

# “What I Wish I Had Seen”: Slash Fanfiction Writing as Queer World-Building

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## ABSTRACT

This exploratory study examines how queer slash fanfiction writers reorient heteronormative entertainment media (EM) content to create queer information worlds. Constructivist grounded theory was employed to explore queer individuals' slash fanfiction reading and creation practices. Slash fanfiction refers to fan-written texts that recast heteronormative content with queer characters, relationships, and themes. Theoretical sampling drove ten semi-structured interviews with queer slash writers and content analysis of both Captain America slash and material features found on two online fanfiction platforms, Archive of Our Own and fanfiction.net. “Queer” serves as a theoretical lens through which to explore non-heteronormative perspectives on gender and sexuality. Participants' interactions with and creation of slash fanfiction constitute world-queering practices wherein individuals reorient heteronormative content, design systems, and form community while developing their identities over time. Findings suggest ways in which queer creators respond to, challenge, and re-orient heteronormative narratives perpetuated by EM and other information sources. This pilot study only begins to explore the topic with ten interviews. The participant sample lacks racial diversity while the content sample focuses on one fandom. However, results suggest future directions for theoretical sampling that will continue to advance constructs developed from the data. The research contributes to emergent perspectives on information creation and queer individuals' information practices. In particular, findings expand theoretical frameworks related to small worlds and ways in which members of marginalized populations respond to exclusionary normativity.