

An Archive of One's Own

Collecting Fandom as a Feminist Project Through the Lens of *Star Trek* Fanzines

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Research Questions

How do archival collections of *Star Trek* fanzines at academic institutions portray fans and fan culture?

How are the archives' portrayals of fan culture influenced by larger social and cultural forces?

How was fan culture represented within the zines themselves? What is unique or special about this format?

Definitions

Fanfiction: fiction, usually fantasy or science fiction, written by a fan rather than a professional author, esp. that based on already-existing characters from a television series, book, film, etc.; (also) a piece of such writing

- In the period I am studying, fanfiction is almost exclusively written, edited, and read by women.

Fanzine: Small, non-professional magazines circulated among a relatively small audience of other fans

Star Trek: This study focuses specifically on *The Original Series* (1966-1969) and fandom from 1966 to circa 1990. Not including *The Next Generation* or subsequent series.

Methodology

Archival Research:

- University of Iowa and Bowling Green State University
- Close reading of archival finding aids
- Examining objects and their organization
- Interviews with archivists

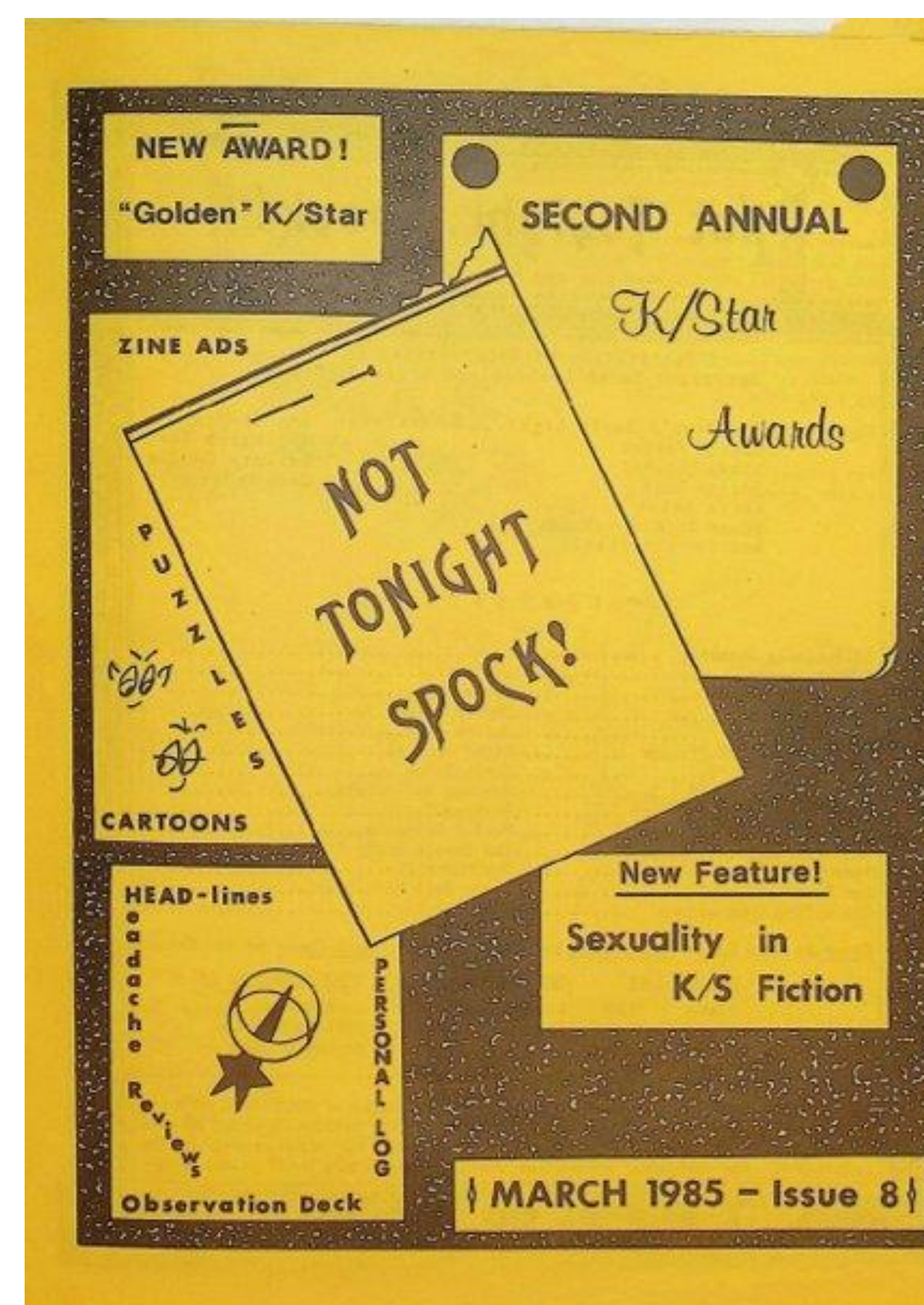
Literary Analysis

- Close reading of *Not Tonight, Spock!* zine from 1985
- "Meta" zine, as opposed to story-based zines



Leonard Nimoy (left) and William Shatner (right) as Spock and Captain Kirk in *Star Trek*, with a model of the *U.S.S. Enterprise*.

By NBC Television - eBay itemphoto frontphoto backpress release, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17205358>



Analysis

Fans as a Source of Knowledge

- Actively seeking out fan-written works
- Naming collections after fans
- Keeping fans' organization of their collections

Writing and Reflecting in Community

- Friendship and camaraderie between fans
- Writing as a communal process, rather than an individual one

Challenging Hegemonic Ideas of Gender and Sexuality

- Speaking openly about sex, kink, and queer relationships in a public forum
- Women as sexual beings, not merely objects of sexual desire
- "Calling out" problematic statements made by other fans

Barriers to Better Collections

Time, Space, and Budget

- What do we have the time, space, and money to keep?

Collection Building:

- How do libraries get the items in their collections? How does this impact who is represented?

Physical and Financial Accessibility:

- Who gets to travel to these institutions?

Reputation of Inaccessibility and Exclusion:

- How do you use an archive?
- Who feels comfortable in an archive?

Conclusions and Future Research

Archival collections of fandom-related materials work to preserve and share valuable literary, cultural, and community knowledge that comes from a unique, women-led form of writing and art. These collections specifically work to honor the labor and knowledge of the women who were involved in *Star Trek* fan communities in the 1960s-1990s and share that knowledge with a new generation of fans and researchers.

Future Research:

- Representation of fandoms other than *Star Trek*, or different *Star Trek* series and films
- Fandom's move from women-led to queer-led
- Online archives like Archive of Our Own