I am your worst fear,
I am your best fantasy:
new approaches to slash fiction

JOSEPH CARL LINDEN BRENNAN

Supervised by Dr Fiona Giles

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) (Honours)

Department of Media and Communications
The University of Sydney
Australia

October 2009
Abstract

Abstract—This thesis uses slash fan fiction produced for the CW television series *Supernatural* to suggest two new slash typologies. While existing frameworks — romantopia (concerned with sex) and intimatopia (concerned with intimacy) — are useful, I argue that many slash stories fall outside the scope of these two terms into two newly proposed categories: paratopia and monstropia. Paratopic slash is centrally concerned with psychological change or geographical repositioning and realises, like romantopia and intimatopia, potentials of homosocial desire. Monstropic slash is centrally concerned with perversity and realises potentials of homosexual panic; it is a genre of slash fiction until now unexplored by slash scholarship. To illustrate these frameworks I discuss *Supernatural* slash stories in detail. *Supernatural* was chosen to illustrate both paratopia and monstropia because it is arguably a text that promotes homosexual panic as much as it does homosocial desire. I also argue that *Supernatural* slash, which would ordinarily be classified as romantopic or intimatopic, is paratopic due to the changes necessary to negotiate the characters’ homophobia and authentically present them in either sexual or intimate love. In conclusion, I argue that paratopia and monstropia are useful frameworks for understanding the ‘other worlds’ that slash inhabits — worlds beyond the reach of ‘topias’ romantopia and intimatopia.

*Keywords*—Fan fiction; Gender; Slash fiction; *Supernatural*; TV
Certification of authorship/originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

[Signature]

Joseph Brennan
0.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first and sincerest thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Fiona Giles, for your counsel, yes, but more for your enthusiasm. You get slash and my excitement for it, so thank you for making this project a pleasure.

I’d also like to extend my gratitude to the Department, in particular Alana Mann, Dr Steven Maras and Dr Marc Brennan. As I do to my fellow honourees. Of course the obligatory mum and dad thanks, mum for the home cooked meals and dad for the reams and reams of paper; my sisters too, Liz in particular for reading my draft, and my relatives, for your polite “sounds interesting” nods during family BBQs.

Finally, I’d like to thank Sam and Dean, the muses for all those weird and wonderful women out there playing in sandboxes. I enjoyed being a peeping Tom on your love affair and hope, like Tosenberger, that the writers of the show will one day
grant you the happiness you deserve. But if they don’t, I feel comforted knowing there’s plenty out there who will.

0.2 AUTHOR’S NOTE

Images used throughout this thesis are useful in ‘bridging the gap’ between academic theory and fandom, something Jenkins, who described himself as an aca–fan, believes is crucial (see 3.3). The fold out Slash Typology Table (see Figure 0.06) will be a useful guide to the new typologies I present in this thesis. I have also created a DVD of key scenes from Supernatural (see Appendix ten). These are scenes from the episodes summarised in Appendices two–six. There has been both press (see Figure 0.03) and academic interest in these typologies. The theories presented in this thesis are currently undergoing blind peer review.

Figure 0.03

Right It’s Stranger than Fiction by Nadia Salemme in MX, published in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, 31 August 2009
Contents

Abstract ii

Certification of authorship/originality iii

Acknowledgements and author’s note iv

0.1 Acknowledgements iv

0.2 Author’s note v

List of images xi

Character glossary xix

Terminology glossary xxii

Slash typology table xxiii

Chapter 1 Introduction 1

Chapter 2 Literature review 3

2.1 The active audience 3

2.2 Fandom 5

2.3 Slash fiction 6

2.4 Romantopia 7
2.5 Intimatopia  
2.6 Homosocial desire  
2.7 Paratopia  
2.8 Monstropia  
  2.8.1 Homosexual panic  
  2.8.2 Monstrous sexuality  
2.9 Conclusion  

Chapter 3  Method  
3.1 Textual analysis  
3.2 Cultural studies  
3.3 Analysing slash  
3.4 Poststructuralism  
3.5 Derrida and deconstruction  
3.6 Queer theory  
3.7 Conclusion  

Chapter 4  Paratopia  
4.1 Impala and the road genre  
4.2 Supernatural and the parasocial  
4.3 Brotherly love  
4.4 Psychological paratopia  
4.5 Geographical paratopia
4.6 A better time, a better place 59
4.7 Concluding thoughts 65

Chapter 5 Monstropia 68
5.1 Monsters in the closest 69
5.2 Perverse paratopia 70
5.3 Gay jokes 74
5.4 Character monstropia 76
5.5 “Won’t somebody please think of the children” 78
5.6 Narrative monstropia 82
5.7 Concluding thoughts 85

Chapter 6 Conclusion 87
6.1 In summary 87
6.2 The monster at the end of this book 89
6.3 Contribution to the field 91

Bibliography 96

Appendix one 119
A1.1 Medieval queerness 119

Appendix two 122
A2.1 Bugs (1.08) 122
A2.2 Playthings (2.11) 125
Contents

A2.3 Lazarus rising (4.01) 126

Appendix three 128

A3.1 Scarecrow (1.11) 128
A3.2 Something wicked (1.18) 130
A3.3 Hunted (2.10) 132
A3.4 Born under a bad sign (2.14) 133
A3.5 All Hell breaks loose pt 1 & 2 (2.21 & 2.22) 135
A3.6 Sex and violence (4.14) 136

Appendix four 140

A4.1 Tall tales (2.15) 140
A4.2 Bedtime stories (3.05) 144
A4.3 Jus in bello (3.12) 146

Appendix five 147

A5.1 Ghostfacers (3.13) 147
A5.2 Criss Angel is a douche bag (4.12) 152

Appendix six 159

A6.1 The monster at the end of this book (4.18) 159

Appendix seven 177

A7.1 Aerial (Astolat 2008a) 177
Appendix eight  
A8.1  Bad blood (Astolat 2008b)  

Appendix nine  
A9.1  Come on, baby, let me know (Lenore 2007)  

Appendix ten  
A10.1  Playlist
List of images

Preliminary pages

Figure 0.01 Safe by Wallse8 i
Figure 0.02 Heat by Lexalot iv
Figure 0.03 It’s Stranger than Fiction by Nadia Salemme in MX, published in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, 31 August 2009 v
Figure 0.04 Character Glossary by Joseph Brennan xix–xxi
Figure 0.05 Terminology Glossary by Joseph Brennan xxii
Figure 0.06 Slash Typology Table by Joseph Brennan xxiii

Chapter 1 Introduction

Figure 1.01 Donna Gottschalk holds poster “I am your worst fear I am your best fantasy” at Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day parade, 1970. Photograph by Diana Davies 1

Chapter 2 Literature review

Figure 2.01 tvbboyfriend-dean by tvbuddy 4
Figure 2.02 Shhhh... I’m Shagging Arthur! by artist unknown 9
Figure 2.03 Mouse by US Magazine 11
Figure 2.04 Sedgwick’s Homosocial–Homosexual Continuum by Joseph Brennan 14
Figure 2.05  *Merlin and Arthur* by Trolleys

Figure 2.06  *Mary Sue is Nothing Compared to Me Tshirt* by Artsyandroid

Figure 2.07  *I See Gay People* by Othersiderainbow.blogspot.com

**Chapter 4  Paratopia**

Figure 4.01  *Untitled* by Texan-Sol

Figure 4.02  *Sam and Dean on the Road* by Joseph Brennan

Figure 4.03  Words preceding the recap for *Rising Lazarus*

Figure 4.04  Nancy Fitzgerald (played by Aimee Garcia) in *Jus in Bello*

Figure 4.05  Sam and Dean (played by Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles) in *Playthings*

Figure 4.06  Merlin (played by Colin Morgan) and Arthur (played by Bradley James) in *Merlin*

Figure 4.07  *Prince Prat* by Draykonis

Figure 4.08  Banner by Heartdrawndream created for Underdog_14’s *Together as One*

Figure 4.09  *Bull Durham* by Trolleys

Figure 4.10  *My Lovely Sam Soon* by Trolleys

Figure 4.11  *Misfortune Cookie* by Trolleys

Figure 4.12  *Supernatural INC* by StawberyNVanila

Figure 4.13  *Sleeping In* by Trolleys

Figure 4.14  *JaredJensen* courtesy Tove & Madde
Figure 4.15  Screenshot by l_o_r_h_a_e_l of a 2006 Jensen Ackles interview at the 11th Annual Critics’ Choice Awards where Jared interrupts to attempt a kiss on the lips. Viewable on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zolsIF1AZJ7A  53

Figure 4.16  J2 courtesy Illy1985  53

Figure 4.17  Three’s Company by Trolleys  54

Figure 4.18  Witness by Ponderosa121  55

Figure 4.19  J2 Breakfast by Trolleys  56

Figure 4.20  Wingcest by Antiship, inspired by Aerial by Astolat  61

Figure 4.21  Embrace by Trolleys, requested by Mobiusklein  64

Figure 4.22  Castiel (played by Misha Collins) in Lazarus Rising  64

Figure 4.23  Sam/Castiel/Dean by *Twilight-Deviant  64

Figure 4.24  Night has brought to those who sleep. Only dreams they cannot keep... by Wallse8  67

Chapter 5  Monstropia

Figure 5.01  Serving Arthur by Antychan  71

Figure 5.02  Two Sides of a Warped Coin by Draykonis  72

Figure 5.03  The Boys Exchange Christmas Gifts by Trolleys  74

Figure 5.04  Supernatural Comic Graphic #16 by Snb123.livejournal  75

Figure 5.05  Screen shot from Tall Tales  77

Figure 5.06  Helen Lovejoy from The Simpsons  78
Figure 5.07  Draco Malfoy (played by Tom Felton) and Harry Potter (played by Daniel Radcliffe). Courtesy WB. Spellbound by The Theban Band  80

Chapter 6  Conclusion

Figure 6.01  Supernatural Wincest by BPHaines  89
Figure 6.02  SPN Sam-Slash-Dean by *Twilight-Deviant  90
Figure 6.03  Lucas Scott (played by Chad Michael Murray) and Nathan Scott (play by James Lafferty). Courtesy CW. Lucas in Are You True?, Lucas and Chris Keller (played by Tyler Hilton) in Champagne for my Real Friends, Real Pain for my Sham Friends, Lucas and Nathan in To Wish Impossible Things  92
Figure 6.04  Theodore “T-Bag” Bagwell (played by Robert Knepper), Lincoln Burrows (played by Dominic Purcell) and Michael Scofield (played by Wentworth Miller). Courtesy 20th Century Fox Television. Michael and T-Bag in Allen, Seth “Cherry” Hoffner (played by Blaine Hogan) in Riots, Drills and the Devil: Part 1, T-Bag and David “Tweener” Apolskis (played by Lane Garrison) in Tweener  93
Figure 6.05  Fox Mulder (played by David Duchovny), Dana Scully (played by Gillian Anderson) and Alex Krycek (played by Nicholas Lea). Courtesy 20th Century Fox Television. Grab by The Theban Band  94

End pages  Appendix two

Figure A2.01  Sam and Dean in Bugs  123
| Figure A2.02 | Sam and Matt (played by Tyler Johnston) in *Bugs* | 124 |
| Figure A2.03 | Sam and Dean in *Playthings* | 125 |
| Figure A2.04 | Sam and Dean in *Playthings* | 126 |
| Figure A2.05 | Sam, Dean and Kristy (played by Genevieve Cortese) in *Lazarus Rising* | 127 |
| Figure A2.06 | Sam, Dean and Pamela Barnes (played by Traci Dinwiddie) in *Lazarus Rising* | 127 |

**End pages Appendix three**

| Figure A3.01 | Sam and Dean in *Scarecrow* | 129 |
| Figure A3.02 | Dean, Michael (played by Colby Paul), young boy (uncredited), young Dean (played by Ridge Canipe) and young Sam (played by Alex Ferris) in *Something Wicked* | 131 |
| Figure A3.03 | Sam and Dean in *Something Wicked* | 131 |
| Figure A3.04 | Sam and Dean in *Hunted* | 132 |
| Figure A3.05 | Dean in *Born Under a Bad Sign* | 133 |
| Figure A3.06 | Dean in *Born Under a Bad Sign* | 134 |
| Figure A3.07 | Dean in *Everybody Loves a Clown* | 136 |
| Figure A3.08 | Dean, Sam and Nick (played by Jim Parrack) in *Sex and Violence* | 137 |
| Figure A3.09 | Jean Broc, *Death of Hyacinth*, 1801, oil on canvas. Courtesy Musée des Beaux-Arts, Poitiers | 139 |
End pages  Appendix four

Figure A4.01  Dean, Sam and frat pledge (played by Neil Grayston) in *Tall Tales* 141

Figure A4.02  Dean, Sam and Curtis/frat boy (played by David Tom) in *Tall Tales* 142

Figure A4.03  Blonde and brunette trickster girls (played by Mashiah Vaughn-Hulbert and Angela Case) in *Tall Tales* 143

Figure A4.04  Sam and Dean in *Bedtime Stories* 145

Figure A4.05  Agent Victor Henriksen (played by Charles Malik Whitfield) talks to Sam and Dean in *Jus in Bello* 146

End pages  Appendix five

Figure A5.01  Alan J Corbett (played by Dustin Milligan) in *Ghostfacers* 148

Figure A5.02  Corbett in *Ghostfacers* 149

Figure A5.03  Ed Zeddoore, Harry Spengler (played by AJ Buckley and Travis Wester) and Corbett in *Ghostfacers* 150

Figure A5.04  Corbett in *Ghostfacers* 151

Figure A5.05  Dean and Chief (played by Chris Burns) in *Criss Angel is a Douche Bag* 153

Figure A5.06  Jay (played by Barry Bostwick) and Dean in *Criss Angel is a Douche Bag* 156
End pages  Appendix six

Figure A6.01  Comic Book Store Owner (played by Michael P Northey), Sam and Dean in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 160

Figure A6.02  Dean in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 161

Figure A6.03  Sam and Dean in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 161

Figure A6.04  Online fan presence in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 162

Figure A6.05  Sam, Dean and Sera Siege (played by Keegan Connor Tracy) in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 163

Figure A6.06  Cover of the first *Supernatural* book in *The Monster at the End of this Book*. Fabio image dated early ’90s, courtesy Missyjack 164

Figure A6.07  Sam and Dean in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 165

Figure A6.08  Sam and Dean in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 165

Figure A6.09  Sam and Dean in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 166

Figure A6.10  Sam, Dean and Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 167

Figure A6.11  Sam, Dean and Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book* 168
Figure A6.12  Sam, Dean and Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book*  169

Figure A6.13  Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book*  169

Figure A6.14  Dean and Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book*  171

Figure A6.15  Castiel, Dean and Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book*  172

Figure A6.16  Sam and Chuck in *The Monster at the End of this Book*  173

Figure A6.17  Dean and Castiel in *The Monster at the End of this Book*  175
The following table is a slash line-up of pairings discussed in the thesis (in order of appearance).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character glossary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Star Trek</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulcan (alien species)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristically emotionless (although that changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spock/Kirk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaceship captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk/Spock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The X-Files</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulder/Krycek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krycek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murderer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krycek/Mulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harry Potter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good boy wizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry/Draco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evil boy wizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draco/Harry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Character Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Tree Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lucas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan’s half brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loves literature and basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas/Nathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nathan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rival half-brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loves basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan/Lucas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison Break</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Michael</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln’s brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael/Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lincoln</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael’s brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln/Michael</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 0.04

Character Glossary by Joseph Brennan
Terminology glossary

The following table defines terms coined or ‘hijacked’ by the author for use in the thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Series</strong></td>
<td>“Series” refers to the parent or base text (although the word “canon” is often used in fandom, it was avoided here because of its associations with a literary canon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>True-to-the-series</strong></td>
<td>Slash texts true to the parent or base text in character psychology and geography (as in romantopia, intimatopia and monstropia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not-true-to-the-series</strong></td>
<td>Slash texts not true to the parent or base text in character psychology, geography or both (as in paratopia and perverse paratopia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>True-to-the-characters</strong></td>
<td>Slash texts true to the characters’ psychology in the parent or base text, even if their geography has been changed (as in romantopia, intimatopia, geographical paratopia and monstropia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not-true-to-the-characters</strong></td>
<td>Slash texts not true to the characters’ psychology in the parent or base text, even if their geography is unchanged (as in psychological and perverse paratopia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>True-to-the-actors</strong></td>
<td>Real Person Slash texts true to the psychology of the actors who play the characters in the parent or base text, even if their geography has been changed (as in true-to-the-actors J2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not-true-to-the-actors</strong></td>
<td>Real Person Slash texts not true to the psychology of the actors who play the characters in the parent or base text, even if their geography is unchanged (as in not-true-to-the-actors J2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paratopia</strong></td>
<td>Coined by the author using Horton and Wohl’s (1956) ‘parasocial relationship’ (see 2.7) to describe slash texts centrally concerned with fantasy that realise potentials of homosocial desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monstropia</strong></td>
<td>Coined by the author using MacCormack’s (2004) ‘monstrous sexuality’ (see 2.8.2) to describe slash texts centrally concerned with perversity that realise potentials of homosexual panic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 0.05
Terminology Glossary by Joseph Brennan
Introduction

In 1970, at a Christopher Street Gay Liberation Day parade, lesbian feminist Donna Gottschalk held a poster that read, “I am your worst fear[,] I am your best fantasy” (see Figure 1.01; Meyer 2002). Similar to Gottschalk’s fear/fantasy statement, queer theorist Guy Hocquenghem ([1972] 1978) argued that the image of the homosexual contains “a complex knot of dread and desire” (p. 50). This thesis uses theories on male homosexuality as a combination of fear and fantasy to explore slash fiction inspired by the CW series *Supernatural* (Kripke 2005) and to suggest two new slash typologies, paratopia and monstropia.

Slash is a form of fan writing that homoeroticises the bonds between heterosexual television characters. The literature review outlines existing theories on slash fiction — primarily Salmon and Symons’s (2001) ‘romantopia’ and Woledge’s (2006) ‘intimatopia’. These are presented in relation to Sedgwick’s (1984, 1985, 1990, 1996) views on homosocial desire, which romantopia (concerned with romance) and intimatopia (concerned with intimacy) can be said to realise. The usefulness of these typologies is demonstrated in relation to *Merlin* (Jones et al. 2008), a BBC-TV series that rewrites Merlin and Arthur as a sexually ambiguous manservant–master pair.
Introduction

Paratopia and monstropia are introduced in the literature review and discussed in the body of the thesis as two additional ‘topias’ that explore the ‘other worlds’ slash inhabits. These topias are demonstrated through close readings of *Supernatural* slash, readings informed by queer theory and deconstruction (as outlined in the method chapter).

Paratopia is defined as stories of either psychological or geographical fantasy. The thesis argues that, in *Supernatural*, it is only by changing character (such as in Real Person Slash and Mary Sue) or location (such as in Alternate Universe) that authors are able to successfully sexualise homosocial bonds. This is supported by a discussion of *Supernatural*’s position within the road genre, which explicitly facilitates such change. Tosenberger’s (2008a) argument that *Supernatural* slash writers wrestle control from producers in order to allow the characters a happiness the series eternally defers is also discussed as useful to understanding paratopia.

Monstropia is shown to be stories that take the perverse subject (as defined by MacCormack 2004) as a central concern, a genre of slash fiction until now unexplored by slash scholarship. Through a discussion of gay jokes, which permeate both the series and the slash, *Supernatural* monstropic stories are defined as those interested in either character or narrative homosexual panic.

Like Gottschalk’s poster or Hocquenghem’s image of the homosexual, the appeal of *Supernatural* and *Supernatural* slash is its push and pull of dread and desire, proof that not all slash texts can be understood via romantopia, intimatopia or indeed homosocial desire.
Literature review

Fan fiction becomes slash fiction by homoeroticising bonds between heterosexual television characters. This chapter uses academic and fan-based literature to chart existing theories on slash. It begins by contextualising slash within theories on the active audience and television fandom, which is followed by a description of romantopia and intimatopia as the existing ‘frameworks’ of slash scholarship. As this thesis introduces two new frameworks — paratopia and monstropia — a discussion of these new terms in relation to their underlying theory and contribution to the field will also be included here. Monstropia is of particular interest as it cannot usefully be understood as realising potentials of homosocial desire, but instead actualises homosexual panic. The chapter concludes that a purely romantopic and intimatopic view of slash, while useful, cannot be applied to all stories.

2.1 THE ACTIVE AUDIENCE

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1947) argued that the media has a damaging hold over audiences. Essentially they believed that audiences and the media were unequal partners in the communicative process of symbolic exchange. John Fiske (1987)
later argued that it is in fact audiences who hold the power, that they are active, critically aware and discriminating\(^1\).

Fiske believed participation in media sense-making — even via commercial television — has the potential to resist dominant ideologies, precisely because reading is active (Hartley 1999, p. 135). Together with John Hartley (1999), Fiske authored the 1978 *Reading Television*\(^2\), which sought to make sense of contemporary television from the point of view of the audience (Hartley 1999, p. 1). Media theorist and active audience guru Henry Jenkins had Fiske supervise his doctoral work. This was at a time when consumers were, with only a few exceptions, viewed as passive and inarticulate, brainless and brainwashed. By introducing Jenkins to a cultural studies understanding of media audiences, Fiske’s belief that viewers have more ‘tricks up their sleeves’ than the majority of academic theorists believe, encouraged Jenkins to

\(^1\)This was a conclusion many cultural studies researchers failed to reach during the 1980s and ‘90s (Gauntlett 2002, pp. 2, 20–25).

\(^2\)Influenced by Richard Hoggart’s 1958 *The Uses of Literacy*. 
interpret for himself the ways in which audiences engage with texts (see Jenkins 2009). This developed into his post-doctoral interest in television fandom, for which Jenkins is best known today.

2.2 FANDOM

Jenkin’s (1992a) first book, *Textual Poachers*, concerned what he saw as a ‘tension’ between academic theory and fan experience (Jenkins 2009). It mapped the contours of television fandom. At its heart was the concept of ‘textual poaching’, borrowed from Michel de Certeau’s (1984) use of the term to describe the ongoing struggle for possession and control of a text’s meaning (pp. 23, 27). Jenkins (1992a) believed fans had developed poaching into an art form (pp. 23, 27). What Fiske (1989) described as a form of cultural ‘guerrilla activity’ was for Jenkins (1992a) the way in which fans related texts to personal, lived experiences, rewriting them around particular anxieties and contemporary issues such as gender, sexuality and racism (pp. 51, 108, 283). Of the descriptions Jenkins offered for understanding fan practices, the ‘fan as textual poacher’ position has been the most widely applied. Useful for the disassociation of fan

---

3 *Textual Poachers* was an extension of ideas presented in Jenkins’s 1988 essay ‘Star Trek Reread, Rerun, Rewritten’.

4 Jenkins (1992a) also described fans as ‘rogue readers’ and ‘cultural participants’. Rogue readers are ‘cultural scavengers’, using materials created by dominant classes to express their own resistance and overcome feelings of subordination and powerlessness (Jenkins 1988, p. 86). Cultural participants are fans who bond over mutual ground, creating communities based on a shared love for a text (Jenkins 1992a, p. 172; Jenkins 1992b, p. 213).
from fanatic, Jenkins’s (1988) ‘textual poaching’ opened the door for the legitimate study of fan practices and the propagation of a view of fans as creative participants in the cultural production of meaning (p. 86; Gauntlett 2008, p. 2). A fan practice of particular interest to Jenkins has been slash fiction.

### 2.3 SLASH FICTION

Slash fiction sexualises non-sexual or latently sexual male bonding. It arose from the convention of using the forward slash to mark the names of characters being paired, for example, Kirk/Spock for *Star Trek* (Salmon & Symons 2004, p. 1). A sexual or romanticised rewriting of media narratives, slash pairings are always male/male\(^5\) and typically involve heterosexual television characters (Meyer & Tucker 2007, p. 105).

In *Cyberspaces of their Own*, Rhiannon Bury (2005) described spaces dedicated to fan fiction as ‘women-centred’ (pp. 2–3). This is particularly the case with slash fiction, which is considered by and large to be written by women, for women. Slash is believed to have begun with female *Star Trek* (Roddenberry 1966) fans in the ’70s, who began penning stories of romantic male pairings in fanzines to protest a lack of any ongoing romantic arc in the series (Weinstein 2006, p. 614). Coming at a time when female heroes were rarely seen in action-oriented narratives, it is believed that slash became a way for women to envision an egalitarian romance (Scodari 2003, p. 113).

---

\(^5\)Female/female stories are rare, and are known as ‘femslash’ or ‘femmeslash’.
2.4 ROMANTOPIA

In *Warrior Lovers* Catherine Salmon and Donald Symons (2001) argued that slash fiction uniquely fuses traditional female romances with traditionally male camaraderie, adventure and risk taking⁶ (pp. 97, 99). Salmon and Symons (2004) argued that heterosexual romance novels exist within the fantasy world of ‘romantopia’, where sex is part of the narrative’s larger plot and where “the heroine overcomes obstacles to identity to win the heart of and marry the one man in the world who is right for her” (p. 97). Salmon and Symons (2004) argued that slash fiction is romantopic in its transference of distinctive attributes from the romance genre (p. 8). These attributes include the heroine granting her virginity to the hero, evident in the slashed narrative through the depiction of the characters as ‘anal virgins’ (Salmon & Symons 2004, p. 8).

Drabbles are a particularly interesting example of a romantopic text. Belonging to a subgenre of slash called ‘Plot? What Plot?’ (PWP), drabbles, or centi-porn, are fragments of stories. At 100 words or less, slash drabbles are pure sex writing exercises. More than a plotless porno, a slash drabble must make every word count. This is an

---

⁶This was based on an empirical research survey that the pair conducted in 2001 into the readership of mainstream romance novels. The survey concluded that most female heterosexual romance fans could enjoy reading a male/male romance. Salmon and Symons (2004) were so convinced of the significance of their findings, they argued that slash fiction should be considered as a species of the romance genus (p. 7).

⁷MacDonald (2006) described ‘Plot? What Plot?’ stories as frankly pornographic tales with little action other than sex (p. 28).
especially important distinction considering criticism\(^8\) made against slash’s literary merit.

John Sutherland, in his 2006 *Telegraph* article ‘Slashing Through the Undercult’, said slash offers all “the pleasures of a trip to a literary zoo[,] … revealing [a lot] about the mysteriously powerful, irrational and erotic emotions that feed fandom”. Sutherland’s ‘however’ was that slash is “downright sloppy”, that its writing and plotting is “rarely good enough” to detain any but the most devoted fan and that it is “a pity it’s not more readable”. In true Strunk and White (1979) tradition\(^9\), drabbles teach slash writers to “omit needless words” when crafting their smut (p. 23).

---

**Stained**

*It doesn’t matter how far Merlin spreads his thighs or how much oil they use. As Arthur thrusts into him, Merlin bites into his bottom lip as he’s sure he can feel something tear and sting. But there’s an odd pleasure swirling with it, so he shifts his legs and whines for Arthur to push harder.*

[continued]

---

\(^8\)London-based arts writer Martin Newman (2007), for example, writing for *Art Monthly*, turned his nose up at slash when he described it as “one of the most theoretically exciting and in reality hilariously crap areas of online amateur writing, reducing all in its path to the lowest common gay entendre denominator” (p. 31). Peg Aloi (2003) agreed when reviewing erotica for *The Women’s Review of Books*, describing slash as “contemporary amateur erotica that strains at the seams of a genre attempting to transcend cyberporn” (p. 31). Newman’s (2007) view of slash writers as wilful misreaders, and Aloi’s (2003) longing for “the type of literary erotica purveyed by Anais Nin” shows, first, how little is known of slash writers and what they do, and second, a desire by critics for finer prose.

\(^9\)Strunk and White’s 14th rule of usage.
Afterwards, when Merlin is sure that Arthur is asleep, he breathes some well-rehearsed words as quietly as he can and the traces of blood upon the sheets vanish. He’s aware that there may be a high price to pay should he forget even once.

END

Dh_Chan’s *Stained* (2009), inspired by *Merlin* (Jones et al. 2008), is a good example of the value of drabbles. In two paragraphs and exactly 100 words Dh_Chan conveys a lot. The first paragraph is purely PWP sex, while Dh_Chan’s second manages to contextualise the characters and demonstrate just how much she knows of their situation. Merlin’s whispered incantation to remove rectal blood from the sheets — that has a certain romance-novel-depicting-a-virgin’s-first-time-with-the-hero connotation — and the final sentence — that says there “may be a high price to pay should he forget even once” — informs readers that Arthur does not know of Merlin’s magic and that their sex together is taboo (hence the medieval setting). Secrecy is an important part of *Merlin*. With the show’s tagline being “keep the magic secret”, Merlin’s forbidden magic is a useful metaphor for his homosexuality in slash narratives.

---

10 A “22-year-old female fresh out of a creative writing course” (Vicky_V 2009).

11 For greater discussion on the role of secrecy in slash, see Jes Battis’s (2006) paper on silence and queer secrecy in *Smallville*, a modern Superman tale where, Battis argues, it is the silence and secrecy of Clark Kent and Lex Luthor that make them all the more slashable.
Jenkins (1992a) speculated that women might prefer slash to a conventional romance because television media does not provide the autonomous female characters needed to create a heterosexual romance between equals (pp. 194–196). Rather than create totally new sets of conventions for autonomous female characters, fan writers choose “the path of least resistance in borrowing ready-made figures, such as Kirk and Spock, to express their utopian visions of romantic bliss” (Jenkins 1992a, pp. 194–196). Camille Bacon-Smith — whose 1992 book Enterprising Women was as significant to the study of slash as Textual Poachers — similarly argued that slash writers pen stories about men together because men hold power, and therefore can relate to each other as “powerful equals” (p. 249).

While in mainstream romance novels there are heroes (warriors) and heroines (non-warriors), slash allows women (through their male bodies) to be both lover and warrior, to be coupled equally, to slay another’s dragons (Salmon & Symons 2004, p. 9). It is in this way that Mirna Cicioni (1998) described slash as a “fantasy of authentic love” that can only exist between equals (p. 169). In short, romantopic slash portrays male/male pairs as equals in stories centrally concerned with sex.

---

12It was Woledge (2006) who argued that romantopic slash is centrally concerned with sex, and hence coined the term ‘intimatopia’ to define slash texts centrally concerned with intimacy. Considering the links romantopia is argued to have with the romance genre, it should be noted that while Woledge’s distinction between romantopia and intimatopia has been adopted here, this thesis is in no way claiming that all stories of the romance genre privilege sex over intimacy. Given Woldege’s definition of romantopia (as sex separated from intimacy), the argument that slash is a form of pornography (see Braeman & Cox 1990; Petty 2004) would be best served by romantopia.
2.5 INTIMATOPIA

Much has changed in television since the ‘70s and the heyday of *Star Trek*’s ‘last generation’\(^{13}\), so much so that contemporary television seems hardly recognisable in comparison; and the idea of slash as egalitarian romance, almost implausible. *The X-Files*\(^{14}\)’s (Carter 1993) Special Agents Scully\(^{15}\) and Mulder, for example, displayed tremendous potential for representational equality all through the ‘90s. The medical-doctor-sceptic-scientist Scully and her I-want-to-believe-alien-chasing-sidekick Mulder toyed with gender roles week after week for more than a decade. And yet, slash authors still seek male/male pairings, even within *The X-Files* (see Scodari & Felder 2000; Scodari 2003). The continued rise of both slash fiction and ‘autonomous female characters’ or ‘co-warriors’ — such as Dr/Special Agent

\[\text{--------------------}\]

\(^{13}\)In a 1996 interview Jenkins argued that too often researchers go straight to *Star Trek* and Kirk/Spook to study slash when instead they should see the series as “one text among many” (Jenkins 1996; also see Falzone 2005, pp. 243–261).

\(^{14}\) *Supernatural* is often considered a direct descendant of *The X-Files* for its shared writing and production staff. In the pilot episode Dean also refers to two FBI agents as Mulder and Scully and then in *Usual Suspects* (2.7) Sam and Dean debate which of them is Scully.

\(^{15}\)Professor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, Linda Badley said, “Scully subverts patriarchal heteronormativity through her role as both a cybercop and forensic investigator, penetrating inert, male bodies with an unfeminine, carnivorous promiscuity” (as quoted in Helford 2000, p. 81).
Scully — suggest that a purely ‘romantopic’ understanding of slash is inadequate for describing all examples of these texts.

In 2006 Elizabeth Woledge argued that a romantopic understanding is limited, believing there to be another type of slash story, where the defining feature is an exploration of intimacy, not sex (p. 99). Woledge (2006) dubbed the fantasy world in which such a story would exist as ‘intimatopia’ (p. 99). Woledge (2006) argued that whereas romantopic slash separates sex and intimacy through its focus on the sexual, intimatopic texts bring them together through a focus on the intimate (Woledge 2006, p. 99). George Haggerty (1998) argued that what culture represses is not sexual desire, but love (p. 15). Woledge (2006) referred to Haggerty when she argued that intimatopic texts highlight portrayals of love and intimacy, not typically associated with interpersonal relationships between men (p. 100). In connecting intimacy to male interaction, Woledge (2006) described intimatopia as a “homosocial world in which the social closeness of the male characters engenders intimacy” (p. 100). In her construction of an intimatopic view of slash, Woledge drew on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s work on male homosocial desire.

\[16\text{In ‘Intimatopia’, an essay published in Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet, a collection of autoethnographical essays that interspersed fannish and academic discourses. Other essays compiled in the collection included: Abigail Derecho’s ‘Archontic Literature’, which used Derrida’s discussion of the archive to argue that fan fiction belonged with the source text as a body of work; and Catherine Driscoll’s ‘One True Pairing’, which described erotic fan fiction through a discussion of pornography and the romance novel.}\]
2.6 HOMOSOCIAL DESIRE

Lynn Spangler (1992) argued that contemporary Western society views men’s friendships as “emotionally contained and controlled” (p. 95). Sedgwick counted this with the concept of ‘homosocial desire’, suggesting that men actively prefer the company of the same sex (Lipman-Blumen 1976, p. 16). Homosocial desire refers to a wide range of culturally normative, intimate interactions between men, including affectionate bonding, emotional ties and visual attraction — none of which necessarily involve sexual acts (Zeikowitz 2002, p. 79). Scott Kiesling (2005), in his article ‘Homosocial Desire in Men’s Talk’, argued that Sedgwick’s desire valued men’s nonsexual desire for each other more than any sexual love, gay or straight (p. 702).

Sedgwick (1990) argued that there is a continuum between homosocial and homosexual bonds and that homosocial desire captures how sexuality can inhabit the very heart of relationships between men that are not specifically designated as sexual (Sedgwick 1985, p. 2; Gil 2002, p. 861). Sedgwick (1985) argued that as a text increases in homosocial connotations, it necessarily decreases in homosexual ones. A text in the middle of the continuum, with a medium amount of both homosocial and homosexual implication, is therefore likely to contain ambiguities of sexuality — neither homosocial nor homosexual (see Figure 2.04).
Woledge (2004) argued that the use of homosexual connotations with an overt homosocial context is one of the most frequently observed patterns in the ambiguous text (p. 241). This pattern has been used by many novelists whose closed male societal settings have legitimised the sometimes homoerotic connotations of their texts (Woledge 2004, p. 241). This is supported by Sedgwick’s (1985) observation that war novels can look “startlingly homosexual” (p. 89). Woledge (2004) explained that this is because the war setting, with its representation of an almost exclusively male society, provides so many homosocial cues that the relationships between the men can be encoded via an equal number of homoerotic cues, including emotion sharing, embracing and even kissing (p. 242). In its applications to slash, Woledge (2005) considered
Kirk/Spock slash in relation to Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model\textsuperscript{17}, where she argued that the homoerotic looks and gestural codes in television texts are the point from which fans begin their decoding (p. 244). Or as Bacon-Smith (1992) succinctly put in, the reason why women perceive a deep and loving relationship between characters on the screen is because “series creators put it there” (p. 234).

Like war novels, medieval literature is also sexually ambiguous (see Appendix one for more on medieval queerness). An example is slash inspired by the medieval-set *Merlin*, for which romantopic and intimatopic frameworks are useful.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{merlin_arthur.png}
\caption{Merlin and Arthur by Trolleys}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Arthur:} There’s something about you Merlin, I can’t quite put my finger on it.

\textbf{Uther:} This deserves something truly special [to Merlin after he saves Arthur], you shall be Arthur’s manservant.

\textbf{Castle Guard:} Merlin, Prince Arthur wants you right away.

\textbf{Gaius:} Your destiny’s calling, you better find out what he wants.

\textbf{The Dragon’s Call} (1.01)

\textsuperscript{17}HALL’S 1973 encoding/decoding model argued that media messages have preferred readings that audiences sometimes negotiate, and even oppose. David Morley (1980) applied this model to the popular current affairs program *Nationwide*, where he analysed how audiences negotiated the text’s preferred reading. Morley (1981) later went on to criticise Hall’s model, believing it to suggest a ‘conveyor-belt’ relationship between media and audience. Jenkins (1992a) argued that audiences do not simply consume mass culture, but rather, actively participate in producing and manipulating its meaning in a dynamic interaction between media and audience (pp. 23, 283).
Merlin: How can it be my destiny to protect someone who hates me?

Dragon: A half cannot truly hate that which makes it whole. Soon you shall learn that.

That yours and Arthur’s path lie together is but the truth.

Valiant (1.02)

The terms romantopia, intimatopia, homosocial desire and ambiguous sexuality usefully summarise existing literature on the nature of slash fiction. However, even Woledge (2005) — who argued that not all slash is romantopic and suggested intimatopic as another form — admitted that the terms could not account for all types of slash fiction (p. 99). No additional ‘topias’ have yet been offered to explore the ‘other worlds’ that slash fiction inhabits. The purpose of this thesis is to offer up two new ‘types’ or subgenres of slash fiction, coined by the author. The first is paratopia.

2.7 PARATOPIA

Donald Horton and Richard Wohl’s (1956) ‘parasocial relationship’\(^ {18}\) was coined to describe the friendships or intimacies a media spectator might imagine exists between them and media characters (p. 215). With ‘para’ meaning ‘close, but not quite’, Horton and Wohl argued that media spectators participate in a relationship with media

\(^{18}\)Horton and Wohl (1956) described the parasocial relationship as characteristically one-sided, nondialectical and nonsusceptible to mutual development (p. 215). They also argued that parasocial relations can only occur while a person is viewing the program: if the viewer does not like the relationships on offer, their only option is to stop watching (Horton & Wohl 1956, p. 215). However, just as television has changed since the ’50s, so have viewing practices and attitudes toward them. Most notably is the use of the parasocial concept to account for both post-program engagement and interactive participation (see Rosengren & Windahl 1972; Rosengren et al. 1976; Nordlund 1978; Hedinsson 1981).
characters that is ‘not quite social’, and would therefore not generally be considered authentic (p. 215). Television was considered the most conducive medium for parasocial engagement for its frequency and consistency of character.

Scodari (2003) argued that male protagonists of television were traditionally represented as ‘lone male heroes’ who did not have ongoing romances (p. 118). This was because male viewers were thought to identify with such a hero as “a freewheeling bachelor going from one disposable woman to another”, or in terms of Star Trek’s Captain Kirk, one space bimbo to the next (Scodari 2003, p. 119). This was a way for producers to “cast a wide net”, or in the words of Brian Clemens (producer of the much-slashed 1977 The Professionals), a formula that created “modern heroes that male viewers wanted to be like and female viewers wanted to get into bed with” (as quoted in Scodari 2003, p. 119). As per parasocial engagement, Scodari (2003) argued that the lack of any long-term romances in texts like Star Trek see the female viewer foregoing direct identification with the ‘bimbo of the week’ and instead fantasising about being the one to ‘finally snag’ the freewheeling bachelor (p. 119).

Altman and Taylor (1973) argued that the more people interact, the more likely they are to achieve deeper states of intimacy. Horton and Wohl believed television’s techniques — such as the close-up and camera zoom — help to improve the relatability of spectators to media characters, presenting them as predictable and nonthreatening figures in the spectator–performer relationship. For Gauntlett (2002) television is the most pervasive form of contemporary mass media, the enabler of ideas (p. 28). It inspires social change through its promotion of diversity and difference, polysemically opening up audiences to see the world through lives other than their own (Cunningham 2000, p. 13).
In so doing, Salmon and Symons (2004) argued that slash writers take poetic licence, moulding characters’ behaviour, mannerisms and even speech to better suit their own, feminising the main point-of-view character so they become the smaller, weaker, lighter, more emotional and more seductive of the two (pp. 8–9). An example of this is evident during instances of anal sex within slash narratives, where the main point-of-view character is often the bottom, passive and quicker of the two to perceive the development of mutual love (Salmon & Symons 2004, p. 8).

As coined here, ‘paratopia’ — in contrast to romantopia and intimatopia — explains slash that is more ‘radical revision’ than ‘filling in of gaps’. Paratopic slash is more intrusive. These writers would sooner change a character’s psychology (as in Mary Sue) or a narrative’s geography (as in Alternate Universe) if it would mean a more

---

20 In Whitney Cox’s (2006) online column on *Supernatural*, subtitled “butch–femme dynamics in the series of brotherly love”, he argued that in *Supernatural* the character of Sam is continually portrayed as less butch than his brother, Dean. Cox (2006) likens the brothers’ dynamic to the roles of men and women in role player video games, “Sam is the mysterious magical girl whose powers will emerge in time to save the world, while Dean is the spiky-haired hero with the big-ass sword who has sworn to protect her from all evil”.

21 See Iser 1994 who argued that fans of media texts are invited by gaps in the text, to fill what is not there.

22 Mary Sue is a fantasy of the perfect woman created within a masculine contemporary culture (Bacon-Smith 1992, p. 102). In Bacon-Smith’s (1992) view men are served by Mary Sue, who applies her skills, and even offers her life for the continued safety and ease of men (p. 102). However, the Mary Sue character is not well received within fan fiction, particularly by other women (see Figure 2.06). As MacDonald (2006) argued, in Mary Sue stories the writer’s intent is not so much to pay homage to the fictional universe in question, but rather to rewrite and reinvent elements of its story and characterisation.
satisfying or interesting romance. Whereas romantopic and intimatopic slash generally seeks to actualise what Doty (2000) described as ‘latent textual elements’, paratopic slash writers are more adventurous. Paratopic slash is best described by writer Julad who likened slash to a sandbox, “a place where women come to be strange and unusual, or to do strange and unusual things, or to play with strange and unusual sand” (as quoted in Tosenberger 2008a, p. 190).

Perhaps without knowing it, CarrieLynn Reinhard (2009) uncovered paratopia when she conducted a ‘structured conversation’ with 10 slash writers. The writers expressed a desire to wrestle control away from producers and write their favourite characters into relationships they believed would make the characters happier (Reinhard 2009, p. 12). As one unidentified fan wrote, “slash allows for the belief/knowledge that, at least in fandom, our favourite characters are being taken care of — they have found someone to love” (as quoted in Reinhard 2009, p. 29).

Another useful way of understanding paratopia is via Rachel Shave’s (2004) application of Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1984) work — with its affinity for the oppressed and marginalised. Shave (2004) suggested that slash fiction represents a “new, imagined carnival space” where norms are playfully inverted (pp. 1, 2). Bakhtin (1984) described the carnival as a “celebrated temporary liberation” from prevailing truth and established to suit more personal drives (p. 28). In other words, women find they can no sooner relate to Mary Sue than they can to the ‘bimbo of the week’.

23Similarly, Tosenberger said that fan writers often feel an impulse to “correct the canon” (as quoted in Chan 2009).
order, a “feast” that is hostile to all that is immortalised and complete (p. 10). Shave (2004) argued that by destabilising and marginalising heterosexuality, carnival in slash makes visible the historically constructed nature of social hierarchies (p. 2). This links to Jenkins (1992a), who described fan fiction as culture’s way of repairing damage done by a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of the folk (p. 23).

In this thesis paratopia is applied to slash inspired by *Supernatural*, which, by virtue of the protagonists (brothers Sam and Dean Winchester) involves incest. The most notable scholarship on *Supernatural* slash has been by Catherine Tosenberger (2008a) who used both romantopia and intimatopia in her analysis. Tosenberger (2008a) argued that rather than being seen as producing texts that are a perverse resistance to a nonincestual show, *Supernatural* slash writers should be seen as allowing the characters a lasting happiness that the show eternally defers. However, as the thesis will demonstrate, Wincest (as *Supernatural* slash is often labelled) that explores potentials of romance or intimacy between the brothers — or in Jenkins’s words, that repairs damage done — is not romantopic, nor intimatopic, but paratopic, due to the necessary changes the slash writer must make to negotiate, what will be argued as, Dean’s homophobia and authentically present the characters in either sexual or intimate love.

Romantopia, intimatopia and paratopia can be said to generally inhabit a world of homosocial desire — as is discussed above and suggested by existing literature in the field.
2.8 MONSTROPIA

The second typology presented by this thesis is monstropia, which in contrast to the aforementioned terms can be understood to generally inhabit a world of homosexual panic.

2.8.1 HOMOSEXUAL PANIC

MacDonald (1976) defined homophobia as anxiety or anticipatory anxiety elicited by homosexual individuals. West (1977) agreed, arguing that psychoanalytic theory suggests that homophobia is the result of repressed homosexual urges or a form of latent homosexuality. Latent homosexuality can be

24 Alfred Kinsey’s et al. (1948) influential study into male sexuality revealed that at least 37% of the United States’s male population would have some homosexual experience to the point of orgasm between the beginning of adolescence and old age (p. 623). Like Sedgwick, Kinsey believed in a sexuality continuum, this time between heterosexuality and homosexuality. One of the more contentious conclusions of Kinsey’s study was his suggestion that more men experience homosexual desires than was previously believed — or perhaps, previously admitted. Virginia Uribe (1994) believed most men prefer a view of male sexuality as black and white as opposed to a continuum shade of grey. She argued that many men employ a variety of psychological defences to avoid confronting their homosexual interests. These defences may include denial, heterosexual dating and channelling sexual desire into other pursuits that permit them to superficially escape homosexual stigma and promote the living of a double identity (p. 169).
defined as homosexual arousal that the individual is either unaware of or denies (see Slaby 1994). Essentially, when a homophobic person is confronted with a situation that threatens to excite their own unwanted homosexual thoughts, they overreact with panic or anger. Sedgwick (1996) argued that Sigmund Freud traced every instance of paranoia to the repression of same-sex desire (p. 277). However, until 1996 the relationship between homophobia and latent homosexuality had yet to be empirically tested²⁵ (p. 277).

Whereas the medieval, sexually ambiguous characters of *Merlin* are usefully understood via Sedgwick’s homosocial desire (as are *Supernatural’s* paratopic slash stories of a ‘lasting happiness eternally deferred’), what can be described as homophobic *Supernatural* slash is more suitably understood as being sexually driven by homosexual panic due to this homophobic content.

### 2.8.2 MONSTROUS SEXUALITY

Patricia MacCormack’s (2004) ‘monstrous sexuality’ was used to describe a perverse subject, and is the theory that underpins my development of the category ‘monstropia’.

²⁵Adams et al. (1996) used penile plethysmography to measure the penile circumference of homophobic men compared with non-homophobic men on viewing homosexual stimuli. The study concluded that the homophobic men registered an almost full arousal level to the homosexual content, while the registered level for non-homophobic men was insignificant. The study confirmed West’s (1977) views on homophobia, that it is associated with homosexual arousal of which the homophobic individual is either unaware of or denies (Adams et al. 1996, p. 443; also see Mahaffey et al. 2005; Parrott & Zeichner 2008; Meier et al. 2006).
MacCormack (2004) argued that culture defines perversion as whatever is not traditionally heterosexual (p. 2). By this definition any desire beyond socially sanctioned forms of heterosexuality — that may or may not challenge established genders or gender roles — is a desire of the perverse subject (p. 2). Further, MacCormack (2004) used the term ‘monster’ to describe the perverse subject. She argued that perversion has a strong relationship with the naming of social-sexual monsters and that therefore perversion can be described as monstrous sexuality (MacCormack 2004, p. 6).

Peter Murphy (2001) named the machine as the predominant cultural metaphor of masculinity, a cold, disembodied and powerful piece of equipment (p. 17). Similarly, in *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (1999), Susan Faludi argued that through a constant societal requirement for men to show their ‘armoured self’ to the world at all times, contemporary culture does as much damage to men as it does women — a suggestion that makes the ‘knight in shining armour’ image, synonymous with romance fiction, no longer seem so harmless (Gauntlett 2008, p. 10).

Slash stories based on homosocial desire challenge myths of conventional sexuality, heroicism, masculinity and gender roles and chip away at the ‘knight in shining armour’ image through stories of men loving men based on shared friendship, trust and adventure. However, MacDonald (2006) argued that homosexuality is not a major political motivator in slash (pp. 28, 29). In monstropia it is a denial of gayness that feeds homosexual panic and makes the monstropic text, in the words of Joanna Russ (1985), not really about homosexuality at all, but instead, about female fantasies of
heterosexual sex acted out via ostensibly male bodies (as quoted in Salmon & Symons 2004, p. 8).

Jenkins (1992a) believed slash stories to be a positive step toward the acceptance of gay sexuality for treating homosexual relations as a given (p. 221). Bacon-Smith (1992) disagreed, arguing that heterosexual women who write slash are more interested in expressing their own polymorphous sexual desires than exploring issues of gay identity (see pp. 238–252). Other theorists (see Green et al. 1998) suggest it is the manipulating and ‘watching’ that excites. With few slash characters showing any signs of anxiety or angst around their sexual actions, these arguments suggest that slash is driven by a fascination with homosexual sex, with the ultimate aim of any slash plot to get two male characters into bed (Weinstein 2006, p. 615).

In *Supernatural*, the protagonists seek out monsters, and in so doing, deny themselves the prospect of any long term romantic, heterosexual relationships (Tosenberger 2008a, pp. 4–5). This links back to MacCormack (2004) who believed that in order to become a social-sexual monster, one must first desire monsters (p. 34). This means that, in relation to Faludi’s (1999) ‘armoured self’ and Murphy’s (2001) ‘man as machine’, the truly monstrous component of monstropia is not heartless sexual content, but its inherent homophobia. Without slash fiction’s loving embraces and trademark ‘shared adventures’, monstropia is as non-progressive, exploitative and constrictive of male sexuality as the most homophobic of gay jokes. In other words, monstropia sees sexuality as black and white, as a dichotomy (natural/monstrous,
heterosexual/homosexual), instead of a continuum of shades of grey. It is in this world that homosexual panic thrives.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter reviewed academic and fan-based research to map literature in the field pertaining to the study of slash fiction. Theories on the active audience and television fandom were followed by a discussion of romantopia and intimatopia as ‘frameworks’ for understanding slash concerned with homosocial desire. The chapter also introduced paratopia and monstropia as two additional frameworks and argued that romantopia and intimatopia, while useful, cannot be applied to all slash stories. The four categories taken together offer a more comprehensive approach to the study of slash, especially as monstropia explores texts concerned with homosexual panic. The value of these ‘topias’ as analytic tools will be demonstrated through the body of the thesis.
Method

Deconstructive textual analysis and queer readings are two interrelated methodological approaches to culture and its objects that are useful paradigms for the comparative analysis of slash texts. This chapter demonstrates how the approaches are related. First it examines the role of qualitative textual analysis within cultural studies, where it holds a central position as the method of choice for the ‘intuitive’ study of texts. Together with its usefulness in bridging the gap between academia and fandom, the chapter then looks more specifically at a deconstructive textual analysis, with reference to the poststructuralist theories of Derrida (1976, 1978, 1987, 1989) to show how deconstruction seeks to disrupt dominant discourse (in particular Derrida’s critique of ‘logocentrism’ and ‘phonocentrism’ in Western metaphysics). Foucault’s ([1976] 1980) ‘reverse discourse’ and Derrida’s ‘supplementarity’ link deconstruction with queer theory through a critique of the heterosexual/homosexual binary, so fundamental to queer thought. The chapter concludes — with reference to the dismantling of the hierarchical binary heterosexual/homosexual — that queer readings are a form of deconstruction that aims to disrupt dominant discourse in order to construct positions of resistance. Both queer theory and deconstruction challenge identity-formation and the objectivism of traditional literary criticism, making them ideal for the comparative study of slash texts.
3.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Textual analysis is a qualitative method that regards cultural products as powerful forces in shaping contemporary culture (Martin & Nakayama 2007, p. 27). When performing textual analysis researchers are making an educated guess at the most likely interpretation(s) of a text (McKee 2001, p. 140; Kerr et al. 2006, p. 65). It should be noted that there are a variety of methods that can be used in the qualitative examination of a text, and that textual analysis is just one of them. While methods such as qualitative content analysis and qualitative ideological criticism are often grouped under a more generic understanding of textual analysis, Curtin (1995) argued that this is misleading as all qualitative textual approaches are different (p. 13; Kellner 2003, p. 9). For example, Johnson (1986–1987) argued that the major difference between qualitative content analysis and textual analysis is how each approach positions the text (p. 38). In qualitative content analysis the text remains at the centre, studied for its own sake and sometimes the social effects it may be thought to produce. Textual analysis, however, is interested in the subjective or cultural meanings a text makes available, a process that involves what Johnson (1986–1987) described as the ‘decentring’ of a text (Johnson 1986–1987, p. 38). Because of this decentering, McKee (2001) argued that the first and most important rule of textual analysis is “context, context, context” (p. 145).

In the social sciences textual analysis is often seen as tedious and time-consuming. Despite the richness of a highly qualitative analysis, textual analyses typically lack precision and inferential strength, which Carley (1993) argued is ‘frowned upon’ by social scientists (p. 76). For the social scientist content analysis, which can deal
with many texts, is often seen as a solution to the problems of textual analysis (p. 77). Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, textual analysis will be understood from a cultural studies perspective, where it has become a method of choice (McKee 2001, p. 138).

### 3.2 CULTURAL STUDIES

Traditionally, cultural studies researchers have not paid much attention to research methods and methodologies (Barker 2005, p. 24). McKee (2001) believed this is because a key insight of cultural studies has been that rigorous methodologies can limit research (p. 140). In cultural studies it is neither truth nor greatness that is looked for in texts, but rather expressions of power and identity-formation (McKee 2001, p. 138). Therefore, if readers only ask the same questions, in the same ways, they will continue to get similar answers. While this does not mean methods are not useful to the cultural studies researcher, it does suggest that more qualitative, dynamic methods of research are preferred. Qualitative methods are best suited to cultural studies because they focus on cultural meaning (Barker 2005, p. 25). What this demonstrates is a tendency within cultural studies for textual methods to be applied intuitively rather than rigorously. The intuitive application of textual analysis is particularly important when analysing slash.

### 3.3 ANALYSING SLASH

Joli Jenson (1992) argued that fans are often caricatured as extreme fanatics, and fandoms represented as excessive and bordering on deranged (p. 9). Jenson (1992)
went on to argue that, by stigmatising fandoms as deviant, researchers become cut off from understanding how value and meaning is enacted and shared in contemporary life (p. 26). Jenkins (2009) argued that scholars need to bridge the gap between the worlds of academia and fandom, to liberate cultural theory from the academic bookstore ghetto and open up a larger space to talk about media matters from an audience’s point of view.

According to Lawrence Grossberg (1992) the fan is active, the consumer passive, and because of this activity the fan is “affectively empowered” (p. 65). What this means is that as fan cultures continue to create more and more sophisticated forms of writing and rewriting television textuality, it is no longer enough for an academic to be ‘willing’ to study fan cultures. With active, astute and literate television audiences frequently knowing more about a given television show or genre than even the best-funded academic or commercial researcher, according to Jenkins (2009), in order to study fandom, one must first be a fan (see Hartley 1999; Jenkins 1992a; Tulloch & Jenkins 1995).

Textual analysis is the obvious approach for the study of texts within cultural studies, which makes it also the obvious approach for the study of cultural texts, like slash. Although it comes in many guises, including ‘literary criticism’, textual analysis in cultural studies draws from three main modes of analysis: semiotics, narrative theory and deconstructionism (Barker 2005, p. 28). Analyses in this thesis adopt a deconstructionist approach to textual analysis, which has its roots in the work of poststructuralist Jacques Derrida (1976, 1978, 1987, 1989).
3.4 POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Poststructuralism is an anti-essentialist movement that believes meaning to be always deferred and in process (Barker 2005, pp. 19, 95). It rejects the idea of an underlying stable structure that holds meaning through fixed binary pairs, and critiques assumptions of a Saussurian model of linguistics — on which structuralism can be said to be broadly based (Barker 2005, p. 17; Young 1981, p. vii). For the poststructuralist there can be no meaning that is clear, descriptive and stable (Barker 2005, p. 95). Instead meaning is constantly slipping from one sign to the next. In terms of Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1916) semiotics, what this means is that signifiers do not produce signifieds but an endless chain of other signifiers. For the poststructuralist there can be no truth, subject or identity that exists outside of language. In other words, a person or subject is not a stable universal entity but rather a construct of language. This ‘decentring’ of the unified, coherent subject represents the anti-humanist nature of poststructuralism (Barker 2005, p. 17). That being said, Young (1981) argued that there is no great consensus about what poststructuralism actually is, except perhaps that it involves the work of Derrida (p. viii).

3.5 DERRIDA AND DECONSTRUCTION

Derrida’s definition of a deconstructive practice is a form of textual analysis that challenges the objectivism of some traditional forms of literary criticism. Assumptions about how texts are read and written are also challenged by deconstruction’s critique of ‘logocentrism’ (universal meanings) and ‘phonocentrism’ (privileging of sounds and
speech over writing) of Western metaphysics (Barker 2005, p. 96; Agger 1991, p. 112). In short, Derrida believed meaning to be a function of presence and absence that has always been structured in terms of dichotomies and polarities. Through its process of *sous rature*, meaning ‘under erasure’, deconstruction seeks to disrupt dominant discourse, and to construct positions of resistance (Burman 1990).

Deconstruction does not mean textual vandalism and is not synonymous with destruction (Johnson 1972, p. xiv). Rather ‘deconstruction’ is etymologically close in meaning to the word ‘analysis’, which means “to undo” — essentially, to ‘deconstruct’

(Johnson 1978, p. 3). As Johnson argued (1978), if anything is destroyed during a deconstructive reading it is not the text but rather a claim in the text to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another (p. 3). In Derrida’s (1976) use of the term, deconstruction analyses the production of truths and seeks out the blind spots in texts (Namaste 1994, p. 221). Derrida (1976) believed that when fundamental assumptions of a text are probed (or analysed) they unravel. In other words, deconstruction seeks to expose the tension between what a text means to say and what it is constrained to mean (Barker 2005, p. 29).

Derrida believed every text to be ‘contested terrain’, in the sense that what it appears to say on the surface cannot be understood without reference to what it conceals (Agger 1991, p. 112). It is in this way that deconstructive readings pry open gaps in meaning, undermining the stability of a text by turning oppositions into

26Deconstruction is useful for ‘untying’ slash fiction’s complex knot of dread and desire.
supplements and allowing for alternative readings. To the deconstructionist, words never transmit a single, indisputable meaning, but instead, language is a field of contending voices, thrown up by the dynamism and struggle of the social world (Fuery & Mansfield 2000, pp. 4.8, 4.10). In deconstruction, these contending voices include the binaries of Western philosophy.

A function of deconstruction is to seek out, display and dismantle the assumptions of a text — an example is assumed heterosexuality (Barker 2005, p. 29). Derrida believed, as did de Saussure, that words produce meaning only with reference to other words, these ‘other words’ often including binary oppositions (Agger 1991, p. 113). A deconstructive scrutiny of the heterosexual/homosexual binary is fundamental to queer theory.

3.6 QUEER THEORY

Queer theory concerns itself with the ways in which homosexual subjectivity is produced by and excluded from culture (Namaste 1994, p. 220). In queer theory, ‘queer’ is always an identity under construction. Like poststructuralism, Eldeman (1995) believed queer theory “utopic in its negativity”, a theory that curves endlessly toward the realisation that its own realisation remains impossible (p. 346). According to queer theorist Annamarie Jagose (1996), queer theory is best understood as promoting a non-identity, or even anti-identity (p. 1). With no interest in consolidation or stabilisation, ‘queer’ critiques all other identity-focused movements as fictitious. Similarly, in her queer reading of medieval texts, Carolyn Dinshaw (1995) argued that queerness works
by “contiguity and displacement”, by knocking signifiers loose, ungrounding bodies and making them strange (p. 76).

Poststructuralism — with its views on sexual identities as constructed — has had an important influence on queer theory’s development (Namaste 1994, p. 220). In fact, Jagose (1996) argued that queer theory’s debunking of stable sexes, genders and sexualities can be best understood as a specifically gay and lesbian reworking of a poststructuralist view of identity as a constellation of multiple and unstable positions (p. 2). It is in this way that the writings of poststructuralists Derrida and Michel Foucault have influenced queer thought.

Derrida’s ‘supplementarity’ is useful in understanding the link between the heterosexual and the homosexual (Fuss 1991, p. 1). Derrida’s (1976) ‘supplement’ suggested that meanings are organised through difference in a dynamic play of presence and absence (p. 244). Concerning binaries, Derrida believed meaning is created through the exclusion and devaluation of what is deemed the ‘inferior’ half of the binary27 (Barker 2005, p. 29). In other words, that something is what it is because of what it is not, for example, that a macho homophobic male can define himself as ‘straight’ only in that he is not an effeminate gay male. This means that homosexuality is

27Derrida (1976) coined différance, meaning ‘difference and deferral’, in support of his argument that binaries need to be deconstructed (see Parker 1989).
not excluded from heterosexuality, but is in fact integral to its definition\textsuperscript{28}. The writings of Foucault offer additional insight into the heterosexual/homosexual pairing.

Foucault is as significant to poststructuralism as Derrida (Namaste 1994, pp. 220–221). In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault ([1976] 1980) examined the organisation of Western sexuality through a study of Victorian society and a critique of what he termed “the repressive hypothesis” (p. 15). Foucault argued that, from the rise of sexology to judicial institutions, sexuality was a profoundly discussed and regulated entity within Victorian society. What this meant was that the society that gave rise to the category of the ‘homosexual’ was one where sexuality was produced through discourse.

Foucault believed social identities to be effects of the ways in which knowledge is organised. To support this, he pointed out that homosexuals did not exist prior to classification, although homosexual practices did. To Foucault this meant that the Victorian category of the homosexual was a way of socially regulating perversity. Foucault believed this also gave rise to what he termed a ‘reverse discourse’, whereby homosexuals began to speak on their own behalf, demanding legitimacy as a natural category (p. 101). However, as this ‘speaking up’ used the same vocabulary and categories by which Victorian society had medically disqualified the homosexual as perverse, Foucault — and poststructuralism — campaigned for the abandonment of

\textsuperscript{28}The link between homosexuality and homophobia is important to this thesis’s discussion of homosexual panic. See 2.8.1 for MacDonald’s (1976) definition of homophobia as anxiety or anticipatory anxiety elicited by homosexual individuals.
labelling theory and deviance-perspectives — which define homosexual identities only in opposition to a naturalised, stabilised heterosexuality (p. 101; Namaste 1994, p. 227). Foucault’s reverse discourse has served as the foundation of what has come to be known in queer theory as ‘the queer dilemma’, where fixed identity categories are both the basis of oppression as well as the vehicle for political power (Gamson 1995, p. 391). Although identity-based movements make sense, the key to liberation is refusing rather than embracing a minority status. In the words of Ki Namaste (1994), it is only in moving beyond a deviance model and deconstructing clear collective categories that obstacles to resistance and change can be overcome (p. 227).

Queering, like deconstruction, is not synonymous with destruction, but rather involves the disruption of binaries, with the privileging of the ‘inferior’ term, in many cases, of the homosexual in opposition to the heterosexual. This is why the queer reading of a text can be seen as a form of deconstruction. Hazel Smith (2005) described queering as a process of ‘writing back’ that views history as discontinuous and full of gaps and silences where the stories of the repressed and marginalised should be. Both queering and deconstruction are thus useful paradigms for the comparative analysis of slash texts29 (p. 134). It is also worth noting that slash is itself a deconstructive practice and queering process.

29 It is worth noting that Dhaenens et al. (2008) similarly argued for the usefulness of queer and post-structuralist theory in the study of slash when he called for a “multidisciplinary approach that includes queer theory frameworks and insights from audience and reception studies” (p. 335).
3.7 CONCLUSION

Deconstructive textual analysis is a method for the study of culture and underpins queer theory. This chapter argued that queer readings are a form of deconstruction and are useful approaches for the study of slash. It traced the development of textual analysis within cultural studies and its suitability to the intuitive study of slash. It then looked more specifically at a deconstructive and queer approach to textual analysis. The chapter explored the common aims of deconstructive textual analysis and queer readings, those aims being to dismantle hierarchical binaries — such as heterosexual/homosexual — and disrupt dominant discourse in order to construct positions of resistance. Challenging constructions of gender and sexuality, deconstructive textual analysis and its application within queer theory is also significant on a linguistic level. Derrida argued that when a word’s meaning is bound up in other words of unequal value, dominant discourse remains unchallenged; and society is sentenced to remain, as Nietzsche once put it, locked in the prison house of language.
Paratopia

Paratopia is a category of slash centrally concerned with either psychological or geographical fantasy. As the chapter shows, psychological paratopia are stories that change character (shown through J2 and Mary Sue examples), while geographical paratopia are stories that change location (shown through a close reading of Astolat’s (2008a) *Aerial*, an Alternate Universe example). The chapter concludes that geographical paratopia is likely to be preferred by fans because it allows a lasting happiness that belongs to the characters themselves, rather than a variation of them. To illustrate the framework, *Supernatural* is used as an example of a text that inspires paratopic slash. Why *Supernatural* slash is best served by paratopia is explained through links the show has with the road genre. The chapter includes selected episode summaries (see Appendices two and three) and moments of note within the series, demonstrating the homoerotic potentials of the show’s lead characters, brothers Sam and Dean Winchester. The chapter argues that *Supernatural* inspires paratopic slash because of a continual denial of happiness within the series. It concludes that slash inspired by *Supernatural*, which seeks to explore potentials of romance or intimacy between the brothers, is only possible if the writer is willing to wrestle control away from the show’s creators and envision a romance that changes either psychology or geography.
4.1 IMPALA AND THE ROAD GENRE

*Supernatural*\(^{30}\) tells the story of two brothers and their pit stops across middle America in a 1967 Chevrolet Impala. In *The End of Victory Culture* Tom Engelhardt (1995) described the car as a symbol of ’50s American freedom (p. 145). He argued that during that time no popular concept of freedom existed without access to ‘wheels’. *Supernatural* has a similar ’50s American feel, which it owes to the Impala’s significance within the show. Series creator Eric Kripke (2007) agreed when he said that “the car is its own character [and] we always pitched it as the third lead in the show” (as quoted in Knight 2007, p. 142). The Impala is a knight in dark shining armour.

\(^{30}\)The show gets its name from the nature of the small town evil monsters-of-the-week the brothers fight in a journey that began as a search for their father and revenge for their mother. As the show progresses and the motivations behind their shared lives on the road change from ‘for vengeance’ to ‘for survival’ to ‘for the job’ (once their mother has been avenged and their father found), the road trip becomes their only freedom, as well as their only reprieve from whatever horrors might await them at the next stop. For a time (seasons one through three mostly) it keeps them one town ahead of the law, which would see them held accountable for the death and destruction left not by them, but by the demons they have hunted. At time of writing, the ongoing saga of Sam and Dean sees them gearing up for a battle of biblical proportions between Heaven and Hell.
Many of the more endearing moments between the boys occur within it, either parked or speeding down an empty highway. It is a safe place; and a familiar one in their different-hotel-every-week lives. It is a mobile home for the boys, and for Dean, his baby. Because of this, at its heart *Supernatural* belongs to the road genre\(^\text{31}\), evident through the words “the road so far”, which begin the recaps before each episode (see Figure 4.03).

\[\text{Figure 4.03}\\
\text{Words preceding the recap for Lazarus Rising}\]

\(^{31}\)Texts of the road genre evoke myths and symbols of the frontier and American West. Such symbols include the cowboy, an icon of proud individualism, frontier justice and rugged heartland morality (Ireland 2003, p. 475). While in American culture the cowboy was once morally and racially “whiter than white”, Brian Ireland (2003) argued that following World War II blemishes began showing up on the cowboy image as troubling character flaws, shady histories and questionable tactics muddied the image of cowboys everywhere (p. 477). As an example, Ireland (2003) called on the heroes of Jack Kerouac’s (1957) *On the Road*, who he described as “thieves, thugs, womanisers and sexual predators with paedophilic tendencies” (p. 477). This gave rise to the ‘antihero as hero’, or heroes with questionable morals, who are frequent visitors within the road genre (Ireland 2003, p. 477). Sam and Dean are classic examples of rogue cowboys.
Like medieval narratives, road narratives tend to portray closed male-only societies, making men in general the most represented within the genre. What this means is that the formula for a road narrative is usually same-sex driven, in a world where women are excluded or incidental and male bonding is important. It is in this way, Ireland (2003) argued, that road narratives reflect traditional roles played by men and women in society, whereby men ‘hunt and gather’, or ‘hit the road’, while women stay at home (p. 481). As to what motivates the men onto the road, Ireland (2003) argued that the “search for a father” is a common culprit, because the characters in road narratives tend to be predominantly male, the father-son bond becomes a useful quencher for the men’s wanderlust (pp. 479–480).

In *Supernatural*, male interests are defined through the marginalisation and exchange of women, as well as the repression of homosexuality. As Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar once said, “women can only be the dumb love interest of the hero who needs him to save her, or who’s there so he doesn’t appear to be gay” (as quoted in Maddison 2000, p. 273). Sedgwick (1985) defined this as the ‘blackmailability’ of Western maleness, which relies on the leverage of homophobia to authenticate heterosexuality (p. 89). This means two things. First, that women are the vehicles through which relations between men are driven; and second, that once women are removed, road narratives are highly homoerotic spaces.

---

32 The rare exceptions often being closed female-only societies.
The character of Nancy Fitzgerald in *Jus in Bello* (3.12) is a good example of how women are exchanged in *Supernatural*. Nancy is a rosary beads carrying, crucifix wearing virgin the brothers save from being sacrificed by a demon (see Figure 4.04). Nancy is a typical *Supernatural* ‘babe of the week’. She is there so that the characters do not appear gay, particularly Dean, who says, “I’m not gonna let that demon kill some nice innocent girl who hasn’t even been laid”. Like all other babes of the week, Nancy is discarded\(^{33}\) (tortured and murdered) at the episode’s end, but not before saying, “when this is over I’m gonna have so much sex”. The argument that without women road narratives are homoerotic spaces is supported by Tosenberger (2008a), who argued that *Supernatural* slash is an expression of readings suggested and supported by the show itself (p. 0.1).

\[^{33}\text{According to Tosenberger, “female characters on \textit{Supernatural} seem to be routinely thrown under the bus” (as quoted in Chan 2009). She also recalled an interview with Gamble (\textit{Supernatural}’s executive story editor) who believed Castiel’s popularity with fans was helped by his gender (see Chan 2009).}\]
4.2 \textit{SUPERNATURAL AND THE PARASOCIAL}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\columnwidth]{figure4.05.png}
\caption{Sam and Dean (played by Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles) in \textit{Playthings}}
\end{figure}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Dean:} The most troubling question is, why do these people assume we’re gay?
\textbf{Sam:} Well you were kind of butch, probably think you’re over compensating.
\end{quote}

As outlined in the literature review (see 2.7), Tosenberger (2008a) argued that \textit{Supernatural} slash (or ‘Wincest’) is best understood as an expression of readings suggested and supported by the show itself, rather than as a perverse, oppositional resistance to a heterosexual, non-incestuous show (p. 0.1). She argued that \textit{Supernatural} frequently draws attention to its own homoerotic energy\textsuperscript{34}, quoting executive story editor Sera Gamble\textsuperscript{35} (see Borsellino 2006) who in jest described her conception of the show as “the epic love story of Sam and Dean” (Tosenberger 2008a, pp. 1–2). Tosenberger (2008a) also believed that too much of a focus on how queer

\textsuperscript{34}Critic Whitney Cox (2006) likened the onscreen chemistry between the brothers to that of Mulder and Scully from \textit{The X-Files}, generating “enough sexual tension to power a small city”.

\textsuperscript{35}Tosenberger described Gamble as “very savvy on the ins and outs of fandom” (as quoted in Chan 2009).
readings ‘make’ texts queer may mask the ways in which television shows, like *Supernatural*, could be understood to be queer on their own.\(^{36}\) (p. 1.5).

### 4.3 BROTHERLY LOVE

In the literature review (see 2.4), Jenkins (1992a) was quoted as saying, slash writers prefer to rewrite television characters rather than create their own because they come “ready-made” (p. 194). *Supernatural* is uniquely difficult to slash, not because of the incest taboo, but rather because, in sexualising the characters, writers risk changing them. This thesis argues that, because Sam and Dean’s relationship is so clearly a familial one, *Supernatural* slash is only ever made possible by doing one of two things, either changing the boys themselves or changing their situation. This is because of certain obstacles that prevent the sexualised scenarios or characters from remaining ‘true-to-the-series’.

Whereas romantopia and intimatopia allow characters to remain as they are in the series — for example, Merlin and Arthur from *Merlin* as a manservant and prince whose intimacy becomes sexual\(^{37}\) — Sam and Dean are bound up as a brother and brother, as a family — a relationship where the negotiation of closeness is more

\(^{36}\)Alexander Doty (1993) wrote on queer desire in television shows. He argued that queerness pervades all cultural products, being present in even supposedly ‘straight’ television settings (Doty 1993, p. 56; also see Newcomb & Hirsch 1983).

\(^{37}\)See Sedgwick 1984, pp. 226–245 for a discussion of the homosocial bonds between a gentleman and a gentleman’s gentleman — useful for understanding why Merlin and Arthur, as manservant and master, are so sexually charged.
difficult. This is supported by the episodes summarised in Appendix two and in Tosenberger’s (2008a) argument that the most homoerotic episodes are those that involve family. In order to sexualise Sam and Dean, a writer must first assess their relationship as brothers, and in so doing, decide to address its associated problems, or ignore them. Many choose the latter. This is why, in many examples of Supernatural slash, writers succeed in sexualising the brotherly bond of Sam and Dean only through substantial, psychological change.

Arthur: I could take you apart with one blow.
Merlin: I could take you apart with less than that.
Arthur: Here you go big man [throws Merlin a sword].

*Dragon’s Call* (1.01)

*Supernatural* slash is inherently paratopic because it is only on abandoning normality, and the possibility of a lasting heterosexual romance, that a sexual
relationship between the brothers can be fully realised. As indicated in relation to the
Merlin fandom, this is not the case with all slash texts\textsuperscript{38}.

So why then is Supernatural slash so popular? In short, the brothers’ only chance
of happiness is with each other\textsuperscript{39}, a scenario made all but impossible within the series.
This links back to ideas of the road genre and ‘the dream’ that characters in road
narratives search for and are eternally denied. It is also similar to the testimonials that
surfaced during Reinhard’s (2009) ‘structured conversation’ into the motivations of slash
writers (p. 7; see 2.7). Whereas romantopia is about sex and intimatopia about intimacy,
paratopia is about fantasy. To demonstrate why certain examples of Supernatural slash
are better understood as paratopic, slash stories will now be explored that either
change the boys psychologically or geographically in order to successfully sexualise their
bond.

\textsuperscript{38}Merlin and Arthur are so homoerotically charged in the series that they do not need to
abandon normality to be sexual — they are in all likelihood already on their way to sexual encounters,
with or without the help of a slash writer.

\textsuperscript{39}Slash writer Killa (2006) explained it best in Carry Me Over the Sky when she wrote that in
Dean, Sam knew the “rough safety of letting go with the one person he could trust to put him back
together again”.

Paratopia
4.4  PSYCHOLOGICAL PARATOPIA

Real Person Slash (RPS) and Mary Sue (MS) are two examples of stories that substantially revise psychology for the purpose of fantasies that still reflect notions of homosocial desire. In Supernatural RPS, instead of Sam/Dean it is Jared/Jensen (that is, Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles, the actors who play Sam and Dean in the series).

Known in the fandom as J2, ‘true-to-the-actors J2’ explore the mechanics of filming the show. In Felisblanco’s (2009) When in Rome, for example, the boys are in Rome promoting season one on DVD when one afternoon, “without realising, Jensen falls suddenly and completely unexpectedly in love with Jared”, which is all thanks to a spotted kitten with green eyes. Then there is Demon Tongue’s (2007b) Parasomnia, which is a character study fantasy that, following a night of sleep walking in a backwoods cabin, makes the boys realise that getting intimate with each other is much more interesting than better understanding their on-screen personae.

‘Not-true-to-the-actors J2’ are stories where, in extreme cases, the only alliance the narrative has with the series or its actors are the names Jared and Jensen. One example is Underdog_14’s (2009) Together as One, which includes male pregnancy and sees Jared as a single dad and Jensen (or Mr Ackles) as his son’s teacher (see Figure

---

The word ‘substantially’ is used here because, as was outlined in the literature review, the process of slashing often involves slight changes to character, such as the feminising of the main point of view character. In its use here the change is more pronounced, to the point where the characters being slashed become almost unrecognisable from how they are portrayed in the series.
4.08). It is much more *Kindergarten Cop* (Salem 1990) than *Supernatural*-filming-set.

Other not-true-to-the-actors J2 include ‘cross-overs’, which mix Jared and Jensen with locations and characters from different fictional universes. Three illustrative examples are Trolleys’s (2009c, 2009a, 2009b) *My Lovely Sam Soon*, a Korean drama about a pastry chef down on his luck and the playboy who hires him to work his restaurant and be his pretend boyfriend, just to annoy his controlling mother (see Figure 4.10); *Bull Durham*, a pitcher/catcher fantasy inspired by the film\(^1\) (Shelton 1988), where Jensen is a minor league veteran catcher brought in to teach Jared, a rookie pitcher, about baseball (see Figure 4.09); and *Misfortune Cookie*, a body switch narrative, *Freaky Friday* (Hach & Dixon 2003) style, where Jared and Jensen are mismatched stepbrothers who, after spending time in one other’s bodies, fall in love (even if it is with themselves; see Figure 4.11).

\(^{1}\)Interestingly, the film is a romantic comedy and the love interest is between a fan and the baseball veteran. Merge ‘fan’ with ‘Jared-the-young-hotshot-pitcher-with-a-wild-arm’ and you have this story.
Figure 4.09
Bull Durham by Trolleys

Figure 4.10
My Lovely Sam Soon by Trolleys
Figure 4.11

Misfortune Cookie by Trolleys

The End
In a disclaimer accompanying *Bull Durham* Trolleys (2009a) wrote that while naming the baseball team “Hell Hounds” would have been more *Supernatural*-appropriate, “Hound Dogs” was ultimately used because it is a better fit for “America’s favourite pastime”; while for *Misfortune Cookie* Trolleys (2009b) wrote that if readers find the “pseudo-cest” of stepbrothers too much, they should “feel free” to imagine the boys as high school rivals instead. These are stories where the need to remain ‘true’ to the characters is secondary to the need to remain true to the cross-over universe. This makes them paratopic. However, what makes J2 *noteworthy* as part of a discussion of *Supernatural* slash is that, like Sam and Dean, Jared and Jensen, too, are homosocially-charged media characters. In fact, it is likely that the popularity of *Supernatural* slash is fuelled in part by the off screen chemistry of the actors.

---

*This is a better fit with the film as well. Trolleys’s (2009b) story also included Chad Michael Murray, who played the love interest in the film.*

*By “media characters” it is meant not only how Jared and Jensen are represented by the media (for example, in interviews), but also how they represent themselves to fans (for example, at conventions). Tosenberger felt it necessary to make a similar distinction when she said, due to prejudice against RPS in fandom, it is crucial to remember that “RPS is about public personae, it’s about public image ... it’s really just borrowing faces to tell a story” (as quoted in Chan 2009).*
With the pair sharing a house in Vancouver and carpooling to work together each day, Jared and Jensen’s interactions off screen are as sexually-charged as those on (Chang 2008). While their flirtatious interactions in public are more likely a form of gay joking (to be explored more fully in the next chapter) and homosocial camaraderie than genuine sexual desire, their very public displays of affection and sexual innuendo do influence true-to-the-actors J2. One example is SplashPink’s (2009) *Rules for Being a Good Boyfriend*, in which Jensen’s love for morning sleep-ins (see Lysell 2006, p. 22) is explored in a story inspired by Trolleys’s artwork (see Figure 4.13), *Sleeping In*, which also includes Sadie, Jared’s real-life dog. That being said, no matter how determined a J2 writer may be to write true-to-the-actors, their stories remain paratopic for dominantly relying on fantasy.

---

44 This has been confirmed by both actors, Jared during an interview with French magazine *One* (see Malfana 2008), and Jensen, when interviewed by *Séries mag*, in which he said, “Yes, together, but with the purest of intentions, even if he’s [Jared’s] constantly harassing me for sexual favours” (as quoted in Huntersaddict 2008).

45 In a 2006 interview with *TOPP*, a Norwegian magazine, in addition to admitting that they both “love walking around the house naked”, Jared also said that Jensen was the most famous celebrity he had made out with, that “Jensen’s gay” and that the first thing he does of a morning is “masturbate to the Tom Cruise poster I have on my bedroom wall” (Lysell 2006, pp. 22–23).

46 Trolleys’s inclusion of Sadie is an example of how true-to-the-actors J2 attempts to remain true to the ‘real person’ in RPS by incorporating as many peripheral characters as possible. This even includes girlfriends, in Demon Tongue’s (2007a) *Disguises*, for example, the *real* reason behind Jared’s break up with fiancée (and co-star) Sandra McCoy is explored. Trolleys’s (2009d) *Three’s Company* also depicts Sadie (see Figure 4.17).
Figure 4.15
Screenshot by I_o_r_h_a_e_l of a 2006 Jensen Ackles interview at the 11th Annual Critics' Choice Awards where Jared interrupts to attempt a kiss on the lips. Viewable on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zolsF1AZ77A

Figure 4.13
Sleeping In by Trolleys

Figure 4.14
JaredJensen courtesy Tove & Madde

Figure 4.16
J2 courtesy Illy1985
In *Supernatural*, viewers are privy to both public and private moments with the brothers — albeit fictional moments — that make them witnesses to how a person changes once indoors of a night. With Jared and Jensen, however, it is only public moments that fans see. And even these moments are staged. This is best illustrated in the pair’s 2006 interview with *TOPP* (see Lysell 2006, pp. 22–23) where Jensen said, in reference to *Supernatural*, “that’s not really the world’s most intellectual show either. Though we are forced to say something else and we’re of course thankful that we have a job.”

Rather than changing characters, Mary Sue (see 2.7 for a more general discussion of MS) invents new ones. In slash, MS is a character inserted into the universe to enjoy the sexual entanglements of, in this case, Sam and Dean. Paratopic MS characters are motivated by an interest in the homosocial desires of men, they are scopophiles, there to infiltrate, then watch. As was explored in the literature review, the invented character is seen as a way for fan writers to insert themselves into the story,
usually as a love interest. These stories are fan fantasies that take fan involvement that next step.

Blue_Soaring’s (2009) *Witness* is a good example of a paratopic MS slash text. In it readers see Sam and Dean through the eyes of Emma, who is witness to the boys’ seduction and apparent murder of a young girl (a vampire) in the alley behind a pub. Readers learn nothing about Sam and Dean from Emma, who seems less interested in her own safety than watching the two boys make out over the corpse of a dead girl.
Stephen King, in the dedication for his 1986 novel *It*, said, “fiction is the truth inside the lie, and the truth of this fiction is simple enough: the magic exists”. Borrowing King’s ‘fiction as truth’ idea, *Supernatural* is truthful in its intent to get to the heart of who Sam and Dean are — as is *Supernatural* slash\(^ {47} \), which seeks a truth of its own about the nature of their relationship. Jared, Jensen and Mary Sue, however, are not truthful in the way Sam and Dean are.

In J2 there is no ‘behind doors’ — only sexualised allusions to it. Therefore, writers ‘imagine’ the goings on of Jared and Jensen’s living arrangements (see Figure 4.19 for one such imagining). This means whether or not the boys are sexual in reality does not change what J2 stories must do, which is to speculate, and to imagine. While

\(^{47} \) *Supernatural* slash, that is, which explores notions of homosocial desire.
Supernatural slash can be allied with moments in the series (see Appendices two–six for examples), J2 stories, and RPS more generally, will always be centrally concerned with fantasy. This makes them paratopic.

Similarly, MS stories either remove or shift the focus from Sam and Dean. The brothers become objects to watch, observe and enjoy. They are no longer the heroes of their own (Supernatural’s) story, but characters in someone else’s. Like J2 stories, readers are not privy to private moments, but rather are expected to piece together the stolen glances and ‘rough intimacies’, as seen through the curtain of a window, or from a dark alley at night. Mary Sue is a peeping Tom in slash narratives.

\[48\] A possible exception to this is the slash of reality television characters. This thesis would argue, however, that ‘reality’ television characters, again, are probably closer to Sam and Dean than they are to Jared and Jensen. Take Big Brother as an example, slash stories about ‘inmates’ set within the house would be slash — as they are set within the fictional universe — whereas slash stories set outside the house would be RPS, and thus paratopic.

\[49\] The issue of ownership over fictional characters is problematic, particularly considering the theories of Roland Barthes (1974, 1977). When Barthes (1974) wrote of an “art of rereading”, he used the word ‘art’ because he believed a habit of society is to ‘throw away’ stories once they are consumed. A society that fails to reread, Barthes (1974) argued, is obliged to read the same story everywhere (pp. 15–16). Barthes (1977) also argued, through his death of the author (and rise of the reader), that conventional analysis of literature has been tyrannically centred on the author, seeking meaning through the study of the man or woman who produced the text rather than those who read it (p. 143). By saying that MS stories are ‘somebody else’s’ I mean they are foreign to all except the writer. As conceived by CW, Supernatural is the heroes’ own story and the realm in which fans first fell in love with them. While making these characters one’s own is part of the appeal of slash, in MS stories, by introducing main characters unknown to all except the author, that realm is changed.

\[50\] Borrowing from Killa’s (2006) “rough safety”.

Paratopia
Psychological paratopia is more intrusive than geographical paratopia. This is because writers change not only the characters, but also their hearts. In these stories, who Sam and Dean were in the series is taken, dismantled and then put back together in a way that makes them unrecognisable. When it comes to paratopic narratives, a change of geography is usually preferable because it shows a reverence for the characters. Considering it was the bonds of these characters that inspired slash, changing these bonds is likely to isolate readers, who read slash to experience the relationship between the characters they know and love, taken in a new direction.

4.5 GEOGRAPHICAL PARATOPIA

Stories that change Sam and Dean’s geography — rather than psychology — in order to sexualise their bond are known as Alternate Universe (AU) stories. AU slash stories that are concerned with homosocial desire are the second type of paratopia. Geographical change is a more difficult approach because, although the environment might be different, all of the interpersonal obstacles from the series (primarily that they are brothers) still need to be negotiated. As outlined in the previous section, with geographical change the eventual happiness that the characters find is granted to Sam and Dean, and not a variation on Sam and Dean. To understand why AU and geography change might be necessary in the case of Supernatural, it is important to first understand the obstacles to romance and intimacy that Sam and Dean face in the series.

At time of writing there had been four seasons of Supernatural (with at least one more on the way). Through their experiences the boys have become closer to each
other, but more estranged from the lives they knew prior to hitting the road. This contrary motion — ‘closer, yet more estranged’ — has fuelled many of the complications and complexities of Sam and Dean’s relationship. Namely Sam’s restlessness and advancing interest in the occult, along with Dean’s protectiveness of Sam, frustration over the failing trust between them and sacrifices he is willing to make to keep Sam in his life, or Sam alive more generally. A close reading of Astolat’s (2008a) *Aerial* will demonstrate that the difference between psychological and geographical change is a reverence for the characters. This will support the thesis’s larger argument that paratopia is a useful way of understanding slash still concerned with notions of homosocial desire, yet that falls outside the scope of romantopia and intimatopia.

### 4.6 A BETTER TIME, A BETTER PLACE

Astolat’s (2008a) *Aerial* (see Appendix seven for story) begins like any *Supernatural* episode. Sam and Dean are faced with a problem and Sam is doing all the research he can to try to solve it. We do not know at first what the problem is, just that it involves Dean, and takes six pints of Winchester blood per day to keep at bay — half of which is coming from Sam.

---

51 Appendix three signposts these changes through a summary and discussion of seven episodes — *Scarecrow* (1.11), *Something Wicked* (1.18), *Hunted* (2.10), *Born Under a Bad Sign* (2.14), *All Hell Breaks Loose, Pt. 1 & 2* (2.21 & 2.22) and *Sex and Violence* (4.14) — from the first four seasons.
We learn that the brothers had to call in 10 years of favours to find a place that could accommodate Dean’s condition. The place they find is a half converted barn, with a 30-foot ceiling and room to park the Impala inside. It is set on 200 acres in Montana state open country and has no neighbours for miles around. Dean has done a lot of thinking about what his condition could mean for him, namely that he is never going to get laid again — that is, “unless he wanted to watch Sam bleed himself white for it”.

Dean tries to “get past” his sexual yearnings by wearing himself out. However no matter what he does — building furniture or laying down plumbing — nothing seems to work. Nothing, that is, except flying. It is around this point that readers work out that Dean’s condition is that he has angel wings. The wings are his curse and saviour; they are his only sexual release, beating behind him “like a storm”. But flying would leave his back hurting “like fuck” the day after, his wings dragging on the floor behind him. After having to watch the pain Dean is putting himself through, Sam makes a 50 mile trip to the nearest Wal-Mart to get essential oils for his back.

Sam makes Dean spread out on the custom-made bed while he kneads the sore muscles around his wings. It feels good, “Hey, Sam, you get that this is fucked up, right?” Dean says, to which Sam replies, “Yeah, Dean, I noticed around the time you started calling me baby.”

It becomes routine for the boys. Until, after one day of flying, while working his fingers through the knots in Dean’s back, Sam says, “it might not have to be blood”. Before Dean can answer he pushes him flat on the bed and masturbates over his wings. It does not work, but after that “it seemed kind of stupid to bother going to their own
beds”. So they stay together. Sam, being Sam, does not give up, and they end up trying all manner of sexual positions and bodily contact to try and find something that will reverse Dean’s condition.

It didn’t work when Dean sucked his cock, either, or the other way around. It also didn’t work when Sam fucked him, nice and slow and perfect from behind, the wings curling up and mantling around him involuntarily. Dean could feel through the tips, stroking them up along Sam’s back and ass and thighs while Sam fucked him, fucked him, thick demanding strokes into Dean’s ass, and Sam was making those choked desperate noises in his throat, and Dean didn’t even know what the fuck he was saying himself, but it was something like yes and god and i love.
Between Sam’s relentless ‘field’ research slip moments of intimacy and happiness between the boys, the story ending soon after, when,

*The next week, Dean took Sam up with him into the wide wide spiralling blue. He landed them finally when it got dark, both of them dazed and sticky and breathless, but he still felt like he was flying.*

While Astolat’s story is concerned with sex and intimacy (and therefore, may be categorised as romantopic or intimatopic), it is, in essence, a fantasy, which makes it paratopic. It is clever in its ability to change Sam and Dean’s universe enough so that their bond can be sexualised, but not enough to change who they are. As was said earlier, in *Supernatural* slash, it is only by abandoning normality, and the possibility of a lasting heterosexual romance, that a sexual relationship between the brothers can be fully realised. Astolat achieves this through Dean’s condition, which, in a post-father (post-season three) universe, leaves the boys completely isolated from the outside world. They are Adam and (St)Eve in Montana in that, for as long as Dean remains under a spell that has him with angel wings, he will not have sex with a woman.\(^{52}\)

Dean’s condition also has benefits for Sam. Keeping Dean isolated keeps Sam isolated, and therefore, safe from his destiny, which would see him become evil. In *Hunted* (2.10) Dean wants them to give up the job and go away in order to protect Sam.

\(^{52}\)In *Route 666* (1.13) viewers learn that the only woman Dean has ever loved broke his heart when she ended the relationship after learning his secret about the supernatural.
This scenario allows for that. By making Dean’s condition the boys’ ‘case’, Sam is able to stay, able to leave the road and his life as a hunter behind, because he is ‘on a job’. This is why, true to their characters, Sam and Dean continue trying different remedies, which mean different sexual trysts, which, because it is ‘all in the name of solving the case’ and ‘saving Dean’, liberate them both from the incest taboo. As the story goes on and the boys become increasingly detached from reality and more deeply embedded in their fantasy of what life would be like ‘off the road’, the more evident it becomes that, although they may be doing everything they can to reverse Dean’s condition, they actually do not want to change, as illustrated through the final scene.

By not revealing the details of the supernatural condition Dean is faced with until one-third of the way through the story, Astolat remains true-to-the-series\textsuperscript{53}, which always, no matter what evil the brothers are fighting, brings the focus of each episode back to their relationship. Jenkins (2007) noted this in his blog when he argued that the monsters the \textit{Supernatural} boys pursue are in fact “unresolved emotional issues”, and that Sam and Dean go out looking for the strange and unfamiliar only to see their relationship more clearly. Here, it is the strange and unfamiliar that finally allows the brothers some peace and a reason to give up the job (which is something they both

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Tosenberger (see Chan 2009) used the word ‘canon’ to describe the television texts (in this case, \textit{Supernatural}) that inspire fan fiction (in this case, slash fiction). Therefore, fan texts that attempt to remain true to their source of inspiration would be known as true-to-the-canon, while those that radically revise the television text would be not-true-to-the-canon. Due to the loaded meaning of the word — and its suggestion of a ‘literary canon’ — for the purpose of this thesis the terms ‘true-to-the-series’ and ‘not-true-to-the-series’ will be used instead.}
want, as seen through *Scarecrow* for Sam and *Hunted* for Dean, see Appendix three). The wings are a blessing for the boys, and as such could symbolise Castiel, the angel who rescues Dean from Hell.

*Dean:* Why would an angel rescue me from hell?

*Castiel:* Good things do happen Dean.

*Dean:* Not in my experience.

*Castiel:* What’s the matter? You don’t think you deserve to be saved?

*Sara Gwenllian-Jones* (2002) argued that cult television texts (see Studlar 1989; Chute 1981, 1983) are prone to slashing because they are a “source of intrigue and frustration” — the cult text implying a world beyond itself but confirming little about it (p. 89). She argued that a cult text’s distance from everyday reality, combined with its
erasure of heterosexuality’s exclusivity, makes way for more diverse speculation about
caracters’ hidden thoughts and feelings\(^{54}\) (Gwenllian-Jones 2002, p. 89).

It is in this way that *Supernatural* is a cult text, always suggesting that there is
more to Sam and Dean’s relationship (most evident in *Sex and Violence*, see Appendix
three) and yet never confirming it. Because it is never confirmed — and because there
are so many obstacles to confirmation that make regular romantopic or intimatopic
stories seem psychologically or geographically inauthentic in terms of the series —
paratopia, with its fantasy elements, is the best way to understand *Supernatural* slash
that is concerned with notions of homosocial desire.

*Supernatural* paratopic stories, which do not change the characters, allow Sam
and Dean as travellers of the road genre the ‘dream’ that the series would see them
denied. It is paratopia’s attempt to wrestle control away from producers of the show
that realises what Bill Nicholls (2000) described as “utopian potentials of socially
repressed possibility” (p. 37), and makes slash, in the words of Sheenagh Pugh (2005), a
‘democratic genre’.

### 4.7 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Jenkins (1992a) believed authorial meaning to be a major agent of social control (p. 25).
He argued that this is because readers are meant to passively accept authorial meaning,

\(^{54}\) Another aspect of the cult text (that links it to slash) is that it is not for everyone and exists
outside the tastes of both popular and elite cultures (see Gans 1975).
while the sanctioned few — authors and producers — are in place to ensure they do (Jenkins 1992a, p. 25). By Jenkins’s view, fans creatively rewrite mass culture without any respect for authorial integrity. Essentially, he believes fans are “guerrilla fighters”, making tactical raids on the structures of the powerful by poaching from their texts.

Talking specifically about slash, there has been significant development since Jenkins’s *Textual Poachers*. Most significant was the coining of romantopia and intimatopia as terms for categorising the nature of slash. While both categories do challenge authorial meaning, this thesis argues that Jenkins’s (1992a) description of fan practices as “tactics of popular resistance” to authorial meaning (and therefore dominant culture), are more suitably represented by paratopia (p. 26).

In opposition to romantopia and intimatopia and their respective romance and intimacy foci, paratopia’s interest in the fantastic is more radical. As has been explored here, paratopia can be a fantasy of either psychology or geography. While psychological paratopia was described as changing character (such as in J2 and MS stories), geographical paratopia was shown to change location (such as in AU stories). In geographical paratopia, the ‘fantasy’ is allowing the characters a happiness they are denied — a happiness that is not possible within their universe (and therefore, unable to be realised by either romantopia or intimatopia).

If romantopia, intimatopia and paratopia can be said to generally inhabit a world of homosocial desire — as has been argued in this chapter, as well as in the literature review — then the next typology, monstropia, can, in contrast, be understood to generally inhabit a world of homosexual panic.
Night has brought to those who sleep. Only dreams they cannot keep...

_Night has brought to those who sleep. Only dreams they cannot keep_... by Wallse8
Monstropia

Monstropia is a category of slash centrally concerned with sexualising homosexual panic present in the series. Monstropic slash that sexualises homosexual panic not present in the series is discussed as a form of perverse paratopia (shown through examples from the *Merlin* fandom). *Supernatural* is again used as an example of a text that, this time, inspires monstropic slash. Of particular interest is the show’s use of gay jokes. The chapter includes selected episode summaries (see Appendices four and five) and close readings of Astolat’s (2008b) *Bad Blood* and Lenore’s (2007) *Come on, Baby, Let me know* to illustrate the two types of monstropia: character (where homosexual panic is experienced by the slashed characters) and narrative (where the slashed characters are written into an environment of homosexual panic). This chapter shows that not all slash can be understood as realising potentials of homosocial desire. Further, it argues that monstropic slash inspired by potentials of homosexual panic in a series (such as gay jokes in *Supernatural*) are as susceptible to slashing as stories that sexualise potentials of homosocial desire (such as sexual ambiguity in *Merlin*).
5.1 MONSTERS IN THE CLOSET

As detailed in the literature review (see 2.8), monstropia was coined using MacCormack’s (2004) monstrous sexuality, through which she used the ‘monster’ metaphor to describe the perverse subject (in this case, the homosexual). Like paratopia, monstropia, too, is better understood as sexualising latent textual elements — this time, of Sam and Dean’s fear of their love, namely homosexual panic. This makes monstropia distinct from its preceding frameworks as it cannot be usefully understood to be concerned with homosocial desire.

Determining whether a story is monstropic is simple. If the protagonists of the slash story (in this case, Sam and Dean) view their homosexuality or the homosexuality of others as perverse, monstrous or deviant, or if their sexual intercourse is written by the author or seen by others in the story as perverse, then the story is monstropic. This means there are two ways in which a text can be understood as monstropic, the first is if the slashed characters view their behaviour as perverse (character monstropia), while the second is if that behaviour is viewed as perverse by others in the narrative, or in deed the narrative itself (narrative monstropia).

---

55 It should be noted that while monstropia is a new category and an as yet undefined part of slash scholarship, it is not an unexplored one. This will be shown later in the chapter through the work of Tosenberger (2008a).
5.2 PERVERSE PARATOPIA

Unlike paratopia, which encompasses both true-to-the-characters (geographical paratopia) and not-true-to-the-characters (psychological paratopia) slash, monstropia is only ever true-to-the-characters (for examples of *Supernatural* episodes that could inspire monstropia see Appendix four for character monstropia and Appendix five for narrative monstropia). This is because slash stories that sexualise homosexual panic not shared by the characters in the series are better understood as a form of perverse fantasy. Linking back to discussions of J2 and MS stories, slash stories concerned with the perverse that are psychologically not-true-to-the-series on which they are based are separate from monstropia for their reliance on fantasy. Therefore, to distinguish paratopic stories concerned with homosocial desire from those interested in homosexual panic, the latter stories will be referred to as perverse paratopia, because of the perverse nature of their content. This will be shown through reference to perverse paratopic stories inspired by *Merlin*.

Biancathecookie’s (2009) *Say You’re Sorry* was tagged by the author as “Jealous!angry!sex”. In it Merlin sexually tortures Arthur after a girl, Lady Grace, flirts with him at dinner. “Did you like the way she looked at you?” Merlin said. “Think she’d still look at you if she saw you like this, strung out, about to beg to be fucked?” The story is part of Arthur_Submits, a LiveJournal site that collects slash stories where Arthur

---

56 To facilitate discussion of perverse paratopia, care was taken in the previous chapter to define psychological from geographical paratopia in relation to homosocial desire.
sexually submits to his servant, the smaller, thinner and more effeminate Merlin. While the site is of interest for its attack on correlations between masculinity and sexual preference or practice (see 2.8), in this story the sex is degrading, and the characters — Merlin in particular — are written as uncaring and sexually deviant.

Arthur arches off the bed and starts to beg.

“Please, Merlin, please please.”

Merlin’s smile turns cruel and he twists his fingers, moves them deeper.

“Think she’d like you now Arthur? Fucking yourself onto your servant’s hand, you don’t even have your shirt off, begging for it. Think your Lady Grace would still want you?”
Figure 5.02
Two Sides of a Warped Coin by Draykonis
Merlin’s jealousy and sexual mistreatment of Arthur is contrasted with Lady Grace, a noblewoman who, Merlin’s questions suggest, would find Arthur’s sexual appetites (sex with Merlin) disgusting. This makes the text perverse. Furthermore, the story’s ‘character rape’ — as it is known in slash, essentially Merlin’s sexual debasement of Arthur — estranges the characters from the Merlin and Arthur of the series, which makes it paratopic, a perverse fantasy. Givemethebook’s (2009) PWP (Re)Union is another example. With a summary that reads, “It’s porn. No excuse in the form of plot whatsoever,” again Arthur is submissive to Merlin in a story that is start-to-finish about sex. What makes it perverse is the writer’s description of the sex and turns of phrase. “Cocks and balls”, “devouring the other man”, “hot, tight hole”, “tongues battling” and “weeping cock” are just a few examples of the descriptions of the sex, which make the characters read like strangers (“other man”) and their sex read as coarse and painful (“tongues battling” and “weeping cock”57). While Biancathecookie and Givemethebook’s stories are about the perverse, they are separate from monstropia for their reliance on fantasy. This is how to identify perverse paratopia.

While perverse Merlin slash is predominately paratopic — because the show’s characters are driven by homosocial desire rather than homosexual panic — it will be argued that the perverse in Supernatural slash is predominantly monstropic. This is because Supernatural promotes a tension between desire and dread, a point that will be shown through Supernatural’s use of gay jokes.

57 While “weeping cock” most likely refers to pre-ejaculation semen discharge, it also evokes sentiments of pain and angst.
5.3 GAY JOKES

‘The Sociology of Supernatural: Minority Report’ is a discussion board on internet forum Television Without Pity where fans discuss issues of sex, gender and race in Supernatural. A recurring topic of the board is Dean’s use of homosexual and/or female descriptors for Sam. As forum participant Suiter (2008) wrote following a season four episode, “I’m just glad there were no gay jokes in this episode. The sad thing is, the writers don’t realise they’re being offensive. They just think it’s funny, which it isn’t any more.”

“For old times’ sake, Sammy.”
Jokes are a form of folklore. They provide information about the joke tellers, audiences and stereotypes of a particular culture (Nardi & Stoller 2008, p. 389). Peter Nardi and Nancy Stoller (2008), in their analysis of gay jokes from the ’50s, ’60s and ’70s, concluded that humour about male homosexuality was used to debase men and their masculinity\(^{58}\) (p. 389). The jokes portrayed gay men as passive, feminine and weak, with the only exception being their hypersexuality\(^{59}\) (Nardi & Stoller 2008, p. 389).

\(^{58}\) It is worth noting that other studies have suggested that gay jokes are not a means of debasing men, but in fact part of a bonding boy culture. Examples include Lilleaas (2007) who looked at gay joking between male sports players, and Appleby (2001) whose ethnographic study of 26 gay and bisexual working class men in Australia and New Zealand found that most gay workers viewed the homophobic threat from their sector to be minimal and saw gay jokes not as demeaning “but part of the macho, chiding social interaction of working class men” (p. 125).

\(^{59}\) A possible psychological consequence of gay jokes is explored in Friedman & Downey’s (1999) study of seemingly well-adjusted, openly homosexual men. The study concluded that even well-adjusted homosexual men harbour intense shame and self-condemnation as the result of feeling unmasculine (Friedman & Downey 1999, p. 325; also see Rowen & Malcolm 2002).
In *Man Enough?* Victor Seidler (1997) argued that men learn to present themselves as society dictates, and to conceal any emotions that might bring the ideal of heteronormative masculinity into question (p. 50). It was in this way that Seidler (1997) believed masculinity something that men must be constantly ready to prove\(^{60}\) (p. 39). To be gay is to be unmasculine and unmanly, therefore the ridicule of homosexuality in gay jokes becomes a way of proving heterosexuality, which explains Seidler’s (1997) — and Sedgwick’s (1985) — argument that masculinity is something always overshadowed by homophobic feelings (p. 39). Linking back to West’s (1977) definition of homophobia as a form of “latent homosexuality” (see 2.8), Sam and Dean’s use of gay jokes and treatment of homosexuals within the series (see Appendices four and five) informs close readings of Astolat’s (2008b) *Bad Blood* and Lenore’s (2007) *Come on, Baby, Let me know* to demonstrate the two types of monstropia, character and narrative.

### 5.4 CHARACTER MONSTROPIA

Tosenberger (2008a) wrote that, in order to overcome the incest taboo, slash writers will often create “aliens make them do it” stories (p. 5.7). Using enchantments or force, these stories take away the characters’ freedom to choose. In short, the incest taboo is

---

\(^{60}\) As an example, comic book writer Douglas TenNapel, when asked about the frequent use of gay jokes in *Black Cherry* — “a lurid tale of sex, violence and the supernatural” — said he was an “equal-opportunity offender” and argued that “in the cultural machismo world of men, gay jokes come up often” (Spurgeon 2007).
overcome by an unspoken disclaimer that says, if these boys had a choice, they would never ‘go gay’.

Other than the incest taboo, another obstacle for Wincest is the inherent homophobia of the characters, Dean in particular. In Tall Tales (2.15), for example, a pledge master gets his just desserts when he is repeatedly probed (raped) by an alien. After recounting his story the boy adds — clearly shaken from the encounter — “it gets worse”, Dean replies, “How could it get any worse? Some alien made you his bitch.” Dean’s assumption that the alien was male, and his description of homosexual acts as worst-case-scenarios explain why some writers may feel the need to adopt an “aliens make them do it” approach when sexualising the pair.

Astolat’s (2008b) Bad Blood (see Appendix eight for story) is what Tosenberger (2008a) described as a “fuck or die” story, a subgenre of the “aliens make them do it” story whereby Sam and Dean are given an ultimatum: they have anal sex or they die (p.
5.8). In Astolat’s story, the boys are forced to have intercourse after being poisoned by a succubus. According to legend they will die in one hour unless they have sex, a task that proves particularly challenging considering that the nearest town is hours away. At first Dean says he would rather die than have homosexual sex, however when Sam explains that it would mean the death of him too, Dean decides bestiality is a more stomach-able alternative, trying his luck with a horse. When Sam admits he would prefer have sex with Dean than a horse, Dean calls him a “sick perverted bastard”. Then when Sam says “bestiality trumps incest”, Dean replies, “bestiality sure as fucking hell doesn’t trump gay incest”. Dean’s descriptors for the sex that follows include “disgusting”, “vile” and “it was like being split open, and what kind of sick bastards did this for fun, Christ ... this wasn’t fucking natural”. Clearly the sexual acts of the characters are not sexualised homosocial desire, but rather, homosexual panic.

5.5  “WON’T SOMEBODY PLEASE THINK OF THE CHILDREN”

Homosexual panic can be experienced not only by the characters in slash stories, but also by the people who read them. However, no matter how ‘black and white perverse’ the story may seem (for example, sex with minors) a reader’s view of a text does not make it monstropic. This is because

61 It should be noted that Astolat published a follow up to Bad Blood titled Bad Company (2008c), in which, following their sexual encounter, Sam realises he has feelings for Dean that are not returned.
interpretations of a slash text will vary from reader to reader. What is perverse for one reader may be romantic for another.

This is best illustrated through mainstream press, who tend to view all slash as perverse. For example, writing specifically about *Harry Potter* slash, Metroactive’s Christopher Noxon (2003) said, although slash “may sound like a sick joke”, it is all too real, while *Scotland on Sunday*’s Annabel House (2003) quoted Neil Blair — a lawyer at author JK Rowling’s literary agency, Christopher Little — in her article as saying, writing slash is “almost like running a porno bookshop in Soho and encouraging kids to come in through advertising with sweets”. Although Noxon’s (2003) article did say attorneys were after slashers for trademark tarnish, the majority of arguments condemning slash cite the corruption of innocent fans as the reason (also see House 2003). Spokespeople for both JK Rowling and Warner Bros. (who own the rights to the *Harry Potter* film franchise) said it was their “social responsibility to protect children” (House 2003). This is an example of how slash can evoke both homosexual and moral panic within readers.

---

62 It should be noted that the reason why *Harry Potter* slash is seen in the media as perverse could be, first, because it involves underage pairings — even if many writers do ‘age them up’ for their stories — and second, because the most popular pairing — Harry/Draco — is between the two characters who dislike each other most in the books, House (2003) observed this too, suggesting that *Harry Potter* pairings were characterised by “tension and suspicion”.
Slash stories whose characters exist on the fringes of what society would consider socially acceptable sexual behaviour, such as sex with children (known in the *Supernatural* fandom as ‘weecest’), are often a form of character monstropia. Therefore media backlash to slash — particularly in terms of its treatment of children — is significant for a discussion of monstropia. However, it is not whether or not sex with or between children is morally wrong that determines a text’s monstropic status, but instead how the text is written.

Barthes (1977) argued that what makes up a text is a mixture of "flow and gaps" and what gives a text meaning is best understood through the reader (pp. 43, 148). Barthes (1977) referred to this as ‘individual difference’, which views every reader as unique, and therefore, every interpretation of a text as random and dispersed (p. 147).
Just because a reader might experience homosexual panic from a slash story, that does not make it monstropic. One man’s perversity is another man’s pleasure.

Edwardina’s (2008) *Without Packages, Boxes, or Bags* is a good example of why. The story features a 16-year-old Dean and a 12-year-old Sam engaging in a sexual act. According to this thesis’s definition of monstropia, this is a monstropic text, but not because it involves a sexual act that society would deem morally corrupt. It is monstropic because of how the characters are written.

> All he could think of was that his sheets and pillow were gonna smell like Sam — this babyish smell of soft skin and hair that hadn’t been ground away by the ugly side of puberty yet — and it was making him feel eager, predatory.

> ... “You doin’ it too?” Dean asked, his voice tearing out gruff and low. Demanding, like their dad’s ... More harshly he demanded, “You watchin’? You watchin’ me?”

Edwardina’s choice of words (predatory) and her description of Dean “demanding, like their dad” that his 12-year-old brother watch him masturbate is why this story is monstropic. This is a story that fosters panic rather than desire. It represents a Weekian (1986) definition of sex as an all-powerful, dangerous instinct, demanding fulfilment against all manner of legal restriction and social convention (p. 24). In essence, this is a story where Dean is not flesh and subjectivity, but a sexual machine. It is not monstropic because the sex is underage, but because it is unconcerned with homosocial desire. Edwardina’s story is not about love, intimacy nor fantasy, it is about
sexual dominance and control. This is why it is monstropic. Other examples include The highwaywoman’s (2008) “Shhh”, a similar story involving blood sports (“it hurts so good”) and Writ Large’s (2008) I Told You a Thousand Times, which explores watersports.

“Want it, Sammy. So hot, your piss and come on me, nothing to wash it away this time.”

... Dean should sound disgusted ... but he doesn’t; the way he sounds it’s like Sam just did something amazing.

In short, it is not the nature of the sexual act but how it is performed that makes a text monstropic. While examples of character monstropia, such as Bad Blood, feature characters that embody homosexual panic, narrative monstropias instead position their characters within a context of homosexual panic.

5.6 NARRATIVE MONSTROPIA

Narrative monstropia will often include stories where the slashed pairs appear relatively unphased by their homosexuality, and yet exist within an environment that fosters homosexual panic. Whereas in character monstropia the slashed characters are homophobic (and therefore, need to be ‘forced’ or enchanted to become sexual) this

---

63 In slash, ‘Squick’ stories are those readers may find offensive or distressing — they typically include activities such as rape, bondage, ‘MPreg’ (male pregnancy) or torture. Squick is as much a warning to readers as it is a categorising tool.
time the homophobia comes from elsewhere in the story. Lenore’s (2007) *Come on, Baby, Let me know* (see Appendix nine for story) is a good example of this type of monstropia. In it Sam and Dean are tracking a demon that kills homosexual men when they have sex, each time leaving behind a stench like rotten eggs. “Jesus,” says Dean when they discover the first victims of the story, “that never gets any less disturbing.”

At first Dean disassociates himself from the men (they) and comments on their hypersexuality by saying, “you’d think they would have at least stopped what they were doing”. In the author’s notes Lenore wrote, “I was in the mood to write something dirty”. By ‘dirty’ she meant a story in which Sam and Dean not only pretend to be gay, but like it. The story is set at a gay club, Balls and Chain, where on their first visit Dean mumbles, “why couldn’t this stupid demon be haunting a tittie bar instead?”

Dean’s ‘disgust’ at the sexual promiscuity of the club’s clientele resembles a scene from *Criss Angel is a Douche Bag* (4.12) when he is sent by a sexually ambiguous magician to see Chief, who turns out to be a leather-clad master in an S&M club (see Appendix five). When Chief asks Dean for his “safe word”, Dean gags. This example is relevant because “the Chief” character — a hypersexual homosexual whose ‘appetites’ are, according to Dean, sickening — is how all the homosexuals are portrayed in

____________________

64 Homosexuals as hypersexual was explored earlier in this chapter in reference to gay jokes (see 5.3).

65 In *Sex and Violence* (4.14) Dean gets his wish, and yet, ends up falling in love with a man (see Appendix three).
Lenore’s story. All the homosexuals, that is, except Sam and Dean. The second victims, for example, are found in an alley behind the club, “one boosted up against the brick, his legs around the other’s waist, caught mid fuck”. Such an encounter suggests anonymity between the pair, two queens fucking in an alley behind a gay club.

Interestingly, the gayer the boys — and more removed from their heterosexual pasts — the more violent become their affections. They become sexual monsters.

Sam bit down, hard.

“Ow!” Dean rubbed at his lip, felt the stickiness of blood. “Bitch!”

He pushed him from the wall, turned the tables, slamming Sam back against the exposed brick, biting his neck, just as hard as Sam had bitten him ... now this was sex.

Sex that could get him thrown in jail and scarred for life ...

But even this encounter is not enough to entice the demon, who “coyly stayed away, much to Dean’s annoyance”. That the boys being bait — pieces of gay meat on display and up for butchering, right at home at a gay club — still does not attract the

66 While Dean does meet one man at the bar — Hank — who likes cars as much as him, the man appears shocked at Dean’s interest. This suggests that the possibility of a gay man (rather than a straight-man-disguised-as-a-gay-man) having similar interests to the-only-gay-in-the-village-who-is-more-interested-in-cars-than-sex is fairly remote.

67 The boys’ attitude toward homosexuality is refreshingly indifferent, Dean has no objections to he and Sam being sexual bait for the demon’s desires. The brothers learn how best to kiss each other, dance together and eventually, have sex, several times. Each time the sex gets hotter as, in their quest to become the ultimate bait, they aim not only to be gay, but to be the gayest.
demon suggests its evil stems from making the boys continue their perverse charade, night after night at Balls and Chain. Eventually Dean submits to Sam, his “ass burned at the invasion”. Dean describes sex with Sam as a form of possession, ‘taking him over’. When the demon shows its face it is laughing at them. The story ends with the boys vanquishing the demon and the club’s manager kicking in the door, ready to perform an exorcism. He then asks if he can join the boys for sex. The club manager’s readiness to perform an exorcism links to Dean’s experience of gay sex as an invasive possession. In Lenore’s story, while Sam and Dean are relatively inoffensive, the story is monstropic because the other homosexuals are presented as social-sexual monsters.

5.7 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In his 1988 paper, *Homosexuality: A Contemporary Psychoanalytic Perspective*, Richard Friedman concluded that homosexual men must have an inbuilt capacity for coping that enables them to function in society despite an atmosphere of “rageful rejection” (p. 179; also see Saghir & Robins 1973). This is a useful way of understanding monstropia. In character monstropia the slashed characters ragefully reject, while in narrative monstropia, these same characters cope in an atmosphere of such rejection. Monstropia is unique and important when it comes to slash scholarship because it categorises stories that cannot be usefully understood as realising potentials of homosocial desire. Instead, these stories explore notions of character and narrative homosexual panic, a genre of slash fiction until now unexplored by slash scholarship.
Monstropia

Monstropia was defined here as stories that view homosexuality as perverse, a view that was supported in some way by the series on which they were based (shown here with reference to gay jokes in *Supernatural*). Stories about the perverse that do not have links with the original text (shown here with reference to *Merlin* slash) were defined as a form of perverse paratopia. *Supernatural* was chosen to illustrate both paratopia and monstropia because of its conflict between dread and desire. It is the explosive nature of homosexual panic that makes monstropia so important. This research is new, yes, but more interestingly, it uncovers a genre of slash exploring the dark underbelly of masculine culture (from a both gay and straight perspective). Returning to Friedman’s rageful rejection idea, another useful metaphor for monstropia is as a spotlight on the closet. In character monstropia it illuminates the ‘monsters’ within, those unable to come to terms with who they are; while in narrative monstropia, spotlighted are monstrous gatekeepers, barricading the door to keep homosexuals from coming out into the open.
Jenkins (1992a) described slash as “a reaction against” onscreen stereotypes of male gender and sexuality (p. 189). According to this view, all slash stories are egalitarian romances in which characters share adventures that smudge the once clear line dividing homosocial and homosexual bonds. Jenkins’s interpretation has been the cornerstone of slash discourse, accounting for nearly all scholarship to date on the subject. Based on Jenkins, Salmon and Symons’s (2001) romantopia and Woledge’s (2006) intimatopia, in particular, have been useful for understanding the use of homosocial desire in slash fiction. This thesis has problematised Jenkins’s definition through examples of slash texts that, first, fall outside the scope of romantopia and intimatopia, and second, ‘pamper to’ rather than ‘react against’ onscreen stereotypes of male gender and sexuality. These stories have been analysed using two typologies presented here for the first time, paratopia and monstropia, respectively.

### 6.1 IN SUMMARY

While *Merlin,* with its sexually ambiguous medieval setting, demonstrated the usefulness of romantopia and intimatopia for texts concerned with homosocial bonds, *Supernatural* was chosen to illustrate paratopia and monstropia because of its tension
between dread and desire (shown in this thesis through reference to the road genre and gay jokes).

Paratopia was defined as stories of either psychological or geographical fantasy. The term was shown to be centrally concerned with fantasy because, in *Supernatural*, it is only on changing either character or location that authors can successfully sexualise homosocial bonds. This was linked to Tosenberger who, when asked to describe her ideal ending to Sam and Dean’s story, said, “They walk off into the sunset together and are happy and live Wincestuously ever after! Unfortunately, I know that I’m only going to find that in fanfic because Kripke and company are sadistic bastards. But that’s what fanfic is for, right?” (as quoted in Chan 2009).

What Tosenberger describes here is paratopia, fan writers wrestling control from producers in order to allow the characters a happiness eternally denied to them in the series.

Monstropia categorised a genre of slash as yet undefined by scholarship. Monstropic stories are those that take the perverse (as defined by MacCormack; see 2.8.2) as a central concern and are interested in potentials of homosexual panic. Character and narrative monstropia were proposed as the term’s two sub-typologies and differentiated using a ‘rageful rejection’ metaphor — in character monstropia characters ragefully reject their homosexuality, while in narrative monstropia those not being slashed, or the narrative itself, ragefully rejects those who are.
6.2 THE MONSTER AT THE END OF THIS BOOK

Season four’s *The Monster at the End of this Book* (see Appendix six for episode summary) is a good final illustration of the dread in *Supernatural’s* complex knot of dread and desire. In it, after discovering they are characters in a book series, viewers learn exactly what Sam and Dean think of slash fans.

*Dean:* There are “Sam girls” and “Dean girls” and — what’s a “slash fan”?

*Sam:* As in Sam slash Dean. Together.

*Dean:* Like together together?

*Sam:* Yeah.

*Dean:* They do know we’re brothers right?

*Sam:* Doesn’t seem to matter.

*Dean:* Oh, come on. That ... that’s just sick [he shuts the laptop and pushes it from him].
*Twilight-Deviant’s slash comic (see Figure 6.02) of the aforementioned scene proves that moments of homosexual panic in the series are as susceptible to slashing as those of homosocial desire.

Unlike paratopia, which can be both true-to-the-series (geographical) and not-true-to-the-series (psychological), monstropia was defined as only ever true-to-the-series. This is because slash texts concerned with homosexual panic not present in the series are more suitably understood as a form of perverse paratopia for their reliance on
fantasy. *Merlin* slash facilitated discussion of preserve paratopia as, unlike *Supernatural*, there is nothing in *Merlin* (such as gay joking or an incest taboo) that can be said to inspire such a true-to-the-series reading.

### 6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD

*Supernatural* was the only text used to illustrate paratopia and monstropia because, as they appear here for the first time, I felt a focused discussion and application of the frameworks to a single fandom would be more useful. *Supernatural* was chosen for its tension between dread and desire that makes its resulting slash suited to both typologies. However the significance of this research to slash scholarship is more far-reaching.

As explained in the literature review (see 2.5), much has changed in television since *Star Trek* and the '70s. It follows that approaches to studying these texts and their resulting fan fiction need also to change. There are many fandoms that fall outside the scope of romantopia and intimatopia and that would be more usefully understood using paratopia and monstropia. Three examples are *One Tree Hill*, *Prison Break* and *The X-Files*.

*One Tree Hill* (Schwahn 2003) is a series about Lucas and Nathan Scott, rivalling half-brothers with nothing in common except their love of basketball. Lucas was abandoned by his father, has a heart condition and a passion for literature, while Nathan is the small town’s biggest jock and the apple of his father’s eye. Nathan’s hazing of Lucas in the first season (*Are You True?*), the Annual Boy Toy Auction (*To Wish*
Impossible Things) and his dream of Lucas in bed with another man (Champagne for my Real Friends, Real Pain for my Sham Friends) fuel sexual tension between the brothers. Lucas’s outsider status and ‘broken heart’ together with Nathan’s insider ‘jock quality’ make the pair perfect contenders for slash. However, it is the taboos the characters much first negotiate — of both incest and homosexuality in small town, red-necked America — that make One Tree Hill slash predominately paratopic.

Chris Keller: [Wakes up shirtless next to Lucas, rolls over and puts his arm around him]

Morning baby.

Nathan: [Nathan wakes up with a smile on his face]

Champagne for my Real Friends, Real Pain for my Sham Friends (3.07)
In *Prison Break* (Scheuring 2005), Michael Scofield gets himself thrown in jail as part of a plan to break out his brother, convicted felon and high school dropout, Lincoln Burrows. Theodore Bagwell (or T-Bag), the show’s only openly non-heterosexual character, is the reason why *Prison Break* is likely to inspire character monstropia. T-Bag is a rapist, murderer, white supremacist and paedophile. He was born of incest (his mother actually his father’s Down Syndrome sister) and was molested by his father. With an interest in torture, T-Bag preys on younger men in the prison, one of whom (Seth Hoffner, nicknamed ‘Cherry’) hangs himself as a result. Michael’s disgust of T-Bag has come through in slash stories that pair him with his brother (or indeed any other male character).

---

68 The show’s closed-male-only-prison-setting lends it to homosexual undertones between other characters. In *Five the Hard Way* (4.07), Fernando Sucre agrees to seduce a homosexual card holder in a Las Vegas hotel room. When asked about it he replies, “It stays in Vegas.”

69 T-Bag attempts to ensnare Michael as a plaything when he arrives at the prison. Michael later takes a crowbar to T-Bag’s knee, warning him to stay away from a young prisoner nicknamed ‘Tweener’.

70 In HalfshellVenus’s (2006) *Payback* Michael fantasises that he would force his brother to perform sexual favours for him if he were a ‘different person’, while in Notanotherjunkie’s (2009) *Red C-Note* describes sex with T-Bag as “defying nature”.

---

**Conclusion**

![Figure 6.04](image_url)

Sides (left to right) Theodore “T-Bag” Bagwell (played by Robert Knepper), Lincoln Burrows (played by Dominic Purcell) and Michael Scofield (played by Wentworth Miller). Courtesy 20th Century Fox Television. Centre (top to bottom) Michael and T-Bag in *Allen*, Seth “Cherry” Hoffner (played by Blaine Hogan) in *Riots, Drills and the Devil: Part 1*, T-Bag and David “Tweener” Apolskis (played by Lane Garrison) in *Tweener*.
Conclusion

As discussed earlier (see 2.5), despite *The X-Files*'s potential for representational equality, slash authors still seek male/male pairings, the most popular of these being Mulder/Krycek (see Scodari & Felder 2000; Scodari 2003). Alex Krycek murdered Mulder’s father, Scully’s sister and made attempts on both their lives. Therefore stories featuring the pair together would likely be a form of psychological paratopia (as the characters are changed so that a romance is possible) or character monstropia (where the hate of their sexual relationship is only matched by their hate of each other).

Each of the above examples have inspired slash, which proves that, while *Supernatural* usefully illustrates paratopia and monstropia, it is not the only text to which the typologies can be applied.

Returning to the title of this thesis and its opening images, both Gottschalk’s fear/fantasy poster and Hocquenghem’s dread.desire knot, the research presented in this thesis has identified genres of slash unrepresented by scholarship and offered categorical tools for their understanding. The implication of this research is that it redefines the trajectory of existing scholarship on slash, opening up the field for more

Figure 6.05
Top (left to right) Fox Mulder (played by David Duchovny), Dana Scully (played by Gillian Anderson) and Alex Krycek (played by Nicholas Lea). Courtesy 20th Century Fox Television. Bottom Grab by The Theban Band
diverse understandings of slash’s queering process. These new ‘topias’ explore the
‘other worlds’ that slash inhabits. On the one hand paratopic stories explore potentials
of socially repressed possibility, while on the other, monstropic stories delve into the
dark underbelly of masculine culture. Seeing the full range of slash fiction genres helps
us to decipher the contradictory entanglements that characterise male bonds.
Bibliography


Bibliography


Aykroyd, D & Ramis, H 1984, Ghostbusters, Black Rhino Productions, New York City.


Bakhtin, M 1984, Rabelais and His World, H Iswolsky (trs), Indiana University Press, Bloomington.


Bibliography

City. Retrieved 28 May,


Burger, G & Kruger, SF 2001, Queering the Middle Ages, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.


Bury, R 2005, Cyberspaces of Their Own: Female Fandoms Online, Peter Lang, New York City.


Carter, C 1993, The X-Files, Twentieth Century Fox, Los Angeles.


Chan, S 2009, ‘Supernatural Love: Catherine Tosenberger on Sam and Dean’s Transformative Love Story’, Sequential Tart: A Comics Industry Web Zine,
Sequential Tart, New York City. Retrieved 19 September,  

Retrieved 15 July,  

Chute, D 1981, ‘Still Waters’, Film Comment, Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York City, pp. 26–32.  


______ 1987, Glas, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.


______ 2000, Flaming Classics: Queering the Film Canon, Routledge, New York City.


Bibliography


Bibliography


Green, S, Jenkins, C & Jenkins, H 1998, ‘Normal Female Interest in Men Bonking:
Selections from The Terra Nostra Underground and Strange Bedfellows’,
in C Harris & A Alexander (eds), Theorizing Fandom: Fans, Subculture and
Identity, Hampton, Cresskill, pp. 9–40.

L Lewis (ed), The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media,
Routledge, New York City, pp. 50–65.

Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 79–90.

Hach, H & Dixon, L 2003, Freaky Friday, Casual Friday Productions, Los Angeles.

University Press, Durham, pp. 5–18.

HalfshellVenus 2006, Payback, Prisonbreakfic.net, New York City. Retrieved 2 October,

Hall, S 1973, ‘Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse’, in S Hall, D Hobson, A
Lowe & P Willis (eds) 1980, Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in

Enterprise Zones: Critical Positions on Star Trek, Westview Press, Boulder,
pp. 259–278.
Bibliography


Bibliography


Bibliography


Jones, J, Capps, J, Michie, J & Murphy, J 2008, Merlin, BBC Wales, Bangor.


Kerouac, J 1957, On the Road, Viking Press, New York City.

Bibliography


Lindsay, J 2006, Darkly Dreaming Dexter, Random House, New York City.
Bibliography


Paff, J 2007, ‘Supernatural: Who is Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?’, *Zap2it*, Tribune Media Services, Chicago. Retrieved 1 April,


Platt, J 2000, *Big Brother*, Evolution Film & Tape, Los Angeles.


Bibliography


Roth, P 1977, The Professor of Desire, Vintage, New York City.


Bibliography


Bibliography


West, DJ 1977, Homosexuality Re-examined, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.


A1.1 MEDIEVAL QUEENNESS

Jeffrey Weeks (1985) believed there to be a persistent desire in Western culture ‘to fix sexuality’, to stabilise it and to insist on the existence of a ‘true identity’ beneath ambiguities (p. 186). Similarly, Michel Foucault ([1976] 1980) described sexuality as a “variable cultural artefact”, a way of putting sex into discourse (p. 69). Much of the research into early modern sexuality has been driven by a Foucauldian view, which argues that sexuality was not constituted as a personal identity before the 19th century. In the absence of a discourse that organises facts of sexuality into personal identities, sexuality can inhabit a whole range of social relationships not specifically designated as sexual. Sedgwick’s notion of homosocial desire is one example, as is the word ‘queer’.

Richard Zeikowitz (2002) believed ‘queer’ to be an undecided term. Neither gay nor straight, he thought it useful for the delineation of ‘peculiar’ medieval character depictions that could not rightly be labelled either way (p. 67). In Queering the Middle Ages, Glenn Burger and Steven Kruger (2001) described a queer approach to medieval studies as one that promises the recovery of cultural meanings that have been lost, obscured or distorted by analyses that have ignored questions of sexuality or attended only to heteronormative understandings of it (p. xvi).
Burger (1994) championed a queer approach to medieval texts because he believed that rather than pinpointing a fixed sexual identity against which to measure nonnormative sexuality, queer reading maps more dynamic, less assured accounts of the “body in motion” within prevailing discourses of power (p. 157). Ruth Karras’s *From Boys to Men* (2002) examined formations of masculinity in late medieval Europe through a queer reading of the bonds that grew up among knights. As women were excluded from military activity — which was a knight’s *raison d’être* — the shared experiences of hardship and violence created homosocial bonds (Karras 2002, p. 62). Karras (2002) argued that such bonds are evident everywhere in Arthurian literature, and often occur in pairs as ‘brothers in arms’, for example Malory’s Sir Gareth, who loved no knight as well as he did Sir Lancelot (p. 62). While it is possible that participation in such a homosocial world may have left men open to accusations of sodomy, Karras (2002) believed that the military context of such a bond served to justify relationships that might otherwise have been condemned, in short, that medieval male sexuality was ambiguous (p. 63).

As an example, Karras (2002) referred to two unnamed knights that died near Constantinople in 1391, whose inscriptions read that they had been companions for 13 years. On their tombstones were engraved the same shields, with the coats of arms of both families, as was usually reserved for the arms of a husband and wife (p. 63).

Noble medieval households were heavily male. With the women peripherally present, young boys as pages and squires were more heavily involved in the running of aristocratic households. As Karras (2002) explained, if a young squire valued the order of
chivalry and wanted to be a knight, he needed first to have a master who was a knight (p. 29). Taking care of a knight’s horses, a squire would also emulate his mentor, both in military pursuits and in other aspects of demeanour, including carving at the table and manners at feasts (Karras 2002, p. 29). This close proximity of living explains the prevalence of knightly homosocial desire in medieval literature. The bath, for example, as a symbol of moral purity, was also a site of male bonding and functioned to display the male body. A prospective knight bathed in the company of other knights, giving them the opportunity to verify health and masculinity (Karras 2002, pp. 64–65). It was in this way that being ‘whole of limb’ was a criterion for knighthood; and soundness of body symbolised soundness of mind.
Appendix two

The following episodes include scenes where Sam and Dean are mistaken for gay lovers and could inspire psychological paratopia.

A2.1 BUGS (1.08)

In Bugs (1.08) the boys are house hunters in disguise that are mistaken twice as a gay couple (first by developer Larry Pike and then by realtor Lynda Bloome). With Lynda’s assumption, Dean decides to play along, calling Sam ‘honey’ and slapping him on the arse. The episode centres on Sam and Dean’s attempt to save Larry’s family. From it viewers learn that Dean does not ‘dream’ of the American white picket fence, in fact, there is nothing he would hate more. While Sam’s affection for Larry’s misunderstood son, Matt, reveals the dysfunctional relationship he had with his father. This gives insight into why Sam left the ‘family business’ to go away to college and pursue a more ‘normal’ life. It also suggests that this is something Dean could never do 71.

71 This is more fully explored in What Is and What Should Never Be (2.20). When a djinn shows Dean a reality where his mother never died, his father never hunted and Sam’s girlfriend is alive (and engaged to Sam). Dean — although in a relationship himself — ultimately decides to leave. This is for two reasons, first, because the people he had saved are now dead, and second, because he is estranged from Sam. In this reality Dean has no career, no steady job, no relationship with his brother and no demons to fight. He is a failure.
Larry: Let me just say, we accept homeowners of any race, religion, colour or sexual orientation.

Dean: We’re brothers.

Lynda: Well let me just say that we accept homeowners of any race, religion, colour or sexual orientation.

Dean: Right, I’m gonna go talk to Larry, OK honey? [slaps Sam on the arse as he leaves]

Getting back to theories of the road genre, the notion of an American dream alluded to in this episode is significant because road narratives often involve journeys taken in search of a dream, which is traditionally the ‘American dream’, usually situated in the West, beyond the frontier — which is the setting for this episode. Ireland (2003) believed that in the search of this dream, many protagonists end up disappointed (p. 482). What is interesting about Supernatural is that, by the third season, Sam and Dean have achieved what they set out to achieve at the start of their journey. They have
found the killer of their mother and Sam’s girlfriend, and vanquished it. They have also found their father, lost him and then rescued him from Hell so that he could live out eternity in Heaven. And yet they remain on the road. This suggests that the ‘dream’ that keeps them driving through the dark heart of America is not their father, or mother, or any girlfriend, but each other. That is the dream the brothers are eternally denied in the series. This denial of the ‘road dream’ is reflected in Ireland’s (2003) argument that another key aspect of road narratives is a lack of back plotting and resolution within their stories (p. 482).

**Dean:** Growing up in a place like this would freak me out.

**Sam:** Why?

**Dean:** The manicured lawns, the ‘how was your day honey’, I’d blow my brains out.

**Sam:** There’s nothing wrong with normal.

**Dean:** I’d take our family over normal any day.
A2.2 PLAYTHINGS (2.11)

In *Playthings* (2.11) the boys stay at Pierpont Inn, a haunted Victorian mansion where they are mistaken for a gay couple by the inn’s owner, Susan Thompson, and employee, Sherwin.

*Susan:* Let me guess, you guys are here antiquing?

*Dean:* How’d you know?

*Susan:* You just look the type. So, a king-sized bed?

*Sam:* What? No, ah, no, we, two singles. We’re just brothers.

*Susan:* Oh, oh, I’m so sorry.

*Dean:* What’d you mean that we looked the type?

The supernatural element of the episode is the haunted love of two sisters, which can be read as a comment on Sam and Dean’s commitment to each other, in particular, Dean’s inability to carry out his father’s wishes: that Sam would be killed should he turn evil. In a scene where Sam is drunk, he makes Dean promise he will kill him should it come to that.
Sam: If I ever turn into something that I’m not, you have to kill me.

Dean: Sam—

Sam: Dad told you to do it, you have to.

Dean: Yeah well dad’s an ass, he never should have said anything. I mean, you don’t do that, you don’t lay that kind of crap on your kids.

A2.3 LAZARUS RISING (4.01)

In Lazarus Rising (4.01), the brothers are reunited after Dean’s resurrection from Hell (where he went after selling his soul to save Sam). It involves two scenes of note, the first when the brothers embrace — and Sam’s female companion, Kristy (who is actually Ruby), asks whether they are ‘together’ — and then when psychic Pamela Barnes propositions Sam and Dean for a ménage à trios — before having her eyes burnt out by an “angel of the Lord” in the very next scene (who turns out to be Castiel, the angel that rescued Dean from Hell).
Kristy: So are you two like, together?

Sam: What? No, no, he’s my brother.

Pamela: You’re invited too, grumpy.

Dean: You are not invited.
Appendix three

The following episodes illustrate the evolution of Sam and Dean’s relationship over the first four seasons and could inspire geographical paratopia.

A3.1 SCARECROW (1.11)

Sam and Dean’s journey begins when Sam, who had given up demon hunting to study at Stanford, agrees to go with Dean on a ‘once only’ trip to look for their missing father. While he had planned on returning to his life afterwards, on witnessing his girlfriend’s death — by the same demon that had killed his mother — he drops out of university and joins Dean on the road, intent on hunting down her killer.

Sam’s actions in the episode Scarecrow (1.11) reflect his early attitudes toward life on the road. Following a call from his father in which Sam learns that not only is his father alive, but that he is hunting the demon that killed his girlfriend, Sam decides to leave Dean and head to California to join his father. When Dean almost dies as a result, Sam comes back and says, because all they have left is each other, they should stay together. In the episode, Dean’s inability to leave behind a life of hunting comes through when he tells Sam that he was right, that he needs to live his own life, and that he is proud of him. Viewers also learn that Dean admires Sam’s ability to stand up to their father — who gave them an order to stop looking for him.
**Dean:** Sam, you were right, you've got to do your own thing, you've got to live your own life. You've always known what you want and you go after it. Stand up to dad, and you always have. I wish I ... Anyway, I admire that about you, I'm proud of you Sammy.

**Dean:** So, can I drop you off somewhere?

**Sam:** No, I think you're stuck with me.

**Dean:** What made you change your mind?

**Sam:** Jess and mum, they're both gone, dad is God knows where. You and me, we're all
that’s left, so if we’re gonna see this through, we’re gonna do it together.

**Dean:** Hold me Sam, that was beautiful.

**Sam:** You should be kissing my ass, you were dead meat dude.

### A3.2 SOMETHING WICKED (1.18)

_Something Wicked_ (1.18) begins with Dean receiving coordinates from his father for Fitchberg, Wisconsin. There the boys find a witch feeding on young children. Dean’s devotion to Sam is shown in this episode through flashbacks to him caring for Sam when the two were growing up and while their father was away. The catalyst for the flashbacks is Michael, a big brother himself. Michael’s younger brother is sick because of the witch. While at first Michael appears hostile, calling Dean and Sam ‘two queens’, he comes to trust Dean. Dean confesses to Sam that when he was a child he had disobeyed an order by their father to watch him and that the same witch had come and almost killed him. “Dad never spoke about it again,” said Dean, “I didn’t ask, but he looked at me different. You know, which was worse.” Dean believes his father sent him the coordinates so he could right his wrong. This episode showed how protective Dean is of Sam, how unrealistic and unsympathetic his father’s expectations were and how, in the absence of their father — and since their mother’s death — it has been “Dean’s job” to look after Sam.

**Michael:** King or two queens?

**Dean:** Two queens.

**Michael:** [looks at Sam] Yeah I bet.

**Dean:** What’d you say?

**Michael:** Nice car.
Figure A3.02
Dean, Michael (played by Colby Paul), young boy (uncredited), young Dean (played by Ridge Canipe) and young Sam (played by Alex Ferris) in Something Wicked

_Michael:_ You said you’re a big brother.

_Dean:_ Yeah.

_Michael:_ You’d take care of your little brother, you’d do anything for him?

_Dean:_ Yeah I would.

_Michael:_ Me too.

Figure A3.03
Sam and Dean in Something Wicked

_Sam:_ Michael, he’ll always know there’s things out there in the dark, he’ll never be the same, you know? Sometimes I wish that ...

_Dean:_ What?

_Sam:_ I wish I could have that kind of innocence.

_Dean:_ If it means anything, sometimes I wish you could too.
A3.3 HUNTED (2.10)

At the end of *Hunted* (2.10), an episode where a fellow demon hunter tries to kill Sam because of what he may become one day, Dean wants them to quit the job and go to Amsterdam. This is an important moment in the series. With their father dead, Dean does not see the point in them hunting anymore. And yet Sam will not let them run, “you’re a hunter,” he tells Dean, “it’s what you were meant to do”.

Sam: So where to next then?

Dean: One word, Amsterdam.

Sam: Dean.

Dean: Come on man, I hear the coffee shops don’t even sell coffee.

Sam: I’m not gonna just ditch the job.

Dean: Screw the job, screw it man, I’m sick of the job anyway. I mean, we don’t get paid, we don’t get thanked, the only thing we get’s bad luck.

Sam: Look Dean, I’ve tried running before ... You can’t run from this. And you can’t protect me.

Dean: I can try.
A3.4 BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN (2.14)

During season two, between hunting for his mother’s killer, worrying about Sam’s destiny — to lead an evil army and bring about the apocalypse — and his father’s dying wish that he kill his brother should it come to that, Dean, despite all of this, becomes increasingly attached to Sam. This becomes particularly evident in *Born Under a Bad Sign* (2.14). Sam goes missing for two days and Dean is frantic.

*Figure A3.05*  
Dean in *Born Under a Bad Sign*

*Dean:* I swear, it’s like looking for my dad all over again, I’m losing my mind here ... I’ve called him a thousand times, there’s nothing but voicemail, I don’t know where he went or why, Sam’s just gone.

When it becomes clear that Sam is evil, holding a knife to a woman’s throat, already having killed a man and shouting at Dean to shoot him or he will kill her, Dean cannot do it. While it turned out that Sam was possessed, this would prove to be just the beginning of Dean’s devotion to him.
Sam: Dean, kill me, or I’m gonna kill her ... shoot me.

Dean: No Sammy, come on [puts gun down and walks away].

Sam: What the hell’s wrong with you Dean? Are you so scared of being alone that you’d rather let Jo die?

In *Metamorphosis* (4.04) Dean punches Sam in the face, twice, after discovering not only that Sam has been using his demon-like abilities, which he promised he would not, but also that he is working with Ruby. “It’s already gone too far Sam. If I didn’t know you I would want to hunt you.” Of course Dean never would, but this episode shows that this is only because of his devotion to Sam.
A3.5  ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE PT 1 & 2 (2.21 & 2.22)

When Sam is killed in *All Hell Breaks Loose, pt. 1* (2.21) Dean sells his soul — in *All Hell Breaks Loose, pt. 2* (2.22) — to the crossroads demon and agrees to only live for another year, just to have Sam back. It is in this episode that they free their father from Hell and destroy the demon that killed their mother and Sam’s girlfriend. Although Sam vows to save Dean from his fate, he never does. Dean dies and goes to Hell at the end of season three.

Dean is resurrected for season four, which is a time of considerable strain for the Sam–Dean relationship. While Dean is in Hell, Sam continues using supernatural powers — to do what he believes to be good — and becomes sexually involved with Ruby — a demon that, viewers later learn, is using Sam to raise Lucifer — both of which he continues and keeps secret when Dean returns. Despite Sam’s lies and deception, he is all Dean cares about — with the exception of Bobby, a family friend, and the Impala, whose wellbeing seems to reflect Dean’s.¹²

¹²The Impala has been damaged twice in the series, first in the episode *Route 666* (1.13) when Dean is involved in a case that brings him back into the life of, according to the series, his only known girlfriend — Cassie, who he loved, but who broke off their relationship when he was honest with her about the ‘family business’. The second occasion was in *Everybody Loves a Clown* (2.02), when, following his father’s death, Dean takes a crowbar to his car.
A3.6 SEX AND VIOLENCE (4.14)

Dean’s devotion to Sam is made clear in Sex and Violence (4.14), an episode about a siren who looks into men’s hearts, finds what they want most and then makes them kill for it. Considering the victims of the episode have all succumbed to beautiful strippers — “strippers Sammy,” Dean says, “we’re on an actual case involving strippers, finally” — the episode looks to be a light one. However, when Dean is revealed as the siren’s next victim, the tone of the episode darkens.

What is important about the episode is its slash potential. Despite Dean’s frequent reference to ‘tits and ass’, the form the siren uses to seduce him is not a stripper named Jasmine, but instead a younger brother type named Nick. The two spend time together, have a lot in common, and eventually, Nick has Dean ready to kill

---

73 Each stripper in the episode is named after a Disney character.
Appendix three

Sam just so they can be together, forever. While the episode clearly sets up that Nick is a little brother figure that Dean can trust, it is ‘forever’ all the same, and shows that, while other men’s hearts desire beautiful women, Dean’s beats instead for companionship. The episode ends when Bobby kills the siren.

*Dean:* So whatever floats the guy’s boat, that’s what they look like?

*Sam:* Yeah, you see sirens can read minds, they see what you want most and kind of like cloak themselves, like an illusion.

*Sam:* You’re one butt ugly stripper.

*Nick:* Maybe, but I got what I wanted, I got Dean ... Dean’s all mine.

*Sam:* You poisoned him.
Nick: No, I gave him what he needed, and it wasn’t some bitch in a G-string. It was you, a little brother that looked up to him, that he could trust. And now he loves me, he’d do anything for me.

Tosenberger singled out *Sex and Violence* as the episode that makes “really, really thin [*Supernatural*’s] veneer of plausible deniability” (as quoted in Chan 2009). This is supported in the episode by the symbolism of the hyacinth flower, discovered at each crime scene. The hyacinth flower gets its name from Spartan prince Hyacinthus, an athletic youth Apollo was “passionately fond of” (Gayley 1911, p. 93).

According to Gayley (1911), during a game of quoits with Apollo, a discus bounced off the earth and struck Hyacinthus in the forehead. Unable to be saved, he died in Apollo’s arms,

> Thou diest, Hyacinth … robbed of thy youth by me. Would that I could die for thee!

> But since that may not be, my lyre shall celebrate thee, my song shall tell thy fate,

> and thou shalt become a flower inscribed with my regret (Ovid 7 AD, p. 162).

As Apollo spoke, the blood staining the herbage ceased to be blood and in its place sprang a flower that bore Hyacinthus’s name and would return each spring to revive his memory. It has been said that Zephyrus (god of the west wind), who also loved Hyacinthus and was jealous of his preference for Apollo, blew the quoit off its course so it would strike him.

Tosenberger (see Chan 2009) argued that, whereas *Supernatural* once treated the Sam/Dean subtext in a joking way (see 5.3), this is no longer the case,
It’s not being played off as a funny or silly “nudge-nudge, wink-wink” to fans anymore. They’re taking it very seriously, this emotionally incestuous relationship between Sam and Dean.

Apollo’s love for the beautiful Hyacinthus was legendary. Its inclusion in *Sex and Violence* symbolises what Tosenberger observed as a ‘serious’ regard for the Sam/Dean subtext. It could also have foreshadowed the hurt/comfort relationship of Castiel and Dean.
Appendix four

*The following episodes could inspire character monstropia.*

**A4.1 TALL TALES (2.15)**

The narration in *Tall Tales* (2.15) is splintered, as Sam and Dean tell their individual accounts of an investigation into the bizarre murders of two staff members and the rape of a student at Springfield University. The episode is similar to 1998 *The X-Files* episode *Bad Blood* (5.12), where Mulder and Scully individually recap a case, revealing irritations toward each other, and demonstrating how different eyes make for a different story; not surprising considering *Tall Tales* writer John Shiban began his career as a writer on *The X-Files* and was co-producer for *The X-Files* episode in question.

Just as *Bad Blood* showed that Mulder saw Scully as irritable and demanding while she saw him as an arrogant eccentric, *Tall Tales* similarly revealed a lot about how the brothers see each other. In Dean’s view, Sam is an emotional ‘pansy’, while in Sam’s view, Dean is sexually irreverent and crude. Bobby observes that the boys are “bickering like an old married couple”, to which Sam says, “we’ve just been on the road for too long, tight quarters, all that”. It turns out that the reason for the boys’ bickering is the trickster, whose specialty is turning people against each other.
Sam: I know this all has to be so hard.

Frat pledge: Not so much.

Sam: I want you to know I’m here for you, you brave little soldier, I acknowledge your pain. Come here [hugs frat pledge], too precious for this world.

[END RECOUNT]

Sam: I never said that.

Dean: You’re always saying pansy stuff like that.

It is Dean’s comical regard for a rape victim (hazed by what Dean described as a “sexed up ET”) that demonstrates how Supernatural promotes panic as much as it does desire, and why it could be said to inspire character monstropia.

Curtis: They did tests on me and they, ah, they probed me.

Dean: They probed you?

Curtis: Yeah, they probed me. Again and again and again [has a shot of alcohol] and again and again and again and then one more time.

Dean: Yikes.
Curtis: And that’s not even the worst of it.

Dean: How could it get any worse, some alien made you his bitch.

The villain of the episode, the trickster, feeds a lab scientist to an alligator, pushes a professor from his window and to his death and repeatedly rapes a male student, and yet, after killing him, Dean says, “well I gotta say, he had style”. Dean was particularly impressed by the rape of the student, which incidentally was the trickster’s personal favourite too. The trickster similarly liked Dean, telling him as much, as well as that the people he killed got what was coming to them. The trickster even tried to tempt Dean with a peace offering; two scantily clad women at his sexual disposal.
Brunette trickster girl: We’ve been waiting for you Dean.

Dean: You guys aren’t real.

Brunette trickster girl: Trust me sugar, it’s gonna feel real.

Blonde trickster girl: Come on, let us give you a massage.

Dean: You know I’m a sucker for a happy ending, I am but, I’m gonna have to pass.

Trickster: They’re a peace offering ... so treat yourself.

Dean: Look man, I gotta tell you, I dig your style, alright, I mean, I do, phew, and the slow dancing alien.

Trickster: One of my personal favourites.

Dean and the trickster are kindred spirits, both hypersexually heterosexual — they even have the same taste in women, the trickster’s ‘peace offering’ shown in an earlier scene feeding the trickster treats. Linking back to the splintered narration of the episode — and its premise of showing audiences how Sam and Dean really see the world, and each other — Dean’s admiration for the trickster and his ‘tricks’ reveal his homophobia (getting pleasure out of the idea of a pledge master — who, according to a
frat pledge, enjoyed hazing freshmen — being raped repeatedly) and view of women as disposable objects to be consumed and enjoyed is forefront in this episode. The survival of the trickster at the end — his death being a ‘trick’ — further cements the show’s encouragement for audiences to like the character, and perhaps even view him as a Dexter-like non-monster who only hurts those who deserve to be hurt (such as a closeted frat boy). The trickster returns the next season in Mystery Spot (3.11) to, believe it or not, ‘save the day’ by teaching Sam a lesson about the value of human life.

A4.2 BEDTIME STORIES (3.05)

Like Tall Tales, in Bedtime Stories (3.05) it is Dean’s homophobia — this time toward what he perceives to be Sam’s gayness — that could inspire character monstropia. Linking (see 5.3) to Seidler’s (1997) belief that masculinity is something men must be constantly ready to prove, as Sam’s older brother, Dean’s comment, “dude, could you be more gay” in response to his knowledge of fairytales bereaves Sam of his masculinity and affirms Dean’s claim to an exclusive heterosexuality (p. 39). It was in this way that Seidler (1997) argued that masculinity is something always overshadowed by homophobic feelings (p. 39). Reviewing the episode, Jessica Paff (2007) wrote, “using implied homosexuality as an insult just rubbed me the wrong way”.

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

\*\*\*
Sam: I do have a theory, sorta.

Dean: Hit me.

Sam: Well I’m thinking about fairytales.

Dean: Oh that’s nice, do you think about fairytales often?

Sam: No, Dean I’m talking about the murders.

Sam: Remember Cinderella? The pumpkin that turns into a coach. The mice that become horses.

Dean: Dude, could you be more gay? Don’t answer that. Oh who knows, maybe we’ll find your fairy god mother.
A4.3 JUS IN BELLO (3.12)

*Jus in Bello* (3.12) is another example of *Supernatural* characters (Dean and Agent Victor Henriksen) using suggestions of homosexuality as an insult.

*Victor:* I’ve got a lot to celebrate. I mean, after all, seeing you two in chains.

*Dean:* You kinky son of a bitch. We don’t swing that way.

*Victor:* Funny … Sorry Dean, truth is your daddy brainwashed you with all that devil talk and no doubt touched you in a bad place. That’s all, that’s reality.

Agent Victor Henriksen (played by Charles Malik Whitfield) talks to Sam and Dean in *Jus in Bello*
Appendix five

The following episodes could inspire narrative monstropia.

A5.1 GHOSTFACERS (3.13)

*Ghostfacers* (3.13) sees the return\(^{75}\) of Ed Zeddmore and Harry Spengler. Calling themselves ‘Ghostfacers’, Ed and Harry — who are actually more web geeks than ghostbusters — epitomise how not to hunt the supernatural. In this episode, Ed and Harry are filming a pilot for a television show (*Ghostfacers*) and have enlisted the help of Ed’s sister Maggie (techie), Spruce (cameraman) and Corbett (intern).

*Harry:* I like Corbett, I do ... [but] I think he’s got the hots for Ed, and that could spell trouble for the whole team.

*Corbett:* Ed’s kind of the more rugged with that really golden beautiful sort of beard.

---

\(^{75}\)First appearing in *Hell House* (1.17) and most recently in *It’s a Terrible Life* (4.17) — an ‘alternate universe’ episode where Sam and Dean are not brothers — *Ghostfacers* is the second outing for the *Ghostbusters*-spoof (Aykroyd & Ramis 1984) pair.
While Ed and Harry are themselves sexually ambiguous — at the episode’s start Ed says, fame and fortune would mean “sex [pause] with girls” — Corbett is the character of interest within the episode. Homosexual, he has a crush on Ed, which Harry says could mean trouble\textsuperscript{76} for the entire team (this is because of, I assume, how dangerous their work is). While the villain of the episode is Freeman Daggett — a Norman Bates\textsuperscript{77}-like ghost who, when alive, worked as a hospital janitor and stole corpses for company at home — the moral culprits are Ed and Harry. They exploit Corbett’s homosexuality for their own safety and profit. Daggett ties Corbett to a chair and seats him at a table with his collected dead. He then kills him in front of Sam.

\footnote{76}{Hypocritical considering Harry is sleeping with Ed’s sister, a secret that comes out when the team are running for their lives.}

\footnote{77}{According to Sam, “Daggett was the Norman Bates stuff-your-mother kind of lonely.” This, of course, is a reference to Alfred Hitchcock’s (1960) \textit{Psycho}.}
Daggett is not the only ghost of the episode. Two others appear (and later Corbett becomes the third) in the form of what Sam and Dean describe as “death echoes”, ghosts caught in a death loop, made to relive their violent deaths for eternity. Corbett becomes trapped in one of these loops, being killed again and again as the surviving Ghostfacers watch on in horror from inside a circle of salt. Earlier in the episode Sam had explained that to free a ghost trapped in a death echo you must appeal to who they were when they were alive. Harry tells Ed that in order to do this for Corbett — and free him from eternal torture — he has to ‘go gay’ for the team, or as Harry puts it, “go be gay for that poor dead intern”. Ed acts surprised that Corbett had feelings for him, even though there had already been two instances in the episode of him reacting with awkward silence in response to Corbett’s flirting.

Ed: Wait guys, guys it’s Corbett, he’s trapped, he’s in a lot of pain you know, we gotta, we’ve gotta try and pull him out of his loop, we have to ...

Harry: I know how we can get through to him.

Ed: How?
Harry: Ed, he had feelings for you.

Ed: Huh?

Harry: He wanted you.

Ed: Wanted me to what?

Harry: You know ... And you know what you gotta do. You can do it Ed. You've always been the brave one, yes you can. Ed, you've got to go be gay for that poor dead intern.

Ed does pretend he is gay, and that he “really truly” loves Corbett. And this does break Corbett’s echo. However, once the echo is broken, Ed asks Corbett to help the team escape, which he does by dragging Daggett, and in turn himself, to Hell.

Ed: Corbett, it’s just Ed buddy, it’s just me. Hey, hey Corbett, listen to me, listen to me, OK, you meant. Corbett. You meant a lot to the team, you meant a lot to me. You know, never back down, never say a bad word, and I remember that Corbett, I remember that, I remember because I love you Corbett. I really truly love you. Do you remember that, do you?
When they escape, Ghostfacers cut their footage into a video of the team’s experience in the house. This includes a segment where Harry says, by dying Corbett has “earned full Ghostfacers status”. This is followed by a candid interview with Corbett before the trip to the haunted house where he says, “tonight ... I think all my dreams are gonna come true”.

(Recorded footage)

**Harry:** As far as we’re concerned, you’re not an intern anymore. You have more than earned full Ghostfacers status.

**Ed:** All this time you were teaching us. About how gay love can pierce through the veil of death and save the day.

**Corbett:** I think tonight, I really do, I think all my dreams are gonna come true.

**Sam:** It’s bizarre how you’re able to honour Corbett’s memory while grossly exploiting the manner of his death, well done.
Ed and Harry’s treatment of Corbett’s homosexuality in *Ghostfacers* is an example of how *Supernatural* could be argued to inspire narrative monstropia. Harry and Ed — who consider homosexual sex of lesser value, shown through Ed’s comment that fame and fortune would mean “sex [pause] with girls” — believe a suitable consolation for Corbett dying and losing his soul is to be equal to them. They now consider the “poor dead intern” to have full Ghostfacers status. To persuade Ed to pretend to “be gay”, Harry says he had “always been the brave one”, as if homosexuality was as scary (or as ‘monstrous’) as the Norman Bates-like ghost who hunted them. Even Sam takes offence to the pair’s treatment of Corbett, describing the *Ghostfacers* pilot as “grossly exploiting the manner of his death”. To which Harry’s response is to call Sam and Dean “dicks” before Spruce runs off DVDs of the pilot and Harry suggests that they are “gonna need a bigger office” for when the series goes national, then international.

**A5.2 CRISS ANGEL IS A DOUCHE BAG (4.12)**

Like *Ghostfacers*, *Criss Angel is a Douche Bag* (4.12), too, could be seen to inspire character monstropia for its portrayal of overtly homosexual characters. Namely Chief, a leather-clad master in an S&M club, whose suggestion of kinky homosexual sex makes Dean gag, then later describe the experience to Sam as one he does not “want to talk about, or think about ever again”.
Dean: Would you know someone who might use them [tarot cards] now?

Vernon: Well there was this guy down on Bleakers Street.

Charlie: Oh yeah, he peddles that kind of specialty stuff.

Dean: Know the exact address?

Vernon: 426 Bleaker.

Charlie: Ask for Chief.

Dean: Chief? Thank you.

Chief: You are really gonna get it tonight big boy.

Dean: There’s been a misunderstanding. I, ah, I think I’ve been had.

Chief: Oh you ain’t been had, ’til you’ve been had by the Chief. Oh, and before we get started, what’s your safe word?

Dean: [gags]

* * *

Dean: Find anything interesting?

Sam: Ah, no, you?

Dean: Nothing I want to talk about, or think about ever again ...
The episode could also be said to inspire narrative monstropia through its treatment of sexually ambiguous characters Charlie and Jay, travelling magicians in town for Iowa Magic Week. It was Charlie (and his friend Vernon) who suggested Dean (posing as FBI) visit the Chief. This within itself suggests that Charlie is gay because, as Lyle Masaki (2009) argued in his blog on the episode, as travelling performers Charlie and Vernon “probably wouldn’t know where to find a source for same-sex S&M action unless they had a bit of an interest in it”.

Dean: [confronts Charlie] The Chief huh?
Charlie: What’s the matter? Chief not your type?

But it is Charlie’s dedication to Jay that most strongly suggests a more than platonic relationship.

Jay: I was just a kid when we first met, all I knew was how to cheat at cards. Charlie got me out of worse scrapes than I can count. Hell, I would’ve been dead by the age of 20 if it hadn’t been for him. He was more than my friend, he was my brother.

Charlie has discovered the secret to immortality in a book of real magic. And yet he seems content to grow old with Jay (a washed out magician), not casting a spell to make himself young again, or any other spells from the book. That is until, following a succession of taunts from young magicians during Magic Week, Jay decides to kill himself in a blaze of final glory by attempting The Table of Death — a trick that almost cost him his life thirty years earlier.
Charlie knows it is suicide, “I would do anything for you, you know that,” he says. “But I will not watch you die, I’ll miss that show.” To this Jay replies, “Ah you’ll be there. You’re always there for me.” Unable to persuade Jay not to attempt the trick, Charlie uses a death transference spell to keep him from certain death. This means, instead of Jay dying, one of the other magicians — who had taunted him — dies instead. The problem is, Jay likes escaping the inescapable, as does his audience. So begins Jay’s comeback.

For his next trick, full of a newfound confidence in his abilities, Jay attempts The Executioner, a feat — where the magician has one minute to escape a straight jacket while in a hangman’s noose — even the great Houdini dared not attempt. When Sam witnesses the ‘not physically possible’ escape, he makes a connection with the local deaths and suspects Jay. However once convinced that Jay is not responsible (following the death of old Charlie) the brothers suspect Vernon.

In the end it is Charlie (in his young again form) who returns to set the record straight, and to invite Jay and Vernon to be young again too. “Come with me, both of you,” Charlie says, “I’ve never made this offer before, but then again, I’ve never had friends like the two of you before. Let me do this for you.”

Sam and Dean show up soon after, guns raised. “Just leave me and my friends alone,” Charlie says. But they will not. A fight follows, shots are fired by Sam and Dean while Charlie on his part casts spells. To save Sam and Dean Jay uses a death transference — the same one Charlie used to save his life — and stabs himself, which kills Charlie. As he dies Charlie turns to him, “Jay,” he says, “you picked these strangers
over me”. The episode ends with Jay alone — Vernon having left him for what he did to Charlie — and giving away his cards, which represent his livelihood and his magic. It also represents the loss of Charlie (his ‘lovely assistant’ for his magic tricks) and how without him the show cannot go on. He is a broken man.

*Charlie:* You were ready to kill yourself, I saved your life.

*Vernon:* Is that right Jay?

*Charlie:* I was there for you like I’ve always been, like I’ll always be.

*Jay:* This isn’t right Charlie, what you’re doing, you know that, somewhere you know that.

*Charlie:* I know I don’t want to come back alone. To start all over alone

---

*Figure A5.06*

Jay (played by Barry Bostwick) and Dean in *Criss Angel is a Douche Bag*

*Dean:* Hey Jay, we wanted to, ah, thank you for what you did yesterday.

*Jay:* I killed my best friend yesterday and you wanna thank me?

[Silence]

*Dean:* Where’s Vernon?
Jay: Oh he’s gone, he said he didn’t want to speak to me again after what I did to

Charlie.

Dean: Listen Jay, you know Charlie was never gonna give up what he was doing. Never, you did the right thing.

Jay: You sure about that? You know Charlie was like my brother, and now he’s dead, because I did the right thing. He offered me a gift and I just threw it back in his face. So now I have to spend the rest of my life old and alone, what’s so right about that?

[ Goes to leave the bar ]

Waitress: Jay, your cards.

Jay: Throw them away.

Jay described Charlie as more than his friend, “he was my brother”. Similarities between Sam and Dean and Charlie and Jay are evident in their shared emotions during the episode. Dean, for example, tells Sam, “Man, I hope I die before I get old, the thing seems brutal don’t it?” while at the end of the episode, “I don’t want to be doing this when I’m an old man” is the explanation Sam gives to Ruby of why he decides to join her and kill Lilith (an act that would bring about the apocalypse). In this respect Criss Angel is a Douche Bag is a pivotal episode in the series.

The episode can be said to inspire narrative monstropia because of the way Charlie and Jay are treated. While Sam and Dean ‘bend’ their own moral code (most notably in Born Under a Bad Sign) to ensure the ultimate survival of each other, no matter what the cost, Charlie — whose desire for Jay is less ambiguous than Sam’s for Dean, or vice versa — is forced by Sam and Dean to ‘do the right thing’ by killing the one person in the world who makes him happy. For Charlie and Jay their eventual happiness
(being together) is not only denied — as in episodes that inspire paratopia — in the series, but destroyed. “You know Charlie was like my brother, and now he’s dead, because I did the right thing ... now I have to spend the rest of my life old and alone, what’s so right about that?”
Appendix six

The following episode is the first to date to explicitly reference slash.

A6.1 THE MONSTER AT THE END OF THIS BOOK (4.18)

Supernatural episode The Monster at the End of this Book (4.18) is arguably the most important to date for the study of fandom and slash inspired by the series. During the 2009 Comic-Con, series creator Eric Kripke described his relationship with Supernatural’s online fans as “tempestuous, loving [and] conflicting”, and said that The Monster at the End of this Book gave him a chance to “lovingly make fun of them” (Roffman 2009).

The episode begins with Sam and Dean discovering they are characters in a series of books with an underground cult following.

*Comic Book Store Owner:* You guys are LARPing, aren’t you?

*Dean:* Excuse me?

*Comic Book Store Owner:* You’re fans.

*Sam:* Fans of what?

*Dean:* What’s “LARPing”?

*Comic Book Store Owner:* Like you don’t know. [Sees their confused faces] Live-Action Role-Play. And pretty hardcore, too.

*Dean:* I’m sorry, I have no idea what you’re talking about.

*Comic Book Store Owner:* You’re asking questions like the building’s haunted. Like
those guys from the books. What are they called? Uh ... Supernatural. Two guys, useake IDs with rock aliases, hunt down ghosts, demons, vampires—

Dean: You’re saying this is a book?

Comic Book Store Owner: Books. It was a series. Didn’t sell many copies, though. Kind of had more of an underground cult following.

The episode is a tongue-in-cheek homage to Supernatural fans, however is also an important piece to the show’s mythology. It resembles the 1999 The X-Files episode Milagro (6.18), not surprising considering that Milagro’s director Kim Manners was executive producer on The Monster at the End of this Book. In Milagro struggling writer Philip Padgett is writing a novel where the characters come to life. Similar to Milagro, the author in The Monster at the End of this Book, Chuck Shirley, has no control over the characters, but is instead a vessel through which their story is told. However, vessel or not, as Dean discovers, Chuck has insight into even his most private moments, which includes his sex life. “I’m full frontal in here, dude”, he says to Sam, whose face
scrunches at the thought. This could represent Sam and Dean’s aversion to the idea that a writer might be privy, let alone have creative licence, to their sexual activities.

**Dean:** This is freakin’ insane. How’s this guy know all this stuff?

**Sam:** You got me.

**Dean:** Everything is in here. I mean everything. From the racist truck to, to me having sex. I’m full frontal in here, dude.
While researching the obscure — and discontinued — book series, Sam uncovers a small, yet vocal, online presence. Here actual fans of the series — such as Simpatico, who features regularly on the Television Without Pity forums — are singled out by Sam and Dean for comments they make on Supernatural storylines. “Screw you Simpatico, we lived it,” says Dean in response to Simpatico’s scathing review of Supernatural ‘storylines’ that are the brothers’ lives.

**Dean:** How come we haven’t heard of them before?

**Sam:** They’re pretty obscure. I mean, almost zero circulation. Uh, started in ’05. The publisher put out a couple dozen before going bankrupt. And, uh, the last one, No Rest for the Wicked, ends with you going to Hell.

**Dean:** I reiterate. Freakin’ insane ... Although for fans, they sure do complain a lot.

Listen to this, Simpatico says, “the demon storyline is trite, clichéd and overall craptastic.” Yeah, well screw you Simpatico, we lived it.

Again this is both a homage to fans as well as a slight jab, as episode writer Julie Siege teases those who take the show seriously enough to imagine narratives of their
own involving the characters, and yet criticise the storytelling that inspired that creativity. Julie inserts herself into the story as custodian — the woman who published the series — Sera Siege (a name that also gives a nod to executive story editor Sera Gamble), who will not stand for anyone “making fun of my boys”. As part of the scene in which this line is delivered, Sam and Dean prove they are true fans of the series by showing their tattoos, to which Sera hikes her skirt and tells the boys, “I got one too”. This scene could perhaps be a reference to a comment Gamble made in a 2008 Firefox News interview, “I’ll be convinced we’re truly a cult hit when a fan gets the same tattoo” (Lastark 2008). Of course this links to this thesis’s discussion of Supernatural as a cult text (see 4.6).

_Sera Siege:_ I don’t want any smart-ass article making fun of my boys.

_Sam:_ Please. Like I said, we are, um ... [unbuttons his shirt to show the demon-protection tattoo] big, big fans.

[Dean rolls his eyes, then shows his own tattoo]

_Sera:_ Awesome. You know what? [Turns around and hikes up her skirt] I got one too.

_Dean:_ Whoa. You are a fan.
The cover of the book series in which the boys feature is also of interest. It is illustrated with a shirtless character bearing a striking resemblance to Fabio, a model made famous for his appearance on the covers of romance novels. This links to the thesis’s discussion of Gamble’s comment that *Supernatural* is the “epic love story of Sam and Dean” (see 4.2) as well as connections between slash fiction and the romance genre (see 2.4).

The episode is of particular interest to this thesis as it is the only to date to explicitly reference slash. While surfing the fandom the brothers discover not only “Sam girls” and “Dean girls” but also “slash fans”. And the verdict? Are the boys up for it? Absolutely not. Dean’s words “that’s just sick”\(^{78}\) summing up best my conclusion that *Supernatural* nurtures a complex knot of both dread and desire.

\(^{78}\)This is the same response Dean gives Sam’s suggestion that the two have sex in Astolat’s (2008b) *Bad Blood* (see Appendix eight).
Sam: Keep on reading, it gets better.

Dean: There are “Sam girls” and “Dean girls” and — what’s a “slash fan”?

Sam: As in Sam slash Dean. Together.

Dean: Like together together?

Sam: Yeah.

Dean: They do know we’re brothers right?

Sam: Doesn’t seem to matter.
Dean: Oh, come on. That... that’s just sick [he shuts the laptop and pushes it from him].

Having learnt that the book series chronicled the boys’ experiences in minute detail up to Dean’s going to Hell, they track down the author to get answers — and learn that he has continued to write without a publisher. Before Sam and Dean are able to convince Chuck that they truly are the Sam and Dean from his books, and not fans LARPing (Live-Action Role-Play), he first strongly suggests they “get a life” then fears for his own when Dean forces entry into his house, “Is this some kind of Misery thing? Ah, it is, isn’t it? It’s a Misery thing.” This scene includes perhaps the two best examples of fans as fanatics. The first example is the actor William Shatner’s (Captain Kirk in Star Trek from 1966–1969) famous advice to Star Trek fans to “get a life”, delivered during a skit on Saturday Night Live in 1986. The second is a reference to Annie Wilkes, the antagonist in Stephen King’s 1987 Misery, who tortures her favourite author after he kills off the character she loves.
Dean: I’m Dean. This is Sam. The Dean and Sam you’ve been writing about.

Chuck Shurley: Look, uh, I appreciate your enthusiasm. Really, I do. It’s, uh, it’s always nice to hear from the fans. But, uh, for your own good, I strongly suggest you get a life [tries to shut the door but Dean stops it].

Dean: See, here’s the thing. We have a life. You’ve been using it to write your books.

[Dean forces his way into the house].

Chuck: Now wait a minute. Now this isn’t funny.

Dean: Damn straight it’s not funny ... Are you a hunter?


Dean: Then how do you know so much about demons? And Tulpas, and changelings?

Chuck: Is this some kind of Misery thing? Ah, it is, isn’t it? It’s a Misery thing.

Dean: No, it’s not a Misery thing. Believe me, we are not fans.

Once the pair have proved themselves, Chuck concludes that he must be a god, which is a interesting way of seeing fan writers, who make the characters their own. Chuck also expresses regret for how he has treated them, “I’m definitely a god. A cruel, cruel, capricious god. The things I put you through ... all for what? All for the sake of literary symmetry. I toyed with your lives, your emotions, for ... entertainment”. Chuck’s
admission that Sam and Dean’s story treats them cruelly and ‘toys’ with their lives complements perfectly this thesis’s description of paratopia (see 2.7), as allowing the characters a lasting happiness eternally denied in the series.

**Chuck:** [Pours himself a glass of whisky and downs it in one go] Oh! Oh, you’re still there.

**Dean:** Yup.

**Chuck:** You’re not a hallucination.

**Dean:** Nope.

**Chuck:** Well, there’s only one explanation. Obviously I’m a god.

**Sam:** You’re not a god.

**Chuck:** How else do you explain it? I write things and then they come to life. Yeah, no, I’m definitely a god. A cruel, cruel, capricious god. The things I put you through, the physical beatings alone ... All for what? All for the sake of literary symmetry. I toyed with your lives, your emotions, for ... entertainment.
Figure A6.12
Sam, Dean and Chuck in The Monster at the End of this Book

Dean: You didn’t toy with us, Chuck, OK? You didn’t create us.

Chuck: I am so sorry. I mean, horror is one thing, but to be forced to live bad writing. If I would have known it was real, I would have done another pass.

Dean: Chuck, you’re not a god.

Sam: We think you’re probably just psychic.

Chuck: No. If I were psychic, you think I’d be writing? Writing is hard.

Figure A6.13
Chuck in The Monster at the End of this Book
Chuck says if he had known the boys were real he would have “done another pass”, as no one should be “forced to live bad writing”. It is later revealed that Chuck does not decide the brothers’ fate, but is instead “a conduit for the inspired word”. This suggests that Sam and Dean’s hardships are important to the show’s story, and also highlights the function of paratopia, as a way to liberate the boys from a fate that in the series “can’t be unwritten”.

This is further supported by the episode’s title, which gets its name from the Jon Stone Sesame Street book *The Monster at the End of this Book: Starring Lovable, Furry Old Grover* (1971). Grover is horrified to learn that there is a monster at the end of the book, and does everything he can to prevent the reader from reaching the book’s end, which includes building brick walls and tying the pages together. However the reader pushes on — Grover in awe of their strength — and when the end of the book comes it is revealed that the monster is in fact Grover himself. This is paralleled in the episode by Chuck’s inability to save Sam and Dean from a fate that he foresaw.

This realisation comes during a scene where Castiel (the angel who rescued Dean from Hell) tells Dean that Chuck is a prophet, and that the books he is writing will one day become known as the Winchester Gospel. Presumably, this pokes fun at the reverence with which fans hold their favourite texts.
**Chuck:** I am the prophet Chuck.

**Dean:** I take it you knew I’d be here.

**Chuck:** You look terrible.

**Dean:** That’s ’cause I just got hit by a minivan, Chuck.

**Chuck:** Oh.

**Dean:** That it? Every damn thing you write about me comes true and all you have to say to me is “oh”?

**Chuck:** Please don’t yell at me.

**Dean:** Why do I get the feeling there’s something that you’re not telling us?

**Chuck:** What wouldn’t I be telling you?

**Dean:** How you know what you know for starters.

**Chuck:** I don’t know how I know, I just do.

**Dean:** That’s not good enough [he shoves Chuck against the wall]. How the hell are you doing this?

**Castiel:** Dean, let him go. This man is to be protected.

**Dean:** Why?

**Castiel:** He’s a prophet of the Lord.

**Chuck:** You, you’re Castiel aren’t you?
Castiel: It’s an honour to meet you, Chuck. I admire your work [he picks up one of Chuck’s books and starts paging through it].

Dean: Whoa, whoa, what? This guy, a prophet? Come on, he’s, he’s, he’s practically a penthouse forum writer. [To Chuck] Did you know about this?

Chuck: [Opening a fresh bottle of whisky] I, uh, I might have dreamt about it.

Dean: And you didn’t tell us?

Chuck: It was too preposterous. Not to mention arrogant. I mean, writing yourself into the story is one thing, but as a prophet? That’s like M Night level douchiness.

Dean: This is the guy who decides our fate?

Castiel: He isn’t deciding anything. He’s a mouthpiece, a conduit for the inspired word.


Castiel: One day, these books, they’ll be known as the Winchester Gospel.

Dean and Chuck: You’ve got to be kidding me.

Castiel: I am not ... kidding you.

Chuck: If you’d both please excuse me one minute [taking his bottle upstairs].

Dean: Him? Really?

Another noteworthy scene from the episode is when Chuck tells Sam he left out that Sam drinks demon blood from the books because he thought it would make him appear unsympathetic. This suggests that Chuck’s Sam and Dean and Kripke’s Sam and Dean are not identical, and that Chuck’s versions have been improved. This revision is a form of psychological paratopia, because Chuck is making changes to Sam’s character that he believes are for the better.

*Chuck:* You want to know if I know about the demon blood.

*Sam:* You didn’t tell Dean.

*Chuck:* I didn’t even write it into the books. I was afraid it would make you look unsympathetic.

*Sam:* Unsympathetic?

*Chuck:* Yeah, come on Sam. I mean, sucking blood? You got to know that’s wrong.

*Sam:* It scares the hell out of me. I mean, I feel it inside of me. I ... I wish to God I could stop.

*Chuck:* But you keep going back ... Maybe the demon blood makes you feel stronger? More in control?

*Sam:* No. That’s not true.
This is supported by the episode’s Mary Sue-quality. The reason Sam and Dean find out about Chuck is because that is what he wrote. Chuck describes his latest book as “very Vonnegut”. When Dean (much to Sam’s surprise) asks, “Slaughterhouse Five-Vonnegut or Cat’s Cradle-Vonnegut?” Chuck replies, “It’s Kilgore Trout-Vonnegut. I wrote myself into it. I wrote myself, in my house, confronted by my characters.”

The episode even has a decent dose of slash potential. Castiel proves his love for Dean by choosing to help him against the will of his god. While Castiel told Dean that Chuck’s stories were the Word of God — “What the prophet has written can’t be unwritten. As he has seen it, so it shall come to pass.” — he decides to help Dean to prevent Chuck’s prophecy from coming true — a prophecy that would have prevented the apocalypse. That Castiel’s intervention saved Dean from a deal that would have cost him his life in exchange for the lives of billions suggests just how much Castiel has come to care for Dean.

---

79 Dean’s seemingly uncharacteristic knowledge of American literature could be argued to inspire psychological paratopia, as Dean is ‘changed’ to become more well-read. There is a similar scene in Sex and Violence (see Appendix three) when after Sam telling Dean of Bobby’s theory that they are dealing with sirens, and Dean’s reply, “Like Greek myth sirens? The Odyssey?” Sam gives him a shocked look. “Hey, I read,” Dean replies.

80 Chuck is of course referring to Kurt Vonnegut, the American writer who, in his 1999 Breakfast of Champions: A Novel, wrote himself into the story as being confronted by recurring character Kilgore Trout (based on science fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon).

81 It should be noted that Sam was not willing to accept the deal to sacrifice himself for the sake of billions of innocent lives, something Dean questions him about later.

82 This seems similar to the sacrifice Corbett makes for Ed in Ghostfacers (see Appendix five).
Dean: Well, I feel stupid doing this. But I am fresh out of options. So please. I need some help. I'm praying, OK? Come on. Please.

Castiel: Prayer is a sign of faith. This is a good thing, Dean.

Dean: So does that mean you'll help me?

Castiel: I'm not sure what I can do.

Dean: Drag Sam out of here. Now, before Lilith shows up.

Castiel: It's a prophecy. I can't interfere.

Dean: You have tested me and thrown me every which way. And I have never asked for anything. Not a damn thing. But now I'm asking. I need your help. Please.

Castiel: What you're asking, it's ... not within my power to do.

Dean: Screw you. You and your mission. Your god. If you don't help me now, then when the time comes and you need me ... don't bother knocking.

Castiel: You must understand why I can't intercede. Prophets are very special. They're protected.

Dean: I get that.

Castiel: If anything threatens a prophet, anything at all, an archangel will appear to destroy that threat. Archangels are fierce. They're absolute. They're heaven's most
terrifying weapon.

Dean: And these archangels, they're tied to prophets?

Castiel: Yes.

Dean: So if a prophet was in the same room as a demon—

Castiel: Then the most fearsome wrath of heaven would rain down on that demon. Just so you understand ... why I can't help.

Dean: Thanks, Cas.

Castiel: Good luck.
Appendix seven

The following story is an example of geographical paratopia (see 4.6 for close reading).

A7.1 AERIAL (ASTOLAT 2008A)

Sam found a way to get rid of them for almost a month at a time, a spell that lasted until the first night of the full moon. The problem was it took a good six pints of fresh Winchester blood, and Dean had seen enough of that by now to last him a few lifetimes.

“So what do you want to do?” Sam said, when Dean grabbed at his arm, ignoring the steady drip from his own.

“Not this,” Dean said, pressing his thumb to the crook of Sam’s elbow, sliding out the needle.

They called in some of the last ten years of favors, and ended up at an old half-converted barn on two hundred acres in Montana, with a thirty-foot ceiling, room to park the Impala inside, and no one around for miles. The goddamn things were still a pain in the ass, especially when Dean was trying to sweep the floor or make dinner or something. Although they were kind of handy for fixing the roof and painting the ceiling, putting in the big skylight Sam wanted, and for the first time in years, he could put things on shelves out of Sam’s reach, which was pretty awesome.
But now they’d been here six months, they’d gotten the place livable, and Dean had enough free time to think more than he wanted to about how he was never going to get laid again, unless he wanted to watch Sam bleed himself white for it. Dean tried to get past it by just wearing himself out, building furniture, laying in plumbing, hauling in firewood, but it was hard, hard, and pretty much the only thing that worked was flying, going out at night and throwing himself into the air, the wings beating behind him like a storm, going and going until he came back to earth spent.

But his shoulders and back hurt like fuck the day after, every time, and the wings went dragging on the floor behind him limply. Sam watched him with worried eyes, and the next time he drove the hundred fifty miles to the nearest Wal-Mart for supplies, he came back with a heap of essential oils. He spread Dean out on the enormous bed they’d hand-made for him out of logs, two feet longer each way than a California king, and he heated up the oil and started slowly kneading the red, sore muscles around the wings. Dean started out groaning a lot, and then pretty soon he was really kind of moaning, and then it was seriously fucked up, but it felt so good he didn’t care, except to say, “Hey, Sam, you get that this is fucked up, right?” a little desperately.

“Yeah, Dean, I noticed around the time you started calling me baby, ten minutes ago,” Sam said, without taking his hands away. “You want me to stop?”

“Fuck no,” Dean said, gratefully; as long as Sam wasn’t going to freak out, he was good. And then in a few minutes he was better, and then he was even better than that, and then he had to slide a hand down and grab his own dick and finish it off, and it was a good thing Sam had put down a bunch of towels first.
Sam clapped him between the shoulderblades, breathing a little loud and uncomfortably himself, and left Dean limp and puddled on the bed. Dean didn’t fall asleep, but he didn’t even try to move for the rest of the afternoon, just lay there and baked in the sunlight slanting down on him, drowsily watching Sam puttering around the barn and pretending he was organizing the new bookshelves when what he was doing was reading in the middle of a big pile of books on the floor.

It happened a few more times, and then without them ever talking about it, all of a sudden it was their weekend thing. Friday night they cleaned the place, top to bottom, and put on a big pot of stew in the slow-cooker. Saturday morning they went out a little before dawn and spent almost the whole day out: Dean flying, Sam running on the ground; or sometimes they played paintball, with Sam using a sniper rifle from the ground. Once in a while Dean got ambitious and took Sam up with him, but that was risky, because having his arms wrapped around Sam, Sam holding on to him, both of them pressed up close and tight against each other, in the air — it made things weirder, and they would always come back down shaking.

They’d turned the old tack room into a giant shower, with a hand attachment; they rinsed, dried off, and went to the bed together. Dean lay down and let Sam work on him, slow and thorough and lazy, sometimes both of them stretched out and half asleep with one of Sam’s hands just kneading idly around one wing. They made it last as long as they could, and then after a few hours, less if they’d gone flying together, Sam got up and went to his own bed, and they both finished up, showered again, ate the stew and crashed. Sunday morning Dean made pancakes, and afterwards they spent the
rest of the afternoon lying in Dean’s bed reading or playing video games or crosswords.
Sam made dinner, and they talked about what they wanted to get done that week.

“Listen, I, uh, it might, if,” Sam said, one day, while he was up there working on Dean’s back. Dean cracked an eye to look up at him; he had no clue what Sam was trying to say. Sam’s face was red. “It might not have to be blood,” Sam blurted finally, even redder.

“Dude!” Dean said, propping himself up on his elbows to stare. “Six freaking pints?”

“It might not have to be the same amount — oh, God, just shut up and stop looking at me,” Sam said. “You want to try it or not?”

“How’s this going to work?” Dean said warily.

Sam didn’t even try telling him, just pushed him back down flat and started the spell chant, and — Jesus, Sam was jerking off over him. Sam was panting over him, Sam’s thighs were shivering, and Dean could feel Sam’s body rocking with each stroke, the spell coming out almost stuttered, and then Sam was — in spurts, hot and wet across Dean’s back, all over the sore muscles where he could feel, oh fucking god.

Turned out it didn’t work, but after that, it seemed kind of stupid to bother going to their own beds.

Sam kept trying to find a way. One time he made Dean sit up against the headboard, straddled his lap, and — “We have to, together,” Sam muttered. They worked at it for a while. Dean couldn’t quit staring at Sam’s cock, the big purpled head
sliding in and out of Sam’s fist, and he’d never been into dick before, but Sam had a
gorgeous one, and he kept losing the rhythm, and then Sam put his hand around both of
them, and that was it, goodbye. Sam came too. It still didn’t work.

It didn’t work when Dean sucked his cock, either, or the other way around. It
also didn’t work when Sam fucked him, nice and slow and perfect from behind, the
wings curling up and mantling around him involuntarily. Dean could feel through the
tips, stroking them up along Sam’s back and ass and thighs while Sam fucked him,
fucked him, thick demanding strokes into Dean’s ass, and Sam was making these choked
desperate noises in his throat, and Dean didn’t even know what the fuck he was saying
himself, but it was something like yes and god and i love.

The next week, Dean took Sam up with him into the wide wide spiraling blue. He
landed them finally when it got dark, both of them dazed and sticky and breathless, but
he still felt like he was flying.
Appendix eight

The following story is an example of character monstropia (see 5.4 for close reading).

A8.1 BAD BLOOD (ASTOLAT 2008B)

Dean managed to keep hold of the machete as he slammed back into the ground hard. Above him, the succubus shrieked as Sam body-checked her into a tree, pinning her wrists to the bark. “Dean!” he yelled, and Dean shoved himself up from the ground.

She snapped her teeth together in Sam’s face, not nearly so pretty now, all yellow cat eyes and snarling and claws. She bucked against the tree and kicked him back with both feet, sent him sprawling to the ground. Sam jumped up and went for her again. Dean was already there too, the machete in motion; she lunged at them, and all three of them hit at once: Sam’s punch slammed into her gut, her claws slashed deep into their shoulders, Dean’s machete took off her head in one smooth stroke, and her blood spurted out all over them.

Her head thumped down somewhere off in the dark trees, and her body toppled a second later. They stood panting for a second, staring down at her, and then their heads jerked back up. “Quick, the holy water,” Sam said, shedding his overshirt and yanking his tee up over his head, away from the cuts.

“You had it!” Dean said.
“What?” Sam said. He grabbed the flashlight out of his pants pocket and shone it back into the woods the way they’d come. Or vaguely the way they’d come. “Fuck, she knocked it out of my hands back there somewhere. What about your flask?”

Dean opened and shut his mouth.

“Dude,” Sam said. “You didn’t.”

“Shut up, the guy left the whiskey bottle right there on the goddamn bar!” Dean said. “Come on, come on, there’s more in the trunk—” and they ran for it, skidding on the old rotting leaves as they went down the hill, the tangle of branches and undergrowth slashing at their faces and their legs. “Ow, fuck!” Dean said, twisting his ankle, and Sam got slapped across the left nipple by something with thorns and yelled like a little girl, and then they were spilling out into the old dirt and gravel parking lot at the trailhead. The Impala was parked diagonally and nearly riding right up the ass of the succubus’s car, a little red Mustang that had almost shaken them three times in the twisting roads before she’d ditched it to try losing them on foot.

“Give me the keys, get your shirt off, quick,” Sam said, and caught Dean’s toss, yanked the trunk open and flipped on the light—

“Sam,” Dean said, swallowing, and he put his hand out to touch Sam’s bare shoulder. The claw marks were four deep parallel gouges curving over the skin, already scabbed over. They looked days old, skin around them cool to the touch. His own shoulder wasn’t stinging anymore either.
“Okay,” Sam said, “okay, let’s not panic, maybe it’s not too late—” and they got the holy water out and poured it over the scabs anyway, but it didn’t do a thing, didn’t hiss or smoke, and only made the rest of their cuts sting like fire.

“Fuck,” Dean said. “Fuck!” He threw the bottle into the trunk and grabbed his head. “How long have we got?”

“An hour,” Sam said, sagging back against the rear of the car.

“God fucking dammit,” Dean said. “Okay. There’s got to be a town close enough, something—”

“Dude, we didn’t see so much as a light on the road for the last two hours since we got off the highway,” Sam said. “Never mind how we’d actually get someone to go for it. Fuck me or I’m going to die isn’t the world’s best pickup line.”

“I’ve heard worse,” Dean said.

“You’ve used worse,” Sam said.

“So what, you want to just sit here and wait until our blood starts boiling and our dicks explode?” Dean said. “This is not how I am going out.”

“Uh, no,” Sam said. “I’m just saying we’ve got no choice. We’re going to have to do it.”

“Dude, that’s what I’m saying!” Dean said. “You want to try coming up with something more helpful, like how we’re going to make that happen?”

Sam stared at him. “Dean. We’re going to have to do it.”
“Huh?” Dean said, and then he got it. “Dude!” he yelled. “Dude, that’s sick! No fucking way! Are you out of your mind?”

Sam spread his arms wide, comprehensively taking in the empty lot, the silence and dark of the forest and the mountains. “I’m looking around at all the other options we don’t have, Dean.”

“Then we haven’t got any options, because that isn’t one!” Dean said.

“Come off it,” Sam said, rolling his eyes. “Are you telling me you’d rather die?”

“Yes!” Dean said. “Dude, what the hell is wrong with you!”

“Oh, okay, then,” Sam said, in a fucking exasperated tone, “and you’d also rather watch me die?”

“Oh, you son of a bitch,” Dean said.

“We’re already down to fifty minutes by now,” Sam said, rubbing his arm across his forehead wearily. “Let’s just get it over with.”

“Forget it,” Dean said. “Get in the car, I’ve got a plan.”

“Dean—”

“Shut up!” Dean said. “I am not having sex with you, now get in the car!”

“Forty-five minutes,” Sam announced, as the Impala came practically leaping off the dirt road onto the pavement, answering Dean’s prayers and hitting the hundred-thirty mark on the odometer. “Forty minutes. Dean, does your plan involve driving so fast we approach relativistic speeds?”
“What the fuck are you babbling about, you freak?” Dean said, and there it was, thank God, there they were, big dark eyes shining in the headlights, the tires going thump-thump as he pulled the car over onto the grassy shoulder. “There we go, come on, come on,” he said, killing the engine and the lights, and he shoved the car door open and headed for the fence.

“Are you *insane*?” Sam yelled at him over the hood of the Impala. “I am *not* fucking a horse!”

He came around the car and grabbed Dean’s other leg before he could swing it over the fence. Dean glared down at him and kicked loose of his grip. “Oh, but you’d fuck *me*?”

“Instead of a *horse*?” Sam said. “Yes!”

“You’re a sick perverted bastard, you know that?” Dean said.

“I’m not the one who wants to go fuck a horse!” Sam said, clinging on to his leg.

“Bestiality trumps incest!”

“Does not!” Dean said.

“Does too!”

“Bestiality sure as fucking hell doesn’t trump *gay* incest!” Dean said.

Sam stopped, staring up at him with his mouth open and wobbling on a disbelieving laugh. “You did not just say that.”

“What?” Dean demanded.
“This is about the gay thing?” Sam said.

“It is not!”

“You’d rather fuck a horse than have gay sex,” Sam said. “Yeah, and I’m the pervert.”

“I’d rather fuck a horse than have gay sex with you!” Dean put his heel to Sam’s shoulder and pushed him back.

Sam staggered back a few steps and caught himself, straightening up. “Right,” he said, with a wealth of scorn.

“Just shut up and get your ass in here,” Dean said.

“ Forget it.” Sam folded his arms. “I’m not doing it.”

“Fine, then I guess you’re going to hang out here and die.” Dean swung his leg the rest of the way over the fence and dropped down into the field. His boots squished in something, but he resolutely ignored it and marched on towards the horses.

Behind him, Sam folded his arms against the fence and put his forehead down on them. “Come on, Dean, we’ve only got thirty-one minutes left,” he called.

“Hey, horsey,” Dean said, ignoring him. Wow, horses were big up close. It lifted its head and looked at him out of one dark liquid eye.

“Is that even a girl horse?” Sam said.
Dean stopped. He groped his flashlight out of his pocket and bent down to check. “Yes!” he said. He didn’t see anything like a dick, anyway. He started edging around behind it. Her. Her.

“Dude, do you have any idea where it is on a horse?”

“If a guy horse can figure it out, so can I,” Dean said. Except the horse had gotten interested now and was turning to follow him. “Come on, stay still,” he muttered, trying to push on her shoulder. Instead she pushed him two steps back with one shove of her nose and started snuffling at his pockets. “Goddammit, will you come on and help me already?” he snapped at Sam.

“Yeah, no,” Sam said. “I’m going to wait out here and watch her kick you in the head and then at least I’ll get to die laughing. Seriously, dude, we’re running out of time.”

“Fuck you, Sam, get in here!” Dean yelled at the top of his lungs, and suddenly lights came on in the big farmhouse on the hill. Dean turned and saw the door open, a bright rectangle of light with a guy standing silhouetted against it, a shotgun in his hands. Sam was laughing so hard he was on his knees in the grass clinging to the fence for support as Dean scrambled back over, the farmer yelling furiously behind him and firing off rounds of buckshot.

Dean grabbed Sam by the collar, hauled him up and shoved him through the driver’s side door so hard he nearly slid headfirst into the footwell on his side. “Get your ass in, move, move!” and pulled out without turning on the lights.
He pulled over again just a few miles down the road, onto a dark shoulder where
the road curved, and pounded the wheel. “Son of a bitch!” he yelled. Sam had his head
pressed against the dashboard, shaking with wheezy hiccuping laughter. Dean punched
him in the arm, hard.

“Oh, fuck!” Sam said, still laughing, and shoved Dean back against the door.
“Come on, back seat, we’ve only got nineteen minutes left.”

“I’m going first,” Dean said bitterly, and got out. He cleared off the back seat by
sweeping all the crap onto the floor while Sam went to the trunk and rummaged for a
minute before coming back. “What is that?”

“Lubricant,” Sam said, tossing it to him. He braced himself against the side of the
car and started pulling his boots off.

It was a big industrial-sized squeeze tube of the stuff. “What the fuck, Sammy,”
Dean said. “There something you want to tell me about?”

“Quit being such a homophobe, man,” Sam said. “It works for girls too.”

“Come on, Sammy, I taught you better than that, you go down on them for at
least ten minutes until they’re all warmed up,” Dean said.

“Uh, yeah,” Sam said. “That ... doesn’t really do the trick.” He shoved his jeans
and boxers down and straightened up naked.

Dean stared in horror. “Oh, you are fucking kidding me.”

“It’s proportional,” Sam said defensively.
“I’m going back to the horses,” Dean said.

“Quit complaining,” Sam said. “If you hadn’t dragged this out to the last minute there’d be more time.”

“If you weren’t five minutes from dying you wouldn’t be getting near me with that thing,” Dean said. He yanked his belt buckle open and shoved his own jeans down while Sam climbed into the back seat and stretched out, face down, his feet sticking off the end. “Put your shirt down first! Don’t you get your spunk on my car.”

“Dude, like I didn’t get it all over the place when I banged Katie Mitchell after the prom,” Sam said, fishing his torn shirt off the floor and stuffing it underneath.

“Don’t tell me that,” Dean said, slicking his cock up, biting down on the whimper that wanted to climb out. The hard-on wasn’t a problem, no matter how uninterested his brain was; with his hands on his dick, he could feel the unnatural heat of it radiating under the skin, his balls weirdly heavy and sore. He climbed onto Sam’s back and slotted against him, easily as when they were kids, curled up in bed together. He groaned. “Jesus, this is so sick.”

He lined himself up and started trying to shove in. “Hey, what about all those lectures on foreplay?” Sam said, squirming under him. Dean’s cock approved in all sorts of disturbing ways.

“Shut up, we’ve got thirteen minutes, and I am not sucking your dick,” Dean said. He gave a heave and managed to pop the head inside.
“Ow!” Sam said. “Dude, payback’s in five minutes, maybe you want to slow down.”

Dean clenched his jaw and slowed down. It was just — it was disgusting, that’s what it was, all that, oh Jesus, heat squeezing down on his cock, way too tight, nowhere near slick enough, so it had that little burn of friction going, and Sam under him making little hitching breaths and shivering and giving these little low breathy “oh” noises, glaze of sweat all over his back muscles, so Dean couldn’t even brace himself easy without his hands sliding. It was vile. Dean stopped, swallowing air in gulps, trying to get his head back on straight. All right. He was in, he was going to go ahead and do it, get off, and he wasn’t going to think about it while he was doing it, not at all, not even a little—

“You’re not humming Stairway to Heaven while you do me,” Sam said, bucking hard up against him, and Dean said “oh fuck yeah” before he could help himself, and Sam said “whoa” in a kind of strangled way. Dean’s hips snapped forward again without him meaning them to, and fuck, oh fuck it was good, it was bliss, Sam panting in time with him, both of them going ragged and whimpering. Dean grabbed Sam’s hips, fingers digging in hard to get a grip on his sweaty skin, fucked into him four times and shot like a pistol, all that heat surging up into his cock and out, pulse after pulse, until he felt drained hollow.

And then his hips started to move again, involuntarily, even though it fucking hurt because his cock was too sensitive. He couldn’t stop, riding Sam easy now with all his own slick everywhere and still coming, almost sobbing down in his throat. Sam had his head buried down against one arm and his hand gripped on the meat of Dean’s thigh.
like a brand, saying, muffled, “Yeah, yeah,” and then he was shuddering all of a sudden underneath Dean, clenching around him and milking him clean.

Dean fell down over him like a cut-string puppet and moaned weakly. “Dude, tell me you didn’t just come! You didn’t do it yet!”

“Shut up,” Sam said, deep as a mineshaft, and tipped Dean off against the back of the seat with a heave. Dean flopped limply. He couldn’t even move his goddamn arms to punch Sam in the head. “Calm down, it’s not going to be a problem,” Sam panted, yanking him flat on his back and getting a leg over him, and Dean managed to lever his head up long enough to see that Sam wasn’t kidding.

He let his head fall back and groaned. He tried to turn himself over, but Sam pushed his shoulder back down, and Dean’s arms slid right out from under him. “Dude, I’m not watching this,” Dean said, struggling to yank his leg free: Sam was hitching it up against the back of the seat, Dean’s other leg hanging mostly off the edge.

“I need to know if it’s hurting you, jerk,” Sam said, in that pissy impatient way he got when he was in the middle of research and refusing to pay attention to whatever you were trying to tell him even if it was seriously fucking important. Also he was squirting out an entire handful of the stuff over his fingers. Dean threw his arm up over his eyes and started singing Peace of Mind under his breath.

Sam snickered and slid his fingers down. “Hey, hey, watch the nails!” Dean said, breaking off.

“I’m not even touching you yet!” Sam said. “Will you relax?”
“You’re kidding, right?” Dean said.

“Dean, seriously!” Sam said. “You want me to do this or not?”

“Not!” Dean said, and covered his eyes up again. “Hurry up and just, ah, already,” words scattering as Sam’s finger slid right into him, and okay, that was just weird, and then Sam braced his thumb right behind Dean’s balls and got in a second finger, and now it was really weird, really really fucking weird, the way it felt to have Sam’s fingers just going in and out, pushing more of the stuff.

Sam took them out and shifted his weight, and Jesus, that was Sam’s dick, and it was touching him. “Ready?”

“No! Dude, quit fucking asking me stupid fucking questions!” Dean yelled, and Sam rolled his eyes and said, “Okay, fine, just say something if I’m—” and pushed.

“Ow!” Dean said.

“Wuss,” Sam said faintly, and Dean said, choked up, “You’re getting the beating of your goddamn life for that when this is over, bitch.” It was like being split open, and what kind of sick bastards did this for fun, Christ. No matter how slicked up he was, this wasn’t fucking natural. Sam’s dick felt so goddamn huge that Dean couldn’t help it, he lifted his arm and looked, just to make sure it hadn’t, whatever, grown to the size of the watermelon it felt like. Then he shut his eyes up tight and wished he hadn’t, because Christ, that thing was going inside him, and there was a hell of a lot of it still left to go.
“Hey,” Sam said, and stopped, even though he was gulping and hoarse, shivering between Dean’s legs. “Come on, Dean, breathe.” He rubbed his hand over Dean’s stomach in circles.

Dean rounded his mouth and panted. “How long?” he said.

“It’s fine, there’s time,” Sam said, and Dean snarled and grabbed for Sam’s wrist and looked at the time: six minutes.

“Fuck you, come on,” Dean said, and he lay back and made it happen, pushed all the tension out of his body on one long breath, gave in to the heavy weakness that wanted to take his limbs anyway, let himself go open. Sam bit his lip and pressed forward in one steady slow thrust that seemed to go on and on and reach impossible places, a staticky fuzzed-out sensation building at the back of Dean’s skull, shiver running up and down his spine and into his legs.

Sam made this small broken noise like someone had just punched him in the gut and stopped again, trembling all over. Dean had to hit him in the shoulder to get him to start moving. The seconds were ticking down, and maybe they’d made a mistake or the clock had run fast and they were off by a few. He had his hand clenched on Sam’s arm, trying to pull him on, then Sam’s hips pumped, one short jerk.

Dean’s hand slid right off Sam’s skin and fell down nerveless. Sam fucked into him again, and by the third stroke he was sliding out some before pushing back in, maybe an inch. Sam stopped, panting, and then he pulled almost all the way out and
squeezed more out of the tube, hands shaking and messy all over between Dean’s legs
and slathering his cock up. Dean lay with his head back, stunned and staring up.

Sam pushed his leg back some more, almost back towards his chest, and started
giving it to him all the way, full length sliding out and in again on every stroke. “Fuck,”
Dean said, gasping. “Fuck.”

“Dean,” Sam said, dragging the word out long and drunkenly like a tape being
played back extra slow, his mouth open and soft and helpless, and then he tipped
forward like a train wreck about to happen, and started kissing Dean.

“No way,” Dean said, struggling, except that just pushed him up harder into
Sam’s next thrust, and when he opened his mouth to gasp for air Sam caught him again,
hungry wet kisses with tongue, suckling on his lip. Worse than that, Sam was talking,
saying things, stupid fucking crazy shit like, “you’re so”, and “your mouth”, and “love
you”, and fucking him the whole time, fast and hard.

Sam’s body was curved over him like a bow with his hips working. His face
looked like he was in pain. Dean cursed under his breath and slung his arm around
Sam’s neck and rocked into him, helped him, said, “Come on, baby, almost there, you
almost made it, that’s it,” urging him on, and Sam gasped and gasped and sobbed
against his shoulder and then went deep and still, and Dean pulled him close and held
him while he shivered and moaned through the waves.

Sam deflated slowly down onto him, collapsing into a big heavy limp weight on
Dean’s chest, breath still coming in whimpering little gasps. Dean had his hand deep in
Sam’s hair, the curve of Sam’s skull fitting into his palm, and he stared up at the roof of the car and didn’t let go. Sam’s cock hadn’t slid out more than halfway yet. It kept twitching, trying to do more than it already had.

Finally Sam sighed, deep and *satisfied*, the little bitch, and eased the rest of the way out. The head of his cock made a loud, obscene sucking noise, popping loose.

“*Dude,*” Dean said in protest, pained. “Gross.” He shifted unhappily.

“You *liked* it,” Sam said, in the tones of a man who’d just found his own personal holy grail.

“Fuck you, I did not,” Dean said. “Get off me.”

“You *liked* it,” Sam repeated, groggily. He put his head back down on Dean’s shoulder and snuggled down. His arms crept up and slid under Dean’s shoulders.

“Don’t you even think about it. We are *not* cuddling,” Dean said, trying to shove him off. “You really are sick, you know that?”

Sam bit Dean in the soft flesh of the shoulder. “At least I didn’t try to fuck a *horse.*”

“Shut up,” Dean said.
Appendix nine

The following story is an example of narrative monstrapia (see 5.6 for close reading).

A9.1  COME ON, BABY, LET ME KNOW (LENORE 2007)

It really shouldn’t have been this hard to track a demon that left a stink like rotten eggs wherever it went — not one or two eggs either, more like an overheated warehouse full of them. This was Dean’s sour line of thinking as they entered the fifth hour of their oh-so futile search. They’d had the complete tour and then some of Levittsville, PA, driving around with the Impala’s windows down, noses up in the air, like he and Sam were a couple of bloodhounds. All this effort had been for nothing, or more precisely, too much, way, way too much. Levittsville’s lone industry left standing after the coal mine tapped out and the steel factories packed up and went to China was a paper mill, belching great plumes of white vapor high into the sky, morning, noon, and night. The demon smell got totally lost in the larger, everyday stench.

Dean shifted restlessly, tapped his fingers on the steering wheel. He’d had just about enough of stink patrol. “One glistening tear, my ass. That Keep America Beautiful Indian guy would be freakin’ bawling his eyes out if he ever got a load of this place.”

“We’re the only ones who can stop this thing,” Sam said, no doubt trying to rally Dean’s demon-hunting spirits. Mostly, he just sounded resigned. “Let’s try the next
place on the list. The demon’s struck at least twice that we know of at by-the-hour motels. We’ve got to get lucky sometime.”

“You’d think so,” Dean grumbled under his breath. A string of vengeful spirits, two werewolves, and one sprite with a decidedly malicious sense of humor had left almost no time for sleeping lately, much less hitting the nearest honky tonk to ply his charms on the local ladies. The sex demon they were chasing was getting way more action than Dean was.

At first glance, the Starlight looked pretty much like all the other low-rent roach coaches they’d investigated. Its better days, if such a thing had ever existed, were clearly in the rearview mirror, paint faded and peeling off the walls, roof a mess of missing shingles, the sign outside crawling with rust, neon flickering like it was about to give up the ghost at any moment, the sadly boastful “Free color television in every room!” all the more ironic considering why people braved the place at all. Dean doubted anyone was going to take time out from their regularly scheduled nookie to admire how vivid a red Katie Couric’s blouse was on the 16-inch RCA bolted to the formica-topped dresser.

“Hey.” Sam jerked to attention in his seat. “You see that?”

A dark gray cloud hovered over the Starlight. Anyone who wasn’t paying real good attention probably would have mistaken it for just another of Levittsville’s many environmental disasters, but if you looked closely, you could see that the cloud was swirling and fluxing and occasionally had what appeared to be a face.
Appendix nine

Dean rubbed his hands together. “Let’s go kick some demon ass.”

Tracking the thing by its stink was certainly no trouble now. The tricky part was not coughing up a lung or puking on their boots in the process. The smell led them to room 126.

Sam pounded on the door. “Hello? Anyone in there? This is the manager. We’ve got a gas leak. You need to evacuate.” No answer, not even the rustling around of people frantically trying to get their clothes back on, and Sam beat on the door more insistently. “Hey! I’m serious. This place could go up at any moment.”

Still nothing. Sam looked to Dean, and Dean nodded, drew his gun, just because that always made him feel better. He mouthed, one, two, three!, and they kicked in the door, rushed inside and stopped cold in their tracks.

“Jesus.” Dean’s stomach did an acrobatic maneuver, letting him know it would really rather be somewhere else. “That never gets any less disturbing.”

Two men, or what was left of them anyway, lay clenched together on the bed, one still braced above the other, bodies locked in intercourse, as rigid as stone, as white as alabaster, like all the color and life and ... juice had been drained right out of them.

“With the way that demon stinks, you’d think they would have at least,” Dean waved his hand, “stopped what they were doing.”

“It feeds on sexual energy,” Sam said distractedly as he searched the room. “Maybe it gives off something to, you know, keep its victims in the mood.”
Dean checked under the bed, found nothing, and started opening nightstand
drawers. “Do you think this thing was, I don’t know, conjured up by fundamentalists or
something? Why is it only going after gay guys?”

Sam shrugged. “It’s opportunistic. Maybe it’s trolling somewhere that there just
happens to be a lot of—” He bent down and rummaged around by the headboard and
came up with a matchbook. “Like a gay sex club.”

Dean leaned in for a closer look. “Balls and Chain.” He rolled his eyes.

Sam grinned. “Looks like that’s our next stop.”

The good news was: Balls and Chain looked pretty much like any other bar, at least the
front of it did. There was a shadowy nether region if you kept going past the polished
mahogany and brass, but Dean chose not to think about what might be going on back
there. The bad news was: the guy who greeted them at the door didn’t appear
particularly convinced by their gayness, or impressed with their attire for that matter,
giving Dean a look up and down, eyebrow lifted at his day-old jeans and T-shirt.

“I’m Ramon, the club’s concierge. I’m afraid we’re strictly members only here. So
if you wouldn’t mind ...” He made a shooing motion.

Dean idly wondered how fast he could make Ramon shit his pants if he whipped
out his 9mm and started waving it around.
Sam, ever useful in situations like this, ducked his head, letting his hair fall into his face. “Hey, Ramon. I’m Sam. Good to meet you. Look, we’re new in town, trying to find a place to hang out where, you know, we fit in. I realize we’re not members, but we’re really hoping you can help us out.” He smiled expectantly, all big puppy dog eyes.

It was a little disgusting really, the way Sam slathered on the boyish charm, but as always, it seemed to do the trick. “Well— normally, we have a fairly rigorous vetting process, but—” Ramon hesitated. “I’ll see what I can do.”

He stepped away to talk with the manager, and Dean looked around to get the lay of the land, not the brightest move as it turned out. There were two guys going at it hot and heavy not ten feet away, apparently trying to swallow each other’s tonsils, their hands down each other’s pants.

“Jeez,” Dean murmured under his breath. Why couldn’t this stupid demon be haunting a tittie bar instead?

“Cheer up, Dean. Maybe you’ll get lucky next time.” Sam was grinning, like he knew exactly what Dean had been thinking.

Dean made a face, just as the manager came out to meet them. He cleared his throat. “Um— Hey, I’m Dean, and this is Sam.”

“Shawn.” His eyes were bright and amused as his gaze flicked between the two of them. “Ramon tells me you’re interested in joining us. You realize this is a club for couples? Are you together?” He tilted his head, and Dean kind of wondered if maybe he was picturing them naked.
“Um,” Sam shifted his weight from one leg to the other. “Well—”

“You bet we're together,” Dean plastered on a smile and slung his arm across Sam’s shoulders. “About four months now. Isn't that right, Sweetcheeks?” He made a kissy face at Sam.

Sam narrowed his eyes, but followed Dean’s lead anyway, "Yep. My studmuffin got a job at the paper mill, so ... here we are. In Levittsville, looking for some nightlife."

Shawn regarded them dubiously, and Dean was gearing up to lay a wet one on Sam, if that was what it took, when Shawn flashed a smile. “Welcome to Balls and Chain then.” He handed Dean an ID card. “That’s only temporary. You and your— boyfriend will need to go through the approval process, but you’re welcome as our guests in the meantime."

“Thanks, man.” Dean gloated in Ramon’s direction.

Ramon tipped his nose up into the air, a look of oh God, what kind of riffraff are we letting in here now. Sam grabbed Dean by the elbow and pulled him off to the bar before he could do anything about it.

“Budweisers,” Sam told the bartender, and then muttered under his breath to Dean, “Just drink your beer and behave.”

“What was that guy’s problem? Also, studmuffin?” He raised an eyebrow.

“Sweetcheeks?” Sam countered.

Dean grinned, “if the name fits, Sammy.”
Their beers were plunked down in front of them, and Dean took a good, long hit off his.

“Have you given any thought to what we’re going to do now that we’re in here?” Sam asked, nodding at a fellow patron who was making eyes at him.

“You keep that up,” Dean deadpanned, “and you are going to end up someone’s boyfriend.” Sam glared, and Dean waved his hand. “Fine. Be all humorless. I figure we poke around until we find this demon, and then, you know, do our thing.”

“Do our thing?” Sam mimicked.

“What? You have a better idea?”

“Yeah, Dean, I have a better idea,” Sam said, a silent *duh* at the end of it. “You’re just not going to like it much.”

This got Dean’s attention. “What?”

“The demon’s in this amorphous state, right? Except when it’s attacking—”

“So we play bait,” Dean finished the sentence for him. “No big deal.”

Sam shifted on the barstool. “Yeah, but, Dean, this place is like a buffet for something that feeds on sexual energy. I think we’ve got to— you know, stand out somehow.”

“What are you saying? We don’t just have to play gay? We have to be the gayest?”
Sam’s answer was to slide his hand onto Dean’s thigh. “Try not to blow our cover.” Then Sam’s mouth was puckering up and looming and *wham*, pressed up against Dean’s. Sam went into a soft shoe routine of a smooch, sidling and mincing, the crescendo a rather timid nibble to Dean’s bottom lip. Clearly, Sam had gotten all his ideas about kissing from watching *Oprah*. When he pulled away, Dean announced as much.

Sam’s nostrils flared, and his mouth pulled flat at the corners, his official *I am pissed now* face. “Six people are dead, remember?”

“Well, if you knew what you were doing—”

Dean figured the best way to teach Sammy something was just to show him. He hooked a hand behind Sam’s neck and tugged him close and laid one on him, a *real* kiss, without all that pussyfooting around, just tongue and teeth and some serious swapping of spit.

Sam, the fucker, not only pushed Dean away, but actually had the nerve to wipe his mouth on his sleeve. “What the hell was that?”

“They call it a kiss, Sammy,” Dean declared smugly.

Sam widened his eyes incredulously. “Dude. How have you *ever* gotten laid?”

Dean glared, “bitch.”

“Jerk,” Sam shot back, just as emphatically.
The bartender shook his head, not even trying to pretend he wasn’t laughing at them. “Let me guess. You guys were friends first and then decided to hook up.”

For a moment, the proverbial pin dropping would have sounded enormous.

Sam mumbled, “Um, something like that.”

The bartender grinned even harder. “I can always spot ’em.”

Sam and Dean carefully didn’t look at each other and finished their beers and by unspoken agreement, called it quits on their first evening of being gay for each other.

The next morning, Sam meticulously scanned the local papers, but there was no mention of any mysterious deaths.

“Well, that’s good, at least.” Dean sat on the edge of his bed, pulling on his boots.

Sam was frowning. “Yeah, but— there’s not even any mention of the two bodies we found at the Starlight.”

“Maybe nobody’s checked the room yet?”

“At a place like that?” Sam lifted an eyebrow dubiously.

“Yeah. Hmm. Maybe the police are keeping a lid on it?”

Sam nodded. “Could be. Except— the first attack made the front page.”

Dean grabbed his jacket off the back of a chair. “What else could it be?”
Sam followed him out to the car, “I have no idea.”

Dean settled behind the wheel. “These things can’t take human form, can they? Clean up after themselves when they’re done?” That was the last thing Dean needed, especially before he’d had his first cup of coffee.

Sam shrugged. "Not that I’ve ever read, but you never know. Maybe it’s somebody else doing the covering up for some reason?”

“Great. Just great.” Dean let out a resigned sigh. “Okay, so let’s hit the police station and the local papers. See if anyone knows more than they’re saying. And when we go back to the club tonight, we’re going to have to really—” He made a gesture that roughly translated, at least in his mind, *get seriously homosexual all over each other’s asses.*

Sam raised an eyebrow.

“Oh, shut up,” Dean told him.

Playing at being a couple wasn’t the weirdest thing they’d ever done in the line of duty, Dean kept telling himself that as the day went on, in a totally transparent attempt to psych himself up. Hey, once they’d actually pretended to be Celine Dion fans. Now that was just plain wrong.

Still, when they got to the club that evening, he made a beeline for the bar, ordered three shots of whiskey, lined them up and kicked them back in rapid succession. The first hit his throat like it was trying to scald him. That was one way to tell you were
still alive, he thought ruefully. The next went down more easily, and the third like silk. He took a breath and pushed back his shoulders.

“Come on,” he grabbed Sam by the arm and bulldozed his way out onto the dance floor.

Sam was busily giving him the are you crazy look, and Dean swung him around, yanked him close, their chests bumping. “Okay, Sammy. Wow me with your moves.”

To make the challenge clear, he did a little pelvic swivel. That got ’em every time. Well, got the ladies, at least. For a moment, Sam just stood there, and Dean was prepared for a robot performance, for locked joints and frozen hips and no sign that Sam had even a passing familiarity with that thing called rhythm. He was prepared, in short, for Sam to disgrace the Winchester name and everything it stood for. But then, Sam surprised him, splaying one of those big paws of his across Dean's back, nudging his knee between Dean’s thighs, countering with a thrust-and-glide of his own.

A gauntlet had been thrown down, obviously, and Dean wouldn’t have been Dean if he didn’t pick it up. He pumped his hips, and Sam answered with a dirty little wiggle. Dean pushed his hands under Sam’s shirt and stroked bare skin. Sam cupped Dean’s ass in his hands, groping and pulling Dean against him. The point of it all got kind of blurred after a while, and when Sam started sucking on Dean’s neck, lost entirely. He made a sound in the back of his throat; he really couldn’t help himself. Sam had managed on the first try to find that one spot. Dean let his head fall back and pushed his body forward.
Sam lifted his mouth, “Really?”

Dean dug his fingers into Sam’s biceps and hoped it really hurt.

Sam snorted a laugh. “Okay, okay.” He went back to what he’d been doing, really applying himself, Dean was happy to note, lips and tongue and the edge of teeth dragging across skin.

Dean’s hard on pressed snugly against Sam’s, and he wormed his hand further beneath Sam’s T-shirt, stroking the strong, sweaty curve of his back. He thought of all the arguments he’d used to coax girls out of their panties, cautionary tales about what could happen to a guy if he didn’t get regular sex, blue balls and shriveled dick and the sudden loss of any ability whatsoever to fix a can opener or build a set of shelves. Add another item to that list, he thought in a daze. If a guy went without pussy long enough, he might even start to get turned on by his brother.

“Dean,” the word came from low in Sam’s chest and sounded almost *broken*.

Well, Dean consoled himself, at least he wasn’t the only one.

Sam trailed kisses up Dean’s neck and along his jaw and eventually to his mouth. Now that was *more like it*, Dean thought, as Sam did dirty, dirty things with his tongue. Apparently, when he wasn’t watching *Oprah*, he was tuning in to the *Spice* channel.

Dean held on and kissed back, and they weren’t so much dancing anymore as making out to the music, swaying in time, rocking against each other.

The layers of cotton knit and denim separating them were really starting to irk Dean. The two of them had on more clothes than pretty much anybody else in the place,
and Dean was beginning to understand the wisdom in going half naked. Apparently, Sam was on the same bandwagon, because he unbuttoned Dean’s shirt and let it fall open. He stroked a hand down Dean’s chest, staring, and then bent his head to mouth a nipple.

“Yeah, baby, yeah, just like that,” Dean crooned, voice low and husky, a tone he’d never expected to use on Sam of all people.

He rucked up Sam’s T-shirt and stroked the soft skin at the waistband, apparently a sensitive place, because Sam shuddered and lunged against him, his hard cock dragging against Dean’s.

Dean idly wondered just how much it would compromise his dignity if he came in his pants, and the happy answer was: let’s worry about that later. Because, frankly, it was hard to imagine anything getting in the way of this orgasm, especially now that Sam had started rubbing a hand along his fly. Dean’s dick jerked against his zipper, trying to get closer to that touch.

And then … a wave of stink hit him. In an instant, he and Sam and everyone else on the dance floor were doubled over and gagging.

Sam tugged at his sleeve. “Come on! We’ve got to—”

“Yeah, yeah.” Dean started to push his way through the crowd.

The stench led to the back exit, and they charged out into the alley, and screeched to a stop just the way they had at the Starlight.
“Damn it,” Dean swiped a hand through his hair. “If I never see that again—”

There was a couple, drained and lifeless, braced against the wall, frozen together the way they’d been in their last moment alive, one boosted up against the brick, his legs around the other’s waist, caught mid fuck.

“Damn it!” Dean said again for good measure.

Sam looked just as shaken as Dean felt. “Let’s—” He jerked his head toward the door.

They stumbled back inside and nearly collided with Shawn, who was planted by the exit, directing people to the front door. “There’s been a problem with sewage backing up,” he announced to the throng of murmuring club-goers. “We’ve called the city, and they’ve promised to send a crew right away, but we’re going to have to close up for the night. The broken pipe is out back, so we’ve got it blocked off. Could be a health risk.”

That was putting it mildly, Dean thought.

Shawn eyed him and Sam, and started to say something, but then apparently thought better of it. Dean gave Shawn the suspicious once-over, but figured it was better just to play it cool, at least for now. He and Sam streamed out of the building along with everyone else.

In the car, Dean said, “You think that Shawn guy might have something to do with the cover ups?”
“Seems like a candidate. We should keep an eye on him.”

“Why do you think it went after those other guys and not us?”

Sam shrugged. “It’s looking for the strongest hit of energy. Maybe it thought—you know, that they were hotter?”

Dean jerked his head around to stare at Sam. “Are you saying it doesn’t think I’m sexy?”

Sam just rolled his eyes.

That night, not many hours after he’d turned in, Dean sat bolt upright in bed, the remains of the dream that had woken him shadowy and unnerving, something about Hershey’s syrup and one of those coin-operated vibrating mattresses and Sam’s hot, hot mouth all over him. Dean shifted restlessly, and in the other bed, Sam rolled over onto his side, regarding Dean quizzically. He looked just as wide awake. They dragged themselves out of bed, and Dean fished the deck of cards out of his duffel bag, and they bent their heads over hands of pinochle at the little table by the window.

Sometimes Sam didn’t know when to keep his mouth shut, like no one had ever taught him the guy code, although Dean sure as hell had given it his best shot. Tonight, though, Sam fixed his eyes on his cards, mouth pressed into a thin, silent line, and Dean made a firm resolution. When this was all over, he was going to log as many hours as humanly possible living it up in strip joints, tucking dollar bills into g-strings, coping a feel of smooth, womanly thigh, paying busty blondes to drape themselves all over him and jiggle and grind and make him forget any of this had ever happened.
The next night at *Balls and Chain*, this very sort of amnesia seemed to have set in there. Guys chatted and flirted and groped each other on the dance floor, like they hadn’t had to flee the place the night before. Ramon looked down his nose at Dean’s attire, as always. Shawn winked as he passed by, a stack of paperwork in his hand. Sam and Dean took their usual spots at the bar, and Mike, the bartender, set down two bottles of Bud without waiting for them to order it. No one looked the least bit worried, which certainly suggested they’d heard nothing about two guys freakishly killed out in the alley.

After a few sips, Sam leaned in, like he was whispering sweet-nothings in Dean’s ear, “I’m going to go see if I can get a look around the manager’s office.”

Dean nodded, and then for the benefit of anyone who might be listening, “You hurry on back from the men’s room, Sweetcheeks. You know how you get sometimes when there are too many good-looking guys giving you the time of day. Don’t make me come find you.”

Sam shook his head as he walked away. Dean grinned to himself and went back to his beer. He didn’t notice at first that the guy sitting next to him was trying to get his attention, not until the guy cleared his throat and ventured, “So, I don’t suppose you’re into cars or anything?”

“Um,” Dean blinked.
“It’s just— See, I closed the deal a few hours ago on a mint Camaro,” the guy explained in a nervous rush. “Been trying to get that baby for months. Finally the owner accepted my offer.” He ducked his head a little sheepishly. “I’ve been dying to tell somebody about it.”


“Hey, man. No. Hit me with it.”

“Really?” Hank brightened.

Dean nodded, and Hank whipped out his wallet, pulled out a Polaroid. The Camaro was robin’s egg blue, and whoever had owned it sure knew how to take care of a car. The chrome was shining so bright sunlight flared off it in the photo.

Dean whistled. “Now that is a thing of beauty.”

Hank tucked away the picture, looking pleased. “I’ve got it sitting out in the parking lot. I don’t suppose you’d like to—”

“Sure. Let me just—” He gestured with his beer bottle, tipped it back, finishing it off. “Okay.”
He slid off the barstool, and Hank clapped him on the shoulder and let his hand linger there.

Dean stared down at it. “Um—”

Suddenly, Sam was standing in front of them, forehead scrunched up, not looking at all pleased. “What the hell do you think you’re doing?”

Hank’s hand slipped from Dean’s shoulder. “You didn’t tell me you had a jealous boyfriend.”

“Well, now you know.” Sam grabbed Dean’s arm. “Excuse us.” He dragged Dean off down the hall. “Don’t you ever stop flirting?”

“Hey, we were just talking cars—”

The rest of Dean’s denial got cut off by the dull “oof” he made when Sam threw him up against the wall. “The manager’s office was locked, you know, if you give a shit about what we’re supposed to be doing here,” Sam said in classic bitchy fashion. “But I did find this spot here, dark, and secluded, where the demon might—”

Then Sam was all over him, hand fisted in his shirt, mouth hot and messy, going to town on Dean’s lips.

Dean smirked beneath the kisses. “You’re not jealous or anything, are you, Sammy?”

Sam bit down, hard.

“Ow!” Dean rubbed at his lip, felt the stickiness of blood. “Bitch!”
He pushed off from the wall, turned the tables, slamming Sam back against the exposed brick, biting his neck, just as hard as Sam had bitten him. Sam moaned and closed his eyes, and, God, Dean could feel him panting. Dean licked at the place he’d left with his teeth, and Sam grappled at him, hands pulling at his clothes, trying to get under his shirt. Dean slid his mouth onto Sam’s, and then they were kissing up a frenzy, Sam moaning into Dean’s mouth, Dean sucking on Sam’s tongue.

“Yeah, yeah,” Dean muttered when Sam’s hands started roaming all over him.

Dean couldn’t remember being this damned hard, and Sam’s dick was pressed hot and insistently against his hip, and he didn’t think. It was all instinct to reach for Sam’s fly, push down the zipper. All instinct until he felt wet cotton against his hand and hardness underneath, and then he froze, because, Jesus, that was Sam’s cock. Sam made a desperate little noise and took charge, opening Dean’s pants, thrusting his hand into Dean’s underwear, apparently no compunction at all that this was Dean’s dick he was fondling.

Dean squeezed his eyes shut and groaned. God, that felt good, and damn it, he wasn’t going to be one-upped by his little brother. He pushed down Sam’s boxers and looked. Sam was big, not just long but thick, his cock red and wet and bobbing eagerly. Dean licked his lips and ventured a finger along Sam’s length, and it wasn’t all that different from touching himself. He stroked more firmly, and Sam sucked in a loud breath and pushed their cocks together, his hand wrapped around them both. Dean’s thigh muscles trembled, and his lungs felt like they were burning, and he thrust desperately, into Sam’s fist, against Sam’s cock.
God, now this was sex. Sex that could get him thrown in jail and scarred for life and make him ... damn it, come way too fast. He gritted his teeth, and his cock pulsed in Sam’s hand.

Apparently, Sam was too far gone to razz him about having a hair trigger, because all he said was, “Dean,” deep and guttural.

“Young, yeah, come on. I got you.”

Dean worked him, up and down, rubbing the head with his thumb, and it wasn’t a banner night for endurance among the Winchester men. By the third pump of his hand, Sam had spilled over his fist.

They fixed their clothes when they’d regained enough brainpower to think of it. Dean was way, way too aware of how sticky his hand was. He let out his breath. “That was—”

Sam swallowed. “Um, hopefully enough bait to get the demon’s attention?”

Dean latched onto that, nodding emphatically. “Bait. Exactly.”

“Maybe if we go back to the motel it’ll follow us?” Sam suggested.

Dean nodded. “Better to take this thing down where no innocent bystanders can get hurt.”

In the car, Sam went quiet, staring moodily out the window in typical Sam fashion, and Dean was left to his own disturbing thoughts. The smell of come was fairly overpowering in the confined space, and the freaky part was, Dean could tell Sam’s
from his own. The scents were decidedly different. On the big list of things he never
needed to know, this was way, way up there.

Back at the motel, they readied their supplies, holy water and a special blend of
herbs finely ground up, and opened their father’s book to the incantation that would
exorcise the demon. They waited. And waited. And waited some more.

Finally, Dean flung his arms out and declared to the air, “I know you think I’m
sexy. So come on, baby.”

Sam sprawled on his bed, hunched over a National Geographic he’d swiped from
the motel office. “Sometimes, you really worry me.”

The demon coyly stayed away, much to Dean’s annoyance, and that meant another
night at Balls and Chain.

On the way there, Sam casually announced, “Oh, I also found out there’s a room
upstairs where—” He cleared his throat. “You know, the really heavy stuff goes down.
You need a reservation to get in. I made one for us for tonight.”

Dean did a double take, and Sam regarded him perfectly innocently, like this
wasn’t something that maybe he should have shared with Dean before they were pulling
into the parking lot.
The upstairs room was dimly lit, all dark paneling and red velvet drapes, sofas and lounge chairs scattered throughout the space, and when Dean’s eyes adjusted, he could see that it was filled with couples … getting busy.

“Damn,” he muttered, not quite able to look away as a man nearby deep-throated his partner.

“Dean,” Sam tugged on his sleeve, and they found an empty spot, a comfortable, loveseat tucked away in a corner.

They sat down, and Sam nervously wiped his palms on his jeans. “I guess we should—”

Dean swallowed hard, “yeah.”

They leaned in, both of them, too abruptly, and bumped their heads. They pulled back and tried again, but the angle was bad, and they clicked their teeth together.

“Jesus, just hold still.” Dean gripped Sam’s jaw and kissed him.

It was awkward at first, but then Sam swiped his tongue over Dean’s bottom lip, and that was— Oh, hell, yeah. Dean pressed closer, and Sam slid his hand behind Dean’s neck, his thumb stroking in circles. The kissing came easily, and then hotly, and they wouldn’t have stopped except for a soft moan from just a few feet away that caught their attention. They looked up, and met the wide-eyed gaze of a man across the way from them. He was bent over an ottoman, and the man behind him was sweating and cursing, and, God, Dean realized: fucking him.
Maybe it shouldn’t have sent a shock of pleasure straight to Dean’s cock, but then, things like sex demons shouldn’t exist, should they? He grabbed for Sam, pulling at his shirt, not caring that buttons went flying as he ripped it open.

“Jerk,” Sam grated, but that turned to a moan as Dean kissed down his chest, stopping briefly to lick at his nipples, before sliding to his knees, pulling his own shirt up over his head as he went.

He could see Sam’s chest rising and falling as he opened Sam’s jeans and pulled his cock through the slit in his underwear. Dean had never given head to a guy, but, hell, he knew what he liked. How complicated could it be? He licked tentatively at Sam’s shaft, and it didn’t taste bad, and Sam had started babbling his name, sex slurred and ridiculously hot. So Dean went down.

He fumbled around, trying to find a good approach, and okay, so maybe it wasn’t as easy as he’d imagined. Sam didn’t seem to care much about finesse, though. He pulled at Dean’s shoulders and pushed into his mouth, and Dean just went with it, swirling his tongue whenever he remembered to. Sam made a choking noise, and his body tensed, and he came in long pulses. Dean swallowed some and coughed out the rest and wiped his face with the back of his hand.

Sam slumped back against the loveseat, his hair matted to his forehead, his eyes not entirely focused. He looked like sex, and Dean’s cock throbbed desperately, as if reminding him that he hadn’t got off yet.

That was when he smelled it, the familiar, disgusting stink.
The daze cleared immediately from Sam’s expression. He pulled Dean up for a kiss, a calculating light in his eyes. “You ready to get out of here?”

“Yeah, baby,” Dean kissed him back. “Let’s take this party somewhere more private.”

There was no need to wonder if the demon was following them. The stink was still just as strong when they got in the car and only intensified as they walked to their room. The stuff for the exorcism was still laid out on the dresser from the night before, and Sam whispered, “We just need to keep its attention.”

Dean nodded, and apparently Sam took this as a sign that he should take off all his clothes. Dean stood there, staring at him, and Sam smiled, a little shyly. He knelt down and pulled Dean’s belt from the loops, and, oh God, maybe Dean was just wrong, wrong, not made at all right, because, Sammy on his knees was the hottest thing he’d ever seen, messy curls and serious eyes, like he wanted to do a really, really good job of sucking Dean’s cock. Sam planted kisses to Dean’s hipbones, and then went to work, hot, hot mouth burning Dean up.

The stink got stronger and stronger, and then ... turned oddly sweet. Dean took a breath, and he wanted — God, he wanted. Sam glanced up questioningly, and Dean nodded shakily. Sam got to his feet and took Dean’s hand and pushed him down onto the bed.

“Are you sure?” Sam’s voice caught in his throat, like it cost him just to ask the question.
Dean turned onto his side and pulled his leg up, and he didn’t know what he was doing. He just wanted. Sam rustled round the room, and Dean was about to yell at him to get the hell over there when Sam plunked down the holy water and ground herbs onto the nightstand next to him.

“You— And I’ll—” It was amazingly practical of him considering how wild his eyes were.

“You, yeah,” Dean said. He would have agreed to just about anything right then.

“But can we— I need you to—”

Sam shifted their dad’s book in his hands, and Dean could see he’d also snagged the complimentary bottle of lotion from the bathroom. He stretched out along Dean’s back and kissed Dean’s neck, and the sweet smell just got sweeter.

“Please,” Dean begged, already shaking.

The first finger felt huge. Dean’s ass burned at the invasion, and why the hell was he doing this again? That thought was only fleeting, though, when Sam crooked his finger just the right way. Then Dean was cursing and pushing back for more, more, oh God, more of that. Sam added another finger, and stroked and tickled, and that was enough, that was— “Do me, Sammy. Come on! Just fucking do me.”

So Sam did, gave it to him, cock pushing right in, and huge got a whole new meaning.

“Shit!” Dean couldn’t stop trembling.
“Are you—”

“Don’t stop!”

For once, Dean might have been just a teensy-tiny bit grateful for a demon’s influence, because Sam actually kept going, inch by inch, taking Dean over. The sweetness was so cloying by now that Dean could taste it in the back of his throat, and the same dark gray vapor they’d seen at the Starlight was seeping under the door, swirling and fluxing and taking shape. Dean could see a face. He thought it might be laughing at them.

“Dean, we have to—” Sam said, like there was no air in his lungs.

“Okay, okay. Just don’t.” He grabbed Sam’s hip and held him there, kept Sam inside him.

Dean threw the holy water at the demon and then the herbs. It sputtered, and the sweetness turned instantly back to stench, even more stomach-turning than before. The demon shimmered and vibrated, trying to revert back to its amorphous state, but the holy water and herbs bound it. Sam read the incantation, and he only stumbled over the Latin a little when Dean pushed against him, fucking himself on Sam’s cock. The demon let out a high pitched wail, louder and louder the closer Sam got to finishing the exorcism, and when he did finally hit the last word, the wail became a screech. The shimmering became increasingly wobbly, and finally, the thing imploded, flash of light, an ear-splitting noise, the room shaking, and then, it was gone, the stink disappearing along with it.
“God,” Sam moaned.

He pumped inside Dean, once, twice, and they both came.

The sounds of “oh, yeah” and “please, please” had barely died in the air when the door was kicked open, and Shawn burst in, a vial of water in one hand and what looked to be a bag of herbs in the other. He skidded to a stop on the carpet. “Oh. You’re not dead.”

He started to slink away, and Dean said. “We got rid of it. And just how do you know about this demon anyway?”

Shawn made an oh-please face. “In my business? Hazard of the profession. I’ve done at least three exorcisms this year alone. Now, if that’s all, I should be—” He darted a look over at the bed. “Unless, maybe you’d—” He smiled hopefully.

Dean looked to Sam, who promptly whacked him on the arm. “Um, I guess not?”

Shawn shrugged. “Your loss. Well— see you around.”

He shut the door behind him, as much as he could anyway given that it had been wrenched off its hinges. Sam flopped back onto the bed and stared up at the ceiling. He let out a sigh. “Well, at least that’s over.”

Dean shifted his hips and sucked in his breath through his teeth. Okay, that was going to smart when he had to spend all day sitting in the car. “Um, yeah.” He cleared his throat. “Over.”
He figured it wasn’t the time to bring it up with Sam or anything, but he was pretty sure. When you started something like this, there was really no such thing as the end.
Appendix ten

Appendix ten is a DVD. It compiles key scenes from the Supernatural episodes summarised in Appendices two–six.

A10.1 PLAYLIST

1. Appendix two

   Bugs (1.08)

   Playthings (2.11)

   Lazarus rising (4.01)

2. Appendix three

   Scarecrow (1.11)

   Something wicked (1.18)

   Hunted (2.10)

   Born under a bad sign (2.14)

   All Hell breaks loose pt 1 & 2 (2.21 & 2.22)

   Sex and violence (4.14)

3. Appendix four

   Tall tales (2.15)
Appendix ten

Bedtime stories (3.05)

Jus in bello (3.12)

4. Appendix five

Ghostfacers (3.13)

Criss Angel is a douche bag (4.12)

5. Appendix six

The monster at the end of this book (4.18)