

The Affective Power of Intimacy: A Case Study of a Men's Hockey Real Person Fan  
Fiction's Literary and Social Contexts

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## ABSTRACT

The Affective Power of Intimacy:  
A Case Study of a Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction's Literary and Social Contexts

Lina Vermeer

This case study's fan fiction and its subsequent non-RPF romance novel version reveal a complex blend of the fan fiction, romance novel, intimatopia, pornography, slash fan fiction, Real Person Fan Fiction, and Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction genres and subgenres. Intimatopia's ideological framework provides a specific method for the romance novel's reordering of self and society, as well as a description of the resulting ordered society and self. As analysis of the reader comments left on the Archive of Our Own fan fiction reveals, intimacy is also critical to the fan fiction's community, because the reader is driven to comment by the text's affective power. The relationship between the reader and the text is primary for the reader, whereas the author's primary aim is to seek an intimate relationship with their readers. There is a conceptual link between the literary and social contexts through their privileging of intimacy as a mode of interaction for the texts's characters, readers, and authors.

Keywords: fan fiction; Archive of Our Own; Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction; romance novel; intimatopia; affective power; intimacy; community; reader-author relationship; reader-text relationship; genre analysis; close reading; beta reader; "filing off the serial numbers"/"pulling to publish"; comment analysis

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents — I have finally reached the top of the stairs

To S.C., without whom this would not exist

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks for this project are owed to many people, particularly the following: Those who read the fan fiction that started it all, and those who left comments. The impact you had on me as a person is here in these pages and in the intangibles I carry with me. While words are never enough, I hope that the words in this thesis are a start.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affect (affective power): In terms of affect theory, affect is the “...visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing...”<sup>1</sup> that act upon a body (literal or metaphorical) and can cause a body to act.<sup>2</sup>

Archive of Our Own (AO3): A popular fan fiction archive website, colloquially known as AO3.

Archontic: An adjective used by Abigail Derecho to describe fan fiction; an archontic text is one that has a deliberate, self-aware, and explicitly stated intertextuality.<sup>3</sup>

Beta reader: A term used in fan fiction communities to refer to a trusted person chosen by a fic author to read, critique, and sometimes revise their fic before it is published; a beta reader can critique and revise many different aspects of a fic.<sup>4</sup>

Canadian hockey literature: Literature that centers Canadian hockey content; as an academic genre, this only includes traditionally published mainstream texts.

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<sup>1</sup> Seigworth, Gregory J. and Melissa Gregg, “An Inventory of Shimmers.” Introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, Duke University, 2010, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Seigworth and Gregg, “Inventory,” 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Derecho, Abigail, “Archontic Literature: A Definition, a History, and Several Theories of Fan Fiction,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 63-66.

<sup>4</sup> Busse, Kristina and Karen Hellekson, “Work In Progress,” introduction to *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 6.

Canon: Facts and information about a story, its world, and its characters that is included in the original source material; what is canon is often hotly debated and is hard to determine.<sup>5</sup>

Fan fiction (*fanfic*, *fan fic*, **fic**): A fictional text that “rewrites and transforms”<sup>6</sup> material that is usually copyrighted by others; fan fiction is written and published or distributed “outside of the literary marketplace...within and to the standards of a particular fannish community.”<sup>7</sup> Colloquially, fan fiction is known as fanfic, fan fic, and fic. The term fic will be used frequently in this thesis to refer to fan fiction.

Fanon: Facts and information about the original source material created, circulated, and pervasively used within the fandom community; fanon can conform, conflict, and/or contradict canon.<sup>8</sup>

Intimatopia: A term coined by Elizabeth Woledge; her term identifies a genre of texts that centers and prioritizes a relationship between characters that is intimate, exclusive, and reciprocal, and also blends love, friendship, and intimacy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Busse and Hellekson, “Work In Progress,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> Coppa, Francesca, “Five Things That Fanfiction Is, and One Thing It Isn’t,” introduction to *The Fanfiction Reader: Folk Tales for the Digital Age*, edited by Francesca Coppa, Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 2017, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Coppa, “Five Things,” 3, 6-7.

<sup>8</sup> Busse and Hellekson, “Work In Progress,” 9.

<sup>9</sup> Woledge, Elizabeth, “Intimacy between men in modern women’s writing,” PhD dissertation, University of Liverpool, 2005, 103, 124.

Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction (*Men's Hockey RPF*): A subgenre of Real Person Fan Fiction that rewrites and transforms the public material about real professional hockey players, primarily those in the National Hockey League (NHL).

Pornography (*smut, porntopia, erotica*): As defined by Catherine Driscoll, pornography is explicit sexual content "...consumed for the explicit purpose of arousal..."<sup>10</sup>

Real Person Fan Fiction (*RPF*): A subgenre of fan fiction that is about the personae of public figures, living or dead.<sup>11</sup>

Romance novel: As defined by Pamela Regis, the romance novel is "a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines"<sup>12</sup> that contains the following eight narrative elements: 1) The Initial Society in which the characters must court; 2) The Meeting between the courting characters; 3) The Barrier(s) impeding their relationship, internal and/or external; 4) The Attraction(s) which make the characters want to be in a relationship; 5) The Declaration of love; 6) The Point of Ritual Death where all hope seems lost; 7) The Recognition of the means to overcome the barriers; 8) The Betrothal, symbolic or literal.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Driscoll, Catherine, "One True Pairing: The Romance of Pornography and the Pornography of Romance," in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 85.

<sup>11</sup> Busse, Kristina, "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*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 215.

<sup>12</sup> Regis, Pamela, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*, 2003, Reprint, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 30.

Slash (m/m) fan fiction (*slash fic*): Slash fiction is a subgenre of fan fiction that features a romantic and/or sexual relationship between men. Slash is primarily used to refer to m/m relationships, which is how it is used here, although femslash or slash (f/f), meaning a romantic or romantic and sexual relationship between two women, is also a subgenre of fan fiction.<sup>14</sup> Colloquially, slash (m/m) fan fiction is referred to as slash fic, which is how it is referred to in this thesis.

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<sup>14</sup> Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 10.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Secret Intimacy: Intimatopia as a Hidden Genre Between Fan Fiction & the Romance Novel*

#### **Introduction**

The exact nature of the relationship between the romance novel genre and the fan fiction genre has been debated and analyzed by scholars, readers, and writers alike. The romance novel, as defined by Pamela Regis, is “a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines”<sup>1</sup> and contains the following eight narrative elements: 1) The Initial Society in which the characters must court; 2) The Meeting between the courting characters; 3) The Barrier(s) impeding their relationship, internal and/or external; 4) The Attraction(s) which make the characters want to be in a relationship; 5) The Declaration of love; 6) The Point of Ritual Death where all hope seems lost; 7) The Recognition of the means to overcome the barriers; 8) The Betrothal, symbolic or literal.<sup>2</sup> Fan fiction, by contrast, is defined more by its conditions of production than its narrative elements. I have chosen to combine several of the definitions Francesca Coppa offers in her fan fiction reader (2017) in order to have a working definition that best encompasses my academic understanding and personal experience of the fan fiction genre. Fan fiction is defined as a fictional text that “rewrites and transforms”<sup>3</sup> material that is usually copyrighted by others; fan fiction is written and

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<sup>1</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Coppa, Francesca, “Five Things That Fanfiction Is, and One Thing It Isn’t,” introduction

published or distributed “outside of the literary marketplace...within and to the standards of a particular fannish community.”<sup>4</sup> Colloquially, fan fiction is known as fic, a term which will be frequently used hereafter to refer to fan fiction.

Under the broad umbrella of the fan fiction genre there are many subgenres of fan fiction, primarily categorized by the specific material that a fic is transforming. In this thesis, the main primary text is a Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction — fan fiction that rewrites and transforms public material about real professional hockey players, primarily those in the National Hockey League (NHL). Real Person Fan Fiction (RPF), of which Men’s Hockey RPF is a subgenre, is a genre of fan fiction about the personae of public figures, living or dead.<sup>5</sup> Another subgenre to which this thesis’s main primary text belongs is slash fan fiction, or slash fic. Slash fic is fan fiction that features a romantic and/or sexual relationship between men.<sup>6</sup> Slash fic is not defined by the material it transforms, but by the specific relationship(s) it depicts, and as such, it contains a multitude of different genres, subgenres, and fandoms within its own subgenre.

Another genre critical to my work in this thesis is Elizabeth Woledge’s intimatopia genre. Coined as a term and identified as a genre by Woledge in her 2005 PhD dissertation, intimatopia centers the creation and development of an exclusive and

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to *The Fanfiction Reader: Folk Tales for the Digital Age*, edited by Francesca Coppa. Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 2017, 4.

<sup>4</sup> Coppa, “Five Things,” 3, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Busse uses the term RPS, meaning Real Person Slash, but I use RPF as it is the most up to date term used in these fandom spaces and also permits the inclusion of non-slash RPF (“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*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 215).

<sup>6</sup> Other relationship categories of fan fiction include: Het, meaning heterosexual/heteroromantic, which pairs two people of different genders (typically men and women) together in a romantic or romantic and sexual relationship; Gen, meaning general, which does not center any romantic or sexual pairing and is focused on platonic relationships; and femslash or slash (f/f), meaning a romantic or romantic and sexual relationship between two women (Busse and Hellekson, “Work In Progress”).

reciprocal relationship between characters that blends love, friendship, and intimacy.<sup>7</sup>

Since the intimatopia genre was identified and defined by Woledge, I have chosen to follow the definition of intimacy that she uses in her dissertation:

familiarity, close association and informal warmth, the kind of unity between two individuals which often characterizes close friendship. Although the intimacy explored in these texts may be sexual in nature, I do not use the term ‘intimacy’ as any kind of euphemism for sexual interaction although this is one of the definitions suggested by the OED.<sup>8</sup>

Intimatopia provides not only the more specific ideological framework for this thesis’s two primary text stories, but a way to understand the structure of the community within which this thesis’s first primary text was produced.

Unlike intimatopia, pornography is a commonly known genre, but its mutability and variations make it necessary to also provide a definition. I use Catherine Driscoll’s definition of pornography as explicit sexual content “consumed for the explicit purpose of arousal”<sup>9</sup> because it is her work on the intersection between fan fiction and pornography that I draw on in this thesis. Pornography, while not as important to this thesis as intimatopia, is so frequently an intersecting genre with the romance novel and fan fiction genres, and also a genre whose textual features heavily appear in my two primary text stories, that it is included here.

At even this initial listing of key genres at play in this thesis’s fan fiction and its non-RPF version indicate, defining the relationship between a text and its genres is far

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<sup>7</sup> “Intimacy between men,” 103, 124.

<sup>8</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 10, Footnote 17. Woledge does not specify that she is using this definition of intimacy in her article, “Intimatopia: Genre Intersections Between Slash and the Mainstream” (2006) in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*. However, since the article is largely taken directly from parts of her PhD dissertation with no significant changes, it is likely that this is the same definition underpinning her arguments there as well.

<sup>9</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 85.

more complex than simply pitting the romance novel genre and the fan fiction genre against each other in order to identify and place value on their differences. However erroneous this oppositional positioning of the romance novel genre and the fan fiction genre may be, it was this initial question that prompted my academic research into the effects of genre and social context of production on a fic's textual features. I am an avid romance novel reader with writerly aspirations, a more recent but no less avid fic reader, and, most recently, a fic author. My experiences as both a reader and writer in these genres prompted me to research the intangible difference(s) I observed between the effects of romance novels and fan fiction. I wanted to know why I felt more satisfied by fan fictions than romance novels, even though many fics I read ostensibly followed the same required narrative structure as the romance novels that left me frustrated. As an academic, I wanted to research this phenomenon and report back to these fields of study with my results so that other scholars could continue to deepen our collective understanding of what is happening to the way we read, tell, and feel these stories. As an author, I wanted to become part of a fandom writerly community; I also want to write and traditionally publish a mainstream romance novel that captures the intangible essence that I felt in my favourite fics — I want to show non-fan fiction readers what romance novels could be.

While I did have the general and certainly lofty goal of writing a different kind of romance novel, I never expected to do it by rewriting and revising one of my own fics into a non-RPF romance novel; there had been other original romance novels I had started that had been the earlier foci of that goal. I began writing *A Good Place to Disappear* — the fic that would become the new focus of my ambition and the subject of



this thesis — on May 3, 2020 during the first COVID-19 lockdown in Ontario, Canada. I had been a reader of Men’s Hockey RPF and frequent commenter on the fan fiction archive website Archive of Our Own for several years. Archive of Our Own is colloquially known as AO3, an acronym which will be used throughout this thesis. I had posted five fics prior — four in the Men’s Hockey RPF fandom and one in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) fandom. All of them received under 200 kudos (likes) and none of them received more than ten comments from readers. These statistics<sup>10</sup> show that I was not a prolific writer in any fandom, nor in the Men’s Hockey RPF fandom specifically; nor did I have a significant amount of reader interaction or feedback prior to *A Good Place to Disappear*.

Despite this initial experience on AO3, *A Good Place to Disappear* received an unusually high number of author-reader interactions in its comment section. While all comments left on a fic are visible to the author and to all readers and anyone can reply to comments, the majority of comments on my fic are between a reader and author; only 8 out of 581 reader comments were left to other readers, most of which were comments seconding the previous reader’s reactions to the chapter.<sup>11</sup> A high number of comments, then, generally represents a strong response from readers towards the fan fiction. As of October 29, 2021, *A Good Place to Disappear* has 547 kudos (the primary ranking system for fics on AO3), 240 bookmarks, 581 comments made by readers, and 534 comment made by me, as the author.<sup>12</sup> This number of kudos shows that at least 547

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<sup>10</sup> Archive of Our Own. Statistics on user account GracelingwithPoisewithoutGrace, on *ArchiveofOurOwn*. Accessed March 12, 2022. Personal communication.

<sup>11</sup> Based on *A Good Place to Disappear*’s total reader comments and their contents as of October 29, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D. Other statistics were taken from *A Good Place to Disappear*’s statistics on the Archive of Our Own website on October 29, 2021.

separate users on AO3 read *A Good Place to Disappear* and liked it. Bookmarks are a way for readers to save fics so it is easier to find them later; this fic having 240 bookmarks indicates that at least 240 users wanted to save the work to read later. When the fics in the Men's Hockey RPF tag are sorted from highest number of kudos to lowest, my fic appears on page 81 of 1391 of the search results; when sorted from highest number of comments to lowest, my fic has the fifth-highest number of comments in the entire Men's Hockey RPF tag, out of 27, 878 fics.<sup>13</sup> It is because of this high number of interactions between author and readers and its popularity within the fandom, that I am using it as my primary text through which I will examine the social context of its production.

It was also because of this unusually strong response to my fic that I chose to revise it into a non-RPF romance novel in the pursuit of traditional mainstream publication. The feedback from readers confirmed what I felt and believed about this story as an author — that it had captured that important yet intangible feeling I was looking for. Of course, feelings and intangibilities are subjective and slippery pieces of evidence to use, especially in the even more subjective and slippery field of artistic critique. More important than the elusive objective evaluation of my literary endeavours is that my fan fiction was able to make myself and my readers believe in its quality enough to feel something. Since it was able to do so, I chose to examine this fic and its subsequent non-RPF version, *Compass Points North*, as well its online author and reader comments, in order to ascertain which textual features of which genres affected my readers and myself as the author.

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<sup>13</sup> Statistic taken from the Archive of Our Own website on October 29, 2021 using the search results for the Men's Hockey RPF tag.

This thesis's main primary text, *A Good Place to Disappear*, is a Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of the pairing Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux. Sidney Crosby is the current captain of the Pittsburgh Penguins and Claude Giroux was the captain of the Philadelphia Flyers for nine years before being traded to the Florida Panthers, and most recently to the Ottawa Senators; both are Canadian players — Crosby from Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, and Claude Giroux from Hearst, Ontario.<sup>14</sup> In the fic, Claude Giroux shares a rivalry with Sidney Crosby in the NHL until his career-ending injury at age 25. After this injury, a possible outing of his queerness, and a breakup with his best friend, Claude returns to his hometown of Hearst, Ontario to recover. After his leg has healed, he buys a farm and spends the next seven years self-isolating there, suffering from depression and anxiety, and wracked with guilt over his abandonment of his best friend and his best friend's sons, whom he regarded as his family. The fan fiction begins after these seven years, when Sidney Crosby mysteriously disappears from the public eye after his sudden, inexplicable retirement from the NHL. Claude, during the course of his travels selling his beef at farmer's markets, unexpectedly runs into Sidney in the small town of Desbarats, on Highway 17 near Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. This unexpected reunion of the former rivals kicks off Claude's journey towards mental health, their courtship, and their eventual public coming out as queer former NHL players. This synopsis summarized the fic that I revised into a non-RPF romance novel and that sparked a high number of author-reader interactions during its publication on AO3.

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<sup>14</sup> "Claude Giroux," wikipedia, Wikipedia, September 20, 2022, accessed September 21, 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude\\_Giroux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Giroux); "Sidney Crosby," wikipedia, Wikipedia, February 21, 2022, accessed March 12, 2022, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Crosby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Crosby).

The overall purpose of my research is to document the genre intersections within the fan fiction, to document its community interactions, and then to analyze how these literary and social contexts of *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* affected their textual features. This specific research into my personal experiences is examined alongside previous scholarship, primarily from fan fiction and fandom studies and studies of the romance novel. Comparing the analysis of my experiences and primary texts to previous research reveals implications for the current and future states of fan fiction and romance novel studies. It also begins to address the paucity of research on Men's Hockey RPF and intimatopia, and the relationship these two genres share with their more popular genre relations, the romance novel and fan fiction in general. My analysis of the reader and author comments on my fic is unique in that it is a quantitative study of all comments left on one fan fiction, as well as a qualitative study of specific examples. Most research on fan fiction communities utilize the qualitative approach in order to draw conclusions about how they function; I have only seen one quantitative study of fan fiction comments on AO3,<sup>15</sup> which demonstrates the critical void that my research here is beginning to fill.

The two major questions structuring my research are: 1. What genres influenced my fan fiction and its revision into a non-RPF romance novel; in what ways did these genres manifest in my two texts? 2. What role did the fan fiction community play in the development of my fan fiction, its revision as a romance novel, and my writing style overall? I have chosen to narrow my scope to these research questions because they

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<sup>15</sup> Rouse, Lauren, "Fan Fiction Comments and Their Relationship to Classroom Learning," in "Fan Studies Pedagogies," edited by Paul J. Booth and Regina Yung Lee, special issue, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, no. 35, 2021.

capture both the literary and social influences on the construction of my primary texts — what my particular fan fiction readers were responding to and from where these textual features originated.

I chose to center my own personal experience for analysis in order to provide a deep level of access into the private and intimate communities of fan fiction and into the process of creative decision-making for a fan fiction and aspiring romance novel author. This level of access is not usually accessible to scholars studying other authors's works because it would require a significant amount of trust and intimacy to be established between the scholar and the author, as well as an even more delicate and complicated consideration of the research's ethics. My position as an author in a fan fiction community and a reading member of that same community *and* aspiring mainstream romance novel author, therefore allows me a perspective often inaccessible to scholars. The hyper-specificity and dual nature of my position as both the academic and the author does present limits in objectivity and in scope. However, this position of "scholar-fan" is an established practice within the field of fandom and fan fiction studies. Kristina Busse and Karen Hellekson address this position of the scholar-fan as: "the realization that no subject position is completely outside the field of study...[which] ha[s] permitted us to take a subject position that melds the fan and the academic without implying a lack of insight of intellectual rigour."<sup>16</sup> Following a similar methodological practice, I have chosen to analyze the texts I created in conjunction with their community, in which I am also embedded. While my position as a scholar-fan and community member is firmly anchored in the particularities of my subjective experience, it is important to have this

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<sup>16</sup> "Work In Progress," 24.

kind of research alongside other, more distanced and objective research, because the subjective experience provides an insider understanding of how these genres and communities work which may be significantly different from an outsider understanding. By keeping a narrow and personal focus, my research is also able to provide a more detailed and specific response to the previous broader, theoretical approaches of fan fiction and fandom studies.

Hellekson and Busse, in their introduction to their fan fiction studies reader (2014), identify six types of approaches to fan fiction that scholarship generally uses: 1) “Fan fiction as interpretation of the source text,” which seeks insight into the source text; 2) “Fan fiction as a communal gesture,” which seeks insight into structures and relationships of the fan fiction’s community; 3) “Fan fiction as a sociopolitical argument,” which examines fan fictions as texts closely to extrapolate ideologies from them and their relationship to other ideologies of larger society; 4) “Fan fiction as individual engagement an identificatory practice,” in which the role of the fan fiction in the individual reader/writer’s psychology and identity is examined; 5) “Fan fiction as one element of audience response,” in which the structural relationship and power dynamics between the fan fiction reader/writer and those of the creators/owners of the source texts are studied; 6) “Fan fiction as pedagogical tool,” in which fan fiction’s role in teaching young readers and writers various skills is researched.<sup>17</sup>

This thesis begins with an introductory chapter mapping out the definitions, genre histories, scholarship histories, textual features, and theoretical approaches of the genres

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<sup>17</sup> All quotes in this paragraph are from Hellekson, Karen and Kristina Busse, introduction to *The Fan Fiction Studies Reader*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2014, 9-10.

and subgenres most significant to my two primary texts: the romance novel, *intimatopia*, fan fiction, slash fan fiction, Real Person Fan Fiction, Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction, pornography, and Canadian hockey literature. After presenting my specific understanding of this tangled web of genres, my second chapter uses my two primary text stories as specific examples of how different textual features are affected by different combinations of genres and subgenres. The process of revising the fan fiction primary text into the non-RPF romance novel primary text is also examined in this chapter, because the revision process demonstrates the compatibilities between some genres as well as their differences. This second chapter falls less clearly into any of Hellekson and Busse's six approaches, as it explores the variety of genre interactions and textual features in my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version — an approach closer to the field of literary studies — and seeks to understand the relationship between specific textual features and specific genres. I use close reading analysis to examine my primary texts as literary texts, rather than using any of the other common approaches listed by Hellekson and Busse — which tend to focus on fan fiction's relationship to other texts, communities, society, or to the socio-political identity of its participants. I have chosen this less-used approach because I seek to redress the lack of research on fan fiction as a text and genre, rather than as a cultural object whose value lies solely in its ability to shed light on someone or something else.

The first two chapters of this thesis focus primarily on genres and their textual features. In the third chapter, I return to the chronologically earlier event of the fan fiction's community formation because an understanding of the text's community would be elusive without first understanding the text itself. Since the community I discuss here

formed around a text, I examine the text and its history and relationship to other genres before examining its community, even though the revision process occurred after the fan fiction community formed; this falls under the second type of approach described by Hellekson and Busse: “Fan fiction as a communal gesture,” which seeks insight into structures and relationships of the fan fiction’s community.<sup>18</sup>

This thesis brings together research on the aforementioned genres and subgenres, which is based on certain definitions of each. By using these specific definitions, I am choosing to include, exclude, emphasize, and minimize certain texts, histories, and characteristics of these genres. In my subsequent discussion of these genres, these specific choices will be further explained. Since this thesis examines the intersections and effects of specific genres and subgenres, I treat genres as distinct and real categories that can sort texts into groups based on their textual features and conditions of production, even though genres are nebulous, mutable, unstable, and in some ways, unreal categories.<sup>19</sup> I also use the terms “genre” and “subgenre” for all generic categories and modes I examine. I do not believe these terms are the most accurate for some categories of texts, but the established scholarly practice of using these terms to describe these groupings of texts makes using “genre” and “subgenre” for all groupings the clearest option.

### **The Romance Novel as a Genre**

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<sup>18</sup> Quote and information from Hellekson and Busse, “Introduction,” 8.

<sup>19</sup> Busse, Kristina, *Framing Fan Fiction: Literary and Social Practices in Fan Fiction Communities*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017, 142, 144.



The mutability of the romance novel genre in particular is noticeable when one attempts to provide its history, as the romance novel, like the genre of fan fiction, can begin in different time periods depending on the definition one uses. I have chosen to use Regis's definition of a romance novel because it is broad enough to encompass the various iterations of the romance novel without excluding too many significant texts. Regis begins the romance novel's history with the oldest and broadest view of a romance *text*, which is a fictional text that depicts an idealized world, focuses on emotions, contains traces from Greek comedic theatre, and is non-mimetic. Regis then traces the development of the romance text into the romance *novel*, which is a longform prose text with the same characteristics, but focused specifically on a love story with a happy ending. Regis cites Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) as the first example. This definition of the romance novel also distinguishes it from the broader category to which the romance novel belongs: the love story. The love story encompasses all stories that focus on romantic love, with no other requirements, unlike the romance novel, which has eight, including a happy ending.<sup>20</sup>

Although Regis does not explicitly state it, her required narrative elements imply the romance novel's required ideological framework: The reordering of a disordered society, either literally or symbolically, through the removal of internal and external barriers that prevent the characters from uniting in a long-term, stable, romantic, often monogamous, often sexual, relationship, and thereby forming the new and symbolic order for society. The internal barriers function as symbols for the external disorderliness of the society, and the removal of internal barriers returns the character's self to order, as well

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<sup>20</sup> Information in this paragraph from Regis, *Natural History*, 19-21, 50, 63.

as the external society (sometimes symbolically or in a limited fashion, depending on the extent of the barriers). The characters's ability to be in a long-term, stable relationship is dependent on their own internal order and ability to live in some sort of orderly society that reflects their internal order. This is the fantasy, or idealized world, that the romance novel depicts: it is one in which a disordered, flawed self and its disordered external society can be rendered orderly and united; this reordering is symbolized and often created by the formation of a stable, long-term non-platonic (romantic and often sexual), often monogamous, relationship between people.

This ideological framework, like Regis's definition, is flexible. It can be used to depict and support other different — even opposing — ideological frameworks within its own framework, because authors and the societies they live in have different ideas of what constitutes an ordered society and an ordered self. This flexible ideological framework also explains the scholarly difficulty in establishing one meaning for the romance novel as a genre. The meaning and effects of the genre change depending on which texts one reads. Since the romance novel's framework symbolizes and often creates order through the formation of a stable, long-term, non-platonic relationship, the romance novel genre also asks its authors and readers what these relationships do, could, and should look like, with vastly diverse results. A criticism most consistent with the bare requirements of the genre, rather than with one of its specific iterations would be to question the effects of a genre that reorders the individual self and its external society through and around a non-platonic relationship. Just as recent developments in the genre have pushed the possibilities for who and how and how many people can form long-term, stable, non-platonic relationships with each other, scholars could begin to critique the

ideological framework that lies at the heart of the romance novel genre and ask why self and society have to be reordered around a non-platonic relationship at all.

Gender is a key area in which the romance novel genre has been expanding — and will hopefully continue to expand — its possibilities. While Regis uses gendered language in her definition of the romance novel’s eight required narrative elements, the ability for Regis’s definition to survive adjustments to a gender-neutral terminology indicates that the use of the terms “heroine” and “hero” — expressive of most of the romance novel’s history and of the heteronormative and homophobic ideological frameworks of that history — are not actually *required* in order for a text to be a romance novel. This opens up the romance novel to depictions of non-platonic relationships involving people of a variety of genders and queer identities. Deborah Kaplan notes the significance of this development in her study of fan fiction and romance novels (2012): “Given the essential heteronormativity of the romance plot, and given the established romance pattern of homosexual as (either positive or negative) other, it is significant for a same-sex relationship to be mapped onto the heterosexual narrative of the romance.” Kaplan also summarizes the romance novel’s treatment of homosexuality from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> century, saying that romance novels moved from “their treatment of homosexuality from the mid-century fear and loathing to a growing twenty-first-century acceptance and sympathy,” where “gender here is vital both to an understanding of the narrative and to the reader’s response to the text.”<sup>21</sup> The romance novel’s marginalization, both metaphorically and literally, of queer characters is discussed by

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<sup>21</sup> Kaplan quotes in this paragraph from Kaplan, Deborah, ““Why would any woman want to read such stories?”: The Distinctions Between Genre Romances and Slash Fiction,” in *New Approaches to Popular Romance Fiction: Critical Essays*, edited by Sarah S.G. Frantz and Eric Murphy Selinger, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland & Company, 2012, 123.

Kathleen Therrien, in her article (2012) examining the depiction of gay and lesbian characters and their roles within heteronormative romance novels.<sup>22</sup> Therrien sees the marginalization of queer characters within heterosexual romance novels as both reflective of the primacy of the heterosexual relationship, and of the re-establishing of ideological frameworks that prize stable, long-term, monogamous relationships.<sup>23</sup> She argues that this is accomplished by using queerness and queer relationships as methods through which the

heroes' and heroines' encounters and negotiations with gay and lesbian characters... finally make visible to them their own location, and participation, in patterns of oppression and reveal the damage it can cause to self, others, and relationships, ultimately freeing them to make choices that lead to strong, monogamous partnerships.<sup>24</sup>

Both Kaplan and Therrien are writing circa 2012, before the very recent sharp increase of mainstream publication of queer romance novels; Kaplan refers to small press publication of eBook queer romance novels and one novella.<sup>25</sup> Despite their rightful highlighting of the marginalization of queer characters in the practically ubiquitously heterosexual nature of romance novels until very recently, the emergence of the newly mainstream published queer romance novel genre demonstrates that it is possible to repurpose the romance novel into “a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more [people],”<sup>26</sup> thereby making room for the queer romance novel.

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<sup>22</sup> Therrien, Kathleen, “Straight to the Edges: Gay and Lesbian Characters and Cultural Conflict in Popular Romance Fiction,” in *New Approaches to Popular Romance Fiction: Critical Essays*, edited by Sarah S. G. Frantz and Eric Murphy Selinger, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2012, 164-177.

<sup>23</sup> Therrien, “Straight to the Edges,” 164-165, 175.

<sup>24</sup> Therrien, “Straight to the Edges,” 175.

<sup>25</sup> Kaplan, ““Why would any woman,” 123.

<sup>26</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 19.

Queering the identities of the characters, while not changing the narrative elements of the romance novel, does change the heteronormative ideological framework that romance novels have frequently reinforced through their prioritization of the heterosexual relationship. This suggests that the romance novel's *required* ideological framework of reordering self and society is not required to be heteronormative. It is still arguable, however, that the stable, long-term, non-platonic relationship required by the romance novel *is* heteronormative because of its focus on permanency, romantic and/or sexual relationships, and often monogamy.<sup>27</sup> The romance novel therefore seems able to include and represent queer gender, sexual, and romantic identities within its ideological framework and narrative elements, as long as those queer characters conform to the arguably heteronormative ideal of a central, stable, long-term, non-platonic relationship through which society is reordered.

Queer romance novels, like the intimatopic texts Woledge discusses,<sup>28</sup> may not be “queer” in the sense of queer theory and queer politics, but they are clearly queer in terms of identity. It is important to note that there is a difference between the academic, cultural, and historical ideas of queerness and the more practical designation of queerness based on one's gender and/or sexuality, where queer is an umbrella term used to encompass all gender and sexual identities that are not cisgender and heterosexual. One may not share the politics, culture, or academic theory of queerness, and *still be queer*;

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<sup>27</sup> As with queer romance novels, eBooks published by small presses do publish non-monogamous romance novels and it is likely that as forms of non-monogamy become more normalized in society, the emphasis on monogamy may lessen in romance novels. See Grimaldi, Christine, “Reader, He Married Him: LGBTQ Romance's Search for Happily-Ever-After,” *Slate*, October 8, 2015, <https://slate.com/human-interest/2015/10/lgbtq-romance-how-the-genre-is-expanding-happily-ever-afters-to-all-queer-people.html>, accessed August 18, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 108-109.

therefore, contrary to Woledge's perspective,<sup>29</sup> if a text has queer main characters, the text should be considered a *queer text*, regardless of its adherence to or divergence from queer academia, culture, and history. Opening up the definition of queer texts in this manner allows for cultural representations of queerness and queer identity — and therefore future queer academia and history — that are different than those already established in queer politics, culture, and academia.

My argument on what constitutes a queer text opens itself up to certain critiques. In choosing to center the sexual and gender identities of a text's main character(s) when identifying queer texts, rather than the ideological framework of the text or the sexual and gender identities of the text's author, I have opened the queer text to harmful appropriation by non-queer authors and to the deradicalization of queerness as an "antinormative function." While the critique that the identity-based definition of queer I am using removes its essential radical and "antinormative function" is important to keep in mind, I have chosen to view texts that feature main characters who have non-cisgender identities and/or exhibit non-heterosexual desire, romantic and/or sexual, as queer texts, because it is important to reflect the "lived realities of LGBTQ+ identified people."<sup>30</sup> To deny the queerness of a text and its characters only because they do not reflect the established queer politics, culture, history, and community, is to limit queer people and their possibilities in a way that seems irreflective of reality and unnecessarily rigid. Queer politics, culture, history, and community are important to many people's queer experiences and knowledges, but opening the idea of queerness allows one to include the

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<sup>29</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 109, Footnote 22 on 109, 227-230.

<sup>30</sup> Quotes in this paragraph from Coleman, James Joshua, "Writing with Impunity in a Space of Their Own: On Cultural Appropriation, Imaginative Play, and a New Ethics of Slash in Harry Potter Fan Fiction," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 11, no. 1 (2019), 97, see Footnote 3.

lived experiences and knowledges of queer people who do not fit established expectations of queerness. This move to open queerness — employed here as an academic argument as well — grows from my particular lived experiences and knowledge as a white, queer, bisexual, cis-gender woman who does not fit into many of the established expectations of queerness, while also benefitting from being white and cisgender. Thus, even though queer romance novels reinforce and reinscribe the ordering of society symbolically through a central, stable, long-term, often monogamous and often sexual, romantic relationship, it would be unnecessarily limiting and harmful to reject this type of relationship as antithetical to all queer people, by rejecting this kind of text as a queer text.

Another critique of my argument that a queer text is queer if its main character(s) is queer is the possibility for harmful appropriation of queer stories by non-queer authors. The appropriation of queer male stories is a particular ethical concern in the fan fiction genre because the vast majority of fics are slash fics featuring male characters in a romantic and/or sexual relationship with each other, and fan fiction authors and readers have traditionally been women and girls of a variety of sexual identities. James Coleman, in his article (2019) discussing the appropriation of queer male narratives in slash fan fiction written by women, acknowledges that fan fiction began as an archive of women's stories for women, but argues that having almost exclusively women writing primarily stories about queer men results in a privileging of women's authority over queer male stories and experiences, and a delegitimization of stories written by actual queer men. Women are thus positioned as the real experts over the queer male experience, rather than actual queer men; this is a form of appropriation, as female writers, regardless of their

own possible forms of oppression, do not have the lived experiences of being a queer man, nor are they part of a shared queer male history and culture.<sup>31</sup>

While this is an important issue within the fan fiction genre to consider, it is not easy to resolve. Since the gender and sexual identities of participants in the anonymous fan fiction communities are unknown unless specifically shared by the person — and even then, they are not verifiable — it is difficult to make judgments about the appropriative nature of a fan fiction based on the author's identity. Determining appropriation based on the author's identity could also force fan fiction authors to publicly reveal their gender and sexual identities; this is private information which, if revealed, could harm people. Even if there is no specific harm caused, like lost employment, family estrangement, or violence to their person, sharing private information in public under pressure can cause emotional harm. It is concerning that publicly sharing such information is becoming expected as if it is owed to the public. Well-known YA author Becky Albertalli felt pressured into publicly revealing her bisexuality after successfully publishing queer YA novels; her essay about this experience poignantly demonstrates the consequences of this societal expectation:

I'd feel uncomfortable, anxious, almost sick with nerves every time they discussed mine [gender and sexuality].

And holy shit, did people discuss. To me, it felt like there was never a break in the discourse, and it was often searingly personal. I was frequently mentioned by name, held up again and again as the quintessential example of allocishet inauthenticity. I was a straight woman writing shitty queer books for the straights, profiting off of communities I had no connection to.

Because the thing is, I called myself straight in a bunch of early interviews.

But labels change sometimes. That's what everyone always says, right? It's okay if you're not out. It's okay if you're not ready. It's okay if you don't

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<sup>31</sup> Information in this paragraph from Coleman, "Writing with Impunity," 85, 98-99.



fully understand your identity yet. There's no time limit, no age limit, no one right way to be queer.

... Why do we, again and again, cross the line between critiquing books and making assumptions about author identities? How are we so aware of invisible marginalization as a hypothetical concept, but so utterly incapable of making space for it in our community?

Let me be perfectly clear: this isn't how I wanted to come out. This doesn't feel good or empowering, or even particularly safe. Honestly, I'm doing this because I've been scrutinized, subtweeted, mocked, lectured, and invalidated just about every single day for years, and I'm exhausted. And if you think I'm the only closeted or semi-closeted queer author feeling this pressure, you haven't been paying attention.<sup>32</sup>

Albertalli is an example of how mainstream authors have also experienced this issue because their texts have been similarly criticized, but with the added critique of profiting off of their "queer" texts, as well as appropriating them. Albertalli's experience is an important example of why making assumptions about identity and judgments about appropriation based solely on those assumptions can be harmful and inaccurate.

Although Coleman flags the issue of women appropriating the stories of queer men within the fan fiction genre, he also argues:

such cultural appropriation is not inherently unethical but instead represents a generative imaginative space in which new configurations of gender and sexuality might be theorized. Building upon this premise, this paper argues that slash's appropriative nature only becomes problematic when it generates misrepresentations that decouple the gay community from its histories, both joyous and painful.<sup>33</sup>

Coleman's position here allows authors to write characters and experiences that they do not share while still behaving ethically as long as they do not write misrepresentations ignorant of queer histories. This leaves room for an author to imaginatively engage with

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<sup>32</sup> Albertalli, Becky, "I know I'm late," *Medium*, August 31, 2020, <https://medium.com/@rebecca.albertalli/i-know-im-late-9b31de339c62>, accessed February 19, 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Coleman, "Writing with Impunity," 84.

stories and identities they do not share or have not experienced, an important aspect of artistic creativity. In an effort to avoid appropriating queer male experiences harmfully in my texts, I chose a beta reader specifically for their lived experience and knowledge of the queer male-aligned community, and particularly where that experience intersects with hockey fandom and culture. A beta reader is a term used in fan fiction communities to refer to a trusted person chosen by a fic author to read, critique, and sometimes revise their fic before it is published; a beta reader can critique and revise many different aspects of a fic.<sup>34</sup> The beta reader for my romance novel also functioned as a “sensitivity reader”; they provided feedback specifically on my representation of the queer male identity and experiences in my two main characters. This feedback was positive: “On terms of sensitivity, I think it's great on gay / queer male issues, never really felt disrespect when reading the novel.”<sup>35</sup> Based on Coleman’s definition of harmful appropriation as one that “generates misrepresentations that decouple the gay community from its histories,”<sup>36</sup> my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version are not, to my knowledge and experience, harmful appropriation, despite my non-male gender, because I have attempted to avoid misrepresentations and to depict a queer male experience that shares parts of the queer community’s history. Using an appropriate sensitivity reader and writing with an awareness of queer men’s history and queer men’s lived experiences make it less likely that I have committed harmful appropriation. This does not mean that I have not done so. Writing characters and experiences that are not all my own always makes it possible for me to commit harmful appropriation that may only become apparent

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<sup>34</sup> Busse and Hellekson, “Work In Progress,” 6.

<sup>35</sup> Beta Reader, email message to author, August 31, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Coleman, “Writing with Impunity,” 84.

to me in hindsight or with further education, feedback, and experience. As with most of the ethical considerations I will discuss in this thesis, there are no clearly and perfectly right choices — only best practices developed by people over time that each person must pick through and decide for themselves which to adopt.

Considering the romance novel's swift adaptability to societal changes — as seen with the recent uptake in traditionally published queer romances<sup>37</sup> — it is even more important for scholarship to stay current. Previous studies of the romance novel, like Janice Radway's famous monograph, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984), and even Jayne Anne Krentz's edited collection, *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance* (1992), tended to focus on the popular forms of the romance novel at or close to the time of their writing, rather than examining romance novels from their historical roots to present day.<sup>38</sup> Considering the enormous number of extant romance novels, this misapplication of results from a small sample size to the entire genre is understandable even as it is inaccurate. Radway's and Krentz's works are important because they provide a combination of the academic, author, and reader's perspectives on the romance novel, particularly on how the romance novel relates to feminism and the patriarchy. A more recent academic collection is Sarah Frantz and Eric Selinger's collection, *New Approaches to Popular Romance Fiction: Critical Essays* (2012). However, the field of romance novel studies lacks a critical monograph or collection that reflects the extremely recent shift in traditional romance novel publishing in terms of the diversity, representation, and activism depicted within the romance novel. Cognizant of this yet

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<sup>37</sup> Grimaldi, "Reader, He Married Him."

<sup>38</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 3-7.

unstudied shift through my own personal reading practices, I have chosen a definition of the genre that avoids assumptions based on specific subcategories of the genre, time periods, or publishing companies. I can thus demonstrate, through comparisons between the requirements of each genre (see Appendix A), how the romance novel genre is able to intersect with other genres often placed into opposition with it, like pornography, fan fiction, and intimatopia.

### **Pornography as a Genre**

Pornography, like its related terms erotica, smut,<sup>39</sup> and porntopia,<sup>40</sup> is its own genre of both written and visual texts with its own history and history of scholarship. The pornography genre strongly intersects with the fan fiction genre because of the prevalence and even ubiquity of pornographic content in fan fiction texts, including both my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version. Driscoll, in her article about the relationships between the romance novel, pornography, and fan fiction, argues that fan fiction “inherits the most criticized elements of both romance fiction and pornography as modes of popular culture,”<sup>41</sup> because fan fiction combines the fears incited by the romance novel and internet pornography: That women and girls can and will privately read pleasurable material that would harm them — whether because of their unrealistic and fantastical romance elements or because of their pornographic (or pornographic in

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<sup>39</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 85.

<sup>40</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 105.

<sup>41</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 94-95.

the wrong way) content.<sup>42</sup> Busse (2017) affirms this connection, highlighting how fan fiction “collapses these two threats by allowing women to read and write sexual fantasies to be enjoyed as text as well as masturbation fodder.”<sup>43</sup> This possibility haunts all fan fiction regardless of their actual content; as Driscoll states, “Even fan fiction stories that involve little or no sex are surrounded by the possibility of sexual representation.”<sup>44</sup> Fan fiction thus inherits the shame and censure of the romance novel and pornography, as well as its own shame and censure for being assumed to be derivative, appropriative, amateur, naïve, and badly-written.<sup>45</sup> This tripling of shame and censure for a text belonging to the romance novel, pornography, and fan fiction genres is especially evident in the general reactions to the most famous example of a fan fiction text being revised and then published as a mainstream romance and erotica novel — *Fifty Shades of Grey*, by E. L. James.<sup>46</sup> In her article on how fan fiction and fandom deals with stories of rape fantasies, non-consent, and dubious consent, Busse summarizes fandom’s main criticisms of James’s *Twilight* fan fiction turned mainstream romance and erotica novel:

To return one last time to the *Fifty Shades* trilogy, this may be one of the reasons why much of fandom immediately rejected the novels. It wasn’t the poor writing or the commercialization of fan fic or the exploitation of fannish community support. It wasn’t even the thinly veiled traditional romance trope and the ultimate pathologizing of the BDSM play for which the novel had become so famous. Or it was not only these issues. By removing the fannish frame that would signal for many readers the fantasy and fetish character of the story, by actually advertising and advocating it as a love story, James replaces a potentially modifying context with a highly problematic paratext that invites readers to embrace a conventional ideology in which extreme sexual power exchange is ultimately pathological and the heteronormative promise of futurity constitutes a happy ending.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 80-81, 85; Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 94-95.

<sup>43</sup> *Framing Fan Fiction*, 95.

<sup>44</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 85.

<sup>45</sup> Derecho, “Archontic Literature,” 63-65.

<sup>46</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 140-143, 94-95, 197-198, 216-217.

<sup>47</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 216-217.

Busse's commentary here is important because it describes the general *fandom* reaction to *Fifty Shades of Grey*, not necessarily the mainstream reaction. This demonstrates that fan fiction community members themselves have internalized the exact criticisms — and possibly their accompanying self-directed shame and censure — that have been externally leveled at the romance novel, pornography, and fan fiction.

Although the arguments briefly examined above contain rich avenues for further study and discussion, my examination of the pornography genre is limited to identifying the textual features it contributes to my fan fiction and its revision, rather than examining fan fiction as textual pornography written primarily by women for women<sup>48</sup> or delving into the scholarly literature specifically on pornography. It is therefore sufficient to state that the pornography genre provides the following textual features to my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version: 1) Numerous explicit sexual content; 2) Explicit sexual content that focuses on the physicality of sex; 3) Explicit sexual content that focuses on the bodies of the characters having sexual intercourse.<sup>49</sup> These textual features are required by pornography because they are “consumed for the explicit purpose of arousal”<sup>50</sup> Pornography, while contributing these relatively easy to identify features in my primary texts, does undergo an interesting and important shift when it is subordinated to *intimatopia*'s ideological framework, which will be discussed in the second chapter.

Since a pornographic text is designed to have a physical effect upon the reader, it connects the fantasy of a story to the reality of the reader's body; pornography's realism

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<sup>48</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 91, 94-95.

<sup>49</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 85.

<sup>50</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 85.

“is still evaluated by affect: does it get you off? do you believe in it?”<sup>51</sup> Affect, or affective power, in terms of its theory, is described as “the name we give to those forces — visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion — that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought...”<sup>52</sup> Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, in their introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), identify affect’s significance because of its potential to affect a body — literal or metaphorical — and thereby lead to that body’s taking action and affecting other bodies.<sup>53</sup> This real, physical affective power of pornography connects back to the censure and shame that the romance novel, fan fiction, and pornography incite in a particularly gendered way — the fantasy elements of these genres are criticized for giving women incorrect beliefs about the world, and the real physical effects are criticized and policed within and without fandom because they indicate “unruly sexualities and queer bodies.”<sup>54</sup> Natalia Samutina connects fan fiction’s affective power and purpose of its pornographic content to fan fiction’s overall ideological prioritizing of affective power:

Above all, passionate communities of fandom readers clearly value the text’s ability to enchant, involve its reader in an imaginary world, keep up the suspense and produce physical reactions – not only a sexual arousal, as in the case of pornographic texts, but other reading-induced affective states as well.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, pornography, whose affective power is over the body, is one way in which fan fiction uses affect to invest the reader in its story and story world.

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<sup>51</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” 87.

<sup>52</sup> Seigworth and Gregg, “Inventory of Shimmers,” 2.

<sup>53</sup> Seigworth and Gregg, “Inventory of Shimmers,” 2-3.

<sup>54</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 177-179.

<sup>55</sup> Samutina, Natalia, “Emotional Landscapes of Reading: Fan Fiction in the Context of Contemporary Reading Practices,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2017), 258.

Driscoll identifies fan fiction's two types of sexual content: "Plot sex," which is sexual content that develops the story's plot, and "porn sex," which is sexual content that is in a detailed, lengthier scene designed to represent the act of sex.<sup>56</sup> Driscoll states that the same fan fiction can contain both plot sex and porn sex — the two are not mutually exclusive.<sup>57</sup> I would argue, based on my examination of the sexual content in *A Good Place to Disappear*, that the same scene can be both plot and porn sex. The use of sexual content to increase a fan fiction's affective power explains Katherine Morrissey's observation in her M.A. thesis, which compares the romance novel to fan fiction. Morrissey describes fan fiction as tending to have more sexually explicit language than romance novels, although both privilege depictions that maintain the idealized fantasy instead of "gritty realism" in their sexual content.<sup>58</sup> Realistic details and description are therefore used to make the fantasy more effective (or, if you will, *affective*). Pornography's affective power over the body could also partially explain Coppa's observation that fan fiction, as a genre, tends to emphasize and focus on the body. In these various ways, pornography's textual feature of explicit sexual content included for the purpose of arousal intersects with the concerns and desires of different genres and communities, particularly the importance of affective power over the body.

### **Fan Fiction as a Genre**

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<sup>56</sup> Driscoll, "One True Pairing," 85-86.

<sup>57</sup> Driscoll, "One True Pairing," 86.

<sup>58</sup> Quote and information from Morrissey, Katherine E., "Fanning the Flames of Romance: An Exploration of Fan Fiction and the Romance Novel," M.A. thesis, Georgetown University, 2008, 94.



As the popularity of media fandom fan fiction has grown immensely since its debut in the 1960s and 1970s,<sup>59</sup> various definitions of fan fiction have been made; each slightly different definition changes which texts are included under the definition and when its history begins.<sup>60</sup> The definition I provided earlier in this introduction, which combines several slightly different definitions offered by Coppa in her fan fiction reader's introduction (2017), emphasizes the importance of modern copyright law in defining and shaping fan fiction. This definition does not, however, require that the material being transformed by the fan fiction be copyrighted by someone. This emphasis on, rather than requirement of, copyright, allows this definition of fan fiction to include both the 1960s and 1970s media fandom fan fictions that formed around the *Star Trek* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* franchises,<sup>61</sup> and the fandom to which my fan fiction belongs, Men's Hockey RPF. In situating the beginning of fan fiction with the *Star Trek* and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* television show fandoms of the 1960s and 1970s, I exclude other, earlier forms of what Abigail Derecho calls "archontic literature,"<sup>62</sup> which encompasses texts that have a deliberate, self-aware, and explicitly stated intertextuality.<sup>63</sup> I have chosen to begin the history of fan fiction with the 1960s and 1970s because the Men's Hockey RPF community to which my fan fiction belongs is a direct descendant of those fandoms and their practices, whereas earlier forms of archontic literature, like many Shakespeare plays,<sup>64</sup> do not directly pass on their communities and

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<sup>59</sup> Coppa, Francesca, "A Brief History of Media Fandom," in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 57-58.

<sup>60</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 1-17.

<sup>61</sup> Coppa, "A Brief History," 43-45.

<sup>62</sup> Derecho, "Archontic Literature," 63.

<sup>63</sup> Derecho, "Archontic Literature," 63-66.

<sup>64</sup> Derecho, "Archontic Literature," 66.

practices. This decision is supported by Driscoll's highlighting of the importance of a fan fiction's social context when discussing it as a genre(s): "No adequate genre study of fan fiction can proceed by textual analysis alone because of the inseparability of fan fiction texts and communities."<sup>65</sup> Since the literary and the social are inextricably linked in fan fiction, my examination of the social context of my fic in the third chapter fits what Seigworth and Gregg describe as a seventh approach to affect theory:

critical discourses of the emotions...that have progressively left behind the interiorized self or subjectivity...to unfold regimes of expressivity that are tied much more to resonant worldings and diffusions of feeling/passions—often including atmospheres of sociality, crowd behaviors, contagions of feeling, matters of belonging...<sup>66</sup>

In fan fiction communities, the line between the reader and author is blurred; emotions and affective power move from reader to author, reader to reader, and author to reader, through and across their texts and comments, which act like a permeable membrane of the community "body." Choosing to give a history of fan fiction based on a continuity of social practices and communities therefore best fits my research because I am specifically examining the genre intersections and textual features of my fic and its non-RPF version.

The study of fan fiction began in the 1980s and initially focused on the meaning and significance of the genre, particularly slash fan fiction, for its primarily female readers and writers.<sup>67</sup> Broader theoretical approaches developed in the 1990s, with ways of theorizing the relationships between fans, the source texts, and the resulting fan fictions; these ways of theorizing borrowed from a variety of fields of study like media

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<sup>65</sup> Driscoll, "One True Pairing," 95, Footnote 1.

<sup>66</sup> "Inventory of Shimmers," 8.

<sup>67</sup> Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 17.

studies, anthropology, and psychology.<sup>68</sup> While perhaps not directly addressing affect theory, emotion, affect, and affective power appear frequently as terms used to describe fandom and fan fiction communities;<sup>69</sup> for example, Busse states that “fan fiction is a literary genre based primarily in affect.”<sup>70</sup> This is not surprising, as they and their areas of study fit Seigworth and Gregg’s fifth approach to affect theory, which is:

found regularly hidden-in-plain-sight politically engaged work — perhaps most often undertaken by feminists, queer theorists, disability activists, and subaltern peoples living under the thumb of a normativizing power — that attends to the hard and fast materialities, as well as the fleeting and flowing ephemera, of the daily and the workaday, of everyday and every-night life, and of ‘experience’ (understood in ways far more collective and ‘external’ rather than individual and interior)<sup>71</sup>

Fan fiction has clear ties to Seigworth and Gregg’s description: Fan fiction began as a subaltern text used by underrepresented and marginalized writers and producers of cultural artifacts to respond to the normativizing culture and economics of copyright law in traditional publishing; it has strong ties to feminism and queer activism and scholarship;<sup>72</sup> it functions as ephemera of the everyday and every-night life of its community participants and members; it functions as a collective experience.<sup>73</sup>

In the early 2000s, studies of fans, fandom, and fan fiction broadened their scope in what was included by those terms, and narrowed their scope to focus on the relationship between fans and a specific source text, and on understanding the fan as an

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<sup>68</sup> Busse and Hellekson, “Work In Progress,” 17-20.

<sup>69</sup> A search of the index in Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, finds 24 instances of the word affect and eight instances of the word emotion (the two refer to each other in their separate index entries); Hellekson and Busse’s index in *Fan Fiction Studies* finds six instances of the word affect; Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” discusses the affective power of fan fiction extensively in her article.

<sup>70</sup> *Framing Fan Fiction*, 76.

<sup>71</sup> Seigworth and Gregg, “Inventory of Shimmers,” 7.

<sup>72</sup> Derecho, “Archontic Literature,” 61-78; Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 19-26.

<sup>73</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 150-152.

individual, not just as a member of a community.<sup>74</sup> A significant monograph from this period of fandom and fan fiction studies is Hellekson and Busse's *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays* (2006). Since the early 2000s, there have been a few theses, dissertations, and edited books collecting scholarly articles and fandom community members's commentary and fan fictions published.<sup>75</sup> Busse's collection (2017) of her work from 2006 to 2017 is important for following changes in the field, as exemplified in her monograph. In addition to these either unpublished (in the case of some of theses and dissertations) or published collections of works or monograph-like works, scholarship on fan fiction and fandom studies in a variety of academic disciplines has continued and been published as individual academic articles. Research on fandoms, their fans, and fan fictions, has also continued to be published in the online-only academic journal *Transformative Works and Cultures*, which published its first volume of articles in 2008.<sup>76</sup> However, there does seem to be a need for more current scholarly monographs, either of collected articles written by different scholars, or one large work of study by a single author or group of authors, that reflect the fandoms and fan fictions that have developed and changed since the early 2000s.

There is some research that discusses fan fiction as its own literary genre, most notably Coppa's article, "Writing Bodies in Space: Media Fan Fiction as Theatrical Performance" (2006).<sup>77</sup> Coppa identifies two textual features that apply to fan fiction as a

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<sup>74</sup> Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 20-24.

<sup>75</sup> See bibliography.

<sup>76</sup> See the *Transformative Works and Cultures* website:  
<https://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/issue/archive>.

<sup>77</sup> In addition to Coppa, Deborah Kaplan also discusses fan fiction as a genre and identifies textual features she attributes to fan fiction as a genre in her article, "Construction of Fan Fiction Character Through Narrative," in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, 134-152, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006.

genre: 1) A focus on bodies; their movements and physicality; 2) Frequent use of repetition.<sup>78</sup> There have also been several attempts, usually accomplished by placing a small sample of fics from a specific fandom in contrast to a similarly small sample of other texts from a different genre — often the romance novel — and attempting to discern differences between the two and then attribute those differences to the genres they represent.<sup>79</sup> These generic differences have often been misattributed. As will be discussed later in this introduction, the greatest source of this misattribution is a failure to take into account Woledge’s intimatopia genre as a genre with its own textual features that frequently intersects with the fan fiction genre and slash fic subgenre, as well as a mistakenly narrow understanding of what a romance novel is, which has already been discussed. This misattribution of textual features to the wrong genres occurred partially because slash fics were often the type of fics chosen as the sample to represent the whole of fan fiction, or slash fic was assumed to *require* certain textual features instead of *frequently* having them.<sup>80</sup>

### **Slash fan fiction: A Fan Fiction Subgenre**

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<sup>78</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>79</sup> Woledge, both in her article (“Intimatopia: Genre Intersections Between Slash and the Mainstream,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, 97-114, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006) and in her PhD dissertation (“Intimacy between men”) integrates 1970s-1990s Kirk/Spock fan fiction into her discussion of the intimatopia genre, linking it to specific traditionally published texts and distinguishing it from the romance novel genre; Kaplan in her article (““Why would any woman”) compares slash fan fiction to the romance novel genre; Morrissey in her M.A. thesis (“Fanning the Flames”) also compares slash fan fiction to the romance novel genre; Driscoll in her article (“One True Pairing”) examines the influences of the romance novel genre and the pornography genre on romantic and sexual fan fiction.

<sup>80</sup> For an example of this, see Anne Kustritz’s article, Kustritz, Anne, “Slashing the Romance Narrative,” *The Journal of American Culture* 26, no. 3 (2003): 371-384.

Scholarship on slash fiction has a tendency to be used to represent fan fiction as a whole due to its quantitative dominance in both the extant fan fiction archives and academic studies. Slash fic was the most popular and earliest subgenre of fan fiction and was initially considered a bizarre phenomenon requiring explanation.<sup>81</sup> It has therefore received a great deal of critical attention.<sup>82</sup> An example of this problem of small sample sizes being used to represent extremely large and diverse genres occurs in Kaplan's article comparing slash fic to the romance novel (2012). Kaplan's study examines only three slash fics written for a Harlequin Challenge in the *Stargate: Atlantis* fandom in 2005 (keeping in mind that her article was published in 2012).<sup>83</sup> She does acknowledge that these slash fics do not and cannot speak for the entire fan fiction genre, nor the slash subgenre.<sup>84</sup> However, she still considers the different textual features that she found as indicative of differences between slash fic and romance novels as *genres*:

Some differences *between slash and romance* [my emphasis] are readily apparent in the Harlequin challenge stories: the gender of the characters; the single point of view of the fan fiction stories as opposed to the more common shifting point of view of romance; the explicitly emotional model of romances as opposed to the less emotional mode of fan fiction; and the rarity in slash of that romance necessity, the formal declaration of love. In other ways, the challenge responses do share traits with many romances: they have a happy ending; disparate wealth and power between the two main characters; and contrived character occupations. Of these, only the happy ending is required of a romance novel...<sup>85</sup>

In this excerpt, Kaplan ties the differences and similarities she lists to either the romance novel genre or to the slash fic subgenre, despite the limitations of her study. In addition to

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<sup>81</sup> Coppa, "A Brief History," 46-48; Kustritz, "Slashing the Romance," 371-372; Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 17; Driscoll, "One True Pairing," 82-83.

<sup>82</sup> Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 17.

<sup>83</sup> Kaplan, "'Why would any woman,'" 124, 130-131, Footnote 9 on page 131.

<sup>84</sup> Kaplan, "'Why would any woman,'" Footnote 9 on page 131.

<sup>85</sup> Kaplan, "'Why would any woman,'" 124.

the small and old sample size of her chosen slash fics, Kaplan only uses one queer (m/m) traditionally published romance novel as comparison to her chosen fic examples; this is likely in large part due to the lack of traditionally published, mainstream, queer romance novels available at the time of her writing this article.<sup>86</sup> While she does follow Regis's narrative structure definition of a romance novel, which I use in this thesis, Kaplan's identified differences and similarities between the romance novel genre and slash subgenre only refer to two of those required narrative elements; the rest are textual features which could be present in the texts because of another intersecting genre.<sup>87</sup> For example, Kaplan's describes fan fictions as "the less emotional mode"<sup>88</sup> as compared to romance novels, which contradicts my experience of intimate Men's Hockey RPF fan fictions (the majority of which are slash fics). My own fan fiction, *A Good Place to Disappear*, contains numerous highly emotional chapters that were a large part of its success, as will be discussed later in this thesis. As this examination of but one attempt to discern generic differences between slash fic and the romance novel indicates, the enormous amount of extant romance novels and fan fictions across various different historical and cultural periods makes it extremely difficult to extrapolate from small sample sizes any accurate textual features of only the chosen genre(s) under analysis. This difficulty is exacerbated by the intersections between multiple genres within one text, both in romance novels and fan fictions. It is thus critical for any studies of genres to attempt to account for the most impactful genres for that text. Although "most impactful"

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<sup>86</sup> Kaplan, "Why would any woman," 128-130.

<sup>87</sup> Kaplan, "Why would any woman," 122, 124.

<sup>88</sup> Kaplan, "Why would any woman," 124.

is perhaps too subjective, accounting for at least more than just one genre's textual features will hopefully increase the accuracy and nuance of such studies.

### **Real Person Fan Fiction (RPF) & Men's Hockey RPF: Fan Fiction Subgenres**

Real Person Fan Fiction (RPF), the parent fan fiction subgenre of Men's Hockey RPF, is another important intersecting fan fiction genre for my fic. RPF is an offshoot of the celebrity fandoms — primarily formed around boybands — that developed in the late 1990s.<sup>89</sup> This subgenre of fan fiction explores “celebrity culture as a metaphor for gender identity and other performances of the self.”<sup>90</sup> Real Person Fan Fiction then merged with the communities and platforms — primarily on the internet — of older, long-standing science fiction media fandoms like *Star Trek* and other popular TV shows between the 1960s and the 1990s.<sup>91</sup> Men's Hockey RPF, a subgenre of Real Person Fan Fiction, thus emerged out of the practices of both “traditional” media fandom, which transforms fictional stories created and owned by other people, and the practices of celebrity fandom, which writes stories about the personae of public figures, living or dead. The Men's Hockey RPF fandom exists across media platforms besides Archive of Our Own, like Tumblr, Twitter, and Discord. It can be even further subdivided into two subgenres: Reader Insert/Imagine fics and Non-Reader Insert/Imagine fics.<sup>92</sup> Since the purpose and

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<sup>89</sup> Coppa, “A Brief History,” 43-45.

<sup>90</sup> Coppa, “A Brief of History,” 56.

<sup>91</sup> Coppa, “A Brief History,” 42-59.

<sup>92</sup> In Reader Insert/Imagine fan fictions, the main character interacting with the hockey player is Y/N, or “Your Name Here” so that the reader of the fic can insert themselves into the story directly and imagine themselves playing the role in the story that the main character is playing. In Non-Reader Insert/Imagine fics, the reader and writer are not made into characters to exist in the story and interact with the player characters.



structure of Reader Insert/Imagine fics are so different from Non-Reader Insert/Imagine fics, I will not be discussing them further and my analysis of Real Person Fan Fiction and Men's Hockey RPF does not necessarily apply to Reader Insert/Imagines.<sup>93</sup> While it is likely that Men's Hockey RPF developed earlier on other platforms along with other subcategories of celebrity fandom, the first fic posted using this fandom tag on Archive of Our Own was posted in 2008,<sup>94</sup> making this fandom part of the more recent mid- to late 2000s development of English-speaking, primarily North American media fandom.

Men's Hockey RPF is a subgenre of Real Person Fan Fiction, and therefore shares its complex relationship to the personae of the public figures about whom fan fiction authors write fic, and that public figure's "real self." Celebrities are real people, but their public image, which is constantly and deliberately constructed, manipulated, and narrativized, provides many performances of the various personae that make up their "real self." These performances work in the same way as the various textual performances (i.e., Real Person Fan Fictions) featuring them do. Public figures, particularly celebrities, are then understood to be both real and not real — a person and a character simultaneously. This way of viewing public figures then opens the door for fan practices that were previously applied to fictional texts to be applied to real texts.

Amanda Retartha, in her PhD dissertation (2014) on the construction of imagined stories about celebrities, states that these types of stories, "exemplify the push and pull between

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<sup>93</sup> For a discussion of Reader Insert/Imagines, see Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 44-45.

<sup>94</sup> Initial tags for this fandom on Archive of Our Own include Hockey Real Person Slash (RPS), NHL Hockey Real Person Fiction (RPF), Hockey Real Person Fiction (RPF). The oldest fan fiction in the Men's Hockey RPF tag, which includes any works initially posted under the earlier tags, was posted in 2008. The Men's Hockey RPF fandom tag developed later in order to differentiate itself from the burgeoning Women's Hockey RPF fandom (who had its first fan fiction posted using this tag on Archive of Our Own in 2013). Posting dates of fan fictions on the archive can be accessed through the archive's Sort and Filter options, selecting Date Posted and then going to the final page of results for the earliest fan fictions once you have selected a specific fandom.

truth and fantasy, molded into the shape of their real-but-not-real characters, offer particularly productive insight into the ontological fault lines at heart of stardom” and “integrate one or more of the mechanisms of public intimacy in order to question their promise of authentic access, and investigate the author’s ability to create, and therefore know, their own version of the celebrity in the liminal, semi-fictional space.”<sup>95</sup> Real Person Fan Fictions, therefore, reveal our lack of knowledge and our lack of intimacy with celebrities, while at the same time attempt to create or simulate that very knowledge and intimacy. Busse highlights this contradiction in RPF:

although many of the stories thematize the celebrities as fragmented selves without any core, often a sense remains that underneath there really, truly may be something that can be recovered or unearthed, most often with the discovery of romantic feelings. [RPF’s] cynical acknowledgment of our postmodern, constructed selves thus often seems to hide an interest in, if not desire for, a reality beyond the performative, for some central core that makes us special and defines who we are.<sup>96</sup>

This concern over identity fragmentation and performance applies to real regular people as well as celebrities and public figures. Busse rightfully points out that celebrities are appealing source material for this kind of reflection on identity construction and performance because “the discrepancy between the public and the ‘real’ self is significant at that level of public exposure.”<sup>97</sup> RPF authors can play with these contradictions, worries, and ideas through their stories, *and* ultimately and reassuringly resolve them by reaffirming the existence of a core real private self through its recognition and affirmation by a romantic partner. This resolution to the problems presented so glaringly by celebrity

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<sup>95</sup> Quotes from Retartha, Amanda G, ““You’re always running into people’s unconscious”: Public Intimacy and the Imagined Celebrity Self in Fiction,” PhD dissertation, New York University, 2014, 3-4.

<sup>96</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 54.

<sup>97</sup> Busse, “My Life Is a WIP,” 215.

culture is reassuring in two ways: 1) It reaffirms for the author/reader that they too have a core real self; 2) It provides the ultimate intimacy of having that core real self be known, recognized, and loved by someone else.

The inherent inaccessibility of a public figure's "real self" is mediated by RPF's imagined ability to "achiev[e] a type of authentic intimacy with their celebrity subjects."<sup>98</sup> RPF, while stated frequently by RPF authors as not being representative of reality or the celebrity's "real self,"<sup>99</sup> uses the body of all public record of these public figures — including but not limited to the public figure's social media, televised interviews, print interviews, their movies, their books, etc. — to construct a version of what they imagine the "real self" of the public figure could be.<sup>100</sup> This does not necessitate a sincere belief in the "realness" of what they are constructing.<sup>101</sup> Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fictions on AO3 often include a statement about the author's awareness that their fic does not depict reality and that they are not trying to depict reality in their beginning notes.<sup>102</sup> Busse further describes the inherent contradiction of writing RPF: It is "both about a collectively created fan space and about a desire to reach the private persona behind the public one; it functions in the constant paradox of being simultaneously real and constructed, of reveling in its own constructedness at the same time as it purports a clear connection to reality."<sup>103</sup> Real Person Fan Fiction authors thus construct a fictional private

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<sup>98</sup> Retartha, "'You're always running,'" 15.

<sup>99</sup> Retartha, "'You're always running,'" 13.

<sup>100</sup> Busse, "My Life Is a WIP," 216.

<sup>101</sup> Busse writes: "Unlike much of the tabloid press, which purports to tell the truth, [RPF] writers consciously declare their writing to be fictional and clearly separate their stories from rumors" ("My Life Is a WIP," 219-220).

<sup>102</sup> This confirms Retartha's statement that most RPF authors include a similar proviso at the beginning of their texts ("'You're always running,'" 13).

<sup>103</sup> Busse, "My Life Is a WIP," 216.

“real self” to exist behind the personae of the “real” public figure.<sup>104</sup> The exact relationship between this fictional private “real self” and the theoretical but unknown and inaccessible “real self” of the public figure cannot ever be actually known, only speculated upon. Retartha views this tension as Real Person Fan Fiction’s ability to “hover in the gray area between the success and failure of knowledge” in a way that “mirror[s] the fragility of intimacy, particularly of the elusive/illusive public intimacy” and that by writing these fics, “audiences/fans can variously construct their desired relationship with a celebrity, or mourn its existence as a construction.”<sup>105</sup> Both desires for intimacy and knowledge — that of the celebrity and that of the reader’s own self — mirror the idealized fantasy of forming the intimate relationship at the heart of intimatopia’s ideological framework, thus demonstrating a conceptual match between the concerns of Real Person Fan Fiction and those of Woledge’s intimatopia genre.

The use of the body of public record as material for constructing a fictional “real self” of the public figure creates a complicated relationship in regards to the old fan fiction distinctions between what is “canon” and what is “fanon.” Canon is defined as facts and information about a story, its world, and its characters that is included in the original source material, but is often slippery and hard to delineate from fanon, which is facts and information about the original source material created, circulated, and pervasively used within the fandom community.<sup>106</sup> Attempting to analogously apply the concept of canon to RPF runs into the slipperiness and thorniness of trying to determine

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<sup>104</sup> Busse, “My Life Is a WIP,” 219-220. She states: “[RPF] deals with at least three different versions of the celebrity: the real star whom we can never know, the public performance of the star, and the extrapolated star where the writer fictionalizes a supposed private life.”

<sup>105</sup> Quotes in this sentence from Retartha, ““You’re always running,”” 20-21.

<sup>106</sup> Busse and Hellekson, “Work In Progress,” 9.

what counts as “real” information about a real person because a real person’s life has no single authoritative source to whom questions of canon can be appealed. There is no author of a person’s life, and the sources for the bits of narrative material used by fic authors are not always produced — that is to say, written, or narrativized — by the real person themselves. They are observed, recorded, packaged, and distributed by many other various people and sources, including but not limited to their family, friends, agents, paparazzi, and news reporters. Since there is no single authoritative source to decide what is canon and what is not-canon, “the canon is created simultaneously by the celebrities, the media, and the fans...the authenticity of any canon fact is ultimately irrelevant. If the fans agree to treat given information as fact, if they collectively include it in their canon, it has become truth within the fannish universe, regardless of its objective truth status.”<sup>107</sup>

This explanation of canon formation within a Real Person Fan Fiction fandom reveals the instability of canon, and the instability of the persona of the public figure. In fact, the latter half of Busse’s explanation of RPF canon bears a closer resemblance to that of fanon rather than canon. However, the important difference for RPF versus other fan fiction subgenres is that fans are not creating fanon *instead* of using canon; they are creating fanon because there is no canon of “objective truth.” This is partially because the fans do not and cannot have access to enough information from a single authoritative source about the “canon” of their public figure, but also because real people are not living according to a demand for narrative and characterization consistency. RPF is thus always a kind of “Alternate Universe (AU),”<sup>108</sup> and can never truly be “Canon Compliant”

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<sup>107</sup> Busse, “My Life Is a WIP,” 215.

<sup>108</sup> Pugh, Sheenagh, *The Democratic Genre: Fan Fiction in a literary context*, Reprint 2015, Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 2005, 242.

because there is no true canon — everything a fic author writes is only a variation on the performance they see and interpret. When the “Canon Compliant” or “Canon Divergence” tags on Archive of Our Own are used for Real Person Fan Fictions, what they are really indicating is either adherence to or divergence from the generally accepted interpretations and narratives of the public figure’s real performance and persona(e). This is not the same as fanon, which could contradict the generally accepted ‘real’ version of the public figure’s performance and persona (i.e., the “canon”). The distinctions between what is canon, not-canon, and fanon in Real Person Fan Fiction reveal the complex relationship between reality and performance that is inherent to the lives of public figures, and to a lesser extent, the lives of the ordinary people who write these stories.<sup>109</sup>

My fan fiction’s specific fandom of Men’s Hockey RPF began in the mid-2000s and has grown immensely since then.<sup>110</sup> However, since it and its parent subgenre of fan fiction, Real Person Fan Fiction, are so new, Men’s Hockey RPF has not received much specific scholarly study or attention yet. Currently, there is only one academic article on Men’s Hockey RPF, which is Milena Popova’s 2017 article, ““When the RP gets in the way of the F”: Star Image and intertextuality in real person(a) fiction.” She has since turned that article into a chapter in her recent 2021 monograph, *Dubcon: Fanfiction, Power, and Sexual Consent*. There is also a forthcoming PhD dissertation from the University of Waterloo PhD candidate, Elise Vist, titled “Longing for Queerness in the NHL: Intimate Fandoms and Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction,” which Popova cites in her monograph, but is yet unavailable publicly or to me. My thesis would thus provide much needed research on the Men’s Hockey RPF fandom.

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<sup>109</sup> Busse, “My Life Is a WIP,” 207.

<sup>110</sup> Coppa, “A Brief History,” 42-59; see also Footnote 108.

In both her article and subsequent book chapter, Popova examines the complex relationship between the celebrity's public image, real self, and RPF character as constructed by the archontic collection of fan fiction texts. Her results indicate that despite the continual adoption and adaptation of characteristics and events from both the celebrity's real life and their various fan fiction lives, there are some real-life events that cause ruptures and absences in the archive of the RPF character, as they are not able to be integrated into the archive of the character. In other words, the 'canon' events cannot be 'fanon-ed' into something acceptable in the fandom archive, so either its canonicity must be denied and therefore excluded from the archive, or its canonicity must be accepted but left as a powerfully silent absence in the archive. Popova's article and book chapter address a critical aspect of the ethical implications of RPF generally, and Men's Hockey RPF specifically — the question of how connected the fan fiction archive's character actually is to the real public figure that inspired it, and what implications the strength or weakness of this connection has for the RPF community. Her work offers an important new direction of the study of Real Person Fan Fiction.<sup>111</sup>

Just as Real Person Fan Fiction concerns itself primarily with imagining a particular "real self" of a public figure's persona using bits and pieces of their public performance, Men's Hockey RPF engages with the personae of professional hockey players, primarily those in the NHL. A player's "canon" material can include game footage, media interviews before, during, and after games, the players's personal social

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<sup>111</sup> Popova, Milena, "“When the RP gets in the way of the F”: Star Image and intertextuality in real person(a) fiction," *Transformative Works and Cultures*, vol. 25 (2017). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3983/twc.2017.1105>; Popova, Milena, "Blurred Lines: From Fiction to Real Life," in *Dubcon: Fanfiction, Power, and Sexual Consent*, 91-116. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2021.

media content, as well as the extraneous media and presence of the players through things like sponsorship deals and ads. Special hockey events like the Winter Olympics, the All-Star Weekend, and the International Ice Hockey Federation's (IIHF) World Championship, provide more content for fans of the sport. This content is often constructed into a narrative before it undergoes further and different narrativization by fic authors because the NHL requires fans to pay money to watch games, and this requires an emotional investment in specific teams and/or specific players.<sup>112</sup> Creating a narrative around a team or player makes it easier for emotional and financial loyalty to a team to be sold to people, which makes it easier to turn them into reliable fans.<sup>113</sup> Thus, even though professional hockey players are not celebrities in the same way as actors and musicians, they are similarly made to perform a persona in order to create an emotional connection between themselves and what they represent (e.g., their specific team) as part of their professional career. The narratives created around these players and teams provide rich material for creating other narratives in fic, which often uses those narratives and their components to construct a totally different and oppositional narrative than the "official" ones not created by fic authors.

The sport and culture of professional hockey lend themselves to several themes, plots, and characterizations that are frequently explored in Men's Hockey RPF.<sup>114</sup> As it is beyond the scope of this thesis, I have not completed an in-depth statistical study of the frequency of these tropes. My generalizations will not be representative of the whole tag

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<sup>112</sup> Popova, "When the RP." For an example of the narrativization of professional hockey players, see Canucks, "Vancouver Canucks – Heroes Return," YouTube. October 26, 2021, video, 4:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1t4kFmkqos>.

<sup>113</sup> Popova, ""When the RP."

<sup>114</sup> hrpfunfortunately, "why hockey rpf?", Tumblr post.



or the whole fandom because of the vast array of different mediums besides AO3 available to fans, and because of the vast array of different fics present in the tag. In general terms, the Tumblr blog, hrpfunfortunately, which posted Men's Hockey RPF commentary and recommendations, made a post that summarizes the broad categories of appeal that men's professional hockey has for fic authors; this post matches my experiences within the fandom as author and reader: 1) The physical and sexual appeal of hockey players as relatively young, physically fit, sometimes good-looking men, or at least good-looking bodies; 2) The homoeroticism of sports and of hockey in particular; 3) Hockey culture as an emotionally heightened experience with high risk and high reward that leaves the door open to explore the consequences of the culture as it is, and the possibilities if the culture were changed; 4) The concept of retirement and its impact on players's mental health, physical health, and sense of identity, family, and purpose without professional hockey, as contrasted with their intense devotion to the sport prior to retirement; 5) The importance of the body for professional hockey players, which lends itself to the exploration of body-related concepts like gender, sex, identity, injury, and the expression and experience thereof; 6) Hockey players often do not present a strong personality in their public personae and so are the perfect balance between a blank slate to project a variety of possible "real selves" onto and a vague suggestion of a "real self" that can be built into distinct character types.<sup>115</sup> While Men's Hockey RPF has not yet been studied as a literary subgenre with specific textual features, this fan-created list of textual features begins an intra-fandom literary analysis of Men's Hockey RPF as a subgenre.

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<sup>115</sup> hrpfunfortunately, "why hockey rpf?", Tumblr post.

Real Person Fan Fiction has historically been a much-maligned subgenre of fandom and fan fiction because of its focus on real public figures, rather than on fictional characters, and its failure to properly account for the subgenre's more complicated ethical considerations, which reflects badly on the fan fiction community as a whole.<sup>116</sup> The accepted practices of behaviour for RPF fans can vary immensely depending on which fandom they belong to as well as their own personal perspectives. There are no official or clear-cut rules for how to engage in an RPF fandom respectfully, only small pockets of established practices and opinions, and each participant in an RPF fandom must learn to navigate these varied and ever-changing ethical considerations to their own comfort and ability.

Busse discusses the kind of negative backlash fans, particularly female fans, face when their fannish love is directed at the source material, "for the wrong reasons and in the wrong way."<sup>117</sup> This backlash signals their love's two transgressive qualities: 1) It is expressive of female sexuality and desire; 2) It displays excessive affect.<sup>118</sup> Busse gives an example of the contrast between the "masculinized" and "feminized" ways to be a fan of the movie trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*.<sup>119</sup> This contrast is even more strongly apparent when we look at professional hockey. Men's Hockey RPF has these same two transgressive qualities because it frequently takes the form of explicit sexual content about professional hockey players. Players are popular in the fandom because of the

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<sup>116</sup> Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 13; Busse, "My Life Is a WIP," 214-216; Arrow, V. "Real Person(a) Fiction," in *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, ed. Anne Jamison Dallas, Texas, BenBella Books Inc., 2013, 323-325.

<sup>117</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 195.

<sup>118</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 195.

<sup>119</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 193-195.

appeal of their physical bodies,<sup>120</sup> not only for what their bodies can do on the ice. Their narratives, personalities, and personal relationships with other players provide the “canon” and “fanon” material and are what primarily drives fandom interest in players and their teams, instead of their skills or odds at winning the Stanley Cup. Not only does this contrast starkly with the traditionally white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, male hockey fan, but it runs perilously close to the traditional and derogatory “puck bunny” stereotype. Puck bunny is a derogatory term used to refer to women who watch hockey because they are attracted to the male player’s bodies as well as their fame and skill, and act like a type of groupie.<sup>121</sup> As Michael Buma states in his monograph, *Refereeing Identity: The Cultural Work of Canadian Hockey Novels* (2012), male hockey players, as represented in Canadian hockey novels, divide women into two categories: puck bunnies and wives.<sup>122</sup> Women, in Canadian hockey novels, are portrayed as being physically weaker and unable to play the game as well and as “unable to fully grasp the glory of the game.”<sup>123</sup> Hockey is “a man’s game” which only leaves room for women to be wives or puck bunnies, not fans or — even worse — fans of the game who also feel and express sexual desire without actually marrying or having sex with the players. Men’s Hockey RPF steers the gendered and sexist assumptions about women and men in hockey culture and traditional hockey fandom into a collision with the already gendered and sexist stereotypes about male and female media fans. When feminized<sup>124</sup> and often queer —

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<sup>120</sup> I use the word appeal instead of attractiveness because readers and authors in the fandom have a wide variety of gender and sexual identities and are not necessarily sexually or romantically attracted to the players they write about.

<sup>121</sup> Buma, Michael, *Refereeing Identity: The Cultural Work of Canadian Hockey Novels*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012, 250.

<sup>122</sup> Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 250-251.

<sup>123</sup> Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 230.

<sup>124</sup> I use the word “feminized” here instead of “female” in order to reflect the stereotypes about fan fiction writers and readers and fan fiction’s historical roots as a genre made by women for women, while also

whether by gender and/or sexuality — participants in the Men’s Hockey RPF fandom engage with hockey, they are doing so in a way that transgresses established gendered practices of how women should be fans of media and how women should engage with the sport of hockey and its players — they love and admire the sport, they speak intelligently about the statistics and strategies of the game; they also write sexually explicit content about the players and repurpose their public narratives in order to create emotionally and physically affective stories with themes that flatly contradict the sport’s traditional, public, perception and presentation.

In addition to the more conceptual reasons for backlash against Real Person Fan Fiction and Men’s Hockey RPF specifically, there are practical ethical considerations to be accounted for. As it is outside the scope of this thesis to provide a full analysis of the ethical questions involved in RPF and Men’s Hockey RPF, I will limit myself to detailing the specific steps I have taken in order to account for common ethical considerations. As a member of the Men’s Hockey RPF community, I distinguish between the public personae that I, and other members of the community, read and write about, and the real people behind these personae. In order to maintain this separation between the world of RPF and the real world of the public figures, most hockey fics are Archive-locked.<sup>125</sup> Archive-locked fan fictions are only visible and available to people with an Archive of Our Own account.<sup>126</sup> This prevents the sharing or accidental finding of these fics outside

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acknowledging the variety of gender identities and experiences Men’s Hockey RPF writers and readers have.

<sup>125</sup> Using my AO3 account, I am able to compare the number of Men’s Hockey RPF fics available when I am not logged in (12, 919) versus when I am logged in (26, 533) to see the difference. This means that there are 13, 614 archive-locked fics, which is over half of the fics in that tag/fandom (Statistics taken from AO3 on March 28 2021).

<sup>126</sup> “Terms of Service,” *ArchiveofOurOwn*, approved May 2018, <https://archiveofourown.org/media>. Accessed March 31, 2021.

of the community and follows the community maxim of keeping fandom content within fandom spaces. My own fics, including *A Good Place to Disappear*, are Archive-locked. Unlike my fic, this thesis will be technically publicly available, which does bring the Men's Hockey RPF fandom and my fic specifically, into the public, transgressing the community maxim to keep fandom content within fandom spaces. I have struggled with this problem, but have concluded that the academic space of fandom and fan fiction studies is an appropriately fandom-related space within which to allow this content to exist and that presenting this research in an academic space may hopefully contribute some good to the fandom space from which this content comes. Of course, having this thesis publicly available does make it more likely for someone outside of fandom spaces to identify the non-RPF romance novel version as having begun as a fan fiction — if the non-RPF version were to be published — thereby being able to bring the fandom content into non-fandom spaces. This is a possibility I must acknowledge, but I believe and hope that it is unlikely to occur. If it were to occur, I would hope that non-fandom and fandom people alike would respect the privacy and dignity of the public figures mentioned herein and not force them to view, interact with, or comment on fandom content not intended for people outside of the fandom community.

Another ethical consideration that comes from Archive-locking one of this thesis's primary texts is my inclusion of reader comments from the fan fiction. Archive-locking my fic creates the implication that the fic, as well as any comments posted on it, are private to that particular fandom space, despite the archive's Terms of Service stating

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that all comments are public.<sup>127</sup> Even on non-Archive-locked fan fictions, comments feel like private messages between the reader and the author, despite their public existence and the fact that other readers likely read other comments. I do consider the reader comments on my fan fiction as messages to me and as part of my fan fiction's paratext, which is why I have chosen to include them in this thesis. I would not presume to do so with the comments on someone else's Archive-locked fan fiction. I have chosen to anonymize the usernames of the readers who commented, in order to remove their private online identities from this publicly available thesis. While internet usernames are not necessarily real personal information, they function as names for people's online lives and personae, and so I have chosen to protect them as if they were real names. These are the main steps I have taken to address the most prominent ethical questions surrounding Real Person Fan Fiction and Men's Hockey RPF. The ethical questions discussed here demonstrate many of the reasons why the Men's Hockey RPF fandom and traditional hockey sport fandom are so separate, despite their shared love for the sport.

### **Canadian Hockey Literature**

This shared focus on hockey also connects Men's Hockey RPF to Canadian hockey literature. Canadian hockey literature has received academic attention, primarily for its relationship to the ways in which hockey is used to support ideas of a (white)

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<sup>127</sup> "Terms of Service."

Canadian national identity and masculinity.<sup>128</sup> After surveying 94 Canadian hockey novels, Buma concludes that the current (2012) function of most hockey novels is to buttress the national Canadian and masculine identities while they are in crisis.<sup>129</sup> He states that the best hockey novels, however, are “resonant, entertaining, engaging, and acutely descriptive of the game.” Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fictions can also be “resonant, entertaining, engaging, and acutely descriptive of the game.”<sup>130</sup> But rather than use these qualities to buttress a Canadian national and masculine identity, Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fictions often already do what Buma hopes Canadian hockey novels can do in the future: They are “artistic outliers that stand apart and creatively question” as they “embrace and expand on these finer qualities while exposing, opposing, and defying the limiting terms of the hockey myth.”<sup>131</sup>

In addition to enacting Buma’s hopes for future Canadian hockey novels, Men’s Hockey RPF is produced within a vastly different social and economic context than Canadian hockey literature. Jason Blake, author of the monograph, *Canadian Hockey Literature: A Thematic Study* (2010), and Buma, do not include texts from outside traditional media publishing frameworks, like Men’s Hockey RPF, as part of their primary texts.<sup>132</sup> Blake emphasizes the connection between the real discussions within the Canadian hockey world and the discussions that play out within the fictional Canadian hockey worlds of Canadian hockey literature; he remarks in his conclusion that:

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<sup>128</sup> See Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, and Blake (Blake, Jason, *Canadian Hockey Literature: A Thematic Study*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). For research into the relationship between Indigenous masculinity and hockey in Canada, see the following in the bibliography: Robidoux, Wagamese, Cairnie, Miroux, and Robinson.

<sup>129</sup> Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 265.

<sup>130</sup> Repeated quote from Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 271.

<sup>131</sup> Quotes in this sentence from Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 270-271.

<sup>132</sup> Blake, *Canadian Hockey*, 241-256; Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 301-304.

discussing hockey in literature without considering hockey as a general cultural phenomenon is not possible. The various focal points of the individual chapters – hockey as a symbol of Canada, a utopian play-world, a violent game, the crux of national identity, and a formidable family link – are all themes common to discussions of real, played hockey in Canada... [these texts] are each informed by and add to general hockey discourse in Canada.<sup>133</sup>

Men's Hockey RPF has a similar, perhaps even stronger connection to the real hockey world and its discussions because it uses both as source material to rewrite and transform in its stories. However, the themes and commentary on these events and discussions are shaped by a very different social context and perspective (primarily queer and gender-marginalized) than traditionally published, mainstream, Canadian hockey literature, as was discussed earlier in this introduction. Another major difference in the social context between Canadian hockey literature and Men's Hockey RPF is that Men's Hockey RPF is international in the scope of the nationality of the teams and players it features, and in the identities of its authors and readers. Hockey is no longer "Canada's game" and it no longer reflects only the Canadian experience.

These differences between how Men's Hockey RPF and Canadian hockey literature handle hockey in their narratives are not minor. Just as Kaplan signaled the significance of a queer relationship being "mapped onto the heterosexual narrative of the romance,"<sup>134</sup> the transformations that occur when the sport of hockey and its players are written into a Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction are significant, not the least because of their radical and antinormative potential. It is because of these radical differences in production, social context, and cultural meaning between Canadian hockey

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<sup>133</sup> Blake, *Canadian Hockey*, 209.

<sup>134</sup> Kaplan, "Why would any woman," 123.



literature and Men's Hockey RPF, that I position them as two parallel genres responding to the same sport, rather than as an integrated strand of the same literary tradition.

### **Woledge's Intimatopia Genre**

A genre encompassing both traditionally published mainstream texts and fan fictions, yet most often overlooked in studies of fan fiction, slash fic, and the romance novel, is Woledge's intimatopia genre. Intimatopic texts, as mentioned earlier in this introduction, prioritize the creation and development of intimacy between characters through an exclusive, and reciprocal relationship that blends love, friendship, and intimacy and features moderated eroticism and mental and physical unity. These texts can be ambiguous, meaning that content with erotic cues ambiguously blends love, friendship, and intimacy together in ways that do not make the texts explicitly sexual. They can also be sexually intimatopic, meaning that they contain explicitly sexual content that blends love, friendship, and intimacy together. Woledge does not clarify if ambiguous intimatopic texts always depict *romantic* relationships; she stresses that intimatopic texts straddle the cultural faultline between the intimate and the sexual (i.e. the assumption that what is intimate must be sexual), and that ambiguous intimatopic texts reject attempts to categorize their intimacy as inherently sexual.<sup>135</sup> I consider, based on the rest of Woledge's definition — particularly the exclusive nature of the intimate bond — all intimatopic texts to depict a romantic relationship, regardless of whether or

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<sup>135</sup> Information in this paragraph from Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 5, 103, 100-102, 124.

not that has been explicitly clarified within the text itself. In a genre that deliberately blends love, friendship, and intimacy, sometimes without specifying what kind of love (i.e., platonic or non-platonic), it is perhaps counter to the spirit of ambiguous intimatopias for me to apply a clear categorization of these texts as romantic, but the intimatopia genre is a fitting addition to the larger category of the ‘love story’ mentioned by Regis,<sup>136</sup> with some overlap with the romance novel genre.

Intimatopia, unlike the romance novel genre, is thus defined by its ideological framework of centering and prioritizing intimacy, and not by a specific narrative structure. However, Woledge finds patterns of recurring cues, both social and erotic, that are used to denote and create intimacy between the two characters in the intimatopic texts she examined. These patterns are the textual features that are not always required by the genre, but are frequently used within it to develop the intimate relationship. Some of these textual features overlap with those attributed by previous scholarship to slash fic or to the romance novel. In deciding which genre is responsible for the appearance of these textual features, I considered whether any of the genres *required* that textual feature, and if the textual feature serves the ideological framework of a particular genre. For example, sexual intimatopic texts *require* their explicit sexual content to blend love, friendship, and intimacy together.<sup>137</sup> Slash fic and Men’s Hockey RPF, by contrast, only *frequently* contain explicit sexual content that blends love, friendship, and intimacy together. Anne Kustritz, in her article on slash fic, also states that this subgenre uses a “friendship-based love narrative, along with an equality-centered relationship dynamic;” she views this as

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<sup>136</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 50.

<sup>137</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 5, 103.

characteristic of slash fic, counter to the portrayal of sexual content in romance novels and pornography. Kustritz also states that while slash “narratives include graphic depictions of sex, they also invert the common structures of pornography...Sex in a slash narrative always occurs within some kind of emotional context, but of particular interest is the fact that sex always has direct and dramatic emotional ramifications.”<sup>138</sup> However, since the sexual intimatopic text requires this subordination of the sexual to the intimate and must prioritize the blending of intimacy with love and friendship, Kustritz’s noted textual features of slash fic are actually textual features of the intimatopia genre. Woledge herself notes that slash fic’s explicit sexual content has been emphasized in studies, “whilst the crucial structures of intimacy which surround and support it have largely been ignored.”<sup>139</sup> Woledge then posits that “it is perhaps this bias towards focusing on sexual aspects that has led to slash fiction being considered in a class of its own rather than as the amateur end of a spectrum of works by women, all of which centre around the notion of male intimacy.”<sup>140</sup> By separating the intimatopic sexual content from the slash fic subgenre, I would argue that these textual features demonstrate the intersection of three genres within the text: slash fic, fan fiction, and intimatopia.

Intimatopia can intersect with the genre requirements of fan fiction, slash fic, pornography, and the romance novel. A sexual intimatopic text can subordinate pornography’s goal to produce sexual arousal to its ideological framework by including explicitly descriptive scenes of sexual activity that also serve to develop and emphasize intimacy between the characters. Pornography cannot, however, intersect with the

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<sup>138</sup> Quotes and information from Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 377-378.

<sup>139</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 16.

<sup>140</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 16.

ambiguous intimatopic text, as pornography requires explicit sexual content, which is not present in ambiguous intimatopic texts.<sup>141</sup> Intimatopic texts can also work with the romance novel's goal to symbolically restore order to societal and psychic disorder through the courtship and long-term, stable relationship of two characters, as long as this courtship and betrothal are subordinate to the creation of intimatopia's reciprocal and exclusive romantic relationship blending love, friendship, and intimacy between the courting characters. Intimatopic texts can easily meet the requirements of fan fiction, slash fic, and Men's Hockey RPF by transforming material created and often owned by someone else, centering a queer relationship between men, and by featuring characters based on the public personae of professional hockey players.<sup>142</sup> As long as intimacy between the main characters in the romantic relationship is prioritized and furthered in this particular manner, intimatopic texts can intersect with many different genres and subgenres. The propensity for intimatopic sexual content in slash fic and Men's Hockey RPF fan fiction, but not in romance novels or pornography, suggests that the intimatopia genre more frequently intersects with those two subgenres of fan fiction than with the romance novel or pornography; an investigation into this phenomenon is a good area for further study.

Besides the sexual content used in sexual intimatopic texts, there are several other textual features that are frequently used to develop and indicate intimacy between the characters. These textual features are not required by the genre, but the presence of many

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<sup>141</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 100-102.

<sup>142</sup> The fan fiction genre requires that a story "rewrites and transforms other stories," while "outside of the literary marketplace," and "within and to the standards of a particular fannish community" (Coppa, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 2, 4, 7); the slash fan fiction subgenre requires the same, as well as the depiction of a romantic and/or sexual relationship between two men; Men's Hockey RPF requires the same as the fan fiction genre as well as the use of real professional hockey players as characters.

of these textual features flag the possibility that the text intersects with the intimatopia genre. The interpersonal intimacy developed between the characters is often done within “ambiguous homosocial contexts”<sup>143</sup> and privatizes this interpersonal intimacy;<sup>144</sup> it occurs within the ambiguous homosocial context, but the intimacy is exclusive to the characters who are intimate. Both this context and the Hurt/Comfort stories — here defined as a plot structure where “one character is given a hard time physically, emotionally or both before being consoled/rehabilitated by another”<sup>145</sup> — are used to justify “expressions of tenderness between men that might, in other circumstances, seem homoerotic in nature”<sup>146</sup> and also to “enable[e] the characters to combine physicality with intimacy and to overcome their inhibitions.”<sup>147</sup> Their privatized intimacy is reinforced by the frequent positioning of the characters as social outcasts within their larger society, as the development of their intimacy contrasts strongly with their prior outcast status.<sup>148</sup> Their intimacy is facilitated by face-to-face communication and reciprocal emotional openness and sharing between the characters; these behaviours contribute to the characterization of the typically male characters as gender-blended men who exhibit “stereotypically feminine traits.”<sup>149</sup> Intimatopic texts also require the presence of moderated eroticism, meaning erotic cues and/or sexual content that is subordinate to intimacy, and the combination of physical and mental unity.<sup>150</sup> This unity and moderated eroticism frequently occur together during scenes of sexual content, as linguistic markers

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<sup>143</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 124.

<sup>144</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 115-116.

<sup>145</sup> Pugh, *Democratic Genre*, 243.

<sup>146</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 95.

<sup>147</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 178.

<sup>148</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 147-148.

<sup>149</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 111-112, 124.

<sup>150</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 124.

of physical and mental unity are combined as part of the description of the sexual activity,<sup>151</sup> thereby subordinating the eroticism of the sexual content to the intimacy that it produces. This summary of frequent textual features of intimatopic texts reveals some of the intersections between the intimatopia genre and slash fic, the romance novel, and pornography. These textual features also overlap quite strongly with hrpfunfortunately's fan-made list of Men's Hockey RPF's thematic attractions, which suggests that intimatopia is a genre that is highly compatible with Men's Hockey RPF specifically, in addition to fan fiction and slash fic.

## **Conclusion**

Through my examination of the intersections of the various genres and subgenres working in my fan fiction, and the textual features they require and frequently use, I have determined that my fan fiction is a combination of the genres of fan fiction, the romance novel, pornography, and intimatopia, and three subgenres of fan fiction: slash fic, Real Person Fan Fiction, and Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction. The romance novel genre is what provides the text's narrative structure and ideological framework of reordering a disordered society and self; fan fiction provides the social context of the text's production, characters, and focus on queerness; slash fic provides the relationship between two queer men; Real Person Fan Fiction provides its focus on the difference between the 'real self' and public persona; Men's Hockey RPF lends the personae of real

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<sup>151</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 210-212.

professional hockey players, its focus on the consequences of hockey's homophobic and toxically masculine culture, and its focus on the body as a source of injury, attractiveness, sexuality, and identity; pornography provides its explicit sexual content for the purpose of producing arousal in the reader. While it is possible to consider my fic and its non-RPF version as Canadian hockey literature because of its Canadian setting, characters, and the central role of hockey in the story, both texts's lack of integration into the social, cultural, and production contexts of Canadian hockey literature positions this literature as a parallel yet separate genre that deals with similar themes and content but in radically different ways. Intimatopia, the most critical genre intersecting in my two stories, provides the ideological framework that centers the development of an exclusive, reciprocal, romantic relationship that is a mix of love, friendship, and intimacy. Intimatopia structures my fan fiction and its revised non-RPF version in such a way that the society and characters's selves are reordered by and around the exclusive intimacy of this romantic relationship.

This intimacy — critical to the textual features and content of my fic and its revision as a romance novel — is also critical to the social context in which my fic was produced. After analyzing the content, frequency, and number of author/reader comments on my fan fiction, I discovered that the readers primarily read my fic in order to form an emotional relationship with the text. Only after that primary relationship was established did they also form a secondary intimate relationship with me as the author. This contrasts with my experience as the author, in which I published my text on AO3 primarily to form an emotional relationship with my readers in order to become part of that specific fandom community. The emotional relationship between the readers and the text was created

through the affective power of the text itself, as readers left comments when the text made them feel something. The text's affective power was reinforced by intimatopia's insistence on the primacy of the intimate and blending intimacy with love and friendship. There is thus a conceptual link between the textual features required by the genre of intimatopia, and the context of my fic's social production. While my examination of author/reader comments did not reveal any major editorial or stylistic impact from readers, the extratextual social form of the fic's production strongly encouraged the incorporation of elements more likely to provoke strong emotional responses in the reader, like those of the intimatopia genre. It is thus appropriate to argue that analysis of my fan fiction and its production reveal a strong compatibility between the genres of fan fiction and the intimatopia. The romance novel genre does not require the use of the intimatopia or fan fiction genres, but is compatible with combinations of these genres; as occurred in my fic and its non-RPF version, suggesting potential future shifts in the ideological frameworks of romance novels, as more fan fictions are revised and published as mainstream texts.

In this thesis, I attempt to describe and explain in a clear, linear fashion, how this web of interconnected ideas, emotions, genres, and communities interact with each other using my fan fiction, *A Good Place to Disappear*, the fic's Men's Hockey RPF community on Archive of Our Own, and its revised, non-RPF romance novel version, *Compass Points North*, as my primary texts. Linked together through intimacy and affective power, the interactions of these genres can be said to echo affect theory itself, which "emerges out of muddy, unmediated relatedness and not in some dialectical



reconciliation of cleanly oppositional elements or primary units, it makes easy compartmentalisms give way to thresholds and tensions, blends and blurs.”<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Seigworth and Gregg, “Inventory of Shimmers,” 4.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Intimacy on the Ice – From Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction to Non-RPF Hockey Romance Novel*

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the ways in which the genres pertinent to *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* can interact in theory because of compatibility between some of their textual features. This chapter examines the genre intersections present in *A Good Place to Disappear* and the revisions made to it to turn this fan fiction into the non-RPF romance novel, *Compass Points North*. Each section examines a specific subcategory of textual features summarized in Appendix A: Required & Frequent Textual Features of Genres Summary Tables. These tables consolidate my research into the fan fiction, romance novel, intimatopia, pornography, and Canadian hockey literature genres and the RPF, slash fic, and Men’s Hockey RPF subgenres; they distinguish which textual features are *required* by each genre, and which are *frequently* used by each genre. By applying this genre research to my specific primary text stories, I provide a more in-depth application of this collective research, which often lacks the specificities that a case study-like approach can offer.

Using these different categories of textual features, I make three arguments: 1) Both the fan fiction, *A Good Place to Disappear*, and the non-RPF romance novel, *Compass Points North*, are intimatopic romance novels in which intimatopia’s ideological framework provides the *method* by which self and society are reordered, and

the *description* of the reordered self and society. Intimatopia's ideological framework thereby gives method and description to the romance novel's ideological framework of reordering disorder through a romantic relationship. 2) Fan fictions can also be romance novels; therefore, the genres are not diametrically opposed, but represent two genres that can operate using the same narrative structure. These genres, while able to share the same narrative structure, do have different social and economic conditions of production, which in turn can produce important differences in their meanings and textual features. A key difference I noted for my specific texts is the way their fan fiction community structure encouraged and reinforced the use of the intimatopia genre more so than traditionally published mainstream romance novels. 3) The process of revising a fan fiction into a non-RPF romance novel for mainstream, traditional publication is not only possible but also an important vehicle for the intermixing and sharing of different community standards and textual features between the genres of fan fiction and romance novels.

### **Textual Features: Other**

The first subcategory of textual features I will discuss is the most general, as it summarizes the "textual features" of a text's production and social context. While a text's production and social context may not be a "textual feature" in the strictest sense of the term, I have included them in my appendix and study because of their importance to the genres and subgenres relevant to this thesis, particularly to fan fiction. The significance of the social context of fan fiction has been noted earlier in my discussion of Busse's work,

and its significance has guided my work here. My emphasis on the relationship between the literary and the social, however, does not assume, and indeed, does not find, that the importance of the social context to the text renders the text meaningless outside of its original context. This is where I diverge from Busse; she argues that fan fiction needs its social context in order to have “its meaning,”<sup>153</sup> which suggests — whether intentionally or not — fan fiction, as a text, cannot have a meaning in its own right, without its social context. If this were true, it would render the process of revising and traditionally publishing the revised fan fiction pointless, or at the very least, imply that any revised and traditionally published fan fictions substantially lack meaning. While the process of revision must change certain aspects of the original fan fiction, the fic itself must have some innate meaning as a story outside of its original context in order to have the potential to be revised and removed from its fan fiction context.

Others scholars share Busse’s viewpoint on fan fiction’s non-viability as a traditionally published, mainstream text; Samutina, in her examination of fan fiction readers’s reading practices and strategies, goes so far as to say:

Even though reworked fan fiction romances have been sometimes published to great acclaim (*Fifty Shades of Grey* presents here a notorious example), the best — according to the criteria of this literary field — fan fiction texts cannot be published precisely due to their dependence on the networks of references created by the particular community incessantly working on expanding the archive of the ‘canon’.<sup>154</sup>

This judgment of fan fiction employs a subjective and unclear use of the adjective “best” — is it “best” as in “the best representative of what fan fiction is” or “the best objectively

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<sup>153</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 254.

based on literary merit” or “the best at doing the cultural and social tasks that fan fiction does”? This narrow understanding of the purpose(s) and possible functions of fan fiction, as compared to mainstream texts, seems to be illogically limiting scholarly understanding and appreciation for the possible movements between fan fiction and traditional, mainstream publication. While outside of the scope of this thesis to discuss more thoroughly, I believe it is highly likely that there are far more traditionally published, mainstream texts that were originally written as a fan fiction than currently known; the number of publicly known texts such as these is likely limited due to legal concerns over copyright or libel and concern over public censure. While I agree that revised and traditionally published fan fiction would lose its specifically fannish contextual meanings, it is possible for many fics to be revised, then traditionally published, while still having meaning and value as a text.<sup>155</sup> If I did not believe that my fic had a core of meaning that would still exist after I revised it into a non-RPF romance novel, I would not have pursued this option.

While I do acknowledge the importance of the historical and social context of the community that welcomed me and my fan fiction, I do not agree with Abigail de Kosnik’s critique of the practice of “filing off the serial numbers” and “pulling to publish.” de Kosnik critiqued this practice on the grounds that “Any work of fan fiction, no matter how splendidly written or laden with scandalous content, can only ever be properly understood as one of a vast archive. Unless and until commercial publishing can find a way to monetize archives of women’s culture, fan fiction cannot truly be said to

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<sup>155</sup> This may be too obvious of a point to say, but it does bear mentioning that not all fan fictions are the same and not all are suited to traditional, mainstream publication, whether for length, content, or style reasons.

have entered the mainstream.” This critique, like Busse and Samutina’s, seems to view fan fiction as only meaningful and only intelligible within its original context.

Considering how fan fiction itself provides endless new interpretive contexts that imbue old pieces of texts with new meaning, this stance appears deeply flawed. Contiguous with this aspect of her critique, de Kosnik also seems to hold individual authors responsible for educating and inducting new readers into the world of fan fiction and its archives. At the same time, she acknowledges that this is only possible in an overly idealistic future publishing industry where fan fictions may be published traditionally as mainstream texts without the need to strip it of its fan fiction identifiers in order to avoid copyright lawsuits and the like. If de Kosnik does believe, as she says, that fan fiction “should be allowed to generate income and fame for its makers,” then she must also accept that, in the world as it stands today, this necessitates authors “filing off the serial numbers” in order to access the fame and income available in the traditional, mainstream publishing industry.<sup>156</sup>

While the “serial numbers” of a fic must be “filed off” in order to be traditionally published, a fic is not only its identifying “serial numbers.” Through my analysis of my own revision process from fic to non-RPF romance novel, it has become clear how my fic was already a romance novel, and how its new form as a non-RPF romance novel still contains the same textual features of the fan fiction that made its readers respond. In fact, it is my hope that traditionally publishing my romance novel will bring these textual features from fan fiction into the romance novel genre. While it is regrettably not always possible or ethical to directly acknowledge fandoms and fan fiction in the traditionally

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<sup>156</sup> Quotes and summary of de Kosnik’s stance from de Kosnik, Abigail, “Fifty Shades and the archive of women’s culture,” *Cinema Journal* 54, no. 3 (2015), 124-125.

published text, the move from the fan fiction context to traditional and mainstream publication is an option that makes sense for some writers and fan fictions, and one that has the potential to create important new ways of writing and reading stories. Textual drift from fan fiction into mainstream genres, especially the romance novel genre, is an area rich in opportunity for further research. Viewing the process as only “filing off the serial numbers,” with its criminal and negative connotations, robs fan fiction authors of important avenues of success and mainstream genres of new ideas.

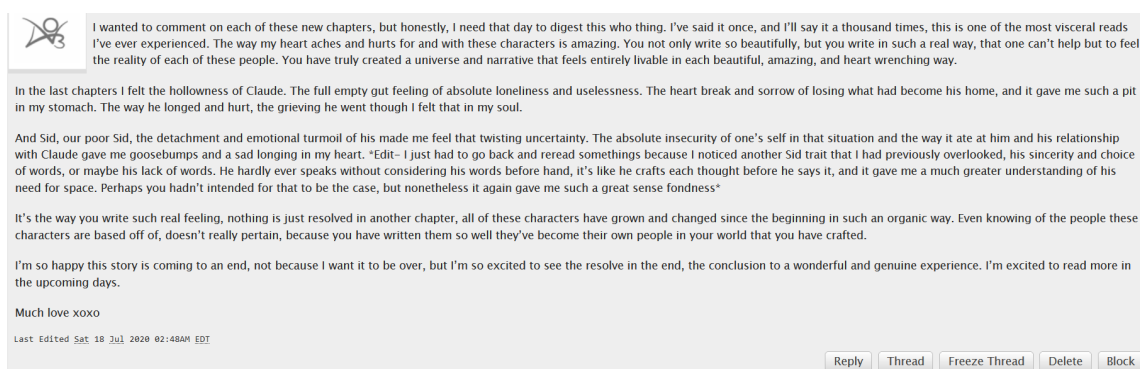
A textual feature that must be removed from a fan fiction in order to be published traditionally is the use of characters who are copyrighted or recognizably based on real people. Revising a fan fiction’s unoriginal characters requires the fic to have characters and a plot that makes sense outside of its fan fiction context. I decided that I wanted to revise *A Good Place to Disappear* specifically because I believed that this story and its characters would still have meaning outside of their fandom context. This belief was strengthened by some feedback I received from a reader on a later chapter of the fic; Reader Daffodil<sup>157</sup> commented (see Figure 1):

you write in such a real way, that one can’t help but to [sic] feel the reality of each of these people. You have truly created a universe and narrative that feels entirely liveable...Even knowing of the people these characters are based off of, doesn’t really pertain, because you have written them so well they’ve become their own people in your world that you have crafted.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction’s discussion of ethics, I have anonymized the usernames of the readers whose comments I quote in this thesis, in order to protect their fandom identities.

<sup>158</sup> Reader Daffodil. Comment on “Chapter 44: Life After Hockey” in *A Good Place to Disappear*, comment posted July 18, 2020 on *ArchiveofOurOwn*. Accessed March 11, 2022. Personal communication.



**Figure 1.** A screenshot of Reader Daffodil’s comment on Chapter 44 of *A Good Place to Disappear* on Archive of Our Own. Visually, this is how comments appear at the end of chapters or works on Archive of Our Own. Their username and the date stamp have been cropped out to preserve username anonymity (Vermeer 2021).

Reader Daffodil notes exactly what I believe about my fan fiction: that its textual universe and characters were written in such a way that they have an independent life outside of its fan fiction context. The fact that prior knowledge of the “canonical” and “fanonical” conceptions of Sidney Crosby and Claude Giroux was not necessary to understand their portrayal indicates that they have acquired their own meaning within my fan fiction. This contradicts Busse and Samutina’s arguments that fan fictions lose their meaning once removed from their fandom context.<sup>159</sup>

As indicated by Reader Daffodil’s comment, the core of my characters and story was able to exist independently from the fan fiction context. However, there were obviously still scenes containing fandom-specific moments that I changed or removed because of their identifying features and their reliance on prior knowledge of the “canonical” material for the Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux pairing. An example of this is in Chapter 12 of *A Good Place to Disappear* and its non-RPF counterpart, Chapter Five

<sup>159</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 3; Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 254.



of *Compass Points North*. In the fic, Sidney Crosby surprises Claude Giroux by asking him for a place to stay for the night after he has been discovered by fans in Desbarats.<sup>160</sup> The same plot event happens in *Compass Points North*, with Matthew Cavanaugh arriving at Jack Pozniak's farm.<sup>161</sup> In both chapters, they get into an argument about the rivalry they had when they both played in the NHL.<sup>162</sup> However, in the fic, there is a small paragraph in the middle of their argument that makes a reference to the "canonical" moment when Claude Giroux claimed that Sidney Crosby broke his wrists by slashing them, which Crosby later denied dismissively.<sup>163</sup> I will present the paragraph in its context so that the difference between the scene with it and without it is noticeable, beginning with Claude speaking to Sidney:

‘... You fed into their stupid rivalry bullshit; then turned around behind their back and made it perfectly clear that I wasn't fucking good enough to be ‘Sidney Crosby's' rival!’ That's not something I'm going to forget.’ He stopped, feeling his voice catch. He ripped his eyes away from Sid and tried to breathe normally.

Sid didn't say anything for a long time.

When Claude finally looked at him, he was staring at the stupid plate of the stupid meatballs and stupid potatoes that Claude had heated up for him, his face pale, his hands tight on his thighs.

Then he looked up and saw Claude's right hand, which had come up and started rubbing his left wrist instinctively. Sid's eyes jolted from Claude's thumb sweeping across his left wrist, then over to his right wrist. His face lost its tight edge and fell into a horrified understanding. He locked eyes with Claude, who startled when their eyes met, his hands dropping down to his sides under the table.

Sid swallowed, then said in a hoarse and pained voice. ‘Do you really believe that I think so little of you?’<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Vermeer, Lina. *A Good Place to Disappear*, *ArchiveofOurOwn*, published 4 May 2020, completed February 19, 2021, accessed March 27, 2021, in the author's possession, “Chapter 12: A Man Who Brought History.”

<sup>161</sup> Vermeer, Lina, *Compass Points North*, unpublished manuscript, Draft 3, completed 24 June 2021, in the author's possession, “Chapter Five: A Man Who Brought History.”

<sup>162</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 12; Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 5.

<sup>163</sup> Buikema, Will and Ryan Simmons, Phil Pasternak, Michael Das, “Beef History: Sidney Crosby vs. Claude Giroux,” SB Nation, Vox Media, November 11, 2019, accessed March 9, 2022, <https://www.sbnation.com/2019/11/11/20955990/flyers-penguins-rivalry-history-explained-sidney-crosby-claude-giroux-nhl-beef>.

<sup>164</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 12.

This paragraph incorporates this “canonical” moment into its plot and its RPF characters, reminding the reader of how far the characters have to go in order to build an intimate and loving relationship together. Sidney’s work to make amends is not just for his comments to the media about Claude, but is for a specific physical injury, which, in this fan fiction context, forms part of the internal barrier of Claude not believing that Sidney could love him.

While the argument between Matthew Cavanaugh and Jack Pozniak remains largely the same, this identifying paragraph is removed entirely, shifting the focus of their hatred onto the negative media comments made by Matthew about Jack, rather than on a physical injury.<sup>165</sup> Just before the part of their argument where the wrist paragraph appears in the fan fiction version, Jack tells Matthew:

‘... You fed into their stupid rivalry bullshit; then turned around behind their back and made it perfectly clear that I wasn’t fucking good enough to be ‘Matt Cavanaugh’s’ rival! That’s not something I’m going to forget.’ He stopped, feeling his voice catch. He ripped his eyes away from Cavanaugh and tried to breathe normally.

Cavanaugh didn’t say anything for a long time.

When Jack finally looked at him, Cavanaugh was staring at the stupid plate of stupid meatballs and stupid potatoes that Jack had heated up for him, his face pale, his hands tight on his thighs. He swallowed, then spoke in a hoarse, pained voice. ‘Do you really believe that I think so little of you?’<sup>166</sup>

In the fic, the emphasis is on the need to atone for the physical injury and all that it implies for their rivalry, rather than on what Claude says he is angry about, which is Sidney’s media comments. In *Compass Points North*, the removal of the wrist paragraph, while serving to remove identifying features and fandom-specific references, moves the

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<sup>165</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 5.

<sup>166</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 5.

focus onto Matthew's *words* as the source of harm, rather than his physical actions on the ice, because those words haunt him.<sup>167</sup> This dispute between the characters serves as a good example of how the overall sense of a scene can remain the same — the main character is angry at the other because of his dismissal of and derision for his skill as a hockey player — even after the fandom-specific references and identifying features have been removed.

The next important revisions I made were the streamlining of the plot and the lessening of the more unrealistic elements. The fan fiction's plot was more restricted as there were some "canonical" elements that had to be used in order for the fic to be a "Canon Divergence" and "Alternate Universe" fan fiction. For example, Claude Giroux is from Hearst but I also wanted Sidney Crosby to have been hiding in Desbarats, a small town on Highway 17 east of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. I wanted to have this setting because of my personal interest in that area of Northern Ontario and because I thought it was a better location for him to hide, as he could live amongst the Mennonite community there, who would not know who Sidney Crosby was. I therefore had to have Claude Giroux make a ludicrous 16-hour-long farmer's market route from Hearst to Sudbury, to Desbarats, to Sault Ste. Marie, and back up to Hearst. No farmer would ever drive this route to make money selling their wares, but this was accepted by my readers. This is likely due to a general ignorance of Northern Ontario's geography, but also because the geography and its lack of realism were not important to their enjoyment of the fic. Thus, in *Compass Points North*, Jack Pozniak lives in Dunn's Valley, a small community north of Bruce Mines, which is located on Highway 17, and a much more reasonable half an

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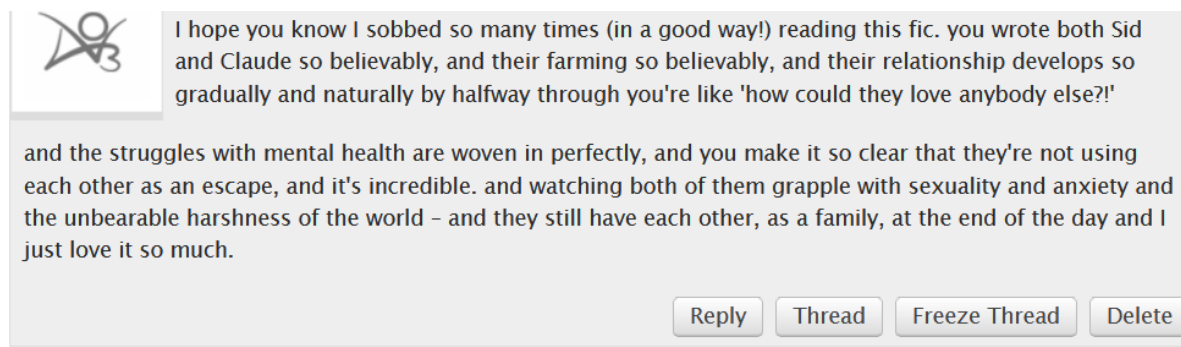
<sup>167</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 4-5.

hour away from Desbarats. This change of setting retained the core of the fan fiction's setting, which was a beef farm located in small-town Northern Ontario, but made it much more realistic and logical.

Another aspect of the fan fiction that needed to be changed was the immediacy of the feelings between the characters. While the ideological framework of intimatopia requires the development of intimacy and that of the romance novel requires the development of attraction and love between the two characters, the extent to which readers will believe in the development of this relationship varies. A romance novel, more than a fan fiction, must tread the line between presenting a desirable fantasy of a reordering of society and self through the formation of a romantic relationship, and presenting a *possible* reordering of society and self through such means. Of course, what readers believe is possible and desirable varies with each person, but the context of a text may permit a reader to believe more easily in a text that leans more towards the fantastical than the realistic. Real Person Fan Fiction tends to lean more towards the fantastical than the realistic; Men's Hockey RPF in particular — provided it is not a Reader Insert fic — begins from a “canon” that is clearly separate and different from the lives and experiences of its readers and authors, who are not, as far as I am aware, professional hockey players. There is therefore much more freedom from the requirements and expectations of realism.

As an example of this difference in context, I will contrast a reader comment on the realism of Claude and Sidney's relationship, and a comment from a beta reader on the relationship between Jack and Matthew. On the final chapter of the fan fiction, Reader Tulip commented that “you wrote both Sid and Claude so believably, and their farming

so believably, and their relationship develops so gradually and naturally by halfway through you're like 'how could they love anybody else?!'" (see Figure 2).<sup>168</sup>



**Figure 2.** Another example of a screenshot of Reader Tulip’s comment on Chapter 48 of *A Good Place to Disappear*. Username and date stamp have been cropped out to preserve anonymity of usernames (Vermeer 2021).

For Reader Tulip, the relationship depicted in the fan fiction was realistic in its slow development, and valued for that. By contrast, a beta reader said in their feedback that, “I think we need to know more about Jack and Matt's relationship before they both retired. I think the relationship can feel a bit insta-love at times, especially at the beginning, where it doesn't necessarily make sense for Matt to stay without us really understanding their past.”<sup>169</sup> Of course, a beta reader is supposed to read more critically than a general fan fiction reader, as they have been asked by the author to provide critical feedback to improve the text, and so they are reading with a different intention. Another important consideration of reader response, which will be explored more in the next chapter, is that my fic’s readers read primarily to have an emotional relationship with the text. Thus, the test of my fan fiction’s balance between fantasy and realism is not: Does it successfully

<sup>168</sup> Reader Tulip. Comment on chap. 48, comment posted July 2, 2021.

<sup>169</sup> Beta Reader. Email message to author, August 31, 2021.

depict a *possible* fantasy of reordered society and self through a romantic relationship? Instead, the test for my fan fiction is more accurately phrased as: Did this fan fiction make you believe — Did it make you feel? The non-RPF romance novel, in attempting to be published in a different reading context,<sup>170</sup> cannot rely on its readers, critics, and editors to read with the same criteria in mind as its fan fiction readers, and therefore has to reach a more even balance between fantasy and realism.

### Textual Features: Narrative Structure

Even prior to its revision, *A Good Place to Disappear* was a romance novel *and* a fan fiction because it was a work of prose depicting the courtship and betrothal of characters and it contained the eight essential narrative events of a romance novel (see Table 1).

<b>The Eight Essential Narrative Events of a Romance Novel in <i>A Good Place to Disappear</i></b>	
<b>Essential Narrative Events</b>	<b>Example from <i>A Good Place to Disappear</i></b>
<b>1) Society Defined</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both Sidney Crosby and Claude Giroux have left the world of professional hockey and the NHL under less-than-ideal circumstances and struggle to adapt to life without hockey; both are therefore outcasts from their former homosocial society<sup>171</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>170</sup> This is not to say that romance novel readers do not also read to be moved emotionally or that they do not form relationships with texts. While the specifics of how a fan fiction reader interacts with the text and the text's author is discussed in detail in the next chapter, a comparison between my results here, and a similar case study of a romance novel reading community would be another fruitful area for further research.

<sup>171</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 1-2.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claude is depressed and self-isolating while living on his farm in his hometown of Hearst, Ontario, the fan fiction's main setting<sup>172</sup></li> <li>• Both Claude and Sidney are impacted by homophobia in hockey and in their society generally<sup>173</sup></li> </ul>
<b>2) The Meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While not their first meeting in their lives, their first meeting in their courtship plot is when Claude surprises Sidney at his new, secret farm in Desbarats, not realizing that the farmer he was told to ask about gardening is Sidney<sup>174</sup></li> </ul>
<b>3) The Barrier</b>	<p>Since the fan fiction is written solely from third-person limited in Claude's perspective, the barriers are presented based on his perspective too:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External barriers: the threat of homophobia from society at large, the possible negative reactions from their friends and family because of their fears and dislike of the other due to their rivalry, possibility of Sidney's rejection of Claude due to his gender, their rivalry, his mental illness, Sidney's insecurity over Claude's relationship with Danny<sup>175</sup></li> <li>• Internal barriers: Claude's depression and anxiety, his guilt over ending his friendship with Danny and his sons, his lingering feelings for Danny, his disbelief that Sidney could love him and stay with him permanently, his fears of becoming intimate with someone<sup>176</sup></li> </ul>
<b>4) The Attraction</b>	A combination of physical attraction, friendship, shared backgrounds, and a desire for the same kind of life after hockey <sup>177</sup>
<b>5) The Declaration</b>	Both declarations of love occur within the middle of the fan fiction; Claude says it first, then Sidney reciprocates <sup>178</sup>
<b>6) The Point of Ritual Death</b>	Sidney leaves Claude to go to his lake house because he is scared Claude is still in love with Danny and that their relationship only works because they stay in their own isolated world; Claude suffers a severe depressive episode after he leaves <sup>179</sup>
<b>7) The Recognition</b>	After a few months apart, Claude has improved his mental health and rejoined his community as a girls's hockey coach; Sidney comes out publicly and Claude does the same in order to support him; then he receives a letter from Sidney explaining that he is now sure their relationship can survive in the outside world and that he still loves him <sup>180</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 1-2.

<sup>173</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 6, 14-15, 19, 26.

<sup>174</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 5.

<sup>175</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 12, 24-25, 36.

<sup>176</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 22, 32, 38, 32, 42.

<sup>177</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 16, 22-23.

<sup>178</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 29-30.

<sup>179</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 42-43.

<sup>180</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 44.

8) The 'Betrothal'	Claude goes to see Sidney at his lake house and proposes to him and Sidney accepts <sup>181</sup>
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**Table 1.** A list of the eight essential narrative events of a romance novel, and the equivalent events from my fan fiction, *A Good Place to Disappear* (Vermeer 2022).

As this table demonstrates, the narrative structure of my fan fiction fits Regis's definition of a romance novel. These essential narrative elements also suggest what kind of disorder and order, both in the characters's society and within themselves, this fan fiction depicts. The internal barriers primarily deal with depression, anxiety, and insecurity, and the external barriers primarily deal with the consequences of homophobia (see Table 1). The story world and characters thus begin in a state disordered by the negative effects of homophobia and mental illness. The world and characters end in an ordered state of treated and addressed mental illness and acceptance of queer identity, brought about through the integration and acceptance of intimacy between the main characters. These are thus the conflicts that drive the text's plot, rather than solely misunderstandings, which are, as Woledge argues, the typical romance novel barrier.<sup>182</sup> This narrative structure remains essentially the same in *Compass Points North* — the setting changes from Hearst to Dunn's Valley, Jonas has only one son instead of three, and Jack and Matt first meet in the novel at the farmer's market, not at Matt's secret farm in Desbarats.<sup>183</sup> These minor changes to the narrative structure allow both versions of the text to be a romance novel and demonstrates that fan fictions can be romance novels and that fan

<sup>181</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 46.

<sup>182</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 201.

<sup>183</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 1-2, "Before" chapter in between chap. 5 & 6.



fictions can be revised into non-fan fiction romance novels with minor changes to their narrative structures.

While the overall narrative structure did not change much from fic to non-RPF romance novel, the backstories of the main characters and the way in which they were integrated into the text changed significantly. The backstories of the main characters were changed to remove identifying details and features of the public figures used in the fan fiction, but also to better fit the thematic direction of the story. In *A Good Place to Disappear*, the backstory was primarily conveyed through either dialogue between Claude and Sidney or through italicized flashback scenes that were presented as Claude's intrusive memories interrupting the present-day action of the fic.<sup>184</sup> Rather than continuing to use in-scene flashbacks to convey backstory, these scenes were removed from the present-day chapters entirely and interspersed throughout *Compass Points North* as their own separate chapters with the heading of 'Before' to indicate their place in the story's timeline.<sup>185</sup> This type of narrative structure emphasizes the past timeline more than using flashback scenes within present-day chapters did. It also has the effect of creating two parallel plots apposite to each other; each reflects and comments on the other, encouraging a richer understanding of the past and present storylines.

The order in which the "Before" chapters appear in the novel was determined based on their thematic connections to what was happening in the previous present-day chapter, rather than chronological order, so as to emphasize their connections. For example, the "Before" chapter with most of the scenes of Jack helping raise Jonas's son and becoming part of their pseudo-family is placed between Chapter 14 — where he and

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<sup>184</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*.

<sup>185</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*.

Matthew share their first kiss and Jack asks Matthew to keep staying with him on the farm — and Chapter 15 —where Jack realizes that he is in love with Matthew but has doubts about Matthew’s feelings for him.<sup>186</sup> The placement of this “Before” chapter juxtaposes the past story of Jack falling for Jonas and becoming part of his family with the present-day story of Jack falling for Matthew and letting him become part of his own family.<sup>187</sup> The reader is thus aware of Jack’s previous experience with attempting to form a type of family and his failure to do so, which informs the reader of some of Jack’s internal barriers and increases the story’s tension by casting doubts on his chance of success in the present-day story.

The increased prominence of the past timeline and past scenes is required for the romance novel because readers will come to the romance novel with no prior knowledge of its characters and their stories. The “canonical” elements of Claude Giroux and Sidney Crosby’s “rivalry” and the “fanonical” stories of their Enemies-to-Lovers relationship were presumably already known by the readers of my fic. The backstory, therefore, needed only to suggest these aspects and indicate my own specific deviations from the other “canon” and “fanon” elements established in the pairing’s fan fictions on the archive. Additionally, the drama of Claude Giroux and Danny Briere’s almost-but-not-quite relationship and Claude’s familial relationship with Danny’s sons did not need to be heavily explained or shown in the fic because it was part of the “fanon” for the alternate pairing of Claude Giroux/Danny Briere. The possibility of Claude choosing to be with Danny instead of Sidney haunts the fic not just because of the backstory presented in the flashback scenes, but because of the archival knowledge many readers likely had of other

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<sup>186</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 14-15.

<sup>187</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 14-15.

fan fictions in the fandom that feature Claude Giroux/Danny Briere rather than Claude Giroux/Sidney Crosby.

This type of layered archival knowledge that enriches the reading experience for each subsequent fic is the fan fiction palimpsest that Mafalda Stasi uses as her central interpretive metaphor for slash fic.<sup>188</sup> Stasi describes the slash fic palimpsest as “a nonhierarchical, rich layering of genres, more or less partially erased and resurfacing, and a rich and complex continuum of themes, techniques, voices, moods, and registers.”<sup>189</sup> In this specific example, *A Good Place to Disappear* is a Claude Giroux/Sidney Crosby fan fiction written over top of “partially erased and resurfacing”<sup>190</sup> fan fictions for the same pairing and also for the Claude Giroux/Danny Briere pairing; all are in conversation with each other. It is this fandom-specific palimpsest of archival meaning that is removed and lost when a fan fiction is revised and traditionally published as a different text in the mainstream context, and this fandom-specific palimpsest of archival meaning that de Kosnik, Busse, and Samutina value over other, text-specific meanings.<sup>191</sup> However, by revising the placement, length, and content of the backstory sections of the fan fiction to reflect the original characters and better emphasize the specific themes of *Compass Points North*, my fan fiction survived the transformation into the non-RPF romance novel because it is a text that has meaning within the text itself, rather than meaning only understandable within the fandom’s archival palimpsest of texts.

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<sup>188</sup> Stasi, Mafalda, “The Toy Soldiers from Leeds: The Slash Palimpsest,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 115, 119-120.

<sup>189</sup> “Toy Soldiers,” 119.

<sup>190</sup> Stasi, “Toy Soldiers,” 119.

<sup>191</sup> de Kosnik, “Fifty Shades,” 125; Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 3; Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 254.

### Textual Features: Ideological Framework

The romance novel's framework is one of two primary operating ideological frameworks in *A Good Place to Disappear*: The story depicts the reordering of a disordered society through the removal of internal and external barriers that prevented the characters from uniting in a romantic, long-term, stable relationship, and it ends with their betrothal, which forms the new symbolic order for their reordered society. The relationship that the newly self-integrated characters form takes its characteristics from *A Good Place to Disappear*'s second primary ideological framework: Intimatopia. The relationship formed by the characters is an exclusive and romantic one that blends love, friendship, and intimacy, in which "the revelation and acceptance of actual faults" allows each character to "be accepted as a total human being, complete with imperfections and infractions."<sup>192</sup> While Kustritz is describing slash fic in these quotations, it is easy to see how this type of intimate relationship is frequently used in slash fic, but is *required* by intimatopia, demonstrating how slash fic are often intimatopic, like *A Good Place to Disappear*. What intimatopia's ideological framework brings to the romance novel genre's ideological framework then is the *method* by which self and society are reordered — by developing an exclusive romantic relationship that blends love, friendship, and intimacy — and the *description* of the reordered self and society — that of one where one is in such a relationship. Of course, forming such a relationship requires one to reveal one's flaws to the other, and to love and accept the other including their flaws in return. The romance novel's romantic gestures must be supported by textual features that show

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<sup>192</sup> Quotes in this sentence from Kustritz, "Slashing the Romance," 379.

the development of this specific blend of love, friendship, and intimacy, rather than presuming such a relationship to exist because of the use of romantic gestures.

The romance novel's ideological framework does not specify the method by which disorder is made into order, what the original disordered state is like, nor what the final ordered state is like. This lack of specificity allows the romance novel genre to be flexible and respond to changes in societal ideas about what is a disordered self and society, what an ordered self and society are, and how to get from one to the other. Intimatopia's ideological framework provides one specific method of going from disorder to order and one specific description of the final order: A blend of love, friendship, and intimacy within an exclusive and romantic relationship. A non-intimatopic romance novel would have a different method of reordering disorder and a different vision of what constitutes an ordered self and society, one which may depict romance without showing the development of friendship or intimacy within the romance. The practice of writing intimatopic texts within the fan fiction genre, particularly the slash fic subgenre, is carried over into the mainstream romance novel genre when intimatopic fan fictions that are also romance novels are revised and traditionally published as mainstream romance novels, as is my intention with *Compass Points North*. This process thus has the ability to introduce intimatopia's method of reordering self and society and its description of said reordered self and society to a new group of readers and writers, potentially altering the romance novel genre.

### **Textual Features: Characters**

Writing a fan fiction using the public personae of real people strengthens the impact of this particular blend of ideological frameworks; this is because RPF seeks to provide the satisfying illusion of gaining authentic intimate knowledge of and closeness to a public figure through the creation of an imagined version of their “real self.”<sup>193</sup> Thus the acquisition of knowledge and intimacy throughout the fan fiction is happening at a textual level — the characters acquire knowledge and intimacy of each other — and at a metatextual level — the *reader* gains imagined knowledge and intimacy of the inaccessible “real self” behind the public persona.

This double-layer of knowledge and intimacy is present in the end scene of *A Good Place to Disappear*'s Chapter 25. In this chapter, Claude's parents have just surprised him and Sidney at home and expressed their hesitation over Claude dating Sidney and living with him because of Sidney's negative media comments about Claude.<sup>194</sup> After Claude's parents leave, Sidney, who overheard these parental concerns, addresses his past behaviour directly to Claude.<sup>195</sup> While their conversation is ostensibly in-text Sidney and Claude working through their emotional baggage, it also helps the reader — presumably familiar with the real Sidney Crosby and Claude Giroux's famous hockey rivalry and media clips —<sup>196</sup> to reconcile their “canonical” rivalry with this fic's imagined storyline of “Enemies-to-Lovers.” This conversation thus does much of the heavy-lifting in reinterpreting Sidney Crosby and Claude Giroux's past relationship in light of their new romantic context at a textual and metatextual level:

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<sup>193</sup> Retartha, “”You're always running,” 3-4, 15.

<sup>194</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 25.

<sup>195</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 25.

<sup>196</sup> Buikema et al., “Beef History.”

Sid shrugged, his shoulders drooping. ‘I know I said shitty, shitty things to the media about you, and about the Flyers.’ He lifted his head and looked at Claude. ‘But it was about me being angry and insecure because I — I was attracted to you, and I didn’t know how to handle it without being a fucking *asshole*, and pushing it all into hockey instead made it easier.’

...Claude was having trouble making the words fit in his brain. He shook his head. ‘You —’ He stopped and rubbed a hand over his face. He shook his head again, and looked at Sid. ‘You said all that shit, for so long, just because you wanted to *fuck*?’

Sid swallowed hard, and then said, ‘Not — not fuck.’ He looked down at his hands, shoved into his pockets. ‘Not just — *that*, anyway.’

Claude stared at Sid. ‘Just spit it out, Croz.’

Sid’s head whipped up, his nostrils flaring. ‘I liked you, okay?’ His hands were out of his pockets now, clenched at his sides. ‘I was just getting my feet in the league, trying to not accidentally out myself by doing something stupid, and everyone was watching every move I made, and you were *there* and I wanted you to fuck me, and I wanted you to kiss me, and everything else that I didn’t even have the experience to articulate to myself!’

Sid turned away, staring out into the darkness, before turning back, his face sagging. ‘I was trying so hard to keep everything under control, to keep *myself* under control, and I hated that you made me feel *out* of control all the time. And people noticed, and they kept asking me, so I said the only thing that could capture what I was feeling, just a little. And then it became a thing, and I had to keep saying it, keep trying to make everyone believe it.’ Sid’s voice dropped down to a whisper. ‘And I kept hoping that maybe one day I’d wake up and believe it myself.’

He lifted his gaze to lock eyes with Claude, whose breath was coming in fast jerks. ‘I know it was a selfish, shitty thing to do. And I’m so sorry.’

Claude exhaled, his breath coming out in a long *whoosh*. ‘Jesus, Sid.’<sup>197</sup>

The work that this scene does to reinterpret their relationship on a textual and metatextual level is recognized in Reader Daisy’s comment on this chapter: “I’m so glad you addressed all the ‘I hate him’ stuff. That needed to be addressed, for me and Claude lol, and you did it really well.”<sup>198</sup> Reader Daisy jokingly specifies that this explanation was needed both for them and for Claude, clearly reflecting the textual and metatextual function of this reintegration of “canon” into the fic. Reader Daisy was a reader who

<sup>197</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 25.

<sup>198</sup> Reader Daisy. Comment on chap. 25, posted June 1, 2020.

came to my fic with foreknowledge of the Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux pairing “canon.” In their eyes, the rivalry between the two of them needed to be addressed and incorporated into this fic’s world in order for the fic to be satisfactory and believable. They make reference specifically to a “canonical” postgame interview in 2012 frequently used in Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux fics, during which Sidney Crosby was asked about the Philadelphia Flyers (Claude Giroux’s team, whom he had just played against and fought during the game), and he said: “I don't like them. I don't like any guy on their team.”<sup>199</sup> A comparison of this “canonical” dialogue from Sidney Crosby’s postgame interview to his conversation with Claude in that scene from *A Good Place to Disappear*, makes clear how this fic speaks back to the “canonical” interview while presenting the same information in a different light.

Another reader commented on the re-interpretive function of this scene, saying:

It was also something to read Sid’s explanation for his past behavior. To quote Claude, because he put it so eloquently: ‘*Jesus, Sid.*’ But yeah, I can see this excuse working in this story’s world. Punk, emotional, young Sid not knowing how to deal with scary emotions just lashing out  
\*cough\*likehewasknowntodointhepast\*cough\*.<sup>200</sup>

In this comment, Reader Rose quotes the response of the in-text Claude Giroux to in-text Sidney Crosby’s explanation for his in-text and “canonical” behaviour. Reader Rose and in-text Claude’s responses mirror each other, which shows how the reinterpretation affects the reader and the character at the same time. Reader Rose then makes the

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<sup>199</sup> “Quotable: Sidney Crosby Doesn’t Like the Flyers, Because He Doesn’t Like the Flyers,” NBC Sports Philadelphia, NBC Sports, April 15, 2012, accessed March 9, 2022; 621 Productions LLC, “Sidney Crosby – I Don’t Like Them,” YouTube. October 29, 2012, video, 0:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJx-rjxKBrM>.

<sup>200</sup> Reader Rose. Comment on chap. 25, posted June 3, 2020.



interesting remark that they can “see this excuse working in this story’s world,”<sup>201</sup> thereby making the distinction between the real world of real Sidney Crosby and Reader Rose, and the *story world* in which in-text Sidney Crosby does the same actions as real Sidney Crosby does, but for in-text, fictional Sidney Crosby’s reasons. The fic uses “canonical” strips of behaviour from the real world, but rearranges and recontextualizes them to express a completely different story.<sup>202</sup> However, even after making this distinction, Reader Rose seems to undo it by then saying, “\*cough\*likehewasknowntodointhepast\*cough\*.”<sup>203</sup> It is unclear from context whether the “he” in this quote refers to in-text, fictional Sidney Crosby, or real Sidney Crosby. It seems possible that this coughed aside refers to real Sidney Crosby, thereby drawing an implicit similarity between the imagined, younger, in-text, fictional Sidney Crosby, and the younger, real Sidney Crosby, thereby blurring the line between the persona and the imagined real self behind the persona.

My fic’s reinterpretation of their “canonical” rivalry takes the boundary between masculinity and the threat of queerness, which is reinforced by Canadian hockey literature, and erases that boundary by making the male hockey players queer. This erasure is dramatized through the repurposing of the sports rivalry — originally an expression of masculine toughness and competition that pits two men against each other — into a complicated suppression of queer attraction that is only resolved through its expression. Rather than reinforcing the idea of hockey as a world in which tough men

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<sup>201</sup> Reader Rose. Comment on chap. 25, posted June 3, 2020.

<sup>202</sup> This metaphor was first used to describe fan fiction’s use of pre-existing characters and ideas by Coppa in “Writing Bodies in Space,” 229-230.

<sup>203</sup> Reader Rose. Comment on chap. 25, posted June 3, 2020.

compete against each other and deride and eschew femininity and queerness,<sup>204</sup> my Men's Hockey RPF uses the same content and reimagines it in a manner that works directly against their original meaning. The new imagined meaning of the rivalry is that it is an internal and external barrier to Claude and Sidney's courtship which needs to be removed so that their society and selves may become reordered. By making the toxic masculinity and homophobia of hockey culture an internal and external barrier to their courtship, the metanarrative of *A Good Place to Disappear* argues that the reader's society needs to end homophobia and toxic masculinity in order to experience this fic's idealized and intimate reordered society. If it were to be published, *Compass Points North* would present this opposing perspective on hockey culture and Canadian hockey literature as a mainstream example of different approaches to the same important material — the sport of hockey and its culture.

### **Textual Features: Thematic Content**

Previous discussions of this thesis's relevant genres and subgenres revealed several thematic connections between fan fiction, the romance novel, pornography, intimatopia, slash fic, RPF, and Men's Hockey RPF, particularly with the theme of the body. In Coppa's influential 2006 article, she notes that one of the few textual features that the genre of fan fiction exhibits is a focus on the body and its physicality and movements. This, by definition, then also applies to fan fiction's subgenres, like slash fic,

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<sup>204</sup> Information on hockey culture in this paragraph from Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 218.

RPF, and Men's Hockey RPF. Coppa links this focus on the body to fan fiction's similarities to a theatrical performance.<sup>205</sup>

Real Person Fan Fiction, and therefore Men's Hockey RPF, focus on the celebrity's body too because it "has the potential to offer the most intimate authentic form of encounter"<sup>206</sup> despite the fact that "it is also the most distancing of the three mechanisms [performances, photography, body], given the near impossibility that the spectator will ever be in the position to experience that body as more than a remote image." Real Person Fan Fiction also emphasizes "the sexual(ized) body and the body-in-sex" particularly as a way of negotiating between the body as potential access to intimate knowledge of the celebrity and its inherent inaccessibility. Pornography also clearly focuses on "the sexual(ized) body and the body-in-sex"<sup>207</sup> because it requires the depiction of both in order to produce sexual arousal in the reader/viewer. Intimatopic texts use physical contact between bodies to express and develop intimacy in sexual and non-sexual interactions.<sup>208</sup> The specific characteristics of the body as depicted in sexual content will be discussed subsequently in the "Textual Features: Sexual Content" section of this chapter.

Romance novels focus on bodily sensations in order to immerse the reader in the world, emotional experiences, and physical experiences of its main character.<sup>209</sup> This

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<sup>205</sup> Summary of Coppa's article in this paragraph from Coppa, Francesca, "Writing Bodies in Space," 225, 229-230.

<sup>206</sup> Retartha, "'You're always running,'" 17.

<sup>207</sup> Quotes and information in this paragraph from Retartha, "'You're always running,'" 17.

<sup>208</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 5, 103, 144, 178.

<sup>209</sup> Morrissey, "Fanning the Flames," 49-50.

textual feature is evident right from the first two paragraphs of *Compass Points North*, which opens with Jack waking up into a panic attack:

The hotel room was dark when Jack opened his eyes. His mouth was dry, and his body covered in sweat. He must've fallen asleep by accident after dinner, because he was lying on top of the scratchy hotel duvet cover.

Jack stared at the ceiling. He waited for his body to stop remembering the way Brian had said, 'It's not an inditement of his character; it's a question of fitness for the Leafs.' He waited for the cobwebs of his dream to stop clinging to his shaking hands.<sup>210</sup>

The description, which also serves to introduce Jack as the main character, emphasizes his embodied experience of anxiety and the bodily sensations he feels in that particular moment. The reader is thus given immediate access to the physical experiences of Jack as a person, as well as the emotions driving them. Although both the fan fiction and the non-RPF romance novel are written in third person and not the first-person perspective, the use of third person limited perspective, as well as the texts's descriptive focus on the body, its actions, and its sensory experiences, are two other methods for encouraging the reader to closely share the main character's experiences.

Injury, both emotional and physical, is also used to further intimacy through the Hurt/Comfort plot trope. The Hurt/Comfort trope is a common trope in fan fiction where a character provides comfort to another character who is in pain, physically and/or emotionally; it is often used to increase intimacy and accelerate the romantic relationship between the characters; Woledge specifically discusses the Hurt/Comfort trope's frequent use within intimatopic texts.<sup>211</sup> With the Hurt/Comfort trope's focus on physical

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<sup>210</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 1.

<sup>211</sup> Information on intimatopia's connection to the Hurt/Comfort trope from Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 111, 178.

proximity and comfort, is also easily applicable to Men's Hockey RPF because mental health problems like depression, anxiety, physical injuries — and their associated emotional effects — and substance abuse issues are part of the sport and culture of hockey.<sup>212</sup> In both primary texts, the main characters are affected either by their own mental illness and physical injury — Jack/Claude — or by their loved one's mental illness and physical injury — Matthew/Sidney.<sup>213</sup> Each character has at least one significant moment of caring for the other during a moment of hurt throughout the stories.<sup>214</sup> For example, when Jack has a severe panic attack, Matt is there to support him through it physically and emotionally, and afterwards he provides comfort and support:

Matt hummed and then got out of the sofa chair, groaning as he uncurled himself. He came over to Jack.  
 He tilted his head and touched his elbow. 'Are you okay?'  
 Jack couldn't stop the way his face trembled. He shrugged.  
 Matt waited, his hand still on Jack's arm.  
 Jack breathed deep, staring at their socked feet. 'Not — not really.'  
 Matt came closer. Jack leaned into him like a sunflower towards the sun.  
 'Is there anything I can do?'  
 Jack shrugged again.  
 'Jack.'  
 He pushed himself into Matt's space, tucking his face against Matt's chest.  
 Matt's arms came around him.  
 Jack took a deep breath. Matt smelled good. 'Can we just — not talk about it?'  
 Matt's arms tightened around Jack. 'You really scared me.'  
 Jack's stomach tensed. 'I know.'  
 Matt's hands rubbed Jack's back. 'Do you promise to talk to someone about it? If not me?'  
 Jack took a deep breath. 'I promise.'  
 Matt's arms relaxed around Jack. 'Okay.' He pulled back from Jack, his hands coming to cup Jack's face. 'Then we don't have to talk about it.'<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Olson, Robert, "What's Up With Canada's Game: Exploring Mental Illness in Hockey," *Centre for Suicide Prevention, Resources*, 2016, accessed March 5, 2022. <https://www.suicideinfo.ca/resource/mental-illness-hockey/>.

<sup>213</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*; Vermeer, *Good Place*.

<sup>214</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 12, 23; Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 20, 32.

<sup>215</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 23.

This scene focuses on comfort and physical proximity, like the Hurt/Comfort trope and it also serves to increase their intimacy, as Jack allows Matt to be physically and emotionally close to him in his moment of vulnerability.

In contrast to this physical and emotional vulnerability, hockey, as a sport and as a culture, places great focus on the physical bodies of its players and what these bodies do and are capable of doing,<sup>216</sup> often framing this in terms of “masculinity-as-toughness.”<sup>217</sup> When this thematic approach to the body is combined with Hurt/Comfort and intimatopia’s approaches to the body, an interesting, high-contrast depiction of the body occurs. This high-contrast depiction is visible when Jack comforts Matt emotionally for the first time in the story; until this point, they have either been antagonistic rivals, or Matt has attempted to comfort Jack:

Matt let out a sob and Jack opened his eyes to see Matt stuff his hand across his mouth, like he could hold in the cries rattling him from the inside out.

Jack felt wild and helpless watching Matt like this. He sank down onto his heels, his hands hanging uselessly at his sides. Then Matt took his hand away from his mouth long enough to choke out, ‘It’s just — I *chose* to leave, and it hurts like this — but you —’ He turned his wild eyes to Jack. ‘You didn’t choose *any* of this, and you hid your skates *away* —’

Matt gasped a jagged breath and Jack couldn’t take it. He couldn’t take watching Matt cry in front of him, so he did the only thing he could think to do, which was to slide his arm tentatively around Matt’s shoulders and pull him closer.<sup>218</sup>

In this scene, Jack is unused to seeing Matt emotionally vulnerable and distressed and experiences discomfort because he is unsure of how to react to his former hockey rival behaving in such a way. Since this is an intimatopic romance novel, he chooses to

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<sup>216</sup> Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 186; Blake, *Canadian Hockey*, 78-133; Popova “‘When the RP.’”

<sup>217</sup> Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 187.

<sup>218</sup> Vermeer, *Compass*, chap. 12.

comfort Matt expressed through his bodily actions and physical proximity, thereby increasing the intimacy between them.

The ways that all these genres and subgenres emphasize the role of the body, its physicality, its movements, its potential for injury and healing, and its potentially sexualized nature and sexual activity, compliment Men's Hockey RPF's thematic concerns with the body and its role in gender, sex, sexuality, identity, and injury (see Figure 3). In focusing its description on the body and its movements, *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* are able to embody these thematic ideas about the body, particularly the body of a male queer professional hockey player, who began as an imagined version of a real celebrity professional hockey player.



**Figure 3.** Copy of a tweet which humorously points out a similarity between the NHL's media commentary on the physical bodies of its players and the descriptions of the physical bodies of the male love interest in romance novels (Screenshot of tweet by Unknown [@uheeuhaha] 2022)

### Textual Features: Sexual Content

The sexual content in *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* combines the explicitness of pornography and intimatopia's blend of love, friendship, and intimacy to produce sexual content which is at once explicit and intimate, with intimacy being the priority. While explicit, the sexual content has reduced its realism in favour of an idealized portrayal of sex. This sexually intimate content is queer as it is between two men, which is a frequent textual feature of fan fiction and its subgenres of slash fic, RPF, and Men's Hockey RPF, but not typical of romance novels.<sup>219</sup> I will be using examples from the fan fiction instead of the romance novel because of the reader comments it received on this subject, but the scenes are largely the same in both texts.

This particular blend of genres and subgenres is present in the sexual content at the end of *A Good Place to Disappear*'s Chapter 26. In this scene, Sidney Crosby has just confessed to Claude Giroux that he quit hockey mysteriously because he realized that he would never be able to come out as gay and have a family with children while still playing in the homophobic hockey world, and that his father would never agree to him retiring from hockey until he was physically broken and unable to play anymore.<sup>220</sup> This emotionally heavy confession prompts Claude to initiate sex that is intimate and healing, similar to the Hurt/Comfort plot trope common in intimatopic texts:

Claude used everything he'd learned to bring Sid closer and closer to the brink, all too conscious that it was never enough, that he could spend a lifetime learning how to make Sid whine high in his throat like that, or how to make his legs shudder until they became supple and boneless, and that it would never be enough. There was always some unexpected facet to him, something that would surprise Claude, and turn his whole view of him upside down, leaving him to wonder if he'd ever really seen him at all.

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<sup>219</sup> See Appendix A, Sexual Content Table.

<sup>220</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 26.



But as Sid begged Claude for more, as tears leaked out of Sid's eyes and down his face, as Sid clamped his ankles around Claude's waist and pulled him in, as Claude slid inside Sid and began to move, he realized that he wanted to be there, with Sid, for every one of those facets. That he wanted to live the rest of his life trying to see them all, to see the whole of Sid as more than the sum of his fragmented parts.<sup>221</sup>

In this excerpt, the physical description of the sex is inextricably mixed with Claude's process of gaining knowledge of — and thus, increasing his intimacy with — Sidney. Claude has already gained some knowledge of Sidney through their sexual activity prior to this scene, but there is a contrast between this type of knowledge, and the whole self that is as yet incompletely known; this difference between the whole self and the sexual part of the self complicates Retartha's assertion that in Real Person Fan Fiction, sex is “the ultimate path toward insight about oneself and one's partner”<sup>222</sup> In this case, the ideological framework of intimatopia has trumped the frequent textual feature of Real Person Fan Fiction: Sex is not the most important way of getting to know someone intimately.

However, this excerpt also complicates intimatopia's idealized fantasy: While it is clear that Claude desires intimacy, and is dedicated to developing an intimate knowledge of Sidney, his internal narration suggests that a complete intimacy will never be acquired because “There was always some unexpected facet to him [Sidney]... leaving him [Claude] to wonder if he'd ever really seen him at all”<sup>223</sup> As perhaps a compromise between intimatopia's idealized world — where perfect intimacy and knowledge of the other is possible — and realism, Claude acknowledges the near impossibility of knowing

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<sup>221</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 26.

<sup>222</sup> Retartha, ““You're always running,” 17-18.

<sup>223</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 26.

Sidney completely, but — more importantly — he dedicates himself to the task of “trying to see them all, to see the whole of Sid as more than the sum of his fragmented parts.”<sup>224</sup>

The extreme blend between explicit sexual content from the pornography genre and the intimacy from the intimatopia genre can also be seen the sexual content’s repetition of phrases mentioning eye contact, which is associated with intimacy and knowledge of the other. These eye contact phrases often contain physical descriptions of the sexual activity, merging erotic cues with those indicating intimacy: “Claude sat up and pulled Sid up with him, and then his shirt was stripped off, and Claude ran his hands along Sid’s bare shoulders and down his arms, looking at every part of him; needing to take apart Sid at the seams, to know every part of him.”<sup>225</sup> Further on, Claude was “staring at Sid, drinking in the way he licked his lips and the way he was panting, his body unable to lie still on the bed.”<sup>226</sup> The textual features of eye contact, face-to-face communication, and emotional openness and sharing, which permeate this scene and its excerpts shown here, are all frequent textual features of intimatopic texts,<sup>227</sup> as these actions help develop intimacy between the characters. While this intimacy is being developed in this scene through sex, the equal, if not stronger, emphasis on acquiring intimate knowledge of the other person, makes this sex scene an example of intimatopia’s moderated eroticism, since the sexual content is subordinate to the development of intimacy.

The intimatopic approach to sexual content was noticed by a reader who discussed this sexual content in their comment on this chapter. Although they do not use

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<sup>224</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 26.

<sup>225</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 26.

<sup>226</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 26.

<sup>227</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 111-112, 124, 126, 138.

the words intimatopia or intimacy, their comment picks up on how intimatopia's ideological framework has shaped this sex scene:

Also, can i just say that ive never, ever seen emotion and sex intertwined like that? an emotional crying scene flow straight into a sex scene? how you don't know if sid crying during sex is him doing Normal Sex Tears(tm) or a renewal of his grief and emotion from their talk, or something else? that. is. amazing.<sup>228</sup>

Reader Iris notices the blending of emotion and sex and also the integration of the intimacy of Sid's confession with that of the sexual content that immediately follows; for Reader Iris, the intimacy of the sex scene is a direct continuation of the intimacy of Sid's confession and tears, not a separate event. This indicates, again, that intimatopia's moderated eroticism is at work. Reader Iris's interpretation of the sex scene as a continuation of intimacy is supported in my reply to their comment:

I am so happy that this sex scene was able to twine emotions and sex like that—that's honestly such a goal for me as a writer and especially this scene was so important and critical for that because it was Claude using sex to express his love for Sid and to heal him, because Claude uses his body when he feels that he can't use his words or doesn't know how.<sup>229</sup>

My reply to Reader Iris demonstrates my authorial intention of using sex to further the intimate bond between these two characters and in my writing more generally. It is interesting to note my specification that this sex was used by Claude "to heal him,"<sup>230</sup> which directly incorporates the Hurt/Comfort plot trope frequently used by intimatopic texts. Thus, not only is intimatopia's ideological framework evident in the textual features of this sex scene and in the subordination of pornography's sexually explicit

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<sup>228</sup> Reader Iris. Comment on chap. 26, posted June 2, 2020.

<sup>229</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 26, posted June 3, 2020.

<sup>230</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 26, posted June 3, 2020.

content to intimatopia's framework, but it is also identifiable even without the knowledge and vocabulary to name it as intimatopia.

## Conclusion

I began this chapter with a discussion of the viability of removing fan fiction from its original fandom context in order to traditionally publish it as a mainstream text. I have argued that this is a viable option for some fan fiction texts and authors, despite concerns over “filing off the serial numbers,” and claims that a fan fiction retains meaning only in its original context. Having established the validity and viability of revising my fic into a non-RPF romance novel, I used *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* to provide examples of the how this thesis's relevant genres can be blended under the ideological framework of intimatopia. I have argued that the RPF community is particularly well-suited to writing intimatopic fan fictions due to Real Person Fan Fiction's emphasis on playing with the differences between the persona and the ‘real self,’ which offers an extra avenue for the development of intimacy between the characters. Men's Hockey RPF specifically is highly compatible with intimatopia because of hockey's homosocial environment and its emphasis on the body as a site of sexuality, value, and injury.<sup>231</sup> The focus on the body — common to fan fiction as a whole<sup>232</sup> and to Men's Hockey RPF specifically — and the sexual(ized) body — common in Real Person Fan Fiction —<sup>233</sup> encourages the inclusion of pornography's explicit sexual content. In *A*

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<sup>231</sup> hrpfunfortunately, “why hockey rpf?,” Tumblr post; Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 186; Blake, *Canadian Hockey*, 78-133; Popova, “When the RP.”

<sup>232</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>233</sup> Retartha, “You're always running,” 17.

*Good Place to Disappear*, the sexual content blends textual features of pornography, fan fiction, RPF, Men's Hockey RPF, and intimatopia; it also subordinates all of these genres's textual features to intimatopia's ideological framework, which demands the development and prioritization of an exclusive and reciprocal romantic relationship which blends love, friendship, and intimacy. *Compass Points North* maintains this blend of textual features and the primacy of intimatopia's ideological framework in its sexual content, but has original characters rather than Men's Hockey RPF characters.

At the beginning of my research, I sought to understand and explain the intangible quality I felt in fan fiction more often than in romance novels, despite being well versed in both genres. Woledge's intimatopia genre provided a theoretical map to describe that intangible quality and to explain how, precisely, authors could create that quality in their texts. In examining my own two texts, I have shown specific examples of how intimatopia can manifest in a text and how intimatopia offers both a *method* for reordering self and society and a *description* of the reordered self and society. Both *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* are intimatopic romance novels; the continuation of the fan fiction's intimatopic qualities in its non-RPF version signifies an important avenue for ideological change within the romance novel genre, where an exclusive and reciprocal romantic relationship blending and centering intimacy, love, and friendship becomes the method of reordering self and society, and the description of what that reordered society looks like. This intimacy is shown and developed over the course of the text, and is not presumed to exist based on the presence of romantic gestures. If this ideological drift from fan fiction and other intimatopic texts to romance novels occurs significantly, readers and writers who enjoy the idealized fantasy of being completely

known and loved, and of completely knowing someone and loving them in return, will be able to read and write mainstream, traditionally published, romance novels that satisfy and honour this desire.

The ideological framework of intimatopia not only unifies these diverse genres in one text, but compliments the social context of my fan fiction's production. The success of my fan fiction was based on its affective power over my readers — realism was valued for its ability to make the fic feel believable enough to have affective power over the reader, not for its own sake. As will be shown in the next chapter, the desire for a fan fiction with affective power caused the community itself to be centered on the fan fiction's ability to produce relationships, primarily between the reader and the text, and secondarily between the author and the reader. The development of intimacy between the reader and the author through the text mirrors the development of intimacy within the text itself. While not all fan fiction and not all Men's Hockey RPF are intimatopic, the primacy of intimacy both within my primary text stories and within the social communities who produce these kinds of stories is intriguing; my next chapter constitutes an early exploration of this connection that will hopefully open up this line of inquiry for further research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Intimate Ties: A Men's Hockey RPF Community in Practice*

#### Introduction

The community structure of fan fiction communities and the amount of influence readers have on fan fiction texts have frequently been examined in academia.<sup>234</sup> Research has viewed these communities primarily as reciprocal, communal, inclusive, and subversive spaces that challenge the capitalist, hegemonic societies that the members of these fan fiction communities live in.<sup>235</sup> While this general, rather utopic, depiction of fan fiction has been challenged and complicated over time — particularly as the intersectional identities of fandom participants become better understood, allowing the power structures within fandoms to be recognized as more than simply subversive, counter-cultural spaces — the importance of fan fiction's social and communal context remains.<sup>236</sup>

In this chapter, I use qualitative and quantitative analysis of the reader and author (my own) comments made on my fan fiction, *A Good Place to Disappear*, in order to determine what kind of relationships formed between the reader(s) and the text, and

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<sup>234</sup> See Bibliography for works used in this thesis.

<sup>235</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 76-77; Jamison, Anne, *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, edited by Anne Jamison, Dallas, Texas, BenBella Books Inc., 2013, 17-20; Derecho, "Archontic Literature," 76-77; Turk, Tisha, "Fan Work: Labor, Worth, and Participation in Fandom's Gift Economy," in "Fandom and/as Labor," edited by Mel Stanfill and Megan Condis, special issue, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, no. 15 (2014), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2014.0518>; de Kosnik, "Fifty Shades," 121-122.

<sup>236</sup> Jamison, *Fic*, 20, 232-252; Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 218-219; Pande, Rukimi and Samira Nadkarni, "From a Land Where "Other" People Live," in *Fic: Why Fanfiction Is Taking Over the World*, edited by Anne Jamison, Dallas, Texas, BenBella Books Inc., 2013, 344-352; Coleman, "Writing with Impunity."

between the author and the reader(s). While qualitative analysis of sample comments has frequently been used in scholarly research to support claims about community formation and function in fandom and fan fiction studies, to my knowledge, a quantitative assessment of all comments on one fan fiction has not been done before. My research here is thus unique and offers important insights into a void in fan fiction studies. This investigation answers two questions regarding the process of revising a fan fiction into a non-fan fiction romance novel: 1) To what textual features of my fic did readers respond, thereby indicating the source of the text's affective power? 2) What kinds of relationships generally formed between me as the author and my readers; more specifically, what is the nature of the editorial feedback I received and — depending on the answer to this question — the subsequent question of whether or not it is ethical for me to attempt to traditionally publish the non-RPF version of this story in order to profit from the mainstream publishing industry. These two dependent queries center the social context in which my fan fiction was created and shared; this centering of the social context follows the methodology used by Busse in her monograph (2017). Like Driscoll in her article (2006),<sup>237</sup> Busse purposely centers the “inextricable immersion of the literary and the social — the continuous entanglement of fan works and their community.”<sup>238</sup> My inclusion of both the literary and the social in this thesis supports her view of the two as inextricably connected.

The inextricable connections between the literary and the social are examined in two specific contexts in this thesis: In this chapter, I examine how the feedback which I received from my readers on my fan fiction — emotional and editorial — impacted the

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<sup>237</sup> Driscoll, “One True Pairing,” Footnote 1 on page 95.

<sup>238</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 10.



narrative structure and emotional content of my fic. My examination reveals the importance of intimacy between the readers and the text, and between the readers and the author, which connects back to the previous chapter's highlighting of Woledge's intimatopia genre. The primacy of affective reading in fan fiction communities<sup>239</sup> encourages the development of an intimate communal web of interactions. This same intimacy was the center of my discussion of genre intersections because the intimatopia genre provided one of the two prime ideological frameworks of my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version.

In the previous chapter, I examined how and to what extent writing my text as a fic within the fan fiction genre affected its construction; these effects were considered in conjunction with the other relevant genres and subgenres affecting my text. Even accounting for my significant departure from Busse, Samutina, and de Kosnik's perspective on the role of the social context in creating a fan fiction's creation and meaning — as discussed in the previous chapter — I have still chosen to examine the community created around my fic because it was an integral part of the process of writing the fic and revising it into my non-RPF romance novel. Without this community, I would not have written this fic in the way that I did; I would not have felt as much confidence in my ability to achieve traditional publication with the non-RPF version. This chapter discusses the division of labour and credit between me as the fic's author, and my readers, beta readers, friends, and other community members. This is because it is necessary to understand what kind of community this fic was part of and what the community's involvement in its creation was, in order to judge what is owed to the

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<sup>239</sup> Samutina, "Emotional Landscapes," 254, 256; Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 76.

community and its members. I conclude that since I performed all of the writing labour and the majority of the imagining labour for the fic, and since the feedback I received was not substantial enough to claim a significant portion of the labour involved in writing the fic, I have a right to claim the position of author.

When I first designed this chapter of my thesis, I imagined that I would be examining how the Archive of Our Own's Men's Hockey RPF fan fiction community affected my writing style and the development of *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North*. However, after analyzing the reader and author comments left on *A Good Place to Disappear* in terms of content, amount, and frequency, I realized that the significant effects of this fan fiction community affected me as a person more than my writing, my fan fiction, or my novel. The experience of creating and — in some senses — *losing* a fan fiction community taught me the primacy of emotions in the fictional universe of my fan fiction, in the community formation between an author and their readers, and to the fandom as a whole. The number, frequency, and quality of content of the reader comments on *A Good Place to Disappear* were driven by the intensity of the emotional attachment to the fan fiction and the intensity of the emotional attachment was determined by how successful the fan fiction was at communicating the emotions of the characters to the readers and creating an emotional reaction in the readers. This supports Samutina's identification of fan fiction reading as a type of reading which has a "clear preference for reading-as-pleasure, reading-as-immersion."<sup>240</sup>

I, as the author, was also driven by emotional attachment. The results of my emotional attachment were the chapters of the fic I was writing, the comments I wrote

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<sup>240</sup> Samutina, "Emotional Landscapes," 259.

back to the readers, and the relationships those created between me, the characters, and the readers. A significant difference in writing this fic compared to the other fics I have written and published on AO3 in the same fandom is that I was compelled to write by my emotional attachment to the characters and the story I was creating, and also — perhaps even more so — compelled by the emotional relationships I felt like I was making with the readers and the fan fiction community they represented to me. Thus, the reader comments indicate that my readers formed relationships with me — and by theoretical extension, the fandom’s fan fiction community — because they were emotionally invested in the fan fiction I created. This positions the author as the person through whom the fan fiction, and its emotions are accessed. I, the author, on the other hand, wrote a fan fiction through which relationships with readers and the fan fiction community were accessed. This positions the fan fiction as the object through which a fan fiction community is accessed. The basis of my fic’s success in creating a temporarily bonded fan fiction community was its ability to successfully communicate the emotional experiences of my characters and to have those experiences produce an emotional response in the reader.

### **The Reader’s Relationship to the Text and to the Author**

My fic is a good example to use to analyze fan fiction community formation on AO3 because of the unusually high number of author-reader interactions that occurred in the comment section of my fic. As of October 29, 2021, *A Good Place to Disappear* has 547 kudos, 240 bookmarks, 581 comments made by readers, and 534 comment made by

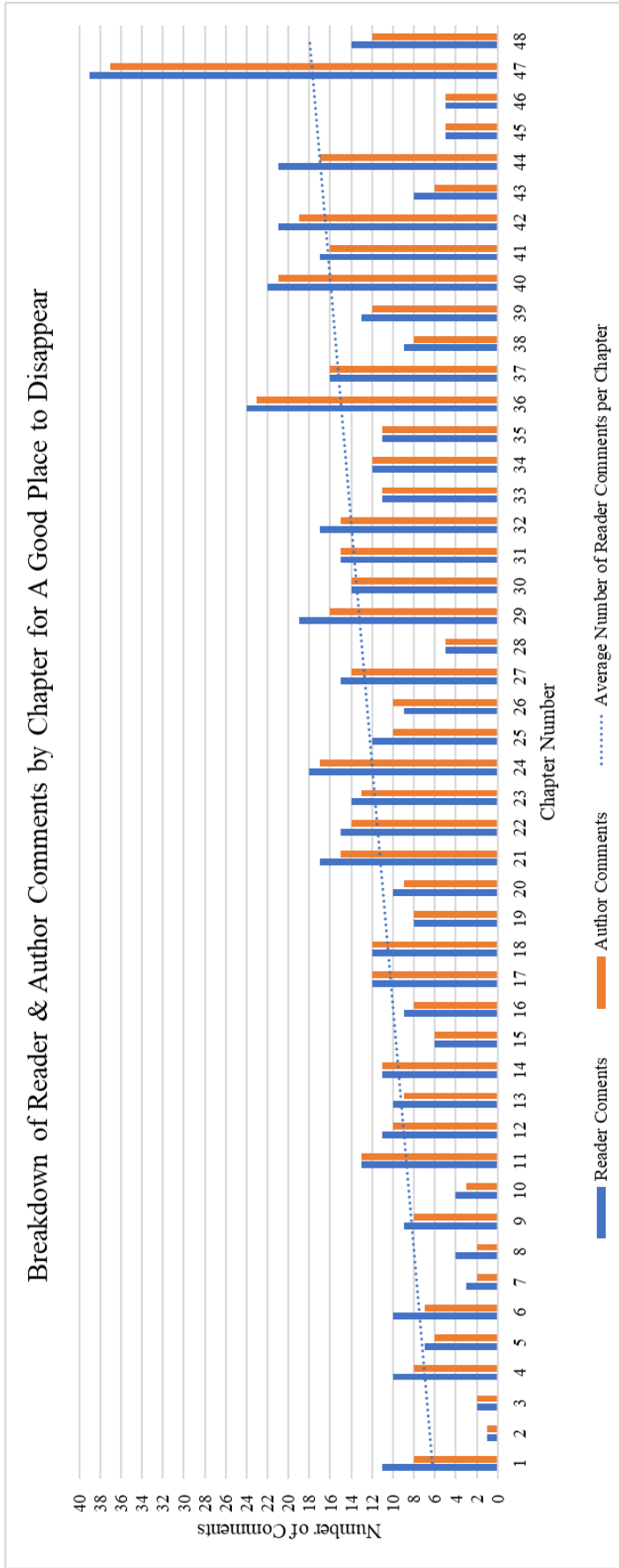
myself, the author.<sup>241</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, a kudos is given to a fan fiction by a reader if they read it and liked it; bookmarks allow readers to save fan fictions to access again later. My fic has a higher number of kudos than most fics in the Men's Hockey RPF tag and the fifth-highest number of comments in the tag out of 27, 878 fics.<sup>242</sup> These statistics demonstrate its popularity in the fandom. Overall, there is a similar number of reader comments (581) to author comments (534), with readers having written only 47 more comments than the author (see Figure 4).<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D. Other statistics were taken from *Good Place*'s statistics on AO3 on October 29, 2021.

<sup>242</sup> Statistic taken from AO3 on October 29, 2021 using the search results for the Men's Hockey RPF tag.

<sup>243</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D.



**Figure 4.** Graph of the breakdown of reader and author comments by chapter for *A Good Place to Disappear*. Statistics taken from tables in Appendix D (Vermeer 2022).

This quantitative data confirms what I remember from my experience: I made a concerted effort to reply to every initial comment I received from readers. I usually attempted to match the tone, intensity, and length of the comment I received in my reply. Sometimes a comment and reply would turn into an exchange, lengthening the thread of the initial comment, and those often ended with a final reader comment, which mostly explains the slightly higher amount of reader comments in comparison to author comments.

Publishing the fan fiction serially over a three-month period encouraged a greater number of readers to read the fic and for readers to become regular and to leave more than one comment on the fic. When a fic is a WIP (Work In Progress), readers can read each chapter as it comes out, which encourages commenting on each chapter rather than just the last chapter because the reading experience becomes a series of multiple events rather than a single event. Each chapter becomes, in a sense, its own mini-story within an ongoing saga, much like an episode of a television show. Readers comment on their response to that specific chapter, rather than only on the text as a whole, because the whole is not yet available. Some readers do filter to only see Completed Works in their search results; they might read a fic only after it is officially completed, and therefore not participate in the community formation that occurs while the fic is being written by leaving comments on chapters of a WIP.

As part of my analysis of my fic's reader and author comments, I organized the various remarks left in all of the comments into categories of remarks, and then within those categories, specific remark types.<sup>244</sup> Some types were only applicable to either the reader or author; types that did not end up with any remarks after examining the contents

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<sup>244</sup> See Appendices B and C.

of every comment were removed from the tables, leaving the Reader Comments with 69 remark types and the Author Comments with 61. It is important to note that while there is a relatively equal number of comments between the readers and the author, I am the author and only one specific person. The patterns and interests revealed in the statistics for the content of reader comments are therefore more likely to reveal general patterns and interests than those of the author, which could represent my own particularities rather than patterns applicable to fan fiction authors in this fandom, or on AO3 in general. Since my fic is but one example out of thousands in the Men's Hockey RPF fandom, and one of millions on AO3, the results of analyzing my experience cannot be applied as general results or principles for this specific fandom or AO3 as a whole. It is my hope that analyzing the comments on my fic, which has a larger-than-normal sample size of comments, will provide a specific and detailed case study for how the theoretical aspects of fandom community can function on AO3.

In the reader comments, the top twelve types of remarks are listed in Table 2, in order of most frequent to the twelfth most frequent, out of 69 possible remark types.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> See Table 2 and Appendix B.

<b>Top Twelve Remark Types in Reader Comments</b>	
<b>Remark Type</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences in Comments</b>
1. Non-verbal Expression of Emotions (emojis)	<b>392</b>
2. Emotional Experience of Reading	<b>195</b>
3. Happy Reaction to Story Events	<b>177</b>
4. Overall Compliments to Fic	<b>170</b>
5. Exclamatory Interjection	<b>139</b>
6. Analysis of Characters	<b>123</b>
7. Sad Reaction to Story Events	<b>115</b>
8. IRL (In Real Life) Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience	<b>112</b>
9. Emotional Connection to Fic	<b>96</b>
10. Personal Relationship to Author	<b>95</b>
10. Happy Anticipation of Future Events	<b>95</b>
11. Serial Publication of Fic	<b>83</b>
12. Quotes from Fic	<b>75</b>

**Table 2.** The top twelve most frequent remark types in reader comments. Statistics taken from Appendix B (Vermeer 2022).

These remark types being the most frequent indicates that readers most often used their comments to express their emotional reactions to the story and sometimes provided ‘in real life’ context for their reading and/or commenting experience, using a combination of emojis, interjections, and coherent phrases. This confirms Samutina’s description of fan fiction comments:

Excessive emotionality is one of the influential discursive norms for describing one’s aesthetic impressions to the community. Emoticons and exclamation marks, the axiological slang of the internet generation are a must-have in readers’ responses...Another very influential norm is the rule of ‘internalizing everything’, that is, speaking primarily of the reading’s impact on the reader, even when evaluating the text. Even those who use formal argumentation in giving detailed responses to readings, still fill their reviews to the brim with stories about what they felt while reading, and sometimes turn their analysis into some sort of a personal story.<sup>246</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 257.



As Samutina’s description indicates, the reader reads “by immersing themselves in the text and internalizing it — allowing it to become inseparable from their self” and “seek[s] an opportunity to establish a personal relationship with a text and to read and experience what really makes them tick”; the emotional attachment to the text, here described as a “personal relationship,”<sup>247</sup> is central in how readers say things and in what they say; this indicates the centrality of personal relationships to the reader’s experience of reading fan fiction.

Other remark types talk about the serial publication of the fic and provide positive feedback to the author through general compliments on the fic and by directly quoting parts of the fic back to the author. Those types of interactions contributed to the formation of a personal relationship between the author and reader, as seen in remark type ten. Only one of the top twelve remark types is a direct interaction with the author as a person (Remark type 10: Personal Relationship to Author), which supports my positioning of the author as the person through which the text is accessed, rather than as the object to be accessed, despite the centrality of emotion and relationship-forming. Even the other remark types which are tangentially related to the author as a person or contribute to a relationship with the author are all remarks for which the fan fiction is the object being accessed. The fic itself is the reader’s focus, as is its affective power.

The length of the fic (48 chapters, 47 initially before the added epilogue; 123,879 words) and its serial publication created more time for the readers to become emotionally

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<sup>247</sup> Quotes in this sentence from Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 260-261.

invested in the story and its characters. The length of the fic also gave the readers more content through which to emotionally bond to the characters and their story. Both of these factors caused the readers to form deeper bonds to the text itself and to the author. I wrote the fic serially, posting each chapter onto to AO3 as a new update to my uncompleted work as soon as I had a finished first draft of each chapter, without editing prior to posting. Generally speaking, I published a new chapter every day or every second day from May 3, 2020 until I posted the initial final three chapters on the same day, July 27, 2020 (see Appendix D). Sometimes I posted more than one chapter on the same day because I wrote enough scenes that needed to be split into multiple chapters. There were four significant gaps in my posting during that time period: 1) A thirteen-day gap between June 6 and June 19; 2) A six-day gap between June 24 and July 1; 3) A five-day gap between July 3 and July 8; 4) A ten-day gap between July 17 and July 27 (see Appendix D). A second and final epilogue chapter — which was not initially planned to be part of the fic — was added after the work was labeled as complete on AO3 on February 18, 2021 (see Appendix D). This means that for approximately three months, my fic was being updated regularly and thus appearing at the top of the list of fics for the Men's Hockey RPF tag, as AO3 automatically puts the most recently published or updated fics at the top of the first page of search results, unless additional filters or a different way of sorting have been purposely selected. A way of checking for new fan fics to read if you have already perused the old fics is to regularly check the fandom tag for new fan fics or newly updated/completed fics. This means that a frequently updating, serially published fan fiction has a higher chance of attracting new and more readers since it is more frequently at the top of the search results, and therefore easier to see and

find. When the publication is spread out over a longer period of time, it also allows you to catch new arrivals in the fandom tag who may not have been reading in the fandom at the time you initially published previous chapters of the fic.

Of course, the length of the fic and the length of its publication schedule can also work against a fic; readers can lose interest, the story can lose its momentum and become cumbersome and pointlessly long. But in this case, the overall average number of comments on each chapter of my fic trended upwards from 6 comments — most likely representing three from readers and three from the author — to a final average of 18 comments per chapter<sup>248</sup> — most likely representing nine from readers and nine from the author (see Figure 4). This indicates that as the fic became longer, the number of comments I received on each new chapter increased. A numerical increase in reader comments represents an increase in the number of people reading the fic, or an increase in readers commenting on the fic, or a combination of the two. Both possibilities support the argument that the length and posting schedule increased the readers's emotional attachment to the fan fiction.

The increase of reader investment in my fic because of its serialized publication is reminiscent of the analog serial publication popularized by Charles Dickens in the 1800s. Nicola Bradbury, in their chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens*, “Dickens and the form of the novel,” describes the effects of Dickens's success with serialized publication:

Part-publication enabled Dickens to generate and sustain levels of curiosity, suspense, audience manipulation, over the ungovernable pace of reading. It also

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<sup>248</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D.

exposed the author to the pressure of public demands in the development of character and plot.<sup>249</sup>

Bradbury signals the emotional effects of serial publication on the readers; these effects — and the author’s ability to control them — are positioned as part of the author’s power over the reader. The power of the reader over the author is suggested in the next sentence, which describes how the dialogue between Dickens and his readers allowed readers to exert pressure on the author. My experience of this author-reader power dynamic is explored later in this chapter; an important difference between the power dynamic between Dickens and his readers and me and my readers is that my financial income and professional career were not affected by the success or failure of my updates, because writing my fic was unpaid, not-for-profit labour.

Serialization’s increase in the readers’s emotional attachment to the fan fiction can be seen not just in the number of comments, but also in their content. While some readers, like Reader Daisy, commented on the first chapter within 48 hours of it being posted and continued to comment on subsequent chapters throughout the fic, other readers did not start commenting until much further into the fic. The timing of their first comment indicates that they read several chapters before feeling the urge to comment; this suggests that they waited to comment until they were so emotionally invested in the fic that they stopped to comment, another indication that the length and posting schedule of the fic increased the readers’s emotional attachment to the text. For example, Reader Iris’s first comment was left on Chapter 21 of 48, and they wrote:

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<sup>249</sup> Bradbury, Nicola, “Dickens and the Form of the Novel,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens*, edited by John O. Jordan, Cambridge Companions to Literature, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 152-153.

OF COURSE THEIR FIRST KISS IS ON THE ICE. I MEAN HOW COULD IT NOT?! THO NOW I AM VERY WORRIED THAT THEYRE NOT IN AS MUCH PRIVATE AS THEY THINK AND IF SOME ASSHOLE RUINS THIS FOR THEM I WILL CRYYYYYYYYYYYY THIS IS SO GOOD I WASN'T MEANING TO GET INVESTED BUT I AMMMMM AND I CHECK THIS FIC OBSESSIVELYYYYYY ITS SO GOOD I WANT CLAUDE TO BE HAPPY SO MUCHHHHHH AAAAHHHH.

The first chapter Reader Iris chose to comment on was the chapter where the Sid and Claude have their first kiss, which is a pivotal moment in the development of their relationship and thus for the fic as a whole. Reader Iris's use of all caps, extension of the ending letter of words, and irregular sentence punctuation produces a stream-of-consciousness pseudo-scream of emotion both at what has happened and at what they fear will happen. Their final remark also indicates that they had been reading the fic prior to this chapter but did not comment; this demonstrates that the emotional significance and intensity of this chapter's events, as well as Reader Iris's emotional attachment to the characters, drove them to comment here. The use of the word "invested" shows that Reader Iris views the fic as something that one gets invested in, and their specification that they "want Claude to be happy" reveals that it is the main character that they are invested in. This shows consistency between the statistics regarding remark types across all comments and this specific example.<sup>250</sup>

Another reader, Reader Marigold, specifically mentions the context of their first comment being well over halfway into the fic and cites the fic's affective power as their motivation for commenting. Reader Marigold commented on Chapter 37:

Heartfelt message: Okay, so I specifically made an AO3 account so I could comment on your story and to tell you how much this means to me. Since the very first chapter, I have been captivated and this story was and is my constant companion throughout a very draining and emotionally difficult period of my life.

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<sup>250</sup> Comment quoted in this paragraph from: Reader Iris. Comment on chap. 21, posted May 27 2020.

I am checking on uploads and feel so happy whenever a new chapter is published (or when you up the number of chapters, I don't want this to end). I love love love this pairing, I love the emotional depth and how you can make me feel the utter despair or the hope or the ecstatic happiness! And so many valuable lessons on mental health, I really like the complex development Claude goes through. And Sid being his rock and being so caring and loving, aaaaah it's so good! I can easily say this is one of my top fanfictions – If not my favorite. It just makes me feel all kinds of things and I hope everything will turn out alright for these two, so thank you for your writing. You might not know but it affects others in positive ways! Hope you stay safe. End of heartfelt message.

Reader Marigold's comment states that they specifically made an AO3 account in order to comment — a reference to the Archive-locked status of the fic, which does not allow non-users to find, read, or comment on the fic. They position the fic as something which provoked deep emotional attachment to the characters and to the fic itself as an object that produces strong and desirable emotional effects on them. Their bond to the characters is shown through their analysis of the roles that each play — Claude as the one who is working through mental health problems, and Sid as the one who supports him — and in their desire for them to have a happy ending. I, as the author, am then positioned as the person to whom thanks is given for creating something which provokes those emotions; this demonstrates that it is the heightened emotional experience and attachment which the fic and its characters provide that the reader desires.<sup>251</sup>

However, the emotions sparked in the reader by the text are sincerely directed towards the fic *and* the author as a person. Reader Marigold uses the second person to create direct dialogue between them and the author as if they are in direct conversation.<sup>252</sup> The personal remarks they direct to the author create intimacy and connection between

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<sup>251</sup> Comment quoted and discussed in this paragraph is: Reader Marigold. Comment on chap. 37, posted July 9 2020.

<sup>252</sup> Reader Marigold. Comment on chap. 37, posted July 9 2020.

this reader and the author; the reader, as a person, has experienced positive emotions and formed a positive and intimate relationship with the text. This relationship then allows for a second relationship to be developed: That between reader and author as two people who mutually derive emotional benefits and bonds from their interactions around and about the text. Thus, despite not having commented consistently on most chapters up until this point, Reader Marigold comments here because the experience of reading those earlier chapters built an emotional bond between themselves and the text, and that bond then expanded to include the author after this comment was made.

Through these two examples of initial reader comments left in the middle of the fic rather than on the first chapter, the function of a fan fiction as an object which creates an emotional bond between itself and the reader, and then often a secondary bond between the reader and the author begins to be revealed. Out of the 69 reader remark types, 24 remark types are categorized under “Emotional Experience.” Within the other remark type categories (Reader-Author Interaction, Writing, Literary Analysis, and Fan Fiction-Specific Topics), there are five more remark types that deal with emotions, 1, “Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship.” In addition to having the most remark types, the “Emotional Experience” category of remarks has the most total remarks of the other remark type categories (1634 total remarks [Emotional Experience] versus 388 [Reader-Author Interaction], 645 [Writing], 212 [Literary Analysis], and 144 [Fan fiction-specific Topics]). This indicates that most of the reader comments were focused on emotions, whether that be the reader’s bond to a specific character, their reaction to events in that chapter, or their emotional connection to the text as a whole.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Information in this paragraph from Appendix B.

The distribution of the comments across the 48 chapters also demonstrates the role of the text's affective power because it is primarily chapters with significant emotional events that received the most reader comments.<sup>254</sup> The significance of emotional events grows as the fan fiction gets longer because there is a greater understanding of the characters, their story, and the significance of events to them; narratively speaking, the pay off for the story's buildup happens more often and to a greater degree the further into the text the reader gets. Additionally, the reader themselves has had more time to develop an emotional bond to the text. These two factors work in tandem to increase the emotional reaction to story events later on in the fan fiction.

This holds true for *A Good Place to Disappear*: Out of 48 chapters — the 48<sup>th</sup> of which was added months later as a surprise epilogue — 14 chapters had 15 or more reader comments.<sup>255</sup> The first chapter to reach at least 15 reader comments was Chapter 21, which is almost halfway through the fan fiction.<sup>256</sup> Chapter 21 is the chapter where Sid and Claude have their first kiss,<sup>257</sup> which is a major milestone in their Enemies to Lovers emotional journey. The fact that this is the first chapter to receive at least 15 reader comments indicates that this event provoked more reader comments than any of the other events preceding this chapter. While the increase in comments on later chapters could indicate an increase in readership overall<sup>258</sup> or an increase in readers who leave comments, rather than an increase in emotional attachment to the fic, it is worth pointing out that even after the general increase in the amount of comments after Chapter 21, there

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<sup>254</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D.

<sup>255</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>256</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>257</sup> Vermeer, *Good Place*, chap. 21.

<sup>258</sup> Chap. 22, 24, 27, 29, 31, 32, 36, 37, 40, 41, 42, 44, and 47 also all had at least 15 reader comments. See Figure 4 and Appendix D.



were seven significant spikes in the number of reader comments (see Figure 4); for example, Chapter 36 received 24 reader comments.<sup>259</sup> Since there were chapters immediately before and after these chapters that received less comments but more than the first few chapters,<sup>260</sup> these seem to be spikes in reader comments that are unrelated to the overall trend of an increased number of comments on chapters. Each of these seven spikes were for chapters that have significant emotional events; for example, in Chapter 36, Claude and Sid go to their first public event as a couple and the Briere children show up uninvited at the farm afterwards, signalling the future conflict between Claude and Danny Briere.<sup>261</sup> As can be seen from this example of one of the many chapters with a spike in reader comments, they all feature significant events that advance the plot and the emotional stakes of the characters and their relationships with each other.<sup>262</sup> Many of these events fulfil foreshadowed subplots from earlier in the fic and thus also provide a sense of narrative satisfaction at seeing them concluded in a way that satisfies the earlier foreshadowing.

A few exceptions to the general trend of comments increasing as the number of chapters increased can be explained by my posting schedule. Chapters 28 and 29 were both posted on June 6, 2020 at the same time because I had written them on that day;<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Chap. 24 received 18 reader comments, chap. 29 received 19, chap. 36 received 24, chap. 40 received 22, chap. 42 received 21, chap. 44 received 21, and chap. 47 received 39 (see Figure 4 and Appendix D).

<sup>260</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D.

<sup>261</sup> The significant emotional events for each of the chapters with spikes in comments were: Chapter 24- Claude's parents made a surprise visit to his house and discovered that Sidney was living with him and that they were together; chap. 29- Claude says 'I love you' to Sidney, the first time either of them has said it; chap. 36- Claude and Sidney go to their first public event as a couple and the Briere children show up uninvited at the farm afterwards, signalling the future conflict between Claude and Danny Briere; chap. 40- Claude's confrontation with Danny and Danny's confession that he was in love with Claude and still is; chapter 42- Claude and Sidney argue and Sidney leaves; chap. 44- Claude gets a love letter from Sidney after being separated for months; chap. 47- the original last chapter, a sappy epilogue scene of Sidney and Claude's joint-bachelor's party before their wedding (Vermeer, *Good Place*).

<sup>262</sup> See Footnote 273 for the complete list.

<sup>263</sup> See Appendix D.

thus, when people were informed of the updates, they read the chapters sequentially in one sitting and left comments on the second chapter they read, and not on the first and the second. The same phenomenon occurred three more times, with the most extreme — the largest disparity in comments between the first chapter posted that day and the last — example of this pattern happening for the initial last three chapters of the fic.<sup>264</sup> As with the previous examples, the final chapter posted on that particular day received the most comments because it was where the reader's reading session ended. Chapter 47, as the final chapter for several months until I posted a surprise epilogue chapter on February 18, 2021, received the most comments out of any chapter<sup>265</sup> because it was the final one for readers who had been following it as a WIP, and for readers who read it later as a complete work.

The causal link between emotionally significant chapters and an increase in reader comments can also be shown through the content of the comments on the chapters that had spikes in the number of reader comments. On Chapter 24, Reader Sunflower reacted to the parents's surprise visit by writing:

I'm overwhelmed with so many emotions. I literally read this chapter today but HOURS ago and knew that I needed to sit down and write this comment. I loved this chapter....I wanted to thank you for making me feel so many feelings.<sup>266</sup>

It is clear that this chapter had an emotional impact on them, and that this impact prompted them to write the comment. Reader Sunflower also speaks directly to the author

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<sup>264</sup> This occurred on July 9, 2020 when I posted both chapters 38 and 39, both which received fewer reader comments than their neighbouring chapters, and again on July 17, 2020 when chapters 43 and 44 were posted. Finally, this occurred for the last time, to a more extreme degree, on July 27, 2020, when I posted the three final chapters, 45, 46, and 47 (see Appendix D).

<sup>265</sup> See Figure 4 and Appendix D.

<sup>266</sup> Reader Sunflower. Comment on chap. 24, posted October 31, 2020.

using second-person pronouns in order to credit them with engendering feelings in themselves, rather than crediting the fan fiction as an object for making the emotions. Their affection and attachment are towards the fic, but their gratitude and the responsibility for the effects of the fic are given to the author as a person.

A comment that more explicitly addresses my structuring of the relationships between reader, text, and author was left on the exact same emotionally significant chapter as Reader Sunflower's comment; Reader Violet left a lengthy comment that discusses specific details from the chapter. This excerpt from that comment explains that their lengthy comment was prompted specifically by the emotions the fic evoked in them:

I love analyzing and pointing out the minute details and I'm happy to do it whenever. However, I don't do it for just anyone. It only comes to light when I'm having visceral reactions to someone's work. If you haven't been able to tell from the scattered thoughts, I've been commenting, your fic is always giving me those visceral reactions

In their comment, Reader Violet draws a causal link between the text creating an emotional response in them and them leaving a lengthy comment on the fic. They position the fic as an object that creates the emotions when they say, "your fic is always giving me," but they specifically state that they don't write lengthy comments, "for just *anyone* [my emphasis]," and not "for just *anything*." Using the personal pronoun "anyone" rather than "anything" indicates that the pronoun is standing in for a person, and not an object, which could have been used if Reader Violet had wanted to say that they do not write lengthy comments for any *fan fiction*. By structuring their sentence this way, they are indirectly saying that they write the comments for the benefit of the person (i.e., the author), and not the object (i.e., the fan fiction), even though the impulse to comment is primarily driven by their emotional response to the fic itself. Reader Violet

thus shows an at least subconscious awareness of the role of their comments in creating and facilitating the author's participation in a fan fiction community.<sup>267</sup>

Through quantitative and qualitative analysis of the reader comments left on the chapters of *A Good Place to Disappear* I have endeavoured to show how readers primarily leave comments on fan fictions when they have experienced a strong emotional reaction to the fic and that they form a strong emotional attachment to the text. Furthermore, the content of the comments indicates the reader's perspective on their relationship to the fic and its author: The author, as the creator of the text they are attached to, receives credit and gratitude for their work, but the fan fiction and its characters and story — the source of the affective power the reader experiences — are the direct object of their emotional attachment; the author is part of a secondary relationship because of their ability to facilitate the primary relationship to the fic. This is not to say that the readers are ungrateful, dismissive, or mercenary, but to show an essential difference between the reader and the author's positions in the fan fiction community. They are interacting with the same people and objects, but are seeking intimacy with different objects — the reader with the text, and the author with the reader(s).

### **The Author's Relationship to the Reader**

The process of serially publishing my fan fiction on Archive of Our Own formed a temporary, text-centered, and emotionally driven community of me, as the author, and my readers. While I did gain emotional satisfaction from writing the fic, it was the

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<sup>267</sup> Quotes and information on comment from Reader Violet. Comment on chap. 24, posted June 1, 2020.

interactions with readers through our comments that connected me to a fan fiction community. The mutual enjoyment of the text created the relationship between me and the readers, which was the focus of my author comments, instead of the text itself. However, the majority of these intimate relationships proved to be temporary and did not manifest into long-term community relationships outside of the serial publication of the fan fiction. The temporary nature of these relationships and their ties to a specific event — the serial publication of the fic — positions the community that develops around a fan fiction’s publication (or perhaps the continual publication of many fics by the same author in a fandom) as something specific to a time and place and that needs continual renewal in order to maintain its lifeforce. Community — that oft-discussed aspect of fan fiction and fandom — is neither guaranteed, nor permanent.

As I did with the reader comments, I have organized the remarks made in the author comments into remark categories and then remark types. The results support my positioning of the fan fiction as the way the desired object — the fan fiction community and its emotional relationships — is accessed because the author remarks were focused on the relationships between them and the reader first and mostly (see Table 3).

<b>Top Twelve Remark Types in Author Comments</b>	
<b>Remark Type</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences in Comments</b>
<b>1.</b> Non-verbal Expression of Emotions (emojis)	<b>445</b>
<b>2.</b> Thank yous	<b>217</b>
<b>3.</b> Emotional Reaction to Comment	<b>205</b>
<b>4.</b> “I’m glad you liked X”	<b>154</b>
<b>5.</b> Analysis of Characters	<b>149</b>
<b>6.</b> Writing Process	<b>142</b>
<b>7.</b> Personal Relationship to Reader	<b>101</b>
<b>8.</b> Exclamatory Interjection	<b>93</b>
<b>8.</b> Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	<b>93</b>

<b>9. Personal Information</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>10. Thank you for commenting</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>11. You're Welcomes</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>12. Emotional Experience of Writing</b>	<b>62</b>

**Table 3.** The top twelve most frequent remark types in author comments. Statistics taken from Appendix C (Vermeer 2022).

The top twelve remark types in the author comments demonstrate that the author comments were focused on the emotional bonds between the reader and the author first, and on the fan fiction second. The author emphasizes the emotional impact and value of the reader's comments both in expressions of politeness and in giving the reader verbal and visual cues of the author's emotional state upon reading the comments (the emojis and exclamatory interjections). Only three of the top twelve remark types in the author comments have to do with the fic itself: "The Writing Process," "Analysis of Characters," and "Emotional Experience of Writing." This last remark type straddles the line between emotion-related remark types and writing-related remark types, showing again how even writing the fic is positioned primarily as an emotional endeavour. However, the emotions in the author comments are directed towards and derived from the emotional relationships between the author and the readers and their creation of a fan fiction community, rather than the text itself, as it is in the reader comments.<sup>268</sup>

As an example of the relationships that developed between me and my readers over the course of publishing *A Good Place to Disappear*, I will examine two key

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<sup>268</sup> It is interesting to note that both the author and the readers frequently made remarks with character analysis (123 remarks by readers; 149 remarks made by the author; see Figures 3 and 4); this indicates that the characters are most likely the technical aspect of the fan fiction that is most important to readers and thus the key to an author being able to communicate and create the emotions that attract the readers and the fan fiction community created through them.

moments in my interactions with Reader Violet, a reader who left regular comments on my fic and who I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter. These are not all of the comments between me and Reader Violet, but they demonstrate both the emotional relationship and the role readers played in the writing of my fic.

The first key moment is the comment Reader Violet left on Chapter 22 of the fic, at which point there were still an estimated ten chapters to go. Reader Violet opens their comment by describing the emotional effect of the chapter on them: “So/ you ripped my heart out a couple of chapters ago, then you sewed it back in nicely last chapter. But now? Those stitches were ripped.” Here, Reader Violet once again positions the author as the receiver of credit for their emotional reaction to the fic, and emphasizes the potency of their emotional reaction to the text by using a visceral, embodied metaphor. In the same comment, they bring in a personal anecdote to connect themselves to the character, saying “Personally, I’ve been gone on someone just to find out that I was basically just an experiment and god does that hurt like hell so I definitely understand Claude’s perspective.” This comment shows how the reader comments when they feel the affective power of the text, and how that emotional reaction is frequently driven by the characters. This comment also combines a discussion of the fan fiction with personal information about the reader, which creates a more personal and intimate relationship between the reader and the author.<sup>269</sup>

In my reply to their comment, I acknowledge the turn to the personal and respond in kind: “I’m sorry you had such a shitty experience. Being gone on someone genuinely sucks a lot of the time, and it’s even shittier when they turn out to be a shitty person or

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<sup>269</sup> Quotes and information on comment from Reader Violet. Comment on chap. 22, posted May 29, 2020.

even just accidentally hurt you, and you should never be treated like someone's experiment."<sup>270</sup> My reply changes the focus of the comment thread away from the fan fiction itself — as it started off in Reader Violet's first comment — towards personal feelings around personal events in the lives of the reader and myself; this is an example of how personal relationships between reader and author emerge from the primary relationship between the reader and the text. The turn to the personal in the comments — combined with the intensity of emotions expressed by the reader and felt by me while writing the chapters they responded to — allows for a more intimate, direct, and immediate relationship between the author and the readers. Their journey of reading the fic as a WIP is almost simultaneous with my process of writing the fic, as I posted each chapter almost immediately after finishing, and most readers read and commented almost immediately after I posted. The near real-time nature of the publishing event(s), which will be discussed later in this chapter, allows the author and the reader(s) to feel and share the emotions produced by the same text almost exactly while they are feeling them, creating a stronger and more intimate relationship. This near real-time nature is another key difference from historical forms of serialization, like that of Dickens, as the capabilities of technology in 2020 allowed for those quicker interactions between author and readers, and therefore allowed for the stronger and more intimate relationship.

This type of interaction exemplifies — and pushes even further towards the intimate — Coppa's description of the fan fiction writer's presence in fandom, as opposed to the generally masculine, traditionally published, and authoritative author of mainstream texts:

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<sup>270</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 22, posted May 30, 2020.



In fandom, the author may be dead, but the writer — that actively scribbling, embodied woman — is very much alive. You can talk to her; you can write to her and ask her questions about her work, and she will probably write back to you and answer them. She might enjoy discussing larger plot, style, and characterization points with you if you engage her in critical conversation.<sup>271</sup>

Reader Violet was able to talk to me and develop a relationship with me through the comment section of my fic on AO3, as it made me, the author, accessible to them as a reader. This facilitated discussions of the text, its affective power and effects, and of personal anecdotes between the reader(s) and the author, creating a certain type of intimacy between them that while possible in traditional publishing, is usually more controlled and mediated through time and space.<sup>272</sup>

The readers primarily wrote comments when they were emotionally moved by and bonded to the characters in the fic. This suggests that the relationship between the reader and the text is primary, and that the development and importance of the reader-author relationship is secondary (barring other factors like previously existing relationships between the readers and authors, etc.). I, as the author, chose to publish the

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<sup>271</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 242. Coppa specifically uses female pronouns here because of fan fiction’s history as being primarily written for women by women and because of the patriarchal connotations around the distinctions between writers and authors. I choose to use gender neutral pronouns throughout when the gender of the person is unknown or when I am giving theoretical examples in order to reflect the changing experiences of gender in 2021, to acknowledge and make room for fandom participants of a variety of genders, and to avoid making assumptions about gender, since I am not doing a demographic study of the fandom participants I discuss here.

<sup>272</sup> For an example of a traditionally published author’s relationship to their readers, see: Palmer, Diana, “Let Me Tell You About My Readers,” in *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, which discusses her relationship with her romance novel readers. Palmer describes a similarly emotional relationship between her and her readers that seems to follow a similar positioning between reader, text, and author in terms of affective power. However, it is unlikely that her readers had similar access to Palmer while she was drafting her novels. She writes: “These readers tell me that my books and those of other romance authors have helped them get through periods of anguish and grief. In fact, romance novels have many times kept *me* going during the trials and tribulations of my own life” (156) and “For all those women, I write books. They are my family, my fans, my friends. I know many of them by name. They write to me and I write back... I never forget that it is because of them that I am privileged to be a successful writer...I write books for my readers” (157).

text on the archive in order to access the fan fiction community and the emotional satisfaction that comes from receiving feedback. Thus, readers want access to the texts, and the author wants access to the community through emotional relationships with their readers. Both are only possible to access through the publishing of a fic on AO3, or another fan fiction archive.

However, the power dynamics between reader and author are not necessarily equal. Busse describes these dynamics and places more emphasis on the author's ability to withhold the fics or parts of the fics from the readers, instead of emphasizing the reader's ability to withhold feedback and interaction from the author:

the reader's comment to the author...is often the only currency writers have in fandom. Writers can control feedback to some degree, be it through begging or blackmail as they hold parts of their stories hostage to a certain number of comments. Posting in parts not only may force the readers to enter a dialogue with the writer but also allows the writer to control reading practices.

Later, despite her emphasis on the fan fiction author's power here, Busse does ultimately decide that the greater power lies with the reader because

the readers have the ultimate control: the stories can be saved, printed out, edited, passed on, sold, or plagiarized, and nothing but community conventions protect the writer. Writers always expose themselves to a degree when writing and posting, whereas readers may lurk for years without ever engaging in any dialogue.

While I agree with Busse that readers do have those specific controls over what happens to the fic and the greater power in the relationship, I think Busse still overestimates the power an author has to control the amount of feedback their fics receive. She also underestimates the importance of reader feedback to the author. As Busse notes, reader feedback is the only form of currency available to a fic author on AO3, as it is an

explicitly not-for-profit space. While an author can choose to post chapter-by-chapter in order to drive up traffic and reader comments, or could post about their fics on other platforms in order to solicit feedback and readership, they are not able to force readers to read their fics or to leave comments. The reader still has the power to not read at all, to read only part, to read and not leave comments, or to read and leave a short comment, etc. The author is not able to control the quality or quantity of feedback on their texts, even though it is often their only reward for writing and posting their texts on a fan fiction archive.<sup>273</sup>

In a gift exchange system, where the author's sole benefit of publishing on an archive, instead of keeping their texts to themselves, *is* the feedback and the community it provides access to, the possibility of not having your free labour of love receive reciprocal love can be disappointing and discouraging. It can even cause authors to leave fan fiction communities. It can also be a strong possibility, depending on a variety of factors mostly out of your control — e.g., what fandom you are in, what pairing you like to write, what tropes you write, your pre-existing fandom social circle, your status as a Big Name Fan (BNF) or lack thereof, fandom wank, the date and time you post your fan fiction, etc. This asymmetry is noted in Tisha Turk's overview of the fandom gift exchange system; Turk describes it as “not just an accumulation of contiguous reciprocal relationships between individuals but a complex system in which the reciprocation of gifts, and by extension the reward for labor, is distributed across the community rather than concentrated in a single transaction.” This broader view of the circulation of gifts within the community is supposed to demonstrate a balance between giving and receiving

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<sup>273</sup> Quotes and information in this paragraph from Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 36-37.

that occurs *only on the systemic level* and not on the level of individuals — yet it ostensibly compensates for “the inconsistency and unreliability of full reciprocation” of the gift exchange system that “is not a failure of the gift economy but an integral part of it.” This kind of gift exchange requires faith in the existence of fairness at the systemic level of fandom’s gift exchange system, since direct reciprocation at the individual level is not certain or necessarily likely. However, an author’s faith in the system’s fairness may erode over time and from a lack of direct reciprocation in the form of comments from readers on fics. It is because of the fragility of this faith, the vulnerabilities listed by Busse, and the ever-looming prospect of participating in the community technically, but being excluded from the emotional rewards of actual relationships, that I position the fan fiction author’s place in the reader-author dynamics as even more vulnerable and uneven than Busse does.<sup>274</sup>

This imbalance in the reader-author dynamics can be seen in the disparity between the amount of “thank you” remarks left by readers and the amount left by the author. Across the 48 chapters, there were 105 reader remarks thanking the author generally, for writing the fic, or for sharing it.<sup>275</sup> This indicates an awareness of the author’s role in sustaining the community through their writing and of the fact that writing and sharing fics is a gift which ought to receive thanks, rather than an obligatory membership fee. In contrast, there were 341 author remarks thanking the specific readers generally in individual replies to their comments, or specific thanks for commenting, reading, or subscribing.<sup>276</sup> The majority of these thanks were general “thank yous” in

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<sup>274</sup> Quotes and information on AO3’s gift exchange system in this paragraph from Turk, “Fan Work”.

<sup>275</sup> See Total Remarks for “thank yous” in Appendix B.

<sup>276</sup> See Total Remarks for the three “thank you” remark types in Appendix B.

response to receiving a compliment from a reader. The disparity between the number of “thank you” remarks left by readers and left by the author could indicate an interesting consequence of the relationship structure between the reader, author, and the text — the readers are aware that the author is owed credit and thanks for providing their fic for free and that their labour is necessary for community maintenance, because fan fiction communities need continual renewal through the publication of new texts and new reader-author interactions.

However, the just over tripled number of author “thank you” remarks indicates that I viewed the reader comments as something which required constant thanks, and that I was aware that I had no right to comments as well as no ability to guarantee them. Taking the time to reply to almost every reader comment and to thank each reader for leaving their comment was my method of acknowledging their fulfillment of the reader’s part of the gift exchange system on the individual level on AO3. The readers’s focus on their emotional reaction to the fic in their comments, rather than performing the same painstaking attribution of thanks in their comments as I did in mine, indicates that not all readers of my fic felt the same insecurity over the possibility of the author not fulfilling their part of the exchange.<sup>277</sup>

I have described the emotion-driven, fan fiction-centered community created by the relationships between the readers and the author as temporary throughout this chapter. This is because the majority of these relationships — and thus the majority of the

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<sup>277</sup> It is interesting to note that one regular reader, Reader Lily, included “Thanks for sharing” in their comments almost every time (They left a comment starting a new comment thread on chapters 24-48, and every comment that was an initial comment they said “Thanks for sharing”). Reader Lily is also a fan fiction writer themselves, so it is possible that their fastidious dedication to thanking me for sharing my fan fiction is a reflection of their authorial awareness of this power imbalance between readers and authors. Reader Lily left a comment on chap. 24-48, posted June 1, 2020-July 28, 2020.

community that coalesced around the serial publication of my fic — stopped renewing itself, and therefore ceased to exist, after the fic was finished, despite the strong emotional relationships between the readers and my fic, and me and the readers. The few relationships that continued did so because we were able to successfully transition from the fic as the factor that kept us together to another factor; we were also able to transition to communicating on different platforms besides the comment section of my fic on AO3. These kinds of transitions require the reader and the author to think that they share something important enough to warrant continuing the relationship. For example, Reader Lily, a user who left frequent comments on my fic,<sup>278</sup> became one of my beta readers for the second draft of *Compass Points North*. While we did not necessarily have the most effusive comment exchange, we continued to talk on Tumblr (a microblogging platform used by fandom communities). Reader Lily also showed interest in my desire to revise the fan fiction into a non-RPF romance novel and then seek publication, and so offered to be a beta reader for me. I showed interest in their own writing projects and shared their enthusiasm for other aspects of the hockey fandom. These interactions — while directly related to and instigated by our comments to each other on my fic on AO3 — provided new commonalities over which to continue the relationship. The friendship that Reader Lily and I developed because of the fic remains an anomaly, however, as they are but one of a few readers I still communicate with today, and one of two with which I have a friendship. Despite the emotional significance my fic had for both me and some of my readers, the dissolution of the community ties between me and most of my readers after the fic was finished indicates that the emotional relationships based around one text

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<sup>278</sup> Reader Lily left an initial comment on chap. 24-48 of Chapters 24-48 of *Good Place*.

are not enough to create a long-term community or long-term relationships between its members.<sup>279</sup>

The temporary nature of my fic's community aligns with Coppa's theoretical model of fan fiction as a theatrical performance and event. Coppa describes fan fiction as "a cultural performance that requires a live audience; fan fiction is not merely a text, it's an event. . .there's a kind of simultaneity to the reception of fan fiction, a story everyone is reading, more or less at the same time, more or less together."<sup>280</sup> With a serially published fic, it becomes even more obvious that it is an event with a live audience specific to a time and place (when the fic is published, and on this specific archive in this specific fandom). Each chapter becomes a specific performance of a long-running theatrical; a more on the nose comparison in this case could be to professional hockey's series of seven games between two teams during playoffs. Each chapter — or game — is different and contributes to an overall "story" that builds towards an end that is unknown until the event is over.

During the "event" of publication, the readers and I, as the author, participated together, albeit from different perspectives. We discussed the posted chapters in the comments, and we were emotionally invested in the event. Since we could interact during

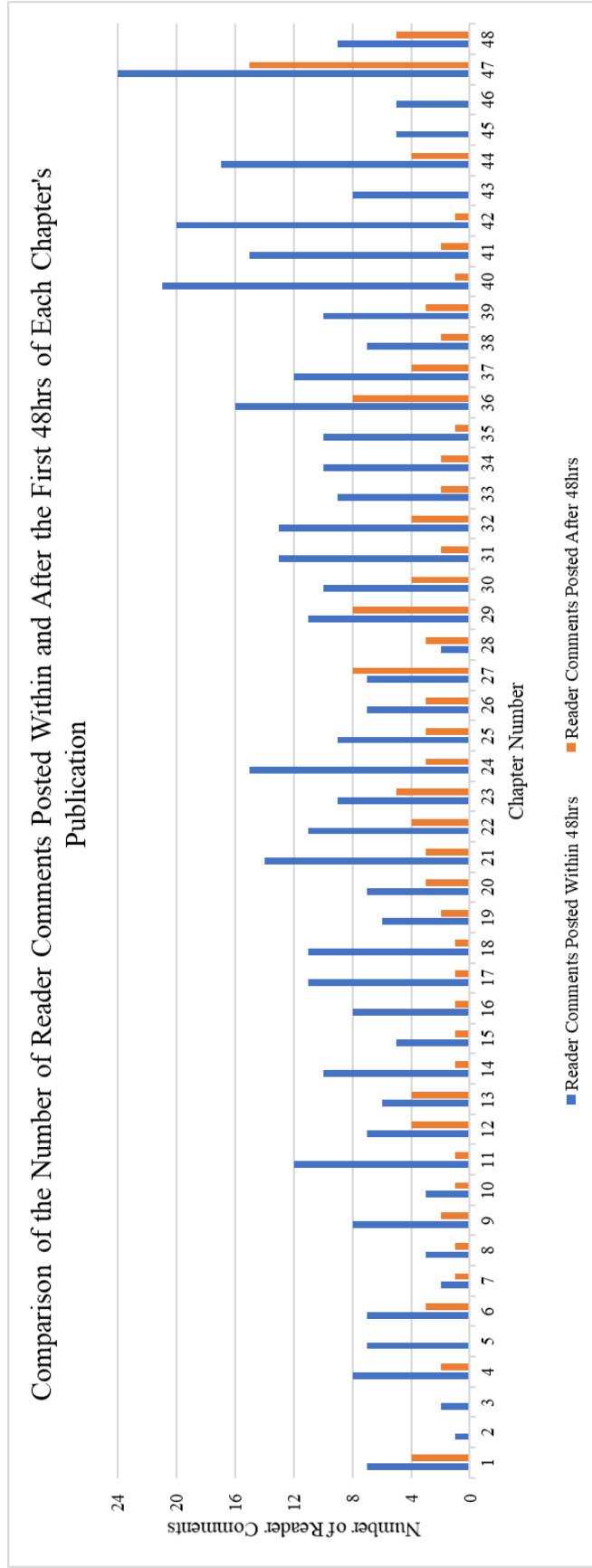
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<sup>279</sup> It is important to note that not only was my fan fiction alone not enough to create long-term relationships between me and my readers, and therefore a long-term fan fiction community, but that there are many other factors that contribute to a fan fiction's amount and quality of comments/interaction. Driscoll describes the interplay between many of these factors: "Every fandom is a web of communities distinguished by type, pairing, and/or genre, with varied degrees of overlapping or interlocking membership. In turn, every community is a field of subcommunities shaped by friendship groups, specific projects, geographic location, the contingencies of the Internet or other meeting places, and real-life conjunctions. Even this complicated assemblage is striated by internal hierarchies – by BNFs (Big Name Fans) and newbies, by networks of linked journals and other cliques. Remembering this is important because the most meticulous generic analysis of fan fiction will never explain why some themes emerge and others subside" (Driscoll, "One True Pairing, 93). Driscoll's remarks focus on the patterns around themes, but are easily applicable to the popularity of a certain fan fiction and the strength/weakness of its reader-author interactions.

<sup>280</sup> Coppa, "Writing Bodies in Space," 239.

this specific temporality, I felt, and the readers likely felt, that we were all in a communal web of relationships centered around the fic. This can be seen in the timing breakdown of when the reader and author comments were posted on each chapter (see Figure 5).





**Figure 5.** A graph comparing the number of reader comments that were posted within the first 48hrs of the chapter being published and the number of reader comments that were posted after the first 48hrs of the chapter being published, by each chapter. Overall, 78% of all reader comments on all chapters of *A Good Place to Disappear* were posted within 48hrs of their associated chapter being published. Statistics from Appendix D (Vermeer 2022).

78% of all reader comments on all chapters were posted within the first 48 hours of each chapter being published.<sup>281</sup> Most chapters received the majority of their reader comments within the first 48 hours, with some even receiving all of their reader comments within the first 48 hours; Chapters 27 and 28 were the only exceptions, with just one more reader comment posted after the first 48hrs than within.<sup>282</sup> Chapters 27 and 28 remain exceptions to this pattern for yet unknown reasons. The fact that 78% of all reader comments across all chapters were posted within the first 48hrs of their chapter being published demonstrates that the vast majority of feedback from readers — the backbone of fan fiction community formation on AO3 — happens within 48 hours of a fic or its update being published. While there are exceptions,<sup>283</sup> a fic author can thus expect their community interactions to either occur soon after publication or not at all. As more time passes since the ‘event’ of initial publication, it becomes less likely that a text will be read because more fics become published afterwards, pushing their fic down the chronological list of published fics in that fandom or tag. Readers who filter their search results more specifically may find older fics after the “event” of their publication, but that is less likely; it is a smaller percentage of the overall feedback an author can anticipate receiving compared to the feedback that is received when the fic appears as the most recently published/updated work in that fandom. These statistics confirm Coppa’s description of fan fiction publication as an event similar to a theatrical performance — if you were not there to see the show and be a part of the conversation with the rest of the

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<sup>281</sup> See Figure 5 and Appendix D.

<sup>282</sup> See Figure 5 and Appendix D.

<sup>283</sup> See my discussion of Reader Sunflower’s comments in subsequent paragraphs for an example of an exception.

audience and the performers, you miss out on that shared experience because reading the textual traces left behind is not the same as experiencing the event yourself.<sup>284</sup>

Busse uses José Esteban Muñoz's term "ephemeral traces"<sup>285</sup> to describe how a fan fiction and its comments are cultural artifacts left over from the event of its publication, and not an accurate and whole representation of the event itself. Muñoz defines ephemeral traces as "a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself...traces of lived experience and performances of lived experience, maintaining experiential politics and urgencies long after those experiences have been lived..."<sup>286</sup> Viewing fics and their paratextual elements as ephemeral traces of a temporally and spatially specific event reminds scholars to weigh its social context as heavily as the texts themselves when interpreting their meaning; it also confirms that a fic's community is a specific temporal and spatial event that lives and dies. The ephemeral traces remain for later readers to find. These later readers could form a new community around it if enough readers read and interact again around the text at the same time, but they cannot bring back the exact community that formed and dissolved with the beginning and end of the fic's publication and initial, more or less simultaneous, reading.

While the exact community cannot be re-formed once the specific time and space of the original publication event has passed, individual relationships not embedded within that communal web can form later if the author still responds to comments and readers still leave comments. A notable exception to my fic's within-the-first-48-hours pattern is the collection of comments I received from Reader Sunflower. They left their first

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<sup>284</sup> Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 150-151.

<sup>285</sup> Muñoz (1996), 10, as quoted in Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 151.

<sup>286</sup> Muñoz (1996), 10, as quoted in Busse, *Framing Fan Fiction*, 151.

comment on Chapter 11 on October 30, 2020, which was over five months after that chapter was posted and about three months after the initial last chapter (Chapter 47) was posted.<sup>287</sup> They proceeded to leave an initial comment on all chapters from 11 to 36 and left one reply to one of my replies; their last comment was left on April 13, 2021.<sup>288</sup> This relationship was not part of the larger community experience I had when originally writing and publishing the fic; this individual relationship between me and Reader Sunflower was made while we were surrounded by the ephemeral traces of the original event. Reader Sunflower shows an awareness of this in a few of their comments, when they say: “Thank you so much for everything till here (I’m happy that you’re around and reading my comments!) <3”<sup>289</sup> and “you: \* ended this fic months ago \*/ me: YOU’RE CHOSING [sic] TO MAKE ME SUFFER RIGHT NOW!!!”<sup>290</sup> The fact that Reader Sunflower thanks me for replying to them indicates that they expected me not to reply because they had commented so long after the fic’s publication. Their second, more humorous comment reveals their awareness of the difference between their immediate experience of reading the fic for the first time, and my now more distant experience of writing and sharing it. Communicating to each other amidst the ephemeral traces of the original reading community had the effect of making the communication between me and Reader Sunflower feel like we were leaving notes to each other in an abandoned city — there was evidence of the former inhabitants, but the people and the relationships that built that city were no longer there to live in it and maintain it.

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<sup>287</sup> Reader Sunflower. Comment on chap. 11, posted October 30, 2020; Vermeer, *Good Place*.

<sup>288</sup> Reader Sunflower. Comments on chap. 11-36, posted October 30, 2020-April 13, 2021; Reader Sunflower. Reply to a reply on chap. 30, posted December 4, 2020.

<sup>289</sup> Reader Sunflower. Comment on chap. 24, posted October 31, 2020.

<sup>290</sup> Reader Sunflower. Comment on chap. 21, posted October 31, 2020.

An even more haunting contribution to the abandoned city metaphor occurred when Reader Sunflower stopped commenting on my fic entirely after Chapter 36, despite there being twelve more chapters to go, with no warning or explanation given. While we had seemingly developed a personal relationship over their lengthy comments and my replies, there was no requirement for them to provide explanations or personal information. In practice, however, both of us acted as if we had an obligation, to communicate to each other and to explain any uncharacteristic silences or absences because of our relationship developed through the text. This can be seen in my December 3, 2020 reply to their initial comment on Chapter 30, made on November 3, 2020, and their December 4, 2020 reply to my reply. On December 3, I commented:

I know I'm responding to your comments a whole month-ish later, but I want you to know that I read all of your comments as they came in immediately and I really value and appreciate them. You wrote so much and gave so much great feedback and it was a lot of fun to experience reading the story along with you./ I know there's a hundred million reasons for you to have stopped commenting, but I just wanted to say that I hope you are doing okay and that you did finish the fic and enjoy the ending, as I want your reading experience up until now to be rewarded by the remaining ten ish chapters of the fic. I hope you continue to find fics that make you feel this way and that you have a safe and happy end of year/new year. <333 Thank you <3333<sup>291</sup>

In this reply, I acknowledge my own silence, which I felt as a dereliction of my authorial duty to show my appreciation of their comments and the effort it takes to write them. My reply also acknowledges that I have no right to their comments and frames my fic as an object which aims to reward the readers emotionally. The personal good wishes not only show the specific time and place our individual relationship was being created in, but that we did have a secondary personal relationship between each other as reader and author.

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<sup>291</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 30, posted December 3, 2020.

The fact that I mentioned Reader Sunflower's absence in the comment section at all also shows how I had grown used to receiving comments from them on every chapter, even while knowing that they were under no obligation to continue reading or commenting. This difference between a theoretical understanding of fan fiction's gift exchange system and the practical emotional experience of actually participating, shows how the system can run into problems when the theoretical system-level fairness does not perfectly align with the experiences people have.

Reader Sunflower's December 4, 2020 reply to my reply shows a similar difference between theory and practice. In response to my tentative entreaty, they wrote:

OH MY GOD YOU !!! YOU !!! FDKASJFLKSDA I'M IN SHOOK/ FIRST OF ALL!!! I can't believe you came back to my comments to answer all of them! It was a surprise to log in and find 20+ notifications in my inbox./ Thank you, truly, for reading them and for taking your time to answer! I'm really happy and surprised KFAFJ/ oh, aND [sic] actually, I didn't finish reading your story yet./ WHICH MEANS: I'LL COMMENT ON THE REMAINING CHAPTERS!!!/ A lot of things led me to stop reading. None of them was about you or your work. Believe me, I missed you and Sid and Claude so so so much./ I was ok and then entered a very bad place so I just. logged off. isolated myself and put my fave fics on "hold" so I could come back better and enjoy the stories without the dark cloud above my head./ I'm happy to say that I'm better, that things got easier and I'm back better than before!/ I couldn't read the last chapters in silence and alone, you know?! I really (*really*) appreciate your work, your writing, your dedication. And if I can show you that by screaming in every chapter I'm glad I'm able to do it!/ I hope you stick around to finish the 10 chapters with me, it would be truly an honor. <3.<sup>292</sup>

Their comment contains many characteristics of the reader-author relationship I have been discussing thus far. They use strong, emotive language to emphasize their emotional commitment to the fic and to me as the author, showing both the primary and secondary relationships. They indicate their surprise at me replying to all of their comments,

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<sup>292</sup> Reader Sunflower. Reply to reply on chap. 30, posted December 4, 2020.

showing again that my replying is a non-obligatory indication of gratitude and respect towards the reader. Their reassuring remarks, which explain that their reasons for pausing their commenting and reading had nothing to do with their (dis)satisfaction towards the text itself, demonstrate that they felt some sort of emotional obligation to reassure me and to continue to maintain the emotional relationship they had begun with me and the text. Their last few remarks, particularly when they say, “I couldn't read the last chapters in silence and alone, you know?!”<sup>293</sup> reveal how reading a fic can be an interactive community-forming and relationship-building event. It was perfectly possible for Reader Sunflower to not finish the fic at all, or to read it without leaving any more comments, or to read it without forming a bond with me as the author. Yet they chose not to do this — instead they waited to read more until they were able to continue commenting on the fic and interacting with me. For Reader Sunflower, reading *A Good Place to Disappear* was not a solitary action, but a community event where a significant part of the joy was sharing the emotional attachment to the text and their reactions to it with the fic's author.

Despite the personal and lengthy interactions in the comment section of the fic between Reader Sunflower and myself, and despite their desire to finish the fic while continuing to build our individual relationship, they did stop commenting after Chapter 36. I have received no further communication from them on any platform, and their final comment provided no hint towards their future absence, or whether they finished reading in silence. The relationship developed between me and Reader Sunflower is rather exceptional both for its specific timing in relation to the fic's publication, and for the quantity and quality of the comments we exchanged. The abrupt and unexplained ending

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<sup>293</sup> Reader Sunflower. Reply to reply on chap. 30, posted December 4, 2020.

to our relationship shows how the web of interconnected reader-author, reader-text, and author-reader relationships does not always result in a long-term community. While individual texts can create relationships and communities, the longevity and strength of a fan fiction's community varies depending on a variety of factors besides the characteristics of the fic itself.

*A Good Place to Disappear* was a popular and well-received fan fiction in the Men's Hockey RPF fandom and experienced a great deal more feedback and interaction from readers than most fics in the fandom. However, I posit that one fan fiction alone is not enough to create a long-term community. As mentioned in the introduction, fan fiction and fandom communities need continual renewal in order to survive. Writing and publishing one fic on the archive is like building one house in the city — yes, readers may come and attend your house-warming party, begin relationships there, and leave behind ephemeral traces. But after the party is over, they leave and move onto another fic publication event, generating ephemera in that house, and so on and so on. The gift exchange system acts as a generative force that urges authors to continually write and publish more texts on AO3 in order to receive more readerly response, to continue to build new relationships, and to strengthen old ones. I believe that readers experience this generative force as well, except that it urges readers to read more fics — especially the newest ones — and to leave comments, in order to build relationships with the other frequent readers and authors. Building these relationships allows them to become an embedded community member and potentially gain more social capital by becoming a beta reader or a friend thanked in the author's Beginning Notes of a fic. The presence of capitalistic concerns — in this case, social capital — within an ostensible non-capitalist



system, connects this type of serialized publication once more to Dickens's serialized publication in the 1800s. Bradbury presents Dickens's serialized publication as a method of publication that creates and measures audience response and dialogue between him and his readers in sales figures, as opposed to fan fiction's reader comments. Fan fiction's economy is of social capital instead of money, yet there is still a pattern of production and consumption.<sup>294</sup> AO3's generative force encourages the continual movement of participants from fic to fic, but does not reward readers and authors who return to old fan fictions and previously trendy pairings, tropes, or other fan fiction patterns. This continual movement away from the old towards new content is a part of a fan fiction community's life force renewal, but it also puts pressure on both authors and readers to constantly produce and consume content, a concept that has more in common with the external capitalist structure of traditional, mainstream publishing than the reciprocal, communal, free, gift-exchange system AO3 was designed to be.

### **Division of Labour & Credit Between Author and Readers for Fan Fiction Writing**

Another capitalist concern in fan fiction communities that is often debated is how the labour of creating a fan fiction is divided between the author and their readers, and the subsequent question of how to divide the credit for the labour in its various forms (e.g., monetary, status, praise, etc.). There are historical examples of this same concern in traditional mainstream publication as well; the editorial relationship and division of credit and labour between Martha Ostenso, a Scandinavian-Canadian-American author from the

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<sup>294</sup> Bradbury, "Dickens," 152-153.

first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and her husband, Douglas Durkin, is a good example.<sup>295</sup> Ostenso had a successful literary career, starting with her 1925 prize-winning novel, *Wild Geese*.<sup>296</sup> However, in 1958, she and her husband signed a legal agreement stating that all of her works, beginning with *Wild Geese*, “were the results of the combined efforts of Douglas Leader Durkin and Martha Ostenso.”<sup>297</sup> Hannah McGregor, in her book chapter, discusses Ostenso’s challenges to traditional ideas of authorship and the editor-author relationship and describes the effects of this contract:

This legal agreement not only throws into doubt the entire narrative of Ostenso’s career; it also destabilizes the notion of singular authorship that lies at the heart of this narrative, and raises the question of how collaborative authorship can and should be handled<sup>298</sup>

This disruption to the “lone genius” author myth that Ostenso and Durkin’s contract forces lends itself to the laudation of a collaborative conception of authorship. However, this has its pitfalls too. The scholarly and critical narrative of Ostenso’s collaborative creative labour and authorship narrativizes “Ostenson’s career in terms of a gendered and hierarchical model of mentor and ingenué” — this is an important reminder that “collaborative dimensions of authorship should not be simplistically lauded without considering the power differentials at work in most collaborative partnerships.”<sup>299</sup> Considering the general position of fan fiction as a form of writing already gendered as “women’s writing,” already derided as amateur popular fiction, and already marginalized

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<sup>295</sup> McGregor, Hannah, “Editing without Author(ity): Martha Ostenson, *Periodical Studies*, and the Digital Turn,” in *Editing as Cultural Practice in Canada*, by Smaro Kamboureli, Dean J. Irvine, and Christl Verduyn, edited by Smaro Kamboureli and Dean J. (Dean Jay) Irvine, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016, 105-106.

<sup>296</sup> McGregor, “Editing without,” 106.

<sup>297</sup> Durkin and Durkin, as quoted in McGregor, “Editing without,” 106.

<sup>298</sup> McGregor, “Editing without,” 106.

<sup>299</sup> Quotes in this sentence from McGregor, “Editing without,” 111.

as legally dicey, not-for-profit texts written and read by the already marginalized,<sup>300</sup> it is especially important to examine the power differentials at work when dividing labour and credit between fan fiction authors and readers; while a fan fiction community and its participants may not be as clearly gendered or hierarchized as Ostenson's relationship with her husband, the ambiguity of fan fiction creation makes it a space where claims of communal/collaborative authorship can hide its own hierarchies and biases.

In the case of *A Good Place to Disappear*, the comments fueled my emotional investment in the fic and in the Men's Hockey RPF fandom, but did not offer significant editorial critiques or alter the direction of the story or its writing style. Reader suggestions were mostly for fun and about minor plot events, which I incorporated into the text as a gift to the readers with whom I had formed relationships. While there were a few critical comments, overwhelmingly the comments were positive, which follows the community rule of thumb of not leaving unsolicited critical feedback. Silence and a lack of comments on a chapter therefore replace the function of critical feedback; a sudden silence in the comments could indicate general reader unhappiness with the development of the fic. The structure of serial publication allowed readers to offer suggestions and feedback before I wrote the next chapter; this did influence my fic in small ways, but no more and often quite less than the feedback I received from the beta readers did. I valued the input I received from the dedicated readers with whom I had an emotional relationship, but the distinctions between author and reader remained, even as the relationships between the two positions were perhaps more informal, frequent, and intimate than those that develop between traditionally published authors and their readers. Thus, the credit owed to my

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<sup>300</sup> Derecho, "Archontic Literature," 66-67, 76-77.

readers is that of acknowledging their role as inspiration, emotional support, and general feedback, and not that of financial remuneration or authorial co-credit.

While I did not have a beta reader when I was writing *A Good Place to Disappear*, my interactions with Reader Violet do share some characteristics with the fandom author-beta reader relationship that Angelina Karpovich explores in her article, “The Audience as Editor: The Role of Beta Readers in Online Fan Fiction Communities” (2006). Karpovich describes the role fan fiction beta readers play in the creation of fics as one which

combines elements of the traditionally distinct roles of the reader (who is the target audience of the text, but whose engagement with it, although potentially interpretive, does not allow for a *direct* intervention), the commentator or critic (who judges the text) and the editor (who ensures that the text fulfills its requirements and who, in contrast with the reader and the commentator-critic, is entitled to stipulate alterations in the text).<sup>301</sup>

Reader Violet was not a beta reader for me, but they were able to have both the interpretive power of a reader, the judicial power of the critic, and the direct intervention power Karpovich reserves for the editor, because of the serial publication of my text and because I valued their opinion enough to allow it to influence the fic.

As an example of these three distinct roles merging in my interaction with Reader Violet, I will examine a comment where they express their idea for a future chapter of the fic. On Chapter 22, they write: “Also, wishful idea I’ve been thinking of: Ben finds out by accidentally finding Sid and Claude making out against the side of the barn.”<sup>302</sup> I

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<sup>301</sup> Karpovich, Angelina I, “The Audience as Editor: The Role of Beta Readers in Online Fan Fiction Communities,” in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland, 2006, 176.

<sup>302</sup> Reader Violet. Comment on chap. 22, posted May 29, 2020.

respond positively to this suggestion in my reply.<sup>303</sup> Several chapters and interactions later, I begin Chapter 29 with this Author's Note, which provides a dedication that gifts the chapter to two specific readers, Reader Violet and Reader Daisy:

For Reader Daisy — Please enjoy sweaty Sid wearing a toolbelt ;) / For Reader Violet — The makeout scene (and you'll know when it happens) is for you / And for everyone who's been reading and commenting, especially about a certain three-word sentence... this is for all of you <3.<sup>304</sup>

This dedication makes specific reference to two commenters and the interactions between them and me in the comments section, as well as to every reader and commenter as a whole. This chapter is therefore framed as a gift to those specific commenters and to all people who gave me the gift of readership and feedback. Naming these two readers specifically also signals to other readers the importance of their relationship to me, and by extension, to the text. This is similar to the process of giving credit and thanks to beta readers that Karpovich describes,<sup>305</sup> except in this case it is elevating the role of the reader and not of the beta reader. Another interesting difference is that the entire relationship between me and Reader Violet is observable by every other reader, since we did not communicate through any medium except the comment section, which is visible to all readers, and we did not have a prior existing relationship. Thus, this elevation from silent reader to actively commenting reader — Karpovich's critic function — to publicly named contributing reader — Karpovich's editor function — is all documented and traceable by other readers. The visibility allows them to see how they could follow a similar elevation in cultural capital and status. This process of communicating between

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<sup>303</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 22, posted May 30, 2020.

<sup>304</sup> Vermeer, Lina. "Author's Notes at Beginning of Chapter" for chap. 29 in *Good Place*, posted June 6, 2020.

<sup>305</sup> Karpovich, "Audience as Editor," 175.

author and reader, incorporating suggestions, and then publicly thanking and acknowledging them in the community space is part of the community renewal,<sup>306</sup> which is based on the maintenance of personal links among readers, authors,<sup>307</sup> and the texts to which they are emotionally attached.

In Reader Violet's comment on Chapter 29, they provide a series of highly emotional responses to the scene I wrote for them as they read it,<sup>308</sup> and reflect on the emotional impact of this chapter and their scene:

well. that was a rollercoaster of emotions. like damn. you went straight for the jugular...seriously i appreciate you so much. i didn't expect you to go through with it when i made the suggestion but im so glad that you did. the moment was absolutely perfect....<sup>309</sup>

Once again, the emotional impact of the story is noted, and credit directed towards the author. Their fannish gushing towards the scene is directly reciprocated by me in my reply;<sup>310</sup> I reiterate my thanks for their idea and reaffirm the emotional value I place on their comments:

I was more than happy to include that scene for you because A) It was a fucking genius idea and B) I love including little easter eggs for y'all/ If this chapter went

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<sup>306</sup> Another example of how credit to the fan fiction community is given to people other than the author(s) of the fan fictions is the function on the archive to add another archive work as a work that inspired your fan fiction that you are posting. These "inspired by \_\_\_" fics show up in the paratextual header of the fan fiction as part of the fan fiction's "Beginning Notes", which appear ahead of the first chapter of the fan fiction, or at the beginning of the entire fan fiction (if viewed as an entire work and not chapter by chapter), after the work's header and summary. *A Good Place to Disappear* has two works listed as inspiration using this function. I also specifically mention them again and talk briefly about how they inspired me and why I like them in the "Beginning Notes" underneath the "inspired by \_\_\_" function (Vermeer, *Good Place*). As Karpovich said when discussing how mentioning beta readers in the "Beginning Notes" gives them prominence both literally in the presentation of the fan fiction and its paratextual elements and in terms of social capital and editorial value, putting these fan fictions in as inspirations for my fan fiction highlights their importance to me, and connects me and my fan fiction to the larger community and puts me in conversation with other fan fiction authors.

<sup>307</sup> Karpovich, "Audience as Editor," 174.

<sup>308</sup> Reader Violet. Comment on chap. 29, posted June 28, 2020.

<sup>309</sup> Reader Violet. Comment on chap. 29, posted June 28, 2020.

<sup>310</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 29, posted July 2, 2020.

right for the jugular, your comment yanked my frickin heart out, it was my genuine pleasure <3.<sup>311</sup>

This reply to Reader Violet shows that I was conscious and considerate of my community's input. The similar tone in their comment and my reply also indicates that the intensity of their request matched the intensity of our relationship, and so it did not feel like an overstep.

It is important to note that Reader Violet did not view their suggestion as something that I as the author was obliged to do — they were surprised and grateful, and viewed it as a gift to themselves, not as something owed to them in exchange for their comments on the fic.<sup>312</sup> There is a tension within AO3's gift exchange system at the individual level, in which authors write fics and publish them on AO3 for free, and readers read them and sometimes provide comments and kudos as feedback. The system requires that both parties perform their roles freely, which means that readers cannot demand fics from authors, and authors cannot demand comments from readers. However, if readers do not provide comments, authors may choose to stop publishing on AO3, as the point of publishing it there instead of writing it and keeping it private is to receive feedback and social interaction from readers. And from the other perspective, if authors shame readers for not leaving comments on every fic they read, readers may not want to write comments at all, and/or comments may become more a matter of rote obligation than a genuine outpouring of emotional response or editorial feedback. The community does need continual maintenance in order to keep existing, but this maintenance must remain voluntary because genuine intimacy and emotional connection between readers,

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<sup>311</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 29, posted July 2, 2020.

<sup>312</sup> Reader Violet. Comment on chap. 29, posted June 28, 2020.

authors, and their texts cannot exist within a structure of formal obligation and requirement.

The specific callback to the suggestion Reader Violet left in their comment on Chapter 22 shows how they performed Karpovich's editor function that is part of the beta reader's role, and not that of a reader, even though Reader Violet is a reader, and not a beta reader with editorial powers. However, since I did not write my fic privately and then share with beta readers prior to publishing it on AO3, all readers had the opportunity to make suggestions for the fic in the comments. This opportunity did not guarantee my acceptance and use of their suggestions — I included the specific plot point requested by Reader Violet because it was cute, easy to write, and did not affect the overall plot and character development that I already wanted to do. I wanted the character Ben to find out that Claude and Sid were together, and it did not make a difference how they found out. Including this suggestion was a way for me to show my appreciation that came at no cost to myself and my own goals. If a reader had made a different suggestion or critique that was harder to incorporate or went against what I intended, I may not have accepted their suggestions, as can be seen from the next comments I discuss.

The most significant negative response to a chapter of my fic that I received was for Chapter 42. The negative feedback I received on this chapter's plot point supported my ultimate decision to revise this plot point in later drafts; I made the decision after receiving similar feedback on a later draft from a beta reader, not when I initially received this negative feedback from readers of the fic version. In this chapter, Claude has just had his significant emotional confrontation with Danny, and Sid has decided to leave Claude because he is scared that Claude is making a mistake by choosing him over



Danny. The first significant negative response was from Reader Petunia, who had an extremely strong emotional response to this chapter: “And this just makes me even sadder than the last chapter...[sic]/I should’ve heeded the warning and waited until there was a chapter with a happier ending to follow up with because I’m truly not doing okay.”<sup>313</sup> I responded to their more personal comment about their mental health seriously, saying, “Please take care of yourself!...Also, if it would be helpful at all, I’m around on tumblr if you would like to talk (same username as here).”<sup>314</sup> I then proceeded to have a personal conversation with Reader Petunia on Tumblr about their reaction to the plot point, which made me seriously consider changing it.

In addition to Reader Petunia’s personal and strong negative reaction to the chapter, I also received many comments on how sad the chapter was, which in itself is not necessarily a negative reflection on the quality of the writing or on the direction of the plot. However, another reader, Reader Lavender, left a comment expressing their disagreement with the chapter’s events:

OK.... my first comment were my usual hearts, today blue and heart broken. But this chapter both confuses me, and irritates me. I can not understand why they think they need to be apart to heal and figure themselves out (ok, I understand why, but no, just no....) People need people (a Skam reference, just for you), -conection. [sic] They need to heal and learn to trust them selves [sic] and each other. Doing that by them selves [sic] is old coping mechanisms. [sic] Claude needs to step up, and show Sid how he truly feels, and what he wants. Preferably right now!

Reader Lavender, in this comment, indicates disapproval for this chapter’s events in a way that confirms Reader Petunia’s opinion on the chapter, but without citing personal experiences as their reasoning. It is important that Reader Lavender is not just expressing

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<sup>313</sup> Reader Petunia. Comment on chap. 42, posted July 17, 2020.

<sup>314</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 42, posted July 17, 2020.

sadness in reaction to the chapter, but irritation and confusion (“this chapter both confuses me, and irritates me.”). They, like Reader Petunia, are invested in the characters and the story, and have their own understanding of it and their own expectations; their irritation and confusion show that my vision of the story and characters has diverged from theirs. Reader Lavender shows an awareness of the reasoning I used when writing this chapter, but rejects the chapter’s events as not only the wrong move for people in general (“People need people”), but as the wrong move for my characters in this story (“Doing that by them selves [sic] is old coping mechanisms. [sic] Claude needs to step up...”).<sup>315</sup>

These two different types of responses — Reader Petunia’s personal and emotional negative reaction and Reader Lavender’s emotional yet analytical rejection of the chapter’s events — worked to sway my opinion on the chapter, as seen in my reply to Reader Lavender:

I’ve been getting a/ lot of feedback about this plot bit, and I am going to rework it a little because you’re right...My big concern was that Claude would heal, but in a way that made him dependent on Sid for his healing...I didn’t want him to heal only because of Sid and only with Sid. But I’m not sure exactly of how best to do that in this story, so even though I’m still going to write the final ending chapter, I may end up doing substantial edits later.<sup>316</sup>

Later, I reply to another request to change this plot point by saying, I may even edit it to have it be fixed earlier-I am conflicted right now, but your comments are helping me judge if this plot bit works or doesn’t.”<sup>317</sup> Both of my replies indicate that receiving critical feedback on this chapter impacted my opinion on the plot of the story and what

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<sup>315</sup> Quotes and information in this paragraph from: Reader Lavender. Comment on chap. 42, posted July 17, 2020.

<sup>316</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 42, posted July 17, 2020.

<sup>317</sup> Vermeer, Lina. Reply to comment on chap. 42, posted July 17, 2020.

was best for the characters. While I continued with my original plot and did not revise, change, or edit, the version of the story these readers saw, their critiques were impactful enough to leave lingering doubt in my mind about that important third act of my plot. This lingering doubt solidified when one of my beta readers, who read *Compass Points North*, and highlighted the same plot point as something that was out of character and ought to be changed. They wrote:

I also think Matt [Sid in *A Good Place to Disappear*] leaving near the end of the books feels a bit unnecessary and cruel. He's just seen Jack [Claude in *A Good Place to Disappear*] there with Jonas [Danny in *A Good Place to Disappear*] and knows Jack is gonna fall apart so leaving feels mean. I think it might be best if he leaves later or if there's an actual concrete reason he has to leave for a bit (family emergency, something to do with the article, or just some business he has to do). That way you still get Jack worrying if he comes back, but without the cruelty which honestly felt out of character.<sup>318</sup>

Not only did my beta reader's comment prove that this was still an issue with the plot two drafts past the initial fic version, but they provided a potential solution in suggesting that Matt leave Jack for a different practical reason, rather than only the emotional one I used. Having an alternative plot point to replace the unsatisfactory one that also preserved the intangible emotional goals I had will allow me to make this revision in future drafts, when I could not figure out how to do it in the fic, despite my acceptance of the negative feedback from my readers.

These examples of my responses to reader feedback — both those which I incorporated into the text, and those which I did not — demonstrate that readers who are not officially beta readers can sometimes perform the beta reader's combined functions of editor, critic, and reader, when the fan fiction is serially written and published, and when

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<sup>318</sup> Beta Reader. Email message to author, August 31, 2021.

the author accepts their input. They also indicate that despite the focus on communal storytelling in fan fiction communities, I did the all of the writing and the majority of the creative labour that was required to make this fan fiction. This is not to deny or ignore the roles of the readers as editor, critic, and emotional supporters, or the roles of other fan fiction writers in both the Men's Hockey RPF fandom, and other fandoms I have participated in, who help build the metaphorical cities that my fic became part of as its own distinct, yet familiar, building. Readers and friends offered feedback and criticism, some of which I accepted and integrated, some of which I did not. However, I wrote the fan fiction myself, and I made the revisions, even when some of the ideas I wrote were the suggestions of a reader or friend. Since there was no collective writing involved, I see the division of credit as a question of the role of the literary and social context of my fan fiction's construction, not as a question of authorship.

My emphasis on the labour of writing as indicative of authorship — while also acknowledging the importance of my labour as placed within a historical and social web of context — takes its inspiration from Kristin Arola's discussion of an American Indigenous approach to the issues of authorship and plagiarism. In order to focus on the process of creation, rather than the end product, as a means of understanding authorship and its relationship to the context around it, and to avoid the "lone genius" conception of authorship, Arola uses American Indigenous ways of thinking and Ojibwe ways of "culturing" to view textual creation:

For American Indian thought, then, acknowledging the active and historical nature of all our relations encourages we bring [sic] texts into the world in particular ways. This is a process-based approach to making, one that acknowledges that a writer never composes in isolation. There is no authentic self who produces original works, instead there are writers who exist in relation to one another, draw from one another, and produce within ecologies of meaning.

In a helpfully prosaic example of this way of thinking in action, Arola begins her article with a story of an Indigenous woman, Margarita, learning the importance of sewing the fringe onto her shawl herself, rather than taking a shortcut by sewing on a pre-made fringe. Arola describes this process as Margarita sewing the fringe herself in order to “put herself into the text, to respect the craft.” While Margarita herself did not invent the concept of a shawl or of putting a fringe on the shawl, and was no doubt taught how to sew and how to sew a fringe and a shawl by other people, the laborious process of sewing the fringe herself was intrinsic to it being hers and part of her, rather than a judgment of authorship based solely on the technical ownership of the final product. In Margarita’s example, the process of performing labour within her specific historical and social context affected her labour, but since she performed the labour, her “text” has her in it, just as my labour writing *A Good Place to Disappear* has put me into the text, even as it has also been affected by my historical and social web of contexts. The amount of labour done and credit owed for ideas versus for the writing of the ideas differs depending on each specific situation, but in my particular case of writing *A Good Place to Disappear*, my position as the sole author of this text is an accurate enough representation of the division of labour between myself and my readers, beta readers, friends, and other community members.<sup>319</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>319</sup> Quotes and information on American Indigenous approaches to authorship in this paragraph from Arola, Kristin L, “Composing as Culturing: An American Indian Approach to Digital Ethics,” in *Handbook of Digital Writing and Literacies Research*, edited by Kathy Mills, Amy Stornaiuolo, Anna Smith & Jessica Zacher Pandya, New York: Routledge, 2018, 275, 279-280.

In this chapter, I have discussed the affective power of a fan fiction to generate emotional relationships between the reader and itself primarily, and then secondarily between the reader and the author. I examined the content, frequency, and number of comments I received from readers on my fic, *A Good Place to Disappear* qualitatively and — in what is so far an almost unique approach to the study of fan fiction comments — quantitatively. My examination revealed that my readers valued the fic as the object that produced their desired emotions, and directed their gratitude and the credit for creating the object with the affective power towards me as the author.

I then moved to demonstrating that while similar in its centering of intimacy and emotions, my author comments indicate that I primarily desired intimate relationships with my readers as a positive emotional experience, but also as a form of membership entry into the community in which I was participating. This difference in priority and desire has the potential to cause friction between community participants, especially since there is a strong possibility for authors to not receive the feedback they desire, and therefore not receive access to intimate community relationships. The power dynamics between the reader and the author are aligned in the reader's favour, even though both are urged by the generative force of the community to continue to produce content — whether in the form of fics or comments — in order to sustain the community's life force.

The community that developed around my fic's serial publication proved to be a temporally and spatially specific and limited series of "events," as it and the relationships it created between me and my readers almost entirely ended with the conclusion of the text's publication. This indicates that the community relationships formed by fan fiction

may not always be permanent or long-lasting. The maintenance of the fandom communities — done in part through the continual growth of the archive of the Men’s Hockey RPF — requires labour from both sides of the text. However, analysis of my incorporation and rejection of readers’s and beta readers’s editorial feedback, supports my assertion that since the labour of the writing and the majority of the imagining was done by me, the text is likewise mine. This emphasis on the doing of labour in deciding the ownership and control of a text does not exclude or deny the historical and social contexts of the text’s production, but my specific contexts do not seem to require more credit or financial remuneration than have already been indicated in the paratexts of my fic. While de Kosnik’s imagined future of traditionally published fics in their archival groupings introducing the wider public into the fan fiction ways of reading and interpreting and proudly proclaiming their fandom heritage<sup>320</sup> is appealing, it does not seem possible at this time. Thus, while the decision to “pull to publish” still requires “filing off the serial numbers,” I do not think I, nor other fan fiction authors, should hold back their fics from the traditional publishing world just to wait for de Kosnik’s imagined future.

This chapter discussed the specific fan fiction community that emerged around my specific fic. The affective power of the text itself and the emotional relationships formed between readers and me as the author all circle around the desire to feel emotionally close and connected to some(thing) or some(one). While perhaps not intimate in a definitional sense, the practice of sharing intense emotions with someone over the shared experience of feeling a text’s affective power produces a sense of

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<sup>320</sup> de Kosnik, “Fifty Shades,” 124.

intimacy and a sense of community. This same concept of producing and seeking intimacy shaped my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version, as both depict the idealized fantasy of Woledge's intimatopia.



## CONCLUSION

### *Future Intimacies*

Throughout this thesis, I have endeavoured to answer two major research questions: 1. What genres influenced my fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version; in what ways did this influence manifest in the texts? 2. What role did my fan fiction's community play in the development of my fic, its non-RPF version, and/or my writing style? These questions directed my research towards the literary and the social contexts of my fic, which left their marks on its non-RPF version. In analyzing the literary and the social contexts, I followed Busse's methodology in *Framing Fan Fiction: Literary and Social Practices in Fan Fiction Communities* (2017).

In the first chapter, my examination of the major genre intersections occurring in both texts revealed that my fan fiction, *A Good Place to Disappear*, is affected by the romance novel, fan fiction, intimatopia, and pornography genres and the fan fiction subgenres of slash fan fiction, Real Person Fan Fiction, and Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction. While Canadian hockey literature is a relevant parallel genre of literature that deals with the same cultural content — the sport of hockey — its different social and economic contexts of production and its opposing reactions to similar topics marks it as a parallel, not intersecting, genre. The other intersecting genres and subgenres contribute different yet complementary textual features to my fan fiction; the majority of these textual features remain in *Compass Points North*. Intimatopia provides the ideological framework that requires the development of an exclusive and reciprocal romantic

relationship that blended love, friendship, and intimacy.<sup>321</sup> The romance novel provides the narrative structure of a courtship and betrothal with its eight essential elements: 1) Society defined; 2) The meeting between protagonists; 3) The Barrier (internal and/or external); 4) The Attraction; 5) The Declaration of Love; 6) The Point of Ritual Death; 7) The Recognition; 8) The Betrothal.<sup>322</sup> The ideological framework of a romance novel — the reordering of a disordered society and self into order — is combined with the ideological framework of intimatopia, so that the reordered society and self is one in which intimacy is prioritized and the formation of intimacy causes the reordering.

Pornography's textual feature of explicit sexual content written to produce sexual arousal in the reader appears significantly within both texts.<sup>323</sup> Fan fiction provides the social and economic context of its production of being written within and to a fandom community and its standards outside of the traditional, mainstream publishing industry, using other people's stories.<sup>324</sup> Slash fan fiction contributes the male gender and queer sexualities of my characters.<sup>325</sup> Real Person Fan Fiction provides the emphasis on the difference between the public persona and their "real selves."<sup>326</sup> Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction brings in the use of the public personae of professional hockey players, and the thematic content of struggling with mental illness, injury, homophobia, toxic masculinity, and loss of identity due to early retirement from the sport.<sup>327</sup> All of these genres and subgenres share a focus on the body, whether as a site for sexual activity, injury, intimacy, meaningful repetition, or knowledge of the "real self."

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<sup>321</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 118.

<sup>322</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 30.

<sup>323</sup> Driscoll, "One True Pairing," 85.

<sup>324</sup> Coppa, "Five Things," 2, 4, 7.

<sup>325</sup> Busse and Hellekson, "Work In Progress," 10.

<sup>326</sup> Retartha, "'You're always running,'" 3-4, 15.

<sup>327</sup> hrpfunfortunately, "why hockey rpf?", Tumblr post.

As my examination of the theme of the body across these genres and subgenres revealed, these genres and subgenres are compatible when they are combined in a way that retains the requirements of each genre, while picking and choosing which frequent textual features of each genre are used. Since these genres are compatible, the only textual features of a genre which had to be removed during revisions were those of RPF: Any identifying features or plot moments within the text had to be removed, both to make the characters original, rather than characters based on the personae of real people, and to make the characters whole within only this text and without the prior archival knowledge of their fandom iterations. Without these fan fiction-specific textual identifiers, much of the previously listed textual features were able to remain in the non-RPF romance novel. This is significant, as it demonstrates the potential for the practices and standards of fan fiction communities to drift into the mainstream communities and readerships of traditionally published genres and subgenres through the process of publishing a revised fan fiction as a mainstream text.

Two major changes that did occur, in addition to the removal of fan fiction-specific identifying features, were the streamlining of the plot and making the text more realistic than the more fantastical world of fan fiction. The fact that the non-RPF version of this story demanded more logical and realistic characters and events than the fan fiction indicates that — as seen in the contrast between reader comments on the fan fiction and beta reader feedback on the non-RPF version — the readers of my fic required realism only in so far as it made them able to feel emotions while reading. The test of realism for the fic became: “Did you believe it enough to feel something?” rather than “Do you believe this could really happen?”

The second chapter of this thesis investigated the relationships between me and my readers and how it affected the fan fiction as a text. As with the text's believability, my analysis of the reader comments revealed that readers were driven to read and comment on the fic because of the affective power it had over them. The relationship the readers formed to the text was primary; any relationship formed between them and me as the author was of secondary importance. This contrasts with my position as the author — I primarily sought to form relationships with my readers through the text because I wanted access to the community these readers represented. This slight misalignment of priorities in the community can cause problems in the gift-exchange system of Archive of Our Own, as the gift of a fan fiction may not produce the gift of feedback for which the author is looking.

The community formed by the serial publication of my fan fiction was a temporally and spatially specific “event.” After the publication was completed, nearly all of the relationships formed between me and my readers vanished, as the “event” drawing us together was over. This indicates that a fan fiction community requires renewal in order to maintain its social bonds. This social context of my fic's production mimics *intimatopia*'s demand for intimacy, providing a conceptual link between the literary context of my fan fiction — that of *intimatopia* — and the social context of its production — that of a gift-exchange system driven by the affective power of its texts and the community of intimate reader-text, and reader-author, and author-reader relationships it can create.

Beyond this conceptual link of the primacy of intimacy and affective power, the social context of my fan fiction did not greatly affect its actual writing or narrative

development. Most of the changes I made were small and did not affect my overall vision of my story; the changes were also made because I wanted to make my readers happy by offering them the small gift of moments written just for their pleasure. The most contested plot point, that of the departure of Sidney near the end of the fic — the point of ritual death — remained in the fic despite complaints. The comment of a non-fandom beta reader on that exact same plot point in *Compass Points North* changed my mind in a way my fan fiction readers did not. This was because my beta reader offered me another option for the plot point and because I was more open to major revisions for the non-RPF version than the fan fiction. It is because of this superficial level of direct effects on my fic that I do not see the community of my fan fiction's production as requiring additional credit or remuneration. The more indirect influence of their response to emotional and intimate moments between the characters — while much less tangible and identifiable — is more significant for both texts.

This thesis has focused on only one example of a Men's Hockey RPF, its community, and its revision into a non-RPF romance novel; therefore, its conclusions are limited to this specific community and these specific texts. The use of my texts and my author comments also runs the risk of my analysis being affected by my personal and subjective relationship to the objects of my study. I chose to limit my primary sources to my two stories and their comments, rather than attempting to provide a more quantitative analysis of the Men's Hockey RPF fandom because it fit the scope of this thesis and it allowed me to provide a uniquely detailed quantitative analysis of one specific example of community formation. Choosing my own texts and my own community experience likewise permitted me to provide more detailed and intimate understanding of the

author's perspective. In choosing to make a deep and narrow analysis, I hope to complement the broader, less detailed scope of earlier fandom and fan fiction research.

At various points throughout this thesis, I have indicated more avenues for further research. The intersections of genres in specific texts and how they affect the text's features can be expanded within the fan fiction and the romance novel genres in order to elucidate more variations on their intersections. Men's Hockey RPF in particular is an understudied fan fiction subgenre which could provide important insight into hockey culture and literature, both nationally and internationally. It is also a subgenre of texts whose specific textual features and stylistic tendencies could be explored more thoroughly than I was able to do in this thesis.

More recent (i.e., post early- to mid-2000s) examinations of the fan fiction and romance novel genres are due in order to reflect their rapidly changing texts and cultures. A possible framework for these updated genre studies could be to incorporate Woledge's intimatopia genre into the examinations of the romance novel and fan fiction genres. My examination of the intersecting genres in *A Good Place to Disappear* and *Compass Points North* and of the effects of my fic's social context on its production indicate the importance of intimacy and affective power to these texts and their contexts. Despite how illuminating and how effective her genre has been in my work here, there has not been much further work done using the intimatopia genre — one could explore the various ways intimacy in intimatopic texts is represented across different time periods, cultures, and different combinations of genders and sexualities, etc. The link between fan fiction's literary and social emphasis on intimacy could be further explored as well, using a broader collection of data. My own quantitative data set from the reader and author

comments on my fan fiction could also be used to investigate different topics than I chose to examine in this thesis.

The process of researching the ways in which my fan fiction's community and intersecting genres and subgenres impacted it and its non-RPF version as texts has changed my understanding of fan fiction's relationship to other genres, and how its social context might guide that relationship. Rather than contrasting only fan fiction and romance novels, I have shown a complex web of genres and subgenres, all working together in different ways to create a text which will have affective power over its readers, so that the author can form relationships with their readers and thereby access a fandom community. The primacy of intimacy and its affective power, both as the literary genre, *intimatopia*, and as the social context forming the community's reader-text, reader-author, and author-reader relationships, remind readers that, for an *intimatopic* text, whether fan fiction or romance novel, or a combination of the two, the question is always: Did I make you believe enough to feel something?

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*All author/reader comments cited and/or quoted in this thesis have a footnote listing their relevant information and were, at the time of writing, available, to all those who had an AO3 account and could therefore access archive-locked works and their comments, on the website, Archive of Our Own. Since the comments examined in this thesis were posted on an archive-locked fan fiction, and due to the fandom practice of keeping fandom content within the fandom, specific links to the comments are not provided and are not listed in the bibliography and usernames have been anonymized. This follows the Chicago Manual of Style (17<sup>th</sup> edition)'s guideline that social media content that is posted in a member-restricted group should be listed as personal communication in the footnotes and not put in the bibliography.*

*It is possible that comments or user accounts could be deleted at any time. The comments quoted in this thesis were based on the comments that were available at the time of researching and writing this thesis.*

*My fan fiction, A Good Place to Disappear, was also available on the website, Archive of Our Own, to those who had an AO3 account, at the time of researching and writing this thesis, but could be removed from the website or edited at any time. A specific link to the fan fiction has not been provided, because of its archive-locked status. Since I am the author of the fan fiction and its non-RPF romance novel version, I have included these two texts in the bibliography.*

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## APPENDIX A

### *Required & Frequent Textual Features of Genres Summary Tables*

Textual Features of Genres: <b>Required</b> & <b>Frequent</b>	
Genre	Ideological Framework
<i>Fan fiction</i> <i>Slash fic</i> <sup>328</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Uses a “friendship-based love narrative, along with an equality-centered relationship dynamic”</li> <li>• “Slash does not deal in the careful presentation of one’s self in order to show a desired partner an ideal image, but rather in the revelation and acceptance of actual faults. This brings to the surface an individual’s desire to be recognized completely by another, to drop the pretense of an image, and to be accepted as a total human being, complete with imperfections and infractions.”</li> <li>• They “begin to create a metatext that tells us how to live in a relationship founded upon equality, explaining how it begins, how it is sustained, and how it ends. The metatext tells us how to live as a community of women who support, critique, and love each other”,<sup>329</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Seeks to provide the satisfying illusion of gaining authentic intimate knowledge of and closeness to a public figure through the creation of an imagined version of their ‘real self’<sup>330</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Supports ‘team-as-family’ bond, queering and expanding the heteronormative family unit</li> <li>• Works to reorder the hockey world and culture into one that not only includes queer people, but embraces them.</li> <li>• Confronts the heteronormative, homophobic, and toxically masculine hockey world and culture</li> <li>• Excludes most women in the queering of the hockey world as teammates replace both the family unit and the romantic (and often sexual) companion</li> </ul>
<i>Canadian Hockey Literature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Supports ‘team-as-community’ concept of a hockey team</li> <li>• Reinforces male hockey players as ideal representations of masculinity, manhood, and the Canadian nation’s citizen</li> <li>• Reinforces masculinity-as-toughness</li> <li>• Reinforces the boundaries between masculinity and its two threats: queerness and femininity by hierarchizing the</li> </ul>

<sup>328</sup> While I consider slash (m/m) fic to be a subcategory of the fan fiction genre in which the only criteria is that the fan fiction focus on a romantic and/or sexual relationship between two men, and not a genre in its own right, since previous scholarship has often treated slash (m/m) as its own genre, I have included it here in this chart as a separate genre to help explain the intersections between these genres and subgenres.

<sup>329</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 377, 379, 383.

<sup>330</sup> Retartha, ““You’re always running,”” 3-4, 15.



	<p>homosocial men's hockey environment's relationship to women and queer men.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They work to “justify individual effort on behalf of the collective”</li> <li>• They work to “exclude those who ‘don’t belong’”</li> <li>• They work to “reproduce its assumptions and power structures through expectations of certain compulsory behaviour that is often abusive, homophobic, and/or sexist”<sup>331</sup></li> </ul>
<p><i>Romance Novels</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reordering of a disordered society, either literally or symbolically, through the removal of internal and external barriers that prevent the characters from uniting in a romantic, long-term, stable relationship and thereby forming the new and symbolic order for society</li> <li>• These texts “celebrate life”<sup>332</sup> and have “a deep rooted optimism”<sup>333</sup></li> <li>• Represents “integration...of the self”<sup>334</sup></li> <li>• Integrates the protagonist and the other aspects of themselves that their love interest embodies and represents through their romantic union<sup>335</sup></li> <li>• Romantic relationship is sexual</li> <li>• Romantic relationship is monogamous</li> <li>• The romantic relationship is central in the main characters's lives</li> <li>• Romantopias (i.e., romance novels) attempt to display that the woman's power is greater than that of the man's – at odds with intimatopia's emphasis on mutual, reciprocal, and equal relationship.</li> <li>• The attachment, or attraction between the two love interests is “often one of extreme ambivalence or even outright hatred”</li> <li>• They “work to situate physical attraction and sex as the central driving force of interpersonal relationships”<sup>336</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>331</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 186-187, 218, 251.

<sup>332</sup> Krentz, Jayne Ann, introduction to *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, 6.

<sup>333</sup> Krentz, “Introduction,” 6.

<sup>334</sup> Kinsale, Laura. “The Androgynous Reader: Point of View in the Romance,” in *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, 40.

<sup>335</sup> Barlow, Linda, “The Androgynous Writer: Another View of Point of View,” in *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, 49, 51. Barlow uses gendered language (hero and heroine) to describe this process, but in its required form for the genre, this integration is not gender-specific, so long as the integration of self also happens through the integration of the protagonist and their love interest (with their representative characteristics) through their romantic union.

<sup>336</sup> Quotes and information in this bullet point and the above two from Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 106-107, 201.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrates the traditionally feminine traits like sharing, empathy, communicate, emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Celebrates “the integration of male and female, both within the psyche and in society”</li> <li>• Celebrates “the reconciling power of love to heal, to renew, to affirm, and to create new life”<sup>337</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Intimatopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Central to the intimatopic text, which may be sexually explicit, sexually discreet, or sexually ambiguous, is the assumption that there exists a fluid link between love, friendship and intimacy”</li> <li>• There are “three central ideological concerns; moderated eroticism, reciprocity and mental unity.”</li> <li>• They “reject the sexual as the central defining principle of close relationships, replacing it with intimacy”</li> <li>• The relationship is made by “the weaving together of the erotic and the intimate into a holistic relationship which combines love, friendship and intimacy”</li> <li>• “insists upon the coexistence of both social and erotic elements”</li> <li>• Argue that “erotic love is only of value when it retains its intimacy.”<sup>338</sup></li> <li>• Upholds the monogamous romantic relationship as the ideal of intimacy<sup>339</sup></li> <li>• Upholds an intimate, loving, friendship-based, romantic relationship as the central relationship of a person’s life</li> <li>• They “refute the cultural hegemonies surrounding male interaction.”<sup>340</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Pornography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Depicts “sex for the sake of sex, or sex outside of context”</li> <li>• Denies “the emotional consequences of sex”<sup>341</sup></li> </ul>

Textual Features of Genres: <b>Required &amp; Frequent</b>	
Genre	Narrative Structure
<i>Fan fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> </ul>

<sup>337</sup> Quotes and information in this bullet point and the two above from Barlow, Linda and Jayne Ann Krentz, “Beneath the Surface: The Hidden Codes of Romance,” in *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992, 16-17.

<sup>338</sup> Quotes and information in this bullet point and above in this genre category from Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 5, 82, 87, 103, 118, 210.

<sup>339</sup> I have labeled these ideological characteristics as “frequent” rather than “required” because although Woledge argues that the exclusivity of the intimate relationship between the two characters is important (“Intimacy between men,” 119), it seems at least theoretically possible that an intimatopic relationship between more than two people is possible.

<sup>340</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 14.

<sup>341</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 377-378.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They “end with a degree of happiness and closure, but when it comes to the exact details of that ending, there is great variety”</li> <li>• Their happy ending does “not require marriage and a life long commitment, simply an emotional bond and level of understanding between two people...it involves a mutual commitment to another person...without a marriage for protection”<sup>342</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Slash fic</i>	Depicts the development of a main romantic and/or sexual relationship (i.e., non-platonic) between two men
<i>Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Conflict between public persona and “real self”</li> </ul>
<i>Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Realization/discovery of queer identity</li> <li>• Coming out narrative structure</li> <li>• Depicts the development of a main romantic and sexual relationship between two men</li> <li>• Conflict between public persona and “real self”</li> <li>• Post-retirement plot</li> <li>• Career-ending injury plot</li> </ul>
<i>Canadian Hockey Literature</i>	Depicts a narrative structure for which the sport of hockey in a Canadian context is significant
<i>Romance Novels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must depict the courtship and “betrothal” of a couple</li> <li>• Must include the following narrative events:</li> <li>• 1) Depiction of “the initial state of society in which heroine and hero must court,” this flawed society must be confronted as it oppresses the hero/heroine in some way;</li> <li>• 2) “the meeting between heroine and hero”;</li> <li>• 3) “the barrier to the union of the heroine and hero;” the barrier(s) can be external or internal;</li> <li>• 4) “the attraction between the heroine and hero;” the reason(s) the couple must marry, which can include but does not require: love, sexual attraction, economic reasons, familial dynastic pressure, etc.;</li> <li>• 5) “the declaration of love between heroine and hero;” this must be an explicit declaration and can happen at different moments for each character;</li> <li>• 6) “the point of ritual death,” where the barrier seems insurmountable and their union most at risk;</li> <li>• 7) “the recognition by heroine and hero of the means to overcome the barrier;” new information is introduced which removes the internal or external barriers;</li> </ul>

<sup>342</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 81-82, 85.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8) “the betrothal;” or some other indicator of a long-term, stable, relationship.</li> <li>• A scapegoat is exiled</li> <li>• A bad character is made good</li> <li>• A wedding, dance, or fete occurs at the end<sup>343</sup></li> <li>• They “rely on misunderstandings which result from a lack of intimacy”</li> <li>• They “often end with the heroine marrying a man she hardly knows.”</li> <li>• “The conclusions of romance novels rarely offer images of mental intimacy and indeed often offer the exact opposite.”<sup>344</sup></li> <li>• The ending requires “a sexual bonding that transcends the physical, a bond that reader and writer know can never be broken”<sup>345</sup></li> <li>• They depict “a fictional world that is free of moral ambiguity, a larger-than-life domain in which such ideals as courage, justice, honor, loyalty, and love are challenged and upheld”</li> <li>• Features conflict which “force[s] the hero and heroine into a highly charged emotional situation which neither can escape without sacrificing his or her agenda”</li> <li>• The hero must “prove his commitment to the relationship”<sup>346</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Intimatopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depicts the development of an intimate, exclusive, and central romantic relationship between characters</li> <li>• They “rarely end in marriage or its equivalent”<sup>347</sup></li> <li>• “As interpersonal bonds grow, the wider social context tends to become narrowed.”<sup>348</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Pornography</i>	<b>No requirements</b>

Textual Features of Genres: <b>Required</b> & <b>Frequent</b>	
Genre	Characters

<sup>343</sup> Regis, *Natural History*, 30.

<sup>344</sup> Quotes and information in this bullet point and the two above from Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 201.

<sup>345</sup> Barlow and Krentz, “Beneath the Surface,” 20. While Barlow and Krentz state that this sexual bonding is required, the definition of the romance novel used here does not require it; this leaves the romance novel open to depicting non-sexual romantic love and some of the experiences of people on the asexual spectrum.

<sup>346</sup> Quotes and information in this bullet point and the two above from Barlow and Krentz, “Beneath the Surface,” 15-17, 20.

<sup>347</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 106.

<sup>348</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 218.

<i>Fan fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is not RPF: Uses fictional characters from stories not written, created, and/or copyrighted by the fan fiction's author(s)</li> <li>• If it is RPF: Uses real people (celebrities, historical figures, other public figures), living or dead</li> <li>• Makes their male main characters queer</li> <li>• Features non-racialized main characters<sup>349</sup></li> <li>• Features "more balanced, less aggressive and dominant characters" as the "hero"</li> <li>• Female characters are often removed or absent</li> </ul>
<i>Slash fic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is not RPF: Fictional characters from stories not written, created, and/or copyrighted by the fan fiction's author(s)</li> <li>• If it is RPF: Uses real people (celebrities, historical figures, other public figures), living or dead</li> <li>• Makes their male main characters queer</li> <li>• Features non-racialized main characters</li> <li>• Female characters are often removed or absent</li> </ul>
<i>Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses real people (celebrities, historical figures, other public figures), living or dead</li> <li>• Makes their male main characters queer</li> <li>• Features non-racialized main characters</li> <li>• Female characters are often removed or absent</li> </ul>
<i>Men's Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses real professional hockey players</li> <li>• Uses real professional hockey players in the NHL</li> <li>• Uses other associated real people adjacent to the featured real professional hockey players</li> <li>• Makes their male main characters queer</li> <li>• Features non-racialized main characters</li> <li>• Female characters are often removed<sup>350</sup> or absent</li> </ul>
<i>Canadian Hockey Literature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses characters available to authors without committing libel or copyright infringement</li> <li>• Uses fictional characters created by the author</li> </ul>
<i>Romance Novels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses characters available to authors without committing libel or copyright infringement</li> <li>• Uses fictional characters created by the author</li> <li>• Features non-racialized main characters</li> <li>• Features "heroes whose stereotypically feminine traits facilitate their intimate interaction with each other"<sup>351</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>349</sup> Morrissey uses the term "white," but using "non-racialized" indicates the specific racial privileges and position the characters represent without relying on false biological essentialisms about the existence and functions of race; this also avoids making erroneous assumptions about a character's racial identity.

<sup>350</sup> Quotes and information from this bullet point to the beginning of this table from Morrissey, "Fanning the Flames," 67-68, 99, 93.

<sup>351</sup> Woledge, "Intimacy between men," 124.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hero is a hero and a villain and must represent a significant threat to the heroine in order to function properly as a villain.<sup>352</sup></li> <li>• The heroine “must find a way to conquer the villain without destroying the hero”<sup>353</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Intimatopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Uses two main characters</b></li> <li>• Uses two male main characters</li> <li>• Characters are social outcasts; their “social isolation stands in dramatic contrast to the heroes’ gradual acceptance into an exclusive bond of interpersonal intimacy”<sup>354</sup></li> <li>• Features “heroes whose stereotypically feminine traits facilitate their intimate interaction with each other”<sup>355</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Pornography</i>	<b>Uses physically embodied characters who experience sexual attraction and arousal</b>

<b>Textual Features of Genres: Required &amp; Frequent</b>	
<b>Genre</b>	<b>(Thematic) Content</b>
<i>Fan fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Focus on bodies; their movements and physicality</li> <li>• Repetition of various textual features, incl. plots, tropes, characters, etc.</li> <li>• Features a “more diverse, fluid approach to sexuality and attraction”<sup>356</sup></li> <li>• “the importance of awe inspiring, dramatic physical beauty is diminished...physical appearance has a presence, but its role is not as strong, or as consistent, as it is in romance novels...”<sup>357</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Slash fic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Focus on bodies; their movements and physicality</li> <li>• Repetition of various textual features, incl. plots, tropes, characters, etc.</li> <li>• “The characters’ attraction to each other is primarily intellectual or spiritual, based upon a long friendship”</li> <li>• “authors spend an inordinate amount of time focusing on and developing their flaws.”</li> <li>• Concerned with the “revelation and acceptance of actual faults”</li> </ul>

<sup>352</sup> Krentz, “Introduction,” 8; Barlow and Krentz, “Beneath the Surface,” 19.

<sup>353</sup> Krentz, “Introduction,” 8.

<sup>354</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 147-148.

<sup>355</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 124.

<sup>356</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 66.

<sup>357</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 93.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depicts “the attainment and preservation of a relationship based upon mutual trust and egalitarian values”<sup>358</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Conflict between public persona and “real self”</li> <li>• Less scenes describing or detailing the characters’s attractiveness or appearance<sup>359</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Conflict between public persona and “real self”</li> <li>• Queer identity</li> <li>• Homophobia</li> <li>• Toxic masculinity</li> <li>• Toxic hockey culture</li> <li>• Identity crisis post-retirement or post-career-ending injury</li> <li>• Mental illness</li> <li>• Physical injury</li> <li>• “Team-as-family” dynamic</li> <li>• Gender, sexuality, sex, and injury as relates to the body and to identity</li> <li>• Challenges of expressing gender identity and sexual orientation</li> <li>• Uses “The ambiguous and erotic possibilities offered by homosocial environments”<sup>360</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Canadian Hockey Literature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The sport of hockey in a Canadian context is a significant part of its content</b></li> <li>• Homosexuality is a threat because its associations with femininity attacks their perception of hockey as a masculine world, culture, and endeavour</li> <li>• The sexual objectification and dominance of women</li> <li>• The reinforcement of masculinity during its times of crisis through four key myths: the player as a bully, as a hero-protector, the sexual, and the New Man (a man who still embodies masculine toughness but is more open to adapting to critiques leveled at masculinity by feminism)<sup>361</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Romance Novels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They “focus on four major themes: love, marriage, children, and heterosexuality”</li> <li>• Set in the ‘real world’ but with heightened sensory details and heightened sexual thoughts and desires from the characters</li> <li>• Sexual desire is an important part of the narrative structure</li> </ul>

<sup>358</sup> Quotes in this genre category from Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 378-380.

<sup>359</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 91-93.

<sup>360</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 48.

<sup>361</sup> Information in this genre category from Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 187, 198-199, 235, 248-249.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sensuality, pleasure, and love are all embedded in the reading experience”</li> <li>• Contains details focused on “food and costuming” which “connect the reader’s body to the heroine’s”</li> <li>• Focuses “on sensory details, emotional feelings,” and the characters’s physical responses to each other to foster the reader’s immersive and affective experience</li> <li>• Scenes of detailed description of the love interest through the other character’s eyes, listing their attractiveness and its impact on the character<sup>362</sup></li> <li>• Characters are “forced to compete for their desired partner’s love”<sup>363</sup></li> <li>• “the intimacy of the romance novel is fleeting and often associated only with sexual interaction”<sup>364</sup></li> <li>• Using symbolic and metaphorical language</li> <li>• The dialogue between the two main characters is the battleground for their conflict; the style of dialogue used in romance novels reflects this</li> <li>• The hero takes to heart the heroine’s criticisms and changes his behaviour because of it<sup>365</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Intimatopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is “an assumption that intimacy is ultimately of more import than the erotic or sexual bonds which may inform it”</li> <li>• Features “intense relationships in which intimacy is exclusive to the individuals who experience it”</li> <li>• Depicts “reciprocal relationships which combine mental and physical unity, and a moderated eroticism.”</li> <li>• Features “privatized interpersonal intimacy”</li> <li>• Uses the Hurt/Comfort (h/c) plot trope to justify “expressions of tenderness between men that might, in other circumstances, seem homoerotic in nature” and also “enabling the characters to combine physicality with intimacy and to overcome their inhibitions”</li> <li>• Features face-to-face communication</li> <li>• Features reciprocal emotional openness and sharing between the main characters</li> <li>• Features “ambiguous homosocial contexts”</li> </ul>

<sup>362</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from here above from Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 31, 35, 37, 49-50, 91.

<sup>363</sup> Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 378.

<sup>364</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 107, Footnote 9.

<sup>365</sup> Information in this bullet point and the two above from Barlow and Krentz, “Beneath the Surface,” 22-23.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features “moderated eroticism” in which “physical gestures become expressive of intimacy rather than sexual desire or ‘lust’”<sup>366</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Pornography</i>	<b>No requirements</b>

<b>Textual Features of Genres: Required &amp; Frequent</b>	
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Sexual Content</b>
<i>Fan fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content</li> <li>• Contains m/m sexual content</li> <li>• Contains “sexual encounters without a larger courtship narrative”</li> <li>• Idealized sexual content; reduces its realism<sup>367</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Slash fic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content that does not “distract[] from the fantasy or depicting the character’s pleasure”<sup>368</sup></li> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content that blends love, friendship, and intimacy together<sup>369</sup></li> <li>• Contains m/m sexual content</li> <li>• Idealized sexual content; reduces its realism<sup>370</sup></li> <li>• Expands “men’s sexual roles to incorporate perspectives and feelings which are traditionally restricted to women.”<sup>371</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Contains m/m sexual content</li> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content</li> <li>• “celebrate the act of sexual intercourse as the ultimate path toward insight about oneself and one’s partner”<sup>372</sup></li> <li>• Idealized sexual content; reduces its realism<sup>373</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content</li> <li>• Contains m/m sexual content</li> <li>• Contains sexual content that blends love, friendship, and intimacy together</li> <li>• “celebrate the act of sexual intercourse as the ultimate path toward insight about oneself and one’s partner”<sup>374</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>366</sup> Quotes and information from this genre category from Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 95, 111-112, 115-116, 119, 124, 126, 138, 178.

<sup>367</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 18, 94.

<sup>368</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 96.

<sup>369</sup> Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 377.

<sup>370</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 94.

<sup>371</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 96.

<sup>372</sup> Retartha, ““You’re always running,” 17-18.

<sup>373</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 94.

<sup>374</sup> Retartha, ““You’re always running,” 17-18.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Idealized sexual content; reduces its realism<sup>375</sup></li> <li>• Expands “men’s sexual roles to incorporate perspectives and feelings which are traditionally restricted to women.”<sup>376</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Canadian Hockey Literature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Contains sexual content</li> <li>• Contains heteroexual sexual content</li> <li>• Sexual encounters with women as a reward for success in the sport<sup>377</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Romance Novels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content</li> <li>• Contains heterosexual sexual content</li> <li>• Sexual encounters are “within marriage (or the promise of an inevitable marriage)”<sup>378</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Intimatopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If it is a sexual intimatopic text: Contains explicit sexual content that blends love, friendship, and intimacy together</li> <li>• If it is an ambiguous intimatopic text: Contains content with erotic cues that ambiguously blend love, friendship, and intimacy together without making it explicitly or unambiguously sexual</li> <li>• If it is a sexual intimatopic text: Sexual content offers an “image of unity...one which counterbalances connotations of inequality associated with various sex acts...each partner experiences the other’s dominance or subjugation in equal measure.”<sup>379</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Pornography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains explicit sexual content</li> <li>• Depicts “sex for the sake of sex, or sex outside of context”</li> <li>• Denies “the emotional consequences of sex”<sup>380</sup></li> </ul>

Textual Features of Genres: <b>Required &amp; Frequent</b>	
Genre	Other
<i>Fan fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “rewrites and transforms other stories”</li> <li>➔ that are “currently owned by others”</li> <li>➔ while “outside of the literary marketplace”</li> <li>➔ “within and to the standards of a particular fannish community”<sup>381</sup></li> <li>• Focus on bodies; their movements and physicality<sup>382</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>375</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 94.

<sup>376</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 96.

<sup>377</sup> Buma, *Refereeing Identity*, 211-217.

<sup>378</sup> Morrissey, “Fanning the Flames,” 18.

<sup>379</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 5, 103, 144.

<sup>380</sup> Quotes and information in this genre category from Kustritz, “Slashing the Romance,” 377-378.

<sup>381</sup> Quotes and information from this bullet point and above in this genre category from Coppa, “Five Things,” 2, 4, 6-7.

<sup>382</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses repetition<sup>383</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “reading-as-pleasure, reading-as-immersion”<sup>384</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “engagement with an imaginary world and the general intensity of affect”<sup>385</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Slash fic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “rewrites and transforms other stories”</li> <li>➔ that are “currently owned by others”</li> <li>➔ while “outside of the literary marketplace”</li> <li>➔ “within and to the standards of a particular fannish community”<sup>386</sup></li> <li>• Focus on bodies; their movements and physicality<sup>387</sup></li> <li>• Uses repetition<sup>388</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “reading-as-pleasure, reading-as-immersion”<sup>389</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “engagement with an imaginary world and the general intensity of affect”<sup>390</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “rewrites and transforms other stories”</li> <li>➔ while “outside of the literary marketplace”</li> <li>➔ “within and to the standards of a particular fannish community”<sup>391</sup></li> <li>• Focus on bodies; their movements and physicality<sup>392</sup></li> <li>• Uses repetition<sup>393</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “reading-as-pleasure, reading-as-immersion”<sup>394</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “engagement with an imaginary world and the general intensity of affect”<sup>395</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Men’s Hockey Real Person Fan Fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “rewrites and transforms other stories”</li> <li>➔ while “outside of the literary marketplace”</li> <li>➔ “within and to the standards of a particular fannish community”<sup>396</sup></li> <li>• Focus on bodies; their movements and physicality<sup>397</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>383</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>384</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>385</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>386</sup> Quotes and information from this bullet point and above in this genre category from Coppa, “Five Things,” 2, 4, 6-7.

<sup>387</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>388</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>389</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>390</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>391</sup> Quotes and information from this bullet point and above in this genre category from Coppa, “Five Things,” 2, 4, 6-7.

<sup>392</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>393</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>394</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>395</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>396</sup> Quotes and information from this bullet point and above in this genre category from Coppa, “Five Things,” 2, 4, 6-7.

<sup>397</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses repetition<sup>398</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “reading-as-pleasure, reading-as-immersion”<sup>399</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “engagement with an imaginary world and the general intensity of affect”<sup>400</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Canadian Hockey Literature</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Published traditionally</li> </ul>
<i>Romance Novels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Published traditionally</li> <li>• Self published</li> <li>• Focus on “reading-as-pleasure, reading-as-immersion”<sup>401</sup></li> <li>• Focus on “engagement with an imaginary world and the general intensity of affect”<sup>402</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Intimatopia</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No requirements</b></li> <li>• Published traditionally</li> <li>• Appropriative texts that rewrite and transform other stories<sup>403</sup></li> <li>• Published in fan fiction communities<sup>404</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Pornography</i>	<b>No requirements</b>

<sup>398</sup> Coppa, “Writing Bodies in Space,” 225.

<sup>399</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>400</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>401</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259.

<sup>402</sup> Samutina, “Emotional Landscapes,” 259; Krentz, “Introduction,” 4.

<sup>403</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 27-28, 159.

<sup>404</sup> Woledge, “Intimacy between men,” 159.

**APPENDIX B*****Reader Comment Content Summary Tables***

Each reader comment remark type is categorized into a remark category. The following are a list of which remark types fall under which remark category:

**Reader-Author Interaction:**

- Thank yous
- Thank you for writing
- Thank you for sharing
- Thank you for commenting
- You're welcomes
- Personal Information
- Personal Relationship to Author
- Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship
- Emotional Reaction to Comment
- IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience

**Writing:**

- Overall Compliments to Fan fiction
- Compliments on Writing Style
- Compliments on Characterization
- Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions
- Details of Fan fiction
- Writing Process
- Desire for More Fan fiction Updates
- Quotes from Fan fiction
- Serial Publication of Fan fiction
- Realism of Mental Health/Illness
- Realism of Emotions
- Realism of Characters
- Realism of Plot
- Realism of Settings
- Story Logic

**Literary Analysis:**

- Analysis of Symbolism
- Analysis of Characters
- Analysis of Plot
- Analysis of Themes
- Mental Health/Illness
- Homophobia
- Hockey Culture

**Emotional Experience:**

- Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing
- Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing
- Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character
- Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character
- Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character
- Bond to Other "Canon" Characters
- Bond to Cathy, Original Character

Bond to Ben, Original Character  
 Bond to Diane, Original Character  
 Bond to Other Original Characters  
 Development of Main Romantic Relationship  
 Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship  
 Happy Anticipation of Future Events  
 Worried Anticipation of Future Events  
 Happy Reaction to Story Events  
 Sad Reaction to Story Events  
 Angry Reaction to Story Events  
 Shocked Reaction to Story Events  
 Non-verbal Expression of Emotions  
 Exclamatory Interjection  
 Relatability of Story  
 Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character  
 Emotional Experience of Reading  
 Emotional Connection to Fan fiction

**Fan Fiction-Specific Topics:**

"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story  
 "Originality" of Fan fiction Story  
 "Canon-ness" of Characters  
 "Originality" of Characters  
 Tropes  
 Farming AU  
 Northern Ontario  
 Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting  
 Wishes to Leave More Kudos  
 Subscription to Fan fiction/Author  
 Ideas for Future Writing  
 Connections to Other Fan fictions  
 Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch.1</b>	<b>Ch.2</b>	<b>Ch.3</b>	<b>Ch.4</b>	<b>Ch.5</b>	<b>Ch.6</b>	<b>Ch.7</b>
Thank yous	1					1	
Thank you for writing							
Thank you for sharing			1				
Thank you for commenting							
You're welcomes							
Personal Information							
Personal Relationship to Author							
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship							
Emotional Reaction to Comment							
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience	1			2			1
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction	5		2	2	3	2	1
Compliments on Writing Style	1			1			
Compliments on Characterization				1			
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions	1			1			
Details of Fan fiction		1		1			1
Writing Process							
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates			1	1			
Quotes from Fan fiction	1			3	1		
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	2						
Realism of Mental Health/Illness							
Realism of Emotions							
Realism of Characters				1	1		
Realism of Plot							
Realism of Settings	1			1			
Story Logic							



<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 8</b>	<b>Ch. 9</b>	<b>Ch. 10</b>	<b>Ch. 11</b>	<b>Ch. 12</b>	<b>Ch. 13</b>	<b>Ch. 14</b>
Thank yous							1
Thank you for writing				1	1		
Thank you for sharing				1			
Thank you for commenting							
You're welcomes							
Personal Information					1		
Personal Relationship to Author	1	3	1	2	1	1	
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship						2	
Emotional Reaction to Comment							
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience		3		1	2	1	
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction				1	1	2	2
Compliments on Writing Style						1	
Compliments on Characterization			1				
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions		1			2	1	
Details of Fan fiction					2	4	
Writing Process					1		
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates							
Quotes from Fan fiction	1	1	1		3	1	2
Serial Publication of Fan fiction				1		2	
Realism of Mental Health/Illness							
Realism of Emotions						1	
Realism of Characters							
Realism of Plot					1		
Realism of Settings						1	
Story Logic				1		1	

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 15</b>	<b>Ch. 16</b>	<b>Ch. 17</b>	<b>Ch. 18</b>	<b>Ch. 19</b>	<b>Ch. 20</b>	<b>Ch. 21</b>
Thank yous	1			1		1	
Thank you for writing			1		1		
Thank you for sharing			1				1
Thank you for commenting							
You're welcomes							
Personal Information						1	
Personal Relationship to Author	1	1		1	2	1	
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship			1				
Emotional Reaction to Comment							
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience		2		1	1	1	1
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction	2		3	2	2	2	3
Compliments on Writing Style	1		1				1
Compliments on Characterization	1						
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions	1	1	1		1		
Details of Fan fiction						1	3
Writing Process							
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates			3	1			1
Quotes from Fan fiction	1	2	1	3	1	2	1
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	1		2		2	1	1
Realism of Mental Health/Illness	1			1			
Realism of Emotions	1						
Realism of Characters							
Realism of Plot	1						
Realism of Settings	1						
Story Logic							

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 22</b>	<b>Ch. 23</b>	<b>Ch. 24</b>	<b>Ch. 25</b>	<b>Ch. 26</b>	<b>Ch. 27</b>	<b>Ch. 28</b>
Thank yous		2	3		1		
Thank you for writing			1	1			
Thank you for sharing			3	2	1	1	1
Thank you for commenting			1				
You're welcomes							
Personal Information	3	2	1	2		6	
Personal Relationship to Author	3		2	1	2	3	1
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship			2				
Emotional Reaction to Comment	1	1	1				1
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience	5	2	4	2	2	7	
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction	8	4	10	6	3	8	2
Compliments on Writing Style	5	1	1		2		1
Compliments on Characterization						2	
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions	3	3	5		3	1	
Details of Fan fiction	3	2	4	2	1	4	
Writing Process							
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates	1	1	2	1			
Quotes from Fan fiction	2	4	2	3	1	4	2
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	2	2	1	4	1	3	
Realism of Mental Health/Illness		1					
Realism of Emotions	1	1				1	
Realism of Characters	1						
Realism of Plot							
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic			1	1			

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 29</b>	<b>Ch. 30</b>	<b>Ch. 31</b>	<b>Ch. 32</b>	<b>Ch. 33</b>	<b>Ch. 34</b>	<b>Ch. 35</b>
Thank yous	2	2	1	1	3	3	1
Thank you for writing	1	1			1	1	1
Thank you for sharing	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Thank you for commenting		1					
You're welcomes	1						
Personal Information		6	1	1			
Personal Relationship to Author	7	8	4	4	3	3	3
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	2	1			1		
Emotional Reaction to Comment	2		1		1		
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience	5	5	5	3			3
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction	8	7	2	4	5	2	7
Compliments on Writing Style	3	2		5	2	3	2
Compliments on Characterization		1	2			1	1
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions	1		3	1		1	1
Details of Fan fiction	3	1	3	3	2	2	2
Writing Process		1			1		
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates	2		1	1			
Quotes from Fan fiction	2	6	2	2	3	2	1
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	8	3	2	1	2		2
Realism of Mental Health/Illness							
Realism of Emotions		1	1				
Realism of Characters		1	1				
Realism of Plot			1				
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic		1	2		2	1	

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 36</b>	<b>Ch. 37</b>	<b>Ch. 38</b>	<b>Ch. 39</b>	<b>Ch. 40</b>	<b>Ch. 41</b>	<b>Ch. 42</b>
Thank yous	2	1		2	2	1	
Thank you for writing		1		1	1		
Thank you for sharing	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Thank you for commenting	1						
You're welcomes							
Personal Information	3	2		1	4		1
Personal Relationship to Author	5	3		2	5	5	2
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	1					1	
Emotional Reaction to Comment	2	1		1	1		
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience	5	2	3	2	8	2	4
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction	9	3		1	6	3	1
Compliments on Writing Style	1	2		1	3	2	1
Compliments on Characterization	2	2			1	1	1
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions		3				4	1
Details of Fan fiction	8	1				1	6
Writing Process			1				1
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates	2	1		2	1	1	1
Quotes from Fan fiction	2	2		1	2	1	2
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	4	3	2	4	4	3	2
Realism of Mental Health/Illness		1			1	1	
Realism of Emotions		1		1	2	2	
Realism of Characters				1	1		
Realism of Plot						2	
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic	6	2	1	12	3	4	1

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 43</b>	<b>Ch. 44</b>	<b>Ch. 45</b>	<b>Ch. 46</b>	<b>Ch. 47</b>	<b>Ch. 48</b>	<b>Total Remarks</b>
Thank yous		2	1		9	1	<b>46</b>
Thank you for writing					2	2	<b>18</b>
Thank you for sharing	1		1	1	5	3	<b>41</b>
Thank you for commenting							<b>3</b>
You're welcomes						1	<b>2</b>
Personal Information		5			3	1	<b>44</b>
Personal Relationship to Author		4	2	1	5	2	<b>95</b>
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship					1		<b>12</b>
Emotional Reaction to Comment	1			1			<b>15</b>
IRL Contextualization of Reading/Commenting Experience	4	7	1	1	10	3	<b>112</b>
Overall Compliments to Fan fiction				2	26	8	<b>170</b>
Compliments on Writing Style		1			5		<b>49</b>
Compliments on Characterization		1			1	2	<b>21</b>
Effectiveness of Writing in Creating Emotions		3			4	1	<b>48</b>
Details of Fan fiction		1			1	2	<b>65</b>
Writing Process		2					<b>7</b>
Desire for More Fan fiction Updates		1			7		<b>32</b>
Quotes from Fan fiction		1	1	2			<b>75</b>
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	4	2	3		5	4	<b>83</b>
Realism of Mental Health/Illness		1			1	1	<b>9</b>
Realism of Emotions		3				2	<b>18</b>
Realism of Characters		2				2	<b>11</b>
Realism of Plot						1	<b>6</b>
Realism of Settings					1	1	<b>6</b>
Story Logic		4			2		<b>45</b>

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch . 1</b>	<b>Ch . 2</b>	<b>Ch . 3</b>	<b>Ch . 4</b>	<b>Ch . 5</b>	<b>Ch . 6</b>	<b>Ch . 7</b>
Analysis of Symbolism	1						
Analysis of Characters							1
Analysis of Plot							
Analysis of Themes							
Mental Health/Illness	1					1	
Homophobia						1	
Hockey Culture							
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing							
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing						1	
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	1		1			2	
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character	1		1				
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							
Bond to Ben, Original Character							
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship							
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship					1		
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	9	1	2	1	2	1	
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							1
Happy Reaction to Story Events							
Sad Reaction to Story Events						1	
Angry Reaction to Story Events							
Shocked Reaction to Story Events				1	1	1	
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	2		3	2	3	2	
Exclamatory Interjection	1			8	2	5	
Relatability of Story							
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Emotional Experience of Reading	1	1	1	4	2	2	
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	3	1		3			

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch . 8</b>	<b>Ch . 9</b>	<b>Ch . 10</b>	<b>Ch . 11</b>	<b>Ch . 12</b>	<b>Ch . 13</b>	<b>Ch . 14</b>
Analysis of Symbolism	1				1		
Analysis of Characters	1	2	1	1	1	1	
Analysis of Plot		2	1		1		
Analysis of Themes							
Mental Health/Illness	2						
Homophobia		1					
Hockey Culture		1					
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing							
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	1	1		2	1	1	3
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character				1			1
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							1
Bond to Ben, Original Character				2			3
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship					1		
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship					1		
Happy Anticipation of Future Events				7	1	2	2
Worried Anticipation of Future Events	1						
Happy Reaction to Story Events		1	1		1	1	3
Sad Reaction to Story Events		1				1	
Angry Reaction to Story Events		1			1		
Shocked Reaction to Story Events		1		3			
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	2	3	1	6	2	4	3
Exclamatory Interjection		3	1	3	2		
Relatability of Story				1			
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character				1			
Emotional Experience of Reading		2		1	2	3	4
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction				2	3	1	3



<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 15</b>	<b>Ch 16</b>	<b>Ch 17</b>	<b>Ch 18</b>	<b>Ch 19</b>	<b>Ch 20</b>	<b>Ch 21</b>
Analysis of Symbolism						1	
Analysis of Characters	1	2	1	3		1	3
Analysis of Plot		1	1				
Analysis of Themes							
Mental Health/Illness			1				
Homophobia							
Hockey Culture							
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing							
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character		1	4	2	2		1
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character			2	1	1	1	
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character	1						
Bond to Ben, Original Character	2	2					
Bond to Diane, Original Character				1			
Bond to Other Original Characters		1		2			
Development of Main Romantic Relationship				1		1	4
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship				1		3	2
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	1		1		1	2	1
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							1
Happy Reaction to Story Events	2	2	2	5	1		8
Sad Reaction to Story Events			4		3	3	
Angry Reaction to Story Events			1				
Shocked Reaction to Story Events			1			1	2
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	4	5	6	4	7	5	12
Exclamatory Interjection		3	2	1	2		4
Relatability of Story							
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Emotional Experience of Reading	2	4	3	3	1	6	4
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	2	1	2	5	1	1	1

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 22</b>	<b>Ch 23</b>	<b>Ch 24</b>	<b>Ch 25</b>	<b>Ch 26</b>	<b>Ch 27</b>	<b>Ch 28</b>
Analysis of Symbolism		3			1	3	1
Analysis of Characters	2	2	3	7	2	6	2
Analysis of Plot		1	3	2		1	
Analysis of Themes		1				1	
Mental Health/Illness		1	1	2			
Homophobia							
Hockey Culture							
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing	1					1	
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	2	1	2				
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character		1	5		2		
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character			4		2	5	1
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters						1	
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							
Bond to Ben, Original Character							
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship		1	2	2	2	2	3
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship	2	1	3		4	1	2
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	3	1	3	3	1	5	1
Worried Anticipation of Future Events	1	2	1	2	1		
Happy Reaction to Story Events	4	3	7	4	3	6	3
Sad Reaction to Story Events	3	3			6	1	
Angry Reaction to Story Events				1	1	1	
Shocked Reaction to Story Events		1	1	1		1	
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	10	12	18	6	3	13	
Exclamatory Interjection	5	2	4	2	3	2	1
Relatability of Story		1	1				
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character		1					
Emotional Experience of Reading	3	14	3	3	2	12	1
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	2	3	6	4		1	1

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 29</b>	<b>Ch 30</b>	<b>Ch 31</b>	<b>Ch 32</b>	<b>Ch 33</b>	<b>Ch 34</b>	<b>Ch 35</b>
Analysis of Symbolism		4					1
Analysis of Characters	3	3	4	3	6	6	4
Analysis of Plot		1		2	3	2	
Analysis of Themes	2	2		1	2		
Mental Health/Illness				2		2	
Homophobia							
Hockey Culture							
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing							
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character		1		1		1	1
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character		2		2	2		2
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters			1			4	3
Bond to Cathy, Original Character	1						
Bond to Ben, Original Character	4						
Bond to Diane, Original Character					5		
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship	4		4			2	1
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship	3	1	3	4		3	2
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	5	1	2	2		4	2
Worried Anticipation of Future Events	2		3	5	5		
Happy Reaction to Story Events	9	6	4	2	3	9	5
Sad Reaction to Story Events			5	13	3	2	
Angry Reaction to Story Events			7	5			
Shocked Reaction to Story Events		1	1	1		1	3
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	14	11	12	10	10	11	10
Exclamatory Interjection	6	4	5	4	1	2	6
Relatability of Story					1		
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character		1					
Emotional Experience of Reading	8	5	7	6	3	1	12
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	2	2	2	6	3	1	1

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 36</b>	<b>Ch 37</b>	<b>Ch 38</b>	<b>Ch 39</b>	<b>Ch 40</b>	<b>Ch 41</b>	<b>Ch 42</b>
Analysis of Symbolism							1
Analysis of Characters	6	2	3	4	13	12	2
Analysis of Plot	1	1	1	1	6	1	1
Analysis of Themes				1			
Mental Health/Illness		2					1
Homophobia							
Hockey Culture					1		
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing		1			1		
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	1	2			1	3	2
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character	3	1			2	2	
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters						2	
Bond to Cathy, Original Character	1						
Bond to Ben, Original Character	1						
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters	2						
Development of Main Romantic Relationship	2					1	
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship			1	1		4	2
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	3	4	1	2	1	4	4
Worried Anticipation of Future Events	8	4	2	7	3	1	3
Happy Reaction to Story Events	24	1	2	4	8	6	
Sad Reaction to Story Events	5	12	4	2	11	10	15
Angry Reaction to Story Events	8	3		2	8	4	1
Shocked Reaction to Story Events	4			1	5		
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	22	14	10	5	14	19	20
Exclamatory Interjection	11	5		5	10	5	2
Relatability of Story							
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Emotional Experience of Reading	11	4	3	1	7	6	6
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	4	4		1	2	2	

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>						
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch · 43</b>	<b>Ch · 44</b>	<b>Ch · 45</b>	<b>Ch · 46</b>	<b>Ch · 47</b>	<b>Ch · 48</b>
Analysis of Symbolism						
Analysis of Characters	1	6			1	1
Analysis of Plot		2				1
Analysis of Themes		2				
Mental Health/Illness	2	1				
Homophobia						
Hockey Culture						
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing					3	
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing						
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	1					1
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character						1
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character	1					
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters	1	1				
Bond to Cathy, Original Character		1			1	
Bond to Ben, Original Character					1	
Bond to Diane, Original Character		1			1	
Bond to Other Original Characters		1				1
Development of Main Romantic Relationship						2
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship					4	3
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	2	7				
Worried Anticipation of Future Events						
Happy Reaction to Story Events	2	6	2	6	15	6
Sad Reaction to Story Events	5	2				
Angry Reaction to Story Events					1	
Shocked Reaction to Story Events			1			1
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	6	24	3	4	25	10
Exclamatory Interjection	3	3	2	1	5	3
Relatability of Story						
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character						1
Emotional Experience of Reading	2	9		2	16	2
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction		1			14	5

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>	
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Total Remarks</b>
Analysis of Symbolism	<b>18</b>
Analysis of Characters	<b>123</b>
Analysis of Plot	<b>36</b>
Analysis of Themes	<b>12</b>
Mental Health/Illness	<b>19</b>
Homophobia	<b>2</b>
Hockey Culture	<b>2</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing	<b>7</b>
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing	<b>1</b>
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	<b>43</b>
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character	<b>34</b>
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character	<b>13</b>
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters	<b>13</b>
Bond to Cathy, Original Character	<b>6</b>
Bond to Ben, Original Character	<b>15</b>
Bond to Diane, Original Character	<b>8</b>
Bond to Other Original Characters	<b>7</b>
Development of Main Romantic Relationship	<b>35</b>
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship	<b>52</b>
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	<b>95</b>
Worried Anticipation of Future Events	<b>53</b>
Happy Reaction to Story Events	<b>177</b>
Sad Reaction to Story Events	<b>115</b>
Angry Reaction to Story Events	<b>45</b>
Shocked Reaction to Story Events	<b>34</b>
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	<b>392</b>
Exclamatory Interjection	<b>139</b>
Relatability of Story	<b>4</b>
Relatability of "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character	<b>4</b>
Emotional Experience of Reading	<b>195</b>
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	<b>96</b>

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch . 1</b>	<b>Ch . 2</b>	<b>Ch . 3</b>	<b>Ch . 4</b>	<b>Ch . 5</b>	<b>Ch . 6</b>	<b>Ch . 7</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters				1			
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes							
Farming AU	2					1	
Northern Ontario				1			
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting	1					1	
Wishes to Leave More Kudos							
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author							
Ideas for Future Writing							
Connections to Other Fan fictions	3		2				
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch . 8</b>	<b>Ch . 9</b>	<b>Ch . 10</b>	<b>Ch . 11</b>	<b>Ch . 12</b>	<b>Ch . 13</b>	<b>Ch . 14</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story			1		1		
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters			1				
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes				2	4	1	1
Farming AU						2	
Northern Ontario							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting				1			
Wishes to Leave More Kudos				1			
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author				1			
Ideas for Future Writing							
Connections to Other Fan fictions				1			
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 15</b>	<b>Ch 16</b>	<b>Ch 17</b>	<b>Ch 18</b>	<b>Ch 19</b>	<b>Ch 20</b>	<b>Ch 21</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters							
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes							
Farming AU			1				
Northern Ontario							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting				1			
Wishes to Leave More Kudos		2	1				
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author							
Ideas for Future Writing							
Connections to Other Fan fictions				1			
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 22</b>	<b>Ch 23</b>	<b>Ch 24</b>	<b>Ch 25</b>	<b>Ch 26</b>	<b>Ch 27</b>	<b>Ch 28</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story				1			
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story				1			
"Canon-ness" of Characters			2	2			
"Originality" of Characters			1	1			
Tropes				1			
Farming AU							
Northern Ontario							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting		1		4	2	1	
Wishes to Leave More Kudos	1	1		1		1	
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author							
Ideas for Future Writing	1	1				1	
Connections to Other Fan fictions		1		1			
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)			1				



<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch · 29</b>	<b>Ch · 30</b>	<b>Ch · 31</b>	<b>Ch · 32</b>	<b>Ch · 33</b>	<b>Ch · 34</b>	<b>Ch · 35</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story	1						
"Canon-ness" of Characters							1
"Originality" of Characters	1						
Tropes							
Farming AU							
Northern Ontario							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting	2	1			1	1	2
Wishes to Leave More Kudos					1		
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author					1		
Ideas for Future Writing				1	2		
Connections to Other Fan fictions	1						
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch · 36</b>	<b>Ch · 37</b>	<b>Ch · 38</b>	<b>Ch · 39</b>	<b>Ch · 40</b>	<b>Ch · 41</b>	<b>Ch · 42</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters						1	
"Originality" of Characters							1
Tropes	2						2
Farming AU				1			
Northern Ontario							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting	2		1		3	2	1
Wishes to Leave More Kudos					1		
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author							
Ideas for Future Writing		1					1
Connections to Other Fan fictions		1					
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)		2		1			3

<b>Reader Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 43</b>	<b>Ch 44</b>	<b>Ch 45</b>	<b>Ch 46</b>	<b>Ch 47</b>	<b>Ch 48</b>	<b>Total Remarks</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							<b>3</b>
"Originality" of Fan fiction Story		2			1		<b>5</b>
"Canon-ness" of Characters		1					<b>9</b>
"Originality" of Characters		2			2		<b>8</b>
Tropes							<b>13</b>
Farming AU							<b>7</b>
Northern Ontario							<b>1</b>
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting		3	1		2		<b>34</b>
Wishes to Leave More Kudos		1			3		<b>14</b>
Subscription to Fan fiction/Author							<b>2</b>
Ideas for Future Writing		2			3		<b>13</b>
Connections to Other Fan fictions							<b>11</b>
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)		5			9	3	<b>24</b>

## APPENDIX C

### *Author Comment Content Summary Tables*

Each author comment remark type is categorized into a remark category. The following are a list of which remark types fall under which remark category:

**Reader-Author Interaction:**

Thank yous  
 Thank you for commenting  
 Thank you for reading  
 Thank you for subscribing (to fan fiction or author)  
 You're welcomes  
 "I'm glad you like X"  
 Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update  
 Personal Information  
 Personal Relationship to Reader  
 Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship  
 Emotional Reaction to Comment  
 IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience

**Writing:**

Details of Fan fiction  
 Writing Process  
 Fan fiction Updates  
 Comments on Quotes from Fan fiction  
 Serial Publication of Fan fiction  
 Realism of Mental Health/Illness  
 Realism of Emotions  
 Realism of Characters  
 Realism of Plot  
 Realism of Settings  
 Story Logic

**Literary Analysis:**

Analysis of Symbolism  
 Analysis of Characters  
 Analysis of Plot  
 Analysis of Themes  
 Mental Health/Illness  
 Homophobia  
 Queer Identity  
 Hockey Culture  
 Physical Health/Illness

**Emotional Experience:**

Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing  
 Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing  
 Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character  
 Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character  
 Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character  
 Bond to Other "Canon" Characters  
 Bond to Cathy, Original Character

Bond to Ben, Original Character  
Bond to Diane, Original Character  
Bond to Other Original Characters  
Development of Main Romantic Relationship  
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship  
Happy Anticipation of Future Events  
Worried Anticipation of Future Events  
Happy Reaction to Story Events  
Sad Reaction to Story Events  
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions  
Exclamatory Interjections  
Emotional Experience of Writing  
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction

**Fan Fiction-Specific Topics:**

"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story  
"Canon-ness" of Characters  
"Originality" of Characters  
Tropes  
Farming AU  
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting  
Acceptance of Reader Ideas  
Connections to Other Fan fiction  
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 1</b>	<b>Ch. 2</b>	<b>Ch. 3</b>	<b>Ch. 4</b>	<b>Ch. 5</b>	<b>Ch. 6</b>	<b>Ch. 7</b>
Thank yous	8	1	2	3	3	2	1
Thank you for commenting	1			1			
Thank you for reading	2						
Thank you for subscribing (to fan fiction or author)							
You're welcomes			1				
"I'm glad you like X"				1	1		
Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update	2		1	1			
Personal Information							
Personal Relationship to Reader	1						
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	2			1			1
Emotional Reaction to Comment	2	1		5	1	4	1
IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience		1		1		1	1
Details of Fan fiction		1					
Writing Process	2	1	2		2		1
Fan fiction Updates		1					1
Comments on Quotes from Fan fiction	1			1			
Serial Publication of Fan fiction							
Realism of Mental Health/Illness							
Realism of Emotions							
Realism of Characters							
Realism of Plot							
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic	1						
Analysis of Symbolism	1						
Analysis of Characters						1	
Analysis of Plot	1					1	
Analysis of Themes	1						
Mental Health/Illness	1		1				1
Homophobia	1		1			1	
Queer Identity	1		1			1	
Hockey Culture	1		1			1	
Physical Health/Illness	1		1				

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 8</b>	<b>Ch. 9</b>	<b>Ch. 10</b>	<b>Ch. 11</b>	<b>Ch. 12</b>	<b>Ch. 13</b>	<b>Ch. 14</b>
Thank yous		1	1	4	3	3	4
Thank you for commenting				2		2	
Thank you for reading				2			
Thank you for subscribing (to fic or author)				1			
You're welcomes				1			
"I'm glad you like X"				1	3	2	3
Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update		1					
Personal Information			2			2	
Personal Relationship to Reader		2			1	2	
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship		2		2	1	3	
Emotional Reaction to Comment		1	2	2	2		1
IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience							
Details of Fic					1	3	
Writing Process	1	1	1	4	3	3	
Fic Updates						2	
Comments on Quotes from Fic							1
Serial Publication of Fic							
Realism of Mental Health/Illness			1				
Realism of Emotions			1				
Realism of Characters							
Realism of Plot							
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic						2	
Analysis of Symbolism					1		1
Analysis of Characters	1	2	1	2	3	4	4
Analysis of Plot		4	1	1	1	1	1
Analysis of Themes							
Mental Health/Illness	1		1				1
Homophobia	1	1	1				
Queer Identity	1						
Hockey Culture	1	1					
Physical Health/Illness							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 15</b>	<b>Ch. 16</b>	<b>Ch. 17</b>	<b>Ch. 18</b>	<b>Ch. 19</b>	<b>Ch. 20</b>	<b>Ch. 21</b>
Thank yous	3	2	7	5	2	1	3
Thank you for commenting	1		2				1
Thank you for reading							
Thank you for subscribing (to fan fiction or author)							
You're welcomes			1	1			
"I'm glad you like X"	2	1	2	4			4
Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update				1		2	
Personal Information		1	3	1	1		
Personal Relationship to Reader	1			1		1	2
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	2	1	1	1		1	1
Emotional Reaction to Comment	3	4	1	2	1	2	5
IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience		1					
Details of Fan fiction		1		1		1	4
Writing Process	2	1	5	1	1	1	3
Fan fiction Updates							
Comments on Quotes from Fan fiction		1		1	1		
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	1				1		
Realism of Mental Health/Illness	1						
Realism of Emotions	1						
Realism of Characters							
Realism of Plot							
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic							
Analysis of Symbolism	1						
Analysis of Characters	2	1	1	2	2	3	3
Analysis of Plot							1
Analysis of Themes							
Mental Health/Illness			2			1	
Homophobia							
Queer Identity							
Hockey Culture							
Physical Health/Illness							



<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 22</b>	<b>Ch. 23</b>	<b>Ch. 24</b>	<b>Ch. 25</b>	<b>Ch. 26</b>	<b>Ch. 27</b>	<b>Ch. 28</b>
Thank yous	10	5	8	7	2	5	2
Thank you for commenting	4	2	2	2	2	1	
Thank you for reading	1		1	1			
Thank you for subscribing (to fan fiction or author)							
You're welcomes		1	4	1	2		1
"I'm glad you like X"	5	2	10	2	2	3	
Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update	1		1		1		
Personal Information	2	6	3	2		3	
Personal Relationship to Reader	2		3	1	1	3	
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	1	2	3	3	2		
Emotional Reaction to Comment	2	7	7	7	6	3	1
IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience	1	2	4		2	1	
Details of Fan fiction		1	1	2	2	3	1
Writing Process	3	2	5	2	2	4	1
Fan fiction Updates		1			1		
Comments on Quotes from Fan fiction	1	3		1		1	1
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	2	1		1		2	
Realism of Mental Health/Illness							
Realism of Emotions			1				
Realism of Characters			1				
Realism of Plot			1				
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic				1			
Analysis of Symbolism		1			1		
Analysis of Characters	6	3	6	6	7	7	
Analysis of Plot			2		1	1	
Analysis of Themes					3	1	1
Mental Health/Illness		2		3	1		
Homophobia			1		1		
Queer Identity							
Hockey Culture			1	1			
Physical Health/Illness							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 29</b>	<b>Ch. 30</b>	<b>Ch. 31</b>	<b>Ch. 32</b>	<b>Ch. 33</b>	<b>Ch. 34</b>	<b>Ch. 35</b>
Thank yous	9	12	3	6	3	3	10
Thank you for commenting	2	3	1			1	3
Thank you for reading							
Thank you for subscribing (to fan fiction or author)	1						
You're welcomes	2	3	2	1	4	1	2
"I'm glad you like X"	9	7	5	4	7	2	5
Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update		1	1				
Personal Information	5	12	2	3	2	3	3
Personal Relationship to Reader	6	13	2	5	2	5	3
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	4	7	2	2	3	2	3
Emotional Reaction to Comment	10	8	9	8	5	4	4
IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience	3	3	1	2		1	1
Details of Fan fiction		1	1	1			4
Writing Process	4	4	6	3	3	1	6
Fan fiction Updates							1
Comments on Quotes from Fan fiction		2			2	1	
Serial Publication of Fan fiction			2	2	1		2
Realism of Mental Health/Illness							
Realism of Emotions				1			
Realism of Characters							
Realism of Plot							
Realism of Settings							
Story Logic						1	
Analysis of Symbolism	1	1					1
Analysis of Characters	6	5	8	3	5	10	5
Analysis of Plot	1	2		1		2	
Analysis of Themes		1		1	2		
Mental Health/Illness			1	3	1	1	
Homophobia			1			1	
Queer Identity							
Hockey Culture							
Physical Health/Illness							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch. 36</b>	<b>Ch. 37</b>	<b>Ch. 38</b>	<b>Ch. 39</b>	<b>Ch. 40</b>	<b>Ch. 41</b>	<b>Ch. 42</b>
Thank yous	10	7	2	2	5	9	2
Thank you for commenting	2	3		1	5	3	
Thank you for reading							
Thank you for subscribing (to fan fiction or author)							
You're welcomes	5	2	1	3	4	3	1
"I'm glad you like X"	11	6	2	1	5	3	2
Hopes the Reader will Enjoy the Update	2	2		1	1	1	
Personal Information	3	2	1	3	7		3
Personal Relationship to Reader	10	5	1	5	1	2	3
Emotional Value of Reader-Author Relationship	6	3		2	3	4	1
Emotional Reaction to Comment	11	3	2	4	16	10	2
IRL Contextualization of Writing/Reading Experience	4			2	1	1	
Details of Fan fiction							2
Writing Process	2	4	3	5	7	5	7
Fan fiction Updates							
Comments on Quotes from Fan fiction		1		1	1		1
Serial Publication of Fan fiction	4		1	2	1	2	5
Realism of Mental Health/Illness					1		
Realism of Emotions						1	
Realism of Characters				1	1		
Realism of Plot			1			1	
Realism of Settings				1			
Story Logic	2	2	2	4	6	2	1
Analysis of Symbolism		1					
Analysis of Characters	6		2	4	4	14	3
Analysis of Plot	2	1	1			3	2
Analysis of Themes	1						
Mental Health/Illness			1	1			
Homophobia							
Queer Identity							
Hockey Culture							
Physical Health/Illness							



<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch .1</b>	<b>Ch .2</b>	<b>Ch .3</b>	<b>Ch .4</b>	<b>Ch .5</b>	<b>Ch .6</b>	<b>Ch .7</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing			1				
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing						1	
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character			2				1
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character			2				
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							
Bond to Ben, Original Character							
Bond to Diane, Original Character							1
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship							
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship					1		
Happy Anticipation of Future Events					1	1	
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							
Happy Reaction to Story Events							
Sad Reaction to Story Events							1
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions		1	3	7	4	2	2
Exclamatory Interjections	1	1				2	1
Emotional Experience of Writing	1		2			1	
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	1						
"Canon-ness" of Fic Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters							
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes					1	1	
Farming AU	1						
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting	2					1	
Acceptance of Reader Ideas							
Connections to Other Fan fictions	2		2				
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch .8</b>	<b>Ch .9</b>	<b>Ch .10</b>	<b>Ch .11</b>	<b>Ch .12</b>	<b>Ch .13</b>	<b>Ch .14</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing			1		2		
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character			1	1	1	1	1
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character			1	1			1
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							
Bond to Ben, Original Character				1			1
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship							
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship							
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	1	2		3			
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							
Happy Reaction to Story Events				2			
Sad Reaction to Story Events							
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	2	3	2	6	5	4	5
Exclamatory Interjections			1	4	1		1
Emotional Experience of Writing			1	2			
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction				1		1	
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story			2		1		
"Canon-ness" of Characters			2		1		
"Originality" of Characters			1				
Tropes			1	2	4	1	1
Farming AU							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting				1			
Acceptance of Reader Ideas							
Connections to Other Fan fictions			1	1			
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 15</b>	<b>Ch 16</b>	<b>Ch 17</b>	<b>Ch 18</b>	<b>Ch 19</b>	<b>Ch 20</b>	<b>Ch 21</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing							
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character						1	
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character						1	
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character	1						
Bond to Ben, Original Character	1						
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship							1
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship							
Happy Anticipation of Future Events			1		1		1
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							
Happy Reaction to Story Events		1					
Sad Reaction to Story Events			2				
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	6	3	8	12	4	6	12
Exclamatory Interjections		2		2	1		3
Emotional Experience of Writing			1				
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction							
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters							
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes			1	1			
Farming AU						1	
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting				2			
Acceptance of Reader Ideas							
Connections to Other Fan fictions				1			
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 22</b>	<b>Ch 23</b>	<b>Ch 24</b>	<b>Ch 25</b>	<b>Ch 26</b>	<b>Ch 27</b>	<b>Ch 28</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing	2						
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character			1				
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character				1			
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character			2			1	
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							
Bond to Ben, Original Character							
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters							
Development of Main Romantic Relationship			2	1	3	3	
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship						1	1
Happy Anticipation of Future Events			1			3	
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							
Happy Reaction to Story Events	1	1					1
Sad Reaction to Story Events	1				1		
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	12	8	13	7	7	13	2
Exclamatory Interjections		1	3	2	1	2	2
Emotional Experience of Writing	2		4		1	3	
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction			1		1		
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story			1				
"Canon-ness" of Characters			1				
"Originality" of Characters			1		1		
Tropes	1	2	2				
Farming AU							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting		1	1			1	
Acceptance of Reader Ideas	1			1		1	
Connections to Other Fan fictions							
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)						2	



<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 29</b>	<b>Ch 30</b>	<b>Ch 31</b>	<b>Ch 32</b>	<b>Ch 33</b>	<b>Ch 34</b>	<b>Ch 35</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing							
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character				1			
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character							1
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters						5	1
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							
Bond to Ben, Original Character	1						
Bond to Diane, Original Character			1	1			
Bond to Other Original Characters	1						
Development of Main Romantic Relationship	2					1	1
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship					1		
Happy Anticipation of Future Events	2	1	1	4	1	1	1
Worried Anticipation of Future Events				1			
Happy Reaction to Story Events	1						1
Sad Reaction to Story Events				1			
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	15	21	12	15	13	16	13
Exclamatory Interjections	4	1	10	4	2	1	1
Emotional Experience of Writing	3			1	1	3	5
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	1	1					
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters							1
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes			1			1	
Farming AU							
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting			1		1		
Acceptance of Reader Ideas	2			3	3		
Connections to Other Fan fictions	2				1		1
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)							

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>Ch 36</b>	<b>Ch 37</b>	<b>Ch 38</b>	<b>Ch 39</b>	<b>Ch 40</b>	<b>Ch 41</b>	<b>Ch 42</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing		1				1	
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character						1	
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character	1		1		2	2	
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							
Bond to Cathy, Original Character	2						
Bond to Ben, Original Character	1						
Bond to Diane, Original Character							
Bond to Other Original Characters	1						
Development of Main Romantic Relationship	2						
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship						1	
Happy Anticipation of Future Events		2		1	2	1	3
Worried Anticipation of Future Events	4		2		1		1
Happy Reaction to Story Events	2				1	2	
Sad Reaction to Story Events	1	6		1		5	3
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	23	15	3	11	17	21	11
Exclamatory Interjections	8	4	2	3	5	5	1
Emotional Experience of Writing	3	2	1	1	2		8
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction	1					2	
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							
"Canon-ness" of Characters							
"Originality" of Characters							
Tropes	1		1			1	1
Farming AU						1	
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting	3					4	2
Acceptance of Reader Ideas					1		2
Connections to Other Fan fictions		1			1		
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)		3		1		2	2

<b>Author Comment Content Summary</b>							
<b>Types of Remarks</b>	<b>C h. 43</b>	<b>C h. 44</b>	<b>C h. 45</b>	<b>C h. 46</b>	<b>C h. 47</b>	<b>C h. 48</b>	<b>Total Remar ks</b>
Bond to Sidney Crosby/Claude Giroux Pairing					1		<b>9</b>
Bond to Claude Giroux/Danny Briere Pairing							<b>1</b>
Bond to "Claude Giroux", "Canon" Character							<b>12</b>
Bond to "Sidney Crosby", "Canon" Character							<b>14</b>
Bond to "Raymond Giroux", "Canon" Character							<b>3</b>
Bond to Other "Canon" Characters							<b>6</b>
Bond to Cathy, Original Character							<b>3</b>
Bond to Ben, Original Character							<b>5</b>
Bond to Diane, Original Character							<b>3</b>
Bond to Other Original Characters							<b>2</b>
Development of Main Romantic Relationship							<b>16</b>
Emotional Investment in Main Romantic Relationship							<b>5</b>
Happy Anticipation of Future Events		1					<b>36</b>
Worried Anticipation of Future Events							<b>9</b>
Happy Reaction to Story Events		1		2	2		<b>18</b>
Sad Reaction to Story Events							<b>22</b>
Non-verbal Expression of Emotions	5	14	2	6	42	11	<b>445</b>
Exclamatory Interjections		4		1	5	1	<b>93</b>
Emotional Experience of Writing	2	4		1	6	1	<b>62</b>
Emotional Connection to Fan fiction					1		<b>11</b>
"Canon-ness" of Fan fiction Story							<b>4</b>
"Canon-ness" of Characters					1		<b>6</b>
"Originality" of Characters		1					<b>4</b>
Tropes		1			2		<b>27</b>
Farming AU							<b>3</b>
Etiquette/Ethics of Fan fiction Writing/Commenting		2			4		<b>26</b>
Acceptance of Reader Ideas		1			3		<b>18</b>
Connections to Other Fan fictions					1		<b>14</b>
Connections to Other Media (not fan fiction)		6			8	2	<b>26</b>

## APPENDIX D

### *Reader & Author Comment Posting Schedule Tables*

<b>Chapter One Posted: May 3, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>03-May-20</b>	3	
<b>04-May-20</b>	4	
<b>06-May-20</b>	2	7
<b>18-May-20</b>	1	
<b>23-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 11	Total Author Comments: 8
		Total Comments: 19

<b>Chapter Two Posted: May 4, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>05-May-20</b>	1	
<b>07-May-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 1	Total Author Comments: 1
		Total Comments: 2

<b>Chapter Three Posted: May 5, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>06-May-20</b>	2	2
	Total Reader Comments: 2	Total Author Comments: 2
		Total Comments: 4

<b>Chapter Four Posted: May 6, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>06-May-20</b>	4	
<b>07-May-20</b>	4	7
<b>08-May-20</b>	1	
<b>24-May-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 10	Total Author Comments: 8
		Total Comments: 18

<b>Chapter Five Posted: May 7, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>07-May-20</b>	3	
<b>08-May-20</b>	4	6
	Total Reader Comments: 7	Total Author Comments: 6
		Total Comments: 13

<b>Chapter Six Posted: May 8, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>09-May-20</b>	7	
<b>10-May-20</b>	2	7
<b>11-May-20</b>	1	
	Total Reader Comments: 10	Total Author Comments: 7
		Total Comments: 17

<b>Chapter Seven Posted: May 9, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>10-May-20</b>	2	2
<b>12-May-20</b>	1	
	Total Reader Comments: 3	Total Author Comments: 2
		Total Comments: 5

<b>Chapter Eight Posted: May 10, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments by Author</b>
<b>10-May-20</b>	3	
<b>11-May-20</b>		2
<b>12-May-20</b>	1	
	Total Reader Comments: 4	Total Author Comments: 2
		Total Comments: 6

<b>Chapter Nine Posted: May 10, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>10-May-20</b>	1	
<b>11-May-20</b>	7	7
<b>12-May-20</b>	1	
<b>13-May-20</b>	1	
	Total Reader Comments: 10	Total Author Comments: 7
		Total Comments: 17

<b>Chapter Ten Posted: May 11, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>12-May-20</b>	3	
<b>13-May-20</b>	1	2
<b>15-May-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 4	Total Author Comments: 3
		Total Comments: 7

<b>Chapter Eleven Posted: May 12, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>12-May-20</b>	6	
<b>13-May-20</b>	6	12
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 13	Total Author Comments: 13
		Total Comments: 26

<b>Chapter Twelve Posted: May 13, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>13-May-20</b>	6	
<b>14-May-20</b>	1	
<b>15-May-20</b>	3	9
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 11	Total Author Comments: 10
		Total Author Comments: 21

<b>Chapter Thirteen Posted: May 17, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>18-May-20</b>	6	
<b>19-May-20</b>	1	7
<b>20-May-20</b>	2	1
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 10	Total Author Comments: 9
		Total Comments: 19



<b>Chapter Fourteen Posted: May 19, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>20-May-20</b>	10	10
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 11	Total Author Comments: 11
		Total Comments: 22

<b>Chapter Fifteen Posted: May 20, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>20-May-20</b>	2	
<b>21-May-20</b>	3	5
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 6	Total Author Comments: 6
		Total Comments: 12

<b>Chapter Sixteen Posted: May 21, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>21-May-20</b>	3	
<b>22-May-20</b>	5	6
<b>23-May-20</b>		1
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 9	Total Author Comments: 8
		Total Comments: 17

<b>Chapter Seventeen Posted: May 22, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>22-May-20</b>	4	
<b>23-May-20</b>	7	
<b>24-May-20</b>		11
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 12	Total Author Comments: 12
		Total Comments: 24

<b>Chapter Eighteen Posted: May 24, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>24-May-20</b>	1	
<b>25-May-20</b>	10	11
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	1
	Total Reader Comments: 12	Total Author Comments: 12
		Total Comments: 24

<b>Chapter Nineteen Posted: May 25, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>25-May-20</b>	2	1
<b>26-May-20</b>	4	5
<b>15-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>30-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 8	Total Author Comments: 8
		Total Comments: 16

<b>Chapter Twenty Posted: May 25, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
25-May-20	2	
26-May-20	5	7
27-May-20	2	
28-May-20		1
30-Oct-20	1	
03-Dec-20		1
	Total Reader Comments: 10	Total Author Comments: 9
		Total Comments: 19

<b>Chapter Twenty-One Posted: May 26, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
26-May-20	7	
27-May-20	7	
28-May-20		8
29-May-20	2	5
30-May-20		1
31-Oct-20	1	
03-Dec-20		1
	Total Reader Comments: 17	Total Author Comments: 15
		Total Comments: 32

<b>Chapter Twenty-Two Posted: May 28, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
28-May-20	1	
29-May-20	10	3
30-May-20	2	10
25-Jul-20	1	
31-Oct-20	1	
03-Dec-20		1
	Total Reader Comments: 15	Total Author Comments: 14
		Total Comments: 29

<b>Chapter Twenty-Three Posted: May 30, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>30-May-20</b>	5	
<b>31-May-20</b>	4	9
<b>01-Jun-20</b>	3	2
<b>03-Jun-20</b>	1	1
<b>31-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 14	Total Author Comments: 13
		Total Comments: 27

<b>Chapter Twenty-Four Posted: May 31, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>01-Jun-20</b>	15	13
<b>02-Jun-20</b>		1
<b>03-Jun-20</b>	1	1
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>31-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 18	Total Author Comments: 17
		Total Comments: 35

<b>Chapter Twenty-Five Posted: June 1, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>01-Jun-20</b>	4	
<b>02-Jun-20</b>	5	8
<b>03-Jun-20</b>	1	1
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>31-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 12	Total Author Comments: 10
		Total Comments: 22

<b>Chapter Twenty-Six Posted: June 2, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>02-Jun-20</b>	2	
<b>03-Jun-20</b>	5	6
<b>06-Jun-20</b>		1
<b>28-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>31-Oct-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 10	Total Author Comments: 9
		Total Comments: 19

<b>Chapter Twenty-Seven Posted: June 4, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>04-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>05-Jun-20</b>	6	
<b>06-Jun-20</b>	4	10
<b>07-Jun-20</b>	1	1
<b>19-Jun-20</b>		1
<b>28-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Nov-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 15	Total Author Comments: 14
		Total Comments: 29

<b>Chapter Twenty-Eight Posted: June 6, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>07-Jun-20</b>	2	
<b>08-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>19-Jun-20</b>		3
<b>28-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>03-Nov-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 5	Total Author Comments: 5
		Total Comments: 10

<b>Chapter Twenty-Nine Posted: June 6, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>06-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>07-Jun-20</b>	10	
<b>08-Jun-20</b>	2	
<b>13-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>14-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>18-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>19-Jun-20</b>		13
<b>20-Jun-20</b>	1	1
<b>28-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>03-Nov-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 19	Total Author Comments: 16
		Total Comments: 35

<b>Chapter Thirty Posted: June 19, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>19-Jun-20</b>	2	1
<b>20-Jun-20</b>	8	9
<b>21-Jun-20</b>	1	1
<b>29-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>03-Nov-20</b>	1	
<b>03-Dec-20</b>		1
<b>04-Dec-20</b>	1	
<b>29-Jan-21</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 14	Total Author Comments: 14
		Total Comments: 28

<b>Chapter Thirty-One Posted: June 20, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>21-Jun-20</b>	13	11
<b>24-Jun-20</b>		1
<b>02-Jul-20</b>	1	1
<b>27-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>08-Dec-20</b>	1	
<b>29-Jan-21</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 15	Total Author Comments: 15
		Total Comments: 30

<b>Chapter Thirty-Two Posted: June 21, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>21-Jun-20</b>	4	
<b>22-Jun-20</b>	9	
<b>23-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>24-Jun-20</b>	1	14
<b>25-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>29-Dec-20</b>	1	
<b>29-Jan-21</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 17	Total Author Comments: 15
		Total Comments: 32

<b>Chapter Thirty-Three Posted: June 23, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>24-Jun-20</b>	9	8
<b>25-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		2
<b>22-Jan-21</b>	1	
<b>29-Jan-21</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 11	Total Author Comments: 11
		Total Comments: 22

<b>Chapter Thirty-Four Posted: June 24, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>24-Jun-20</b>	6	
<b>25-Jun-20</b>	4	
<b>26-Jun-20</b>	1	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>		11
<b>26-Jan-21</b>	1	
<b>29-Jan-21</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 12	Total Author Comments: 12
		Total Comments: 24



<b>Chapter Thirty-Five Posted: July 1, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>01-Jul-20</b>	7	
<b>02-Jul-20</b>	3	10
<b>23-Feb-21</b>	1	
<b>14-Apr-21</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 11	Total Author Comments: 11
		Total Comments: 22

<b>Chapter Thirty-Six Posted: July 3, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>03-Jul-20</b>	14	
<b>04-Jul-20</b>	2	
<b>05-Jul-20</b>	2	
<b>06-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>08-Jul-20</b>	1	20
<b>09-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>13-Jul-20</b>		1
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>13-Apr-20</b>	2	2
	Total Reader Comments: 24	Total Author Comments: 23
		Total Comments: 47

<b>Chapter Thirty-Seven Posted: July 8, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>08-Jul-20</b>	8	2
<b>09-Jul-20</b>	4	
<b>10-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>11-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>13-Jul-20</b>	1	12
<b>14-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>27-Jul-20</b>		2
	Total Reader Comments: 16	Total Author Comments: 16
		Total Comments: 32

<b>Chapter Thirty-Eight Posted: July 9, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>10-Jul-20</b>	7	
<b>13-Jul-20</b>	1	7
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>27-Jul-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 9	Total Author Comments: 8
		Total Comments: 17

<b>Chapter Thirty-Nine Posted: July 9, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>09-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>10-Jul-20</b>	9	
<b>11-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>12-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>13-Jul-20</b>	1	12
	Total Reader Comments: 13	Total Author Comments: 12
		Total Comments: 25

<b>Chapter Forty Posted: July 12, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>12-Jul-20</b>	5	2
<b>13-Jul-20</b>	16	
<b>15-Jul-20</b>		17
<b>16-Jul-20</b>	1	2
	Total Reader Comments: 22	Total Author Comments: 21
		Total Comments: 43

<b>Chapter Forty-One Posted: July 15, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>16-Jul-20</b>	15	14
<b>18-Jul-20</b>	2	
<b>27-Jul-20</b>		2
	Total Reader Comments: 17	Total Author Comments: 16
		Total Comments: 33

<b>Chapter Forty-Two Posted: July 16, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>17-Jul-20</b>	20	17
<b>18-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>27-Jul-20</b>		2
	Total Reader Comments: 21	Total Author Comments: 19
		Total Comments: 40

<b>Chapter Forty-Three Posted: July 17, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>17-Jul-20</b>	5	3
<b>18-Jul-20</b>	3	
<b>27-Jul-20</b>		3
	Total Reader Comments: 8	Total Author Comments: 6
		Total Comments: 14

<b>Chapter Forty-Four Posted: July 17, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>17-Jul-20</b>	10	4
<b>18-Jul-20</b>	7	
<b>20-Jul-20</b>	2	
<b>25-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>27-Jul-20</b>	1	12
<b>14-Aug-20</b>		1
	Total Reader Comments: 21	Total Author Comments: 17
		Total Comments: 38

<b>Chapter Forty-Five Posted: July 27, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>27-Jul-20</b>	5	2
<b>14-Aug-20</b>		3
	Total Reader Comments: 5	Total Author Comments: 5
		Total Comments: 10

<b>Chapter Forty-Six Posted: July 27, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
<b>27-Jul-20</b>	4	
<b>28-Jul-20</b>	1	
<b>14-Aug-20</b>		5
	Total Reader Comments: 5	Total Author Comments: 5
		Total Comments: 10

<b>Chapter Forty-Seven Posted: July 27, 2020</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
27-Jul-20	12	1
28-Jul-20	12	
29-Jul-20	2	
02-Aug-20	1	
05-Aug-20	1	
06-Aug-20	1	
08-Aug-20	1	
12-Aug-20	1	
13-Aug-20	1	
14-Aug-20		31
17-Aug-20	1	
24-Aug-20	1	
25-Aug-20	1	
21-Sep-20	1	
13-Oct-20	1	
03-Dec-20		3
09-Jan-21	1	
23-Jan-21	1	
29-Jan-21		2
	Total Reader Comments: 39	Total Author Comments: 37
		Total Comments: 76

<b>Chapter Forty-Eight Posted: February 18, 2021</b>		
<b>Date Comment Posted</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Reader(s)</b>	<b>Number of Comments Posted by Author</b>
18-Feb-21	5	
19-Feb-21	4	
23-Feb-21	1	
25-Feb-21	1	
13-Apr-21		10
15-Apr-21	1	
02-Jul-21	1	
06-Jul-21	1	
07-Jul-21		2
	Total Reader Comments: 14	Total Author Comments: 12
		Total Comments: 26