KAZUYA MINEKURA'S *SAIYUKI* AND THE DYNAMICS OF ANGLOPHONE YAOI FANFICTION

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, *Kazuya Minekura's Saiyuki And the Dynamics of Anglophone Yaoi Fanfiction*, submitted by me towards the partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Philosophy (Arts) in the Department of English of Jadavpur University, and pursued under the supervision of D$_R$. Rimi B. Chatterjee, is based upon my own original work and there is no plagiarism. This is also to certify that the work has not been submitted by me in part or in whole for the award of any other degree/diploma of the same Institution where the work is being carried out, or at any other Institution. A paper out of this dissertation has also been presented by me at a seminar/conference at the Department of English, Jadavpur University, thereby fulfilling the criteria for submission, as per the M.Phil Regulation (2017) of Jadavpur University.

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On the basis of academic merit and satisfying all the criteria as declared above, the dissertation work of Shweta Basu, entitled *Kazuya Minekura's Saiyuki And the Dynamics of Anglophone Yaoi Fanfiction*, is now ready for submission towards the partial fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (Arts) in the Department of English of Jadavpur University.

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they know that without them this research would not see the light of day.

SYNOPSIS

Ever since its publication in 1592 in the print form, the Chinese novel *Hsi-yu-chi* (translated into English as *Journey to The West*) has enjoyed immense and lasting popularity, one that continues even today. One of the four great classical novels of Chinese literature, this novel's long enduring popularity bears its mark on the numerous multimedia adaptations of the same, namely animated films and serieses, live-action films and serieses, video games, interactive novels, stage musicals, and graphic novels. My MPhil dissertation focuses on the yaoi fanfictions stemming from the manga/anime adaptation of the legend by the mangaka Kazuya Minekura, named *Saiyuki*.

Fanfiction can roughly be defined as fiction written by fans, based on an extant fictional universe and a set of characters, who can either be reworked into an alternate universe or be woven into a possible continuation of the source storyline. Born with the purpose of paying homage to the source, this adaptation is part of the universal attempt at keeping a story going, and weaving new stories with characters we can relate to, having its origins in the Graeco-Roman cultural artefacts. The practice of fanfiction came into being in the published form in the year 1891, with J. M. Barrie's parody of *Sherlock Holmes*. Therefore, the existence of 7.3k *Saiyuki* fanfictions on the fanfiction.net (the internet's largest repository of fanfiction) as well as on dedicated fansites, other fanfiction sites and the blog sites of the fan-authors is not a freak cultural phenomenon at all. Rather it is inextricably linked to the ongoing practice of storytelling as a communitarian enterprise.

"Yaoi" is the Japanese equivalent to the Western "slash" and deals with male homosexual relationships in fictional characters (and sometimes real-life ones as well, albeit in a fictional setting). I wish to explore this angle in my study of yaoi fanfictions, looking at the gendered perspective (since most of the yaoi practitioners are women) of the erotics, the pleasure of self-expression, reworking of unfulfilled fantasies and the "gift culture" between

authors, proofreaders, moderators and more, since fanfiction is primarily a genre fraught with legal disputes regarding copyright claims, and generally does not seek to make money out of the authorial labour.

What makes the fan-practice of *Saiyuki* different, is that the author relishes active involvement of fans with her work, which, if metacritically seen, is a fan-work too, being an adaptation of the original Chinese text; and she provides a lot of fan-service through the recreation of her characters as per the fan-fantasies. She is also a part of the gift culture, gifting her artworks to the actors of the live-action stage drama based on the anime/manga. While many other authors seem to have a love-hate relationship with the practice of fanfiction, Minekura leaves ample leeway for the fans to imagine the inner sexual dynamics of the "ikemen" (handsome men) of *her Saiyuki*.

My research looks briefly at the history of fan, fandom and fanfiction, then moves on to discuss the theoretical dimensions of it, in the light of Linda Hutcheon's Adaptation Theory, Wolfgang Iser's Reader Response Theory, Henry Jenkins' theory of the Participatory Culture of Fandom, Francesca Coppa's views on the feminist praxis of slash", the practice of yaoi and the "fujoshi" (rotten girls) subculture in Japan and see how it ties up with the largely anglophone practice of *Saiyuki* fanfiction, amongst such other considerations. Fanfiction as a cultural activity cannot be perceived of as a monolith, and is, therefore, influenced by and influences relevant social processes that are spatio-temporally contextual, or even as Hans-Georg Gadamer would have it, across the "Horizon of Expectations". Then, to trace out the development of fanfiction as an artwork in the course of Kuhnian Paradigm-shifts as well as changing modes of reception and interpretation, it proves useful to have a certain interlinking framework of contexts and co-texts, something akin to Bourdieu's idea of the "field".

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Upon researching fanfictions, I realized that there exists a research gap, since almost no research exists on anime/manga anglophone fanfiction, let alone on yaoi, and this text, Saiyuki. I hope through my research I am able to fill that research gap and also situate my work within the ongoing research on fanfiction, based on network-based participation and Western source texts.

WHAT/WHO IS A FAN?

Fans are, first and foremost, audiences. They are interpretive audiences, who, pride themselves of the activity of indulging in the media/art/sport that they love, in making meanings of it, and more often than not, flaunting their love for it to the world around. There exist many kinds of fan experiences that exist in the often-overlapping binaries of online/offline, anonymous/named, expressed/non-expressed, none of greater value than the other, and all such experiences go into the making of fandom as an overarching phenomenon, that has existed from even before the term "fan" came to be in use[1]. The Greco-Roman literary and performative culture, as well as a lot of mythmaking around the world, have, since times immemorial, celebrated experiences of adoring and admiring individuals, actions, fictional characters, and even gods or other religious figures, and created narratives around them. The epic mode, as well as that of parody, uses well-known events and characters to spin newer narratives that resonate with the audience across times and space. Just like Newton's third law, for every action that was well-loved, there is a reaction from a fan, whether in the form of a positive/negative feedback, or a celebratory act that is revelatory and/or artistic in nature.

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[1] Daniel Cavicchi, "Fandom Before 'Fan': Shaping the History of Enthusiastic Audiences", *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History* 6, no. 1 *(*2014*)*: 52–72, https://doi.org/10.5325/reception.6.1.0052.

ETYMOLOGY:

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the meaning of the word "fan", stands for either "an enthusiastic devotee (as of a sport or a performing art) usually as a spectator" or "an ardent admirer or enthusiast (as of a celebrity or a pursuit)" such as fans of a film-actor or of the genre of science-fiction (in literary or media formats) derived from contracting the extant English word, "fanatic". The first known usage of the word "fan" occurred in 1682 after which the word suffered a disappearance, resurfacing in the late 19th century, in the context of sports enthusiasts.[2] As nebulous in terms of its etymological sources as the variety of practitioners under the umbrella term, the word "fan" may also have roots in the Latin word "fanum", meaning temple/sanctuary. The modern latin word "fanaticus" meaning "insanely, but divinely inspired", compliments the fan practices perfectly. Moreover, philosopher George Santayana has defined the act of "fanaticism" as redoubling one's efforts when that person has become oblivious to his/her original aim. While the religious nature of fandom and fan-practices is worth exploring in this postmodern world where atheists are in multitude, the innate fanaticism[3] of fans have often been seen as pathological in nature whether in the form of a violent mob, or an individual overtly indulgent in his/her interests or even "textual poaching", in the words of acafan (a fan who is an academic) Henry Jenkins which gives rise to controversies regarding intellectual property and copyright-claims.

As for the word "fanatic", with its inextricable links with fan practices, came to be used in English around 1550 AD, meaning "marked by extreme enthusiasm and often intense uncritical

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[2] Douglas Harper, "Fan (n.2)", *Online Etymology Dictionary*, Accessed 22 May 2012,
<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=fan&allowed_in_frame=0>
[3] "The Vocabularist: Are Fans Fanatical or Fanciful?" *BBC News*, September 22, 2015, Accessed May 12, 2019,
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-34298659>

devotion". Around 1647, the modern meaning "extremely zealous", came to the fore. The earliest records of the usage of the word "fan" link it with "fanatic", as an 1885 Kansas City Times record shows, "of course a fan is a fanatic". Another etymological origin of the word "fan" links it to the word "fancy", as derived from the word "fantasy", which in turn comes from the Greek word "phantasia", meaning, "imagination".[4] It also links with the Greek verb, "phainomai", which means "to appear"[5]. The epicurean and the stoic philosophers had used the word to make sense of sensory impressions and our reception of them. This etymological interpretation then brings to the fore the interpretive reception of a cultural phenomenon, which is the very core of fan praxis. Accorrding to Aristotle, "phantasia" can be interpreted as the mind's desire to mediate abstractions with a "mental image"[6] which is also a pivotal part of the creation of fan narratives, or fanfictions, which bring out the underlying subtleties present within the possibilities of the extant plot through the literary mediations of an enthusiastic fan.

While exploring the etymological origin of the word "fan" through the word "the fancy", which used to be a "collective term for followers of a certain hobby or sport", we may find that the meaning of a "fan" as a "devotee" appears around 1889 in American English, referring to the baseball enthusiasts.[7] Coleridge's interpretation of the concept of "fancy" deems it inferior to that of "imagination", where the prior is responsible towards the mechanical accumulation and storage of information in the mind and memory, and the latter is the power of synthesizing that information

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[4] "Fans and Fan Clubs", *Encyclopedia of Recreation and Leisure in America*, Accessed May 12, 2019,
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/humanities/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/fans-and-fan-clubs>
[5] Dörthe Almuth Schilken, "Fantasy, Genre", *Brill.* September 19, 2006, Accessed May 12, 2019.
<https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-dictionary-of-religion/fantasy-genre-COM_00162?s.num=4>
[6] Jana Noel, "Interpreting Aristotle's Phantasia and Claiming its Role Within Phronesis", *Philosophy of Education Archive* (1997): 289-296.
[7] "fan | Origin and meaning of fan by Online Etymology Dictionary", *Etymonline.com*, Accessed 12 May 2019,
<https://www.etymonline.com/word/fan>

to create something new.[8] Fan activities are also a commingling of both, where it is common practice for ardent fans to go through their favourite media over and over again, in order create newer meanings, that come to light through tumblr posts, blogs, headcannons and fanfictions, and more such methods. (explain, give examples). "Fancy" is then, despite the difference of opinions between philosophers, a faculty peculiar to people who are able to harness "the power of conception and representation in artistic expression",[9] which, by association, makes fans a kind of highly creative people, which is also attested by the creative nature of the different kinds of fan practices within the fandom[10], such as cosplay, fanart, fanfiction, interpretive forum discussions and much more.

No matter the origin of the word, fans exist since the beginning of humankind, the tradition being as old as the practice of appreciating art or any activity.

FANDOMS: WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DID THEY COME TO BE

WHAT IS FANDOM?

Fandoms are basically subcultures that are composed of fans who share a sense of mutual identification and solidarity towards any area of human interest or activity (i.e., texts (literary/media), individual celebrities, hobbies, genres, sports, fashions, etc.).[11] Fans are characterized by their common interest in even minuscule details of the object(s) involved in their fandom. They spend a significant amount of time and energy to study these objects of interest, often as part of social network(s) that are associated with that particular fandom. This is a crucial

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[8] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia literaria, or, biographical sketches of my literary life and opinions*. Vol. 7. Princeton University Press, 1984.

[9] "Fancy," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, June 23, 1999, Accessed May 12, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/science/fancy>

[10] Lucy Bennett, "Researching online fandom", *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 4 (2013): 129-134.

[11] " What Does Fandom Mean?", *Definitions.Net*, Accessed May 12, 2019, <https://www.definitions.net/definition/fandom>

differentiation between "fannish" (fandom-affiliated) practices and passing/casual interest in an activity, text or trend.

According to the Merriam-Webster's dictionary, which traces the usage of this term to 1903, its roots lie in referring to sports enthusiasts, while its present-day usage refers to groups of people who are fascinated with any particular subject.[12]

Fandom as a term is also used to refer to interconnected social networks that are formed of individual fandoms which may overlap. There are quite a few large conventions, both digital (such as fandom.com) and analog (such as Comic Con International, Dragon Con, New York Comic Con etc.) that cater to fandom in this sense, catering to fan-interests in media (such as films, anime, comics, television shows, webeseries etc.) and performative acts such as cosplay. There is also the opportunity of buying and selling related merchandise such as (doujinshi, unofficial fanbooks, artbooks, posters, etc.)

The most popular place for fan-interaction on the web, fandom.com defines itself as "a global entertainment media brand powered by fan passion." Also, it is the "fan-trusted source in entertainment" and provides "a home to explore, contribute to, and celebrate the world of pop culture".[13] The "fan contributor program" of FANDOM provides "the most passionate fans a home to explore, speculate, and give perspective on their interests with millions of fans" on the internet.[14]

SHORT HISTORIOGRAPHY OF FANDOM

While the history of fandom is centuries older, this proclamation from the world's largest community of fans does aptly some up what being part of any fandom means. It is important for a

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[12] "Fandom", *Merriam-Webster*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fandom

[13] "About," *FANDOM*, Accessed May 12, 2019, <https://www.fandom.com/about>

[14] "Fan Contributor", *FANDOM*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.fandom.com/fan-contributor?gh_jid=208408

fan to be passionate about his/her favourite art/media/person/sport, which passion fuels the "fan-labor" and the spirit of camaraderie and "gift-culture" that is unique to fans. Fans do fan-activities out of love, and generally not towards any financial gains (link it to fair use, fanart and fanfiction). Fans "explore" meanings, often going beyond plot possibilities (the case of AU, genderbending, cross-dressing, fanon and OC and Reader as a character). They "contribute" to the media they derive so much pleasure from, in the form of different fan-practices, which plays the dual-role of paying homage and bringing out the artist in them. This whole act of being a fan is celebratory and brings in multitudes of aficionados across the world together in this celebration of "popular culture" which has been looked down by highbrows but deserves academic attention. Fans speculate and give their perspective on the media they consume, "fan theories" which are all the rage nowadays after the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe) boom, bring out the intellectual faculties of fans, which proves that they are not merely passive consumers of products produced by artists, but themselves are producers, who can even impact the original authorial intentions regarding the plots.

Fans of Sherlock Holmes are usually considered to have created the first modern fandom.[15] Fans held public demonstrations of mourning and cancelled their subscriptions to the *Strand Magazine*, where the stories hitherto used to be published, after Holmes was "killed off" in 1893, in the story called "The Final Problem".[16] Then there came to be the first example of authors imbuing fan theories in their works, since Sherlock was then brought back from the dead by Conan

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[15]Scott Brown, "Scott Brown on Sherlock Holmes, Obsessed Nerds, and Fan Fiction", *Wired*, June 04, 2017, Accessed May 12, 2019, < https://www.wired.com/2009/04/pl-brown-6/>

[16] "Sherlock Holmes", *Fanlore*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://fanlore.org/w/index.php?title=Sherlock_Holmes&oldid=579597.

Doyle, almost a decade later, at the request of fans. The Sherlock fandom had created some of the

first fanfictions as early as about 1897 to 1902.[17]

WHAT IS MANGA?

According to John A. Lent, manga is comics created in Japan, or by Japanese creators in the

Japanese language, conforming to a style developed in Japan in the late 19th Century[18]. As Adam

Kern has discovered, they have a long and complex pre-history in earlier Japanese art.[19] A number

of artists in the United States have drawn comics and cartoons influenced by manga, such as

Vernon Grant, Frank Miller, Adam Warren, Toren Smith, Ben Dunn, etc.[20] In 2004 TokyoPop

introduced original English-language manga (OEL manga)[21].

Heike Jüngst points out that "Manga has become the largest segment of translated comics in

the Western World" (50)[22]; which is further attested by Paul Gravett in 2004 that "this is not some

passing craze or flavor of the month."[23] As Troni Grande states, it is also "a means of resisting the

established value of high culture"[24] (2) which is similar to Linda Hutcheon's views about pop-art

forms such as movies and games (that are technologically mediated) as opposed to accepted,

expensive and senior high-art forms such as dramas, operas, ballets and forms of readable

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[17] Julia Dex Yeung, "Did Sherlock Holmes Really Exist?", *The Straight Dope*, November 29, 2017, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.straightdope.com/columns/read/2088/did-sherlock-holmes-really-exist/.

[18]John A. Lent, ed. *Illustrating Asia: Comics, Humor Magazines, and Picture Books*, (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 3-4.

[19] Adam L. Kern, *Manga from the floating world: Comicbook culture and the kibyoshi of Edo Japan,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006)

[20] Bhob Stewart, "Screaming Metal", *The Comics Journal* 94 (1984).

[21] "Tokyopop To Move Away from OEL and World Manga Labels", *Anime News Network*, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2006-05-05/tokyopop-to-move-away-from-oel-and-world-manga-labels.

[22] H. E. Jungst, "Translating manga," in *Comics in translation*, ed. Federico Zanettin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 50-88.

[23]Paul Gravett, *Manga: Sixty years of Japanese comics*, (London: Laurence King, 2004).

[24]Troni Grande, 2009, "Manga Shakespeare and the Hermeneutic Problems of" Double Access". *Queen City Comics Conference: California*, https://ourspace.uregina.ca/bitstream/handle/10294/3091/QueenCityComics?sequence=1.

literature, whether they be spin-offs (that are direct in their performance and appeal) – all of which are artistically important in their own regard (3)[25].

WHAT IS ANIME?

Anime is basically animation (whether hand-drawn or computer-generated) which originates from or is associated with Japan.[26] The Japanese word "anime" means *"animation"*, which encompasses all forms of animated media.[27] Outside of Japan, the word "anime" specifically refers to an animation style disseminated from Japan, which is often characterized by vibrant characters, colorful graphics, and fantastical themes.[28] The word "anime" reverberates with culturally abstract approaches which create the possibility of anime production in countries other than Japan.[29] For the purpose of simplicity, many Westerners see anime strictly as a Japanese product of animation.[30] For some scholars, defining anime as a quintessentially Japanese product might be related to a new form of Orientalism.[31]

The earliest of the commercial Japanese animation dates back to 1917, and since then production has seen a continuous increase. The art style which characterizes anime had emerged back in the 1960s with works from Osamu Tezuka. Henceforth it continued spreading

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[25] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Routledge, 2012.

[26] David Murphy, "A Guide to Manga and Anime for Those Who Want to Know What All the Fuss is About", *Reading Time.* Vol.1. no. 53: 15-16.

[27] Lesley Aeschliman, "What is Anime?", *Bellaonline*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20071107150423/http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art4260.asp

[28] "Anime." *Merriam-Webster*. Accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anime.

[29] [29] Chris O'Brien, "Can Americans Make Anime?", *The Escapist*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20121018071546/http://www.escapistmagazine.com/articles/view/features/9829-Can-Americans-Make-Anime.

[30] [30] "Anime News Network Lexicon - Anime", *Anime News Network*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20130513001647/http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/lexicon.php?id=45

[31] Brian Ruh, *Stray Dog of Anime*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 134–135.

internationally, especially during the late twentieth century, resulting in a large domestic as well as international audience. Anime is distributed through multiple media platforms, such as theatrically, through television broadcasts, directly through on-demand or disc-based home media, as well as streaming over the Internet. It is diversified into numerous genres which may target broad and niche audiences.

Anime as an art form has distinctive methods and techniques of production which adapted across time to emerging technologies. It comprises of a story-telling mechanism combining graphic art, cinematography, characterization, and many other forms of imaginative techniques that are typical to it. Anime production generally lays less focus on the movement of animation and more on the realism of settings as well as the use of camera effects which include pan, zoom, and angle shots. Due to its hand-drawn nature, anime separates itself from reality by a crucial fiction gap that provides ideal escapism for audiences in which they can immerse themselves with relative ease.[32] Anime as an umbrella term includes various art styles as well as character proportions and features including the trademark "large eyes small mouth" trope or realistically sized eyes.

ANIME/MANGA FANDOM IN THE ANGLOPHONE COMMUNITIES:

The anime/manga fan communities in the English-speaking world started from the 1970s and saw steady growth. According to Japanophile Fred Patten, the first fan-club that was devoted to Japanese animation was the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization, beginning in Los Angeles, the USA

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[32] Timothy J. Craig, *Japan Pop! Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*, (Armonk, NY: Sharpe,2000), 139–140.

in 1977.[33] Its growth was characterized by waves, which according to Gilles Poitras were often instigated by a singular work.[34]

The artwork is one major appeal of anime, some fans even claiming its visual quality to be superior to most US-based animated series[35]. Holly Kolodziejczak, the content editor at *Anime Fringe*, has described her amazement by the depth of anime, which was not like the cartoons that she had encountered before. "The characters had real personalities, their own feelings, and motivations for their actions, strengths, and flaws that enhanced their characters. They were more like real people, and thus people could much more readily identify with them."[36] Larry Green added that while in the United States animation is traditionally made for children/teenagers, anime discusses subjects which are relevant to both adults and children. For Green, any viewer from any background or age-group would be able to find something to his/her liking because of anime's large scale of production.[37]

According to Susan J. Napier, anime fans "find refuge in a culture that diverges from the typical American way of life." She also pointed out that fascination with the Japanese culture is not entirely a new concept and that it has existed since the middle of 19th C. She also gives the example of an 1876 painting entitled *La Japonaise* by Claude Monet, which depicts Monet's wife

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[33] https://web.archive.org/web/20060505014917/http://www.tcj.com/269/n_scan.html

[34] Gilles Poitras, *Anime Essentials: Every Thing a Fan Needs to Know* (Stone Bridge Press, 2000)

[35] Debbi Gardiner, "Anime in America", *J@pan Inc Magazine*, Accessed May 12, 2019, <http://www.japaninc.com/article.php?articleID=972>

[36] Holly Kolodziejczak, "So, this is Point B? - Looking Back, Going Forward", Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20090417065025/http://www.animefringe.com/magazine/2005/12/special/04.php

[37] Larry Green, "JAPANESE ANIMATION PAGE (THEATRICAL & TV)", *Nausicaa.net,* Accessed 2009-05-21., http://www.nausicaa.net/~lgreenf/anime.htm

in a kimono, and Japanese hand-fans adorning the background. For Napier, this interest in Japan stems from an "escape from the Industrial Revolution ... a pastoral utopia".[38]

WHAT IS FANFICTION?

Fan fiction or fanfiction (also known as a fan fic, fanfic, fic or ff) is an original work of fiction that is written by fans based on existing characters or settings.[39] Fans that author fanfictions may choose to either maintain the characters and settings of the original creator or to add their own (as either OC, Author Insert or Crossover). It is a popular form of fan labour[40], particularly since the advent of the Internet.

The term "fan fiction" came to be used in the 20th C., when copyright laws started making clear what stories using established characters were authorized by the copyright holder and which of them were unauthorized.[41] Before, unofficial sequel or pastiches existed in place of what is now popularly known as fanfiction.

Fanfiction may have for its settings the canonical fictional universe of its fandom (referred to as "canon") or an alternative universe that exists outside it (popularly known as AU)[42] Since most fanfiction writers assume that the primary reading audience of their work(s) are other fans

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[38] Carter Rogers, "Professor of Japanese speaks about anime fandom", The Tufts Daily, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20090416153226/http://www.tuftsdaily.com/professor-of-japanese-speaks-about-anime-fandom-1.1568757
[39] Stephen Downes, "Column: What Is Fan Fiction – and Why Is It Making People Nervous?" TheJournal.ie, Accessed May 12, 2019, <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/what-is-fan-fiction-and-why-is-it-making-people-nervous-1334505-Mar2014/>

[40] Fan labour is the composite whole of the creative activities which are engaged in by fans, for other fans to enjoy without monetary compensation for such labour. Fans respect their culture based on gift economy and are afraid off copyright infringement and lawsuit claims.
[41] "Fanfiction: A Legal Battle of Creativity", *Reporter Magazine*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://reporter.rit.edu/views/fanfiction-legal-battle-creativity
[42] Nancy Schulz, "Fan Fiction—TV Viewers Have It Their Way", *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fan-Fiction-TV-Viewers-Have-It-Their-Way-1518184

from the same fandom, they also presume foreknowledge of that canon universe upon which their works are based.[43]

A SHORT HISTORY OF FANFICTION

The term "fan fiction" was first used in print in 1939. In this earliest known case of citation, the term is used to demean amateurish science fiction (as opposed to "pro fiction").[44] The term appears also in the 1944 *Fancyclopedia*, which was an encyclopedia of fandom jargon. The definition here refers to it as "fiction about fans, or sometimes about pros, and occasionally bringing in some famous characters from [science fiction] stories". The book mentions that this term is "[s]ometimes improperly used to mean fan science fiction, that is, ordinary fantasy published in a fan magazine".[45]

Before the adoption of copyright began in its modern sense, it was commonplace for contemporary authors to base their characters on others, if not complete plots. As an example, Shakespeare's plays such as Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado About Nothing, Othello, As You Like It and The Winter's Tale were based on fiction by other authors[46].

The modern phenomenon of fanfiction as expressive of fandom and fa-interaction was popularized by the *Star Trek* fandom and the fanzines that they published in the 1960s. The first *Star Trek* fanzine titled *Spockanalia* (1967), contained some fan fiction, the example of which

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[43]Bronwen Thomas, "What Is Fanfiction and Why Are People Saying Such Nice Things about It?", *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* Vol. 3 *(*2011)*: 1–24, https://doi.org/10.5250/storyworlds.3.2011.0001.

[44] Jeff Prucher, ed. *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 57.

[45]John Bristol, *Fancyclopedia*, The Fantasy Foundation, 1944.

[46] Brown, John Russell, and Terence John Bew Spencer. "William Shakespeare." Encyclopædia Britannica. April 19, 2019. Accessed May 12, 2019. https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Shakespeare/Shakespeares-sources.

was followed by many others.[47] Such fanzines were produced through mimeography and offset printing. These were then either mailed to other fans or sold at nominal prices at the science fiction conventions in order to recoup costs. Women dominated the authoring of fanfictions. By 1970, 83% of *Star Trek* fanfiction authors were female, and by 1973 they were 90%.[48] One scholarly opinion states that fanfiction "fill[s] the need of a mostly female audience for fictional narratives that expand the boundary of the official source products offered on the television and movie screen."[49] This also helps explain why yaoi fanfictions are mostly made for women, by women, in the later parts of the dissertation

Since the advent of the World Wide Web, fanfiction gradually became popular and widespread. According to an estimate, fanfiction comprises almost a third of all the content about books on the WWW.[50] In addition to the traditional analog-based fanzines and conventions, group electronic mailing lists via Usenet were established for dissemination and collaboration on fanfiction as well as fan discussions regarding the same. Searchable fan fiction archives started being established online. These online archives were initially non-commercial, hand-tended and specified by fandom/topic. Such archives were upgraded by automated databases which were still non-commercial.[51] In 1998, FanFiction.Net, the not-for-profit site specifically for fanfictions came to be online, which allowed any fan to upload original content in any fandom.[52] Since then, the possibility of self-publishing fanfiction at a common archive with ease of access

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[47] Joan Marie Verba, *Boldly Writing: A Trekker Fan & Zine History, 1967-1987*, (Minnetonka MN: FTL Publications, 2003).

[48] Francesca Coppa, "A Brief History of Media Fandom", in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, eds. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2006), 41–59.

[49] Camille Bacon-Smith, *Science Fiction Culture*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 112–113.

[50] Jason Boog, "Brokeback 33 Percent". *Mediabistro*. Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20130210011535/http://www.mediabistro.com/galleycat/brokeback-33-percent_b7743?c=rss

[51] Coppa, "History of Media Fandom", 43

[52] Maryanne Murray Buechner, "Pop Fiction". *Time Magazine*. Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1001950,00.html

and no insider privileges, and the ability to review stories directly on site popularized quite quickly.[53] There are also cases when works initially were written as fanfictions are published as original, professional literature, which then goes on to spawn their own transmedia fandom (discussed in greater detail later). One popular example of that would be E. L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which was originally written as fanfiction for Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series of books and movies. It played off the source characters of Bella and Edward which were renamed as Anna and Christian so as not to infringe on copyright issues, for the purposes of her novels, which also were adapted to film productions,[54] which is a practice known as 'pulling-to-publish'.[55]

JAPANESE DOUJINSHI

In the 1960s and 1970s, a similar trend appeared in Japan, where independently published manga and novels, known as *doujinshi*, which are based on existing manga, anime, and video game franchises began to be frequently published by manga artists who are fans of the source materials. *Saiyuki* also has many doujinshis, which are again fan translated into English (and other languages and circulated for free).

STATISTICAL DATA INVOLVING DEMOGRAPHICS, SEX, AGE ETC[56].

In a statistical study that was performed in 2010, about 75.2% of FanFiction.Net account holders allowed the website to disclose their location. From there it was found that 57% of such

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[53] Karen Bradley, "Internet lives: Social context and moral domain in adolescent development", *New Directions for Youth Development*, Vol. 108 (2005): 57–76.

[54] Marah Eakin "Holy crow! Fifty Shades of Grey is crazy similar to its Twilight origin story", *The A.V. Club*, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.avclub.com/article/holy-crow-fifty-shades-grey-crazy-similar-its-twil-215185

[55] Joseph Brennan and David Large, "'Let's get a bit of context': Fifty Shades and the phenomenon of 'pulling to publish' in Twilight fan fiction", *Media International Australia*. Vol.152, no. 1 (2014): 27–39.

[56] "Fan Fiction Demographics in 2010: Age, Sex, Country", FFN Research, Accessed May 12, 2019. http://ffnresearch.blogspot.com/2011/03/fan-fiction-demographics-in-2010-age.html.

accounts originated from the United States, followed by 9.2% from the United Kingdom, 5.6% from Canada and 4% from Australia.

A mere 10% of users on FanFiction.Net disclose their sex/gender in their profiles, 78% of whom are women[57] while only 22% identified as male.

Although it is indeed difficult to determine the age of fanfiction readers/writers as it is seldom disclosed in their accounts or bio's, however, most that did disclose their age appear to be teenagers (between the ages of 13 and 17).

GENRES

In addition to the "regular" genres, which for fanfiction are usually determined by the work they're based on, there are a few genres that are specifically associated with fanfictions. Often, they overlap. Such genres include:

- Angst

It is when a narrative has an overall angsty mood, with the pivotal character/characters are either brooding, sad, or in anguish.

- AU or Alternate Universe

Here the characters in the fanfiction are given a backdrop other than their own canonical one.

- Crossover

Fanfictions that bring together characters, items, or set pieces from multiple fandoms.

- Fluff

A story that is designed for the reader and the author to be happy about, and with no other ulterior motive, therefore plot coherence is also less important. nothing else.

- Hurt/comfort

In such stories character(s) are put through traumatizing experience(s) in order to be comforted, generally by the pairing partner.[58] These stories allow for the close examination of such characters' bond(s) with one another, often through offering sexual and bodily comfort.

- Pairing/Shipping

Such stories explore romantic relationship(s) between two or more characters from fandom(s). Some of its subgenres include "Slash/Yaoi" (which focuses on male homosexual pairings), "Femslash/Femmeslash/Yuri" (exclusively female/female), "Crossover Shipping" (focussing on the romance between characters from multiple fandoms) and "Friendshipping" (focussing on platonic relationships).

In a slightly different context, the term "shipping" within the fan community refers to the fact that a fan (often self-admittedly) is heavily invested in the (possibility of) romantic relationship between two characters.

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[58] "A Fanspeak Dictionary", *Fan Fiction Dictionary -- Your Guide to Fanspeak,* Accessed May 12, 2019, http://expressions.populli.net/dictionary.html.

- Smut

Smut is sexually explicit or pornographic writing. This could refer to a small portion of a story, or in its entirety. The terms "lemon" and "lime" are often used to allude to the upcoming sexual scene.

- Songfic

Songfic is a genre of fanfiction which features a fanfiction interspersed with the lyrics of a relevant song.[59] The term made out of portmanteau of the two words "song" and "fiction". Since many lyrics are under copyright, whether or not songfics are a violation of that law is debatable. Fan fiction websites like FanFiction.Net, have barred authors from posting such songfics that contain lyrics outside the public domain.[60]

- Vent

Vent is the kind of fanfiction which is written by an author who is under mental stress, or for his/her therapeutic purposes to calm down after a distressing situation.

FANFICTION RELATED TERMINOLOGY

- A/N

This is an abbreviation of "author's note", generally found before the beginning or the conclusion of a story/chapter. These are used by the author to directly convey to the reader his/her personal details or clarifications regarding the narrative.

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[59] Artur Lugmayr and Cinzia Dal Zotto, *Media Convergence Handbook - Vol. 2: Firms and User Perspectives*, (Springer, 2016), 148.
[60] "Guidelines", *FanFiction.net*, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.fanfiction.net/guidelines/

- Canon

Canon is the original storyline of the source narrative universe, which may include plot, settings, and character developments.[61]

- Disclaimer

Disclaimers are generally part of the author's notes that inform the readers regarding the deserving credit for the original source text[62]. They often contain pseudo-legal language which disavows intention of copyright infringement and alludes to fair use. While such "disclaimers" may be legally ineffective and based on confusions between illegal copyright infringement and unethical plagiarism, it does express the goodwill of the fan authors, that they do not wish to make profit out of their fanfictions, and that they are genuinely indebted to the source for giving them the inspiration to write.[63]

- Fanon

Fanons are ideas (involving either whole interpretation of the canon source, or specific details within it) that hold widespread truth values among fans but are unconfirmed within the canon.

- Headcanon

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[61] "Common Fandom Terms", *Fanfiction Terminology*, Accessed May 12, 2019,
<http://www.angelfire.com/falcon/moonbeam/terms.html.>

[62] "A Fanspeak Dictionary", *Fan Fiction Dictionary -- Your Guide to Fanspeak,* Accessed May 12, 2019,
http://expressions.populli.net/dictionary.html.

[63] "Fan Fiction, Plagiarism, and Copyright," *Dear Author*, March 17, 2012, Accessed May 12, 2019,
<http://dearauthor.com/features/letters-of-opinion/fan-fiction-plagiarism-and-copyright/>

Headcanons are personal, idiosyncratic interpretations of canon text by the fan(s), and may involve re-interpretations of character backstory or interrelationships, done through teasing out of a subtext present in the canon, or by directly contradicting canon. If many fans share such an interpretation, it transforms to fanon.

- SI

  An abbreviation of self-insert, where the fan-author himself might be an OC, taking part in the narrative action of the fanfiction.

ONLINE INTERACTIVITY AND GIFT CULTURE

For fanfictions, reviews can be provided by both anonymous and registered users. Such sites are also programmed to notify authors of new feedbacks, through which readers and authors can communicate directly online.[64] This system helps create bonds between the reader and the author, based on their love for the shared narrative universe, as well as creates a ground for constructive criticism.[65] Sometime, unmoderated review systems can be abused to send flames, spam, or trolling messages. However, fan fiction on the internet allows many young writers access to a wider audience for their literary efforts than it was ever possible before, and this has resulted in improved literacy.[66]

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[64] "Fanfiction.Net Review Form". *Fanfiction.net.* Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.fanfiction.net/secure/review.php?storyid=3058878&chapter=1&storytextid=9301416%27

[65] Jessica Dockter, Delainia Haug, and Cynthia Lewis, "Redefining Rigor: Critical Engagement, Digital Media, and the New English/Language Arts*", Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* Vol. 53 no. 5 (2010): 418–20, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25614575.

[66] Rebecca W. Black, "English-Language Learners, Fan Communities, and 21st-Century Skills", *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 52 (8)*: 688–97, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27654331.

Fandom members make the fandom community a more interactive space[67] through such as gift exchanges or fic exchanges, which takes place through an organized challenge in which the participants create fanfiction based specifically on what prompts are provided to them by other participants, which can be a specific setting, situation, character pairing or more.

LEGAL ISSUES WITH FANFICTIONS

Since fanfiction is a derivative work, it may constitute a copyright violation under the United States copyright law.[68]

Some would argue that fanfiction does not fall under fair use.[69] The 2009 ruling by United States District Court judge Deborah A. Batts which permanently prohibited publication of a book by the Swedish writer Ryan Cassidy in the US, since his protagonist was a 76-year-old version of Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, is an example of upholding this position.[70] Organization for Transformative Works and such fanfiction communities uphold the legality of non-profit fanfiction under the fair use (such as Creative Commons) doctrine since it is a creative and transformative process.[71]

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[67] Chris Dede, and Sasha Barab. "Emerging Technologies for Learning Science: A Time of Rapid Advances", *Journal of Science Education and Technology Vol. 18 no. 4 (*2009)*: 301–4, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20627709.

[68] A.T. Lee, "What's "Derivative Work?"", *A Brief Introduction to Copyright for Fanfiction Authors*, Whoosh! Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.whoosh.org/issue25/lee1a.html#41

[69] Elizabeth Burns and Carlie Webbr, "When Harry Met Bella: Fan fiction is all the rage. But is it plagiarism? Or the perfect thing to encourage young writers?", *School Library Journal*, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6673573.html

[70] Sewell Chan, "Ruling for Salinger, Judge Bans 'Rye' Sequel", *New York Times Cityroom Blogs,* Accessed on May 12, 2019, http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/07/01/judge-rules-for-salinger-in-copyright-suit/?hp

[71] "Frequently Asked Questions – Legal", Organization for Transformative Works, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20091001030602/http:/transformativeworks.org/faq/legal

There has been a lot of push and oull amongst authors regarding their support/negative stance towards fanfiction. Some prominent authors such as J.K. Rowling[72] and Stephenie Meyer[73] have openly supported fanfictions based on their works. The author Orson Scott Card of the *Ender's Game* fame, has shown a considerable change in his attitude to fanfiction. While he had once stated on his website, "to write fiction using my characters is morally identical to moving into my house without invitation and throwing out my family", he later went on to assist fan fiction contests, even arguing that "[e]very piece of fan fiction is an ad for my book. What kind of idiot would I be to want that to disappear?" on the Wall Street Journal.[74]

However, authors such as Anne Rice of *The Vampire Chronicles* fame, have agreesively prevented fanfictions based on their work to be published at FanFiction.Net.[75] Sharon Lee and Steve Miller, of the *Liaden universe* fame, have also strongly opposed fanfiction. Lee went on to say that "Nobody else is going to get it right. This may sound rude and elitist, but honestly, it's not easy for us to get it right sometimes, and we've been living with these characters...for a very long time."[76]

WHAT IS YAOI

Yaoi, also known as boys' love, or BL is a genre of fiction/fictional media that originated in Japan, characterized by its featuring of homoerotic relationships between male characters.[1]

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[72] Darren Waters, "Rowling backs Potter fan fiction", *BBC*, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/3753001.stm

[73] "Twilight Series Fansites", *StephenieMeyer.com*, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20111006021434/http:/stepheniemeyer.com/ts_fansites.html

[74] Aja Romano, "Orson Scott Card's long history of homophobia", *Salon.com,* Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.salon.com/2013/05/07/sci_fi_icon_orson_scott_card_hates_fan_fiction_the_homosexual_agenda_partner/

[75] Waters, "Rowling backs Potter fan fiction".

[76] Sharon Lee, "The second answer", *Sharonleewriter.com,* Accessed May 12, 2019, http://sharonleewriter.com/2013/10/the-second-answer/

Typically created by women authors for a female audience, it is distinct from the homoerotic

fiction/media that is marketed to gay male audiences (such as bara), but yaoi also attracts male

readers[77].

Yaoi can span across a wide range of media, including original manga or doujinshi, anime,

drama CDs, novels (literary or visual), games, and fan production (such as fanfiction of media that

may be originally yaoi or not). Yaoi is defined by its characteristic practice of pairing the male

characters in relationships according to two main roles. One is the seme who is the sexual top or

active pursuer, and other is the uke, who is the sexual bottom or passive pursuant[78] (which is

comparable to the ancient Greek practice of erastes and eromenos, the lover and the beloved in a

male homosexual relationship)[79].

Yaoi's origins come from both fan culture and commercial publishing. According to James

Welker, the term yaoi dates back to doujinshi culture of the late 1970s to the early 1980s. It is

basically a portmanteau of the words "yamanashi ochinashi iminashi" (which in Japanese mean no

climax, no point, no meaning). Yaoi was then a self-deprecating way of referring to amateur fan

works that parodying the mainstream manga and anime by depicting their male characters in vague

or explicitly sexual situations.[80]

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[77] Tuuli Bollmann, "He-romance for her: Yaoi, BL, and shounen-ai", in *Imaginary Japan: Japanese fantasy in popular culture* ed. E. Niskanen, (Turku: International Institute, 2010), 42-46.

[78] "Are You Familiar with "seme" and "uke"? Japanese Universities Give Lessons on Boys' Love!" SoraNews24. June 02, 2015. Accessed May 12, 2019. <https://soranews24.com/2014/07/07/are-you-familiar-with-seme-and-uke-japanese-universities-give-lessons-on-boys-love/>

[79] Nicole Holmen, "Examining Greek Pederastic Relationships", Inquiries Journal, February 01, 2010, Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/175/examining-greek-pederastic-relationships.

[80] James Welker, "A History of Shonen'ai, Yaoi, and Boys Love", in *Boys' love manga and beyond: history, culture, and community in Japan*, University Press of Mississippi, 2015) 42–75.

Yaoi themes like social taboos, rape, violence, humour, etc,[81] are also present in Saiyuki, hence it easily lends itself to such interpretations, and reading of subtexts with such character dynamics on the fore.

Most of the yaoi fans are either teenage girls or young women. In Japan, female fans of yaoi are called fujoshi, referring etymologically to the observation that a woman enjoying fictional gay content is "rotten", therefore too ruined to be married. The term "fujoshi" carried the connotation of being a "fallen woman".[82]The male equivalent of this term is fudanshi. The terms were initially coined by the online bulletin board 2channel in the early 2000s as a derogatory insult. These were later reclaimed as self-descriptive terms.

Shoujo manga stories that featured romances between boys or young men began to be commercially published in Japan from the mid-1970s,[83] and soon enough, they became part of their own genre.[84] However, the spread of yaoi though the Western fan-communities is generally linked to the Western slash fiction community that pre-existed. In the mid-1980s, fan translations of the manga series From Eroica with Love began circulating through the slash community via amateur press associations,[85] which went on to create a "tenuous link" between the genres of slash and yaoi.[86]

[81] Akiko Mizoguchi, "Male-Male Romance by and for Women in Japan: A History and the Subgenres of 'Yaoi' Fictions." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal,* no. 25 (2003): 49–75, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42771903.

[82] Patrick W Galbraith, "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play and Transgressive Intimacy among "Rotten Girls" in Contemporary Japan", *Signs* Vol. 37 no. 1 (2011): 211–232.

[83] James Welker, "Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: "Boys' Love" as Girls' Love in Shôjo Manga", *Signs* Vol. 31 no. 3 (2006.)*:* 841–70, https://doi.org/10.1086/498987.

[84] Kayo Takeuchi, "The Genealogy of Japanese "Shojo Manga" (Girls' Comics) Studies" *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal, no. 38:* 81–112. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42272011.

[85] Matthew Thorn, "Girls and Women Getting Out Of Hand: The Pleasure And Politics Of Japan's Amateur Comics Community", in *Fanning the Flames: Fans and Consumer Culture in Contemporary Japan*, William W. Kelly, ed., (State University of New York Press, 2004), 169-186.

[86] Thorn, "Girls and Women", 172.

Albeit the increasingly overlapping associations between Anglophone online yaoi fandom with that of online slash fandom,[87] slash fiction has generically portrayed adult males, which according to Francesca Coppa are "overdetermined", whereas yaoi follows the aesthetic of the bishounen (or the beautiful boy, often pre-pubescent, and even as adults, connecting to their effeminate beauty or lithe features). This is an interesting commentary on the character of Genjo Sanzo in Saiyuki, whose name can ambiguously mean either a man or a woman, and whose beauty supposedly surpassed the boundary between genders, which is a typical trait of the bishounen (a Japanese term literally meaning "beautiful youth (boy)".[88] Mark McLelland has described this aesthetic to be seen as problematic in recent Western society.[89]

According to Jessica Bauwens-Sugimoto, there exists a tendency in both yaoi and slash fandoms towards the disparaging of the other fandoms' heteronormativity, their potential for subversiveness or even their potential for enjoyment.[90]

SAIYUKI: BRIEF PLOT SYNOPSIS AND CHARACTERIZATION

Saiyuki is a manga series by Kazuya Minekura which started being serialized in from 1997 in the *G-fantasy Magazine* and is still being published, as a sequel, *Saiyuki Reload Blast*, in *Monthly Comic Zero Sum*. It has spawned multiple manga sequels and prequels (such as *Saiyuki Ibun*, *Saiyuki Gaiden*, *Saiyuki Reload*, *Saiyuki Reload Blast*, etc.) anime adaptations, video games

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[87] Sandra Youssef, "Girls who like Boys who like Boys - Ethnography of Online Slash/Yaoi Fans", (B.A.Thesis, Mount Holyoke College, 2004).

[88] Sharalyn Orbaugh and Sandra Buckley ed., *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture*, (Taylor & Francis, (2002), 45–56.

[89] Mark McLelland, "The World of Yaoi: The Internet, Censorship and the Global "Boys' Love" Fandom", *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 2005.

[90] Jessica Bauwens-Sugimoto, "Subverting masculinity, misogyny, and reproductive technology in *SEX PISTOLS*". *Image & Narrative*, Vol. 12 no. 1 (2011), Accessed May 12, 2019, http://www.imageandnarrative.be/index.php/imagenarrative/article/viewFile/123/94

and other media. The story of Saiyuki is loosely based on Wu Cheng'en's Chinese novel *Journey to the West*.

Saiyuki's plot mainly involves four indifferent heroes, the monk Genjyo Sanzo (based on the historical personage of Xuan Zhang), the monkey king Son Goku, the half-demon Sha Gojyo (based on the water demon from the source text), and the man who turned into a demon Cho Hakkai (formerly known as Cho Gonou, based on the gluttonous pig demon of the source text). These unlikely protagonists have received orders by the Sanbutsushin (who are the Three Aspects of the Buddha, relaying Heaven's will) to travel to India to put a stop to the possible resurrection of the Ox-Demon-King, Gyumaoh. Their journey and this story is a bildungsroman, is anything but smooth. They are constantly under attack from antagonists with different skillsets, bad weather, losing their way, internal differences, and tragic personal pasts.

Yaoi in case of *Saiyuki*, which is not a Yaoi text per se, is not really a deconstruction, as the themes of sexuality (often aberrant) have been explored in the series itself. There are many examples to be found across the anime/manga. Gojyo, the playboy of the group is avowedly bisexual as he chases the skirts of Sanzo and Hakkai and even addresses them in female terms when they first meet. Hakkai is known to have shared an incestuous past with his now dead sister, but he had shared a prolonged cohabitation with Gojyo before the beginning of the journey and even throws in the occasional sexual joke. Sanzo, who is too "pretty" to be a man, was mistaken as an adolescent girl while trying to flee the demons. The mountain bandits who caught him, tried to rape him, even when they realized he is a boy, and he had committed his first manslaughter to save himself, which left a deep psychological trauma, often dealt with in the fanfictions. Although so "pretty", he is a man who openly neglects women who try to be too close to him, going to the extent of literally kicking them, which may have been due to him being a monk growing up in an

all-male ensemble for the largest part of his life. Some fanfictions deal with this life in a monastery and how his sexual initiation may have been done by male peers. Although Goku is shown to share the occasional affection with girls his age, that did nothing to belie his sexual orientation. Sanzo is clearly the most important person in his life, whether that be in a sexual or an asexual, platonic sense. The *Saiyuki Gaiden* series takes this exploration to a whole new level when the pre-pubescent Goku calls Sanzo "his Sun". Therefore, there is plenty of room arranged by the mangaka herself to let the fans speculate as much as they want of the sexualities of the four physically attractive protagonists, with their "bishounen" charms, which is the prerequisite of yaoi.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

I begin my discussion on Kazuya Minekura's *Saiyuki* and the dynamics of anglophone yaoi fanfiction by first delineating what a fan is. Fans are basically interpretative audiences that pride themselves regarding their affinity to a particular media, text or activity which in turn lends them their fan status. Then I go on to trace the etymology of the word fan, which may have its roots in the latin words "fanum" (meaning temple/sanctuary) and "fanaticus" (meaning insanely, but divinely inspired).

Then I talk about the nature of fandom, which is basically an interactive community of fans, who indulge in various re-productions and re-interpretations of the media/text/activity that they love -- such as cosplay, fanart, fanfiction, etc. Then I move on to discuss what fanfiction is, which is fiction written by fans for fans based on the particular text/media/activity that they adore. Then I go on to talk about the various sub-genres and tropes of fanfiction, such as OC (which is Other Character, not part of the canon), AU (Alternative Universe, where the characters are given

different background) Lemon, Smut, Yaoi, etc. Yaoi fanfiction is basically the anime/manga counterpart of slash fanfiction (which mostly deal with Western media and texts like the *MCU/Marvel Cinematic Universe*, *Supernatural* or *Harry Potter*) and they are characterized by their depiction of homoerotic relationships between the physically attractive male protagonists.

Then I go on to talk about the plotline of *Saiyuki*, which is a retelling of Wu Cheng'en's 16th C Chinese Novel *Journey to the West*, that is set in a modern-world backdrop. The protagonists here, the monk Xuan Zhang (who is known here as Genjo Sanzo) and his three demon disciples, (Cho Hakkai, Sha Gojyo, and Son Goku, The Monkey King) all drink and smoke and use verbal and physical violence throughout the source text. There are also a lot of taboo experiences that the characters go through, including incest, and the text itself allows space for homoerotic interplay, even if it is not so explicitly mentioned. The yaoi fanfictions and I talk specifically about the anglophone ones, form pairings between the characters and explore the homoerotic dynamics possible between them.

My first chapter deals with yaoi fanfiction based on *Saiyuki*, in the light of reader response theories.

- First, there is the discussion of Wolfgang Iser's theory of "gaps" and "indeterminacies" which allow the space for fanfictions to take place within the extant narrative universe, where readers/fan-authors re-interpret the schemata offered by the source text to create their own meanings.
- Then there is Hans Robert Jauss's theory of the "Horizon of Expectations" which allows space for the wish-fulfilment of the present-day readers, with the help of the Kuhnian paradigm shift that gives them the benefits of the network, online communities and digital production of freely circulated texts.

- Hans Georg Gadamer's phenomenological notion of the "fusion of horizons" is helpful to explain how the extant narrative universe of the source text and the alternative possibilities of fanfiction may exist at the same time.

- David Bleich's idea of reader-response makes "felt-sense" a key factor in textual interpretations and favours "subjective paradigm" and "sharing emotional responses" which are important for the production of fanfics.

- Jonathan Culler's ideas of "reading as a woman" allows for the feminist possibilities inherent in yaoi fanfiction, as they are mostly written by female fan-authors, for a largely female audience by bringing in the subjective experience of a woman, autobiographical criticism of texts and toppling of social norms, such as reading neutrally, as a man would, into the production and reception of fanfictions.

- Stanley Fish's notion of the "interpretive communities" helps to explain the popularity of Saiyuki yaoi fanfictions for its fanbase, as such fantasies can bring together people from diverse social, racial and economic strata, based on their shared cultural competence.

The second chapter deals with fanfiction in relation to Pierre Bourdieu's idea of the field, habitus, distinction, and taste. In his book named Distinction, Bourdieu talks about "tastes" in art, food and music as an outcome to social class. Now if we relate this situation to virtual fan communities, which are like societies in their own regard, the members of it form tastes towards "yaoi" acts, and fanfictions are written and received, with the full knowledge that the deviant sexual acts which are not yet "normalized" in real-life society, have their own audience that derived aesthetic pleasure out of it, in the virtual society of yaoi aficionados.

The idea of "habitus", which derives from ingrained skills, habits, and dispositions that come to define us over time, can be relatable to fanfiction as well. A fan-author has the kinds of

"naturalized" "feel for the game" that are required to produce yaoi fanfictions, through the imaginative possibilities that allow for such alternative retellings. Habitus here refers to the competence that the fan-authors have, which is required to imagine alternative possibilities that make way for the yaoi dynamics between the characters, thus creating yaoi fanfictions.

Bourdieu's idea of the "field" can be thought of as the microfoundations of culture that go into the making of an artwork. The fan community for Saiyuki yaoi fanfictions is one such field. A fan can be part of multiple overlapping fields, just as that fan might be a fan of multiple media/texts and can write fan-fictions based on them. Such fields can be shared by multitudes of fans across Earth, depending upon their preferences and sensibilities.

The third chapter deals with fanfiction as adaptation, borrowing largely from Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation as well as Siobhan O'Flynn's idea of fanfiction as an adaptation in the era of Web 2.0, and monetization of online content, amongst other things such as transmedia adaptation, where Saiyuki fanfictions are prose adaptations of visual texts. There is also Henry Jenkins's idea of the "participatory culture" and how it ties up with transmedia storytelling, and "textual poaching" through fanfictions.

There is also Francesca Coppa's views on Slash fiction as a feminist enterprise and how it holds true for yaoi as well. For Coppa, bodies are the true protagonists for yaoi fanfictions, because the physical touches and sexual explorations have their own semiotics and form a different sort of language for emotional communication, which is otherwise impossible for the "manly" characters trapped by the norms of patriarchy.

There is a conclusive section on scopes for future research, where I outline what I could not do in this research, and what projects may be undertaken in the future to make up for that research gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Below is a non-exhaustive list of the key texts that helped me formulate my arguments during the scope of this dissertation.

Bennett, Lucy. "Researching online fandom". *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 4 (2013): 129-134.

The author, who is a faculty of the Cardiff Metropolitan University and an editorial assistant for the journal *Social Semiotics*, talks in this conversational essay about her foray into the research of Online Fandom, as one of the very first researchers in the field. This essay helps me understand the necessity of researching online fandoms and the ways of approaching this highly communicative and interactive virtual space, and what it reveals about the user-practices and tendencies, when addressed in the academic vein.

Black, Rebecca W. "English-Language Learners, Fan Communities, and 21st-Century Skills",

Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 52 (8): 688–97.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/27654331.

The author, a faculty of The University of California, explains in this paper how the 21st Century digital literacy skills help English-language learners better develop their language proficiency with the help of fan-communities which practice fandom activities like fanfiction writing. This case is true for both adolescent and adult literacy building. This clearly formulated scholarly article helps me delineate with respect to my research, how fanfiction writing has reached the popularity that it now enjoys and the artistic and linguistic skills employed by the fan-writers in the writing of fiction involving pre-created characters, which is quite difficult, because the characters cannot possibly behave out of character, lest it attracts negative reviews from other fan-community members.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Randal Johnson. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016.

Bourdieu continues to have a massive influence on social theory, which is proven through the continued relevance of his works that have been translated in over twenty languages and are required reading across the disciplines of social sciences and humanities, including cultural studies, anthropology, and education. Bourdieu's theory of the "field" has hitherto been only considered under "analog" circumstances, where the socio-cultural background of the subjects is known in "reality". It was quite a thrilling experience to realize that this theory could be applied to "virtual" societies and their practices, namely that of the female fans indulging in the "yaoi" fanfiction of their favourite fandoms.

Cavicchi, Daniel. "Fandom Before 'Fan': Shaping the History of Enthusiastic Audiences". *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History,* Vol. 6, no. 1 *(*2014*):* 52–72. https://doi.org/10.5325/reception.6.1.0052.

The author, a researcher affiliated to the Penn State University, through his spatiotemporally widespread research, gives a very grounded and scholarly account of the how and when of the emergence of the fan-communities and putting the phenomenal rise of the enthusiastic audience and the power they hold over popular media in a historical perspective. This article enriches my research by providing a timeline of such fan-based systematic activities before and after the rise of the online social communities like Facebook and Twitter. Fanfiction is inherently based on the audience reception, and it helps me historicise the tendency of "fandom".

Dede, Chris and Sasha Barab. "Emerging Technologies for Learning Science: A Time of Rapid Advances". *Journal of Science Education and Technology Vol. 18 no. 4 (*2009*):* 301–4. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20627709.

The authors, researchers affiliated to Harvard University and Indiana University respectively, try to explain, among other things, how the emerging technologies which create virtual interactive platforms for youngsters in the Web 2.0, (fanfiction being one of such interactive communities) helps to rapidly advance the pedagogical sciences, theories and praxis taken together. The article is lucid and intended for a scholarly audience, in its representation of how interactive communities and the feeling of camaraderie take forward the learning experience in a mutually beneficial and satisfactory atmosphere for both the instructor or the guide and the learners. It helps enrich my work in laying down the technical foundations and human impact of the new interactive genre of literature, namely fanfiction.

Dockter, Jessica, Delainia Haug, and Cynthia Lewis. "Redefining Rigor: Critical   Engagement,

   Digital Media, and the New English/Language Arts.*" Journal of Adolescent & Adult

   Literacy 53 Vol. 5 (2010)*: 418–20. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25614575.

The authors, who respectively are a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota, a high school teacher at Roosevelt High School, Minneapolis and a faculty member of the University of Minnesota use this article to explain the slowly emerging but deeply rooted interrelations between the learning and teaching practices of the English Language and the digital media, fanfiction being one such medium which facilitates critical engagement with the learning procedure, if implemented properly. This lucid article does well to explicate a case study of a high school classroom where such new digital media which are already popularized amongst the students is used to facilitate both language learning and cooperative mindset amongst the learners and teachers alike. This article helps me explain the behavioural tendencies of many fanfiction writers and why the genre of fanfiction draws them to such an imagined community of writers across the world with shared ideas and choices.

Galbraith, Patrick W. "Fujoshi: Fantasy Play and Transgressive Intimacy among "Rotten Girls"

in Contemporary Japan". *Signs* Vol. 37 no. 1 (2011): 211–232.

The author, who is a researcher affiliated to the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies in the University of Tokyo, uses the article to explicate the "fujoshi" (roughly translated as rotten girl) culture in Japan, and how it subverts vale judgments and heteronormative conceptions of gender-roles and politics, sexual preference and fantasies and power-play both in terms of imaginative freedom and consumerism. This lucid and scholarly article helped me locate the "yaoi" or BL culture within the cultural milieu of its domestic and vernacular strata and how it creates a certain camaraderie between women as both producer and consumer of the yaoi version of male homosexuality, based on a transgressive sexual perversion that terms such aficionados as "rotten girls".

Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.

The famed literary critic and theorist Linda Hutcheon holds the rank of University Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto. In her book titled A Theory of adaptation, she explores the continuous development of creative adaptation, and argues that the practice of adapting is central to the story-telling imagination. In this avant-garde book Hutcheon develops her theory of adaptation through analyzing a range of media, from film and opera, to video games, pop music and theme parks, investigating the breadth, scope and creative possibilities within each such medium. Hutcheon appropriates quotes from other well-known critics, such as John North and Walter Benjamin, suiting their views on images, words and the art of storytelling to her own purpose of validating the value of adaptations, not as derivatives of 'original' texts, but palimpsestuous takes that reveal new, varied ways of thinking. For Hutcheon,

as it is for Aristotle, mimesis is not mere copying, but pleasurable representation in tune with human nature, which derives its pleasure of ritualistic repetition, along with the piquancy of surprise. An adaptation has its own aura, its own polyphonic presence in ever-flowing, ever-melting, ever-meandering, horizon of expectations. Adaptation is repetition without reflection, a form of intertextuality, a work that is second without being secondary. Every adapter is first an interpreter then a creator, one who takes possession of another's story yet makes it his/her own, through his/her own sense and sensibilities. It is a proof of the dynamicity that makes a work enduring across ages, through variations of media and reception, as is seen by the fanfiction still flourishing long after the initial serialized publication of Kazuya Minekura's manga, *Saiyuki*. An adaptation facilitates the use of memory and involvement on part of the audience who take part in the unveiling of the riddle, finding out the similarities as well as dissimilarities between the text and the palimpsest. Adaptations allow people to tell, show, or interact with stories. Major shifts in story's context, either in time or in space, can change how the transposed story is interpreted, both ideologically and literally. This idea coheres well with the kind of metafictional writing fanfiction is. An interesting observation tells us how stories get retold in different ways in new material and cultural environment, like genes which adapt to situations trough mutations, which are passed on through generations. And the fittest do more than mere surviving, they flourish. The book, though meant mostly for scholarly studies, is in fact so lucidly and interestingly (yet professionally and unbiasedly) conceived that it would prove to be a good read for any cultural media enthusiast. The book, published by the prestigious Routledge Press, is abundantly sourced, with ample pictorial evidences.

Iser, Wolfgang. "The reading process: A phenomenological approach". *New Literary*

    History Vol. 3, no. 2 (1972): 279-299.

This classic essay advocating reader response criticism, since its initial publication in 1972 by the prestigious Johns Hopkins Press, has enjoyed lasting fame and relevance. This essay's succinct examination of the relationship between reading and interpretation, has helped me approach the problem of writing/reading fanfiction as an activity of reader-response. The gaps between the reader and the text are what give rise to the possibilities of fanfiction. explored. The universality of textual expectation and surprise lend their credence in the realm of fanfictions as well.

Jenkins, Henry, Ravi Puroshotma, Katherine Clinton, Margaret Weigel & Alice J. Robison,

"Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture". (The MIT Press, 2005).

A self-proclaimed acafan, Jenkins has come a long way from this initial white paper presented at the MIT Conference in 2005 on digital participation. His theories of "textual poaching", "participatory culture" and "convergence culture" are integral parts of the basic paradigms supporting the interactive dialogue between fans and the media that they consume, as well as a ground of exchange between the scholars and the subjects (namely fans). Here is where Jenkins's own status as a fan comes in handy, as he uses autoethnography to validate his claims. The pervasive participatory culture of fandom, is held together by shared knowledge, which is furthermore enabled by the technological leap made possible through web2.0 applications.

Mizoguchi, Akiko. "Male-Male Romance by and for Women in Japan: A History and the

Subgenres of 'Yaoi' Fictions." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal,* no. 25 (2003): 49–75.

http://www.jstor.org/stable/42771903.

The author, who is a researcher affiliated to the Josai University Educational Corporation, throughout this lucid and scholarly essay chalks out a history of the emergence of yaoi fiction, and its various subgenres, which expresses an academic and critical perspective on the male-male

romance by and for Women in Japan. As for my research, this article helped me put into perspective the popular practice of yaoi-based character relationships in case of non-yaoi text-based fanfictions, and the psychosocial tendencies that give rise to such phenomenon.

Murphy, David. "A Guide to Manga and Anime for Those Who Want to Know What All the Fuss is About". *Reading Time.* Vol.1. no. 53: 15-16.

This precise and clearly article, written by a freelance magazine contributor, meant for beginners in the Japan-born neo-global phenomena of Manga and Anime, does a very good job in outlining the basics of the art, history, production, audience, fanbase, characteristics of the two inter-related media. The article, copyrighted by the Children's Book Council of Australia, is full of colourful illustrations, which is indeed an important way of catching notice of the page-flippers. Interesting for both children and their parents alike, Murphy's article begins with a casual title, making the difficult oriental medium of manga and anime seem as easygoing and entertaining as possible. He starts off the discussion with the popularity of the media, and the fields where they are now located -- blooming in the western culture in the last decade, much to the dismay of many parents, teachers and librarians. He then gives a running list of the most popular of their kind -- *Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh, Cowboy Bebop. Appleseed. The Guyver, One Piece*, and goes on to explain the reason behind this sudden boom. For him, it is because it is an easily accessible, rich story telling technique that covers a broad range of genres. Moving on to a brief history of the medium, he explains that originally manga was translated as "whimsical pictures", and was created first by the artist Hokusai in the 18th Century, through woodblock prints on handmade papers. By the 1930s, the art of creating manga had evolved, so did the story-telling technique. The works of Walt Disney were being imported in Japan, and the artists found that the simple, fluid strokes of the Disney characters went well with their art style, and were quick to incorporate it into their own oeuvre. As the Japanese

were interested in visual art-books (comics) without regard to any particular age-group, the post-World War II Japan saw a large influx of American servicemen and businessmen who brought large amounts of American 'Comic Books'. Japanese experts on Manga, acknowledge much of their early understanding of English to reading these comics. The cinematographic techniques of the western comic books gave rise to the lack of descriptive text, highly stylized facial expressions, cutesy style, but the big eyes small mouth combination was a direct descendent of the Disney art-style. Many titles were produced which ranged from teenage love stories, to action adventures, to adult dramas, so there was something for everyone. Then essay then deals with the rise of video techniques and computer games which incorporated such art-style, which came to be known as anime movies and anime games. Many of the Studio Ghibli Movies were based on western literature. The article is a popular magazine article, but proved important for my discussion of the fanfiction based on Kazuya Minekura's popular seinen manga *Saiyuki*. The medium though popular among all ages, in India, as well as other parts of the world, is relatively culturally alien, as it is propagated through English or other regional translations, and are often misunderstood as cartoons, which are essentially caricatural. This article proves to be very useful for building the basics of knowledge about manga and anime. The author is rarely subjective, is professional in his treatment of the subject. It belongs to the interdisciplinary field of the cross-section between visual arts and literature, meant to appeal to scholar and commoner alike. Ample presence of sources and examples make the work even better graspable.

Rish, Ryan M and Joshua Caton. "Building Fantasy Worlds Together with Collaborative

Writing: Creative, Social, and Pedagogic Challenges". *The English Journal,* Vol. 100 no.

5 (2011)*:* 21–28. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23047798.

The authors, a PhD candidate at Ohio University's School of Teaching and an English and drama teacher at the Licking Valley School in Newark, Ohio have written this essay to analyze a classroom scenario involving teaching narrativization to learners with the help of the interactive and intercommunicative nature of fanfictions. The creation of such a world of interlinked stories

involving the possible and alternative scenarios of the superheroes known to them, with the guidance of the teacher, helps students develop more detailed, sophisticated and in-depth writing through collaboration of styles and ideas. This scholarly article helps me address the interactive nature of fanfiction involving narrativization, stylizing, sourcing and editing by the beta readers. Reviews and suggestions also help build longer fanfictions, where the real-life audience themselves become meta-writers, writing on a writing that is based on an earlier piece of source writing/art.

Takeuchi, Kayo. "The Genealogy of Japanese "Shojo Manga" (Girls' Comics) Studies". *U.S.-*

Japan Women's Journal, no. 38: 81–112. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42772011.

The author, who is a researcher affiliated to the Josai University Educational Corporation, throughout this lucid and scholarly essay chalks out a genealogy of Japanese "Shojo-Manga" (roughly translated as Girls' Comics) Studies, and its interrelations to a subgenre, namely the yaoi or the Boys' Love manga. This essay helps me situate the phenomenon of Slash or Yaoi fanfiction as part of the tendencies and aesthetics of the yaoi manga, and the treatment of the male protagonists of the non-yaoi manga under consideration to fit the typifications of the yaoi manga protagonists.

Thomas, Bronwen. "What Is Fanfiction and Why Are People Saying Such Nice Things about

It?". *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* Vol. 3 *(*2011*):* 1–24.

https://doi.org/10.5250/storyworlds.3.2011.0001.

The author, who is a researcher at the University of Nebraska Press, writes this essay for the scholarly laymen who have no idea about the now booming online literary phenomenon known as fanfiction. This playful study lays down a definitive account of the phenomenon called

fanfiction, explicating its theory and praxis, users, motives and methods. This essay is very good as a primer and helped me define the otherwise slippery terminology of fanfiction.

Thorne, Steven L. and Jonathon Reinhardt. "'Bridging Activities, New Media Literacies, and Advanced Foreign Language Proficiency". *CALICO Journal* Vol. 25 no. 3 (2008)*:* 558–72. http://www.jstor.org/stable/calicojournal.25.3.558.

The authors, researchers affiliated to the Penn State University and the University of Arizona respectively, explicate the use of the pedagogical model called "bridging activities" to trigger advanced foreign language proficiency with the help of the new media literacies that are already extant amongst the adolescent and adult learners. This scholarly essay does well to explain how the rise of fan-communities, fandom and fanfiction in the Web 2.0 and how it helps build and sustain foreign language proficiency amongst the learners. Since the fandom addressed to in my research is Japanese in its origin, this article may help address the issue of the enthusiastic use of vernacular Japanese terms in the otherwise English-language narrative and the habit of the fiction writers to gloss them for the benefit of fellow fans, which creates a mutually beneficial language learning atmosphere.

Welker, James. "Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: "Boys' Love" as Girls' Love in Shôjo Manga", *Signs* Vol. 31 no. 3 (2006.)*:* 841–70, https://doi.org/10.1086/498987.

The author, who is a faculty of the Department Of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Illinois, puts the 1970's born and still continuing phenomenon of Yaoi or Shounen-ai, (also known as BL or Boys Love) in a historical perspective as a subgenre of the already extant Shojo Manga, which can be roughly translated as girl's comics in Japan. He historicizes the uprising of the gender-transcending figure of the bishounen or the beautiful boy, and discusses its connections with gender politics and feminism, in the light of the solidarity it

creates between women, as both producers and consumers. The article is lucid and intended for a

scholarly audience who are already familiar with the narrative artforms such as anime and

manga, which are typical to Japan. The facts and logicality of this article helps me enrich my

own work which tries to elucidate why yaoi has become such a popular fanfiction genre with

respect to the anime which in themselves have little content to logicize such relationships

between the male characters.

FANFICTION AS AN ACTIVITY OF READER-RESPONSE

The act of writing fanfiction can be seen to be in tune with the phenomenological approach towards a text as performed by readers, through reader-response, where readers are not solely passive recipients of the author's intended meaning, rather they themselves are active producers of their own meaning deriving out of the source text. Fanfiction, as we have discussed before, is a kind of narrative built on an extant narrative universe, along with plot, backdrops and characters or it could take this extant universe out for a spin, with giving the extant characters new names and backgrounds, and even a different narrative universe, known as AU or Alternative Universe.

Unlike the assumption made by the theoretician E.D. Hirsch, which implies that "hermeneutics must stress a reconstruction of the author's aims and attitudes in order to evolve guides and norms for constructing of his text"(cf. 153)[91], the practice of writing fanfiction derives heavily out of the theoretical bases provided by Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish, as the latter has argued that readers "write" the texts that they read, "the readers' cognitive activities supply everything."[92]

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WOLFGANG ISER:

Iser is less mystical and more scientific than the Geneva School of Phenomenological Criticism. According to David Lodge, Iser sees "literary meaning as a convergence of text and reader".[93] Lodge then goes on to say that "reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated" (188)[94] through uniquely valuable, conscious activity on part of the readers, which

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[91] Elizabeth Freund, *Return of Reader*, Routledge, 2013.
[92] Corina Puş caş , "The Text and Its Reading-W. Iser's Model", *Philologia*. Diacronia.ro. Studia Universitatis Petru Maior.
[93] Nigel Wood and David Lodge, *Modern criticism and theory*, Routledge, 2014, 188
[94] Lodge, *Modern criticism and theory*, 188

impulse is precisely the driving force for writing fanfictions. Iser's discussion of indeterminacy – gaps or blanks in the text stimulate the readers to construct meanings that would not otherwise come into existence. For Iser, the act of reading is constituted by the interaction between the different structures of the literary works and recipients. His model, therefore, consists of three layers. First is the text with its schemata (interspersed layers of determinacy and indeterminacy) which allows for the readers' production of meaning, then there is the reading process, which subjects the text to a logic of consistency of its own by making sense of these consistent and inconsistent parts off the narrative, the third are the conditions inherent to the text that make way for the active interaction between the text and the reader. The reader, through the second layer, processes the text through a "concretization", to create a "cohesive aesthetic object".[95]

For Iser, a literary work lies halfway between the text and its realization by readers. It consists of two poles, one is the artistic, another aesthetic. The first is the text as conceived of by the author, the second is the literary work as realized by the reader. Therefore, for a "text" to transform into a "literary work", the intervention of the reader is of foremost priority. Fanfiction here has a very contingent position. It holds claim to both of these poles, as it is an original and artistic enterprise, because the story written by the fan-author, despite borrowed elements, is a story of his/her own. Also, it is created out of the "concretization" of the source narrative and can bring about the same activity in the readers who read it. There is also the practice of fanfictions being inspired by or based off of other fanfictions.

Also, for Iser, a literary work is more than the authorial text, it takes on life only when it is read. Therefore, the conception and production of fanfiction may bring the concerned text to life

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[95] Puş caş , "The Text and Its Reading."

and continue its relevance through an active afterlife, maintained by the fan-authors. The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, but this interaction remains virtual. Such a virtual nature makes a work dynamic and calls forth different effects, such dynamicity, in turn, is realized through fanfictions. The patterns and the schemas of the source text are related using the various perspectives offered by the text. The realization of the source text through reading (in this case also viewing) is dependent on the reader's own, uniquely personal disposition, helped by the different patterns embedded in the text. Therefore, it is completely logical that some readers may choose to find homoerotic undertones in the source narratives, and decide to emphasize upon them and bring them to light in their own fanfictions. Fanfiction is then a part of the reading process, which imparts life to the source text, rather makes it more vibrant through the imaginative possibilities explored by the fan-authors. Such convergences, for Iser, cannot be "precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified with the reality of the text or the individual disposition of the reader"[96]

The various possibilities explored in the fanfictions derive from the inherently dynamic nature of readerly comprehension and the aesthetic response elicited by the readers. These, through the creative intervention of the fans, take on the concrete form of another kind of fictional enterprise, that is the fanfiction. According to Laurence Sterne, a literary text is an arena, where the author and the reader (in this case the fan-authors and their subsequent readers) participate in a game of imagination, the framework of which is laid by the source text.[97] Giving out the whole story would result in boredom for the reader. Therefore, it is imperative for the author of the source text, that s/he creates a text that allows the space for the readers' imagination to work things out

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[96] Wolfgang Iser, "The reading process: A phenomenological approach", *New Literary History* Vol. 3, no. 2 (1972), 279
[97] Iser, "The reading process", 279

for himself/herself, for reading can only become pleasurable when it is active and creative. Therein lies the "pleasure factor" of fanfictions, which involves creation in the physical sense of writing and publishing it for other readers online, within an active framework of feedback and participation. The "unwritten" part of a text stimulates a reader's creative participation, and this is the space where fanfictions take place.

For Iser, the sentences within a text (which may refer in this case to events through visual frames, sound effects, and dialogues, since the source text is anime/manga) establish various perspectives but are merely components, not the sum total of the text. The sentences take on their real meaningfulness through the interaction of their correlatives. The connection between the correlatives are the points at which the reader is able to "climb aboard" the text. The given perspectives are accepted but made to interact, in a way that is reflective of the readers' personal sensibilities, which take a physical form in case of fanfictions.

The sentence (or an anime/manga frame) does not mean one thing. The interactions between the sentences fulfil their common aim. The sentences then foreshadow something to come – the structure of which is indicated by their content. This indication is supplanted by an expectation, or to use Edmund Husserl's term, "pre-intention"[98] of what is to come, events, which have been indicated by the structure of the sentences. Yet, the interaction between the correlatives constantly modify the expectations instead of fulfilling them. Fanfictions work towards such "wish-fulfillment" amongst the fans.

Each intentional sentence correlative opens up a particular horizon, which is modified by succeeding sentences. This subsequent modification tends to have a retrospective effect on what

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[98] Cf. Iser, "The reading process", 282

has been read. Fanfictions derive from re-reading the source text. The fan-authors reread it to situate their narratives and to contextualize them within the source narrative universe, whereas fanfiction readers re-read the source text through the retellings that the fanfictions involve. As with any text, whatever that is read is memorized and foreshortened. If it is evoked again, set against a different background, previously unforeseeable connections may be developed, which are physically materialized through fanfiction. The evolved memory is never the same as before, therefore, memory and perception are never identical. Establishment of interrelations between past, present, and future makes a text expose its multiplicity of connections – which are products of the readers' mind working on the raw material of the text. This is important in case of the fanfictions, which situate themselves within the narrative universe, sometimes specifying the before-and-after continuity of events, "arcs" to be precise.

The reading process, for Iser, is a creative process far beyond the mere perception of a text. A reader may realize a situation far removed from his own reality and different readers are differently affected by the "reality" of a text. Therefore, the activity of reading is a kaleidoscope of perspectives, pre-intentions, and recollections.

Every sentence in a text (or every frame in a manga or anime) contains a preview of the next and forms a kind of viewfinder for what is to come, and this, in turn, changes the "preview" and so becomes a "viewfinder" for what has been read (or seen). Reading and interpretation do not have a smooth flow, rather are subjected to constant shifts in anticipation and retrospection. This process of active participation by the reader which happens through anticipation (for what is yet to happen) and retrospection (looking back to what has already happened) transforms the text into a "lived" experience for the reader; this process of continual modification is akin to the way in which we gather experience in life, looking both backwards and forwards.

The text may reflect the reader's disposition, again creates a reality different from the reader's (since, for Iser, readers are bored by the texts which present us with the things that they know perfectly well themselves). The author, through the narrative techniques that are at his/her disposal, can influence the readers, but s/he will never set the full picture before his/her reader. If s/he does, s/he risks losing his/her reader. This is true for the source text, which allows for alternative retellings.

Now, this takes an interesting twist in case of Saiyuki yaoi fanfictions. There is the M/M relationship, Mature Content (NC-17, X, M, etc. depending on the parameter used) disclaimer, so if a reader chooses to read a text, s/he knows what content to expect. The pairing between characters is also expressly mentioned in the beginning, and the Primary Character Relationship, Settings, etc. filters available at Fanfiction.net or Archive of our own, let readers navigate through their favourite pairings, also the summary tells readers what to expect throughout the storyline. So the readers have all the co-ordinates at hand, and they read through the text just to see how the story unfolds. This, in turn, ties up with the Iserian idea that "[t]he "stars" in a literary text are fixed, the lines that join them are variable."[99]

The reader/fan-fiction author is forced to reveal aspects of himself/herself in order to realize a reality different from his/her own. Therefore, the fan-fiction authors sometimes reveal biographical details and the specific reasons for their choosing a particular dynamic between the character or a particular setting, and experiences of his/her own reality go on to make parts of that unfamiliar reality of fanfiction, which is further removed from the source text it is based upon.

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[99] Cf. Iser, "The reading process", 287

Texts are full of twists and turns. Even in the simplest story, there must be some blockage, if only for the reason that no story can be told in its entirety. It is only through inevitable omissions, that a tale finds its dynamism. Whenever the flow is interrupted, the opportunity arises for "filling in the gaps" left by a text itself.

According to Iser, any literary work does not pinpoint any particular referential reality, as a document does, with one intended meaning; rather it is a mesh full of gaps, with patterns to guide the reader's imagination. The "blanks" or "indeterminacies" must be supplanted by the reader, through the construction of personal narratives based on the source narrative. Such gaps also initiate a sort of virtual communication between the author and the reader, as we would further discuss in the section on fan service. For the writers of fanfiction, it is almost instantaneous and far more concrete. Such communication happens in the comments section, where there may be suggestions for improvement or alternative scenarios.

Such relative indeterminacies, whether in the form of unwritten text or dialogues, whether intended or unintended by the author, privileges the reader to exercise his/her own creative imagination, as a co-author. So, a fanfiction writer is first a reader who also writes what s/he has read, and in the manner s/he has decided to read the source text. Each such reader would fill in the gaps in uniquely personal ways, and Iser notices that this process is more dependent on the nature of the source text. The more fragmentary the nature of the text, the more the reader's involvement. Following that cue, the episodic nature of *Saiyuki* as either an anime or manga makes the readers explore the possibilities of there being more than what is being offered by the media at the face value. *Saiyuki* is the story of a journey, rather a bildungsroman involving the personal growth of each of the four lead characters, that spans several years, whether in narrative time or in the time of storytelling (The first *Saiyuki* manga appeared in the late '90s and is still ongoing, rather on a

hiatus). In each episode, we are given glimpses from the journey and not a daily chronicle. So much may come to pass in the time in-between, as some fan-authors expressed their desire to see the sexy and single male protagonists enjoying more frequent stops at hot-springs, flaunting their naked selves and having more action with each other in the inns where they rest during their voyage.[100] Therefore, fanfiction appropriates these otherwise inaccessible spaces (the spatial changes and temporal duration between the episodic narration) to create narratives that are set within the canon or the author's own narrative universe, by situating themselves within these heavily contingent spaces, fraught with immense possibilities, all at the discretion of the fan-author's interpretative imagination.

These gaps have a different effect on the process of anticipation and retrospection, and thus on the "gestalt" (unified pattern) of the virtual dimension, for they may be filled in different ways, thereby excluding the various other possibilities. No reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way. The reading process is selective and the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations. A second reading often produces a different impression from the first. This may be due to the reader's change of circumstances, still, the text must allow this variation. Therefore, following that logic, the reading process is selective, and potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations.

Picturing something presupposes its absence, as one cannot imagine something he has already seen. As Iser would put it, "[t]he written part of the text gives us the knowledge, but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things." (288). [101]This works in favour of the prose text of the yaoi fanfictions, as the readers may already know how the characters look

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[100] "Zang Fu Theory Chapter 3, a Saiyuki Fanfic", FanFiction.Net, Accessed May 11, 2019, https://www.fanfiction.net/s/4274180/3/Zang-Fu-Theory.
[101] Iser, "The reading process", 282

like, but the prose descriptions give them a leeway of imagining them getting involved with each other in a way that the readers would prefer.

These "gaps" tempt the readers to supply their own details while also pushing them to continue their reading. This is why, despite almost full decades of hiatus and interspersed releases, *Saiyuki* still enjoys lasting popularity (mention exact timeframe between *Reload Gunlock* and *Blast*) among the fans. Through such inevitable omissions the story becomes dynamic, more so through the active participation of the fan-authors and readers of fanfiction, who do not simply explore the narrative universe as supplanted by the source text, but also the possibilities of AU or Alternative Universe, OC or Other Characters as well as Character Swaps, where two characters often magically, swap their respective personalities.

Whenever "consistent reading suggests itself… illusion takes over". Illusion, says Northrop Frye, is "fixed or definable, and reality is at best understood as its negation". Without the formation of illusions, the unfamiliar world of the text would remain unfamiliar.[102] The source text becomes accessible and readable, through the different levels of the consistency of the illusion, which are then realized through fanfictions. This process is virtually hermeneutic. The text creates sudden expectations, which the readers then project upon it to narrow down the polysemantic possibilities to one single interpretation, which is in keeping with the aroused expectation deriving an individual configurative meaning.[103] Therefore, each of the multiple fanfictions which may be based on a particular event/scenario in the source text, narrow down on any one take, that is typical to that fan-author's interpretative notions.

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[102] Iser, "The reading process", 289
[103] Lodge, *Modern criticism and theory*, 215

The consistent pattern that the reader is seeking depends upon his own nature, yet he encounters other impulses that seem alien to him, which may resist integration to that pattern. Thus, the semantic possibilities are far reacher than the individual configurative meanings formed while reading. This helps to explain why multiple fan-authors conceive of different ideas and combine them differently with the source narrative universe to create starkly different fan-frictions. The reader or the fan author has to constantly lift the restrictions that s/he places on the "meaning" of the text. While building illusions, s/he oscillates between observation and participation, leaping into the unfamiliar without being bound by it. If a balance between the possibilities and the realities of the source text is achieved, the reader will no longer involve himself/herself and observe, or be engaged in the process of establishing and disrupting consistency. As Iser would put it, "[t]he inherent non-achievement of balance is a pre-requisite for the very dynamism of the operation". [104]Starting out with expectations and shattering of them is integral to aesthetic experience. This aesthetic experience allows the fan-authors to create embodiments of the expectations that remained unfulfilled in their readings of the source narrative.

The satisfaction of expectations for the readers is an ambiguous feeling because pleasure mainly derives from surprises, which are betrayal off expectations. Surprise and frustration create a paradox, which may be deemed as fertile ground for the creation of fanfiction. Frustration, through blocking or checking the activity of continuous reading, provides new orientations for it. On the other hand, surprise causes a cessation of the exploration, creating avenues for intense contemplation and scrutiny. Later such surprises are connected to the past drift of experience, and the enjoyment becomes intense. This is true for fanfictions, which are based on elements of relationship dynamics already embedded within the source text, which come to the fore through

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[104] Iser, "The reading process", 292

this paradoxical interplay of frustration (wanting to see more of it) and surprise (seeing an unexpected glimpse).

For Iser, "[a]ny aesthetic experience tends to exhibit a continuous interplay between deductive and inductive operation".[105] This interplay, in turn, gives rise to the configurative meaning of the text, while also formulating the unformulated and representing the text's "intention". Fanfiction, as an aesthetic experience, tries to remain true to this "intention", while also reinterpreting the configurative meaning to negotiate the surprises and frustrations encountered by that particular fan-author. Such an act of recreation is not smooth. Rather, this dynamic process relies upon interruptions and negotiations based on opposite actions, such as retrospection/anticipation, decision/change, expectations/non-fulfilment, acceptance/rejection, etc.

This process, when used in case of creating and processing fanfictions, involves defamiliarization techniques (such as character-swap, memory-loss, trauma, vulnerability that is uncharacteristic to a particular character) and use of conceit, (such as extended metaphor, alternative situations, etc.). These stances taken by the fan-author creates tension and makes the readers reconsider the data that they thought they recognized to be perfectly straightforward. Therefore, the interplay of illusion-forming and illusion-breaking makes reading and writing fanfictions an interactive and re-creative process.

The efficacy of a literary text entails from apparent evocation and subsequent negation of the familiar, it prepares the readers for a re-orientation through which they gather new experiences. The readers' pre conception are continually overtaken so that the text becomes "present" as their

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[105] Iser, "The reading process", 292

own ideas recede into the "past". They are then open to the immediate experiences of the text, which was not possible as long as their preconceptions were their "present".

According to Iser, there are three important aspects which form the basis of a reader's relationship with the text. The first of this is the dual process of anticipation and retrospection. Then there is the consequent unfolding of a text like a living event. Finally, there is a resultant impression of life-likeness. Any "living-event" must remain open. This obliges the reader in his search for consistency so that he can closeups situation and comprehend them. But this consistency-building in it self is a living process, which constantly forces one to take a selective decision. These decisions, later impart life to the possibilities that they have hitherto excluded. These exclusions later disrupt the established consistency of the source text. Thus, the reader or the fan-author becomes entangled in the fanfiction of his/her own making, which is a creative "gestalt" of the source text. The process of absorbing the unfamiliar is labelled as the identification of the reader with what s/he reads. "Identification" is a familiar ground upon which we are able to experience the unfamiliar. Identification is not an aim to be reached but a stratagem employed by the author to stimulate attitudes in the reader.

Reading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception. Then, according to Iser, the reader becomes "occupied" by the thoughts of the author. Text and reader no longer confront each other as "object" and "subject", but instead, the "division" takes place within the reader himself as he takes as a theme for himself something he is not, provided his own personality can adopt to it, which is again physically materialized through fanfiction.

Reading has a dialectical need to decipher gives us the chance to formulate our own deciphering capacity. We bring to the fore and element of our being of which are not directly concerned. Reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated. The primary

usefulness of fanfiction is to help make conscious certain aspects of the text which would otherwise remain in the subconscious. Having a fanfiction community also satisfies our desire to talk about what we have read and how we have read it.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HANS ROBERT JAUSS:

Jauss borrows the term "paradigm" from the scientific philosophy of T.S. Kuhn, to provide a historical vantage point to reception-aesthetics, with the commingling of two seeming oppositions, Russian Formalism, which put emphasis on form and thinks of literature as a scientific enterprise, and the theories of social sciences, which involve indeterminacies as an obvious human condition. According to Kuhn, science does not undergo linear progression through the gradual accumulation of new knowledge, rather goes through periodic changes, through "paradigm shifts".[106] Paradigm is a specified theoretical orientation, guided by particular epistemology, research methodology, the scientific community and its mindset in a particular historical vantage point. A paradigm creates the framework for theoretical orientation and the questions to be asked. Also, a paradigm will reflect the consensus view of a particular scientific community, whether consciously articulated or subconsciously assumed, which concept ties up with the communitarian culture of fanfiction, where the members of a particular fan community held together by the shared love of the members towards a particular media, assume that it is possible and probable for their shared universe to have alternative narratives told and propagated by the members, without going into the legalities of copyright claim.

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[106] S. R. Coleman and Rebecca Salamon, "Kuhn's" Structure of Scientific Revolutions" in the Psychological Journal Literature, 1969-1983: A Descriptive Study", *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* (1988), 415-445.

For Jauss, "paradigm" is a kind of scientific skeleton or basis, which is formed of the hypotheses and ideas that function in a particular timeframe.[107] If someone, in accordance with Einstein's theory of time as a dimension, travels across a time-portal from the time-frame 1980 to 1780, s/he will find himself or herself in a different paradigm. Objective knowledge is not simply a progressive accumulation of facts, therefore older paradigms are replaced by new ones.

Now let us look at this logical framework in the light of *Saiyuki* and related fanfiction. The fetishization of the male bodies as part of the practice of Slash writing by female fan-authors (which we will discuss in greater detail later) is something that could not be conceived in the days when *Hsi-yu-chi* was conceived by Wu Cheng'en. But the practice of fan writing did exist. The Buddhist novel entitled *Tower of Myriad Mirrors*, written and published almost a century later, is a sort of dream narrative that does not form part of the main narrative, and conceived by another buddhist monk (name) writing in a style similar to Wu Cheng'en but with unique variations that set it apart, based on the extant framework of *Journey to The West*, that has already gained popularity, to get its didactic points across. Kazuya Minekura's *Saiyuki* is set in the present era, although fraught with magic realism, where a pet dragon transforms into a jeep. The lead character of Genjo Sanzo, the stand-in for the legendary Xuan Zhang, is a monk, yet is quite a patron of commodity fetishism. He is clad in low-waist denim and leather tights smoke Marlboro cigarettes and shoot out of a Smith and Wesson gun, without much thought about the age-old values of peace and non-violence as inherent to the Buddhist tradition. Therefore, as the paradigms change, the markers of meaning and the process of meaning-making also changes. The reason why *Saiyuki* enjoys such lasting popularity among the fans is because of its relatability, how the characters who

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[107] J. E Elliott, "Paradigms retained: Cultural theory, critical practice", *Comparative Literature* 50, no. 1 (1998): 57-91.

are burdened with sins past make way through life without being bogged down, a motif that transcends space and time, yet is delivered through in the sexualized package of four handsome young men clad in the clothes of present day and living in a world that the fans too can inhabit. They too face the problems of broken showers and faulty TV-sets in broken down motels, as any of us would on a long journey in a faraway place. This change in paradigm also allows the author as well as fans to explore the otherwise taboo issues of homoeroticism through fan-service (discussed in a later chapter) and fan-fiction.

The term "horizon of expectations",[108] (50)which was coined by Jauss in connection to the term "fusion of horizons" as theorized by the phenomological philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, has been used to denote the plethora of factors that limit the judgment, evaluation and interpretation of literary texts in a particular age – whether regarding genre or the extent of being literary. Going by that line, fanfiction has also carved its own niche amongst the reading public in this day and age of internet accessibility. They are literary works in their own regard, have spawned their own audience who themselves are authors. It has spawned an active "participatory culture", in Henry Jenkins' term (discussed in greater detail later), where anyone can read or write while appropriating the source narrative in any way possible, without the censorship of value-judgment, whether based on form or content. While some may face some forms of deriding by fellow community members, they do receive accolades and support as well. For Jauss, the original horizon of expectations does not establish the final meaning of a text. As discussed before, it is always open to newer interpretations, which fuse with the older horizons to create a meandering, ever-flowing river of readerly expectations. Fanfictions form a part of such horizons. Jauss also

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[108] Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, (Routledge, 2016), 50.

recognizes that an author may choose to go beyond the predispositions of his/her day and emerge as an avant-garde. But for Minekura and her fellow fan-authors, it is more important to be in tune with their existing and growing audience and to cater to their horizons of expectations through activities like fan-service. Yet the story-telling technique of many fanfictions are indeed avant-garde in nature, they are well-wrought forms of art on their own. Oftentimes, the AU storylines, with the characters given alternate names, life-histories, background or even species, could easily be read as fantasy stories without any connection to the source narrative from which they are inspired.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HANS-GEORG GADAMER:

The phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer expresses the necessity of considering both whole and individual parts of any text while processing its meaning. The parts make the whole, and the whole is made of the parts, thereby they are inextricably interdependent. In the case of fanfictions, if we consider the narrative universe of the source text as the "whole", fanfictions depend on the congruency of that universe for them to make sense. On the other hand, expectations of individual fans, which can be considered as "parts" go on to influence the source narrative through fan-service made by the author. Gadamer's term, "fusion of horizons", may help to explain the various possibilities of genre inherent in the source narrative and the creative imagination of the fan-authors, which may give rise to parallel storylines, Alternate Universe setups, homoerotic explorations etc., all of which have their own vested interests in catering to the demands and desires to the various niches of audience groups and their preferences, while retaining the same ground, which is their shared love for *Saiyuki*. *Saiyuki*, which is an action/fantasy anime/manga is often reinterpreted by fan-authors in their own tales to belong to the sci-fi or dystopic genre, among many others.

Interpretation of any text, for Gadamer, is bound by the cultural tradition from which it derives its origin. Now, this is an interesting point of reference for *Saiyuki* fanfiction. *Saiyuki* is originally a Japanese media text, whether in manga or anime form, its form-based aesthetics is typical to its Japanese origin. The language used in the text is Japanese, the fictional world inside the text shares the Japanese sensibilities, the Buddhist philosophy inherent in this spiritually invested text is "Zen", which is a Japanese variant of Buddhism. *Saiyuki,* as discussed before, draws its roots from an old Chinese Buddhist novel, and has its remnants in characterization, the plot as well as spirituality. Now, the fanfiction texts under consideration are anglophone, and the fanbase of *Saiyuki* is largely Anglophone too. These anglophone fan-authors write fanfictions in English, which reaches out to even the non-anglophone fanbase that has some knowledge of English, receiving wide circulation, almost as wide as the source narrative. Now, true to Gadamer's notion, where the authenticity of the source cultural tradition is a must in case of interpretation, the canon-based fanfictions of *Saiyuki* also exoticize the anglophone narratives with sprinklings of Japanese words, customs, behavioral patterns, cultural practices, etc. While this seems exotic with respect to English usage, the fans try their best to be as authentic as the source narrative, which is Japanese. Some even feature haikus, which is a uniquely Japanese genre of poetry. Some of these fanfictions could easily have been conceived by Minekura herself, so close they are to her own narrative stylistics, even if not the exact authorial intention.

According to the Gadamerian notion, any interpreter possesses preconceived prejudices and knowledge, to which new knowledge is added, and they both influence each other while the reader interprets any text. Horizon, then, is the reader's perspective, and this is true in the case of fan-authors. The fan-authors are restricted to imagine within the boundaries of the source text, along with their own limits of perception of it, yet, they may also see beyond it, which opens the

possibility of "fusion of horizons", going by Gadamer's logic. The source narrative influences various fan-narratives, fan-narratives influence each other, and they sometime come back to influence the source narrative as well. For Gadamer, as with Iser, any text only achieves significance once it is read. Even fanfictions are written for the fan-community, with an "implied reader" in mind, one which shares the tastes, sensibilities and is a fellow appreciator of the source text. The implied reader is expected to even share the prejudices of the fan-author, which in this case is finding homoerotic undertones in the source text, and bringing them to the fore in a more clear and engaging manner through the creation of alternative narratives., which may be based on the canon, or AU or maybe just a drabble or headcanon.

Fanfictions may also spawn fanfictions of their own, fellow fans writing tributes to the fanfictions that appealed to them, or adding prequels or sequels to that fan-conceived narrative, giving it a sense of continuity that transcends the sensibilities of a single author and his/her intentions. The interpreter or the fan-author then becomes interpreted, by another fan-author, while all of them belong to the same cultural tradition. Therein lies the Gadamerian notion of the mutual influence of texts and interpretation/interpreters.

Connecting to the notion of "Interpretive Communities" by Stanley Fish (as discussed later on), groups of interpreters possessing a special bent towards a specific genre or style, create a cluster of texts, which are interconnected through the reading act of the interpreters. Going by that cue, fanfiction is less about trying to figure out the "authorial intention", rather more about using the act of writing as an interpretation, that makes use of the tools available by the source author and to mould them according to the sensibilities of the fan-authors. Through the fanfiction, the fan-author's own intentions are made as unambiguous and graspable as possible, often through the prefatory notes to each chapter and through the discussions in the comments section with the fellow

readers. Yaoi fanfiction is marked by its clarity of situations, and more than often by deviant sexual explorations, the presence of which is almost absent or very subtle in the source texts. This bent or "prejudice" becomes a key to keeping together the readerly community, the members of which form the cultural tradition of yaoi fanfiction associated with the source text. There is also the case of the temporal distance between the source authors and the readers/fan-authors. The latter takes the liberty of basing their interpretation on their own temporal experiences; the tastes, demands, and sensibilities of their own time, rather than that of the source author's. This is equally true for Kazuya Minekura's *Saiyuki* itself, which is a re-interpretation of the much older *Journey to The West* or *Hsi-yu-chi*, which sets it in a present-day world, that is relatable to the present-day readers and their aspirations. The trend of yaoi fanfiction, as we shall argue in later stages, with validation from the argument by Francesca Coppa, is a harkening back to the ideas of liberation and struggle attached to same-sex love in present day world.

For Gadamer, "[s]ince we are now concerned not with individuality and what it thinks but with the truth of what it said, a text is not … a mere expression of … life, but is taken seriously in its claim to truth"[109] Unlike the interpreter in Gadamer's idea of the "fusion of horizons", the fan-writer does not lay claim to any truth. Rather, s/he makes an honest admission of all of his/her possible faults in writing the fanfiction in the prefatory note. The only claim made is that the fanfiction is solely a product of the fan-author's imaginative faculties, and the only purpose of that is a communitarian sense of enjoyment. There is no money to be made and therein lies the gift-culture embedded in fanfiction. The fan-author denies any claim to the characterization by the source author or the other related intellectual properties, hence there is no dispute with copyright-

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[109] Hans-Georg Gadamer, T*ruth and Method,* Trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2004.

claims of the source author. The work belongs in the public domain, accessible to all, as it should be with communitarian and "carnivalesque" performative activities.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DAVID BLEICH:

Based on Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory, theorists like Purves, Beach, and Marshall have delineated a set of "specific response processes" by the reader, as follows.[110]

- **Engaging:**

  This involves emotional involvement, empathy, and identification with the characrters of the text. The massively popular categories of yaoi fanfiction, such as angst, hurt/comfort or even non-con or rape, brings out and exorcises the hidden fantasies and unsolved emotional issues that the fan-authors or readers may have.

- **Constructing:**

  This involves the creation of alternative worlds, reconceptualizing the existing sets of characters, plot-settings, and events. In terms of fanfiction, we see such associations in the cases of crossovers (characters from different narrative universes coming together), AU (Alternative Universe, maybe set in a different genre altogether), Character switching (where the power dynamics between the characters change).

- **Imaging:**

  This involves the creation of visual images. Fanfictions often times attempt to recreate the intense visual spaces as offered by manga and anime through their detailed description of spaces, people and events.

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[110] Richard Beach, *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories, NCTE Teacher's Introduction Series*, (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English Press, 1993), 61

- **Connecting:**

This involves relating autobiographical experiences with the text. This is especially true for the yaoi fanfictions, which are relatable to the female audience (as explained in the section on yaoi)

The reader-response critic David Bleich is more concerned with the reader's engagement in the text, which is key to fanfiction, as it is a practical demonstration of that engagement. According to him, the readers' engagement with any text is displayed across a plethora of "subjective" experiences, such as "emotional reactions and associations, involvement, empathy, identification" etc.[111] A heightened sense of such emotions as well as the detachment that makes them aware of such "felt-sense" create a certain subjective-objective duality in the readers, which make their presence felt in case of fanfiction. The fan-authors, as well as the readers of fan-fiction, are able to relate with the plight or happiness of the characters involved, while also making them play the roles that they would like them to play, like a puppeteer, who is aware of his art/craft. Bleich criticizes the dismissal of the readers' personal responses in the guise of "affective fallacy" in the New Critical tradition, in his book *Readings*. Rather, in his book *Subjective Criticism*, he has argued in favour of the "subjective paradigm" which leads to a better cognitive understanding on part of the readers. This concept is communitarian in the sense that public sharing of "emotional responses"[112] helps collective negotiation of agreed upon meanings in reader networks, where there exists an inner dialogue of the readers with the concerned texts, while "creating a dialectical tension between private experience and shared public

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[111] Beach, *Introduction to Reader-Response Theories,* 62

[112] David Bleich, *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism*. (Urbana: NCTE, 1975), 67

knowledge", which may even lead to change in perceptions, for example getting acculturated to the yaoi community.[113]

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JONATHAN CULLER:

In his book *On Deconstruction*, in one of the initial chapters entitled "Reading as A Woman"[114] Jonathan Culler has described three different ways of reading that female readers practice, which is important in the discussion of *Saiyuki*'s yaoi fanfiction because it is a kind of gynocriticism. While *Saiyuki* is written by a female author with her female audience in mind, the yaoi fangirls or the fujoshis (rotten girls, further explained in the relevant section) as they are called, are generally female. Yaoi fanfiction is mainly written by women for the entertainment of fellow female readers. Hence the praxis of yaoi fanfiction writing/reading depends a lot on the reading practices a woman may have.

The first observation is that women are subjective readers, in that they extend their life experiences into the literary works that they read. This is especially true for yaoi fanfictions as the women can relate to the powerplay between the two male characters because they roleplay according to accepted gender roles. Women can relate to the "uke" or the effeminate male partner in the relationship and giving leeway to their erotic fantasies of deviant sexual forms without the actual engagement of a female body (which might render them vulnerable to the bodily threats which become more relatable, whereas in case of a male body it is more defamiliarized), helps build a subjective-objective dialectic once again. Also, it helps the fan-author rid of her personal trauma through a cathartic method

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[113] Beach, *Introduction to Reader-Response Theories,* 62

[114] Jonathan Culler, "Reading as A Woman", *On deconstruction: Theory and criticism after structuralism*, (Routledge, 2008), 43-63

of writing, in presence of fellow female fans, while also enjoying the anonymity of her position, where she would not directly be subjected to any judgment, rather would receive emotional support from her reading audience. Sometimes these cathartic tendencies are clearly mentioned in the prefatory notes to a fanfiction chapter, popularly known as a "rant" where the fan-author talks about her life-problems, and expresses her gratitude to both the source text and the fanfiction community for lending her the emotional support required to go on with her mostly unwelcome daily experiences.

For Culler, this means that women do not treat literature as a neutral, "normal" ground as the prevalent, masculinist bias for objectivity would have us believe. Therefore, themes that are taboo in dominant modes of literature may find their expression in yaoi fanfictions, where men are just as vulnerable and powerless, despite having superhuman abilities, they are prey to their emotions and lust.

The second observation is that society has conditioned the masculinist way of reading as a norm, and women are also subjected to that notion. To be able to read as a woman would be to reclaim the authority that they only can have, on any text, depending upon how they choose to interpret a text, in a way that empowers the non-dominant discourse. The interpretation of a seinen action anime/manga series in the garb of yaoi is such an interpretation.

The third observation attempts to deconstruct the binaries of masculinist and feminist reading. The dominant, objective discourses involved in interpreting a text is considered to be the former while the double position of being and reading as a woman through subjective experiences is the latter. It is this position that gives rise to the complex

gendered dialectics in yaoi fanfiction, as is later discussed, with validations from the critic Francesca Coppa.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STANLEY FISH:

The notion of "interpretive community" as formed by Stanley Fish, takes into consideration the social aspect of the response that any fictional narrative elicits. This is especially true in case of fanfiction, because its authorship and readership both depend on the online fanbase of a particular media-artform, made of anonymous netizens brought together by their love for that particular text. For Fish, the meanings elicited by the transaction between a text and a reader is "a function of the interpretive strategies and conventions adopted by readers as members of a particular interpretive community."[115] Therefore, members of the Saiyuki yaoi anglophone fanfiction base, the fan-authors, and the readers share specific strategies and conventions that are valued by that fanbase. As for yaoi fan-authors and readers of Saiyuki fanfiction, they prefer certain non-canon yet mutually agreed upon homoerotic relationships between the male protagonists, whether in the form of established relationship or an unexpected turn of events, while incorporating their own erotic fantasies, which also have their sets of existing patterns, norms and rules, as explained in the glossary at the introduction to this dissertation. Such "strategies", according to Fish, "are finally not our own but have their source in a publicly available system of intelligibility. Insofar as the system (in this case yaoi) constrains us, it also fashions us, furnishing us with categories of understanding, with which we in turn fashion the entities to which we can point."[116]

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[115] Beach, *Introduction to Reader-Response Theories,* 114

[116] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980), 332

The source text for fanfictions, then, is not static, objective or given. Meaning-makings in yaoi fanfictions has the possibility to be diversely dynamic based on the reading strategies of the fan-authors and readers, based on their preferred contexts, which in turn is socially induced. The internet and all of these fan communities form a virtual society, full of these pockets of microcosms made of specific fanbases, who have their specific sets of expectations from the fanfictions that come out of reader-text transactions. They read the source text in certain ways, reading between the lines, imagining sub-plots and bending the inter-character dynamics in such ways that conform to the yaoi tradition and also to the expectation of the fans. So, unlike Iser's idea of adaptation as "thwarting of expectations", it is also in a way catering to the extant expectations, and this catering to the already-formed and slowly growing audience gives fanfiction its reason to exist. Because fanfiction is made by fans, for fans, with no profit other than appreciation and satisfaction involved. The membership in the interpretive community of yaoi fans makes the fan-authors and readers accustomed to responding to the certain "symbolic meanings" which may lie hidden in the microstructure of the source text.[117] However, Fish's notion of the interpretive community has been criticized for its nebulous nature by critics like Culler, Dasenbrock, Freund and more, who argue that if the text/reader transaction happens solely due to the sets of institutional strategies, then both reader and the text disappear.[118] I do not mean to argue that fanfiction as an enterprise is completely dependent on these norms or strategies. Each individual fan-author possesses a unique set of stylistics, command over the English language (since the fanfictions under consideration are Anglophone in nature) as well as the bilingual proficiency to keep the Japanese vibe of the source text intact in the fanfiction

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[117] Beach, *Introduction to Reader-Response Theories,* 114
[118] Beach, *Introduction to Reader-Response Theories,* 115

narratives. The response to the source text then is as diverse in number as there are different readers, even if they take into consideration the permutations and combinations of the existing tropes of yaoi fiction.

A JOURNEY ACROSS THE CULTURAL FIELD: RELATING BOURDIEU'S IDEA OF "THE FIELD OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION", "HABITUS" AND "DISTINCTION" TO ANGLOPHONE YAOI FANFICTION BASED ON KAZUYA MINEKURA'S *SAIYUKI*

A multi-level model of culture, consisting of the structural and dynamic interplay between the various levels, spanning from the individual to the organizational to the national on to the global has now become more accepted, which is in sharp contrast to the initial anthropological conception(s) of culture(s) as static and bounded.[119]Instead of the former idea of culture as a singular codified entity to be studied in isolation of its time and space, in the globalized world of today, "culture" and "Culture" are both to be decomposed into sets of social, material and semiotic practices.[120] In this way, we may be able to interpret and understand the ongoing processes through which "voices develop, acquire validation and are retransmitted"[121] even after the production of the artifact is done and over with. In case of *Saiyuki*, the process of fanfiction writing and reading has been concurrent with its anime and manga production, as well as ongoing even when the anime/manga has been in hiatus, to fill in the spaces of narrative expectations in the existing audience.

Cultural production, unlike, although linked with the means and modes of the material production and various capitals, has an afterlife, either in consecration, or populism, or in an in-between, contingent state within the two extremities of the vast spectrum. Fanfiction operates in

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[119] Miriam Erez and Efrat Gati, "A Dynamic, Multi-Level Model of Culture: From the Micro Level of the Individual to the Macro Level of a Global Culture," A*PPLIED PSYCHOLOGY: AN INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, Vol.* 53 no. 4: 583-98.

[120] "What is Culture?", Accessed March 05,2018, https://www.sccs.swarthmore.edu/users/00/ckenned1/ culture.html.

[121] Daniel Little, "Understanding Society: Bourdieu's "field"", January 01, 1970, Accessed March 05, 2018, https://understandingsociety.blogspot.in/2011/02/bourdieus-field.html?m=1

this contingent space, as a communitarian enterprise, which helps in maintaining the relevance of an artwork, as well as forms its afterlife through reception and multiplied production of related fictional narratives.

No cultural activity can be thought of as a monolith, and is, therefore, influenced by and influences relevant social processes that are spatio-temporally contextual, or even as Hans-Georg Gadamer would have it, across the "Horizon of Expectations".[122] Then, to trace out the development of any artwork in the course of Kuhnian paradigm-shifts[123] as well as changing modes of reception and interpretation, it is useful to have a certain interlinking framework of contexts and co-texts, something akin to Bourdieu's idea of the "field", which can be thought of as the microfoundations of culture that go into the making of an artwork.

In his 1993 collection of essays, named *The Field of Cultural Production*, especially in the title chapter, Pierre Bourdieu outlines his idea of the cultural field, which may be applied to a wide range of cultural phenomena including literature and art. This methodology of sociological and cultural interpretation relates to the production of yaoi fanfiction related to *Saiyuki*, where there are sometimes massive changes in plot, characterization, stylistics and more, depending upon the cultural fields where the fan-authors and their sensibilities operate.

The key to Bourdieu's approach is "relationality", which signifies that cultural production – as both process and product, is located within "a space of positions and position takings" – creating a set of relations, which are neither purely subjective/internal, as relating to the textual

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[122] Jeff Malpas, "Hans-Georg Gadamer.", Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, March 03, 2003, Accessed March 05, 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/.

[123] John Naughton, "Thomas Kuhn: the man who changed the way the world looked at science", *The Observer,* August 18, 2012, Accessed March 05, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/aug/19/thomas-kuhn-structure-scientific-revolutions.

dynamics and the author's ideas as well as intentionality nor entirely objective/external to the realm of the artwork itself, as with co-texts and contexts, such as contemporary social conditions, intertextuality, spatio-temporal considerations etc. It is a complex mesh of all such variables that go into the making of the specific cultural artifact. This position taking, by either the author or the reader or even the fan-author and the readers of fanfiction, (which can also change on the basis of spatio-temporal reception), does not happen in isolation. Rather, it happens due to a partly invisible heuristic and hermeneutic training, which occurs both at home and at the educational institutions amongst others, which creates the disctinctive training in "taste", required for the appreciation of "high" or "low" art. This training, related to social distinction, is a key determinant of cultural competence, both in terms of production and reception of an artwork. As Bourdieu notes, "The literary or artistic field is a field of forces, but it is also a field of struggles tending to transform or conserve this field of forces"[124]. This idea also relates to the struggle regarding the copyright issue of preserving intellectual ownership od fictional ideas and the love-hate relationship that the authors of the source texts tend to have with the fan-authors and their works.

According to Bourdieu, social life is an intimate admixture of objective and subjective factors, structure and agency – and no work, whether it is of art, literature, philosophy or science, can be understood purely in reference to itself. It is, therefore, necessary to situate that particular work of art in relation to other points of reference in meaning, practice, theory and specific intellectual pursuit. Meaning(s) of a specific work of art tends to change across space and time, as its points of reference keep on shifting – as in the case of adaptations. Adaptations have distinctly different intentionality from the source and use different storytelling techniques to reach out to a

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[124] Pierre Bourdieu and Randal Johnson, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 30

different audience with different expectations. As Wolfgang Iser would have it, adaptations work at "thwarting of expectations", (cite) instead of always being faithful to the source, which may impact the audience in a positive or a negative manner, depending on their perception of the source text that is adapted, and the forms used in adapting it.

Now, coming to the work under consideration, the source text of *Saiyuki,* when conceived, had a specific set of co-ordinates that situated it in those cultural, linguistic, artistic and social fields as determined by the author Kazuya Minekura's intentionality and specific position takings, as a mangaka writing an elaborate tale of spiritual insight that is very East-Asian in its worldview, while garbed in the tradition of the "Wild West" that is very topical to the Americas, while also making it so contemporary that it can be related to by the present day readers, who then become fan-authors spinning fanfictions as tributes to the source text.

Kazuya Minekura's *Saiyuki*, just like Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West*, the 16th C. Chinese novel that it is based on, has at its core the trickster character of the Monkey King.[125] Sometimes the fanfictions also weave together the three pillars of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism that are supposed to hold the idea of the Chinese spirituality together,[126] that is there in both of these source texts. However, the specific position takings in these two source texts, based on authorial intent, relationality, and spatio-temporal contexts have changed in their reinterpretation through fanfiction. Countless adaptations, including fanfictions, whether asian or otherwise, have contributed to the continued value and popularity granted to the 16th C. source-artwork named Hsi-yu-Chi by Wu Cheng'en, which was intended to be religious, moralistic,

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[125] Wu Cheng'en and Anthony C. Yu, *The Journey to the West*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

[126] Yao Xinzhong and Yanxia Zhao, *Chinese Religion: A Contextual Approach*, (London: Continuum, 2010).

didactic and niche-specific, due to the source-text's colourful depiction of a humorous and picaresque bildungsroman, with a universal and timeless appeal. Therefore, in this case, we may also treat Minekura's *Saiyuki* to be a fan-tribute to the earlier work, a fanfiction in its own regard, take place in palimpsestuous manners, which are not merely intertextual, as each adaptation or fanfiction to be specific, echoes its relation to the source in the light of the fan-author's contemporary socio-cultural context and often audience demands as well.

The source text of the fanfictions under consideration, Kazuya Minekura's anime/manga adaptation of *Journey to the West* has a manyfold significance, in terms of situating itself in the cultural field and position-taking. It makes use of the particular hermeneutic framework of manga/anime[127] that is deeply embedded in the classical Japanese art and tradition of woodblock prints used to convey historical, religious and parodic ideas from the times of Hokusai.[128] It also echoes the Western traditions of comics and graphic storytelling and the Disney-influenced art-style and technique in visualizing and animation. This adaptation also reverberates of the worldwide popularity and niche-audience-culture that has created an "imagined community" of anime/manga aficionados versed in the specific stylistics related to the meaning-making of that specific genre, related to Bourdieu's idea of the inculcation of "taste" and "distinction"[129]. Now select members of that "imagined community" who are versed in the necessary "taste" and

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[127] Marwah Zagzoug, "The History of Anime and Manga", Accessed March 05, 2018, https://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/evans/HIS135/Events/Anime62/Anime62.html.

[128] "HOKUSAI'S MANGA | Princeton University Library", Princeton University, Accessed March   05, 2018, http://library.princeton.edu/news/2014-12-16/hokusai%E2%80%99s-manga.

[129] Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Nice, and Tony Bennett, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2015).

"distinction" to make meaning out of the source text, become fan-authors, as they put to words their personal adaptations of the source-narrative in the form of fanfiction.

Once a literary novel, *Journey to the West*, through its anime/manga adaptation *Saiyuki*, has now become both a pop-culture artifact. Apart from this, it is also treated as a work of artistic value that enjoys literary consecration in the now emerging field of New Media Studies across universities around the world. The new position-taking of the mangaka and the related work of art redefines itself with respect to that of the source, as the allegorical scenario is made more human, emotionally charged and relatable. The mythical China of 16th Century finds its urban-mythical "Western" counterpart in this 21st Century Journey to the West, with its palimpsestuous echoes of the American West's depictions in Hollywood films, with its guns and goons and gore. It also reverberates of the "western influence" through globalization, capitalism and commodity fetishism, as the modern day Xuan Zhang wears designer clothes, denim and shoes under his monk's robes, smokes Marlboro cigarettes and shoots silver holy bullets out of a Smith and Wesson pistol. This anachronistic spin-off of the historically probable helps for today's generation to relate more to the archaic notion of the spiritual journey allegorized through the physical – the universality of bildungsroman made more appealing to the young-adult and adult audience worldwide. With its array of violence, both in terms of language and action, depth of plot and characterization, *Saiyuki* holds its seinen and shounen audience in thrall, almost two decades after its first publication, situating itself within the complex spectra between the two extremities of the consecrated high-art and the populist low-art.

Fanfiction also bridges this binary between high and low artforms, through the communitarian participation, and each narrative has its own stylistic devices, depending on the fan-author. Sometimes it is highly stylized and erudite like a Victorian fiction, written in

impeccable English, while some are written more colloquially, with a contemporary and localized flavour of American English. Some even feature haikus in them. Some have rich imagistic storytelling, some are purely for erotic purposes, and also unapologetically so, termed as porn-fic.

Anglophone fanfictions defamiliarize the usual gestures performed by manga volumes or anime episodes through the creation of a visual imagery, which, despite being wholly dependent on written (usually prose) texts, attempt to capture the style, theme, plot, characterization and at times even the language of the source text, whether in Japanese (in Romaji or the romanised text,) or through English translation provided in footnotes to the fanfiction. Now, in the case of Anglophone fanfictions, the case of translation is complicated. In a lot of circumstances, the usage of popular Japanese words in Romaji expects that kind of cultural and linguistic literacy from fellow readers, and sometimes elaborate use of Japanese mythographic and cultural scenarios embedded in the plot have their elaborate explanation in English.[130] The source text of *Saiyuki* is Japanese, and the fanfictions try to retain that vibe while changing the medium of comprehension, which is Anglophone. Through its highly imagistic and descriptive language, it tries to replicate the visual narrative of anime/manga, with the language English acting as a participatory lubricant between fellow fans who maybe from different places, races, and gender, but are similar in their love for *Saiyuki* and their proficiency of English. Fanfiction, as a significant new genre with its complete dependence on community-participation in terms of both authorship and readership, challenges the literary and high-aesthetic view of Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West*, and alongside its source text, namely *Saiyuki,* spins a more mass-oriented product of media-based fantasy-entertainment.

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[130] Steven L Thorne and Jonathon Reinhardt, "'Bridging Activities, New Media Literacies, and Advanced Foreign Language Proficiency," *CALICO Journal* Vol. 25 no. 3 (2008)*:* 558–72, http://www.jstor.org/stable/calicojournal.25.3.558

Writing fanfiction is a transparent process in which the agency of the re-creators (fan-authors) is revealed (by their own intention) and posited contextually along the lines of the audience (fanfiction readers). Fanfiction writers for *Saiyuki* are hugely Anglophone, (as the statistics from fanfiction.net and other Anglophone fanfiction archives exclusively dedicated to *Saiyuki* will show), and they often provide their own twists to the art forms of the source narrative, through stylizations native to the English language, creating a hybrid culmination of influence of the "oriental" art form upon the "Occidental" aesthetics and seems to be a cursor of the changing sociocultural and global life, particularly in the urban centers. Fanfictions mostly circulate through the internet, which requires certain economic freedom and digital literacy to be part of the select group of fans who indulge in fanfiction, whether through reading or writing. Also, there is no money to be made, so there is also the necessity of a certain amount of free time. This fits in with Bourdieu's premise of cultural competence being available to a select few. Now looking at the worldwide number of anglophone *Saiyuki* Fanfictions, (7.3k total fannfictions in fanfiction..net, of which 5.2 k are in English)[131] along with those written in otherthe number of such chosen few is quite huge.

As Bourdieu sees it, "the 'eye' is a product of history reproduced by education"[132]; hence a reader must possess enough cultural competence in both the fields – the detached contemplation required to 'read' manga or watch anime, and to be able to find that feeling while reading a prose narrative in the Anglophone vernacular that s/he is already familiar with, through a kind of self-induced defamiliarization (which is also eased by the stylistics of the fanfiction involved) to be

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[131] "Saiyuki FanFiction Archive | FanFiction", FanFiction.net, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://www.fanfiction.net/anime/Saiyuki/?&srt=1&lan=1&r=103

[132] Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Nice, and Tony Bennett, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste.*, (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2015), 3

closer to the cultural strata offered by the source narrative of *Saiyuki.* The reader, therefore, must make efforts to make both the conventions intelligible. Herein lies the ambivalent stance of Anglophone fanfiction, as it appeals to the "popular gaze" by emphasizing "norms of morality or agreeableness" (as posing itself as non-profit fan-tribute) again, it places itself in front of the "pure gaze" by advertising its experimental attempts (expressing itself as a text based on "Oriental" art and sensibilities).[133]

Now, looking at the yaoi angle, the imagined/assumed homoerotic relationships as conceived of between the protagonists of *Saiyuki,* as they occur in the Yaoi fanfictions, is a product of the shared "taste" of the female aficionados, who both relate to the characters and derive pleasure out of such erotic interaction. (which ties up with Francesca Coppa's ideas of slash, as discussed later on). In his book entitled *Distinction*, Bourdieu analyzes how social class acts as an important determinant of individual tastes in art, food, and music. According to his observation in the introduction to that book, "taste is more than an outcome of class – it also does its own sort of classifying"[134]

Bourdieu's idea of the "cultural capital" relates to the symbolic elements like skills, tastes, mannerisms and other practices that are acquired by being part of a particular social class or group, as is the case of fanfiction communities, who are able to relate to the feeling of being part of one social group, through their attraction to a particular media/text. This shared form of "cultural capital", rising from similar taste in art objects, linguistic proficiency or livelihood choices (although fanfiction communities are virtual and dispersed across space and their members come from vastly different social strata) creates a comfortable sense of collective identity. But in the

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[133] Bourdieu, *Distinction,* 34

[134] "Social Theory Rewired | New Connections to Classical and Contemporary Perspectives." Accessed May 11, 2019. http://routledgesoc.com/profile/pierre-bourdieu.

case of fanfiction communities, Bourdieu's assumption that cultural capital breeds inequality between group identities by fostering feelings of "people like us" versus "people like them", doesn't hold true. While certain forms of cultural capital may be valued over other others, such as better knowledge of canonical plot situations, better ideas/prompts for alternative retellings, linguistic proficiency, etc., the more proficient members do their utmost to share this excess capital with less of it, without creating an atmosphere of demeaning and derogation. Those with better linguistic proficiency willingly take up the roles of beta-readers (who are basically editors of the draft of the fanfiction), whereas those with canonical knowledge suggest plot edits, those with better ideas set up prompt-based fic-challenges, etc. No member's social mobility is hindered within the space of this virtual society.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital may come in three overlapping forms, one is the embodied, and may refer to the command over the language the fanfiction is being written in. Second is objectified and may refer to the number of published fanfictions to one fan-author's anonymous account/handle-name. The third is the institutional form, and this in case of fanfictions may refer to the greater availability of cultural capital as discussed above, proficiencies and abilities that symbolize cultural competence and authority over the rest of the fan members, albeit in a non-hierarchical and more friendly manner.

Habitus is one of the most influential yet ambiguous of Bourdieu's concepts, which refers to the physical embodiment of the cultural capital, which stems from the ingrained skills, habits, and dispositions which come to define us over time, things that we learn from our life experiences, things that make us who we are. According to Boudieu, this is a "feel for the game"[135] something that is inherent and instinctive, something that underlines our proficiency at the fields in which we

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[135] "Social Theory Rewired"

excel. For fan-authors, this habitus is their connection to the source narrative that they base their fanfictions on, as well as their linguistic and cultural competence which allows them to shape and re-shape that extant narrative universe into something that expresses them and their choices. Habitus also extends into the idea of "taste" and "distinction" as discussed before.

Habitus is basically the composite of the ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions, that sets any individual apart, or makes him/her a part of a group. The practice of writing Anglophone Yaoi Saiyuki fanfiction is for the fan-authors a habitus. Individuals perceive the surrounding social world and react to it based on their habitus. In this case, their reactions to the narrative universe that they adapt through their fanfictions form their habits. Such dispositions, as is the case with fan-communities, can be relatable to the likes of social class, religion, nationality, ethnicity, education, profession etc., which are shared by people with similar backgrounds, which in this case is their shared tastes and sensibilities for Saiyuki as a narrative universe and yaoi as a preferred mode of relationship between the male protagonists. This habitus, like any other, is acquired through imitation (is mimetic in nature), an initiative practice that is specific to the concerned group. [136] The shaping and reshaping of the narrative universe with the help of fanfiction helps the individuals socialize, in the light of their individual experience and opportunities.

Habitus is shaped by an individual's structural position in society and generates action in conjunction with that. Therefore, when fan-authors act like fans and demonstrate agency while writing fanfiction, they simultaneously reflect and reproduce their social structure in real life and their status as fans, as well as their unique preferences and sensibilities, while also catering to the

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[136] O. Lizardo, "The cognitive origins of Bourdieu's Habitus", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, Vol. 34, no. 4, (2004): 375-448.

demands of the group. Habitus consists of both the hexis (which are the physical habits of posture and accent) and the more abstract mental habits such as schemes of perception, appreciation, classification, feeling, action, etc. For a virtual netizen, that a fan-author is, the hexis may be his/her length of peer-connect, staying online, mannerisms such as using netspeak or memespeak, etc, that come out through the praxis related to actual fanfiction production. Fanfiction writers participate in discussions that happen in chat forums or respond to the positive/negative feedback that the fellow readers may have for them, or "rant" about personal life in their "prologue" or "epilogue" to the fiction chapters, or stay completely aloof without divulging any personal detail, and following the professional, unattached stance of writing. Bourdieu suggested that habitus allows individuals to find new solutions based on newer situations without having to deliberate in a calculated manner. The fan-community based on yaoi fanfictions stemming from Saiyuki has also created a given situation, where the fan-made pairings between the characters are not deliberated upon, yet are seen as natural. Each of these pairings has their own fanbase, based on the personal preferences of the fans, which in turn are based on their gut feelings and intuitions, which are culled from the interactions between the characters within the source narrative. Bourdieu's concept of habitus is collective and socially shaped[137], so are these yaoi pairings.

Just as the attitudes, mannerisms, tastes, moral intuitions and habits[138] that go into the making of habitus, which is based off an individual's life experiences, and go on to situate that individual in a related future,[139] the habitus that is writing yaoi fanfiction based on Saiyuki is also

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[137] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[138] Pierre Bourdieu*, Pascalian Meditations*, (Stanford University Press, 2000), 4.

[139] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and society*, (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1963).

informed by an individual fan-author's social position and life choices as related to the ethnography of yaoi fans and fujoshi culture, discussed before in the introduction to this dissertation.

The predisposition towards yaoi amongst most Saiyuki fanfiction writers (the proof of which is the high number of BL/Yaoi based content on Fanfiction.net and the whole domains dedicated to Saiyuki yaoi pairings, such as Minus Wave, Split-Infinity.org etc.) is the reproduction of the social structure which results from their habitus (Bourdieu, 1987). This predisposition has been "normalised" so much amongst the yaoi fan communities, that its presence is no longer questioned. This is related to that quality of habitus, where a certain behavioural pattern or belief becomes so very ingrained into the society's structure that the original purpose of such behaviour or belief can no longer be traced. This is the case with the source narrative which is not "yaoi" in nature, as well as the inner dynamics between the characters there are vastly different from how they are portrayed in the fanfictions. The totality of such learned habits made of writing styles, tastes, and other non-discursive knowledge that might be said to "go without saying" (Bourdieu 1990:66-67)—become socialized into the individuals who are members of that culture.

According to Bourdieu, habitus is composed of: [s]ystems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.[140]

Bourdieu's notion of the "feel for the game" is dependent on the cultural arenas or fields where they operate, based on the practice of the players, each having its unique set of rules,

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[140] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, (Polity Press, 1990)

knowledge as well as forms of capital. Therefore, it is possible for a fan to write fanfiction, do cosplay, partake of different fandom activities across different fandoms, be part of a family and have a livelihood, all as part of a single life experience. Here writing anglophone *Saiyuki* fanfiction as a fan-author is just one "field" amongst many (example of one fan-author writing fanfictions across fandoms in fanfiction.net). Fields can certainly overlap and struggle against each other for viability and prestige. The "field" of writing fanfictions has no economic value and has a vulnerable capacity as artwork, due to lack of originality and copyright claims. Yet its value lies in its ability to weave together communities of like-minded people, in a virtual space within the internet, where everyone respects the value of that field and prides himself/herself on being part of it. In art, according to Bourdieu, each new generation of artists have overturned the established positions of their precursors, and have been critiqued by yet newer generation(s) of "avant-garde" artists who overruled the "rules of art" of their own age to carve out their own unique niche of power within the field. Fan-authors have also been part of this struggle towards legitimacy, to be seen as artists who are not just "textual poachers" (to use Henry Jenkins' term), and have played to win supporters, such as Amazon Worlds, who have tried to monetize this opportunity into reaching out to more and more customer base (and its aftermath, as discussed later).

FANFICTION AS ADAPTATION AND A PRODUCT OF PARTICIPATORY CUULTURE

In an increasingly globalized world, art and entertainment have become inextricably mingled. According to Christina Schäffner, "processes of text production and reception are no longer confined to one language and one culture… This universality … has consequences for intercultural communication, and thus for translation".[141] As we have already discussed in the earlier chapter, translation also plays a key role in Anglophone fanfictions that stem out of a source text that is Japanese. Building upon that concept, we may also deduce that writing prose fanfiction based on visual media like anime/manga requires such a translating proficiency that can transform one kind of narrative medium into another, yet can retain the vibe or the stylistic imagery of the source visual text.

In the view of film semiotician Christian Metz, "There is a reason for the possibility as well as for the necessity of adaptations."[142] For fanfiction such a necessity is self-expression. In adapting an extant narrative universe, that has its own intricacies of plot and characterization, the readers turned fan-authors get an existing framework to express their own ideas. It is like getting a world full of people, and being a fan-author, gives one the god-like ability to rebuild that existing framework any way that s/he may please. This also takes out the difficulty of building one's own imaginary universe, as well as gives free reign to the imaginative possibilities inhered ion the extant universe that may be brought out to light by the fanfictions written by the fan-authors. The narrative gaps, the silences between the conversations, the prehistory of the characters all can be re-interpreted by individual fan-authors to give rise to different scenarios, according to their

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[141] Christina Schaffner, "Politics and Translation", in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Piotr Kuhiwczak and Karin Littau, (Cleveton-Bristol-Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2007), 135.

[142] Christian Metz, *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*, Trans. Michael Taylor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 44.

personal sensibilities. Since there is no profit to be made, there are no trappings required that will guarantee popularity and market-sales. The practice of writing fanfiction also allows the fan-authors to pay tribute to the source artwork, and to sympathize as well as empathize with the characters of the source text, that they so love and admire. It enables them to explore the hidden vulnerabilities, psychological trauma or even friendships and sexual needs of the characters, fleshing them out, making them more human than canonically possible. In the source text, we have a monk and his three compatriots going out on a journey to stop a demon being resurrected and to restore balance to the world in chaos. All of these powerful men, busy hunting demons across the way and fighting for their lives and their mission – are allowed human moments, pain and vulnerability, a moment of joy or a change of events where things could be different – all through adaptation in fanfiction. Besides the protagonists, the supporting characters of the source text also have their say in the fanfictions. Some of them often become fan-favourites and have their stories reinvented where a villain may become an anti-hero. Through fanfiction, fan-authors discover the cathartic possibilities of exploring their own weaknesses or hurt or find a welcome relief from the daily monotone of existence. Some fan-authors find their inspirations while driving to work, some showcase their amateur poetic abilities in the fiction, blissfully guarded by the anonymity that fan communities provide.

For Linda Hutcheon, "adaptations … relate stories in their different ways. They use the same tools that storytellers have always used: they actualize or concretize ideas; they make analogies; they critique or show their respect…." Unlike parodies, adaptations "openly announce" their "overt and defining" relationship to the source texts.[143] For some, as Robert Stam argues, literature will always be superior to any adaptation of it because of its seniority as an art form. But

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[143] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 3-4.

this priority involves what Stam calls iconophobia (suspicion of the visual) and logophilia (love of the word as sacred).[144] For fanfiction though, this scale of prioritization is upturned. Fanfiction based on *Saiyuki* is, in its own right, a written form of art, literature to be precise, and it derives its source and validation from the visual narrative of Saiyuki anime and manga. So, the hierarchy is toppled in this subversive mode of art, that truly champions "art for art's sake".

A negative view of adaptation might be the product of thwarted expectations of the audience seeking textual fidelity. But, as John Ellis suggests, there is a desire for the persistence of stories within a post-Romantic and capitalist world that values novelty.[145] The process of adaptation can, therefore, be seen as a massive investment (financial and psychic) in the desire to repeat particular acts of consumption within a form of representation that discourages such a repetition. Fan authors invest their time and effort to recreate the source narrative universe in their own personal ways, without any financial returns. Textual fidelity is undercut to pproduce new meanings, narrative structures and newer methods of storytelling, through digital hypertext.

Even if according to critics like Stam adaptations are inferior and secondary creations, they are omnipresent in the global repertoire of cultures. Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change. Thematic and narrative persistence combines with material variation to give rise to adaptations, which is true for fanfictions as well.[146]

Saiyuki fanfictions are a kind of transmedial, mostly digital adaptations of the source visual-literal narrative of manga or anime, which are digitally published in various online repositories and archives, such as fan-fiction.net, archiveofourown.org, split-infinity.org, Minus

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[144] Robert Stam, "Beyond fidelity: the dialogics of adaptation." *Film Adaptation (2000):* 54-76, 58.

[145] John Ellis, "The Literary Adaptation", *Screen* Vol. 23 no. 1 (1982): 3-5.

[146] Ropars-Wuilleumier, Marie-Clair cf. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 31.

Wave, etc, with the chapters linked through hypertext. Such fanfictions have their repercussions felt in the varied fields of mass-media-culture, as well as in the socioeconomic scenario involved with the source text, where the author pays tributes to such fan-works through fan-service, which also tend to boost sales and create market relevance of a source text across time.

A work of art's worth of critical acclaim is determined by the reception of that artwork by reviewers and critics. And subversively enough, fanfictions themselves provide acclaim, relevance, and tribute to the source text that is being adapted, as it is the result of reception by reader/audience who have become mesmerized enough by the source text, enough to recognize their own status as fans of that source text. Then, it is an artwork, whose presence is defined by the source artwork it is based upon, yet it also multiplies the possibility of meaning making out of that source artwork. An adapted work is important "both as a formal product, transcoding or transposition of a particular work or works; and as a creative process, an act of re-interpretation as well as re-creation"[147] Adaptation via fanfiction may well be seen as a form of translation, which fits in with Susan Bassnet's comment that translation involves a transaction involves a transaction between texts and between languages and is thus "an act of both inter-cultural and inter-temporal communication".[148]

As Walter Benjamin comments "Storytelling is an art of repeating stories"[149], yet, adaptations are experienced "as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation"[150] and "the pleasure comes from... [this] comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise.".[151] This same feeling comes true for this "translation",

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[147] Grande, "Manga Shakespeare", 18.

[148] Susan Bassnett, *Translation studies,* (London: Routledge,) 2002, 9.

[149] Walter Benjamin, "The task of the translator", in *Theories of translation: An anthology of essays from Dryden to Derrida,* ed. by John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte, (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 71–92, 90.

[150] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 8.

[151] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 4.

which as a unique sort of split-text, creates a graphic-scriptic duology, between the source and the adaptation. Therefore, a fanfiction does not diminish the value of the source, rather enhances it.

The retelling of known plots may be as old as antiquity, supported and condemned over the ages, across cultures. According to Philip Pullman, "[T]he theatre itself is much less high-minded than those who keep a watchful eye on its purity; the stage has always cheerfully swiped whatever good stories were going."[152] Not surprisingly, therefore, the genre of fanfiction thrives upon this practice, recycling the resources of plot and action of a single source text, a manga or an anime that has been much popular, and by popular demand (such as commission, requests, competitions, and challenges within the fandom) such reproductions are made. This trans-medial reproduction harkens back to a tradition as old as graphic narratives, the pictorial performances of Hokusai which were the oldest "manga", and pays tribute to it through non-graphic, prose narratives, which try to recreate the same visual feelings as one would receive from the source visual-text. The techne involved in this case, which is digital publication through hypertext, on specific web-repositories on world wide web, and circulated free of charge (sometimes through the creative commons license) is very much a product of our own time and space and serves to re-popularize older narratives. The positive public reception coming out through fanfiction then also becomes a tool for re-marketing the source text in a way that fans would like, in the garb of fan-service. *Saiyuki*, which revamps the age-old tale of *Journey to The West* for the material consumption of a pop-art generation, has a large oeuvre of fanfictions written by mostly Anglophone fan-authors, who provide their own twists to the tale told in the source narrative, in many different ways, enjoying popularity in the niche that they address.

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[152] Philip Pullman, "Let's pretend", *The Guardian*. November 24, 2004. Accessed on May 12, 2019. <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

The way such fanfictions are written, sometimes retaining much of the source text's characterization and plotline with little or no variation, and sometimes adapting it in a way that displays diverse levels of creative liberty, the final work becomes a hybrid culmination of eastern artistic influence upon the western, vernacular aesthetics of the anglophone community. The biographical details of the anonymous fan-authors, as they come through, also seem to be a cursor of the changing socio-cultural and global life, particularly in the urban centers. The agency of the re-creators in adapting the source, while retaining the sensibilities of the Japanese source text, while changing the medium of comprehension from the visual narrative to the literal, in a way which also eases reader-participation despite the elimination of the visual, topples the usual hierarchy of source and adaptation, high and low; aesthetic and commercial -- by placing the fanfictions contextually along the contemporary horizon of expectations, which adapts the 16th Chinese spiritual text into a more mass-oriented product of media-based fantasy-entertainment, through intervention of Kazuya Minekura, whose adaptation is a fan-tribute in its own right.

As Federico Zanettin outlines, the "dialect" of manga can be distinguished from the broader language of comics because manga as a genre has its "own set of conventions and stylemes"[153] For instance, "manga typically pauses the action of the narrative, by spreading one scene across several panels or by using the page to show close-ups and detailed moments"[154] (31). Fanfictions based on Saiyuki have a slow and descriptive narrative technique with heavy dependence on images, both visual and sensory, as well as detailed descriptions of the characters physical features, mental and emotional states, physical expressions and mannerisms, that make the readers recall the manga panels and the anime visuals of the source text.

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[153] [153] Federico Zanettin, *Comics in translation*, (Routledge, 2015), 18.

[154] John E. Ingulsrud and Kate Allen. *Reading Japan cool: Patterns of manga literacy and discourse*. (Lexington Books, 2009)

It is indeed, as John E. Ingulsrud and Kate Allen explain, "the deliberate manipulation of panel size, shape and arrangement of expressive effect has been developed most extensively by manga creators.[155] One of the primary differences between Western comics and manga involves the interplay between layout, characterization, and the role of the reader. Generally, in comics, characters are relatively "stable" and "do not change"; however, "in many mangas, the characters themselves can be drawn in degrees of iconicity or caricaturization, representing different psychological states and positional identities" – which holds true for *Saiyuki* as well.[156] The same difference is also true for fanfictions that are based on Western comics and those that are based on manga/anime. Saiyuki *fanfictions* often see the use of chibi (heightened emotional expressions of characters through childlike miniatures, usually with large heads and dimunitive bodies), which is characteristic of manga, as well as the pathos of the characters that are brought out with subtlety of expressions, through verbal expressions of the traditional styling used in manga - large eyes, graceful figures, expressive backdrops that merge seamlessly with the descriptive prose, that tries its best to make the readers recall the source visuals, and make it all seem like the part of a greater continuum, mutually agreed upon by the *Saiyuki* fandom.

In tune with the theories of intertextuality, the author William S. Burroughs surmises the legitimacy of adaptations as art-form. According to him, "…the work of other writers is one of a writer's main sources of input, so don't hesitate to use it; just because somebody else has an idea doesn't mean you can't take that idea and develop a new twist for it." "Adaptations may", for him, "become quite legitimate adoptions" – as is the case with fanfictions.[157]

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[155] Ingulsrud and Allen, *Reading Japan cool*, 31.
[156] Ingulsrud and Allen, *Reading Japan cool*, 27.
[157] William S. Burroughs, "Screenwriting and the potentials of cinema," in *Writing in a film age: Essays by contemporary novelists*, ed. by Keith Cohen, (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1991), 53–86.

In his book, *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen* (2002), John Bryant has argued against the fixity of a text, since there are always a variety of revisions, manuscript versions as well as print editions. (1-2).[158] Fanfiction focuses on both kinds of fluidity, which according to Hutcheon are, "(a) the production process (writing, editing, publishing, and performing) and (b) those created by reception, by people who "materially alter texts", who censor, translate, bowdlerize, and adapt them further"[159] Fanfiction is a product of art, whose "writing, editing, publishing, and performing" are based on a source artwork. Again, yaoi fanfiction is "created by reception", by the fans who "materially alter texts", not through censorship, but through additional erotic content, that also hinges on being pornographic at times. It brings to life the fantasies of the fans, as a communitatrian enterprise, which public media censorship would not allow circulating. The "part of the energy" of the initial text[160] sees significant increase, by the process of "cultural revision"[161] that happens in the fanfictions, and "…these reception-generated changes fit along a continuum of fluid relationships between prior works and later – and lateral – revisitations of them."[162] Fanfictions also see fanfictions spawned as tributes of themselves, and this metafictional enterprise spins web-like meshes of interconnected narratives that circulate on the internet, growing the girth of possible narrative frameworks that the source artwork may result in.

Fanfictions work, in Hutcheon's words, "in the participatory mode", since "there are the various hypertextual possibilities created by interactive fiction creators", which in turn is made

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[158]John Bryant, *The fluid text: A theory of revision and editing for book and screen*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

[159] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 170.

[160] Bryant, *The fluid text,* 62

[161] Bryant, *The fluid text,* 93

[162] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 171.

possible through free digital publications via online, hyperlinked repositories of fanfiction.[163]

Fanfictions are a kind of interactive fiction, where each narrative is usually produced by multiple

fans, some of them are authors, some of them beta-readers (editors of the manuscript), some of

them fic-challenge creators, some may suggest plots, while some others may suggest the action

and dynamics between characters.

Fanfictions take place along the "reception continuum", where the focus moves from the

production to the re-production, as "receivers begin to refashion the initial works".[164] They are

also similar in nature to what Peter Rabinowitz terms "retellings" and "revisions" of familiar or

popular narratives.[165] Fanfictions also possess the dual nature of providing "fidelity to the prior

work [which] is a theoretical ideal, even if a practical impossibility" as well as catering to "the

aesthetic and even ideological expectations of their new audience" as is the case of the yaoi

fangirls, for whom the homoerotic dynamics between the attractive young male protagonists play

a key role in production as well as consumption of that particular kind of fictional narrative[166]

Following Hutcheon, we might also want to explore what might be the reasons for the

popularity of adaptations across adaptive practices that include fanfiction, "especially in light of

all the negative rhetoric expended on adaptation as both a product and a process".[167] According to

George Steiner, "economy of invention" is a trait that is typically human and therefore it is

"distinctly possible that the mechanics of theme and variation, essential to music, are incised also

in language and representation."[168] (14) It is in human nature to find a preferred story and make

changes to it, one that suits the adapter's choices and needs better. Each fanfiction then, has a

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[163] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 171.
[164] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 171.
[165] James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz eds, *A companion to narrative theory*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 247-48.
[166] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 171.
[167] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 173.
[168] George Steiner, *What is comparative literature?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 14.

presence of its own, without losing its Benjaminian aura, "separate from the palimpsestic pleasures of doubled experience". Its mode of reproduction, whether mechanical or otherwise, does not make it a mere copy, where the repetition is not reduced to mere replication. The act of conceiving and performing a fanfiction brings "together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty".[169] As an act of adaptation, fanfiction "involves both memory and change, persistence and variation."[170]

According to George Kubler in his book, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*, "antipodes of the human experience of time are exact repetition, which is onerous, and unfettered variation, which is chaotic"[171] This inherent chaos, fringed with the dependence on the "known" (which is the source narrative framework being adapted) in the conception and production of each fanfiction makes it so very unique, as an artistic reproduction of the fan-author's unique sensibilities. Kubler then goes on to claim that "[h]uman desires in every present instance are torn between the replica and the invention, between the desire to return to the known pattern, and the desire to escape it by a new variation"[172] Fanfictions, as adaptations, effectively fulfill both of these desires, all at the same time, exploring alternative possibilities of "what could have been" (the imaginative liberties taken by the fan-author) commingled with "what has been" (the source narrative universe, its story, plot and timeline). Kubler's observations do not relate explicitly to adaptations per se, but to a cultural reproduction, he calls a "relay. For him, "[t]he relay transmits a composite signal, composed only in part of the message as it was received, and in part of impulses contributed by the relay itself."[173] Just like there is never a perfect replica, except in the case of

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[169] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 173

[170] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 173

[171] George Kubler, *The shape of time: Remarks on the history of things*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 63.

[172] Kubler, *The shape of time,* 72.

[173] Kubler, *The shape of time,* 22.

mass, mechanical productions, each fanfiction is a unique retelling, hinging upon the variations that set it apart from every other, be it due too language, tonality, style, characterizations, plots, settings, inclusions or exclusions to the source narrative, amongst other possibilities.

When each fanfiction is experienced by its reader, or even by its fan-author(s) at the time of production, editing, publication or future revisiting(s), s/he may experience "the conservative comfort of familiarity… countered by the unpredictable pleasure in difference".[174] This concept also ties up with Wolfgang Iser's idea of "thwarting of expectations" eliciting a pleasurable response from the readers/audience (as discussed before). It also connects to the study of anthropologist Michael Taussig, who has based his study on the power of replication on Walter Benjamin's 1933 essay, "On the Mimetic Faculty". According to Taussig, a society is able to maintain through alterity, based on such a power.[175] Also, Taussig's exploration is a party to the eternal Self/Other debate, where he recognizes that there is indeed a human compulsion to behave in the manner off something or someone else, which gives rise to the paradoxical capacity of the Self being defined by this Other,[176] which is also true in the case of fanfictions. The Self of the fan-author's artistic capability is defined by the way s/he imitates the art of the source author in the act of producing or reproducing a fanfiction, while the source author is an Other to him/her as a person. For Taussig, "the mimetic faculty" is something inherent to the experience of being human, and he defines it as "the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other".[177] This is an important observation regarding the legitimacy and historicity of fanfictions because according to this logic, it is not merely a freak cultural phenomenon aided by digital literacy and cheap internet access among the fanfiction writing

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[174]Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 174.

[175] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity: A particular history of the senses*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 129.

[176] Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity,* 19.

[177] Taussig, *Mimesis and alterity,* (xiii).

community. Rather, the practice of writing fanfictions then becomes something natural to the human experience and the desire to replicate, with variations which make the personal uniqueness seep through.

For Hutcheon, the "adaptive faculty is the ability to repeat without copying, to embed difference in similarity, to be at once both self and Other. Adapters, such as fanfiction writers, may use this ability in many complex ways, despite the difference in cultural contexts (Japanese and Anglophone) and modes of communication (Visual and Literal), they may adapt one into the other, as discussed before. Adaptations may also disrupt the elements of priority and authority, as fanfictions are not merely secondary products of the source-text, and authorship for the fan-authors are able to escape the legalities of copyright-claim based, capitalist modes of circulation, and truly make the tenet of "knowledge should be free"[178] real.

HENRY JENKINS'S CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

Participatory culture, as opposed to consumer culture, allows the public to act not simply as passive consumers, but also as contributors or producers (prosumers).[179] Recent technological advances such as personal computers and the popuparity of Internet have enabled private consumers to also create and publish media, based on what what they consume, through the Internet.[180] Since the technology now enables Therefore, these new forms of expression enabled by technology, create newer forms of engagement in public discourse theough a participatory culture, which not only supports individual creation but also informal relationships that pair

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[178] Mark Horner, "Essays on Education: 3. Knowledge Should Be Free", *Inside/Out,* Accessed May 12, 2019, http://insideoutpaper.org/essays-on-education-3-knowledge-should-be-free/.

[179] Christian Fuchs, "Social Media as Participatory Culture", in *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*, (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2014), 52–68.

[180] Paul Willis, "Foot Soldiers of Modernity: The Dialectics of Cultural Consumption and the 21st-Century School", *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 73 no. 3 ((2003), 392.

novices (fans) with experts (professional writers or media producers the fans are influenced from).[3] In participatory culture "young people creatively respond to a plethora of electronic signals and cultural commodities in ways that surprise their makers, finding meanings and identities never meant to be there and defying simple nostrums that bewail the manipulation or passivity of "consumers."[2]

Fandom Scholar Henry Jenkins uses the term "textual poaching" in order to articulate the processes by which dedicated fans respond to popular media, and this happens as an offshoot of participatory culture. As mentioned before, fans are no longer simply passive consumers, rather they become "prosumers", who are "active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings".[181] Fans, who are often constructed as mere victims duped by the official culture industry, are in fact tech-savvy, net-savvy, subversive readers who can operate outside of paradigms of the so-called "culture industry"[182]. This happens as they are not simply passive recepients, rather re-creators of what media/text they feed on. Jenkins emphasizes this "producing ability" of fans that give rise to new cultural material. Fans can then "poach" their favourite texts to create a plethora of new analytical and creative works, which may include message board and blog posts, self-published fanzines, fanfiction, fanart, amateur films, FMVs (Fan Music Video), and fan "vids"[183].

The increased access to Internet is key to the growth of participatory culture because it enables collaborative action amongst fans[184], so as to generate and disseminate news, ideas, and creative

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[181] Henry Jenkins, "'Strangers no more, we sing': Filking and the social construction of the science fiction fan community." *The adoring audience: Fan culture and popular media* (1992): 208-236, 224.

[182] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. "The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception." *Media and cultural studies: Keyworks* (2006): 41-72.

[183] Catherine Tosenberger, "Textual Poachers", in Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture, ed. by Dale Southerton, SAGE Knowledge, Accessed on May 12, 2019, http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412994248.n546.

[184] Ryan M Rish and Joshua Caton, "Building Fantasy Worlds Together with Collaborative Writing: Creative, Social, and Pedagogic Challenges", *The English Journal,* Vol. 100 no. 5 (2011)*:* 21–28, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23047798.

works; and connect with people who share similar goals and interests, thereby creating "affinity groups", and fanfictiin communities based on specific fandoms share this nature. In 2005, Henry Jenkins and co-authors Ravi Purushotma, Katie Clinton, Margaret Weigel and Alice Robison had authored a white paper entitled "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century".[185] In this paper, participatory culture is described to have the following attributes.

- Relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement

- Strong support for creating and sharing one's creations with others

- Some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices

- Members believe that their contributions matter

- Members feel some degree of social connection with one another (albeit through a virtual, networked setup).

As technology continually gives rise to newer avenues for communication, collaboration, and circulation of ideas, it has therefore also provided newer opportunities for the consumers to create their own content.

Fanfiction writers and readers were one of the first virtual, participatory communities to showcase that the public could actively participate in the pop culture that they enjoy, while also helping to change and grow the narratives of tv shows and other such media, like manga/anime during their runtimes, airing or serial publication. Fanfictions also served to strengthen the

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[185] Henry Jenkins, Ravi Puroshotma, Katherine Clinton, Margaret Weigel & Alice J. Robison, "Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture". (The MIT Press, 2005).

popularity of the series even after the last episode had aired, or the last installment of manga came out. Some fanfiction creators also developed "fan-theories" and speculation about what is to happen next, and they are often correct, and sometimes in retrospect these ideas get incorporated into the original/source media, as the recent Marvel Movies boom and related fan-theory phenomena would serve to prove. Fanfiction authors, through their practices of participatory culture in their respective fanfiction communities, creating "new" materials out of the existing narrative universe. Fanfictions form a life of their own, and those of their characters, outside the confines of the original content. Fans expand on the original story, while putting their beloved characters through different adventures and sexualities. Such fanfiction communities are composed of audiences and readers from around the world, who are of different ages, with different backgrounds, all coming together, as part of a "convergence culture"[186] to develop and write about theories and possibilities about popular media such as tv shows, books, anime/manga and films. They expand and/or continue their stories, even if the corporate bodies producing and marketing them, have brought them to a close.[187]

The relationship between Web 2.0 tools and participatory culture is more than just material, however.[188] The mindsets and skillsets of participatory practices influenced by Web 2.0, in turn influences the fans' thinking processes and abilities of production, which is key to the online production and dissemination of fanfictions.

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[186]James Hay and Nick Couldry, "Rethinking convergence/culture: An introduction", *Cultural Studies* 25, no. 4-5 (2011): 473-486.

[187] Ashlee Humphreys, *Social Media: Enduring Principles*, (Oxford University Press, 2016).

[188] Tim O'Reilly, "What Is Web 2.0?" *O'Reilly Network,* Accessed on May 12, 2019, http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html

In Vincent Miller's book *Understanding Digital Culture*, he makes an argument in favour of Axel Bruns' idea of the "prosumer,", which makes the lines between producer and consumers become blurred. Generically, producers have been those that create content and cultural objects, usually attached to the cultural industries and multinational conglomerates, whereas consumers are audience and/or purchasers of such objects. According to Miller, "[w]ith the advent of convergent new media and the plethora of choice in sources for information, as well as the increased capacity for individuals to produce content themselves, this shift away from producer hegemony to audience or consumer power would seem to have accelerated, thus eroding the producer-consumer distinction".[189] "Prosumer[s]" are therefore the end-result of a strategy which is increasingly used to encourage positive/negative feedback between the producers and consumers, (fan service being one of the avenues in which the authors incorporate such desires of the audience), "which allows for more consumer influence over the production of goods."[190]

Bruns refers to the concept of "produsage", which functions as a community collaboration, where the participants can share "content, contributions, and tasks throughout the networked community".[191] By this logic, "produsers" are active participants empowered by their participation through network building between fellow produsers or fans and that of the source material producers. For Bruns, this empowerment for the users subverts the typical "top-down mediated spaces of the traditional mediaspheres".[192] Every participant, in this system, has some sort of authority, and the ability to change things to suit their will.

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[189] Vincent Miller, "Convergence and the Contemporary Media Experience", in *Understanding Digital Culture,* Sage. 2011, 87.
[190] Miller, *Understanding Digital Culture,* 87.
[191] Axel Bruns, "Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage." *Digital Formations Vol. 45.* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 14.
[192] Bruns, "From Production to Produsage", 14.

This in turn, leads to Bruns' idea of "equipotentiality. This concept works on the assumption that while there may not be equality of skills and abilities amongst all the participants in a given produsage project, they can have "an equal ability to make a worthy contribution to the project".[193] The traditional distinctions between producers and consumers having been blurred, every participant therefore has an equal opportunity to participate meaningfully in the act of produsage.

PROBLEMS IN PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

The situation of the "participation gap", or the fact that not everyone can take part in this participatory culture of writing fanfictions, is also linked to the issue of the digital divide, where there may not be equal access to technology amongst all fans, so the fanfiction writers demographics show that the writers mostly come from affluent and "first-world" countries (refer to the section on demographics in the "Introduction" for relevant statistical data).

Participatory culture is seen to lack representation for the female, resulting in misrepresentation of the women online. This in turn, makes difficult authentic representation of women by themselves, and deters the female participation in participatory culture. With men empowered by holding the dominant positions in the media industries, they are engaging with "existing technologies to break up and reformulate media texts for reasons of their own".[194] The production of yaoi fanfiction, with their "by women for women" method of existing data processing, tries to topple this hierarchy.

Women who are active in participatory culture are seen to be at a disadvantage, because the content that they view is generally not designed keeping in mind their participation. Instead of

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[193] Bruns, "From Production to Produsage", 25.
[194] Catherine Driscoll, "The Problem of Adaptive Individual Choice in Cultural Evolution", *Biol Philos* Vol. 23 (2007): 101–113.

going with the flow of male biased content, "feminist interaction design should seek to bring about political emancipation… it should also force designers to question their own position to assert what an "improved society" is and how to achieve it".[195]

The current dynamics of participatory culture fails in challenging "the hegemonic dominance, legitimacy and appropriateness of positivist epistemologies; theorize from the margins; and problematize gender".[196] This is an issue that Francesca Coppa's treatment of Slash fanfiction tries to address, which is equally true for yaoi subgenre participation amongst women and the fujoshi subculture. Also, as we have seen before, fanfiction is one subgenre of participatory culture, where female producers clearly have the upper hand, whether in terms of number of productions or producers who choose reveal their producer status. (For more discussion refer to the section on sex and demographics in the "Introduction" to this dissertation)

FANFICTION AS TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

Since mid 2000s, the global entertainment and media industries have seen, according to Siobhan O'Flynn, "seismic shifts with the emergence of new platforms, modes of interaction, and the changing production design of entertainment properties."[197] The rise of the social web has been the most prominent of such changes, as fans are now armed with multiple means of participatory media, which include fansites, dedicated fanfiction sites, social media websites/applications, blogs, wikis, windows/mac/android touchscreen platforms in smart mobile devices -- and this has seen viral dissemination of "prosumer" content online.

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[195]Shaowen Bardzell, "Feminist HCI." *Proceedings of the 28th International Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems,* Vol. 10 (2010): 301–310.

[196] Ann Light "HCI as Heterodoxy: Technologies of Identity and the Queering of Interaction with Computers". *Interacting with Computers.* Vol. 23 (2011): 430–38.

[197] Siobhan O'Flynn, "Epilogue", *A Theory of Adaptation*, 179.

Because of the immense popularity and connective potential of such online and mobile platforms, audiences are no longer regional markets; rather they are "global, connected, and responsive",[198] and this is demonstrated by the speed of transmission of "spreadable content", in Henry Jenkins's term.[199]

Transmedia storytelling which works through narratives that are multiplatform, is the technique of telling one single story or experience, across a range of current digital technologies. It is not to be confused with the traditional cross-platform media franchises, sequels, or adaptations, yet it works closely together with such media.[200]

Transmedia storytelling exists in the form of transmedia narratives, which Kalinov and Markova define as: "a multimedia product which communicates its narrative through a multitude of integrated media channels".[201] Henry Jenkins, in his book Convergence Culture, gives the example of the media conglomerate DC comics. DC releases related comic books prior to the release of their film adaptations, so that audience has knowledge of the backstory. Similarly, in a reverse mode, Saiyuki fanfiction is based on the backstory given in the anime/manga/Drama CD/fanbooks/interactive games, on the other hand, there may be explorations of other possible backstories. Most of transmedia storytelling are not based on singular characters or plot lines, rather focusing on larger complex worlds with multiple characters and plot lines, which can be sustained for a longer periods of time, as with the many arcs and serieses in Saiyuki. Transmedia can also extend to attract larger audiences, using objects like fanbooks, artbooks, posters,

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[198] Siobhan O'Flynn, "Epilogue", *A Theory of Adaptation*, 179.

[199] Henry Jenkins, "If It Doesn't Spread, It's Dead (Part Six): Spreadable Content." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*. Accessed May 12, 2019. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2009/06/spreadable_content.html

[200] Henry Jenkins, "Transmedia Storytelling 101", *Confessions of An Acafan*, Accessed May 12, 2019. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2007/03/transmedia_storytelling_101.html

[201] Kalin Kalinov, "Transmedia Narratives: Definition and Social Transformations in the Consumption of Media Content in the Globalized World" *Postmodernism Problems*. Vol. 7 (2017): 60–68.

merchandise and more, sometimes based on fanfictions as well, so as to cater to more fans interested in the Saiyuki universe, just as Jenkins gives the example of DC comics releasing coloring books to attract younger audience members.

The phenomenally rapid and wide-spread dissemination of online, fan-generated content is very useful for the culture industry marketers. Adaptations are often undertaken to capitalize on the existing fan base (hence making anime out of manga, parallel story-lines, prequels and sequels, console games, merchandise etc.). Hence tapping into the marketing potential of the existing fan community generated content on the free online platforms, fanfiction as an example, is a pivotal industry goal, and Amazon Worlds is one example of it going wrong, as discussed later. The interconnectivity of the world wide web has created a paradigm shift in mobilizing global communities of interest (such as fan communities), who are "able to act and react instantly and en masse to shared delights and perceived injustices. Networked fan communities then have a serious impact on the production, control, and distribution of adaptations.

Adaptation as "a transcoding process that encompasses recreations, remakes, remediations, revisions, parodies, reinventions, reinterpretations, expansions, and extensions."[202], is a basic framework that all fan-generated content, including fanfictions, that too, niche specific fanfictions like anglophone yaoi fanfiction based on an anime/manga adaptation are based upon. The emergence of transmedia as a conglomerate strategy of producing and disseminating media have made the continuum between narratives in the shared universe(s) more palpable.

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[202] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 32.

Transmedia adaptations exist as "reworkings of the mythos and content of a given story and storyworld".[203] Whereas unauthorized adaptation, recreation, and remixing were once (and are still sometimes) viewed as copyright law infringement, quite a number of key players in the fields of convergent media and transmedia production, such as Jeff Gomez and Tim Kring have championed fan participation and fan-generated content as a demonstration of audience/consumer loyalty to any given storyworld and/or brand. Jeff Gomez, who is the CEO of Starlight Runner and a pivotal contributor to the establishment of the PGA Transmedia Producer credit, promoted transmedia back in 2010 as a form which allows for the development of "robust 'story worlds' that play out across multiple media platforms"[204] and that would allow fans to "touch the canon".[205] And this is how fanfictions function, by not only touching the canon but adapting it to suit the fan's or the fan communities' purposes.

Sometimes, fans feel that some transmedia storylines, (for Saiyuki developed through the connected universe of Anime, Manga, Fanbooks, Drama CDs, Interactive Games etc.) may have gaps in the plot line or scope for further character development, so through writing fanfictions they may begin other extension(s) of transmedia storytelling.

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[203] Siobhan O'Flynn, "Epilogue", *A Theory of Adaptation*, 184

[204] 204 Michael Humphrey, "Pottermore: Expert explains how Harry Potter's website will transform storytelling", *Forbes.com.* 29 July 2011. Accessed May 12, 2019, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhumphrey/2011/07/29/pottermore-expert-explains-how-harry-potters-website-will-transformstorytelling/>

[205] Siobhan O'Flynn, "Epilogue", *A Theory of Adaptation*, 185

CONCLUSION

YAOI AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH SLASH FICTION

Francesca Coppa, Director of Film Studies and Associate Professor of English at Muhlenberg College, uses autoethnography as a woman fanfiction writer, to relate with the specialties that women can bring to the fore of Slash fanfictions, which are equally true for yaoi as well. In an interview with Robert Kozinets, by the aca-fan Henry Jenkins, Coppa talks about how "[m]any female fans critique the mainstream media for its lack of nuance and emotional depth, and that [they] create stories and vids that rectify that. Female fans add feelings to the source text that they rewrite as fanfictions, they add "personal attachments and sustained relationships... sex, tears and … [other] appropriate emotional responses"[206]. That helps the otherwise "overdetermined" male character vent his feelings when there is a tragedy. He may also fall in love with the person that he has been fighting aliens with.

As discussed before in the section on yaoi, the history of yaoi in the Anglophone fan communities derives through slash fiction, which is basically a genre of erotic fan fiction written by women authors about male characters. It is, according to Coppa, perhaps the most notorious art form that came out of media fandom. Slash fiction may be contextualised in terms of the theory and history of drag performance. Coppa creates a comparative scenario, where in classic drag, gay men dress up as "highly overdetermined female characters" to express facets of gender and identity that cannot be properly expressed through their identity as regular, everyday "gay men". Coppa

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[206] [206]"Gender and Fan Culture (Round Fourteen): Francesca Coppa and Robert Kozinets." Accessed May 12, 2019. https://fandebate.livejournal.com/5624.html.

argues that in a similar fashion, slash writers play with "highly overdetermined male characters" for similar performative and communitarian purposes. Both are a form of appropriation that is original and artistically significant, giving rise to newer meanings and recontextualising older meanings. Both performances practically "show- do gendered behavior and create space for new sexual- social roles"[207].

For Coppa, "the bodies of the male slash protagonists are not just bodies", they have their own "particular narrative histories" with which women can relate.[208] In the case of yaoi fanfictions Saiyuki, these can be the loneliness of the characters, their everyday brushes with death (which can be an "overdetermined" way of looking at the everyday life-struggles of women, whether in the house, or on the streets), their lack of confidence in their abilities, the inability to protect what they love, their personal tragic pasts and so much more. Here is where the explicit sex scenes in the yaoi fanfiction come in and have their validation. As Coppa puts it, "[w]hile the sex scenes … are clearly addressed to the reader's sexual desires… even to the point of orgasm," the purpose of the slash is not merely masturbation.[209] Therein comes the concept of the "healing cock", which is a "jokey way of referring to something pervasive"[210] In slash, a character's mental troubles can be dealt with by having loving sex with his male partner/foil in the story. Sex here is an embodiment of unfulfilled duties/desires and the lack that the character(s) may suffer from, and the climax involves addressing these needs and meeting them. This relationship or emotional connection derived through a physical one is palpable, yet context and character specific, and better articulated through the "larger than life" stature of epic fantasy characters.

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[207] Francesca Coppa, "Slash/Drag: Appropriation and Visibility in the Age of *Hamilton" in A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*. ed. by Paul Booth, (John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 189 – 207, 189.

[208] Coppa, "Slash/Drag: Appropriation and Visibility", 204.
[209] Coppa, "Slash/Drag: Appropriation and Visibility", 204.
[210] Coppa, "Slash/Drag: Appropriation and Visibility", 204.

FAILURE OF MONETIZING FAN LABOUR

As for the **Kindle Worlds** project by Amazon, which is the embodiment of the corporate culture attempting to monetize fan labour (through the culture-products that Amazon holds copyrights for) through selling fanfictions through its self-publishing portals, it saw an untimely demise. It had to shut down its Kindle Worlds fanfiction site which was operational for a little more than five years since May of 2013. By Jun 14, 2018, all new submissions to Kindle Worlds were stopped and all of the Kindle Worlds stories at Amazon.com were removed by July 16, with the website seeing a complete closure on August 29.[211]

According to Francesca Coppa, fan-authors should "worry about signing away the rights to their own creativity". Platforms like Kindle Worlds tried to monetize something that was not for hire, but part of a gift culture. As Coppa says in her interview, "[m]ost fanworks are born noncommercial and will forever stay that way, but fans do have rights over their own transformative, creative work."[212]

FUTURE SCOPE(S) OF STUDY

A closer case study of the anglophone yaoi fanfiction "Zang fu theory" by ladylotusmoon, which could not be included in the present work due to spatiotemporal constraints, shows Sanzo's

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[211] Roger Packer, "It's the End of Kindle Worlds as We Know It |." Accessed May 12, 2019. https://rogerpacker.com/its-the-end-of-kindle-worlds-as-we-know-it/amp/.[211]

[212] Kathryn Beaton, "Interview: Francesca Coppa, 'The Fanfiction Reader: Folk Tales for the Digital Age", *University of Michigan Press Blog,* August 29, 2017, Accessed May 12, 2019, https://blog.press.umich.edu/2017/08/interview-francesca-coppa-fanfiction-reader-folk-tales-digital-age/.

possessiveness and assertiveness, Gojyo's flamboyance and flirtatiousness, Hakkai's low self-esteem and guilt and Goku's childishness in tune with the characterization offered by Minekura's original work, while also positing the characters against an alternative yet thematically coherent backdrop. In this fanfiction, eroticism is pitted against spirituality, just as in the source violence is pitted against spirituality. It clearly showcases the effort on part of the fan-authors to be authentic and study the background related to the source text and matching the fanfiction with its source scenario.

One important avenue for future study would be to study the erasure of the self by the fans. The are either anonymous or use handles in the websites where they write, and the style of characterization and language that they write in are highly reminiscent of the original author as if written by ghost authors. They do not claim selfhood through their writings, although there is the polite habit of recognising and citing influence from other fan-authors' works.

Another scope for future study would be the toppling down of the hierarchy of fans and original creator when we look at the fanarts by Minekura, as a tribute for the actors role-playing her charactera in the *Saiyuki* stage show, named *Kagekiden*. Through this two-way exchange, she expresses her awe as a fan of these actors who are playing characters created by her, but so much more differently than the source plotlines. These adaptations influenced Minekura so much so that she has remodelled her original character of Ni Jienyi, in the anime/manga, based on Mitsuru Karahashi's performance of that character in the stage shows. There are two ways of looking at this phenomenon. One is that of role reversal when the author herself is a fan of the adaptation, the other being the practice of fanfiction or fanart as a gift culture embedded in the act of gifting the actors the portrayals of their persona by the mangaka. Minekura often visits the rehearsals of the *Kagekiden* musicals and gifts the actors with fan-drawings of them playing the original characters

created by her. In a related manner, the meta-artistic endeavours of Kazuya Minekura show the performative aspect of her narrative work. Her characters from the plot in anime/manga sometimes appear in vocal albums, audio dramas or artbook illustrations, where the characters from the *Saiyuki* are dressed up/behave like actors or seiyuus (voice actors). The boundary is then further blurred. So, do we have fictional actors acting as those characters in the narrative, or are the narrative characters posing like actors to mess with our sense of narrative reality?

Tracing the historiography of the practice of fan service and tying it to the prevalent practice in manga/anime, especially how it is practised by Kazuya Minekura by way of Saiyuki, can be an interesting study as well. The practice of fanservice by Minekura occurs mainly through published artbooks (the *Salty Dog* Series and *Dice of Destiny*, for example) and bonus media attached to the end of manga volumes or TV series episodes. Fanservice by Minekura also includes cosplay, AU, erotic poses and costumes -- anything and everything the fans would like to fantasize about without crossing the boundaries of full-frontal nudity and sexual explicitness, although often the boundary is stretched to the limit. A full-colured spread from the first chapter of *Saiyuki Reload Blast* shows the four protagonists titillating the audience with a full view of their naked backs, in a roadside public bath, which may be Minekura's way of showing appreciation for the fans who waited to buy this work even after a long hiatus, by appealing to their voyeuristic impulses. Minekura's blog, which is named Nitro[213] is full of exchanges with fans and non-commercial illustrations made as tributes for fans. So here we have a direct exchange between the author and her fans, where the prior often indulges the latter's fantasies, instead of succumbing to the

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[213] Kazuya Minekura, "World is 峰-mine-." World is 峰-mine-. Accessed May 12, 2019. https://nitroblog.exblog.jp

hierarchical distance of the author from his/her fans, as some authors do (as discussed in the section on legal issues with fanfiction).

Even Kazuya Minekura's *Saiyuki* can be seen as a fan tribute to the original *Journey to the West*, and the characters can be thought of as revamped, or given a spin-off in an AU. This angle can be further explored in future research, in the light of doujinshi mangas.

Another interesting study would be to situate *Saiyuki* amidst the legacy of religious writings in the era of fandom. Digitisation and the modern world has also brought about a loss of faith in the divine, and more atheists than ever before, yet as we could see from the etymology of the word "fan", it does have the connotations of religious fanaticism, and fandoms are themselves formed of religious practices of the fan, who are dedicated to their fandom(s). How a narrative like *Saiyuki* subverts the normative power play in the realms of religion and belief in spirituality to touch the heart of "modern" audience, is a subject worthy of exploring. Religion, which is a grand narrative as old as mankind, is a prevalent theme in *Saiyuki*. Related religious and spiritual imageries are invoked in many fanfictions, that again deals with subversive issues like homosexuality, through the perspective of yaoi. Often these fan-authors themselves are quite well read in the Zen Buddhism tenets invoked in *Saiyuki*, and they quote such well-known Buddhist scriptures in their works. We may also look at fan practice as a religion (practitioners having similar approaches) and *Saiyuki* being based on a religious text, there is renewed interest for the postmodern generation in Zen spirituality as mediated through anime/manga, that seeps through fanfiction.

Yaoi has been an important cultural term that has hitherto been largely overlooked in the western looks at fan studies, whereas slash practices do not suffice to speak of anime/manga phenomena of male homosexuality. There is scope for future study which looks at how yaoi can be both similar and different from slash, and how its cultural heritage is rooted in the Japanese

ethnography. We may also look at yaoi as a transnational phenomenon, how it has been made into media and the subsequent cultural influence on non-Japanese sections of the world.

There is also the possibility of doing QDA (Quantitative Data Analysis) based on the facts and figures of *Saiyuki* fanfictions online, such as language, theme (slash, het, friendship, angst, yaoi, etc), character pairings using filters in the main repositories of *Saiyuki* fanfiction online. We can also look at site visits, and try to gauge the popularity of *Saiyuki* fanfiction.

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