"ONE INDEX FINGER ON THE MOUSE SCROLL BAR AND THE OTHER ON MY CLIT":

SLASH WRITERS' VIEWS ON PORNOGRAPHY, CENSORSHIP, FEMINISM AND RISK

by

Kelly Simca Boyd

B.A., Brock University, 1997

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department

of

Women's Studies

© Kelly Simca Boyd 2001

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

August 2001

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENCE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

"ONE FINGER ON THE MOSE SCROLL BAR AND THE OTHER ON MY CLIT:" SLASH WRITERS' VIEWS ON PORNOGRAPHY, CENSORSHIP, FEMINISM AND RISK.

Author:

(signature)

Kelly Boyd

(name)

August 8, 2001

(date)

Approval

Name: Kelly Simca Boyd

Degree: Master of Arts (Women's Studies)

Title of thesis: "One Index Finger on the Mouse Scroll Bar and the
Other on my Clit "; Slash Writers' Views on
Pornography, Censorship, Feminism, and Risk

Examining Committee:

     Chair: Dr. Susan Wendell, Committee Chair

_____
Dr. Brian Burtch, Senior Supervisor
Professor, School of Criminology,
Associate Faculty Member
Department of Women's Studies

_____
Dr. Jacqueline Levitin, Supervisor
Associate Professor
Department of Women's Studies and
the School Of Contemporary Arts

_____
Dr. Rhiannon Bury, PhD
External Examiner

_____
August 1, 2001

Date

ii

ABSTRACT

Slash fiction is the term used to describe amateur pornographic texts about characters in movies and on television shows, written generally by, and for, heterosexual women and published either in private zines or online. This type of sexually explicit material violates copyright laws and as such is an illegal form of pornographic writing. The history of slash fiction is outlined, along with an overview of the history of pornography and censorship explored in relation to the feminist perspective on these issues. Responses to an online survey completed by 210 slash authors and publishers were qualitatively analyzed. Seven key themes were discovered: Feminism, Pornography, Censorship, Risks for Writers, Media and Technology Savvy, Respondent Profile, and Cross-Categories. The resulting analysis shows that within this community there are a range of opinions on common terms such as "feminist," "pornography," and "erotica." Slash writers are also generally concerned about censorship, recognize the risks they take in writing texts not generally accepted in society, and take precautions that minimize the risks, but still allow them to publish their works.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to all the slash writers and producers
who participated in my research. Your willingness to talk with me made
this thesis possible and I am greatly indebted to all of you.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the help and support of Katherine Langley, a longtime participant in fandom and member of the slash community. Kathy has been in fandom for 28 years, and has an extensive knowledge of both slash and fan history. I am greatly indebted to Kathy; I would never have been able to write the History of Slash section of my thesis without her.

I would like to thank Kellie Matthews for graciously allowing me to use her story in my thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge the time and effort that Dr. Brian Burtch put into helping me produce this thesis.

I would like to thank Dr. Jaqueline Levitin, and all the members of my committee.

Finally I would like to thank Paul Doerfling. Without his excellent editing skills this thesis would not be the same.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

For the most part, television shows are men's most basic fantasies made large. In the world of the small screen, despite a few inroads made by the occasional "woman's show" or cable channel, men, and things that interest men, are of primary interest. We are exposed to explosions and macho posturing but few women, unless you count the large-breasted, small-waisted bevy of women that habitually throw themselves at our "heroes" each and every week. What if some women despairing of the small screen decided to take matters into their own hands? What if they reshaped materials until it better suited what they really wanted?

We would have the subject of this thesis, slash fiction: sexually explicit, amateur, gay male and lesbian tales produced predominantly by heterosexual women, for heterosexual women, about characters in mainstream television series and feature movies. In these tales, Fox Mulder (from the hit show, *The X-Files*) is madly in love with his enemy, Alex Krycek, while Jean-Luc Picard (from the television series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) cannot get enough of his sometime nemesis, sometime ally, Q. Originating in the 1960s with the pairing of Kirk and Spock from the original *Star Trek* series, the genre was dubbed "slash" due to the slash mark (/) placed between the characters' names to indicate who the story was about. Eventually the genre evolved into

using just the first initials of the character's names, e.g., K/S
(Kirk/Spock) or M/Sk (Mulder/Skinner).

Companies that produce these television series or feature films own the
rights to the characters. This means that only they, or the people they
give official permission to, can produce any materials using those
characters. This arrangement prevents others from making a profit from
characters without their express permission, and allows copyright
owners to control content linked with copyrighted series and characters.
Slash writers lack official permission to use these characters; in writing
their stories they are breaking copyright law. Since traditional
publishing houses can not legally publish slash, these stories are
published in underground magazines (called "zines"), or on the
Internet/World Wide Web (the web). The zines are sold through the web,
mail order, or at conventions, though rarely openly at traditional
conventions. Since the mid 1990s, slash fiction has made its mark on
the web community, introducing itself to a number of people previously
unaware of its existence, and expanding its reach considerably. Even
with this greater exposure, slash fiction is still relatively underground,
with few people outside of the fan community aware of its existence. As
fandom in general is a marginalized and underground community, very
little has been written about it over the decades. Slash fandom is even

more hidden; there has never been a book that outlines the history of slash fiction.

Studying slash fiction offers us a chance to explore what women think and feel about a wide variety of issues of interest in Women's Studies: pornography, censorship, feminism, to name a few. The writers and producers of slash fiction are exploring their sexuality and desires in an environment designed and controlled by themselves. For this thesis, I contacted slash fiction writers and producers to explore their experiences with state, community and personal censorship. As there are few academics writing on this topic, this project is a preliminary, exploratory project that will provide original information from a small sample.

In the first chapter, the history of slash fiction is outlined from its hotly debated beginning in the *Star Trek* fandom, to the *Star Wars* controversy, and on to slash fiction's presence on the web. An overview of the scholarly interest taken in slash is presented next, with attention paid to academic works by Joanna Russ, Constance Penley and Henry Jenkins. The chapter ends with an overview of the history of pornography and censorship explored in relation to feminist perspectives on these issues.

The second chapter outlines the research design used for this project. The concept of the internet as an elite technology is explored, along with

issues of access for my participants and the type of interviews used. How the data were collected is explained in depth, as is the analysis process. An explanation of feminist research is presented along with a discussion of why the present research should be considered feminist.

The results of the data analysis are presented in the third chapter. The data falls into seven different categories: feminism, pornography, censorship, risks for writers, media and technology savvy, respondent profile and cross categories. Quotes from respondents are used extensively in the analysis, with any spelling or serious grammatical mistakes corrected to promote ease of reading.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, key findings for each category are presented along with a conclusion exploring the importance of slash fiction for feminists and the use of my research for the slash community.

In Appendix I and II, the questions asked of the respondents are presented along with the web pages each respondent had to access to participate in my research.

In Appendix III an example of slash is presented. I felt that it was important that at least one example of slash be included in this thesis. The problem is that no *one* story will truly capture slash fiction. Some

slash is explicitly sexual, some is merely romantic. Some slash stories are well written and polished, almost professional pieces, while others are decidedly amateurish. Slash stories can range from two-page sexual studies, to sprawling epics lasting hundreds of pages. Finally, and perhaps most significant, there are literally hundreds of different fandoms.

The short story presented does not represent all of slash fiction, but instead is a short work offered to me by an author respected within various fandoms. *Moonrise* is written by Kellie Matthews and takes place in the *Due South* universe.

Due South is a Canadian show focused on the adventures of a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Constable Benton Fraser, living in Chicago with his deaf half-wolf named Diefenbaker. His partner, a Chicago detective named Ray Kowalski, is the other prominent figure in the show. The Canadian nature of *Due South* appealed to the Canadian in me.

This story was chosen for a number of reasons. Kellie Matthews is considered one of the better authors currently writing slash fiction. Generally, her works are long, complex stories, but due to space issues, I chose one of her shorter, more sexually driven pieces. Kellie Matthews was the author of the very first piece of fanfiction I ever read (an *X-Files* story called *Gemma* sent to me by a friend). To include one of her most recent pieces of fiction in this thesis felt like coming full circle in the journey begun with that first story. *Moonrise* is a sequel to a much

longer and more involved story, but it stands alone quite nicely. The author feels it has a "shadowy, almost bittersweet tone" that I think describes it well.

Many of the words and phrases used in this research will be unfamiliar to individuals not experienced with fandom. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of the thesis for convenience. Readers are encouraged to make use of this resource whenever they come across terminology with which they are unfamiliar.

I self-identify as a feminist both as an individual and as a researcher. I believe that women are equal to and should be treated as equal to men in society. I question the stereotypes and images I am presented with in everyday life, and I work to improve the position of women in society. As a researcher, I focus on issues relevant to feminism in particular and to women in general. I am concerned with my representation of participants and am careful to make my biases clear to both the participants in my research and the readers of the finished product.

I am aware that there is a struggle between being both a researcher and an insider to the community. As an academic I have a responsibility to the academic community to present a well balanced and researched project. As an insider, I might feel that it is best to present the slash

community as speaking with one, well thought out voice, instead of showing the confusion and/contradictions inherent within a group of individuals. As a member of a hidden community, I might also feel that it is in the best interest of the community to present the thoughts and views of the community in a positive manner so as to put the slash community's "best face forward". As a feminist researcher, this dual responsibility is important to not only acknowledge, but to work to make sure neither one is given precedence over the other. The issue of conducting feminist research was taken seriously in this project and various techniques and strategies were employed to insure that this paper took advantage of feminist research practices. A more detailed discussion of feminist research occurs in Chapter II.

Chapter I
Slash and the Pornography Debate

History of Slash

The roots of slash fiction lie in the established tradition of Science Fiction Fandom (SF Fandom). SF Fandom, a predominantly male community centered around science fiction authors and their stories, has been around for at least 70 years (Langley, March 18, 1999). SF Fandom was based on fanzines and conventions, where people with similar interests gathered to discuss topics of interest. Fanzines (or zines) were small, amateur, private publications usually focused on one topic or concept. Zines generally had an extremely small print run, averaging 75 to 250 copies for distribution. These zines predominately contained nonfiction writing, Letters of Comment (LoCs), reviews, and critiques. There was some fictional writing, but when science fiction became more popular in the 1950s, most fiction stories were published professionally, rather than in amateur zines.

The NBC network televised the first episode of *Star Trek* on September 8, 1966. Fanfiction took root here and flourished, with many *Star Trek* fans coming directly from the SF tradition. Since *Star Trek* was a television

show, many people drawn to it were new to both science fiction and to the fan community. These new fans, predominantly female, were drawn to fandom as a result of *Star Trek*, not for the science fiction premise of the show, but for its interesting characters and their interactions (Tulloch and Jenkins, 1995, Jenkins, 1992). These "Character Fans" did not want to explore science fiction and sociological themes (as was done in science fiction fandom). Instead, they wanted to write about Captain James T. Kirk, the Captain of the Starship Enterprise, his Science Officer, Spock, and the other crew members (but mainly Kirk and Spock) as they explored the galaxy, "boldly going where no man had gone before." D. Langsam, a SF fan, published the first Star Trek zine, *Spockanalia*, in 1967, at the beginning of *Star Trek's* second season (Langley, March 11, 1999). The zine was supposed to be a one-time event; nobody could see filling more than one publication solely on *Star Trek*. However, by its second issue, published in April 1968, several other *Star Trek* fanzines were already in print or going to print.

Initially, these zines stayed well within the "gen" category (fiction that could be read by people of any age). That trend was broken in 1972 when the zine *Grup* was published; it was the only adult content *Star Trek* zine at that time. In 1975, the first issue of *R&R* came out, and, in 1976, *Grope* and *Warped Space XX* (the adult issue of the very popular genzine, *Warped Space*) were released. Adult zines were very

controversial in fandom. While many fans were delighted to see their favorite characters in more adult situations, other fans believed that the people writing and producing this type of zine debased the shows, with some critics demonizing adult zine writers as "godless pornographers" (Langley, March 11, 1999).

In September 1974, *Grup #3* published a story, "A Fragment Out of Time," by a well-known fan, D. Marchant. This was the first *publicly* published slash story (other slash stories had been written and circulated by hand underground, but none had yet to appear in a public forum with wide distribution.) The story was highly coded, did not mention Kirk or Spock, and relied instead on 'he' and 'him' to describe the action (Langley, March 6, 1999).

In 1975, in *Grup #4*, D. Marchant published an essay in the *Star Trek* letterzine, *Halkan Council,* on the topic of Kirk/Spock slash, sparking the first public discussion of slash. Once begun, and fueled with the publication of other K/S material, the heated debate raged for years, with arguments made on both sides. Critics of slash disagreed with the basic premise for a number of reasons including; homophobia, character assassination, and religious beliefs. Those on the pro-slash side tended to argue either that a sexual relationship between Kirk and Spock was

inevitable, or that it was merely a way that the love between the

characters could develop (Langley, March 18, 1999).

In June 1976, the next example of K/S appeared. *Alternative: Epilog to Orion* was written by G. Downes, ironically, a fan who had publicly stated her beliefs that while the relationship between Kirk and Spock rested on love, it was not a sexual love (Langley, March 11, 1999, and, March 18, 1999). As the debate over the validity of slash raged on over the years, more published slash stories were making it into the hands of fans. A K/S story appeared in the October 1976 issue of *Warped Space XX*. In March 1977, the publishers of *Warped Space* renamed their adult zine *Obsc'zine*. It too included K/S, as did the September 1977 issue of *Sensuous Vulcan*. Despite the still vigorous objections of those opposed to slash, K/S slash fiction was firmly established when in early 1978, *Thrust*, the first all K/S anthology zine, was published (Langley, March 18, 1999).

The evolution of fandom continued in the late seventies when fans began publishing stories in universes set in television shows other than *Star Trek*. In 1976, *Warped Space* published a story set in the *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* universe. When *Star Wars* debuted in 1977, *Warped Space* once again led the pack, publishing the first *Star Wars* story. This opened the floodgates; zines based in various universes began to appear

11

and flourish. In 1979, *Syndizine*, the first mixed media (or multimedia) zine, appeared and with it Media fandom took off (Langley, March 18, 1999). With Media fandom, fandom took a giant step away from its SF roots. Distinguished from *Star Trek* fandom, media fandom focuses on television shows and movies in general, not on one series alone.

The next large series to enter into slash was *Starsky and Hutch (S&H)*, a 1970s American police drama. Due to the unusually close relationship between the two main characters, slash fiction quickly developed among the fans of this series. The first *S&H* gen zine, *Zebra Three*, was printed in the fall of 1977, with the first *S&H* slash zine, *Forever Autumn*, published in Britain in March of 1980 (Langley, April 24, 1999). The debate over slash fiction was still raging and anti-slash fans were particularly vocal in this fandom. Fearing that slash materials would be sent to the publishers and actors in *Starsky and Hutch*, the first American slash zine, *Code 7 # 1*, was published completely anonymously. No author, artist or editor names were listed (Langley, March 1, 1999, and, April 24, 1999). Threats of exposure by fans opposed to slash fiction did not stop the publishing of *S&H* slash fiction. *Graven Images* by J. Aumerle was published in 1981. Other slash authors and editors either advertised slash zines in production or published assurances that they would not stop publishing *S&H* slash and the furor around the threat of possible exposure quickly died down (Langley, April 24, 1999).

Through the 1980s, fandom in general grew, with more and more shows developing active fanbases and the fans of these shows producing slash fiction.

In 1988-89, the fandom of the show *Blake's 7* was seriously damaged when some actors in the show, having become friends with a good number of the fans, were shown samples of slash stories. Taking offense to the portrayal of their characters as homosexual, and seeing this type of writing as a betrayal of their friendship with fans, the actors sought to ban the slash authors they knew from fandom and to rid the fandom of slash. The furor eventually eased, and slash fiction continued to be written in the *Blake's 7* universe (Langley, June 17, 1999).

By the 1990's, dozens of television shows and feature films were being slashed. Fanfiction entered the electronic age in 1991, with *Star Trek* once again leading the way. Online fanfiction began to grow in popularity in newsgroups and private mailing lists, but slash still had not made the leap, although there were a few private slash mailing lists in existence. In 1996, slash fiction started to appear in search engine listings of private web pages, and within a year, it was extremely prolific on the web (Langley, June 17, 1999).

By this time, "slash" was an established format and had its own fans, people who were dedicated to the *concept* of slash fiction itself. For these fans of slash as a genre, anyone could be slashed, not just shows and characters that seemed to lend themselves to slash, as was done previously. Slash was written in any show with a fan following. Slash fandom had also moved from the realm of Science Fiction, buddy cop and B-rated TV shows into the realm of the mainstream with "serious" shows like, *Homicide: Life on the Street, Law and Order*, and *Oz* developing a small, but growing slash following.

The Lucasfilm Letters

Zines were generally too small and underground to attract attention from the producers of big name shows. The first exception occurred in June of 1977, when the publishers of the *Star Trek* genzine, *Dreadnought Explorations*, L. Maclaren and G. Martin, received cease-and-desist letters from Paramount lawyers. After many discussions between the publishers of the zine and various legal representatives for Paramount, it was discovered that this fanzine was mistaken for a professional publication. When the confusion cleared, the case was dropped and, after a temporary shutdown, the zine continued (Langley, March 11, 1999, and March 18, 1999).

In 1978, B. Clark published the first *Star Wars* fanzine, *Skywalker # 1*.
In the spirit of sharing, early editors of *Star Wars* zines often sent their
finished products to the offices of Lucasfilms (Langley, June 30, 1999).
Lucasfilms openly allowed genzines based on *Star Wars*, but were clear to
fans that absolutely no pornography (gay or straight) would be allowed
(Langley, March 1, 1999). In May 1981, L. Deneroff and C. Levine
published the adult, heterosexual stories, "Slow Boat to Bespin, 1 and 2"
in the multimedia zine *Guardian #3* (Langley, June 30, 1999). In August
of that same year, Maureen Garrett, Director of the Official *Star Wars*
Fan Club, mailed to all *Star Wars* fanzine publishers an explanation of
the cease-and-desist letter Deneroff and Levine had received. She
asserted:

> Lucasfilm Ltd. does own *all* rights to the Star Wars
> characters and we are going to insist upon *no* pornography.
> This may mean no fanzines if that measure is what is
> necessary to stop the few from darkening the reputation our
> company is so proud of. For now, the few who ignore the
> limits of good taste have been turned over to our lega [sic]
> department for legal action. (Italics in original) (*Comlink #3*,
> September, 1981)

Ms. Garrett added that some form of official "guidelines" from Lucasfilms
would be forthcoming. On October 7, 1981, another letter from Maureen
Garrett, co-signed by Frances Smith, Legal Counsel, was sent to
publishers of *Star Wars* fanzines, containing the previously promised
"guidelines". This letter reasserted the ownership through copyright of

all *Star Wars* characters by Lucasfilms and set out guidelines for all fanzines to abide by:

> The key factor which we would like all fanzine publishers and contributors to keep in mind is the wholesome nature and broad-based appeal of the *Star Wars* Saga. The character of the films and all authorized literature themselves best illustrate the manner in which we believe the *Star Wars* Saga should be depicted. Lucasfilm can only appeal to your sense of decency and respect for the *Star Wars* characters in asking that you consider our desires. Lucasfilm objects to material that contains: pornography, vulgarity, or explicit gore and violence. – The kind of writing which 99.9% of you have already labeled as "garbage." (*Jundland Wastes #5/6*, November, 1981 and *Comlink 4*, December 1, 1981).

These guidelines were vague and overall were considered to be fairly useless by the fan community, but they had the desired effect of squashing the budding slash community working in the *Star Wars* universe. Adult fiction was still published, but it remained deeply underground. Over the years a few cease-and-desist orders have been sent out in other fandoms, but none have had the same fandom-wide effect of shutting down the public production of slash fiction as the Lucasfilm letters did.

Slash Fiction Today

Slash fiction, initially a small movement, has gained a more mainstream profile. Recently *SF Gate*, the online version of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Wired* and *Salon* magazine have published articles mentioning slash fiction. Nevertheless, slash works are still considered socially

peripheral. Internet servers, concerned about their images, as well as copyright infringement, will often shut down "adult" sites after receiving only one or two complaints. Geocities, in particular, has removed several slash sites.

As yet, however, no one has challenged slash in a court of law. While many creators of feature movies and television shows know of the existence of slash fiction, many turn a blind eye to it. Even George Lucas, who previously attempted to remove all pornography from the *Star Wars* universe, has yet to attempt to tackle the slash fiction writing for his latest feature, *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace.* As well, with the increased interest in slash fiction, the traditionally held view of slash as a violation of copyright is being debated. Some recent thinking suggests that fanfiction and slash fiction should be protected under the banner of "transformative" works and thus not necessarily considered as copyright infringements (Leonard, 1999).

Academic Discussion of Slash

Science Fiction author Joanna Russ was the first academic to write about slash fiction in a public forum. In her 1985 collection of essays, *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans and Perverts*, she reworked her essay, "Another Addict raves about K/S" previously published in 1985, in the fanzine *Nome #8*. The next academic writing about slash

was, "Romantic Myth, Transcendence and *Star Trek* Zines" by Patricia Frazer Lamb and Diana L. Veith in the 1986 book, *Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature*, edited by Donald Palumbo. These authors put forth similar theories to Joanna Russ about slash fiction. Likening slash to romance novels, these academics tell us that slash is better than porn because of its focus on characters and relationships, but that it is still based in dominant views of society. For Russ, Lamb, and Veith, both male characters are written as women or androgynous beings; both are active and passive at any given point, each embodying the feminine or masculine characteristics needed at the time.

In answer to the most pressing question - Why two men? Why no women? - they speculate that what women want is a relationship based on equality. Because generally, women are not substantively equal to men in society, they say that women cannot imagine a relationship between a man and a woman ever being equal. Russ, Lamb and Veith also believe that since it is difficult for women to see themselves in a relationship where they "save the day" then return home to a positive and loving partner, they project all of these combined desires onto the male characters in *Star Trek* - a relationship between two men, based on equality, respect, and mutual trust and loyalty. It is only at the end of their article that Lamb and Veith differ slightly from Russ. While Russ remains silent on this issue, Lamb and Veith see slash as a way for

women to remove gender as the determining force in relationships. Slash writers provide both men and women with a vision of a new and different way of loving, and open up new possibilities for women.

The fan and academic, Edi Bjorklund, published her article, "Thinking About Slash/Thinking About Women" in *Nome #11* in June 1988. Bjorklund agrees with Russ, Lamb and Veith that true love can only be found between equals and that women cannot see themselves saving the universe. Bjorklund points out that for some women, slash has a political purpose. It furthers the feminist tenet of decreasing sexism and homophobia, and it is empowering, as women publicly assert their sexualities. Bjorklund makes a connection between slash and women's real life experiences, suggesting that writers and readers of slash use it as a lens to help them focus on, and deal with, the discrimination and inequality they face in their everyday lives. Recognizing the diversity of slash fandom, the different functions it plays, and the qualities that people take from it, Bjorklund writes: "Slash is not just a new kind of women's literature. It is a means whereby we may defy a wide variety of social conventions and taboos..... Slash fandom is, to sum up, a tactic of subversion for women" (Bjorklund, 1988, pg. 38).

In 1992, Camille Bacon-Smith published her ethnographic study of the female fan community, *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the*

Creation of Popular Myth. In her discussion of slash fiction, Bacon-Smith

disagrees with Russ's assertion that the male characters are really

female. She believes that this argument might hold some general

credibility, but it is too simplistic to encompass the entire genre. Bacon-

Smith believes that slash fiction gives women a place to distance

themselves from unfulfilling relationships with men and creates an

avenue where female writers can explore their feelings toward men.

Many fans disagreed with Bacon-Smith's conclusions as misrepresenting

fandom and their own experiences (Langley, February 21, 1999, Lewis,

1997).

Constance Penley, in her article, "Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics, and

Technology" (1991), argues that women write slash fiction because it is

fun to write explicit erotica, and because the very practice of reading and

writing slash fiction reduces the societal inequalities between the sexes.

In her later works, notably the book *NASA/TREK* (1997), Penley expands

this notion. Countering Russ' arguments that women writing slash seek

to turn the male characters into women, or androgynous beings, Penley

proposes that the women are attempting to rewrite the male body into an

image that is more sensitive and caring. She believes that slashers are

thus writing more than just their version of a perfect man; they are also

critiquing and reworking society's definitions of masculinity.

In 1991, Henry Jenkins III, wrote the article, "*Star Trek* Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching." In this article, Jenkins introduces us to his use of the notion of "textual poaching," first introduced by Michel DeCerteau. Jenkins briefly mentions slash fiction, telling us that, "what K/S does openly, all fans do covertly. In constructing the feminine countertext that lurks in the margins of the primary text, these readers necessarily redefine the text in the process of rereading and rewriting it" (Jenkins, 1991, pg. 196). The next year, Jenkins expanded these thoughts in his book, *Textual Poachers*.

In *Textual Poachers*, Jenkins builds on DeCerteau's idea of "poaching." For DeCerteau, in his book, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) a struggle exists between the readers and the producers of texts. In this struggle, authority is given to the producers as the socially sanctioned people who "know" over the less knowledgeable readers and consumers of the text (Jenkins, 1992). The producers of the text have the "right" way to look at it and the consumers must meekly follow along. Textual poachers challenge this pattern by creating their own meanings from the texts. For Jenkins, DeCerteau's notion of poaching acknowledges ways in which fans can resist and challenge the attempts to control them through "appropriating" the text away from the socially sanctioned reading. "Poaching" emphasizes the fluidity of the interpretation of the text while at the same time, recognizes that the fan reading is not always

resistant to the dominant view; fans still work within the structures designed by the producers of the text (Jenkins, 1991). Jenkins distances himself slightly from DeCerteau when he indicates that in fandom, readers create a tangible community. Discussions among readers expand the experience of reading beyond its first consumption, and create a foundation for how future readings will be approached, countering DeCerteau's assertion that readers are too transient to create a stable community.

A limitation of all academic writings on slash fiction is that the only slash community studied in any depth is the *Star Trek* community. While initially *Star Trek* was the only slash community, now thousands of writers and readers produce slash fiction in hundreds of different fandoms. When academics exclusively concentrate on one specific fandom it does not allow for all variations in slash fiction to come to light. Another critique is that while some academics, notably Henry Jenkins, have shared their thoughts and findings with the fans, most academics are publishing without taking into account the thoughts of the people they write about. There are noticeable rumblings in the fan community around the writings of Joanna Russ, Camille Bacon-Smith, and Constance Penley (Langley, February 21 and 28, 1999). Many fans feel their theories are out of date and neglect the rapid-fire changes that occur in slash fiction, particularly on the web. None of these academics

answer the question of why slash is still written in spite of the presentation of an egalitarian heterosexual relationship (as seen in *The X-Files*), or why a rapidly growing subgenera of slash is one in which the two partners are decidedly *unequal*, with deliberate and extreme power imbalances placed into otherwise equal partnerships (e.g. sado/masochism and dominant/submissive relationships).

Pornography or Erotica?

The point of both pornography and erotica is similar. The content of the work is sexually explicit and the intent is to arouse sexual desire. Nevertheless, the perception of pornography and erotica within mainstream society is vastly different. It is important to look at our use of words and to define the academic terms being used in this paper. Words are important; they shape how we see and accept things. "The definition of a word determines who gets to be included in the activities of people defined by that word.... Words have real-world consequences" (Christina, 1997, pg. 33).

For many people, erotica lives in the genteel world of the respectable middle and upper class. Produced by respectable publishing houses, on good quality paper, erotic literature is well bound with glossy, shiny covers. Erotica sells in mainstream bookstores at high prices to

respectable individuals (Carol, 1994, Preston, 1992, Preston, 1995, Rubin, 1993). The stereotype of erotica is that it is generally less explicit than pornography, and primarily uses words as its vehicle. Erotic stories are considered to be serious artistic endeavors by authors who are attempting to make valid commentary on noteworthy issues. This writing is thought to be of high quality, is socially respectable, and does not degrade women.

A popular stereotype of pornography is that it is cheaply produced by obscure or poorly regarded publishers, appears in low quality magazines and pulp paperbacks, and is sold in mass quantities at a low price (for enormous profit to the pornographers) in seedy, dingy stores populated by furtive men. Pornography appears primarily as movies and photographs, but when written, pornographers use vulgar language and graphic, unimaginative text. These poorly written and acted stories and films are said to degrade women and to have little, if any, redeeming merit (Arobateau, 1997, Shiner, 1997).

There is a strong debate over the use of the words "pornography" and "erotica." Each word is loaded with societal meaning. Many sex radicals and pro-pornography feminists believe that the delineation between pornography and erotica is based in classism, with the upper classes attempting to regulate lower class individuals' access to sexually explicit

works, while maintaining availability for themselves (Feminists Against Censorship, 1991, McIntosh, 1993, Preston, 1995).

To challenge the largely classist distinction between pornography/erotica and low art/high art, and to stay true to my sex radical feminist beliefs, there will be no distinction made between high "erotica" and low "pornography." In this thesis, all sexually explicit material will be referred to indiscriminately as either "pornography" or "sexually explicit" writing.

History of Pornography and Censorship

Before the nineteenth century, sexually explicit works were unregulated, and pornography was not a word or concept in general use, while anything that could be considered "politically" suspect (e.g. criticism of the king or the church) was regulated (Lacombe, 1994, McNair, 1996, Kipnis, 1996). The word "pornography" was first used in the mid nineteenth century when the British discovered a collection of erotic Greek pictures and art from Pompeii. To keep women and the easily corrupted rabble from seeing these ancient works, only rich men who could claim a "scholarly" interest in the Grecian works were allowed to view them (McNair, 1996, McIntosh, 1993). From the beginning, then, pornography was based on both a political and classist division. As access to printed material increased generally, and the common man was

better able to gather his own collection of explicit works, the upper class began to fear for the morals of those beneath them. It was only then that a distinction began to be made between acceptable "high" erotica (what the rich could afford) and unacceptable "low" pornography (what the poor could afford) (Preston, 1995, Carol, 1994, McNair, 1996). True to the roots of censorship based on controlling the masses and maintaining the status quo, books on birth control and other politically sensitive issues were also deemed unacceptable for the "morally lax" and "easily corruptible", i.e., women, children and the poor (Schneir, 1994, Carol, 1994).

Over time, both Canada and the United States adopted obscenity legislation that based its definition of obscenity on protecting weak-minded and/or immoral individuals. In the 1950s and 1960s, with the "sexual revolution," civil libertarians, artists and the general population saw obscenity laws as outdated. These laws were eventually changed in the 1970s to focus on sexually explicit works that had no social or artistic redeeming values (Lacombe, 1994, Schneir, 1994, Juffer, 1998). Pornography went through a boom with the change to the obscenity laws. As long as it had some sort of social message, a pornographic work was unlikely to be censored.

There were two main viewpoints on pornography during the 1960s. The first was a religious/moral perspective that purported that pornography degrades the people who use it, keeps them from becoming productive members of society, and destroys society's moral fabric. The second perspective was that of liberals who believed that only science could answer the question of whether pornography was dangerous or not, and that over regulation was detrimental to expression (Lacombe, 1994). At first, feminists joined with civil libertarians in endorsing this new sexual freedom. Many saw the fight against obscenity laws as a way to remove the heterosexual, white male power over the female body. It was only in the late 1970s that feminists began to see pornography as a representation of all that went wrong with the sexual revolution - the degrading images of women, the acceptance of sexual violence and the still unequal position of women in relation to men (Lacombe, 1994).

Anti-Pornography Feminism in the 70s

The feminist approach to pornography shifted in the late 1970s. During the early 1970s women began to speak about the violence they suffered at the hands of men. "Scientific" links had been made between sexually explicit material and violence. The feminist argument against pornography expanded to become based on pornography's representation within a political, cultural and economic context, allowing the feminists

of the 1970s to confront the societal inequalities missed in the earlier civil liberties view on pornography. Defining their argument on the way that sex was *portrayed* in the most sexually explicit materials they could find, some feminists put forward the idea that pornography was dehumanizing, degrading and harmful to all women (Kaay, 1996, Lacombe, 1994). This stance came to be known as anti-pornography feminism.

Anti-Pornography feminists became outspoken opponents of pornography, arguing that because pornography takes place in a patriarchal society, it reflects and supports the dominance of men over women (McNair, 1996). Pornography was not just a fantasy or abstract concept, it was a form of violence against women. Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon became best known for their vehement tirades on the evils of pornography. They, and other anti-pornography feminists, believed that the real purpose of pornography was to debase and demean women and turn them into sexual objects, thus dehumanizing them (Dworkin, 1981, MacKinnon, 1993, Butterworth, 1996, McElroy, 1995). For these feminists, images of women being violated and violently abused link pornography directly with the sexual violence that *all* women experience in their everyday lives. Pornography was not just a fantasy or abstract concept, it was real and actual violence against women. "Women in pornography are bound, battered, tortured, humiliated and

killed. Or, to be fair to the soft core, merely taken and used"
(MacKinnon, 1993, pg. 278). The only solution to the problem of
pornography was its complete and total censorship – in other words, its
abolition (Rubin 1993).

For some anti-pornography feminists, there was a divide between the
"pornographic" and the "erotic." "Erotic" texts showed pleasurable
sexual acts between two consenting, willing adults with no power
difference between them, while "pornography" depicted a power
imbalance where pain and submission was assumed to be a natural part
of women's sexuality (Steinem, 1983, Lacombe, 1994). For these
feminists, some forms of sexually explicit writing and pictures were
acceptable, particularly works by women. Other feminists, such as
Dworkin, believed that the distinction between the pornographic and the
erotic was moot and that until *all* women were free, *no* sexual image or
writing about women would be anything but pornographic (Dworkin,
1981, Caputi, 1994).

Anti-Pornography feminists of the late 1970s found that the harm that
pornography did to women occurred in three different ways, from the
direct to the indirect. The first harm of pornography was done to the
women *within* pornography, to the women who were beaten, mutilated
and degraded to get pornographic pictures (Lacombe, 1994, MacKinnon,

29

1993). They believed that many women in pornography are there because of an abusive past, a past that pornography takes advantage of. The definition of the second harm of pornography rests on pseudo-scientific evidence that shows that the consumption of pornography by men encourages violence against women (Lacombe, 1994). Anti-pornography advocates point out that in a laboratory setting, after exposure to pornography, men display an increased insensitivity to women and to their pain, and an increased willingness to act aggressively towards women (Lacombe, 1994). The third and final harm of pornography is social in nature. Pornography teaches men and women how they are supposed to act sexually and inhibits women's efforts to become equal. Because pornography socializes women to be passive, pornography inhibits women's rights to equality (Lacombe, 1994).

This three-pronged attack on pornography was strategic for anti-pornography feminists. If the argument of actual harm failed, they could argue against pornography for "scientific" reasons. If that argument failed, then their final argument could be that pornography inhibited women's attempts to gain equality. With these three "harms" of pornography, the feminist debate about sexism focused strongly on the single issue of pornography and its link with male violence (Rubin, 1993). The hard-line stance against pornography brought anti-pornography feminists into close contact with other groups working against

pornography, but not for the same reasons. Conservative and far right religious groups were happy to accept help from the anti-pornography feminists, while they simultaneously promoted other platforms that undermined feminist goals.

Opposition to Anti-Pornography Feminism

From the beginning there was opposition to the 1970s anti-pornography feminists' hard-line defense of the censorship of pornography (Carol, 1994, Lacombe, 1994, McNair, 1996, Shaw, 1997). Anti-Censorship feminists often agreed with the anti-pornography idea that pornography was insidious, but were opposed to complete censorship of pornography. The groupings: "Pro-Pornography" and "Sex Radicalism" came out of the pro-pornography/anti-censorship debate. Pro-pornography and sex radical feminists are firmly anti-censorship, as well as believing that pornography is good. Despite some differences in opinion, all three groups have the same concerns: putting faith in science or censorship, porn as a scapegoat for sexism, censorship of feminist and gay/lesbian works, harming women in the sex industry, and desexualizing women.

Before most feminists adopted science as the definitive proof that pornography was harmful to women, they had previously been highly critical of science and its underlying biases (Lacombe, 1994). Science

has not always worked in women's best interests, and anti-censorship feminists were understandably concerned with anti-pornography feminists' blind allegiance to the statements of scientists. When quasi-scientific proof was brought forward implying harm to women, anti-censorship feminists critically examined the studies being done and had considerable concerns. The most basic concern was that even the scientists doing the studies were reluctant to make sweeping statements or to generalize their findings (Carol, 1994, Lacombe, 1994). What was found could only be applied to a laboratory setting, not to the outside world where thousands of different stimuli and variables interact (Carol, 1994). Some studies suggest that pornography does not affect men's aggressiveness towards women, and one study shows that pornography reduces aggressiveness in men. There has even been a study that shows that misogynistic pornography helps push men more towards a feminist stance regarding women (Carol, 1994). Obviously the studies are varied, contradictory and "prove" nothing (Lacombe, 1994, McNair, 1996, Carol, 1994).

Censorship has not always worked in the best interests of women. Anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals were understandably concerned when anti-pornography feminists seemed to place their faith in an institution that has worked against feminist issues in the past. In the most basic sense, censoring pornography infringes on

an individual's right to free expression. They were also concerned that anti-pornography and censorship laws that were based on the hate speech legislation would follow its same path, i.e. being used against those they are supposed to protect (Kaay, 1996). History demonstrates that censorship is a political act and is usually used against groups speaking out against those in power, while still allowing their "friends" freedom of speech (Carol, 1994, McElroy, 1995).

Anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals believe that censorship never works in the best interests of women and other marginalized people (Califia, 1995, Carol, 1994, McElroy, 1995). No matter how liberal or feminist the censorship laws might be, they are still largely reinforced by the sexist, misogynistic, homophobic society in which we live (Carol, 1994, Califia, 1994, 1995, Kaay, 1996). Cultural products, particularly our society's mainstream print and media, are dominated by and designed around the needs and desires of heterosexual white men. What is good for women is not necessarily what is good for men, and society will always reflect this divide.

Anti-Censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals were also worried that the struggle against pornography was deflecting attention from the greater issue of sexism and women's place in society. They pointed out that institutionalized sexism is far more than just

pornography: television, movies, pop culture, and music all promote sexist images of women, as do schools, the family, and the church (Carol, 1994, Kaay, 1996, Lacombe, 1994, McNair, 1996, Rubin 1993). To focus solely on pornography removed it from the social structures supporting and helping to create it. It also created an "excuse" for those who commit violent crimes "because" of pornography, and perpetuates the patriarchal image of women being weak and in need of protection (Kaay, 1996).

Anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals were concerned with the effect that a complete ban on any type of pornographic work would have on sexually explicit works by lesbians, gay men and feminists. These types of works are not produced by "big business." They often explore the nature of human sexuality and desire in a nonsexist manner or show alternative images of women and men, yet they would be included in any ban (Avedon and Matrix, 1996, Kaay, 1996, Lacombe, 1994).

Along with harming gay/lesbian and feminist works, anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals worried that the strict anti-pornography position would harm women working in the sex industry. Prostitutes and other women working within the sex industry find the anti-pornography feminist position to be condescending, alienating and

offensive to them and the choices they have made (Rubin, 1993, Shaw, 1997). The negative attitude of feminists to pornography helps to perpetuate the discrimination that sex workers face in society and helps to promote a degrading image of women in the sex industry (Carol, 1994, Nagle, 1997). Anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals believe that feminists should be working towards supporting prostitutes and other women in the sex industry, not reviling them and portraying them as "vile whores" (Carol, 1994).

The desexualizing of women is the final concern that anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals have with the anti-pornography position. According to anti-pornography feminists, women are not attracted to pornographic images. Even feminist depictions of female sexuality are problematic for anti-pornography feminists (Queen, 1997). Anti-censorship, pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals believe this position to be dangerous and wrong. In accepting the desexualization of women, through denying them the possibility of being aroused by explicit works, a sexist argument is being promoted that contributes to the objectification of women and denies women the possibility of finding for themselves, by exploring pornographic pictures and texts, what women find arousing (Assister and Carol, 1993, Califia, 1994, Carol and Pollard, Kaay, 1996, McElroy, 1995, 1993, Rubin, 1993).

Pro-pornography feminists and sex radicals take their concerns with anti-pornography feminism one step further. Speaking from the boundaries of society, these groups talk about the benefit pornography can have. Pornography is one of the most effective methods for imparting sexual health information to marginalized groups. The self-pleasure that pornography brings is also often one of the ways that people get through difficult times in their lives. Exposing images and thoughts that are not spoken of in mainstream society allows people with alternative sexualities to see that they are not alone, and can often provide an opening in which internalized homophobia can be confronted (Califia, 1988, 1994, Preston, 1993).

These concerns evolved from the early debates about pornography and censorship and form the basis of feminist discussions on pornography today. While the anti-pornography position still exists, many feminists and feminisms have taken a step back from a strict anti-pornography position and are looking at pornography from a variety of positions. However, the ongoing debate over pornography, erotica, and censorship suffers from a lack of new research, especially with regards to women's experiences as producers and consumers of sexually explicit imagery. Chapter Two provides an overview of the research design of this study, followed by detailed findings in later chapters, which will contribute to this debate.

Chapter II

Research Design

Introduction

For this thesis 200 hundred women and 10 men were surveyed from within the slash community. I asked questions about these individuals' involvement with writing pornographic literature and their experiences with censorship (See Appendix I for the complete questionnaire). Questions were asked to discover why they write slash, what risks they were taking and how they minimize these risks. Questions were also asked about how society is responding to their writing. The questions then focused on censorship, their experiences with it, and how the law, publishers, Internet Service Providers and others are reacting to their writing. Finally, demographic information about the participants was collected. This included information around their educational level, age, sex, income, sexual orientation, area of residence, and occupation.

This thesis is designed as exploratory research with original data obtained from structured interviews with open-ended questions conducted via the Internet. It incorporates qualitative data from the interviews, with quantitative demographic information. The purpose of this research is to explore the slash community's experiences with and reactions to the topics of feminism, pornography, censorship and risk.

My participants, by the nature of the slash community, were predominantly female writers and/or publishers of slash fiction over the age of 18. In this study, I contacted them through snowball sampling, recommendations given to me through personal contacts, and through responses to a request for participants submitted across various e-mail lists dedicated to discussion and distribution of slash fiction. I found the list names and e-mail address through the "KS Nicols FanFiction on the Web" site (http:/members.aol.com/ksnicholas/fanfic/index.html). I also accessed ONElist and Egroups to find mailing lists dedicated to slash fiction. From these sources I gathered the addresses of 364 web pages, 129 mailing lists, ten zine publishers, and 17 addresses of people who had both web pages and moderated mailing lists. In total, this represented 45 different fandoms and 149 multiple fandom sites. At least three of the mailing lists are entirely based on f/f pairings, as opposed to the usual m/m pairing specific lists.

I presumed a snowball method for gathering respondents would give me a higher likelihood of respondents referring people of legal age to my questionnaire. An introductory e-mail was sent out to various e-mail lists dedicated to the discussion of slash, individuals with slash-based web pages, and slash zine publishers with pages on the web. This introductory e-mail contained a brief introduction to myself, my interest in slash and my request for participation. A link to the web page created

for this project (see Appendix II) was provided, as well as to my e-mail address, with a request to e-mail me if they had any questions.

Every attempt was made to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents. All names and identifying information were changed or destroyed to protect the participants. All information was kept in a secure location and will be destroyed six months after the completion of the research. A web page was designed to secure the respondents' anonymity; any secondary information that might indicate a respondent's identity was changed or removed.

The project's web page included a short biography detailing my interest in fanfiction, fandom, and slash fiction. There was a description of what was required from participants, and requests to pass the word on to other people and to link my page with their own. The cut-off date for accepting completed interviews was indicated clearly. My e-mail address was provided so that if respondents had questions, they could contact me. Finally, there was a link to the e-mail address of a long-time slash fan, Katherine Langley, who agreed to answer any questions about me or my research that individuals might not want to ask me directly. At the bottom of the page, there was a button to the next page.

The second page could be accessed without going through the first page.

Page 2 presented an information sheet for participants. It briefly explained the research, explained that participation is voluntary and briefly described the process I would use to maintain participants anonymity. This page also contained my e-mail address so respondents' could contact me if they had any questions. Finally, the risks involved with participating in this research were explained. At the bottom of the second page was a button to the third page.

The third page was only accessible through the second page. No direct links to this page were possible. In this third page was the informed consent for the research. Participants filled out the consent form with their name, address, and e-mail address. The date was automatically included on this form. At the bottom of the page was a button to the next page. When this button was pressed, a randomly generated five-digit number was attached to both the consent form and the fourth page. A copy of the consent form was sent to both the project hotmail e-mail address, and the e-mail address supplied by the respondent. I set up a hotmail address for the project so that there would be no record on the SFU server containing a respondent's information and the randomly generated five digit number assigned to them.

The fourth page was only accessible via the consent form on the third page. On the fourth page was the interview, along with spaces to answer the questions. At the bottom of the page was a button to send this interview to my SFU e-mail address. When this page was sent to my SFU e-mail address, the randomly generated number produced on page three was included as the only participant identifier. The consent form was not at any time linked to the interview material, except through this randomly assigned number. The consent form and the interview never arrived to the researcher at the same e-mail address. The button at the bottom of the fourth page sent the respondents to the fifth and final page.

There was a brief note of thanks for participating on the final page, and a request to the participant to only fill out the interview once. There was a recommended date when respondents could check back to the web page to see the results of the interviews posted. There was also a section where the respondent could fill in their e-mail address if they wished to be contacted when the data analysis was finished and posted to the web page. If the request was made, this e-mail address was sent to the researcher's e-mail address. While a respondent was able to re-access the interview from this page (through the 'back' button in Netscape), if they resent the interview, the randomly generated number would remain

the same. If the respondent went back to the consent form and resent the consent form, a new randomly generated number would be created.

Four respondents wished to fill out the interview through e-mail. To do so, they created an anonymous hotmail account and from this account requested the questions. Before I sent them the questionnaire, I sent out the information sheet and consent form. The respondents were required to fill out the consent form and returned it to the researcher's hotmail account before the questions were sent. When the consent form was returned, a random number between 0 and 200 was assigned to the consent form. This number was also added to the interview sent out to the respondent. The returned interview was stripped of any identifying information.

Responses to the interview questions were collected between November 1, 1999 and December 15, 1999. After December 15, the questionnaire was replaced by a page informing people that responses were no longer being collected and that they should check back to this page at a later date if they were interested in looking at and commenting on the analyzed data.

One must have a computer, phone line, modem and appropriate software to access the Internet and World Wide Web. Most people also have to pay an Internet Provider for access to the Internet. All of this adds up to a considerable expense to connect online. At first glance, it is easy to see how the web could be perceived as a technology for the wealthy.

Concerns have been raised about the perceived elite nature of the Internet for doing research on women. It is only on closer examination of the issue that one begins to see what is occurring in society. Barriers still exist to limit individuals' access to the Internet, particularly for people who do not speak English, but in numerous ways, these barriers are beginning to be overcome. If an individual cannot afford to own a computer herself, she can access the Internet via the public library. Many public libraries are beginning to offer free Internet access as a part of their services. All universities offer both free (or drastically reduced priced) web access and computer terminals to allow students to connect. Finally, numerous "Internet cafes" are springing up in cities, large and small, allowing individuals to pay a minimal amount to surf the net. To counter the issue of expensive web page and e-mail providers, many companies are set up to offer "free" e-mail accounts and space for web pages (e.g. Yahoo!, Hotmail, Geocities). While there are problems with

"free" providers, mainly the irritation of having numerous "pop up" windows filled with advertising, they are still free and easy to access. These options allow many people who traditionally were eliminated from accessing the Internet to surf the web and receive unlimited e-mail.

Traditionally, women's access to pornography is much different from men's. Women have historically been too tied to the home because of childcare, housework, lack of leisure time, and monetary considerations to seek out sexually explicit works (Juffer, 1998), not to mention the physical and geographical situations (like "red light districts") that often denied women access to pornographic works. It is pretty clear that historically "men generally have more time and mobility to access and consume porn than do women" (Juffer, 1998, pg. 6).

The web is increasing women's access to pornography by bringing it into the home, the traditional domain of women. While most Internet pornography still focuses on the desires (or perceived desires) of white heterosexual men, there are numerous, free "women friendly" sites emerging (Juffer, 1998), with slash fiction sites being a case in point.

Due to the subcultural nature of slash fiction and the continuing debates

as to its validity and respectability, the community as a whole tends to

be wary of strangers and researchers. Some researchers (Bacon-Smith,

Penley, Jenkins) have studied the community, but many of their

conclusions have been hotly contested by the slash community. The

slash community's negative reaction to Camille Bacon-Smith's idea that

slash fiction is a substitute for unfulfilling relationships is a case in point

(Lewis, 1997). I hoped that my insider status in the community would

allow me to bypass some of the resistance to talking to an outsider.

Rather than presenting myself as an objective outsider wanting to map

this unusual occurrence, I presented myself as an interested fan of slash

fiction talking about my experiences as well as the experiences of others.

This will be discussed later in this work.

Sampling

I interviewed insiders to the experience of writing and publishing slash

fiction who were able to provide me with "information rich" descriptions

of their experiences (Patton, 1990). These interviews allowed me to learn

a great deal of important information on the topic of writing sexually

explicit works and censorship. The people I interviewed were ideal informants because they are members of the slash community. Each was a self-identified participant in their community, even if they participated as an anonymous member or through the use of an alias. This identification with the slash community allowed each person a personal understanding of what it means to be a sexually explicit writer in society.

Each participant's inherent knowledge allowed me to use the intensity sampling strategy discussed by Michael Quinn Patton (1990) in his book, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. When using intensity sampling, the researcher interviews people who know and have had experience with what the researcher is looking for. This way, each interview is filled with descriptions that can later be analyzed. With intensity sampling, each case is filled with usable information, but no one case is an extreme example of what is being studied (Patton, 1990). Since each participant is an insider, they were able to provide "thick descriptions" of their experiences (Patton, 1990, pg. 430). Thick descriptions give the researcher a lot of information with which to work. With these "thick descriptions", I was able to make connections between both the respondents and outside theories.

For this research project, I did structured interviews with open-ended questions conducted over the Internet. The open-ended question "maximizes discovery and description" (Raymond, as quoted in Reinharz, 1992). Interviews allowed respondents to use their own voices, instead of the voice of the researcher (Reinharz, 1992). All interviews took place over the Internet. The interview questions were designed in advance and were carefully worded and ordered to elicit more than single word answers and to encourage open-ended responses as much as possible.

The interview questions evolved from themes found in three major sources. The first source was the community itself. It was a common occurrence on the mailing lists I subscribed to, to see once or twice a month, someone writing to inform the community that their web page had been taken down by their ISP because of their slash writing. When Yahoo! and Microsoft joined together, there was a mass exodus of people who left Yahoo! out of fear that their pages would be censored. There was often discussion on various mailing lists about which web servers would not censor web pages. Another issue discussed extensively by various members of the community was what was an appropriate type of writing and censorship.

The second source was the available academic literature. In reading

through these works, I often found reference to ways in which the women

writing slash fiction kept themselves "safe" in relation to their writing.

"Codes" and pseudonyms were discussed and the importance of these

measures to the community was explained.

The final source I used for the development of my questionnaire was my

own experiences as a fan and a reader and writer of slash fiction. As a

member of the slash community for three years, I felt that I had a good

working knowledge of the issues that the slash community faces. I have

been involved in slash-specific mailing lists for numerous years and I

have friends who I have met through slash contacts and who talk to me

about the issues they feel are relevant. I have read thousands of slash

stories and have done my best to trace the development of slash fiction.

Initially, my questionnaire contained over forty questions. To limit the

scope of the project, it was decided to eliminate any questions related to

the literary value of slash fiction. While they were interesting questions,

they did not have anything to do with the issue of censorship.

Eventually the questionnaire was brought down to thirty-three questions

and fourteen Background Information questions.

After receiving ethics approval (described later) from the University, I set up a web page containing the questionnaire. As slash readers and writers are predominantly women, I contacted seven women: five recommended to me by a long time fan in the slash community, and two whom I knew from other sources. I asked these individuals to read over my web page and questionnaire to critique any parts that might be confusing, need more explanation or generally did not work. Five of the women agreed to participate in the validation process. The original deadline of October 15, 1999 was delayed until October 29, 1999 as most of the women indicated that they would be too busy to participate until after October 20.

By the revised deadline of October 29, four of the women had contacted me with their recommendations for changes to my web page and questionnaire. The suggested changes were minor in scope and dealt primarily with clarifying my intention. I willingly made the suggested changes.

On November 1, 1999 I sent out my request for participation to the collected e-mail addresses and mailing lists. The response was instantaneous with over fifty questionnaires collected in the first day.

Some people wrote to me with questions and clarifications, which I answered promptly.

There was some excitement on one mailing list when a member accessed my page and became alarmed to read my list of the potential risks to participation. She wrote to the mailing list indicating that before participating, they should "read the fine print", since I was saying that I was going to give the names of any respondents to "The Powers That Be". As this was a mailing list that I am normally on, I was able to respond quickly to her concerns. I indicated that, far from trying to hide the risks (as she was implying), I was openly pointing them out on the web page and warning all potential participants that, if forced by legal authorities, I could be required to produce my contact list. After my explanation, the discussion on the list quickly died down.

The large majority of my responses came within the first two weeks of my request being sent out. After that time, generally two or three responses a day came in, until December 15, 1999 my given cut off date. At that time I stopped accepting responses to the questionnaire.

After all responses were received, I realized that there was too much data for me to get through in any reasonable amount of time. To limit the scope of the project, I only analyzed a subset of the questions that related directly to the key research question. Looking over my questionnaire, the questions I asked could be divided into five key themes: Feminism, Pornography, Risks for Slash, Censorship, and Media and Technology Savviness. I eliminated any questions that did not relate to any of these five themes. This narrowed the questions I was looking at to twenty-two questions (Questions 11-32) and the fourteen background information questions.

While some questions fit only into one theme, for example question 13, "Do you identify as a feminist?" fits only into the Feminism theme, many questions could be cross-referenced into multiple themes. For example, question 14, "Do you know about the various feminist positions on pornography? Please elaborate." fits into both the Feminism theme and the Pornography theme. This overlapping of themes occurs in several places. Please refer to the table below.

Table #1 - Division of Questions into Themes

THEME	QUESTIONS
Feminism	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Pornography	14, 15, 16, 18
Risks for Slash	11, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31,32
Censorship	21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32
Media and Technology Savvy	11, 12, 27, 28, 29, 30

Examining the questions according to themes, illustrates how each theme interacts and is affected by the other. By the very nature of the questionnaire design, the questions are interconnected. However, to avoid repetition, only one theme will be used for each question. Refer to the table below to see the final designation of questions by theme.

Table #2 - Questions and Themes

THEME	QUESTIONS
Feminism	13, 17
Pornography	14, 15, 16, 18
Risks for Slash	19, 20
Censorship	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32
Media and Technology Savvy	11, 12, 27, 28, 29, 30

Working with the remaining questions, I separated each response into individual questions and stamped each question with the individual's five-digit identification number. Each question was placed in its own envelope to facilitate the examination of a single question in context with the other respondents.

Next, I began to read through the individual responses to each question. Each response was sorted into sub-categories based on content. If a subcategory became too large, it was further subdivided so that the question could be explored to its full extent. In some cases, the responses fell into more than one subcategory. In those instances, I used my judgement and picked the subcategory that seemed most prominent in the response.

This division into subcategories was deemed the best way to analyze the open-ended questions to allow for individual responses to come out. I created a subcategory generally whenever three or more individual people put forth the same idea in their answer. Each of the subcategories for the question was placed into an envelope with the question, theme and subcategory written on it. These envelopes were sealed and placed into a larger envelope with the question and theme written on them. This ensured that once the question had been divided, I would be able to see at a glance what the subcategories within it were and created a filing system that enhanced my ability to track hundreds of responses.

In the end, each question had at least four subcategories and as many as twenty-one. When all the questions had been divided into their different subcategories, I looked through each question's subcategories and pulled out quotes that I felt best represented the responses given for each subcategory.

Each question was then placed under its respective theme. A chart was created to show a simple breakdown of the general answers to the question. A more in-depth exploration of the question using numerous quotes from respondents was also provided for each question.

To analyze the demographic information, the answers to the questions were entered into a database to allow for a general quantitative analysis. Each set of questions was placed in the database along with its five-digit identifying number.

When the data was collected and analyzed, it, along with the "History of Slash" chapter as presented here, was placed on the project web page. Those who had indicated that they would be interested in seeing the analyzed data, by providing their e-mail address after they completed the questionnaire, were invited to return to the web page to examine the work in progress. When they accessed the web page, they were presented with a page containing links to each section of the thesis. In this way, respondents could select and comment on the sections that interested them. If someone did not want to read the history of slash,

they did not have to read through it to get to the data. On the other hand, if someone felt that they might be able to contribute to the history section, they were able to do that as well as looking over the data. At the end of each section I requested feedback to ensure that the analysis accurately reflected the participant's thoughts and experiences.

The participants who wrote back were pleased with the research and felt that it was an accurate reflection of their experiences. Many of them felt that the findings fit with their own personal experiences and did not have any suggestions for change. A few respondents critiqued parts of my history that they thought required clarification, notably that slashers are selective about the characters they will slash, and that not only *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* characters are slashed. Changes were made to the history section to clarify these points. One respondent wrote back and generated an interesting conversation about various concepts of pornography and erotica.

Ethics

The main ethical concern of this project was maintaining the confidentiality of the participants I interviewed. Slash writers remain hidden from the gaze of society and many writers of slash fiction wish it to remain that way. As noted earlier, slash fiction uses images and ideas

copyrighted by the company that owns and produces the television shows. These copyright owners have not given their permission to the writers of slash fiction to use these characters, so legally, the writers of slash fiction are breaking the copyright laws. Although no slash writer has as yet been sued, the threat of legal action still hangs over their heads, as was evident in the response from the person who read my web page and immediately assumed that I was going to give their names over to "The Powers That Be". As a researcher, I must take into account the ethics of accessing an illegal community, even though no one has yet been charged. Issues of confidentiality and disclosure are of particular importance as my writing about their work might cause the producers and owners of movies and televisions shows to take legal action against the participants of this study.

All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could stop their participation in the research at any time. They were also informed that I would keep their anonymity to the best of my abilities, through coding their answers with numbers (instead of names) and having all identifying information removed. Finally, all respondents were informed that legally I may be required to divulge any information I gathered if required by a court or any other legal body.

With this information given to all participants, written consent was obtained from all participants. This informed consent contained the name of the researcher, the name of the institution (Simon Fraser University), a repetition of the information regarding confidentiality, and information about obtaining the research when it was done.

Feminist Research and the Present Study

There is an ongoing debate about the nature of feminist research. No one has come up with a widely-accepted definition. Some researchers believe that feminist research can be distinguished by "its choice of problems and ultimate objectives" (Reinharz, 1992, pg. 3). Others refer to research that transforms the traditional disciplines, and still others believe that it is the feminist's ability to recognize disagreements that define it as feminist (Reinharz, 1992).

The are many forms of feminist methodology. As Liz Stanley states, "'feminism' is not merely a 'perspective', a way of seeing; nor even this plus an epistemology, a way of knowing; it is also an ontology, or a way of being in the world" (Stanley, 1990, pg. 4). The same can be said for feminist methodology. A strength of feminist methodology is its diversity. Feminists may use traditional methods of research methodologies, adapting them to feminist goals and outlooks, as well as inventing new

ones to adequately express issues and situations that the more traditional methods can not cover (Reinharz, 1992). While it is impossible to list all the different forms that feminist methodology can take, there are still a few basic concepts that all forms of feminist research should encompass.

Must Not Speak For Others

Feminist researchers must take care not to speak for other people. "[W]e cannot speak for others, but ... we can, and must speak *out* for others" (Reinharz, 1992, pg. 16)(italics in original). This concern resolves itself in many different ways, including "member checking". With member checking, the researcher allows the respondents to participate in all aspects of the research process, not just in the interview process (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1991). This can take the form of the participants receiving the typed transcripts and being able to both comment on what they were saying, and/or edit what can and can not be used by the researcher. It can also involve the researcher sending her research to the participants to gather their comments and ideas on the research findings. This increased opportunity to participate in the research helps to guarantee that the researcher is not exploiting or misrepresenting the people that she is studying. It also helps to empower the participants, and allows them greater autonomy within their research experience.

In this research many steps were taken to ensure that the voices of the respondents were heard. The slash community was consulted throughout the research process to ensure that the researcher did not misrepresent the thoughts and concerns of the slash community. As noted, the questions were originally developed from issues discussed within the community. I was a member of various slash specific mailing lists for three years before I began developing my research questionnaire. By that time, I had read thousands of e-mail messages generated by the community. This experience shaped my thinking and the questions posed.

After the questions were developed, but before the interview was open to the general public, a group of long-time slash writers and members of the community reviewed it. These women were knowledgeable insiders to the slash community who had expressed interest in my research in previous contact. They voiced concerns about the content of the questionnaire, the web pages and the information I provided. Later, after the first two chapters were written, and the data was collected and analyzed, it was published on the web and the participants in the research were invited to comment. These comments and concerns helped to shape the analysis and the final presentation of the data.

Another method used by feminist researchers to avoid speaking for their participants is to let the data speak through women's own voices, without excessive analysis or interpretation (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1991, Kgomo, 1996). In this way, the participants can tell their own stories in their own voices. Finally, feminist researchers must guard against treating women as a completely homogenous group. Within a research group, there may be similar experiences, but the individual's voice and experience must still be shown (Kgomo, 1996).

The slash community was consulted throughout the research process, but I was concerned that my voice not be the only one heard in the research summary. Accordingly, quotes from respondents are used extensively to minimize any distortion of their submissions.

Reciprocity

Feminist researchers are concerned with acknowledging the place of the researcher in the production of the research. While traditional methodology assumes a degree of neutrality and objectivity in the researcher, feminist researchers argue that this is impossible. No researcher is completely objective and separate from their research (Oakley, 1990, Reinharz, 1992). The objectivity mythology merely sets up the researcher as unapproachable and all knowing (Acker, Barry, and Esseveld, 1991). To lessen the divide between researcher and

respondent, feminist researchers suggest *reciprocity*. In this way, the researcher will not be an unapproachable taker of information, but will provide information, helping to lessen the barrier between researcher and researched.

Feminist researchers generally believe that it is important that the researcher includes herself in the discussion. Not doing this would be hiding, or denying by omission that all researchers bring a personal bias to what they do. This bias is not a weakness, or even unwelcome, but to disregard it is considered a serious flaw for feminist scholars. "Written accounts of feminist research should locate the feminist researcher firmly within the activities of her research" (Stanley, 1990, pg. 12).

Although I lacked face-to-face contact with my participants, I attempted to provide them with opportunities for reciprocity. In my e-mail calling for participants, and on the first part of my web page, I provided personal information about myself, my life experiences, my educational background, my physical appearance, my first discovery of slash, and my recent thoughts about slash fiction (see Appendix II). I provided various links in my web page so that interested parties could find out more about my schooling, my previous research and my employment. My e-mail and postal addresses were provided so people with questions could contact me if they chose. I also provided the e-mail address of a member of the

community who I had been communicating with for a number of months and who was willing to talk to others about me and my research. In this way, I hoped to ease the divide between the "unapproachable researcher" and "subject". This personal information also informed the participants of my biases, particularly my feminism and sex-radical leanings. With this information, respondents could decide if they were interested in participating.

Must Be Emancipatory

Feminist research must also be emancipatory. It must work towards the eventual changing of the political, economic and social system that currently works towards keeping women oppressed, second class citizens in today's society (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1991, Kirby and McKenna, 1989). Researchers can do this by working alongside the goals of feminism to reflect on the social context and help create change within the system. "Research that does not reflect on and analyze the social context from which it springs serves only the status quo and does not enable us to interact with and change society" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 16).

Hand in hand with the emancipatory nature of feminist research is the requirement that feminist researchers should strive to help the people

being researched. Feminist research must create data that the researched can access and use in their own lives (Acker, Barry, Esseveld, 1991, Kirby and McKenna, 1989, Oakley, 1990, Reinharz, 1992).

The emancipatory nature of the present research is straightforward. Slash fiction is a little known avenue where women explore their sexuality and their sexual desires. Unconcerned with popular notions of what is "proper" or "acceptable" for women to desire, the power of slash writing lies in its textual poaching, the writers' ability to take characters from television and movies and write them doing whatever *they* want them to do, not what the network and the producers of the shows want them to do. Their resistance comes from their refusal to acquiesce to any of society's predefined categories of fiction. Slash writers are not writing traditional "Harlequin Romance" type stories, stories that are acceptable for women to write. These romances are mainstream heterosexual, and emphasize marriage and monogamy. Initially, they were not graphically sexually explicit, although this has changed in recent years. Slash fiction is written about gay sexuality and can be graphically sexually explicit. However, slash writers are not writing traditional pornography either. The characters in slash are almost always portrayed as being in love and committed to their respective partner(s). These writers change pornography to reflect what they want to see, while also changing the romance genre into something radically different from what it currently

is. The sexuality and socialization of both men and women are reworked, along with the images of dominant institutions, such as the military and police forces.

Slash fiction offers women an emancipatory alternative to what they are given by society. Bringing the actions of these writers to the public eye will help open up the discussions around women and sex, pornography, censorship, desire and the socialization of men and women.

The issue of censorship has yet to be fully explored by the slash community. While many have heard about instances of censorship, no one has attempted to gather together the cumulative experiences of the slash community. The community uses various strategies to protect themselves from censorship, each with varying degrees of success, but no one person has attempted to find out what these strategies are or how they are working. The intent of this research is not only to document women's experiences writing slash fiction, but also to provide the members of the slash community with valuable tools to help them in their fight against censorship. Newer members of the community can access this research to find out ways to protect themselves, while older members of the community can find out if their tactics are working in the grand scheme of things. Hopefully, this exploratory information will be emancipating in terms of their agenda.

Finally, the feminist researcher must self-identify as feminist, or as part of the women's movement, or the research itself must be identified as feminist (Reinharz, 1992). Individuals must be allowed to choose whether they wish to be identified with the feminist movement. Feminism and feminist research in particular is concerned with allowing people to self-identify, and this must extend to labeling our research. As well, this self-identification sidesteps the touchy debate on who is a feminist. "This approach rejects the notion of a transcendent authority that decides what constitutes 'feminist,' consistent with the anti-hierarchical nature of many feminist organizations and much feminist spirit (Reinharz, 1992, pg. 7)."

As stated earlier, I self-identify as a feminist both as an individual and as a researcher. This addresses the key issues pertaining to feminist research methodologies. The issue of conducting feminist research was taken seriously in this research project, and various techniques and strategies were employed to insure that the research took advantage of feminist research practices.

Chapter III

Issues Arising from the Data

In this chapter I present participant responses and discuss some of the issues arising from the data. The survey questions can be found in Appendix I. Based on a careful analysis of the responses to my questions, the following themes were developed.

Feminism

In my questionnaire, I asked six questions about feminism to explore a strong feminist undercurrent or presence that I had experienced in fandom as a whole, and in slash in particular. I did not, however, want to make assumptions for the community based solely on my impressions. In my experience, some people were proudly and explicitly feminist, while others were not, and the majority of the slash community was quite silent on this issue. I wondered how slash writers and producers felt about feminism.

Reading through the answers, I found six themes coming out of the answers to the questions categorized under the Feminist label. These themes are: *Identifying as a Feminist, Confusion Over the Term 'Feminist', Humanist/Equalist, Anti-Feminist, Personal Experiences/Strong Women* and *The Power of Writing*. Each of theme will be discussed in the sections below.

When I read through the first dozen or so responses, I was concerned that none of my respondents were positively identifying as feminists. No one seemed to take delight in feminism. Despite my initial misgivings, a great number of my respondents (58%) replied with pride and delight that they were indeed strong feminists: "Absolutely. Eternally. Flamboyantly. Always" (14732). "Oh yes. Since grade school, when some idiot teacher told me I couldn't grow up to be an astronaut but that if I was lucky, maybe I could marry one" (78210). "Oh yeah! Even now, when it's supposed to be a 'shameful' ideology, THIS IS WHAT FEMINISM LOOKS LIKE, HAVE AN EYE-FULL, SWEETIE!" (45600).

Along with this strong identification as feminist, many participants worked their feminist politics into their writing: "I think that simply by writing sexually explicit fiction I am taking a feminist stance - I am creating material that I find erotic and that defends my right to my own sexual desire" (72385). "Yes: in my writing, I write as a feminist. I use non-sexist language. I do not create disposable female characters...In other words, I don't do casual misogyny or casual homophobia" (88155). "I can't imagine that something I feel so strongly about isn't obvious in everything I write" (22653). "I suppose in a fundamental way I do - simply by being 'out' about writing this stuff. I don't really think about feminism as something apart from me, so it must be reflected in my writing, as it's part of who I am" (14660). "I think the very act of writing is a feminist act, reclaiming power in a feminine way. Masculine power is all about force and hierarchy, fandom and writing is a cooperative

network of equals offering their opinions and gaining power through respect" (34754).

> ...Also, I think the very existence of slash is furthering to the ideals of feminism, in that it has made a community of women who are creative, intelligent...and sharing ideas of women's views of social psychology and sexuality that have never been expressed before...What I am trying to say here is that I think it is good from a feminist point of view for women to express by writing, or indulge by reading, their views of life, love and sex, especially when it is not what women in our culture are expected to want to read or say (94244).

2. Confusion Over the Term "Feminist"

While many participants eagerly identified as feminists, some of the respondents indicated a confusion over what the terms "feminist" and "feminism" mean. This confusion came out in the answers to my questions on feminism: "Not exactly, because I'm not sure what that term means anymore" (86323). "I don't have a handle on 'feminist.' I don't think I even really know what it means to be 'feminist'" (39096).

> To a degree. I dislike many of the women who have taken the term and made it into something that chains women far more than it benefits them. I'm willing to try to take the word back, though, much as the term 'queer' has been reclaimed in recent years (64450).

"I used to answer this with a very firm 'no,' but now...I'm not so sure. I suppose I am very much a feminist in the dictionary sense of the word, but I am also extremely hesitant to use that word to describe myself" (40104).

3. Humanist/Equalist

Along with the confusion over "the official" definition of feminism, some respondents believed that feminism was passé, and that women and men should start to work more towards a "humanist" or "equalist" position. Nineteen respondents fit into this category. This position surfaced when respondents replied to the question about their position on feminism: "More as a humanist, since I think splitting the sexes leads to unnecessarily polarized distinctions" (150). "I'm more an 'equalist' - I think men and women both have their strengths and weaknesses...but there shouldn't be stereotypes regarding either gender" (98710). "I integrate humanist principles in all of my writing. I imbue all of my characters with personal empowerment and a recognition of the rights of those around them" (19192). "Feminist principles? Freedom and equality - I consider those more humanist principles. I don't think anyone deserves any sort of special treatment, men, women, or other" (52914).

> I think perhaps my feminist viewpoints get mutated into a
> humanist view. I'd like for all people to be treated equally,
> while allowing for individual variations...I don't editorialize in
> my stories...no preaching, no political agendas. The
> characters just interact as they see fit without delving into
> all the homophobic mess of our society (37048).

4. Anti-Feminist

Almost one-quarter of the participants did not identify as feminist: "NO!!!!" (38143) "No. Never have done. Don't see the point" (32840).

"No. Sorry. I was one of those in the 60's and I don't like the fanaticism that has taken over. First the extreme lesbian faction, and now the 'pagan' faction. Seems to me all this is because real progress didn't come as quickly as the originals wanted" (64760). "No. I agree with any idea/opinion that strikes my fancy or suits my needs" (92706). Asked if they include feminist principles in their writing, thirty-four percent (34%) indicated that they did not: "No. I write for pleasure not for purpose" (17690) "No. While I may illuminate or illustrate things I believe in my writing, I first and foremost want to write a good story, and other intentions are secondary or not deliberately inserted" (35965). "Nope. I mean, some may argue that slash itself is a feminist principle in showing 'weaker' men, but I don't view my own work that way. I write for the characters, not the social issues in the RL beyond" (25125). "If there are any in my writing, they got there by themselves. More power to 'em" (41925).

5. Personal Experiences/Strong Women

Regardless how they responded to the question "Do you integrate feminist principles in your writing", many participants indicated that they wrote strong women characters: "I introduce strong female characters and men with a healthy respect towards women (and vice versa)" (14111). "No, unless you count the fact that I simply assume that the women in my stories can be in positions of authority or in any profession they choose" (56452). "Well about the only way I can answer it is when I write a female character I try to make her a well rounded, interesting individual, a strong woman with her own voice" (83689).

I admired my respondents' bald assertion that women should be presented as full human beings in positions of authority. It speaks to the way that feminism and feminist beliefs have seeped into society. Thirty years ago, to put forth that women should always be presented as well-rounded characters was a radical act. Today, even people who decry feminist politics still assert this concept as a given.

6. Power of Writing

The final theme which emerged from my questions on feminism centered on empowerment through writing. When answering the question, "Do you integrate feminist principles in your writing?" I noticed that a few respondents gave a qualified no: "My instinctive response would be 'No', but that wouldn't be entirely correct. The truth is I don't do it consciously. I just write according to my worldview. And since in my worldview, men and women are equals, they are in my stories" (51214). "Not consciously...But I think in slash, when we write about prejudice against same sex relationship, we could just as easily be talking about prejudice against women. It's all about being accepted for who you truly are" (69295). "Nahh, what I do in my slash writing and publishing is a hobby, for fun. A place to leave the real world behind. I do incorporate politics in my writing, though, especially when trying to show that two men loving each other is <u>not</u> dirty, is <u>not</u> immoral and is <u>not</u> evil, but IS a beautiful thing" (emphasis in original)(59484). "No, unless you count the fact that I simply assume that the women in my stories can be in positions of authority or in any profession they choose" (56452).

These respondents seem to recognize that they are placing a political message in their writing, either a message against homophobia (which is not seen as a feminist issue for these respondents), or an implicitly feminist message that women can do whatever they want. But at the same time, their answers seem to imply that what they write is not important, as if in a patriarchal society it wasn't a political (and feminist) action to write a story pretending that women and men are equal.

Pornography

It was crucial to ask the respondents about their thoughts and views on pornography. The basis of slash fiction is that it is a sexual text. As noted earlier, I disagree that there should be a distinction between pornography and erotica. The questionnaire was constructed to see where in this debate my respondents fell.

In reading the answers to my questions, I found some expected responses and some unexpected ones. Five themes emerge out of the data relating to the category Pornography. These themes are: *Confusion Over Pornography and Feminism, Pro-Pornography Beliefs, Pornography vs. Erotica, Porn is Pictures Not Text,* and *Slash Isn't Just Sex.* Each theme will be discussed in more depth in the paragraphs below.

When I asked what the respondents believed the feminist position on pornography was, three predominant answers evolved. First, twenty-six percent (26%) of the respondents did not know: "No, I'm not terribly politically active. I know, bad human, no biscuit" (41129). "No, I have no idea what feminists believe about pornography or any other subject. I am secure in my sexuality and with my standing among the human race, both male and female" (63516).

Second, twenty-six percent (26%) of respondents assumed the feminist position was anti-pornography: "I'm not positive, but I'm rather certain some of them have broomsticks up their ass and they probably give the tired line that porn objectifies chicks and all that shit" (73717). "Well I'm assuming that they don't like it since it makes women look like 'whores', but I'm not entirely sure" (38143).

> Yes. The argument that pornography exploits and denigrates women, opening them up to potential violence. Or that it portrays women as objects, or sexual receptacles waiting to be used by men. Or that it plays to the ultimate male fantasy that 'she wants it', whatever 'it' is. Or that it distorts men's understanding of the female body- breast implants (breasts that bounce unnaturally), absence of body hair, application of body makeup. And so on (61077).

Finally, twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents knew the feminist position to be both anti and pro-pornography: "Some feminist think that pornography is harmful, no matter what. Others think that it can be used to portray sexuality in a positive way" (26855). "Most of what I've

heard from feminists is diametrically opposite -- either it's empowering and wonderful, or degrading and should be stopped" (18324).

I believe that this almost evenly-divided confusion over the feminist stance on pornography reflects the respondents' earlier confusion about the term "feminism." If someone does not know what feminism means, how are they supposed to know what feminists believe about pornography?

We cannot discount the effect of the media on this issue. For decades, the popular media (television news, mainstream press, radio programs) has vigorously disseminated the selective words of anti-pornography feminists such as Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon and even Gloria Steinem as being the only position feminists have towards pornography. Outspoken pro-pornography feminists such as Pat Califia, Carol Queen, Avedon Carol and Cherie Matrix have gone largely unnoticed by the mainstream press. This very limited debate of feminist perspectives on pornography in the popular press distorts women's notions of the feminist position on pornography.

Despite the confusion over feminists' beliefs in relation to pornography, there was an overwhelming acceptance and even enjoyment of pornography:

> I'm a fierce proponent of the first amendment, freedom of speech and intellectual freedom. I think an adult should be allowed to read, write, view whatever he or she sees fit. I find it absolutely ridiculous that this society treats the human body as something to be ashamed of. I think that if we raised our children to accept their bodies as natural and ordinary and even as <u>beautiful</u> that there'd be far fewer problems in our society...As for sexual pornography - I think making and viewing it is up to free adults to make their own personal decision whether to participate or view (children and animals excluded, please). What consenting adults choose to do is their own business as long as no one is harmed (emphasis in original)(62593).

"I think pornography can be a strong, empowering thing, especially for sexual minorities, which doesn't mean that 'good' porn has to be a soapbox for 'peace and love'" (67765). "I find porn stimulating, and while I agree that minors should not be depicted in it/exposed to it, porn has a valid place in consenting adult sexuality" (49072). "One index finger on the mouse scroll bar and the other on my clit. Oh, you meant philosophically ... If it's a work of imagination it should be legal no matter what the content" (77892). "My fundamental viewpoint is that the continuing liberalization of pornography - particularly the availability of gay and lesbian pornography, and the depiction of the erect penis - is providing a critique of the reactionary dialectic inherent in traditional,

woman-denigrating, pornography designed for the patriarchal heterosexual male gaze. And it turns me on" (73236).

When asked what other types of sexually explicit writing they read, seventy-two percent (72%) of the respondents indicated that they read at least one other type of explicit writing. This shows a general open-mindedness in the slash community which is not unexpected considering the sexual nature of slash fiction.

3. Pornography vs. Erotica

The debate between "pornography" and "erotica" was brought up repeatedly in the answers to the questions relating to pornography. Multiple questions addressed this issue. The following analysis makes use of the theme regardless of the question that generated the response.

Some respondents preferred the term "erotica": "Since I don't consider what I write or read to be pornography, but rather erotica, my views on pornography tend towards the negative" (16734). "I am not clear about the difference between pornography and erotica. The first feels dirty, angry and coercive. The second is more fun, more light, sometimes, more about feelings other than anger" (58391). "Generally, yes, although I like the term erotica for the kind of writing I am doing as I'm trying to do more than get my readers off" (59759).

"No. I don't write pornography. I write erotica. Erotica is positive writing. That is what distinguishes it from pornography, the sole purpose of which is to arouse. Modern erotica can be both sensitive and extremely graphic - and all effective erotica can be - as the saying goes - read with one hand. However, erotica does not concentrate on the plumbing, but rather on the relationships between the characters" (emphasis in original)(43768).

Others disliked the term "erotica" and preferred pornography:

"I consider it pornography because the term 'erotica' smacks to me of making things tame and safe to protect the delicate sensibilities of women...I feel that if I call what I do 'erotica', it conjures up images of lace and discreetly draped sheer fabrics, and safe. Constrained, 'fit for a lady', staying within the parameters that women are expected to be hemmed in by. And I feel that 'erotica' has pretensions of higher goals and is deceptive, because it hides behind a mask of literary delusions, while 'pornography' is bluntly about sex, satisfaction and getting exactly what I want. By calling it 'porn', I'm declaring my independence, control and power - and that I'm not afraid of sex, my own sexuality nor other people's opinions" (emphasis in original))(51629).

Others simply preferred the term "pornography": "Slash is porn and I consider myself a pornographer. To me, the creation and distribution of sexually explicit materials is what pornographers do. I write about men fucking each other and I share it with people, ergo, I am a pornographer" (94365). "Yes, I hope so! Porn is whatever gets you hot, pushes your buttons ... if I'm not achieving that with my slash, I need to find another hobby" (49072). "When I write sexually explicit fiction, intending to excite people in a sexually explicit way, yes, of course I am writing pornography. Anyone who says otherwise is kidding themselves" (88155).

Still others felt that there's no difference between "pornography" and "erotica": "Pornography, erotica, whatever you wanna call it ... if you can keep your hands out of your pants while reading one of my sex scenes, I need to try harder" (63203).

> All writing is done to evoke some feelings of sensation in the reader. Some writing is done to evoke sexual feelings/sensations in readers. When it's artfully done, it tends to get labeled 'erotica;' when it's clumsily done, it tends to get labeled 'porn.' I think the distinction is specious and indefensible, except, maybe, on this sort of quality-of-writing basis (87672).

"Pornography is in the eye of the beholder. It's a label, and labels are assigned by the observer, usually not the writer ... I don't really subscribe to the 'erotica vs. pornography' debate" (52914).

4. Pornography is Pictures, Not Text

When asked about pornography, some participants reported that for them, pornography was pictures, not the written word: "No - pornography is visual depictions of sexual acts. Writing about them is a totally different thing" (38143). "I tend to think of pornography as pictures rather than words, though I'm aware it's an arbitrary distinction" (39176). "If it's pictures, it's demeaning to women. I highly oppose it. If it's writing, however, as long as it does not reinforce the stereotype of women, I enjoy it" (21343).

In chapter one, I indicate that pornography is generally assumed to be lower class and pictorial, rather than higher class written text, which is

seen as more artistically defendable. Most participants do not indicate what they think sexually explicit writing is, but they believe it is something different from pornography. They may believe that it is "erotica," however, since it is not described as erotica by the participants, I can not label it as such. One participant indicated that she preferred to label her work "smut" (39176), which is surprising as "smut" is typically considered as negative a term as "pornography". Then again, the word "smut" has an in-your-face kind of playfulness to it that "pornography," with its laden background, could never hope to achieve.

5. Slash Isn't Just Sex

An interesting theme became clear as I analyzed the answers to Questions 15, 16 and 18. To Question 15, "What are your positions on pornography?" Sixty-six percent (66%) of the responses indicated that they were anti-censorship or pro-pornography. To Question 16, "What kind of other sexually explicit writing do you read?" Seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants indicated that they read some other form of sexually explicit writing. For Question 18, "In writing slash fiction do you think you are writing pornography?" only forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents indicated that they thought they were writing pornography.

When I first read the answers to Questions 16 and 18, I thought that the participants were reacting negatively to my use of the loaded word "pornography" in the wording of the last question. Since seventy-five

(75%) of the participants indicated that they read "sexually explicit" writings, I would have thought that more participants would answer that they were writing "pornography" when they were writing slash. Obviously they were reacting in a negative manner to the use of the word "pornography" as opposed to "sexually explicit" writing.

This analysis falters when we consider the responses to Question 15 (What are your positions on pornography?). In Question 15, sixty-six percent (66%) of the participants, asked their positions on pornography, held anti-censorship or pro-pornography views. When you add this figure to Question 18 (In writing slash fiction do you think you are writing pornography?), it becomes clear that a reaction to the word "pornography" cannot be the only reason why only forty-three percent (43%) of the participants believe that slash fiction is pornography. Over half of the participants like pornography, so why would they react negatively to the use of the word "pornography" in relation to slash?

An answer to this perplexing question became clearer when I took a closer look at what exactly the participants were saying about Question 15. Twenty-four percent (24%) of the participants emphasized that slash was something *more* than simple pornography: "I think I am probably writing pornography as defined by the world at large. To me, I am writing about a relationship between two men. Sex is a small part of the

story" (91907). "Yes....But I will say that slash isn't <u>strictly</u> porn in the classic sense. Slash is often romance writing gone one step differently" (emphasis in original)(230). "When I'm writing slash, I'm writing about <u>love</u> - in its purest form" (emphasis in original)(69295). "Since what I write about and enjoy reading about are loving relationship, no, I do not consider that pornography" (199). "Pornography is rarely about the story, slash fiction is rarely about the sex, although the sex is prominent in it" (74131). "I write plot first, and then I use sex to help flesh out the plot" (35367). "No. I don't write much sex at all" (34790).

Thus, respondents may not be simply reacting against my use of the word "pornography" to describe slash fiction, or not in the way that I first thought. The word "pornography" does not adequately describe what they are doing. It is sometimes a part, but not *all* of what makes up slash fiction.

Censorship

The question of censorship is complex and controversial. In asking questions about censorship, I wanted to find out how prevalent censorship was in the slash community. It seems that everyone knows about previous occurrences of censorship, in particular the example of the *Star Wars* letters (see Chapter I), but I was not sure how prevalent

censorship is today. Two themes arose from the category of censorship. These are: *Community Censorship vs. External Censorship* and *Understanding and Acceptance of Some Censorship*. Each theme will be discussed in the sections below.

1. *Community Censorship vs. External Censorship*

While not explicitly mentioned, two different forms of censorship were evident in the responses to my questions on censorship. *External censorship* related to censorship by the state. This included, but is not limited to, cease-and-desist letters from the producers, having web sites shut down because of "adult" content or having a zine confiscated at a border. *Community censorship* refers to people within both the slash community and the greater fan community telling someone what they can and can not do. For example, a gen fan writing a harsh Letter of Comment (LoC) because they stumbled onto the slash genre, or a slash fan writing an abusive LoC because an author paired two characters they did not like.

Some actions are designed to prevent external censorship, yet do little to prevent fan community censorship: "I do not use my real name. I do not use my employer's internet access for matters related to my stories or stories I would like to read" (199). "I store my archive site at internetdump.com. They require that your site be of a sexual nature" (47839). "Meta-tags to prevent robots from indexing my web pages. While I don't hide, I don't advertise either" (47982). "I use a free webpage provider, and not the space provided by my ISP" (76477). These actions

help to keep the respondents' real identities from being discovered (free webpage provider, pseudonym), to prevent their sites being shut down due to a violation of "Terms of Service" with their internet provider (using an adult server), or their web pages to be listed in search engines (meta-tags).

Other actions reflect the specific nature of community censorship. "At the beginning of my stories I give a rating and a short summary of any parts of the fic that may be found distressing/distasteful to others...This gives the reader an opportunity to not read the story and therefore any objections are invalid" (74131). "I make sure that wherever it appears, there are no doubts about what it is: I warn people up front so they can't say they wandered in by accident" (98337). "All my slash fic is kept on a server dedicated to the pursuit of slash" (50835). Ratings, summaries of the story and warnings are thus designed to warn potential readers what they will encounter if they read the story. This attempts to limit the number of unhappy readers, keeping the negative LoC's to a minimum.

Many of the actions taken by the respondents to prevent censorship work on both external and community censorship: "I have disclaimers and warnings (age, character ownership, type of stories/sexual acts) on my webpage." (20294). "I play only in slash-friendly places. You'll never catch me putting anything on fanfiction.com or wherever...I stick to the safe-house type websites/chatrooms/etc. now" (21337). Disclaimers and labeling, protect the writer from external censorship: age warnings and a disclaimer notice that the characters do not belong to the writer and she is not making money from them, provide the writer some protection from

legal prosecution. Indicating the type of story, for example, slash or sexual acts such as bondage and watersports, allows potential readers to know what to expect in the story and protects the author from receiving nasty letters of comment from readers who stumble onto their story unawares. Not publishing your fiction in a public forum provides some protection from "The Powers That Be" finding it, while also protecting the writer from complaints from readers.

2. Understanding and Acceptance of Some Censorship

Eighty-one percent (81%) of the participants took some precautions to prevent censorship of their works: "I do not use my real name. I do not use my employer's Internet access for matters related to my stories or stories I would like to read" (199). "I label all my stories as adult and put in a disclaimer that the story is slash" (51827). "I have rated my site with several net nanny type programs, and I try to prevent minors from reading my material - I don't want to get shut down because some 13 year old got caught reading my site" (49072).

The respondents know and understand that their writing can be censored if found by nonfans. It is understood, and is considered acceptable, by a majority of the community that actions should be taken to prevent slash from falling into the hands of those too young, or not inclined towards reading it.

It is interesting that seventy-nine percent (79%) of the respondents stated that they would not let censorship affect their writing, beyond

what they already do to prevent censorship: "No. If I was afraid of being censored, I wouldn't be writing slash in the first place" (39176). "There are things I'll avoid writing due to my lack of knowledge about them, but other than that...I haven't as yet let a fear of censorship censor my writing style" (92706). "No...I'll write what I please, because it is to please myself that I write" (86164). "Nope. No one can tell me what I can and cannot write. If I feel it's controversial, I'll put that at the beginning of the story and the reader then has the option of deleting or reading" (59484).

This indicates that the community has an understanding of the nature of their work. They recognize that what they are writing is not necessarily for everyone. But at the same time, within their own community, they do not allow censorship to affect what they write.

Strategically, the precautions taken by the participants in this study do not seem to be excessive. Labeling and disclaimers make sense to help keep people who are either too young or not interested in slash fiction from reading the story by mistake. The same can be said with placing it on slash friendly sites - those who are not interested in slash will know to stay away. Placing a story on an adult server or web site will help to keep children and minors away and using a pseudonym will help to keep your writing life and your working, non-writing life, separate.

A significant minority, almost twenty percent (20%) of the participants, indicated that they do not take *any* precautions against censorship. Although they know there is the possibility of being censored, they do not

feel that the threat is great enough to take precautions. This attitude could be a reflection of the "Wild West" perception of the Internet: that the Internet can not be (nor should be) regulated in any meaningful way.

Risks for Writers

For some people, it could be dangerous were it known that they produce homoerotic pornographic works. It can affect their careers, their families and their friends. Only one theme evolved from the questions asked about the risks they take.

1. Risk

The large majority of respondents felt they took risks in writing slash: "Tons. Deep cover. I hope you understand the risk that people take in doing this survey. Most of us would lose everything. I KNOW I would" (39440). "I lost a promotion once when the woman who made the choice decided I must be gay after reading one of my published pieces my sister was showing proudly around" (68614). "I work at a religious college. My immediate supervisor is a minister. I do not know what would happen if my slash activities were exposed. I do not care to find out" (19629). "I risked my reputation as an editor. It has suffered, and there was much debacle at one stage" (87551). "I work in media, television and theatre, often in direct contact with writers and actors. I have personally met the actors whose alter egos feature most heavily in slash writing. I would be unhappy for any of the actors I work with to learn of my slash writing under casual circumstances" (73236). "Professionally, it would be

detrimental if it became known" (51827). "The only personal risk I face is being ostracized from a very solidly biblical home" (59652). "I think the only risk I could face is being sued by George Lucas for posting dirty stories about his characters" (38143). "Well I risk alienating some of the people I care about" (16734).

Despite the possible risks, I found that only a very small percentage (7%) maintained complete secrecy about their involvement in slash writing. Two key factors in nondisclosure seem to be community views on homosexuality, and employment: "My door is firmly shut and is unlikely to be opened anytime soon. To my knowledge, none of my family knows and I certainly can't tell my friends and as for work, well I work at an elementary school...that just about sums it up, I'd think. I live in a small town and attitudes toward homosexuality are unenlightened to say the least" (34227). "My husband knows and the friends I've made in the slash community...Otherwise it would be very dangerous for anyone to find out. I live in a very rigid, very fundamentalist community and I have a very public job" (53373). "My friends know. My family is slowly finding out now that my mother is dead...My work does _not_ know - I'd probably lose my job if they found out" (emphasis in original)(51629).

Media and Technology Savvy

Slash writers' manipulation of available technologies shows a certain level of media and technology savvy. Women are not dominant on the Internet, yet there are thousands of websites and private mailing lists

run and populated by women (Clerc, 1996). I felt that it was important that my research examined how women used the media and technological resources available to them. There were two themes that came out of the larger category of "Media and Technology Savvy". They are: *Use of Resources* and *The Powers That Be*.

1. Use of Resources

Although some writers publish only in zines, over seventy percent (70%) of respondents published their stories in more than one place, including zines, archives, web pages, mailing lists and sharing with personal friends: "I publish on mailing lists, archives, my web page. I want to have as many people read my stories as possible" (51827). "I started out in zines because that was the only game in town. Since the internet has become so popular, I now publish first on a show specific mailing list, then later to a web page and to the show specific fanfiction archives" (37048). "So far, only on mailing lists and the archives belonging to them. I don't yet have a web page of my own, but if I ever learn to make one, then I will publish there also" (55507). "Web pages and mailing lists. I think some of my work is archived at various places. I don't want to advertise my writing to all and sundry, but I do want it to be accessible for those who know what they're looking for" (46880).

Slash writers have embraced the Internet and use it extensively. Their use of this technology provides them an unprecedented ability to publish and distribute their writings. In the beginning, their only option was to publish in zines or through friends, this is no longer their only choice,

and the range of publishing methods used by the participants reflects this.

2. The Powers That Be *and the 'Quicksilver Anarchy of the Net'*

The phrase *The Powers That Be* (TPTB) is used by fans to refer to the creators, producers and distributors of feature movies, and television shows. Asked in Question 27 if they feared a backlash from *The Powers That Be*, the participants in this study showed a high level of media and technological savvy in their answers.

Some respondents believe in the inherently unstoppable nature of the Internet. They believe that even if *TPTB* tried to shut down sites, they would never be able to find them all. For every site shut down, five more would spring up: "Nah - I mean, it could have this effect, but I have great faith in the basic quicksilver anarchy of the net. I know a number of people whose sites were shut down and who reopened elsewhere within days, if not hours. There's a guerilla quality about net life and online slash that I find very reassuring" (87672). "It's been around too long for that to happen. For every site they close down, another one pops up somewhere else" (64760). "But I feel like with the Internet, no matter what TPTB do, we can find a way around their legal b.s." (21337).

Other respondents referred to the support slash writers and fans give to shows, and the importance of knowing that they represent a loyal group of fans that will watch the show no matter what: "Not if the PTB are smart. Through slash, they - without spending dollar one on advertising

89

- get their shows promoted and a dedicated group of fans" (52914).
"Personally? I think it's encouraged. More people are watching some
shows now because they liked what they read" (91907). "No. Although
some TPTB aren't exactly happy about slash, there are others who are
making it more and more part of the show, and use it for their
advantage" (38981).

Others highlighted the negative publicity from attempting to shut down
slash fiction: "I worry about it sometimes, but I'm not at all sure that
any production company would want the publicity, I mean, does George
Lucas really want Ted Koppel to look into the camera and intone, 'Han
Solo and Chewie: lovers, or just good friends?" (98337) "I feel that if
TPTB types came down against slash fanfiction and didn't go after gen
and het fanfiction they'd be opening themselves up for a world of
discrimination charges. And a lot of bad publicity" (emphasis in
original)(41129).

Finally, some participants mentioned that some producers not only know
about slash, but also actually cater to it in their shows: "The executive
producer even mentioned an interest in it in one interview I've read, and
in another, he basically said that TPTB created the characters, but the
fans could do with them whatever they wished" (16734). "The new breed
of Powers That Be, the Joss Whedon generation, are all for net anarchy
and synergy between the show and the fans - they grew up in the same
media culture that we did, and they have a similar love for it, I think"
(53911). "Chris Carter (X-Files) must be aware of it. He was quoted as

directing the Mulder/Krycek kiss scene in an X-Files episode to be 'Closer to the mouth. Closer!'" (56595).

Cross Category

1. Censorship and Media and Technology Savvy

In the Censorship category it becomes quite clear that a great number of slash writers and publishers either dislike or distrust Geocities: "I took my slash pages away from Geocities, where they were more likely to be taken down" (14570). "I didn't know much about the different servers when I started my site, I only knew I didn't want Geocities since I'd heard rumors about them not being so nice to people" (23026). "The whole Yahoo/Geocities Terms of Service is why I moved my site to a different domain" (47982).

A number of slash sites on Geocities have been taken down after only one or two complaints. Geocities merged with Yahoo! on June 25, 1999. In the new company's letter to Geocities members, it was indicated that if they continued to use web space in the new company, all information contained on the web page would become the property of Yahoo!Geocities. While this was later found to be a technical requirement to allow Yahoo!Geocities to set up mirror sites if need be, many fans protested what they perceived to be an attempt by Yahoo!Geocities to gain control of their creative content. They acted on their outrage by removing their sites, vowing to never deal with Geocities again.

This dislike of Geocities is well known in fandom and is a prime example of media and technology savvy on the part of fans. Instead of quietly sticking with a company they disliked, fans moved in large numbers to other internet providers that were more welcoming to both its users in general and slash writers in particular. Not content with quietly moving, fans have repeatedly told slash communities about their problems with Geocities, until it has become common knowledge in slash fandom that Geocities is an undesirable company to do business with.

Profile of Respondents

I profiled what the average respondent to my survey looked like. She is:

Figure 1: Profile of Respondents

47 % are between 18-29

95% are female

91% have at least some post-secondary education

52% are bisexual/lesbian/gay

56% are single

83% have no children

51% make less than $30 000 U.S. (gross income)

68% are American

24% are students

67% access the Internet at home

42% are on the web 2-4 hours a day

42% read fanfiction between 1-2 hours a day

44% write fanfiction for about 1 hour a day

61% write at home

This profile is consistent with my expectations, with one notable exception. It has always been presumed that heterosexual women write slash fiction for other heterosexual women. I found that this definition did not hold for this sample. Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents identified as bisexual, lesbian or gay. While this is not a large majority, it is certainly a far cry from the expected dominance of heterosexuality. With the ongoing push for gay rights and a general acceptance of lesbian/bisexual/gay people in the younger community, it is not surprising that a larger number of younger individuals would identify as

lesbian/bisexual/gay. Thus, to a certain extent, my survey reflects both the youth and sexual diversity of my respondents.

Chapter IV

Conclusions

Key Findings

There are a few key findings that should be discussed in more depth. They are broken down into theme for ease of discussion.

Feminism

While fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents self-identified as feminists, there was still some confusion over the term "feminist." I believe that this confusion reflects the fact that, as with many "loaded" words (e.g. pornography, racism, censorship), there is more involved than a simple definition. Modern feminism had been around for over thirty years, and the definition of the word has gone through many changes. During feminism's existence, it has come to mean many different things to many different people. At its conception, feminism was introduced as a positive, affirming movement for women. After decades of media caricatures of feminists as harpies interested only in denigrating men and male institutions, many people are confused as to what feminism really is. Is it a positive movement or a negative one? Are feminists pro-women or anti-men? Or some combination of both?

To further confuse the issue, feminism is an ever-changing, complex movement that has fractured into many distinct philosophies. There are liberal feminists, radical feminists, socialist feminists, anti-censorship feminists and dozens more. While I deliberately left the definition of feminism up to the individual respondent, it is not surprising that some of the participants responded with confusion when asked about feminism and feminist principles.

Pornography

While there was a strong commitment to sexually explicit writing, there was debate on the terms respondents wanted to use. Some respondents liked the term "pornography," others preferred "erotica." This diversity in opinions is not surprising considering that the issue of pornography and erotica is still being widely debated in society. "Pornography" has different meanings for each respondent. Some people embrace the term "pornography" so that their writings can subvert the common understanding of the word, much as the epithet "queer" has been subverted by its usage in the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender community. Others embrace the term "erotica" to express difference between their writing and that of pornographic texts.

As a sex-radical feminist, I have argued that the term "erotica" serves to enforce a classist distinction that only benefits the dominant system set up to "protect" women and lower-class men from "harmful" works, while still allowing upper-class men access to sexually explicit material. Not all respondents share my beliefs. What is important to take from this discussion is that a majority of respondents believe that women should have the right to write and enjoy sexually explicit texts. I might wish that more respondents had engaged in a deeper political analysis of the terms, but I certainly can not argue with the basic outcome that women are writing and enjoying sexually explicit texts.

It is also important that the respondents' perception of slash be explored. While many respondents felt that slash was "pornography" or "erotica," a quarter of the respondents felt that neither of these terms worked. For these participants, pornography and erotica was strictly focused on sex and sexual acts. In slash, while it *might* be sexually explicit, it is much more than just sex. For these participants, in slash, there is plot, characterization, love, respect, sex (sometimes) and relationships. Slash is pornography taken one step forward to include more than just sex. While sex is often an important part of slash, the relationship between the characters is just as important.

Slash writers are concerned with censorship, but don't let it stop them from writing what they want. At the outset, I presumed that the greatest threat to fandom in general and slash writing in particular would be external censorship. Surprisingly, many slash writers seem to take more precautions against internal censorship, not external. By far the most precautions taken to prevent censorship were to prevent community censorship, with a secondary focus on preventing external censorship.

I think this relates to the everyday experiences of slash writers. While most slash writers know of the few writers in the past who have been singled out for external censorship, currently, slash is flourishing with external forces doing nothing to stop it. In today's society, *The Powers That Be* are conspicuously silent in regards to fanfiction and slash. Lately, the worst that has happened externally to slash writers is that they have been removed from servers due to their site's adult content.

Community censorship, on the other hand, is and always will be a problem. Fans are vocal, and often quite vicious when confronted with something that they dislike. Warnings, ratings and summaries of the stories have all become common practice in order to inform the reader as much as possible before they are confronted with something they do not

like. It is through using this extensive warning system that slash writers can protect themselves from community censorship.

Risk

It is important that the risk that many respondents are taking to write slash fiction is not downplayed. Most writers feel that they have something to risk when they write slash fiction, but despite this perception, they continue to write.

That ninety percent (90%) of slash writers maintain at least a small level of secrecy shows a certain cautiousness and understanding of their environment. Slash writers understand that some people will denigrate their writing, and even take reprisals, so most writers regulate carefully who knows of their hobby. That slash writers and publishers continue creating slash demonstrates that respondents will not let fear run their lives. They understand the risks, but their desire to express themselves overrides this. Slash writers are careful about who knows of their writing and where they put their fiction, and warn off unsympathetic or age-inappropriate readers.

Media and Technology Savvy

Participants showed a great deal of media, culture and technological savvy in their answers. They think about how their actions affect the

world around them. They understand the ever-changing nature of the Internet, the free advertising and support fans give to a show, the negative media attention that would result from an attempt to shut down slash fiction, and point out that, contrary to popular belief, some *Powers That Be* actually support slash as a valid reading of the texts they are producing.

Personal Reflections

Doing this research has been an intense learning process. As both an academic and a member of the slash community, it was sometimes difficult for me to juggle the responsibilities I had to both communities. And sometimes, despite my best intentions, my dual identities were in direct contradiction with each other. Looking back over the research process, I feel that this duality of both researcher and insider helped make this research project stronger.

As an insider, my contact with the slash community was not simply limited to the period of data collection. Rather than as a researcher taking an interest in the community for one small slice of its existence, I maintained continuous contact with the slash community. Because of this, my analysis of their responses was based in a contextual framework best be understood by the insider. This insider status also allowed me to update other sections of my thesis as more information became available. For example, over the years that I have spent observing the slash community, slash fiction based on a f/f pairing has become increasingly

prevalent as more female characters appear in roles other than those of supporting cast.

Knowing that being an insider presented the possibility of my only presenting the most positive aspects of the community, I became extremely conscious of presenting not only the views that highlighted the positive aspects, but those that perhaps did not. Concerned that I might be attempting to have the slash community speak with only one voice, I made sure that all opinions were given a chance to speak, even when they directly contradicted something that had just been said. It was because the positions of researcher and insider were sometimes in contradiction with each other, that I was able to present a comprehensive view of slash writers opinions on feminism, pornography, censorship and risk.

Looking Back

The intent of this research was to be exploratory, and as with all exploratory research, some things are overlooked and other things could have been done differently. This research project is no different.

In the demographic information section, the issues of race and ethnicity should have been addressed. In the past, whiteness was assumed and unexamined but in contemporary feminism and post-colonial thought, race and ethnicity are important issues to be discussed. The slash community has generally been assumed to be white, but as with the

assumptions of the heterosexuality of slash writers, this research could have found that the assumption of "whiteness" is incorrect as well. With that being said, the interview questions evolved from themes present in the slash community, the academic research and the researcher's experiences as a reader and writer of slash fiction. Race is not an issue that came up in any of these three sources, indicating that while race and ethnicity are important issues in feminism, that importance has not manifested itself in the slash community.

When designing the questionnaire, many questions were included in an attempt to get a wide understanding of slash writers' experiences. Unfortunately, due to the large number of responses and increasing concerns with time, it became impossible to analyze the answers to all the questions. In hindsight, this project would have been better served with fewer questions more specifically aimed towards the key issues it wanted to explore.

Slash Fiction and Its Importance for Feminism and the Slash Community

It is important that feminists participate in slash fiction. Writers of slash are women on the frontlines of the pornography debates. Every day they look at what popular culture gives them and twist it around until they create something that they like better. While slash writers do not set out with a "feminist agenda," their writing works to resist, and

reconceptualize popular notions of sex, sexuality, pornography and romance. Further research should focus on the relationship between women's perceptions of pornography as it relates to the consumption of sexually explicit writing on the internet. Another avenue of research could examine the way that women become involved in fandom in general and slash fiction in particular. This area of research, because it is both new and relatively unstudied will provide opportunities for researchers from multiple perspectives to examine this facet of women's experiences. With the growth of online communities this will only become a larger issue as more people gain access to the internet and become involved with online communities.

Throughout its history, slash fiction has had little public exposure. This privacy has worked for slash fans, keeping them out of view of owners and producers of movies and television shows. With the growth of the Internet and the burgeoning slash presence on it, the previous level of anonymity is disappearing. Now, more information about the slash community is a benefit both to the members of the slash community and to the greater public. This research looks at slash writers and publisher's views on issues that are of importance to both society and slash writers: feminism, pornography, censorship and risk. Small groups of slash writers have discussed these topics amongst themselves, but this research is the first to consolidate the discussion into one body

of work. This research can act as a resource for slash fans interested in their community's beliefs and activities. It can also act as a resource for fans interested in finding out about the censorship of slash fiction and some of the precautions they can take to minimize their level of risk. Finally, the "History" section of this thesis can offer new fans a chance to read about the history and development of their community; something that they can not do by going down to their nearest library and checking out a book.

This study has focused predominantly on the relationship of feminism, and censorship on the slash community. To augment this analysis further study should focus on the members of the slash community; how they came to fandom, how they found out about the genre, their motivations for writing and other aspects of their personal histories. The women who write slash fiction are a fascinating, diverse and eloquent group of individuals. This paper focused on the authors of slash fiction, however there is also a large community of fans who only read and do not write. Their perspectives may be significantly different than those who participated in this study. For those interested in statistical analysis, an examination of the demographic information of this population would further our understanding of this community.

Participation in this web questionnaire is entirely voluntary. Please feel free to terminate this interview at any point.

You must be over 18 to participate in this project

Please do not answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or that you object to in any way. Due to different interpretations of words and word usage, please feel free to modify or expand upon any of these questions.

Writers and Publishers

1. How and why did you get active in fandom?

2. a) What fandoms are you currently in?

   b) What fandoms were you previously in?

3. Tell me about the first time you found out about slash writing.

4. What was your original opinion of slash fiction? Has your opinion changed?

5. How many years have you been writing slash fiction?

6. In what fandoms do you write slash?

7. Are you exclusively a slash writer or do you write gen stories as well?

8. Have you ever been paid for any writing? Elaborate.

9. Do you write slash fiction in all the fandoms your are in? Why or why not?

10. Why do you write slash fiction?

11. Where do you publish your writings? Mailing lists? Archives?

Personal friends? Web pages? Zines? Why?

12. Which slash specific e-mail lists--if any--have you joined? How did you hear about them?

13. Do you identify as a feminist?

14. Do you know about the various feminist positions on pornography? Please elaborate.

15. What are your positions on pornography? Explain.

16. What kind of other sexually explicit writing do you read?

17. Do you integrate feminist principles in your writing and/or publishing? Please elaborate.

18. In writing slash fiction do you think you are writing pornography? Why or why not?

19. How far out of the 'slash closet' are you? Do your friends know? Family? Work? How did they react?

20. What risks (personally and professionally) do you face in writing and/or publishing slash fiction?

Note: All questions about censorship include *all* types of censorship. This includes, but is not limited to, censorship by legal authorities, your ISP and personally within the fan community (including nasty letters of comment).

21. What do you think about censorship of your material?

22. What precautions do you take to avoid censorship?

23. Are there things you won't write about because you're afraid you'll be censored? Explain.

24. Do you feel that you or your work has ever been censored or an

attempt to censor has been made? Explain.

25. Did previous occurrences of censorship (either self, or others) affect your choice of Internet servers? Explain.

26. Has censorship, either personal or hearsay, ever affected your decision to write or publish (either net, mail list or zine) slash fiction? Please explain.

27. Do you worry that the relatively easy access of slash fiction on the net will make *The Powers That Be* more aware of its existence and thus will result in a backlash against slash? Why or why not?

28. How informed are you about the censorship laws?

29. What is your knowledge of copyright laws?

30. Where did you get this knowledge?

Publishers Only

31. As a publisher of slash fiction (either net, mail list or zine) have you ever been asked to stop publishing? Explain.

32. As a publisher of slash fiction (either net, mail list or zine) have you ever refused to publish a story? Why or why not?

Writers and Publishers

33. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

34. Do you have any comments on these questions?

Background Information

Please Check your response.

1. What is your age now?

18-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60 and up

2. What is your sex?

female

male

3. What is your highest level of formal education completed?

No formal schooling

Highschool

Some post-secondary

College diploma

University degree

Graduate degree

4. What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual

Bisexual

Lesbian/Gay

Other (Please explain)

5. What is your marital status?

Single

Seeing someone

Married

Living with partner

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

6. Do you have any children?

Yes

No

Children Ages

7. What is your current gross annual income? (US $)

Under $10 000

$10 000-$19 999

$20 000-$29 999

$30 000-$39 999

$40 000-$49 999

$50 000-$59 999

$60 000 or more

8. In what country do you live?

9. What is your occupation?

10. How do you access the Internet/World Wide Web?

Home

Office

Public access terminal

Other. (Please explain)

How many hours a day do you spend reading/answering e-mail and/or surfing the World Wide Web?

Less than 1

1-2 hours

2-4 hours

4-6 hours

6-8 hours

8 or more

12. How may hours a day do you spend reading fanfiction?

Less than 1

1-2 hours

2-4 hours

4-6 hours

6-8 hours

8 or more

13. How many hours a day do you spend writing fanfiction?

Less than 1

1-2 hours

2-4 hours

4-6 hours

6-8 hours

8 or more

Where do you write?

home

office

both

other

Page 1

Get Your Hands Off My Fantasies

Hello. My name is Kelly Boyd and I'm a Masters Candidate in Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Personally, I'm 26 years old, short, with purple hair, green eyes, glasses and nine piercings. I'm a full-time student, but I'm also the President of the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU), the local TA union here at SFU. I live in Hamilton Hall the graduate residence on campus, where I'm also the Residence Assistant (RA). Basically all that means is that when people have a problem with their rooms, I'm the first one they talk to. I like reading, art, watching TV and hanging out with my friends. Musically, I have eclectic tastes, in one day I can listen to anything from thrash, to classical, to swing, to mainstream pop to techno to alternative. I generally don't like Country or Jazz, but even then, I've been known to try it.

I was first introduced to fandom by a friend six years ago, when he sent me the first part of an adult X-Files story. Totally hooked, I begged him

for the rest of the story and then when I was done with that, he told me about the X-Files fiction newsgroup.

Unhappy with trying to find the diamond in all the rough and spams and trolls I found in this newsgroup, I gave up. Occasionally my friend would forward something on to me, but for years that was the extent in my participation.

Fast forward to three years ago. I had moved back home after completing a double major honours undergraduate degree in Liberal Studies/Women's Studies at Brock University. (If you're interested in reading my undergraduate honours thesis, it's called "You Want to Do What? Where?" and it's on bodyart [piercing, tattooing and scarring].) Living at home, I no longer had access to the Internet, so when I could get access, I made the most of it.

One beautiful day when I actually had access to the Internet/World Wide Web, I remembered the stories that my friend used to send me, so I went looking to see if I could find any sites on the Web.

Well, wasn't I surprised? I was like a kid in a candy store! All these sites jumped into my search engine, I almost didn't know where to start.

I spent a day just surfing around, seeing what was out there. Any show I could think of (X-Files, Forever Knight, Highlander, Star Trek, Due South) I checked out numerous sites of fanfiction for them. I was in heaven and I never wanted to leave. Unfortunately, it wasn't my

113

computer or my internet time and eventually I did have to leave. I downloaded a disk filled with stories to fortify myself until I could get back on the web and sadly bid adieu to my new found joy.

A couple of months later, I was back at a computer with online access and this time I had a plan. While I enjoyed the gen stuff that I'd found earlier, I was looking for something a bit more adult. Like the stuff my friend had sent to me a couple of years ago. It was during my search for adult fiction that I stumbled across my first taste of slash.

Ah slash. What a wonderful concept that is.

The first site I came across was the Sentinel Adult Fiction Archive. 24 hours later, I emerged with a huge internet bill, my eyes swimming from staring at a computer screen that long and three disks filled with stories I hadn't had time to read.

For the rest of the year I kept up my reading, catching moments on the web when I could, downloading what I didn't have time to read online and generally immersing myself in the slash concept. I read through the entire Sentinel archive, and branched out into the Highlander, X-Files, Due South, Star Trek, and Forever Knight slash archives.

The year finished and it was time for me to pack up and move myself halfway across the country to start grad school. It had been brewing in the back of my mind that I might want to change my thesis topic to something relating to slash. The Women's Studies department at SFU

asked you to submit your thesis topic when you first apply, and I'd been accepted to the program under the topic of lesbian s/m pornography and other alternative forms of women's sexually explicit writing. I didn't think it would be too hard for me to change my topic, slash fiction certainly wasn't a mainstream form of women's writing. In all honesty, after finding slash, my interest in academically exploring other types of erotic women's writing had waned considerably.

Doing some preliminary research, I came across very little academic writing on the topic of slash. Constence Penley, Henry Jenkins III, and Camille Bacon-Smith seemed to be the only academics writing on this interesting topic. With each chapter and article I read on slash, I got more and more excited, this was definitely what I was interested in studying.

Well after some debate and a lot of convincing on my part, my advisor agreed to let me change my thesis topic. Since he was in Criminology, we agreed that I had to focus on some aspect of slash that would fit into his discipline. The underground, possibly illegal nature of slash fit into the description nicely.

Thus rose my thesis topic. Slash fiction and censorship.

Slash fiction, if you don't know, is sexually explicit gay male and lesbian literature written predominantly by women for women, about characters from popular television shows and movies.

For me, slash fiction is a fascinating way where within a society that's focused and built around men, women are taking what they're given and are subverting it to create a form that they find more pleasurable. In a society where women are told they're supposed to be uninterested in sex, the writers and publishers of slash fiction are quietly turning that misconception on its head. I could go on and on about how subversive and revolutionary I think slash writers and slash fiction is (not to mention just plain hot), but I won't.

Now by the word censorship, I don't just mean when something is stopped at the boarder, or governments write laws against it. I mean all kinds of censorship. When TPTB send out cease-and-desist orders, when servers pull web pages after receiving one complaint, when zine publishers refuse to publish certain works, when authors don't write what they want to for fear of what the community will say, when readers write letter of comment telling you that you are good enough to be writing--and any other form of censorship that's out there.

What I need from you:

- If you're a writer or publisher of slash fiction I'd like to hear from you. I have a questionnaire with 30 some odd questions on it that I'd like you to fill out and return to me. Now I will warn you, these questions aren't yes/no or multiple choice. They're questions that (I hope) cause you to sit down and think, to engage with them and to write in-depth answers. Don't worry if you haven't experienced censorship

yourself, or you've only heard about it second hand. I still want to hear from you.

- Pass the address to this web site on to anyone who you think might be interested in participating. I've done my best to get the word out, but I would appreciate any help I can get.
- Link this page to yours, but please only link to this introductory page. If you do this, please contact me at ksboyd@sfu.ca to tell me what your site is.
- Tell your friends with web pages about this page and get them to link it to their pages as well.
- Pass my e-mail address on to anyone you know who doesn't use the Web, or can't access the Web. I can give out all this information through e-mail and snail mail, if need be.

If you have any other questions either about me, or about my research, please don't hesitate to write to me at ksboyd@sfu.ca.

If you would like a second opinion on either me, or the validity of my research, you can contact Katherine Langley at kslangley@e-mail.msn.com. She's a long time fan who's been active in many fandoms over the years. I've been talking to her about my research for about five months, and she's agreed to give me a letter of introduction (so to speak).

This sounds like a fascinating research project. Please take me to the questionnaire

Information Sheet for Subjects

This research project is about slash fiction--sexually explicit, gay male and lesbian literature written predominantly by women, for women, about characters from popular television shows and movies.

It focuses on censorship, both real and perceived, experienced by the writers and producers of such fiction.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. At any time you may request to be removed from this study and have all relevant information pertaining to you and/or your answers removed from the project.

YOU MUST BE OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Throughout this study every attempt will be made to keep the anonymity of all participants. No names or identifying information will be linked to your responses. All information will be coded with a number, all names and identifying information will be changed or destroyed to protect the participants. Anything sent to the researcher will be printed out and then removed from both the server and the researcher's computer. These printed out responses will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed six months after the completion of the research.

Third parties will not be allowed access to information related to individual subjects.

If you have any questions or comments related to this interview you may contact me at ksboyd@sfu.ca. Be aware that if you contact me through my personal e-mail account and if your comments or questions are related to the interview, I will be unable to guarantee your anonymity. I will make every attempt to keep your anonymity, but it cannot be guaranteed.

In order to ensure confidentiality, please do not include in your response any information that might identify you.

This questionnaire should take you between 30 and 40 minutes to complete.

Completed questionnaires will be accepted between November 1, 1999 and December 15, 1999.

There are minimal risks in participation, but there are some risks none the less. These risks may include the following:

The primary risk involved with participation in this research is the threat of legal action from the holders of the copyright of the characters used in slash fiction. Confidentiality of the participants will be kept to the full extent of the law. However, it is possible that as a result of legal action,

the researcher may be required to divulge information obtained in the course of this research to a court or other legal body.

Every attempt will be made to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. There is however the risk that someone reading this research may recognize one of the participants. Personally, this may result in embarrassment of the participant, the loss of a friend and/or social disapproval óf part of the participant's community. Professionally, this may result in sanctioning and/or loss of a job for the participant.

There is the risk that an Internet provider may discover that pornographic or 'adult' materials are being stored on a participant's web page. This may result in the web page being shut down and may require that the participant either change Internet providers completely or agree to remove any offending texts.

Please tell me more.

Informed Consent by Subjects to Participate in a Research Project

The University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures. Your returning this form to the researcher will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. You must not write your name or any other identifying information on the research materials, other than the consent form. All information will be coded with a number, all names and identifying information will be changed or destroyed to protect the participants. Materials will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed six months after the completion of the study. However, it is possible that, as a result of legal action, the researcher may be asked to divulge information obtained in the course of this research to a court or other legal body.

Having been asked by Kelly Boyd of the Women's Studies Department of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project, I have read the procedures specified in the document.

I understand the procedures to be used in this experiment and the personal risks to me in taking part.

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this experiment at any time. I understand that if I have any questions about this research, I may contact the research named above, or her supervisor, Dr. Brian Burtch, Criminology Department, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5A 1S6. I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the experiment with Meredith Kimball, Chair of the Women's Studies Department of Simon Fraser University.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting: Kelly Boyd, 1023 Hamilton Hall, SFU, Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6 or through e-mail at: ksboyd@sfu.ca or on the World Wide Web at www.sfu.ca/~ksboyd/intro.html

I have been informed that the research material will be held in confidence by the Principal Investigator.

I agree to participate, by answering through a web page, the questions asked of me as described in the document referred to above, during the time period between November 1, 1999 and December 15, 1999.

I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

YOU MUST FILL IN ALL PARTS OF THIS FORM, OR YOUR RESPONSES WILL NOT BE USED IN THIS RESEARCH. THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE SENT TO AN INDEPENDENT E-MAIL ADDRESS AND WILL ONLY BE CHECKED TO MAKE SURE IT HAS BEEN CORRECTLY FILLED OUT BEFORE I ACCEPT YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE.

Name:

Address:

E-mail Address:

Date:

I UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE FORM AND GIVE CONSENT FOR MY ANSWERS TO BE USED IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. I UNDERSTAND THAT ANY INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ME WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL BY THE RESEARCHER TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT ALLOWED BY THE LAW.

I understand the above, submit my consent form

Please fill in this form now. Once you access the page with the

questionnaire, you can not return to this page without losing everything that you have written on the questionnaire. If for some reason you are unable to complete the questionnaire in one setting, please send what you have, and then when you are able to finish the remainder, complete a new consent form and submit the rest of the questionnaire.

Thanks.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

Your questionnaire has been sent to the researcher. Please do not
resend it, and please only fill out the questionnaire once.

Completed questionnaires will be accepted from between November 1,
and December 15, 1999.

The analyzed data should be up sometime in January. If you are
interested in reading and commenting on my conclusions, please come
back in January or enter your e-mail address below if you wish to be
contacted. This address will not be linked to your questionnaire
responses in any way.

Thank you again for your participation.

I would like to be contacted at _____

Back to the front page

Appendix III

Example of a Slash Story

Moonrise

The temperature has dropped precipitously now that the sun has fully set. Though the days are lengthening this time of year, dark still seems to fall quickly, especially here where no artificial lights brighten the shadows. I send another annoyed glance at Diefenbaker who looks abashed, well aware that it was his ill-considered leap into the water after a duck which tipped the canoe and drenched us. Even though the temperatures today were pleasant, the water was still very cold.

Fortunately it hadn't been far to shore, and we'd already been most of the way back to the cabin, so while we're wet and chilly, neither of us is in danger of hypothermia. Had the incident occurred further from shore or the cabin the situation might have been different. All in all Ray had taken the whole event with surprising good humor, better, in fact, than I had. We'd maneuvered the upside-down canoe to shore, dumped it out, wrung out our clothes as best we could and headed in for the night after storing the canoe.

"You can finish drying out here," I say sternly to Diefenbaker as we near the cabin, moving a little faster in our desire to get out of the chilled air and our wet clothes.

"He didn't mean to do it, Frase," Ray says, trying to blunt my justifiable irritation.

"The fact remains," I say, refusing to grant clemency.

"Hey, he's just following his natural instinct," Ray says. "Can't fault a guy for that."

Instinct. The word, indeed, the entire subject, has taken on a whole new meaning in the last few months, one to which I tend to respond in a rather Pavlovian manner. Despite the discomfort of being chilled and damp, I find myself becoming aroused. It's a bit embarrassing how easily he can induce that in me. I suppose it's a result of going so many years without intimacy. My body wants to make up for lost time and my mind isn't far behind. I shoot a look at Ray, but though his eyes are bright with humor they don't hold that certain look I know means more.

All right. Settle down. He's wet and cold, he didn't mean anything by that. After all, he has no way of knowing that I respond to the word 'instinct' like a lab rat to a food lever.

Ray unlocks the door and we step inside. The small cabin has retained some residual warmth from the day and if it feels good to me I know it must feel better to Ray, who's already starting to strip off layers of damp clothing as I light the lantern. There's a generator if we want electricity, but I prefer the simplicity of lanterns.

"I dibs the shower," Ray says, heading for the small bathroom. In

the doorway he stops and looks back, eyebrows lifted. "Unless you want to share?"

I'm very tempted. His lean torso seems to invite my touch, and he did offer . . . however, one of the things I've learned since I moved in with Ray is that we waste a truly frightening amount of water when we shower together. In the interests of conservation I shake my head. "You go ahead, I'll shower later."

He nods, not looking too disappointed. I console myself with the thought that there will be other opportunities which have less environmental impact. A moment later I hear the shower come on while I strip and drape my clothes over a kitchen chair to dry. Knowing that we're settling in for the night I opt for the comfort of a pair of sweatpants and a sweatshirt. I light a fire in the fireplace, and after standing by it a few moments I'm almost too warm, but I know Ray will be glad of the heat.

A can of beef stew goes into a pan on the propane-fueled stove to heat on a very low flame, because Ray takes long showers even without me. As I rinse the can I suddenly remember that Dief is in exile on the porch and feel slightly guilty about that-- as Ray said, the hunting instinct is difficult to overcome. However, it would undermine discipline to go back on my word now, so I ready a bowl of food and another of water and head out to feed him. He's under the porch swing, and though he comes out from under it when I step out, to my surprise, when I put down his dishes, he doesn't immediately begin to eat.

He exhales loudly: a very wolflike sigh. Perhaps it's my imagination but he sounds guilty. I sigh too and crouch down.

"It's all right this time, but you need to think of consequences. Ray's not a strong swimmer, and it's fortunate we were relatively close to shore when it occurred and that I was able to help."

He lowers his head, puts his ears back and glances away briefly with a soft whine. I nod, accepting his apology. "Thank you. I know you didn't."

That seems to do the trick: I feel the brush of his tail twice against my arm and then he wanders over to start eating. I get to my feet and stand for a moment, absorbing the night. I can hear the susurration of the river, crickets, frogs, and distantly the call of an owl. The sky is a vibrant cobalt blue with a scattering of bright stars like - I grin to myself - drops of spent semen across dark sheets. A faint ivory glow through the trees to the east tells me the moon is rising. The air that felt uncomfortably cold to me just a few minutes ago now feels just pleasantly crisp. Ray was right. I do need to escape the city for this sort of setting now and then. He's usually right about me, I've found, even when I think he's not.

Being together hasn't been a completely smooth adjustment. He does things that annoy me: wet towels in a heap on the bathroom floor,

for instance. I do things that annoy him, of course, such as arranging the spices alphabetically rather than by frequency of use. But the annoyances so far are minor when compared to all the things we do right together, and we're learning how to communicate so that those minor things don't assume more importance than they should. I close my eyes and inhale deeply. Leaf-mould, moist earth, pine, damp wolf, a tinge of woodsmoke from our fire, and a faint hint of warming stew. I don't want to go back inside yet, so I settle onto the swing, rocking it idly with an occasional flex of my legs.

I'm not sure how long I've sat there when the cabin door opens and Ray emerges. It must have been quite some time, because his hair is dry. He brings with him the aroma of Dr. Bronner's peppermint soap, together with his own unique scent, which combined are nearly as erotic as the word 'instinct.' He's wrapped in a quilt against the chill, and though his face is shadowed I can see his eyes shining in the moonlight as he looks at me. Wordlessly he comes and sits beside me, and I can feel his warmth, radiant. Ray-diant. I hadn't realized I was getting chilled until now. After a few moments he untucks the quilt from around his feet and hooks a foot behind my ankles to pull my feet under the fabric too. His long narrow feet cover mine, warming them.

"I turned off the stew," he says after a little while longer.

I stiffen a bit. "I'm sorry, I forgot."

He smiles, I can see the flash of his teeth. "S'okay. No biggie. You're allowed. Nice out here."

I look at him, a little surprised. "You don't find it too cold?"

"It's a good kind of cold. Not the nut-shriveling kind. Just the fire-in-the-fireplace kind. The kind that makes you want to be close to someone else."

He says it nonchalantly, but I know him better than that and have to work to control a smile. I can take a hint. I scoot a bit closer and slide my arm around his blanket-encased form. He leans into my embrace and I see his teeth again, briefly. This close his scent is stronger, and there's an underlying hint of more than just soap and clean skin. My own mouth curves in a smile I can't control. He's looking away from me, toward the moon, almost full, that's now risen above the trees. My eyes trace the long line of the tendon in his throat from just behind his ear down to where it flows into the curve of his shoulder, and I suddenly realize that in order for me to see that he must be shirtless under the quilt.

I almost chide him for coming out half-dressed when a thought takes me, and I slide one foot out from beneath his and glide my toes up his ankle to his calf. His *bare* calf. I've always been quite good at deductive reasoning. And math. Combine bare shoulder with bare calf, add quilt, multiply by Ray's personality and the sum of that equation shakes me to the core. I'm suddenly very glad I didn't put on a pair of

jeans, as I would be quite uncomfortable right now. The muscles of his calf flex a little under my toes, and he chuckles.

"Get two yet?" he asks out of the blue.

"What?" I reply stupidly, wondering if the sudden rush of blood to more southerly areas has left my brain unable to process correctly. His question makes no sense.

"Did you get two yet? You know, one plus one?"

Damn, sometimes he is uncannily in tune with my thoughts. I clear my throat. "Ah, yes."

He laughs again, a richer sound this time. "'Bout time." He snakes a hand out of his quilt and runs a single long finger over the turgid proof of my reasoning ability. "Oh yeah," he says huskily. "You got it all right." He moves his hand up, hooks his fingers into the elastic waist of the sweatpants and tugs. "Lift up."

"But Ray, it's . . . ."

"I didn't say 'argue with me,' I said lift. Now lift."

I lift. He pulls. When I settle back I feel the fabric of the seat-cushion under my buttocks and thighs, cool air caressing the bared, heated skin between my waist and knees. He stands up, the blanket

trailing from his shoulders like furled patchwork wings. The moonlight steals all his daylight gold, rendering his elegant lines in silver and smoke. Dear God, I didn't think it was possible for him to be any more beautiful than he is every morning in our bed, but he is. Standing here in between shadow and substance he is a mythical creature, but not an angel. No angel ever wore such a look of earthbound mischief.

"Ray," I say hoarsely.

"Mmm?" he replies, moving closer to me, standing with his feet on either side of mine.

"You're going to get cold," I say foolishly, and then want to bite my tongue. Sometimes I say the most idiotic things.

"Guess you better keep me warm then," he says softly, leaning forward, planting a knee on the swing next to my thigh as he puts a corner of his quilt into my hand.

I grasp it automatically and he does the same thing with the other corner, leaving me holding it up as he puts his hands on the back of the swing, shifts his weight and straddles my lap. The swing wants to rock and I have to tighten my calves and dig my toes in against the porch to hold us still. He's not cold, I can feel the heat of him just inches away. His right hand is warm as he lets go of the swing and strokes my thigh, then curls his fingers around the base of my erection, holding me as he leans even closer, cants his hips forward, and then eases down. I almost

protest again, because though we're getting fairly experienced at this there are things that should be done first, but as I feel the slickness and then the ease with which I slip inside him, I realize there's no need. Ray must have . . . prepared. . . before he came outside. I moan as I imagine what he looked like doing so, feeling the results all around me.

Finally he's settled, both hands on the back of the swing again, his bent knees in the gap between the seat and back of the swing, his legs tight alongside my thighs, his penis a thick, hot length against my belly. He moves on me, a roll of his hips that makes me slide within him in a way that makes us both gasp, and then he leans to lick my ear with a sound that's half purr and half growl.

"Relax, Ben. Let us go."

Ben. He only uses that name for me in the heat of passion. I cherish it like a rare gift. I don't understand what he means though, until the next time he moves and I strain to keep the swing stable. Then I finally comprehend. I stop trying to hold us in place and his movements make the swing sway gently. He takes that rhythm, echoes it, his body moving against mine, all long, lean grace as his head falls back, and his lips part. In this position his chest is at mouth level, and I take advantage of that, leaning to suckle first one taut nipple, then the other. He shivers suddenly and I remember the blanket, now draped limply between my hands, and bring it up around his shoulders, enfolding him in its protective embrace.

He shivers again anyway, and I realize it's not from cold, it's from arousal. He sighs, and makes a soft sound in his throat, coming down harder against me, making the swing move faster. His sigh brings my gaze to his mouth. His mouth is extraordinary: so expressive, so talented. I stretch upward to catch it with my own, and he bends down again to make it easier for me. My lips graze his cheek as he moves down to me, encountering smooth skin. . . he shaved. More preparation. Knowing how much he planned this sends rivers of heat through me, the intensity almost too much. My thighs flex and I push up into him, disrupting the rhythm he'd set. He moans and shakes his head.

"Let - let me do the work, Ben."

Somehow I manage to relax my legs and the movement of the swing stabilizes again, a steady back and forth, with each movement of his body. I want to touch him, but I can't because my hands are full of blanket and if I drop it to touch him, the cold air will find his sweat-sheened skin. It's a subtle torture to not be able to caress him. I lean forward to lick his shoulder, to use my mouth on him as I can't use my hands, and he laughs, taking a hand from the back of the swing to stroke my face, run his thumb across my lips.

I catch it quickly in my teeth, hungry for some part of him in me as I am in him. I suckle it, stroking with my tongue, as I wish I could do for the straining length against my belly. The deliberate rhythm stutters, and he clenches around me, oh God, so sweet. I buck and shudder and gasp his name, fingers clenching in fabric as I strain to keep from falling.

136

"Shhh," he says, tugging his thumb from my mouth, leaning to brush his lips across mine. "Shhhh. God this is good. I love the way you feel inside me. I could do this forever, fuck you forever."

He might be able to, but I can't. I never can with him. The control I've always had deserts me when I'm with him, completely lost, no reserve, no restraint nothing but passion and need and love. I try. I bite the inside of my lip, hoping the pain will outweigh the pleasure, but his hand is on my face again, finger sliding into my mouth, pushing between my teeth, taking even that from me.

"Don't, Ben. Just give it to me, come for me."

His voice steals my last thread of sanity, and I do as he says, with his finger in my mouth, my cock buried deep in the welcoming heat of him. Pleasure rises through me in mind-stealing waves, pulsing out of me, making me shudder and cry out like some wild thing, giving myself to him totally, trying vainly to somehow meld the very cells of our being together, inseparable. I am in him, but somehow he's also in me at the same moment, one.

Gradually reality settles in again. He's still hard against my stomach, trembling, his breathing shallow and tense has he holds himself still to allow me the fullest experience of my own pleasure. I lift my head to look into his face. His eyes seem to hold the moonlight captive: there's no color to them, only light and the dark wells of his dilated pupils. I let the blanket fall and my hands slide down to his hips,

caressing, urging him up, and off me. I can feel him shaking as he complies, hear the soft sound of loss he can't suppress as my body slips out of his.

I steady him as he gets his feet under him, and then I stand too. My legs are also more than a little shaky. Grabbing the blanket from where it fell, I wrap it around his shoulders, then turn him and press him down to take my place on the swing. He complies with a sigh, and I sink to my knees between his widespread thighs, hands on his hips again, pulling him forward to the edge of the seat. He makes a soft, anticipatory sound. He knows I like this, I know he loves this. Perhaps not as much as me in him, but it's a close second. I circle his erection with one hand, pumping gently, and he moans, thrusting into my hand.

He's close, I can feel it in him, hear it in his voice. I slide my other hand beneath the sweaty weight of his scrotum, caressing, then back farther, fingers searching, finding. He's softly pliant, his body opening readily to my touch. I take his cock in my mouth just as I slide two fingers into him, their entry eased by the heat and wetness of my own semen inside him. He arches helpless under the dual assault, hands clenching by his thighs.

"Oh fuck," he moans, the words thick and hoarse. "Yeah. Ohyeah. More."

I give him the more he wants, using my fingers almost roughly inside him, my other hand still working the base of his shaft as I lick and

suck on him. I used to be afraid I'd hurt him, but I know now where the lines are, what he wants. He bucks hard against my fingers and shudders, his long body bowed in a slouch as he tries to stay on the swing and still get closer to me, to the pleasure I'm giving him. I twist my fingers a little inside him, pushing deep, probing, and let him feel my teeth, and that's as much as he can stand. He tenses, groans a deep, throaty sound, and I smile around him as I feel the spasms start around my fingers only to be echoed a moment by the hot spurts of his seed across my tongue.

I take every drop from him, licking softly, knowing how sensitive he is now. Finally I feel him shiver, from cold this time, and I know we need to move inside. I slide my fingers gently from him, release his softened cock, and rub my head against his thigh for a moment before I stand, hitching up my sweatpants which I've just now realized are still down around my knees. Astonishing the things one can forget when one is otherwise. . . occupied. Ray is still sprawled in an almost-painful looking slouch on the swing, looking utterly and delightfully debauched. He doesn't appear to have moved at all, not an inch.

"Are you all right?" I ask.

He chuckles softly, looking up at me with those amazing, luminous eyes.

"Pretty much dead, but way better than all right."

I put out a hand. "Come on, inside. It's too cold for you to be dead out here. Lets go in by the fire and I'll warm the stew up again."

He yawns and nods, and puts his hand in mine so I can pull him to his feet, but I don't stop with that. Hands still entwined, I pull him into my arms, holding him close for long, long moments, just trying to convey through simple touch the feelings I have no words for. 'I love you' is entirely inadequate to the task. He's part of me, and I of him. His arms go around me and tighten, almost painfully, and I know he understands, that my truth is his truth as well. His lips brush my ear, then my cheek, then my eyelids, his tongue stealing out, warm, to lick the salt from my lashes. How did he know? He lingers there a moment, then his mouth moves to mine and I taste my tears on his lips.

"There's no one in the world I'd rather be dead with," he whispers a moment later. "Come on. Let's go inside. We can die again in a little while."

We can. We will. And live again, as well. Together.

Glossary

Computer Terms

Dencity.com: Previously this was an adult webpage provider. Just recently they have notified all their customers that they will no longer provide space for adult content.

Domain: A top level web site address, like "Yahoo.com". Server space is usually provided by a company that takes no responsibility for what's put on it.

Internetdump.com: A webpage provider set up deliberately for sites with adult content. To have a website on this domain, it must be adult in content.

Internet Server Provider (ISP): An organization set up to provide access to the Internet/World Wide Web for paying companies and individuals. An ISP can provide a user with just dialup access, just web site space or both.

Meta tags: Codes placed in the webpage by the designer to describe the content of the page to search engines. Meta tags may indicate that a site contains adult content among other things. Search engines can decide not to index adult content or not return it if a "family filter" is active. Meta tags can also be used to keep a web page hidden from automatic computer searches.

Net Nanny: A program designed to enforce "community standards." Generally this takes the form of keep children from accessing adult webpages, or hate pages, but filters of these types are known for blocking pages about gay rights, breast cancer, and pages that say filtering software is bad.

Newsgroups: A system whereby people can post email and have online discussions that are accessible to the general public. Newsgroups usually focus around a specific set of common topics or interests (e.g. a specific TV show or hobby).

Pop Up Window: An Internet advertising program that opens a separate viewing portal which is designed to promote a product or service. Online culture disparages this type of advertisement as it has traditionally slowed down access to the Internet and bombards the user with unwanted advertising.

Search Engine: A computer program that allows you to search for specific web pages by means of specific text or a set of defining parameters.

Fannish Terms

Actor Slash: Slash fiction about actual actors, not the characters they play. For example William Shatner, not Captain Kirk. This type of slash is highly frowned upon by most communities.

Adult: The term used to describe any sexual or implied sexual content in a zine or story. It is used to denote that the material was inappropriate for children. Before slash fiction, adult stories or zines contained heterosexual content, and were hotly contested within the fan community. After a number of years it branched out when slash began to be published. Now, while slash is still technically "adult," the term is generally used to refer to heterosexual material.

Beta Reader: An individual who reads through a story before it's published and acts like an editor, pointing out spelling and grammar mistakes, holes in the plot or when characters don't act in character. Some beta readers act very closely with authors, to help produce the best possible story, others just check for spelling and grammar.

bs: Bull Shit.

Canon: Anything in a television show or movie that has either been seen on screen or has been mentioned by one of the characters on screen.

Character Fan: A fan who is interested in discussing the characters of a TV show or movie, as opposed to one who is interested in discussing the premise or science behind the ideas raised in the show or movie. This title was used to differentiate between traditional SF fans and the "new" fans intrigued by the characters in *Star Trek*.

Clan Denial: A group of fans who have banded together to collectively deny the death or disappearance of a favorite character from a Television

show or movie. For example when the sidekick Richie Ryan from *Highlander* was killed off at the end of the fifth season, a group of fans came together, called themselves 'Clan Denial' and refused to believe that he was actually dead.

Coding: Within every fan community there are certain words and phrases used that have a deeper history and meaning than implied by the word. These "coded" words and phrases act as a way to keep the community together and to allow people to know who is an "insider" to the community and who is an "outsider".

Copyright: The legal protection given to the creators and producers of television shows and movies. The holder (or someone they designate) of the copyright of a character or television show is the only person *legally* allowed to use the copyrighted characters. Copyright is designed to protect the holder of the copyright from other people making money off of their work. Slash and fan writers break copyright every time they write a story.

Death Story: A story where one or more of the primary characters is either dead, or is killed off in the course of the story. Death stories are extremely disliked in fandom, and are often required to have explicit warnings on them.

Fanfic or Fanfiction: An original story written by a fan of a television show or movie.

Fanzine: Zines published by and for fans of particular television shows or movies. Usually made up of nonfiction writing, letters from readers, reviews and critiques.

f/f: Denotes that the primary pairing in a story is between two women and generally has at least one implied or explicit lesbian sex scene.

Flame: A letter written to an author containing harsh personal criticism and unkind words. Most flames are written with the intention of hurting and demoralizing the recipient. Generally flames are unprovoked and unexpected. Many lists have a policy of not allowing personal attacks onlist, but not much can be done between private e-mail.

Gen: The phrase used to describe a story, zine or discussion that is suitable for all ages to read or participate in.

Gen zine: A fanzine that focuses on all ages discussion of the television show or movie. No "adult" topics, stories or letters would be published.

Letterzine: A fanzine that revolves around publishing letters from its readers. The readers talk to each other through their letters and long, involved discussions evolve through each month's letters.

Listmum: The owner or moderator of a Mailing List. Generally this person has ultimate say over what can and can not be discussed on the list and who can and can't join.

Letter of Comment (LoCs): A letter written to and author of a story. In a LoC, the reader discusses the story written by the author. LoCs can be short or long, depending on the mood of the writer at the time. Generally LoCs are positive, but often contain critiques or point out mistakes in the story.

Mailing List (ML): A private list set up so fans of a show can talk to each other through e-mail. Each list has different rules and requirements. Only people subscribed to the list can post to it. Depending on the list, there might be requirements for joining. The list is usually owned by one individual who has ultimate say over who can and can't be on the list.

Mary Sue: A female character created in the *Star Trek: The Original Series* universe. Mary Sue was beautiful (usually with a striking feature like violent eyes), brilliant and young. Each of the main male characters fell in love with her after spending a short period of time in her presence. A major trauma effects the ship and although nobody else can figure out what to do, Mary Sue does and generally loses her life in the process. Everyone mourns her loss. The phrase "Mary Sue" is now used in fandom to describe any original female character that is felt to be merely a representation of the female author. Mary Sue stories are generally scorned in fandom as being amateurish and wish fulfillment.

Media Fandom: Evolving out of Science Fiction Fandom, media fandom focused on television shows, movies and other objects of mass media.

m/f: Denotes that the primary pairing in the story is between a man and a woman and generally has at least one implied or explicit heterosexual sex scene.

Mixed or Multimedia: Generally used in relation to zines or conventions. Mixed or multimedia indicates that more than one fandom will be present and discussed.

m/m: Denotes that the primary pairing in the story is between two men and generally has at least one implied or explicit gay sex scene.

OFC (Original Female Character): A character created by an author and placed within the universe of a particular television show or movie. This original character interact with and lives in the already created universe, but is the property of the author, not the creators of the television show or movie.

PWP (Plot, What Plot?): A type of story (generally fairly short) focused entirely on sex, with little or no plot, or character development.

POV (Point Of View): Internet slang.

PTB: Powers That Be: A fan term used to describe the producers and distributors of TV shows and movies. The PTB have ultimate control over the direction the shows, and the characters within them take.

Rapefic: A fan term used to describe fiction that centers on the rape and subsequent healing of one or more main character.

RL (Real Life): A fan phrase used to indicate life outside of fandom.

Science Fiction Fandom: Based predominantly in literature, fans of Science Fiction authors and stories joined together to meet with authors and discuss works.

Sith Academy: An online parody spinoff from the movie *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*. At the Sith Academy, the characters from the movie are made absurd. Currently there are 164 stories at the Academy, all of them internally consistent due to strict editing by the creator of the Academy. The stories have been slash in nature since story #29.

Slash: gay male and lesbian literature, often sexually explicit, written predominantly by women for women, about characters from popular television shows and movies.

Squick: A slang term used to identify things that the writer does not like or finds distasteful. For example, spiders 'squick' me out.

Terms of Service (TOS): The agreement individuals must agree to before they are allowed to put up a web site. Often Terms of Service stipulate that no pornography or 'adult' content is allowed. Violating the TOS is a valid reason for your web page to be removed.

TOS'd: Slang meaning that you were thrown off your Internet Provider for violating their Terms of Service. Usually for having pornography on your web page.

TPTB: Please see PTB (Powers That Be).

Vanilla: A phrase used to describe straight-forward penetrative sex with no toys, strange positions or other sexual aides. Comes from the flavour of ice cream, which is seen as plain and unadventurous.

Zine: Short for "magazine", zines are small, amateur, independently published underground magazines. They are usually focused around one topic or concept. Generally zines have an extremely small print run, 75-250 copies is not unusual.

Shows, Characters, Authors, Actors, Producers and Production Companies

Blake's 7: A television show produced by the BBC from 1978-81. A futuristic dystopian focusing around the attempts of a band of rebels (lead by Roj Blake) to overthrow the repressive Federation. Unlike most television shows, the rebels often fail and sometimes die. The two main characters are constantly at odds and trust between the two of them is scarce. The series ended on a dark note with the death of all the rebels and the triumph of the Federation.

Pat Califia: A lesbian author best known for her hard-core lesbian s/m writings. Considered by many to be the best writer of erotic lesbian fiction publishing today.

Chewie (Chewbacca): A character from the *Star Wars* universe. Chewbacca was Han Solo's co-pilot on the Millenium Falcon. Covered completely in fur, Chewbacca spoke with a series of growls, yowls and grunts that only Han Solo seemed to understand.

Chris Carter: The creator and producer of the Television series *The X-Files* and *Millennium.*

Davis/Panzer: The Production company that produces the Television series *Highlander.*

Due South: A Canadian television show produced by Alliance that ran from 1993-1997. The show revolved around the adventures of Constable Benton Fraser, a Canadian Mountie living in Chicago and his Chicago police officer partner Ray Vecchio. The show ran for two seasons and then was cancelled. After a year hiatus, one more season was produced. The actor who played Ray Vecchio was unavailable, so another actor was brought in and the character Ray Kowalski was introduced. There is great debate between the fans of the show over who is the better Ray, Ray Vecchio or Ray Kowalski.

Tom Fontana: Creator, producer and writer for the Television series *Oz.*

Han Solo: A character from the *Star Wars* universe. Han Solo was the pilot hired by Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi to get them off of Luke's home planet and help them save Princess Leia.

Highlander (HL): A television show produced by Davis/Panzer from 1992-98. Based on the movie of the same name, the show focused around the adventures of Duncan MacLeod, an immortal born in 1592. Duncan had various friends, but the most popular were Richie Ryan, a new immortal and Duncan's student, and Methos, the oldest immortal. The show ended after six seasons. A movie has just recently been released.

Homicide: Life on the Street: A television show produced by Barry Levinson from 1993-99. The show focused on the lives and experiences of a group of police officers that worked in the Homicide division in Baltimore. Known for it's gritty look, the constant motion of the camera and its frequent use of hand held cameras, *Homicide* was popular with the critics, but struggled to find an audience.

Ted Koppel: A respected journalist and news anchor.

Nicholas Lea: An actor on the television show *The X-Files*. He plays the villain Alex Krycek, a character who works for the Consortium, a group of men working towards the eventual enslavement of the human race by aliens. Although Alex Krycek is a villain, he's immensely popular with the fans.

Law and Order: A television show produced by Dick Wolf from 1990 and still continuing. The show focuses on two distinct processes, first the police who solve the crime and then the District Attorney's who prosecute the criminals. Immensely popular with both the critics and the public, it has recently produced a spin off series, *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit.*

George Lucas: Creator of the *Star Wars* universe.

Man From U.N.C.L.E.: A television series produced by NBC from 1964-68. Created as a spy spoof, it focused around the adventures of Solo and Kuryakin, two agents of the United Command for Law and Enforcement, an organization set up to save the world from evil masterminds and the agents of THRUSH.

Oz: A Television series produced by HBO starting in 1997 and still continuing. Not in general circulation, each season of this show is only 8 episodes long. Focusing around the people living and working at "Oswald State Correction Facility, Level Four", this show is marked by it's extreme and graphic violence.

The Professionals: A Television series produced by the LWT from 1977-83. While never shown in wide distribution in the US, it was extremely popular in Britain and managed to generate a large fan following. It focused around the adventures of Bodie and Doyle, two agents of C15, and organization set up to help combat urban terrorism.

Anne Rice or A.N. Roquelaure: The popular author of numerous vampire stories and novels. As A.N. Roquelaure, she wrote a series of s/m novels under the title of *The Sleeping Beauty Series*.

Scully: The female character from the Television series *The X-Files*. Dana Scully is the skeptical partner to Fox Mulder, the star of the show.

The Sentinel: A Television show produced by Pet Fly Productions from 1996-99. It followed the adventures of Jim Ellison, a cop with all five of his senses heightened to extraordinary levels. His friend and guide, Blair Sandburg, an anthropology graduate student, helped him learn to use his heightened senses. The series was cancelled after it's fourth season, but the fans were able bring it back for one more season. The show is noted for it's extraordinarily close relationship between the two men.

Star Trek: A Television series produced by NBC from 1966-69. While not extremely popular at the time (it was cancelled after the second season, although the fans did manage to bring it back for one more season), it spawned a number of extremely popular movies and three new Television shows twenty years later (one of which has expanded into movies as well). Response to *Star Trek* started the entire slash genre of writing, imagining a close relationship between its Captain Kirk and Commander Spock.

Star Wars: A movie produced and created by George Lucas. Originally produced as three separate movies (*Star Wars*, *The Emperor Strikes Back* and *The Return of the Jedi*), in the late 1970s, early 1980s. A large

fandom grew around the three original movies. After the first "adult" story was published, Lucas sent out cease-and-desist orders to fan writers and effectively drove the slash community underground.

Star Wars: The Phantom Menace: Released in 1999, this is the first movie in twenty years set in the *Star Wars* Universe. This movie traces the childhood of Darth Vader and the beginnings of the evil Emperor. A large slash and active slash community has grown up around the characters Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi with, so far, no interference from George Lucas.

Joss Whedon: Creator and producer of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel.*

Xena: Warrior Princess: A television series produced by Universal Studios and Renaissance Pictures starting in 1995. Chronicling the adventures of Xena, a standard hero figure with a dark past and her sidekick Gabrielle, and non-violent bard, *Xena* has developed an almost cult following, particularly among lesbians. The lesbian subtext of the two characters dances just below the surface of the show and is easily picked up and explored by the fans.

The X-Files (XF) : A television series produced by Fox Network starting in 1993 and still continuing today. The series follows the adventures of Fox Mulder and Dana Scully as they explore the X-Files, files of unexplained phenomenon collected by the FBI.

A Fragment Out of Time: The first published slash story. Based in the *Star Trek* universe starring Kirk and Spock. Written by D. Marchant (a well known Australian fan) and published in September, 1974 in the zine *Grup #3*. It was really only a story fragment, but it was highly contested within the fan community.

Alternative: Epilog to Orion: The second published slash story. The first published K/S zine. Based in the *Star Trek* universe, it stars Kirk and Spock. Written by Gerry Downes (a fan from Alaska), it was published in June 1976.

Code 7: The first published American slash zine in the *Starsky and Hutch* universe. After hearing rumors that people were planning to send issues to the producers and actors in *Starsky and Hutch*, the editor of the zine announced the zine was cancelled. In reality, instead of canceling it, the editor went completely underground and published the zine anonymously - no authors, artist names, no editor. To receive a copy of the zine you had to know someone.

Comlink: A *Star Wars* letterzine. The letters from Maureen Garrett, the Director of the Official *Star Wars* Fan Club, discussing the publication of "adult" stories were published and discussed in this letterzine.

Dreadnought Explorations: A *Star Trek* gen zine written and published by Linda Maclaren and Gina Martin. In June 1977 they received cease-

and-desist letters from paramount lawyers. Their zine had been mistaken for a professional publication. The confusion was cleared up, after many letters and phone calls. The zine stopped publishing for a short while, but eventually continued publication.

Forever Autumn: The first published slash zine in the *Starsky and Hutch* universe. Published by S. Meek and S. Stuart in Britain in March, 1980.

Graven Images: A pre-slash zine written by J. Aumerle in the *Starsky and Hutch* universe. Published in 1981. It was the first slashy story published after the threats to expose slash to the producers and actors in *Starsky and Hutch.*

Grope: An adult zine based in the *Star Trek* universe. First published in 1976.

Grup: The first published "adult" zine. Published in 1972. Based in the *Star Trek* universe. The title came from an old *Star Trek* episode in which a planet is discovered where the adults had died leaving only children behind with a faint memory of "grups" or grownups.

Guardian: A multimedia zine. In the third issue, published in May 1981, adult stories in the *Star Wars* fandom were published, eventually causing official "guidelines" for fan writers to be developed by Lucasfilms.

Halkan Council: *Star Trek* letterzine where the first discussions of slash fiction were publicly discussed.

Jundland Wastes: A *Star Wars* letterzine where the cease-and-desist letter from Lucasfilms was published.

Nome: A fanzine in the *Star Trek* universe. The author Joanna Russ published an essay, "Another Addict Raves About K/S" in the 8th issue. Later, Joanna Russ reworked this essay and published it in her book, *Magic Mommas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans and Perverts*. The fan and academic Edi Bjorklund published her essay "Thinking About Slash, Thinking About Women" in the 11th issue.

Obsc'zine: When the publishers of *Warped Space* decided to continue publishing an adult zine, they chose this as the name. First published in March of 1977.

R&R: The second published adult zine in the *Star Trek* universe. First published in 1975.

Sensuous Vulcan: A *Star Trek* slash zine published in September 1977.

Skywalker: The first *Star Wars* fanzine. Published in 1978.

Slow Boat to Bespin: The first published adult stories in the *Star Wars* universe. Published by L. Deneroff and C. Levine in the multimedia zine *Guardian #3* in May 1981. This story came to the attention of George

Lucas and sparked the forming of "official" guidelines for fan writers. These guidelines served to effectively drive the *Star Wars* slash community underground.

Spockanalia: The first published *Star Trek* zine. Published in April of 1967 by Devra Langsam. It was supposed to be a one shot zine.

Syndizine: The first published mixed media or multimedia zine. Published in 1979.

Thrust: The first all K/S anthology zine. Published in early 1978.

Warped Space: A popular gen zine in the *Star Trek* universe. It would occasionally publish stories out of smaller fandoms, including a *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* story in 1976 and a *Star Wars* story in 1977.

Warped Space XX: The adult issue of the popular genzine *Warped Space*. Published in the *Star Trek* universe in October 1976.

Zebra Three: The first Starsky and Hutch gen zine. Published in 1977.

Acker, Joan, Kate Barry and Johanna Esseveld. 1991. "Objectivity and Truth: Problems in Doing Feminist Research." In Mary Margaret Fornow and Judith A. Cook, eds. *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Arobateau, Red Jordan. 1997. "They Say I Write Sex for Money: The Dike Writer as Sex Worker." In Jill Nagle, ed. *Whores and Other Feminists.* New York: Routledge.

Assiter, Alison and Avedon Carol. 1993. *Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures: The Challenge to Reclaim Feminism.* London: Pluto Press.

Bacon-Smith, Camille. 1992. *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Bjorklund, Edi. 1988. "Thinking About Slash/Thinking About Women." In *Nome #11* June 1988.

Butterworth, Dianne. 1996. "Wanking in Cyberspace: The Development of Computer Porn." In Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, eds. *Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Califia, Pat. 1988. *Macho Sluts.* Boston: Alyson Publications.[1]

_____. 1994. *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex.* San Francisco: Cleis Press.

_____. 1995. "Dangerous Tongues." 1995. In *Forbidden Passages: Writings Banned in Canada.* Pittsburgh: Cleis Press.

Caputi, Mary. 1994. *Voluptuous Yearnings*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

Carol, Avedon. 1994. *Nudes, Prudes and Attitudes*. Chetenham: New Clarion Press

Carol, Avedon and Cherie Matrix. 1996. "Feminists Against Censorship's Preface." In Cherie Matrix, ed. *Tales From the Clit: A Female Experience of Pornography*. San Francisco: AK Press.

Carol, Avedon and Nettie Pollard. 1996. "Changing Perceptions in the Feminist Debate." In Alison Assiter, and Avedon Carol. 1993. *Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures: : The Challenge to Reclaim Feminism*. London; Boulder, Colo: Pluto Press.

Chapkis, Wendy. 1997. *Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labour*. New York: Routledge.

Cherny, Lynn and Elizabeth Reba Weise, eds. 1996. *Wired Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace*. Seattle: Seal Press.

Christina, Greta. 1997. "Loaded Words." In Carol Queen and Lawrence Schimel eds. *PoMoSexuals: Challenging Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality*. San Francisco: Cleis Press.

Cleis Press. 1995. Forbidden Passages: Writings Banned in Canada. Pittsburgh: Cleis Press. Introduction by Pat Califia and Janine Fuller.

Clerc, Susan. 1996. "Estrogen Brigades and 'Big Tits' Threads: Media Fandom Online and Off." In Lynn Cherny and Elizabeth Reba Weise, eds. Wired Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace. Seattle: Seal Press

Comlink #3, Sept. 1981.

Coyle, Karen. 1996. "How Hard Can It Be?" In Lynn Cherny and
    Elizabeth Reba Weise, eds. Wired Women: Gender and New
    Realities in Cyberspace. Seattle: Seal Press

Dworkin, Andrea. 1981. "Pornography." In Stevi Jackson and Sue
    Scott, eds. 1996.

Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader. New York: Columbia University
    Press.

Dworkin, Andrea. 1981, "Pornography." In Miriam Schneir, ed. 1994
    Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the
    Present. New York: Random House.

Feminists Against Censorship. 1991. "Pornography and Censorship:
    Siamese Twins?" In Gillian Rodgerson and Elizabeth Wilson, eds.
    Pornography and Feminism: The Case Against Censorship.
    London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Fornow, Mary Margaret and Judith A. Cook, eds. 1991. Beyond
    Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research.
    Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison.
    New York: Random House.

hooks, bell. 1994. Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations. New
    York: Routledge.

Jackson, Stevi, ed. 1993. Women's Studies Essential Readings.
    Washington Square: New York University Press.

Jackson, Stevi and Sue Scott, eds. Feminism and Sexuality: A Reader.
    New York: Columbia University Press.

Jenkins III, Henry. 1991. "Star Trek Rerun, Reread, Rewritten: Fan Writing as Textual Poaching." In Constance Penley, Elisabeth Lyon, Lynn Spigel and Janet Bergstrom eds. *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

_____. 1992. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture.* New York: Routledge.

Juffer, Jane. 1998. *At Home with Pornography: Women, Sex, and Everyday Life.* New York: New York University Press.
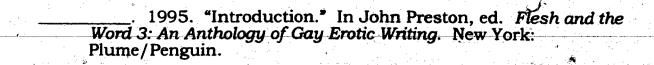
Jundland Wastes #5/6, Nov 1981.

Kaay, Anne. 1996. *Pornography, Feminism and Seditious Sex Talk (Censorship).* Masters of Art. The University of Western Ontario.

Kgomo, Eugenia Adeline. 1996. *Parenting In a Different Social Environment: The Experiences and Perspectives of Immigrant Women of African Descent in British Columbia.* Masters of Art. Department of Women's Studies, Simon Fraser University.

Kipnis, Laura. 1996. *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America.* New York: Grove Press.

Kirby, Sandra and Kate McKenna. 1989. *Experience, Research, Social Change: Methods From the Margins.* Toronto: Garamond Press.

Lacombe, Dany. 1994. *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Lamb, Patricia Frazer and Diana L. Veith. 1986. "Romantic Myth, Transcendence and *Star Trek* Zines." In Donald Palumbo, ed. *Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature.*

Leonard, Andrew. 1999. *Who Owns Xena?*
http://www.salonmagazine.com/july97/21st/article970703.html

Lewis, Patricia Scheiern Lewis. 1997. *Pass the Crisco Spock*
http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/projects/live_culture/lc1/articles/sl
ash.html,

MacKinnon, Catherine. 1993. "On Collaboration." In Stevi Jackson, ed.
Women's Studies Essential Readings. Washington Square: New
York University Press.

Matrix, Cherie, ed. 1996. *Tales From the Clit: A Female Experience of
Pornography.* San Francisco: AK Press.

McElroy, Wendy. 1995. *XXX: A Woman's Right to Pornography.* St.
Martin's.

McIntosh, Mary. 1993. "Liberalism and the contradictions of sexual
politics." In Lynne Segal and Mary McIntosh eds. *Sex Exposed:
Sexuality and the Pornography Debate.* New Brunswick: Rutgers
University Press.

McNair, Brian. 1996. *Mediated Sex: Pornography and Postmodern
Culture.* London; New York: Arnold.

Nagle, Jill. 1997. "Introduction." In Jill Nagle, ed. *Whores and Other
Feminists.* New York: Routledge.

Nagle, Jill, ed. 1997. *Whores and Other Feminists.* New York:
Routledge.

Oakley, Ann. 1990. "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms."
In Helen Roberts, ed. *Doing Feminist Research.* London:
Routledge.

Patton, Michael Quinn. 1990. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.* 2nd ed. Newbury Park: Sage.

Penley, Constance. 1991. "Brownian Motion: Women, Tactics and Technology." In Andrew Ross and Constance Penley, eds. *Technoculture.* Minneapolis: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Penley, Constance, Elisabeth Lyon, Lynn Spigel and Janet Bergstrom, eds. 1991. *Close Encounters: Film, Feminism, and Science Fiction.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

_____. 1997. *NASA/TREK.* New York: Verso.

Perks, Marcelle. 1996. "DIY Pornography." In Cherie Matrix, ed. *Tales From the Clit: A Female Experience of Pornography.* San Francisco: AK Press.

Palumbo, Donald, ed. 1986. *Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature.* Westport: Greenwood Press.

Preston, John ed. 1992. *Flesh and the Word: An Anthology of Erotic Writing.* New York: Plume/Penguin.

_____. 1992. "Introduction." In John Preston, ed. *Flesh and the Word: An Anthology of Erotic Writing.* New York: Plume/Penguin.

_____. 1993. *My Life as A Pornographer and Other Indecent Acts.* Richard Kasak.

_____. 1995. *Flesh and the Word 3: An Anthology of Gay Erotic Writing.* New York: Plume/Penguin.

_____. 1995. "Introduction." In John Preston, ed. *Flesh and the Word 3: An Anthology of Gay Erotic Writing.* New York: Plume/Penguin.

Queen, Carol. 1997. *Real Live Nude Girl: Chronicles of Sex-Positive Culture.* Pittsburgh: Cleis Press.

Queen, Carol and Lawrence Schimel eds. 1997. *PoMoSexuals: Challenging Assumptions About Gender and Sexuality.* San Francisco: Cleis Press.

Reinharz, Shulamit. 1992. *Feminist Methods in Social Research.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Roberts, Helen, ed. 1990. *Doing Feminist Research.* London: Routledge.

Rodgerson, Gillian and Elizabeth Wilson, eds. 1991. *Pornography and Feminism: The Case Against Censorship.* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Ross, Andrew and Constance Penley, eds. 1991. *Technoculture.* Minneapolis: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Russ, Joanna. 1985. "Another Addict raves about K/S." In *Nome #8.*

_____. 1985. *Magic Mammas, Trembling Sisters, Puritans and Perverts.* New York: Crossing Press.

Rubin, Gayle. 1993. "Misguided, Dangerous and Wrong: An Analysis of Anti-pornography Politics." In Alison Assiter and Avedon Carol, eds. *Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures: The Challenge to Reclaim Feminism.* London: Pluto Press.

Schneir, Miriam. 1994. "Commentary." In Miriam Schneir. *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present.* New York: Random House.

Schneir, Miriam. 1994. *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, World War II to the Present.* New York: Random House.

Segal, Lynne and Mary McIntosh eds. 1993. *Sex Exposed: Sexuality and the Pornography Debate.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Shaw, Catlin MacKay. 1997. *Sleeping With the Enemy? Feminism and Pornography in Canada.* Unpublished undergraduate thesis.

Sheiner, Marcy. 1997. "Odyssey of a Feminist Pornographer." In Jill Nagle, ed. *Whores and Other Feminists.* New York: Routledge.

Stanley, Liz, ed. 1990. *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology.* London: Routledge.

Steinem, Gloria. 1983. "Erotica vs. Pornography." In *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions.* New York: Holt.