '"Never mind, Ron," said Hermione quickly,

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16 Popularized by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003), racial color blindness refers to the denial of racial categorization, or "color", and of systemic racism based on color. Bonilla Silva asserts that this dismissal comes most often from white people who believe that "if Blacks and other people of color would just stop thinking about the past, work hard, and complain less (particularly about racial discrimination), then Americans of all hues could 'all get along'" (1). However, as he points out, this approach ignores how race is inherently embedded into nearly every aspect of American culture and must be addressed in order to sincerely address systemic racism as a whole.

seizing Ron's arm to restrain him as he took a step toward Malfoy" (*The Goblet of Fire* 138). The audience takes inspiration from Hermione's bravery and Rowling never has to expand on the experience of being attacked for one's race (represented in the blood purity metaphor), an experience which she has never had. Muggleborn and half-blood characters don't engage in conversation about their unique experiences compared to their pureblood peers. Nonwhite characters never reference the similarity between blood supremacy and white supremacy in the Muggle world. The effect is the tokenization of an entire system of oppression, where blood status drives the plot forward but does not seem to exist within the characters' interpersonal lives.

Many fans have read into Hermione's experience as an outsider, born from Muggle parents and the frequent victim of blood-related hate speech, as a racialized narrative (Ratcliffe). In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Hermione is described as having bushy, curly hair for which she is often bullied (Rowling 83). This characterization has led some fans to identify with and believe in a Black Hermione. Although Hermione is depicted as white in several cover illustrations of the books, Rowling has said that "Hermione can be a Black woman with my absolute blessing and enthusiasm" (Ratcliffe). The public validation from Rowling was in response to the controversy following the play production of *Harry Potter and The Cursed Child*, in which South African-British actress Noma Dumezweni was cast to play Hermione (Ratcliffe). The choice sparked outrage among some fans who maintained that, despite it never being explicitly stated in the books, Hermione is white. These reactions highlight our tendency to assume that characters are white unless explicitly stated otherwise (Koehm 2018; Peterson-Reed 2019) which perpetuates whiteness as the default and other identities as outliers. However, fans

have long been reimagining Hermione, and plenty of other characters, as people of color in fanfiction, a practice commonly referred to as *racebending*.

In *All the Young Dudes,* MsKingBean89 racebends the character Mary MacDonald as a Black girl. She seems aware of the need for Black existence to be woven into the text, rather than topically applied as physical appearance alone, as Mary's racial characterization is developed secondary to other characteristics, such as her humor, kindness, and intelligence. Rather than using racial identifiers in her introduction, as Rowling does with Dean ("a black boy even taller than Ron, joined the Gryffindor table" (97)), Mary is described as a Muggleborn from South London (188) who is "funny and brusque and bolshie, but unfailingly kind and full of compassion" (281). MsKingBean89 takes her time in establishing Mary's race, weaving clues for readers into her development as a character. It isn't until chapter 49 that it is stated that her parents were born in Jamaica, pointing to her ethnic background (294). In chapter 62, a little less than halfway through the work, Mary is described as, "looking quite frazzled – her dark hair was coming out of her braids in thick corkscrews" (383). When considering this description in the context of Hermione's hair and the role it plays in fans' identification of her race, the choice to characterize Mary with braids and a tight curl pattern seems to be intended to point readers toward Black racialization. Other instances of cultural association develop her racial identity before its confirmation: "her gold hoops jangled, her kohl rimmed eyes were wide and fiery" (623-624). These details function both as a hint to Mary's racial background and context for the story, which makes their inclusion feel valuable and intentional.

An analysis of Dean Thomas' and Mary MacDonald's introductions in their respective texts illustrated the technical distinctions: Rowling's brief and surface-level introduction, which gives just enough detail to establish a character of color without having to deviate from the white

protagonist's journey; and MsKingBean89's careful weaving of narrative clues that, over a long period of time, build her character's features, including her race. Mary's race is equally important as that of her peers (note that Rowling never introduces any character as "a white boy" or "a white girl"), yet still a part of her appearance that is referred to when appropriate for the story. In chapter 77, MsKingBean89 finally confirms Mary's skin color: "She was beautiful, it would be a fair statement – not just her soft curves and chocolate brown eyes, but the spatter of freckles on her nose, her warm brown skin..." (483).[17] The blood supremacy allegory in *Harry Potter* is utilized in *All the Young Dudes* as well, however, MsKingbean89 explores it in a noticeably different way. Tension between the characters and their blood status creates a multifaceted representation of identity where intersections can be explored. On page 579, the work's main character, Remus Lupin, asks "Has someone tried to hurt you, Mary?" to which she responds, "'Oh, all the time,' she shrugged, with a tired smile, 'I'm used to it by now. At least being the only black kid at my primary school prepared me for something.'" Mary's experiences with discrimination in the Muggle world inform her relationship to the prejudice she experiences in the wizarding world. The intersectionality of these social identities is one example of how MsKingBean89 expands on the ideologies in *Harry Potter* that are present but underdeveloped.

MsKingBean89 establishes early in the book a stark difference between Remus and his friends James Potter, Sirius Black, and Peter Pettigrew, all of whom were born in the wizarding world, come from wealthy pureblood families, and are not afflicted with lycanthropy. Their fluency in the wizard society often leaves Remus, who grew up in a Muggle orphanage, feeling

[17] It should be noted that this description occurs within the context of sexualization, and that Black women experience sexual objectification at higher rates and starting at younger ages (Eshelman). While Mary is characteristically a sexual being whose experiences give her authority in the eyes of her female peers, we should acknowledge the relationship between Black women and hypersexualization.

alienated, and their class difference leads to a contrast in their understanding of the world around them. James and Sirius are sheltered from the rampant harassment that Remus faces in his time at the children's home he lived at previously, and their blood status has protected them from experiencing blood-related bullying as Remus and Mary do. Pureblooded students benefit from "pureblood privilege" that protects them from discrimination (566). In contrast with Hermione, whose maltreatment is only significant when someone directly calls her a "mudblood" to her face, experiences of discrimination occur both in-text and out of the text. Mary says, "If this war carries on I won't even be able to get a job as a muggleborn" (491). Discrimination poses concerns for non-pureblood students beyond the risk of being attacked or insulted.

At one point, the Marauders (the nickname that Remus, James, Sirius, and Peter adopt) begin plotting a revenge prank on Severus Snape, which involves casting a spell that will change the Slytherin's words every time they use a blood slur. Remus has compiled their list of slurs, and Sirius comments, "Well I just didn't think there were so many. Never seen them all written out like that. And anyway, where did you hear all of these?" (278). Remus answers, "'Where'd you think?' Remus met Sirius's eyes, deliberately. He'd been waiting for something like this" (278). Within this exchange, several things are clear to the audience: Remus has had unique racialized experiences, his friends are unaware of them (at least of their frequency) and Remus holds some resentment over their ignorance. The discrimination occurs equally in the narrative and the pauses in between, making MsKingBean89's characters' marginalization a constant burden rather than a plot device. While Rowling only ever utilizes these slurs to make her villains more unlikeable, MsKingBean89 uses them to expand her characters' identities and lived experiences.

Another facet of non-pureblooded students' lives that MsKingbean89 pays attention to are moments of solidarity and connection. Despite the *Harry Potter* books focusing on the ramifications of blood supremacy on the wizarding world, Rowling hardly engages with the psychological effects of discrimination on mixed-blood students. MsKingBean89 seems to understand that this should be at the heart of the story and is sure to include it all throughout her fanfiction. In chapter 48, while waiting to see if the spell they put on the Slytherins will work, James complains that it could be days before they drop a blood-related slur. Mary says, "It won't...You three must be blind if you haven't seen what's going on around here" (281). This comment suggests that there is a Hogwarts experience that James, Sirius, and Peter are unaware of because of their pure-blood status. James inquires, "What's been going on, then?...Do you get called stuff, MacDonald?" and Mary answers, "It's been worse this year. You must know Remus?" (281). She calls on Remus, a fellow half-blood student, to confirm the experience, one that is inaccessible to the others: "Insults from the Slytherins had definitely increased this term, though it might only have been noticeable to non-pure blood students" (268). Through this interaction, Remus and Mary offer their pure-blood friends, and the audience, a window into their lives. MsKingBean89 combats the tokenized isolation of Rowling's racialized characters by writing conversations that openly address the disparities between pureblood and non-pureblood students.

However, *All the Young Dudes* is no racial utopia. Just as Rowling uses ethnic-sounding names to create the illusion of a diverse world, MsKingBean89 does the same. Inserts like "Adil Deshmakh, the Gryffindor team captain, made the team eat together at breakfast, rather than their friends." (MsKingBean89 181) and "Remus knew that it was Harpreet Singh's final year at Hogwarts, which meant that the position of Quidditch Captain would be open next year"

(MsKingBean89 351) allow readers to feel as though there are characters of color around, without explicitly including them. That both inserts have to do with sports points to a larger kind of tokenization that exists for men of color. Outdated and racist eugenic theorists have suggested that Black men are physically advanced compared to their white male counterparts, resulting in a tendency to stereotype them as athletes (Duffey 2). Often, Black men are valued for their athletic abilities and are less likely to be characterized as academics or artists (Cooper "Why are black males supported only when they're athletes?"). In *Harry Potter,* Lee Jordan is the Quidditch commentator, and Dean plays as Gryffindor's Chaser for a few years. Both *Harry Potter* and *All the Young Dudes* engage with this stereotype by attributing athleticism to otherwise underdeveloped male characters of color. Mary's earlier description which related the color of her skin to her attractiveness is another example of problematic associations that remain present in MsKingBean89's work. Despite its tendency to offer creative power to underrepresented communities, a large part of the fanfiction community is white. Implicit and explicit biases about people of color exist within, as does the tendency to treat whiteness as a default. As noted in Koehm's *Revision as Resistance: Fanfiction as an Empowering Community for Female and Queer Fans* (2018), characters in fanfiction are notably more often white than any other race, and while "the justification that there just aren't enough characters of color in media to begin with is a common excuse in fandom as to why they are not the subject of transformative works like fanfiction" (49), this does not excuse the ways that fanfiction perpetuates stereotypes and engages in tokenism.

Emphasizing Queer Subtexts in *Harry Potter*

While sex is not central to the *Harry Potter* series, it is a heterosexual story. All relationships between characters occur between straight, cisgender characters. None of them

express curiosity about their sexual orientations and sexual identity is absent in the text. There is plenty of criticism of Rowling's heteronormative narrative that places heterosexuality at the center of an ideal fantasy world, and of its upholding of traditional gender roles (Duggan 2022; Heilman 2003; Pugh and Wallace 2006; Pugh 2011). However, a lack of sexuality in *Harry Potter* does not mean that sexuality and, more specifically, queerness can't be read in the narrative. There are thousands more fanfictions beyond *All the Young Dudes* that interpret a wide range of LGBTQ+ themes in the characters and story itself, which resist the heteronormative world that Rowling upholds in her series.

Harry Potter is an ideal literary canvas for the creation of queer fanfiction. The wizarding world overtly engages with the politics of invisibility[18] (Cuntz-Leng 96) through the manifestation of magical concealment within the Muggle world. Wizards live among Muggles, and much of their infrastructure exists in plain sight of the Muggle world: Platform 9¾ is an inconspicuous wall in the middle of King's Cross Station; Grimauld's Place is hidden within a Muggle apartment building; Diagon Alley is in central London but can only be accessed by secret code. As Cuntz-Leng points out, these mechanisms reflect the reality of queer communities who have lived between the lines of heteronormative societal expectations.

From the very first line of the series, *Harry Potter* negotiates notions of normalcy and the magic (literally and figuratively) that comes with embracing the abnormal: "Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much" (Rowling 1). This line establishes the politics that the rest of the series will grapple with: who is normal, who is not, and which is the better thing to be? The identification of

[18] Cuntz-Leng refers to the nature of stigmatized social identities as being "invisible" to dominant culture. In particular, queer culture developed in secret as "only insiders were able to decipher the codes for gaining access to queer subculture, its clubs and secret meeting-points" (96). She argues that invisibility plays a large role in Harry Potter and provides fans a basis through which to pull queer subtext from.

the Dursleys as “perfectly normal” contradicts their sinister treatment of Harry: starving him, physically harming him, locking him in a cupboard (or closet) under the stairs, and verbally abusing him. By characterizing the Dursley’s this way, Rowling alienates the normal and makes Harry (who is representative of the oppressed abnormal) the sympathetic hero. The Dursleys’ attitudes toward Harry echo the perspective of homophobic parents: “but they also had a secret, and their greatest fear was that somebody would discover it.” (Rowling 1). The Dursley’s silencing of Harry’s magical ability, both through keeping the truth of his identity hidden and forbidding him to engage with it, reflects this perspective further (Ehnenn 2011). They distance themselves from the Potters, “Mrs. Dursley pretended she didn’t have a sister” and fear Harry’s magic rubbing off on their son, “they didn’t want Dudley mixing with a child like that” (Rowling 1). As Jennifer Duggan writes, “Frankly, it would be difficult to argue that the Harry Potter texts do not contain queer elements ... [as] the first novel quite literally documents Harry’s being freed from life in a closet and introduced to a nonnormative magical subculture by a pink-umbrella-wielding half-giant" (152). *Harry Potter* aligns itself ideologically with marginalized communities, making it very popular for reinterpretation in fanfiction spaces.

Despite her story lending itself to queer interpretation, Rowling runs into the same problem with the representation of queer characters that she does with her characters of color: the way in which she has included queer characters raises questions about her authenticity and effectiveness in fully immersing a character in their identity. The only confirmation of a queer character in *Harry Potter* came post facto when Rowling revealed to an audience at Carnegie Hall that Albus Dumbledore, Hogwarts’ headmaster and a mentor of Harry’s, is canonically gay (Rothstein 2007). There is minimal textual evidence of this facet of his identity, and it bears no real weight on his life within the narrative. Revealing this detail after the release of the books

appears as a retroactive attempt at diversity without truly integrating it into the narrative. Her comment, “I would have told you earlier if I knew it would make you so happy” suggests that Rowling was unaware of how impactful Dumbledore’s homosexuality would be for audiences (“JK Rowling outs Dumbledore as gay”). However, she later remarks, “Oh my god, the fanfiction” in reference to the impact of Dumbledore’s confirmed sexuality (Tosenberger “Oh my God, the fanfiction!”). Rowling demonstrates an understanding of fan communities and the kind of engagement that including queer characterss inspires.

Representation is necessary, especially for people of color and queer communities, who must withstand the oppressive tactics of a dominant culture that actively tries to subdue and erase their presence. José Esteban Muñoz establishes that survival practices of queer and racially disenfranchised people are not innate but learned from the observation of others: “It is crucial that such children are able to look past ‘self’ and encounter others who have managed to prosper in such spaces. Sometimes a subject needs something to identify with; sometimes a subject needs heroes to mimic and to invest all sorts of energies in” (38). It is not just queer representation that queer fans need, but representations of queer individuals who are powerful, complex, and resilient. We may consider fanworks—which play with not only sexuality, but gender, race, ability, and power—as the “practices of survival” that Muñoz refers to, which are used “to withstand the disabling forces of a culture and state apparatus bent on denying, eliding, and, in too many cases, snuffing out such emergent identity practices” (37). Muñoz asserts that these practices are not intrinsically developed but learned socially through the example of others (37). While scholars of fandom may study a variety of purposes that fanfiction serves, I have found nearly all of them to agree on the social function of the practice, where power lies “not in how a writer breaks with the tradition of the community's work but in how she uses the language of the

group to shed a brighter light on the truth they work to communicate" (Bacon-Smith 57). While J. K. Rowling's revelation of Dumbledore's sexuality highlights mainstream media's tendency to include diverse representation as an afterthought, fanfiction authors like MsKingBean89 delve deeper into the complexities of these social ideologies, as exemplified in her portrayal of Remus Lupin's homosexuality in *All the Young Dudes.*

MsKingBean89 informs Remus' experiences and perspective through the lens of his sexuality. He feels both behind his peers—"Remus tried not to think about the fact that none of his friends had made any comment in his likeliness to get a snog. He must rank even lower than he thought"—and out of place because he doesn't want to be involved in any of it (361). That's not to say that Remus doesn't have romantic interests, only that all his friends are interested in girls, and Remus neither shares nor understands their desires. In one chapter, Remus tells himself, "You have to start snogging girls some time…Everybody does – it's normal" (410). Remus' understanding of his sexuality is built slowly until he eventually has his first sexual encounter over the summer, away from Hogwarts, with a boy at the St. Edmund's orphanage where he grew up: "It wasn't what you could call romantic, or affectionate. More like a necessary thing" (455). Remus discovers that "he had always wanted it – this, or something like it…Something Remus knew that he had to push as far as it would go, so that he could identify all of the hard edges and sharp limits of it. He was mapping out his own desires, and using Grant as a compass" (455). MsKingBean89 calls attention to how a lack of homosexual representation requires Remus and other queer characters to develop their sexualities with one another. Christopher, a boy with unrequited feelings for Remus, uses code when he finally comes out: "Christopher looked as though he was spilling his very darkest secret. His cheeks were crimson now, and he wasn't looking at Remus when he spoke. 'I er… I like Oscar Wilde, a lot … and

Christopher Isherwood" (709-710). To which Remus responds, "You might like Truman Capote, too" (710). These references not only demonstrate the politics of invisibility as Remus and Chris discuss their sexualities through subtext, but also illustrate the importance of queer representation in pop culture as a form of identification.

Pop culture references play a large role in MsKingBean89's fanfiction. The name, *All the Young Dudes,* comes from the David Bowie song.[19] Bowie himself is central to the story as Remus and Sirius bond over their love of his music, and in an early chapter, Remus describes the first time he saw the star as his first exposure to queer subtexts:

> When David slung his arm around the tall, fair haired guitarist, Remus' stomach had done an odd sort of flip, and as the two men sang into the same microphone, their cheeks pressed close together, one of the St Edmund's care workers had marched over and turned off the television set. *Nasty queers*, he had said, *disgusting putting that sort of thing on the telly when kiddies might see it.* (151)

All the Young Dudes is very conscious of the social ramifications that being heterosexual had in the 1970s. Unlike *Harry Potter*, *All the Young Dudes* addresses the political climate of its setting, and MsKingBean89 makes a point to include references to homophobia: "They used to be able to send you to prison, but it's ok now. Well. Not ok. It's not… I mean, it's still better *not* to be queer, I suppose" (712). Just as Mary experiences racism because she is a racial minority, Remus' life is influenced by the homophobic society that he lives in. The intersection between real-world politics and the politics of the wizarding world creates space to explore the intersectionality of character identity. Grant moves into a homeless squat and notes that everyone there is "queer…with nowhere else to go" (602). True to the 1970s, gay subculture is not just invisible to the mainstream, but actively pushed to the outskirts (Cuntz-Leng 2017).

[19] It may be significant that David Bowie died the year before *All the Young Dudes* was published. Further inquiry into the time it was published may reveal further connections between *All the Young Dudes* and the political and pop cultural climates at the end of the 2010s.

MsKingBean89 often works with the concept of (in)visibility to make commentary on oppressive societal structures that inform her characters' lives. Alongside references to the homophobia, MsKingBean89 also comments on class inequality: "'This isn't about class." Remus said, angrily. Grant glanced down at him, sympathetically, as if he was much older and wiser. "'ave a look around Remus," he said, gesturing to the dank room they were in, "We're British. It's always about class" (602). She also references political movements of the time: "Cheers, Remus, knew I could count on you to support the women's lib argument" (579). These references ground MsKingbean89's narrative in a political landscape that accurately reflects the social and cultural barriers her characters must engage with. This combats the topical application of marginalized identity in *Harry Potter* by embedding discrimination in every level of the fictional world.

While Rowling's narrative primarily skirts around themes of sexuality, MsKingBean89's fanfiction delves deeply into Remus' sexual awakening and exploration, highlighting the unique complexities of queer identity development. By prioritizing the exploration of sexuality, MsKingBean89's narrative challenges the boundaries of traditional storytelling, which has often ignored or tokenized queer experiences in the mainstream. Queer readings such as *All the Young Dudes* are not "'alternative' readings, wishful and willful mis-readings, or 'reading too much into things' readings" but subversive interpretations that "result from the recognition and articulation of the complex range of queerness that has been in popular culture texts and their audiences all along" (Cuntz-Leng 95). We may consider these readings—which play with not only sexuality, but gender, race, ability, and power—as the "practices of survival" that Jose Esteban Munoz refers to in *Disidentifications*.

The Lycanthropy Metaphors: Homosexuality, Disability, and Marginalization

In an e-book spin-off of the original Harry Potter series, Rowling revealed that Remus Lupin's werewolf condition was "a metaphor for those illnesses that carry a stigma, like HIV and AIDS" and that "the wizarding community is as prone to hysteria and prejudice as the Muggle one" (Short Stories From Hogwarts 43). It is impossible to look at HIV/AIDS as a concept without acknowledging its connection to queerness. The very first reported cases of HIV in the United States were gay men, and the stigma and oppression that followed the outbreak of the disease would irreparably damage queer communities across the country for years to come. Thus, lycanthropy in *Harry Potter* as a metaphor for HIV/AIDS creates a missed opportunity for Rowling to examine Remus Lupin's experiences concerning queer identity and oppression, a social structure that is nonexistent in the *Harry Potter* fictional universe. When considering the way werewolves live in the wizarding world, it's easy to see the parallels between lycanthropy and homosexuality. They must hide their identities or register with the government due to their perception as "evil" creatures (MsKingBean89 131). Canonically, they're characterized as untrustworthy, dangerous, and predatory—especially to children—and Remus is forced to leave his job at Hogwarts due to parental outrage after being "outed" as a werewolf. MsKingBean89 takes the final step that Rowling doesn't: putting lycanthropy in conversation with homosexuality.

The nature of Remus' condition, which must be kept secret, is a physical manifestation of his hidden sexuality. On one hand, he strongly desires to reveal this core aspect of his identity, something that shapes his everyday life and his future. He fears graduating from Hogwarts knowing that the outside world will not accept him. Yet on the other hand, he fears that even his closest friends will become terrified to associate with him. Even after revealing his secret to

them, Remus worries that his condition will be objectified, rather than truly accepted: "The marauders liked anything dangerous; perhaps sharing a room with Remus was simply another exciting risk" (314). Language associated with revealing one's sexuality is used when Snape pranks Remus with a truth-telling potion, asking him to reveal his "deepest, darkest secret" (415) which Sirius refers to as "outing" (417). This metaphor is acknowledged further when it begins to directly intersect with his sexuality:

> "I don't want a girlfriend, how many times?"
>
> "I know you say that, but...I can't help but think there must be a reason behind it...I think I know why." Sirius shifted, awkwardly, and Remus looked at him, sideways, his heart pounding in his chest. He should have expected this, eventually. "It's because of the werewolf thing, isn't it?"
>
> Remus opened his mouth, then closed it again. Really? Really!? He sat down, head in his hands, and tried not to laugh. (693)

Through Remus' condition, MsKingBean89 takes a close look at the individual experience of someone forced to hide a highly stigmatized aspect of their identity, as one might have to with their sexuality. Further, the threat of anti-werewolf stigma in the outside world threatens Remus' safety, especially as the war ramps up. His concern about the war's impact on werewolf acceptance within the wizarding world can be compared to any queer individual's fear of the impact of the AIDS epidemic on their acceptance in our society.

Remus' lycanthropy can also be read through the lens of disability.[20] It is necessary to establish the difference between impairment and disability, as the former describes a physical or mental disposition, and the latter speaks directly to the social and cultural disadvantages imposed

[20] Similarly to those who are identified outside of the racial, sexual, and gender binary status quo, disabled people suffer from a lack of autonomy in the discourse surrounding their experiences. They are consistently left out of conversations surrounding media representation and fandom participation, despite being positioned as spaces for the marginalized. Both fandom and equity and inclusion studies suffer from a lack of intersection with disability studies, and often utilize language, concepts, and assumptions rooted in ableism (Anderson Howell 2019; Bolt 2019; Schalk 2018).

on impaired people because they exist outside of the social norm (Barnes). Colin Barnes describes the social model of disability as the understanding that "people with any form of accredited impairment are disabled by an unjust and uncaring society" (14). Physically, Remus suffers self-inflicted injuries that leave him, at best, in pain afterward: "He arched his back carefully and tried not to grimace when the pain split his back like a bolt of lightning" (103). At the worst, he is unable to move or at risk of death, even: "There was a deep gash across his belly that made him want to be sick...He felt dizzy, wanted to curl up and sleep. *Stay awake*, he urged himself, furiously, *stay awake or you'll die, you idiot"* (126). Socially, Remus is hindered even before he fully understands the presumptions that the Wizarding world makes about werewolves. He is isolated from his peers, sometimes missing classes to recover from his injuries, and constantly lying to his friends about where he goes during full moons. The social and physical reality of Remus' life leaves him feeling confused, angry, and alone. He experiences feelings of self-hatred and disgust. With so much of the world set against him, he wonders if he's "clinging onto a life that had never really wanted him; that might never be all that much worth living" (125). As she develops the stigma surrounding lycanthropy, MsKingBean89 echoes the ways in which disabled people are set apart from the norm and demonized as a threat to the social values it upholds (Barnes 2019).

But there are moments of celebration and acceptance, from both himself and from others, woven into the narrative, too. Remus experiences bouts of energy leading up to and following transformations, and this translates into moments of extra powerful magic (43). MsKingBean89 suggests that despite the challenges it poses, Remus' condition strengthens his abilities and his connection to the Wizarding world, giving him unique advantages over his peers. This makes a moment between Sirius and Remus extra tender, where Sirius tells him "I've always loved your

magic. It's so... you" (858). Whether Sirius knows that Remus' magic is influenced by his lycanthropy is unimportant; it is a unique part of him that Sirius loves and respects. Perhaps the most striking example of acceptance between Remus and the other Marauders is seen in their choice to become animagi. Animagi are wizards who can transform into animals at any time. As it's explained in the text, this kind of magic is incredibly advanced and regulated by the government, and it's not allowed to be performed by wizards under the legal age of seventeen (296). Despite this, the Marauders insist on attempting it under the guise that as animals, they'll be able to comfort Remus during transformations and keep him from harming himself. Where the resources Remus found at Hogwarts had failed him, his friends made up for with research of their own: "They'd practically written an entire history of European lycanthropy, along with feeding habits and migration patterns, pack behaviour, canine communication signals" (298). In a radical act of resistance, the Marauders put themselves in danger for the sake of helping their friend. The Marauders becoming animagi is canon in the *Harry Potter* books and expanded upon in *All the Young Dudes*. MsKingBean89 further develops the plot device to demonstrate solidarity, care, and friendship.

Leading up to the Marauder's animagi transformations, Remus' wolf form is described as separate from himself: "Sometimes it felt as though the wolf crept into his mind before it got hold of his body" (22). In the mornings after a transformation, Remus describes the event as something done to him by the wolf, rather than by himself: "This time the wolf had clearly grown restless, because Remus awoke with a number of deep scratches" (41). In contrast, the Marauders joining Remus as animagi is the first place in the narrative that MsKingBean89 writes from the wolf's perspective: "The wolf, knowing itself to be the leader now, stopped growling. He recognized the scent of them; knew they meant no harm. This was his pack - and he was no

longer alone" (478). This indicates that the presence of his friends during a transformation allows Remus to feel connected to a part of himself that previously brought shame and resentment. When Remus wakes after being accompanied by his friends, he discovers that he hasn't hurt himself at all, and for the first time, he can remember what had happened: "I wasn't me, exactly, but I wasn't *not* me either. Does that make sense?" (479). It is the first time narratively that the separation Remus enforces between himself and the wolf narrows.

Later in the text, the Marauders help Remus sneak out of confinement for the first time, and "Remus' memories of the full moons were much better than they ever had been" (530). Another moment between him and Sirius, "'Was it scary? Was *I* scary?' He had no idea what he looked like in wolf form. Sirius's expression did not flicker. 'No.' He said, firmly. 'You were beautiful'" (479-480) shines through as a moment of acceptance and celebration. Remus, having never encountered a positive reaction to his condition, goes through the motions of deciphering what Sirius' comment means for him and his romantic feelings toward his friend. MsKingBean89 often uses interactions like this to blur the lines between the overarching themes of her work, demonstrated here by the intersection of disability and sexuality.

MsKingbean89 demonstrates how writing through identity can be used to create in-depth portrayals of marginalization in general. From the beginning of the text, Remus' lycanthropy divides him from the rest of the world. Remus is constantly advised not to tell anyone about his condition because of the negativity associated with werewolves, who are considered "dark creatures" and assumed to be working with Voldemort (82). At Hogwarts, he has access to resources that inform him of these assumptions, which further his sense of shame: "He'd known that he was dangerous, of course. He'd known that he was different. He *hadn't* known that he was hated. Hunted, even. Apparently, his teeth were worth thousands in certain parts of eastern

Europe. His pelt was worth even more" (82). Prejudice against werewolves infiltrates every level of the Wizarding world. Unaware that Remus is a werewolf, his friends feed into negative stereotypes as the war intensifies: "'They're still dangerous.' Marlene replied. 'I don't see why we're pretending they aren't...I know it's unfortunate for them, they might have been perfectly normal otherwise, but facts are facts'" (947). The news spreads fear through wizard communities: "WEREWOLF ATTACKS ON THE RISE – could your children be next?" (336). Complicated legislation dictates the lives of werewolves, requiring them to register with the Ministry and report their status to the world around them (83). The contradictions frustrate Remus, "I'm not s'posed to tell anyone – oh wait, until I'm seventeen, then I have to tell EVERYONE, right?" (389) and make it difficult for him to hope for a future where he will be accepted and cared for by those around him. What little information does exist on werewolves perpetuates negative stereotypes: "There was no account of a wizard actually living with the condition; how they had managed; what to expect; whether they had been able to hold down a job, or even just avoid hurting others" (83). There is also a lack of knowledge from caretakers like Madam Pomfrey, the school nurse, such as not knowing the appropriate language to refer to his experiences:

> "No, dear, you're the first Hogwarts student that I know of who's been..."
> "Bitten?"
> "Who's been bitten." She accepted, gratefully. (41)

These frustrations mirror those of disenfranchised communities who face discrimination and struggle at every level of our society.

MsKingBean89's development of Remus' condition portrays the divide between marginalized people and society, and between marginalized people and their stigmatized identities. There are external forces that perpetuate stigma and fear as well as an internal conflict

within Remus about his life as a werewolf. Both drive the development of his inner and outer perception of the world: he is incentivized to join the efforts opposing Voldemort because the Wizarding world has little to offer him in terms of career prospects after school, and because he feels a sense of responsibility to change the perception of werewolves as evil creatures. In both *Harry Potter* and *All the Young Dudes,* lycanthropy addresses marginalization and can be read as a defamiliarized metaphor for disenfranchisement. However, white Rowling's portrayals of disenfranchisement often act as plot devices to further the central narrative, MsKingBea89's portrayal of Remus' experience with marginalization utilizes internal conflict and external oppression to create a fully-immersed representation.

Rethinking Stereotypes: Fanfiction as Critical Discourse

Works like *All the Young* Dudes provide evidence that fanfiction is a valuable resource for critical engagement with mainstream media. MsKingBean89 counters tokenism within *Harry Potter* by paying attention to the intersectionality of her characters' social identifies, demonstrating fanfiction's ability to expand on the social contexts that authors introduce in their books, "even while they remain absent from the text" (Duggan 152). If Rowling's books function as defamiliarized introductions to racial inequality, prejudice, societal stigma, and queerness for her audiences, fanfictions such as *All the Young Dudes* extract these subtexts and explores them overtly in reinterpretation. MsKingBean89 refamiliarizes readers with these social structures by emphasizing them as tangible influences on characters' lives, rather than narrative metaphors. This reinterprative work can be seen across the fanfiction genre as much of our mainstream media engages in tokenism and many fans are willing to perform the labor of rehabilitating these portrayals.

Fanwork benefits the creators and producers of mainstream media. In some cases, the relationship between fans and media producers can be mutually beneficial. Through fanfiction, fans elaborate on the nuances of social ideologies that are often overlooked in the mainstream media, addressing concepts such as race, sexuality, (dis)ability, and the hierarchy of cultural power. This kind of feedback can aid producers in navigating market trends and audience preferences, and pressure to oblige these preferences can create more enjoyable and inclusive experiences for fans. As heightened fan participation in the creation of mainstream media becomes normalized, media production becomes a participatory culture which "transforms the experience of media consumption into the production of new texts, indeed of a new culture and a new community" (Jenkins 46). This participatory culture not only enriches the fan experience but

also holds the potential to influence mainstream media production, challenging the industry to incorporate more meaningful representations of marginalized identities. Zihan Wang argues that through participatory media culture, "fans are empowered in the process of consuming media content, since they can interact with media producers to express their opinions directly, which can impose significant impact on media producers' strategies and decisions" (47). However, the relationship between fans and media producers is complex, with fans often providing labor and creative input without adequate recognition or compensation.

Despite providing an immeasurable amount of free labor for the mainstream, fans are belittled and insulted by those in the industry. Examples of fan stereotypes from media outlets such as *Saturday Night Live* and *Newsweek* can be found in Jenkin's *Participatory Culture*, where Jenkins asserts that narrow portrayals of fan behavior, while accurate, are incredibly selective and shape our perception of fans. These misrepresentations allow for further discrediting, playing an important role in fitting "facts into a larger mythology about fannish identity" (11). As discussed in my introduction, fans are typically portrayed as juvenile and obsessive, engaging in behavior often deemed embarrassing by non-fans. Simultaneous sexualization and belittlement of female fans reflect a larger culture of misogyny, which equates female attention with lowered cultural value (Yodovich). This portrayal is problematic considering that much of the "embarrassing" behavior works in favor of media producers and their profits.

Along with the free advertising that fanwork provides, the digital landscape in which the majority of fandom takes place in supports advertisers, website hosting services, and media conglomerates through online fees, advertisements, and high-traffic interaction. The media industry disguises its exploitation of fan labor as reciprocity, where fans might receive special

access to extra content or television and film stars in exchange for their unpaid marketing (De Kosnik, "Should Fanfiction Be Free?" 124). This relationship most often "ends up shifting costs and risks onto the fans" rather than propelling them upwards in our cultural hierarchy (Busse "Fan Labor and Feminism" 112).

Articles such as *Medium's* Margherita Reads' "It's 2023, let's stop supporting J.K. Rowling and Harry Potter (and yes, that includes fan-made content)" point to a shift in attitude towards the *Harry Potter* as a whole.[21] As controversy surrounding the *Harry Potter* series and Rowling herself has become widespread, fanfiction has been criticized for keeping the series relevant. Reads' piece argues that it is impossible to separate fan content from its source material and, by proxy, the author. While Rowling may not benefit directly from use of her characters and/or universe, continued engagement with them maintains relevancy for the franchise from which she profits. No amount of editing from fans will change "all the racism and antisemitism of the magic world itself, or its homophobia, transphobia, fatphobia, and ableism, which will still exist even in the fan-made content" (Reads). This criticism points to a larger issue of fanwork attempting to fix the mainstream media writers' problematic portrayals for them.

I propose fan rehabilitation of topically applied identities as another form of labor that fans provide beyond advertising and maintaining relevancy. I suggest that we consider whether this ability encourages media industries to rely on fans to repair problematic narratives rather than enact change within writer rooms. Reads acknowledges emotional connection to *Harry Potter* as a driving force that keeps fans engaging with the series, and Wang similarly points out the importance of emotion in fan participation. He argues that this participation is not profit-driven but due to emotional investment: "The fact is that they are exploited by the media industry

[21] See also *BBC's* "Seriously... -Can I still read Harry Potter?", *The Globe and Mail's* "Can you still enjoy Harry Potter if you don't want to support J.K. Rowling?"

in a more invisible way, [but] they still enjoy the process of engagement and believe that their participation can create some sort of influence" (49). Therefore, media producers may rely on fans not only to add diversity to their stories, but to transcribe sincere meaning over tokenized portrayals, or transcribing sincere meaning over the stories altogether. If fans are willing to create complex and insightful narratives through fanworks, media producers may not need to spend the time and effort to do so themselves.

Despite the risks of exploitation, fanfiction remains a vital tool for addressing problematic aspects of popular media, offering alternative narratives and perspectives that contribute to a broader cultural discussion about the failures of mainstream media. I urge future scholars of fanfiction to consider the implications of how the mainstream media industry benefits from fan labor and how existing exploitations of fanwork might evolve in the future. As we continue to investigate the relationship between fans and media producers, it becomes increasingly evident that fanfiction is not merely a form of entertainment but a catalyst for change, challenging us to confront cultural concepts of diversity, ownership, and power dynamics within our media landscape.

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition	Example	Source Citation
Archive of Our Own (AO3)	A fan-created and run nonprofit open-source archive of fanworks. One of the most popular and foundational sites for the digital sharing of fanfiction.	"Have you thought of uploading your fanfiction to AO3?"	Archive of Our Own, Organization for Transformative Works, archiveofourown.org/. Accessed 9 May 2024.
Canon	The source, or sources, that are considered authoritative by the fannish community. In other words, what *actually* happened within a piece of media.	"Canonically, Darth Maul didn't die in *The Phantom Menace.* He comes back in *The Clone Wars."*	Booth, Paul, editor. A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018.
Cishet	A term that combines "cisgender" and "heterosexual".	"Majority of media these days feature cishet characters."	"Cishet." Cambridge Dictionary, Cambridge University Press and Assessment, dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/cishet. Accessed 9 May 2024.
Cultural Capitol	Non-financial social assets that enable social mobility.	Knowlege about the *Star Wars* franchise gives fans varying levels of cultural capital that influence their proximity to the fandom.	Bourdieu, P. (1983). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press.
Fair Use	A provision in US Copyright Law that allows the use of copyrighted work for purposes such as	"My professor said that we can analyze the *Star Wars* films in class because education	"Research Guides: Copyright & Fair Use: Fair Use." *Fair Use - Copyright & Fair Use - Research Guides at University of Oregon Libraries*,

	teaching, reporting, comment, or criticism."	falls under Fair Use laws."	University of Oregon, researchguides.uoregon.edu/copyright/fairuse. Accessed 6 June 2024.
Groupie	Most often applied to female fans whose devotion leads them to follow stars from place to place. There is an assumption that groupies offer sexual satisfaction.	"I've seen that girl at three other *Star Wars* panels this year. She's a total groupie!"	Jenkins, Henry. Textual Poachers Television Fans and Participatory Culture. Routledge, 1992.
Headcanon	Something a fan imagines about the characters (such as a scenario or relationship) but that doesn't appear on screen/on the page.	"Padme Amidala being secretly Force-sensitive is the best Star Wars headcanon."	"Headcanon Meaning." Merriam-Webster, Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/words-were-watching-headcanon-fanon. Accessed 7 May 2024.
Hits	A counter of how many times a work has been accessed.	MsKingBean89's *All the Young Dudes* has nearly 14,000,000 hits.	"Statistics FAQ ." Archive of Our Own, Organization for Transformative Works, archiveofourown.org/faq/statistics?language_id=en#hitstats. Accessed 7 May 2024.
Intellectual property	An idea, design, or work created by someone that the law prevents others from copying.	*Star Wars* is Disney's intellectual property.	"Intellectual Property ." Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, Oxford University Press, www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/intellectual-property. Accessed 7 May 2024.
M/M, F/F, F/M	Categories used to distinguish male/male, female/female, or	"I want to see more F/F fanfictions on AO3!"	"Tags FAQ." Tags FAQ | Archive of Our Own, Organization for Transformative

	female/male relationships.		Works, archiveofourown.org/faq/tags?language_id=en#tagtypes. Accessed 8 May 2024.
Racebending	The editing of a character's race to be different from their canonical race. Most often done with characters that are assumed to be white, but whose race might not be specified within the text.	"The fanfiction I'm reading racebends Luke Skywalker as Black."	Booth, Paul, editor. A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018.
Shipping	Derived from the word relationship, shipping is the desire by fans for two or more people to be in a relationship, most often romantically.	"I feel like the only person who doesn't ship Obi-Wan and Anakin."	Booth, Paul, editor. A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018.
Slash	The most notorious genre of fanfiction that originated among 1960s Star Trek fans, referring to works that pair two men as sexual partners.	"Have you read any *Star Wars* slash recently?"	Booth, Paul, editor. A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018.
Tokenism	The act of including certain character identities to satisfy the need for diversity, rather than accurately portraying people with those identities.	"It feels like Finn is just a token Black character in the *Star Wars* sequels."	"Tokenism, N." Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2790543242.
Transformative Fair Use	A form of Fair Use law that favors work that has been transformed in some way that differs from	"My fanfiction would likely fall under transformative fair use because I'm using the original	"Research Guides: Copyright & Fair Use: Fair Use." *Fair Use - Copyright & Fair Use - Research Guides at University of Oregon Libraries*,

	the original copyrighted work.	work to explore something new about the world.”	University of Oregon, researchguides.uoregon.edu/copyright/fairuse. Accessed 6 June 2024.

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