"EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE IN FAN FICTION":
The thrill of rewriting and reading according to
Finnish fan fiction buffs

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tutkielman tarkoitus oli selvittää millä tavoin suomalaiset fanifiktion kirjoittajat ja lukijat kuvailevat fanifiktiota. Aineisto koostui 109 vastauksesta kyselyyn, joka toteutettiin nettikyselynä. Siinä oli 18 kysymystä, joilla pyrittiin tavoittamaan vastaajien yleisiä käsityksiä fanifiktiosta sekä sen merkitystä heille. Lisäksi kysyttiin mitä kieliä he tarinoissaan käyttävät. Tutkielman tavoite oli fanifiktio – ilmiön kuvaaminen. Toisena tavoitteena oli lisätä ymmärrystä englannin kielen käytöstä Suomessa. Tutkielmaan valittiin aineistolähtöinen lähestymistapa ja alettiin etsiä vastauksista sekä yhteneväisyyksiä että eroavaisuuksia ja näiden pohjalta muodostettiin erilaisia teemoja. Aineistoa tutkittiin ikään kuin se olisi ollut haastattelu koska kyselyssä oli avoimia kysymyksiä vastausvaihtoehtojen sijaan.

Tutkimustulokset osoittivat, että kyselyyn vastanneet osasivat hyvin monipuolisesti kuvailla fanifiktiota ilmiönä. Lisäksi he osoittivat miettineensä fanifiktion merkitystä perusteellisesti. He pohdiskelivat melko laajasti kirjoituskielen valintaansa. He olivat tietoisia englannin kielen vahvasta asemasta Suomessa tai ainakin internetissä ja pääsääntöisesti pitivät tätä positiivisena ilmiönä. Kiinnostavia lisätutkimuksen aiheita olisivat asenteet toisaalta äidinkieltä ja toisaalta vierasta kieltä kohtaan. Tässä aineistossa ne vaihtelivat äidinkielen aseman puolustamisesta vähättelyyn ja jopa halveksuntaan ja vierasta kieltä kohtaan ilmeni ihannointia tai pelkoa oman kielen menettämisestä.

Säilytyspaikka – Depository Kielten laitos

Muita tietoja – Additional information

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marge Simpson runs off with Mickey Mouse after getting sick and tired of his beer-loving chubby hubby. Max (*Dark Angel*), Buffy (*The Vampire Slayer*) and Zena (*Warrior Princess*) form a fierce threesome to save the day. Jesus kissed Judah; hey I always thought it was the other way around. The sports reporters would be surprised to hear that well-known ski jumpers jumped each other behind the scenes. Weird? No, not in the wonderful world of fan fiction, where indeed everything is possible!

The examples above are all connected to the phenomenon called fan fiction, which is one way of expressing intense feelings towards the various objects of admiration for example movies, books, TV-shows and even real people as sportsmen and musicians. Fan fiction is a broadly defined term for fiction about characters or content written by fans of the original work. Most fan fiction writers assume that their readers have knowledge of the original title their works are based on. This description of fan fiction assumes there is an original story behind it, something that it is based on. Therefore can the fantasy stories about *Backstreet boys* and well-known sportsmen be considered as fan fiction? What is the original work if the source of fan fiction is an actual person? Or are the stories written about re-lived game situations fan fiction? According to the fan fiction writers and readers they are.

Fan fiction as a phenomenon can be argued to be dated either as early as the fifth century B.C. when described as literature to critique patriarchy, xenophobia and racism when Greeks produced politically motivated retellings of ancient myths although the term fan fiction was not used until the 1960s (Derecho 2006: 63 - 67). However, it will be far more interesting to find out what the phenomenon entails than to debate its birthday. For the time being it is sufficient to say that no matter what the starting point may be it is nevertheless an on-going phenomenon and

almost anyone can do it but it is still mostly common among young adolescent girls and that it is very popular. You can verify the popularity by checking the various Internet sites which post fan fiction stories. One that lists and sorts out fan fiction is fan fiction.net. It lists fan fiction stories first of all according to genre: Anime/Manga, Books, Cartoons, Comics, Games, Movies, Plays/Musicals, TV shows and Miscellaneous. Secondly, it lists all the fan fiction stories in alphabetical order. Thirdly, it also actually has all the stories not just the titles. A word of a warning, if you are a huge fan of some specific fandom and you will go to check them out on fan fiction.net it might take a lot of time because there might be over 40000 fan fiction stories written about one fandom alone.

What is this phenomenon then all about? The aim of this study is to conceptualize a profile of fan fiction buffs by examining the answers of Finnish fan fiction writers and readers. The data were collected by a web questionnaire. It was designed by Professor Sirpa Leppänen and it was available on selected fan fiction sites on the Internet in 2003. There will be two objectives in this study. The first is to find out how the respondents themselves define fan fiction and what it means to them. The second interest is the language choices of the respondents. It is interesting how today especially young people feel comfortable to use and able to use English almost as another mother tongue and Anglicism slithers into Finnish everywhere.

The data will be treated as if it had been an interview instead of a questionnaire. The methods that will be used in analysing the data are similar to the ones that you would use if you had interviewed people. But if the people had been interviewed there would not be 109 interviews. It was possible to get that many answers by collecting the data using the Internet questionnaire. Due to the fact that they were open-ended questions it was not possible to analyse the answers using the usual methods when you have a questionnaire where people choose their answers from the given options. The main purpose of the study is to analyse the respondents' opinions and ideas of fan fiction and find different themes in them. The

justification of the approach chosen for analysing the present data will be explained in more detail in chapter three. But before we get that far there will be a journey through chapter two which will deal with fandom research in general. A brief introduction of different phases in fan studies will be given. The concept of fan fiction will be defined and the terminology connected to it will be introduced. Terms like slash, lemon, and lime probably do not mean anything to a person who is not familiar with fan fiction, except for their literal meaning. Fan fiction will be presented on one hand as a social and cultural phenomenon and on the other hand as a literary phenomenon. It will be discussed whether fan fiction can be considered as literature.

After the appetizers served in chapters two and three the main course will be at the reader's table in chapter four, which will present the analysis and the results of this study. This chapter will form the major part of the present study. The answers given by the respondents will be described and categorized. The different themes will be presented by giving examples from the data.

The journey in the fan fiction world will end in the combination of discussion and conclusion. The results of the present study and what kind of thoughts came to mind while working with the data will be discussed in the fifth chapter. They will not be revealed at this point because it is nice to keep the reader in suspense. It has come time to conclude the introduction by saying that hopefully the reader will enjoy getting to know the thoughts of fan fiction writers and readers as much as the writer of the present study did. And if the fan fiction bug bites the reader may be left with a feeling how they would rewrite the whole study, maybe from a slightly different point of view.

2. FANS, FANDOMS AND FAN FICTION

Unfortunately, it is not possible to write fan fiction based on the previous research by only picking the ones you like and treating them as you wish. There are specific rules how to deal with the academic texts. The following is an introduction of how various researchers have defined fans and fan fiction. Firstly, two approaches how to categorize fan studies will be introduced briefly. Secondly, a more detailed overview of some fan studies will be presented followed by Hills' (2002) commentary on selected fan studies. Thirdly, different views and approaches on fan fiction will be presented. Also some of the terminology connected to fan fiction will be presented in addition to categorization of different ways of writing fan fiction. Finally, there will be an overview of what kinds of motives for fan fiction writing have been found.

2.1 Fan studies: a sneak preview

It is possible to see different approaches in fan studies and also to sort them differently. The following three approaches in fan studies can be found in the overview by Busse and Hellekson (2006: 19 – 23). First, the ones that understand fandom as cultural phenomenon include for example the articles written by Jenson, Fiske and Grossberg published in *The adoring audience* (1992). Second, the studies in which the fans are let to speak for themselves are put together and the article written by Green, Jenkins and Jenkins published in *Theorizing fandon: Fans, subculture, and identity* (1998) and *The Democratic genre* (2005) by Pugh are used as examples. Third, they notice a shift in fan studies from studying the community to studying the individual fan for example Hills (2002) in *Fan cultures*. One can see a continuum from the first ones as looking at the fandom as cultural phenomenon from the outside to the ones speaking about the phenomenon as a group leading to the ones speaking of the phenomenon from an individually experienced point of view.

Similarly, Jenkins (2006b: 11 – 12) divides at least three moments in fan studies. First, the studies by Tulloch, Fiske and Radway are described as ones that began to stress active audiences. Despite the differences in their studies they all had in common the importance to remain outside of what they were writing about and show no direct contact in their subject matter. Second, Jenkins sees himself and others writing at the same time, as ones who tried to change the existing discourse around active versus passive and resistance versus co-opted to insider knowledge of what it means to be a fan. He sees writing *Textual Poachers* (1992) as a continuous struggle between being the defender of fans and at the same time remaining the describer, analyst and critic. Third, Jenkins continues that by the time of *Science Fiction Audiences* (1995) the need to defend is no longer present. In his opinion, it is nowadays easier to mix and combine the identities of a fan and of an academic but not altogether without problems.

The differences in grouping the various fan studies seem not significantly different. The ones listed by Busse and Hellekson (2006: 19 – 23) present fan studies as a continuum in which they seem to move from outside point of view to the most inner experience. As for Jenkins (2006b: 11 – 12) describes the differences in fan studies from a slightly different angle by concentrating more on problems of the position of the researcher on one hand as a fan and on the other hand as an academic.

2.2 Fan studies: a close-up

Grossberg (1998: 267 - 268) states that people did not look for heroes in the media before the twentieth century. In his opinion the first celebrity heroes were famous men of business, such as John D. Rockefeller but by the 1930's, after the rise of movie and radio industries, there was a shift in the object of admiration to people in popular culture. The new idols were people like Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford. He concludes that the Hollywood system of today produces enormous amount of information about media stars to feed fans´ interests. If we accept that

Grossberg is right in placing the first appearance of popular culture fans circa 1930´s and leave out the consideration whether for example the people admiring Circus Maximus performances in ancient Rome could actually be considered also as fans of the popular spectacles we can move on to think about what it means to be a fan.

It is not always easy to define when someone can be called a fan. If you simply like a certain film or watch a TV-series regularly – does that make you a fan? No, not necessarily. Being a fan means something else. It involves a more intense relationship to its source. There are many kinds of fans and various fandoms. The common feature seems to be the devotion the fans have for their fandom. According to Grossberg's (1998: 267) definition people can be thought of as fans or as followers of media fads and fashions if they identify themselves with the media product or a particular media star or a particular style presented in the media. In his opinion the sole consumption of certain media products does not necessarily make a person a fan, for being a fan includes a certain amount of commitment in the media product even though fans may use media products to define their identity. He continues that for some, fandom can be a major part of their identity and be a major activity in their everyday life. Fandom can also bring people together and a lot of activities can be connected to being a fan for example fan clubs, fanzines and conventions. He concludes that for others, it just means buying certain products and reading about the subjects of admiration. In other words, being a fan seems to be a matter of degree. Similarly, Abercrombie & Longhurst (1998: 141) make a continuum where in other end there is a consumer, followed by a fan, a cultist, an enthusiast ending in a producer at the other end.

The above described definitions of fans seem fairly neutral. The fans are described as ordinary people with certain interests in fandoms compared to the ones described in the following section which presents various stereotypical views connected to fans.

Stereotypically, female fans can be seen as screaming teen-aged girls in pop concerts and male fans as pillow-beating couch potatoes devastated if their favourite team does not win (Heinonen 2003: 11, Jenson 1992: 12, Nikunen 2003: 122). Jenson (1992: 9) presents views of fans either as the obsessed individual or the hysterical crowd both in media and by scholars such as Caughey (1978) and Schickel (1985). She continues that both descriptions contain the aspect of seeing fans as potential fanatics and therefore the concept of fan includes the possibility of social and psychological pathology. She concludes that this enables to treat fans as disreputable, even dangerous "others" by characterizing them as deviant (Jenson 1992: 9). This suggests that seeing fans this way implies that there is something shameful if you admit that you are a fan. The other "others" can look down on somebody who is proudly pronouncing to be a fan. The other "others" Jenson (1992: 23 – 26) refers to are academic researchers who wished to keep their distance by describing fans from a superior and from an outside looking in point of view. She suggests that if one could associate with those "others" and assume important commonalities as well as differences between individuals it would be possible to avoid the separateness that underlies the description of fan as pathological. Earlier there were little if any studies done which saw fandom as normal and everyday cultural or social phenomenon Jenson (1992: 13). It should be considered what it means to be a fan in relation to the larger question of what it means to desire, cherish, seek, long, admire, envy, celebrate, protect, ally with others (Jenson 1992: 26 - 27). She does not explain further what she means by all that but it gives an impression that she wishes that fans would be studied first of all as normal and secondly the list of verbs she gives all have something to do with either emotions or something that involves interaction. Jenson's article was published a decade ago and it is safe to say that today her wish has come true and the fans are no longer seen solely as dangerous lunatics. Nevertheless, some problems still remain and these issues will be addressed in the following section.

2.3 Critique on the field of fandom

Jenkins in his book *Textual poachers: television fans and participatory culture* (1992) at the time of its publication showed a seminal direction in fan studies. Jenkins wanted to legitimate and value fans as active producers. This stand is criticised by Hills (2002: 8 - 9) because he sees there is a problematic contradiction in Jenkins' argumentation. He thinks that Jenkins was able to get rid of the stereotype of a fan as a passive weirdo by not using psychological attributes while describing fans but because at the same time Jenkins used the expression "The stereotypical conception of the fan, while not without a limited factual basis… (Jenkins 1992: 17) " he is confused because he has not seen Jenkins addressing this contradiction. He suggests that these limited factual bases deserve to be explored and made explicit in their own terms rather than being used to form in his word moral dualism by which he means a view of the cultural world which constructs and focuses on two clear sets of "good" and "bad" phenomena.

Hills (2002: 29) is also not keen on constructing sustainable oppositions between fans and consumers because it positions them as separable cultural identities. Hills finds that this type of logic occurs in a number of theoretical models of fandom, particularly those offered by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) and Jenkins (1992). In Hill's opinion (Hills 2002:29) the "continuum" model by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998:141) reproduces the type of moral dualism which places "good" fandom in opposition to the "bad" consumer. It is true that Abercrombie and Longhurst have presented a continuum of audience experiences and identities, ranging from the "consumer" at one end, to the "petty producer" at the other end of the scale, and taking in the "fan", the "enthusiast" and the "cultist" along the way. But it is equally true that they say:

> Lest we be misunderstood, it is important to stress that we are not making judgements about the relative worth of these different positions along the continuum. In our view there is not necessarily more worth in being an enthusiast than a consumer." (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998: 141).

Is the choice of words "**not necessarily** more worth" that leaves room for the interpretation of that model as a continuum of good and bad? Without the word **necessarily** there would be no room for the interpretation made by Hills. But he stresses quite strongly that this view of the consumer is an essentially negative one: consumers lack the developed forms of expertise and knowledge that fans, enthusiasts and cultists all possess in ever-increasing and ever-more-specialised forms (Hills 2002: 29). Whereas, Grossberg says that according to "subcultural" model fans constitute an elite fraction of the larger audience of passive consumers (Grossberg 1992: 52). That statement would leave more room for the interpretation that being a fan is more valuable than being a plain consumer.

Hills (2002: 30) continues his criticism by arguing that Jenkins' attempt to put an end to any fan – consumer oppositions by saying that media fans are consumers who also produce, readers who also write, and spectators who also participate is still problematic because it leaves out the fans who may be not producers, who wish not for example write fan fiction. Last one on Hill's "critique list" is Fiske (1992) who has considered reading a text and talking about it as "productivity". Hills thinks that changing the labels has made it possible for the academic studies to remove the stigma of consumption (Hills 2002: 29-30).

These contradictions cannot be resolved by a "better" theory of fan activity but the best can be achieved by theoretical approach to fandom which can tolerate contradiction without seeking to close it down prematurely (Hills 2002: 29). Now that the fan studies field have been trampled and the dust has settled we can see that the times has yet again changed as we can see in the following section.

2.4 Episode 2010 in fan studies

Hills (2010: 56) addresses the following questions. Can we say that the battle between fans and producers has reached its grand finale when fans have become official producers which happened by the movement of *Doctor Who* fans into the TV industry. Are the poacher model and fan-producer binary still relevant?

And the answer (Hills 2010: 69) is that even though, fans can now work as producers with the official production the corporate protectiveness is still very much alert as we can see in the case of the little old lady knitting Adipose[1] figures. Once someone started to sell them on eBay the BBC worldwide came marching in to protect their licensed trademark. He concludes that even when some fans have been able to establish a "gamekeepers" position the less fortunate ones are still treated as problem "poachers".

Poaching nowadays has gotten new forms (Hills 2010: 72 – 78). He explains this by describing that for example when the filming takes place in a public place fans are able to get information which they share online. They can be called spoiler-gathering fans and they differ from earlier poachers in that they do not seek control over textual content per se. They are "pre-textual" poachers" who operate against producers´ desire to control pre-transmission or pre-textual, release of information. Hills concludes that theories of fan "poaching" remain of some value to thinking through specific power relationships between professionalised fans and the wider fan culture. Nowadays the passing on the information is easy and quick on the Internet and sometimes scriptwriters need to come up for new ideas because devoted fans have already guessed and speculated the ones that have not been even filmed yet. This has said to been the case with the popular TV-series *Lost*.

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[1] The Adipose, alien creatures in television series *Doctor Who*.

It seems that the storyline in fan studies can be placed under scrutiny over and over again and new plots appear as times go by but for the purpose of the present study it has come to put an end to this discussion and move on to introduce various approaches to fan fiction.

2.5 Fan fiction definitions and terminology

Fan fiction (Pugh 2005: 25 – 26) whether official or unofficial, paid or unpaid, which makes use of a canon of characters, settings and plots generated by another writer or writers. Pugh continues that this source material may come from books, films or TV and in the latter two cases it will not derive purely from writers but also from directors, producers and even actors, all of whom have a hand in the creation of characters. She concludes that there is also a relatively new sub-category using named real people as fictional characters. Could one use instead of the words writer and writers, the word creator or creators of the original sources because it would include all the above mentioned but then again it would leave out the real people because they were not creators of themselves. Fan writing can also be seen as critical response to original source and rewriting the original serves the interests of fans better (Jenkins 1992: 151). Nowadays, fan fiction appears most on the Internet, earlier it used to be circulated in print sometimes referred to as fanzines or printzines the latter one as a distinction from webzines (Pugh 2005: 7).

There are many terms one needs to know when talking about fan fiction but some more relevant than others. Fan fiction writers have created various terms to describe content of fan fiction as well as other codes which do not have significance to outsiders. A few of the following terms originates in the present data described by the respondents if no other source is mentioned.

Alternate universe (AU) is the term for stories where the original story is set in a way that it is not presented in the canon whereas crossover can mix universes or/and characters (Pugh 2005: 36).

Beta reading, the practice of releasing a story to a selected (and trusted) fellow writer or other member of the fan fiction community before making it available to a general readership through a fiction archive, a newsgroup, or additional avenues such as LiveJournal.com, is arguably a phenomenon that came about as a result of the move from paper-based to Internet-based fan fiction (Karpovich 2006: 172).

Canon is the word used to describe the source material which is commonly accepted as authentic and within the fandom and a canon may be "closed" or "open", depending on whether it is still possible for it to be expanded by the originator (Pugh 2005: 26). Fan fiction writers not only have their own knowledge of the canon but they can assume that their readers have a similar one (Pugh 2005: 32). According to Pugh (2005: 37 – 38) the extent to which canon controls fan fiction can vary a lot. She gives an example of one of the most extreme ones *The Republic of Pemberley*, which is a web-based group devoted to Jane Austen fandom. There are very strict rules of which kind of fan fiction will be accepted. Pugh explains that the focus is more on Austen and the appreciation of her work therefore all the fan fiction posted on that site must be written in a way Jane Austen would have written them. I would assume that this type of restriction on fan fiction writing, which allows only the stories that follow the original source as much as possible on the forum, is probably not a one-off but still a rare exception.

Original characters (OC) are explained by Pugh (2005: 36) as characters the fan fiction writer has created and they do not exist in the original canon. Some fan fiction readers do not want to read fan fiction with original characters (Pugh 2005: 36). Others are prepared to accept them as such if they seem to fit into the canon written about (Pugh 2005: 82). But one OC-character any writer would probably want to avoid creating is Mary Sue. Pugh (2005: 85) describes Mary Sue as a character that is basically an idealised version of the author and gives an example of a typical Mary Sue who will go into the fan fiction universe, save everybody,

sort out all their problems, earn their undying love and often die heroically in the end.

Out of character (OOC) usually receives negative feedback if the characters in fan fiction are made too different from their originals (Pugh 2005: 36). The nature of the characters is the least favoured feature for alternation and wildly off-beamed interpretations are not tolerated (Pugh 2005: 65 – 66). There might be more flexibility with minor characters because their personalities and opinions are not so well established in the canon, that said staying in character seems to be the one thing a fan fiction writer must accomplish and no clever plot nor wonderful ideas will compensate for it (Pugh 2005: 69 – 71). In character (IC) refers to the behaviour of characters which seems logical given what is known about them and their previous behaviour in the original source.

Plot? What plot? (PWP) means (Pugh 2005: 75 – 76) exactly what it says. Pugh explains there are fan fiction writers who prefer to write stories where there is no action at all but lot of interaction and reflection instead. She continues that the characters interact but do not do anything apart from maybe talk and sleep together. She concludes PWP may imply sex scenes but there are several stories where things don't get that explicit.

A story defined as "angst" (Pugh 2005: 76 – 78) deals not as much on what happens to the characters but on how they cope or do not cope in those situations. Pugh adds that very similar to angst are the hurt-comfort stories in which a character is emotionally in pieces before consoled and rehabilitated by the other characters. The respondents of the present study mentioned fluff as an overtly sweet romance. Smut stands for adult content as well as lemon which reveals sexual content whereas lime indicates a story with sexual themes but not necessarily explicit. The latter two are also referred to as citrus. M/F consensual sex refers to sex between a man and a woman who both agree to have sex together whereas noncon is used for

the opposite. Yaoi and shounen are Japanese terms for slash and mainly used in anime and manga based fan fiction.

Pugh (2005: 90 – 91) continues to explain the terms used as markers which will tell the reader what type of story is in question. The term for fan fiction with no overt sexual content is "gen" in other words suitable for a general audience. She states that in the beginning it all was and still is by far the largest category of fan fiction. She continues that for some fan fiction writers this may have been a matter of moral preferences but as often due to the respect for canon. It did not however take long for the fan fiction with more adult content to appear in fanzines. She concludes that adult at first meant explicit and heterosexual.

What is the story behind the hyphen and the slash then? It (Pugh 2005: 91) started as a way to help the reader to be quickly able to see what the story was about. She explains that if the initials of the main characters were joined by a hyphen it was a "gen" story and if by a forward slash it was an adult one. Soon the forward slash came to mean specifically stories that focused on male/male relationships. She concludes that slash became the name for such fiction and adult meant specifically heterosexual.

Slash (Pugh 2005: 91 – 92) attracts more attention and comment from the outside the fan fiction community than many other forms of fan fiction. Pugh points out that those who do not wish to write slash detest when slash is seen as a typical example of fan fiction and slash readers and writers get tired of endless questions of motivation behind slash stories. Similarly, McLelland (2006: n.pag.) has raised a valuable question of why men's interest in lesbianism is taken for granted whereas women's interest in male homosexuality needs interpretation. It is a very interesting question indeed and would be intriguing to study further. Slash (Pugh 2005: 98) can be easily defined as homoerotic relationships between male characters which did not happen on screen but might, given certain circumstances,

have done. She continues that nowadays, there is frequent debate within writing community about two more recent developments and whether they "count" as slash: is slash purely m/m or can an f/f stories also be considered as slash or do stories about characters who are canonically gay count as slash?

It was surprising to find out that slash is not considered as typical fan fiction. It might be true that because it draws so much attention it has made the impression that it is very wide-spread and common. It would be interesting to find out how common it is but because it was not the purpose of the present study it is time to move on to introduce the various ways of re-writing.

2.6 Different ways of re-writing

The following is a summary of how Jenkins (1992: 162 – 175) notes ten ways in which fans rewrite the original texts.

1. Re-contextualization
2. Expanding the timeline
3. Re-focalization
4. Moral realignment
5. Genre shifting
6. Crossovers
7. Character dislocation
8. Personalization
9. Emotional intensification
10. Eroticisation

Re-contextualization (Jenkins 1992: 162 – 163) means that fans write stories, which fill in the gaps in the original material and give alternative explanations for the characters' behaviour. The stories are often set in the off-screen actions. They might be stories about the past of the character that will provide more information for the character's conducts.

Expanding the timeline (Jenkins 1992: 163 - 165) is another way of changing the original story. Fans write about things that happened before the original story starts. In comparison to the previous way of rewriting in this the fans explore the whole story not just a single character. Fans also continue stories that in their opinion have ended before their time. Sometimes favourite shows are cancelled or the waiting time for a sequel is simply too long.

Re-focalization (Jenkins 1992: 165 - 167) means that whereas most of fan fiction writers concentrate on the main characters some of the fans want to give more attention to secondary ones. They want to give more voice to the ones in the background, often women and minorities. Fans can give female characters more professional competence and at the same time question the attitudes of the original male-cantered stories. It is a way of reclaiming female experiences.

Moral realignment (Jenkins 1992: 168 - 169) can take many different forms. In addition to wanting to get their own voice to be heard the writers may want to give alternate voices to various characters in the original stories. Fan fiction writers write stories in which the villains are the main characters of their stories. The villains can remain bad but the story is told from their point of view. They can also write stories in which the good guys are the bad guys. Writers also offer explanations why the character turned evil in the first place.

Changing genre (Jenkins 1992: 169 - 170) is also a way to alter the original story for example fan fiction writers shift focus from for example action to stories that pay more attention to relationships which is a minor change. They can also mix elements of different genres together. A major change can be seen if supernatural forces appear in every-day context.

Crossovers (Jenkins 1992: 170 - 171) mix characters from different texts together. Some stories combine texts that are set in the same place or share the same genre or

have same actors in them. Others make more unusual combinations. Comedy characters can be found in puppet shows. Crossovers break the boundaries between texts but also between genres. Fan fiction writers want to explore how the characters would act with other characters from different stories.

Character dislocation (Jenkins 1992: 171) is a quite radical way of manipulating the original genre boundaries. The characters can be taken from the original context and can be placed to a totally different environment. Characters of present day can be put into medieval fantasy world or historical settings. The fans have liked the characters a lot but not the original context and this explains their desire to change the surroundings for their favourite characters.

Personalization (Jenkins 1992: 171 - 173) is a term used when fans write themselves into the stories. They are often called Mary Sue-stories. Fan fiction writers say that quite young girls write most of them. They describe themselves in the stories as super-sexy, knockout gorgeous, omnipotent heroines whose actions rescue the day. This subgenre of fan writing is discouraged by many in the fan culture.

Emotional intensification (Jenkins 1992: 174 – 175) focuses in psychological and emotional issues. Fans switch focus from action to emotional scenes and preferably to moments of narrative crisis. They are called hurt-comfort stories. These stories are usually full of angst and fans express their compassionate concern for characters. They can also explore how characters that in the original text seem perfectly calm in all situations would react in a totally surprising and different situation.

Eroticisation (Jenkins 1992: 174 - 175) is the last one of Jenkins' categories for rewriting. It is also a very popular form of fan fiction. Fans do not have to worry about censors, they only need to mark age-limits to their stories. Some stories just

get inspiration from relationships already hinted by the original text. Also the homoerotic stories referred to as slash were mentioned in this category.

Jenkins (1992: 177) conclude that fans read and write these stories not only to relive their own expectations of the original texts but also to see how others have perceived them and how the stories can be retold and what new elements have been introduced to them.

All of the above listed ways of rewriting are ways the content is altered. The style and genres are another matter. Fan fiction can appear as poems, songs, short stories and as drabbles which are stories with no more than 100 words or so. The writers themselves have developed codes to describe the content of their stories. In order to get to know the world of fan fiction it is good to be familiar with a few terms and abbreviations. The most common ones were introduced in the earlier section. Next some of the possible motives for fan writing will be presented.

2.7 Motives for writing fan fiction

Fiske (1992: 37 - 39), basing his thoughts on Bourdieu's (1984) model of thinking culture as an economical system, has divided three aspects of productivity in fandom. The first being semiotic, which indicates the ability to build own meanings and interpretations of the existing texts. The second aspect becomes from the discussions of these meanings and makes them become productions of their own. People not only express fandom through speech but also with clothing and hairstyle. The third aspect of fandom is textual which refers to all the texts that fans produce and recycle among them, in other words, fan fiction. Fandom is seen as something that is produced. It is made visible by various actions and writing fan fiction is just one way of expressing fandom.

Sometimes nothing is enough to feed the hunger of true fans and therefore they are forced to begin to produce fan material themselves in order to save them from

starvation. Fan fiction is one way to ease that hunger for more. Fans of a particular text (in this case the word text refers to various types of original sources for example books, TV-shows, cinema) write fan fiction stories. They alter the original story line and make up their own plots. Some might say that they steal the original characters and play with them. They could be called remote controllers. Also, writing fan fiction can ease the frustration for not having real power over on what goes on because the real power lies in the hands of the authors, producers, directors and scriptwriters.

Jenkins in his early work *Textual Poachers* (1992) theorizes the field of fan studies, drawing from audience studies with a particular emphasis on popular culture and television. He uses Michel De Certeau's (1984) notions of textual "poaching" and nomadic reading to emphasize the process of making meaning and the fluidity of popular interpretation (Jenkins 1992: 34). Unlike De Certeau Jenkins does not separate writers and readers. He sees fan reading as a social process because individual interpretations are made and discussed with other readers whereas De Certeau thinks that the reader's meaning production remains temporary as the reader moves from place to place (Jenkins 1992: 44 – 45). In Jenkins' (1992: 23 – 24) opinion, fans experience a combination of adoration and frustration for popular texts and it motivates their active involvement with the narratives. He explains that because the original text is seldom satisfying, fans aim to express the unrealized possibilities within the original to themselves and others. He concludes that in the process, they become active participants in the circulation of textual meanings instead of being simply an audience for popular texts.

Similarly, (Pugh 2005: 42 - 43) there are fan fiction writers who want "more from" and "more of" their fandom. She explains this by giving an example that when the canon material is so appealing the fan fiction writers cannot bear to leave it when it ends, it is the case of "more of". She states that they might prefer that the original creators would continue the story but if they do not, they simply have to do it

themselves. She continues that sometimes the canon material is appealing but something in the original strikes the writers not so perfect or fully realised and then they want "more from" it and in this case they might want to fix inconsistencies of dates or facts or they have a need to explain a character's behaviour.

Another reason for writing fan fiction according to Pugh (2005: 75 – 76) used to be that the original story was too much concentrated on the action and there was no room or interest in exploring the characters and their relationship. She points out that this is no longer quite as true as it was in the seventies, when TV-based fan fiction took off. For example, some cop shows originally were all about action but in later seasons started to develop to a direction where also the emotional side of the characters was presented. These days, it would be an odd series that didn't have such a side. She explains that this is partly, due to the advent of more central and developed female characters, for example cast of strong females in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* but also the male characters have changed; the macho heroes are out of fashion. She concludes that it took quite a while for the producers and scriptwriters to do the same the fan fiction writers were doing decades ago.

Usually in hurt-comfort stories the hero-figure, the tougher the better is taken apart physically, emotionally or preferably both before he is rescued and consoled by some other character (Pugh 2005: 20). She explains that it almost inevitably is a "him" in these scenarios, both because fan fiction writers tend to be more interested in male characters and then she says something which I found to be very interesting: "…because extreme hurt-comfort can feel uncomfortable for both reader and writer if it happens to a female character". Unfortunately, she does not explain this any further but I am intrigued of the notion that it is somehow less uncomfortable to read and write hurt-comfort stories in which the character is male. What is this all about? All kinds of thoughts pop into mind and most of them very stereotypical in nature for example men are tougher so it is easier to see them

hurt than women. This is only speculation on my part since it was not explained in more detail. Pugh (2005: 76 – 77) continues that fans explain hurt-comfort stories by the need to deal with all real life pain they see around the and which they cannot make better so they relieve their anxiety by writing instead.

Jenkins talked about re-focalization as one way of expressing female experiences (Jenkins 1992: 165 – 167). This could explain why fan fiction is so popular among young girls. They can get their voice heard and experiences shared through these stories. Also Leppänen (2008: 157) has shown that girls and young women can deal with conflicting identity scenarios they face in their own lives in fan fiction forums and they can investigate gender and sexuality issues with fan fiction writing. In addition, they are motivated by the lack of interesting female characters and they are frustrated that female characters are presented as objects in the original sources and they pursue more active and interesting female characters by writing fan fiction (Leppänen 2008: 167).

Whereas, Herkman (2001: 91) sees the female roles and women in contemporary media products as more active and independent. He sees that there is an overall increase of women as heroes in contemporary audio visual stories and the traditional gender roles in for example action movies and computer games have been placed upside down. He gives examples of both television and movie female roles in which the female character has taken a position of a hero and lists television series *Xena* (Lucy Lawless), Vallery Irons (Pamela Anderson) in *V.I.P*, agent Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) in *The X-files*, Samantha Waters (Ally Walker) in *Profiler* and in the movies Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) in *Alien* and Samantha Gaine (Geena Davis) in *The Long Kiss Goodnight* and the character Lara Croft in the computer game *Tomb Raider* as examples of such cases. He explains that the roles of "the prince" and "the princess" have been turned upside down when the princess becomes the hero and the prince the target of her affections. He continues that there are no princes at all in many contemporary stories because they want to

highlight the change of the roles and they achieve that by telling that the female character does not even need a man not even as a romantic target. He concludes that even the erotic attraction between the princess and the prince is replaced by the erotic attraction between the villain and the heroine, usually the villain desirers the beautiful heroine but she uses her sexuality to defeat the villain.

One can certainly see a change compared to the more traditional stories in which the princess quite passively just waited around to be rescued but in my opinion the description of women as beautiful and using their sexuality in order to get advantage of men still follows a traditional concept. The story has changed a bit but the underlying story is still very much male-centred. If earlier there was a need to write fan fiction including for example strong female characters, it would seem that nowadays there are models of those in the original sources as well. However, it still remains as a choice in fan fiction writing how they want to write these stories. The writers may choose to write stories which resemble the traditional ones very much or not, but at least it is up to them to make a choice how they get their voice heard exactly in the manner that they want to be heard. There are numerous studies (see D'Acci 1989, Fiske 1989, Radway 1984) on how fans have reported that a particular show have given them confidence to deal with various situations in their social world or how a fandom has worked as self-empowerment or how romance reading has enabled women assert their own rights. The selection of texts or stars, or other sources for that matter, offers fans opportunities to make meanings of their social identities and social experiences (Fiske 1992: 35).

Many adults worry that children copy pre-existing media content instead of creating their own original work (Jenkins 2006a: 190). Jenkins defends kids by reminding that in the past it was common that young artists learned from masters by copying them and that it is easier to practice writing by creating new from borrowed elements (2006a: 191). He continues that fan fiction serves as youth empowerment (Jenkins 2006a: 191). Children can use stories to either escape from

or reaffirm aspects of their own lives (Jenkins 2006a: 182). He concludes that improving writing skills may be a secondary benefit compared to their pleasure of expanding their experiences of fandom and social connections with other fans (Jenkins 2006a: 193 – 194).

Derecho (2006: 76 – 77) sees that fan fiction has a significantly larger import. In her opinion fan fiction is a genre that has a long history of appealing to women and minorities, individuals who used writing as means to express not only their narrative creativity, but their criticisms of social and political inequities as well. She perceives fan fiction not only as a genre of "pure" resistance but she thinks there are elements of pacification by and cooperation with the dominant culture in fandom. She thinks that fan fiction opens up possibilities – not just for opposition to institutions and social systems, but also for a different perspective on the institutional and social.

The motives for fan fiction writing in previous research can be divided and summarized in the following way. Productivity can be seen as one way of expressing fandom. Further various ways of re-writing can serve as a means of getting more of and more from the source text. Writing can be seen as practicing writing skills and perhaps as rehearsal for writing own stories which are not based on anyone else's works. Writing is also used for emotional relief and as means of empowerment and getting one's voice heard. Also social and political critique was found as motives for writing. Similar motives were found in the present data of Finnish fan fiction writers. Only the social and political critique as a motive was not very visible in the answers therefore it was tempting to consider it a bit further. The following section deals with considerations of fan fiction on one hand as ethical and political practice and on the other hand as literature.

2.8 Fan fiction as influential writing

Derecho (2006: 61 - 63) attempts to find a middle ground definition for fan fiction placing it somewhere between a broad definition which originates fan fiction several millennia ago, with myth stories and a narrow definition which understands fan fiction as a product of fan cultures. Derecho wishes to treat fan fiction not as a cultural phenomenon, but as an artistic practise. She situates fan fiction within the larger field of literature and thinks that many of the fan-scholars have an interest to study fan narratives as a type of art. She defines fan fiction not as derivative or appropriative but wants to replace these terms with a new one: archontic, which she borrows from Derrida (1995) who suggests that all archives remain forever open to new entries, artefacts and contents and it expands and engrosses itself and that this is caused by an internal drive he calls "archontic principle", which does not allow the archive to stay still or stable, but wants it to multiply. It is easy to accept the idea of open archive that continuously expands but the idea of it having an internal drive is puzzling. How can an inanimate archive have an internal drive? However, if we leave that puzzle aside and continue to consider Derecho's definition of archontic as a better way to describe the intertextual relationship at the core of the literature than the words derivative or appropriative do because in her opinion those terms imply property, ownership and hierarchy.

Derivative indicates a poor imitation or even a corruption of an original work and appropriative has a connotation of taking and can be easily understood as stealing whereas term archontic has no preferences to property rights or judgements about the antecedent and descendant works (Derecho 2006: 63). She continues that the texts that build on previously existing texts are not lesser than the source text, and do not violate the source text but only add to the text's archive. She also wants to make a difference between the concept of intertextuality and archontic literature by explaining that because the latter quotes the texts consciously and announces them

as variations it is not to be understood as intertextuality defined by for example Kristeva (1980) who defines that any text is a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. Fan fiction (Derecho 2006: 64 – 66) is tied to pre-existing texts and the connection is announced in the identifying headers that precede and categorise individual fics. One does not see this in nonfan works.

Derecho (2006: 69) sees previous histories of fan fiction written by several fan-scholars as lists of the archontic literature that preceded fan fiction. She aims to present the way archontic writing has been used as technique of social, political or cultural critique in a way John Fiske (1992), drawing on Pierre Bourdieu (1984), explains as "the culture of the subordinate". They use subordinate specifically to refer to the proletariat in the modern era of the cultural industries, because many subordinate cultures, especially women and ethnic minorities, have chosen to express their thoughts by writing archontic literature, which has had lasting appeal for subordinated groups seeking suitable means of expression. Derecho finds interesting how women have used archontic writing for expressing their dissatisfaction and desires, but at the same time, occasionally their desires coexist with the values of dominant culture.

According to Derecho (2006: 69 – 70), archontic literature, as a tool of social criticism, has reached its most productive period over the last eighty years with the postcolonial and ethnic American literature. She lists works by Randall: *The Wind Done Gone* (2001) which is narrated by Scarlett's slave and half-sister, and Rawles's *My Jim* (2005), as intentions to draw attention to unjust power relations. This may as well be true but do the teenagers fulfilling their fantasies by writing fan fiction actually feel that they are opposing the out-dated notions of hierarchy and property?

However, what is a bit disturbing in Derecho's definition of fan fiction is her almost total ignorance of the fact that fan fiction is solely based on texts created by someone else and that those people have certain rights to them. Surely, all literature takes influences from all the material available (archives) in the world but not as clearly and boldly as fan fiction. Whether it is narrow-mindedness on my part or not but it is hard to admit that fan fiction is set against original fiction, no matter how noble the intentions of the writers may be to draw attention to prejudice. For example, a French novel *La bicyclette Bleue* by Deforges (1981) can be seen as a copy of *Gone With the Wind* by Mitchell (1939). The setting was in France during the 2nd world war and the names had been changed but the plot followed almost completely the storyline of *Gone With the Wind*. I thought it was stealing and I resented the idea of someone using the same idea. Sure, as a young girl I just read the romantic level of *Gone with the Wind*, it was only later as an adult when understood the racist views of it but I could still enjoy the story simply by ignoring the embarrassment caused by the attitudes toward the slavery. Nevertheless, I truly believe based on how Scarlett's father was described in the original, that he would never have had any sexual intercourse with one of his slaves. I think it is equally wrong to claim that all plantation owners were abusing their slaves that way. If there is proof that all of them actually did, then by all means write a published novel from the perspective of Scarlett's half-sister, but otherwise not. I think it is wrong because nothing in the original insinuates that Gerald O'Hara would have had a sexual interest in his servants (I can now see myself starting a *Gone with Tara* fan fiction forum similar to the earlier mentioned *Republic of Pemberley*). Isn't it possible to write a novel about slave abusing plantation owners by using self-invented characters and stories? Or is it that using well-known characters you can raise people's interest for your issues. Otherwise, it is not easy to see this as a very relevant reason for writing fan fiction.

Then again, it is also true that fan fiction is the literature of the subordinate, as Derecho (2006: 71 – 72) puts it, because many fan fiction writers are women

responding to media products that are mainly emphasised on male narrative. Women do not have many positions of power in mass media organizations but they do have access to the Internet. Also Jenkins (1992: 23) presents that that fan fiction is written out of combination of fascination and frustration. Great deal of fan fiction (Derecho 2006: 71 – 72) tends to reinforce traditional gender roles and social norms but fan fiction on the whole qualifies as resistant artistic practice, because it serves as means for women to write against the media corporations by adding to or replacing the canonical versions of media texts. She continues that women writing fan fiction face a risk of legal prosecution because of the copyright laws. She concludes that even the most socially conventional fan fiction is an act of defiance of corporate control and reclamation of women viewers' rights to experience the narratives they desire by creating them for themselves. Surely the corporations and the lawyers would not mind if they were indeed creating them just for themselves. The problem of copyright arises when these stories are posted on various Web sites. If it was for their pleasure only, they would not need to post them anywhere, they could keep them in their own drawers and nobody would mind.

It is fascinating how Derecho (2006: 73) describes archontic literature as something, which works by repeating with a difference and then continues, drawing on Deleuze's (1968) concepts and terms of virtual and potential being just as real as the actual. If this is accepted then also the previously mentioned nocturnal activities of Mr. O´Hara should be accepted. Derecho (2006: 74) describes that the archontic literature assumes that every text contains a wealth of potentialities that variations of the text can then make actual. She continues that the Internet had enabled thousands of potentialities within single texts to be actualized and circulated. She presents that alternate universe stories which pair different characters, stories that fill in missing scenes are examples of potentialities within the original texts becoming actualized thanks to fan fiction authors.

Derecho (2006: 75) sees that part of studying fan fiction is to admit that the text is never stable and the virtualities inside source texts are perpetually in the process of becoming actualized. She also sees that there is repetition with a difference within a given archive and the interplay between the texts can never be solidified and stilled. She concludes that texts live in relation with each other, collide into each other and in these collisions get infected by each other. Do the texts collide independently? It is people who read them and produce new ones therefore the effects move through people.

Derecho (2006: 76) stresses the fact that archontic literature and fan fiction are the chosen means of expression for many subordinate groups because archontic writing seeks to empower and elevate what is subordinate. Derecho uses these concepts to justify fan fiction. But again why not use own characters to bring out the issues of the subordinate? Sure, they use fan fiction to point out their issues but it does not explain why fan fiction, in particular, is the means of doing that. The idea of using fan fiction as a means of the subordinate is just a defensive way of justifying fan fiction because it is on the borderline of illegal. All the writers of novels mentioned before (*La bicyclette bleue, The Wind Done Gone, My Jim*) got sued because of copy right laws. Categorizing fan fiction as literature is a tricky business. If we look for other motives for fan fiction we can leave the question of illegality aside. A lot of motives were found in the present data and those will be presented in chapter four but next the tools that were used to handle the data will be introduced in the following chapter.

3. WORKING WITH THE DATA

The following chapter will provide more information about the present study. The first section will discuss the aims of the present study. The second section will introduce the data and how it was acquired. The chapter will be concluded with a discussion of the methods used in the analysis of the data.

3.1 Research questions

The present study will gather information of fan fiction provided by Finnish teens and adults. More specifically, it will attempt to draw a profile of people reading and writing fan fiction – who they are and how do they describe various issues connected to fan fiction and what it means to them. In addition, there is an aim to understand how and why Finnish people use English in their everyday life. Fan fiction is an interesting context because many Finnish people write both in Finnish and English. The research questions of the present study are as follows:

1. How the respondents describe fan fiction?
2. What does fan fiction mean to them and in what ways it is present in their own lives?
3. What are the language choices like in the fan fiction context?

Based on the literature on fan fiction discussed earlier, it will be assumed that similar elements will be found in the answers of the respondents. The various ways of re-writing will turn up in the data but otherwise it was not a primary goal to find issues discussed in earlier studies. Rather, it was letting the voice of the respondents to be heard and seeking similar themes in them.

3.2 The description of the data

The data were collected by Professor Sirpa Leppänen (University of Jyväskylä) in 2003. She designed the questionnaire that was disseminated on selected fan fiction sites on the Internet. The questionnaire was available on those sites from 19th November to 18th December 2003. There were 18 open-ended questions (and if counting all the sub questions there were 59 questions altogether) and 109 answers were received. The questionnaire was in Finnish and the respondents also answered in Finnish. Some of the answers will be used as examples verbatim in the analysis. The examples taken from the data were translated into English and

sometimes the sentences had to be completed because the respondents used spoken-like Finnish which if translated word to word into English would not make any sense at all. The added words will be in square brackets. The examples from the data will be numbered and because there are 149 of them the original Finnish ones will not be included in a separate appendix because it would have added too many extra pages. The letter R and the following number at the end of each example stand for the position of the respondent as they were first of all numbered from one to 109. The examples will always be quoted completely therefore the example may consist of elements which could be considered as answers to something else than the topic in question. Sometimes the total sum of answers may exceed the total number of respondents but this is due to the fact that some of the respondents gave lot of descriptions in one answer and the answers fit into different categories. The present data consisted of colourful and interesting points of views about fan fiction and the findings will be presented in chapter four. All the different themes found from the data will be dealt with in groups.

The first question of the basic background information will not have the same objective as the others. The majority of the respondents were women. Age range was from 11 to 32 years of age. They seemed to come from all over Finland. Most of the respondents listed Finnish as their mother tongue. Many of the respondents were still in either comprehensive school or in high school. The background information of the respondents will be discussed in more detail in chapter four. The following section will describe the method that was used to see what the somewhat large data was all about.

3.3. Analytical methods

Because the data were already collected before the beginning of this process it was not possible to think about the analysis methods before collecting the data as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000: 135) suggest. Many methods used for analysing questionnaires assume that there are answer options instead of open-ended

questions. The present data with open-ended questions were analysed using a combination of methods presented by Dey (1993), Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000), Kvale (1996), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Tesch (1990). The analysis soon turned out to take a data-based approach because it was the first major step taken. The breaking of the data into bits and pieces led to the discovery of certain reoccurring themes which some of them could be found also in pre-existing research. It is not always easy to tell the difference of the data-based analysis compared to the one that looks for similar themes that can be found in previous researches. Some themes are found in the data and therefore it can be argued that the results have been found by using data-based method but similarly the same themes can be found in previous research and one could argue that the themes were found first and then the data was analysed and the similar ones were found there. In the end, the main thing is that something can be found and explained.

Some of the above mentioned sources deal with analysing data gathered by interviews. These data could have been treated as an interview even if they were collected from informants who had answered the questionnaire anonymously on the Internet and there were no face-to-face contacts. The data could have been collected by interviewing the respondents face-to-face but then the number of informants would have had to be substantially lower. Kvale (1996: 189) has separated six different phases in analysing interviews. He sees the analysis process as a continuum in which description is on one end and interpretation at the other end. Some of the interview analysis phases could be applied to the present data. The first phase is the actual interview situation in which informants describe their experiences, views and emotions. This phase is similar to the questionnaire of the present data in which the informants were asked to describe various aspects of fan fiction. Compared to an interview they are not able to correct the possible misunderstandings made by the researcher. Other phases that could be applied to the present data were the organization of the data and clarifying it, trying to

eliminate repetition and irrelevant points. The actual analysis is summarizing, categorization and interpretation of the data.

The aim of the present study was to describe, compare and explain the phenomenon with the help of the data. The study presents precise descriptions of the phenomenon and presents central and interesting features of the phenomenon (Hirsjärvi et al 2004: 125 - 130). All conclusions were mainly made inductively which means that they were drawn from the data instead of having theoretical points in advance and trying to find similar findings in the data (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 136). Although some of the features of fan fiction were familiar before the analysis.

The goal of the present study was achieved by first dividing the questions in the questionnaire into three main topics. The questions were put into groups for example it seemed logical to put the questions concerning language into a group of their own. Secondly, the data were categorized, described and interpreted. This was achieved by first reading through all the questions in each group several times and the data was annotated. Reading is not passive as Dey (1993) puts it but it is an interactive process, while reading it is worth to ask questions who, what, when, where and why because they can help exploring potential themes and topics. Also so what is a useful question because it forces you to think why some aspects of the data seem interesting. The reading process prepares the ground for the analysis (Dey 1993: 83 – 84, Tesch 1990: 96). Noticing similar and different patterns or variables can be expected in the data (Miles and Huberman 1994: 246). They were discovered by going through all the answers and looking for recurring similar answers and starting to put them together. Tesch (1990) explains that the pieces of data can be organized according to a system that is mainly inferred from the data. Some topical categories may exist before analysis, but mostly the data will go through a process of interrogation and as a result it will reveal the themes they contain, and categories are formed. The method of comparing and contrasting is

used for all phases during analysis for example while forming categories, establishing the boundaries of the categories, assigning pieces of data to categories, summarizing the content of each category. The aim is to recognize conceptual similarities and discover patterns, which can be tentative and flexible in the beginning and can be modified until a satisfactory system is established (Tesch 1990: 96). After the data was organized into the categories each category was explained and described. The final stage of the analysis is a synthesis in other words a concentrated picture of the phenomenon (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2000: 143 – 144, Tesch 1990: 97).

3.4. The analysing process in practice

In practice the above mentioned process was achieved by dividing the questions into three different groups because various topics can be seen in them. The various topics were basically determined by the questions in the questionnaire. The questions, which dealt with similar themes, were grouped together in the following way.

The first topic consisted of answers given to questions two, three and six which asked to describe the general understanding of fan fiction phenomenon. Fan fiction writers were asked to give definitions of fan fiction, describe the people who wrote fan fiction and give their opinions about good and poor fan fiction.

The second topic consisted of the respondent's personal relationship to fan fiction. The questions four and five concerned with reasons for reading and writing fan fiction and how the respondents had found about it and how often they spent time with fan fiction. The connection between other hobbies and fan fiction was dealt with in question seven. The fourth group of questions concentrated on the various types of fan fiction texts written and read by the respondents and they were dealt with in questions eight, nine and ten. The fifth group of questions from 11 to 13 dealt with the forums and tools the respondents used in fan fiction writing and

whether they discuss their fan fiction and whether it influences their writing. There were many different types of questions that were put under the third topic but it made sense because they all had one thing in common. All of them asked about issues connected to fan fiction from a personal point of view.

The third topic was formed out of questions from 14 to 18 concerning the respondents' language choices. They were put together because they formed a logical group of their own. The last topic concerning language matters contained both general and personal notions of fan fiction but it was treated as a separate topic because language issues was one of the major research interest. The various topics found in the data will be presented in table one.

Table 1: Different topics in the data

FAN FICTION DESCRIBED BY THE RESPONDENTS	Questions 2 - 3 and 6
THE RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT WITH FAN FICTION	Questions 4 - 5, 7 – 13
LANGUAGE CHOICES IN FAN FICTION	Questions 14 - 18

The present data of Finnish fan fiction writers and readers provided a pleasant journey through the minds of fan fiction buffs. The continuum model is a simple way to approach the question of what it means to be a fan. There is a justified criticism of such an approach because it oversimplifies the complexity of fan identities. It is not suggested here that every fan fits into this categorization and the present study will not attempt to draw oversimplified conclusions based on the data saying that because 109 respondents answered in a particular way therefore

all the fans must fit into these descriptions. Instead, it is an attempt to understand a phenomenon from outsider's point of view and gather information from the various answers and aim to draw a profile of a fan fiction writer and reader but does not claim that all the fan fiction buffs all over the world are alike. The aim will be accomplished by recognizing repeated similarities in the answers as well as differences.

4. DISCOVERIES IN THE WORLD OF FAN FICTION

Fan fiction is a wide-spread phenomenon and the purpose of the present study was to find out whether it is possible to achieve a general understanding of it and learn about the motives for fan writing and reading by going through and analysing the answers of the respondents. It can be said that there are as many opinions as there are people but these respondents have something in common and therefore it was possible to draw conclusions based on their answers. Also the answers on the language choices of the fan fiction writers provoked many questions. It would be interesting to consider the answers of language choices more profoundly and see if the findings in part could shed some light on the status and use of English in Finland in general, but the main focus was on the language choices in fan fiction, not in the overall status of English language in Finland.

First, the background information of the respondents will be presented. This part will not have as much emphasis as the other three due to the fact that the answers given did not consist of very detailed information. The background questions are just simply answered with one fact and that is the nature of them. Therefore the answers given to background information will not have the same objective as the others. The three different topics will be dealt with in more detail and a lot of examples will be given to support the findings.

4.1 The respondents' background information

The majority of the respondents (n=98) were women. There were only 11 men. Age range was from 11 to 32 years of age but most of the respondents (n=77) were from 13 to 20 years old. Their places of residence covered many different areas in Finland. Most of the respondents (n=105) reported to have Finnish as their mother tongue. One respondent said it was Swedish and a couple of them (n=2) did not tell what it was, instead they gave a number indicating perhaps the school grade. One respondent said that his mother tongue was Hindi, which could have been true or just a joke. However, his other answers were fluent Finnish and therefore his answers were not excluded even though it can be argued whether he qualifies as a Finnish respondent.

Many of the respondents were still in either comprehensive school (n=33) or in high school (n=19). There might have been more of those who were still in comprehensive school or in high school but they listed themselves as students (n=18) and because it was not possible to know whether the 15 and 16-year-old ones were in comprehensive school or in high school they were grouped as students. Some of the respondents (n=7) had finished high school and a few (n=17) told to have further education: undergraduate students at a university (n=7), vocational high school (n=3), Master of Arts (n=3), Vocational Qualification in Business and Administration (n=2). A few of them (n=7) listed their current jobs (computer electrician/sales director, computer trainer, graphic designer, library assistant, office worker, system specialist, works at a kindergarten). The question form provided the opportunity to choose either education or occupation. Many of them were still in either comprehensive or high school and only a few mentioned their occupation. This can be explained by the fact that most of the respondents were between 13 to 20 years old.

Apart from English most of them had studied Swedish (n=93), German (n=41) and French (n=36) but also other languages were mentioned such as Spanish (n=12), Italian (n=7), Japanese (n=7), Latin (n=6), Russian (n=5), Estonian (n=2), Arabic (n=1), Hungarian (n=1), Norwegian (n=1), Esperanto (n=1), Portuguese (n=1), and Sami (n=1).

The fan fiction writers were asked to list their hobbies in the background information. The most popular hobby turned out to be reading (n=57) which was no surprise considering the people who we are dealing with here. Drawing (n=22) and other art work (n=13) were also favourite hobbies. Music (n=25) and playing an instrument (n=5) were also listed as hobbies. Writing as a hobby was also popular (n=19). Some have the respondents mentioned theatre (n=6) and acting (n=5) as hobbies. Fan fiction writers seemed to have more or less creative hobbies. However, also more than half of the respondents (n=66) reported to have some sort of athletic hobbies for example dancing and horse-back riding. Movies (n=11), TV (n=3), comic strips, sci-fi (n=3), role-playing games (n=8) and live role-playing games (n=7), other games (n=6) and Japanese anime and manga (n=14) were also mentioned as hobbies. All the hobbies that the respondents mentioned were very typical hobbies of young people. The hobbies of the respondents will be dealt with in more detail in question seven which was concerned with hobbies and their connection with fan fiction.

According to the findings based on the answers provided by the respondents of the present study, it would seem that writing fan fiction is more popular among women than men. The respondents also seemed to be relatively young. Most of the adolescents go to school and because most of the respondents in this study were very young it is not possible to draw conclusions on the occupational background of the respondents because there were not that many of them who had finished either comprehensive school or high school. Also no view will be taken on their

language skills at this point because the language question will be dealt with in more detail in the later section.

4.2 Fan fiction described by the respondents

In the following section the respondents' own definitions of fan fiction will be presented. Questions two and three asked to define what the respondents thought fan fiction was about and what kinds of people wrote fan fiction. They were asked to describe fan fiction on a more general level. The respondents were also asked to describe good and poor fan fiction in question six. Because describing various characteristics of good and poor fan fiction fit into the category of general definitions of fan fiction it was included in this section.

The aim was to find out how the respondents depict fan fiction and fan fiction writers and what kind of criterion they have for good and poor stories. The idea was to approach the phenomenon by gathering insider's knowledge about it rather than looking from outside in. However, the outsider's perspective still remained because the categorization of the answers and conclusions drawn based on them were made by the outsider in other words not a fan fiction writer. The answers were carefully read, and put into the following groups according to their similarities and differences. First, the definitions made by the respondents will be presented and the three major definition types were quite easily seen in the data. Second, their ideas about fan fiction writers will be presented. Third, their opinions about good and poor fan fiction will be introduced.

4.2.1 Definitions of fan fiction

The respondents described fan fiction in versatile ways. Most of the answers contained elements that it was understood that first of all fan fiction has everything

to do with fandom. The aspect of fandom was not necessarily put into words as such, but it was implied in the answers in the following way.

Most of the writers (n=104) thought that fan fiction was written about TV-series (n=25), films (n=34) and books (n=45). Other inspirational sources for fan fiction writing turned out to be comic books (n=7), games (n=4), bands (n=2) and music in general (n=1). Also real people (n=1), singers (n=1) and actors (n=1) were seen as motivation for writing.

There were also a lot of elaborate answers about fan fiction. What they had in common was that they described fan fiction as something that was written by people who wanted to rewrite the texts that are dear and important to them. There was only one among the respondents who said that she wrote about *Harry Potter* even though she did not like the books at all! She might be called an anti-fan. Otherwise the aspect of fandom could be found throughout the answers. Some of the definitions about fan fiction were a little bit vague; some of the respondents (n=7) wrote that it was a story written by a fan (n=7) or some them (n=5) described it simply as storytelling. One respondent wrote that fan fiction was romance and another referred to it as porn.

> Example 1.
> Fan fiction is a way for the fan not to let go of the book/TV-series, a way to tie one's self into them and maybe to change the story-line a little bit in their own stories and believe that by doing that one has changed the lives of the characters a little. Because the context and the characters are ready, the idea [for a story] can come into mind anytime, from a situation, from a feeling, even from a song. One of the central and most interesting aspects of fan fiction is probably the various couples – the possible and the impossible ones. "They belong together!" Young girls, hungry for romance read and write fan fiction for their own need. Who does not think that the romantic scenes are the most entertaining ones? Who claims not to have read the romantic scenes from *Jane Eyre* for twenty times? When one writes fan fiction based on books, it means that the characters of that book are so charismatic and touching that the readers believe them to have a life existing outside the pages of the books.R108

> Example 2.
> Usually it is a story written by a fan and it is based on particular topic and the writer has added own wishes, own views and imagination. Usually they write fan fiction about the characters who they wish would fall in love with each other because this does not happen

in the original story. I, myself have read only one *Harry Potter* novel and I could not stand it at all as it is, so I write fan fiction in order to create "a reality" that pleases me.R97

Fan fiction was described as fan activity and in these answers being enthusiastic in other words a fan was mentioned in the answers. However, the various ways of rewriting were also present in the answers.

Therefore, it was no surprise that many of the answers (n=81) were related to different ways of re-writing. Many of the respondents (n=39) answered that people who wrote fan fiction had a need to write stories about characters and contexts that someone else had created. They also described fan fiction as stories based on texts originally created by an author (n=5) or as playing with someone else's characters (n=2).

Example 3.
The writer can let her imagination run wild in fan fiction and write whatever she wants about a book/ book series/TV-series or movie characters. One can also mix different book scenarios or throw in own characters. The only thing that makes fan fiction different from "ordinary" literature is that there are characters and scenes created by someone else.R4

Example 4.
Fan fiction is writing stories based on fictional characters and scenes created by someone else. Their relation to the original one can vary from slavish imitation to the ones that totally contradict with the original text.R29

There were a couple of respondents (n=3) who described fan fiction as a story in which the plot of the original story was presented in a way the writers would have wanted it to be continued. Some of the respondents said that it was expanding the original story line (n=12) or continuing the story from where the original had ended (n=7).

Example 5.
Fanfiction (the term that is also used in Finland, the term "fanifiktio"[2] I have never heard of and it sounds really odd to my ear) is created by fans of movies/books/comic books. There are many reasons. Some may think that a film should have had a different ending, so one writes an alternative ending for own fun. Also one can develop things that might have happened in a book. In short, fan fiction is a way to develop good characters and use previously created scenes for writing entertaining, usually relatively short stories. The most

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[2] Fanifiktio is Finnish for fan fiction.

popular ones are those which have a certain couple, in other words, the writer creates a romance between characters whom she would have wanted to fall in love with each other in a book/a movie.R26

Some of them wrote (n=5) that fan fiction writers added things to the story that they would have wanted to happen or things that they thought had happened in the original one, others described writing of fan fiction simply as filling in gaps (n=9). Fan fiction was also described as additional material (n=1) and additional episodes (n=1) as well as providing new viewpoints (n=3) and own ideas of the familiar world (n=9). Exploring 'what if' scenarios was mentioned as one way of re-writing the original text (n=1).

Example 6.
Fan fiction starts to develop when people see a film or read a book and start to wonder "what if" and what happened during the time we were not told about. Fans wonder about what would have happened differently in a certain point and how things would have proceeded in that case. They fill in gaps, answer questions and create a more detailed personality, a past and a future for the character they like. These ponderings transform into fan fiction when fans put them on paper.R28

One respondent defined fan fiction as writing crossover stories. Some of them (n=9) also described fan fiction as writing from the point of view that interests them. They thought of fan fiction as a possibility to make their own interpretations of the characters (n=5) and sometimes making minor characters more versatile (n=3).

Example 7.
The writer uses the characters of the book/ the film and sometimes even real people in her story. The story can be similar to the original style and context or the plot can be totally the figment of the writer's imagination. Many writers have their own ideas also about the characters that do not completely fit into the description in the original one. The writer aims to explain the faults of her/his favourite character and give a better impression of that character. For example, in fan fiction Draco is often a lonely, traumatised boy who is aching for affection, but in books he is just an egoistic idiot.R51

One of them said that writing was one way of studying the characters and another one said that writing fan fiction enabled to deal with characters with exceptional

imagination and often in a sexually colourful way. This was probably quite true because another popular way of re-writing was to make own interpretations of relationships between characters (n=10).

> Example 8.
> [They are] stories written by the readers or film-watchers and they are situated in the context in question and in which the characters are dealt with exceptional imagination and often in a sexually colourful way.R65

The respondents gave a lot of examples of different ways of changing the original source. The aspect of freedom and doing things their own way was present in the answers. Similar themes will occur in the section which deals with the personal relationship to fan fiction.

A few of the respondents (n=14) defined fan fiction on a more personal level in this part even though the personal relationship to fan fiction was asked about later in question four. Therefore this category will slightly overlap with the topic discussed later concerning the personal relationship to fan fiction. These answers could be considered as general definitions as well because the respondent can assume that other people may have similar reasons for writing. These comments described fan fiction to be escapist (n=2) and an outcome of boredom (n=1). It was also described as something written for pleasure (n=1) and for easing anxiety (n=2). Some of them (n=5) said it was a form of self-expression and of using one's imagination in a creative way (n=1). A couple of respondents (n=2) defined fan fiction as writing their own fantasies into fan fiction stories.

> Example 9.
> Fan fiction is not just about little teenage girls writing about *Backstreet Boys* and maniac *Star Wars* slash [writers]. Fan fiction is for people who are not satisfied with the normal everyday routines, but they have a need for great emotions: joy and devastating sorrow, etc. Fan fiction is a product of a culture and it gives great satisfaction to its user. Because the original story is never complete, the fans can fill in the gaps. The modified story always has a greater significance to the writer than the original one.R57

> Example 10.
> [It is] escapism from boredom. [It is] losing one's self into another world. [It is] fantasising. [It is] escaping from the reality.R74

Fan fiction writers seemed to be aware of the fact that they used someone else's creations and a couple of them (n=4) wanted to make it clear that they were in no way trying to profit by writing fan fiction. It seemed that the difference between fan fiction and literature was not always clear but there was one who claimed that fan fiction for her was like any other literature. Table two will present the main points found in the descriptions of fan fiction.

Table 2: Fan fiction descriptions of the respondents

Fandom (n=104)	▪ staying close to the fandom ▪ re-living the fandom ▪ addiction
Re-writing (n=81)	▪ alternations ▪ character study ▪ additional material
Emotional ease (n=14)	▪ pleasure ▪ easing anxiety ▪ fantasizing ▪ escapism

Fan fiction definitions gave the impression that the respondents thought of fan fiction as something that gave a lot of pleasure and was a lot of fun to the writers. The emotional importance of writing fan fictions came up but the aspect of fandom and the different ways of re-writing played the major role in their definitions. Fan fiction seemed to offer a nice playground for dealing with the context and the characters of the admired fandoms.

4.2.2 Features of fan fiction writers

The respondents were also asked to describe what kinds of people write fan fiction. It seemed that the overall profile of a typical fan fiction writer was not easy to make by using the respondents' definitions. They described fan fiction writers in a

very versatile way. As they said themselves, all kinds of people read and write fan fiction. The aspect of fandom was found throughout the answers but not in all of them.

The majority of the respondents (n=71) listed various characteristics about fan fiction writers. Imagination (n=26) and creativity (n=11) were the most mentioned characteristics. Good writing skills and verbal talent were also mentioned as characteristics (n=8). A couple of them (n=2) said that people who read and write fan fiction were more or less home loving people because reading and writing took a lot of time. Also a couple of them (n=4) described fan fiction writers as people who had a lot of free time. Other characteristics mentioned were: someone with a good sense of humour (n=3), tolerant (n=3), dreamers (n=2), well educated (n=2), with a family (n=2) and also eccentric, impatient, lonely, mature, nerds, ordinary, successful in school and talented children each one mentioned only once. There were a few respondents (n=6) who said that fan fiction writers could not be categorized or that they had no special features.

Quite a few of the respondents (n=31) described the people who wrote fan fiction as genuine fans who wanted to spend time in the fictional world with the characters they love by writing stories about them. They said that people who had strong opinions of their fandom (n=17) and who were addicted to some TV-series, film or a book (n=5) start writing fan fiction. Some of them (n=17) believed that most of the fan fiction writers were female but they were aware that also men wrote fan fiction. The following comments reflect these views.

> Example 11.
> Very many kinds of people [write fan fiction]. Most of the writers are young women, but the age, education and interest vary a lot. The most professional ones of the fan fiction writers are people to whom writing is an elemental part of their life, either as a long-term hobby or even as part of their job (e.g. a great number of journalists who write non-fictional text for living write fan fiction). At the other end, there are the ones who channel their fantasies into writing either for themselves or for the other fans (as a good example are the Mary-Sue stories written by rather young writers in which they write themselves as

protagonists in adventures with the characters they admire) Surely, one cannot make a generalization of fan fiction writers because there are so many kinds of them.R29

Example 12.
My writers are mostly quite mature; they have a family, [they are] well-educated people who relate to and care about the world [they are interested in] enough in order to make an effort in creating additional material to them. The age varies from 13 to 55 but most of them are women over 30 years of age. They are also creative in other areas; they draw, create web sites or something else and some of them have published literary writings or are about to publish them.R61

Example 13.
Mostly women and girls of all ages, their education apparently varies. There are university graduates and housewives. [There are] all kinds of people. Many have had some ordeals in their life and they want to relieve their experiences by writing fan fiction.R104

Many of the respondents (n=27) wrote that fan fiction writers were people who enjoyed writing in general. Two of the respondents thought they were people who wrote a lot anyway. One respondent said that they were people who dream of becoming an author. Also in their opinion fan fiction writers were people who read a lot anyway (n=8) and wanted to write about it (n=5). They were also described as people who wanted to spend time with fictive characters (n=3).

On the whole the descriptions of the fan fiction writers were positive. Only a few of the respondents defined fan fiction writers as people who lacked time, energy, abilities and enthusiasm to create their own context (n=4) or finish their own stories (n=1). A couple of respondents (n=2) mentioned that people who wrote fan fiction might be a bit lonely or weird.

Writing as such was seen as part of their lives, as a channel for fulfilling fantasies and as means to seek relief for their ordeals in their own lives all of which could apply to any kind of writing for example keeping a diary. The respondents might have reflected their own personality and their own reasons in these answers, but they still seemed to have ideas about other fan fiction writers. They probably knew other writers from for example visiting various fan fiction sites on the Internet.

4.2.3 Criterion for good and poor fan fiction

The respondents were also asked to describe what they thought good or poor fan fiction was like. A couple of respondents (n=4) did not describe good fan fiction at all; they gave opinions about the poor fan fiction only. The answers about good fan fiction could be divided into four major groups. First of all, the content and structure and various genres and styles of fan fiction were seen as criterion for good writing. Second, the respect for the original was appreciated. Third group of answers valued good writing skills. Fourth, good fan fiction needed to cause some emotional effect in the reader. Similar ones were found in the answers for poor fan fiction with the exception of the emotional effect. The positive feedback of fan fiction will be presented first followed by the ones which received negative feedback.

Most of the respondents (n=70) appreciated things that were related to the content and structure of fan fiction stories as well as preference of a certain style or genre. For some of them (n=22) good fan fiction had an interesting and complex plot, including preferably subplots. Some respondents (n=7) also valued general descriptions. Also place and character descriptions were appreciated (n=3). Some of the respondents (n=7) appreciated if the story had new and unused ideas or at least a good idea that supported the story from the beginning to the end (n=3). A few of the respondents (n=4) appreciated fan fiction which has no clichés and a couple of them (n=3) thought that good fan fiction had same elements as any other good literature: good plot, original way of writing, good entity. A couple of the respondents (n=2) were content with the topic that interested them. Other descriptions about good fan fiction which were mentioned at least once were: ending well planned, interesting from the start, lot of adventures, things do not happen too fast, gives an alternative viewpoint, a lot goes on in the story.

Example 14.
Good fan fiction (fic) in my opinion has no clichés (many couples as such are clichés), chapters are not too short (3-4 paragraphs in each chapter) and the descriptions are clear enough. In time my standards have got higher and I won't accept most of the fics. I have the same problem with my own fan fiction writing.R20

Example 15.
Poor fan fiction is full of clichés and for example in a romance; the couple first hates each other and fall in love in the next sentence. In a good one the characters are [described] as they are in the original but with some new qualities. A [good] fic has a plot that proceeds logically and has enough good descriptions.R53

Some of the respondents (n=13) just listed the genre or the type of the text they liked the best: slash (n=3), sad stories (n=3), humour (n=5) and angst (n=2). One respondent preferred serials and two of them only mentioned that the age limits and warnings of the content should be appropriately marked.

Example 16.
I read mostly just "slash", in other words romance-fiction based on the relationship between two men or two women. Sad stories as a genre move me the most but sometimes it is fun to choose a humorous story that makes me laugh.R10

The second largest group of answers (n=56) about good fan fiction included positive feedback to the stories that honoured the original stories. The respondents wanted the writers to know and respect the originals but have a personal touch in their writing (n=24). One respondent wrote that it was important that the writer knew who was who in the original story and did not invent characters for example relatives that already existed in the original one. It was also appreciated if the language resembled that of the original text (n=1). It was considered very important (n=20) that the characters were IC (in character), in other words that they reminded the original characters sufficiently and were not altered too much. A few of them (n=5) thought that good fan fiction made them believe in the characters even though they were altered. There were a couple of respondents (n=3) who preferred fan fiction that complemented the world of the book without changing the characters too much or adding too many own characters. Two of the respondents wrote that they wanted the characters to have their own personality.

Example 17.
Good fan fiction remains loyal to the characters personalities in a way they are described in the original or develops them in a way that is a possible interpretation in the original canon. Fanon-clichés (=plots, ideas, character descriptions that do not resemble canon which have become too common in fan fiction) should be avoided. A captivating and believable plot is a plus but not essential if the characters are described well enough. Knowing the canon is the key. Poor fan fiction is "out of character", unintentionally humorous and reveals poor knowledge of the original text. The writer's own angst and fantasies are too obvious; the stories written for therapy seldom work. R29

Example 18.
Good fan fiction complements the world of the original book, but it does not invade the author's territory by changing the personality of the characters or by adding too many own characters without a valid reason. Whereas poor fan fiction has characters which could be anyone and their doings are described unconvincingly. I appreciate technical writing skills and imagination and the ability to write fan fiction without imitating anyone else.R33

The third group of answers (n=33) consisted of responses which emphasised the fan fiction writers' language skills in fan fiction. Correct spelling and grammar were valued among the respondents (n=11). The use of good language and fluency were appreciated (n=17). One of them even said that writing style and fluency mattered more than the story. Also the good set-up on the computer screen was mentioned once. A couple of the respondents (n=3) described a good fan fiction in the following way: the writer has concentrated and given thought to the text, writer knew how to write and it made them want to read more from the same writer.

Example 19.
I think the characters in good fan fiction are IC (in character). And of course same things as in any literature: a good plot, an original way of writing and a good entity that brings images into mind and creates emotions. In addition to that, it is extremely important that there are not a lot of spelling and grammar mistakes, because one can put almost anything on the Internet. Also the beginning of the story is important for when I make the decision whether I read it or not. Basic information, age limits, possible couples and warnings usually indicate that the writer has been around fan fiction for a while.R4

Example 20.
Good fan fiction contains descriptions and the writer knows how to use synonyms and how to create excellent sentence structures. A good fan fiction story has to stay in certain "limits". In my opinion, one should not make too many or major changes to the decisions made by the author or the director. Usually good fan fiction stories are also long.R46

The respondents also defined good fan fiction based on what kind of effect it had on them. Fan fiction had to cause emotional reactions in order to fulfil the criterion of good according to some of the respondents (n=11). Fan fiction was also considered good if the reader could relate to the story (n=1) or if it made her feel like she was part of the story and she could care for the characters (n=1).

Example 21.
 Good [fan fiction] makes you want to read it and when it is over, it leaves an empty feeling and you immediately want to read another one by the same writer. It touches you and gets tears into your eyes in sad parts and makes you laugh aloud in funny parts. And it causes excitement about what's going to happen next. And it is fluently written.R27

Example 22.
Poor fan fiction does not bring depth to the book, it only repeats thing or the writer tries to imitate the style of the author but fails in doing so. Good fan fiction has to have a short-story kind of idea. It does not explain everything but leaves some things understood between the lines, especially in love scenes, which are often written in a clumsy and stiff way. The motives of the characters should be clear. Good fan fiction is also verbally talented; it has to have the personal touch of the writer. It also has to moving; evoke emotions because we read them in order to get overwhelming emotional reactions.R108

The descriptions of good fan fiction resembled the criterion one would expect in any kind of literature. There was some overlap in the answers, in other words the same answer could fit into more than one group. Also the quotes of the good fan fiction descriptions may have contained also answers about poor fan fiction because they were quoted as a whole and not abbreviated. The same applies to the following examples of poor fan fiction.

The answers to the question about poor fan fiction were almost the opposites of the descriptions of good fan fiction. Some of the respondents (n=17) did not give an opinion about the poor fan fiction.

Most of the answers (n=69) about poor fan fiction were related to the content and structure of fan fiction and also certain subjects were disapproved. It was not appreciated (n=13) if the plot was not fluent or it had no point at all. The story was also considered poor if things jumped straight away to romantic incidents (n=2).

Clichés were considered boring (n=10). A couple of the respondents (n=2) did not value stories with unclear character and location descriptions or if there were no descriptions (n=6) or no explanations (n=1) at all. It was also considered poor fan fiction if there were no special ideas (n=2) or if the writers were just copying someone else's texts (n=3). A couple of respondents (n=2) disliked things happening too slow or too fast. One respondent wrote that she did not appreciate if in slash, the couple suddenly found each other and fell in love immediately. Also one respondent thought that fan fiction was boring if the characters were not deep and another disliked stories that repeated themselves. One of the respondents disliked the stories with too many "what if" possibilities. Slash was not appreciated by one of the respondents and maybe not surprisingly Mary Sue stories (n=7) also known as SI, self-insertion (n=1) were criticized. ANC (annoying new character) was not appreciated (n=1). Also porn (n=3) and violence (n=2) as well as rape (n=2), child molesting (n=1) and death (n=1) were not valued as subjects.

> Example 23.
> Poor fan fiction has bad language, absurd plot device, Mary Sue characters who steal all the attention, misrepresentation of the characters or boring fluff (there can be good fluff, too). One does not even want to read the story if the language is poor.R8

> Example 24.
> Fan fiction is poor if the sole purpose is sex (Unfortunately many slash writers make that mistake. Good slash is rare.) Or [fan fiction is poor] if the characters are extremely different from the original ones. Some logic/idea would be nice to find. Good fan fiction has a point and it is entertaining.R77

The second largest group of answers (n=34) about poor fan fiction concentrated on the writers' skills. Poor grammar and spelling mistakes were disapproved (n=21). Also it was not appreciated if the writers did not have good writing skills or used bad language (n=9). Short sentences, long speeches and repetition of the words did not get praises (n=3). One respondent mentioned bad set-up on the Internet and the pop-ups as a criterion for poor fan fiction.

Example 25.
I think fan fiction is poor if the writer has not bothered to take grammar or creative ideas into account. It does not matter if the story has no plot if it is otherwise well written.R3

Example 26.
One has to look for good fan fiction; the poor ones come across anyway. I am mainly annoyed by spelling mistakes, which could have been easily fixed if the writer would have bothered to read the text through. The other annoying thing is the short, clumsy sentences. I also do not want to read fan fiction that is all about meaningless violence or rape. I can read fan fiction of this kind but not if it is solely about that.R51

Third group of answers of poor fan fiction contained the ones which considered unfamiliarity with the fandom as criterion for poor fan fiction (n=26). In their opinion, fan fiction was poor if it did not remind the original (n=6). Nevertheless, there was also one who said that she did not appreciate fan fiction that followed the original too much. Fandom clichés (n=1) and familiar couples with same pattern of behaviour were criticized (n=1). Fan fiction was considered poor if the characters were OOC, out of character (n=13) or if the characters could be from any story if the names were changed (n=1) or in which the dialogue and the characters did not follow the original text but the wishes of the writer (n=1). A couple of respondents (n=2) condemned unbelievable characters and they did not like if the characters and the personality created by someone else were copied. It was not very clear what they meant by this because in a way fan fiction is all about borrowing characters created by someone else but they could have meant copying from the other fan fiction writers and in that case this opinion made more sense.

Example 27.
The writers of poor fan fiction could not care less about the world in question; the characters could be anyone from anywhere if the names were changed. The writer might deal with the character/ situation/ things on one hand too lightly or on the other hand she might emphasize them too much or in a wrong way. Sloppiness in writing and not knowing the original e.g. misspelled names, spelling mistakes etc. [are not appreciated].R61

Example 28.
Good fan fiction has some of the original spirit left. The atmosphere can be totally different, but somehow the setting must be recognizable. Facts should be correct or there has to be a good reason for changing them and the changes must be presented convincingly (e.g. the death of Qui-Gon cannot be left out without an explanation). The characters must behave according to their personality and if there are self-invented characters they must be believable (no more American exchange students in Hogwarts!). Poor fan fiction is filled with Mary-Sue characters, spelling mistakes, factual and other errors and the characters can be recognized by the name only because their behaviour is totally unnatural for them.

(Draco decides to become one of the good guys just because he all of the sudden realizes that he is in love with Harry/ Ginny/ Hermione/Pigwidgeon/ or some of the other good guys.)R71

Table three sums up the four major ways of describing good and poor fan fiction. The four different ones were found in the criteria for good fan fiction and three different ones for poor fan fiction. The same elements were found both in descriptions of good and poor writing with the exception that the emotional effect was not mentioned in the descriptions of poor fan fiction. Interestingly, slash was favoured by some and disliked by others. Also all the requirements for good and poor fan fiction apply to any literature except for the respect for the original text.

Table 3: Good and poor fan fiction

Content, genres and subjects of fan fiction	+ good and interesting plot + imaginative idea + sweeps away from the beginning + angst +/- slash - no explanations - things proceed either too fast or too slow - Mary Sue - porn
Respect for the original text	+ written competently + characters seem real and IC + fit the original story - characters OOC - no knowledge of the fandom
Language skills	+ uses good language - poor language - lot of spelling and grammar mistakes
The emotional effect	+ funny one makes you laugh + sad one makes you cry + romantic one makes you burst of joy + makes you relate to the story

Fan fiction described and defined by the respondents contained many-sided and interesting points. They had a very clear understanding of the phenomenon. First of all, fan fiction was seen as something that is part of being a fan. Also, it seemed that the different ways of re-writing conceptualized fan fiction in the minds of the respondents. It is understandable since that is what fan fiction concretely is about. Also other aspects of fan fiction could be found in the answers as it was also described from the emotional point of view. The writers were described mainly in a positive manner and the good and poor fan fiction characteristics were listed in a versatile way. The respondents were well aware of their preferences and dislikes in fan fiction. Next the respondents' personal relationship to fan fiction will be discussed.

4.3 Personal relationship to fan fiction

The issues concerned with the respondents' personal involvement in fan fiction were dealt with in various ways in questions four, five and from seven to thirteen. There were a lot of questions and sub questions in this part and also a lot of overlapping occurred.

First, the various values the respondents found in fan writing and reading will be introduced. These issues were dealt with in question four. Second, the issues of how and when the respondents became familiar with fan fiction and why they started to write and read it will be presented. These issues were addressed in the fifth question. Third, there will be a brief discussion of how the respondents described the connection between fan fiction and their other hobbies which was asked in question seven. Fourth, the various original sources and genres that the respondents' fan fiction is based on will be presented and also why those in particular motivate writing and reading. These issues were addressed in questions eight and nine. In addition, various text types and genres will be introduced. They were explored in question ten. Fifth group of questions from 11 to 13 dealt with

writing habits, audience and how fan fiction appeared in the respondents' everyday life.

4.3.1 The various values of fan fiction

Different types of motives for fan fiction interest could be found in the answers of the respondents. They gave a lot of different answers why they enjoy fan fiction. First, all the answers were carefully read and similarities and differences in the answers could be noticed. Then the similar answers were put together and five different categories were found of what kinds of different meanings writing and reading fan fiction have for the respondents. The writing of fan fiction seemed to have first of all the fandom aspect, secondly the emotional meaning was found, thirdly writing for creative and practice purposes was mentioned, fourthly it had purely an entertainment value and fifth a social involvement was revealed. The similar categories could be found in the meanings of reading fan fiction. Also the meaning of fan reading had one category typical only to reading. When the respondents did not specify whether they meant fan writing or reading similar meanings were found except for the social aspect. First, the various meanings of fan fiction which did not specify either writing or reading will be presented followed by the various meanings of fan writing and reading.

First of all, the respondents described the meaning of fan fiction as a way of spending time (n=8), as entertainment (n=8), as relaxation (n=6) and as a hobby (n=5).

> Example 29.
> It is a way to relax and put things in order in my head. In addition, it is a nice way to spend time. It is nice to let thoughts fly.R38

> Example 30.
> It is a hobby. A way to "empty" my brain.R69

Secondly, fan fiction was described from the emotional and psychological point of view (n=12).

> Example 31.
> It is fun, it helps to understand things and without fan fiction life would be much more boring. Fan fic is life.R72

> Example 32.
> Great entertainment to me, possibly also a means of sexual pleasure. Yes, I am a bit twisted. Fan fiction is very therapeutic to me in every sense of the word.R45

Thirdly, fan fiction meant being a fan and rewriting features were mentioned (n=7).

> Example 33.
> It is a nice way to spend time, it is fascinating to imagine about what a certain character would do in a certain situation.R42

> Example 34.
> [It means] freeing imagination, having fun. It gives a bonus value to the fandom you are interested in, deepens its world and keeps the interest going when nothing new is happening in the fandom (for example there is not going to be a new book for a while). [It is] entertainment.R86

Fourth, fan fiction was described as practice and expression of creativity (n=5).

> Example 35.
> Escape from reality. Away from everything normal, grey everyday life into another world. [It is] a perfect way to relax. [It means] increasing vocabulary and language skills. [It means] getting to know different styles of literature.R74

Also, there were a few (n=4) miscellaneous answers it is like wine, both bad and good (n=1), bonus (n=1), can share love (n=1), do not know what it means (n=1). Next the answers that specified whether they meant either writing or reading fan fiction will be presented.

4.3.2 The various values of fan writing

There was a lot of overlap in the answers to questions four and five. In addition, some of the answers were also quite similar to the answers given to question two

in which the respondents were asked to describe fan fiction in their own words, therefore there will be some repetition in the examples from the data. The next two sections will deal with the meaning of writing and reading fan fiction. An attempt was made to find out what kinds of meanings the fan writing and reading had to the respondents.

First of all, the meaning of writing fan fiction was described as part of being a fan (n=8) and also various aspects of re-writing came up (n=33). Writing gave a chance to dive into a beloved world and gave something to do while waiting for the next book or episode. Writing helped if the characters were missed or it was fun to spend time with beloved characters. It was also described as honouring the original or as giving extra value to the original. Sometimes the devotion could be really intense as can be seen in the following.

> Example 36.
> I always need "an altar to kneel before". One fandom invades my mind totally for a couple of weeks/ months/ years and during that time all of my life involves with that fandom. Reading and writing fan fiction takes hours every day – it is an easy and fascinating way of worshipping one's false gods.R21

The respondents also described the meaning of fan writing by giving a lot of examples of various ways of rewriting (n=33). These examples resembled the descriptions of fan fiction given in question two. The ways the respondents wanted to change the stories could be divided into two groups. First, there were the ones who emphasized character changes (n=19). They described it as presenting own ideas of the characters, as studying the characters, as changing character behaviour, as a possibility to peek into the mind of the characters, as concentrating on favourite characters, as writing more of the minor characters, as playing a little with characters, as explaining villain behaviour, as pondering what characters might do in a certain situation and as character dislocation. Second, the respondents (n=14) who wanted to change the whole story mentioned that they wanted to change the ending, continue the story or they wanted to dictate the

whole storyline. They wanted to add new scenes and relationships to the stories. Also the desire to open eyes for various possibilities the others might not have noticed was mentioned. Creating couples of the characters in a different way was one way of changing the original story.

> Example 37.
> It is a liberating way of expressing oneself. It also eases the frustration caused by e.g. book-series. If the character should have behaved differently, you can make it happen in your writings. I consider fan fiction as easing fantasies. In writing everything is possible.R2

> Example 38.
> [It means] a lot [to me]. Of course, it is entertainment but you can choose the amount of time you spend yourself. [You can do it] even at the small hours. Secondly, there is the fandom aspect. As a fan I am so interested in certain things that nothing is enough. (Almost) everything will do and because there is not enough official material, one has to take the unofficial ones [and] often they are even better! When one writes fan fiction and not the original, everyone has the ready context. One can start writing about interesting stuff straight away and do not have to repeat who is who. One can experiment roles in fan fiction that would be otherwise forbidden: the role of a victim, violence, gay porn, pillage and rape, anything. For example, I read overly melodramatic and strongly realistic stories in which the main character gets cancer and the angst dose of the day has been satisfied. For the moment I am writing a story about a man who becomes a single father unwillingly. I do not have children yet. Pretty transparent, isn't it?R57

The respondents also said that they wanted to show respect to the original text by writing fan fiction but there were also those who were not so happy with the original and wanted to change it somehow. This did not mean that the ones who wanted to honour the original texts never changed them at all. Writing fan fiction seemed to be more than just being a fan of a specific fandom or enjoying the various possibilities of re-writing. There seemed to be other meanings to writing as well which became clear from the answers and the other meanings involved in fan writing will be introduced next.

Secondly, fan writing had clear emotional and psychological meanings to many of the respondents (n=29). The examples of the answers that focused on emotional dimension of fan fiction writing will be introduced next. It was seen as a way of easing pressure, dealing with feelings and thoughts. Fan fiction was described as a way to escape everyday life. It was described even as means of surviving.

Example 39.
I have an annoying habit to become attached to the book characters and fan fiction is a way of clearing my head [getting rid] of the characters. In addition, fan fiction is good therapy when feelings are mixed and I would like to write about them but writing to journal won't do and I do not feel like making up my own characters. These gloomy "therapy texts" are usually not worth publishing… R30

Also writing was a way of increasing self-knowledge. Writers used personal experiences and thoughts as basis and reflected them to the texts. Sometimes fan writing was described simply as self-expression.

Fan writing was also described as wanting to identify with the characters and that expressing thoughts and feelings in another body was a fabulous feeling. Also sharing the experiences of the characters gave the writer a feeling of empathy and thrill. Writing fan fiction was a way of building self-confidence when one succeeded in finishing a difficult text.

Example 40.
It is a way to relax and forget about stressful things and just concentrate on favourite characters. Writing provides self-confidence when you are able to finish a difficult text that you thought you never could.R51

Example 41.
[They] mean a lot. [It is] like placing myself into another body and forgetting about myself. It is like in the movies, but better – I can use my imagination even more than just sitting in the cinema. Writing is expressing me onto paper in someone else's body. It feels wonderful.R55

Fan writing also gave them a good feeling and pleasure. It was mentioned even as means of sexual pleasure. It could have been expected to have more of these types of answers considering the huge amount of sexually oriented fan fiction stories appearing on the Internet. But either these respondents did not write them or were reluctant to reveal this aspect of their writing. It was mentioned though that they wrote fan fiction in order to ease frustration and sexual fantasies and wanted to fool around with, in their words, pervert couples. By that they might have meant putting the type of characters together that would never be a couple in the original one.

Some of the examples above could be said about any writing. For example writing a journal or any creative writing can have the same effect as the ones the respondents described. Writing in this sense seemed to have a therapeutic function. There were also descriptions which can be said only about fan writing for example when the respondents wanted to identify with the characters. The intensity of the emotional meaning ranged from simply giving the respondents a good feeling to extreme as it was described as means to survive in life. The next group of answers revealed a more practical relationship to fan writing and they will be introduced next.

Thirdly, fan writing was seen as means of practice and expression of creativity (n=23). They wanted to develop as writers and fan fiction was good practice. In this way, fan fiction could be seen as simply a preparation for 'the real thing', rather than an alternative to it.

> Example 42.
> I hope writing fan fiction is a good practice for me if I ever want to write a real book/a story. I do not consider the stories I have written "real" because they are based on ideas created by someone else. Reading fan fiction written by others is entertaining if it is based on an interesting topic.R1

Fan fiction was seen as means of keeping up writing skills. They also wanted to learn and improve English skills.

> Example 43.
> It is a hobby. It helps to improve writing and imagination and it is fun.R81

Creativity was one of the points mentioned. Fan fiction was seen as a way to use and increase imagination. It was seen as a possibility to make imagination come true. It was also considered a demonstration of personal creativity and bringing out one's creative skills. Also it had given back the lost pleasure of writing.

Example 44.
Writing means above all relaxation for me, a possibility to let go of the everyday routines, but also experimenting different ways of writing and exploring the characters that interest me and their relationships. I have had to write a lot of texts based on pure facts and I felt like I had lost touch with the writing of fiction. Fan fiction helped me to get it back and to find the lost pleasure of writing again that had become unpleasant and oppressive because of the factual writing.R29

Also it was mentioned that it was interesting to see what could be achieved by writing. The desire to experiment with various ways of writing was mentioned. The experimenting of forbidden roles was also mentioned.

Example 45.
[It is] a nice way to spend time, no need to think too much when reading. By writing it is possible to release pent-up perversions by creating couples without apparent logic … without forgetting good taste, though.R77

It seems that fan writing can be used for practicing writing skills but writing with original characters could, too. The idea of using already created characters and settings as an easier method for practicing (see Jenkins 2006a) is typical to fan fiction. Also the idea of playing and experimenting with writing in a way that would never be possible in the original for example Narcissa Malfoy having an intimate moment with the Grindylow[3] is characteristic to fan fiction.

Fourth, fan writing was seen as a way to spend time, relaxation, entertainment and as a hobby (n=15). It was said that fan fiction had only an entertaining value. It was also mentioned that they simply liked writing.

Example 46.
[It is] entertainment, not literature taken seriously but entertainment that requires no brain activity, like pulp fiction. The point is to create backgrounds and future for the characters known from the books. In addition, it is nice to write with READY CHARACTERS, no need to try creating splendid characters because they can be found in the books.R83

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[3] Characters in *Harry Potter* books.

Writing for fun applies to any writing, not only to fan writing. Writing can be a hobby and fan writing was described as one. The answers that were considered to reveal the social aspect of fan writing will be introduced next.

Last group of answers concerning the meaning of fan fiction writing showed a social aspect of fan writing (n=11). It was considered fun to share the creations of imagination with others. Fan fiction writers enjoyed giving and receiving feedback. The respondents had gotten new friends through writing and publishing fan fiction on the Internet. They wanted to show their writing skills to others and were very pleased about positive responses. Not many of the respondents mentioned these interactive sequels but they are not rare in the fan fiction world.

> Example 47.
> For example it is wonderful to read *Harry Potter* because waiting for the next book is like expecting to get the moon from the sky. It is fascinating to develop different stories and it is social, too. You always get feedback online.R31

> Example 48.
> Writing fan fiction is the most important hobby of mine. Reading fan fiction is almost as important but mainly just for fun. I practice writing by writing fan fiction. Thanks to fan fiction I have made online friends, and that is important, too.R62

According to these data fan fiction writing had five distinctive dimensions. First the devotional fandom aspect and re-writing, the psychological and emotional as the second largest aspect, the third was the purely entertaining aspect of fan fiction, the fourth the creative, learning and experimental aspect of writing, and last the social aspect of writing. Next the similar categories concerning with reading of fan fiction will be presented.

4.3.3 The various values of fan reading

The examples of what the respondents thought about reading fan fiction meant to them will be presented in the following sections. Their answers followed basically the same categories as the ones about writing fan fiction.

First of all, the aspect of being a fan and various types of text alterations were found in the answers (n=28). There was a fine line between the difference of the meaning of fan reading and why they read fan fiction.

Fans simply needed more and could not wait for a new book. The respondents said it was an opportunity to have a glimpse into the world of beloved characters or it was a possibility to sneak back into the world that they loved.

> Example 49.
> Writing: one can think about a good story in head for own fun and if it seems to be any good, one might write it down. The best ones get to be published, most of the times they end up in your own drawer like any other writings. Reading: when the world of the story is interesting enough, fan fiction offers an opportunity to get back there without the need to read the same story again. You sometimes might feel even sad at the end of a good book/film when you let go of it. Fan fiction offers an opportunity to sneak back…R66

Reading could also be very addictive as the respondents revealed that they couldn't live without reading fan fiction.

> Example 50.
> [It means] an escape from one's own life. It offers some change to other reading and it is a big part of my everyday life anyway. I probably would not survive one week without wonderful fan fiction written by others or my own either.R37

> Example 51.
> It is great that people have the energy to write fan fiction. It is wonderful to notice that some people want to read my stories. I can't stay away from reading fan fiction. I am hooked! (: R9

They were interested in seeing what others had thought of and what kinds of plots were possible. It was important to search for new viewpoints to the books and stories. Fan fiction offered different viewpoints and ideas that one would not think otherwise and reading could be an eye-opening experience. They wanted to read about characters that they wished to be together.

> Example 52.
> Writing frees me to create and explore situations/characters from a perspective that was not dealt at all in the original or was not dealt in a way that satisfies me. Reading, for one,

offers different viewpoints and ideas that you would not necessarily come to think about at all.R61

Furthermore, they read fan fiction because it presented issues that the original text only insinuates. They wanted to see characters in scenes that were not or would not be in the original text. They also read fan fiction because they wanted to know the characters better or they wanted to see favourite minor characters in a leading role and read more about the characters they liked. It was found interesting to read about what other characters did while the main characters were adventuring somewhere else. They said that it was almost the only way to be able to read homoerotic stories and that is why they were interested in slash. Interestingly, one of the respondents said that reading fan fiction felt like playing a sequel of a game.

Example 53.
I enjoy it a lot because I write fan fiction based on FF7 videogame, which I liked and like it a lot.. I can continue the game plot while I write about it and when I read it feels like playing the sequel of the game.R67

It was not a surprise to find out that the value of reading fan fiction was very much connected with being a fan. The various ways of rewriting could have been better understood as reasons why they read fan fiction than as answers to what reading of fan fiction means to the respondents.

Secondly, fan reading meant a way of spending time, a hobby and good entertainment (n=21). They said that read a lot anyway and they read because they liked reading. Fan fiction was described to have the entertainment value of a comic book or pulp fiction. They liked to read them because they were short and another one enjoyed them because they were easy to read and they offered some change for reading the original texts. The atmosphere of the stories was described as nice and they were pleasant to read.

> Example 54.
> Reading fan fiction is mainly a way of spending time for me, having fun and relaxing. Writing helps me to get to know myself better and express my thoughts. It relaxes and gives me a good feeling. R15

> Example 55.
> I read a lot anyway and I have continued books and movies ever since I was a little girl. Fan fiction is good entertainment and passing of time. R8

The same can be said about reading literature in general as a hobby or as entertainment. There were not many points that can be said especially about fan fiction except for reading because it offered change for reading the original. Next the emotional value of fan reading will be presented.

Thirdly, fan reading contained emotional and psychological features (n=13). Reading fan fiction was very important to them and as one of them put it: she lives and breathes fan fiction. Reading could be a sort of escapism because the respondents wrote that while they read they could forget everything else and reading was good therapy. They described fan reading as a possibility to have a pause in their own lives. It relieved from the pains of this world. Fan reading also had the element of self-searching and identifying with the characters. Reading was also described as pleasure and relaxation.

> Example 56.
> It is like another world where you can escape when you want to have a break from your own life.R20

> Example 57.
> By writing you can express feelings. By reading you can seek for comfort or make your spirit higher; the main character can cope worse than you.R16

There might be some overlap in the two foregoing categories because it can be argued whether the reading for pleasure or relaxation could also be considered as reading for entertainment purposes because when you read books as your hobby you experience both pleasure and relaxation. It was not always easy to decide into

which category the answer would fit the best and therefore they are not completely inclusive.

> Example 58.
> A lot, it is part of my everyday life. I enjoy reading the stories of others and I give comments. It is in a way a good therapy; I can forget about everything else for a while, immerse myself in a story and in a plot. I write a lot myself, a lot of pages in a day. Slash stories have stolen my heart, they are very important to me. I can deal with them better than the stories based on heterosexual relationships. Fan fiction is extremely important to me, it helps to ease the pain and increases imagination.R5

> Example 59.
> By writing you can express feelings. By reading you can seek for comfort or make your spirit higher; the main character can cope worse than you.R16

The fourth group contained answers typical to only fan reading (n=10). It was said that talented writers were the reason for reading and that fan fiction is better or as good as the original but also opposite opinions were given. Also one of the respondents revealed that she enjoyed looking for the mistakes made by others.

> Example 60.
> I like writing and reading fan fiction a lot. Most writers in my fandom write better than some of the published authors whose books I have read. It is a certain way to escape, like some people watch soaps etc.R58

> Example 61.
> Writing is above all a way of spending time; I am not good at reading. Reading fan fiction interests me only rarely. I justify this by the fact that I want to create a very different perspective, a fresh sequel/ an addition to the original story and I am not interested in other viewpoints to the same story. It is a hobby and it should be fun. I do not want to force myself to read or write anything. The comments given by other writers are also one factor for my writing. They do not inspire me to write but they might get me to try again.R76

> Example 62.
> [It is] entertainment. It is also fun to read when "then" is used instead of "than" over and over and over again. Yes, I enjoy the incompetence of others. Sometimes, it is too bad though and I can't enjoy it. Writing is a way to relax and (kind of) fulfilling my fantasies.R78

Fifth, anyone could assume the writing of fan fiction to be a more interactive practise of fan fiction however the social aspect could be found also in the answers (n=7) about reading fan fiction. First of all, the respondents mentioned that they took pleasure in sharing their fandom by reading fan fiction. Also they enjoyed

giving feedback and wanted to encourage the other writers after reading their fan fiction. They got a feeling of fellowship and togetherness while reading the stories written by others. They read them because they wanted to find out what other fans thought. Reading was also one way of getting to know people. Reading fan fiction had been an eye-opening experience for the respondents. Not only had they found about the various ways the texts could be altered but they had also made new friends by reading, discussion and commenting on fan fiction texts.

Example 63.
Reading has given a lot to me- I have gotten to know a lot of real talented people by reading their stories. Writing has taught a lot of English and I have learnt some things about myself, too. And my Irish proof reader has become a good friend of mine.R54

Example 64.
Fan fiction takes most of my time spent online which is about ten hours per week. I read a lot of fan fiction, mainly slash but I write when I feel like it. I have ended up to some discussion groups online because of the fan fiction there and I have gotten to know many wonderful people this way and this has happened on several occasions. By writing fan fiction you can peek into the mind of the character and make own interpretation of the character based on the facts provided by the original author. When reading some of the best written fan fiction it feels like getting to know the character of the book/movie / TV-series better. Fan fiction, in my opinion, is literature as any writing.R4

Curiously, reading was also seen as a way to practice and to improve creativity. These types of answers were less frequent here than in the answers about writing fan fiction. Nevertheless, there were a couple of these opinions (n=3). Reading fan fiction developed their imagination and enriched their own world and gave new ideas to their own texts. They loved the stories because in them their imagination could run wild. One of the respondents said that she learnt by examining the mistakes made by others.

Example 65.
I enjoy reading the stories written by others … and I write them when I have nothing else to do. I develop my imagination by reading the stories of others.R25

Example 66.
Reading is a way of spending time and learning. [It helps] to learn how to write better by noticing mistakes made by others and evaluating their writing skills. Reading fan fiction is also about getting and thinking about new viewpoints. Writing fan fiction for me is basically like any other writing; I just have the NEED to write something. [It is about] using

own experiences and thoughts as a basis and reflecting them to the stories. There is also the need to create something new, write something else than what has been written before about the characters. By letting others to read what you have written and letting them comment on them, you learn how to write better.R10

Quite many respondents (n=17) give more or less miscellaneous answers to what fan reading meant to them: very important (n=3), wonderful (n=2), I like stories (n=2), enjoy reading (n=2), pleasure (n=1), fun (n=1), some change to other reading (n=1), part of my life (n=1), nice moments (n=1), same as any reading just easier because they are shorter (n=1), pulp fiction (n=1), object of study (n=1).

In conclusion, reading was first of all seen as part of fan activity. They wanted to read fan fiction based on their loved fandom. Reading was also seen as purely entertainment and the same applies for reading any literature in general as well as reading in order to get emotional experiences. Also fan reading is similar to any reading because some people have the tendency to bury their heads in a book in order escape the reality for a while. If the above mentioned reasons apply to any reading it was surprising to find the social aspect also in reading because one would assume it more in writing. Also it was interesting that reading also served as practice because one could easily jump to conclusion that only writing is used for practicing.

Table four is a summary of the answers of writing and reading fan fiction. This time they will not be presented from largest to smallest group because the order was not the same for writing and reading.

Table 4 The various values of writing and reading fan fiction

Fandom	▪ worship ▪ staying close to a world they love ▪ re-writing
Emotional	▪ self-knowledge ▪ ease my feelings ▪ sexual pleasure ▪ survival
Social	▪ feedback ▪ online friends ▪ sharing the love for fandom
Entertainment	▪ a hobby ▪ pleasure of reading just for amusement
Creative/Practice	▪ practice of writing skills ▪ improving language skills ▪ learning from mistakes made by others ▪ experimenting with issues that are not possible in the original

Altogether there were more answers about writing of fan fiction than about reading even though most of them reported to do both. Perhaps because writing can be seen as something that requires more activity compared to reading, it was easier for them to analyse and describe what writing means to them. Writing fan fiction might be considered more as part of being a fan than reading fan fiction which can be considered just as for example reading a book and it might not be easy to reflect one's thoughts of reading fan fiction if it is considered just as any reading. This might have been one reason why there were more answers about writing fan fiction than there were about reading. The respondents were able to reveal a great variety of answers of what fan writing and reading means to them and only one had answered I do not know to this question. Next it will be introduced how and when the respondents had found out about fan fiction and why they had started to write and read it.

4.3.4 How, when and why fan fiction interest started

There were a lot of sub questions in question five. All the respondents did not answer all of them. Also it was sometimes unclear whether they were talking about writing or reading fan fiction. Some of them had already revealed why they wrote and read fan fiction in the answers to the fourth question.

First, it will be presented how many of the respondents both read and wrote fan fiction and how long they had known about fan fiction. Most of the respondents (n=105) both read and wrote fan fiction. Only a couple of them (n=3) mentioned that they only read fan fiction and there was one who just wrote it.

Second, all of the respondents did not answer when they had found out about fan fiction but the majority of the respondents (n=81) did. It was not surprising that most of the respondents had encountered fan fiction fairly recently considering their young age. Most of them (n=36) had been familiar with fan fiction for from couple of months to three years and many of them (n=19) had known about it from four to eight years. A few of them (n=11) did not mention the number of years; instead they stated that they had been aware of fan fiction for several years. A few of them (n=6) said that they had been writing fan fiction before they even knew about the term. A couple of the answers (n=3) were a bit vague. They did not mention any particular time, only mentioned that when Orlando Bloom starred as Legolas or when HP and LOTR became entertainment for the masses. Some of the respondents referred to well-known fandoms by abbreviations but it was clear from the context that they meant *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings*. When the respondents used the abbreviations they were also used in the examples. The earliest encounters (n=2) with fan fiction were from the 1980s from comic book reader stories. Clearly most of the respondents had found out about fan fiction in times when the use of the Internet had become more or less a part of everyday life.

Therefore it was not surprising that the most frequent answer (n=81) to the question where they had discovered fan fiction was somehow connected to the Internet. Many of the respondents (n=27) had found out about fan fiction on various online discussion forums or seen about it on fan pages (n=19). A few of them (n=8) told to have bumped into fan fiction by accident. Others (n=10) had heard about it from their friends or on the homepages of their friends (n=2). *Helsingin Sanomat*[4] had published an article about fan fiction, which introduced this phenomenon to some of the respondents (n=4) and led them onto the Internet sites. A couple of the respondents (n=3) just mentioned the Web pages they had found fan fiction from. Some of the answers (n=13) were vague: just read a LOTR-fic (n=1), saw the additions made by *Star Control* players (n=1), slash (n=3), LOTR (n=2), fandom (n=1). A couple of them (n=5) mentioned the name of Cassandra Claire[5] as the reason they looked for fan fiction. One problem of an Internet questionnaire might be that people tend to answer them quite quickly and some of them did not realize that it is sometimes almost impossible to know what they have meant by their answers. Fortunately these types of answers were not common in the present data.

When the respondents were asked why they started to write fan fiction the most common answer contained features of different ways of rewriting (n=18). Also, a few of the respondents (n=12) mentioned that they had just wanted to try writing or that that they (n=8) had written long before they had been familiar with the term fan fiction. For some of the respondents (n=8) reading fan fiction had inspired writing. There were also respondents (n=7) who simply stated that they enjoy writing. Only a couple of the respondents (n=5) specified that the devotion to fandom was the reasons for writing. There were other reasons as well but they were not mentioned frequently: did not find the desired topic (n=2), challenging and nice to write (n=2), wanted to do as well or even better than others (n=2),

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[4] *Helsingin Sanomat* is a Finnish daily newspaper
[5] A presumably famous fan fiction writer in fan community.

ambition (n=2), develop English skills (n=1) or develop as a writer (n=2), nice to put ideas and plots on paper (n=2), idea of fan fiction appealing (n=2), had to start (n=2), easy and relaxed way of writing (n=1), my thing (n=1), self-expression (n=1), the story just happened to take place in a known context (n=1), just for fun, nothing else to do (n=1), a friend suggested (n=1), nice to share one's own imagination with others (n=1), a story of a friend inspired (n=1), feedback (n=1), no one else wrote them the way she wanted them to be written (n=1).

> Example 67.
> About six years ago when I bumped into fan fiction not even really knowing what it is all about. It was a long, not finished sequel and I was hooked. Then I started to look for other stories and other fandoms than just the one I liked. I read fan fiction because it is a way to get to know the characters better. I have been writing for about a year now. I took part in an interactive sequel and I got positive feedback, which in turn inspired me to write more. Suddenly, I got a lot of new ideas for my own stories and of course other fans that like my stories and ask for more motivate me to continue writing.R11

The most common reason for why the respondents had started to read fan fiction was that they were looking for more of their fandom they were interested in (n=46). Also some of the respondents (n=19) found fan fiction in itself appealing. Various ways of rewriting (n=17) were found as reasons for reading fan fiction. Some of the respondents (n=12) mentioned that they had started reading because a friend had suggested it to them. A few of the respondents (n=5) simply stated that they loved to read. Also a few of them (n=5) said that the reason for their reading was Cassandra Claire because they found her to be a skilful writer. Other reasons that were mentioned were that they read because they wanted to compare own stories to the stories of others (n=1), writing inspired reading (n=1), talented writers (n=1), they make you laugh and cry (n=1), for fun (n=1), there is a nice atmosphere in the stories (n=1).

> Example 68.
> I found about fan fiction if I remember correctly about half a year or a year ago. I ended up in Potter discussion groups in Suomi24 and someone had put a link to FinFanFun[6] (http://pub33.ezboard.com/bfinfanfun) there. I ended up to Vuotis (http://www.vuotis.net) and Loftis (http://lotrff.suddenlaunch2.com) from FinFanFun. I

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[6] FinFanFun, Vuotis (Vuotava Noidankattila) and Loftis (Lord of the Rings FanFiction) are Finnish fandom forums on the Internet.

started to read fan fiction almost by accident, knowing basically nothing about it. I was thrilled about the fact that everything is possible in fan fiction. Besides, I love to read about my favourite characters that are not in the major role in the book/film/TV-series. I wrote my first story soon after I had read one. I have always enjoyed writing and fan fiction seemed to be "my thing".R4

Example 69.
I read a few slash stories that my friend recommended to me years ago. But I got truly interested in fan fiction in autumn 2002 when I read a parody of *The Lord of the Rings* called *The Very Secret Diaries* written by Cassandra Claire. I started to read slash stories and a while later I found myself thinking that I might be able to create similar ones. I also realized that enjoyed writing and it became a means of relaxation for me. Later ambition and a desire to develop as a writer stepped in but then again fan fiction offered opportunities to write things that you would not necessarily write in other contexts.R29

Due to the fact that they were a lot of sub questions in question five it was no surprise that many of the respondents gave no reason for why they had started to write (n=32) or read (n=26) fan fiction.

4.3.5 Hobbies connected to fan fiction

The respondents were asked how their other hobbies were connected with fan fiction in question seven. Most of the respondents (n=77) reported that their fan fiction hobby was linked to their other hobbies. There were some (n=23) who thought that it had nothing to do with their other hobbies. A small minority (n=8) was uncertain of their answers. They were not sure what could be considered as a hobby or they did not consider their free-time activities to be hobbies.

It was not surprising that most popular hobbies connected with fan fiction were reading (n=32) and writing (n=24), but a couple of respondents (n=2) did not consider reading and writing hobbies at all. Also drawing (n=13) and other art work (n=4), especially fan art, were mentioned. Some respondents (n=20) considered various fan activities to be their hobbies for example fandom in general was mentioned as a hobby a couple of times. Also collecting fan-products for example fantasy pictures, books and objects were mentioned as a hobby (n=3). Other hobbies connected to fan fiction interest were Japanese manga and anime

and other comic strips (n=11). Also interest in movies and books (n=6) was listed here. Playing video and computer games (n=3) and playing live role games (n=5) were mentioned, too. Some listed various Internet activities (n=7) as hobbies for example maintaining Web pages and playing *Harry Potter* games on the Internet.

> Example 70.
> I write a lot besides fan fiction. I do some acting and I have written manuscripts. I have drawn and painted pictures to my texts as part of my art hobby.R10

> Example 71.
> Of course. They are connected to my interest in fantasy and writing. It is a combination of those two. I write stories based on the fantasy books I love.R52

The majority (n=84) of the mentioned hobbies connected with fan fiction fit into hobbies which can be considered as creative activities. Also many different types of fan activities were considered as hobbies connected to fan fiction.

4.3.6 Fan fiction categories

The respondents were asked to list the fandoms that they write and read about and give reasons for their choices. They were also asked how often they read fan fiction and to define what type of texts and genres they write and why. These issues were addressed in questions eight, nine and ten. Next these answers will be presented and discussed.

4.3.6.1 Fandoms written about

Lot of the respondents (n=47) did not specify the fandoms they write about; whether they meant a film or a book or a comic book. Therefore, the following fandoms were listed by the name only: *The Lord of the Rings* (n=16), *Harry Potter* (n=27), *Narnia* (n=1), *Batman* (n=1) and *X-men* (n=2). Two respondents said that they write real person slash and one respondent wrote pop slash. Rock bands like *The Rasmus* (n=1), *Red Hot Chili Peppers* (n=1), **Nsync* (n=2) and *Backstreet Boys*

(n=1) were listed. One person mentioned writing about bands without naming any particular band. Another person found *Cats* musical worth writing about. One respondent was into writing real person fic. Interestingly, the former boy band **Nsync* was the target of both pop slash and real person fic. The most curious objects of writing turned out to be ski jumpers (n=1) and the relationship between Jesus and Judah (n=1). In my opinion, this proves that indeed everything is possible in fan fiction.

4.3.6.2 Fandoms read about

The same problem occurred when the respondents were asked what fan fiction they read because on one hand *Harry Potter* (n=47) and *The Lord of the Rings* (n=25) were mentioned many times as the answer to what fan fiction they read but on the other hand it was not specified whether they meant the films or the books. Other fandoms referred to by name only were: *X-men* (n=2), *Tolkien* (n=1), J-rock, (Japanese metal and rock music, n=1) and *Spiderman* (n=1). Curiously, one respondent mentioned the name of the forum, Loftis where she read fan fiction as the answer to what fan fiction she reads. The following contains miscellaneous answers: *Xena*: Über Alt short stories (n=1), real people fiction (n=3), an actor Oded Fehr (n=1), adult fan fiction (n=2), sex (n=1), Buffy and Angel together (n=1), PG-13[7], NC-17[8] and K-15[9] (n=1) and reading everything except for m-preg (n=1) or gay couples (n=1)

Also, many of the respondents listed literature styles as an answer to what fan fiction they read: romance (n=5), angst (n=5), action adventure (n=1), horror (n=1), humour (n=5), parody (n=1) and suspense (n=1). The different types of literature

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[7] Parental guidance for children under 13. International age limit system.

[8] No children 17 and under admitted. International age limit system.

[9] No children under 15 admitted. Finnish age limit system.

like short stories (n=6), poems (n=2) and song fics (n=1) were mentioned as well as genres like sci-fi (n=1) and fantasy (n=1). Slash was popular among the readers of fan fiction. Slash in general (n=16), M/M slash (n=1), real person slash (n=3), pop slash (n=1) and *The Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* slash (n=3) were mentioned. In addition, a few of the respondents (n=5) said that they read all kinds of stories and one respondent did not answer to this question at all.

> Example 72.
> [I read] something every week, mainly *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* slash. [I read] a little humour. It is hard to find written slash anywhere else than in the fan fiction and I do not know how to explain why I read them. Slash is not the main thing but the quality of the text determines whether I read it or not.R60

The fandoms which were given the name and genre in question will be presented next.

4.3.6.3 The books that inspire fan fiction

It seemed, according to data that books (n=85) were the most fruitful bases for fan fiction writing, *Harry Potter* being the ultimate winner among the books as the inspiration source for fan fiction writers. Other books on the list represented many different types of books. The respondents were also asked to list what fan fiction they read. If the books were the most popular bases writing fan fiction, at first glance they seemed to lose attraction as a source for reading fan fiction, but this curiosity is explained by the fact that most of the answers were listed as fandoms because it was not possible to tell if the respondents meant the books or the films by the same name. The books that were mentioned by name will be presented in tables five and six.

Table 5 The books written about

Table 6 The books read about

Books mentioned in general	19
Fantasy literature mentioned in general	2
Animorphs	1
Artemis Fowl	1
Books by R.A. Salvatore	1
Books by Robin Hobb[10]	1
Crime and Punishment	1
The Death Gate Cycle	1
Good Omens	1
Dragonlance	3
The Famous Five	1
Harry Potter books	34
His Dark Materials	1
A House of Stairs	1
Little House on the Prairie	1
Little Prince	1
Lord of the Rings-books	12
Nancy Drew	1
Secret Garden	1
Tiina-books by Anni Polva	1
The Unknown Soldier By Väinö Linna	1
The Wheel of Time	1
	Total n=85

Books mentioned in general	2
Artemis Fowl	1
Sherlock Holmes	1
Vampire chronicles by Anne Rice	2
Wheel of Time	1
	Total n=7

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[10] Robin Hobb has stated on her web-site that she does not permit fan fiction based on her works.

4.3.6.4 The films that inspire fan fiction

Films (n=49) formed a second largest group as invoking desire to write fan fiction. Compared to books there was no film/s that would have been a major source for writing fan fiction. *The Lord of the Rings*, *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Star Wars* were equally popular among the fan fiction writers. The same applies to reading favourites. Only *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Star Wars* were mentioned more often than the others. The films represented various genres but the majority of them seemed to have one thing in common. They contained supernatural and fantasy features.

Table 7 The films written about

Films mentioned in general	11
Ardeth Bay (a character, in The Mummy)	1
Back to the Future	1
Black Hawk Down	1
Crow	1
Gladiator	1
Harry Potter films	2
Interview with a Vampire	1
Jurassic Park	1
Lord of the Rings films	7
Matrix	3
The Secret of NIMH	1
Nightmare before Christmas	1
Pirates of the Caribbean	7
Star Wars	7
The Talented Mr. Ripley	1
Titanic	1
Wonder Boys	1
	Total n= 49

Table 8 The films read about

Back to the future	1
Black Hawk Down	1
Dead Poets Society	1
Hard Core Logo	1
Matrix	1
The Mummy	1
The Mummy Returns	1
Pirates of the Caribbean	5
Red Dragon	1
The Secret of NIMH	1
Star Wars	3
The Talented Mr. Ripley	1
	Total n= 18

4.3.6.5 The television series that inspire fan fiction

The names of the various television series that serve as source texts for writing and reading fan fiction will be presented in tables nine and ten.

Table 9 TV-series written about   **Table 10 TV-series read about**

TV series mentioned in general	9
Alias	1
Angel	2
Babylon 5	2
Biker Mice from Mars	1
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	4
Dark Angel	1
Dark Skies	1
Invisible Man	1
Roswell	1
The Sentinel	1
Stargate	1
Star Trek	1
Tribe world	1
Xena: The Warrior Princess	3
The X-Files	1
	Total n=29

TV-series mentioned in general	2
Alias	1
Angel	1
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	4
Charmed	1
Dark Angel	1
Due South	1
DS9(Star Trek: Deep Space Nine)	1
Earth 2	1
Everwood	1
Farscape	1
Fastlane	1
Highlander	1
The Invisible Man	1
Millennium	1
OZ	1
Roswell	1
The Sentinel	2
Soap	1
Space: Above and Beyond	1
Stargate SG-1	1
Star Trek	3
StarTrek TGN (the next generation)	1
Star Trek TOS (the original series)	1
Tribe World	1
Xena: The Warrior Princess	2
The X-files	2
	Total n=38

Television series (n=29) were a popular base for fan fiction writing as well but not as much as books and films. The TV-series written about had one thing in common; they all had supernatural features in them. They seemed to be more or less from the same genre except for one animated cartoon. About a third of the respondents (n=38) were interested in reading fan fiction based on various TV-series. Most of the TV-series read about contain fantasy elements, just one of them *Everwood* belonged to the category of drama.

4.3.6.6 Anime and manga as inspiration for fan fiction

Also Japanese anime and manga (n=19) inspired fan fiction writers. Various anime and manga topics also raised the interest in reading among the respondents (n=15).

Table 11 Anime/manga written about

Anime mentioned in general	5
Manga mentioned in general	5
Dragon Ball Z	1
Gensomaden Saiyuki	1
Gundam Wins	1
Hellsing	2
Hikaru No Go	1
Naruto	2
Naruto	1
	Total: n=19

Table 12 Anime/manga read about

Anime mentioned in general	1
Manga mentioned in general	1
Bubble Gum Crisis	1
Gensomaden Saiyuki	1
Hikaru No Go	1
Naruto	1
Oh! My God	1
Oh! My Goddess:Trial by Tenderness	1
Prince of Tennis	1
Project A-Kosta	1
Ranma ½	1
Ranma: Girl days	1
Robotec	1
Sailor Moon	1
Trigun	1
	Total: 15

4.3.6.7 Computer and video games as inspiration for fan fiction

Various computer and video games (n=9) were also mentioned as a source for fan fiction texts. The games mentioned here were different types of role-playing games, which probably had more to give for story line compared to different types of console and computer games. *Final Fantasy* was the only game-series that the respondents mentioned as the games they were reading about. *Final Fantasy* was a console role-playing game which probably offered the readers opportunities to re-capture the atmosphere of actual playing.

Table 13 The games written about

Games mentioned in general	2
The Bouncer	1
Final Fantasy	3
Forgotten Realms-series	2
Star Control Saga	1
Suikoden	1
Zone of the Elders	1
	Total n=11

Table 14 The games read about

Final Fantasy	1
Final Fantasy 7	1
Final Fantasy 10	1
	Total: n=3

4.3.7 Reasons for writing and reading about particular topics

The respondents found different reasons for their writing and reading choices but also similarities could be found in the answers. They resemble the reasons for reading fan fiction in general, but this time the question was about reasons for reading particular fandoms. The reasons for writing about particular topics will be presented first followed by the reasons for reading choices.

It seemed that characters were a major inspiration for the writers. The characters from *Harry Potter* books (n=21) and the characters from *The Lord of the Rings* (n=4) were described as versatile and fascinating and they provided an endless amount of possibilities for re-writing. An interesting and fascinating topic and characters were important factors to some of the respondents (n=14). There were a few (n=10) who did not either give or know any reasons for their writing choice.

Example 73.
I read and write only about *Harry Potter* because I know them better. *Harry Potter* books have so many and different characters with different backgrounds which J.K.Rowling has not clarified that it is so much easier to write about them than e.g. about *The Bold and the Beautiful* in which all the possible couples and the plot possibilities have already been seen.R45

Example 74.
I often write based on Japanese animations, comic books and computer games. The main reason for this is that there are no real people in these. Another reason is that compared to western productions, the Japanese ones have deeper plots and characters have more background information. Taking all these details into account provide a nice challenge for writing fan fiction.R76

Interestingly, on one hand it was seen easier to create own contributions to the books and films because of the complete and finished nature of them and the fan fiction writers can continue or alter the stories as they please. On the other hand they were also seen so complete that there was not much left to say and therefore TV-series were preferred as a source for fan fiction texts. These choices were more or less a matter of taste, as well as the preference between books and films/TV-series. The preference between movies and TV-series vs. books as a source of writing differed for example in the following way.

Example 75.
I write mainly about movies and TV-series, seldom about books because then I don't have to think about the appearance of the characters because they already exist.R25

Example 76.
[I prefer] books because [when writing about them] imagination can fly more freely because I can imagine the places and characters myself.R85

Fandom as such was a reason for writing for a few of the respondents (n=5). Some people (n=3) also said that the reason for writing is the desire to keep certain characters together or to create slash couples.

> Example 77.
> I write about *Harry Potter* books. Something in them has captured my attention. It is a mystical thing that is not easy to explain to others. Maybe it is magic. I do not read any other fantasy. I write about them because it is easy, the characters are young and the series is not finished yet. The different happenings in the books give hundreds of different possibilities and the world of *Harry Potter* is amazing.R50

It could be that because the characters in for example *Harry Potter* are young it was easy for the young fan fiction writers to identify with them and the things they go through, naturally apart from the magical stuff.

The respondents gave the following reasons for reading various types of fan fiction. These answers contained some of the same elements as the answers to question about what reading and writing fan fiction meant to the respondents. At least the aspects of fandom and emotional reasons could be found also in these answers. One answer can include different reasons therefore there will be overlap in the following examples.

Some of the respondents (n=5) mentioned fandom as such as reason for reading. Curiously one of the respondents saw the reading of *Star Trek* as a means of keeping it continuing.

> Example 78.
> I read fan fiction of *Harry Potter*, *Final Fantasy* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. [I read] all of them as often as possible, every day actually if I have a chance. I read about those topics because they interest me and because one might actually say that I love them. And I write about them myself so I want to know what others have written about them. It would be stupid to write the same kind of fan fiction story as someone else.R24

Nevertheless the writer of the story, a believable plot and the couple in the story had more effect than the fandom they are written about for some of the respondents (n=4).

> Example 79.
> I used to wander from one fandom to another, e.g. *x-files, due south*, DS9, *sentinel, harry potter, Buffy* etc. Now my base is real people fiction and a few smaller fandoms on the side like *everwood, Fastlane, Hard Core Logo* etc. Nowadays the writer has more influence than the fandom, I have become selective and I refuse to read any kind of garbage just for the sake of the characters. I was looking for *Everwood* fan fiction and ended up in fanfiction.net and I read a rotten story written by a 13-year old. I felt betrayed and I thought that I had wasted my time on crap. It is easier to browse through web pages of well-known writers and read their stories despite of the fandom. The only stories I do not read at all are the ones I am not familiar with, if I have not seen a single episode of the original e.g. *Sports night*. I read fan fiction several hours a day. But then I watch less TV and read fewer books, which is a shame, but I got to find the time somehow.R57

A few of the respondents (n=13) reported to read because it gave them feelings of pleasure and entertainment, and they considered reading fun and relaxing. The stories could also cheer them up and make them feel good. These reasons were similar to the answers to question four of what does reading and writing of fan fiction mean to you.

> Example 80.
> I often read romantic stories (*Harry Potter*) that stay within age limit 15. I do not read stories of homosexual couples. (I read only about heterosexual couples.) I also read humorous stories. I read fan fiction when I have the time for it or when I feel like it. For example when I am angry, humorous stories cheer me up. And when I am sad, romance or angst make me feel better or make me cry. I read them because they are so emotional and I like them. I like reading in general.R50

> Example 81.
> I read *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter* fan fiction. I read them daily. I read them because they are interesting and wonderful. They sweep you off this world for a moment and put your mind in rest. And after [reading] them you can submerge yourself in dreams and plan the sequel. And when a new chapter appears to the fan fiction you love, you can run to read it, you can scream of joy and give feedback.R27

Some of them (n=8) said that they read the stories because they are nice and they just like reading. One respondent preferred to read fan fiction because it was easy because of the limited vocabulary. A few respondents (n=5) said that they liked to

see what other writers have thought and wanted to compare different writers. Also they sought for inspiration for their own texts.

> Example 82.
> [I read] *Harry Potter*, occasionally original fiction, too or fan fiction based on films both in English and Finnish. [I read] them daily if possible (I had a pause of seven weeks in the summer, but it did not stop the enthusiasm – it was just a good thing to have a break) from an hour to more. (Mostly romance stories with Draco/Ginny or angst-like discussion of the Slithering) It takes much more time to write. I like reading fan fiction. It is not like ordinary literature because it has the elements of the writers in it. It is fascinating to read what others have thought about the same things. It is appealing and attractive.R15

The following are examples of the miscellaneous answers that do not specify the fandom but reveal the type of texts that the readers were interested in.

> Example 83.
> I mainly read "adult-content" fan fiction. I do not mean purely sexual content in the stories but stories that aim to treat themes that are important to me from an adult and mature viewpoint (for example choices and giving up on things, death, love, the relationship between parents and children, growing up and becoming an adult etc.) Drama and comedy are my favourites, I also like horror. The genre does not influence as much as how well the story is written. I read quite a lot of slash. The main motivation is of course the sexual pleasure, but I try to find quality texts in which the writer has made an effort to create believable plot and characters. I got interested in fan fiction through slash stories but now I have started to read other stories, too. I read about 2-8 hours a week. I read daily if possible, usually one story a day. I rarely read anything that is longer than 2-4 chapters.R29

> Example 84.
> I read only slash stories. They are more interesting than the heterosexual ones in which most often the female character is boring, whereas in slash both parties are equal and interesting. Usually the stories I read have one or two chapters because I do not have the energy to read the longer ones. It varies how much I read, sometimes I cannot be a day away from the English fan fiction, and sometimes there can be a break of two months. I read the Finnish fan fiction almost daily. My favourite subjects are *Gensomaden Saiyuki* and j-rock.R51

The respondents were also asked how often they read fan fiction. The question about writing frequency was dealt with other set of questions therefore only the reading frequency will be introduced in this section. Most of the respondents (n=68) read fan fiction on a more or less regular basis. It seems that for the majority of the respondents reading fan fiction was a time-consuming hobby. Due to the addictive nature of fan fiction reading it was no wonder that it took so much time. There was no answer from 18 respondents.

The ones who read daily (n=24) or almost daily (n=20) formed a largest group of regular readers. The following answers can also be categorised as regular readers: very often (n=6), once a week (n=6), whenever I have time or feel like it (n=3), several stories in a week (n=3), whenever a new story appears (n=2), a couple of times a week (n=2), four times a week (n=1) and, as often as I can (n=1). Then there were the ones who did not read frequently: not often (n=10), a couple of times of year (n=2), haven't read in years (n=1), once a month or less (n=1), a couple of stories a month (n=1), a couple of times a month (n=1), not every week (n=1), one respondent rarely read because reading from the screen hurts her eyes (n=1). One respondent said that she reads about once a week but sometimes months go by without reading any fan fiction at all. It is safe to say that regular readers formed a majority of these respondents and they seemed to spend a considerable amount of their free-time reading fan fiction. Reading almost daily shows a quite intense dedication to fan fiction.

4.3.8 Text types and genres

The respondents were also asked about the kinds of texts and genres they write and why in question ten. Short story (n=80) seemed to be the most popular text type among the respondents. Poems (n=26) and songs or song parodies (n=23) were the second most popular. A life story (n=1), stories with many parts (n=3), epic (n=1), a novel (n=2) were also mentioned. Four respondents did not answer anything to this question, no answer to text type (n=2) and a couple of respondents (n=3) repeated that they do not write at all.

Slash (n=57) was popular among the respondents. The style of texts was described as follows: romance (n=54), angst (n=49), humour (n=25), adventure (n=11), drama (n=9), action (n=8), fluff (n=8), general (n=5), suspense (n=4), horror (n=4), hetero (n=4). Many of the above mentioned are used for any literature but couple of the have a specified meaning in fan fiction. Fantasy (n=2), mystery (n=2), violence

(n=2), adult (n=1), supernatural (n=1), sci-fi (n=1) tragedy (n=1) and BDSM (n=1) were mentioned by a few of the respondents. There are many abbreviations or words which have specified meaning in fan fiction and some of them were mentioned by a few of the respondents: AU (n=2), femslash (n=2), smut (n=2), hurt-comfort (n=1), m/f consensual sex (n=1) as opposed to noncon (n=1), citrus (n=1), Xover (n=1), yaoi/shounen (n=1). A few of the respondents described their texts with age-rating NC-17 (n=2), PG-13 (n=1) and PG (n=1).

The respondents concentrated mainly on listing the various text types and genres not so much on the reasons for their choices. They either said nothing about the reasons or said that they did not know. A few of them (n=8) said that it depended on the mood they were in. They described the reasons for writing slash that it is sweet, beautiful and easy to write. Also one's own sexual orientation was offered as an explanation for slash but also it was written because writing heterosexual text was too personal. It was also described as more daring, breaking the boundaries and therefor more fascinating. The following two are examples of some of the more elaborate answers.

> Example 85.
> I write mainly short stories and genre is either romance or angst, sometimes perhaps also slash. I write romance short stories because they are the easiest to write because it is easy to make up a love story with certain characters. I write angst because I have suffered of depression and because of that it is easy for me to relate to such issues.R22

> Example 86.
> I write short stories, usually a combination of romance and angst or slash and angst. I have written a few humorous ones, too. Angst is fascinating because it allows you to be more horror romantic and use more clichés compared to regular short stories. (At least, the Finnish literature tradition seems to assume realism). I have heard that the reason for writing slash is that homoerotic stories are not dealt with in literature (compare to numerous books about heterosexuality or lesbian fantasies in porn magazines). It sound logical to me – girls and women want to put interesting and strong male characters together as a couple in order to try whether they can describe the situation convincingly.R33

It seemed that the writers were not exclusively committed to one or two genres or styles for that matter but they were able and willing to choose various ones for

their writing. It was not surprising that romance was popular. The theme of romance was present in many answers to other questions as well.

In conclusion, the answers to what fandoms, what text types and styles the respondents were interested in provided a good overall picture of their preferences. The different categories in fan fiction writing and reading did not offer many surprises even though the versatility of the sources was interesting. The dominance of *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings* considering their popularity at the time of the data were collected was understandable.

4.3.9 The audience and writing habits of the respondents

Questions 11, 12 and 13 concerned with the habits involved in fan fiction. The respondents were asked to whom they wrote fan fiction and why. They were also asked when, where and how often they wrote it and whether they wrote alone or with other people and if they used guides, beta-readers and such to help their writing. They were also asked if they discussed fan fiction on the Internet or in their everyday life and with whom. Also it was asked whether these discussions had an impact on their writing.

4.3.9.1 The audience

There were 107 answers to question 11, which asked to whom the respondents wrote their fan fiction. Three of them did not write fan fiction at all. Majority of the rest of the respondents (n=72) said that they wrote fan fiction mainly for themselves. A total of 68 respondents mentioned that they wrote to various forums but only 23 of them further specified the forum either domestic (n=19) or international (n=4). A small group of respondents (n=18) also wrote for their friends or to their own home pages (n=9). Some of the respondents answered that they wrote to other Finns (n=14) or to international audiences (n=4). The rest of the

answers were more or less miscellaneous: they publish, but do not reveal where (n=6), mailing-list (n=4), Live Journal[11] (n=2), diary (n=1), to a chosen few (n=1), to soul-sisters (n=1), writes, but does not reveal whether posts them (n=1), to archives (n=1), internet diary (n=1), do not post them (n=1), to the Internet-pages (n=1), to Internet-friends (n=1), to the ones who like them (n=1).

The reasons for writing fan fiction to particular recipients or "places" were extremely miscellaneous. First of all it should be noticed that almost a third of the respondents (n=25) left the reason unmentioned. This was understandable because there were a lot of sub questions included in question 11. Also instead of answering why they wrote fan fiction either to themselves, their friends or to the forums part of them answered once again why they wrote fan fiction in the first place.

The most common reason for writing to various forums on the Internet seemed to be the received comments, feedback, encouragement and praises as they were mentioned by many of the respondents (n=31). However, one of the respondents wrote that she had made a promise to herself that the day the feedback became more important than the writing she will quit. An opposite of her were the couple of respondents (n=2) who confessed that they had become addicted to feedback.

> Example 87.
> I write mainly for myself but also more and more to international audiences in English. First I looked for some kind of feeling of security and confidence of using own language on Finnish forums and lists, but I have found more comfortable sense of community on some English forums and lists in which both the average age of the users and interests are closer to mine. My favourite place is www.henneth-annun.net. When I started to write fan fiction, I decided that the day the feedback becomes more important than the writing, I will quit. In other words, I write mostly for my own pleasure and the feedback is just a bonus. But if something that I have written touches upon others and they are up to send me a comment, it feels good. The international audience is both wider and more versatile than the Finnish one, which is why I prefer it.R29

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[11] Live Journal is a social media platform on the Internet.

Example 88.
I am hooked on feedback. Big time. But I still don't just write lots and lots, I invest more on the quality than the quantity. Nowadays, I write more in English than in Finnish, even though I do not post them on international sites. I write mainly for myself and my friends. Many of my online friends like the same couples as I do, so some of the stories I write just to please them. I haven't dared to go to international sites; maybe I am afraid of the feedback I might get. It is easier to use the familiar and safe Finnish sites as Vuotis, FinFanFun and Loftis.12

The latter response is somewhat contradictory because on one hand she says that she is addicted to feedback but on the other hand she says she mainly wrote for self and was a bit timid about the feedback she might receive. However this is not uncommon when people are asked to give their opinions on something, it is usual that they give this kind of on one hand and on the other hand answers.

Also there were some respondents (n=7) who mentioned they wanted feedback because it helped them to improve their English and writing skills in general. There were a few respondents (n=5) who said that they wrote mainly for themselves but if they thought that they had succeeded to write a good story they posted it online.

Example 89.
I write mostly for my own pleasure but I usually post all of my stories in a specific forum and on my home pages. So I also write to other Finns. The reason for publishing is that I want to get comments from others and I hope that as many people as possible would read my stories. Comments lighten up the day and suggestions for improvement help to develop writing skills.R50

Example 90.
[I write] mainly for myself, but I also post my best texts in order to find out what other people think of them.R23

There were also the ones (n=7) who used fan fiction for expressing their emotions and thoughts. They either kept these ones for themselves because of their emotional content or put them online because they said their friends had become bored to listen to their problems. Also particular sites on the Internet (n=6) were mentioned as reason for publishing fan fiction either because they were concentrated on specific fandoms or the practices were familiar on them. A couple

of the respondents (n=3) wanted to put their stories on the Internet because then they did not have to face the readers and they preferred to get feedback anonymously. Readership or as many readers (n=8) as possible was also one reason for publishing fan fiction.

> Example 91.
> [I write] to Finnish forums and to myself. Sometimes it is better to write than just have things inside your head. But if you write yourself into the story I doubt that anyone else feels like reading it.R44

> Example 92.
> I write to anyone who is interested :-) I have posted my stories to Finnish www-pages and to three international fan fic forums. I want as large readership as possible and feedback.R54

Some of the reasons were similar for writing fan fiction in general as a many of the respondents (n=22) explained writing as spending free-time (n=3), relaxation (n=2) or just for fun (n=7) or even simply just because they liked writing (n=10).

The reason for not writing in public were self-criticism (n=9), shyness (n=4) and the incapability to receive criticism (n=1). A couple of the respondents (n=2) were not keen on getting a lot of readers for their stories.

The rest of the reasons were more or less miscellaneous: put them on home-page in order to get more people there (n=1), wants to make moral statement by writing to Internet sites (n=1), likes it if someone challenges her for writing fan fiction (n=1), for the sake of friends (n=1).

4.3.9.2 The writing habits of the respondents

The writing habits were the object of interest in question 12. It was asked when, where and how often the respondents wrote and whether they wrote alone or with others, all at once on the paper or on computer and if they used help such as guides or beta-readers. Once again a lot to answer for in one question and not all of

the respondents replied to each point. There were total of 107 answers and three of them briefly repeated that they did not write fan fiction.

When the respondents were asked when and how often they wrote fan fiction, they gave the following kind of answers. Some of them (n=14) said that they wrote either daily or almost daily. Almost as many of them (n=12) said that they wrote every week or several times a week. It seemed that most of the respondents who commented on the frequency spent quite a lot of time writing their stories because the ones who did not do it as often formed a minority among the answers: a few stories per month (n=1), seldom (n=2), a few times a month (n=1), occasionally (n=1). A couple of the respondents (n=3) said that the frequency varied from time to time. The most common time of the day for writing was night (n=8) and evening (n=8). A couple of the respondents (n=2) said that they wrote after school, during weekends (n=1) and on holiday (n=1). Some of them (n=15) replied that they wrote whenever they had inspiration for writing or they got a good idea for the story and did not state further when and how often this occurred. The following answers were equally unclear as to when and how often but revealed something about their writing habits anyway: when I have nothing to do (n=1), when I have time (n=1), whenever I feel like it (n=3), always when I am supposed to be doing something else (n=1), whenever (n=4), often (n=1).

The respondents were also asked where they wrote and it was not a surprise that the majority of them said that they wrote at home (n=45) or in their own room (n=8). The rest of the answers were each mentioned only a couple of times: at work (n=3), at school (n=3), at summer house (n=3), at my parents' place (n=2), on the bus (n=2), wherever (n=2), on the way to work (n=1), when travelling (n=1), or on the train (n=1). They were also asked whether they wrote alone or with others. The majority of them (n=73) stated clearly that they wrote by themselves and many of the answers (n=28) could be interpreted as the ones who wrote alone. Not many of the respondents (n=11) said that they wrote with others and two of them wrote so

called round robin stories, which are stories that someone starts and others continue.

Although beta-reader was the most common (n=38) medium of aid many respondents (n=15) said that they did not have beta-readers. Other mediums that the respondents revealed to use were: the books (n=11) and TV-series (n=1) that their fan fiction is based on, the Internet (n=8), dictionaries (n=7), spelling checkers (n=4), reference books (n=2), encyclopaedia (n=2), music for inspiration and concentration (n=2), maps (n=1), grammar guides (n=1) and instructions for creative writing (n=1). Also mobile phone (n=1), Word Pad (n=1), MS Word (n=1) and translation software (n=1) were mentioned as medium of aid. There were only a few respondents (n=7) who said they used no help for their writing.

The respondents were also asked whether they wrote on paper or on computer and if they produced the text all at once or took time re-writing it. There were total of 105 answers and most of them (n=87) revealed that they used computers for their writing but as many respondents (n=38) said that they wrote on paper, it must mean that at least of some of them did both. Only a few of the respondents (n=6) said that they wrote everything at once and some of them (n=14) said that it took a few revisions before the story was ready.

It was a slight surprise that so many respondents wrote on paper; one could assume that nowadays writing on computer to have supplanted writing on paper. Writing seemed to take a lot of time for quite many of the respondents. It surely takes time to write if one checks facts from various sources and consults beta readers and revises the text many times before they are pleased with it and ready to reveal it on Internet for others to see and read.

4.3.9.3 The visibility of fan fiction in the lives of the respondents

The visibility of fan fiction in the lives of the respondents was the interest in question 13. The purpose was to find out whether the respondents discuss their own fan fiction or fan fiction in general online and/or in their everyday lives and with whom do they discuss it with and why and also if these discussions have an effect on the stories and how.

It was not always easy to tell from the answers whether they meant discussing their own fan fiction, fan fiction written by others or fan fiction in general. When the respondents were asked whether they discussed their own fan fiction or fan fiction written by others the following answers were found. There were almost as many of those who discussed their own fan fiction (n=36), as there were those who discussed both their own and fan fiction written by others (n=34). Whereas the ones who discussed only fan fiction written by others formed a small minority (n=9) among the respondents. There were five respondents who had chosen not to answer at all to this question and some of the respondents (n=15) told that they did not discuss fan fiction at all. One said that she followed the discussion online but did not take part in it. Others who commented the reasons for not discussing fan fiction said that they did not want opinions of others to have an effect on their writing or that they were too self-critical or shy to take part in these discussions or that they simply did not have anyone to talk to.

Many of the respondents discussed fan fiction both online and in face-to-face situations (n=40) but almost as many (n=32) discussed it only on the Internet and only a couple of the respondents (n=3) said that they discussed it only in real life situations. Some of the respondents (n=16) did not specify to whom they talked to about fan fiction. It was not surprising that the majority of the ones who answered to this question discussed fan fiction with their friends (n=41). Quite many of them (n=22) said that they discussed fan fiction with other readers and writers or other

fans or with the ones who read their fan fiction or commented on them. Also online acquaintances from various sites or online friends as some of them called them were mentioned (n=15). Family members (n=6) and beta readers (n=5) were mentioned as the ones they discussed fan fiction with.

Some of the respondents (n=17) did not comment on reasons for discussing fan fiction. The major reason for discussing fan fiction turned out to be getting new ideas and advice for fan fiction writing (n=23). Almost as many of the respondents said that they discussed fan fiction in order to get comments and feedback (n=22) and to give feedback (n=11) and also to response to feedback (n=2). Some of the respondents (n=15) wanted to share and compare opinions, thoughts and experiences. A few of them (n=10) enjoyed discussing with people who have same interests as them. Also critique and evaluation was mentioned by a few of the respondents (n=7). Some of them said that discussion helped to notice and avoid mistakes (n=7) and developed them as a writer (n=2). There were also a few miscellaneous answers: one can recommend stories to others (n=4), good company online (n=1) or important online friends (n=1), it is easy to discuss fan fiction (n=1) or one has no need to fear online (n=1). The importance of sharing a common interest and getting and giving feedback has shown to be important throughout the data and therefore was not a surprise in this section either.

The respondents were asked to tell whether these discussions had an effect on their writing and there were some who did not answer to this part of the question (n=23). However, among the ones who did those who said that the discussions had an effect formed a majority among the respondents (n=49) and there were only a few (n=13) who thought that they had no effect at all. They were also asked to define how these discussions affected their texts. Most of the ones who had specified the effect said that they got new ideas (n=22) from discussions. Also discussions helped them to notice and avoid mistakes and clichés (n=8) as well as helped them to rewrite their texts (n=6). A few of them said that discussions lead

them to writing stories by requests (n=6). Also advice and feedback made a few of them try harder and improve writing (n=5). There were also a couple of miscellaneous answers: one gets to know what irritates people (n=1), critique has a positive effect, discussions affect the content and the plot of the texts as well as the choice of words (n=1). A couple of them (n=4) admitted the effect but did not specify it further. The respondents were discussing fan fiction because they were interested in other opinions and they wanted to improve as writers and found the discussions helpful in this sense.

In conclusion, it is not easy to write a compact summary of the section concerning with the respondents' personal relationship to fan fiction because so many different themes were included in it. First, the various reasons for writing and reading fan fiction were covered. Both writing and reading had many-sided meanings to the respondents. Fan fiction was not solely about fandom. Writing and reading was significant on many levels such as emotional and social. It also served as source for practice and creativity. The answers revealed that the respondents had a meaningful relationship to fan fiction. Second, the respondents were asked to reveal the fandoms they were interested in writing and reading about. In addition, the text types and genres were covered. The sources for fan writing and reading were versatile and inspired various ways of rewriting in multiple genres and styles. Third, the writing and reading habits were asked about. The respondents wrote both for themselves and for others. Writing to others and discussing it was done because of feedback, encouragement and praises. The respondents seemed to spend a lot of time with fan fiction. Next, the interest will shift to language issues connected to fan fiction.

4.4 Language choices in fan fiction

The respondents were asked in which language they wrote their fan fiction in and what factors influenced their language choices in question 14. They were also

asked to estimate how common it was that Finnish fan fiction writers wrote in English and to give reasons for Finnish people writing in English in question 15. They were asked to describe and compare their Finnish and English writing in question 16. Also, they were asked to evaluate if the choice of language had an effect on the style and subjects of their texts in question 17. In addition, they were asked to consider whether Finnish people should write only in Finnish or English or with both languages in question 18. Next the answers to these questions will be presented.

4.4.1 Finnish, English or other languages and why?

The respondents were asked to tell what languages they used in fan fiction writing in the first question (14) concerning language choices. They were asked whether they wrote in Finnish or in English or in both languages or if they wrote in any other languages. They were also asked to tell the reasons for their language choices. The majority of the respondents (n=87) gave a reason for their language choices. Some of the respondents (n=18) mentioned only the languages but not the reasons. There were two respondents who did not answer at all to this question and one who did not mention the languages only the reason for language choice and one who said that she did not write at all and one who said that he used both languages but did not write fan fiction anymore. Therefore there will be a total of 104 answers analysed. The dominance of the use of English compared to other foreign languages can be seen in the figure one. It can be explained by the fact that the majority of Finnish children begin to study English as their first foreign language at the third grade in school. Yet, it cannot be seen as a sole reason for why English in particular is used in fan fiction which will become clear in the following sections of presenting the various language choices in fan fiction.
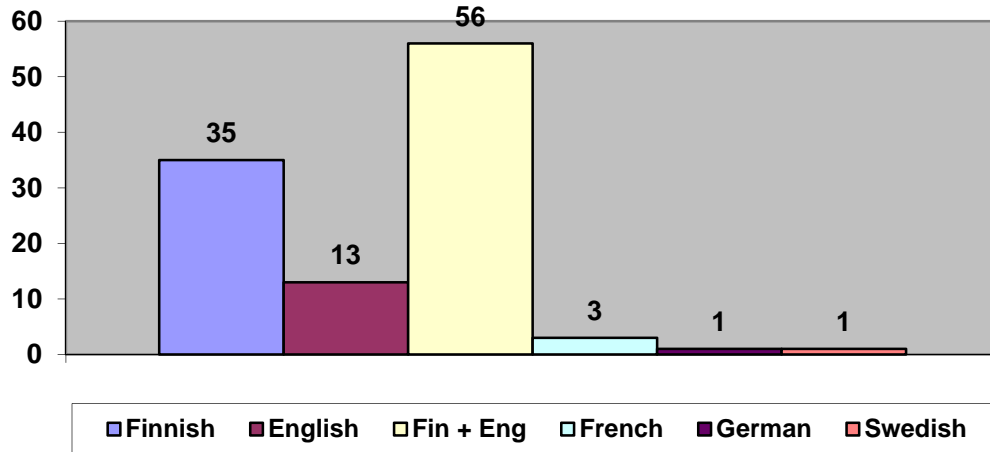
Figure 1: Language choices in fan fiction

4.4.2 Only in Finnish

Almost a third of the respondents (n=35) clearly reported that they wrote in Finnish. The main reason for choosing to write in Finnish was that the respondents (n=10) felt that they were not able to use any other languages than Finnish or they (n=5) thought that their English skills were not good enough.

> Example 93.
> Absolutely a) [the choice for the answer only in Finnish], because I am not able to use other languages and I cannot write in English.R39

A few of the respondents (n=7) gave similar but slightly different reasons. They thought that the quality of their texts in Finnish was better or that they would not be content in texts written in English.

> Example 94.
> I have written only in Finnish, because it is absolutely my strongest language. I might be able to write in English but I could in no way achieve the same kind of verbal acrobatics.R33

> Example 95.
> I write only in Finnish. Then I can write complex and old-fashioned language easier than in English or in other languages.R98

The other reasons for writing in Finnish were that it would be too hard or would take too much time to write in English (n=2), no one else needed to look for mistakes in the texts (n=1) and one respondent just did not wish to write in any other languages. But it was interesting that a few (n=5) of the ones who wrote only in Finnish had the desire to write in English in the future. The desire to use English seems to be quite strong possibly due to the dominance of English on the Internet communities. A few of them (n=8) gave no reason for choosing Finnish.

4.4.3 Only in English

Only a few respondents (n=13) reported clearly to write only in English. It was not always easy to decide into which group the answers should belong as can be seen from the following example. However it was taken into the group of people who wrote only in English because this person used to write in English and even now the final version is always in English.

> Example 96.
>
> My friend is my proof reader. Nowadays the same friend translates my texts into English. Earlier I used to write everything in English but then my criterion exceeded my language skills, so I write the first version mixing both languages. However, I write intensive scenes right away in English because it is important to imagine the utterances in my head. The published version is always in English.R57

The other cases were clear and one reason for writing in English was that the original fandom was in English and the characters spoke in English and it would have felt unnatural to write about them in Finnish (n=4).

> Example 97.
> I write only in English. It is even hard to answer this questionnaire in Finnish because of the subject, because I am so used to talk about [fan fiction] in English. I write in English because I write about real people who cannot speak Finnish, and because Finnish as writing language feels stiff. The main reason though is that e.g. a member of *Backstreet Boys* would not sound natural if he spoke Finnish unless it was the word "kiitos" [thank you] in a concert in Finland. R58

> Example 98.
> b) [I write] only in English. I think it is the most natural language for me to write because I write about English characters and I have read e.g. the *Harry Potter* books only in English.R74

Another reason for writing in English was that a few of the respondents (n=4) were quite critical of Finnish and preferred English instead.

> Example 99.
> [I write] only in English. Finnish is such a stiff language that it does not feel natural to write in Finnish. English, as a language is more fluent and expressive. It just feels more natural to write in English.R73

> Example 100.
> [I write] only in English, I have tried [to write] in Finnish for couple of times with no success. The reason for this is that in my opinion Finnish is a stiff and limited language; it is easier to express things in English. What on earth is the purpose of this little language of little people in a great wide world…R76

Other reasons for writing in English were the confidence in one's own language skills (n=2), more readers (n=2) and the practice of language skills (n=1). Two of them did not give a reason for choosing English.

It was not a surprise that if the original fandom was in English it inspired to write about it in English. However, preferring English because of the qualities it possesses was an unexpected notion and it raised a lot of pondering and further interest. One might have expected the reason for using English to be the wider audience but surprisingly the language of the original and a general dislike of writing in Finnish were mentioned more often. Although, it must be remembered that there were only 13 respondents who wrote only in English therefore there cannot be much variation in their answers.

4.4.4 Both languages

A little bit more than half of the respondents (n=56) said that they wrote both in Finnish and English. It seemed to be quite many people compared to the few who wrote only in English, but a closer look revealed that in fact about half of the 56 respondents (n=27) had only little experience in writing in English. If the respondents themselves used words like seldom, rarely, only little, a few their answers were put into the group of respondents who had only little experience in writing English. They could have been included with the ones who wrote only in Finnish but because they had some experience in writing in English they were taken in as ones who used both English and Finnish. They reported their writing in the following way: have written a little in English (n=9), a few stories (n=3), have translated some of their stories (n=2) or have sometimes written in English (n=5). Also there were the ones who had tried (n=3) or just had started writing in English (n=3) or only had written some songs and poems (n=4). A few of them (n=6) did not give any reasons. Many of them (n=8) said that writing in Finnish was easier or that their Finnish skills were so much better. Also many of them (n=7) felt that their English skills were not good enough for writing more in English. There were a couple of respondents (n=2) who thought that their language skills in both English and Finnish were good but they preferred writing in Finnish. They mentioned also a few other reasons for their writing in English: language depended on the forum, English took too much time and effort, the texts written in English were beautiful, and inspiration of the text determined the language. Also one respondent said that all the texts she publishes on the Internet are in Finnish, but the ones that are for her eyes only are sometimes in English, but she did not want them to be seen by others if no one had corrected them.

> Example 101.
> I write mostly in Finnish, but I have written a few fan fiction stories in English. I write in Finnish because it is my native language and I am good at it. I would write more in English but I make a lot of mistakes. Even though I can speak English well, I do not master grammar well enough in order to be able to make my texts as good as I liked them to be.R24

Interestingly, there were two respondents who used more English than Finnish. The other one had no reason for the choice, but the other one said that she had only written a few stories in Finnish because she got more readers in English, she liked English adjectives and the way love can be described in a very beautiful way in English, also she felt that Finnish was a cold and hard language and she did not know how to use it.

The rest of respondents (n=26) told that they used both languages more or less equally. Many of them (n=7) used English because they wanted more audience and feedback for their stories. Some of the respondents (n=4) wanted to improve and practice their English skills and one wanted to maintain language skills both in Finnish and English. A few of them (n=5) translated their texts, mostly from English to Finnish but also the other way around. One of them said that if the story was good in her opinion, she rewarded herself by translating it into English. Two of them gave no reason for their choice.

> Example 102.
> I write almost without exception all my stories first in Finnish and then in English, but I edit both versions simultaneously and keep them coherent. I write in Finnish because it is easier to comprehend word choices and sentence structure in my native language. I translate them into English because then I can send them to international audience. In addition, I enjoy translating and I have noticed that the stories improve because I have to think about them in two different languages. R29

> Example 103.
> I write in both languages, but so that I first write the story in Finnish and if I like it, I will translate it into English. I do it in this way because Finnish being my mother tongue is automatically richer than my English. I do not translate word for word instead I tell the story again in a different language trying to find suitable expressions for it so that it will not exceed my skills.R77

Some of the respondents (n=3) described their writing in Finnish easier and more natural and descriptions beautiful but equally many (n=3) thought that English was easy and the images and metaphors more beautiful than in Finnish.

Some of the respondents made the language choice based on the fandom (n=3) or the type of fan fiction they were writing (n=2). It could be that the influence of the original fandom being in English had an impact that the fans simultaneously started to favour also the English language.

> Example 104.
> I write both in Finnish and in English. It is easier sometimes to express things in English in certain type of fan fiction and Finnish fits better to others. Also the ones written in English catch a wider audience.R51
>
> Example 105.
> [I write] in both languages depending on the subject I write about. Naturally, I write fan fiction about TV-series in English because the language of the characters maintains its richness in the original language. But I think it is natural to write in Finnish if it is based on books, which have been translated into Finnish. R89

Other reasons mentioned for language choice were: Finnish just for fun (n=1), read more in English because there are more available (n=1), the ones that are published in Finnish (n=1) and good language skills in both languages (n=1). Even the person's mood (n=1) and the type of text (n=1) influenced the choice of language. One respondent used English because it offered sufficient distance to some topics.

4.4.5 Other languages

Apart from English the other languages that were mentioned were French (n=3), Swedish (n=1) and German (n=1), but because there were only a couple of these answers it seems reasonable to claim that the use of English was the most common foreign language for the Finnish fan fiction writers. The languages studied by the respondents were checked as well as their possible connection to the language choice of writing. The amount of languages they had studied did not seem to have any influence on the choice of language in fan fiction. Perhaps unexpectedly, those who wrote only in English reported to know foreign languages mainly either none or only two. One might expect that the ones who know a lot of foreign languages to be the ones who would be capable and willing to write in English. The ones who wrote only in Finnish said to know foreign languages from none to four and the

ones who wrote both in Finnish and English knew foreign languages from none to five. The list of languages that the respondents knew was quite varied.
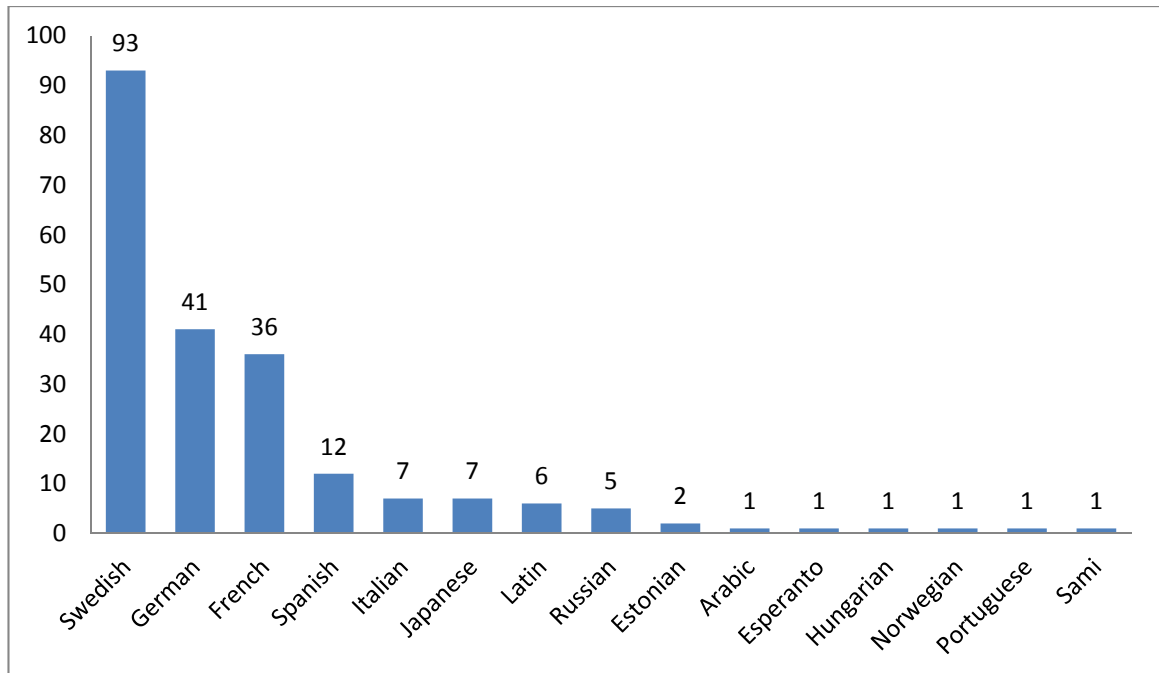

Figure 2: Language proficiency

The following example is a rare exception in the data. The majority of the respondents used either Finnish or English.

Example 106.
I often get an idea from wordplay, therefore I must write the story using the language in which the wordplay works. Or I get an inspiration from a song or a poem, in which case I use the language it was written in, at least if I am going to cite it in my fic. This is why I have written most of my fics in Finnish, a few in English, two in Swedish and one unfinished in German. However, I would never let the stories I have written in a foreign language read publically unless a native speaker of that language has proofread the story and pointed out my mistakes.R71

In conclusion, the main reasons for different language choices were gathered in table 15.

Table 15: The reasons for language choices

Finnish	▪ Language skills not considered good enough for writing in any other language than Finnish ▪ Language skills not good enough to create expressive texts in English ▪ Easier and more natural
English	▪ Original fandom in English ▪ Do not like Finnish ▪ Confidence in their English skills ▪ Want to improve English skills ▪ Wider audience
Both	▪ Like to translate ▪ Want to maintain/improve language skills in both languages ▪ English for practice purposes, Finnish for creative writing ▪ Wider audience and more feedback ▪ The subject and the forum have an influence on the language choice

It seemed that the ones writing only in Finnish found the use of their native language the most comfortable because they did not trust their language skills to be good enough in other languages or they were not pleased enough with the quality of their texts in other languages. Therefore, it was interesting that the respondents who wrote only in English and one among the ones who used both languages considered being more capable of writing in a foreign language than in their native language. One could assume the mother tongue to remain the strongest language no matter how good skills one might achieve in a foreign language. It was also interesting how some people might start to think that it was more comfortable to express things in a foreign language. It was not possible to tell from the present data what factors influenced these opinions but some hints of the reasons behind these ideas could be found in the answers. It seemed that it might have been easier to express emotional and difficult subjects in a foreign language

because the things they wrote about could come from personal experiences even if the things were set in a known context.

> Example 107.
> [I write] in Finnish and in English when I am able to. English offers some distance, it is easier to describe emotions because there is no pressure when you do not know exactly what it means what you writing yourself either. I have not published anything in English and I will not do it in the future either but I enjoy writing in English.R107

The use of foreign language could offer some distance to the subject. Fans find it easier to write about sensitive topics as sex in English rather than in Finnish (Leppänen 2008: 171). Yet, it has been found also that it is easier to deal with difficult and painful emotions by writing in Finnish (Leppänen 2008: 174). Both types of examples of the above mentioned language were found in the present data.

4.4.6 The commonness of using English in fan fiction

The respondents were also asked to estimate how common it was that people who did not speak English as their mother tongue use it for writing fan fiction in question 15. About half of the respondents (n=54) thought that it was very common, almost more a rule than an exception. One of them said that anyone who had good English skills wrote in English and another thought that it was common at least in those countries where English is taught in schools. A couple of the respondents (n=4) thought that it was more common among the older writers but one thought that it was more common among the young. There were some respondents (n=9) that said that it was not very common or that it was rare. One respondent had not answered this question at all and a few (n=4) did not know how common it was. It was perhaps not easy to estimate the commonness of the language choices because what they knew for certain was their own writing, but their searching various fan fiction Web sites had probably given them some kind of idea of language choices.

The respondents were asked to give reasons for why people would choose to write fan fiction in English instead of their mother tongue. The reasons that they gave were very similar to the ones that they had given for their own language choices in fan fiction writing. Actually quite many of the answers could rather be considered as personal answers than as general reasons for why in their opinion people wrote in English. Therefore, the reasons for writing fan fiction in English were divided into the similar groups as the answers given to question 14.

Most of the respondents (n=61) thought that getting a wider audience and more feedback for fan fiction texts was a reason for why in their opinion people chose to write in English. The respondents answered more or less based on their own opinions and experiences instead of considering the possible motives of other fan fiction writers as can be seen from the second example below, the respondent switches from using "they" to using "I" in the middle of the answer.

> Example 108.
> [It offers] greater "possibility for publishing" which provides more readers→more feedback. [It is] very common.R26

> Example 109.
> I have run into quite a few people on the Internet who choose to write in another language than their own. Probably because apart from catching audience they think that the text is cooler, suits the fandom better in English. I also would like to have my name in the big, international Sirius/Remus- files alongside with Dawnatello, Luna, Nezad and Mieko Belle. The celebrities exist also in fan fiction and everybody wants to be one of them. I will settle for being "one of the best fan fiction writers". :) R108

Almost a third of the respondents (n=33) considered the reason for writing in English might to be that people thought that English sounded better or had finer expressions.

> Example 110.
> [It is] quite common because one immediately knows to be able to catch potentially tens of millions people more. In addition Finnish people hold English on some kind of a pedestal – it sounds exquisite – more exquisite than own mother tongue. The same thing that sounds awkward in Finnish gets new glamour in English. [It is] weird.R68

Example 111.
[I think they use English] because extremely romantic or otherwise corny things often sound stupid in your own language and somehow [they sound] more eloquent in English. I believe that good writers can do the job well in their own language.R83

Some of the respondents (n=19) also said that the original fandom being in English was a reason for writing in English. The difficulty of translating dialects is an acknowledged fact among the professional translators as well, therefore it is no wonder that the amateur writers share that discomfort and choose to write in the original language instead.

Example 112.
It is quite common. Maybe they want a larger audience or they find it easier to write in English. Some people think that Finnish just does not fit into some characters' speech – they cannot use dialect because it sounds stupid or they cannot use standard language because it sounds artificial.R11

Example 113.
English is the "official" language of the popular culture. I assume that if the text that the fan fiction is based on is English then the writer of the fan fiction text will also use English in order to create as genuine product as possible.R89

Another explanation for using English was that some of the respondents (n=15) considered English as an international language and even spoken by as many as 95% of the people in the world. It is a bit exaggerated but it showed how at least these Finnish respondents saw English as a dominant language in the world. It could be the same in the minds of Finnish young people in general as well because the English language has a big role in their lives. It is not just studied at school. They are in touch with it daily through for example TV-programs and the Internet. Also the present study shows that they are quite comfortable using it themselves as well. Here are some comments on the international aspect of English in their opinion.

Example 114.
It is very common. I personally know only one person who writes in another language. (Or I write also in Finnish but only during the writing process) People write in English because the original source is in English, it is the common language in the Internet communities and the assumed potential billion readers read only English. If you don't write in English, no

one will read your story. In my opinion, the only reason for writing in another language would be writing about fandom that exists only in Finnish, e.g. *salatut elämät*[12]. (Are there even any fics based on it?) If one writes only for oneself and friends the language does not matter but otherwise English is the one and only option.R57

Example 115.
I think that almost everyone writes in English, I do not remember to have seen very many in other languages. Maybe [I have seen them sometimes] in Spanish, Italian or German. English is like the Esperanto of the Internet. Everybody must know it, at least a little bit. It is a pity though, that the even the slightest literary skills do not get noticed because the writer does not know how to express her/his self fluently enough in a foreign language. It is also annoying that the English writers have an easy monopoly position.R78

The respondents (n=10) also thought that people might write in English in order to improve their language skills.

Example 116.
I suspect it is quite common. The English skills of Finnish people are quite good, at least among the young. English is used a lot; one sees a lot of it in use. That is why it is quite easy to use it if you know the basics. Writing in English maintains language skills, and makes it easier to create sentence structures in exams.R5

Example 117.
It is very common, because then you get a lot of readers – at least if the story is good. They also improve their language skills and fluency of writing as well and get free practice for later life.R15

Also the aspect of taking distance to the subject was mentioned as one of the explanations for using foreign language and the respondent suspected that people might not even be aware of the sites on the Internet in their native language.

Example 118.
I think it is very common. I have been surfing the net for a quite short while but I have run into quite a few Finns who write only in English. One reason might be that by writing in English one catches more readers. Another reason might be that it is easier to write in foreign language because the text does not feel too personal. The third reason might be that part of the Finns and others do not know that there exist sites where you can write fan fiction in your own language.R104

Table 16 sums up the reasons the respondents found for writing fan fiction in English.

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[12] *Salatut Elämät* is a Finnish soap opera

Table 16: The reasons why people (other than the respondents) write in English

Feedback and audience	▪ More feedback and discussions with foreigners
The superiority of English	▪ English has finer expressions ▪ English is a more beautiful language
Fandom	▪ English is the original language of many fandoms.
English is an international language	▪ English common language in the world ▪ English is the language of the world
Improving language skills	▪ Maintain and improve English skills

4.4.7 Descriptions of writing in Finnish and in English

The respondents were asked to describe their writing in both Finnish and English. The question had the choices between easy or difficult as description options and since the majority of the respondents had chosen to describe their writing based on that continuum the categories were created based on easiness and difficultness. Their answers about easiness and difficultness were divided to five groups. In addition, a category named "others" was needed because all of the respondents had not described writing as easy or difficult. It seemed like a fairly simple question but there was a lot of variation in the answers.

Almost half of the respondents (n=47) considered writing in Finnish to be easy, but there were also respondents who thought it was difficult (n=9). Then there were those who found writing in English either easy (n=12) or difficult (n=24). There were also those who thought that writing was easy in both languages (n=7) or that it was difficult in both (n=3). A few of the respondents explained that both English (n=9) and Finnish (n=9) had both easy and difficult elements in them. These

different points of views can best be explained with the help of the following examples.

Finnish was easy:

> Example 119.
> I use good Finnish and I try to write text that resembles the original, but I also try to personalize it by bringing something of my own to it. Writing in Finnish is easy, or should I say natural, it is my native language. Writing in simple English is natural; when you know the vocabulary but if you have to look for words in a dictionary, it is not natural anymore and not easy either. (Now I'm talking about schoolwork but probably the same applies to fan fiction, I don't really know, because I haven't written in English yet.)R50

> Example 120.
> For me it is easy to write in Finnish. I get the flow-experience when I write. I can write for many hours at a time. I'm kind of perfectionist in that way. English writing can be sloppier.R52

Finnish was difficult:

> Example 121.
> It is hard to write in Finnish because the readers are Finnish. If I write in English for Finnish people my language can be rough and clumsy but people might like it better because English is not my native language and the readers don't understand it that well either.R2

> Example 122.
> It is usually easier to write in English probably because there is not so much pressure. Writing in Finnish is difficult. It is hard to find just the right word or word order and some things that are originally in English e.g. names and wordplay are simply not translatable into Finnish.R21

It would seem that the respondents who found writing in Finnish easy wanted to use rich and fluent language and therefore they wanted to write in their own language. They seemed to prefer the effortlessness of using Finnish and thought of using English as strenuous and imperfect. The ones who had the opposite opinion gave the following kinds of explanations. They thought that writing in Finnish was difficult if on one hand the original fandom was in English or on the other hand they had the pressure of writing perfect Finnish. These respondents seemed to be more tolerant of using imperfect English.

The ones who found writing in English (n=12) easy or difficult (n=24) explained it in the following way.

English was easy:

> Example 123.
> I rather write in English and I write more in English because it has become my language. Sometimes in normal life I forget Finnish words and remember them only in English. It would   have been easier to fill in this questionnaire in English. (: R74

> Example 124.
> I am not able to write in Finnish. [When I write] in English my fingers dance on the keyboard and the text appears.R80

English was difficult:

> Example 125.
> It is very easy to write in Finnish, sometimes I have to think about some verbs and how to conjugate them, but small mistakes are corrected with the help of the beta reader. Writing in English is more challenging, as usual in foreign language. Phrases are not so easy to create; the use of tenses and prepositions is quite hard. But one gets by through studying.R5

> Example 126.
> Writing in English is quite difficult and time consuming. I use a lot of time to get the form and atmosphere as they are in my head into the stories. My readers are accustomed to certain type and quality of my writing and they appreciate it and I like it so I try my best not to underachieve even if it gets extremely difficult sometimes. So writing in English is very rewarding. Writing in Finnish might be quicker but it does not feel worthwhile.R61

The respondents who thought that writing in English was easier seemed to be very confident in their English skills. The comment about losing words in Finnish and remembering them only in English was not very rare. There were also the ones who thought that writing in English was difficult. These respondents liked to revise and keep up the quality of the text. They liked the challenge of writing in a foreign language because even though they found writing in English difficult, they used it.

Also, there were the ones who thought that writing in both languages was either easy (n=6) or difficult (n=3). These respondents found writing in general to be easy

and effortless. They mentioned the lack of inspiration as the only reason for difficultness in writing or the others who seemed to think that all fan fiction writing was quite hard; in their opinion the language had no effect on the effort of writing.

Both were easy/difficult:

> Example 127.
> Writing in both languages is quite easy. When I have inspiration things come into my mind effortlessly. Sometimes, I have to check some words in English before I can use it in my text.R101

> Example 128.
> Writing is never simple; the language makes no difference for me.R19

There were also respondents who thought Finnish (n=9) and English (n=9) had both easy and difficult elements.

Finnish had easy and difficult elements:

> Example 129.
> Writing is both easy and difficult. Writing in Finnish is quite easy in principle, because I know it so well. I know grammar and stuff. What makes it difficult is to express things clearly enough. Text formulation is difficult, not the language. Writing in English at least for me is quite difficult. I don't know the grammar well enough and it takes a lot of time to think about the structure. Thinking about the grammar then stops the ideas to flow. I do not know enough words to express myself well in a foreign language.R24

> Example 130.
> [Writing] in Finnish is both easier and more difficult. It is more difficult in Finnish because there are no words for everything in Finnish. There is no word that describes the sound when a pencil falls onto a table or own pronouns for male and female. But I also use words fluently in Finnish that cannot be translated into English. R45

English had easy and difficult elements:

> Example 131.
> My writing in Finnish is easy and fluent. When I write in English I have to think a lot and check word in a dictionary but I have no difficulties in structures.R28

> Example 132.
> Dialogues are more natural in English than in Finnish but otherwise writing in English is hard work. When one writes in Finnish one gets the ideas onto paper immediately.R44

The respondents were content in using both languages and found various elements in them that they found either easy or difficult.

Some of the respondents (n=20) had described their writing also with other qualities than easiness or difficultness for example English is slower not harder, English is more fun, English is a more analytic language. A few of the respondents had described their writing in more detail as in the following examples which could have been considered answers to question 17.

> Example 133.
> Writing in Finnish depends on the type of fan fiction. Sometimes the story is so distressing that I get depressed myself, and I do not find the right form to some things. Writing in English is liberating. I don't know why.R35

> Example 134.
> It depends entirely on the subject. The problem in writing in Finnish is that it is disgusting to write too romantic and sweet text in Finnish because it is not accustomed to emphasize emotions a lot in our culture. It is much easier to express feelings in English. There are also cunning expressions in English that do not exist in Finnish.R89

All in all the respondents had given a lot of thought to their writing habits and were able to describe their writing in both languages in detail. They were quite capable of specifying the easy and difficult elements in both languages. There was a lot of variation in their answers that it was not possible to say in short what they considered to be easy and difficult and therefore a lot of examples of their answers were given.

4.4.8 The effect of the language on the style of writing

The respondents were asked to describe their writing in English and Finnish for example style and topics and whether the language choice had an effect on content of their stories in question 17. This might have been a little bit problematic as a question because many of the respondents either did not answer (n=8) or did not know what to answer (n=3) or did not write fan fiction (n=3). There were also

respondents (n=14) who listed the different styles in which they wrote or commented their writing but did not comment the effect of the language choice at all. The question setting offered another chance to describe their writing but as it had been already asked in question 10 the main purpose of this question was to compare their writing in English and Finnish and if the language choice had some effect on their writing. Despite of the possible misunderstanding of this question by some of the respondents there were many comments of the language effect on the style, content, quality and subjects.

About a third of the respondents (n=37) thought that the language had some kind of effect on their writing. A few of the respondents (n=6) said that the language had an effect but did not specify how. The rest of the respondents thought that it affected mainly the quality (n=13) of their texts. They said that their language was not as good in English as in Finnish and had for example less description. Also their stories in Finnish were longer and wordplay was left out from the English ones.

> Example 135.
> My texts in Finnish are rich and descriptive. The style can be quite colourful and it is easy to experiment different styles. The subject is usually a love-story between two people or love triangles. It is also fun to write adventures. My texts in English are much simpler than my Finnish ones. There is very little description and sentences are quite short. The subjects can be the same as in the Finnish ones but as a whole the stories are a lot shorter.R24

> Example 136.
> In my opinion my Finnish texts are not fluent. When I write in English the language is effortless and dialogue comes easily.R58

Many of the respondents (n=24) said that the language had no effect on their writing. They reported on writing about everything both in English and in Finnish. The language did not change their writing style and they wrote all categories: angst, slash and drama both in Finnish and in English. Also the forum and person's mood were mentioned as factors, which determined the language choice.

Example 137.
My aim is to keep the style and language the same and I think I have succeeded in doing that. So there is no difference. I aim to achieve easy-going text with spoken language resemblance but nevertheless I use standard language.R11

Example 138.
The language has no effect at all. If the story requires certain style I will use it even if my fingers fell off. I experiment a lot with different styles in both languages and the subjects stay the same. I have noticed that this has improved my English skills.R77

Language also affected the style (n=8), content/topic (n=5) or the genre (n=3) of their writing.

Example 139.
My texts in Finnish are more descriptive, often they are poetic and they do not have a plot. My texts in English usually have a plot. I find it easier to write slash in English because I have read so little of it in Finnish.R51

Example 140.
The language has a huge effect. My stories in Finnish are action adventures, or if not purely adventures, there is something happening all the time, no sitting around. My style in English is slower and I also write more emotional stories in English, probably because I would feel embarrassed to write such sweet stories in Finnish. But I have read so many of them in English so I can think that "everybody does it" (And I'm funniest when I write in Swedish. Swedish is simply a language you cannot take seriously. :) R71

Example 141.
I write humorous and light texts in Finnish, there is no romance and angst in them. The two latter ones are easier to write in English, because it is not my mother tongue, so the emotional matters do not disturb so much. R89

It seemed that the language has the most effect on the quality and the style of the texts and some effect on the content and genres. Some subjects seemed to be easier to approach from a non-native speaker's point of view.

4.4.9 Recommendations on the language choice

The question about whether people should write only in Finnish or in English or with both languages raised many opinions. However quite a few of the responses were more or less indifferent about the language choice. Majority of the respondents (n=56) simply pointed out that it was everyone's own choice (n=44) or

that they (n=12) had no opinion about in which language other people should write in.

> Example 142.
> I don't care in which language the Finns write. The main thing is that people have writing skills (it is not just putting words one after another) and language skills. It doesn't make sense to write in English without at least moderate skills. No one wants to read stories written in poor English, it is a sad fact.R24

> Example 143.
> Oh, my goodness! This is a hobby, usually practiced alone. One does as one pleases without anyone's recommendations!R76

For them the writing of fan fiction was seen as private business and they did not want to give any advice on the matter of language choices. They might have misunderstood the question a little but even if this had been the case their opinion is nevertheless valuable.

About a third of the respondents (n=37) thought that the use of both languages was a good option. They thought that there was a demand for using both languages. Once again the reasons for using English were the larger audience and improving language skills.

> Example 144.
> Finnish people should write at least in Finnish, but they can write in English, too. But Finnish people should cherish their own language, because it is a unique and very lovely language. Our country is getting more and more international and especially English features have increased, so everybody should make an effort to maintain our fine language. Writing stories in Finnish helps, I think. If you write in English, you might also start to talk in English sometimes, and that is not necessarily a good thing. Writing in English is of course good for practicing language skills. It is worth writing in English, too, just as long as you don't forget Finnish.R50

> Example 145.
> Both are good. I like writing both in Finnish and in English. One should cherish own mother tongue, because one needs it for official stuff, but also English is important on the Internet-based communities. If one wants to connect with foreigners and get more readers, one needs to know how to write in English.R93

There were not many respondents (n=11) who thought that people should write only in Finnish. There was some concern for losing the mother tongue if more and

more people in Finland started to use English. Also there was a wish for more fan fiction to be written in Finnish. Yet, it was interesting that only two of the respondents felt that people should write strictly in Finnish and even the latter one of them leaves some room for writing in English, too.

> Example 146.
> I would like to encourage Finnish people to write mainly in Finnish, because Finnish fan fiction world is light years behind the English one, and I have a need for fan fiction written in Finnish. I appreciate those writers who along their English writing write also in Finnish. There are more people interested in fan fiction in Finland that anyone is aware of. As far as I know there is more demand than supply.R3

> Example 147.
> I suppose that I think that [Finnish people should write] only in Finnish, because it is our mother tongue and it cannot disappear among the major languages. But I don't mind if people write in English, too…R39

It was quite interesting that there are some people who were genuinely worried that the increased use of English among Finnish people might end up exterminating Finnish. The increased use of English in Finland is quite visible and maybe some of these respondents have become aware of that and also somewhat concerned and they are calling into question the use of English.

There were only a few respondents (n=4) who said that people should write only in English.

> Example 148.
> No, because writing in Finnish might be hard for some and writing in English helps learning it and improves vocabulary.R7

> Example 149.
> English is a better choice. The whole idea of fan fiction is based on global thinking; the Finnish language does not fit in it. Nobody reads Finnish stories. Maybe, Finnish people might read it, but who finds a Finnish text on the Internet? I don't think that children who have not learnt English yet, should use Finnish either, because I think children under 12 should not have fan fiction as a hobby. First of all I would not like my own children to read everything you can find on the Internet and I don't want to read stories written by young children. English language is a good precaution. If you are too young to understand sex and violence in English, you are too young to understand it in any other language.R57

The language choices of the respondents were dealt with in a diversified way. Therefore it was not a surprise to find a lot of interesting viewpoints for example the competence of using English. It was surprising, on one hand the preference of using English because it is more beautiful than Finnish and on the other hand the concern for using too much English and therefore the preference of using Finnish in order to save it from becoming extinct. It was exciting to find out reason for different language choices and that some of them turned out to be opposites. Further discussion on these and all the other results will be left to the next and final chapter.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When this study was originally set in motion the interest was in the use of English in Finland and fan fiction writing was seen as one context where quite many people seemed to feel comfortable to use English. Very soon it became clear that the world of fan fiction itself is fascinating and the investigation took a turn to study fandom and fan fiction in particular but not forgetting the language issues either.

The shift in the research interest meant a shift from language studies to fan studies. The present study aimed to understand fan fiction as a phenomenon and as one way of expressing fandom. The window to fan fiction was provided by Finnish fan fiction buffs. The approach to deal with the data was an outsider's view of the phenomenon with the help of information provided by the insiders. It was anticipated that looking into the world of fan fiction through the eyes of the respondents would provide enough information that the attempt to draw a profile of fan fiction writers and readers could be achieved.

Thus, drawing a profile of a Finnish fan fiction buff was the main research question. It sought to find enough similarities in the answers in order to draw conclusion

based on the data. It was never forgotten that the audience of popular culture cannot be conceived as a singular homogeneous entity and the differences within and between the popular audiences must be taken seriously (Grossberg 1992: 53). The attempt was to examine the answers and reflect the findings with earlier research on what is fan fiction. Also, in particular what does fan fiction mean to the respondents and in what various ways it exists in their lives? In addition, the language choices in fan fiction were dealt with.

The data were collected by an Internet questionnaire which has the pros and cons as a method. A lot of answers were received but it was not always easy to tell what the respondent meant. Especially in the questions which contained sub questions some of the respondents did not necessarily emphasize which question they gave the answer to. This dilemma could have been avoided by collecting the data by interviews because the interviewer would be able to ask the interviewee to further define the answers and the interviewee could also correct possible misunderstandings. Also by interviewing on one hand it would have been possible to really dig deep into the thoughts of the informants but then the whole research question would have needed to be altered because one would not interview 109 people and the data would have been more constricted. Again one benefit of the anonymous questionnaire compared to face-to-face interview was that it offered privacy which could have encouraged the participants to express their opinions and feelings freely especially considering the younger ones among the respondents. They might have been shy to express some of the opinions and feelings in the face-to-face interview for example some of the answers of their intimate emotions might have been left out. In conclusion, an anonymous questionnaire was a valid means to collect data in this case because the attempt was to receive enough answers in order to make some kind of overview of the fan fiction phenomenon. Lots of detailed information was found in the data and it was an interesting process to get all things sorted out. The answers were put into tentative categories and examining them over and over again began to form a final set of themes. It feels that in some

parts just the surface has been scratched and in others a deeper digging has taken place. It seems almost as the archive, in this case the present data, were also a source text that provided possibilities for various characterizations and interpretations but as the study could not be a forever-on-going sequel it has come time to put an end to it, rather than say, "to be continued". But as some of the respondents said it is hard to say goodbye to the world that they hold so dear, let's have a quick look back before the final curtain.

Now thinking about the journey with the Finnish fan fiction writers and readers it comes to mind that they were creative, imaginative people who wanted to have their own words heard in the fandom they were interested in. And when the interest gets so intense that it needs to be get out of the system in the form of fan fiction you can truly call yourself a fan – not just a random reader or watcher of books, movies and TV-series. This kind of idea of a continuum follows the ideas of Abercrombie & Longhurst (1998) and also the idea of difference between a media consumer and a fan presented by Grossberg (1998). There must be something deeply captivating in the source texts that the fans simply cannot let them be whereas an average media consumer quite often forgets and moves on after consumption. According to the present study fan fiction seemed to be most popular among young women who were capable of explaining first of all the phenomenon of fan fiction and secondly their own relationship to it. This result was similar to the other studies on fan fiction writers (See Leppänen 2008, Pugh 2005). This does not mean that men are not involved in fan fiction. However, men were in such a small minority in the present data that it made no sense to start making any comparisons between women and men. In general, one can mention that men seemed to more be interested in action type of texts whereas women were more drawn to the emotional ones. This generalization does not mean that women were not at all interested in action or that men would shudder at the sight of the emotional stories. A typical fan fiction writer and reader turned out to be a young female who is a fan and wants to manipulate original texts in various ways and

feels comfortable to do so both in English and in Finnish and in the case of the reader wants to learn about multiple possibilities other people have created. These characterisations do not apply to each and every one but give an overall idea who the writers and readers might be. Fan fiction seemed to a captivating and time-consuming hobby which can be enjoyed alone or with others.

The various descriptions of how fans rewrite texts followed quite closely the ten ways of rewriting described by Jenkins. The respondents mentioned re-contextualization (Jenkins 1992:162) as filling in the gaps and offering explanations to character behaviour as one way of rewriting. They also mentioned expanding the timeline (Jenkins 1992:163) when they wished to continue series that had suddenly ended or concluded in unsatisfactory manner or when they could not wait for the original to continue. Re-focalization (Jenkins 1992: 165) was mentioned in the present data as a means to give more attention to minor characters. Moral realignment (Jenkins 1992: 168) was seen as a way to offer explanations for villain's behaviour but this type of rewriting could also be considered re-contextualization or re-focalization. The respondents mentioned telling the stories from the point of view of the villains. Genre shifting (Jenkins 1992: 169) as such was not mentioned in the data if it is understood as writing the story for example as romance when the original genre was action. Jenkins sees also the original text as the basis for romantic fiction involving couples only suggested in the series as genre shifting. The respondents of the present study mentioned their wish to write about possibilities that the original insinuates and in this sense also genre shifting was found in the data. However, there were more responses about mixing genres for example suspense and romance or action and romance which can be seen as one type of crossover (Jenkins 1992: 170) which on one hand blur the boundaries between texts and on the other hand between genres according to Jenkins. Character dislocation according to Jenkins (1992: 171) differs from crossover in a sense that crossover mixes two known originals whereas in character dislocation the writer makes use of known characters but may situate them in a context she

has created. The respondents mentioned the challenge of describing the characters in a believable way when they were located in a totally different place or situation. Personalization (Jenkins 1992: 171) or the Mary-Sue phenomenon was mentioned in the answers as an unwanted way of re-writing, not as something they did themselves. Mary Sue did not receive a lot of negative feedback which could have been anticipated compared to other studies (see Jenkins 1992, Pugh 2005). Mary Sue, in the present study was mentioned in negative manner only in seven answers and in two answers it was mentioned as one type of fan writing but not judged nor praised. Emotional intensification (Jenkins 1992: 174) emphasizes moments of narrative crisis and how the characters cope in those situations. These stories are sometimes referred to as hurt-comfort stories and also angst can be seen as an example of this. There were many references to both angst and hurt-comfort in the present data. Last one on Jenkins' list of rewriting was eroticization (Jenkins 1992: 175) which explores the erotic dimensions of characters' lives. Fans' stories transform a relatively innocent, though often suggestive world into an erogenous zone of sexual experimentation. Also slash was dealt with under the heading eroticization even though sex is not necessarily the main point in many slash stories. Also fans wish to create stable romances that the original for example TV-series refuses to do. The respondents of the present data listed all of the above mentioned. Some of them confessed that reading and writing fan fiction gave them sexual pleasure.

The desired couples and writing about them was mentioned by many of the respondents. It is typical to fan fiction communities to be organized by pairings or couples and it is called shipping which supports certain couples at the expense of other (Driscoll 2006: 84). This type of re-writing as such was not mentioned by Jenkins. He mentions eroticization (Jenkins 1992: 175 – 176) in fan writing but it is slightly different from what the fan fiction respondents of the present study were talking about. Jenkins meant stories with sexual content and the fan fiction writers announced their wish to keep their favourite characters in a romantic relationship.

It does not mean though that they would not write stories with sexual content, on the contrary, sexuality as such was mentioned as a reason for fan writing. Jenkins (1992: 169) mentions romance as genre shifting and what he meant by this was that for example if the original genre was action, fan fiction may be more concerned with the relationships between the characters. Also, the original may form the basis for romantic fiction involving couples suggested in the series. These suggested possibilities were mentioned by the respondents of the present study for example fan fiction readers mentioned that reason for reading fan fiction was to find stories that the original only insinuates.

However, this is also a little bit different from the idea of keeping a couple together which could be for example Buffy and Angel in the TV-series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spinoff *Angel*. They are lovers who due to lot of reasons are kept apart in the original but fans find ways to maintain their relationship. This type of fan writing was not found in Jenkins' categorization. It was mentioned briefly as one way of expanding the series timeline where *Beauty and the Beast* denied fans the anticipated resolution of the Vincent - Catherine romance (Jenkins 1992: 164) or as eroticization as the "the dead girlfriend of the week syndrome" which yet again refers to a slightly different phenomenon than the respondents of the present study were referring to.

As Jenkins (1992: 176) concludes often multiple forms of rewriting occur within a single story. It seemed also that his categories of ten ways of rewriting were not exclusive for example he begins to describe moral realignment by calling it the most extreme form of re-focalization (Jenkins 1992: 168). Also crossover category included description which could have also been character dislocation (Jenkins 1992: 171). In addition, there was an example in expanding the timeline of the *Hellhound* series (Jenkins 1992:165) which in fact resembled more the descriptions of crossover and character dislocation. There seemed to be some overlapping in the descriptions of rewriting and it is true that for example placing a character into a

different setting can be on one hand character dislocation or on the other hand crossover. Jenkins' concepts of re-contextualization (when understood as changing character behaviour), re-focalization, moral realignment and character dislocation were all concentrated on character changes. The respondents of the present study gave also a lot of examples of characters as basis for their re-writing.

A lot of topics were included in the section concerning the respondents' personal relationship to fan fiction. They revealed first of all an intense relationship to fandom but also to fan fiction. The various ways of re-writing played a major role in the answers and the aspect of fandom was embedded in the answers throughout the data. It was rewarding to find out about the emotional aspects of fan fiction. As for, the subjects, in other words the fandoms written and read about did not offer many surprises apart from the already mentioned relationship between Jesus and Judah which raised the eyebrows through the ceiling because that would not have come to mind in a million years. The presumption was that the fandoms which inspire fan fiction are the likes of *Harry Potter* or *Star Wars*, but surely not *The Bible*.

As I found it a bit hard to accept fan fiction as one type of literature I was curious whether I could find any statements in the present data to support Derecho's (2006) idea of fan fiction being literature and serving the purpose of the subordinate ones. There were a few respondents who thought of fan fiction as literature or preferred fan fiction compared to literature. However, the fan fiction writers and readers who took part in the present study did not mention the aspect of opposition in fan fiction at all. Although, one reason for looking for slash stories was that fan fiction is almost the only source for finding homoerotic literature and this could be seen as looking for the voices of the subordinate ones. Sometimes the interpretation can be found in the eye of the reader and the writer of a certain text may not recognize the motivation the reader assumes in the text. However, that is not to say that such interpretations should not be made.

There seemed to be something fascinating and appealing in the fan fiction writing or reading process itself since so many respondents reported a deep and meaningful relationship towards reading and writing fan fiction. Somehow the gazing into the world of fan fiction gave the impression that it is like continuing the childhood games of pretending to be someone else. When the bike was the brave, loyal Black Stallion and the big rock in the park played the role of Himalayas and the huge lump of snow you pushed around represented the zebra meet – the only food your spoiled lion pet would eat. This was all great until the day arrived when "the childhood shoes" were getting a little bit too tight. All of the sudden you still knew how to play but the thrill was gone and it never came back. It raised the question that could it be that one reason for fan fiction appeal for the older participants might be the possibility of getting back the lost pleasure of playing that you used to have as a child. This was not obvious in the present data but curious just as a thought. Pugh described that she and her children playing with *Robin Hood* figures resembles fan fiction writing in many ways – in the play there are elements of what if's, character re-focalization and mixing new characters into the original story (Pugh 2005: 9).

The idea of communal online sandpit is also used by Pugh (2005: 117 – 118). She explains that earlier before you could find people with similar interest online you might have felt that you indulged your fantasies in private without even supposing there were others doing the same. She continues that fan clubs, to many, were something adolescents joined and the advent of the Web and of email changed everything. Suddenly, you could type the title of your interest and find all kinds of material and above all, others like you. She concludes that earlier fan fiction was distributed in magazines and they were not available to everyone and not all fans travelled to conventions. The word sandpit refers to children playing. Some people might find it once again as something that demotes fans. However, it can also be seen as a reinforcement of the idea of fan fiction having the same appeal to adults as playing has for children.

Similarly, toys and playing seem no longer to be reserved for children (Heljakka 2011: 43). She has found that adults are not only interested in toys and collect them but they play with them on one hand in the same way as children (fantasy) and on the other hand use toys for creative and productive purposes. She has studied photos of dolls taken by adults who share them on the Internet and sees that it represents the communal and social functions of toys and playing. Also social media applications like *Facebook, Youtube* and *Flickr* enable people to share stories of their own lives by writing mini narratives and they have become an important part of expressing fandom and also serve as means to share toy activities of adults (Mäenpää 2010: 28). Playfulness has been a significant factor in familiarizing people with the Internet (Saarikoski et al. 2009: 261). The internet seems to provide adults a face-saving forum to be a child again and enjoy similar things as children.

Pleasure in itself is also a complex phenomenon as Grossberg (1992: 55) puts it. He presents the following: the enjoyment of doing what you want, the fun of breaking the rules, the fulfilment of desires, the comfort of escaping from negative situations, the reinforcement of identifying with a character, the thrill of sharing another's emotional life as common features in relationship to popular culture. Also fans' investment in certain practices and texts provides them with strategies which enable them to gain a certain amount of control over their affective life, which further enables them to invest in new forms of meaning, pleasure and identity in order to cope with new forms of pain, pessimism, frustration, alienation, terror and boredom (Grossberg 1992: 64 – 65). These notions are very similar to the ones that were found in the answers of Finnish fan fiction writers and readers. Fan writing can offer a therapeutic outburst of darker feelings and help writers to deal with troubles in their own lives, especially with the help of angst fan fiction (Leppänen 2008:175).

Also the respondents' relationship to languages was fascinating. It is curious how the relationship towards your mother tongue can vary from one end to another.

One could assume the mother tongue to be the nearest and the dearest but that was not always the case even though both examples existed. It is understandable that the foreign language offered the distance when it was necessary and that explained the use of for example English. It seemed that it might have been easier to express emotional and difficult subjects in a foreign language because the things they wrote about could be also quite personal even if the things were set in a known context. However, fans have also found it easier to use Finnish when dealing with difficult emotions and topics (Leppänen, 2008: 174). One could also assume the mother tongue to remain the strongest language no matter how good skills one might achieve in a foreign language. Even though there were only a few of comments of better language skills in English than in Finnish it would be an intriguing subject to study further. It would be interesting to interview these people and ask what exactly made them feel that writing in English was easier than writing in Finnish. It was not possible to tell from the present data what factors influenced these opinions but some hints of the reasons behind these ideas could be found in the answers. Also, it did not become clear from the present data why people would dislike their own language and claim it useless and therefore chose another language for writing. These opinions and reasons would be worth for further research.

However, no matter how intrigued I am about the language issues as topics for further study once again I notice that the pull of fandom is stronger because at the moment, I admit that my inspiration from this journey leads me away from the academic world into a world of an unknown fandom. As, while doing the research I bumped into *Doctor Who* again and again, I have started to record the episodes on television so that I no longer need to ask Doctor…Who?

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APPENDIX 1: The original questionnaire in Finnish

FANIFIKTIOKYSELY

Tämä kysely liittyy Jyväskylän yliopiston kielten laitoksella tehtävään tutkimukseen, jossa tutkitaan sitä, miten suomalaiset nuoret ja aikuiset käyttävät englannin kieltä arkielämässään ja mikä merkitys englannin kielellä on heille. Fanifiktio on tässä mielessä kiinnostava, koska monet suomalaiset kirjoittavat tekstejään nykyään sekä suomeksi että englanniksi.

Osana tätä tutkimusta haluamme selvittää myös sitä, mitä fanifiktion kirjoittajat itse ajattelevat kirjoittamisestaan ja miten he itse kuvailevat englannin kielen merkitystä fanifiktiossa.

Olisimme kiitollisia, jos voisit vastata oheiseen lyhyeen kyselyyn. Ajatuksesi ja näkemyksesi ovat meille arvokkaita. Kaikki antamasi tiedot käsitellään luonnollisesti luottamuksellisina. Vaikka ilmoittaisit nimimerkkisi, jolla yleensä kirjoitat, sitä ei tulla ilmoittamaan julkisesti missään. Olisimme myös kiitollisia, jos levittäisit tietoa tästä kyselystä harrastajaystäviesi parissa.

Tutkimuksen tuloksia esitellään sekä Suomessa että ulkomailla. Jos haluat tiedon tutkimuksen julkaisusta, ilmoita siitä tässä (LINKKI)

Lisätietoja tutkimuksesta saat professori Sirpa Leppäseltä (Yhteystiedot tähän).

Paljon kiitoksia osallistumisestasi!

1. Perustietoja
Ikä
Sukupuoli,
Asuinpaikka,
Koulutus/työ,
Äidinkielesi
Kuinka monta vuotta olet opiskellut englantia?
Muu kielitaitosi
Muut harrastukset,
Nimimerkki (ei ole pakko täyttää!)

2. Kuvaile fanifiktiota (fan fiction) omin sanoin. Mitä se sinusta tarkoittaa?

3. Kuvaile, millaiset ihmiset kirjoittavat fanifiktiota.

4. Mitä fanifiktion kirjoittaminen ja lukeminen merkitsee sinulle?

5. Miten ja milloin kiinnostuit/tutustuit fanifiktioon ja miksi aloit itse lukea ja kirjoittaa niitä?

6. Millainen on mielestäsi hyvä/huono fanifiktio?

7. Liittyykö fanifiktioharrastuksesi joihinkin muihin harrastuksiisi? Mihin?

8. Mistä fandomeista kirjoitat (TV-sarjoista, kirjoista, elokuvista…)? Miksi niistä?

9. Mitä fanifiktiota itse luet? Kuinka usein? Miksi?

10. Millaisia tekstejä kirjoitat (novelleja, runoja, lauluja jne.)? Mitä genrejä (romance, angst, slash…) ? Miksi?

11. Minne kirjoitat? Kenelle (itsellesi, muille suomalaisille, kansainväliselle yleisölle, foorumeille…) kirjoitat? Miksi?

12. Miten kirjoitat: milloin, missä, kuinka usein; yksin/toisten kanssa; yhdellä kertaa paperille tai koneelle, käytätkö apuvälineitä/oppaita, beta-lukijaa …?

13. Keskusteletko omasta/muiden fan fictionista verkossa ja/tai normaalielämässäsi? Kenen/keiden kanssa? Miksi? Vaikuttavatko keskustelut teksteihisi? Miten?

14. Kirjoitatko
a. suomeksi ainoastaan?
b. englanniksi ainoastaan?
c. molemmilla kielillä?
d. muilla kielillä? Millä?
    Miksi?

15. Kuinka yleistä luulet olevan sen, että suomalaiset (tai muut, joiden äidinkieli ei ole englanti) kirjoittavat englanniksi? Miksi he mielestäsi kirjoittavat englanniksi?

16. Miten kuvailisit suomenkielistä kirjoittamistasi? (helppoa, vaikeaa…) Entä englanninkielistä kirjoittamistasi?

17. Miten kuvailisit suomenkielisiä ja englanninkielisiä tekstejäsi? (tyyli, aiheet…) Vaikuttaako kirjoituskieli tekstisi sisältöön? Miten?

18. Pitäisikö sinusta suomalaisten kirjoittaa vain suomeksi? Vain englanniksi? Molemmilla kielillä? Miksi?

APPENDIX 2: The translated questionnaire in English

FAN FICTION QUESTIONNAIRE

This survey is part of a research in the language department at the University of Jyväskylä. The research is about the use of English among the Finnish young and adults in their everyday life and what does English mean to them. Fan fiction is interesting in this sense because many Finnish people nowadays write their texts both in Finnish and in English.

As part of this research we would like to find out how the fan fiction writers themselves see their writing and how would they describe the meaning of English in their fan fiction.

We would appreciate if you answered to this short survey. Your thoughts and opinions are valuable to us. Naturally, all the information will be dealt with confidentially. Even if you gave the pseudonym which you use, it will not be shared publicly anywhere. We would also be grateful if you let your fan fiction friends know about this survey.

The results of this survey will be presented both in Finland and abroad. If you want to know about the publication of the research, let us know here. (Hypertext link)

More information about the research is available from Professor Sirpa Leppänen. (contact address)

Thank you for your participation!

1. Background information
   Age
   Gender
   Place of residence
   Education/ employment
   Native language
   How many years have you studied English?
   Other language skills
   Other hobbies
   Pseudonym (not necessary to fill in!)
2. Describe fan fiction in your own words. What does it in your opinion mean?
3. Describe what kinds of people write fan fiction.
4. What does writing and reading fan fiction mean to you?
5. How and when did you get interested/ became familiar with fan fiction and why did you start to read and write them?
6. What is in your opinion a good or a poor fan fiction like?

7. Is fan fiction connected to your other hobbies? Which ones?
8. What are the fandoms (TV-series, books, films…) that you write about? Why them?
9. What fan fiction you read? How often? Why?
10. What types of texts do you write (short stories, poems, songs etc.)? What genres (romance, angst, slash…) Why?
11. Where do you write? To whom (for yourself, to other Finnish people, to an international audience, to forums…) do you write? Why?
12. How do you write: when, where, how often; alone/ with others; at once on a paper or at computer, do you use help/ guidebooks/ beta reader…?
13. Do you discuss your fan fiction / fan fiction written by others online or in real life? With who? Why? Do the discussions have an effect on your texts? How?
14. Do you write
    a. only in Finnish?
    b. only in English?
    c. in both languages?
    d. in other languages? Which languages?
    Why?
15. How common it is in your opinion that Finnish people (and others whose native language is not English) write in English? Why do you think they write in English?
16. How would you describe your writing in Finnish? (easy, difficult…) How about your writing in English?
17. How would you describe your Finnish and English texts? (style, subjects…) Does the language have an effect on the content of your texts? How?
18. Do you think Finnish people should write only in Finnish? Only in English? In both languages? Why?