

Dubcon

Fanfiction, Power, and Sexual Consent



Milena Popova

DUBCON

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MILENA POPOVA

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To my queer found family. <3

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1 INTRODUCTION

Content note: This chapter discusses rape culture and rape apologism and includes some references to and descriptions of sexual violence.

You know what the magic word, the only thing that matters in American sexual mores today is? One thing. You can do anything—the left will promote, and understand, and tolerate anything—as long as there is one element. Do you know what it is? Consent. If there is consent on both or all three or all four, however many are involved in the sex act, it's perfectly fine, whatever it is. But if the left ever senses and smells that there's no consent in part of the equation, then here come the rape police. But consent is the magic key to the left.

—RUSH LIMBAUGH, OCTOBER 2016¹

This is a steep price to pay for 20 minutes of action out of his 20 plus years of life. The fact that he now has to register as a sexual offender for the rest of his life forever alters where he can live, visit, work, and how he will be able to interact with people and organizations.

—DAN A. TURNER, JUNE 2016²

I am here today not because I want to be. I am terrified. I am here because I believe it is my civic duty to tell you what happened to me while Brett Kavanaugh and I were in high school.

—DR. CHRISTINE BLASEY FORD, SEPTEMBER 2018³

THE GRAY AREAS OF RAPE CULTURE

American talk radio host Rush Limbaugh defends US presidential candidate Donald Trump for boasting about how he can “grab [women] by the pussy,” casting the idea of sexual consent as a strange, outlandish, immoral invention of “the left.”⁴ The father of Brock Turner, a college student convicted of three counts of felony sexual assault of an unconscious woman after a campus party and sentenced to six months in prison, bemoans the harsh sentence for what he calls “20 minutes of action.” A woman relives her sexual assault on national television in the hope of stopping her assailant’s confirmation to the United States Supreme Court. She fails. (And she is not the first to do so.)

This is rape culture. The #MeToo movement has brought the endemic nature of sexual violence into the public eye. In the United Kingdom alone, over 200 women are raped every single day.⁵ At the same time, those in power—from members of Parliament to judges to talk-show hosts—routinely dismiss rape allegations. Even in the most egregious cases, like that of Brock Turner, they find ways of blaming the victims and protecting the accused and guilty. And while feminist campaigners have been pushing against rape culture and for better education about consent, it is clear that sexual consent is—at best—a contested topic in contemporary Western societies and cultures. Comments and cases such as these have gained public attention and prominence in the media partly because they are relatively clear-cut: two men witnessed and stopped Brock Turner, and their testimony was crucial in securing his conviction.⁶ But focusing solely on these cases means we obscure experiences of sexual violence and consent violations that are less clear-cut: experiences that fall in a problematic liminal space, a gray area between “yes” and “no,” for a variety of reasons.

2017

Then something happened that was not ok

Everything wobbled.

“That is unacceptable to me.”

How does she voice that and feel safe.

Not knowing the rules.

The one condom two women situation.

She was confronted by her inability to ask for what she needed, to know what it was she needed and then ask for it. She is shocked at not being able to say no in the moment—she didn't trust her own sense of that's not ok. Why was she so worried about how that would look in the peer group? There was an incipient fear that she would be ostracized; become an even more peripheral participant than she was feeling.⁷

This is an extract from a paper presented by two colleagues of mine at a conference. In it, they reflect, among other things, on how their conception of who they are as individuals has shaped their sexual experiences. Here, Davina, at her first sex party, is struggling to communicate her needs and boundaries for fear of being made to feel like she does not belong in this space.

2017

But rather: it's clear in retrospect that between the ages of, like, 15 and 22, *I Was Not In A Position To Assent To Sex*. . . . and that's about culture & sex education & ace-invisibility & how we talk about desire. It happened bc I lacked the necessary awareness. When I think about my sexual history, such as it is, it feels like being raped by no one in particular.⁸

In a Twitter thread, writer Alex Gabriel talks about how the erasure of asexuality from the UK's Sex and Relationships Education curriculum left Alex, as an asexual person, poorly equipped to meaningfully consent to sex for a long time. Being unable to distinguish between sexual and other types of attraction put Alex in a position where sex that was consensual on the surface nonetheless felt like a violation.

2018

“He said something along the lines of, ‘How about you hop up and take a seat?’” Within moments, he was kissing her. “In a second, his hand was on my breast.” Then he was undressing her, then he undressed himself. She remembers feeling uncomfortable at how quickly things escalated.⁹

A young woman describes a date with comedian Aziz Ansari that seemed to follow a script—dinner, kissing, undressing—that made her feel

deeply uncomfortable. Even in a post-#MeToo environment, many doubt whether the behavior described constitutes sexual misconduct on Ansari's part. What these three accounts have in common is that the sexual experiences they describe would, by both law and "common sense," be regarded as consensual. And yet, upon reflection, those who experienced them now characterize them as consent violations. If the words of Rush Limbaugh and Dan Turner and the way the Kavanaugh allegations were simply brushed away paint a picture of consent as contested, the latter three testimonies would suggest that it is more complex still than even those of us Limbaugh calls "the left" would imagine. And although there is still plenty of work to be done in both research and activism with regard to the arguably less complex cases (i.e., those perceived as consent violations at the time they occurred), we desperately need a better understanding of the other ones: those cases in which the ways that we are taught to think about what "normal" sex is, about what constitutes a date or a romantic relationship, or about the kind of sex we have and what it says about us as people make it more difficult for us to meaningfully consent to sex.

Feminist academic approaches to sexual violence and consent are diverse and multidisciplinary. Scholars from fields such as psychology, feminist legal theory, and cultural studies have made important contributions. But even within feminist academia, consent in its own right is significantly undertheorized,¹⁰ and scholars struggle to account for the vast gray areas revealed by stories like those of Davina, Alex, and the anonymous woman who went on a date with Aziz Ansari.¹¹ The psychologist Nicola Gavey argues that we, as a society, have a particular way of conceptualizing what "normal" (hetero)sex looks like. It is a combination of many, sometimes conflicting ideas, but it generally involves exactly one cisgender man and one cisgender woman; it starts with kissing and touching, progresses through undressing, and culminates in penile-vaginal intercourse, which ends when the man ejaculates. (This, of course, sounds remarkably like that script Aziz Ansari was following in his interaction with the young woman.) We also have dominant cultural ideas about what exactly requires consent, and when and how consent can be withheld or withdrawn (not, for instance, due to the "one condom two women situation"). We even have

an idea that all people experience sexual attraction and want to have sex, and that if someone doesn't, something must be wrong with them (hence Alex's sense of "being raped by no one in particular"). It is these dominant ideas that make it difficult to name such experiences as violations, and Gavey calls them the "cultural scaffolding of rape."¹² There is, however, another community—not academic, not overtly activist—that has developed a word for this. Readers and writers of erotic fanfiction would call these three examples "dubcon": dubious consent.

EROTIC FANFICTION AND CONSENT

This book started its life as a PhD thesis, with a title taken from a tag on the fanfiction website Archive of Our Own (AO3): "slight dub-con but they both wanted it hardcore." Tags on AO3—an online archive owned and operated by fans that hosts nearly 7.4 million fanworks as of March 2021—are pieces of metadata, intended to facilitate the organization and searchability of such fanworks. Yet their usage in the fanfiction community makes them so much more than that. And those eight words, "slight dub-con but they both wanted it hardcore," perfectly encapsulate one of the remarkable things about this community, not only in its tags but also in large sections of its creative output and day-to-day interactions and practices: its nuanced engagement with issues of sexual consent, which I found in fanfiction circles long before I started researching it, that is at the same time delightfully playful and deadly serious.

Fanfiction is amateur-produced fiction based on existing, generally proprietary media such as TV shows, books, movies, and video games. Fans—mostly women and nonbinary people, and mostly members of gender, sexual, or romantic minorities¹³—take the settings, plots, and characters from these "properties" and make them our own. We rewrite endings. We resurrect the dead. We give life to minor and marginalized characters. We imagine ourselves in the magical worlds we are passionate about. And in slash—the subgenre of fanfiction that focuses on same-gender relationships—we put queerness and sex back into texts they have been meticulously scrubbed out of. Of course Mr. Spock has been banging Captain

Kirk, Sherlock has been sucking Watson's cock, Cho Chang and Pansy Parkinson have been researching innovative uses for wands at Hogwarts, and Link, the pointy-eared protagonist of the Legend of Zelda video game franchise, is a trans woman! Have you not been paying attention? And considering that over 2.2 million of AO3's 5 million fanworks are rated as mature or explicit, and that its community consists predominantly of women and nonbinary people, meaning that it is disproportionately affected by sexual violence,¹⁴ it would be more shocking if the community *didn't* think about issues of sexual consent.

Fandom—the community of readers and writers of fanfiction—is where I first encountered the concept of “dubcon”: the idea that sometimes, for whatever reasons, consent is not clear-cut, not a matter of “yes” or “no.” I have been a part of this community for so long that I have no conscious memory of when I first came across the word. Fanlore, the fandom wiki, traces early usages of it to sometime in 2003,¹⁵ but fanfiction's engagement with the gray areas of consent predates this usage by decades. Wedged awkwardly between the academic books in my bookcase, there is a collection of slim, US letter-sized, perfect-bound volumes older than me. Among them are Barbara Wenk's *One Way Mirror* and Jean Lorrh's *The Night of the Twin Moons*.¹⁶ In one of the origin stories of fanfiction I tell my undergraduate students, Lorrh and Wenk would be considered some of the foremothers of today's fanfiction community. Decades before fandom found its way onto the internet, they wrote stories about the characters of *Star Trek*, typed them out, mimeographed them, had them bound into fanzines, and sold them at conventions or through the mail. Wenk's novel-length story explores, among other themes, material and social dependency within an intimate relationship. The first volume of Lorrh's series focuses on the relationship between Spock's parents, and particularly the emotional impact of *pon farr*, the Vulcan “fuck or die” mating drive. It is ultimately stories like these, where consent is a vast gray area between “yes” and “no,” mired in power relations and inequalities, that give us the most nuanced and productive engagements with questions of consent, and that are the focus of this book. It is those stories that are epitomized by those eight words: *slight dub-con but they both wanted it hardcore*.

In eight words, the author who tagged the story this way draws a distinction between consent and the “wantedness” of sex. This is something that feminist researchers of consent from disciplines ranging from psychology to law have struggled with for decades. Sometimes, we may very much want to fuck someone silly, but other factors, such as the power imbalance between them and us, may impact whether we can genuinely and meaningfully give consent. Other times, we may feel little or no desire, and yet we may consent to sex for other reasons. Power still plays a role in these cases: sex consented to for relationship maintenance when we are materially, financially, or socially dependent on our partner may still fall in the gray area of dubcon. These are things I should perhaps have been given the opportunity to learn at school in sex and relationships education, or from my parents, or maybe even by cultural osmosis from media representations of sex and relationships. But I wasn’t, and ultimately I learned them from fanfiction, and from a handful of other feminist spaces I found myself in over the years. Was I alone in this? Did everyone else know these things already, and I had somehow missed them? Or were the discussions I was seeing in the fanfiction community around sexuality and consent part of a wider landscape of feminist activism, a space where women and nonbinary people got together to work these things out because no one had told us—maybe even because no one else knew to begin with? These are some of the questions we will explore in this book.

THE POTENTIAL OF FANFICTION

Feminist understanding of sexual consent—in law, psychology, and culture—has evolved significantly over the last five decades, as we will see in the next chapter. And yet, there are still gaps, at least in part because the dominant ideas in our society of gender, sexuality, sex, and consent are so ubiquitous and resistance to change is so great that dismantling them is the task of generations.¹⁷ Feminist scholars and activists see popular culture, including pornography and romance novels, as a key source of our dominant ideas about sex and consent. Popular culture is where we learn that pulling pigtailed is a sign of affection, and that rejection is an invitation to

keep making bigger and bigger romantic gestures. However, even though culture can reinforce many of the harmful ideas that feminists have identified as contributing toward sexual violence and rape culture, it also has the potential to drive change. Audiences, after all, aren't passive and don't always read popular culture in exactly the same way; we bring our own ideas and experiences to it, and we interpret it and shape it as much as it shapes us. So, what do audiences *do* with media and culture that tell us that potentially coercive sexual situations are normal, romantic, or, in Nicola Gavey's words, "just sex"?

Scholars of fandom and fanfiction have long seen fans as a particularly active type of audience. In his groundbreaking 1991 ethnography of fandom, Henry Jenkins calls them "textual poachers."¹⁸ Fans, he argues, take bits of popular culture and repurpose them for their own ends. And those ends are generally subversive, counter to the dominant meanings and ideas of our society and the raw material we use. So, can such active audiences mount a meaningful resistance to dominant ideas of sex and consent? The fanfiction community consists predominantly of women and nonbinary people, a majority of whom identify as members of gender, sexual, or romantic minorities. This community produces a significant amount of work focused on sexual and romantic relationships, much of which is sexually explicit.¹⁹ It would certainly be a likely suspect for the kind of active audience that critically engages with dominant ideas of sexuality and consent, that challenges those ideas and creates alternatives, and that is able to resist the idea that coerced, forced, or unwanted sex is normal or "just sex." With that in mind, the rest of this book explores two key questions: How do erotic fanfiction and the communities around it engage with issues of sexual consent? And can this engagement be meaningfully viewed as a form of cultural activism?

OVERVIEW

To answer these questions, I immersed myself in fanfiction communities for three years—or rather, I started paying scholarly attention to communities I had been part of for decades. I started analyzing stories, tropes,

events, and practices to understand precisely how I myself had come to learn about concepts like dubcon—how these communities were examining consent issues, creating new knowledges, and spreading them to new members or even potentially beyond their boundaries. In this book, I will take you on a tour of fanfiction stories and tropes, community discussions and practices, and the views that fanfiction readers and writers at a convention shared in conversations with me.

To start, however, we will take a small detour into theory. In the next chapter, I explore in depth two sets of ideas. First, I look at the evolution of feminist scholars' and activists' engagements with sexual violence, rape culture, and consent. In line with the opening of this book, rather than focusing on some of the more clear-cut cases of sexual violence, I pay particular attention to what we do (and do not) know about the gray areas of consent—about dubcon. An understanding of how those gray areas come to be then leads to the question of how the way we are taught to think about certain things—like gender, sex, sexuality, or consent—shapes the world around us, which in turn leads to the question of whether (and how) it is possible to create *new* ways of thinking. I explore these questions by turning to the theories of French philosopher Michel Foucault on how power operates through “discourse.” Foucault’s view of power is arguably somewhat bleak: it is difficult to see how we can resist dominant ways of thinking because sometimes alternatives are simply unimaginable. To find a way past this, I look at the role of culture and bring in approaches from the margins: postcolonial, civil rights, queer, and feminist traditions of resistance, which I term *discursive resistance*.

Before I dive into the specific case studies of fanfiction communities and consent, I offer a short interlude—a very brief introduction to key parts of fanfiction scholarship and research that will help you understand how fanfiction *works*: how readers and writers as a community make meanings from the bits of popular culture we poach in a kind of *communal textuality*.

In chapter 3, we dive straight into the deep end of the pool and take a look at the Omegaverse: a science-fictional alternate universe collectively created by fanfiction readers and writers, where human gender and

sexuality look rather different from what we are used to. In the Omegaverse (also known as alpha/beta/omega or A/B/O stories), humans have six possible genders determined to varying degrees by biology and social roles. If terms like “alpha” and “beta” sound remarkably similar to the prevailing cultural idea of how wolf packs work, that is because they are.²⁰ The Omegaverse has its origins in part in bestiality fiction, and features estrus cycles (or heat), penises with knots, and scent marking, as well as more fictional elements such as self-lubricating anuses and male pregnancy. A/B/O stories are deeply controversial in fanfiction communities, and have been dubbed by some as “dogfuck rapeworld.” So, what can dogfuck rapeworld tell us about consent? The weird and wonderful Omegaverse provides a less familiar lens through which we can examine ideas about gender, sex, sexuality, and consent in our own society. Like all good speculative fiction, A/B/O stories show us something alien to prompt us to look for similarities and differences with our own world and to question how *we* do gender and sex. At the same time, the squalid, messy, erotic nature of the stories provokes strong affective reactions in readers, compelling us to engage with the consent issues inherent in the A/B/O setting on affective, emotional, and intellectual levels.

We stay with fanfiction stories and tropes in chapter 4, where I look at arranged-marriage fanfiction. Arranged marriage is a popular trope in fanfiction stories and borrows heavily from the marriage-of-convenience trope in Regency romance novels, which are set in the early nineteenth century. Both romance novels and fanfiction stories using the arranged-marriage trope focus on relationships characterized by social and material inequality: characters from different social backgrounds are thrust together with no way out, and frequently one character is dependent on the other financially, socially, or in other ways. Fanfiction readers and writers use some of the genre conventions of the romance novel while carefully rewriting others, thereby creating meaning through both similarities and differences to the romance novel genre. One important aspect of the romance novel that fanfiction stories rewrite is the marriage consummation scene. In romance novels—and in our culture more generally—marriage consummation as a practice tends to go unquestioned. To be legally valid, a marriage between

a man and a woman must be consummated, and that is all there is to it. There is, however, something bizarre about the fact that (these days, and in most Western jurisdictions, at least) we recognize marital rape as a crime, yet we also force this one state-mandated instance of intercourse on those who wish to be married. By focusing on the marriage consummation scene in arranged-marriage stories, fanfiction readers and writers highlight this paradox and recast the practice and legal institution of consummation from normal and always consensual to at least *potentially* coercive. Having cast that doubt on the consensual nature of consummation, fanfiction communities then make small changes to the genre conventions of romance novels to explore the conditions under which inequalities in sexual and romantic relationships can be leveled to make sexual consent between unequal partners truly meaningful.

The case studies in chapters 3 and 4 show how fanfiction readers and writers engage with issues of consent in the presence of power differentials in their creative output. Such tropes as the Omegaverse and arranged marriage allow fanfiction communities to take a fresh look at things we take for granted: gender roles, attitudes toward sex, and institutions such as marriage. Through these stories, fanfiction readers and writers get to ask questions like: What if the way we see these things shapes how we act? What if the dominant ways we think about gender, sex, marriage, and other related concepts are, in fact, ways in which power operates on us, limiting our freedom and choices when it comes to how we do sex? And what if we imagined these things differently? The Black American philosopher and activist Cornel West calls these questions the demystification and demythologization of dominant ways of thinking.²¹ In chapter 5, we shift focus away from fanfiction stories and begin to look at how fanfiction communities apply such demythologization and demystification to their experiences in the real world. I do this by looking at the fanfiction space where the fictional and the real interact most obviously: real person(a) fiction or RPF, a type of fanfiction based on real-life celebrities. What happens, as one fan asked, “when the RP gets in the way of the F”? Specifically, what happened when Patrick Kane, an American ice hockey star and central fan object in the Hockey RPF fandom, was accused of rape?

The controversy around the Kane rape allegations (and the subsequent unsatisfactory closure of the case) revealed deep conflicts within both individuals and fanfiction communities. Driven by a desire to live by feminist values, community members found themselves reexamining their fandom, their past fiction, and their future involvement with a now problematic fan object. More importantly, though, the Kane controversy provided a vehicle for fanfiction readers and writers to grapple with the role of the law and the criminal justice system in rape culture. Community members used the same techniques they normally employ to make a celebrity such as Kane more human and relatable to examine and give an inner life to other key individuals in the case, most notably Kane's accuser and the district attorney in charge of the case. This in turn allowed them to humanize the law as an institution, and thereby highlight its many flaws. Although a minority of community members accepted the law's version of events, a majority of the group either found ways of bracketing the law: accepting some of its premises in specific contexts while acknowledging its failings in sexual violence cases and challenging its universal applicability. Others rejected the law outright and highlighted its biases and key role in perpetuating rape culture.

In chapters 6 and 7, I draw out more of the links between fanfiction stories, community practices, and the real world when it comes to sexual consent. These two chapters are based largely on conversations I had with fanfiction readers and writers at a fan convention in London. In chapter 6, I look at the epistemology of consent: How do we know what consent looks like, and whom do we consider a qualified knower of this? Psychology, philosophy, and the law offer only limited answers to these questions and frequently disqualify individuals' own experiences as a valid source of knowledge of consent. At the same time, our experiences *are* shaped by our environment and the dominant ways we are taught to think about sex, gender, sexuality, and consent, and that is also difficult to account for. Fanfiction is helping its readers and writers not only to redefine and better understand consent based on lived experience and emotion—both theirs and those of their characters—but also to grapple with the role social power structures play in their interpretations of such experiences. Fanfiction communities

create knowledges about consent that are fundamentally epistemologically different to those generated in academia or by the law.

Chapter 7 takes us full circle back to fanfiction texts, the paratexts that surround them, and how these do real work in the real world. Fanfiction readers and writers have an at times paradoxical relationship with ideas of authorship. On the one hand, we claim for ourselves the right to reinterpret and rewrite any work in any way we see fit. We tend to think of the author of the originary work as well and truly dead: their intent does not matter to our reading. At the same time, the fanfiction readers and writers I interviewed repeatedly talked about how much it mattered to their enjoyment of fanfiction that there were ways of knowing whether the author intended to explore problematic aspects of consent, or wrote something “rapey” by accident. This suggests that fanfiction communities recognize the work that fiction, art, and culture do in the real world by either entrenching dominant ways of thinking or enabling us to imagine alternatives. Out of that recognition arise a number of community practices, norms, and infrastructures that seek to facilitate fanfiction’s ability to let us imagine things differently. These practices also enable survivors of sexual violence to make informed choices about what kinds of content to engage with, thus allowing them to exercise autonomy and informed consent. In these ways, fanfiction readers and writers enact the knowledges and feminist values they develop in their creative output and interactions with each other, making them manifest in the real world: a *praxis of consent*.

Finally, in chapter 8, I speculate about the future of fanfiction by examining both its failures and its potential as an activist space. I look at how consent-related cultural activism is not evenly distributed in fanfiction communities, and how existing discourses and practices marginalize and harm fans of color in particular. In light of the #MeToo movement and an increasing mainstreaming and commercialization of fanfiction, I also speculate about where cultural activism on sexual consent may head in the future. Here, an increasing focus both in fanfiction communities and among more casual audiences on the impact that fiction, culture, and art have on the real world points toward potential avenues to leveraging fan communities’ knowledges in a wider context.

Ultimately, this book argues that fanfiction is among the forms and spaces in popular culture that have the potential to make significant contributions to conversations around gender, sex, sexuality, and consent; and that the fanfiction community's engagements with issues of sexual consent can be viewed as a distinct form of cultural activism: the use of culture to challenge dominant ways of thinking, and to imagine and even enact alternatives. The production, circulation, and discussion of fanfiction (a kind of communal textuality) allows the community to enact a discursive resistance to dominant ways of thinking by forming powerful alternative imaginaries of sexuality and consent. Fanfiction communities also establish a praxis of consent through practices that encourage active engagement with consent issues and center the wellbeing of survivors of sexual violence, thus enacting within community spaces what a world free of sexual violence might look like. The knowledges generated in these ways challenge, demystify, and demythologize dominant discursive constructions of gender, power, sexuality, and consent, as well as the institutions that support these constructions. They are then applied to community members' own day-to-day lives and engagements with sexuality, consent, and rape culture. Yet fanfiction communities are far from perfect and are undergoing rapid changes. Our challenge is to recognize the knowledges they create and their limitations, and to find ways to mitigate the latter while disseminating the former to a wider audience.

Notes

CHAPTER 1

1. Limbaugh's full tirade says a lot more about Limbaugh and the American right than it does about the left, or consent. It makes for interesting listening/reading. Content notes for rape apologism apply. See Media Matters Staff, "Limbaugh: The Left Sends Out 'the Rape Police' Whenever There's Sex with 'No Consent' (Also Known As Rape)," *Media Matters*, October 12, 2016, <https://www.mediamatters.org/video/2016/10/12/limbaugh-left-sends-out-rape-police-when-ever-theres-sex-no-consent-also-known-as-rape/213787>.
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11. Linda Martín Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).
12. Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (Hove: Routledge, 2005).
13. Given the dispersed nature of fandom, gathering large-scale demographic data on online fanfiction communities has proved challenging, and no truly representative data set exists to date. Surveys conducted by fans themselves in fannish subcommunities suggest that fanfiction is produced predominantly by women and nonbinary people: in the AO3 census conducted in 2013, only 4.2 percent of respondents identified as “male,” and 80 percent identified as “female,” with the remaining 15.8 percent selecting other gender options such as “genderqueer” (6 percent), “agender,” or “androgynous” (2 percent each). In terms of sexuality, approximately two-thirds of respondents selected at least one option other than “heterosexual,” and 53.7 percent of respondents identified as members of a “gender, sexual, or romantic minority.” This data is not without limitations, as survey author centrumlumina herself acknowledges. The sample is self-selecting, and potentially overreliant on AO3 users who also use Tumblr (the primary mode of advertising the survey). Nonetheless, the data is based on a sample of over 10,000 AO3 users, and is a significant improvement on previous anecdotal evidence of fandom demographics. A more recent project focusing on fans’ views and experiences of sex and sexuality surveyed 2,200 fans aged eighteen and older. Similarly to the AO3 census, it found that 85.9 percent of respondents identified as “female” and 3.6 percent identified as male, with 7.7 percent of participants selecting “nonbinary,” 5.6 percent “genderfluid,” and 4.3 percent “agender.” With regard to sexual orientation, only 24 percent of respondents identified as “heterosexual.” Thus, although data on fandom demographics remains limited, available evidence broadly agrees that this is a group predominantly consisting of women and nonbinary people, a majority of whom are not heterosexual. See centrumlumina, “Gender,” Tumblr, October 1, 2013, <http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62816996032/gender>; centrumlumina, “Overall Gender and Sexuality of AO3 Users,” Tumblr, August 12, 2014, <https://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/194562495289/overall-gender-and-sexuality-of-ao3-users-this>; centrumlumina, “Gender, Sexual or Romantic Minority,” Tumblr, October 2, 2013, <http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62890602051/gender-sexual-or-romantic-minority>; centrumlumina, “Limitations and Uses of the Data,” Tumblr, September 30, 2013, <http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/162748999135/limitations-and-uses-of-the-data>; and finnagain, “Fandom & Sexuality Survey Summary Report,” 2017, By Fans 4 Fans, LLC.

14. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Sexual Violence," last updated August 8, 2018, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention>.
15. Fanlore, "Dub-Con," 2016, last updated December 6, 2019, <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Dub-con>.
16. Barbara Wenk, *One Way Mirror* (Poison Pen Press, 1980); and Jean Lorrain, *The Night of the Twin Moons* (Creative Printers, 1976).
17. For a discussion of the resistance to recent movements and activism around sexual violence, see chapter 7 in Milena Popova, *Sexual Consent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
18. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
19. destinationtoast, "Because I Was Curious about the Breakdown of Fic on AO3," Tumblr, May 11, 2013, <http://destinationtoast.tumblr.com/post/50201718171/because-i-was-curious-about-the-breakdown-of>.
20. The idea that there are "alpha" and "beta" individuals who vie for dominance in wolf packs has been thoroughly discredited by the researcher who originally popularized it. Sometimes science makes mistakes, and our early ideas of how wolf packs worked were based on studying packs of unrelated wolves in captivity. See L. David Mech, "Alpha Status, Dominance, and Division of Labor in Wolf Packs," *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 77, no. 8 (1999): 1196–1203, <https://doi.org/10.1139/z99-099>. For some reason, the cultural idea of alpha wolves still persists despite the evidence.
21. Cornel West, *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

1. Milena Popova (@elmyra), "How's everyone's #coronavirus apocalypse going, folks? I just had to tell someone on Facebook that they weren't under any obligation to have sex with their husband, and it feels like this is a good time to belabour this point," Twitter, March 26, 2020, 8:08 a.m., <https://twitter.com/elmyra/status/1243147837753434112>.
2. Andrea Dworkin, *Right-Wing Women* (Exeter, UK: Pedigree Books, 1983).
3. The case used as precedent to establish marital rape as an offence in England and Wales was Regina Respondent and R. Appellant: <http://bailii.org/uk/cases/UKHL/1991/12.html>.
4. Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Catharine MacKinnon, "Reflections on Sex Equality under Law," *Yale Law Journal* 100 (1991): 1281, <https://doi.org/10.2307/796693>.
5. Celia Kitzinger and Hannah Frith, "Just Say No? The Use of Conversation Analysis in Developing a Feminist Perspective on Sexual Refusal," *Discourse & Society* 10, no. 3 (1999): 293–316, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926599010003002>; Kate Lockwood Harris, "Yes Means Yes and No Means No, but Both These Mantras Need to Go: Communication

- Myths in Consent Education and Anti-Rape Activism,” *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 46, no. 2 (2018): 155–178.
6. Joanne Wright, “Consent and Sexual Violence in Canadian Public Discourse: Reflections on Ewanchuk,” *Canadian Journal of Law & Society (La Revue Canadienne Droit et Société)* 16, no. 2 (2001): 173–204. For an introduction to the history of feminist approaches to sexual consent and the evolution of the law in this area, see also Milena Popova, *Sexual Consent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
 7. Lois Pineau, “Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis,” *Law and Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1989): 217–243, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00160012>.
 8. Michelle J. Anderson, “Negotiating Sex,” *Southern California Law Review* 41 (2005): 1401–1438.
 9. There is a series of studies by Kristen Jozkowski and her team looking into how college students express consent. In the various surveys, participants are asked specifically how they express consent to penile-vaginal intercourse, and in the interpretation of the results the researchers define things like kissing, undressing, or moving to a more private space as consent behaviors, or expressions of consent. This tells us a little bit about how college students behave in sexual situations, and probably slightly more about the researchers’ own ideas of what sex is and what requires consent. We will see in chapter 6 of this book how fanfiction readers and writers have a very different view on the subject. See Kristen N. Jozkowski and Zoë D. Peterson, “College Students and Sexual Consent: Unique Insights,” *Journal of Sex Research* 50, no. 6 (2013): 517–523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.700739>; and Kristen N. Jozkowski and Zoë D. Peterson, “Assessing the Validity and Reliability of the Perceptions of the Consent to Sex Scale,” *Journal of Sex Research* 51, no. 6 (2014): 632–645, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.757282>.
 10. See Laina Y. Bay-Cheng and Rebecca K. Eliseo-Arras, “The Making of Unwanted Sex: Gendered and Neoliberal Norms in College Women’s Unwanted Sexual Experiences,” *Journal of Sex Research* 45, no. 4 (2008): 386–397, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490802398381>; and Melissa Burkett and Karine Hamilton, “Postfeminist Sexual Agency: Young Women’s Negotiations of Sexual Consent,” *Sexualities* 15, no. 7 (December 2012): 815–833, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460712454076>.
 11. Debra Umberson, Mieke Beth Thomeer, and Amy C. Lodge, “Intimacy and Emotion Work in Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Relationships,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, no. 2 (2015): 542–556, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12178>.
 12. Melanie Ann Beres, Gareth Terry, Charlene Y. Senn, and Lily Kay Ross, “Accounting for Men’s Refusal of Heterosex: A Story-Completion Study with Young Adults,” *Journal of Sex Research* 56, no. 1 (2019): 127–136, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1399978>.
 13. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
 14. Wendy Hollway, *Subjectivity and Method in Psychology* (London: Sage, 1989).

15. Lisa Downing, "What Is 'Sex Critical' and Why Should We Care about It?" *Sex Critical* (blog), July 27, 2012, <http://sexcritical.co.uk/2012/07/27/what-is-sex-critical-and-why-should-we-care-about-it/>.
16. Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (Hove: Routledge, 2005).
17. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.
18. This is somewhat of an oversimplification because ideas about love, sex, romance, and relationships have changed significantly over time. A more accurate description would be to say that we currently believe that it is how past generations thought, and that decoupling sex from romance is a relatively novel idea. Of course, this way of thinking in itself helps reinforce the conceptual link between sex and romance.
19. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 20:327–336; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).
20. Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
21. Feminist philosopher Lois McNay actually finds three major problems that Foucault's work presents for us. The first is Foucault's idea that the body, like everything else, is discursively constructed. This is a very powerful idea because it allows us to move beyond essentialist conceptions of gender. Some schools of feminism firmly believe that what makes a woman a woman, and therefore what is at the root of her oppression by patriarchy, is her possession of a uterus and ability to bear children. This is what we refer to as biological essentialism, and it has many problems, including failing to account for the experiences and oppression of trans people and, followed to its logical conclusion, suggesting that Margaret Thatcher is just as oppressed as a working-class woman of color. A discursive approach to gender and the body, by contrast, allows us a much more nuanced understanding of how power operates on different bodies in ways that are gendered. What McNay points out, though, is that Foucault never quite went there himself as his interest in issues of gender was limited. Understanding gender through the lens of discourse and discourse through the lens of gender is an area where feminist scholars like Susan Bordo have significantly expanded Foucault's work.

The second issue McNay identifies is one of agency: If we are all discursively constructed subjects, occupying the subject positions allowed us by discourse, how can we meaningfully act in the world? And if power operates on us from all sides, in all directions, and there is no meaningful way to work "outside" of this system, how can we resist it from the inside? Third, and related, Foucault rather shies away from making moral judgments, leaving us without a firm ground for ethical action. How do we make moral choices about which operations of power to resist and how? In response to both these problems, McNay suggests turning to thinkers and activists from marginalized groups to help us find ways of meaningfully and ethically resisting from within. See Lois McNay, *Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*.

22. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000), 69.
23. bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989); bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990).
24. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 18.
25. Cornel West, *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
26. For a fun and accessible introduction to medieval sexuality, I highly recommend Dr. Eleanor Janega's work on Twitter and elsewhere. See, for instance, Eleanor Janega, "Medieval Sexuality," *Medievalists.net*, 2019, <https://www.medievalists.net/2019/05/medieval-sexuality-with-eleanor-janega/>.
27. Paul Routledge, "Sensuous Solidarities: Emotion, Politics and Performance in the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army," *Antipode* 44, no. 2 (2012): 428–452, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00862.x>; Tuuli Lähdesmäki, "Cultural Activism as a Counter-Discourse to the European Capital of Culture Programme: The Case of Turku 2011," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 5 (2013): 598–619, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549413491720>; Deborah Withers and Red Chidgey, "Complicated Inheritance: Sistershow (1973–1974) and the Queering of Feminism," *Women: A Cultural Review* 21, no. 3 (December 2010): 309–322, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574042.2010.513494>; Christian Scholl, "Bakunin's Poor Cousins: Engaging Art for Tactical Interventions," in *Cultural Activism: Practices, Dilemmas, and Possibilities*, ed. Begüm Özden Firat and Aylin Kuryel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 21:157; Michael Buser, Carlo Bonura, Maria Fanin, and Kate Boyer, "Cultural Activism and the Politics of Place-Making," *City* 17, no. 5 (2013): 606–627, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2013.827840>.
28. Michael Buser and Jane Arthurs, "Connected Communities: Cultural Activism in the Community," *Cultural Activism* (2012), 3, <http://www.culturalactivism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/CULTURAL-ACTIVISM-BUSER-Update.3.pdf>.

INTERLUDE

1. For an introduction to fandom's long history with cease and desist letters, see the Fanlore wiki: https://fanlore.org/wiki/Cease_%26_Desist.
2. This is, of course, a highly oversimplified and selective—as well as deliberately polemical—story, and I hope no medievalists come after me for telling it this way. But it is useful for reconsidering some of the things we take for granted about what we consider great art. I am indebted for this account to several posts that used to circulate on fannish Tumblr with some regularity but have since been lost to the mists of time, Tumblr's dreadful search functionality, and the Tumblrpocalypse (Tumblr's ban on adult material in 2017, which caused a significant exodus of users from the platform).
3. For examples of the "fanfiction as text" approach, see Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse (eds.), *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2006), specifically these three chapters: Abigail Derecho, "Archontic Literature:

A Definition, a History, and Several Theories of Fan Fiction,” 61–78; Catherine Driscoll, “One True Pairing: The Romance of Pornography and the Pornography of Romance,” 79–96; and Mafalda Stasi, “The Toy Soldiers from Leeds: The Slash Palimpsest,” 115–133. For examples of the “fanfiction as community practice” approach, see Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Camille Bacon-Smith, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); and Anne Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance Narrative,” *Journal of American Culture* 26, no. 3 (2003): 371–385, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1542-734X.00098>.

4. Derecho, “Archontic Literature.”
5. Of course, Alice Randall’s *The Wind Done Gone* is not so much fanfiction as it is an examination of the originary work’s deep-seated racism. But, in many ways, it works in the same way as fanfiction: it relies on its audience knowing the originary work and reading the two side by side to pick up on the similarities and differences. In the process, readers begin to reevaluate *Gone with the Wind* and start asking uncomfortable questions about it. These questions were so uncomfortable that Margaret Mitchell’s estate tried to stop the publication of *The Wind Done Gone*. The book prominently carries a disclaimer on its cover labeling it a “parody,” giving it protection as a transformative work under US copyright law.

The other works name-checked here are Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones’s Diary* and Seth Grahame-Smith’s *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, but these are only a handful of examples of professionally published “fanfiction.”

6. Derecho, “Archontic Literature;” Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance Narrative.”
7. Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*; Bacon-Smith, *Enterprising Women*; Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance Narrative;” Patricia Frazer Lamb and Diana Veith, “Romantic Myth, Transcendence, and *Star Trek* Zines,” in *Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature*, ed. Donald Palumbo (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 235–256; and Joanna Russ, “Pornography by Women, for Women, with Love,” in *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans & Perverts: Feminist Essays* (Trumansberg, NY: Crossing Press, 1986), 79–99.
8. Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance Narrative;” and Ika Willis, “Keeping Promises to Queer Children: Making Space (for Mary Sue) at Hogwarts,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 153–170.

CHAPTER 3

1. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Camille Bacon-Smith, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); Anne Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance Narrative,” *Journal of American Culture* 26, no. 3 (2003): 371–385, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1542-734X.00098>; Patricia Frazer Lamb and Diana Veith, “Romantic Myth, Transcendence, and *Star Trek* Zines,” in *Erotic Universe: Sexuality and*

- Fantastic Literature*, ed. Donald Palumbo (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 235–256; and Joanna Russ, “Pornography by Women, for Women, with Love,” in *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans & Perverts: Feminist Essays* (Trumansberg, NY: Crossing Press, 1986), 79–99.
2. centrumlumina, “Overall Gender and Sexuality of AO3 Users,” Tumblr, August 12, 2014, <https://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/94562495289/overall-gender-and-sexuality-of-ao3-users-this>; Kristina Busse and Alexis Lothian, “A History of Slash Sexualities: Debating Queer Sex, Gay Politics and Media Fan Cultures,” in *The Routledge Companion to Media, Sex and Sexuality*, ed. Clarissa Smith, Feona Attwood, and Brian McNair (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2018), 117–129.
 3. Kristina Busse, “Pon Farr, Mpreg, Bonds, and the Rise of the Omegaverse,” in *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, ed. Anne Jamison (Dallas, TX: Smart Pop, 2013), 316–322; Mafalda Stasi, “‘You? Omega. Me? Alpha. . . I Can’t Help It. That’s Basic Biology for You’: New Forms of Gender Essentialism in Fan Fiction,” presented at Console-Ing Passions Conference, Leicester, UK, June 23–25, 2013; Jonathan Rose, “Omegaverse, or: What a Kink Trope Tells Us about Sex, Gender and Sexuality,” presented at the 2016 Fan Studies Network Conference, Norwich, UK, June 25–26, 2016; Popova, “Dogfuck Rape-world”; Kelsey Entrikin, “Sex Pollen and the Omegaverse: Dialogues of Consent in Fan Fiction Tropes,” presented at the 2019 Fan Studies Network Conference, Portsmouth, UK, June 28–29, 2019.
 4. netweight, “The Nonnies Made Them Do It!” Archive of Our Own, October 28, 2013, <http://archiveofourown.org/works/1022303>; norabombay, “Alphas, Betas, Omegas: A Primer,” Archive of Our Own, first published May 13, 2012, last updated September 21, 2015, <http://archiveofourown.org/works/403644/>.
 5. norabombay, “Alphas, Betas, Omegas.”
 6. norabombay, “Alphas, Betas, Omegas”; Busse, “Pon Farr, Mpreg, Bonds, and the Rise of the Omegaverse.”
 7. destinationtoast, “It’s Time for Fandom Stats: Omegaverse Edition!” Tumblr, August 26, 2013, <http://destinationtoast.tumblr.com/post/59371807212/its-time-for-fandom-stats-omegaverse-edition-in>.
 8. Stasi, “You? Omega. Me? Alpha.”
 9. Abigail De Kosnik calls this kind of body of fanwork an archive, and suggests that every new work added to such an archive alters our perception of all the other works in it, including the originary work. Mafalda Stasi uses the metaphor of the palimpsest: a manuscript where writing has been layered over previous writing. Both of these are good ways of conceptualizing the ways in which fanfiction readers and writers layer meanings onto each other dynamically, in constant dialogue, constantly changing readings and meanings of earlier materials (including the originary work). See Abigail Derecho, “Archontic Literature: A Definition, a History, and Several Theories of Fan Fiction,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse (Jefferson,

- NC: McFarland & Co, 2006), 61–78; and Mafalda Stasi, “The Toy Soldiers from Leeds: The Slash Palimpsest,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2006), 115–133.
10. norabombay, “Alphas, Betas, and Omegas.”
 11. John H. Gagnon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1973); William Simon and John H. Gagnon, “Sexual Scripts: Permanence and Change,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 15, no. 2 (1986): 97–120, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01542219>.
 12. Gagnon and Simon, *Sexual Conduct*; Dana A. Ménard and Christine Cabrera, “Whatever the Approach, Tab B Still Fits into Slot A’: Twenty Years of Sex Scripts in Romance Novels,” *Sexuality and Culture* 15, no. 3 (2011): 240–255, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-011-9092-3>.
 13. There are a number of studies on the relationship between sexual scripts and popular culture. A helpfully titled paper suggests that “Whatever the approach, Tab B still fits into Slot A” in romance novels, for instance. Men’s and women’s magazines shape how we negotiate consent in intimate situations. Some romance novels also reproduce the “token resistance to sex” rape myth, telling us that a woman putting up some resistance is part of the normal sexual script, and that such resistance can be disregarded. As well as reproducing rape myths and dominant sexual scripts, popular culture can be very cis- and heteronormative, leaving queer people with very limited scripts of their own. (Of course, popular culture is not all bad, and we don’t all read it the same way. But the fact that it is our primary resource for sex education, and that so much of it does reproduce problematic dominant ideas, is an issue.) See Ménard and Cabrera, “Whatever the Approach”; Stacey J. T. Hust et al., “Establishing and Adhering to Sexual Consent: The Association between Reading Magazines and College Students’ Sexual Consent Negotiation,” *Journal of Sex Research* 51, no. 3 (2014): 280–290; Jennifer Power, Ruth McNair, and Susan Carr, “Absent Sexual Scripts: Lesbian and Bisexual Women’s Knowledge, Attitudes and Action Regarding Safer Sex and Sexual Health Information,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 11, no. 1 (2009): 67–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691050802541674>; Nina Philadelphoff-Puren, “Contextualising Consent: The Problem of Rape and Romance,” *Australian Feminist Studies* 20, no. 46 (2005): 31–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0816464042000334519>; and Milena Popova, *Sexual Consent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
 14. Wendy Hollway, *Subjectivity and Method in Psychology* (London: Sage, 1989).
 15. N. Tatiana Masters, Erin Casey, Elizabeth A. Wells, and Diane M. Morrison, “Sexual Scripts among Young Heterosexually Active Men and Women: Continuity and Change,” *Journal of Sex Research* 50, no. 5 (2013): 409–420, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.661102>.
 16. Hollway, *Subjectivity*; Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (Hove: Routledge, 2005); Kristen N. Jozkowski and Zoë D. Peterson, “College Students and Sexual Consent: Unique Insights,” *Journal of Sex Research* 50, no. 6 (2013): 517–523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.661102>.

- doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.700739; Lois Pineau, "Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis," *Law and Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1989): 217–243, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00160012>; and Michelle J. Anderson, "Negotiating Sex," *Southern California Law Review* 41 (2005): 1401–1438.
17. Milena Popova, "Follow the Trope: A Digital (Auto)ethnography for Fan Studies," in "Fan Studies Methodologies," ed. Julia E. Largent, Milena Popova, and Elise Vist, special issue, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, no. 33 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2020.1697>.
 18. Stasi, "You? Omega. Me? Alpha."
 19. netweight, "Nonnies."
 20. netweight, "Nonnies."
 21. Fan studies citation practices are a complex issue, and I have discussed them elsewhere. I am treating the fanfiction stories I have analyzed in this book as data and therefore following fan studies best practices for the protection of fan sources by not linking directly to the stories. You may have noticed that I have linked directly to other fanworks published on AO3 and Tumblr, such as fan histories, primers, and statistics. I do this in an effort to recognize these works as the outputs of fan knowledge production, which is different from, though just as legitimate as, academic knowledge production. For more on the complexities of fan studies citation practices, see Milena Popova, "Fan Studies, Citation Practices, and Fannish Knowledge Production," in "Fan Studies Methodologies," ed. Julia E. Largent, Milena Popova, and Elise Vist, special issue, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, no. 33 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2020.1861>.
 22. Stuart Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-structuralist Debate," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 2, no. 2 (1985): 91–114.
 23. See Selma James, "I Founded the Wages for Housework Campaign in 1972—and Women Are Still Working for Free," *Independent*, March 8, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/international-womens-day-wages-housework-care-selma-james-a9385351.html>.
 24. Hollway, *Subjectivity*.
 25. Susan Ehrlich, *Representing Rape: Language and Sexual Consent* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Jennifer Temkin, Jacqueline M. Gray, and Jastine Barrett, "Different Functions of Rape Myth Use in Court: Findings from a Trial Observation Study," *Feminist Criminology* 13, no. 2 (2018): 205–226.
 26. Anderson, *Negotiating Sex*.
 27. Masters et al., "Sexual Scripts among Young Heterosexually Active Men and Women."
 28. Lynne Segal, *Straight Sex: Rethinking the Politics of Pleasure* (London: Virago, 1994); Catherine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
 29. Porn studies scholar Susanna Paasonen tells us that when it comes to pornography, the relationship between meaning and our physical response is complex: "In pornography, bodies

move and move the bodies of the people watching [or, in our case, reading]. This motion involves a complex nexus of flesh, genre conventions, technologies and values—actors that are both material and immaterial, human and nonhuman—in and through which particular images and texts become experienced as pornographic.” See Susanna Paasonen, “Disturbing, Fleishy Texts: Close Looking at Pornography,” in *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences*, ed. Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (London: Routledge, 2010), 58–71, 66.

CHAPTER 4

1. There are non-Western genres, such as Bollywood films, that make extensive use of the arranged marriage trope. However, arranged-marriage fanfiction is rooted predominantly in Western romance novels, which is why my intertextual analysis focuses on these.
2. This number may seem low, particularly in comparison to the Omegaverse, but the arranged marriage trope is considerably older than AO3, and many works using it may be hosted on other archives or on writers’ own pages.
3. Catherine Roach, “Getting a Good Man to Love: Popular Romance Fiction and the Problem of Patriarchy,” *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 1–15; Catherine M. Roach, *Happily Ever After. The Romance Story in Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016).
4. Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
5. Pamela Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).
6. Roach, *Happily Ever After*, 23.
7. Arlie Russell Hochschild, “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure,” *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 3 (1979): 551–575, <https://doi.org/10.1086/227049>.
8. Emotion work and emotional labor are also unevenly distributed when it comes to race, class, and some other axes of marginalization; for instance, Black people are expected to manage the feelings of White people (or White fragility) in most contexts. Oppression and marginalization can operate through such uneven distribution of emotion work and emotional labor. As with any other operation of oppression, intersectional effects also apply: Black women’s experiences of emotion work are different to both those of Black men and of White women. For more on White fragility, see Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).
9. Hochschild, “Emotion Work”; Rebecca J. Erickson, “Reconceptualizing Family Work: The Effect of Emotion Work on Perceptions of Marital Quality,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 55, no. 4 (1993): 888–900, <https://doi.org/10.2307/352770>; Debra Umberson, Mieke Beth Thomeer, and Amy C. Lodge, “Intimacy and Emotion Work in Lesbian, Gay, and

- Heterosexual Relationships,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, no. 2 (2015): 542–556, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12178>.
10. Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*, 135.
 11. Rebecca J. Erickson, “Why Emotion Work Matters: Sex, Gender, and the Division of Household Labor,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67, no. 2 (2005): 337–351, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2005.00120.x>; Umberson et al., “Intimacy and Emotion Work.”
 12. Umberson et al., “Intimacy and Emotion Work.” Interestingly, there is little research into men who experience less desire than their partners. One of the reasons for this is likely to be the dominance of the male sexual drive discourse: we are so steeped in it that it doesn’t occur to us that men might actually experience less desire than their partners or that this might be worth researching.
 13. For those who have somehow managed to avoid the Marvel Cinematic Universe over the last fifteen years, the Marvel character Thor is loosely based on Norse mythology. He is a member of the Aesir, an extremely long-lived and godlike (albeit human in appearance) people who inhabit a world called Asgard. Asgard’s historical enemies in the MCU canon are the Frost Giants, or Jötunar (singular: Jötun): large, blue-skinned humanoids who inhabit the ice world Jötunheim.
 14. Monika Drzewiecka, “Queering the Marvel Universe: Feminism, Homoeroticism and Gender Issues in Loki-Centric Slash Fanfiction,” PhD diss., University of Gdańsk, 2015.
 15. Josephine Donovan, *Feminist Theory. The Intellectual Traditions* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012); Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law* (London: Routledge, 1989).
 16. Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (Hove: Routledge, 2005).
 17. It is worth noting that these are only partial and not intersectional critiques of the institutions of marriage and, more broadly, family. Black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins draw our attention to the fact that these institutions also reproduce and legitimize racial and other inequalities—for instance, through the construction of the “ideal” marriage and family as heterosexual, not interracial, and restricting wives to the private sphere. Collins points out that this constructed separation between the public world of work that men take part in and the private family world that is seen as the domain of women does not describe the reality of Black families in the United States—or, in particular, the reality of Black women, who have historically participated in the public world of work while their private family world has been invaded by state institutions. This in turn is used to further justify racial oppression by constructing both Black women as unfeminine and Black men as hypermasculine. The view of marriage and family presented in arranged-marriage fanfiction stories does not account for this. Instead, the marriages depicted here are a combination of two Eurocentric constructions of the institution of marriage. On the one hand, there is the ideal, private marriage and family described by Collins. On the other, given

that the arranged-marriage fanfiction trope is rooted primarily in Regency-era marriage-of-convenience romance novels, these are also dynastic marriages, joining two powerful families for political and economic reasons. Both of these, however, exhibit a significant, gendered power imbalance between the partners, and it is the impact of this power imbalance on the protagonists' ability to meaningfully consent (or otherwise) to sex that is at the core of my interest in the trope. It is, however, important to acknowledge that there have been substantial critiques of fanfiction's focus on Whiteness as well as Whiteness as a structuring factor in fandom. I will return to questions of race and how they impact the work fandom does on consent in chapter 8. See also Rukmini Pande, *Squee from the Margins: Fandom and Race* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018).

18. Frazer Lamb and Diana Veith, "Romantic Myth, Transcendence, and *Star Trek* Zines," in *Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature*, ed. Donald Palumbo (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 235–256; and Joanna Russ, "Pornography by Women, for Women, with Love," in *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans & Perverts: Feminist Essays* (Trumansberg, NY: Crossing Press, 1986), 79–99; Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Anne Kustritz, "Slashing the Romance Narrative," *Journal of American Culture* 26, no. 3 (2003): 371–385, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1542-734X.00098>.
19. Lamb and Veith, "Romantic Myth."
20. Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 134.
21. Representing Loki as intersex is a common feature in a significant number of fanfiction stories centered on him. Specifically, Loki is frequently represented as having both a penis and a vagina. This is an unrealistic representation of intersex bodies; having two complete sets of genitals is extremely rare, while a variety of other less visible intersex traits are much more common. Whether Loki's intersex body is common in Jötun society, or he is part of a minority or even unique varies from story to story. Even in stories where Loki's intersex traits are not the norm for Jötunar, he is almost never depicted as experiencing discrimination as a result. Intersex activists have highlighted a range of issues of poor representation of intersex people in popular culture, resulting in stigmatization and invisibilization. Loki's representation as intersex in fanfiction likely has its roots in the Loki of Norse mythology, where he is represented as a shapeshifter and his gender is considerably more ambiguous than in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. See April Herndon, "'House' Gets It Wrong," *Intersex Society of North America*, 2006, <http://www.isna.org/node/1008>; and Drzewiecka, "Queering the Marvel Universe."
22. Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 139.
23. Umberson et al., "Intimacy and Emotion Work."

CHAPTER 5

1. The Chicago Blackhawks' team name and mascot are not quite as egregiously racist as those the Washington Football Team abandoned in 2020. But they are nonetheless harmful caricatures of Native American history and people.
2. The structure of the NHL is designed to stop one team from dominating the league by placing a cap on how much teams can spend on players and ensuring the best young players go to struggling teams. This structure is also reflected in Hockey RPF stories, and accounts to some extent for the popularity of the Crosby/Malkin and Kane/Toews pairings. All four of these players were highly talented individuals drafted by struggling teams who went on to lead their teams to success. The Pittsburgh Penguins won the Stanley Cup three years after Crosby was drafted, and the Blackhawks won their first Cup in forty-six years just three years after drafting Patrick Kane. These players are commonly referred to as the faces of their respective franchises, and their high media exposure contributes as much as their athletic skill to their popularity with RPF fans.
3. For more on how sports RPF works and why it is an attractive place for fanfiction readers and writers, see Abby Waysdorf, "My Football Fandoms, Performance, and Place," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 18 (2015); Abby Waysdorf, "The Creation of Football Slash Fan Fiction," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 19 (2015); and Elise Vist, "Longing for Queerness in the NHL: Intimate Fandoms and Hockey Real Person Fanfiction," PhD diss., University of Waterloo, forthcoming.
4. Jack Dickey, "Reconstructing Patrick Kane's Drunken Weekend in Madison, with Eyewitness Testimony," *Deadspin*, May 10, 2012, <https://deadspin.com/5909246/reconstructing-patrick-kanes-drunken-weekend-in-madison>.
5. Lou Michel and Robert J. McCarthy, "NHL Star Patrick Kane Is Subject of Police Probe, Sources Say," *Buffalo News*, August 6, 2015, <http://buffalonews.com/2015/08/06/nhl-star-patrick-kane-is-subject-of-police-probe-sources-say/>.
6. See, for instance, Bethan Jones, "'My music was on shuffle, one of their songs came on and I had to hit next . . .': Navigating Grief and Disgust in Lostprophets Fandom," presented at Popular Music Fandom and the Public Sphere, University of Chester, Chester, UK, April 10, 2015; Jasmine Proctor and Tvine Donabedian, "'Oppa Didn't Mean It': Shared Identity and the Exploitation of Emotional Labour in K-pop Fandom," presented at the 2019 Fan Studies Network Conference, Portsmouth, UK, June 28–29, 2019.
7. Rob Elgas, "Patrick Kane Will Attend Training Camp, Speaks at News Conference," ABC 7 Chicago, September 17, 2015, <http://abc7chicago.com/sports/patrick-kane-will-attend-training-camp-speaks-at-news-conference/987150/>.
8. Adam Gretz, "Patrick Kane Will Not Face Charges Following Rape Investigation," CBS Sports, November 5, 2015, <http://www.cbssports.com/nhl/news/patrick-kane-will-not-face-charges-following-rape-investigation/>.

9. NHL.com, "Blackhawks' Kane Can Set American Point-Streak Mark," November 28, 2015, <https://www.nhl.com/news/blackhawks-kane-can-set-american-point-streak-mark/c-789951>.
10. Richard Dyer, "Stars as Images," in *The Celebrity Culture Reader*, ed. P. David Mashall, 153–177 (New York: Routledge, 2006).
11. Ross Hagen, "'Bandom Ate My Face': The Collapse of the Fourth Wall in Online Fan Fiction," *Popular Music and Society* 38, no. 1 (2015): 44–58.
12. Kristina Busse, "'I'm Jealous of the Fake Me': Postmodern Subjectivity and Identity Construction in Boy Band Fan Fiction," in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. Su Holmes and Sean Redmond, 253–268 (London: Routledge, 2006), 260. See also Kristina Busse, "My Life Is a WIP on My LJ: Slashing the Slasher and the Reality of Celebrity and Internet Performances," In *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, 207–224 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2006).
13. It is worth noting here that this relationship to the material is very different to the one that audiences have with commercial biopics. For the vast majority of the audience, a biopic such as *The Social Network* or *Bohemian Rhapsody* will be the only time they engage with a fictionalized representation of a celebrity's private life. Implicitly, then, biopics both make and are perceived as making a much stronger truth claim: in the eyes of the audience they tell the one true story. RPF readers and writers, on the other hand, are much more aware that they will never have access to the one true story, and are quite content with creating as many untrue but fun stories as possible. See Melanie Piper, "Real Body, Fake Person: Recontextualizing Celebrity Bodies in Fandom and Film," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 20 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2015.0664>.
14. See Popova, "'When the RP Gets in the Way of the F.'"
15. For more detail on what rape culture entails, see Milena Popova, "Introduction," chap. 1 in *Sexual Consent*, 1–12 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
16. Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law* (London: Routledge, 1989).
17. Carol Smart, "Feminism and Law: Some Problems of Analysis and Strategy," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 14, no. 2 (1986): 109–123.
18. Sameena Mulla, *The Violence of Care: Rape Victims, Forensic Nurses, and Sexual Assault Intervention* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).
19. Irina Anderson and Kathy Doherty, *Accounting for Rape: Psychology, Feminism and Discourse Analysis in the Study of Sexual Violence* (London: Routledge, 2007).
20. Sarah Deer, "Decolonizing Rape Law: A Native Feminist Synthesis of Safety and Sovereignty," *Wicazo Ša Review* 242, no. 2 (2009): 149–167, <https://doi.org/10.1353/wic.0.0037>; Mulla, *The Violence of Care*; Popova, *Sexual Consent*.

21. Jennifer Temkin, Jacqueline M. Gray, and Jastine Barrett, "Different Functions of Rape Myth Use in Court: Findings from a Trial Observation Study," *Feminist Criminology* 13, no. 2 (2018): 205–226.
22. As my fannish home at the time, Hockey RPF was never meant to be part of my research. But sometimes life gives you lemons, and then you have to make lemonade. I have used "we" for all of the shenanigans the Hockey RPF community engaged in before the rape allegations because I was part of that community. But when I decided to make this a part of my research, I had to take my fannish hat off. I had to remove myself from the community, to stop posting and engaging with the discussion, and observe from the sidelines instead. So, for the rest of this chapter, "we" becomes "they."
23. Sue Lees, "Judicial Rape," *Women's Studies International Forum* 16, no. 1 (1993): 11–36, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(93\)90077-M](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(93)90077-M), 11.
24. There is recent evidence, for instance, that rape myths continue to be widely leveraged by defense lawyers in courtrooms. Anecdotal, too, there have been a number of high-profile cases in which the complainant's sexual history has been permitted to be considered by the jury (such as the acquittal on retrial of Welsh football player Ched Evans), or the complainant has had to endure the ordeal of days-long cross-examination (such as the infamous Northern Irish rugby case). See Olivia Smith and Tina Skinner, "How Rape Myths Are Used and Challenged in Rape and Sexual Assault Trials," *Social and Legal Studies* 26, no. 4 (2017); Steven Morris and Alexandra Topping, "Ched Evans: Footballer found not guilty of rape in retrial," *Guardian*, October 14, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/oct/14/footballer-ched-evans-cleared-of-in-retrial>; Susan McKay, "How the 'Rugby Rape Trial' Divided Ireland," *Guardian*, December 4, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/dec/04/rugby-rape-trial-ireland-belfast-case>.
25. Susan Estrich, "Rape," *Yale Law Journal* 95 (1986): 1087–1184; Susan Ehrlich, *Representing Rape: Language and Sexual Consent* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Mulla, *The Violence of Care*; Lees, "Judicial Rape."
26. Phil Rogers, "New York District Attorney Questioned about Patrick Kane Case," NBC Chicago, August 12, 2015, <http://www.nbcchicago.com/blogs/madhouse-enforcer/District-Attorney-in-Patrick-Kane-Case-Makes-First-Public-Comments-321615842.html>.
27. Sports Mockery, "Full Frank Sedita Interview about Patrick Kane Investigation," November 5, 2015, <http://sportsmockery.com/2015/11/full-frank-sedita-interview-about-patrick-kane-investigation/>.
28. Jared S. Hopkins and Stacy St. Clair, "DA in Patrick Kane Inquiry Is Tough on Sex Crimes, Cautious on Big Cases," *Chicago Tribune*, August 20, 2015, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-patrick-kane-prosecutor-20150819-story.html>.
29. Rogers, "New York District Attorney Questioned."
30. Hopkins and St. Clair, "DA in Patrick Kane Inquiry"; Ballotpedia, "New York Judicial Elections, 2015," 2015, https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_judicial_elections,_2015.

31. See, for instance, Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*; Nicola Lacey, *Unspeakable Subjects: Feminist Essay in Legal and Social Theory* (Oxford, UK: Hart, 1998); Lynn Jamieson, "The Social Construction of Consent Revisited," In *Sexualizing the Social: Power and the Organization of Sexuality*, ed. Lisa Adkins and Vicki Merchant, 55–73 (London: Macmillan, 1996).
32. Busse, "Jealous of the Fake Me"; Busse, "My Life Is a WIP"
33. Popova, "When the RP Gets in the Way of the F."
34. Christian Scholl, "Bakunin's Poor Cousins: Engaging Art for Tactical Interventions," in *Cultural Activism: Practices, Dilemmas, and Possibilities*, ed. Begüm Özden Firat and Aylin Kuryel, 21:157–178 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011).
35. One source of inaccuracy in this data is the fact that a number of works were removed from the archive following the rape allegations. Because there is no way to see what was removed or when these works were originally posted, it is impossible to correct for this. Therefore, the posting rate and number of active authors in the pre-allegations period is likely to be underestimated in this data set.
36. I have talked elsewhere about why the original community's "scorched earth" strategy of trying to discourage new fans failed. A lot of it is to do with the technical features of Tumblr, and how anyone joining the fandom after the dust had settled would have struggled to find the rich and detailed discussion of the issues that the original community produced. See Popova, "Tumblr Time."

CHAPTER 6

1. Michele Burman and Oona Brooks-Hay, "Victims Are More Willing to Report Rape, So Why Are Conviction Rates Still Woeful?," *The Conversation*, March 8, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/victims-are-more-willing-to-report-rape-so-why-are-conviction-rates-still-woeful-92968>.
2. Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law* (London: Routledge, 1989).
3. Susan Estrich, "Rape," *Yale Law Journal* 95 (1986): 1087–1184; Susan Ehrlich, *Representing Rape: Language and Sexual Consent* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*; Sue Lees, "Judicial Rape," *Women's Studies International Forum* 16, no. 1 (1993): 11–36, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(93\)90077-M](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(93)90077-M); Nicola Lacey, *Unspeakable Subjects: Feminist Essay in Legal and Social Theory* (Oxford, UK: Hart, 1998); Lynn Jamieson, "The Social Construction of Consent Revisited," In *Sexualizing the Social: Power and the Organization of Sexuality*, ed. Lisa Adkins and Vicki Merchant, 55–73 (London: Macmillan, 1996).
4. John H. Gagnon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1973).

5. Laina Y. Bay-Cheng and Rebecca K. Eliseo-Arras, "The Making of Unwanted Sex: Gendered and Neoliberal Norms in College Women's Unwanted Sexual Experiences," *Journal of Sex Research* 45, no. 4 (2008): 386–397, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490802398381>.
6. Debra Umberson, Mieke Beth Thomeer, and Amy C. Lodge, "Intimacy and Emotion Work in Lesbian, Gay, and Heterosexual Relationships," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, no. 2 (2015): 542–556, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12178>.
7. Wendy Hollway, *Subjectivity and Method in Psychology* (London: Sage, 1989).
8. Emily J. Thomas, Monika Stelzl, and Michelle N. LaFrance, "Faking to Finish: Women's Accounts of Feigning Sexual Pleasure to End Unwanted Sex," *Sexualities* 20, no. 3 (2017): 281–301; Melanie Beres, "What Does Faking Orgasms Have to Do with Sexual Consent?" *Sexualities* 21, no. 4 (2018): 702–705, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460717708151>.
9. José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).
10. Jamieson, "The Social Construction of Consent Revisited," 62.
11. Nicola Gavey, *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (Hove: Routledge, 2005).
12. Linda Martín Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).
13. Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*.
14. Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance*, 7.
15. Alcoff, 13.
16. Esther Addley, "Q&A: Julian Assange Allegations," *Guardian*, December 17, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/dec/17/julian-assange-q-and-a>.
17. rockstardinosaurpirateprincess, "Consent: Not Actually That Complicated," March 2, 2015, <http://rockstardinosaurpirateprincess.com/2015/03/02/consent-not-actually-that-complicated/> (link no longer available). A breakdown of the contents of this post can be viewed here: Ellen Stewart, "This Tea Making Metaphor Explains Consent in the Most Matter of Fact Way," *Metro.co.uk*, March 14, 2015, <https://metro.co.uk/2015/03/14/this-tea-making-metaphor-explains-consent-in-the-most-matter-of-fact-way-5103657>.
18. Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 99 (emphasis in original).
19. Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*.
20. Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance*, 64.
21. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000); bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989) .
22. Nine Worlds is a fan convention that takes place annually in London. Since its inception in 2013, Nine Worlds has billed itself as "an unconventional convention" (Nine Worlds 2013) and has emphasized values such as diversity, inclusion, intersectionality, and accessibility,

as becomes clear from the event's original funding bid on the crowdfunding website Kick-starter:

So is this just for middle-aged straight white men who work in IT?

Nope. It's for everyone. We're putting lots of tracks in there, and we've chosen the mix to make sure there are plenty of options whoever you are and whatever your interests. We're founded on the radical belief that geekdom should not be restricted by class, age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability, or the ability to cite Wookieepedia in arguments.

To counter the barriers that can arise in tech, gaming or other types of cons, we're operating a strong anti-harassment policy. We're actively reaching out to diverse communities. And we're making sure our guests and volunteers represent the diversity we'd like to see in our attendees.

So is this just for middle-aged straight white women who work in IT?

Nope. See above.

The convention features a range of diverse program tracks on the intersections of culture and race, gender, sexuality, and disability. It also features a dedicated track on fanfiction. This and the next chapter are largely based on eight interviews I conducted with readers and writers of fanfiction at Nine Worlds 2016. I collected limited demographic data on interviewees for privacy reasons, but it is worth noting that all interviewees were White.

23. Celia Kitzinger and Hannah Frith, "Just Say No? The Use of Conversation Analysis in Developing a Feminist Perspective on Sexual Refusal," *Discourse & Society* 10, no. 3 (1999): 293–316.
24. For an extensive discussion of the backlash against the #MeToo movement, see Milena Popova, *Sexual Consent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
25. Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance*.
26. Jamieson, "The Social Construction of Consent Revisited," 58 (emphasis mine).
27. Gavey, *Just Sex*.
28. Cornel West, *Keeping Faith: Philosophy and Race in America* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
29. Lees, "Judicial Rape," 125.
30. Smart, *Feminism and the Power of Law*; Gavey, *Just Sex*.
31. Lees, "Judicial Rape"; Jamieson, "The Social Construction of Consent Revisited"; Ehrlich, *Representing Rape*; Jennifer Temkin, Jacqueline M. Gray, and Jastine Barrett, "Different Functions of Rape Myth Use in Court: Findings from a Trial Observation Study," *Feminist Criminology* 13, no. 2 (2018): 205–226.
32. Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*.
33. Lol Burke, "The Right to Rehabilitation after Punishment?" *Probation Journal* 62, no. 1 (2015): 3–6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550515573103>.

34. Ehrlich, *Representing Rape*.
35. For a more extensive discussion of transformative justice approaches to sexual violence, see Popova, *Sexual Consent*.
36. Michael Buser and Jane Arthurs, "Connected Communities: Cultural Activism in the Community," *Cultural Activism* (2012), 3, <http://www.culturalactivism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/CULTURAL-ACTIVISM-BUSER-Update.3.pdf>.
37. Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance*.
38. Jamieson, "The Cultural Construction of Consent Revisited," 70.

CHAPTER 7

1. Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 23.
2. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text: Essays Selected and Translated by Stephen Heath*, 142–148 (London: Fontana, 1977).
3. Trust me on this one. I once wrangled an AO3 tag for the sexual or romantic relationship between Dobby the house elf and Neo from *The Matrix*. But also I feel the need to draw the reader's attention to Chuck Tingle's Harry Potter fanfiction novel, for no particular reason. See Chuck Tingle, *Trans Wizard Harriet Porber and the Bad Boy Parasaurolophus* (independently published, 2020).
4. Alexandra Herzog, "‘But This Is My Story and This Is How I Wanted to Write It’: Author's Notes as a Fannish Claim to Power in Fan Fiction Writing," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 11 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2012.0406>.
5. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2.
6. For a discussion of author's notes, see Herzog, "But This Is My Story." For a history and discussion of disclaimers, fanfiction, and copyright law, see Rebecca Tushnet, "Copyright Law, Fan Practices, and the Rights of the Author," *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* 86 (2007): 60–71.
7. Michael Buser and Jane Arthurs, "Connected Communities: Cultural Activism in the Community," *Cultural Activism* (2012), 3, <http://www.culturalactivism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/CULTURAL-ACTIVISM-BUSER-Update.3.pdf>.
8. The media landscape is changing, and in many cases my interview participants talked about the media they had grown up with. Nonetheless, even in contemporary media, consent is handled badly more often than it is handled well.
9. Suzanne Black, "What's in a Name? Understanding Fanfiction Titles in Context," presented at the 2019 Fan Studies Network Conference, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, UK, June 28–29, 2019.

10. Genette, *Paratexts*, 197 (emphasis in original). Incidentally, Genette has some rather snarky and amusing things to say about Barthes and the idea of the death of the author, if subtle snark between French literary theorists is your thing.
11. Genette, 224.
12. Ali Vingiano, “How the ‘Trigger Warning’ Took Over the Internet,” *BuzzFeed News*, May 5, 2014, <http://www.buzzfeed.com/alisonvingiano/how-the-trigger-warning-took-over-the-internet>.
13. Sexual and intimate partner violence statistics vary significantly by jurisdiction and reporting methodology. The UK Office for National Statistics estimates that 26 percent of women have experienced domestic abuse, a category which includes sexual violence by an intimate partner. The Ministry of Justice, Home Office, and Office for National Statistics estimate that 5 percent of women have experienced rape, and 20 percent of women have experienced some form of sexual violence. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 18.3 percent of women have experienced rape. All of these reports agree that women experience sexual violence at significantly higher rates than men. Office for National Statistics, “Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault and Stalking,” last updated February 9, 2017, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2016/domesticabusesexualassaultandstalking>; Ministry of Justice, Home Office, and Office for National Statistics, “An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales,” January 10, 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/an-overview-of-sexual-offending-in-england-and-wales/>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Sexual Violence,” last updated August 8, 2018, <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention>.
14. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (London: Routledge, 2000).
15. José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).
16. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: Pluto Press, 1984), 24–25.

CHAPTER 8

1. To be clear, this is a rhetorical question. Shortly after I completed my previous book, *Sexual Consent*, the United States put Brett Kavanaugh on its Supreme Court despite the fact that there are multiple credible allegations of sexual assault against him. It was a slap in the face for the #MeToo movement, and for any survivor of sexual violence who has ever spoken out. We are not done; we have barely even started.
2. Stephen Duncombe, “A Politics That Doesn’t Look Like Politics,” *Cultural Resistance Reader* (New York: Verso, 2002), 113.
3. Rebecca Tushnet, “Copyright Law, Fan Practices, and the Rights of the Author,” *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* 86 (2007): 60–71.

4. Fanlore Wiki, “Strikethrough and Boldthrough,” last updated May 11, 2020, <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Strikethrough>.
5. astolat, “An Archive Of One’s Own,” LiveJournal blog, May 17, 2007, <http://astolat.livejournal.com/150556.html>.
6. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 138.
7. Sarah Elizabeth Lerner, “Fan Film on the Final Frontier: Axanar Productions and the Limits of Fair Use in the Digital Age,” *Transformative Works and Cultures* 28 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2018.1429>.
8. Milena Popova, *Sexual Consent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
9. There is a certain irony in describing the juggernaut that is *Supernatural* fandom as marginalized. At the time of writing, it is the third-largest fandom on AO3, eclipsed only by Marvel and Harry Potter, and boasts nearly 230,000 fanworks. It is important to remember, however, that both the show and the fandom have evolved over time. In the show’s early days, before the introduction of Castiel, slash fans had to pick their moral high ground between incest and RPF: their options were essentially limited to canon fic depicting an incestuous relationship between Sam and Dean Winchester, or RPF about Jensen Ackles and Jared Padalecki. This did not make the show or fandom any less popular, but it did mean that *Supernatural* fans were frowned upon by other parts of fanfiction fandom. To avoid such scrutiny, they organized differently than many other popular fandoms, in that they made extensive use of anonymous spaces such as LiveJournal kinkmemes. See also netweight, “The Nonnies Made Them Do It!” Archive of Our Own, October 28, 2013, <http://archiveofourown.org/works/1022303>.
10. Eve Ng, “Between Text, Paratext, and Context: Queerbaiting and the Contemporary Media Landscape,” *Transformative Works and Cultures* 24 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2017.0917>.
11. TV Tropes, “Bury Your Gays,” <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/BuryYourGays>.
12. For a patchy but nonetheless interesting range of case studies of queerbaiting in media, see Joseph Brennan (ed.), *Queerbaiting and Fandom: Teasing Fans through Homoerotic Possibilities* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2019).
13. Again, for no particular reason, I feel the need to draw the reader’s attention to two recent-ish TV shows: *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* and *Steven Universe*. Bring chocolate and tissues.
14. Alex Naylor, “‘My Skin Has Turned to Porcelain, to Ivory, to Steel’: Feminist Fan Discourses, *Game of Thrones*, and the Problem of Sansa,” in *The Woman Fantastic in Contemporary American Media Culture*, ed. E. R. Helford, S. Carroll, S. Gray, and M. R. Howard, 39–60 (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016).

15. Dean Barnes Leetal, "Those Crazy Fangirls on the Internet: Activism of Care, Disability and Fan Fiction," *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies* 8, no. 2 (2019): 46–73.
16. Elise Vist, "Longing for Queerness in the NHL: Intimate Fandoms and Hockey Real Person Fanfiction," PhD diss., University of Waterloo, forthcoming.
17. Camille Bacon-Smith, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).
18. centrumlumina, "Ethnicity," Tumblr, October 2, 2013, <https://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62895154828/ethnicity>; centrumlumina, "Limitations and Uses of the Data," Tumblr, September 30, 2013, <http://centrumlumina.tumblr.com/post/62748999135/limitations-and-uses-of-the-data>.
19. Rukmini Pande, *Squee from the Margins: Fandom and Race* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018).
20. The term "Magical Negro" was popularized by Black director Spike Lee. For examples, see TV Tropes, "Magical Negro," [https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Magical Negro](https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/MagicalNegro).
21. Zina Hutton, "Stitch Talks About Trauma—Whose Trauma Matters," Patreon (subscriber post), <https://www.patreon.com/posts/stitch-talks-24812771>.
22. Elizabeth Woledge, "Intimatopia: Genre Intersections Between Slash and the Mainstream," in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, 97–114 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2006).
23. Barbara Wenk, *One Way Mirror* (Poison Pen Press, 1980).
24. Vist, "Longing for Queerness."

