

**UNIVERSIDADE DE CAXIAS DO SUL
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CURSO DE LICENCIATURA EM LETRAS - INGLÊS**

THALIA ESTER DE CANDIDO GIRARDI

**FANDOM TRIBE: THE DEPICTION OF GENDER
INSIDE *GOOD OMENS* FANFICTION**

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Trabalho de Conclusão do Curso de
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"The author is dead and I'm getting my inheritance"
(spacefroggity)

ABSTRACT

Sharing and creating stories is one of our main characteristics as humans. Creating fanfiction is one of the results of this story-telling tradition. Fanfiction is usually done by members of a determined fandom, which is a community united by the love for a determined piece of media. This community behavior is what Maffesoli named tribalization. This process is very clear inside the *Good Omens* fandom, which is very peculiar when dealing with the notion of sex and gender. It is like this because of the fluidity of these concepts when talking about supernatural beings, who do not really fit inside the traditional binary notion of what constitutes men and women. This makes *Good Omens'* fandom especially good at subverting gender expectations and depictions. This work investigates the representation of genders inside *Good Omens'* fanfiction.

KEY WORDS: Fanfiction; fandom; identity; gender portrayal; urban tribes.

RESUMO

Compartilhar e criar histórias é uma das nossas principais características como seres humanos. Criar fanfiction é um dos resultados dessa tradição de contação de histórias. A fanfiction geralmente é feita por membros de um determinado fandom, que é uma comunidade unida pelo amor por uma determinada obra midiática. Esse comportamento de comunidade é o que Maffesoli chama de tribalização. Esse processo está muito claro no fandom de *Good Omens*, que é bem peculiar ao lidar com a noção de sexo e gênero. É assim por causa da fluidez desses conceitos quando falamos de seres sobrenaturais, que não se encaixam realmente na noção binária tradicional do que constitui homens e mulheres. Isso torna o fandom de *Good Omens* especialmente bom em subverter as expectativas e representações de gênero. Este trabalho investiga a representação de gêneros dentro das fanfictions de *Good Omens*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Fanfiction; fandom; identidade; representação de gênero; tribos urbanas.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of humankind, it has been easily noticed the importance of passing our history to others, what caused us to learn one of our favorite activities: telling stories. Our capacity of not only telling events, but modifying the reality and straight up creating other worlds is not only an activity done for survival, but also for pleasure.

Creating stories helped us connect our feelings with others, and soon became a tool for our process of tribalization. During the length of this work we are going to infer about the origin of fanfiction and how this cultural phenomenon became essential to fandom itself, fandom being defined by Oxford dictionary as “the fans of a particular person, team, fictional series, etc. regarded collectively as a community or subculture”.

This work has as its central theme the depiction of gender identity and expression by fandom written works. The decision of working with gender expression was made because of the fact that the great majority of fandom writers are women, but most characters depicted in fandom works are men. We will address this issue by answering one question: How is gender pictured in *Good Omens*' fandom written works?

Our main objective is analyzing the portrayal of gender inside *Good Omens* fanfiction. This will be done by following these steps: 1. Explain the origin and concept of fanfiction; 2. Discuss fandom community behavior using the concept of tribe; 3. Comprehend the postmodern gender identity depicted by the fandom culture; and 4. Analyze the portrayal of genders inside *Good Omens*' most popular fanfiction works.

We chose to analyze fanfiction inside *Good Omens* fandom because of its recent growth in popularity after the launching of the Amazon Prime's miniseries *Good Omens* (2019). The series is based on the book *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch*; written in 1990 by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman.

Good Omens is the story of a demon and an angel who, after living among the humans for six thousand years, have grown fond of them and their lives on Earth. The demon Crowley and the angel Aziraphale, after working both on Earth for so long, start seeing each other as friends rather than enemies. So, when the time for starting the Apocalypse comes, they decide to make something to thwart it. The idea is to influence the antichrist, now born, to become a normal child, rather than the bringer of the end

of times. After some confusion, Crowley and Aziraphale end up spending eleven years influencing the wrong kid. The real antichrist is a boy named Adam Young, who was created by normal humans. After some havoc caused by Adam with his new discovered powers, the boy decides not to bring the apocalypse, rejecting Satan as his father and fixing the world to its normal state, before the day of the supposed apocalypse. In the end, Crowley and Aziraphale are left wondering what is the Great Plan of God at all, and if everything that happened was planned all along, and are left to live their lives as usual.

Angels and demons are not limited by human's view of gender and sexuality:

Many people, meeting Aziraphale for the first time, formed three impressions: That he was English, that he was intelligent, and that he was gayer than a treeful of monkeys on nitrous oxide. Two of these were wrong; Heaven is not in England, whatever certain poets may have thought, and angels are sexless unless they really want to make an effort. But he was intelligent. (GAIMAN; PRATCHETT, p. 165–166)

This excerpt is particularly famous among *Good Omens* fans, even those who have only seen the TV series - which does not have this quote said at all. The fact that angels (and demons, by affiliation) are described as “sexless unless they really want to make an effort” made fans infer two things: 1. Classify these creatures in human terms is not wise, and 2. They can choose which sexual apparatus they want to have, when they want to have and if they want any at all. These beliefs made *Good Omens* fandom's depiction of gender and sexuality especially interesting to analyze.

The number of fanworks posted on Archive of Our Own¹ since the release of the TV series (May 31st 2019) grew from 3,617 works to 18,041 works (November 19th 2019), establishing a stable fanbase.²

The most popular works inside the website will be selected by the largest number of *bookmarks*. Bookmarks are a function inside Archive of Our Own by which the user can mark specific works. This category was chosen because of the idea that the most important works of a community are the ones that the reader not only reads, but intends to come back at it for some reason, such as commenting, reading again or recommending the work for their friends.

¹ Archive of Our Own, a.k.a. AO3, is a multi-fandom archive owned and operated by the Organization for Transformative Works. (https://fanlore.org/wiki/Archive_of_Our_Own)

²This number was achieved using the filtering system of Archive of Our Own to see the works posted between the release of the book and the day before the release of the TV series.

The methodology we will be working with is bibliographic research.

Bibliographic research may be defined as any research requiring information to be gathered from published materials. These materials may include more traditional resources such as books, magazines, journals, newspapers, and reports, but may also consist of electronic media such as audio and video recordings, and films, and online resources like websites, blogs, and bibliographic databases. (ALEN, 2017)

Reed (2006, p. 41) defines bibliographic research as “the process of using the library and bibliographic resources to locate information relevant to your topic”. Because of the nature of this project, it is important to emphasize that many of the sources investigated are going to be websites, used as a tool to try to represent what happens in online spaces.

In the first chapter, “Fanfiction: definition and origin”, we are going to define the term fanfiction and talk about the origin of fandom and fanfiction. In the second chapter, “Tribes and community behavior inside fandom”, we are going to relate the concepts of post-modern identity, urban tribes and gender with what can be observed inside fandoms. In the third and last chapter, “Analysis of *Good Omens* fanfictions”, we are going to analyze eight pieces of fanfiction based on *Good Omens* and see how the concepts studied relate with what we see in these works.

Globalization is the key to the fanfiction phenomenon. With English as a global language, communication throughout a great part of internet is only possible with some knowledge in the language. David Crystal (2003, p.3) points out that: “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.” We can point out the importance of English inside *Good Omens* fandom by filtering the works posted on Archive of Our Own by language. From the 18,041 works published by November 19th 2019, 16,687 of them are written in English. Fanfiction and other fandom writings are updated by thousands of people every day, and, despite being the first contact many people have with English as a global language, it is still vaguely researched by academic papers.

Fanfiction is a declaration of love and a divorce at the same time. By one side, fanfiction is born from raw passion. There are not much people as devoted to a cause as fanfiction writers. We could define fanfiction as simply as Oxford dictionary does it, and say only that it’s “fiction written by a fan of, and featuring characters from, a particular TV series, film, etc.”, but this definition would be too shallow. Fanfiction not only uses a character from a work, it studies the character, analyzes and deepens

them. Anything can be a sign of something more. Did the character stutter when trying to communicate something? Well, this could be a very serious sign of something else. They can be lying, trying to cover up something else or this topic can be hard for them because of what happened in their past.

If all the stated above was related to love, now we can talk a bit about hate. Normally this hate walks hand-in-hand with fan love, but the target is usually the people responsible for the original work. You see - they may say - character X barely appears during said episode, and we feel like what is happening would mean so much for them because of what happened last season that I'm a hundred percent sure he would not act so neutral to the whole thing. What are the writers thinking? Do they even read what they write? You know what? Read this fanfic, *here* is what really happened. We are cutting ties with the original work in order to pay our respect for this same work we love so dearly.

Mostly related to women, girls all over the world see fanfiction as a way to express their ideas and ideals, as well as their fears and desires, without any of the previous limitations they had been struggling with before, inside fandom and in the real world as well. Despite being one of the top reasons for the popularization of fandoms, women fan history is pervaded with misogyny and prejudice. We will see later how years and years of sexism affected fandom works.

If more studies were done, it could help prevent some harmful stereotypes related especially to young girls, and how they choose to entertain themselves. Laura Moss (2015) wrote an article named "Why must we hate the things teen girls love?", where she talks about the experience of some women with that topic. She talks about a Young Adult, from now on YA, author called Kerry Winfrey³, who said: "For many people, the fact that teenage girls like something — whether that something is Taylor Swift or One Direction or 'Twilight' — is a reason to write it off completely". Winfrey "was a teen herself when she learned that simply by liking something, she had the ability to make it uncool" (MOSS, 2015). As she says: "They're excited and they're sharing in that excitement with others, but often their joy is mislabeled as 'hysteria.'" (MOSS, 2015). As academics, we should reflect in order to help preventing this phenomenon. "Mocking teenage girls and portraying their interest as worthless can further reinforce ideas that things created for women and by women are unimportant."

³ Kerry Winfrey is an American writer, author of *Love and Other Alien Experiences* and *Things Jolie Needs to Do Before She Bites It*.

(MOSS, 2015). The use of personal passions to write and share pieces is a way of making young people fall in love with literature and research and it should not be wasted.

This paper has the intention of collaborating with these studies and help filling some gaps in the topic, analyzing what fanfiction says about gender.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 FANFICTION: DEFINITION AND ORIGIN

Fanfiction is the fiction created by fans, and for fans. Having its origins in 1970, fanfiction evolved from Star Trek fanzines⁴ to the thousands of internet pages we see today. Francesca Coppa (2014) has a known chapter in *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of Internet: New Essays*, where she describes the beginning of the fandom as we know it, the womb where fanfiction was created. In this chapter, we will be summarizing this history in order to give foundation to our later discussion.

Coppa says that the word *fandom* was first applied to sports and theatre, and was later adopted by science fiction, which developed much of the jargons and language still used today. Science fiction fandom is said to have developed in the magazine *Amazing Stories* (1929), that had a place for fan interaction and interaction between fans and editor. These fans began to organize themselves and create art, and with this the first science fiction fanzine, *The Comet*, was published in 1930. As science fiction was only published irregularly during the Great Depression, fan arts had to compensate lack in the marketplace. Despite tiny meetings had taken place in 1936 and 1937, the first World Science Fiction Convention was held in July 1939 and has been held annually since then, being now called Worldcon.

Coppa (2014) declares that “media fandom⁵ emerged from within science fiction fandom around 1996”. U.N.C.L.E. and Star Trek were the first television series to start fandoms. The struggle *Star Trek* had for ratings made their fans even more vocal about their interests. The women who built these fandoms were usually better “educated than most, heavy readers and scientifically literate” (COPPA, 2014). This explains why they liked Mr. Spock character so much, as they knew what was like being treated like an alien and not having their emotions understood in their workplaces.

⁴ A magazine, usually produced by amateurs, for fans of a particular performer, group, or form of entertainment. (Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fanzine>.)

⁵ The term *media fandom* first appeared in the 1970s to describe fans of televised or filmed science fiction as opposed to literary science fiction (Available at: https://fanlore.org/wiki/Media_Fandom).

Star Trek fandom “produced not only simply the critical discussion typical of science fiction fandom but creative responses of their favorite show”. Their fanzines included “fanart - poems, songs, stories, drawings, teleplays.” *Star Trek* fandom was dismissed by many of the more traditional fans as being “science fiction for nonreaders.” After causing some furor, they eventually, subsequently “feeling unwelcome at science fiction conventions, would start holding their own conventions”, the first one being held in 1972. Later, there would be another division, this time within the fandom, as Verba (1996, p. 23 apud COPPA, 2014) said, between fans that liked it because of its science fiction elements, and those who liked it for the characters.

As Coppa (2014) continues, by the year of 1975, *Star Trek* fandom was well established. The previous year (1974), 15,000 people attended the *Star Trek* convention, having more than 6,000 people turned away at the door. The writers of *Star Trek’ lives!* note how the show was “startling sexy” (LICHEMBERG et al apud COPPA, 2014). The way *Star Trek* decided to deal with emotions attracted very much women’s attention, what decreased a lot the activity of male fans, “not without bitterness”, they add. Coppa (2014) explains that, in 1970, 83 percent of *Star Trek* fan writers were women, and by the end of 1972, this number increased to 90 percent.

With a lot of fanfiction focused not only in science fiction or the plot, but on the relationship and interactions between the characters, slash⁶ fanfiction emerged, the first one documented being “A Fragment Out of Time”, written by Diane Marchants in 1974. Slash fanfiction would later become a big part of fandom work, as well as a subject surrounded by controversy, something we will later approach.

In the mid to late 1970s, buddy cop shows⁷ started to rise. As Coppa says (2014), although these shows didn’t seem to have much in common with *Star Trek*, the importance of friendship and partnership made fannish practices easily adaptable to these shows. She adds that, “the same aspects that made buddy shows attractive to relationship-oriented fans also made them attractive to slashers”. As this kind of works started to become more popular, it slowly “came out of the closet”, as for *Naked Times*

⁶ *Slash* is a type of fanwork where two (or more) characters of the same sex or gender are placed in a sexual or romantic situation with each other. (Available at: <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Slash>)

⁷ TV Tropes defines Buddy Cop Shows as a Cop show (show where police work is represented), which focuses on a partnership, usually (but not exclusively) of two males, as opposed to a Cop Show which focuses on a single officer/detective or an entire squad. (Available at: <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/BuddyCopShow>)

(1978-1994), which was a Star Trek fanzine with its content being primarily K/S⁸ material.

During 1977, the debut of Star Wars “triggered a science fiction blockbuster explosion”. If it was difficult for science fiction fans to have new content, now they were “drowning in them”. Star Trek fandom and Star Wars fandom had difficulty getting along, though, as some fans migrated from one to another. But as some of these fans noted that there were places for other interests, media fandom was born.⁹

This post-Star Wars era was followed by great science fiction and fantasy-themed films in the early 1980s. “In this time media fandom really grew and spread, not only because there were so many films to choose from, but also because [of] the obsessively researching nature of most media fans [...]” (Coppa, 2014), which made them see a lot of Harrison Ford¹⁰ movies, for example. It was important for them to be well informed. During these times, English and American television developed, introducing more “quality” television series, with “more complex narrative arcs and characterization issues”.

Even if crossovers¹¹ were not new in the fandom, in the late 1980s fans started more and more to pursuit multimedia crossover. Crossovers between two different detective shows can be explained, but fans started to mix everything “with gleeful abandon” (COPPA, 2014). Crossing a series about a department store’s employees with a series about werewolves? No problem at all. The world of fanfiction grew exponentially.

Another important thing that happened in the late 1980s was the beginning movement of fan interactions from the fanzines into “what would be called the internet”. All different kinds of fans “began to colonize Usenet¹²” (COPPA, 2014), creating special spaces for their interest, like the distribution of fanfiction and fannish discussion. In the beginning, they had “mailing lists” that were generally ran off “a university server by

⁸ Kirk “slash” Spock, meaning a romantic relationship between the two characters.

⁹ As seen in <http://members.aol.com/mdiawstCon/mwchist.htm>, accessed June 1, 2006.

¹⁰ American actor born in July 13, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois, USA. He is most known for interpreting Han Solo in the Star Wars franchise and Indiana Jones in the same name franchise. (Available at: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000148/>)

¹¹ A crossover is a fanfic where two or more fandoms are combined in some way. (Available at: <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Crossover>)

¹² Usenet is regarded as one of the oldest networks. In fact, it was conceived in 1979. This means that it was implemented before the World Wide Web. The fact that it is a distributed network means it is not controlled by any single source. It also means that it remains largely uncensored. (Available at: <https://www.usenet.com/what-is-usenet/>)

someone who worked or studied there” (COPPA, 2014). Coppa (2014) also adds that “the early 1990s can be regarded as a time of modernism for online fandom: a fandom was judged by the strength of its infrastructure.”

By the end of the 1990s, online technologies became increasingly popular, what allowed even more people to enter media fandom. As Coppa (2014) explains, “Formerly, most fans had been mentored by older fans or had attended a convention in order to meet others who shared their particular obsession.” But the times had changed and “now people could just google their favorite show, join the available lists or start reading fanfiction - even erotic fiction - on a public online archive.” This point in fandom history, was “distinguished by the crossover between traditional media fandoms and other kinds of fandoms, namely comics, celebrities, music and anime.” Coppa points out that English-speaking anime fans, for example, had difficulties with access, so online communication was a solution for their problem.

The internet caused fandoms to collide and mix with each other:

When all of these fandoms - media, comics, celebrity, music, anime - moved onto the Internet, they gained a wider audience, and the most obvious audience for a “new” fandom was a person from what, for lack of a better word, we might call a neighboring fandom. So some media fans got interested in comics, some anime fans started writing about celebrities, and some celebrity fan writers began to model their work on that done in media fandom. (COPPA, 2014, p. 52)

Some of these writings were so influenced by other fandoms that “created similarly brilliant and science fiction-like premises to explore celebrity culture as a metaphor for gender identity and other performances of the self” (Coppa, 2014). This exchange between different groups of people also helped to spread terms in common, an example being Mary Sue¹³.

Over time, the infrastructure of fandom changed from mailing lists to big archives on the internet, being some of the most famous Archive of Our Own and Fanfiction.net, the later having, today (2019), more than 800,000 stories only of *Harry Potter*¹⁴. Besides *Harry Potter*, other notably big fandoms that emerged in the 2000s were *The Lord of The Rings* (released in 2001), comic books from DC Comics and Marvel (especially after *Iron Man's* release, in 2008) and TV shows such as

¹³ “(originally in fan fiction) a type of female character who is depicted as unrealistically lacking in flaws or weaknesses.” It has its origins in the 1970s “from the name of a character in A Trekkie's Tale (1973), a parody fan fiction story based on the US television series Star Trek.” (Available at: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/mary_sue)

¹⁴ As seen in <https://www.fanfiction.net/book/>

Supernatural (2005 - currently). Archive of Our Own, according to the site itself, counts with more than 5,389,000 works from more than 34,640 fandoms (2019)¹⁵.

Based on the data collected, we will talk now about cultural identity and how this gets connected with fanfiction.

2.2 TRIBES AND COMMUNITY BEHAVIOR INSIDE FANDOM

As it was stated earlier, fanfiction is a relationship of love and hate with the canon¹⁶ of a story. Despite most authors and people involved with pieces of media being neutral or positive about fandom interaction and writing pieces, some authors are not happy about fandom's entitlement over their plots and characters. Anne Rice, author of *Interview with the Vampire* (1976), is openly against fanfiction. On her own website, Rice let the message for her fans very clear:

I do not allow fan fiction. The characters are copyrighted. It upsets me terribly to even think about fan fiction with my characters. I advise my readers to write your own original stories with your own characters. It is absolutely essential that you respect my wishes.¹⁷

About Rice, the newspaper The Guardian, when talking about fanfiction, wrote in 2002 that Rice herself “asked Fanfiction.net to remove all stories using her characters¹⁸”.

Another example of authors who have a negative idea of fanfiction is Robin Hobb, author of *The Farseer Trilogy* (1995-1997), who posted an entire rant on her previous official website explaining why she dislikes and does not permit fanfiction of her works, being some of the highlights of the text the idea of identity theft and how insulting it feels to her when fanfic writers want to change the characters or the world the story is set in.¹⁹

The usage of the word “entitlement” to characterize fanfiction writers fits well. As it was established before, fanfiction is about love. The word comes from “fanatic” for a reason. This relationship begins when a piece of art - literature, cinema or other

¹⁵ As seen in <https://archiveofourown.org/>

¹⁶ Canon is the “official” information about a piece of media, as opposed to fan made pieces of media.

¹⁷ <http://www.annerice.com/ReaderInteraction-MessagesToFans.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2002/dec/05/internet.onlinesupplement1>

¹⁹ <http://web.archive.org/web/20050630015105/http://www.robinhobb.com/rant.html>

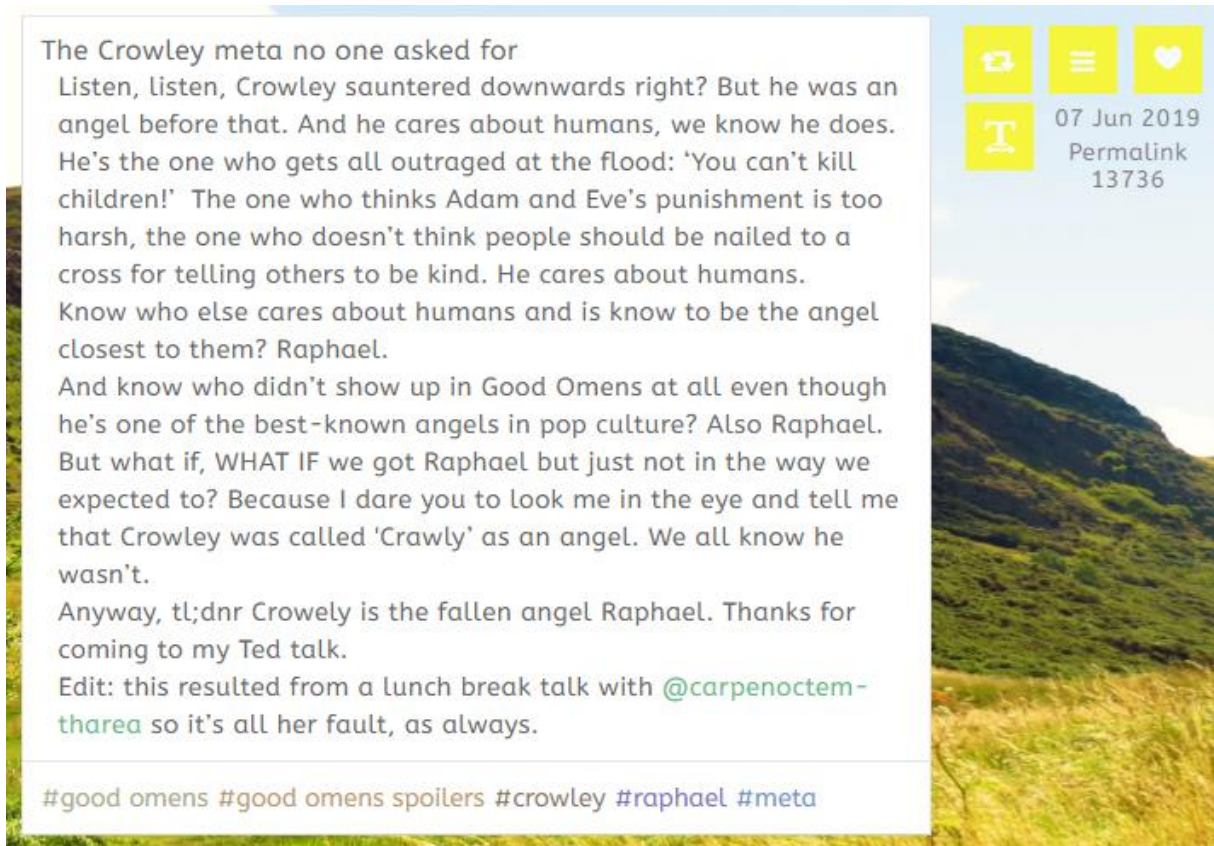
media - touches someone. There are few things more human than the enjoyment and sharing of stories. This art produces strong emotions. The consumer cries, mourns, laughs, falls in love. And shares. The amount of emotions generated from the contact of art with the human being is so devastating that these people feel the need to share their experiences with others. If they cried while reading the end of a book, they will want to talk with those who did the same, even if, at first, it seems pointless. But the truth is: it usually adds a lot to their experience, usually by showing them a side of the story they have not seen before, details that would have passed unnoticed otherwise, or enabling the person to express how they feel about something, making those thoughts clearer and enabling them to organize and elaborate themselves.

Long metadiscussions are a characteristic of most fandoms. Every detail is overanalyzed and different interpretations are put at stake. This may cause fights inside the community, where different interpretations of a character might harm how some people decide to view a character, threatening the possibility of projecting over a character, and how these people see themselves. But not only disagreement is reached in these discussions. Some of the ideas are so well received that, even when there is not much canon information to support it, it starts to be treated as canon.

One good example of a personal hypothesis being so well accepted that it spreads to the whole community can be seen inside *Good Omens* fandom. After the launch of the TV series, a headcanon²⁰ posted on Tumblr became widely popular, supporting the idea that the demon Crowley was the archangel Raphael before his fall from grace (see figure 1).

²⁰ A thought that, despite not being part of the canon of a story, is considered true to a person. Fanlore defines Headcanon as “a fan's personal, idiosyncratic interpretation of canon, such as habits of a character, the backstory of a character, or the nature of relationships between characters. The term comes from the fact that it is the canon that exists in a fan's head.” (Available at: <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Headcanon>)

Figure 1 – First Post



Source: The-reading-lemon's Tumblr post: ²¹

This post received more than thirteen thousand notes²² on Tumblr (the platform where it was posted and a very well-known place for fandom socialization). Other users started to comment about this headcanon. The user previously known as Darthvcder (now known as Raphaels²³), made a gifset²⁴ about it, which helped to spread even more the thesis (see figures 2, 3 and 4).

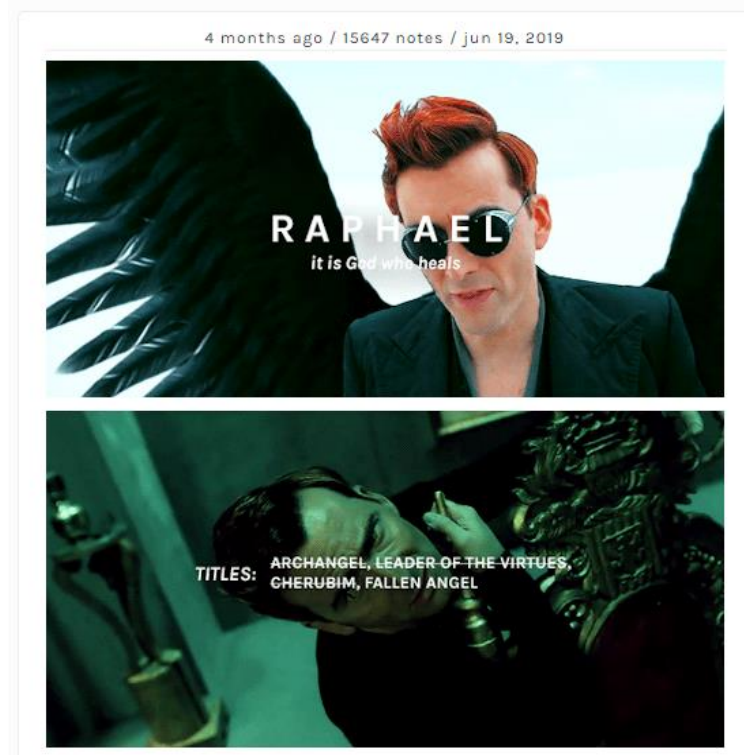
²¹ <https://the-reading-lemon.tumblr.com/post/185427668198/the-crowley-meta-no-one-asked-for>

²² Tumblr help center defines notes as "all of the reblogs, likes, replies, and answers that a post has received". (Available at: <https://tumblr.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/231855888-Notes>)

²³ Possibly because of their love for the idea.

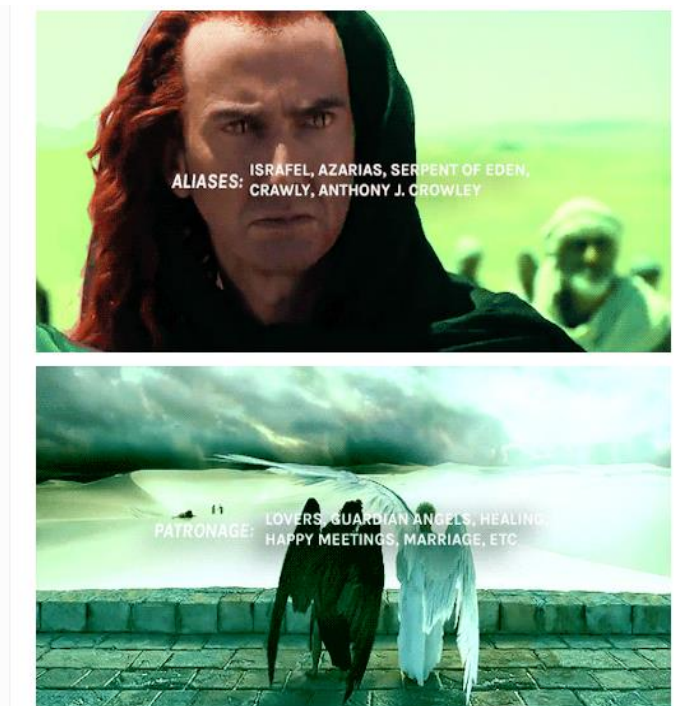
²⁴ A set of GIF images.

Picture 2 – First Part of the Second Post



Source: Raphaels' Tumblr Post ²⁵

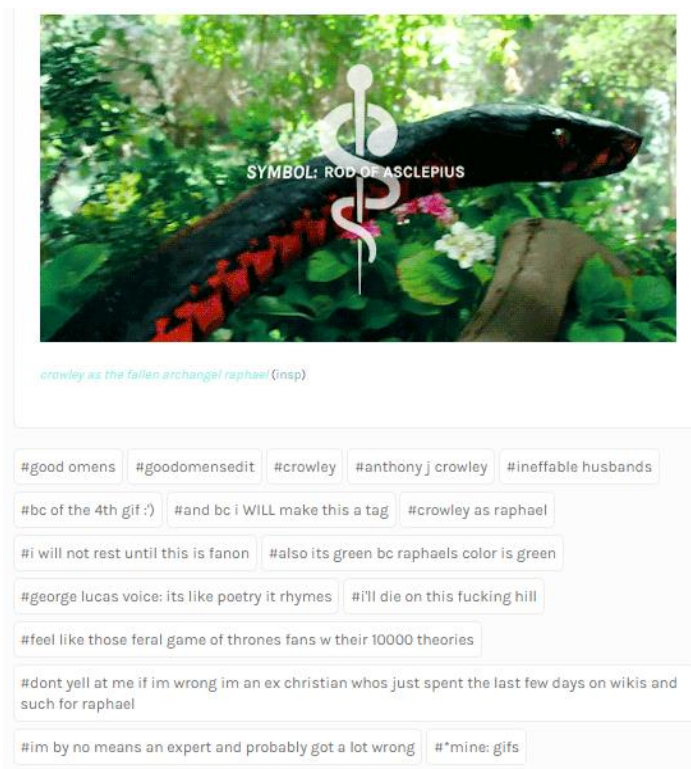
Figure 3 – Second Part of the second post



Source: Raphaels' Tumblr Post

²⁵ <https://raphhaels.tumblr.com/post/185716339833/crowley-as-the-fallen-archangel-raphael-insp>

Figure 4 – Third part of the second post



Source: Raphhaels' Tumblr Post

With other posts being made not linking to the original font, most of the users who know this thesis do not know where exactly it comes from, what is a normal occurrence. Some reacted positively about it, some negatively. Posts made on Tumblr normally allow commentaries to be posted by other users, what can lead to friendly support or heated arguments. Other theorists politely disagree by posting counter-thesis as the ones seen below.

One user, for example, pointed out the resemblance of Aziraphale's name to the angel Israfil, often considered the Islamic counterpart of the Christian angel Raphael, what would make Aziraphale the archangel Raphael, not Crowley. Adding to that, the user also stated that Crowley could be the angel Cahetal, the seraphin (possible translation being "burning one" or "serpent") of agriculture, both because the fact that Crowley is the serpent of Eden and because of his hobbie of growings plants (Annex A).

Another user came with other idea that, if Raphael fell, he would still be high hanked on hell (what does not seem to be true for Crowley), while also having their

healing nature corrupted, so the character that would fit most in this description is Beelzebub, because their external appearance resembles disease and pestilence (as the character is portrayed in the series as a being full of sores and flies floating around) and is also referred to as a lord by Crowley. (Annexes B and C)

The ‘Crowley is Raphael’ idea became so well known that the tag “Crowley was Raphael before falling” has more than five hundred stories posted on Archive of Our Own.

It is important to say clearly that in no place on both the original book or TV series script the identity of Crowley before his fall is mentioned, the only information of his works as an angel being the fact that he helped to build a nebula and his apparent knowledge of astronomy. (GAIMAN, 2019, p. 249)²⁶

People who draw or write Crowley as Raphael almost always show his relation with stars, even though there is no theological support of the archangel Raphael being related to the creation or symbolism of stars. User *fainttwinkling* (2019), author of one of these drawings, wrote the following on the same post they uploaded their fanart:

I love the stars and that Crowley helped create them and the idea of him being Raphael before the Fall. With golden eyes and wings that showed he was already different from the very beginning. I imagine he was truly happy then and sometimes looks up and misses these times a bit. (Annex D)²⁷

Their post has over twelve thousand notes. Another artist, when posting their art wrote the following: “Crowley!Raphael AU. I absolutely Love this headcanon, it fits perfectly with Crowley!”²⁸.(Annex E)

People also referenced other works to support the thesis, for example, *Paradise Lost*, by John Milton (Annex F). User *venomousaziraphale* (2019) compared Milton’s depiction of Raphael with Crowley’s story, stating about how interesting would be the actions done by both characters combined in one story: the angel who loved humanity and treated Adam and Eve as “almost-equals” being the same one that rebelled against God, gifting humanity with the “ability of becoming agents of free will and reason”. The user also talked about the symbolism of the snake on Raphael’s staff

²⁶ “Crowley: Nice nebula. Look at that. I helped build that one.” (GAIMAN, *The Quite Nice and Fairly Accurate Good Omens Script Book*, p. 249, 2019)

²⁷ <https://fainttwinkling.tumblr.com/post/185845795403/may-i-offer-you-good-people-a-drawing-of-that>

²⁸ <https://kogla.tumblr.com/post/186573088081/crowleyraphael-au-i-absolutely-love-this>

and its relationship with the Greek ritual of Pharmakon²⁹, where the poison is also the cure, making Crowley the tempter of humankind and the gifter of reason.

All these posts and how they are connected to each other are a clear example of a particular behavior that all fandoms show. One simple idea or interpretation between a few members of the community leads to the thousands of people interacting, discussing and analyzing it. When expressing their love for a certain character or story online, people are able to find other people doing the same thing and they bond. As we stated before, they feel the need to share. They become a tribe. Michel Maffesoli wrote a book named *The Time of The Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (1988), where he explains his views about how these urban tribes are formed.

In an interview for Agence France-Press, Maffesoli (2014) talks about “a society that is no longer unified... but a mosaic of communities united by affinities.” He talks about his choice of words when describing the phenomenon, as well as the visible part that internet has in the formation and socialization of these tribes:

If I chose to use the word "tribe" in 1988... it was to show that we are witnessing a return to what used to be thought of as outdated. Today in the concrete jungles that are our contemporary megacities, there is a need to stick together. What is different about post-modern tribes (compared to tribes of centuries ago) is their synergy of the archaic and the technological. Seventy percent of Internet traffic today is about community -- romantic, philosophical or religious meetings. (MAFFESOLI, 2014)

The idea that the world nowadays is “too individualist” is something that Maffesoli disagrees in his book. As he states:

The main thrust of my arguments will be to show, to describe and to analyse the social configurations that seem to go beyond individualism, in other words, the undefined mass, the faceless crowd and the tribalism consisting of a patchwork of small local entities. (MAFFESOLI, 1988, p. 9)

The belief that the younger generations do not like socializing is, according with all we are analyzing in this work, clearly misguided. They do it differently than

²⁹ According to the Center of Hellenic Studies of Harvard University’s website: “The *pharmakos* was a human embodiment of evil who was expelled from the Greek city at moments of crisis and disaster. The name is probably, but problematically, connected with *pharmakon*, ‘medicine, drug, poison’. Both poison and drug were originally magical; so a *pharmakon* is a magical dose [...] causing destruction or healing. *Pharmakos* then would be ‘magic man, wizard’ first [...] Then, presumably, he or she was ‘healer, poisoner’, then later, expiatory sacrifice for the city and rascal, off-scourings, and so on. On the one hand, the *pharmakos* could be the medicine that heals the city (according to scholia on Aristophanes *Knights* 1136c, the *pharmakos* is used in order to obtain a *therapeia*—‘service, tending, medical treatment’—for the prevailing disaster); on the other, he could be the poison that had to be expelled from the system (he is often ugly or criminal).” (Available at: <https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/4912.part-i-greece-1-the-pharmakos-in-archaic-greece>)

older generations, but the need of attention and approval seems to not have changed at all. The people that form a fandom produce artistic content in order to please and connect with each other, they share their emotions about a piece of media to find other people who feel the same way, they want to connect. Maffesoli (1988, p.11) states that “we can say that we are witnessing the tendency for a rationalized 'social' to be replaced by an empathetic 'sociality', which is expressed by a succession of ambiances, feelings and emotions.”

Moss (2015) quotes Bailey Poland, a feminist writer and activist, who talks about how people assume teenage girls are incapable of controlling their emotions or interests, becoming “overly excited or upset for no reason”, when, in fact, their behavior is deliberate used as a foundation for community-building and empathetic development. Poland also stated that these girls are actually aware of the “social influences” behind those media products they consume.

Stuart Hall (1996, p. 279) says that “Late-modern societies [...] are characterized by 'difference'; they are cut through by different social divisions and social antagonisms which produce a variety of different 'subject positions' - i.e. identities - for individuals.” And with it, in order for our society to work, “it is not because they are unified, but because their different elements and identities can, under certain circumstances, be articulated together. But this articulation is always partial: the structure of identity remains open.” Maffesoli (1988, p.11) says that “sex, appearance, lifestyles - even ideology - are increasingly qualified in terms ('trans', 'meta') that go beyond the logic of identity and/or binary logic.” So, if we combine these two thoughts together, we have a society ready to put labels in all of its characteristics and form groups that are bound by the labels in common. One person’s sense of identity being a bunch of different labels (woman, gay, black, fat, young, depressed, between others) put together and their need to socialize being fulfilled by dozens of different communities that combine with the previous labels.

Durkheim, according to Maffesoli (1988) talks about how people connect when they indulge for the same cause. “We are indignant together” (DURKHEIM apud MAFESSOLI, p. 12, 1988). Like a religion, these people, especially teenagers, will defend their favorite characters with all their will, as if the character represented themselves and the way people interpreted the character could harm their view about themselves.

We see clearly thousands of people bounding over their love for a particular character, but what must a character have in order to gain the love of an entire fandom? It's rather difficult to say, but a lot of fan favorite characters are the ones seen as "outcasts". These characters are usually perceived as weak, emotionally unstable, traumatized, etc. Despite most of these labels, as a number of other words, being very often used to characterize women, fan favorite characters are still predominantly male.

An example of this can be seen in Mpreg³⁰ fanfictions.

Other stories, classified as mpreg, will be deepened precisely in the representation of difficulties and requirements faced by male characters in the process of generating a child, almost as if they aimed to portray men living the same reproductive dramas faced by a woman, transferring to these obligations historically and culturally attributed to the feminine, under the supposed justification of a bodily difference. (SACHS, 2017, our translation)³¹

One of the explanations for this phenomenon is that female characters tend to be of much less importance or depth than their male counterparts. Lu Fong (2011) wrote an article for The Good Man Project named "The 'Harriet Potter' Effect, or Why We Prefer Male Characters", where she mentions the *Independent* world's "leading literary luminaries" pool, where was compiled a list of their top 100 favorite characters in fiction. Of these 100, nearly three-quarters of these characters were male. Are male characters more likable than female ones? She also wonders "if a worldwide franchise such as *Harry Potter* would have made it off the ground if Harry had been, say, Harriet. Would Harriet Potter have gotten away with so much teen angst without being called names that rhyme with *witch*?"

Moss (2015) touches the subject of the different standards where we deal with male versus female entertainment by mentioning Erika Christakis, a lecturer at the Yale Child Study Center, who advocated for *Twilight*, pointing out that, as men are allowed to enjoy "all manner of violent, creepy, ludicrous and degrading movie tropes", women also should be able to enjoy their "fantasy life straight-up weird, sexy, and implausible". While these movies should not be considered "high art", no one needs to question they seriously as entertainment.

³⁰ *Mpreg* (short for male pregnancy) is a plot device where men become pregnant. (Available: <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Mpreg>)

³¹ "Outras histórias classificadas como mpreg virão a se aprofundar justamente na representação das dificuldades e exigências enfrentadas por personagens masculinos no processo de gerar uma criança, quase como se tivessem por objetivo retratar homens vivendo os mesmos dramas reprodutivos enfrentados por uma mulher, transferindo a estes obrigações histórica e culturalmente atribuídas ao feminino, sob a suposta justificativa de uma diferença corporal."

Pressured by the changes of gender and sexuality views of society, some companies are trying to change, little by little, their products. Super hero movies are very popular these days, but if you are going to see one it's almost certain that the main character is going to be a "white, hetero guy". However, recently, Marvel launched their first female lead movie, *Captain Marvel* (2019), which caused a lot of controversy between the fans. The movie *Love, Simon*³² (2018) is an example of queer relationships being represented by current media and *Get Out* (2017) an example of a well succeeded movie with black characters. So, even knowing that this movement is happening, it is still low paced, and representativity is still a need to be supplied. This need is reflected in various ways by fanwork.

There are cases of people drawing characters with darker skin colors than the original source (Annex G). Female characters may be put in a story that does not had them in the first place. We also have, as stated before, a history of homosexual relationships being depicted in fanfiction. Fanfiction and fandom works are highly customizable. A lot of fandom members want to feel included in their favorite stories. But is slash fanfiction, for example, a good example of representativity? There are questions about it.

Fan fiction is a genre that has a long history of appealing to women and minorities, individuals on the cultural margins who used archontic³³ writing as a means to express not only their narrative creativity, but their criticisms of social and political iniquities as well. Fanfiction is not a genre of "pure" resistance; as Fiske (1992) and others have pointed out, there are elements of pacification by and cooperation with the dominant culture in fandom. (DERECHO, 2014, pg. 72)

Some may say that slash fiction is good for LGBTQ+ because of the exposure it allows, and it is known that frequent exposure leads to normalization. But others, very insightfully, say that it is not contributing to LGBTQ+ causes at all because some of the girls who normally write these stories see these relationships as "fetishes". Fujoshis³⁴, for instance, are girls who like to read or watch gay romance. As in lesbian porn, the homosexuality in those media might have a heterosexual focus, a fact that makes some people from the queer community uncomfortable. Is it alright writing this

³² Directed by Greg Berlanti.

³³ As Derecho (2014) says, "Archontic relates to the word archive, and I take it from Jacques Derrida's 1995 work *Archive Fever*, by which Derrida claims that any and every archive remains forever open to new entries, new artifacts, new contents."

³⁴ Fujoshi (腐女子, lit. "spoiled girl") is a reclaimed Japanese term for female fans who enjoy any media works or fanworks with romantic relationships between men. (Available at: <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Fujoshi>)

kind of pieces in the name of feminine sexual liberation? And if the woman who write these works are part of the LGBTQ+ community, does it make it alright?

When discussing the possible reason for the slash phenomenon, Busse and Hellekson (2014) talk about the views depicted in Patricia Frazer Lamb and Diane Veith's "Romantic Myth, Transcendence, and Star Trek Zines" (1986), which "suggests that even explicit sexual content must be metaphorically understood as a way for women to write their desires for equal relationships between equal partners."

They argue that slash can depict a love between equals that does not fall prey to notions of hierarchical gender roles and that explores both the male and female sides of the characters. In fact, they suggest that the homosexual relationship actually signals a displaced idealized heterosexual one that valorizes inner compatibility, true love, and deep friendship over sexual object choices. (BUSSE; HELLEKSON, 2014)

But when we make this distinction between male and female, are we sure about what we consider male or female? As J.T. Ton (2018, p. 4) says:

It is not always possible to guess from an outsider's perspective what someone's gender identity is, because it is a personal identity experienced only by that individual. Moreover, how someone expresses themselves through their clothes or hairstyle may not match the way they feel internally, or match what society may expect of them, being a certain gender.

Judith Butler (1990) has the idea that gender is actually a performance of a behavior considered feminine or masculine. If a male character starts acting as a female person is supposed to act, does it makes him less of a men? As J. T. Ton (2018) summarizes, "Judith Butler is critical of this distinction between sex and gender and suggests that sex and gender could be the same. She states that if sex is also socially constructed, then sex and gender must be equal."

In the next chapter, we see how these identities and concepts are expressed inside fanfiction works.

3 ANALYSIS OF GOOD OMENS FANFICTIONS

The works of fanfiction analyzed here were chosen by the number of Bookmarks on Archive of Our Own, as stated before. The titles of the works and their writers are the following:

1. A Home at the Beginning, by stereobone³⁵

³⁵ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/19153375>

2. In the (Second) Beginning, by cherryfeather³⁶
3. get religion quick (cause you're looking divine), by brinnanza³⁷
4. You, Soft and Only, by thehoyden³⁸
5. all i need, darling, is a life in your shape, by deadgreeks³⁹
6. such surpassing brightness, by Handful_of_Silence⁴⁰
7. Salinity (And Other Measurements of Brackish Water), by drawlight⁴¹
8. Love Hath Made Thee a Tame Snake, also by thehoyden⁴²

As it is already known, when adapting a book to another media format, some changes are necessary, some because of time, budget, lack of needed special effects or simply because the narrative of the book does not necessarily work as a TV show or movie. So, not differently to other book adaptations, *Good Omens*, the miniseries, suffered some modifications comparing to the title book.

The process of transforming a book into a TV series is not an easy task. Neil Gaiman, one of the writers of the book, not only “wrote and executive produced the series” but “also served as the showrunner” (RODRIGUEZ, 2019). Gaiman said in an interview that *Good Omens* was his most complex and personal adaptation. He wanted to make something Terry Pratchett, his friend and co-author of *Good Omens*, who died in 2015, would have loved.

I got to make something incredibly personal [...] I got to take the biggest thing the BBC Studios has made, the biggest thing on Amazon today, and come through on the promise that I made to my friend who died that I would make a television show that he would like and be proud of. (GAIMAN apud RODRIGUEZ, 2019)

Neil Gaiman said that he was expecting a big reaction to this TV adaptation “but the “ferocity” of the response to one aspect of the show took him completely by surprise” (JEFFERY, 2019). He said that, while having “enormous fun” writing the dynamic between the demon Crowley and the angel Aziraphale, “the strength of the fan reaction to the pairing was more than he could have hoped for”.

Gaiman talks about how he, when doing the script for the series, felt in need of extra material for the pair because “there just wasn’t enough in the book” (JEFFERY,

³⁶ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/19074079>

³⁷ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/18091460>

³⁸ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/19874908>

³⁹ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/19132273>

⁴⁰ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/17752469>

⁴¹ Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/19127431>

⁴² Available at: <https://archiveofourown.org/works/19306813>

2019). During this process, the author thought: “why don’t I essentially take the beats of a love story and see how that works?” He said he was very fortunate in having Michael Sheen and David Tennant (the actors who played both the angel and the demon) “understand that and let it happen” (GAIMAN apud JEFFERY, 2019).

Gaiman continues to talk about this phenomenon in his interview, while also talking about how the actors playing the main characters helped build this:

Particularly the way that Michael plays Aziraphale just as a being of pure love, I think that gave us something very special, because people of every and any sexual orientation and any and every gender looked at Crowley and Aziraphale and saw themselves in it, or saw a love story that they responded to, and that was completely unexpected. [...] Things like this, you can’t manufacture, they have to happen from a fandom. (GAIMAN apud JEFFERY, 2019)

Gaiman states again in other interviews that *Good Omens* (the miniseries) is a love story. And the fans don’t seem to disagree with that view. Of the eight analyzed works, all of them were explicit using the tag Aziraphale/Crowley⁴³, which indicates a romantic relationship between these characters.

Despite the characters being ambiguous in the sense of gender (as explained before, neither angels nor demons have sexes or genders, canonically), seven of the eight works tagged their stories as having a M/M relationship (one of them used the term “Multi” to describe the relationship as well. Another work used both M/M tag and “Other”.) This shows that, despite the *Good Omens* fandom having a particularly open concept of gender (both because of the canon of the story, and the reaction of the author and the actors to this question), the choice of casting and pronouns used during the TV show is still a crucial point when tagging their work.

Inside the works, however, the fluidity of gender and sex is very clear. In the work *You, Soft and Only*, Crowley and Aziraphale’s relationship is depicted during the centuries and, every now and then, the supernatural beings change their gender.

1. We see them both as male:

“Yes,” Aziraphale said, equally quietly. And then, very calmly, he said, “I’d be much obliged if you could slip your hand under my toga, if that’s not too much of an imposition.” “Not at all,” Crowley said in kind, and without breaking eye contact with the prospective interlopers, he worked his way under the voluminous folds of cloth to Aziraphale’s tunic, to where his cock would be if he cared to manifest such a thing—“Aren’t you full of surprises,” Crowley said admiringly. Aziraphale’s cheeks went pink. “It’s the fashion.” “Oh, indeed,” Crowley said. He was sporting one himself. “How good of an actor are you?” (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

⁴³ The use of *slash (/)* indicates romantic relationships, as stated before.

2. We see them both as female:

“Oh Sister Aziraphale, I do so look forward to it,” Crowley purred. Aziraphale pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed again. And as Crowley was about to turn and walk away, Aziraphale said, “Lovely dress, by the by — although that embroidery is a bit on the nose, isn’t it?” Crowley waved a hand down at the enormous embroidered snake on the front of his gown. “What, this?” Aziraphale snorted, and strolled back to the scriptorium.” (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

3. We see Aziraphale as a woman and Crowley as a man:

“We could go as husband and wife,” he suggested, looking extremely pleased with himself. Crowley stared at him in disbelief. “What.” “I need to get close to the lady’s circle to fulfill my orders, and you require some extended time with the lord’s brother, do you not?.” (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

4. We see Crowley as a woman and Aziraphale as a man:

Crowley was wearing widow’s weeds and what he thought was a very fetching netted half-veil; it appealed to him to make everyone around him uncomfortable as they contemplated mortality, and also jealous, because he looked very good. He was also getting so much judgement from everyone around him; a person in mourning was customarily not out socially. Not bad work for just standing around at a party. He was making conversation with a young lady who distinctly did not want to be at the ball. [...] “Miss Mowbray,” Crowley said. “May I introduce Mr. Fell?” They exchanged courtesies, and Aziraphale stood there, twisting his hands somewhat awkwardly. “How are you acquainted with one another?” Miss Mowbray asked, obviously dying for something to cut the tension between them. “Mr. Fell was very close to my late husband,” Crowley said, and smiled just a little meanly. (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

It is interesting to highlight that, inside this work, even when depicting themselves as women, neither Aziraphale nor Crowley stop using male pronouns to refer to themselves, suggesting a disconnection between the performance of gender and gender itself.

We also have the case where gender may not be compatible with sex. For example, in *Love Hath Made Thee a Tame Snake*, Aziraphale presents himself with a vulva without making any other change whatsoever in his appearance or pronouns:

He took off Aziraphale’s trousers the old-fashioned way, to discover that Aziraphale had not selected a cock when making this particular Effort. He wondered if it was indeed Aziraphale’s preference, or if it was something about the season that prompted it. Crowley settled for raising an eyebrow at him, and Aziraphale flushed pink. (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

Most authors agree that gender and sex are different concepts. As J. T. Ton (2018) clarifies:

Psychologist Robert Stoller was the first to distinguish between the terms gender and sex [...] the word gender describes how much feminine and masculine behaviour an individual displays and the word sex describes the biological characteristics of a person. Mikkola (2017, 1.1) gives a similar definition: Gender denotes men and women depending on social factors such as social roles, position, behaviour and identity and sex denotes the biological characteristics of someone's body.

Judith Butler's view of gender and sex is, however, a little controversial. She argues that "bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender" (BUTLER, 1990).

Ton (2018) also states that Butler suggests that "sex is as culturally constructed as gender" and she concludes that if that is the case, then gender and sex are the same". He says that Butler "calls sex a cultural norm because sex is no longer treated as something that is determined by the body".

Because of the popularity explosion of *Good Omens* after the miniseries release, most of the works (six out of eight) were written after the launch of the show. The ones written before used male pronouns when referring to God, as it is used in the book and as society tends to view it, in general. However, in the series, God is voiced by a woman (the American actress Frances McDormand) and is referred to as "Her", so we can see this change in fanfictions too.

How could he have ever believed something like this could be anything but divine? It didn't matter that Crowley couldn't feel the Host, couldn't feel *Him*, because he'd reoriented himself to a new North a long time ago. (BRINNANZA, 2019, our highlight)

"I've seen what it does to people," he said. "How it ruins them, how it makes them the best and worst of themselves. Love is the best thing *He* ever created, Crowley, but it does make one so terribly human." (HANDFUL_OF_SILENCE, 2019, our highlight)

"I'm sure the cottage will be perfect," Aziraphale said, and then kissed him, right in front of all the humans, and presumably, the Almighty *Herself*." (THEHOYDEN, 2019, our highlight)

"They destroyed them, and they said--it was just rumor, you know, it's not what the Almighty said--but some of the others thought *She* sent the flood to show humanity what would happen to those who--well. Broke those sort of rules." (DEADGREEKS, 2019, our highlight)

The first fanfiction in the list to mark a female character in the tags of the work (putting her in a position of significance to the story) was the fifth. Despite the series having a fair distribution between female and male actors (even with slightly more men than women in the casting, the four secondary angels are played by two actresses and two actors and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse also being divided two by two

regarding gender, for example), and some of the most important characters being female (God and the witch Agnes Nutter), the popularity and frequency of female characters inside the works is very low. Writers tend to divide equally non-named characters between female and male, but when dealing with the main characters, the number of female centred works is insignificant. This tend to be true in various fandoms, where feminine characters are less depicted in fandom works than male ones, even though historically most fanfiction writers are woman, as seen before. However, when depicting woman, the writers tend to give them agency and subvert some old concepts of gender. For example, when depicting a heterosexual couple moving together, the author choose to make the man live in a place owned by the woman:

Turns out Anathema is no longer renting the cottage, she's owning it. And Newton is living there with her. (STEREOBONE, 2019)

Other works show men doing activities considered culturally feminine, like cooking:

Mrs. Young laid them gently on a table in the hallway, and Mr. Young appeared with a steaming pan of lasagna, a proud grin on his face. "You're in for a treat, lads," he said. "Secret family recipe!" (DEADGREEKS, 2019)

Crowley and Aziraphale were responsible for much of the meal, as neither Newt or Anathema were particularly adept cooks, and though Adam's friend Wensley insisted his mother was teaching him how to make lots of good and healthy meals, none of them were quite comfortable trusting an eleven year old with an entire holiday banquet. (DEADGREEKS, 2019)

Religion and its relationship with feminism and queer culture is also a theme depicted in these works:

Crowley was definitely of the school of work smarter, not harder. The sooner he had what he came for, the better. He looked around to make sure no one was in earshot. "I'm looking for the Gospel of Mary Magdalene." [...] It was precisely where Crowley would have hidden it, if he were an abbess with a now-uncanonical text that encouraged women to ask questions and not take men's bullshit lying down. [...] In the end, it didn't work out quite as Crowley had hoped—he'd really wanted to spread the heresy much more widely, because people could and should ask questions. But Aziraphale's beautiful illuminated manuscript fell into covetous hands, and what a waste, really. (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

Aziraphale felt about Calvinists rather like Crowley felt about Satanists - they could be nice enough people individually, but they were frightfully eager to please using methods that were entirely of human invention, despite being done, allegedly, in the name of God.[...] Despite what various authorities claimed, heaven had very little to say on the subject of sodomy or homosexuality in general. Love was love, after all, but that's what you got

when you based a religion on a translation of a translation of a disputed translation (BRINNANZA, 2019)

Various artistic works were done inspired by the analyzed fanfictions. Of the eight works studied, six of them have won a Podfic version of their stories made by fellow fans. Podfic, according to Fanlore, "is an audio recording of fanfic, read aloud by a fan (or several).⁴⁴ The making of a Podfic by a person who is not the author of the story is a sign of community behavior and a statement of love from the part of the podfic artist. Various fanarts were also made. At least three works have inspired fanarts directly linked at them. Translation is also a possibility, the first work listed (*A Home at the Beginning of the World*) having a Korean translation attached to the notes as well as *You, Soft and Only*, which has a Chinese translation. The writers and readers interact and exchange art inside the fandom tribe. They create fiction over other tribe member's fiction and some of the views of fanfiction writers about gender, for example, are reproduced by other tribe mates. Some authors let clear on their works the importance of the other in the process of creation:

This doesn't get written without Merelyn, Twentysomething, Leupagus, and Waldorph cheering me on, or at least, not written so quickly! Many thanks to some fine new GO friends on Discord chat, in particular Reserve, who read parts of this and provided lovely feedback. And I'd be nowhere without Lynnmonster and her ability to turn around a beta so quickly. (THEHOYDEN, 2019)

⁴⁴ <https://fanlore.org/wiki/Podfic>

4 CONCLUSION

Our main objective with this work was analyzing the portrayal of gender inside *Good Omens* fanfiction. In order of achieving this, we started explaining the origin and concept of fanfiction, how it started in the science fiction fandom and how it developed to what we have nowadays. After this, we discussed about fandom community behavior and how it fits inside Maffesoli's concept of tribe. We also gave special attention to how postmodern gender identity affected the way fandom behave. In the end of our work, we analyzed eight of the most popular fanfiction works inside *Good Omens*' fandom to see how the portrayal of genders is done in these works.

We noticed by analyzing these works that this fandom is very peculiar when dealing with the notion of sex and gender, probably because of the fluidity of these concepts when talking about supernatural beings, who do not really fit inside the traditional binary notion of what constitutes men and women. *Good Omens* fandom is especially good in subverting gender expectations and depictions, giving more agency to female characters and breaking social norms of what we see as women's or men's activities.

Despite having a fairly distribution of gender inside the casting of the miniseries, the main characters and ultimately the most depicted in fanfictions (Aziraphale and Crowley) are still played by male actors. This is a statistic that tends to be true in most fandoms. Even if, historically, we have way more female writers of fanfiction than male, as stated before, the lack of female representation inside media seems to not be a problem noticed as worth discussing. Either way, fandom places are a privileged space for discussing gender and its perks, where the notions of gender are reconfigured.

Fandom behavior is an interesting subject that is far from being totally understood. In future works, it would be useful to deepen the study of such communities, analyzing other of the thousands of aspects we could not approach in this work. The more we understand these behaviors, the better we understand ourselves as humans.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A – First thesis

Here we all are talking about Raphael!Crowley headcanons when the truth is surely that Aziraphale had a slight change in spelling his name when he got assigned to Eden

Israfil, also spelled
Israfel, often
considered same
as **Raphael**

At first he was just too polite to correct anyone, but after a while it was just too awkward to bring up anyway.

Where does this leave Crowley? *Well I'm glad you asked!*

A **seraph** (/ˈsɛrəf/, "the burning one"/"serpent"; or **seraphim** /ˈsɛrəfɪm/, in the **King James Version** also

Cahethal - seraphim angel over agriculture.



How about an angel whose rank literally means "serpent", whose domain primarily involves growing plants, and who was, as a seraph, *probably powerful enough to stop time even after the Fall?*

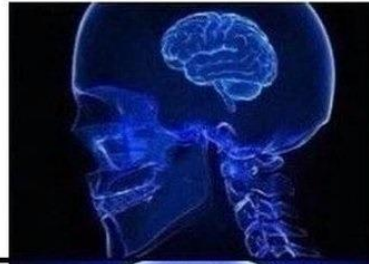
#from the desk of anachron #good omens #raphaelcrowley
#raphaellaziraphale #cahethalcrowley #i know i'm probably one the first
#if not just straight up the first #to consider this headcanon
#but i am forever headcanoning crowley as cahethal and you can't stop me

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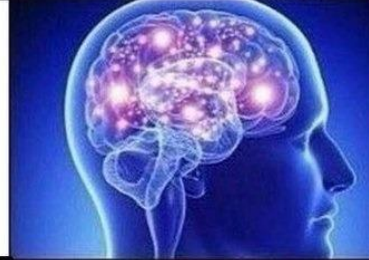


ANNEX B – Second thesis

**there is no
Raphael in the
GO!verse**



**Raphael exists,
we just don't see
him**



**Crowley was
Raphael**



**Aziraphale and Crowley
were both Raphael
before being split into 2
separate beings**



Raphael was the patron angel of healing, and Crowley was said to make stars as an angel. If the Archangel Raphael Fell, they would still have a high rank in Hell, but they would be corrupted, carrying disease and pestilence. Beelzebub was Raphael.



ANNEX C – *Good Omens*' Beelzebub



ANNEX D – Crowley as Raphael by fainttwinkling



ANNEX E – Crowley as Raphael by Kogla



ANNEX F – Third Thesis

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- □ X

RAPHAEL!CROWLEY AND PARADISE LOST

venomousaziraphale:

@the-reading-lemon's raphael!crowley really got to me so i had to say something about milton's depiction of raphael.

raphael appears briefly about midway through the poem, sent by god Himself to narrate the events of satan's rebellion to adam and eve as a means to warn them against temptation. raphael, in all his six-winged glory, humbly shares a meal with adam and eve, sitting with them almost as an equal: a far cry from the other warrior-like angels who'd previously patrolled the garden.

as God commanded raphael in book 5 of paradise lost:

Converse with Adam, in what Bowre or shade
 Thou find'st him from the heat of Noon retir'd,
 To respite his day-labour with repast,
 Or with repose; and such discourse bring on,
 As may advise him of his happie state,
 Happiness in his power left free to will,
 Left to his own free Will, his Will though free,
 Yet mutable; whence warne him to beware
 He swerve not too secure: tell him withall
 His danger, and from whom, what enemie
 Late falln himself from Heav'n, is plotting now
 The fall of others from like state of bliss;
 By violence, no, for that shall be withstood,
 But by deceit and lies; this let him know,
 Lest wilfully transgressing he pretend
 Surprisal, unadmonisht, unforwarnd.

there is free will in happiness, and conversely, happiness in free will. or so God put it.

now, consider the-demon-formerly-known-as-raphael, crowley, who loved humanity so dearly that he treated adam and eve as almost-equals during his time in eden. crowley, who *turned against his god-given task* and tempted eve into committing the original sin. crowley, who gifted humanity with the ability to become agents of free will and reason.

and the iconography associated with raphael as well as his patronage--his staff entwined with a snake, physicians and healing--are concepts derived from the classical tradition, but specifically the ritual of the pharmakon. he is both the poison and the cure, his temptation being the former, and the gift of reason to humanity the latter.

ANNEX G – Fanart of Aziraphale and Crowley

