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Authorship in Fanfiction:
Textual and Paratextual Analysis of Identity Performance

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Faculté des lettres

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**Authorship in Fanfiction:
Textual and Paratextual Analysis of Identity Performance**

Par

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sous la direction de la Professeure

Jennifer Thorburn

Session de Juin 2021

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Abstract

The present study aims to observe how authors of fanfiction perform their identity as authors by looking at fanworks based on the Canadian TV show *Schitt's Creek* (CBC, 2015-2020). Fanfiction is a literary genre written by fans for fans, based on a source work. Authors further develop and rewrite the characters and stories from the canon of the original work of fiction. Inscribed in the field of fan studies, I approached my data linguistically to identify trends in fanfiction regarding the choices authors make when writing fanfiction. With a qualitative analysis of the text and a quantitative approach to the paratext (here the tags and the authors' notes), I seek to determine how different elements constitutive of fanfiction participate in the performance of one's identity in this literary genre. The authors' choices of tags as well as the inclusion of direct quotations, the addition of sex scenes, and the eventual correction of the source work are all elements which participate in their performance as authors and fans. Each of these elements situate the works of fanfiction in relation to the source work. The addition of personal elements in the authors' notes marks a distinction between the writers and the readers, despite all of them being fans of the same work of fiction. By observing and comparing the different elements constitutive of fanfiction, the present study identifies different trends which participate in the authors' identity performance.

1 Introduction

“[F]ans raid mass culture, claiming its materials for their own use, reworking them as the basis for their own cultural creations and social interactions” (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 18).

This quote from Jenkins describes how fans interact with the object they admire. Their engagement with the work of fiction they are fans of surpasses its simple consumption; fans’ enjoyment is also found in its rereading, reworking, and reanalysis. This process, which Jenkins categorises as a ‘raid’, makes the object of their fandom theirs in addition to the original creators’. As fans claim the source work, they use it to create their own stories in the shape of fanvids, fanart, or fanfiction.

Fan creations are analysed in the field of fan studies. This field of research observes the different elements constitutive of fan culture, such as fan interactions, fan community, and fan creations. There are variations depending on the source work, the fan community, the fans themselves, and the researcher’s own relationship with the source work. Since the 1980s, fan studies have evolved and sought to analyse different aspects of fan culture, while aiming to remain objective. The interdisciplinary nature of this field allows researchers to observe different trends of fan culture. The present study locates itself in this field of study, looking at fan practice in fanfiction from a linguistic perspective.

Fanfiction is a literary genre written by fans, for fans. It retells and reinvents stories based on an already existing work of fiction, reworking characters in different stories. This genre has been developing since the 1960s, with fans writing works of fanfiction based on *Star Trek* (NBC, 1966-1969). First published in fanzines, today, fanfiction is a genre primarily published and read on the internet. Despite fanfiction being an important part of fan culture, it remains understudied, and the academic approach to fanfiction is primarily qualitative. Ethnography allows researchers to observe and interview fans about their practices when writing fanfiction and their interactions with other fans. Some ethnographic studies of fanfiction with a linguistic approach also pay attention to second language acquisition in the context of fan writing. In addition to this approach, researchers may also analyse the text itself to observe the intertextuality of fanfiction and its relation with the source text, as well as the relationship between the text and fan discourse. Although these studies give a description of fans’ behaviour, they focus on individuals’ practice, which in turn deters generalisations. Quantitative studies are not as developed in the study of fanfiction, but they allow broader conclusions. They also observe different elements not analysed in qualitative works, such as the paratext of fanfiction,

which are also constitutive of this genre (paratextual elements are features surrounding the text, such as the tags or the authors' notes). The present study aims to fill this gap in the literature, observing both quantitative and qualitative datasets of both the text and the paratext.

By engaging with multiple types of datasets, I aim to analyse the ways authors of fanfiction perform their identity as fans and authors in the different levels constitutive of this literary genre. To observe these elements, this study will collect and approach the data of the paratext with a quantitative approach, comparing different trends in the tags describing the fanwork and the notes from the author. The analysis of the text, more qualitative, will observe, from a close-reading perspective, the inclusion of the source work within the text, the addition of sexual elements, and the (eventual) corrections of scenes from the source work. With the analysis and comparison of these different elements, I intend to observe the choices and practice of authors of fanfiction which participate to their identity performance as authors and fans, in the intertextual literary genre that is fanfiction.

As I aim to provide an overview of fan practice in relation to their identity performance, I selected a single fan community, also known as 'fandom', to gather my data. It is constituted of works of fanfiction based on the Canadian TV show *Schitt's Creek* (CBC, 2015-2020). The show portrays a formerly wealthy family living in a small rural town. Airing from 2015 to 2020, the show gained popularity when it was added to Netflix in 2017, expanding the fandom and with it, creations like fanfiction. This fandom was selected as I needed to personally understand its practice and discourse. An important aspect of fan studies is the researcher's own identity and relation with the community. While remaining objective, one's personal fan identity has to be acknowledged. My insight of the community discourse in the *Schitt's Creek* fandom allows me a deeper understanding of the works of fanfiction analysed in the present study.

My mémoire is structured as follows: first, I will expand on the definition of fanfiction and the history of this genre. This will be followed by an overview of the different waves of fan studies and the place of fanfiction in academia. I will conclude this theoretical section with a definition of intertextuality and of the paratext, and their relation with fanfiction, followed by a definition of the notion of identity and its performance. In the third section of this study, I will introduce *Schitt's Creek* in more depth before presenting Archive of Our Own, the website from which the works of fanfiction analysed in this study are from. It will be followed by my position in relation to the ethics of studying data collected online and my identity as an acafan. Then, I will present the methodology used to collect and analyse the data of both the quantitative and qualitative sides of my study. The fourth chapter presents my results and observations of the

different elements constitutive of fanfiction from the tags and authors' notes to the inclusion of quotations from the canon, the addition of sex scenes, and the correction of scenes deemed unsatisfactory by the author. Finally, I will conclude with an overview of the results observed in this study, while discussing limitations and potential openings.

2 Theoretical Framework

The current study aims to analyse fanfiction from a linguistic point of view in both a quantitative and qualitative way. However, fanfiction is a wide genre that needs to be defined and contextualised. After presenting an overview of fan studies, a field in which fanfiction is analysed, I will introduce the study of fanfiction in academia and different ways fanfiction has been approached. I will then present a quick outline of the notion of intertextuality, with a closer look at Genette's conception in comparison with fanfiction. Finally, I will define the notion of identity, opening its definition to the context of fanfiction.

2.1 What is fanfiction?

Fanfiction is a literary genre written by and for fans of a work of fiction that already exists. The original stories of the source work, considered to be the 'canon', present a setting and a set of characters. Authors of fanfiction use these elements to rewrite, change, or add to the original stories, staying more or less 'canon-compliant', depending on the fans' interpretation and inspiration for their own stories. The original stories can come from a variety of mediums; as De Kosnik et al. (2015: 146) point out, "[f]an writers use the narrative of a television show, book, movie, or computer game as a starting point for original stories, incorporating characters, story lines, settings, and other elements of the 'source' texts into their fan fiction works". The use of 'starting point' to describe source work in the process of writing fanfiction is interesting as it illustrates the fundamental role of the original story without minimising what fanfiction stands for. The original story works as the base for fans to construct their own stories. Fans create new narratives without copying the source material. They explore the stories they love beyond what the canon allows them to do.

This broad definition of fanfiction is based on what is considered and accepted as fanfiction today. Historically, authors of original works did not have the same recognition as they have today for their works and taking inspiration from others' works was more accepted than it is today. Copyright law has limited the way we tell stories as "[c]reators of new works have never written in a vacuum. They have always had generations of past human creation on which to base their efforts" (Lipton, 2014: 432). This intertextuality between texts that are

related can explain why some classics could be considered fanfiction based on other stories. As Romano points out in response to a published author calling fanfiction “immoral” (Gabaldon, 2010: para. 1), there are a lot of published – and award-winning – stories that can be categorised as fanfiction, such as Virgil’s *Aeneid*, inspired by Homer’s *Iliad*, or Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, derived from the Old Testament (Romano, 2010, paras. 34 and 39). Just as authors of fanfiction today, Virgil and Milton enjoyed someone else’s work and took it as a starting point for their own stories, just as E.L. James used Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* to write *Fifty Shades of Grey*. However, unlike *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Virgil’s and Milton’s texts are not based on copyrighted works of fiction.

2.1.1 Historical context of fanfiction

While the classics presented can be considered fanfiction, the present paper will pay closer attention to ‘modern fanfiction’: fanfiction as we find it today, written by fans and for fans of mass media. It is broadly accepted that this ‘modern fanfiction’ began in the 1960s with fans of the TV show *Star Trek*, though the notion of fans has existed since the late 19th century, at first used to describe sports fans (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 12). With time, the notion of the fan evolved, and a division based on gender was depicted in the media when talking about fans: “sports fans (who are mostly male and who attach great significance to ‘real’ events rather than fiction) enjoy very different status than media fans (who are mostly female and who attach great interest in debased forms of fiction)” (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 19). It is these media fans, some of whom enjoyed *Star Trek*, who started to write fanfiction in the 1960s. Moreover, before fanfiction as we know it today, there was ‘fan fiction’, which is the fiction written by an amateur and published in fanzines (Jamison, 2013: e-book 129). The amateur could be a fan of something but not use the source work to develop it, simply using it as inspiration, if at all. This allowed amateur writers to publish their work for an audience that liked a similar genre (i.e. publishing a story of space travel in a fanzine for *Star Trek* fans).

Fan fiction is the predecessor of fanfiction and helped with the development of communities of fans. This sense of community started with *Star Trek*, which revolutionised the viewing experience as it “was one of the first shows to attract not only an audience but a fan community, a group of people who collectively discussed it and analyzed it and criticized it and obsessed over it” (Jamison, 2013: e-book 13). These fan communities, also called ‘fandoms’, have largely changed over time. Back in the 1960s, conventions and fanzines were key for these communities’ development, whereas today, the internet plays an important role in introducing fans from around the world to each other and to fan discourse. The internet offers digital spaces

for fans to form communities. Before the internet became as easily accessible as it is today, fans, like *Star Trek* fans, also known as Trekkies, had to make an effort to develop a community. Trekkies did not simply enjoy it; they discussed, rewatched, and critiqued it. This fan discourse participated in the creation and writing of fanfiction. In the early stage of fandoms, fanfiction remained something relatively personal, although sometimes shared between fans or published in fanzines. But with this show, fanfiction gained in popularity and “*Star Trek* was the first fandom where fanfiction became so central it could sustain multiple fanzines devoted exclusively to fic” (Jamison, 2013: e-book 145). Fanfiction was gaining importance in fan culture, and while these fans were ridiculed for their writings, they continued to create and experiment with the genre.

One key element to fanfiction that started in the *Star Trek* fandom is ‘slash’ stories. In 1974, Diane Marchant’s “A Fragment Out of Time” was published in a fanzine, but what set this fanfiction apart from its predecessors was that Kirk and Spock were in a sexual relationship. While this type of stories already existed, Marchant’s was the first to be published in a fanzine. ‘Slash’ fiction is a subcategory of fanfiction which romanticises and sexualises characters of the same gender.¹ Its name comes from the punctuation mark between the characters when describing the story, such as “Kirk/Spock”. Since then, the ‘/’ has gained the connotation of romantic and/or sexual relationship between characters; when depicting friendship and familial relationships, an ampersand is used between characters’ names, for example “Kirk & Spock”.

This type of fanfiction presents the characters and their relationships with each other under a different light than in the canon. As Jenkins ([1992] 2013: 205) notes, “[s]lash throws conventional notions of masculinity into crisis by removing the barriers blocking the realization of homosocial desire; slash unmask[s] the erotics of male friendship, confronting the fears keeping men from achieving intimacy”. Particularly in the context of *Star Trek* with Kirk as the archetype of a masculine womanizer, rewriting the platonic relationship between two male protagonists went against the patriarchal mindset of the time. As mass media fandoms are largely composed of women (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 48), some associated their creation, such as slash fiction, with their erotic fantasies about the characters and the actors’ physical appearance, but these works also showed another wish: “[b]oth partners retain equality *and* autonomy while moving into a more satisfying and committed relationship” (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 219). This

¹ While ‘slash’ fiction represents fanfiction about characters of the same gender, ‘femslash’, which depicts women in homosexual relationships, also exists, indicating a distinction between ‘slash’ (for relationships between men) and ‘femslash’ (for relationships between women).

observation presents a deeper meaning to slash fanfiction, beyond simply erotic fantasies the writers had.

Slash is a type of fanfiction which raised issues of how much freedom the fan should have over the source work and its characters. Some fans criticised the sexualisation of characters that were not theirs, while others revelled in it. The discussion on the romanticisation and sexualisation of characters was not simply aimed at fan-created homosexual relationships between canonically heterosexual characters. It also happened in the fandoms of *Beauty and the Beast* (CBS, 1987-1990) and *The X-Files* (Fox, 1993-2002), where the characters were in a ‘will-they-won't-they’ relationship, particularly in *Beauty and the Beast*. Fanfiction presented romance whereas the canon did not, or at least not as much and not as graphically as some fanfiction did. As mentioned in the introduction, “fans raid mass culture, claiming its materials for their own use reworking them as the basis for their own cultural creations and social interactions” (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 18). Fans rewrite the stories they love, twisting them to create something new, based on their own knowledge and imagination. This includes rethinking the characters and their relationships.

While the romanticisation of characters, whether it was slash or not, became more and more accepted within the fandoms, these communities of fans were also growing and finding new ways to communicate and spread their stories. *The X-Files*, as well as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (WB, 1997-2001 and UPN, 2001-2003), were successful TV shows that amassed a large number of fans that were active online. And while “[v]ery active fandoms were still small groups – by today’s standards – [...] they were laying the social, procedural, and cultural groundwork that had influenced every fanwriting fandom since” (Jamison, 2013: e-book 200). The airing of these shows coincided with the democratisation of the internet. It was easier to know about the show, and to get in touch with other fans and the creators and actors of the show. Fans could communicate with each other at a speed they could not before, at least not from the comfort of their own houses. The internet also made it easier to find fanfiction, and more importantly fanfiction about specific topics depending on one’s taste, rather than reading what was published in the fanzines the fan received at home. Furthermore, as Jamison points out, the internet also offered anonymity to both the author and the reader of fanfiction (2013: e-book 189). For the author particularly, it decreased the fear of having one’s fanfiction damage their day-to-day lives, especially more erotic works of fanfiction. While fanzines with fanfiction continued to exist, the internet was replacing them quickly. But the shift of medium was not the only element that was changing: “Internet fandom as a whole, and especially internet fanfiction,

owes a great deal of its apparatus, terminology, customs, and conflicts to the writing and interpreting communities that grew around *The X-Files*” (Jamison, 2013: e-book 199-200). The way fans talk about the source work has evolved. For instance, the use of the word ‘ship’ as a verb was introduced by fans who wished Mulder and Scully were a couple, ‘shipping’ them together.²

While the internet helped with the development of fandoms, it is with *Harry Potter* and later *Twilight* that the size of fandoms became big enough to be called ‘megafandoms’. In the early 2000s, fans appreciated J.K. Rowling’s respect for their creations, including fanfiction, during a time where fanfiction authors would often receive cease-and-desist letters from authors or big corporations. Warner Bros., the studio in charge of the movie adaptation of *Harry Potter*, was one of the corporations that would send cease-and-desist letters. As kayanem writes, “JKR’s tolerance levels paved the way for the fandoms we have now, big and loud and in public media spaces” (kayanem, 2019: para. 4). *Harry Potter* fanfiction changed this literary genre and helped with the development of fanfiction in other fandoms.

Twilight also participated in the evolution of what fanfiction is, in part because of the publication of E.L. James’ *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which was originally a piece of *Twilight* fanfiction before becoming a worldwide best-seller once it was published. *Twilight* fanfiction was also important in the development of the genre as it soon became more about romance than vampires, and the source work became less important to fanfiction in this fandom. Even with basic knowledge of the original story, “[the *Twilight* saga] provided a basic structure, some basic characterizations, and relationship and plot trajectories, but increasingly these elements appeared vampire- and glitter-free” (Jamison, 2013: e-book 298). The source work, while remaining a starting point, had been reduced to its romance trope, and the fandom could stand by itself without necessarily using the supernatural nature of *Twilight*. In fact, some non-fanfiction writers would adapt their original stories to become *Twilight* fanfiction to gain a readership, acknowledging the size of the *Twilight* fandom (Jamison, 2013: e-book 297).

Twilight also participated in another change in fanfiction: monetisation. When Snowqueens Icedragons, the pseudonym of E.L. James used when posting her fanfiction online, then named *Master of the Universe*, she did not expect to sign a publishing contract out of it. Before that, authors of fanfiction who were published had done so with an original story, rather

² The term is derived from ‘relationship’, and oftentimes there is a ‘ship name’ for the characters, that is created by blending their names. In the case of Mulder and Scully, ‘Sculder’ represents them as a couple in the fandom.

than by just changing the characters' name(s) from their fanfiction. The publication of *Fifty Shades of Grey* changed the way some people perceived fanfiction and opened the debate on the monetisation of fanfiction. Traditional publication of fanfiction also opened the discussion about the process of writing in the genre, specifically whether it is a solitary experience similar to that of traditionally published authors or a collective process between fans who comment with encouragement, helpful criticism, and plot ideas. Furthermore, fanfiction is a diverse genre which profits from the freedom of the absence of affiliation with big corporations that could dictate or censure certain topics which would not fit their brand. We can see this with slash, which was – and still is – a big part of the development of fanfiction; however, “the works of fanfiction that have received big publishing contracts do not begin to reflect the diversity of stories out there” (Jamison, 2013: e-book 456, paraphrasing Coppa). Coppa criticises the fact that published fanfiction is about heterosexual couples, even if slash fanfiction can gather large readership too (Jamison, 2013: e-book 456). Along the same lines, when some people tried to create the website FanLib.com for fans to post fanfiction, fans saw right through the for-profit aspect of it. It had not been created to help fans post their fanworks, but rather to make money out of it (Jamison, 2013: e-book 492). While this project did not succeed, it opened the discussion of a multifandom website, made to archive and simplify the finding of fanfiction, for fans and by fans. Out of this discussion “was born the idea of the Organisation for Transformative Works (OTW), an all-volunteer nonprofit dedicated to providing access to and preserving the history of fanworks and fan culture” (Coppa, 2013: e-book 494). The OTW is the head of multiple websites and organisations for fans. They oversee Archive of Our Own, which will be discussed later; Fanlore, a wiki about fans and everything that surrounds them; and Transformative Works and Cultures, a peer-reviewed journal about fan cultures.

This overview of the history of fanfiction offers a better understanding to its evolution and changes through the years. The place of this genre has expanded to become more common in today's fan communities. As fanfiction has expanded, there has also been an increase in the different tropes and categories within this literary genre.

2.1.2 Categorisation of fanfiction

In the overview of the history of fanfiction, the notion of slash has already been discussed. While this is an important type of fanfiction, it is not the only one. There are many genres, story tropes, and romantic and/or sexual pairings. As the historical contextualisation of fanfiction has shown, there has been an increase in the number of writers and readers of fanfiction; with that, there has been an expansion of the different stories available. On Tumblr, Berlynn-whol

presents a metaphorical explanation of the evolution of fanfiction and the different genres available:

The different fanfic eras explained as lunch

Pre-internet era: You walk into a room and sit down at a table. Someone brings you a turkey sandwich, a bag of potato chips, and a soda. Perhaps you are a vegetarian, or gluten-free. Doesn't matter; you get a turkey sandwich, a bag of potato chips, and a soda.

Usenet era: You walk into a room and sit down to your turkey sandwich, a bag of potato chips, and a soda. Someone tells you that over at the University they are also serving BLTs, pizza, coffee, and beer.

Web 1.0 (aka The Great Schism): You walk into a room. The room is lined with 50 unmarked doors. Someone tells you, "We have enough food to feed you and a hundred more...but we've scattered it behind these fifty doors. Good luck!"

Web 2.0 (present): You walk into a room. Someone points at the buffet and says, "Enjoy!" You turn to see a 100-foot-long buffet table, piled high with every kind of food imaginable. To be fair, some of the food is durian, head cheese, and chilled monkey brains, but that's cool, some people are into those...and trust me, they are even more psyched to be here than you are.

Figure 1. Berlynn-whol metaphor for the evolution of fanfiction.

Not only does this illustrate the increase of available fanfiction, but it also shows the scarcity of the different categories at the beginning of this literary genre, in both the pre-internet era and the Usenet era. Even in the Usenet era, the existing variety was not necessarily available. In comparison, the fanfiction posted today, in Web 2.0, offers a wide range of themes, some of which might not interest and please everybody, as the comparison shows, but everybody can find something that piques their curiosity. While this diversity already existed, although not on the same scale, Web 1.0 did not provide the same ease in finding specific topics for fans to read; the idea of hiding fanworks behind unmarked doors references the fear of cease-and-desist letters authors had at the time and the hiding they did to share their fanfiction, as well as the idea of hiding their identity and to separate their fanworks from their day-to-day lives.

The definition of fanfiction in the present thesis is that it is a genre based on an existing work of fiction. However, there is a subgenre, RPF, or *Real Person Fiction*, which, as its name indicates, takes inspiration from the lives of real people, generally celebrities. Instead of using characters from works of fiction, authors of RPF fanfiction use real celebrities in their stories.

This subgenre is often criticised by authors of non-RPF fanfiction. While fanfiction is often prone to the ‘don’t like, don’t read’ argument about taboo topics, RPF does not seem to be included in this rule. It was even been officially banned from FanFiction.Net in 2007, although some people continue to post some RPF stories there. Archive of Our Own does not have the same regulation, relying on the reader to choose fanfiction that interests them. Similar to RPF, there is also the ‘self-insert’ genre. While it can be present in RPF fanfiction, it is not necessary. The narration tends to be in the second person, and some of it is written with the indication ‘Y/N’ (‘your name’) to allow the reader to insert themselves in the story. Although these subgenre needed to be addressed from an academic perspective, they will not be further discussed in this study as they do not respond to the same intertextuality and co-construction of authorship as ‘traditional’ fanfiction does.

Aside from RPF and self-insert fanfiction, there are an infinite number of categories, subgenres, and story tropes in fanfiction. As De Kosnik et al. (2015: 146) explain, “[f]an fiction is an umbrella term that describes a multiplicity of genres of literary production by media fans, including short prose pieces (drabbles), poems, short stories, multi-chapter novels of works comprising several volumes”. Today, fanfiction is presented in regard to its word-count, which can make it difficult to visualise its level of completion. Some multi-chapter fanfiction is never finished, some of it is already finished when it is posted, and certain fanfiction is work-in-progress and the comments and suggestions from the readers can help the author move forward. Because of this, “[f]anfiction is not necessarily wholly unlike other fiction in its creation, dissemination and reception, but it markedly foregrounds communal and intertextual performativity that often caters to highly individualized reading desires” (Busse, 2017: 57). As Busse points out, fanfiction is the object of a community. The author writes for their readers, sometimes even based on a prompt from a fellow fan. Ideas for stories can also be inspired by another work of fanfiction the author has read. Authors can also play with the format of their fanfiction. As De Kosnik et al. (2015) mention, fanworks can take the form of drabbles (some of which as short as a hundred words), poems, 5+1 structure,³ and many more. These challenges encourage authors to diversify their craft. The multiplicity of genres and varying lengths also play with the intertextuality of the fanfiction genre: there is not only one fanfiction, but thousands.

³ The 5+1 structure, also named “Five Things”, presents multiple scenes, five of which are similar, and one is different. Although the number is not fixed and can be changed, 5+1 is the most common form. An example from the *Schitt’s Creek* fandom is “Five weddings David and Patrick don’t have, and one they do” (in *like the holding of hands, like the breaking of glass* by wardo_wedidit).

Continuing on this notion of intertextuality between fanfiction, there are also tropes that recur in different fandoms. According to the Fanlore page of tropes in fanwork, there are five themes of tropes:⁴

- 1) **Character Transformations and Non-Human Characters:** which includes “Aging up”, “Werewolf” (or “Non-werewolf” depending on the canon), or “Genderswap”,
- 2) **Style, Theme or Setting** which includes “Alpha/Beta/Omega society”, “Coffee Shop AU”, or “Royalty AU”,
- 3) **Individual Elements** which includes “Amnesia”, “Mates”, or “Pretend Couple”,
- 4) **Based on relationship to canon**, which includes “Missing scene”, “Fix-it”, or “Futurefic”,
- 5) **Based on tone** which includes “Fluff”, “Porn” (or PWP, which stands for “Plot? What Plot?”, or “Porn Without Plot”), or “Angst”.

These tropes give structure and prompt stories. The popularity of tropes can vary between different fandoms. While they are a big part of the fanfiction genre, tropes are not the only topics fanfiction are written about but they can be used as a starting point for authors.

2.2 What are fan studies?

The study of fanfiction belongs to the field of fan studies. This field of study pays attention to fans, fandoms, and fan works. It is an interdisciplinary field of research, associating humanities and social science together (Evans and Stasi, 2014: 6). Its interdisciplinary nature offers different points of view on the subject of fan culture. In the introduction of *Fandom* (2007), Gray et al. present three waves of fan studies. Although they do not define clear dates for the beginning of this field of research, it has taken inspiration from de Certeau’s 1984 work. De Certeau differentiates “the distinction between strategies of the powerful and the tactics of the disempowered” and presents “the consumption of popular mass media [as] a site of power struggle and fandom the guerilla-style tactics of those with lesser resources to win this battle” (Gray et al., 2007: 1-2). With these arguments of power imbalance, fan studies started as a way to defend mass media fans. The beginning of fan studies, today considered the first wave of the field, talked about fans as an entity rather than as a group of individuals. It was describing fandoms in a positive light, which provoked the nickname “Fandom is beautiful” to describe

⁴ An exhaustive list of potential existing tropes in the genre of fanfiction can be found on the Fanlore page “List of Tropes in Fanworks”, https://fanlore.org/wiki/List_of_Tropes_in_Fanworks, accessed on 31.08.2020.

the first wave (Gray et al., 2007: 3). Scholars of the first wave, such as Bacon-Smith, Jenkins, and Pearson, sought to present mass media fans in a new light. By presenting fans as more than obsessive devotees, the first wave of fan studies opposed the outsider stereotypical perception of fans that had been portrayed in the media (Booth, 2013: 121). The first wave of fan studies also aimed to defend fan work by “redeem[ing] them as creative, thoughtful, and productive” (Gray et al., 2007: 4). This wave encouraged an ethnographic approach to open the dialogue with fans.

The second wave of fan studies continued to observe fans on a community level but, rather than defending and praising fandoms, it described these communities as “one space of consumption that mirrors larger issues across multiple cultural realms” (Booth, 2013: 122). The second wave observed the hierarchies within the fandoms. It changed the perspective of fandoms presented in the first wave: whereas fandom had initially been presented as places to question social norms and hierarchies, the second wave “suggest[ed] that the interpretative communities of fandom (as well as individual acts of fan consumption) [were] embedded in the existing economic, social, and cultural status quo” (Gray et al., 2007: 6). The first wave showed fandoms as critiques of the norm; the second wave showed that they were not so different after all, imitating the hierarchies in place in our society. While more critical of fans, the second wave highlighted social dynamics, which illustrates the change in fan studies, although researchers continued to take an ethnographic approach to it.

The third wave of fan studies goes beyond what was observed before. It takes fans and fandoms more for granted. Fans are accepted as part of our daily-life and studying fandoms and fans allows us to “capture fundamental insights into modern life” (Gray et al., 2007: 9). Fans are more common in the audience of mass media and push scholars to observe “the relationship of fandom to areas of scholarly pursuit other than reception studies, and the relation of fans to aspects of culture other than the popular” (Booth, 2013: 122). It pushes the discussion of fans in different contexts than mass media. In their book, Gray et al. (2007) present chapters that go beyond pop culture associated with fan studies, paying attention to the news (Gray, 2007), classical music (Pearson, 2007), or theatre (Tulloch, 2007), diversifying the notions of fans and fandoms in the discussion of fan studies.

As previously stated, Gray et al. (2007) only consider three waves of fan studies. However, Booth (2013: 123) argues that the field has reached a fourth wave, including fans in the research and observing fan studies themselves rather than fans. Booth considers there to have been a shift in the discussion, becoming more meta with Jenkins’ (2011) post on his

definition of 'aca-fan'. This term, a blend of *academic* and *fan*, presents the scholars as fans themselves, members of the fandom they are analysing. Booth's article seeks to encourage scholars, and more importantly, acafans, to open a discussion with fans, to listen to their input, without 'othering' them as it has happened in the other waves of fan studies. In parallel, Evans and Stasi (2014) are also critical of the field of study as they consider it to be lacking a proper methodology. They name three approaches (ethnography, textual analysis, and psychoanalysis) that are usually used in fan studies but the history of these methods bears their own baggage and risks othering the fan or, in the case of textual analysis, forgetting about them completely (Evans and Stasi, 2014: 9-13). They conclude their article encouraging scholars to adopt a self-reflective autoethnography approach to fan studies, perpetuating the ethnographic tradition already present in fan studies while advocating that researchers remain aware of their own identity as acafans.

2.3 Fanfiction in academia

Fanfiction is a part of fandom practice, and it has been from its beginning. It is one way to perform one's identity as a fan. As we have seen, fan studies do not only analyse fanfiction, but for some, it is a way to approach the fan community and see their practices. As Evans and Stasi (2014) advocate, other researchers have used an autoethnographic approach to the study of fan work, or at least an ethnographic one. This approach allows the researcher to observe different aspects of fanfiction, such as the influence gender has, whether it is from the author of the source work or the characters (Fathallah, 2017) or from the fans (Bacon-Smith, 1992). The association of this ethnographic approach with close-readings of the fanfiction has shown how fans interpret the source work and how their reactions influence the way fans write, such as the increased agency of secondary characters (Milli and Bamman, 2016).

Another important aspect of fanfiction that ethnography can illustrate is its influence on second language acquisition, more particularly of English as a second language, as it helps with the language learning (Black, 2006; Thorne et al., 2009), as well as the construction of an identity on the internet (Lam, 2000; Black, 2006; Jwa, 2012). A lot of communication online happens in English, but it is not necessarily the user's first language. Fanfiction is a place where people learning English can practice and receive constructive comments to better their writing skills and their English in a different setting than a classroom.

Studies on fanfiction do not only observe fans' social practice with an ethnographic approach; some scholars analyse the texts themselves. Fanfiction is a genre that has limitations

– in parts due to its intertextual nature – and fans can play on this aspect of it. Busse (2017) delimits four aspects that are key for fanfiction and that can influence one’s approach to the study of it. She considers fanfiction to be (1) fragmented, (2) intertextual, (3) performative, and (4) intimate (Busse, 2017: 46). While all four are key descriptors of what fanfiction is, it is primarily the first two that are important for the present study. The fragmented nature of fanfiction is found in different aspects of it. Fanfiction does not stand alone; it is based on a source work as well as conversations between fans and events outside of the fandom (such as the show winning awards). It belongs to a particular setting when the fanfiction is written and published, and it can be influenced by the fandom discourse as much as it can influence the fandom discourse itself. Multi-chaptered fanfiction does not need to be complete to be posted and fans’ reaction and comments can affect its ending.

Fanfiction’s definition is also based on its intertextual nature, as it is based on both the source text and the fan community. It rarely stands on its own (apart from the Twilight fandom, which, over time, left little of the source text in its fanfiction as Jamison (2013: e-book 298) points out). Busse (2017: 46) describes fanfiction as an object of “near ephemeral intertextuality”, highlighting the importance of understanding and knowing the context of the fan community when the fanfiction was written and published. Intertextuality adds limitations to fanfiction. As Stein and Busse (2009) point out, there are multiple limitations for fanfiction writers. Some of them are based on the source work, from which the authors have to find the right balance, taking inspiration from the source work without copying it. There are also other fan works and fan discourse which will offer certain interpretations of scenes that can influence the writing (Stein and Busse, 2009: 197).⁵ They also point out that some writers add challenges and limitations to their work by following a certain trope, answering a prompt from a fellow fan, or writing a story within a certain word-count (Stein and Busse, 2009: 198-99). These studies illustrate not only the role and influence of the source work but also the importance of the context of the fandom and its conversations. The intertextual nature of fanfiction does not rely exclusively on the source work and it is necessary to keep that in mind in studies on fanfiction.

There are some critiques of the ethnographic approach scholars often take in the study of fanfiction. As their observations are of a small group of individuals, they do not necessarily

⁵ While the story in the source work is considered to be the *canon*, some elements can be considered as part of the *fanon* (blending of ‘fan’ and ‘canon’). These are elements that do not necessarily have many links to the source work but that fans agree upon. Another similar term is ‘headcanon’, which is more specifically for one fan’s interpretation but if accepted by the community, it can become fanon.

represent the whole fandom, or more broadly, the whole fan community. Yin et al. (2017: 6106) encourage diversity in the study of fanfiction, particularly because it is a genre that continues to be “often undervalued by society and understudied by researchers”. In answer to the lack of quantitative studies in the field, they have created a dataset of more than 6 million fanfiction to be analysed. Other critics of the absence of diversity in methodology in studies of fanfiction are Pianzola et al. (2017), who analyse the social dynamics between authors and readers in fandoms. Similarly to Yin et al. (2017), they show the important role fanfiction has in literary practice in today’s youth (Pianzola et al., 2017: 2). They combine a qualitative and quantitative approach to their study, comparing readers’ engagement to original stories (fanfiction) published on Wattpad with classics imported from other websites onto Wattpad. Their results show more interest and interactions with fanfiction than classics in the number of reads, vote counts, and comments. Their study shows that there are different reading practices, and digital reading represents one of them. Approaching fanfiction from a quantitative point of view further the observations that can be made in ethnographic studies. Including more quantitative studies to observe fanfiction like Yin et al. (2017) did can broaden the observations made.

Another part of fanfiction that lacks study is the paratext. Based on Genette’s (1997b) definition, the paratext represents additions to the text that are not the text itself. In the case of fanfiction, this can be the author’s notes, the tags, or simply the title of the fanfiction. While this notion will be explored in more depth later, it is important to keep in mind that the text does not stand on its own; the paratext contributes to the fanfiction as well. These elements give key information about the fanfiction to the reader. For example, Gursoy et al. (2018) pay attention to fanfiction’s tags, more particularly the Archive of Our Own tagging system, which will be presented in the methodology chapter. In their study, Gursoy et al. (2018) compare the use of tags in different fandoms and find that they are relatively similar regardless of the fandom. They also divide tags into two main categories: declarative (which tend to be about the characters, location, or story elements) or expressive (which are more personal to the authors, about their writing process or reflection on the narrative) (Gursoy et al., 2018: 500). They also mention the “Tumblr-style” tags,⁶ which tend to be more informal, and direct speech aimed directly to the reader, giving information about the work within the fandom rather than being tags used for search queries.

⁶ The microblogging website Tumblr presents ‘free tags’ allowing users to use them for different functions. Not only can the users use them to describe the content they are blogging about, but they can also add commentary to the post they do not deem necessary to add to the post itself.

In summary, studies of fanfiction tend to analyse the fanfiction itself, and sometimes the community from which it comes from. There is little research on the paratext that surrounds it, such as the tags and the notes the authors can add. Since archives to which the fanfiction is posted do not all offer the same ways to tag, the paratext could be interesting to study, to observe the performance of the writers and how they construct their identity as authors. The present paper aims to fill this gap in the literature.

2.4 What is intertextuality?

Throughout the definition and discussion on fanfiction, intertextuality has been taken for granted. This term was first developed in poststructuralist theories in the late 1960s. Kristeva (1969) is credited to be the first one to introduce the term ‘intertextuality’, at first in French (Allen, 2000: 14). Then, the notion of intertextuality relied on a Saussurian approach to language. By considering that signs do not stand on their own, the same could be said of utterances (Allen, 2000: 19). This comparison can be broadened to the fact that “the text is not an individual, isolated object but, rather, a compilation of cultural textuality” (Allen, 2000: 36). Just as fanfiction does not stand on its own because of the source work and the community, other texts and utterances take inspiration from the world that surrounds them.

Genette (1997b) proposes a structuralist approach to intertextuality, associating structuralism and semiology together. He compares literature to *parole*, as something that belongs to a particular context, whereas the act of reading the literature, its ‘consumption’ by the public, is a *langue* (Genette, 1982: 18-19, in Allen, 2000: 96). Genette uses the term ‘transtextuality’ to refer to intertextuality and proposed five subcategories of transtextuality (Allen, 2000: 101-107). For him, intertextuality is one of these subcategories. It describes the direct quotation from, or simply a reference to, one text in another, whether it is marked or not (Allen, 2000: 101). According to this definition, fanfiction is intertextual as it makes references to the source text and can have direct quotations. His second subcategory is paratextuality, which he described as the threshold of the text as “[i]t is an ‘undefined zone’ between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world’s discourse about the text)” (Genette, 1997b: 2). From the author’s name to the notes, the paratext adds information to the text without being the text itself. Because of this lack of clear place, between within and outside the text, it can be difficult to define its role for the text. It offers the text a sense of completion to the public (Genette, 1997: 1). The third subcategory Genette considered is metatextuality. It describes a text commenting on another text. While fanfiction might not be directly in this

category, fan discourse on the source work can influence fanfiction. There can be indirect comments about the source work within the fanfiction, or they can be found in the paratext (in the author's notes, for instance). It is also possible there are metatexts about the fanfiction itself, with other fans commenting and analysing it. The fourth category Genette included is hypertextuality, in which an 'hypotext' is related to an 'hypertext' without commenting on it. Fanfiction is, by nature, an hypertext, intentionally intertextual as it is based on a source work, or, according to Genette's term, an hypotext. While quite vague about the definition of hypertextuality, Allen points out that "Genette particularly refers to forms of literature which are intentionally inter-textual" (2000: 108), and therefore includes fanfiction. Finally, the last subcategory Genette enumerates is architextuality. It does not look at the text itself, but rather "the reader's expectations, and thus their reception of a work" (Genette 1997a, in Allen, 2000: 102). In the realm of fanfiction, readers expect to read something based upon the source work. Other assumptions can be made based on the paratext, such as the summary or the tags presenting the trope or the story of the fanfiction, but this aspect of fanfiction will not be further analysed in the present study as my analysis remains on the author rather than on the reader. Nonetheless, due to its nature, fanfiction remains a genre that is intertextual, or transtextual using Genette's terminology.

2.5 The notion of identity

Similarly to intertextuality, the notion of identity and its performance has yet to be defined in this study. However, an understanding of this term is necessary to analyse the ways authors perform their identity. To develop this notion, I will consider Burke and Stets' (2009) identity theory, which "assumes that persons construct identities through social interactions" (Davis, 2015: 138). Their theory highlights the importance of interactions in the construction of one's identities and their performance of said identities. It illustrates the importance of linguistic choices which also participate to the construction and performance of one's identities as it happens through interactions with other individuals. Furthermore, they use the plural form of the word to underline the multiple identities people have. In the present study, while authors of fanfiction perform a dual identity, as it will be further explained later in this section, I will use the singular form of the word as their identity as authors of fanfiction and fans are closely linked to one another. Davis, presenting Stets and Burke's (2014) delimitation, describes three types of identities which themselves can encompass multiple identities. The first type is the person identities which is linked to one person's individuality, what make them their own person. The second type is the role identities, which describes the person's social position in society in

relation to other individuals, like being someone's friend or someone's colleague. Finally, the third type is the social identities, which describes the identities which make an individual part of a group, being part of a fandom for example (Davis, 2015: 138-139). In each of these categories, multiple identities can be performed at the same time, but these performances will vary depending on the context and with whom we interact with. An identity is "a socially constructed selfhood that is taken on when people identify with certain social groups – a sense of who they are in a social situation" (Jwa, 2012: 324). The notion of identity is therefore closely linked to one's interactions with other people and the way an individual present oneself to others.

Presenting and performing one's identity is closely linked to the context in which the interaction takes place. The internet offers different situations than what is available offline. It influences the ways one might present their identities. As the context plays an important role, many studies analyse specific settings, as the present study will do by looking at fanfiction. However, some general elements particular to the internet emerge. While some conversations happen synchronously, there is also the possibility to have asynchronous interactions between individuals, and many of these interactions are written rather than spoken. This can influence the way people present and perform their identities. In addition to that, the internet also offers anonymity, allowing its users to present themselves completely differently depending on the context. When presenting identity performance online, Merchant points out that "identity shift is more common in some environments than other, just as everyday life" (2006, 237). He compares how one might perform differently depending on the platform used online, as some offers more distance between the offline and online identities. For examples, interactions on Facebook will diverge from ones on Tumblr as the identities performed are different. On Facebook, as it "require[es] authentic identifiers in the form of real names and affiliations, the performance of the self is based on already established social roles" (Darvin, 2016: 531), the interactions are expected to be somewhat similar to the offline performances, as there will likely be interactions with people met and known offline. As opposed to Facebook, on Tumblr, the user is more likely to have a pseudonym and to interact with people with similar interests rather than with people met in their day-to-day lives. By observing interactions online, it is possible to analyse how people perform their identity depending on the context.

The present study aims to analyse how authors of fanfiction perform their identity as fans and authors. In the context of fandoms, the interactions happen between people sharing a similar interest. Their identity as fans is on the foreground. While fans can perform other

identities, in this context, the social identity which connects them with other members of the fandom is their fan identity. Some fans can elect to construct their identity as fans by writing fanfiction. As I aim to analyse and describe this dual identity as fan and authors, I will pay attention to the ways these individuals perform their identities through their writing, both within the text and in the paratext. The analysis of identity in fanfiction with a linguistic approach observes primarily the cases of language learning. It is in part due to the nature of this literary genre, as Jwa states “the distinctive design features of fanfiction discourse have given rise to a new social space that holds great potential for the negotiation of identity” (2012: 325-326). Fanfiction is a genre that encourages the interactions between individuals, both in the process with prompts or discussions amongst the fan discourse, and once the story is posted with comments from the readers. While the notion of identity is closely linked to the interactions between individuals, as the internet is oftentimes asynchronous, there is an importance in the ways one presents oneself. The present study will look particularly on the ways authors of fanfiction present their identity within their fanfiction, in the text and in the paratext. I expect to find both elements illustrating their fan knowledge to situate their place in the social group of the fandom, as well as elements more personal, presenting their writing as their own.

This chapter aimed to define the genre of fanfiction, in part by presenting its history and diversity. By situating its place in academia, I have illustrated gaps in the literature, particularly regarding quantitative research and studies on paratextual elements. As I aim to observe the paratext of fanfiction, in addition to the text itself, I have further developed this aspect by presenting Genette’s definition of intertextuality and of the paratext. Finally, I have presented a definition for the notion of identity. The overview of these different elements allows a better understanding of fanfiction and lets me further develop my analysis of the authors’ identity performance.

3 Method

As stated, the present study aims to analyse fanfiction from both a quantitative and a qualitative approach to observe the different ways fanfiction authors construct and perform their identity as writers. This chapter will firstly present the source work of the fanworks studied in this research and the website on which the data was collected. Then, I will explore my own identity as an acafan and my reflection on ethics of researching fanfiction. Once these different elements are laid down, I will present the methodology of my data collection and of my analysis.

3.1 *Schitt's Creek*

As it has been alluded, the corpus upon which this research was conducted is based on works of fanfiction written about the televised comedy series *Schitt's Creek*. This Canadian TV show, created by Dan and Eugene Levy, aired from 2015 to 2020. While broadcasted on CBC in Canada and PopTV in the United States, it gained popularity and further recognition once it was added to Netflix after its third season in 2017 (Robinson, 2020). *Schitt's Creek* tells the story of the Rose family, a formerly wealthy family trying to find their balance in a town they bought as a joke years before losing their fortune. As the series continues, the characters grow, acclimate to the town and its inhabitants, and learn to live without money. While the main characters are the four Rose family members (father Johnny, mother Moira, son David, and daughter Alexis), townspeople also recur, such as the mayor and his wife (Roland and Jocelyn Schitt) and an employee (Stevie Budd) at the motel where the Roses live.

The series was acclaimed by its fans, in part, for its treatment of queer characters. They are presented similarly to heterosexual ones, which is not always the case in the media. David Rose (played by Dan Levy) is openly pansexual and is seen dating both men and women on the show before dating and marrying his business partner, Patrick Brewer (played by Noah Reid). This relationship is the main 'ship' of the fandom, as illustrated with the number of pieces of fanfiction written about them. Out of the 3,976 completed works published on Archive of Our Own, 89% (N=3,544) of them contain the tag "Patrick Brewer/David Rose" (as of 13.10.20). Because of its status as the main relationship in the fandom, all the fanworks analysed in the qualitative part of this study will be centred around them. As previously discussed, Jenkins explains this preference for slash relationship as the illustration of "[b]oth partners retain[ing] equality *and* autonomy while moving into a more satisfying and committed relationship" ([1992] 2013: 219). In the context of *Schitt's Creek*, this argument can be nuanced as women on the show are often presented as fully developed characters, regardless of their relationship status. For example, Alexis Rose (Annie Murphy) gains equality and autonomy during an off-period of her on-and-off relationship with Ted Mullens (Dustin Milligan) when she graduates both from high school and community college. Later, in season 6, they break up amicably to pursue their careers.⁷ The different characters and their relationship will be further explored in §4.1.1 and §4.1.2 when I will be presenting the different tags found in fanfiction.

⁷ It would be interesting to compare hetero- and homosexual relationships in fanfiction within the same fandom and see how the portrayal of different characters plays a role on the choice fans make in their stories. However, the present study seeks to observe authors' identity performance rather than the differences within the fandom.

3.2 Archive of Our Own

All works of fanfiction analysed in this study were collected from Archive of Our Own (AO3). This archive was created in 2008 by its parent organisation, the OTW, and quickly gained popularity. Its name references Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, which shows the importance of personal space for female writers. In this instance, the archive is not specifically a space for women, but rather a safe space for fans to post their works, regardless of their gender.

As it is the website from which all stories analysed in this study come from, there are different elements to pay attention to regarding the presentation of the different fanfiction. Before opening a work of fanfiction, there are multiple elements available to the reader, illustrated below (Figure 2).

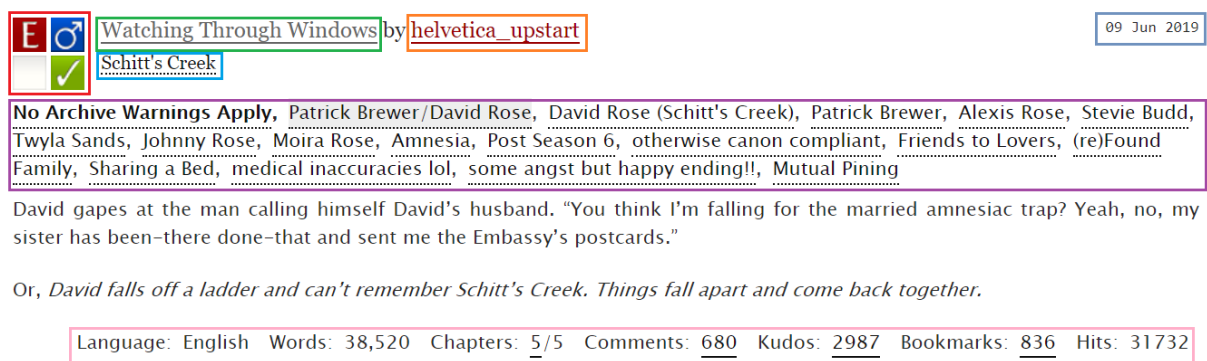


Figure 2. Visualisation of a fanfiction before opening it. In this case, Watching Through Windows.

This work of fanfiction, which is part of the corpus for the qualitative side of the study, will serve as an example of the different elements that inform the reader about a fanwork. The title and the author of the fanfiction are highlighted in green and orange, respectively. Underneath, in blue, is the fandom in which the fanfiction takes place. In cases of crossovers, there would be multiple fandoms indicated there. The date of publication is available on the right, in grey. The fanfiction's tags are outlined in purple. Before opening the fanfiction, these tags are all listed together but, as Figure 6 will show, there are three categories of tags. Underneath the tags, unhighlighted, is the summary of the fanfiction. Below this, the different types of statistics available to the reader are highlighted in pink, with each statistic reported. 'Kudos' are the equivalent of the 'likes' found in social media. Finally, in red in the top left corner of the figure, are the main symbols for the fanfiction. They are important because they allow the reader to quickly assess the rating and warnings of the fanfiction before reading further. The tags, summary, and symbols are not mandatory for the author to fill in, but it is encouraged.

There is space for four ratings in the symbol box. On the top left, we find the ‘content rating’ to indicate the level of maturity of the work. Unlike FanFiction.Net, which has banned explicit works (Riley, 2015: 21), AO3 marks it as such so readers can make their own decisions. It is not mandatory, but there are four different ratings as presented in Figure 3.

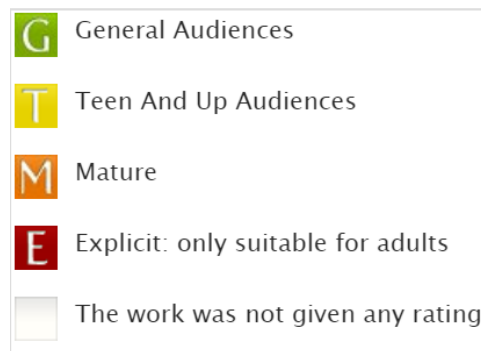


Figure 3. Indications for the content rating, from AO3.

Within the symbol box, authors can also give information about the type of the fanfiction’s relationship, which is indicated in Figure 4. Male on male slash continues to be the main type of relationship written about in fanfiction, which Riley (2015: 41) explains as being rarely represented in the media, particularly the explicit scenes; fanfiction gives their authors the possibility to write about these relationships. Nonetheless, other relationships, some of which are also rarely shown in the media, such as femslash or multi, can also be found in fanfiction.

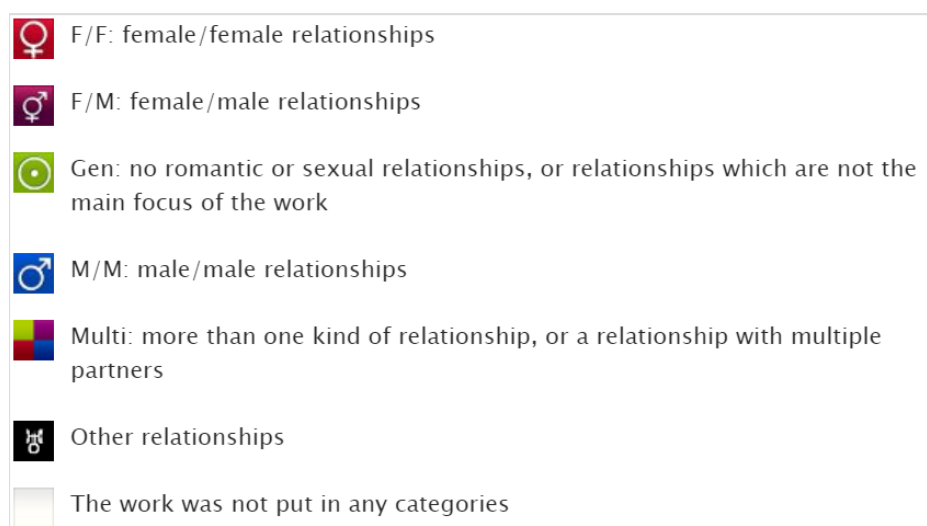


Figure 4. Information on the main relationship, from AO3.

Not only does AO3 offer a rating indication, but there is also one for warnings, which is indicated at the bottom left corner of the symbol box. Once again, it is the author’s choice to decide if there is a warning to be given; the presence or absence of a warning allows readers to

make an informed choice. With *Watching Through Windows*, the author determined that their work did not require a warning for the readers and so this part of the symbol box is blank.

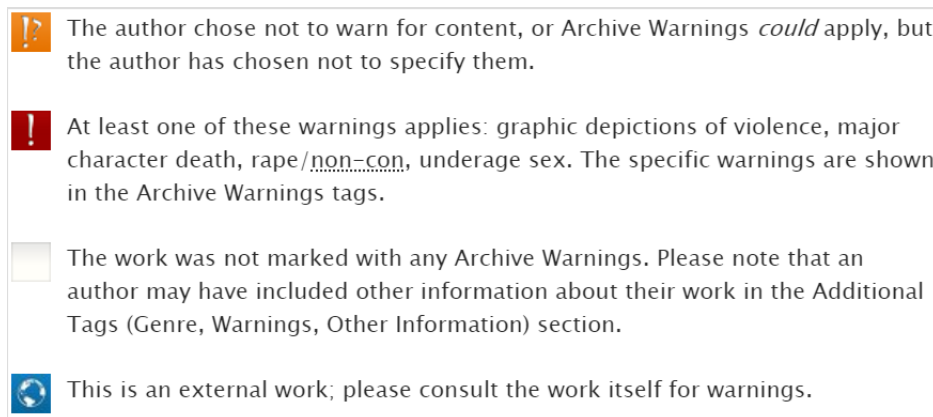


Figure 5. Indications for the warnings of the fanfiction, from AO3.

Finally, there is also an indication of whether the fanfiction is complete or not, in the bottom right corner of the symbol area. In the present study, I only analyse completed works, putting aside works in progress (WIPs) and unfinished fanfiction; therefore, the fanworks analysed in this thesis will all have a checkmark similar to *Watching Through Windows*.

Once the fanfiction is opened to be read, the same information is available at the top of the page but is structured differently, illustrated in Figure 6. The three first lines re-present the rating, warning and category of the fanfiction, followed by the fandom. Afterwards, the tags that were previously all listed together, are now distinguished as ‘relationship’, ‘characters’, or ‘additional tags’. Finally, at the bottom is the statistical information, which was already available before opening the fanfiction.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Schitt's Creek
Relationship:	Patrick Brewer/David Rose
Characters:	David Rose (Schitt's Creek) , Patrick Brewer , Alexis Rose , Stevie Budd , Twyla Sands , Johnny Rose , Moirra Rose
Additional Tags:	Amnesia , Post Season 6 , otherwise canon compliant , Friends to Lovers , (re)Found Family , Sharing a Bed , medical inaccuracies lol , some angst but happy ending!! , Mutual Pining
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-05-18 Completed: 2019-06-09 Words: 38520 Chapters: 5/5 Comments: 680 Kudos: 2987 Bookmarks: 836 Hits: 31738

Figure 6. Elements of fanfiction once it is open, here for *Watching Through Windows*.

A particularity of AO3 is in its tagging system. It combines two forms of tagging systems: ‘free tagging’ and ‘controlled vocabulary’(Gursoy et al., 2018: 492; Johnson, 2014). AO3 works with volunteers who control and organise the tags. The aim of the wranglers (the name of these volunteers) “is not a perfect tagging scheme, but clarity, differentiation between similar tags

with different concepts, prevention of single tags with different meanings, and ease of use for as many people as possible” (Wrangling Guidelines on AO3). When posting a story on AO3, the author is required to indicate the fandom in which the work takes place. It helps the website suggest tags that already exist in the fandom, but the author can choose to ignore the suggested tags and create some of their own. The wranglers check and associate tags with similar connotations. In this case, the tag “some angst but happy ending!!” is different from the tag “Angst with a Happy Ending”, but the former is redirected to the latter as they share a similar meaning. While free tags can be redirected to a more traditional tag, wranglers do not change them, allowing the author to choose their tags. Free tagging is more common in the ‘additional tags’ section. Not all free tags are redirected by the wranglers; for instance, the tag “medical inaccuracies lol” has not been redirected to a more frequently used tag about medical inaccuracies. These free tags will be further analysed in this study in §4.1.3.

3.3 Acafans and ethics

It is important, particularly in a study on identity performance, to present my own. I consider myself a fan of *Schitt’s Creek* and I have read fanfiction from this fandom in my own free time. My fan identity has participated in my choice to study this fandom’s fanworks. As Busse (2017a: 45) points out, there are “intense meta-conversations” in fanfiction. It is necessary to have an understanding of fandom discourse to study and understand fanworks. Busse continues by describing fanfiction as “near ephemeral intertextuality” (2017a: 46), an intertextuality with the source work as well as with the reflections fans have. As intertextuality is a key element of this study, particularly in the close-reading section as I will later explain, it was necessary for me to know the source work, the different headcanons the community has generated, and the reception of plot advancements amongst fans.

Fan studies also raises ethical questions. Fanfiction, once posted online, becomes public data. Nonetheless, the topic of ethics remains in fan studies about whether it is acceptable to study fanwork without asking permission from the authors and how to present the author in relation to their work (Busse, 2017b: 11-12). Regarding the present study, I have elected that no ethical steps were necessary for multiple reasons. First, the fanworks analysed in this paper are all publicly available. While some authors chose to make their stories only available for people logged-in on AO3, these works were not selected in the data. Second, in regard to asking permission from the authors, both time limitations and the observer’s paradox were at play. Before being able to read and analyse the works of fanfiction studied in the paper, I would have had to wait for their answer. Furthermore, the authors could have changed elements of their

works, including the paratext, knowing someone was analysing their practice. Finally, while some scholars also suggest anonymising the data, this would be difficult in regard to the size of the dataset. It would also introduce limitations in analysing and presenting my results, as part of this study includes a close reading of the works of fanfiction. For these reasons, and in regard to the scope of the present study, I chose not to contact authors.

3.4 Data collection

Because this study is separated between quantitative and qualitative datasets, there are two processes of collection. This section will look at the methodology for both datasets.

3.4.1 Quantitative data collection: Web scrapers

The quantitative portion of this thesis seeks to look at the way authors perform their identity in the paratext of fanfiction collected from fanworks posted on AO3. As there are multiple elements to gather, two web scrapers were used to extract data from the archive. Because they did not collect the same sets of data, the Chrome plugin Web Scraper and Python AO3 scraper were used interdependently. While both collected similar information such as the title, the name of the author, or the word count, the former also gathered the authors' notes while the latter collected the statistics and the tags of the fanworks. The data collection happened in two phases: first, the collection on the Chrome plug-in Web Scraper (on 09.10.20), which included the 'fic IDs' upon which Python would construct its scraping (on 10.10.20). While it is possible that not all the fanfiction published on AO3 were collected, both web scrapers contain the same list of fanworks.

Using the Chrome Web Scraper extension, each fanfiction was scrapped following the steps pictured below (Figure 7). The 'pagination' allowed the scraper to visit all the pages of AO3 on which *Schitt's Creek* fanfiction is posted. For each fanfiction, the scraper opened it, collecting the information with the red circles. And, in case of multi-chaptered fanfiction, the scraper followed the process of the green circles, collecting the necessary data for each chapter.

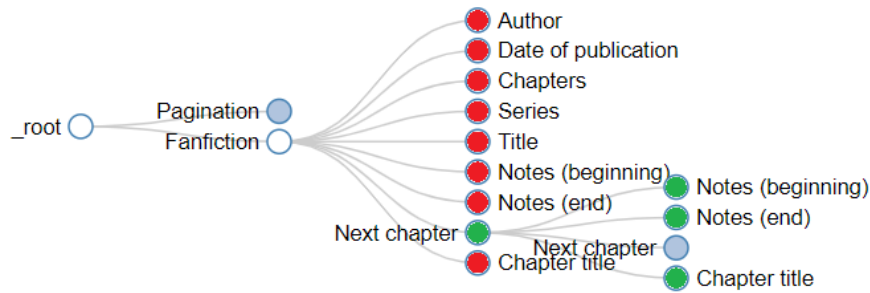


Figure 7. List of elements scraped with the Chrome plugin Web Scraper.

Once the Chrome plugin had scraped the fanfiction, it gave a list of the different elements, including the IDs for each works of fanfiction. Based on that, Python was used to collect further data. While Python could also have been used to collect fanworks IDs, this process would not have gathered the author’s notes. Therefore, only the Python program “ao3_get_fanfics.py” was used to collect data. Python scraped the following elements of fanfiction:

- The title,
- The rating,
- The category,
- The fandom,
- The tags about the relationship(s),
- The tags about the character(s),
- The additional tags,
- The language of the fanworks,
- The publication status (completed or not),
- The date of publication,
- The word count,
- The number of chapters,
- The number of comments,
- The number of kudos,
- The number of bookmarks,
- The number of hits.

Some of these elements were also collected with the Chrome plugin, and were therefore merged. Furthermore, while Python offered the possibility to collect the text itself of the works of fanfiction, it was deemed unnecessary for this work as the quantitative aspect of this study analyses more closely the paratext than the text itself.

Juxtaposing the elements collected from the two pieces of scraping software gives an overview of the paratextual features of fanfiction. The different elements collected with these two web scrapers resulted in a wide variety of data. In this study, both the tags and the authors' notes were the primary aspects analysed, to observe the way authors perform their identity. Tags were analysed in Microsoft Excel, organising them in different categories and comparing their frequency. For the notes, I used the Word list function of AntConc (Anthony, 2020) to observe the different key elements. This allowed me to observe frequent terms. However, I did not compare my data with a reference corpus with the Keyword list function of AntConc as I did not have access to a corpus that contains paratextual elements to works of fiction. While this would have highlighted some particularities specific to fanfiction (mention of prompts, kudos, or beta which is the term for the person proofreading the story), it would not have offered a proper comparison between the choices made by authors of fanfiction and ones of traditional fiction.

3.4.2 Qualitative data collection: Close reading

While the quantitative side of the present study looks at the paratext, the qualitative part seeks to observe how authors balance their own writing and the source work within the text. A small sample of 10 fanworks were selected⁸. These stories were selected because they have the most kudos of the *Schitt's Creek* fandom on AO3. As previously mentioned, kudos are the equivalent of likes on social media. I chose to sample fanfiction based on their kudos for multiple reasons. The first one is based on the fact that readers can only give kudos once for a single work of fanfiction.

⁸ During the sampling, no works of fanfiction had to be excluded from the selection because of the restriction to only AO3 users. All 10 works are currently available to the public (as of 12.10.2020).

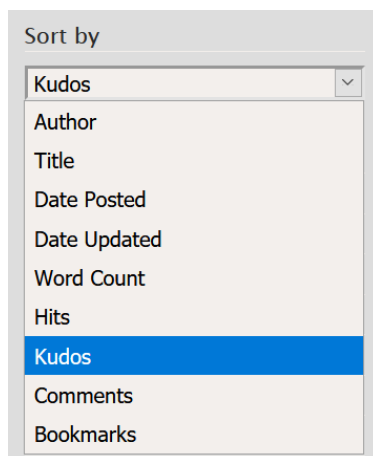


Figure 8. List of options to sort fanworks on AO3.

The archive offers the possibility to sort fanfiction by the number of kudos, amongst other options pictured in Figure 8. Hits, kudos, comments, and bookmarks all represent the popularity of a fanwork. However, the ability to give only one kudos per work of fanfiction differentiates it from the rest. Bookmarks are only an option available for people with an account on AO3, which does not represent the entirety of readers. The numbers of hits and comments do not represent single readers as one can read or comment on a specific fanwork multiple times, and multi-chaptered fanfiction are likely to have more hits as readers go back to it as it gets updated. Nonetheless, popularity was important to me, as it represents a form of acceptance from the fan community. Some headcanons of the community can gain popularity with fanfiction and become some sort of fanon. This popularity can also, potentially, participate in the performance of the author identity, as they are not simply fans but also content creators for other fans.

The 10 fanworks analysed in the qualitative part of the study are presented in Table 1, in order of the number of kudos they have received⁹ (see Appendix III for a summary for each fanwork). The table also contains the word count for each work of fanfiction. Although it is not something further analysed in the present study, it illustrates diversity in the length of popular works of fanfiction in the fandom. When reading them, each work of fanfiction was annotated regarding the characterisation of the main cast (primarily David Rose and Patrick Brewer as well as the rest of the Rose family and Stevie Budd). Elements such as description of the physical surroundings and references to the source work (whether in passing or with direct quotations) were also annotated. Finally, the sex scenes were also marked as these are where

⁹ The number of kudos for each fanfiction was collected on 12.10.2020. It changes as fans continue to read fanfiction and as new pieces of fanfiction continue to be written.

the divergence from the source work is the most noticeable as *Schitt's Creek* does not show such scenes (even if some are alluded to).

Title¹⁰	Author	Kudos	Word count
<i>Watching Through Windows</i>	helvetica_upstart	3,218	38,520
<i>no other version of me i would rather be tonight</i>	wardo_wedidit	2,240	10,563
<i>One Week</i>	lettered	1,878	51,513
<i>Take My Heart (and Make It Strong)</i>	CartWrite	1,866	21,156
<i>give away the game</i>	thingswithwings	1,554	12,856
<i>my heart was broke, my head was sore</i>	blueink3	1,544	31,028
<i>A Better Horizon</i>	KeriArentikai	1,451	1,970
<i>Wild and Wired</i>	lettered	1,447	19,433
<i>getting down to business</i>	etben	1,429	3,597
<i>mid-range denim</i>	mihaly	1,426	223,025

Table 1. List of fanworks analysed in this study.

By approaching the data for this study from both a quantitative and qualitative method, I aim to present the different ways authors of fanfiction perform their identity. These approaches also foreground different elements constitutive of fanfiction, one the text itself (qualitative) and the other, the paratext (quantitative).

4 Results and discussion

Because the two datasets show different aspects of intertextuality in fanfiction, this section is divided into two parts, depending on the methodology used to collect the data and the textual element analysed. Firstly, results from the paratext, based on the quantitative approach, will be presented. And, in the second part, a qualitative analysis of the ten texts selected will be introduced. I will discuss the different elements as I present them and will finish this section with a broader look at the different approaches.

4.1 Results of quantitative dataset

The quantitative approach of this study observes the intertextuality and the author's identity performance in the paratext. As there are multiple paratextual elements in fanfiction, the results

¹⁰ The choice of capitalisation was made by the author of each fanwork.

are divided in several categories. The first element of the paratext analysed in the present study are the tags the authors have chosen for their stories. While they are not mandatory, tags allow readers to understand what the fanfiction is about in addition to the summary. It is a common practice to not overload the tags of one's fanfiction with irrelevant information. Therefore, the tags chosen often represent the main elements of the story; authors might choose to put aside background characters or relationships. This section will be divided based on the level of the tags (characters', relationships', and additional tags). The second element of the paratext analysed in this study is the authors' notes present at the beginning and the end of fanfiction. Again, it is not something mandatory and authors might choose not to write anything in the notes, but they offer a different point of view about the authors' identity performance. This overview of different paratextual elements in fanfiction thus presents the different practices used in *Schitt's Creek* fanfiction.

4.1.1 Characters' tags

While there are four main characters in *Schitt's Creek* with the members of the Rose family, other characters interact with them and have different levels of importance throughout the show. However, fans do not necessarily give the same importance to the characters as the canon does. Table 2 presents the number of episodes in which the main and recurring characters appear. Although it gives an idea of the importance of the characters in the show, this structure does not indicate their role in the plot. Romantic partners like Ted Mullens and Patrick Brewer, although present in fewer episodes, play an important role in the development and story arcs of both David and Alexis Rose.

	Number of episodes ¹¹
Johnny Rose (Eugene Levy)	80
Moira Rose (Catherine O’Hara)	80
David Rose (Daniel Levy)	80
Alexis Rose (Annie Murphy)	80
Roland Schitt (Chris Elliott)	79
Stevie Budd (Emily Hampshire)	78
Jocelyn Schitt (Jennifer Robertson)	66
Twyla Sands (Sarah Levy)	63
Ronnie Lee (Karen Robinson)	43
Ted Mullens (Dustin Milligan)	43
Patrick Brewer (Noah Reid)	40

Table 2. Number of episodes for each character, taken from the IMDB page of the cast of Schitt's Creek.

Characters’ presence in fanfiction changes depending on the fans’ inspiration for different characters. Some, absent from Table 2, are more present in fanfiction than in the show. As such, using the number of episodes to compare with the number of tags does not indicate the characters’ role in either the show or the works of fanfiction but does help visualise the differences between the two. Out of the totality of the character tags from the fanworks studied quantitatively (N=11,956), the most frequent characters are David Rose (N=3,321) and Patrick Brewer (N=3,149). Further discussion on their relationship will be approached below. The distribution of the remaining character tags are shown in Figure 9 below; because of their prominent place in the data, David and Patrick are not included as this would obscure the differences between the rest of the characters and their tags. Nonetheless, it is clear that David and Patrick are key characters in the fandom. As previously explored, slash relationships participate in the development of fandoms. There is also the correlation between the addition of a gay love interest during season three when Noah Reid joined the cast and the show’s availability on Netflix which boosted *Schitt’s Creek’s* popularity and, with that, its fanbase. It is also important to point out that the authors choose how they tag their work: some decide to only tag the main characters of the fanfiction, not including other characters. This might also help to explain the difference between David and Patrick and the rest of the characters: as

¹¹ There is a total of 80 episodes in the 6 seasons of *Schitt’s Creek*. There is a special episode called “Best Wishes, Warmest Regards: A Schitt's Creek Farewell”, which aired after the finale, that shows the behind the scenes of the show. As it is not part of the canon, it is not included in the episode lists, as opposed to the Christmas special at the end of the fourth season.

fanfiction in the fandom is predominately based on their relationship, they are more likely to be tagged than other characters.

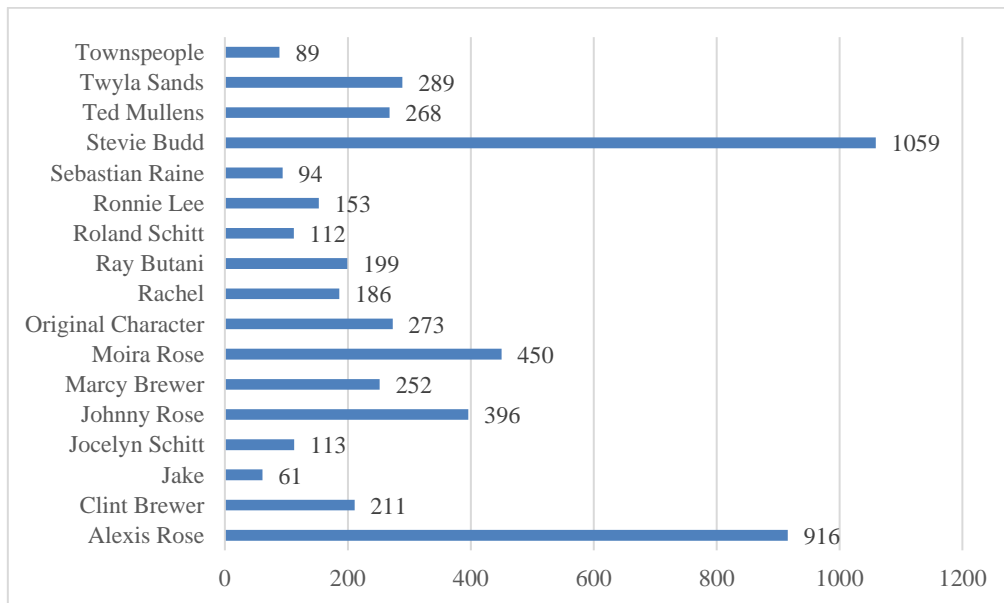


Figure 9. Distribution of the characters' tags, without David, Patrick, and minor characters.

Besides David and Patrick, two other characters stand out: Stevie Budd and Alexis Rose. It is particularly interesting in comparison with Moira and Johnny Rose. While the Rose family is considered the main characters of the show, Stevie could also be included in the list, along with Roland Schitt, based on the number of episodes in which they appear and their roles on the show. Although these characters are present in a similar number of episodes, Stevie is included significantly more in fan stories than Roland. While Roland regularly interacts with Stevie and Johnny (particularly in later seasons when they all work at the Rosebud Motel together), Stevie is also seen with the other Roses, particularly with David. Fans' preference to write about the younger members of the family, plus Stevie, as opposed to Moira, Johnny, or even Roland, can be explained in different ways. Canonically, Alexis and Stevie interact regularly with David, who is the most recurrent character in fanfiction, the former being his sister with whom he shares a room and the latter being his best friend. David has also shown disgust towards Roland from the very first episode, which could explain his lack of representation in fanfiction. Moira's lack of prominence in fanfiction can be associated with her idiolect. Imitating her voice in text can be difficult and could discourage fans from writing her in order to avoid having to imitate her speech style. As for Johnny, throughout the show he remains the 'calmer' Rose, dealing with his family's – and more particularly his wife's – antics. This role can be difficult to write in fanfiction and might be the reason why fans prefer not to include him as much as other characters. This can also be explained by the presence of Patrick,

who can also be seen taking this role in relation to David, or even with Moira and Alexis as it is seen in 06x02¹² when Patrick forces Alexis to delete the video of David talking about his enuresis.

An interesting comparison between similar characters is the difference between Patrick and Ted Mullens. Both are the main love interest of a Rose sibling. While the question of relationships will be further discussed in §4.1.2, there are elements in these relationships that can explain the difference in representation in fanfiction between Patrick and Ted. David and Patrick have a linear relationship that starts at the end of season 3 and continues until the end of the show, at their wedding. Alexis and Ted have a more complicated relationship from the very beginning, getting engaged in the first season, breaking up the second, rekindling it in the fourth, dating in the fifth and breaking up again in the final season. However, I believe the difference between the characters' portrayal in fanfiction is not only due to the show's plot but rather what the characters mean to fans. As it has already been discussed, queer relationships, more importantly gay ones, have always had a prominent place in fandom culture and fanfiction. Both David and Patrick show growth in their characters while in their relationship, Patrick learning to communicate and David regaining self-confidence. Patrick's late coming out was also appreciated by fans, giving an example of someone coming to terms with their sexual identity later in life. Also, Dan Levy has highlighted the importance of writing and portraying a couple that happens to be gay, as opposed to a couple built around their gayness. He explains that in other media, "[t]here's more caution as to how intimate you [a gay relationship] can be" but while writing *Schitt's Creek*, "[i]t was [his] intention with this relationship to never once question whether [they] were taking it too far" (Dan Levy in Picardi, 2019).

The heterosexual nature of Alexis and Ted's pairing is not the only difference with David and Patrick's relationship. Both Alexis and Ted's growth happens in large part while they are broken up. Furthermore, Ted's change happens mainly during the trip he had planned for the both of them but goes on alone after a breakup. After that, he becomes surer of himself and does not let Alexis manipulate him, while remaining the same character from then on. Alexis also grows, graduating from high school and college, finding success working for her mother, and moving to New York after the finale. I theorise that the reason Ted is not as present in fanfiction as Patrick is in part due to the absence of queer discourse, but also because Alexis

¹² In the present study, the convention to mark the episodes are of the number of the season, an 'x', followed by the number of the episode. In this case, 06x02 refers to the second episode of the sixth season.

is a character that does not need to be in a relationship to succeed. Ted also does not have as much screen time with characters other than his love interest unlike Patrick who shares screen time with Stevie and Alexis, as well as other characters like Johnny, Moira, and even Ronnie Lee (a Schitt's Creek town counsellor). These differences between Patrick and Ted are the reasons I believe the former is more present in fanfiction than the latter.

The role some minor characters have in fanfiction shows a different approach between what is canon and what fans create. Patrick's parents, Marcy and Clint Brewer, only appear in two episodes of *Schitt's Creek* (05x11 and 06x14), the latter at their son's wedding as guests without lines. However, they are both in more than 200 works of fanfiction. Rachel, Patrick's ex-fiancée, is only present in one episode (04x07) but she is also relatively present in fanfiction (N=186). These characters participate in the writing of Patrick's past, and in the development of his ability to communicate. In 04x07, we see that Patrick had not been open about Rachel to David, who was unaware of her existence before she arrived at the barbecue. Patrick has also not been clear with Rachel, having left without explaining the reason behind their break-up or informing her about his current relationship status. In 05x11, we learn that Patrick has also not explained the reason for his departure to his parents, as Patrick has not come out to them yet, nor has he been open to David about not telling his parents the nature of their relationship. The increased prominence of these characters in fanfiction shows a difference between the canon and the fanon. It allows fans to explore Patrick's character development from a different point of view than in the show. As fanfiction pays closer attention to Patrick and his relationship with David, there is more opportunities to include his past.

By comparison, David grows, becoming more confident in himself and in his relationship with Patrick, which is the longest relationship he has ever had. The presence of Sebastian Raine (03x10), one of his pre-canon exes, in town before David and Patrick enter into a relationship, shows that David has changed since living in Schitt's Creek, even before dating Patrick. Sebastian embodies David's past and is a face for his plethora of unhealthy exes. And David's reaction to Sebastian shows an evolution in the character. While Sebastian is not as present as the Brewers and Rachel, he remains a recurrent minor character and is more present in fanfiction than Jake, who David 'dated' throughout the third season, and who reappears later in 06x06 when he proposes what David and Patrick interpret as a threesome but is later revealed to be an orgy. Both represent David's exes at different points in his character development. David's relationship with Sebastian lasted for "almost three months, four if you [Moira and Alexis] include the month he was seeing other people" (03x10) and it ended with Sebastian

breaking up with him. David did not set any boundaries in this relationship and endured it. Later, after living in Schitt's Creek for some time, David decides to end his relationship with Jake when he wants to form a throuple with Stevie and David. While David had agreed to an open relationship, he has set some limits. This self-assurance continues when Sebastian comes to Schitt's Creek and David uses him to help his mother, who Sebastian was going to ridicule. This time, David is fully in charge of what happens in this relationship (although their interaction only lasts one night). This growth in David allows the viewer to see him as ready to commit to a healthy relationship, which Patrick offers.

There is also a relatively high number of original characters (OCs) in the fanfiction, which illustrates a need from fan writers to add to what was given in *Schitt's Creek*. While the majority of the tags for OCs are not specified, and would need a closer analysis with the text itself to organise them in categories, some tags are more defined. Three categories of OCs stand out. The first is the people from the town (N=10). Whether it is in the Jazzagals, Café Tropical, or at the wedding, there are background characters that live in Schitt's Creek. And some of them gain importance in fanfiction, illustrating friendships outside of what is portrayed in the show, giving more depth to the main characters in fanfiction. The second group of OCs is the children and pets present in FutureFics or in alternate universes (N=10). These can be Alexis' child, or David and Patrick's (although this would not follow the canon as, in 06x05, the couple has a conversation and agrees not to have children, but the stories might have been written before the episode aired), or it can be a child born before the canon, changing the plot. David's aversion for children is shown early in the show, which means that fans have included pets as replacement in their fanworks, before David and Patrick discussion on the topic of children, as a sign of commitment for the couple. Finally, the third category is Patrick's family members (N=22). While Marcy and Clint are known Brewers, Patrick himself references his family in the show. For instance, in 03x13, David asks Patrick about his birthdays (Extract 1). While David's question can be interpreted as David referring to his own family, it could also indicate a potential sister for Patrick, as it can be expected that the characters have talked about their families to each other. However, this second interpretation changed during the episode Meet the Parents (05x11) as we learn more about Patrick's family, and fans theorise that he is an only child based on Marcy's comment ("You are the only thing in the world that matters to us"). Regardless, as his answer in Extract 1 suggests, his family seemed close, particularly with his cousins whom he considered as siblings.

1 DR Here is a question. Has your family ever forgotten your birthday?
2 Like your parents and sister, collectively, as a whole?
3 PB That would be a no. No, we've always had some kind of party.
4 DR Oh.
5 PB In fact, sometimes two parties. Uh, one before school ended, with
6 my friends, and then another with family, with my cousins who
7 were kinda more like siblings.

Extract 1. Transcription of discussion between David and Patrick, in 03x13: "Grad Night".¹³

According to his description, Patrick is, or was during his youth, close to his family. Based on that interpretation of what Patrick says in the lines 5-7, writers have included his family in their stories, some of them are tagged as Patrick's family members. It is unclear how close to his family he is during the show as he left the place he grew up in. However, when discussing why he has not come out to his parents yet in 05x11, he explains, "I was just waiting to do it in person, and then I didn't go home for the holidays, and then I was feeling comfortable with you [David] and your family" (05x11). This glimpse at this family dynamic fuels fanfiction authors to explore how Patrick might rekindle his relationship with his family members after his coming out.

As noted earlier, David and Patrick's predominance in fanfiction, in comparison with the other characters, can be explained by their queerness. In the tradition of fanfiction, slash relationships have played a key role in the genre, regardless of the pairing's canonicity. In *Schitt's Creek's* fandom, fans started posting their works of fanfiction as David and Patrick became canon, at the end of the third season. While it can be nuanced that the canonicity of the relationship is the sole reason for fanfiction to be written as it coincides with the availability of the show on Netflix in different countries, David and Patrick's relationship being canon remains an important element to point out. I believe their own sexual identities might also participate to the popularity of the characters and their pairing. David identifies as pansexual, and it is portrayed in the show as he is seen in relationships with people of different gender identities. David is characterised both in the show and in fanfiction as accepting of his sexuality. For Patrick, at no point during the show does he, or anyone else, name his sexuality. Nonetheless, fans tend to believe he identifies as gay, based on his comparison between his prior relationships with women and the one he has with David, such as when he says, "You know, when you kiss me, that felt like my first time, you know all the things that you're supposed to feel, I've felt them last night" (04x01). Despite Patrick's sexual orientation not being canonically clear, it

¹³ All transcriptions from the show were written by myself.

does not minimise his journey of discovering his sexual identity later in life. Neither of these two queer identities are often portrayed in the media, but they remain journeys that fans can identify with while watching the show. It may coincide with their own potential journeys and inspire them to develop stories based on their own experiences, adapted for David and Patrick.

To summarise, both the show and works of fanfiction in this fandom have many characters, more or less developed in the stories. However, as seen in this section, most of the characters included in fanfiction are linked to David and Patrick, who remain the main characters in this fandom. While other characters are also important in fanfiction, they are often written in relation to David and Patrick. For these characters that are not David or Patrick, there is also a distinction between generations. Moira and Johnny are not as present in fanfiction as Alexis and Stevie, despite having similar roles in the canon. I believe this is due to three different elements. The first one is associated to the characters' relationships with David and Patrick. The younger generation is more likely to be friends with the main ship, while the older generation represents parental figures. They are thus less likely to be included in fanfiction describing the daily lives of David and Patrick. The second reason they might not be as included in fanfiction as Alexis and Stevie is due to author preference. As authors choose to tell the stories they want, they might be more inclined to write about the younger generation, which might be closer to their own experiences, than the older generation. Furthermore, Moira and her idiolect might deter writers to include her in their stories as it can be difficult to imitate her.

Despite the show and fanfiction having a wide list of characters, authors of fanfiction choose to write about the same characters, namely David and Patrick. To tell their stories, authors deviate from the source work, simply by changing the importance of the characters. Reworking the roles and importance of different characters is common practice in fanfiction; this genre allows authors to tell untold stories. Barnes argues that “[f]anfiction often concentrates on expending the story by focussing on themes or secondary characters that may not be given sufficient depth in the original story” (2015:75). I would nuance her argument in the case of *Schitt's Creek*: fans write more about underdeveloped themes rather than secondary characters. Indeed, in the show, both David and Patrick are considered main characters (Patrick is first a recurring character in season 3 and then a main character from season 4). Therefore, in this fandom, prevalent practice is more about positioning the other main characters of the show as secondary characters in fanfiction than developing secondary characters further.

Overall, the development of certain themes is more present in the fanworks analysed here. As it has already been discussed, David and Patrick's queerness plays an important role

in their appreciation in the fandom. Despite the show developing a gay couple, certain themes remain unexplored in the canon, as it will be further discussed in the close-reading section of this study. As authors of fanfiction tell stories about David and Patrick, and explore themes absent from the canon, they reduce the role of other characters like the rest of the Rose family, who are characters found more traditionally in the media regarding their sexuality alone. Fanfiction let fans write expand on elements underdeveloped in the media.

4.1.2 Relationships' tags

Relationships' tags are closely related to the characters' ones. David and Patrick, the most frequently tagged characters in fanfiction, also share the most recurrent romantic relationship in this fandom. Nonetheless, it is interesting to observe the relationships' tags as they illustrate the dynamics fans put forward in their stories. There is a distinction, already presented previously in §2.1.1, between romantic and sexual partners, whose names are linked by a forward slash, and family or friendships, which are indicated with an ampersand. In the present study, these types of relationships will be categorised as 'romantic' and 'platonic' relationships to distinguish between them, but it does not seek to put aside fanfiction portraying sexual relations between non-romantic partners. Furthermore, these two categories of relationship are going to be analysed separately before being compared to each other.

4.1.2.1 Platonic relationships

Platonic relationships have an important role in *Schitt's Creek* as it portrays a family that learns to know and love each other. Their relationships with people from the town also participate in the evolution of the characters. In the dataset, there are 811 platonic tags, with a wide variety of them, some only appearing once in the dataset. Figure 10 presents the most frequent relationship tags, five of them standing out from the rest. The initials are based on the characters' names; for the complete list of characters and their initials, see Appendix I. The "free tag" category describes comments from the authors that could be expected in the additional tag section rather than in the relationship one but that remain linked to the relationship tagged prior, for example "they all hang out you get the point" (from *'Cuz Shade Never Made Anybody Less Gay* by livelyvague).

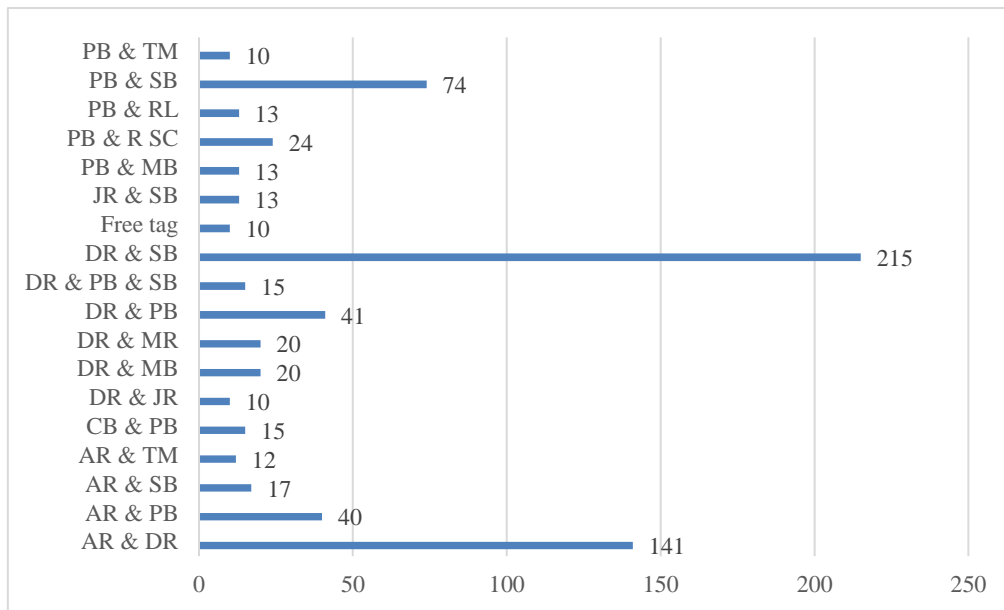


Figure 10. Distribution of platonic relationships' tags, without minor relationships.

The most used platonic relationship tag is the one for the friendship between David and Stevie (N=215). While they had a brief ‘friends-with-benefits’ relationship during season 1, the friendship between these two characters is important to their development. In the episode “The Jazzaguy” (04x08), they both admit to being each other’s first best friends (Extract 2).

David and Stevie are in their hotel room, talking about the reason why David did not ask about Patrick’s dating history, and therefore did not know about his ex-fiancée.

- 1 SB Well, no, but did you guys not talk about your dating history?
- 2 DR I guess I just thought the deeper we got into his past, the deeper
3 we’d have to get into mine. And historically speaking, the more
4 I revealed of myself, the less interested people got. So...
- 5 SB Okay, so I’m gonna go out on a limb and say that you were probably
6 surrounding yourself with the wrong people. And we both know that
7 Patrick is not that kind of person. Also, I know everything about
8 you. About your history, your family. And I’m still here.
- 9 DR I think you’re my best friend.
- 10 SB You think?
- 11 DR Well, I can’t know for sure, because I’m realizing now that I
12 don’t think I’ve ever really had one.
- 13 SB Okay, well, if we’re being honest, I don’t think I’ve ever had
14 one either.
- 15 DR This would be a really sweet moment if what we had just admitted
16 to each other wasn’t so sad.

Extract 2. Transcription of a discussion between David and Stevie, in 04x08: “The Jazzaguy”.

This scene happens during the fourth season of the show. At this point, David and Stevie’s friendship has been evolving since season 1, and they are learning to continue their

relationship with more distance as Stevie pays more attention to her job at the motel and David has started his own business and is dating his business partner. Many of the storylines for Stevie are set at the motel with Johnny and Roland, while David's are at the Rose Apothecary with Patrick. While it is not portrayed in the show as often as in the first seasons, their friendship remains strong, evidenced by David asking Stevie to be his maid of honour (06x04).

The importance of their relationship in the fandom is shown through the amount of fanfiction portraying it. Their friendship, while having a short period during which Stevie had unrequited feelings for David, was not portrayed as a 'will-they-won't-they' relationship, with Stevie canonically overcoming her feelings for David quickly. Their dismissal of Jake's proposal for a throuple (03x02) made it clear for fans that Stevie and David had both overcome potential romantic feelings for each other, who wrote stories about their relationship, a successful friendship between a man and a woman.

With Patrick's arrival, there is a change in David and Stevie's friendship dynamic. Fans have written about Stevie's friendship with Patrick (N=74) and David's friendship with him (N=41). Stories with a platonic tag for David and Patrick can use the tag for the period before they started dating, which can vary in length depending on the story, as some authors diverge from the canon and have taken them longer to start dating. The friendship between Stevie and Patrick is established in the series: they share screen time, joking around, as the transcription below shows (Extract 3).

Scene begins as David enters the Rose Apothecary, he arrives in the middle of Patrick and Stevie's conversation.

- 1 PB I cursed those bears with the little strength that I could muster
2 up.
- 3 SB [laughing]
- 4 DR Hi! We're all just hanging out before work? Was there a text
5 chain that I wasn't on, or...
- 6 PB Well, it's not exactly before work, the store opened about 25
7 minutes ago, so.
- 8 SB But yes, there is a chain, and no, you're not on it.

Extract 3. Transcription of a discussion between David, Patrick and Stevie, in 04x04: "Girls' Night".

This scene illustrates not only that Patrick and Stevie hang out with each other and have fun, but also that they do not need David to communicate and can be friends without him. Once again diverging the trope often found in the media of the jealous ex, Stevie encourages David to date Patrick, pushing him when it is needed. The three of them are close to one another in the canon and these platonic relationships are put forward in fanfiction.

Another important platonic relationship is between Alexis and David. While they are siblings, it is alluded that they did not have a close relationship before arriving in Schitt's Creek. The scene below (Extract 4, from 03x04) shows an important moment in their relationship from before they lost their money and where they stood then. In this extract, Alexis compares herself to Moira and Stevie, who both have a close relationship with David. David's description of Alexis' travels gives information on the Rose family dynamic before living in Schitt's Creek, and their parents not caring about Alexis' whereabouts. Throughout the show, David and Alexis learn to trust and love each other, to the point where David asks Alexis to walk him down the aisle on his wedding day.

David drives himself and Alexis back from his driving test while they discuss his driving examiner.

1 AR See? I told you. He didn't care. You never trust me!
2 DR Yes, I do.
3 AR No, you don't!
4 DR Yes, I do.
5 AR No, and you never take my advice. And I'm always the last person
6 you turn to.
7 DR What do you want me to say?
8 AR Well, like, what makes me different than Stevie or Mom? You trust
9 them with stuff.
10 DR Okay, you wanna talk trust? Stevie and Mom weren't running around
11 the world for a decade and a half with random men, leaving me at
12 home to wonder whether they were okay!
13 AR Well, I'm sorry for having fun, David, with a selection of very
14 confident international men. But I was always okay.
15 DR Were you? Because I was the one at the consulate sending you
16 temporary passports and coloured contacts lenses whenever you
17 needed them. I was the one at home, not having fun because I was
18 constantly worried which East Asian palace Alexis was being held
19 hostage in this week. Not Mom and Dad. Me.
20 AR Well, you didn't have to worry about me.
21 DR Well, I did.
22 AR ((smiles while looking away))

Extract 4. Transcription of a discussion between David and Alexis, in 03x04: "Driving Test".

Similar to Stevie, Alexis also shares a relationship with Patrick. While it is not portrayed as often on the show, there are scenes where they bond, and it shows that they are friendly with each other. While the portrayal of this platonic relationship occurs less frequently than the one analysed in this study (N=40), it illustrates Patrick's integration with the Rose family as more than simply David's romantic partner.

The distribution of platonic tags in the data set remains telling of the kinds of relationships authors write about. As discussed in the previous section, older characters are not included in fanfiction as often as younger characters, and the same can be said about platonic relationships. There is a focus on the friendships between David, Patrick, Stevie, and Alexis, deepening what is presented in canon. This shows that fanfiction can explore in more details elements and themes that underdeveloped in the show.

4.1.2.2 Romantic relationships

Romantic relationships have an important role in the writing of fanfiction, as it is the case in the *Schitt's Creek* fandom. Indeed, in comparison with platonic relationships, romantic ones represent the majority of the relationship tags (N=811 and N=4,100 respectively). Furthermore, although the first fanfiction published in the fandom is tagged Moira/Johnny, what follows is primarily tagged with David/Patrick. Out of the 4,100 romantic tags, 84% (N=3,437) are a tag for their relationship. This overwhelming use of the tag David/Patrick is the reason why it is not included in Figure 11, as it would obscure the distinctions between the other tags.

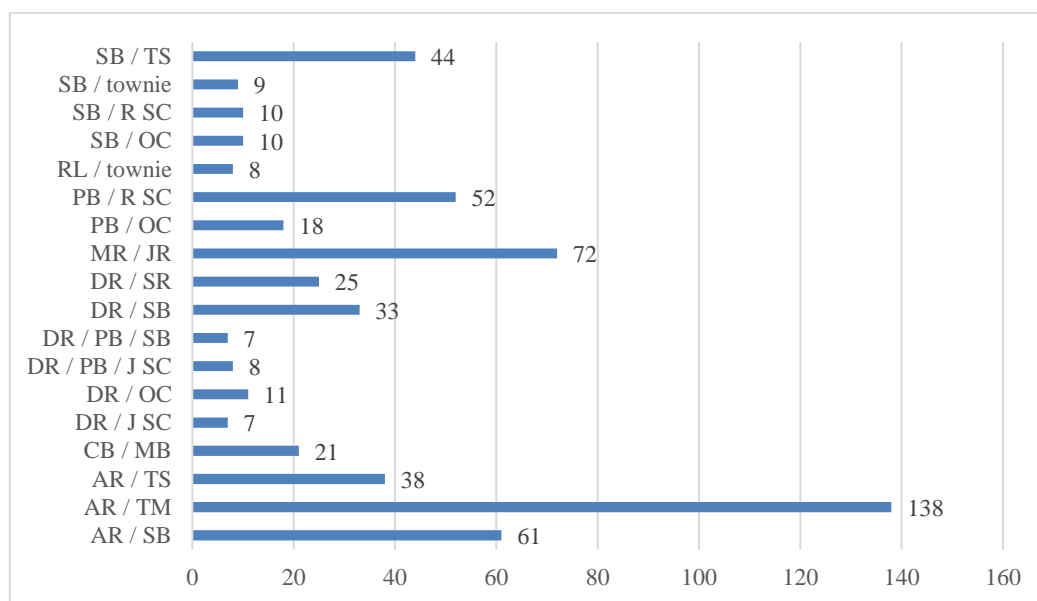


Figure 11. Distribution of romantic relationships' tags, without David/Patrick or minor relationships.

Before looking more precisely at these other tags, it is important to take a look at David and Patrick's relationship in regard to fanfiction, as the romantic tag for David and Patrick represents the large majority of the romantic tags in the *Schitt's Creek* fanfiction corpus. And while, as previously mentioned, slash fanfiction has always had a key role in fanfiction, David and Patrick are fully developed characters who have flaws and quirks that make them unique, rather than being the LGBT+ characters whose only plotlines are based on their queerness, and

their relationship is integral to the canon. And while fanfiction is a genre that can be used to correct the source work that fans consider to be poorly written or mistreating their favourite characters, fanfiction can also be used as a tool to further the universe in which the source work is built. For instance, an element appreciated by fans of the show is the absence of homophobia. No one in the small town of Schitt's Creek is critical of David and Patrick dating. Dan Levy's carefulness in writing queer characters, mentioned earlier, signalled to fans they could invest time in this healthy queer relationship. Both because of the show's genre and Dan Levy's lack of tolerance of homophobia, fans could expect an absence of violence toward David and Patrick, which is often the case in the 'bury your gay' trope often used in shows that aired in the same time period as *Schitt's Creek*.¹⁴

After David and Patrick's relationship, the second most tagged is the romantic relationship between Alexis and Ted (N=138). Unlike Patrick, who arrives in Schitt's Creek and the Roses' lives later, Ted already lives there at the start of the series. Like Stevie or the Schitts, he meets the Roses when they are still behaving like their old selves. At the beginning, Alexis and Ted's relationship is not healthy, Ted loving Alexis to the point of asking her to marry him while Alexis is using him to make Mutt Schitt jealous. However, as the show continues, both characters grow, Alexis improving herself without the need of a man, and Ted knowing where his limits are. It is not because of their relationship that they improve; it is a process they take upon themselves. Their breakup during the last season is also important as, while they love each other, they both understand they cannot be happy by staying together. This breakup is sometimes ignored in fanfiction (or unknown if written before 06x08), or corrected with them reuniting later in their lives in post-canon fanworks.

Continuing with the Rose family, Moira and Johnny's relationship is also present in fanworks, although not tagged as frequently (N=72). Despite being married throughout the show, the tag for "Moira/Johnny" is rarely used in comparison with the other Rose relationships (David and Patrick, and Alexis and Ted). On the show, Moira and Johnny's relationship is a constant, showing a more mature couple still loving each other even before arriving in Schitt's Creek.¹⁵ In addition to the arguments evoked earlier while discussing the characters, I believe the reason they might not be tagged as often as David/Patrick or Alexis/Ted is also based on

¹⁴ This references the television trope that LGBT+ characters are more likely to die than heterosexual ones, see the Fanlore page on it for further detailing and examples: https://fanlore.org/wiki/Bury_Your_Gays (accessed on 14.04.2021).

¹⁵ Some episodes illustrate their love for each other, such as Moira worrying about the possibility of Johnny having an affair when she finds love letters she does not remember writing (05x02), or Johnny struggling when she is in Bosnia (05x01). Some intimate moments are also hinted at (01x05) between the two.

the longevity of their relationship, which may be taken for granted in the tags. Despite the characters evolving, their relationship does not change throughout the show. And as the majority of the fanfiction portrays David and Patrick, Moira and John's relationship is not as present in the stories as it is in the show; tagging them might not be considered a necessity.

The romantic pairing of Patrick and Rachel (N=52) is portrayed more often in fanfiction than it is in the show. As this relationship took place before Patrick arrived in Schitt's Creek, little is known about it. From his own description when presenting it to David, Patrick describes this relationship with his ex-fiancée as “[they] got together in high school and [they]’ve been on and off ever since” (04x07), implying a long-term relationship between the two. As their relationship is not further detailed in the source work, it leaves room for authors of fanfiction to imagine it and describe the process of Patrick breaking up with Rachel for the last time and coming to terms with his sexuality.

The different relationships presented until now have been canon; however, some fanon relationships also exist in *Schitt's Creek* fanfiction. Stevie has been coupled with Alexis (N=61) or with Twyla, the waitress and owner of the local café (N=44). Both cases represent femslash, which is only hinted at in the show with Ronnie's relationships. Stevie herself says she is heterosexual when using the wine allegory¹⁶ with David after they had intercourse (01x10). And while she is seen sleeping with, or dating, men (David, Jake, Amir), she does not enter a long-term relationship with any of them. Furthermore, during 06x06, she is seen attending one of Jake's orgies, hinting at an open mindedness on her part. Some fans have imagined the failure of her relationships to be because of their heterosexual nature and reimagined what it would be like if she were to date Twyla, who has been single on the show since her breakup with Mutt (in season 2), or Alexis. Stevie's potential relationship with Alexis gained traction in 06x14 with them staying up all night long after David and Patrick's wedding.

Similarly to the genre more widely, there is a remarkable difference between the amount of slash and femslash stories within the *Schitt's Creek* fandom. Jamison, paraphrasing other scholars (Bacon-Smith, 1992 and Green, Jenkins, and Jenkins, 1998), writes that “femslash has been largely ignored by fic writers because there are not enough strong female characters on television” (2013: e-book 214). However, this is an argument I would nuance in the context of *Schitt's Creek*. I believe a reason for the lack of femslash in this fandom comes from the fact

¹⁶ After their first intercourse, Stevie explains to David she thought he was gay by using a wine allegory, saying she thought he was only interested in red wine, like her. David then points out he likes “the wine, not the label” alluding to his pansexuality.

that the main female characters, particularly Alexis and Stevie, are shown to be interesting and fulfilled while being single, decreasing the need to see them in romantic relationships. Throughout the show, they both work on their careers and on themselves, by themselves.

As with the platonic relationship tags, there is a greater number of works of fanfiction tagged with romantic relationships between the younger generation of the show. They again might be considered more interesting to write about as their relationships are evolving throughout the show, while older couples might be taken for granted. Authors might also be more interested in writing about relationships with characters closer to their age, as previously mentioned. The show also offers diversity in its romantic pairings, rather than showcasing only heteronormative relationships, and has been praised for its portrayal of the relationship between David and Patrick; however, the addition of femslash illustrates a need for queer female characters in the media, including *Schitt's Creek*.

4.1.3 Additional tags

While all tags on AO3 can be either controlled or free, additional tags are more likely to be free than character and relationship tags, which are more likely to use suggested tags based on other tags used in fanfiction in the fandom. In the present study, the data consists of both free and controlled tags in the additional tags' category. The entirety of the additional tags was organised in different categories based on both Fanlore (2020) and Gursoy et al.'s (2018) lists; some other categories have been added to distinguish the whole dataset (see Appendix II for the list).

Table 3 shows the distribution of the different additional tags in *Schitt's Creek* fanfiction using Gursoy et al.'s (2018) categories. They divide tags in two main categories; whether they are declarative or expressive tags. Within these categories there are further divisions, with the declarative tags encompassing story elements and discourse elements. The expressive tags contain the expressive notes which are more personal to the authors. As Table 3 indicates, there are more tags in the declarative category, while the expressive tags contains the smallest amount in the data. It is interesting to point out that while expressive notes is the category that relates the closest to the authors themselves and their process, it represents only 10% of the additional tags compared to the two other type of tags. Although each type is further explored below, it already shows some distance between the authors and their works in the tags.

Declarative	Type I: story elements	7,024	28%
	Type II: discourse elements	15,745	62%
Expressive	Type III: expressive notes	2,443	10%
Total		25,212	100%

Table 3. Distribution of the different types of additional tags.

The first type of additional tags relates to the story elements, mentioning different elements such as:

- The characters (N=2,997, such as “Patrick loves dogs” in *The 3 Times David had a Moment* and the 1 Time it Wasn’t David by FangirlOfTheCentury),
- The relationship tags (N=2,199, for example “Established Relationship” in *no other version of me i would rather be tonight*, by wardo_wedidit),
- The setting (N=965, situating the fanfiction at a certain place “Rose Apothecary (Schitt's Creek)”, as in *Lovebug* by xhorizen, or a certain time “Halloween”, like in *Tricks and Treats* by Fait_dEtoiles), or
- Noting useful objects (N=863, for example “broken radiator” in *Tropical Christmas*, by bellafarella).

With these tags, authors can add elements that play an important role in the story and can distinguish the story from the source work, such as changing a character’s identity. Therefore, tags like “trans!Patrick” (in *Double Queer* by AgentRusco) or “Vampire David” (in *A Very Mixed Bag: Assorted David/Patrick Ficlets*, by codswallop) indicate a change in the character, in this case the portrayal of Patrick as a transman or of David as a vampire. While it does not summarise the entirety of the story, these tags indicate a key element of it. Although there are tags specifically for the characters and the relationships, discussed previously in §4.1.1 and §4.1.2 respectively, additional tags go more in depth and are more specific to the fanfiction itself. Tags found in the additional tag section inform the reader of more specific elements and details the nature of the characters rather than list who is portrayed in the story.

The second type of tag is the most prominent of the three and depicts the discourse elements of the stories. It includes different categories such as:

- The story’s relationship to the canon (N=2,360, for example “Pre-episode: The Hike” in *Today*, by iola17),

- Eventual trigger warnings (N=779, such as “Implied/Referenced Abuse” in *A Test of Time*, by houdini74),
- Sexual elements (N=2,721, for example “Anal Sex” in *mid-range denim* by mihaly), and
- The genre (N=9,885).

As genre is such a wide category, many tags can be listed as such, for example “Domestic Fluff” (in *no other version of me i would rather be tonight*, by wardo_wedidit), “5+1 Things” (in *like the holding of hands, like the breaking of glass* by wardo_wedidit) , or “Coming Out” (*Something to Tell You*, by Coeurire). Each of these elements give a wide understanding of what to expect in the story. These categories can explain the reason why discourse elements are the most frequently tagged: they help the reader choose whether to include or exclude stories depending on their preferences. For example, authors tend to carefully tag elements that might trigger readers, such as drug use or sexual elements. They might also offer further details on triggering elements in the author’s notes, as will be discussed later. Tagging the story in relation to the canon also allows readers to avoid spoilers. Furthermore, indicating the genre of the story clues the reader of the tropes and tone of the story; there is a codification within the genre of fanfiction and it helps fans in their choice of the story to read. As an example, when a work is tagged as “smut”,¹⁷ it is expected to contain sexual elements, regardless of the fandom in which the fanwork is written in. Fans can easily choose to include or exclude such genres as part of their search. Tags categorised as genre do not only indicate selected tropes but also other elements that clue the readers into key elements of the story such as “Alternate Universe - Different first meeting” (in *Private Lesson* by redlightsandflowers), or that describe the type of story like “Character study” (in *If/Then* by ishandahalf) or broader topic, such as “Healthy Communication” (in *Synchronicity*, by sonlali).

The third and final type of tag, the expressive tags, tends to be more personal to the authors themselves, talking about their process (N=801, for example “i wrote this in 20 minutes oops”, in *Sundays With You, My Love*, by egoanesthesia) or reflecting on their narrative (N=556, such as “Litterally this is just thousands of words of anniversary fluff” in *You're Everything I've Ever Dreamed of Having*, by egoanesthesia). Tags can also directly address the reader (N=206, for example “pls tell me if there's something you think ought to be tagged” in *And conquer it*

¹⁷ Smut is a genre of fanfiction that contains sexually explicit scenes between the characters.

you will, by another_Hero) or include the fanwork in special events (N=696) within the fan community. The latter tags can include broad events such as “flufftober” (in *I Smelled Bacon*, by FrizzleNox), which is common to everyone regardless of the fandom and encourages authors to write ‘fluffy’ fanfiction during the month of October. It can be more specific like “SC sports fest” (in *Waiting on the Day* by High-Seas-Swan (FangLang)), which was a specific prompt fest within the *Schitt’s Creek* fandom. Expressive notes may also include direct reference to the actors or their other projects (N=184, for example “specifically noah reid’s actual music” in *I’ll Be Apollo*, by lesbianapiarist), a tag from a work of fanfiction that portrays Reid’s songs as Patrick’s). While this category of expressive tags referencing the actors contains the fewest tags, it contains tags for the “DJL prompt” (for example in *Friendly Folks Can Gather*, by Mirrorinthebathroom), referencing a comment made by Dan (Joseph) Levy while on tour with his fellow castmates. Although I could not retrieve the context of the following quotation, Levy mentioned fanfiction saying “I love that fanfiction is never like, ‘Two people go to the park and have a nice chat.’ It’s always, ‘They are staring at each other from across the room. Slowly, the temperature in the room heats up.’ Anyway...” (Dan Levy, *Up Close and Personal*, 19.10.19, quoted in holmesapothecary’s Tumblr post). It prompted fans of the show to write stories of the two descriptions he gave, and to tag these stories with “DJL prompt”.

While there is some reference to the show in the third type of tags, it differs from direct reference to the canon found in the second type. In expressive tags, when mentioning the show, authors may reference the actors and their other projects or be critical of the show (for example the tag “Let Alexis Rose Eat” in *on preferences of cake*, by kindofspecificstore). In the second type of additional tags, the discourse elements, the direct references to the canon of the show are primarily used to situate the fanworks. In the story tags, the author include elements more aimed towards their stories. It might have a connection with the canon due to the intertextuality of fanfiction, but the story tags are in relation to the fanwork. Each of these tags have a different relation with the canon, participating on how the authors situate themselves with the show.

The different tags and categories in which they belong contribute to the way authors perform their identity. By including more personal tags, authors of fanfiction can present their identity as authors. They can perform their person identity when mentioning their process or personal reflection on their narrative. Moreover, when addressing the reader, they create an asynchronous interaction between themselves and the reader. Authors can also perform and present their social identity as a fan when they include their work in a fandom event or when they mention actors and their projects. Furthermore, in addition to including personal tags in

the additional tags, knowing how to tag fanfiction is also part of the authors' identity performance: it demonstrates an understanding of the fandom and its discourse from the author and a sense of belonging in the community.

4.1.4 Authors' notes

In addition to the tags, authors can also choose to construct the paratext by writing in the notes section. As seen in the previous section, in comparison with the other categories, tags mentioning the author's process when writing fanfiction represent only a small part of the additional tags. Authors' notes allow them to develop their process or any other topics they might want to explore in the paratext in more detail. As notes are only available once the readers have opened the fanwork, I hypothesise the authors might be more personal in the notes than in the tags previously presented, particularly as notes can be found both before the story and after it (or at the end of each chapters). As I suppose authors might be more personal in the notes, I also expect a distinction between the introductory and the concluding notes because of the paratext's placement in regard to the story. Notes at the top of the story may be used as an introduction in addition to the summary, or to warn readers about potential triggers, whereas notes at the end might be used as a conclusion and potentially as a way for authors to advertise other stories or platforms where readers can follow them.

Regardless of the content, there is, from the start, a numerical difference between notes at the beginning (N=3,009) and ones at the end (N=2,283). There is also a small amount of fanfiction without any notes (N=902). As notes at the beginning are situated between the summary and the story, they are likely to be read once the fanfiction is open. When situated at the end, the notes are between the text and comments and kudos. Because of their placement in regard to the text, they do not convey the same elements. Concluding notes are more likely to encourage readers to "comment" (N=437, and more broadly N=586 while including wider notions of "comment*"¹⁸) or to leave "kudos" (N=384). In comparison, there is a significant difference with introductory notes for both "comment*" (N=165) and "kudos" (N=62). While it was to be expected, as the possibility to comment or to leave kudos is situated underneath the notes at the end of the fanwork, the presence of these terms in the concluding notes stands out in comparison with introductory notes. Authors are also more likely to promote other platforms, primarily their Tumblr accounts, in the concluding notes than in the notes at the beginning

¹⁸ Using an asterisk allows the inclusion of alternative forms of the word searched, for example in this instance, "comments" or "commenting".

(mentions of “Tumblr” are N=1,125 and N=328 respectively). Furthermore, when Tumblr is mentioned before the story, other recurring words hints at a different use of the term. Instead of promoting their Tumblr account, it is often associated with the notion of prompts. In the introductory notes, there is also more use of terms linked to the author’s choice and process such as “title” (N=713), “beta” (N=393), and “inspired” (N=303). While they are also terms that are used in concluding notes, they are not as frequent.

Just as there are differences between the notes at the beginning of the story and at the end, the use of pronouns varies as well. Table 4 shows the distribution of the different pronouns in the notes. There is also the percentage for each pronoun in both the notes at the beginning and at the end of the fanwork. These percentages help compare the two positions as there are more introductory notes than concluding ones; a comparison based only on the raw numbers might obscure trends.

Pronouns¹⁹	Occurrences at the beginning		Occurrences at the end	
I	5,744	42%	3,184	35%
My	1,626	12%	884	10%
Me	1,189	9%	1,469	16%
You	2,520	18%	2,172	24%
Your	426	3%	311	3%
We	380	3%	178	2%
They	376	3%	205	2%
Them	366	3%	140	2%
Their	261	2%	113	1%
He	205	1%	136	1%
His	192	1%	98	1%
Him	120	1%	70	1%
She	147	1%	69	1%
Her	167	1%	83	1%

Table 4. Distribution of pronouns in the authors' notes.

In both positions, the most frequently used pronouns are the first-person singular pronouns. Although first-person pronouns, both personal and possessive (“I”, “me”, and “my”), are favoured, accounting for over half of the pronoun instances in both introductory and concluding notes, second-person pronouns (“you” and “your”) are also more regularly used than other pronouns. This use of pronouns underlines the personal nature of the notes with authors

¹⁹ Some pronouns are absent from the data, like “our”, or rarely mentioned like “mine” (N=54 in introductory notes and N=14 in concluding notes), “yours” (N=9 in total), “ours” (N=2 in total), “theirs” (N=2 in total), or “hers” (N=2 in total). Because of this reason, they are not included in Table 4.

primarily talking about themselves. There is a difference in the usage of the second-person pronouns, with the notes at the end including them more often than introductory notes. This difference can be associated with the distinction in the content of the wordlist explored above: while introductory notes tend to offer more detail about the process of writing the story, and therefore are more about the author than the reader, concluding notes can promote the author's other platforms (which corresponds to the first-person singular pronouns) or it can encourage the reader to comment and/or leave kudos (which corresponds to the second-person pronouns). Another distinction between the two pronouns is the difference between the personal and possessive forms of the pronouns. As stated, there is a divide in the use of "you" and "I", but it becomes more prevalent in the comparison between the possessive pronouns. The inclusion of "your" in the notes is similar to lesser used pronouns of Table 4, accounting for 3% of the pronouns used in both the introductory and concluding notes, whereas "my" is more widely used (12% and 10% in the notes at the beginning and at the end respectively). It further the difference between the first- and second-person pronouns, as the former primarily describes the readers, while the former refers to the author. While the tags can be used to perform as a member of the fandom based on the author's knowledge, the difference in the pronouns in the notes marks a divide between the readers and the authors. This is all the more noticeable by observing the use of the first-person plural ("we"), which represent only a small percentage of the pronouns used. Although both the author and the readers are fans of *Schitt's Creek* and share the same social identity, in the context of fanfiction, there is a difference between the two roles. Indeed, in addition to the social identity as a member of a fandom, there is also the personal identity as either the author or the reader. A closer analysis of the context in which the pronoun "we" is used could further develop this argument. In the present study, we can compare the use of this pronouns with the use of third-person pronouns, which is more likely to mention characters, actors, or other fans (such as authors talking about their betas).

The notes can also include elements from the show. The most recurrent names are the ones from Patrick (N=1,283 in total for both categories of notes) and David (N=1,271). Other characters also come up, but to a lesser extent, with Stevie (N=199) and Alexis (N=193) in third and fourth position, similarly to the character tags discussed previously. As with the tags, Moira and Johnny are not mentioned as often in the notes. Johnny is included in 54 notes in total, 56% of which (N=30) list Johnny along with other characters, principally with Moira. For Moira, no particular trend comes out of the 90 notes that mention her.

Notes can also be used to warn readers about potential triggering topics. As it has already been explored, tags can also be used for this purpose; however, they are limited in the description of potential triggers. Authors might choose to detail further the triggering content in the notes to help readers avoid it or know more about it before reading the story. In the notes, there are multiple ways to mention triggering content; while the majority contains variants of “warning*” (N=51 at the beginning and N=8 in concluding notes), it can also be indicated with “CW” (N=25 and N=2 in the introductory and concluding notes respectively), for content warning, or “TW” (N=10 in the introductory notes and N=1 in the end notes), for trigger warning. The majority of these warnings are put in the introductory notes, understandably placed before the story.

Notes, and to a wider extent, the paratext of fanfiction, allow the author to inform the readers about the content of their text. While it contains elements of the source work, particularly in the character and relationship tags, the paratext also informs the reader about elements included in their story. Free tags, although not used as frequently, can also be used to directly talk to the reader and to enable the author to perform their identity, two functions also carried out by the notes. As each element of the paratext has its own particularities and are more or less related to the canon, what an author chooses to include participates in the relation between the source work and their fanfiction, as well as the way they present their identity as fans and authors. The elements an author present in the paratext of their work of fanfiction participate to the performance of their identity as both fans and authors. Not only do they construct their person identity in the notes and the expressive tags, they also perform their social identity as member of a fandom who know well the source work, the fan discourse, and how to tag their work. From the paratext, readers can already observe how the author present themselves before reading the work of fanfiction.

4.2 Results of qualitative dataset

The qualitative approach to fanfiction offers a closer look to the text itself and the authors’ choices. By analysing and comparing different the ten fanfiction that had received the most kudos at the time of data collection,²⁰ this approach looks at the relationship between the source work and fanfiction. Recall that fanfiction is a literary genre that is diverse not only in its content, but also in its relationship to the canon; not all fanworks reference and incorporate the canon in similar ways. Their relation to the source work can be found in the plot of the story,

²⁰ The ten fanworks analysed in this study are listed and summarised in Appendix III.

whether it is canon compliant (which follows the canonical plotline) or set in an alternate universe (which changes key elements of the canon). Fanfiction can also offer different points of view or incorporate direct quotations from the source work.

First, I will analyse the direct relationship to the canon, more particularly the presence of quotations from the source work. The incorporation of quotations from *Schitt's Creek* varies between the stories which illustrates how authors decide how dependent of the source work their fanfiction is. This will lead to the second element analysed in this section, the sex scenes. While absent from the canon, they are included in most of the fanworks analysed in this section. This hints at a division between the canon and fanfiction. Finally, in relation to the canon, I will discuss the notion of correction and rewriting of certain scenes by unsatisfied authors.

4.2.1 Relationship with the canon

In the present study, the ten selected works align themselves closer to canon compliance than alternate universes. Some might diverge at a certain point but are based on the canon, nonetheless, changing after a certain point of the canon rather than placing the characters in completely different settings. This tendency towards canon compliance illustrates a preference from fans to read stories that are close to the canon as the selected works can be considered as the most popular. Works of fanfiction can follow the plot with accuracy (*mid-range denim*) or they can develop scenes or fill in missing scenes (*Wild and Wired, getting down to business, One Week*). Some works of fanfiction base themselves on specific episodes and offer further development of their plot (*no other version of me i would rather be tonight*) or add more mature elements than the source work (*give away the game*). Fanfiction, as a written format, also allows authors to depict introspection from the characters (*Take My Heart (and Make It Strong), A Better Horizon*). Finally, authors can choose to deviate from the canon at a certain point and develop a parallel universe (*Watching Through Windows, my heart was broke, my head was sore*). As these works do not incorporate the canon in similar fashions, their relationship to it within the text will vary, more specifically with their incorporation of quotes from the source work. It is important to note that the inclusion of material from the canon is not a malicious process of plagiarising the source work; rather, this process of referencing the show is aimed at the readers – and fellow fans – who will recognise the quotations.

While the majority of the fanworks analysed in the present study reference some quotations or, more broadly, some episodes, *mid-range denim*'s author, mihaly, includes entire scenes from the show. Their fanfiction presents Patrick's point of view of the different events

and scenes from *Schitt's Creek*. mihaly started writing their story after the third season had aired, as one of the first fanfiction of the fandom, and finished after the finale. Each chapter covers an episode of the show since Patrick met David in 03x08, including episodes where Patrick is absent, filling in missing scenes. Below (Extract 5) is a scene analysis of the first time Patrick tells David he loves him in *mid-range denim*, which follows the show's own scene.²¹ This scene was selected as it only contains David and Patrick and includes visual elements such as facial expressions that might be described or analysed in the text. It also includes elements that could be filled in, such as Patrick knowing David's history with saying "I love you" to people in his life, which was not portrayed in the show.

He was checking the massage oils that had arrived that morning when the bell rang. Patrick turned to see David with a large box, trying to get through the door. He looked ridiculous as he struggled to fit his large body and the box in the small doorway. Patrick could've helped him, but then he would've missed the show.

Once David was through the door, Patrick asked sarcastically, "Have you been going to the gym? Because that looked effortless."

Extract 5. Scene from mid-range denim by mihaly, chapter 16.

In the show, the scene begins with David struggling to enter Rose Apothecary while carrying a box. The author does not include David's moans while entering and, as they describe the scenes from Patrick's point of view, preferred to recount David's physical difficulties as "look[ing] ridiculous as he struggles to fit his large body and the box in the small doorway". Patrick mirrors the viewer, or in this case the reader, in watching David trying to enter the shop. Although Patrick could have helped him, the next sentence explains his choice as he would not want to miss watching his boyfriend being ridiculous, hinting at his teasing nature. Just as the author has described David as being "ridiculous", they have also chosen to characterise Patrick as teasing and sarcastic before introducing a direct quotation from the show, which is itself sarcastic in the way he describes David entering the Rose Apothecary.

Later in the scene, when David explains why he wants to avoid meeting with Ted, he describes the situation as "very awkward and cringe-y". In the show, Patrick immediately gives an answer to David; however, in the fanfiction, the author has been able to include Patrick's thoughts on the situation because of the writing format of fanfiction. Table 5 presents a side-

²¹ For the transcription of the scene from the show, see Appendix IV.

by-side between the show and fanfiction for this scene, illustrating how Mihaly uses the canon to ground the scene, while adding to it.²²

²² For other juxtapositions between scenes of the show and fanfiction, see Appendix V.

Scene transcription	Fanfiction extract
<p>DR Yes! The whole situation with Alexis and Ted right now is very awkward and cringe-y. Alexis told him she loved him.</p> <p>PB Wow. Well, good for her, it's... it's not easy putting yourself out there like that.</p>	<p>“Yes!” he answered. “The whole situation with Alexis and Ted right now is very awkward and cringe-y.” David had kept Patrick abreast to all the developments in his sister’s relationship – or lack thereof – so he was intensely familiar with all the details of their past. “Alexis told him she loved him.”</p> <p>To say Patrick wasn’t affected by what David just said would be a lie. He knew David had been burned many, many times before in relationships, but he was such a romantic. Sure, he didn’t excel at the grand romantic gestures like Patrick did, but he had his moments that took Patrick’s breath away. Plus, he was sure he’d now seen every romcom in existence thanks to David’s obsession with them.</p> <p>Awkward and cringe-y?</p> <p>Is that how he was going to feel when Patrick told him he loved him?</p> <p>“Wow,” Patrick said, still processing his own feelings. “Good for her. It’s not easy putting yourself out there like that.”</p>

Table 5. Side-by-side between similar scene between the canon (from 04x12) and fanfiction (from mid-range denim, by mihaly, chapter 16).

As Jenkins writes, “fan writers do not so much reproduce the primary text as they rework and rewrite it, repairing or dismissing unsatisfying aspects, developing interests not sufficiently explored” (1992 [2013]: 162). Although Mihaly uses scenes from the show, they add more to it by developing Patrick’s inner thoughts, which is not explored in the show. By adding Patrick’s thoughts in response to David’s assessment of the situation between Alexis and Ted, the author gives depth to the way Patrick tells David he loves him later in the episode. As the conversation continues, each direct quotation is surrounded by Patrick’s inner thoughts, displaying him galvanising himself before sharing his feelings with David.

In the show, when Patrick tells David he loves him, David immediately accuses him of doing it when he is already anxious, saying, “So you just said that to me for the first time, knowing that it would make my day more stressful” (04x12), which Patrick confirms. While some fans criticised the teasing nature of the love declaration, *mid-range denim* illustrates Patrick’s uncertainty and doubts. Extract 6 depicts Patrick’s inner monologue before declaring his love to David. It reuses the “awkward” and “cringy” terminology that David used to describe Alexis’ situation. The extract below, in contrast with the extract from Table 5, includes Patrick’s own feelings regarding declaring his love for David. As the extract from Table 5 precedes Extract 6, Mihaly chose to characterise Patrick as understanding David’s reaction to Alexis’ declaration of love, before developing Patrick’s own feelings and the bravery he associates it with. Once he tells David he loves him, Patrick’s relief is described with the “giant *whoosh* in his stomach” as well as with Patrick regaining his composure and self-assurance when he “put[s] his hands cockily on his hips”.

Patrick couldn’t get those two words out of his head. Awkward? Cringe-y? What he felt for David was anything but. Saying ‘I love you’ was so courageous, even if the other person didn’t say it back, which he knew was going to be the case with them. He wanted to prove to David that what Alexis did was not just huge, but beautiful and meaningful. Those three words change everything. Saying ‘I love you’ was not at all awkward or cringe-y.

“David, listen to me,” he said as he took him by the shoulders. “What you’re doing is very brave, very generous, okay? And I don’t want to add more stress to your day...” He paused. David looked at him with anticipation. So, Patrick said it. “But I love you.”

He felt a giant *whoosh* in his stomach, the feeling of the words he’d held onto since they met being released into the world. Patrick loved David. It was now fact.

They stood there for a long moment, neither saying anything, just letting the gravity of what Patrick said permeate the space between them. The delight in David's eyes was evident, but so was a hint of mild frustration.

"Okay, so you just said that to me for the first time knowing it would make my day more stressful," David said, breaking the silence.

"That's correct," Patrick said, putting his hands cockily on his hips.

David was freaking out a little.

Extract 6. Scene from mid-range denim, by mihaly, chapter 16.

David's agitation is in part explained because of the rarity of his own love declaration. While *Schitt's Creek* portrays David explaining how many times he has said "I love you", with Patrick finishing his sentence, it does not show how Patrick has come to know this story. In *mid-range denim*, the author offers an explanation in the form of a flashback. It details how the conversation came to be in the first paragraph of Extract 7, and then the different occurrences during which David declared his love. It includes a reference to the dance scene from 02x13, where David is shown telling his family he loves them.

It was never a direct question Patrick posed to David. He never said, 'Tell me all the times you've said 'I love you'.' because that would have been weird. Instead, they were talking about the best concerts they'd been to. Patrick talked about the time he saw Rush live and it was one of the greatest experiences of his life, to be in that huge crowd hearing one of the greatest bands in the world play right in front of him.

David described the first time he saw Mariah Carey in excruciating detail to where Patrick could envision a 16-year-old David sobbing 'I love you' in Mariah's arms during a VIP meet-and-greet. He said it was the second time he'd ever said 'I love you', and the conversation very naturally shifted to the first time (his parents surprised him with a whole new renovated closet that was easily the size of Patrick's first apartment) and the third time (at a dance here in Schitt's Creek).

Patrick would be extremely content to receive the fourth after David's parents and the Songbird Supreme.

But it probably wouldn't be today.

Extract 7. Scene from mid-range denim by mihaly, chapter 16.

This reference to the show is not detailed, particularly in comparison with the other two declarations of love, as it references a scene the reader is likely to recognise from the show. Finally, the extract ends with Patrick's low expectations for David to return the sentiment.

While the reader knows it will happen, as the story follows closely the plot of the show, it is not the case for Patrick. This adds depth to Patrick's characterisation as he is shown as having vulnerability and doubts despite being a character often portrayed as being in control.

Mid-range denim is the only fanwork of the corpus that incorporates this much of the source work into it. Others might quote it or reference it, but not to this extent. As an example, *Watching Through Windows*, which portrays an amnesic David, also references the number of times David has said, "I love you", in Extract 8. *Watching Through Windows* is not as close to the canon as *mid-range denim* is, and therefore the references to the show are not as linear.

David doesn't know shit about love: he's only said it twice before, and once was at a Mariah Carey concert. But he must have known, at some level, that Patrick wanted him enough to marry him. Not that marriage means anything, when it comes to love— of course there are loveless marriages, ones that start that way and ones that end that way— but at some point, Patrick wanted him that much.

Extract 8. Scene from Watching Through Windows by helvetica_upstart, chapter 4.

In this fanwork, the first time the reference to David's love declarations appears is in reference to Patrick's own "I love you" to David. He remembers saying it twice, including at the Mariah Carey concert. This reference to the canon is used to characterise David and his insecurities, even more present than usual as the story portrays the "old David" from before his family's arrival in Schitt's Creek.

At a later point in the fanwork, as David recovers his memories, there is a reference to the canon, mentioning the third time he said his "I love you". In Extract 9, below, David questions Patrick about it. Patrick does not go into detail when describing the scene, aside from saying that it happened before they met. Referencing the barn party (02x13), *helvetica_upstart*, the author of *Watching Through Windows*, expects the readers to understand the allusion to it without detailing further the scene, just as *mihaly* has done in their own story.

"In the memory, when you told me you loved me..." David says, straining to unearth the words from the hot blur of emotion in that moment, "I think you mentioned I'd said it three times before. I only remember twice."

Patrick strokes David's hair. "You said it to your family in Schitt's Creek, before I'd met you."

Extract 9. Scene from Watching Through Windows by helvetica_upstart, chapter 5.

Comparing the two approaches to the same scene shows how authors can appropriate the source work and use it to tell their stories. In comparison with the other fanworks in the

corpus, *mid-range denim* is the one that remains the closest to the source work; other stories do not include as many direct quotations. Regardless of the different ways it can manifest, “fans emphasize and foreground the intertextuality of their creative work” (Stein and Busse, 2009: 193). As intertextuality is constitutive of the literary genre that is fanfiction, authors embrace it and play with it. Stein and Busse continue, saying that authors “celebrate repetition as they tell the same story again and again, while setting themselves limitations of style, length, or narrative device” (2009: 193). As the comparison between *mid-range denim* and *Watching Through Windows* shows, while exploring the same elements (how many times David has said ‘I love you’), authors can include it differently in their stories. Authors choose the limitations they set for themselves. In the case of *mid-range denim*, mihaly tells the story of the show from Patrick’s point of view, remaining close to the canon while incorporating his inner thoughts. With *Watching Through Windows*, helvetica_upstart distances themselves from the canon which allowed them more liberties with regard to the incorporation the source work. The comparison between the two works of fanfiction illustrates the diversity of the genre.

The use of direct quotations can vary between authors and fanworks and it is part of the way authors set limitations for themselves. Quotations can also be hinted at rather than directly quoted, or they can be introduced in different settings, as Extract 10 shows.

“The store actually helped a lot. Gave us something nice to talk about. Exciting. They’re proud of me, of us, I know they are.” The smile doesn’t last long, though. “My parents are good people, David, but I just – ”

Extract 10. Scenes from my heart was broke, my head was sore by blueink3, chapter 1.

This extract comes from *my heart was broke, my head was sore*, which follows the canon until David and Patrick share their kiss (03x13). The morning after, Patrick has to go home to see his father after a health scare and David decides to accompany him. While driving back home, Patrick tells David he has not come out to his parents yet. In the last sentence of the extract, Patrick’s utterance refers to the canon, when Patrick admits that he has not told them about David being his boyfriend (05x11). The dialogue has only been slightly changed from the canon (“David, I know my parents are good people”); what differs the most is the setting. The scene in *my heart was broke, my head was sore* takes place early in their relationship, as it happens just after 03x13 (or instead of 04x01), while the scene in the canon happens in 05x11. While referencing the show, which the readers are expected to recognise, it forces Patrick to be open about his situation to David earlier in their relationship, offering a divergence from the show in the plot of the fanwork.

These different extracts illustrate the multiple ways authors might choose to work with the canon. By nature, there are references to the canon in each fanfiction, but the way the authors introduce it in their stories vary and participate in their performance as authors. Furthermore, as Jwa (2012: 330) explains “intertextuality in fanfiction discourse encourages and even reconstructs the writer’s voice, as his or her identity is inevitably reflected and negotiated in fanfiction writing when he or she positions him or herself in the original discourse”. The choice they make in relation to the canon is based on the way they want to tell their own stories and how they identify themselves in relation to the source work. With these choices, the authors perform both their personal and social identities, situating themselves in the fandom with their knowledge of the canon while also showing their individuality with how they introduce it in their stories.

4.2.2 Sex scenes

While fanfiction references the source work, it can also diverge from the canon, as it is the case with sex scenes and *Schitt’s Creek*. The show alludes to sex between its characters but little is shown on screen. Sex is implied and referenced on multiple occasions, such as when David interrupts his parents (01x05) or when David receives a ‘happy ending’ from his masseur on his wedding day (06x14). Allusions to intercourse can inspire fans to write the missing scenes and to develop the sexual nature of the show for an audience that seeks it. Importantly, not all fanfiction contains sexual elements, including one in the corpus (*A Better Horizon*). And when they do include these elements, authors do not expand on it with the same amount of detail or importance for the story. Fanfiction allows contributors to include more taboo elements in their stories as there are fewer restrictions than on traditional broadcast media, which has to comply with broadcasting standards.

In this section, I argue that the sex scenes are not simply a description of intercourse between two (or more) characters, but can also be described as an intimate moment between them. Fanfiction is not simply a debauchorous literary genre – although some fanworks are, by nature – but rather includes these scenes to further the relationship between the characters depicted in the stories. Because of that, it does not simply describe intercourse, but what leads to it and what follows, and can offer a different look at a relationship and help it develop.

Sex scenes in fanfiction can vary in length and detail. There is also diversity in the types of intercourse described in these scenes, even within a single fanfiction. A recurring element of the corpus analysed in this study, which references the show, is the lack of privacy for David

and Patrick early in their relationship (mentioned in 04x02 and 05x03). As many of the works of fanfiction selected in this study include the beginning of David and Patrick's relationship, intimacy is quickly an issue for them: David shares his room with his sister and Patrick rents a room at Ray's, who does not understand their need for privacy, as seen in 05x03 when he does not knock before entering Patrick's room. This makes it difficult for them to share private time together. As it is hinted at in 04x02, when Stevie interrupts them while making out at the store, the couple tries to enjoy some privacy in the stockroom of the Rose Apothecary. This element of the show, which hints at the sexual nature of their relationship, is often included in fanfiction, particularly fanworks depicting the early days of David and Patrick's relationship. Authors also include intimate and private moments in Patrick's car, which is not seen in the show, aside from their first kiss when Patrick is taking David back to the Rosebud Motel (03x13).

In *One Week*, the author, lettered, writes about the first week of David and Patrick's relationship, which includes the search for privacy. The story shows the evolution of their relationship during its early days, as the entire story is set between the first two episodes of the fourth season of the show. Canonically, Patrick has made it clear with David that he would like to take their relationship slowly (04x01). *One Week* contains 8 smutty scenes, none of which includes penetrative intercourse. The inclusion of these sexual scenes participates in the growth of their trust for each other and the strengthening of their intimacy. As noted in the previous section, the written format of fanfiction also allows a glimpse inside the psyche of the characters, in this case David's. In Extract 11, below, after some kissing, Patrick and David relocate from the shop to the stockroom to have more privacy; however, David remains insecure about his physique and the possibility of someone seeing them while undressed. The description of both characters' undressing participates in the characterisation of both David and Patrick. While Patrick is quick and sure of his movements, David takes his time and doubts himself. The second paragraph of this extract shows a more direct glimpse to David's mind, which includes his limits (people seeing them make-out versus people seeing him shirtless) and flashbacks from his life before living in Schitt's Creek. However, Patrick interrupts David's spiralling thoughts by asking what is troubling him.²³ The scene continues after the extract with Patrick protecting the window with cardboard before them starting to make-out again, while David continues to battle his insecurities.

²³ There is an error in the last line of the extract. It mentions "Patrick's gaze" rather than David's; David is the one looking at the window, as the second paragraph indicates. Although involuntary, this mistake highlights the fan-made aspect of fanfiction. While some authors of fanfiction might have betas proof-read their works, fanworks may contain mistakes.

“Yes.” Patrick moved away from him instantly, but he was already unbuttoning his shirt, while David slid off the counter and followed somewhat more slowly. Patrick’s shirt was half unbuttoned when David got back there, but Patrick immediately stopped when David appeared, moving to grab the hem of David’s sweater again. “Take it off,” said Patrick.

“Right,” David said, but instead he looked nervously at the window above the work counter, because he didn’t mind anyone seeing them making out, but he minded pretty much everyone seeing him shirtless. It wasn’t as though he hadn’t been naked in front of people, but it had been a while; he’d put on some since then, and he was usually drunk or high or some kind of combination of both those other times; those other times, he was *waxed*—

“You don’t . . .” Patrick’s hands fell away, and he followed the direction of Patrick’s gaze. “Is it the window?”

Extract 11. Scene from One Week by lettered, chapter 6.

This extract also contains some formatting choices from the author. The italicisation of “waxed” marks an emphasis on the word, which underlines David’s insecurities about his body. The word is followed by an em dash (“—”), which here marks the interruption of David’s thoughts. That the author chose to use an em dash rather than another form of punctuation participates in this feeling of interruption. David would have continued to spiral, worrying about his physique, but Patrick stopped it, at least for a little while.

While the written format can allow a glimpse inside the characters’ psyches, as seen with Extract 11, fanfiction can also include discussion mid-intercourse, as it is the case in *Take My Heart (and Make It Strong)*, which depicts the development of David and Patrick’s relationship, including their sex life. The extract below takes place during their first time having sex with each other, after some bantering about every possibility for it to go wrong.

Patrick pressed his body against David’s and kissed him. He could feel David’s erection pushing against his thigh and he shivered. “You want to keep talking, or you want to fuck me?”

“I don’t see why I can’t do both,” David murmured. He nuzzled Patrick’s chin. “You good to keep going?”

Patrick nodded. While David located the lube and the box of condoms, he caressed David’s body, delighting in the gasps and little hitches of breath he provoked.

“You know, you’re only making this more difficult,” David panted. “I am trying to focus.” His second attempt to open the condom packet failed.

Patrick grinned. “Gee, David, I thought you were a sex god?”

“Okay, my hands are very slippery, and commentary is not helping.”

Extract 12. Scene from Take My Heart (and Make It Strong) by CartWrite, chapter 7.

Throughout the scene, they continue to converse, which includes some teasing, as seen in Extract 12. Their conversation starts with David checking on Patrick, as it is his first time having sex with another man. But, as David struggles to open the condom packet, Patrick starts teasing him, which includes a reference to David calling himself a “sex god” from earlier in the scene, due to Patrick’s reaction to David’s touches. In parallel with the conversation and the teasing, after the extract, there is the transition from preparation to penetration, with David finalising his own preparation with the lubricant and a condom. This transition does not pause their closeness, as CartWrite continues to write them touching each other. There are mentions of Patrick pressing his body against David’s, feeling his erection against him, them nuzzling against each other, and Patrick caressing David’s body. Not only does the entire scene show the intimacy for their first time having sex together, the details of their bodies touching encourages this feeling of intimacy. Their checking on each other, which includes some teasing, is also an element that contributes to the development and reinforcement of their relationship, as it is a recurrent element in both the show and fanfiction.

Just as there is talk during the sex scenes, there is often also some discussion afterwards, either to check on each other or to continue what was talked about beforehand. As much of the fanfiction selected in this study portrays the early stages of David and Patrick’s relationship, they contain explorations of the characters’ limits, particularly for Patrick who is discovering his sexuality and a new way to have – and appreciate – sex.

“So that was a yes, I think.” David’s voice is soft and his hands are gentle against Patrick’s side, guiding him to lie flat. “I mean—” he fusses with the sheets until they’re tucked in up to their chins, the two of them curled facing each other. “Yes?”

“Do you even have to ask? Yes,” Patrick adds, as David opens his mouth. “Obviously, yes.” He leans in, brushes his lips soft and sweet against David’s. They’ve kissed plenty over the past few weeks, for lack of the time or privacy to do anything more, and every kiss has been different: soft kisses, hungry kisses, laughing kisses. After-sex kisses are all lazy satisfaction and slow, lush sweeps of tongue; Patrick’s not quite sure, but they may be his favorite yet.

Extract 13. Scene from getting down to business by etben.

This scene (Extract 13) follows David pleasuring Patrick with both masturbation and fingering. There is a break, indicated with the three asterisks, before David starts debriefing what they have done. Once again, there is some characterisation in David's uncertainty when approaching the topic with him "fussing with the sheets" as well as his questioning "Yes?". Patrick is quick to reassure him before engaging in a kiss. This leads to Patrick's inner thoughts on the different types of kiss they have shared. The scene is followed by David, once again, worrying about the slowness of their relationship, and Patrick, who has put down these limits, explains his satisfaction in what they have done. During the scene in the extract, they are facing each other in bed and are talking after their sexual interaction. This participates in the construction of their relationship. Discussing their likes (and eventual dislikes) helps build their trust in each other, which David lacks, and to develop healthy communication between the two, which Patrick struggles with.

Sex scenes can also contain realistic details, such as disposing of the condom or in this case some cleaning up. In Extract 14, this cleaning up period is not an element *wardo_wedidit* remains on for a long time; it is a small detail that follows both of the characters' climaxes (just before the extract). It illustrates the routine of a couple at ease with each other, particularly with David cuddling Patrick once they have cleaned themselves. They also pick up the conversation they were having before. There is also some teasing from David, which is something which also happens in the show, primarily from Patrick. The scene continues beyond the extract with some murmurs from the two, in the dark, intimate, until they tell the other they love each other, which marks the end of this part of the fanwork.

Then they're frozen for a second, catching their breath together until Patrick drops a quick kiss to David's pulse point and rolls off him, reaching to the bedside table to gather some tissues and clean them up. David still feels blurry, out of it, the day's exhaustion is starting to hit him again.

"To answer your earlier question, yes, I do get off on you surprising me," Patrick murmurs as he straightens them up, and David smiles easier in the dark. This time David's the one to tangle them together, wrapping himself around Patrick.

"For the record, so do I, apparently," he teases back, and Patrick huffs out a laugh, taking David's hand in his own and kissing the back of it, close.

Extract 14. Scene from no other version of me i would rather be tonight by wardo_wedidit.

Fanfiction is a genre that is not subject to the same broadcasting rules as the source work. To tell their stories, authors of fanfiction are free to include what pleases them. This overview of different elements layered into sex scenes in fanfiction illustrates that these scenes

are not uniquely there to add sexual elements to the story, but also participate in the characterisation and development of the relationship portrayed. Fans write stories about characters they enjoy, following the canon of the show to different extents. As a way to deviate from the source work, authors can incorporate sex scenes in their stories with various degrees of detail. Particularly, because fanfiction is a genre that allows more freedom than traditional media, such as a televised show, it can go into more explicit detail when exploring intimate moments between a couple. As Jenkins writes, “fans actively assert their mastery over the mass-produced texts which provide the raw materials for their own cultural productions and the basis for their social interactions” ([1992] 2013: 23-24). Free from broadcasting rules, fans tell stories based on their own knowledge and experiences, which can include sexual elements. As *Schitt’s Creek* does not show explicit content, the inclusion of these scenes in fanfiction illustrate Jenkins’ quotation.

In the present study, I paid closer attention to the context of the scenes which construct a sense of intimacy between David and Patrick. Erotic scenes are not simply added to the story for the spectacle; they also participate in the construction of a relationship between the characters depicted. As Jenkins later points out, “[t]he focus is often on sensuality (especially the stroking and sucking of breasts, the fondling of flesh, the massaging of backs and feet) rather than on penetration and ejaculation (the most common images in traditional pornography)” ([1992] 2013: 192). The scenes analysed in this study further this observation as the intimacy between David and Patrick is not only present during the intercourse, it also surrounds it. Sex scenes also allow authors to show their cultural knowledge of fandoms, tropes, and stories told in fanfiction. All in all, these scenes are used to explore David and Patrick’s relationship and to illustrate the trust and love they have towards one another, adding extra characterisation for both David and Patrick in a setting absent from the source work.

4.2.3 Scene correction

Although *Schitt’s Creek* is largely appreciated by its fans, there are some elements fans have been displeased with. While these moments are relatively rare, fans occasionally disagree with the portrayal or reaction of certain characters, for example, the lack of questioning from David when he received a fellatio from a stranger on his wedding day (06x14) or Patrick’s cold reaction to David and Stevie giving products from the store to a robber (05x02). It is the latter moment that will be further discussed here. While David and Stevie’s actions were not perfect, Patrick’s reaction was deemed to lack understanding of the stress a robbery might have put them under.

In the present study's corpus, only *mid-range denim* mentions this scene and offers a correction; however, it is not the only fanfiction from the fandom that offers a correction for this scene, either by rewriting it or by adding something afterwards. mihaly, the author, has opted for the second option for their story. It contains the scene with Patrick's discontentment and also offers his thoughts as the story tells his point of view of his scenes in the show.

Oh, David.

While Patrick certainly had a bone to pick with Stevie, this was definitely all David's fault. David had never been known to be cool under pressure; Patrick thought Stevie was better, but apparently, he was wrong. He tried to put himself in their shoes, being surprised with a potential armed robbery. Perhaps he was being too harsh. When he considered how he reacted to his first ever robbery (coincidentally at his first job, Rose Video), he reacted very similarly. But he wasn't a pimply teenager anymore; he was an adult and knew better. And David and Stevie were adults too.

He should've had them sort out their story with him before he called the police. It would have saved them all the embarrassment.

Extract 15. Scene from mid-range denim by mihaly, chapter 19.

This scene follows the policeman leaving the store. Patrick decides to go to the backroom to wrestle with his disappointment. The inclusion of his thoughts for David ("Oh, David.") shows his worry and therefore the reason for his on-edge reaction to David and Stevie's behaviour with the robber. The main paragraph of the extract depicts Patrick's inner thoughts on what happened and justifying his own reaction. mihaly does not seek to invalidate the reaction that fans disliked but rather tries to justify it in relation to Patrick's characterisation: he is someone who is sure of himself and he expected David and Stevie to react the same way he himself would have behaved. This leads to the last line of the extract, which includes Patrick's disappointment in his own reaction. The chapter continues with David joining Patrick to the backroom after Stevie has left. Neither of them apologises for their responses to the robbery. mihaly's rewriting of the scene to add some details, including of Patrick's psyche, offers some closure to unsatisfied fans by adding more depth to the scene.

Typically, "[f]ans have little say about what happens to their characters or their programs, but fans claim the right to protest and protest loudly decisions contradicting their perception of what is desirable or appropriate" (Jenkins, [1992] 2013: 118). Writing fanfiction and correcting what displeased them is a way for fans to protest and to offer other fans an alternative from the source work. In this example, the solution offered to the readers was to add

a closer look at Patrick's inner thoughts and, to a lesser extent, David's. While criticised for his coldness and lack of understanding in this scene, Mihaly's writing of Patrick's reaction contributes to and aligns itself with his characterisation in the show. In this case, Mihaly offers a way to join both the fandom's and the screenwriter's views together to explain Patrick's reaction in more detail than what was offered in the show, while remaining close to the canon.

4.3 Summary

This overview of the results of both the quantitative and qualitative research highlights the intertextual nature of fanfiction as a genre. Nevertheless, there are different ways authors can choose to include the canon in their stories and their paratext. The diversity in the inclusion of the canon, even in a single fandom, highlights the liberty the authors have when referencing the source work as there is no set format for it. This liberty is also linked to the choices they make in their identity performance in relation to the source work; fans have to balance their identity as authors and as fans. Their stories are intertextually linked to the source work on which their stories are based on, as well as with the fandom's discourse. Busse (2017a: 47) argues that fanfiction is a fragment of a wider fandom discourse. She writes that "much of the text's meaning can be tied in with a specific place, time, and community" (Busse, 2017a: 53), underlining the importance of the context in which the authors write their stories as it can influence the stories they tell. Busse's argument is exemplified with the development of fanfiction in the fandom after its third season, once the relationship between David and Patrick became canon. As previously discussed, I consider the canonicity of the pairing an important part in the writing of fanfiction in the fandom. Its addition to Netflix also participated to its availability to a wider audience. This contextual knowledge gives an understanding for the development of fanfiction after the third season rather than earlier.

Furthermore, as positive representation of LGBT+ characters is increasing in the media, *Schitt's Creek* was praised for its inclusivity by its fans as well as greater institutions such as the GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), who gave the show an award for Outstanding Comedy Series. The show developed stories about queer characters beyond what is usually represented in the media. In their fanfiction, fans continue to tell the stories of characters and themes that they feel deserve to be developed. To do so, authors make decision regarding the inclusion of the source work in their fanfiction, as exemplified with the inclusion of direct quotations, the correction of certain scenes, or with the selection of characters for their stories. They also choose how to perform in their interactions with the readers, creating distance between them and the readers as seen with the use of pronouns in the notes, while also being

part of the fan discourse, as the tags illustrate. These choices are part of the authors' performance on how they present their identity. They balance both their fan and author identity, which are portrayed based on the choices they make. The choices made in relation with the canon, in the text and the paratext, clue the reader on the author's social identity of being part of the community. Some elements are more personal, such as the notes or additions to the canon, which is closer to their own personal identity which incorporates their author identity. Furthermore, as each author makes their own decisions (such as the inclusion of direct quotations), it allows them to show their individuality in comparison with other authors of the same fandom. A reason why I believe each author performs their identity differently and makes different choices regarding the integration of the source work is because these decisions do not have repercussions on the popularity of their work. Indeed, "[t]here's something fascinating about the way a community decides what stories to promote. There isn't an editor or a team of editors reading a book and choosing to put it out there. Instead, it's a collection of people – mostly women – who pick up a fic and decide they love it" (Billings, in Jamison, 2013: e-book 322). Billings describes some luck associated with the popularity of certain fanworks. Authors can reflect their own individual identity in the choices they make when writing their stories. These choices will not influence the authors' popularity in the fandom. This aspect of fanfiction allows authors the freedom to write and make choices for themselves, to create their own stories.

5 Conclusion

This study aimed to present and discuss the different elements of fanfiction which participate in the author's performance as both author and fan. In my analyses of the text and the paratext, I have shown multiple elements that lead authors of fanfiction to make decisions when writing their stories, which are constitutive of this dual identity. The present study has found that constituents from both the text and the paratext participate in the distancing the fanfiction from the source work, as well as between the author and other fans.

Throughout the process of writing fanfiction, authors select certain aspects of the canon to follow, and others to ignore or change. The roles of David and Patrick, both in terms of characters and for their relationship, constitute the biggest difference between fanfiction and the canon; the focus on them puts other canonically main characters to the side. And when these other characters are included in fanfiction, they tend to be incorporated in relation to David and Patrick. Based on the character and relationship tags, authors of fanfiction in the *Schitt's Creek* fandom select certain aspects of the canon to include in their stories, putting aside elements and characters unnecessary for their fanfiction. The tags illustrate the selection the authors make

in relation to the canon. While each individual author choose the tags for their fanwork, there are tags that stand out, namely tags for David and Patrick. The inclusion (or not) of direct quotations does not demonstrate the same strength in trends as the tags; however, it illustrates individuality between the different authors depending on the quotations selected and how much are included in the stories. As fanfiction is intertextual by nature, the amount of direct quotation depends on the authors' storytelling needs. This exemplifies the variation there is between individual authors. Each of them writes their own stories, making their decisions based on personal choices. They also make individual choices around the inclusion and details of sex scenes and correction of unsatisfactory scenes, which are more personal and closely related to the authors' own cultural and personal knowledge. These scenes, particularly the sex scenes, deviate from the canon, allowing fans to develop elements that also participate in the characterisation and development of the story. Authors of fanfiction are thus not a single entity, but are as diverse as the genre of fanfiction.

As I approached my data from both a quantitative and qualitative angle, this study offers a wider and more generalised understanding of authors' practices regarding their identity in the text and the paratext. However, as the scope of this study was limited, I only looked at fanfiction from a single fandom. Including a comparison between different fandoms could have shown differences or generalised practices between fan communities. Works of fanfiction written about a source work with non-canon queer pairings, or which include further correction from fans, could be interesting to compare with the observations made in the present study. Further research comparing authors' practice in different fandoms could identify generalised practice in fan culture, and differences between particular fan communities.

This study also identified some distancing between the authors and the readers, despite all being fans of the same source work. The authors' notes are the element of fanfiction where the authors can be more personal. They contain advertisements for other platforms, primarily authors' Tumblr accounts, as well as encouragement for the readers to leave some kudos and comments. This distancing is also visible in the dichotomy between the use of the first-person singular and second-person pronouns. As the notes are the space for the authors to be more personal, there is more use of the first-person pronouns than others, including the first-person plural "we". Including interactions between authors and readers could have further established this difference between the roles, such as analysing the comments left on works of fanfiction, which could have identified trends in the communications between the authors and the readers. As an important part of the fan discourse happens on Tumblr, the interactions between authors

and readers in the comments could have been compared with the ways authors communicate with other fans on this platform. Notwithstanding these limitations, observing the authors' notes, as well as other paratextual elements such as the tags, identified the authors' own perceptions of their work and how they communicate about it with their readers.

The present study was designed to determine the ways authors of fanfiction perform their identities in relation to the source work on which they base their stories. I have shown how these authors construct their identity in relation to the canon as well as in relation to other fans. The genre of fanfiction is diverse and the ways authors perform their identities vary from individuals which participate to their identity as authors rather than fans as it helps them stand out from other authors and fans.

Appendices

Appendix I. List of characters

Name	Initials	Description
Adelina	A SC	David and Alexis' nanny when they were children. Her name is mentioned a couple of times in the show, but she is never seen on screen.
Alexis Rose	AR	Moira and Johnny's daughter and David's sister. She also has a relationship with Mutt Schitt and Ted Mullens. She graduates from high school and community college before starting her own business.
Bob Currie	BC	One of the townspeople, on the city council with Roland Schitt, Ronnie Lee, and Ray Butani. He is married to Gwen Currie. He owns Bob's Garage.
Clint Brewer	CB	Patrick Brewer's father, married to Marcy Brewer.
David Rose	DR	Moira and Johnny's son and Alexis' brother. He co-owns the Rose Apothecary with Patrick Brewer with whom he has a romantic relationship. His best friend is Stevie Budd.
Jake	J SC	One of the townspeople. He has an open relationship with David and Stevie Budd, and remains open about his sexual life throughout the show.
Jocelyn Schitt	JS	Roland Schitt's wife, she teaches at the local high school. She becomes friends with Moira, and is part of the Jazzagals, the acapella singing group of the town.
Johnny Rose	JR	Moira's husband and David and Alexis' father. Used to own the Rose Video franchise, he later co-manages and co-owns the Rosebud Motel with Stevie Budd.
Ken	K SC	Client at the Rose Apothecary, he gives his number to Patrick Brewer and they go on a failed date.
Marcy Brewer	MB	Patrick Brewer's mother, married to Clint Brewer.
Moira Rose	MR	Johnny's wife and David and Alexis' mother. Used to play in a soap opera. She replaces Ray Butani in the city council, and is part of the Jazzagals, the acapella singing group of the town.
Mutt Schitt	MS	Roland and Jocelyn Schitt's son. He has a relationship with Twyla Sands and then Alexis Rose, before leaving town in season 2.
Patrick Brewer	PB	Clint and Marcy Brewer's son. He co-owns the Rose Apothecary with David Rose with whom he has a romantic relationship.
Rachel	R SC	Patrick Brewer's ex-fiancée. She comes to town to try to get back together with Patrick.
Ray Butani	RB	One of the townspersons. Used to work on the city council but stopped to work on his many businesses. He employs and rents a room to Patrick Brewer.
Roland Schitt	RS	Schitt's Creek's mayor and part of the city council, he is married to Jocelyn Schitt and works at the Rosebud Motel.
Ronnie Lee	RL	One of the townspersons. She works in construction. She has a rocky relationship with Patrick Brewer. She is also part of the

		Jazzagals, the acapella singing group of the town and the town council.
Sebastian Raine	SR	Was in a relationship with David some time before the Rose lost their money. He is a photographer who comes to town to photograph Moira.
Stevie Budd	SB	Motel clerk before owning it after her aunt's passing. Johnny helps her before co-owning it with her. She is best friends with David.
Ted Mullens	TM	A veterinarian, who gets in a relationship with Alexis.
Twyla Sands	TS	Café Tropical's waitress, and later its owner. She is in a relationship with Mutt Schitt early in the show.
Original characters	OC	

Appendix II. Different types of additional tags

The list presented below is an adaptation of both Fanlore (2020) and Gursoy et al. (2018) lists. Some elements have been added or defined differently than in the original list they belonged to. As this table is an adaptation from Gursoy et al.'s list, elements added from Fanlore will be marked with an '*', while elements I have added are marked with a '*'.

Declarative tags

Type I: story elements	
Characters	Character identity and/or *transformation
	*Characters' actions
	*Wider topics touching the characters (i.e. anxiety)
	**Original characters and animals
*Relationships	*Addition to the relationship tags
	*Description of the relationship
	*Characters' actions
Setting	Location
	*Time period/timeline
	*Setting/*festivities
*Objects	*Objects in reference to the canon
	*Objects that might trigger the reader
	*Other
Type II: discourse elements	
Genre	Genre, *style, *theme

	*Individual elements key to the story (i.e. adoption)
	*Tone
Canon	Canonicity (in relation to the canon, i.e. post-canon)
	Canon (direct link to the canon, i.e. episode number)
*Trigger warnings	*Sexual/relationship abuse
	*Drug/alcohol use
	**Sexually dubious
	*Other taboo elements (i.e. ratings)
*Sex	*Sexual acts
	*Sex toys
	**Other

Expressive tags

Type III: expressive notes about...	
Process	Inspiration, writing process, choices
	*Tags, AO3, titles, Tumblr accounts
	*Proofreading, beta
Personal reflexion	Reflexion on own narrative
	**Description of own narrative
	*Own headcanon, opinion
*Discourse on source work	*Reference to the DJL (Daniel Joseph Levy) prompt
	*Mentions of the actors/their projects
	**Differences/relation to the canon (i.e. X deserves better)
	*Reference to the timeline/choices made by Dan Levy
*Reader	*Directly to the reader, use of the second person pronoun
	*Use of the 'we' pronoun
	**General address
*Events	*Special events (i.e. flufftober)
	*Prompt

Appendix III. List of fanworks

Title	Author	Summary
<i>Watching Through Windows</i>	helvetica_upstart	David falls off a ladder and forgets everything from before Schitt's Creek, including his husband Patrick. The story follows David (from his point of view) while he learns about his new life with his family and husband. He falls back in love with Patrick before retrieving his memory.
<i>no other version of me i would rather be tonight</i>	wardo_wedidit	Alexis teaches David about love language. He starts to overthink his relationship with Patrick and tries his best to please his boyfriend by using what he supposes is Patrick's love language.
<i>One Week</i>	lettered	Part 2 of the Wild and Wired series. It tells the story of the first week of David and Patrick's relationship. It takes place between two episodes.
<i>Take My Heart (and Make It Strong)</i>	CartWrite	Follows Patrick discovering his feelings for David and the exploration of intimacy between the couple as they are already dating.
<i>give away the game</i>	thingswithwings	Discussion and exploration of a kinkier relationship (more specifically dominant/subordinate roles).
<i>my heart was broke, my head was sore</i>	blueink3	Patrick's father has a health scare the day after David and Patrick's first kiss. David decides to join Patrick to go see his family, despite Patrick not being out yet.
<i>A Better Horizon</i>	KeriArentikai	Follows Patrick coming to terms with his feelings for David.
<i>Wild and Wired</i>	lettered	Part 1 of the Wild and Wired series. It follows David and Patrick from their first meeting to their first kiss.
<i>getting down to business</i>	etben	Describe David and Patrick's night at Stevie, and with that their first time having sex together.
<i>mid-range denim</i>	mihaly	Each chapter follows an episode of the show since Patrick met David, told from Patrick's point of view.

Appendix IV. Transcription of Patrick's love declaration (04x12 "Singles' Week)

1 DR Ah! Ah! ((enters into the Rose Apothecary while carrying a box))
2 PB You been going to the gym, 'cause that looked effortless?
3 DR It's just a very awkwardly shaped box, but yes, I have, and thank
4 you for noticing.
5 PB So what, uh, what is this?
6 DR Um, this is a box of dog sweaters that Alexis has asked me to
7 drop off at Ted's for the pet adoption thing for Singles Week.
8 PB So what's it doing here, then?
9 DR I was just wondering what your day was looking like?
10 PB I'm not dropping the box off for you.
11 DR Okay, I know, but it would just save me so much distress!
12 PB Oh, are you in distress?
13 DR Yes! The whole situation with Alexis and Ted right now is very
14 awkward and cringe-y. Alexis told him she loved him.
15 PB Wow. Well, good for her, it's... it's not easy putting yourself
16 out there like that.
17 DR Okay, sure. I just think it'll be less awkward for all of us,
18 especially Ted now knows that I know, that he knows, if you maybe
19 took the box.
20 PB I'm not taking the box for you, David, I still have to unpack
21 all of these products for Singles Week that you bought.
22 DR Okay, then I guess I'll just take the boy and go, then.
23 PB David?
24 DR Yeah.
25 PB Listen to me.
26 DR Mh-hm.
27 PB What you're doing is very brave. Very generous, okay? And I don't
28 want to add more stress to your day, but I love you.
29 DR Okay, so... So you just said that to me for the first time,
30 knowing that it would make my day more stressful.
31 PB That's correct.
32 DR Because you know that I've never said that to anyone else, aside
33 from my parents twice and at [a Mariah Carey concert]
34 PB [a Mariah Carey concert], I know.
35 Yeah. And I don't expect you to say it back to me, right now,
36 you say it when you're ready. Just felt right to me, in the
37 moment. You're my Mariah Carey.

38 DR Okay. That compliment could bring me to tears, but I'm not gonna
39 let it. So... I... would like to thank you for all the wonderful
40 things that you said.

41 PB Okay. Wanna get me a tea while you're out?

42 DR Okay, I will get you a tea. Um, would you mind just not looking
43 at me while I take this box outta the room, 'cause I don't want
44 you regretting any of the nice things that you just said to me?
45 Okay, look away, please. Please. ((David exist the store))

46 PB That went well.

Appendix V. Side-by-side between Patrick’s love declaration in the show and in *mid-range denim*

Extracts from 04x12 “Singles’ Week”	Extracts from <i>mid-range denim</i> , chapter 16
<p>DR Ah! Ah! ((enters into the Rose Apothecary while carrying a box))</p>	<p>He was checking the massage oils that had arrived that morning when the bell rang. Patrick turned to see David with a large box, trying to get through the door. He looked ridiculous as he struggled to fit his large body and the box in the small doorway. Patrick could’ve helped him, but then he would’ve missed the show.</p>
<p>PB You been going to the gym, ‘cause that looked effortless?</p>	<p>Once David was through the door, Patrick asked sarcastically, “Have you been going to the gym? Because that looked effortless.”</p>
<p>DR Yes! The whole situation with Alexis and Ted right now is very awkward and cringe-y. Alexis told him she loved him.</p>	<p>“Yes!” he answered. “The whole situation with Alexis and Ted right now is very awkward and cringe-y.” David had kept Patrick abreast to all the developments in his sister’s relationship – or lack thereof – so he was intensely familiar with all the details of their past. “Alexis told him she loved him.”</p> <p>To say Patrick wasn’t affected by what David just said would be a lie. He knew David had been burned many, many times before in relationships, but he was such a romantic. Sure, he didn’t excel at the grand romantic gestures like Patrick did, but he had his moments that took Patrick’s breath away. Plus, he was sure he’d now seen every romcom in existence thanks to David’s obsession with them.</p> <p>Awkward and cringe-y?</p> <p>Is that how he was going to feel when Patrick told him he loved him?</p>

<p>PB Wow. Well, good for her, it's... it's not easy putting yourself out there like that.</p>	<p>"Wow," Patrick said, still processing his own feelings. "Good for her. It's not easy putting yourself out there like that."</p>
<p>PB David?</p> <p>DR Yeah.</p> <p>PB Listen to me.</p> <p>DR Mh-hm.</p> <p>PB What you're doing is very brave. Very generous, okay? And I don't want to add more stress to your day, but I love you.</p> <p>DR Okay, so... So you just said that to me for the first time, knowing that it would make my day more stressful.</p> <p>PB That's correct.</p>	<p>Patrick couldn't get those two words out of his head. Awkward? Cringe-y? What he felt for David was anything but. Saying 'I love you' was so courageous, even if the other person didn't say it back, which he knew was going to be the case with them. He wanted to prove to David that what Alexis did was not just huge, but beautiful and meaningful. Those three words change everything. Saying 'I love you' was not at all awkward or cringe-y.</p> <p>"David, listen to me," he said as he took him by the shoulders. "What you're doing is very brave, very generous, okay? And I don't want to add more stress to your day..." He paused. David looked at him with anticipation. So, Patrick said it. "But I love you."</p> <p>He felt a giant <i>whoosh</i> in his stomach, the feeling of the words he'd held onto since they met being released into the world. Patrick loved David. It was now fact.</p> <p>They stood there for a long moment, neither saying anything, just letting the gravity of what Patrick said permeate the space between them. The delight in David's eyes was evident, but so was a hint of mild frustration.</p> <p>"Okay, so you just said that to me for the first time knowing it would make my day more stressful," David said, breaking the silence.</p> <p>"That's correct," Patrick said, putting his hands cockily on his hips.</p> <p>David was freaking out a little.</p>

DR Because you know that I've never said that to anyone else, aside from my parents twice and at [a Mariah Carey concert]

PB [a Mariah Carey concert], I know. Yeah. And I don't expect you to say it back to me, right now, you say it when you're ready. Just felt right to me, in the moment. You're my Mariah Carey.

It was never a direct question Patrick posed to David. He never said, 'Tell me all the times you've said 'I love you'.' because that would have been weird. Instead, they were talking about the best concerts they'd been to. Patrick talked about the time he saw Rush live and it was one of the greatest experiences of his life, to be in that huge crowd hearing one of the greatest bands in the world play right in front of him.

David described the first time he saw Mariah Carey in excruciating detail to where Patrick could envision a 16-year-old David sobbing 'I love you' in Mariah's arms during a VIP meet-and-greet. He said it was the second time he'd ever said 'I love you', and the conversation very naturally shifted to the first time (his parents surprised him with a whole new renovated closet that was easily the size of Patrick's first apartment) and the third time (at a dance here in Schitt's Creek).

Patrick would be extremely content to receive the fourth after David's parents and the Songbird Supreme.

But it probably wouldn't be today.

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