

Data on Tolkien Fanfiction Culture and Practices

1st Edition

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Introduction

In 2004, I happened to search a character from J.R.R. Tolkien's *Silmarillion* on Google, and the first result was a story about that character on Fanfiction.net. I was new to the Tolkien fandom and had never heard of fanfiction, although I'd been writing it for several months by that point (with no notion that what I was doing was called *fanfiction* and was something thousands of other people did too), and this chance discovery opened a new world for me. My progression from discovering the Tolkien fanfiction, or Tolkienfic, community to becoming an author myself is not uncommon. However, my interest came from another angle as well: the study of the history, culture, and practices of the Tolkienfic community. As an MA student in the humanities, my interests here were not sanctioned by my program, but I found myself indulging them nonetheless, using my nascent research and critical thinking skills, in my spare time to try to describe, analyze, and ultimately understand the community to which I belonged.

Studies of fandom, and fanfiction in particular, aren't new. They have been a part of academia—and an increasingly respectable part—for decades now, since the publication in a pair of books in 1992 that explored the fanfiction phenomenon: Henry Jenkins' *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* and Camille Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women: Television Fandom and the Creation of Popular Myth*. However, as the titles of these books suggest, the burgeoning academic interest in fanfiction was largely confined to media fandom. As I began to read more and more of the scholarship being produced by both academics and fans, I increasingly felt like the community, culture, and practices being described were not my own. Diving deeper into the published research likewise revealed that the fanfiction produced by the Tolkien fandom—one of the oldest and most prolific fic-writing fandoms—was largely ignored by the scholarly literature, which true to my earliest impulses, often failed to accurately describe us.

This study came about, in part, to remedy this. I hoped that this study, commenced in late 2014 and progressing through all of 2015, would provide a snapshot of the Tolkienfic community and begin to provide evidence and maybe excite interest in our fandom and its history, culture, and practices because, as noted above, we often deviate and even defy the received wisdom from fanfiction studies. This document is intended to present my research with minimal commentary.

As noted, it is but a snapshot of a community's self-reported beliefs and behaviors. It is far from comprehensive. Some parts of the Tolkienfic were harder to reach than others. Other parts are likely overrepresented. Furthermore, fandom communities evolve over time, and what was true in 2015 may not have been true in 2005 and may not be true in 2025. It's important to recognize the limitations of this study—discussed in the Study Limitations section on page 9—and not to overgeneralize. I am also a member of the Tolkienfic community—an archive owner, author, and participant in various community spaces—and bring with me my own biases based on more than a decade as a participant. Part of why I want to finally publish these data is to make it easier for other researchers and scholars to use.

Tolkien fanfiction has been in existence for six decades. Its authors have produced hundreds of thousands of stories and dozens of communities for sharing, reading, and discussing them. Yet other fic fandoms without nearly the longevity and force of the Tolkienfic fandom have received far more attention and study. It is long past time for the Tolkienfic fandom to receive its due.



License and Use

Use of my data and commentary within this document is encouraged. I hope it will inspire further thought, discussion, research, and scholarship on the Tolkienfic fandom. This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial license. As is the norm for academic work, I naturally expect credit for any of my data and ideas that you use, but if you're not using them to turn a profit for yourself, you are free to use whatever you need, including reprinting or redistributing sections or the whole document, without needing to ask for my permission.

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Study Methodology

This study commenced on 24 December 2014 and closed on 30 November 2015. The study was in survey form, hosted on Google Forms, and sought the input of authors and readers of Tolkienfic. The survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board of American Public University on 23 December 2014. The consent form and survey are available in **Appendix A** (p. 100).

The survey began with a screening question to assess eligibility for the survey: “Do you read and/or write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” Participants were given a choice of *Yes* and *No*. No identifying information was collected. (I considered questions, such as the participant’s nationality, that I discarded because it would make it too easy to identify individual participants.)

The survey was divided into two parts: one for authors and one for readers. After collecting demographic information on age and gender, the survey asked the participant, “Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” An answer of *Yes* took the participant to the author’s section of the survey. Next, the participant was asked, “Do you read Tolkien-based fan fiction?” and, if answered *Yes*, progressed to the reader’s section. If the participant chose *No* for the question, “Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” the participant passed to the reader’s section of the survey.

The first questions for each section asked about time spent on fanfiction-related activities, sites used, and other fandoms the participant was involved in. The majority of each section provided statements and gave participants the choice of five responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and No Opinion/Not Sure. Participants were not required to answer any questions except for the screener question and the questions “Do you read and/or write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” and “Do you read Tolkien-based fan fiction?” which were necessary to direct them to the correct section, so some participants skipped survey items. The time to complete the survey took about fifteen minutes.

Development of Survey Questions. Although I had in mind areas I was interested in investigating, I wanted to remain cognizant of the fact that my fandom experiences were not universal. In order to solicit a broader view as I developed questions, I posed the following question on my personal LiveJournal, Dreamwidth, and Tumblr: “Why do you write Tolkien fanfic?” I used these responses to develop questions for the survey.

Discarded Responses. Initially, 1,074 people participated in the survey. Twenty-two responses were removed for the following reasons:

- One person did not consent to participate.
- Fifteen people answered *No* to the screener question.
- Six people answered *Yes* to the screener question but then answered *No* to both questions, “Do you read and/or write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” and “Do you read Tolkien-based fan fiction?”

The final number of participants was 1,052.



Normalizing Data. Participants were generally provided with a short answer field to record responses to numerical questions. This resulted in responses that cannot be quantified along with responses that required normalization to be used in statistical analysis. Unless otherwise indicated, the following procedure was used to produce quantifiable data:

- Nonquantifiable responses were discarded (e.g., *a few*, *too many*), including responses that suggested a number (e.g., *a few*).
- If a number was written out, it was converted to numerical form (e.g., *three* would become 3). This includes converting *none* to 0.
- Some participants provided a range of responses. In these cases, the midrange was entered as the data (e.g., *10-20* would be entered as *15*).

Recruitment of Participants. After the survey was posted, I recruited participants from several Tolkienfic communities, as well as my own social media spaces. I also requested that others pass the word or “signal boost” to communities that I was not a part of. I reposted my request several time throughout the year that the survey was open.



Study Limitations

Naturally, there are limitations to this study that must be considered when interpreting results. First, while the survey format produces data that is easily quantifiable, it also removes any opportunity for participants to provide context or nuance for their responses. Several participants reached out to say they would have liked a free-response field to provide clarification on some of their answers.

Next, although the investment of time to take the survey was minimal (about fifteen minutes), it is possible that fans participate but do not view themselves as invested in the Tolkienic fandom (including new fans) would not want to invest that time. As such, it is likely that participants in the survey represent the most invested members of the fandom, and the views of those who are not as invested are not being represented.

The survey also relied on self reports, meaning that participants might respond in ways that elevate what they perceive as positive qualities and downplay the negative. The anonymity of the survey counters this somewhat.

Recruitment of participants also limits the survey data at multiple points. Because I posted the pilot question, “Why do you write Tolkien fanfic?” on my personal blogs, it is likely that people who saw and felt comfortable responding to that question were people familiar with me and possibly sharing my experiences and views of fandom. When I promoted the survey, some sites and communities were very easy to reach, while others were impossible to reach. For example, the promotion was widely circulated on Tumblr (which has a strong overlap with An Archive of Our Own) and my own site, the Silmarillion Writers’ Guild. FanFiction.net, on the other hand, provides no easy way to reach its members, so participants who use this site primarily or exclusively were less likely to see the call for participants. I was able to use several Yahoo! Groups mailing lists to recruit participants who may not be very active at present; nonetheless, since many archives, mailing lists, and other communities have gone quiet or been closed entirely, “veteran” fans were also hard to reach.



Chapter One: Demographics

Gender

Study participants were asked, “What is your gender?” and provided with a short-answer field. This question was not required. Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 below show the responses to this question.

	n	%
Female	931	88.5
Nonbinary	63	5.99
Male	48	3.61
No Response	20	1.90

Table 1.1. Gender in the Tolkienic fandom. (n = 1052)

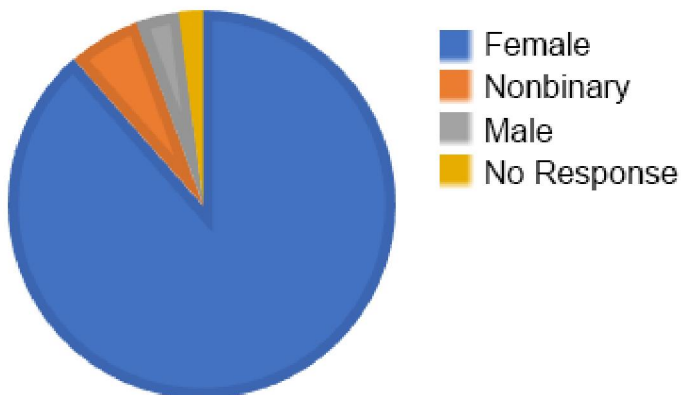


Figure 1.1. Gender in the Tolkienic fandom. (n = 1052)

“Nonbinary” is a term that includes many self-reported genders outside the female/male binary. Other participants responded with whether they were cisgender or transgender; these were entered as *female* or *male* regardless of cis or trans status.

Multifandom Comparison. In 2013, Tumblr user CentrumLumina conducted an [AO3 Census](#); of the items asked participants to self-report their gender. Her results give one point of comparison with the broader fanfiction-writing community. (See the link above for methodology and limitations.) Table 1.2 below shows CentrumLumina’s data alongside my data.

	Tolkienic Survey		AO3 Census	
	n	%	n	%
Female	931	88.5	9039	90.3
Nonbinary	63	5.99	--	--
Male	48	3.61	417	4.2
No Response	20	1.90	21	0.2

Table 1.2. Gender in the Tolkienic fandom compared to the AO3 Census.



CentrumLumina's survey allowed participants to select one or more genders from a checkbox in addition to providing a field for a short free response. As a result, it is difficult to determine the number of nonbinary participants, since many participants selected more than one. See the [AO3 Census: Gender](#) for complete data and discussion.

Discussion. Fanfiction as a primarily female phenomenon is well-known and -discussed to be nearly a truism by now. My results show this to be true of the Tolkienfic fandom as well. Data are similar to fandom demographics as a whole, as measured by the AO3 Census. In both results, male fandom participants are a very small minority, with only about 4 percent of participants in both surveys identifying as male.

Age

Study participants were asked, "What is your age?" and provided with a short-answer field. This question was not required. Table 1.3 shows the averages computed from the data.

Average	Age	Standard Deviation
Median	24	
Mean	27.9	11.7
Mode	18	
Midrange	30.5	

Table 1.3. Average age in the Tolkienfic fandom. (n = 1038)

Survey participants ranged in age from 13 to 74. Thirteen participants did not answer the question; one participant provided an age of 8, which was deemed unlikely, a probable error, and eliminated as a response. Figure 1.2 and Table 1.4 below show the distribution of participants by age.

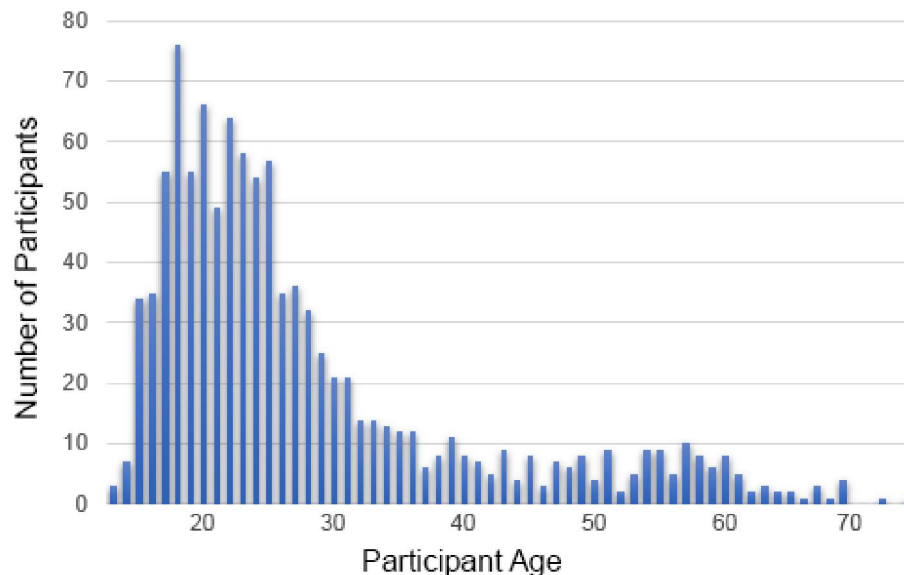


Figure 1.2. Frequency of Tolkienfic fandom participation by age. (n = 1038)



Age	Frequency	Age	Frequency	Age	Frequency
13	3	34	13	55	9
14	7	35	12	56	5
15	34	36	12	57	10
16	35	37	6	58	8
17	55	38	8	59	6
18	76	39	11	60	8
19	55	40	8	61	5
20	66	41	7	62	2
21	49	42	5	63	3
22	64	43	9	64	2
23	58	44	4	65	2
24	54	45	8	66	1
25	57	46	3	67	3
26	35	47	7	68	1
27	36	48	6	69	4
28	32	49	8	70	0
29	25	50	4	71	0
30	21	51	9	72	1
31	21	52	2	73	0
32	14	53	5	74	1
33	14	54	9		

Table 1.4. Frequency of Tolkienic fandom participation by age. (n = 1038)

Multifandom Comparison. CentrumLumina's AO3 Census also inquired about participant age, allowing me to compare Tolkienic fandom age demographics compared to age demographics in the broader fanfiction community. The mean age of AO3 Census participants was 25.1 (standard deviation 8.2), and a median age range of 22-24. Table 1.5 below uses her age groupings and data alongside a comparison of data for the same age groupings for the Tolkienic fandom. See [AO3 Census: Age](#) for complete data and discussion.

Age Range	AO3 Census		Tolkien Fandom	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
15 or younger	357	3.6	44	4.24
16-18	1588	15.9	166	16.0
19-21	2302	23.0	170	16.4
22-24	1949	19.5	176	17.0
25-29	1878	18.8	185	17.8
30-34	933	9.3	83	8.00
35-39	404	4.0	49	4.72
40-49	440	4.4	65	6.26
50 or older	140	1.4	100	9.63

Table 1.5. Age of participants in the Tolkienic fandom compared to the AO3 Census.



Discussion. As Figure 1.2 shows, participation in the Tolkien fandom sharply increases in the late teen years, sustains a high level of participation through the mid-20s, then falls off sharply into the early to mid-30s. After that point, participation remains fairly steady under the mid-60s, at which point it decreases again.

This data is especially interesting when considered side-by-side with the multifandom data from the AO3 Census. In most areas, the two are relatively similar, with similar averages and frequencies in most age groups. However, there are two key exceptions. First, participation between the ages of 19 and 21 years is considerably higher in the broader fandom than in the Tolkienfic fandom: 23.0 percent for the broader fandom compared to 16.4 percent for the Tolkienfic fandom. Past the low 20s, the numbers equalize until the age of 40, at which point, the *opposite* effect occurs: The Tolkienfic fandom has considerably more participation from people over the age of 40 than does the broader fandom, particularly in the 50+ age group, where Tolkienfic fandom participation is nearly seven times that of fandom participation as a whole: 9.63 percent of participants compared to just 1.4 percent in the AO3 Census. This data shows that the Tolkienfic fandom is older compared to fandom as a whole, both because fewer young fans participate and because more older fans do.



Chapter Two: Modes of Participation

Reading

Study participants were asked, “Do you read Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” Results, shown below in Table 2.1, show that overwhelmingly, participation in the Tolkienfic fandom involves reading fanfiction.

	n	%
Yes	1047	99.5
No	2	0.19
Prefer not to answer	3	0.29

Table 2.1. Participation in the Tolkienfic fandom by reading fanfiction. (n = 1052)

Participants were also asked, “Approximately how many hours per week do you spend reading Tolkien-based fan fiction?” This field accepted all responses; some could not be used for quantitative analysis because they were not numerical (e.g., “a lot” or “varies”); however, these responses were interesting because many were subtly defensive or denigrating to the reader’s interest in fanfiction. For example, some readers gave responses along the lines of “too much” or “more than I want to admit.” Only one participant responded with a phrase that suggested that the participant felt that Tolkienfic deserved *more* time than the participant could give (“Not as much as I’d like”). See the Study Methodology (p. 7) for the procedure on how data was normalized for analysis. In addition to these procedures, if the response “less than one” (or similar language), 0.5 was used.

It’s important to note that this question was one where we would have access to more precise data if the survey had differentiated between current and past fandom activity. Several participants noted in their response that they used to read more but currently read little. It is impossible to know whether the numbers reported by other veteran participants were their current data or data for past participation. This shortcoming should be kept in mind when using and interpreting this data.

Table 2.2 below shows the averages for the number of hours participants reported reading Tolkienfic per week. Responses ranged from 0 to 100 hours per week.

Average	Hours Reading	Standard Deviation
Median	4	
Mean	6.85	9.52
Mode	2	
Midrange	50	

Table 2.2. Average spent reading Tolkienfic per week. (n = 901)

Age and Reading. Does a participant’s age predict differences in the number of hours a participant spends reading Tolkienfic? Table 2.3 shows the median number of hours each age group spent reading Tolkienfic per week. These results show that age does not appear to impact the time a participant spent reading Tolkienfic.



Age Range	Median Hours Reading
≤19	5
20-24	4.25
25-29	3
30-34	5
35-39	3
40-44	2
45-49	5
50-54	4.25
55-59	2.75
60-64	4
≥65	5

Table 2.3. Median hours spent reading Tolkienfic by age group. (n = 1027)

Reading and Status as an Author. A few participants noted that they used to read more but slowed down in order to focus on their writing. Does participating as an author as well impact the amount of reading a participant does per week? Table 2.4 shows data for authors compared to readers-only.

Average	Hours Reading Authors n = 552	Standard Deviation	Hours Reading reader only n = 338	Standard Deviation
Median	4		4.25	
Mean	6.94	10.4	6.71	7.91
Mode	1		2	
Range	0-100		0-70	
Midrange	50		35	

Table 2.4. Average spent reading Tolkienfic per week for authors and readers-only. (n = 890)

Once again, differences are insignificant between the author and reader-only groups. Readers-only spent slightly more time reading, as a general rule, although the author group includes the more extreme outliers.

Writing

Study participants were asked, “Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?” Results, shown below in Table 2.5, show that while a majority of community members write fanfiction, fewer participate as authors than as readers.

	n	%
Yes	642	61.0
No	397	37.7
Prefer not to answer	13	1.24

Table 2.5. Participation in the Tolkienfic fandom by writing fanfiction. (n = 1052)



Gender and Writing. Are there demographic trends that can predict whether or not a person is likely to author Tolkien fanfiction? Table 2.6 below compares responses for people who answered both of the following questions:

- Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?
- What is your gender?

Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?	Female (88.5%)		Nonbinary (5.99%)		Male (3.61%)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	563	89.1	43	6.8	26	4.11
No	357	92.0	20	5.15	11	2.84

Table 2.6. Participation as a Tolkienfic writer by gender. (n = 1020)

The data shows that there is no meaningful effect between gender and whether or not one writes Tolkienfic.

Age and Writing. Likewise, participation as a writer could vary depending on the age of the community member. Table 2.7 below shows the average age of participants, depending on their response to the question, “Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?”

Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?	n	Mean Age	Median Age
Yes	631	29.5	25
No	391	25.3	22
Prefer not to answer	11	26.9	25

Table 2.7. Participation in the Tolkienfic fandom by writing fanfiction. (n = 1034)

Table 2.8 and Figure 2.1 show the percentage of participants in each age range who responded Yes to the question, “Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past?”

Age Range	% Authors
≤19	48.7
20-24	57.7
25-29	67.4
30-34	60.2
35-39	77.6
40-44	75.8
45-49	75.0
50-54	63.0
55-59	81.6
60-64	85.0
≥65	69.2

Table 2.8. Percentage of each age group that participate as authors. (n = 1035)

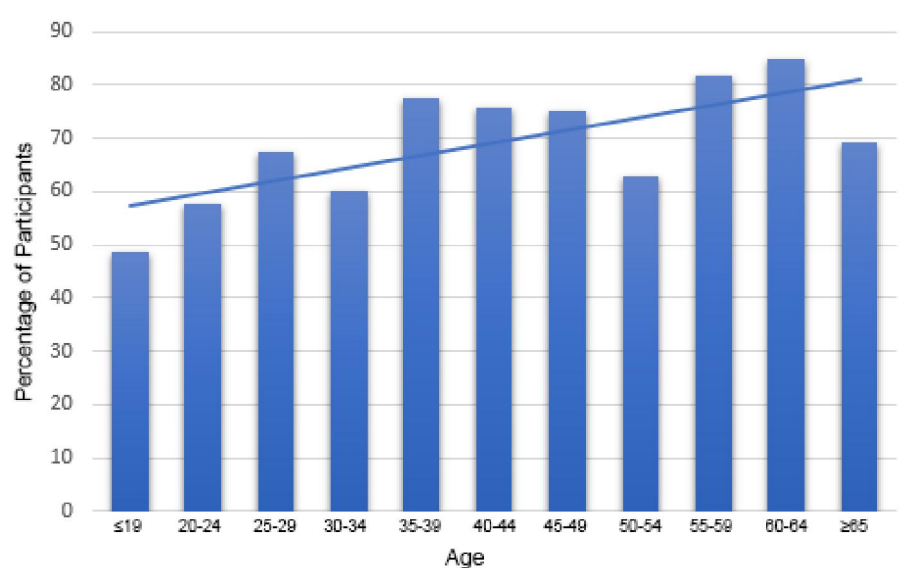


Figure 2.1. Percentage of each age group that participate as authors. (n = 1035)

Discussion. Unlike gender, age does seem to factor into whether a person participates as an author or only as a reader. While Table 2.8 and Figure 2.1 show some fluctuation, the overall trend shows increased participation as an author as age increases. Contrary to the popular view of fanfiction as a young woman's craft, these data show that writing fanfiction is more common among the older demographics in the Tolkienfic fandom. Fewer than half of teenage participants are authors compared to 85 percent of authors in the 60 to 64 age range.

Experience and confidence may account for the tendency of older participants to write more often than younger participants do. Older participants have had the time to develop their literary tastes and hone their craft as writers. Longevity in the fandom may explain it as well, with authors remaining longer in the fandom than those who are readers only. Longevity would naturally favor older authors.

Commenting

Study participants were asked several questions related to commenting. This section will deal only with the rate of commenting reported by participants and possible connections with demographic data. Additional exploration of the motives and specific practices behind commenting will be discussed more fully in **Chapter 13: Commenting** (p. 93).

Participants were asked, "Do you leave comments or other feedback on Tolkien-based fan fiction stories?" and 789 (75.9 percent) respondents answered *Yes* to this question, and 251 (24.1 percent) answered *No* (n = 1040). Participants were also asked to "Estimate the percentage of Tolkien-based fan fiction stories that you leave comments or other feedback on." See the Study Methodology (p. 7**Error! Bookmark not defined.**) for the procedure used to normalize this data for analysis. In addition, participants who answered *No* to the question, "Do you leave comments or other feedback on Tolkien-based fan fiction stories?" and who left the field blank for the question, "Estimate the percentage of Tolkien-based fan fiction stories that you leave comments or other feedback on," had a value of 0 entered for the latter question. Table 2.9 shows the average of percentage of stories participants report commenting on, if they comment on stories. Note that responses of 0 are not included in this data; as noted above, 24.1 percent of participants report that they do not comment on stories they read.

Average	% Comments	Standard Deviation
Median	30	
Mean	37.3	30.4
Mode	10	

Table 2.9. Average percentage of stories commented on among participants who comment. (n = 794)

Table 2.10 and Figure 2.2 show the number of participants who reported a percentage of comments left on the stories they read. Again, responses of 0 are not included in the data.

%	# participants	% participants
≤9	149	18.8
10-19	143	18.0
20-29	100	12.6
30-39	48	6.05
40-49	44	5.54
50-59	94	11.8
60-69	36	4.53
70-79	61	7.68
80-89	49	6.17
90-100	70	8.82

Table 2.10. Number and percentage of participants reporting a percentage of stories commented on. (n = 794)



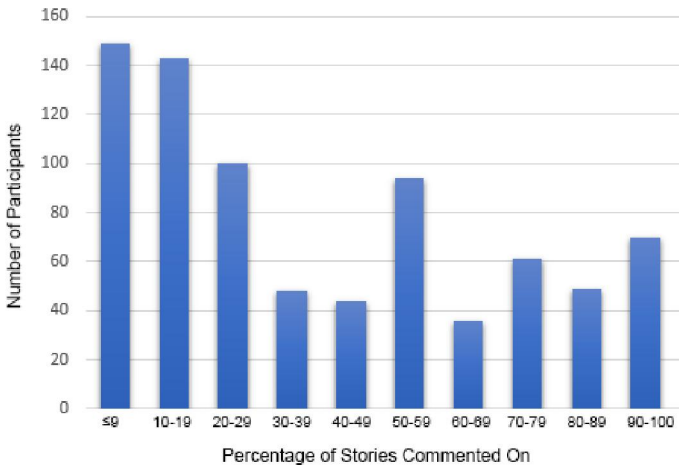


Figure 2.2. Frequency of different rates of commenting. (n = 794)

Commenting and Status as an Author. How is commenting behavior impacted by a participant's participation in the Tolkienfic fandom as an author? Table 2.11 below shows responses to the question, "Do you leave comments or other feedback on Tolkien-based fan fiction stories?" by the participant's status as an author or a reader only.

Do you leave comments or other feedback on Tolkien-based fan fiction stories?	Author		Reader Only	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	549	86.5	233	59.3
No	86	13.5	160	40.7

Table 2.6. Participation as a Tolkienfic writer by gender. (n = 1028)

Discussion. Commenting behavior is a complicated and often contentious topic in fandom meta discussions. These data show that commenting is relatively rare; I'd further suggest that the data here is inflated. Participants report that, on average (median), they comment on about 30 percent of the stories they read, which means that authors should expect about one comment per three clicks on their story. Even a quick glance at a site that publicly reports click and comment counts shows that this is not the case.

Further exploration of commenting behavior in the Tolkienfic fandom is undertaken in **Chapter 13: Commenting** (p. 93). However, the data presented here show that commenting is much more common among authors than non-readers. The data above in the section on Reading (p.14) show that authors are not necessarily more committed (or less) to reading Tolkienfic than participants who only read; however, they report communicating more often with the authors they read. This makes sense: Authors are presumably comfortable enough with writing (usually in English) to write stories. While comment writing is a different skill than fiction writing, the two are not completely independent of each other, and commenting-writing as a skill is likely to come more easily to someone regularly practicing other types of writing. Many people are avid readers without practicing any form of writing beyond that required for everyday communication, and it is not surprising that fandom should be the same. Furthermore, Tolkienfic authors who post their writing have the logistical requirements (such as website logins) and social connections that facilitate commenting.



Chapter Three: Fandom Initiation

When and why does a person become involved in the Tolkienic fandom? The survey looked more at the *when*, although clues about the *why* emerged in the process. The survey included the question, “For how many years have you been writing Tolkien-based fan fiction?” from which I was able to calculate an approximate year of entry into the fandom. This question provided a short answer field where participants could enter a free response.

Before presenting this data, it is important to note two limitations. First, this question was asked only of *authors*. In retrospect, I would ask it of readers as well. Secondly, this is an example of a question where the answers are complicated by my assumption that fandom participation involved a single entry date, followed by more-or-less steady participation between that entry date and the date of taking the survey. Rather, several responses indicated that the participant had been involved in the Tolkienic fandom for intervals with gaps in between.

With those limitations in mind, Figure 3.1 below shows the approximate date of fandom entry for all participants. The earliest date of entry was 1973. As the graph shows, entry into the fandom was low for current participants until the early 2000s, when there was a sudden spike of activity.

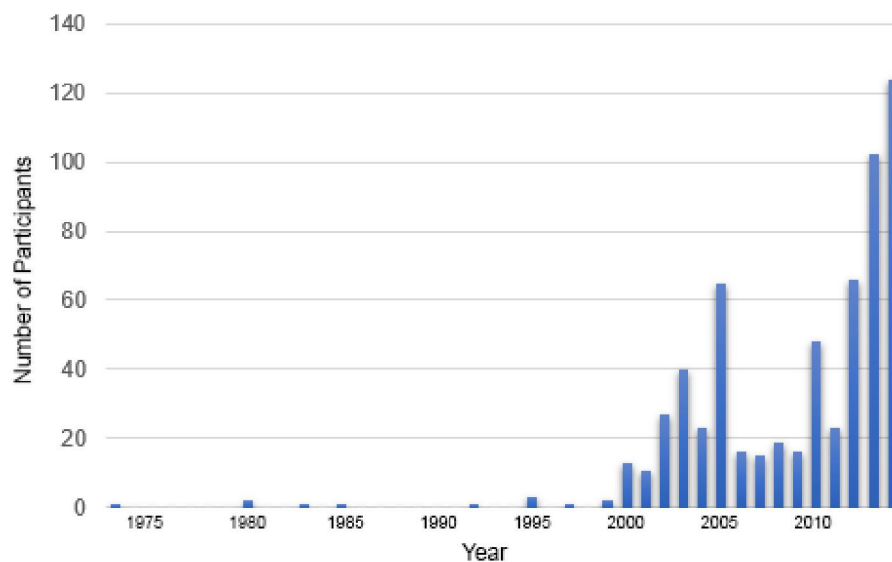


Figure 3.1. Frequency of year of entry into the fandom by Tolkienic authors. (n = 620)

Figure 3.2 focuses on the period of time beginning in 2000 when the current fandom was experiencing its boom in activity. In addition, the years when Peter Jackson released one of his highly successful and popular films are marked in orange.

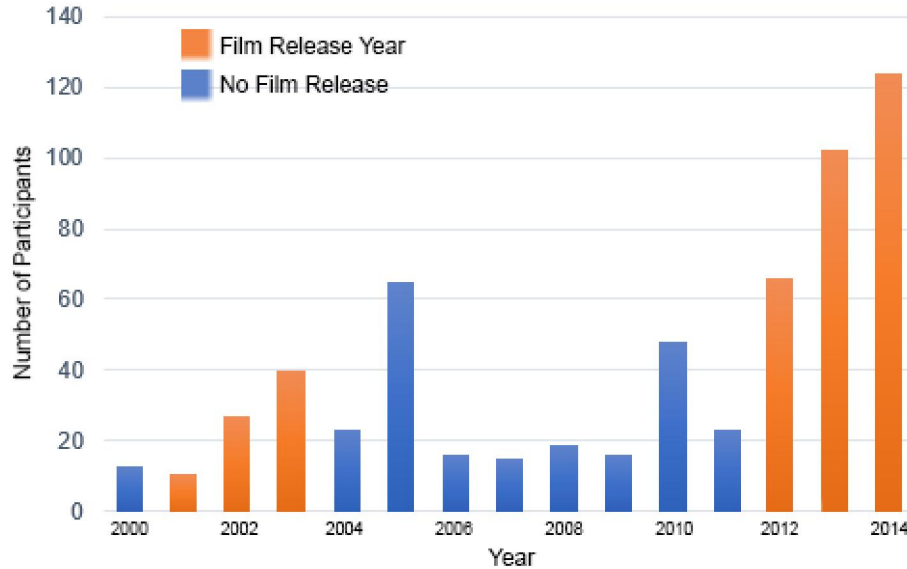


Figure 3.2. Frequency of year of entry into the fandom by Tolkienfic authors, 2000-2014. (n = 608)

Age of Initiation. With data on participants' ages and the number of years they had been writing Tolkienfic, it is possible to calculate roughly the age at which they began penning Tolkien-based fanfiction. Table 3.1 and Figure 3.3 below show the distribution of ages at which participants' data shows they began writing.

It is important to note that these data are *not* directly reported by participants but are calculated using data they reported.

Age Range	# Participants
≤9	5
10-14	109
15-19	188
20-24	108
25-29	55
30-34	40
35-39	24
40-44	21
45-49	30
50-54	18
55-59	10
60-64	2

Table 3.1. Age at which participants began writing Tolkienfic. (n = 619)

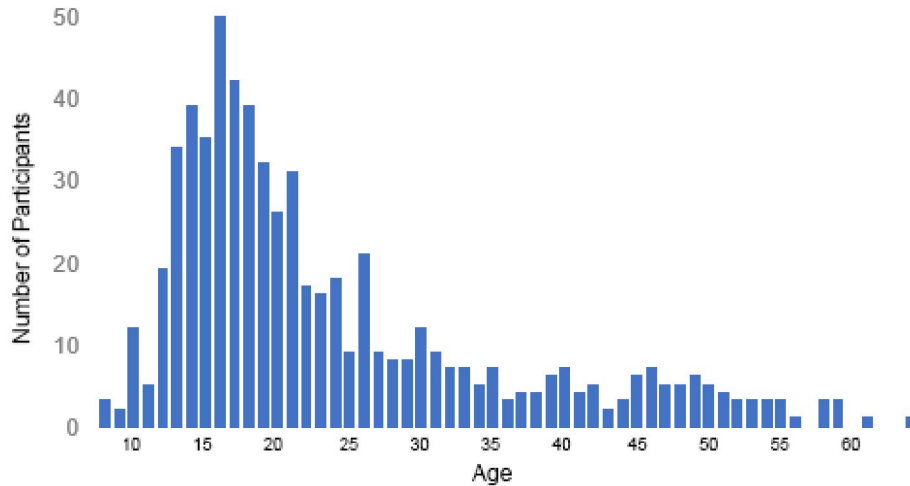


Figure 3.3. Age at which participants began writing Tolkienfic. (n = 619)

Discussion. The data on when participants entered the Tolkienfic fandom show a fandom with a high degree of longevity. The Tolkienfic fandom is not, to borrow the term coined by a friend and collaborator, “a flash fire fandom” where participants join, avidly create and interact for a few months, and then move on. The data show that many Tolkienfic fandom members are committed to the fandom for years—even decades—after joining.

The data also show that, while the fandom has existed for decades, it experienced its boom with the rise of home Internet at the beginning of the 2000s. In addition, as Figure 3.2 shows, the release of Peter Jackson’s two film trilogies contributed to increased participation in the fandom. More than ten years after the release of the first film, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the effect of the *Lord of the Rings* films can still be seen. *The Hobbit* films—which had just completed their release at the time of this survey—also generated interest in the fandom.

Finally, data calculated on the age at which participants began writing Tolkienfic shows that authors most often write their first stories in their late teens or early twenties. However, author initiation is far from confined to one’s youth. Although experiencing a steep drop-off after the mid-twenties, entry into authorship continued at a steady pace through the age of 50. It is important to realize that nearly a third (30.7 percent) of authors wrote their first Tolkienfic story after the age of 25. As seen in the demographic data about participant age found in Chapter One (p.10), the Tolkienfic fandom challenges the common wisdom that fandom—and fanfiction in particular—are largely the province of teens and young adults. Rather, Tolkienfic fandom is an older community than fanfiction communities tend to be.

Chapter Four: Multifandom Participation

Conventional wisdom often assumes that fandom participation is generally multifandom, and CentrumLumina's AO3 Census would support this assumption. Only 13 percent of authors who participated in the AO3 Census were monofandom (personal communication). In comparison, 23.5 percent of Tolkienfic authors (total $n = 634$) answered *No* to the question, "Do you write fan fiction for other fandoms?"

Primary Fandom

The survey also asked authors, "If you write fan fiction for other fandoms, would you define the Tolkien fandom as your primary fandom?" Here, 21.1 percent of Tolkienfic authors answered, "I do not write for other fandoms." This is a small discrepancy that might be accounted, at least in part, by a smaller number of respondents. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 below show how Tolkienfic authors responded to this question.

Response	# Participants	%
Yes	330	52.8
No	163	26.1
I do not write for other fandoms	132	21.1

Table 4.1. Response to question, "If you write fan fiction for other fandoms, would you define the Tolkien fandom as your primary fandom?" ($n = 625$)

"If you write fan fiction for other fandoms, would you define the Tolkien fandom as your primary fandom?"

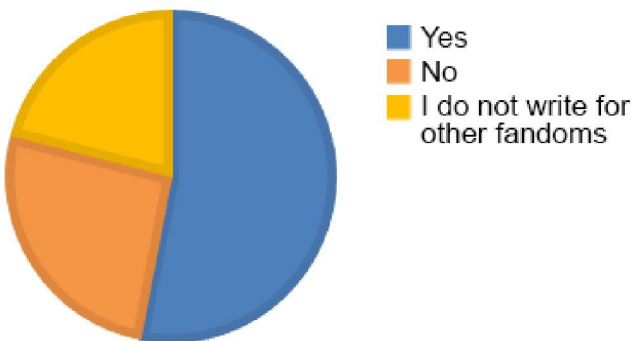


Figure 4.1. Response to question, "If you write fan fiction for other fandoms, would you define the Tolkien fandom as your primary fandom?" ($n = 625$)

Discussion. Tolkienfic fandom tends to involve less multifandom participation than other fic fandoms. Data show that nearly one in four Tolkienfic authors is monofandom (compared to about one in eight in fic fandom as a whole). Furthermore, multifandom Tolkienfic authors view the Tolkienfic fandom as their primary fandom at a high rate. In all, nearly three out of four authors who write Tolkienfic consider its fandom their only or primary fandom, leaving only one

out of four authors who create Tolkienfic but view other fandoms as more important to their fannish participation.

Other Fandoms

Participants were also asked: “Please list other fandoms you write or have written fan fiction for. If you write for more than ten, choose the ten where you spend the most time writing fan fiction.” Participants were given a short-response field in which to enter as many fandoms as they wished. The 478 authors who responded to this question answered with 481 different fandoms, showing the breadth of multifandom participation among those authors who do write for multiple fandoms. (See Appendix B on page 113 for a complete list of the fandoms entered for this response.) Table 4.2 below lists the fandoms selected by 5 percent of the participants to answer this question. Rows highlighted in blue also appear among the most common fandoms reported in the AO3 Census.

Fandom	# Participants
Harry Potter	160
Marvel/MCU	81
Sherlock	67
Star Trek	60
Doctor Who	48
Supernatural	48
Star Wars	40
Naruto	34
A Song of Ice and Fire/Game of Thrones	31
Avengers	28
Dragon Age	24
Final Fantasy	24
Chronicles of Narnia	23

Table 4.2. Fandoms chosen by 5% or more of participants who listed additional fandoms. (n = 478)

CentrumLumina also included an item about popular fandoms. There are two key distinctions, however. First, she included a checkbox list of popular fandoms, followed by a short answer field where participants could enter additional information, generating two sets of data: [Popular Fandoms](#) and [Other Fandoms](#). Perhaps most importantly, however, her question asked for fandoms the participant “regularly read and/or produce works for,” whereas my data only included fandoms the author wrote for. Keeping these limitations in mind, however, the two surveys nonetheless make for an interesting comparison.

Table 4.3 shows fandoms chosen or listed by 5% of more of participants in the AO3 Census, compiled from the “Popular Fandoms” and “Other Fandoms” data sets. Rows highlighted in blue also appear among the most common other fandoms among Tolkienfic authors.



Fandom	# Participants	Fandom Type
Sherlock (TV)	4098	Show
Marvel Cinematic Universe	3976	Comic/Media
Teen Wolf (TV)	3741	Show
Supernatural	3604	Show
Harry Potter	3304	Book/Media
Merlin (TV)	2152	Show
Star Trek: Alternate Original Series (Movies)	2128	Film
Doctor Who	1815	Show
Marvel (Comics)	1791	Comic
X-Men (Movieverse)	1391	Film
Actor RPF	1329	RPF
Tolkien, J.R.R.	1192	Book/Media
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	833	Show
Glee	832	Show
Torchwood	819	Show
Stargate Atlantis	805	Show
Welcome to Night Vale	663	Radio Program
DCU (Comics)	652	Comic
Homestuck	607	Comic
Stargate SG-1	504	Show
Pacific Rim	451	Film
Inception	433	Film
Les Miserables	368	Book/Media
Star Trek	355	Show
Hannibal	338	Show

Table 4.3. Fandoms chosen by 5% or more of participants in the AO3 Census. (n = 5158 for “Other Fandoms”; no n is given for “Popular Fandoms”)

Discussion. Tolkienfic fandom authors, when they participate in multiple fandoms, do not participate equally in the fandoms popular among fic readers and writers as a whole. While several fandoms emerge in common, the majority of fandoms popular overall are not popular among Tolkienfic writers, and many fandoms popular with Tolkienfic writers are not seen among the AO3 Census’s most popular fandoms.

Among the fandoms popular with Tolkienfic authors but not in fandom overall, one observes the presence of other fandoms of the Book/Media type (see the “Other Fandom Types” section below). The Tolkien fandom itself belongs to this category, as does *Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, both among the most popular fandoms enjoyed by Tolkienfic authors. Additionally, other popular fandoms include those with similar fantasy elements to Tolkien’s universe: the two aforementioned fandoms, as well as *Dragon Age* and *Final Fantasy*. Considered alongside the data presented and discussed in the section above, “Primary Fandom,” Tolkienfic fans seem to prefer fandoms with significant literary and fantasy elements, when compared to fic fandom participants as a whole.

Other Fandom Types

Based on the responses entered to the item, “Please list other fandoms you write or have written fan fiction for. If you write for more than ten, choose the ten where you spend the most time writing fan fiction,” I classified each fandom listed according to the type of text. Table 4.4 shows each type of text, along with the number of times a fandom encompassed by that text type was listed. Please note that this data is *not* the number of participants to list a fandom of that text type but the number of mentions of a fandom in a particular category. For example, if a participant listed, “Harry Potter, Chronicles of Narnia, Novels of Naomi Novik, and Star Wars” as fandoms, the data would show two entries for Book/Media, one for Book, and one for Film.

Fandom Type	# Data Points
Show	553
Book/Media	293
Anime/Manga	200
Comic/Media	165
Book	161
Film	126
Video Game	121
Myth/Folklore	27
Real-Person Fiction (RPF)	23
Comic	15
Stage Production	11
Radio Series	9
Unknown	8
Game	4
Multi	2
Software	1
	1719

Table 4.4. Other fandoms listed by fandom type.

Categorization is, of course, subjective in some cases. I tried, to the greatest extent possible, to categorize a fandom according to its primary or best-known texts. For example, *Star Trek* has had several television series, several films, and many tie-in novels, but because the television series is its primary and best-known text, it was classified as a Show. The Book/Media and Comic/Media types identify fandoms that began as a book or a comic but have since developed a significant media component, such as a derivative film or television series. The Tolkien fandom would be a part of the Book/Media category, which also includes *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*; the Comic/Media category includes the Marvel comics and films.

Discussion. While the Show category dominates among Tolkienfic authors, it is far less popular than it is in fandom as a whole. Consider that nearly half of the popular fandoms from the AO3 Census are show fandoms; in comparison, only four of the popular fandoms (out of thirteen) for the Tolkienfic fandom are shows. Only four shows—*Sherlock*, *Star Trek*, *Doctor Who*, and *Supernatural*—account for 40% of the data points in the Show category.



As noted above, in the discussion for “Other Fandoms,” Tolkienfic authors prefer the Book and Book/Media categories at a higher rate than does fandom as a whole. Only three of twenty-five popular fandoms from the AO3 Census were categorized as Book/Media. (One of them was the Tolkien fandom.) Of thirteen popular fandoms among Tolkienfic authors, three are also Book/Media. The Video Game and Anime/Manga categories are also more popular among Tolkienfic authors than they are in fandom overall. The AO3 Census did not list a single popular Video Game or Anime/Manga fandom. The Tolkienfic fandom, on the other hand, has two popular Video Game fandoms (*Dragon Age* and *Final Fantasy*) and has one popular Anime/Manga fandom (*Naruto*). Overall, the Anime/Manga category is the third most popular among Tolkienfic authors.

The Myth/Folklore category is another that—while small even in the Tolkienfic data—is entirely absent from the AO3 Census. Again, this category points to the importance of literary and fantasy elements in the preferred fandoms of Tolkienfic authors. Finally, the Real Person Fiction (RPF) category—one of the most popular on the AO3 Census—is comparatively absent from the Tolkienfic fandom data. More authors listed fandoms in the Myth/Folklore category than did the RPF category.

To conclude, these data shows two trends emerging when comparing Tolkienfic fandom to fandom overall. First, Tolkienfic authors enjoy a greater diversity of fandoms, with Japanese, video game, and literary fandoms holding their own alongside the more typical media fandoms based around shows. Secondly, Tolkienfic authors tend to prefer fandoms that include literary and fantasy elements that are also central to the Tolkien fandom. Therefore, while there is greater diversity by some metrics, other metrics demonstrate a specialization in fantasy-oriented fandoms and suggest a lack of diversity, evidenced also by Tolkienfic authors’ tendency to give precedence to the Tolkien fandom.



Chapter Five: Sources

Study of the Tolkienic fandom is complicated by its canon. J.R.R. Tolkien began work on his imaginary universe in the 1910s, and this work extended until his death in 1973. The two major works published during his lifetime—*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*—are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg, with his son and literary heir Christopher Tolkien since publishing dozens of posthumous volumes of his father's writings, drafts, illustrations, and letters. Complicating an already complex canon are two blockbuster film trilogies that rocketed Tolkien and his imagined universe to the fore of the popular imagination in a way it had not achieved on the strength of the books alone. Tolkienic authors use, combine, alter, and sometimes intentionally ignore these myriad sources to construct their transformative works.

Tolkienic authors use all of Tolkien's texts—as well as the films based on them—to a significant degree. In the survey, participants were given a list of checkboxes from which to select the sources they used, including an option to add sources not included on the list. Table 5.1 below shows the percentage of Tolkienic authors who reported using a particular text or text series in creating their fanworks. Texts are listed in order of publication.

Text	# Participants	%
<i>The Hobbit</i>	474	74.1
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	570	89.1
<i>The Silmarillion</i>	501	78.3
<i>Unfinished Tales</i>	328	51.3
<i>The History of Middle-earth</i>	333	52.0
<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> films	385	60.2
<i>The Hobbit</i> films	326	50.9

Table 5.1. Texts used by Tolkienic authors to write fanfiction. (n = 640)

These data show a heavy reliance on book-based sources. No text is used by less than half of Tolkienic authors. Furthermore, strictly movieverse authors—and it is important to reiterate here that this survey was administered in the midst of the *Hobbit* film trilogy—are vanishingly rare. Only three participants—less than a half of a percent—used only the films as sources.

Unfinished Tales (UT) and *The History of Middle-earth* (HoMe) are thirteen volumes collecting the notes, drafts, and other materials Tolkien used to construct primarily *The Silmarillion* (compiled, edited, and published posthumously by Christopher Tolkien as a single coherent narrative) but also *The Lord of the Rings* (LotR). These volumes do not read as a single coherent narrative and often provide complex, sometimes contradictory information. They are, in short, difficult texts to work with. However, 60.8 percent of authors used at least one of these texts as part of their fanfiction; 41.7 percent used both.

In my 2017 blog post [Tolkien Fan Fiction Sources \(Or, The Silmarillion as a Gateway Drug\)](#), I observed that, the longer a person spent in the Tolkienic fandom, the more likely they were to work with more challenging sources. Consider authors who did not use *The Silmarillion* as a source but did use *The Hobbit* and LotR. Seventeen percent and 20 percent of them, respectively, used UT and the HoMe. These authors had been writing a median of three years.

When using *The Silmarillion* as a source, on the other hand, 73 percent of authors used UT and/or HoMe. Authors using *The Silmarillion* had been writing a median of five years; those



who used *The Silmarillion*, as well as UT and/or the HoMe, had been writing a median of six years.

Discussion. These data show that, while the film trilogies have had an undeniable influence on the Tolkien fandom and the fanfiction it produces, it remains primarily a book-based fandom. Even in the midst of the *Hobbit* film trilogy, movieverse-only fanfiction writers were exceedingly rare.

Instead, the data show that participation in the fandom predicts the use of increasingly challenging texts. The trajectory seems to proceed as follows: Fans enter the fandom due to either the films or the books. Film fans do not stay strictly so for long: They inevitably pick up one of the books, usually *The Lord of the Rings*. Once fans have read *The Hobbit* and LotR, if they remain in the fandom, they are likely to read *The Silmarillion*. Once they've picked up this most accessible of Tolkien's posthumous texts, they are likely to proceed to the more challenging posthumous texts of UT and the HoMe.

Looking back at **Chapter Four: Multifandom Participation** (p. 23) and the tendency of Tolkienfic authors to focus on the Tolkienfic fandom instead of other fandoms, I would suggest that part of the reason for this exclusivity lies in the challenges posed by Tolkien's canon. To master the canon well enough to write Tolkien-based fanfiction requires a level of reading and study that isn't common to most other fandoms. Furthermore, the value placed by the Tolkienfic community on reading difficult canon texts encourages long-enduring participation by authors willing to put in this kind of effort, and this level of effort precludes similar attention paid to other fandoms.

Chapter Six: Archives

While the Tolkienfic fandom has been around for more than six decades, it skyrocketed in popularity in the early 2000s, as shown in **Chapter Three: Fandom Initiation** (p. 20). At this time, a perfect storm of increased home Internet access and enthusiasm for the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy produced a wave of fannish activity that has never fully subsided. Initial interest in Tolkienfic occurred largely on mailing lists, followed by the advent of Tolkienfic archives, websites devoted to hosting Tolkien-based fanfiction. The number and centrality of Tolkien-specific archives to the community's culture and history is a feature of several fandoms from the early 2000s, and Tolkienfic fandom is among those with the most fandom-specific archives (see Fanlore's [Category: Archive](#) page). In addition, multifandom archives (like Fanfiction.net) and social media sites being used as archives (like LiveJournal) originated at the same time. As a result, archives are central to the Tolkienfic fandom in a way that they are not for most other fandoms.

Survey participants were asked, "Which sites have you used or do you use to post Tolkien-based fan fiction? Please check all that apply." The list of checkboxes included all of the Tolkien-specific archives I was aware of, multifandom archives, and social media sites commonly used to share fanfiction. In addition, there was an "Other" field that participants could use to add sites they used that were not included on the list.

Author Use of Archives

Table 6.1 shows the number and percentage of total authors who use a specific archive to post stories. Archives are classified by type, then sorted from most to least frequently used.

Archive	# Authors	%
Tolkien-Specific Archives		
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	109	18.6
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	91	15.5
Stories of Arda	61	10.4
Many Paths to Tread	52	8.9
Faerie	48	8.2
Library of Moria	42	7.2
LOTRFanfiction.com	42	7.2
Tolkien Fan Fiction	37	6.3
Open Scrolls Archive	28	4.8
Of Elves and Men	24	4.1
Last Ship	14	2.4
Naice a Nilme	13	2.2
West of the Moon	12	2.1
Mirrormere	10	1.7
Faramir Fiction Archive	9	1.5
Quills and Ink	8	1.4
Axe and Bow	6	1.0
Parma Eruseen	6	1.0
The Trees Remember	6	1.0
Elf Fetish	4	0.7



Archive	# Authors	%
Multifandom Archives		
Archive of Our Own (AO3)	405	69.1
Fanfiction.net	336	57.3
Adult-Fanfiction.org	36	6.1
Skyehawke	12	2.1
Social Media Sites		
Tumblr	211	36.0
LiveJournal	200	34.1
Dreamwidth	51	8.7
Yahoo! Groups	46	7.9

Table 6.1. Archives used by Tolkienfic authors to post fanfiction. (n = 586)

Table 6.2 below shows the number and percentage of participating authors who posted their Tolkienfic on the three types of archive: Tolkien-specific, multifandom, and social media.

Archive Type	# Authors	%
Tolkien-Specific	255	43.5
Multifandom	528	90.1
Social Media	371	63.3

Table 6.2. Types of archive used by Tolkienfic authors to post fanfiction. (n = 586)

Discussion. Tolkienfic authors make significant use of all three types of archive with multifandom archives among the most frequently used. The data for Tolkien-specific archives provides further evidence for the longevity of many authors in the fandom. While the most popular Tolkien-specific archives were currently active when the survey was given or had only recently closed (e.g., the Henneth-Annûn Story Archive), many of the least popular archives had been shuttered for years at the time of the survey. Enough of their authors remained in the fandom, however, to keep these archives on the list. The popularity of Tolkien-specific archives is also partly predicted by the degree of specialization. Many of the least popular archives catered to very specific interests, such as a specific pairing, friendship, or character.

Archive Cultures: Methodology

In 2016, while researching my paper [Attainable Vistas: Historical Bias in Tolkien's Legendarium as a Motive for Transformative Fanworks](#), I ran some of my survey data and differentiated by archive. While I'd always had the sense, as a member of the Tolkienfic fandom, that different archives had distinct cultures, I was surprised to see that I was able to quantify those cultural differences using survey data.

In this next section, I will look at several survey items that reveal important cultural differences among archives. I selected only those archives used by 5 percent or more of survey participants: a total of fifteen different archives.

The majority of survey items gave participants a choice of five responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and No Opinion/Not Sure. In the interest of simplicity, I have combined Strongly Agree and Agree, and Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

For each survey item, I provide data for all participants, followed by data for each archive. When archive data is 5 percent higher or lower than the data for all participants, that



data is highlighted in red and blue, respectively. The darker the color, the further from the overall percentage that archive's data is, in five-percent increments.

Archive Cultures: Authority

Conventional wisdom about fanfiction holds that it, almost by definition, locates authority differently than traditional publishing. For example, while traditional publishing places a high amount of authority with the author, editor, and rights holders, fanfiction authors—again, according to conventional belief—willfully defy that authority. The original author's control of her or his characters and world often matters less than the fanfiction author's purpose for those characters and that world. For example, while most readers are going to assume without question that Sauron is an evil character, a fanfiction writer might make him more nuanced or even a misunderstood or misrepresented “good guy.” This decision to flout Tolkien's authority over his character might be done for any number of reasons: perhaps adding complexity to a fairly flat character, perhaps softening him to serve as a romantic partner for Melkor, or perhaps because misjudged bad boys appeal to the fanfiction author. In all cases, though, the fanfiction author's needs supersede Tolkien's authority to have his character presented as intended.

Authority is more complicated in the Tolkienfic fandom, however. While a detailed discussion of the fandom's history is beyond the scope of this document, both in the fic fandom and the broader Tolkien fandom, fans have traditionally valued and respected the authority of J.R.R. Tolkien, Christopher Tolkien, and the Tolkien Estate. As seen in **Chapter Five: Sources** (p. 28), most Tolkienfic fandom authors seek to deepen their knowledge of Tolkien's world. Not surprisingly, this value is often at odds with the more freewheeling elements of the broader fic fandom.

Archives are one arena where this tension plays out. While some archives have included specific rules about appropriate use of the source texts—some archives ban slash or alternate universe stories, for example—in many cases, how the archive regards Tolkien's authority is generated by and projected not from the site's policies but its members.

Figure 6.1 and Tables 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5 below show the results of three questions asked on the survey that concern authority, beginning with the strictest adherence to the Tolkien's authority—creating fanfiction that the author believes he would have approved of—followed by a more moderate adherence to his authority by keeping his moral beliefs in mind when writing fanfiction. The final question, shown in Table 6.5, is the least rigid adherence to authority and asks about the importance of canonical facts to authors when writing fanfiction.

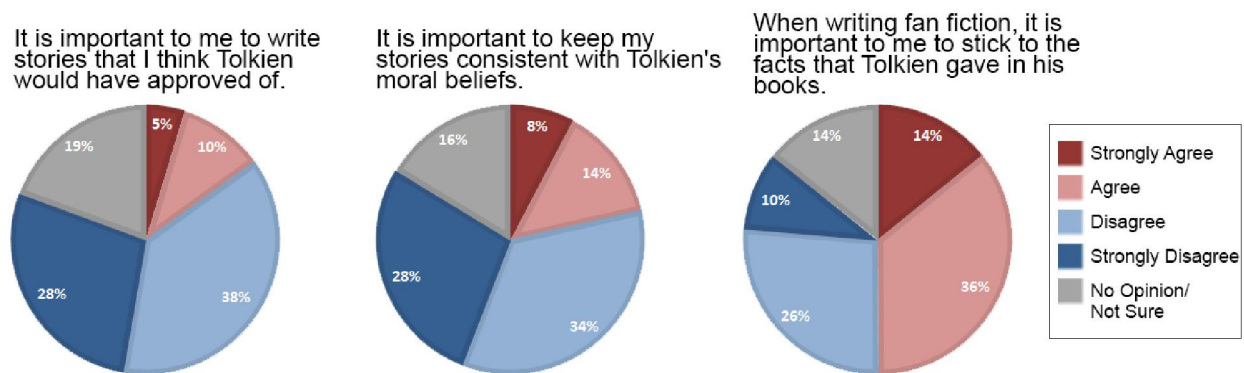


Figure 6.1. Overall agreement on statements about authority among Tolkienfic authors.



It is important to me to write stories that I think Tolkien would have approved of. (n = 635)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 15.1%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 65.5%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Tolkien Fan Fiction	13	36.1	Many Paths to Tread	27	51.9
Many Paths to Tread	15	29.0	Stories of Arda	34	56.6
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	20	18.8	Tolkien Fan Fiction	21	58.3
Fanfiction.net	61	18.4	LotRFanfiction.com	26	61.9
Stories of Arda	10	16.6	Fanfiction.net	210	63.4
LiveJournal	28	14.1	Faerie	33	68.7
Dreamwidth	7	13.7	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	73	68.9
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	11	12.2	Tumblr	148	70.2
LotRFanfiction.com	5	11.8	Dreamwidth	36	70.6
Tumblr	24	11.4	Archive of Our Own	283	70.8
AdultFanFiction.org	4	11.1	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	64	71.2
Yahoo! Groups	5	10.9	LiveJournal	142	71.4
Archive of Our Own	42	10.5	Yahoo! Groups	34	74.0
Faerie	5	10.3	AdultFanFiction.org	27	75.0
Library of Moria	3	7.14	Library of Moria	35	83.4

Table 6.3. Importance of Tolkien's perceived approval, by archive. (n = 635)

It is important to keep my stories consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs. (n = 640)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 21.5%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 62.2%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Tolkien Fan Fiction	17	45.9	Tolkien Fan Fiction	20	54.0
Many Paths to Tread	16	30.8	Many Paths to Tread	31	59.6
Stories of Arda	15	25.1	Stories of Arda	36	60.0
LotRFanfiction.com	10	23.8	FanFiction.net	204	61.0
Fanfiction.net	79	23.7	LotRFanfiction.com	27	64.3
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	23	21.3	AdultFanFiction.org	24	66.6
LiveJournal	40	20.0	Tumblr	142	67.3
Yahoo! Groups	9	19.6	Yahoo! Groups	31	67.4
Library of Moria	7	18.7	Archive of Our Own	272	67.7
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	16	17.6	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	62	68.2
Tumblr	33	15.6	Library of Moria	29	69.0
Archive of Our Own	61	15.2	LiveJournal	138	69.0
AdultFanFiction.org	5	13.9	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	76	70.4
Dreamwidth	6	11.8	Faerie	37	77.1
Faerie	5	10.3	Dreamwidth	40	78.4

Table 6.4. Importance of consistency with Tolkien's morality, by archive. (n = 640)



When writing fan fiction, it is important to me to stick to the facts that Tolkien gave in his books. (n = 636)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 49.9%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 35.8%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Tolkien Fan Fiction	23	63.9	Stories of Arda	15	24.9
Stories of Arda	38	63.4	Tolkien Fan Fiction	9	25.0
Library of Moria	23	54.8	Many Paths to Tread	22	28.8
FanFiction.net	168	50.6	AdultFanFiction.org	12	33.4
Yahoo! Groups	23	50.0	FanFiction.net	115	34.6
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	53	49.6	Library of Moria	15	35.7
AdultFanFiction.org	17	47.2	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	39	36.5
Tumblr	97	46.4	Yahoo! Groups	17	36.9
LotRFanfiction.com	19	46.3	LiveJournal	74	37.0
Archive of Our Own	284	45.9	Tumblr	81	38.7
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	41	45.5	Archive of Our Own	159	39.7
LiveJournal	90	45.0	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	36	39.9
Many Paths to Tread	22	42.3	LotRFanfiction.com	17	40.4
Dreamwidth	21	41.2	Dreamwidth	23	45.1
Faerie	17	35.4	Faerie	23	48.0

Table 6.5. Importance of factual canonical accuracy, by archive. (n = 636)

Discussion. The data on how fanfiction authors regard the authority of the original creator shows one key area where archive cultures can differ drastically. While a discussion of the individual archives and how their policies and histories impact the cultures on their sites is beyond the scope of this document, several notable trends do emerge.

While several sites do emerge again and again as either putting a lot of weight on Tolkien's authority or very little, other sites do not take such a simplistic view. Perhaps the best example of this is the slash-only archive Library of Moria (LoM), which opened in 2002 amid a general fandom climate that was often hostile to slash. LoM puts the least value in Tolkien's perceived approval of all of the archives (see Table 6.3)—not surprising, considering that the prevailing fan opinion at the time (correct or not) was that Tolkien would not have approved of homosexual relationships among his characters. When asked about consideration of Tolkien's morality, however, LoM moves toward the middle of the pack—again not surprising, since Tolkien's books often focus on themes of courage, loyalty, and humility, concepts that can be expressed just as easily in slash as in other stories. Finally, when asked about adherence to canonical facts, LoM was one of the archives that valued this the highest. This defies the idea, common among fans in the early 2000s, that slash writers care little about the canon and are more interested in sexual gratification. Clearly, then, authors can value and adhere to Tolkien's authority in some areas while completely rejecting it in others.

Older archives tend to value Tolkien's authority more than newer archives. Sites like Stories of Arda and Tolkien Fan Fiction—founded in 2003 and 2004, respectively—tend to value authority more than newer sites, like the Silmarillion Writers' Guild and Faerie (2007 and 2011). The same can be seen on multifandom archives, with Fanfiction.net (founded in 1998) authors placing much greater importance on Tolkien's authority than authors on An Archive of Our Own



(established in 2008). Likewise, explicitly genfic sites (Stories of Arda and Many Paths to Tread) tend to value authority more, even in the case of Many Paths to Tread when relatively few restrictions are placed on the types of stories members can share on the site.

Overall, however, these data show both how Tolkienfic authors self-selected archives that shared their values (or ended up having their values shaped by the archives they joined), as well as how the importance of Tolkien's authority began to lessen as the history of the fandom progressed.

Archive Cultures: Social Justice

In many other fandoms, social justice is a primary concern. In the Tolkienfic fandom, however, social justice has not been as quickly adopted as a motive for writing fanfiction. As part of the research for a thus unpublished paper, I compared posts made to the Silmarillion Writers' Guild (SWG) Yahoo! Group during 2007 and posts made to the Metafandom community on LiveJournal from January to March 2007. On Metafandom, about 9 percent of posts had to do with LGBTQ+ concerns, 4 percent with gender and women's rights, and 3 percent with race and ethnicity; in other words, about 16 percent of posts had to do with social justice. On the SWG, on the other hand, there wasn't a single post all year about social justice concerns.

In the decade since, however, social justice has increasingly become a motive for creating fanworks in the Tolkienfic community as well. As the data in Figure 6.2 and Table 6.6 below shows, though, this is far from universal and another area where the cultures of individual archives differ.

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that I see in Tolkien's books

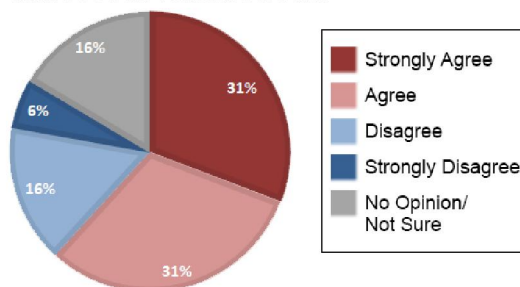


Figure 6.2. Social justice motives for writing among Tolkienfic authors.

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that I see in Tolkien's books. (n = 637)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 61.9%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 21.7%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Tumblr	160	76.2	Tumblr	25	11.9
Archive of Our Own	274	68.6	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	14	15.5
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	60	66.6	Archive of Our Own	72	18.1
LotRFanfiction.com	27	64.3	Stories of Arda	13	21.7
Yahoo! Groups	29	63.1	Fanfiction.net	77	23.1
Stories of Arda	37	61.6	Faerie	12	25.0
Dreamwidth	31	60.8	Library of Moria	15	25.7
Faerie	29	60.5	Dreamwidth	14	27.4
FanFiction.net	195	58.5	AdultFanFiction.org	10	27.8
Tolkien Fan Fiction	21	56.7	LiveJournal	57	28.5
AdultFanFiction.org	17	55.6	Tolkien Fan Fiction	11	29.7
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	70	55.6	Yahoo! Groups	14	30.4
LiveJournal	111	55.5	LotRFanfiction.net	13	30.9
Library of Moria	22	52.4	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	37	34.3
Many Paths to Tread	25	48.1	Many Paths to Tread	18	34.6

Table 6.6. Importance of social justice motives, by archive. (n = 637)

Discussion. A first impression from the data above is that newer archives tend to identify social justice more often as a motive for creating fanworks. However, this picture is hardly simple. Many Paths to Tread was established in 2009, making it one of the youngest archives on the list, and also the archive *least* motivated by social justice as a reason for writing.

What seems to be at work here is more complicated to quantify than simply the age of the archive. Instead, archives with a more traditional Tolkienfic focus seem to be motivated less by social justice in their fanfiction. By “traditional,” I do not in any way mean conservative. Note that Library of Moria—the only slash-specific archive on the list—is the next-to-least motivated by social justice. Rather, when I say “traditional,” I mean that members of these archives enjoy fanfiction that explores within the world Tolkien created, without extending much beyond those boundaries to consider their fanfiction as a commentary on real-world concerns. In this way, *traditional* Tolkienfic fandom has defied the what we are told to expect of fanfiction communities by countless scholars: that they exist to rework art to reflect the lives and concerns of the fan (not the original creator), which includes addressing injustices faced by fans who are often underrepresented in the traditional publishing and entertainment worlds—women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people.

However, this data certainly suggests also that this is changing. Consider that three out of four Tolkienfic authors who post their fanfiction to Tumblr identified social justice as a motive for that fanfiction. Not far behind, roughly two out of three authors on Archive of Our Own and the Silmarillion Writers' Guild did the same. Social justice, then, cannot be brushed aside lightly as a motive in the Tolkienfic community. However, it's important to note that those three sites also have a culture where challenging and considering the larger implications of the canon is commonplace and even encouraged, as the section below will show.



Archive Cultures: Critical and Reparative Motives

Like social justice motives, fanfiction is widely considered by scholars as a vehicle of criticism. In other cases, it becomes a reparative art: the chance for a fan to fix something they believe the original creator did wrong. This can take the form of the well-known “fix-it fic”—a story that changes a detail in the story that the fan dislikes, such as the death of a favorite character or the repair of a breakup of a favorite ship—or can tap into those social justice motives, repairing elements of the original text that read as sexist, racist, or homophobic. For example, fanworks that cast Tolkien’s heroes—almost certainly imagined by Tolkien as white-skinned—as persons of color work to repair a racist narrative that casts dark-skinned people only in the role of villain.

As noted in the sections above, **Archive Cultures: Authority** (p. 32) and **Archive Cultures: Social Justice** (p. 35), however, Tolkienfic fans have rarely conformed to the tendencies of fandom as a whole and, in some ways, even defy what fan studies scholars have generally accepted as core values of fan communities that create transformative works. Tolkienfic fans’ willingness to use critical and reparative elements in their fanfiction, shown in the data below for three survey questions (Figure 6.3 and Tables 6.7-6.9), further reinforces some of the ideas discussed above. I have ordered these survey items from most to least critical of Tolkien.

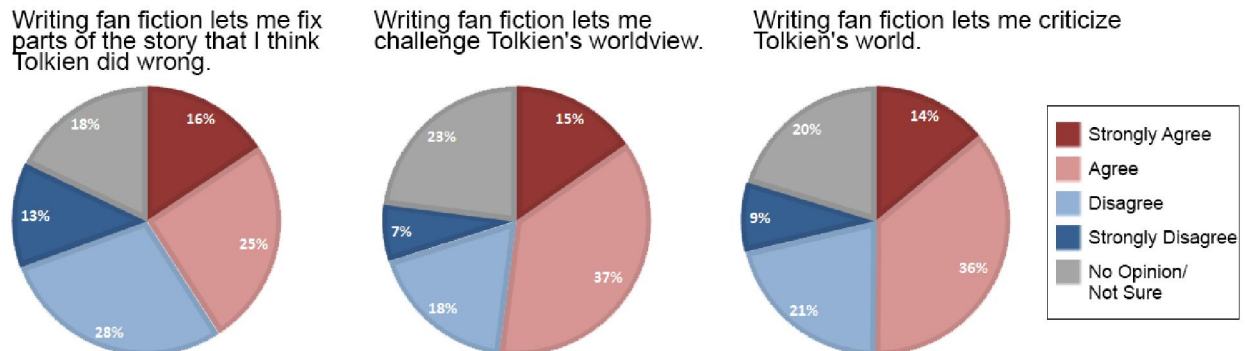


Figure 6.3. Critical and reparative motives for writing among Tolkienfic authors.

Writing fan fiction lets me fix parts of the story that I think Tolkien did wrong. (n = 638)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 40.9%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 41.2%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	48	53.3	Tumblr	68	32.4
Tumblr	105	50.0	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	30	33.4
Archive of Our Own	190	47.4	Faerie	16	33.4
Yahoo! Groups	21	45.7	Yahoo! Groups	18	39.2
AdultFanFiction.org	16	44.4	Archive of Our Own	158	39.4
Stories of Arda	26	43.3	Fanfiction.net	134	40.2
Dreamwidth	22	43.1	Many Paths to Tread	22	42.3
Faerie	20	41.7	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	46	42.6
FanFiction.net	137	41.1	LotRfanfiction.com	21	43.0
LotRfanfiction.com	17	40.5	Dreamwidth	22	43.2
LiveJournal	80	40.0	LiveJournal	87	43.5
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	43	39.8	AdultFanFiction.org	16	44.5
Library of Moria	15	35.7	Tolkien Fan Fiction	21	56.7
Tolkien Fan Fiction	11	29.7	Stories of Arda	36	60.0
Many Paths to Tread	13	24.9	Library of Moria	26	61.9

Table 6.7. Importance of reparative motives, by archive. (n = 638)

Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview. (n = 636)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 52.1%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 25.0%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Tumblr	133	63.6	AdultFanFiction.org	7	19.5
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	53	58.9	Stories of Arda	12	20.0
Dreamwidth	30	58.8	Archive of Our Own	80	20.1
Archive of Our Own	234	58.7	Faerie	12	25.1
LiveJournal	107	53.5	Fanfiction.net	84	25.2
Stories of Arda	31	51.7	LiveJournal	52	26.0
FanFiction.net	172	51.6	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	17	28.9
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	55	51.4	Tumblr	40	29.1
AdultFanFiction.org	18	50.0	Dreamwidth	16	31.4
Faerie	24	50.0	Many Paths to Tread	17	32.6
Yahoo! Groups	22	47.8	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	35	32.7
Library of Moria	18	42.9	LotRfanfiction.com	15	35.7
Tolkien Fan Fiction	14	38.9	Yahoo! Groups	18	39.2
Many Paths to Tread	20	38.5	Library of Moria	18	42.8
LotRfanfiction.com	16	38.1	Tolkien Fan Fiction	17	47.3

Table 6.8. Importance of critical motives, by archive. (n = 636)



Writing fan fiction lets me criticize Tolkien's world. (n = 634)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 50.1%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 29.4%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Yahoo! Groups	29	64.4	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	21	23.4
Tumblr	129	61.5	Tumblr	51	24.2
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	54	60.0	Faerie	13	27.7
Dreamwidth	28	56.0	Archive of Our Own	111	27.8
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	58	54.2	Dreamwidth	14	28.0
Archive of Our Own	214	53.6	Stories of Arda	17	28.3
Stories of Arda	32	53.4	Yahoo! Groups	13	28.9
Tolkien Fan Fiction	18	51.7	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	32	29.9
FanFiction.net	165	49.9	Fanfiction.net	104	31.4
LotRFanfiction.com	20	48.5	LiveJournal	64	32.3
LiveJournal	94	47.4	Many Paths to Tread	18	35.3
Library of Moria	28	43.9	LotRFanfiction.com	17	41.5
Faerie	20	42.6	AdultFanFiction.org	16	44.4
AdultFanFiction.org	15	41.7	Tolkien Fan Fiction	16	45.6
Many Paths to Tread	20	39.2	Library of Moria	21	51.2

Table 6.9. Importance of critical motives, by archive. (n = 634)

Discussion. Not surprisingly, the more critical, reparative survey item was less agreeable to participants than the two milder items. These items—one of which asks about challenging Tolkien's worldview; the other of which asks about criticism of Tolkien's world—were not appreciably different, even though one is ostensibly about the author and the other about his creation.

There are a handful of archives that emerge at the extremes of all of the questions. Tumblr and the Silmarillion Writers' Guild were among the most agreeable for all three questions; Many Paths to Tread and Library of Moria (LoM) were among those who agreed least often for all three questions. As seen with the social justice question, LoM's appearance there again underscores that even writing focused on ships and adult content doesn't necessarily mean the authors are willing to push the envelope as far as using their fanfiction as a vehicle of criticism or social commentary. Other groups, however, were inconsistent across the three questions, suggesting that critical and reparative motives—whether in support or against—are less important to the site cultures.

Archive Cultures: Sexuality

Fanfiction culture in general is typically characterized as valuing the sexual gratification of creators and readers as important. Fanfiction is stereotyped by the nonfannish world as being mostly about sex, but fans and scholars are equally guilty, with some fans using "porn" as a synonym for "fanfic" or "story," and scholars often gleefully lingering over the more sexually adventurous stories, authors, and tropes.

Tolkienfic fandom, however, once again varies in this. Shipping did not become a central part of the fanfiction community until relatively recently. A majority of stories do not contain sexual content, and there are even archives where graphic sexual content is not allowed—



perhaps unthinkable in many other fandoms. One question on the survey asked about fanfiction as a means of sexual exploration and enjoyment, with the results shown in Figure 6.4 and Table 6.10 below.

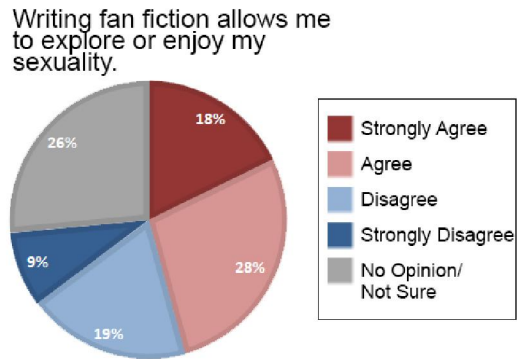


Figure 6.4. Motives for exploring and enjoying sexuality among all Tolkienfic authors.

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality. (n = 634)					
Strongly Agree/Agree: 45.8%					
Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 27.8%					
Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
Library of Moria	25	59.6	AdultFanFiction.org	6	16.7
AdultFanFiction.org	20	55.5	Faerie	9	18.8
Archive of Our Own	211	52.9	Archive of Our Own	85	21.3
Tumblr	110	52.7	Tumblr	46	22.0
Faerie	23	47.9	Library of Moria	11	26.1
FanFiction.net	148	44.4	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	24	27.0
LiveJournal	85	42.5	Tolkien Fan Fiction	10	27.0
Stories of Arda	24	40.6	Fanfiction.net	28.5	
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	36	40.5	LotRfanfiction.com	12	28.6
Yahoo! Groups	18	39.1	Many Paths to Tread	15	28.8
LotRfanfiction.com	16	38.1	Stories of Arda	18	30.5
Tolkien Fan Fiction	14	37.8	LiveJournal	66	33.0
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	36	33.3	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	38	35.1
Dreamwidth	17	33.3	Yahoo! Groups	17	37.0
Many Paths to Tread	14	27.0	Dreamwidth	21	41.2

Table 6.10. Importance of sexual exploration and enjoyment, by archive. (n = 634)

Discussion. The results show that sexual exploration and enjoyment is not nearly as universal as much scholarship, meta, and popular opinion about fanfiction generally would have you believe. Less than half of Tolkienfic authors surveyed reported this as a motive for their writing. Among the archives where it is most important, there are few surprises: Library of Moria and AdultFanFiction.org, the two sites that exist for sharing pairing-based stories.

Gatekeeping and Belonging

Tolkien fandom history has, to an extent, been one of gatekeeping. As Tolkienfic fandom began to establish itself online, this precedent—bolstered by an influx of film fans entering the fandom at the same time—was often echoed by similar gatekeeping measures put into place by Tolkienfic archives. Similarly, as seen above, these myriad archives tended to each develop its own distinctive culture, which further circumscribed the types of stories and approaches that appeared on that archive. While these cultural values did not impose rules, they created a sort of social pressure that led some authors to feel comfortable and welcome on some sites and less welcome on others. (A full discussion of the historical evidence for gatekeeping practices in the Tolkien and Tolkienfic fandoms is beyond the scope of this document. See the presentation [The Borders of the \(Fictional\) World: Fan Fiction Archives, Ideological Approaches, and Fan Identity](#), coauthored with Janet McCullough John and presented at the 2016 New York Tolkien Conference, for more on the historical evidence for these claims.)

Several survey questions explored how welcome both authors and readers felt in the Tolkienfic fandom as a whole. Three questions were asked of authors, presented in Figure 6.5 below.

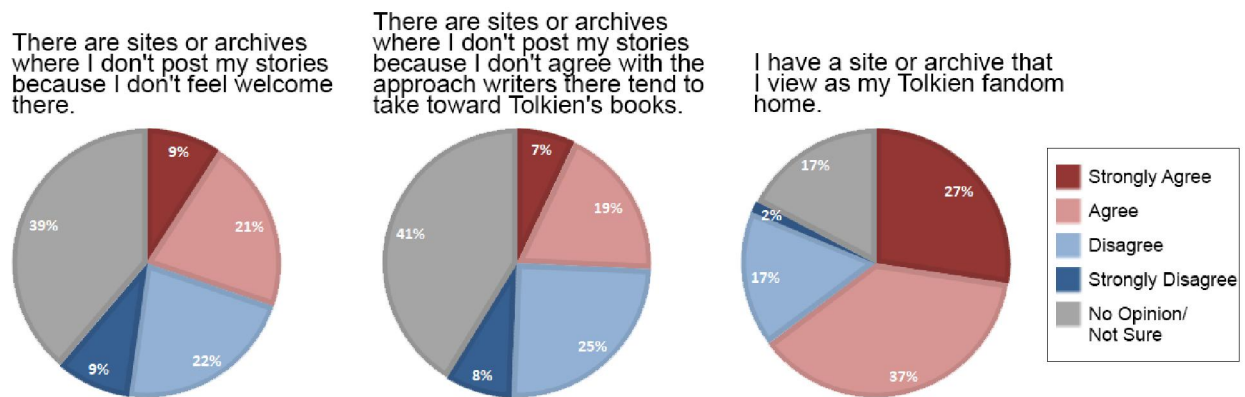


Figure 6.5. Tolkienfic author perceptions of archive cultures and gatekeeping. (n = 636; n = 630; n = 638)

When I looked at the first survey item (“There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't feel welcome there”) by archive, I was surprised to find that, on every one of the fifteen archives studied, the number who agreed or strongly agreed was higher than that same data for Tolkienfic authors as a whole. That data is below, in Table 6.11.

There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't feel welcome there.
(n = 636)

Strongly Agree/Agree: 30.2%

Strongly Disagree/Disagree: 31.0%

Strongly Agree/Agree			Strongly Disagree/Disagree		
Archive	n	%	Archive	n	%
LotRFanfiction.net	24	57.2	Faerie	7	14.6
Yahoo! Groups	26	56.5	Many Paths to Tread	8	15.7
Dreamwidth	28	54.9	Yahoo! Groups	8	17.3
Faerie	26	54.1	Dreamwidth	10	19.6
Library of Moria	21	50.0	Tolkien Fan Fiction	8	21.6
Many Paths to Tread	25	49.1	Stories of Arda	15	25.0
AdultFanfiction.org	17	47.2	Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	28	26.2
Tolkien Fan Fiction	17	45.9	LiveJournal	53	26.4
LiveJournal	89	44.3	AdultFanfiction.org	10	27.8
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive	45	42.1	Fanfiction.net	101	30.3
Silmarillion Writers' Guild	34	37.7	Library of Moria	13	30.9
Stories of Arda	22	36.7	Silmarillion Writers' Guild	30	33.3
Fanfiction.net	120	36.0	Archive of Our Own	142	35.4
Archive of Our Own	138	34.4	LotRFanfiction.com	15	35.7
Tumblr	64	30.5	Tumblr	81	38.6

Table 6.11. Perceptions of belonging, by archive. (n = 636)

Figure 6.6 below shows three sets of data: authors who did not post to *any* of the fifteen archives listed above, authors who posted only to Tolkien-specific archives, and authors who posted only to multifandom archives.

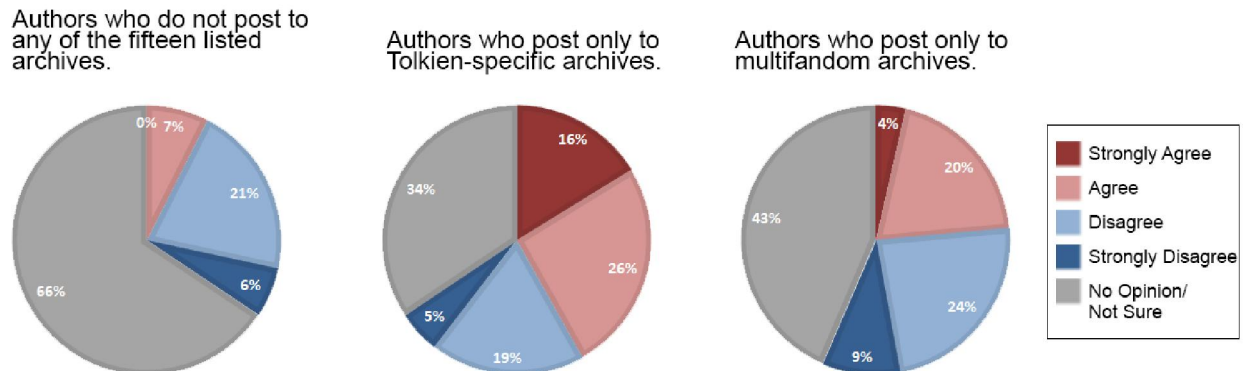


Figure 6.6. Perception of belonging among authors based on archive-posting habits. (n = 67; n = 253; n = 140)

Four questions, shown in Figure 6.7 below, were asked of readers.

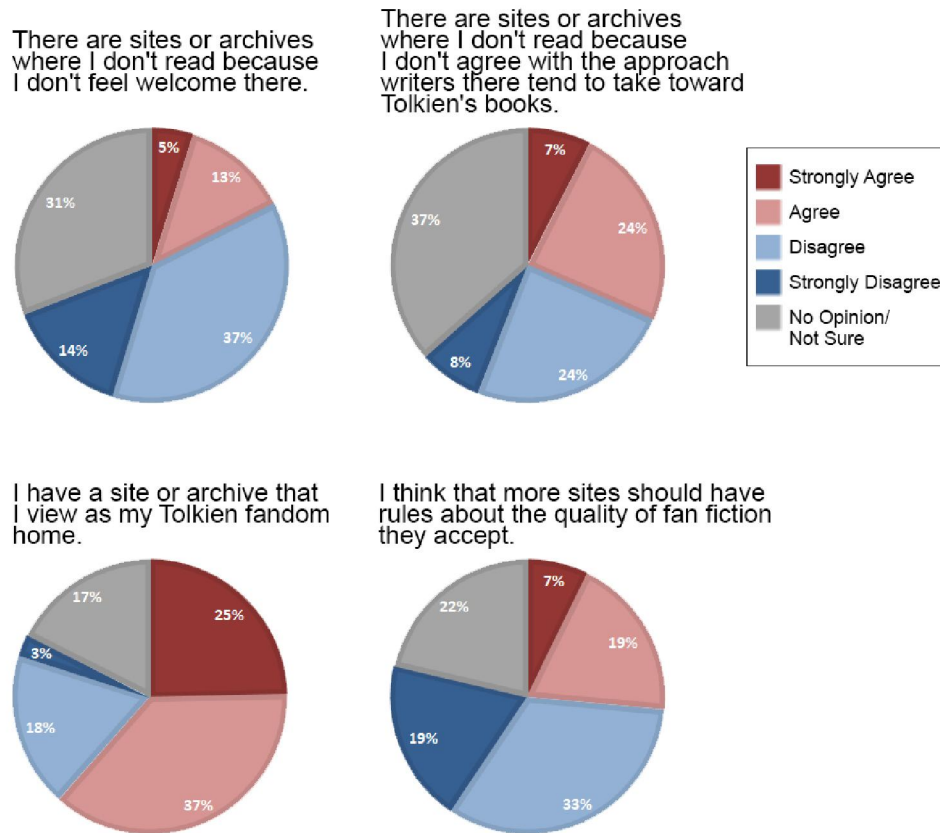


Figure 6.7. Tolkienfic reader perceptions of archive cultures and gatekeeping. (Top Row: n = 1006; n = 1016; Bottom Row: n = 1013; n = 1011)

Discussion. Authors were asked two questions how welcome they feel on Tolkienfic archives. The first question (“There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't feel welcome there”) concerned whether the writer felt like they belonged on the site. Feeling *unwelcome* could be caused by any number of factors: rules banning the types of stories the author writes, negative comments, lack of feedback or interaction, or perception of an archive culture that did not match the author's preferences. A second question (“There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't agree with the approach writers there tend to take toward Tolkien's books”) tapped more directly into how the perception of an archive's culture affects whether or not authors post there.

The data for these two questions are nearly identical. Roughly 30 and 26 percent of authors, respectively, deliberately choose not to post to an archive due to various perceptions. A relatively high number of authors answered No Opinion/Not Sure. Again, the data were nearly identical: 39 and 41 percent, respectively.

Perceptions of belonging (measured by the survey item “There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't feel welcome there”) were tied, in part, to the archive(s) where an author posted. Authors who did not have any contact with the fifteen most popular archives reported feeling unwelcome at far lower rates; however, looking closer at the participant data in this set, many did not report any archive at all where they posted, making it possible that these authors did not post at all or posted only to niche or personal sites. The high number of authors who answered No Opinion/Not Sure—nearly two-thirds—further suggests

that many of the authors in this group may simply lack experience with the broader Tolkienfic community represented by the fifteen listed archives.

Authors who posted to Tolkien-specific archives were the most likely to report feeling unwelcome. (Although two of the three archives where authors agreed with the statement most often were social media sites: Dreamwidth and Yahoo! Groups.) Authors who posted only to multifandom archives reported feeling unwelcome far less often. This is an interesting phenomenon that may be explained by the fandom's history. **Chapter Three: Fandom Initiation** (p. 20) shows that many survey participants had been in the fandom since the early-mid 2000s, a time when gatekeeping and conflict between members of different groups were a prominent feature of the Tolkienfic fandom. Corroborating this idea is the fact that the two sites where participants agreed least often with the statement—Archive of Our Own and Tumblr—are among the youngest archives studied, emerging after gatekeeping and dissension among fandom groups began to subside.

Readers felt unwelcome on archives at a much lower rate than authors did: only 18 percent (compared with 30 percent for authors). Readers, however, were about as—even slightly more—selective of archives based on culture as authors were: 31 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "There are sites or archives where I don't read because I don't agree with the approach writers there tend to take toward Tolkien's books." Compare this to authors, 26 percent of whom agreed or strongly agreed with a similar statement that asked about posting.

Both authors and readers were asked, "I have a site or archive that I view as my Tolkien fandom home." A majority of both authors and readers—64 and 62 percent, respectively—agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Furthermore, only 2 percent and 3 percent, respectively, of authors and readers strongly disagreed with this statement. Finding a "fandom home," therefore, is part of fandom participation for a majority of both authors and readers in the Tolkienfic fandom.

Finally, readers were asked explicitly about their approval of gatekeeping policies with the question, "I think that more sites should have rules about the quality of fan fiction they accept." Just over half (52 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, and just over a quarter (26 percent) agreed or strongly agreed. This item is one of those times when I wish for a time machine to go back and ask Tolkienfic readers around the year 2005 the same question. Certainly, as the fandom's history progressed beyond the impact of the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy, new archives abandoned gatekeeping practices and existing archives (like the Henneth-Annûn Story Archive) relaxed them. It seems, therefore, that the fandom zeitgeist had shifted in an important way where gatekeeping was viewed as not only unnecessary but negatively.



Chapter Seven: Genre

Genre is somewhat important in the Tolkienfic community. As the previous chapter shows, there are multiple archives that specialize in a particular genre. In the early-mid 2000s, slash was controversial, and slash writers were often publicly criticized and even harassed. At this juncture in fandom history, femslash was rare.

The survey considered four genres: femslash, genfic, het, and slash. There were four survey items each for authors and readers, respectively phrased as “I identify myself as a [genre] writer” and “I enjoy reading [genre] stories.” While survey data was being collected, some participants questioned the phrasing of the items for authors, in particular the use of the words *identify myself as*. This was a deliberate choice of wording because I wanted to identify how many authors viewed themselves as authors of a particular genre, not simply authors who had written a story that fit a genre. For example, an author who was willing to write a femslash story for a ficswap but who otherwise does not choose or prefer to write femslash would have been captured in a hypothetical survey item like “I have authored femslash stories” but not the survey item as written. I believe this is an important distinction.

Author Genre Preference

Figure 7.1 below presents data showing how authors responded to items about each of the four genres.

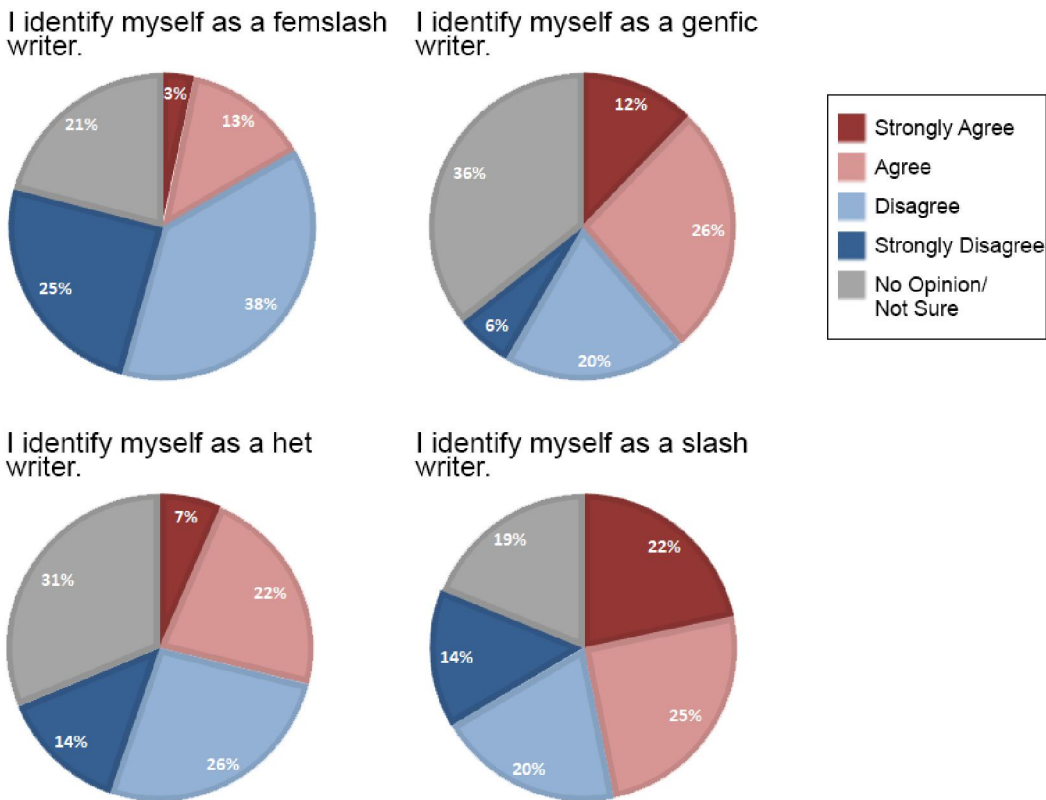


Figure 7.1. Author identity by genre. (Top Row: n = 633; n = 639; Bottom Row: n = 635; n = 636)

Discussion. Slash and genfic emerge as the most popular genres for authors, with 47 and 38 percent of authors, respectively, identifying as writers of those genres. Femslash was the least popular, with only 16 percent of authors identifying as writers of such, which is not surprising, given that it is only recently that femslash was regularly produced in the Tolkienfic fandom at all.

Nonaffinity varied also based on genre. (I am defining *nonaffinity* as choosing Disagree or Strongly Disagree for one of the statements.) The genre with the highest nonaffinity was femslash, with 61 percent of authors not identifying as femslash writers. Genfic was the lowest with only 26 percent nonaffinity.

The No Opinion/Not Sure response is interesting in this data set as well. It is considerably higher for genfic and het (36 and 31 percent, respectively) than it is for femslash and slash (21 and 19 percent, respectively). It is possible that the genfic and het genres produce the most confusion since, in the Tolkienfic fandom, one is perhaps most likely to produce these genres of story without necessarily wanting to identify with that genre. For instance, since Tolkien's texts contain only heterosexual pairings, it is likely that most Tolkienfic authors have written a story including one. Yet that author may not want to identify as a het author while also not wanting to disagree with the statement.

Reader Genre Preference

Figure 7.2 below presents data showing how authors responded to items about each of the four genres.

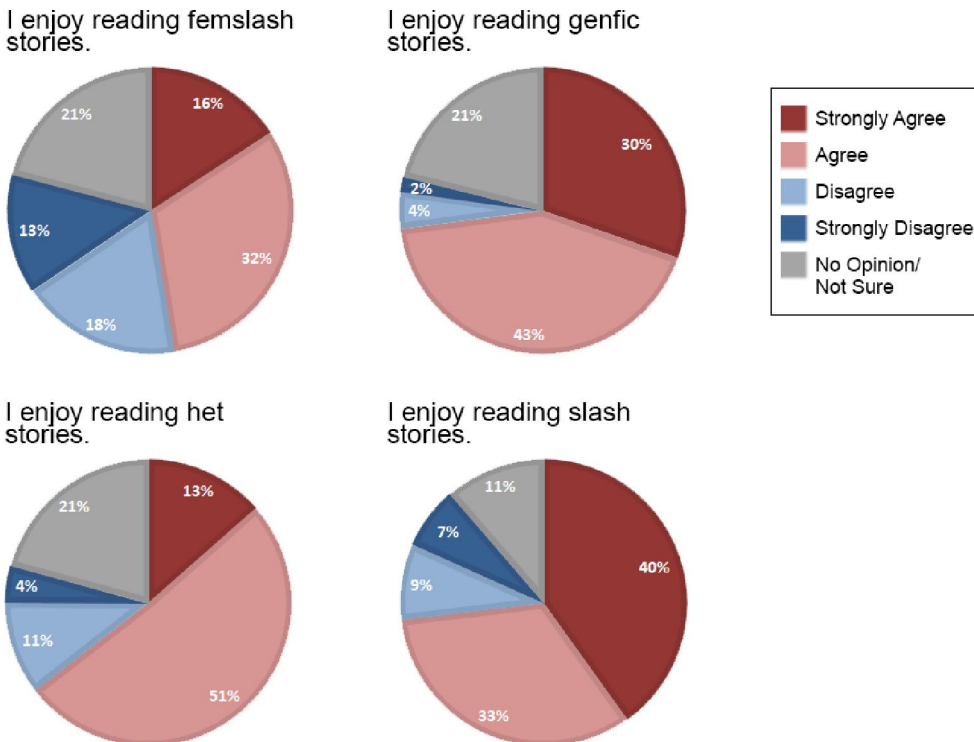


Figure 7.2. Reader preference by genre. (Top Row: n = ; n = ; Bottom Row: n = ; n =)

Discussion. Slash and genfic emerge as the most popular genres among readers, with each of them enjoyed by 73 percent of readers. Slash readers, however, feel more strongly about their

preference, with 40 percent choosing Strongly Agree (compared to just 30 percent for genfic). Genfic had the least dislike among readers, with just 6 percent choosing Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

Femslash emerges once again as the least popular genre, enjoyed by only 48 percent of readers. Furthermore, it received the most dislike, with 31 percent of readers—nearly one in three—choosing Disagree or Strongly Disagree. These data are difficult to interpret. On the one hand, they are innocuously explained because femslash is the newest of the four genres by far. On the other hand, the Tolkienfic fandom has a troubling history of ignoring, dismissing, and disparaging the few canon female characters Tolkien gave us and doing little to encourage (and, at times, actively discouraging) the creation of original female characters, making it hard to see this level of distaste for the genre as wholly uninfluenced by those cultural tendencies. Nor is it opposition to same-sex pairings (although that is also a part of Tolkienfic fandom's history): Slash is disliked by only 16 percent of readers, half of those who dislike femslash.

Genre and Demographics

As noted above, genre has been contentious in the past in the online Tolkienfic community. Slash was explicitly banned in some places—one of those archives is still online today—and subtly discouraged in others. Slash authors were subjected to bullying and harassment. Homophobic sentiments, in the guise of “debate,” were not unheard of. Femslash was nearly nonexistent: Distaste for homosexual pairings coupled with disdain toward female characters, where canon women were subject to negative scrutiny and original female characters were mocked. While these were not universal attitudes, they were also not difficult to find, through the mid-2000s, including in mainstream fandom spaces.

As seen in **Chapter One: Demographics** (p. 10), however, the Tolkienfic fandom experienced a surge in young participants. Nor do its gender demographics differ all that much from fic fandom as whole: It is predominantly female and nonbinary. How have shifting demographics impacted the popularity of genres? I ran several analyses and present here the data that stood out as most significant and interesting.

Femslash and Demographics. As documented above, femslash was the least popular of the four genres by far. Analysis of demographic data along with responses to the statement, “I identify myself as a femslash writer” shows that young authors and nonbinary authors are most interested in femslash. Figure 7.3 shows the percentage of each of three genders (female, nonbinary, and male) chose Agree or Strongly Agree for that statement.



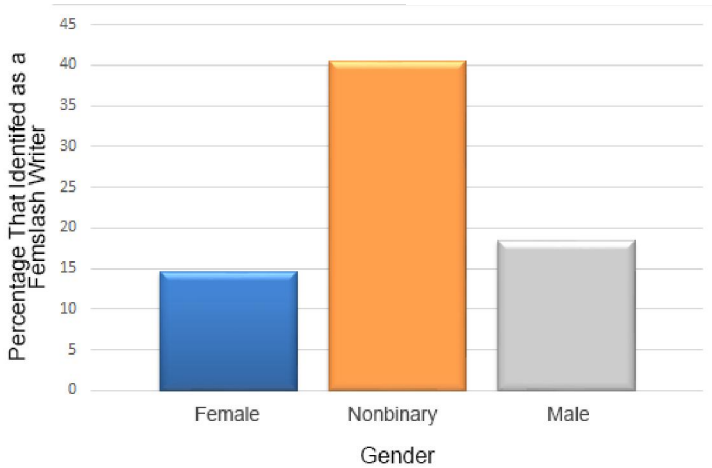


Figure 7.3. Percentage from each gender category that agreed with the statement, “I identify myself as a femslash writer.” (n = 101)

Age is another area where there is a demographic pattern for this survey item. Table 7.1 provides median age and years writing data for each of the possible responses to the item, “I identify myself as a femslash writer,” showing that younger authors are more likely to identify as femslash writers.

	n	Median Age	Median Years Writing
Strongly Agree	21	24	6
Agree	84	22	3
Disagree	236	26	5
Strongly Disagree	154	28	5
No Opinion/Not Sure	131	23	3

Table 7.1. Median age and years writing for each response category for the survey item, “I identify myself as a femslash writer.” (n = 626)

Het and Demographics. Authors of het stories, on the other hand, show the exact opposite pattern as writers of femslash: They tend to be female or male, and they tend to be older. Figure 7.4 shows percentage of each of three genders (female, nonbinary, and male) chose Agree or Strongly Agree for the statement, “I identify myself as a het writer.”

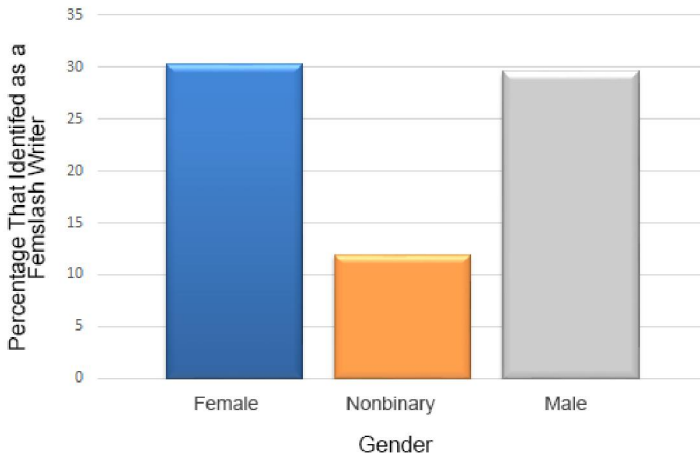


Figure 7.4. Percentage from each gender category that agreed with the statement, “I identify myself as a het writer.” (n = 182)

Although the trend is not as strong for femslash, age varies also depending on the author’s response to the statement “I identify myself as a het writer.” In this case, authors who most strongly identify as het writers tend to be older. Table 7.2 provides the median age and years writing for each response to the statement.

	n	Median Age	Median Years Writing
Strongly Agree	41	30	8
Agree	140	25	5
Disagree	168	26	4
Strongly Disagree	85	25	4
No Opinion/Not Sure	194	24	3

Table 7.2. Median age and years writing for each response category for the survey item, “I identify myself as a het writer.” (n = 628)

Genre, Authority, and Critical Motives

I also compared how responses to two selected items varied based on the genre an author identified with. One of these items concerned the authority of the original author; the other concerned critical motives for fanfiction. (See the sections **Archive Cultures: Authority** [p. 32] and **Archive Cultures: Critical and Reparative Motives** [p. 37] for more data and discussion.) Table 7.3 shows how responses varied, based on genre, to the statements, “It is important to keep my stories consistent with Tolkien’s moral beliefs” and “Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien’s worldview.” Authors were included in a genre category if they chose Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement about identifying themselves as a writer of that genre.

	“It is important to keep my stories consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.”		“Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview.”	
	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Femslash Authors	7.55%	80.2%	79.0%	10.5%
Genfic Authors	28.5%	56.9%	49.3%	26.4%
Het Authors	32.9%	51.9%	44.8%	28.9%
Slash Authors	11.4%	68.8%	60.9%	18.6%

Table 7.3. Variation by genre in responses to items about authority and critical motives.

Discussion. Genre and views on authority and critical motives interact. It's important to note that the directionality of this influence cannot be definitive. On one hand, placing a low value on the authority of the original author and high value on using fanfiction as a vehicle of criticism encourages writing femslash and slash; after all, there are no LGBTQ+ characters in Tolkien's texts. Likewise, valuing Tolkien's authority and placing a low value on critical motives would encourage one to stick to canonical pairings: het and genfic. On the other hand, spending time in communities that push beyond the boundaries established by Tolkien's authority and employ fanworks as critical vehicles may feel more comfortable writing femslash and slash, and vice versa.

As Table 7.3 shows, genfic and het authors tended to respond similarly to all items, placing a relatively high value on Tolkien's authority and a low value on critical motives. Femslash and slash authors do not move similarly in lockstep; rather, femslash authors value Tolkien's authority the least and are most comfortable with critical motives. Slash authors tend to fall in the middle between the femslash authors and the het and genfic authors.

This likely reflects the newness of the femslash genre and its embrace, as shown in the **Genre and Demographics** section above (p. 47), by younger authors and nonbinary authors. Slash as a genre is not necessarily “progressive” in the sense of embracing social justice, critical, and reparative motives for writing. The Library of Moria (LoM)—the only slash archive studied in **Chapter Six: Archives** (p. 31)—was among the archives to value both social justice and critical/reparative motives the lowest. I noted in this chapter that LoM is an example of “classic Tolkienfic fandom,” a culture that looks almost entirely inward at the texts rather than drawing out of the texts to connect to real-world concerns. Until fairly recently, this approach was the norm in Tolkienfic fandom (even if it was not in fic fandom as a whole).

Genre in the Wider Fic Fandom

Returning to CentrumLumina's [AO3 Census](#) gives a point of comparison with the wider fic fandom. CentrumLumina also captured data on genre (which she calls *categories*, using the term *genre* for a different purpose). Table 7.4 below puts my survey data alongside her AO3 Census data, identifying the percentage of authors who wrote a particular genre and the percentage of readers who read it. In my survey, authors and readers are both identified by choosing Agree or Strongly Agree for those survey items.



	Authors		Readers	
	Tolkien Survey	AO3 Census	Tolkien Survey	AO3 Census
Femslash	16.7%	10.4%	47.4%	44.1%
Genfic	38.8%	24.3%	73.0%	49.4%
Het	28.9%	19.8%	64.5%	50.7%
Slash	46.9%	40.1%	73.1%	89.7%

Table 7.3. Comparison if Tolkien Fan Fiction and AO3 Census data for genre preference.

Discussion. In the wider fic fandom, as described by the AO3 Census, femslash similarly lags behind the other genres in terms of what authors are producing. The chief difference lies in readership: In the wider fic fandom, femslash readership has caught up to genfic and het, whereas in the Tolkienfic fandom, readership of femslash continues to trail the other three genres.

On both the Tolkien Fan Fiction Survey and the AO3 Census, the most popular genre among authors was slash. However, in the wider fic fandom, slash is much more popular than the other genres; comparatively, in the Tolkienfic fandom, it trails genfic by only about 8 percent. Genfic, on the other hand, dominates in the Tolkienfic fandom in a way it does not in the wider fic fandom. While genfic is the second most popular genre for authors on both surveys, it essentially ties with slash for the most popular genre among readers, with almost three out of four readers enjoying genfic in Tolkienfic fandom, where just about half read genfic in the wider fandom.

Chapter Eight: Tolkien Studies and Fanfiction

As discussed in **Chapter Five: Sources** (p. 28), Tolkienfic authors, as a group, are very well-read. Strictly movieverse authors were essentially nonexistent in the survey, and data showed that, as authors remained longer in the fandom, they read beyond the familiar *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* to include more challenging, posthumously published works. This chapter will look at data for several questions, asked of both authors and readers, that asked participants to consider how Tolkienfic has impacted the texts they've read, information learned, and analyses and connections made.

Research and Reading among Authors

Figure 8.1 below shows the data for four survey items that concern learning, research, and reading among Tolkienfic authors. These questions concern the acquisition of canon knowledge, not the use of it through analytical practice.

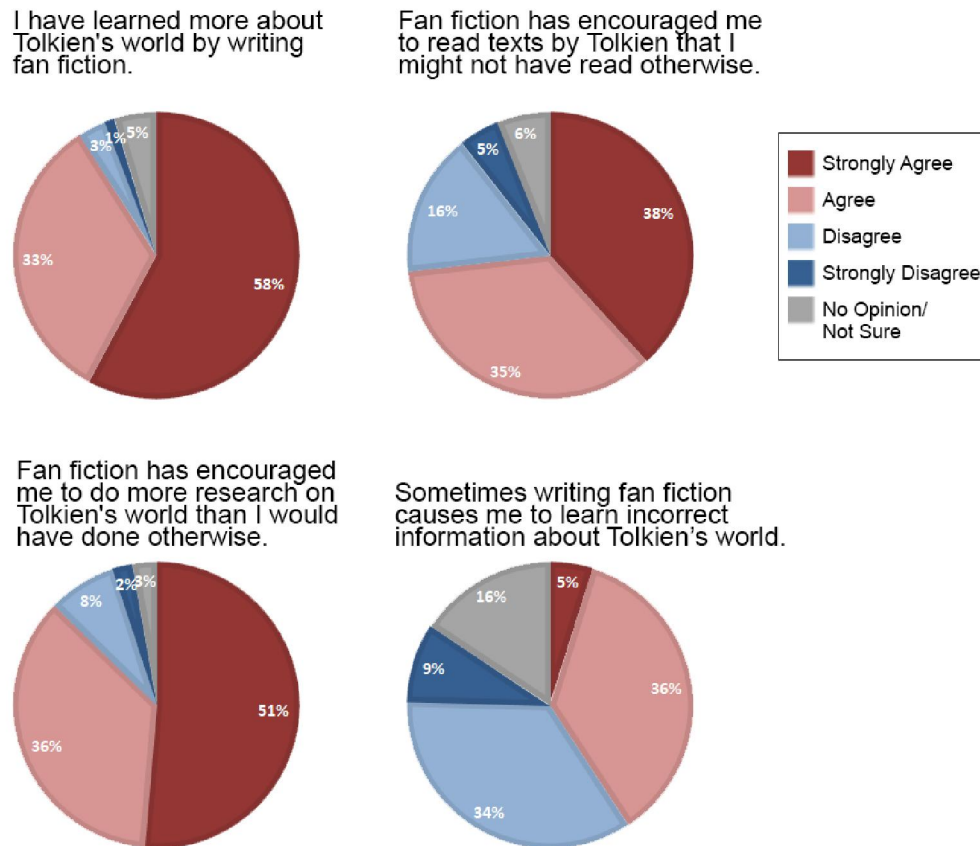


Figure 8.1. Author perceptions of learning, research, and reading because of writing Tolkienfic. (Top Row: n = 633; n = 631; Bottom Row: n = 630; n = 631)

Discussion. A strong majority of Tolkienfic authors report that they read more, research more, and learn more because of writing fanfiction. The fourth item, “Sometimes writing fan fiction



causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien's world," tackles the problem identified by some authors of learning incorrect information because of fanfiction. Authors are about split as to whether this is something they have experienced or not.

Textual Analysis among Authors

Four items asked to authors pertained more to textual analysis: What authors *do* with the information they have gleaned from reading and researching for fanfiction. Are they developing new ideas and making new connections? One can, for instance, have a great amount of factual knowledge without using (or being able to use) it to make inferences or even to use it as evidence to support a claim about the texts. Figure 8.2 below shows authors' responses to those four items.

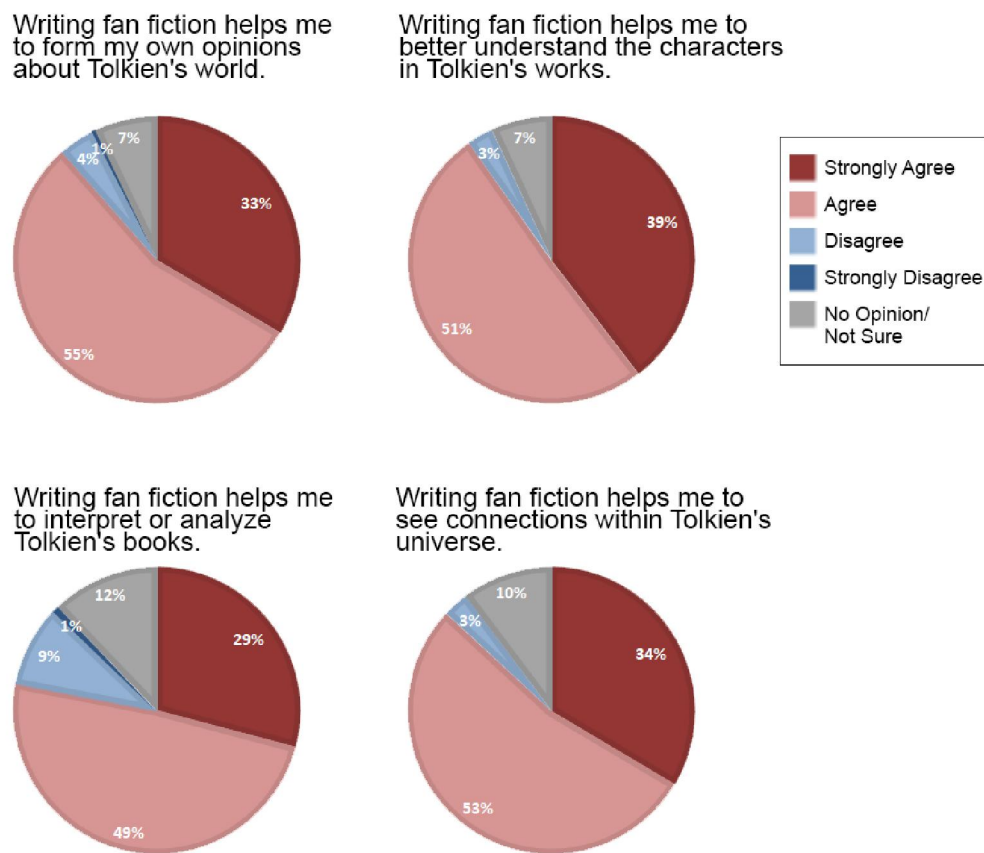


Figure 8.2. Author perceptions of learning textual analysis skills because of writing Tolkienfic. (Top Row: n = 630; n = 628; Bottom Row: n = 628; n = 627)

Discussion. Even a stronger majority of authors self-report developing textual analysis skills because of their fanfiction than do expanding their reading or research. In other words, a majority of authors recognize that fanfiction encourages—or even requires—higher-level thinking skills typically developed through scholarly work.

Research and Reading among Readers of Tolkienfic

Figure 8.3 below shows the data for parallel items presented to readers of Tolkienfic on the topic of reading and research undertaken because of reading fanfiction.

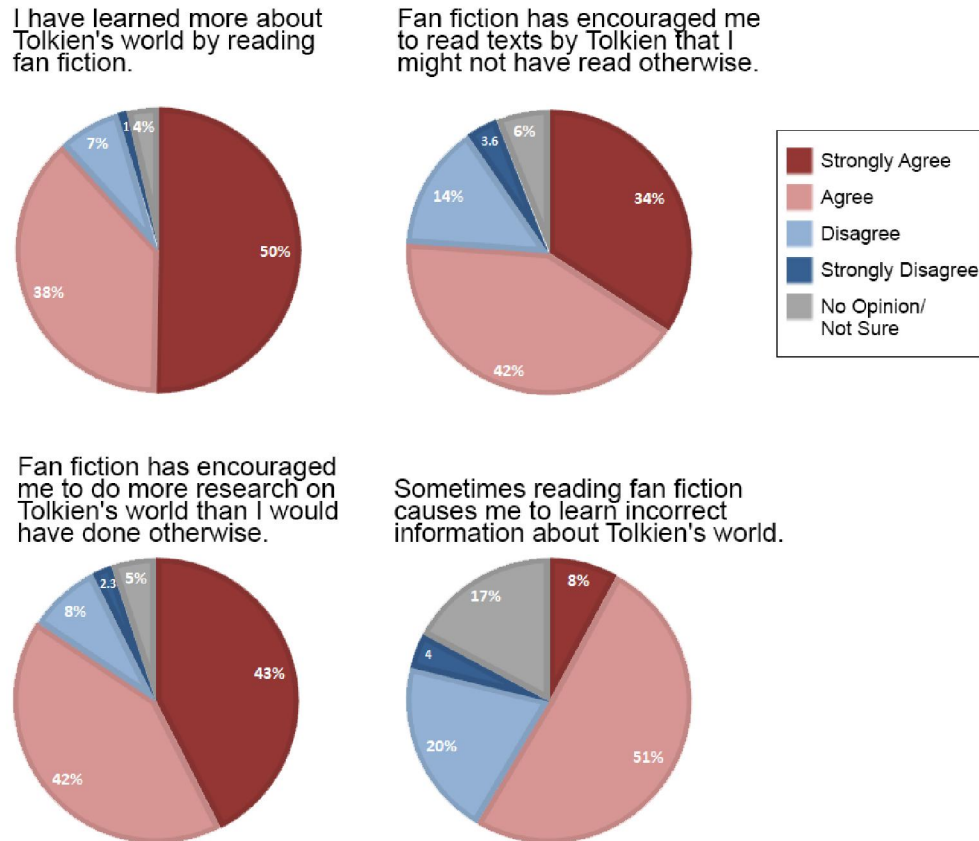


Figure 8.3. Reader perceptions of learning, research, and reading because of writing Tolkienfic. (Top Row: n = 1025; n = 1016; Bottom Row: n = 1007; n = 1008)

Discussion. Interestingly, both authors and readers equally believe that they “have learned more about Tolkien’s world” from fanfiction. Both groups chose Agree or Strongly Agree for that statement 88 percent of the time.

On the other two items about reading texts and doing research, authors agreed with the statements more often than readers, which is not itself surprising. Nonetheless, readers still agreed at a relatively high rate. The statement “Fan fiction has encouraged me to read texts by Tolkien that I might not have read otherwise” appeared on both the author and reader halves of the survey; authors agreed 73 percent of the time, and readers agreed 66 percent of the time. Nonetheless, it is worth stepping back and considering the implications of that data: Two out of three fanfiction readers, simply by virtue of their involvement with Tolkienfic, self-report that they have picked up texts that they would not have otherwise. The data for the statement on research (“Fan fiction has encouraged me to do more research on Tolkien's world than I would have done otherwise”) is even stronger evidence in support of fanfiction as an enticement into Tolkien studies: 87 percent of authors agreed, and 85 percent of readers agreed.

Of course, fanfiction is not always a perfect source of information about the texts. It necessarily extends beyond the canon and sometimes deliberately ignores or even flouts it. In other cases, erroneous facts can gain traction through fanfiction, where readers—seeing those errors in multiple places—might reasonably assume they came from Tolkien’s books. In my experience, many authors speak of encountering a text or character first through fanfiction, not the source texts. Others speak of details they assumed were canon, only to discover that they were invented by a fanfic author, popular additions to the canon (called *fanon*), or common misconceptions.

Among authors, 41 percent agreed that “Sometimes writing fan fiction causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien’s world.” Readers, on the other hand, agreed with the item, “Sometimes reading fan fiction causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien’s world,” 59 percent of the time. Different levels of engagement with the source texts possibly explains the difference. Authors, who are working with the texts to develop believable characters and cultures based around the canon, are more likely to encounter evidence that disproves certain ideas as “canon.” For readers, this is less likely to occur.

Textual Analysis among Readers

Only one item asked about textual analysis skills among readers of Tolkienfic: “Reading fan fiction helps me to see connections within Tolkien’s universe.” Figure 8.4 below shows authors’ responses to this item.

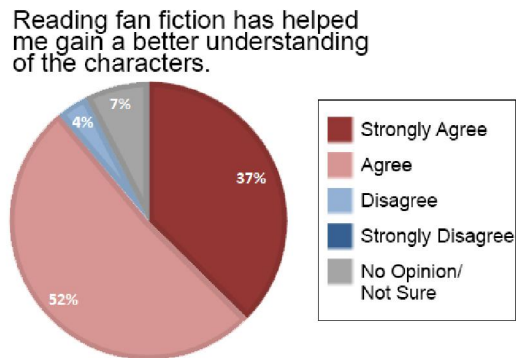


Figure 8.4. Reader perceptions of learning textual analysis skills because of reading Tolkienfic. (n = 1013)

Discussion. The number of readers who agreed with this statement (89 percent) is roughly the same as the number of authors who agreed to a similar statement about writing Tolkienfic (87 percent). Again, readers self-report that reading fanfiction helps them to develop the kinds of analytical skills typically associated with the scholarly side of the fandom. While the process of researching and working deeply with the texts to craft a story enhances these skills, the simple act of reading a Tolkienfic story also leads readers to a deeper appreciation of his world.

Chapter Nine: Motives for Writing

Motives for writing fanfiction—the *why* of the genre—are a key area of scholarly interest. Tens of thousands—or more?—of fans, mostly women, devote swaths of their lives to writing stories that can't be published in the traditional sense, won't earn them a penny, and sometimes open them up to mockery or even more serious real-world consequences. Not surprisingly, many of the questions I asked on the survey also seek to answer this question, often in conjunction with deeper questions about the fandom's history and culture.

Many of these items were developed from the pilot study, which posed the simple question, "Why do you write Tolkien fanfic?" on various social media. Because there are so many survey items that tap into motive, I will not discuss each of them but will present them alongside similar questions.

Inferential Motives

Inferential motives arise from a desire to take details from the text and, through fiction, explore how believable characters, cultures, and worldbuilding can be developed from those details, beyond what Tolkien himself gave us.

Characters. Many Tolkienfic stories begin from a desire to better understand a character, including adding complexity to characters who, as some critics of Tolkien point out, sometimes lack the psychological depth and nuance modern readers expect. Figure 9.1 shows the results of three questions about character. They show the overwhelming importance of character as a motive for writing Tolkienfic, with almost every author agreeing with the statement.

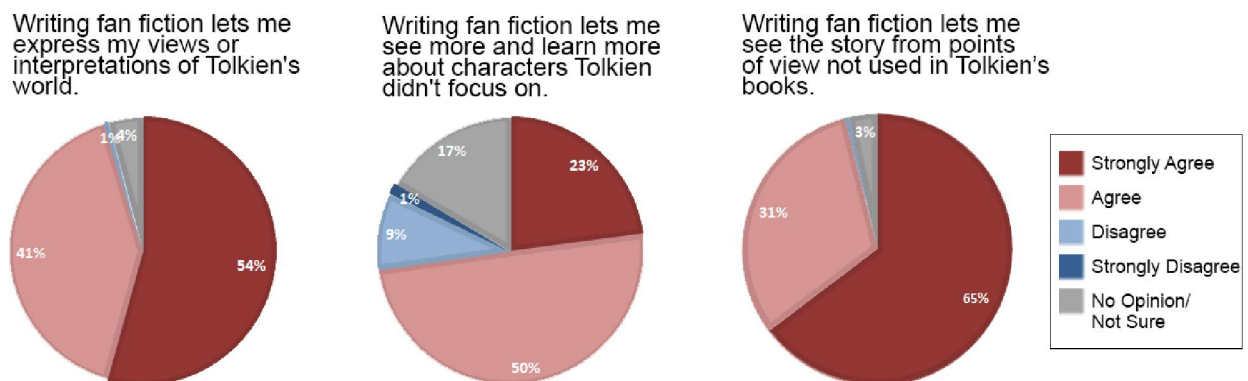


Figure 9.1. Motives for writing related to character. (n = 636; n = 638; n = 641)

Relationships. Exploring the relationships between characters is commonly identified as a motive for writing fanfiction. One item on the survey asked about relationships: "Writing fan fiction lets me explore what relationships might have been like between characters." Responses to that item are in Figure 9.2 below. Again, the support for this motive is strong, with more than 95 percent of authors agreeing with the statement.

Writing fan fiction lets me explore what relationships might have been like between characters.

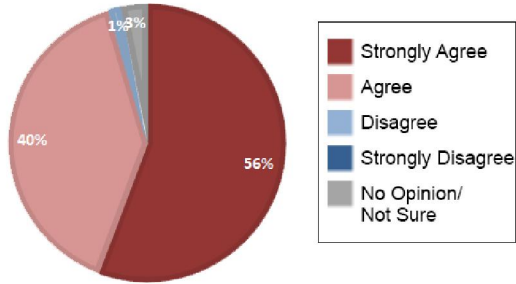
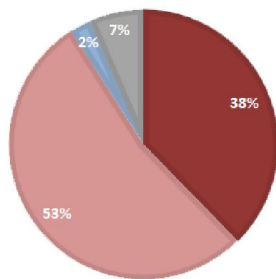


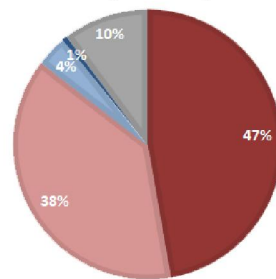
Figure 9.2. Motives for writing related to character relationships. (n = 630)

Cultures. Of the vast tapestry of cultures that Tolkien created for his world, few are developed fully. Authors also express interest in filling in these cultural blanks, as well as deepening their understanding of cultures that are relatively well-documented. Figure 9.3 shows authors' responses to three items relating to culture. Here again, we see cultural inferencing as a strong motive, although it begins to back off by the third item, "Writing fan fiction lets me explore racial and cultural relations in Tolkien's world," which could be seen as edging nearer to social justice motives.

Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about the cultures of Arda.



Writing fan fiction lets me develop cultures that Tolkien didn't fully develop.



Writing fan fiction lets me explore racial and cultural relations in Tolkien's world.

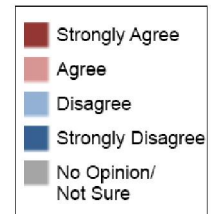
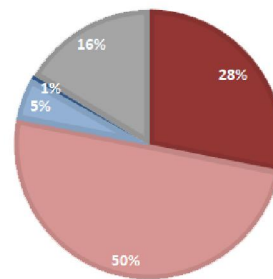
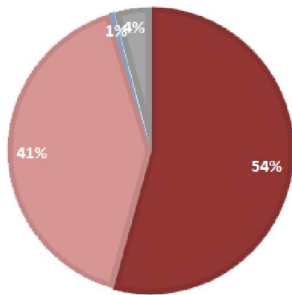


Figure 9.3. Motives for writing related to culture. (n = 629; n = 639; n = 627)

Interpretive Motives

Interpretive motives involve the use of fiction to share an analysis of the text. Two questions asked about interpretive motives, shown below in Figure 9.4. As the data show, authors overwhelmingly use their stories to "express [their] views or interpretations of Tolkien's world," with roughly 95 percent agreeing with that statement. Fewer—but still a healthy majority of roughly 73 percent—use fanfiction specifically to develop explanations for textual details the author finds difficult to understand.

Writing fan fiction lets me express my views or interpretations of Tolkien's world.



Writing fan fiction lets me explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.

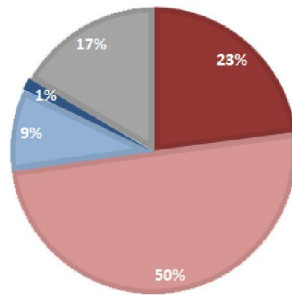
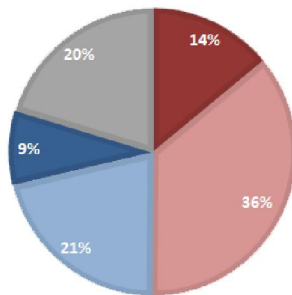


Figure 9.4. Interpretive motives for writing Tolkienfic. (n = 629; n = 628)

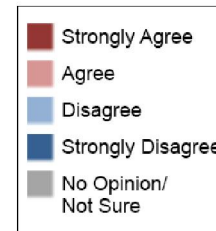
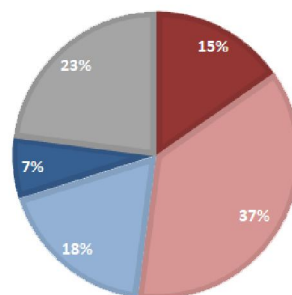
Critical Motives

Data on critical and reparative motives were presented in the context of archive cultures in **Chapter Six: Archives** (p. 30). Figure 9.5 presents these data again, along with an additional item not analyzed in Chapter Six that falls under the critical/reparative umbrella.

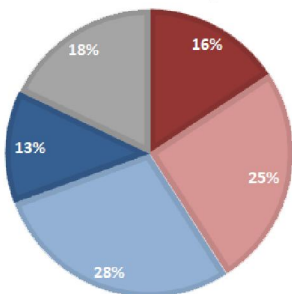
Writing fan fiction lets me criticize Tolkien's world.



Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview.



Writing fan fiction lets me fix parts of the story that I think Tolkien did wrong.



Writing fan fiction lets me tell the story how I wish it had been told

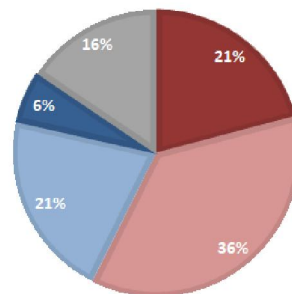


Figure 9.5. Critical motives for writing Tolkienfic. (Top Row: n = 634; n = 636; Bottom Row: n = 638; n = 628)



Discussion. Only about half of authors are comfortable with critical motives for fanfiction, whether those motives are presented as criticism of Tolkien's invented world or his own personal worldview. The data on reparative motives, though, makes an interesting point about how Tolkienic authors regard authority. Both items ask essentially the same thing: How comfortable are authors with using their fanfiction to alter the texts to meet *their* preferences versus conforming to the vision of the story presented by authorities like authors and editors?

One item, however, presents this motive as fixing Tolkien's mistakes, i.e., the motive depends on understanding the authority—Tolkien—as having less standing to decide the facts of his invented world than his fans. This motive inverts a traditional picture of authority and locates it with the fan. The second item, however, presents a desire to change the text as serving the wishes of the fanfiction author. The authority is not mentioned.

Despite the fact that the two questions ask essentially the same thing, far more authors agree when authority is not involved. When changing the story is simply service of their wishes, 57 percent agree. When changing the story is viewed as correcting an authority—even though this is implicit in the first item as well—the percentage who agree drops to 41 percent. This shows how, contrary to prevailing theories on the purpose of fanfiction, Tolkienic fandom is far less comfortable with rejecting the authority of the original author, J.R.R. Tolkien.

Appreciative Motives

When I ran the pilot study asking why people wrote Tolkienic, I was blown away by the number of people who identified what I can only term appreciative motives: the desire to honor and prolong Tolkien's world. This is not surprising because of the texts—Tolkien's works aren't considered modern classics without reason—but because this motive is so rarely identified by fan studies scholars.

Figure 9.6 shows the number of authors who agree that their writing is motivated by love for an imagined world and a desire to connect more deeply to it. As can be seen, a strong majority express these motives. Compare these data to those for critical motives, presented in Figure 9.6. Far more fans identify appreciative than critical motives, which is contrary to the conventional scholarly wisdom about fanfiction.

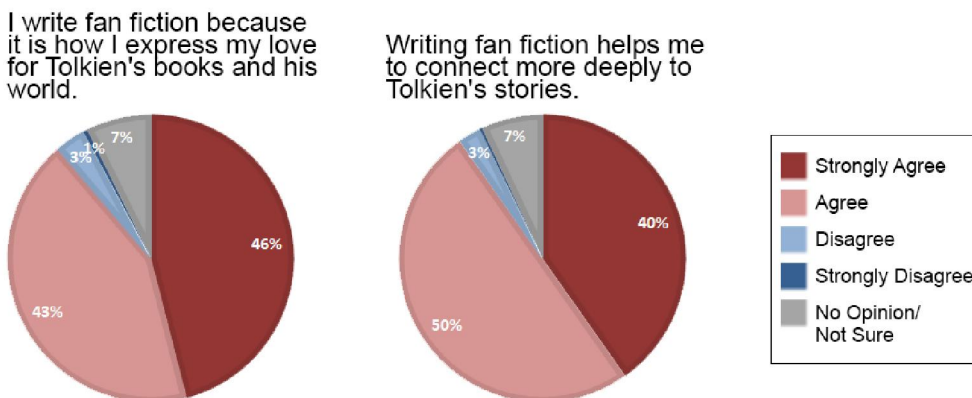


Figure 9.6. Appreciative motives for Tolkienic. (n = 628; n = 622)

Figure 9.7 presents the data for two questions that center on the fan's desire to prolong the experience of reading the books. Again, authors agreed with these statements in high numbers.



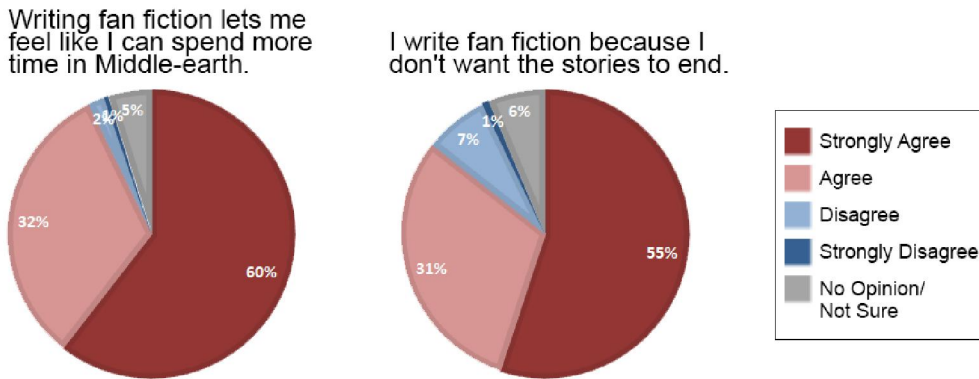


Figure 9.7. Appreciative motives for Tolkienfic. (n = 631; n = 628)

Next, three statements pertained to motives related to extending Tolkien's work, shown in Figure 9.8. While the first one does not mention Tolkien, the final two statements directly connect the Tolkienfic author's creative work with the authority's (Tolkien's) purpose and vision. Again, these two items underscore the oversized role authority plays in the Tolkienfic community compared to other fic fandoms. Agreement with these statements remains high, and while authors begin to back away from the third and most authority-oriented statement ("Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I am realizing Tolkien's dream of creating a realistic myth"), a strong majority of 69 percent still agreed, and agreement is considerably higher than for any of the critical motives (see Figure 9.5).

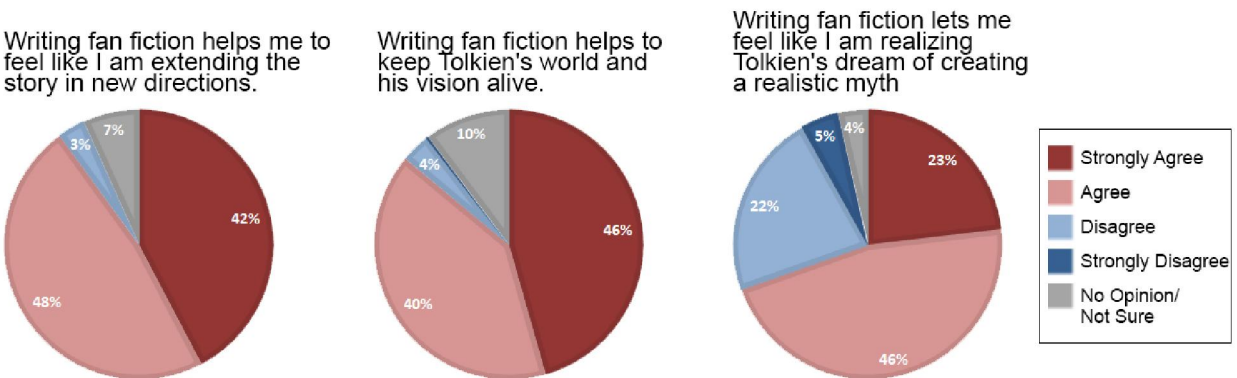


Figure 9.8. Appreciative motives for Tolkienfan related to authority. (n = 639; n = 629; n = 629)

Finally, the survey also asked several items related to specific aspects of the text that inspired authors to create fanfiction: worldbuilding, characterization, and gaps in the plot. Responses to these items are displayed in Figure 9.9 and show that all three elements drive authors' inspiration.

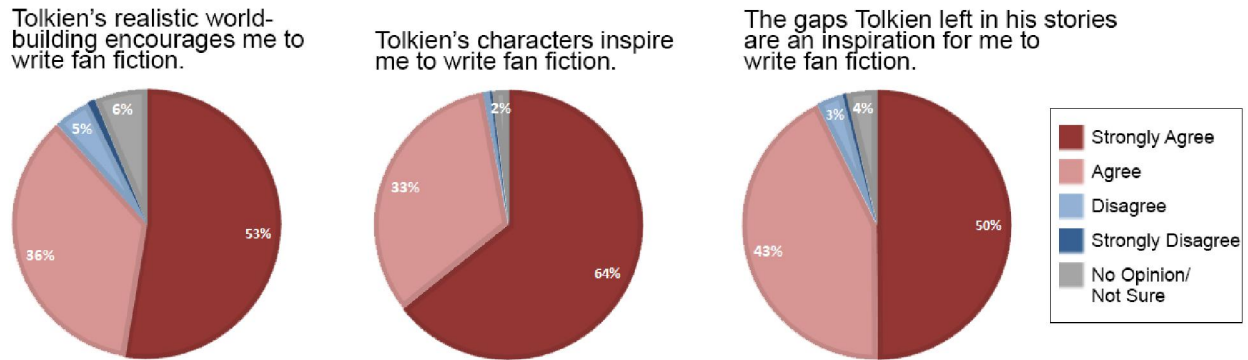


Figure 9.9. Specific textual elements that encourage fanfiction. (n = 639; n = 639; n = 633)

Social Justice Motives

Social justice as an attribute of archive cultures is discussed in **Chapter Six: Archives** (p. 35). As noted in that chapter, social justice is commonly seen as a motive for writing fanfiction, as fans use their stories to critique and repair how the source material presents women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people. That chapter also shows that, on many Tolkienfic archives, social justice is far less important within some specific fandom cultures.

What about for Tolkienfic authors as a whole? Figure 9.10 shows how many authors use their fanfiction to “correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that [they] see in Tolkien’s books.” While this number is still a majority, it much lower than the number of authors who use fanfiction to explore characters, relationships and cultures.

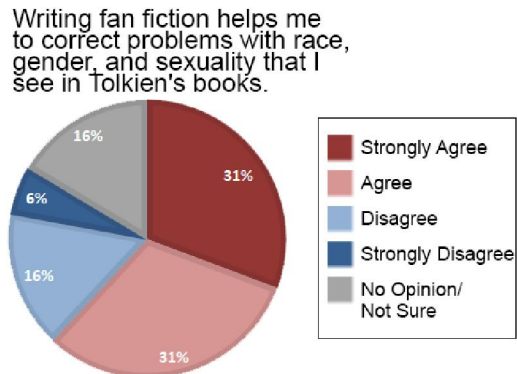
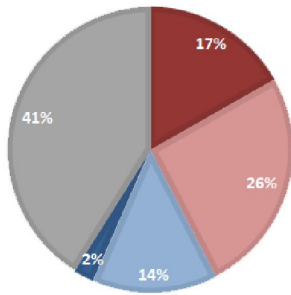


Figure 9.10. Reparative motives related to social justice. (n = 637)

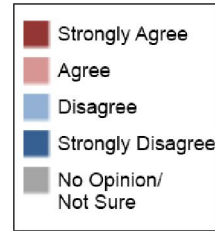
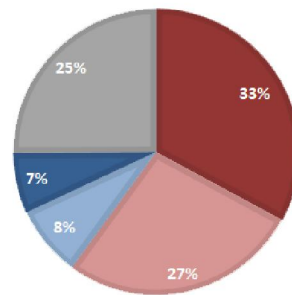
Figure 9.11 provides a more specific breakdown of individual social justice-related motives. These data show that authors have varying levels of comfort with characters from groups underrepresented in literature. A majority—roughly 88 percent—agree that they use fanfiction to “explore the perspectives of female characters.” The item about “gender and sexual roles in Tolkien’s world” is slightly less but still a comfortable majority of 73 percent. Authors who write fanfiction featuring the perspectives LGBTQ+ characters drops again to roughly 60 percent. Characters of color receive the smallest share of interest and attention from authors: Only 43 percent of authors agreed that they use fanfiction to explore their perspectives, less than half of the percentage who used fanfiction to present the perspectives of female characters.



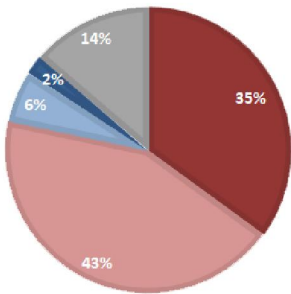
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of characters of color.



Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of LGBTQ+ characters.



Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of female characters.



Writing fan fiction lets me explore gender and sexual roles in Tolkien's world.

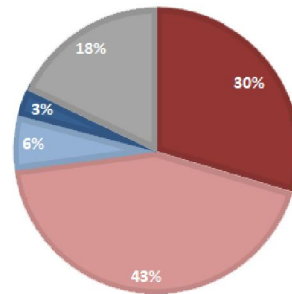


Figure 9.11. Motives related to specific social justice concerns. (Top Row: n = 634; n = 633; Bottom Row: n = 635; n = 626)

Corrective Motives

Two survey items asked about motives related to correcting not the world of Tolkien but other transformative works: the Peter Jackson films and other fanfiction writers' work. Figure 9.12 shows these data. A small majority (63 percent) agreed that correcting Peter Jackson's movies was a motive; even fewer (48 percent) wrote Tolkienfic to correct their fellow authors.

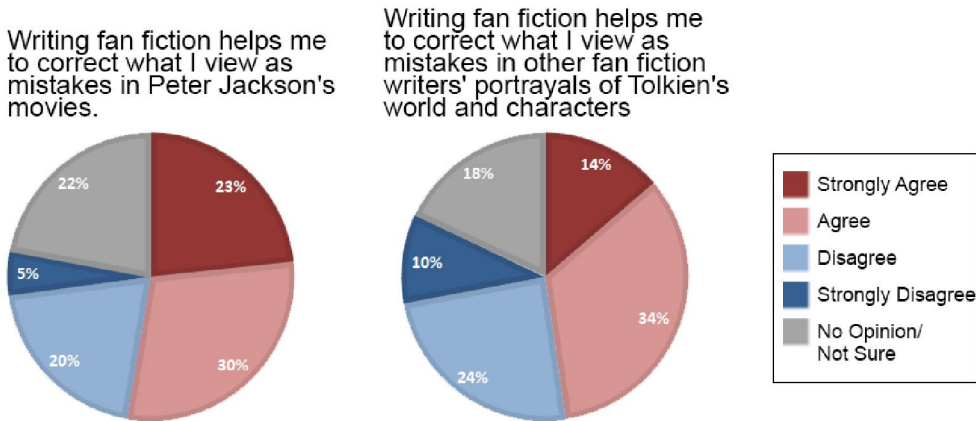


Figure 9.12. Corrective motives for Tolkienfic. (n = 934; n = 935)

Communal Motives

Contrary to the notion of the writer as a solitary artist, fanfiction authors are oft-identified and -celebrated for the communal aspects of their art. Fanfiction is sometimes construed as one form of “payment” in a gift economy; in other cases, a fanwork can become a line of dialogue in an ongoing conversation about the texts and their place in the larger world. Two statements tapped into these communal motives, shown below in Figure 9.13. A majority—although not a strong one—agree with both statements.

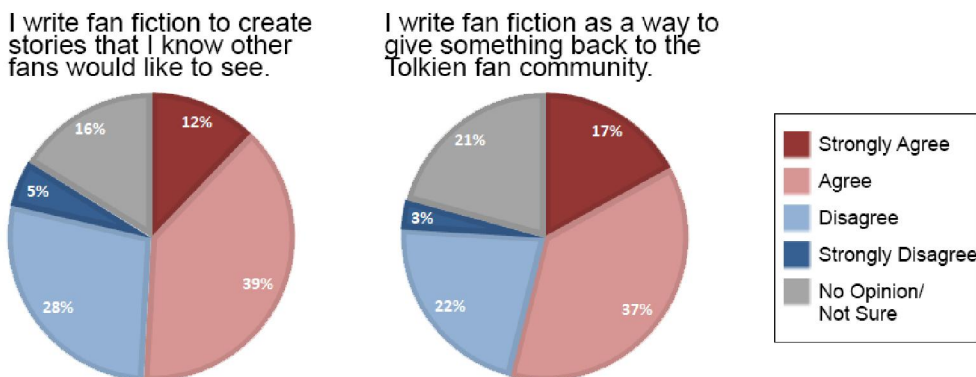
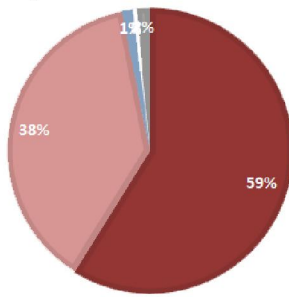


Figure 9.13. Communal motives for Tolkienfic. (n = 630; n = 631)

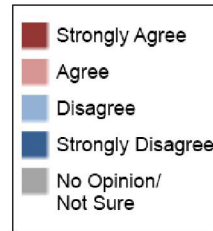
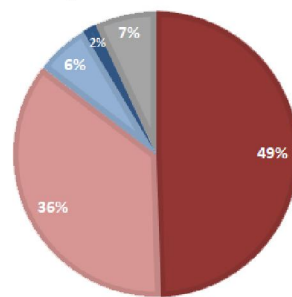
Personal Motives

Opposite communal motives are personal motives: the desire to use one's writing to understand or simply entertain oneself. These motives are more in line with the modern notion of the author as a solitary figure, pulling stories from her imagination alone, rather than acting in conjunction with others in her community. Figure 9.14 shows data for four items related to personal motives. As the data show, personal motives are a factor in fanfiction writing for a majority of Tolkienfic authors.

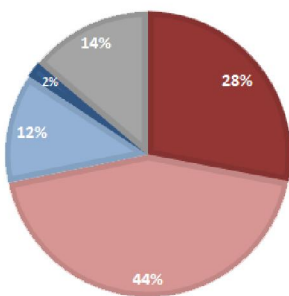
I write fan fiction to entertain myself.



Writing fan fiction is a form of escape for me.



Writing fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.



Writing fan fiction lets me relate Tolkien's world to my own experiences.

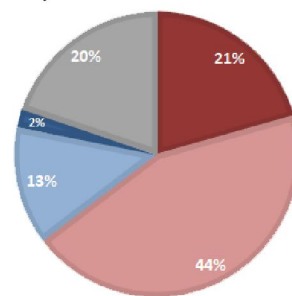


Figure 9.14. Personal motives for Tolkienfic. (Top Row: n = 632; n = 638; Bottom Row: n = 628; n = 625)

Spiritual Motives

Tolkien made his spiritual beliefs explicit, and critics—correctly or not—have made locating connections between his books and his spirituality a central pursuit in the field of Tolkien studies. Many Tolkien fans also find the connection between his books and their own religious beliefs to be important. One survey item assessed this motive, seen below in Figure 9.15. While not in a majority, authors who agreed with this motive also are not insignificant: roughly 36 percent—or one in three—authors agreed that “[w]riting fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.”

Writing fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.

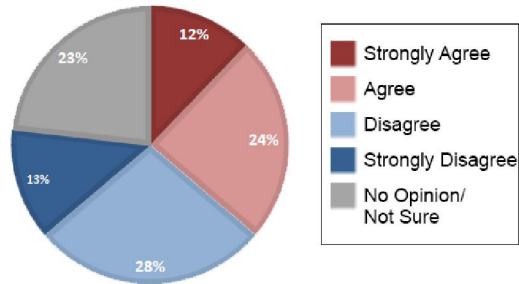
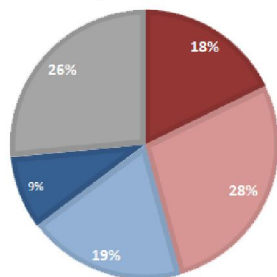


Figure 9.15. Spiritual motives for writing Tolkienfic. (n = 637)

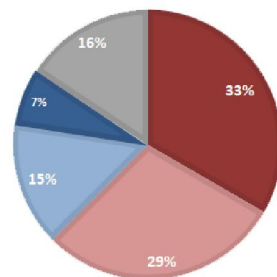
Motives Related to Sexuality

Exploring one's sexuality is another motive for fanfiction that both scholars and fans in the broader fic fandom love to identify. Figure 9.16 shows that, while a majority of authors enjoy noncanonical pairings and adding erotic elements to their stories, a majority do not view exploring or enjoying their sexuality as a reason for writing fanfiction. This challenges the prevalent idea that fanfiction functions as porn for women to sex education to everything in between as a primary purpose.

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.



I enjoy pairing characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.



Writing fan fiction lets me add sexuality to Tolkien's world.

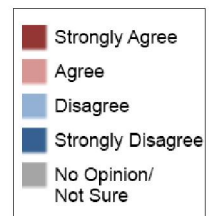
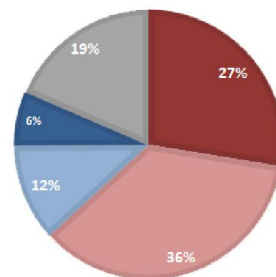


Figure 9.16. Motives related to sexuality in the Tolkienfic fandom. (n = 635; n = 636; n = 635)

Media-Related Motives

One item asked about if the Peter Jackson movies served as inspiration for authors' fanfiction. Responses to that item are shown in Figure 9.17. This data shows that a majority of authors (72 percent) feel that the films have encouraged their fanfiction.

Peter Jackson's movies have encouraged me to write Tolkien-based fan fiction.

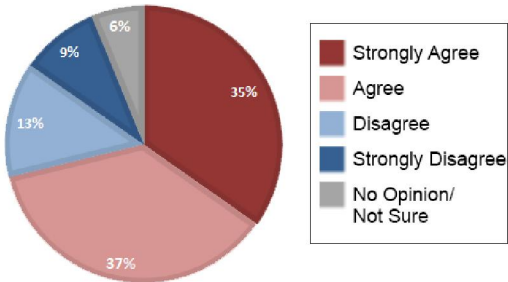


Figure 9.17. Peter Jackson's films as an inspiration for Tolkienfic. (n = 636)

Miscellaneous Motives

Finally, three motives gleaned from the pilot study do not fit fully into any of the above categories. The data for those motives are shown below, in Figure 9.18. Interesting, the item “Writing fan fiction lets me try out alternative storylines or endings” is another example—similar to the example discussed in the **Critical Motives** section and shown in Figure 9.5 (p. 58)—of a “soft violation” of authority. Tolkien is not mentioned, yet what the item describes is superseding his authority in favor of the author telling the story how she wants it to be told. As above, a majority was willing to agree with a “soft violation” as they were not when Tolkien was mentioned in the item.

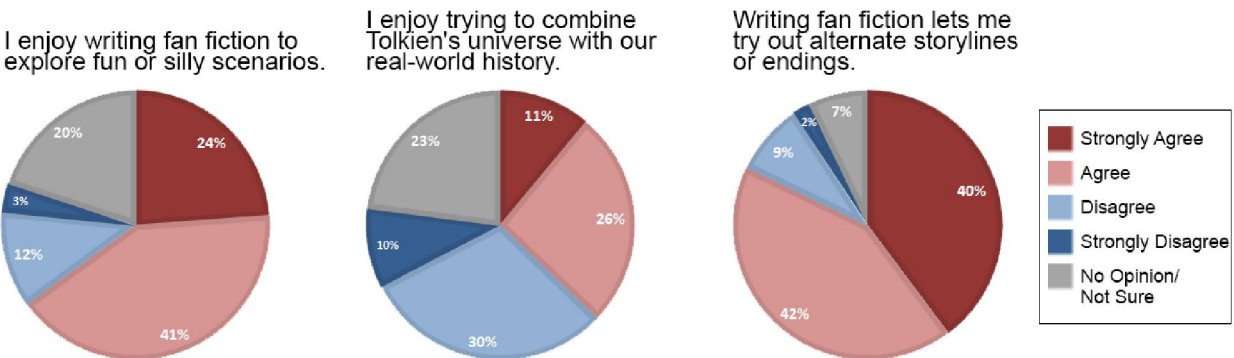


Figure 9.18. Other motives for writing Tolkienfic. (n = 635; n = 627; n = 628)

Putting It Together: Overall Ranking of Motives

In this section, I will compile the data presented above and show which motives authors agreed with the most, as well as which they *disagreed* with the most. Table 9.1 shows the items discussed in this chapter, from the highest to lowest percentage of authors to agree. Table 9.2 shows the items discussed in this chapter from the highest to lowest percentage of authors to disagree.

Survey Item	%SA	%A	Total%
Tolkien's characters inspire me to write fan fiction.	64.3	34.7	97.0
I write fan fiction to entertain myself.	58.9	38.1	97.0
Writing fan fiction lets me see the story from points of view not used in Tolkien's books.	64.7	31.4	96.1
Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about characters Tolkien didn't focus on.	58.9	36.8	95.7
Writing fan fiction lets me explore what relationships might have been like between characters.	55.7	39.7	95.4
Writing fan fiction lets me express my views or interpretations of Tolkien's world.	54.2	41.0	95.2
Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.	60.5	32.3	92.8
Writing fan fiction lets me develop characters that Tolkien didn't fully develop.	51.1	41.7	92.8
The gaps Tolkien left in his stories are an inspiration for me to write fan fiction.	49.9	42.8	92.7
Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about the cultures of Arda.	37.5	53.1	90.6
Writing fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.	40.2	50.0	90.2
Writing fan fiction helps me to feel like I am extending the story in new directions.	42.3	47.7	90.0
I write fan fiction because it is how I express my love for Tolkien's books and his world.	46.0	42.7	88.7
Tolkien's realistic world-building encourages me to write fan fiction.	52.6	35.7	88.3
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of female characters.	35.0	43.3	88.3
Writing fan fiction helps to keep Tolkien's world and his vision alive.	45.6	40.4	86.0
I write fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.	55.1	30.6	85.7
Writing fan fiction lets me develop cultures that Tolkien didn't fully develop.	47.3	38.2	85.5
Writing fan fiction is a form of escape for me.	49.5	35.9	85.4
Writing fan fiction lets me try out alternate storylines or endings.	39.8	42.4	82.2
Writing fan fiction lets me explore racial and cultural relations in Tolkien's world.	28.1	49.9	78.0



Survey Item	%SA	%A	Total%
Writing fan fiction lets me explore gender and sexual roles in Tolkien's world.	29.6	43.3	72.9
Writing fan fiction lets me explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.	22.9	49.8	72.7
Writing fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.	28.0	43.8	71.8
Peter Jackson's movies have encouraged me to write Tolkien-based fan fiction.	34.7	36.5	71.2
I enjoy writing fan fiction to explore fun or silly scenarios.	26.0	44.9	70.9
Writing fan fiction lets me relate Tolkien's world to my own experiences.	20.6	44.0	64.6
Writing fan fiction lets me add sexuality to Tolkien's world.	27.6	35.7	63.3
I enjoy pairing characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.	33.3	29.2	62.5
Writing fan fiction helps me to correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that I see in Tolkien's books.	30.8	31.1	61.9
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of LGBTQ+ characters.	32.9	27.2	60.1
Writing fan fiction lets me tell the story how I wish it had been told.	20.9	36.5	57.4
I write fan fiction as a way to give something back to the Tolkien fan community.	17.0	36.9	53.9
Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I am realizing Tolkien's dream of creating a realistic myth.	17.6	35.3	52.9
Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in Peter Jackson's movies.	23.3	29.3	52.6
Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview.	15.3	36.8	52.1
I write fan fiction to create stories that I know other fans would like to see.	12.2	38.6	50.8
Writing fan fiction lets me criticize Tolkien's world.	14.0	36.1	50.1
Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in other fan fiction writers' portrayals of Tolkien's world and characters.	13.7	34.0	47.7
Writing fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.	17.8	28.0	45.8
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of characters of color.	16.6	25.4	42.0
Writing fan fiction lets me fix parts of the story that I think Tolkien did wrong.	15.7	25.2	40.9



Survey Item	%SA	%A	Total%
I enjoy trying to combine Tolkien's universe with our real-world history.	11.0	26.2	37.2
Writing fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.	12.2	24.0	36.2

Table 9.1. Motives for writing Tolkienfic, from most to least agreed with.

Survey Item	%D	%SD	Total%
Writing fan fiction lets me fix parts of the story that I think Tolkien did wrong.	28.5	12.7	41.2
Writing fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.	27.5	13.0	40.5
I enjoy trying to combine Tolkien's universe with our real-world history.	30.3	9.6	39.9
Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in other fan fiction writers' portrayals of Tolkien's world and characters.	24.4	9.9	34.3
I write fan fiction to create stories that I know other fans would like to see.	27.7	5.2	32.9
Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I am realizing Tolkien's dream of creating a realistic myth.	16.9	3.5	30.4
Writing fan fiction lets me criticize Tolkien's world.	21.1	8.4	29.5
Writing fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.	19.1	8.7	27.8
Writing fan fiction lets me tell the story how I wish it had been told.	21.2	5.9	27.1
I write fan fiction as a way to give something back to the Tolkien fan community.	22.0	3.3	25.3
Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in Peter Jackson's movies.	20.3	4.9	25.2
Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview.	18.1	6.9	25.0
Peter Jackson's movies have encouraged me to write Tolkien-based fan fiction.	13.5	9.1	22.6
Writing fan fiction helps me to correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that I see in Tolkien's books.	16.0	5.7	21.7
I enjoy pairing characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.	14.8	6.9	21.7
Writing fan fiction lets me add sexuality to Tolkien's world.	11.7	6.5	18.2
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of characters of color.	14.0	3.3	17.3
I enjoy writing fan fiction to explore fun or silly scenarios.	12.6	3.8	16.4



Survey Item	%D	%SD	Total%
Writing fan fiction lets me relate Tolkien's world to my own experiences.	13.4	2.1	15.5
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of LGBTQ+ characters.	8.1	6.8	14.9
Writing fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.	12.4	1.9	14.3
Writing fan fiction lets me try out alternate storylines or endings.	8.6	2.1	10.7
Writing fan fiction lets me explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.	9.2	1.4	10.6
Writing fan fiction lets me explore gender and sexual roles in Tolkien's world.	6.2	3.0	9.2
I write fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.	7.2	0.8	8.0
Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of female characters.	5.8	2.2	8.0
Writing fan fiction is a form of escape for me.	6.1	1.6	7.7
Writing fan fiction lets me explore racial and cultural relations in Tolkien's world.	5.1	0.5	5.6
Tolkien's realistic world-building encourages me to write fan fiction.	4.5	0.9	5.4
Writing fan fiction lets me develop cultures that Tolkien didn't fully develop.	3.8	0.6	4.4
I write fan fiction because it is how I express my love for Tolkien's books and his world.	3.5	0.5	4.0
Writing fan fiction helps to keep Tolkien's world and his vision alive.	3.5	0.3	3.8
The gaps Tolkien left in his stories are an inspiration for me to write fan fiction.	3.2	0.5	3.7
Writing fan fiction helps me to feel like I am extending the story in new directions.	3.3	0	3.3
Writing fan fiction lets me develop characters that Tolkien didn't fully develop.	2.8	0.2	3.0
Writing fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.	2.6	0.3	2.9
Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about the cultures of Arda.	2.5	0.3	2.8
Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.	1.9	0.5	2.4
Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about characters Tolkien didn't focus on.	1.6	0	1.6



Survey Item	%D	%SD	Total%
Writing fan fiction lets me explore what relationships might have been like between characters.	1.6	0	1.6
I write fan fiction to entertain myself.	1.3	0.2	1.5
Tolkien's characters inspire me to write fan fiction.	0.8	0.3	1.1
Writing fan fiction lets me express my views or interpretations of Tolkien's world.	0.6	0	0.6
Writing fan fiction lets me see the story from points of view not used in Tolkien's books.	0.5	0	0.5

Table 9.2. Motives for writing Tolkienfic, from most to least disagreed with.

Chapter Ten: Reader Preferences

Many items on the survey also concerned what readers prefer to see in the Tolkienfic they read. In many cases, these items are paired with an item that asks about similar author motives. As in Chapter Nine, because there are so many of these items, they will be presented here with minimal commentary and followed, at the end, with a table that compiles all of the statements concerning preference and ranks them based on the percentage of authors who agreed and the percentage of authors who disagreed with each statement.

Inferential Interests

As defined in the parallel author items presented in **Chapter Nine: Inferential Motives** (p. **Error! Reference source not found.**56), stories with inferential components use evidence from the texts to draw conclusions about characters, relationships, and cultures. Readers were provided with four items concerning these possible preferences, seen below in Figure 10.1. Similar to Tolkienfic authors, Tolkienfic readers generally have a high interest in these kinds of stories.

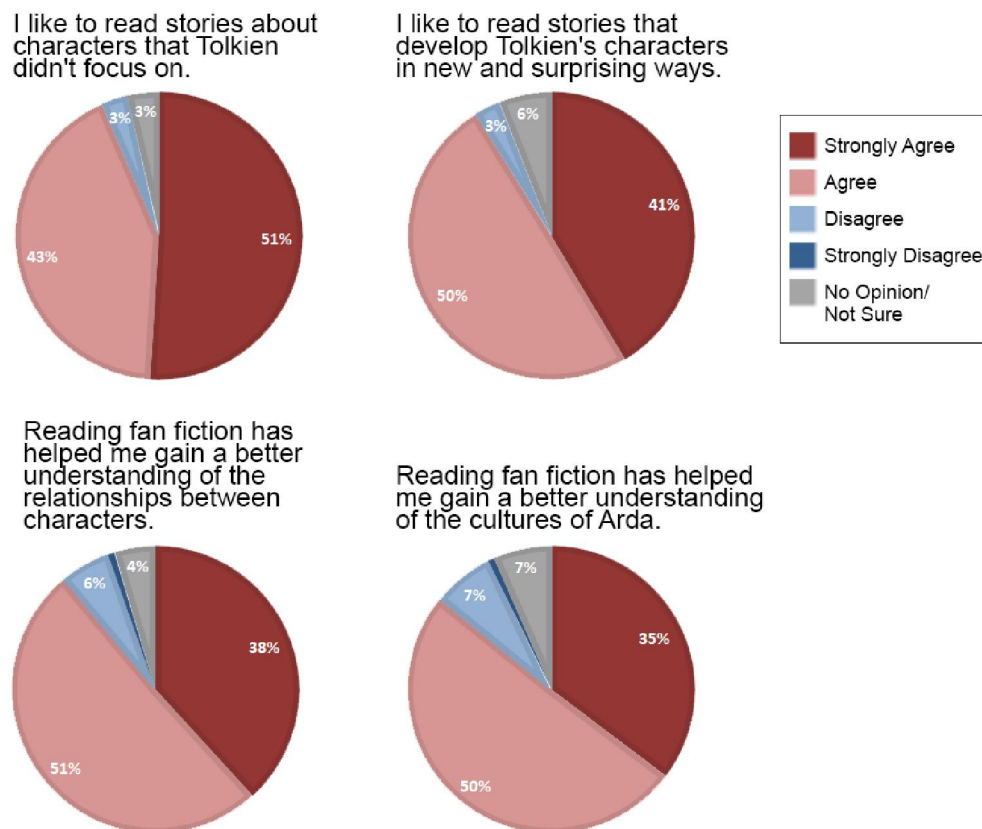


Figure 10.1. Reader interest in inferential motives. (Top Row: n = 1020; n = 1011; Bottom Row: n = 1016; n = 1019)

Also part of the inferential category is the gapfiller: a fanfiction genre that seeks to fill in the literary blanks by inferring what possibly happened between two canonical events. The



matching author item was included under **Appreciative Motives** in the section that looked at what specific aspects of Tolkien's stories encouraged fanfiction (p. 59); 93 percent of authors identified the gaps in the story as inspiration. Readers responded to an item stating, "I like to read stories that fill in the gaps in Tolkien's stories." Figure 10.2 shows the response to that statement. There is not a statement in the survey that receives stronger agreement: Only four participants disagreed that they enjoy gapfillers.

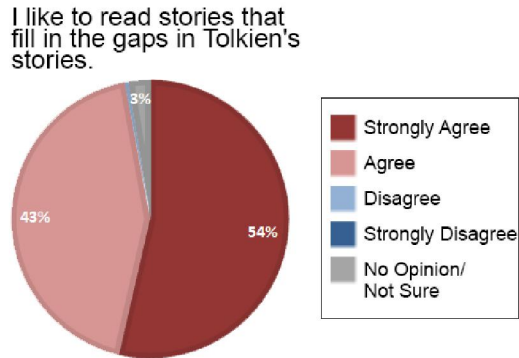


Figure 10.2. Readers who enjoy gapfillers. (n = 1013)

Interpretive Interests

As defined in the parallel author items presented in **Chapter Nine: Interpretive Motives** (p. **Error! Reference source not found.****Error! Reference source not found.**57), stories with interpretive components use fanfiction to offer analysis of Tolkien's books. While authors construct those interpretations, however, readers assimilate the constructions of others. Two survey items fit into the interpretive classification. Their data is shown below in Figure 10.3. While interest in views and interpretations of Tolkien's books was roughly even between authors and readers (95 and 94 percent, respectively), readers were more interested in reading "stories that explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts" than authors were in writing them. While 86 percent of readers expressed an interest in such stories, only 73 percent of authors wrote them.

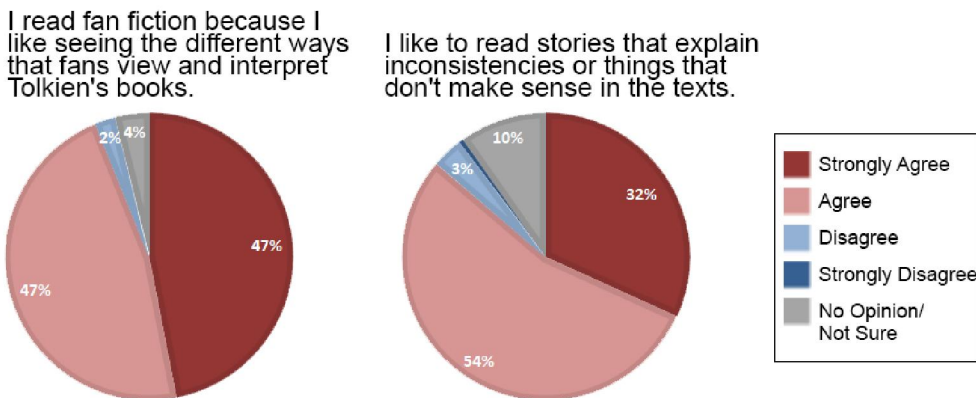


Figure 10.3. Interpretive interests in Tolkienfic. (n = 1012; n = 1011)

One item lies between the interpretive interests discussed here and the critical interests discussed in the section below: “I like to read stories that have an unusual or thought-provoking interpretation of Tolkien’s world.” This item, shown in Figure 10.4, concerns stories that push the boundaries of common or accepted interpretation. These data show a strong majority of readers interested in such stories and a very small minority (just slightly over 3 percent) disagreeing with the statement.

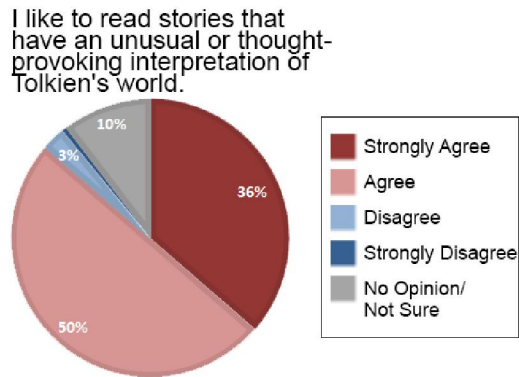


Figure 10.4. Readers interested in “unusual and thought-provoking” interpretations. (n = 1009)

Critical Interests and Authority

Authority has been discussed a couple of times now. In **Chapter Six: Archive Cultures: Authority** (p. 32) discussed how archives differed in their users’ approach to authority, while **Chapter Nine: Critical Motives** (p. 58) considered how Tolkienfic authors used (or didn’t use) their fanfiction as vehicles of criticism. Among authors, critical motives are among those identified by the fewest writers, and diving deeper into individual archives, certain sites have cultures that place a premium on respecting Tolkien’s authority, while others value using fanfiction as a critical and even reparative form. Figure 10.5 considers items that tapped into the concept of authority, namely how closely readers prefer their Tolkienfic to adhere to Tolkien’s authority. These items correspond to statements presented to authors.

Authors and readers express similar interest in “stories that are consistent with Tolkien’s moral beliefs”: 22 and 29 percent, respectively. Likewise, 49 and 55 percent of authors and readers, respectively, find adhering to canon details important in what they write and read.

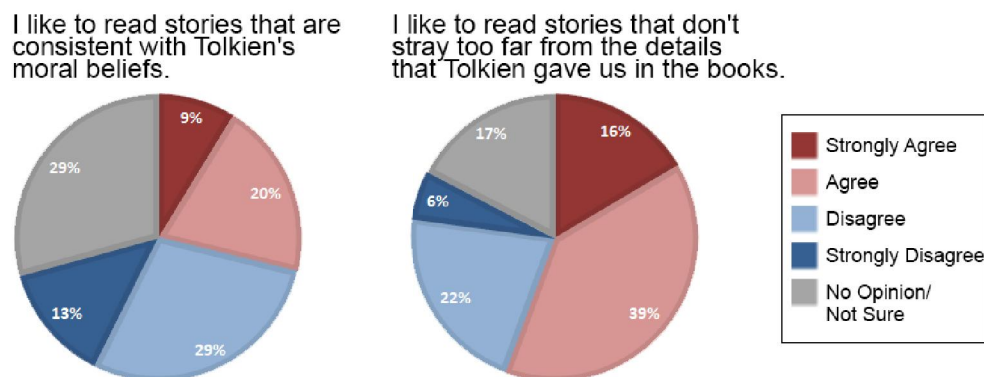


Figure 10.5. Reader agreement with statements concerning authority. (n = 1022; n = 1011)



Figure 10.6 shows the items that correspond, for the most part, with the author survey items discussed in **Chapter Nine: Critical Motives** (p. 58). Authors are more comfortable with critical approaches to Tolkienfic, with 50 percent of them agreeing compared to 41 percent of readers. Otherwise, readers are generally more receptive to critical-oriented stories than authors are motivated to write them.

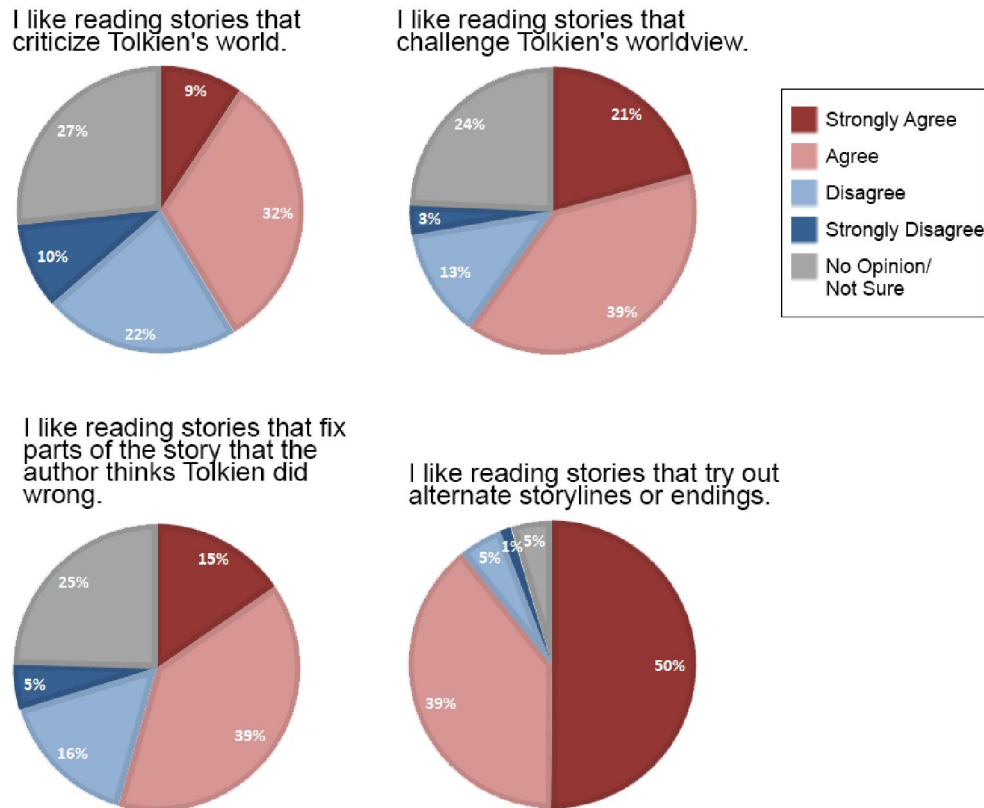


Figure 10.6. Interest among readers in critical approaches to Tolkienfic. (Top Row: n = 1014; n = 1012; Bottom Row: n = 1019; n = 1009)

Appreciative Reasons for Reading

A common motive of authors is what I've termed the appreciative motive, discussed in **Chapter Nine: Appreciative Motives** (p. **Error! Reference source not found.****Error! Reference source not found.**59). The corresponding interests in readers express a desire to read fanfiction as a way to express love and deepen one's connection with Tolkien's books. Figure 10.7 below shows three appreciative statements presented to Tolkienfic readers in the survey. As with the corresponding statements given to authors, the response shows strong identification with appreciative reasons for reading Tolkienfic. As I noted in Chapter Nine, this motive is oft-overlooked by fan studies scholars. Perhaps it seems too obvious, but the simple desire to imaginatively inhabit a fictional world beyond the fan's initial pleasure in discovering it through the source texts appears strong among both Tolkienfic authors and readers.

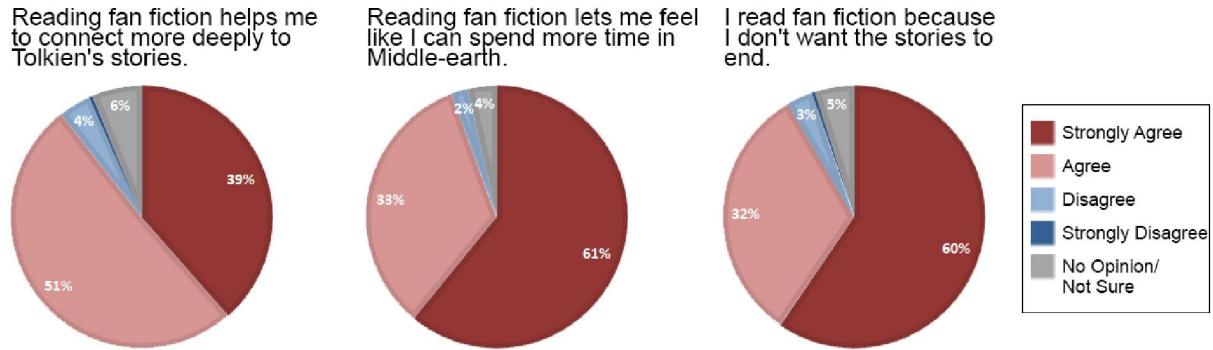


Figure 10.7. Reader perception of appreciative reasons for reading Tolkienfic. (n = 1011; n = 1017; n = 1017)

Social Justice Interests

Fanfiction readers are typically depicted as thoughtful about matters concerning social justice. However, as **Chapter Nine: Social Justice Motives** (p. **Error! Reference source not found.****Error! Reference source not found.**61) shows, authors are uneven in their interest in writing fanfiction that represents the experiences of specific groups of characters. The data for similar items posed to readers is in Figure 10.8 below. Comparing the data for authors and readers shows that there is much more interest among readers in reading stories about characters of color and LGBTQ+ characters than there are authors writing it. While only 43 percent of authors agreed that they used Tolkienfic to explore the perspectives of characters of color, 68 percent of readers enjoyed reading these stories. Likewise, 60 percent of authors wrote fanfiction about LGBTQ+ stories compared to 73 percent of readers who enjoyed reading these stories. The data for female characters, on the other hand, is nearly identical between authors and readers (78 percent and 80 percent, respectively).

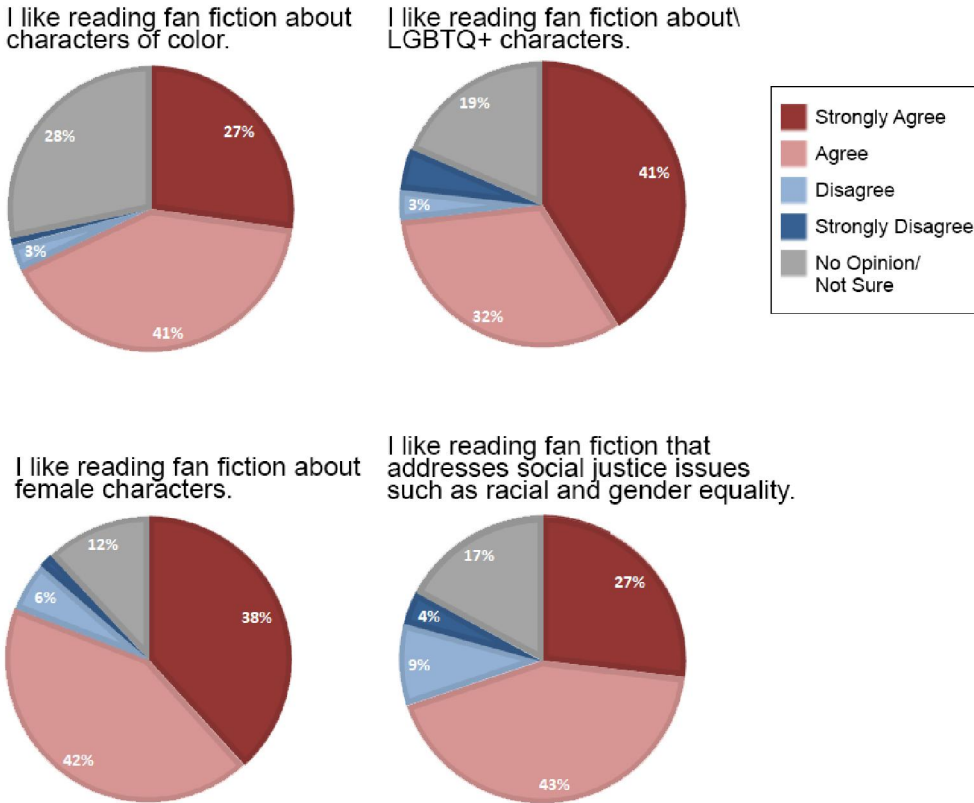
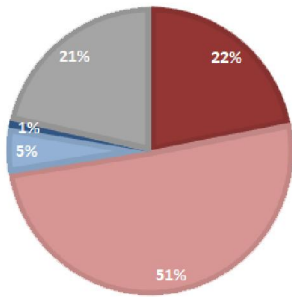


Figure 10.8. Tolkienfic reader interest in stories addressing social justice. (Top Row: n = 1028; n = 1013; Bottom Row: n = 1023; n = 1018)

Communal Interests

Communal interests concern stories that rely on the collective nature of fanfiction, using shared or popular fan interpretations (the latter often termed *fanon*). Survey items for readers about communal interests look different than the communal motives for authors discussed in **Chapter Nine: Communal Motives** (p. 63Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.) because, within the Tolkienfic community, the roles themselves of *author* and *reader* are so different. (Additional discussion of how readers contribute to the Tolkienfic community through giving feedback will be discussed in **Chapter 13: Commenting**, p. 93.) The two survey items consider opposites in terms of how stories respond to communal ideas: in one sense embracing those ideas to the extent of adopting them as a form of canon (hence the root of the term *fanon*); in the other, using stories to criticize fanon and other collective ideas. Survey data for these two items, shown in Figure 10.9, show that most fans (73 percent) enjoy fanfiction that employs communal elements, with only 6 percent disagreeing that they do. Interest in stories that approach those communal elements critically is lower, with only 56 percent agreeing and more than double (14 percent) disagreeing.

I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.



I like reading stories that correct or criticize popular fan interpretations of Tolkien's world and characters.

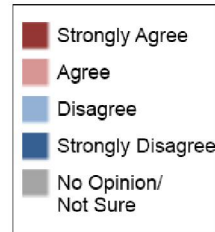
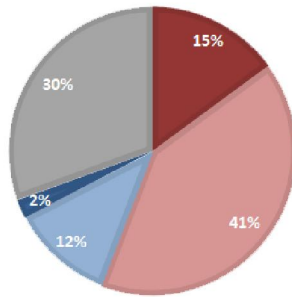
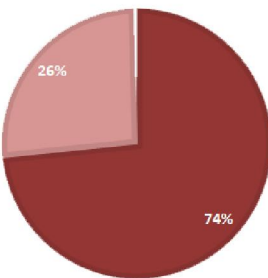


Figure 10.9. Interest in Tolkienic stories with communal elements. (n = 1015; n = 1016)

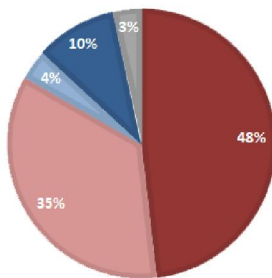
Personal Interests

Personal motives among authors were discussed in **Chapter Nine: Personal Motives** (p. 63). Corresponding data for items presented to readers are shown below in Figure 10.10. Responses to these three items from both authors and readers show a remarkable degree of correspondence. The largest difference between the three is that while only 2 percent of authors strongly disagreed that they wrote Tolkienic as a form of escape, 10 percent of readers strongly disagreed that they read it as a form of escape. Six percent of authors and 4 percent of readers disagreed with the same statement. The relative strength of disagreement for this item among readers might reflect an ongoing contempt toward “escapist” literature in, for example, university writing programs.

I read fan fiction for entertainment.



Reading fan fiction is a form of escape for me.



Reading fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.

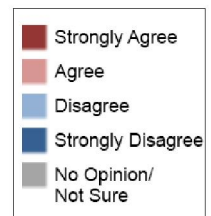
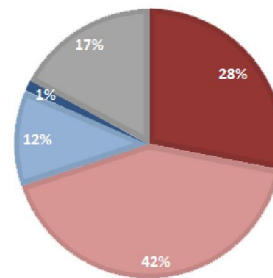


Figure 10.10. Personal interests in reading Tolkienic. (n = 1025; n = 1024; n = 1019)

Spiritual Interests

A specific subset of personal interest in Tolkienic are spiritual interests, or the extent to which Tolkienic readers—a subset of a fandom that often explicitly identifies with Tolkien's Christian and Catholic beliefs—read fanfiction as a way to explore their own spiritual beliefs. (It's also essential to note that non-Christian groups, such as pagans or agnostics, to name just two, may draw spiritual edification from Tolkien's books, so this item should not be seen as a commentary on specifically Christian beliefs.) A corresponding item was posed to authors and is discussed in **Chapter Nine: Spiritual Motives** (p. 64). Figure 10.11 shows the data for readers.



While 36 percent of authors agreed that they wrote Tolkienfic in part to explore their spirituality, this interest is less present among readers, only 28 percent of whom agreed with the corresponding statement. More also disagreed and expressed uncertainty about the statement than did among the authors. Selecting out only authors who chose Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement, “Writing fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality” (n = 218), 71 percent also agreed with the reader’s statement, “Reading fan fiction helps me explore my spirituality.” In conclusion, there seems to be a core group of Tolkienfic community participants, if a minority, who use Tolkienfic as a vehicle of spiritual exploration.

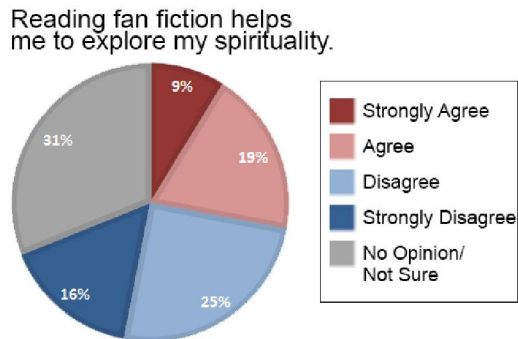


Figure 10.11. Spiritual interests in Tolkienfic. (n = 1017)

Interests Related to Sexuality

Fanfiction as a vehicle for sexual expression and exploration is a keen interest among both scholars and fans themselves. Discussion of how Tolkienfic authors identify with these motives occurs in **Chapter Nine: Motives Related to Sexuality** (p. 65). Figure 10.12 shows data for the corresponding set of statements that readers were asked to respond to. For all items, readers expressed slightly more interest in sexuality in stories than authors did in writing about it.

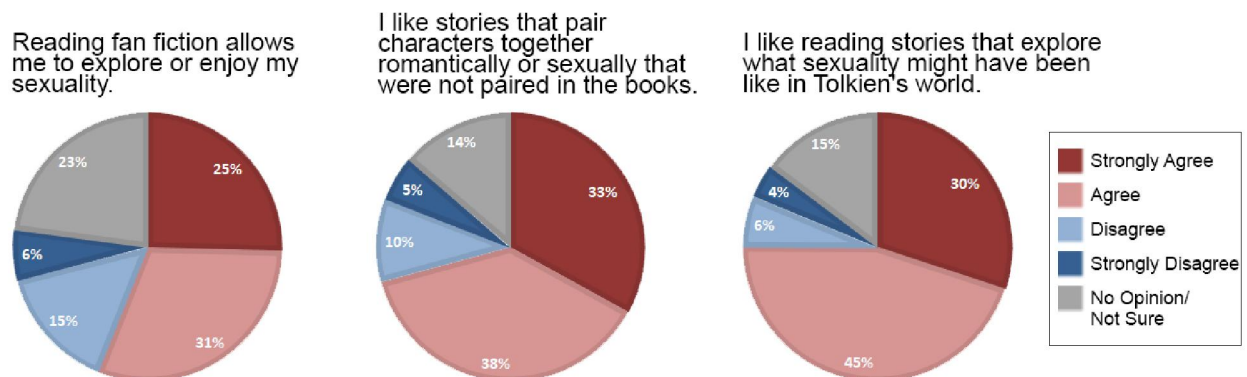


Figure 10.12. Interests in sexuality in Tolkienfic stories. (n = 1017; n = 1019; n = 1015)

Media-Related Interests

Two survey items asked readers to respond based on their interest in stories that respond to Peter Jackson's film trilogies, either in drawing details from the films or by responding critically to the films. There **Chapter Nine: Media-Related Motives** (p. 65) and



Chapter Nine: Corrective Motives (p. 62) both consider how authors use the Jackson's films. Figure 10.13 shows how readers responded to the two film-based items. While a majority (66 percent) agreed that they "like reading stories based on Peter Jackson's movies," it is still worth noting that one in three readers either didn't enjoy such stories or expressed uncertainty. Considering stories that "correct or criticize Peter Jackson's movies," readers reported less interest in reading these types of stories (42 percent) than authors expressed for writing them (53 percent).

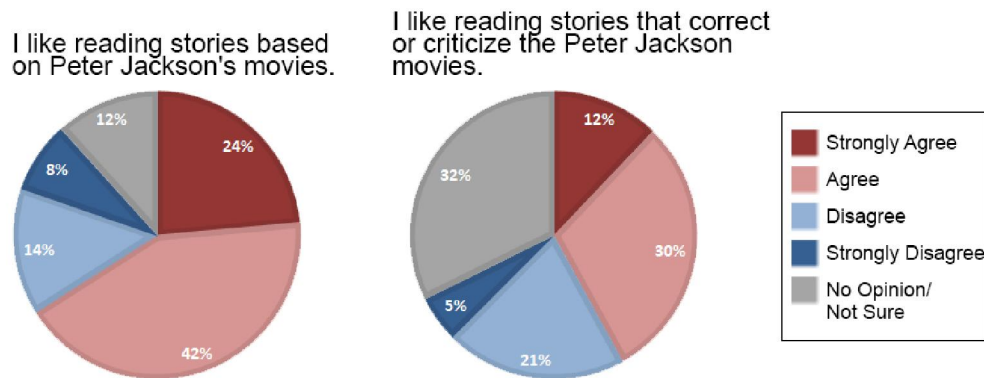


Figure 10.13. Interest in Tolkienfic that responds to Peter Jackson's films. (n = 1024; n = 1013)

Miscellaneous Interests

The final three items do not fit easily in any of the categories above, although they may overlap somewhat with some of them. Figure 10.14 shows the data for these three items. The first item asks about stories that employ "fun and silly scenarios." Readers here have more interest in reading these types of stories (81 percent) than authors reported in writing them (65 percent; see p. 66), an interesting contrast considering readers' relative reported interest in escapist stories (see p. 78).

The next chapter (**Chapter Eleven: The Craft of Writing**; p. 85) asks about author interest in crossovers, with 31 percent of authors agreeing that they enjoy writing crossovers. Slightly more readers, again, are interested in reading crossovers (40 percent) than there are authors interested in writing them. The same section discusses author interest in writing original characters, with 60 percent of authors agreeing that they enjoy writing original characters. In contrast, only 50 percent of readers enjoy stories with original characters.

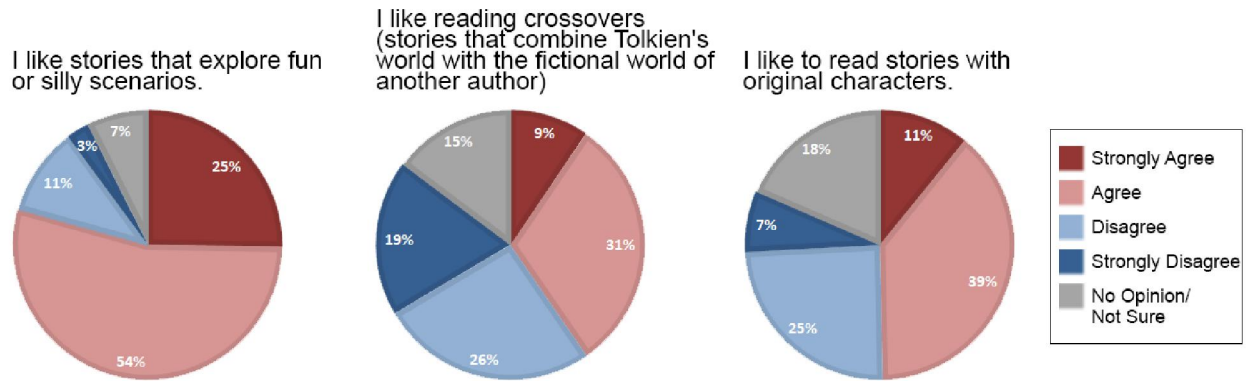


Figure 10.14. Other interests in reading Tolkienfic. (n = 1027; n = 1017; n = 1025)

Specific Story Selection

These three survey items concern less the broad reasons why participants read Tolkienfic and focus more on how they select specific stories to read. Responses to these three survey items are shown in Figure 10.15 and suggest that social factors, i.e., friendship with the author, matters less than interest in the characters, pairing, or time period, or a summary that makes the story sound appealing. Please note that these data are not included in Tables 10.2 and 10.3.

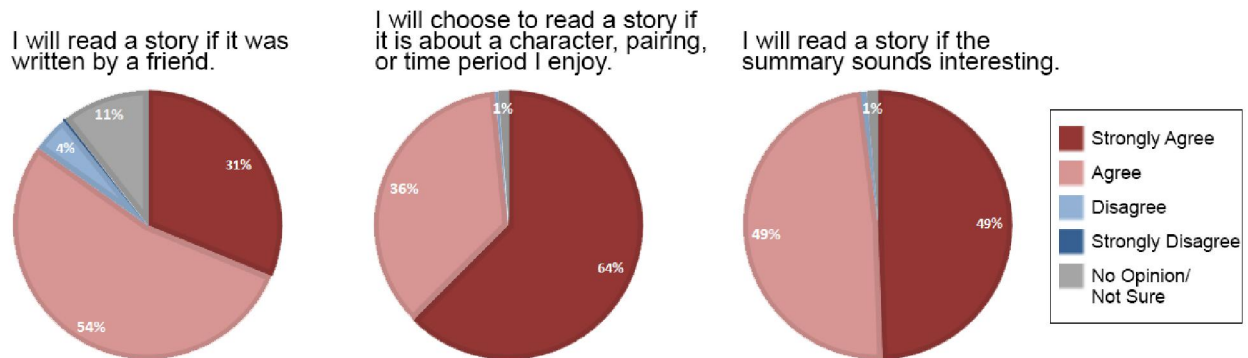


Figure 10.15. Factors in selecting a specific story. (n = 1021; n = 1024; n = 1029)

Putting It Together: Overall Ranking of Interests

In this section, I will compile the data presented above and show which interests readers agreed with the most, as well as which they *disagreed* with the most. Table 10.1 shows the items discussed in this chapter, from the highest to lowest percentage of authors to agree. Table 10.2 shows the items discussed in this chapter from the highest to lowest percentage of authors to disagree.

Survey Item	%SA	%A	Total%
I read fan fiction for entertainment.	73.3	26.3	99.6
I like to read stories that fill in the gaps in Tolkien's stories.	53.6	43.5	97.1
Reading fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.	60.9	33.5	94.4
I read fan fiction because I like seeing the different ways that fans view and interpret Tolkien's books.	46.8	46.8	93.6
I like to read stories about characters that Tolkien didn't focus on.	50.9	42.5	93.4
I read fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.	59.5	32.1	91.6
Reading fan fiction is a form of escape for me.	52.8	38.4	91.2
I like to read stories that develop Tolkien's characters in new and surprising ways.	41.3	49.6	90.9
Reading fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.	38.5	50.9	89.4
I like reading stories that try out alternate storylines or endings.	50.1	39.1	89.2
Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the relationships between characters.	38.2	50.7	88.9
I like to read stories that have an unusual or thought-provoking interpretation of Tolkien's world.	36.4	50.0	86.4
I like to read stories that explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.	31.8	54.5	86.3
Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the cultures of Arda.	35.3	50.5	85.8
I like reading fan fiction about female characters.	38.3	42.6	80.9
I like stories that explore fun or silly scenarios.	25.2	54.0	79.2
I like reading stories that explore what sexuality might have been like in Tolkien's world.	30.0	45.0	75.0
I like reading fan fiction about LGBTQ+ characters.	41.1	32.2	73.3
I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.	21.9	50.6	72.5
I like stories that pair characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.	33.0	37.8	70.8
Reading fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.	28.1	41.9	70.0
I like reading fan fiction that addresses social justice issues such as racial and gender equality.	26.8	43.0	69.8
I like reading fan fiction about characters of color.	27.2	40.8	68.0
I like reading stories based on Peter Jackson's movies.	23.6	42.4	66.0
I like reading stories that challenge Tolkien's worldview.	20.8	39.1	59.9



Survey Item	%SA	%A	Total%
I like reading stories that correct or criticize popular fan interpretations of Tolkien's world and characters.	14.9	40.9	55.8
Reading fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.	25.4	30.6	55.6
I like to read stories that don't stray too far from the details that Tolkien gave us in the books.	16.5	39.1	55.6
I like reading stories that fix parts of the story that the author thinks Tolkien did wrong.	15.4	39.0	54.4
I like to read stories with original characters.	10.9	38.7	49.6
I like reading stories that correct or criticize the Peter Jackson movies.	12.1	29.9	42.0
I like reading stories that criticize Tolkien's world.	9.4	32.0	41.4
I like reading crossovers (stories that combine Tolkien's world with the fictional world of another author).	9.5	30.9	40.4
I like to read stories that are consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.	8.8	20.0	28.8
Reading fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.	8.8	19.2	28.0

Table 9.1. Interests in reading Tolkienfic, from most to least agreed with.

Survey Item	%D	%SD	Total%
I like to read stories that are consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.	28.6	13.4	52.0
I like reading crossovers (stories that combine Tolkien's world with the fictional world of another author).	26.1	18.7	44.8
Reading fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.	25.1	15.9	41.0
I like reading stories that criticize Tolkien's world.	22.3	9.7	32.0
I like to read stories with original characters.	24.5	7.3	31.8
I like to read stories that don't stray too far from the details that Tolkien gave us in the books.	21.5	5.5	27.0
I like reading stories that correct or criticize the Peter Jackson movies.	20.4	5.2	25.6
I like reading stories based on Peter Jackson's movies.	14.3	8.0	22.3
Reading fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.	15.0	6.1	21.1
I like reading stories that fix parts of the story that the author thinks Tolkien did wrong.	16.0	5.1	21.1
I like reading stories that challenge Tolkien's worldview.	12.5	3.3	15.8
I like stories that pair characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.	10.0	5.5	15.5



Survey Item	%D	%SD	Total%
Reading fan fiction is a form of escape for me.	4.0	10.7	14.7
I like reading stories that correct or criticize popular fan interpretations of Tolkien's world and characters.	11.6	2.1	13.7
I like stories that explore fun or silly scenarios.	10.7	2.7	13.4
I like reading fan fiction that addresses social justice issues such as racial and gender equality.	9.3	3.7	13.0
Reading fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.	11.5	1.4	12.9
I like reading stories that explore what sexuality might have been like in Tolkien's world.	6.1	4.0	10.1
I like reading fan fiction about LGBTQ+ characters.	3.5	4.7	8.2
Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the cultures of Arda.	7.0	0.7	7.7
I like reading fan fiction about female characters.	5.6	1.6	7.2
Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the relationships between characters.	5.8	0.7	6.5
I like reading stories that try out alternate storylines or endings.	5.0	1.2	6.2
I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.	5.1	0.9	6.0
Reading fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.	4.1	0.4	4.5
I like to read stories that explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.	3.5	0.5	4.0
I like reading fan fiction about characters of color.	2.9	0.8	3.7
I read fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.	3.2	0.4	3.6
I like to read stories that have an unusual or thought-provoking interpretation of Tolkien's world.	2.8	0.5	3.3
I like to read stories that develop Tolkien's characters in new and surprising ways.	2.9	0.3	3.2
I like to read stories about characters that Tolkien didn't focus on.	3.0	0	3.0
I read fan fiction because I like seeing the different ways that fans view and interpret Tolkien's books.	2.3	0.3	2.6
Reading fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.	2.0	0.1	2.1
I like to read stories that fill in the gaps in Tolkien's stories.	0.4	0	0.4
I read fan fiction for entertainment.	0.2	0	0.2

Table 9.2. Interests in reading Tolkienfic, from most to least disagreed with.



Chapter Eleven: The Craft of Writing

I've discussed now in several places how Tolkienfic authors use fanfiction to engage with Tolkien's canon. Another dimension, however, is how they use (or don't use) fanfiction to improve their craft as writers and how fanfiction affects (or doesn't affect) their ambitions as authors. Fanfiction has been disparaged over the years for the quality of story it tends to offer, with insults coming from people looking for a cheap laugh to professional authors putting down the very fans who buy their books. Fanfiction authors are often quick to respond to these remarks, pointing out how fanfiction has helped them to grow as writers, gain confidence, and sometimes become published authors themselves. They also often note the quality of many stories available if you know where and how to look.

We have seen, though, that many authors are motivated by factors that, while not exclusive of, do not require prowess as a writer. This section considers how authors perceive the role of fanfiction in their creative lives and how readers in the Tolkienfic community regard the quality of story available for them to read.

Author Attitudes toward Writing

One item asked about how authors regard their own writing: "I take my writing seriously when writing Tolkien-based fan fiction." Figure 11.1 shows the data for this statement: A strong majority of authors do take their writing seriously.

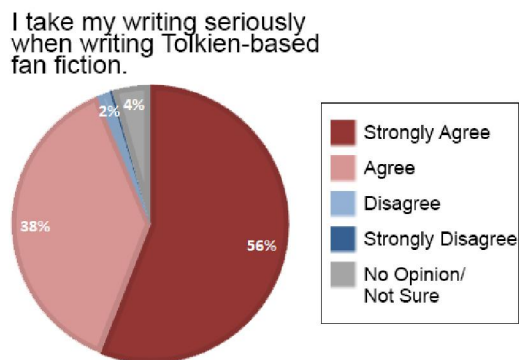


Figure 11.1. Tolkienfic authors' attitudes toward their writing. (n = 633)

Author Perception of Improvement

Next, do authors believe that the practice of fanfiction aids them in improving their craft as writers? Three survey items fall into this section: one about improvement, another about the role of feedback from readers in fostering that improvement, and finally, one about confidence as a writer. Figure 11.2 shows the data for these three items.

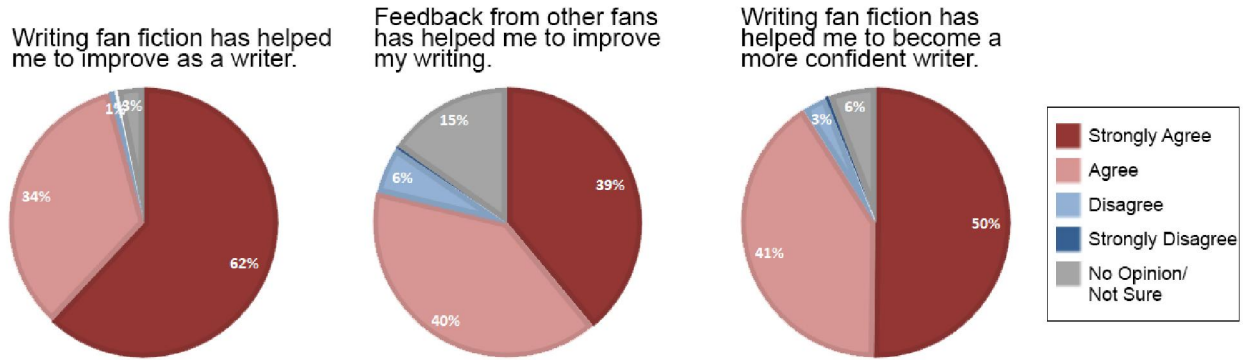


Figure 11.2. Author perceptions of their improvement as writers. (n = 634; n = 632; n = 634)

Discussion. Authors overwhelmingly report that they gain both skills and confidence from writing fanfiction. Clearly, they do not perceive their hobby as frivolous, embarked upon mostly to throw characters in bed together, as popular opinion would hold, with no concern over the quality of their work.

Authors also report in a strong majority (79 percent) that feedback from other fans has helped to improve their writing. Here, it is important to note that “feedback” could take many forms: comments left by readers, commentary and edits from a beta-reader, one-click feedback like kudos, or other forms of feedback. (Commenting specifically will be discussed in detail in **Chapter 13: Commenting**.) However, this data shows that a high degree of collaboration happens in the Tolkienfic community that is aimed at improving the participating authors’ writing.

Writing beyond Tolkienfic

The matter of original fiction is somewhat contentious in fic fandom, with some authors forthright about their aspirations to use fanfiction as a springboard to a professional writing career, others adamant that fanfiction is a worthy pursuit and no less valuable than original fiction, and most falling somewhere in between. For three items, authors reported ways in which their writing pushed past the borders of Middle-earth, seen in Figure 11.3 below. (**Chapter Four: Multifandom Participation** [p. 23] includes more information participation in other fandoms by Tolkienfic authors.)

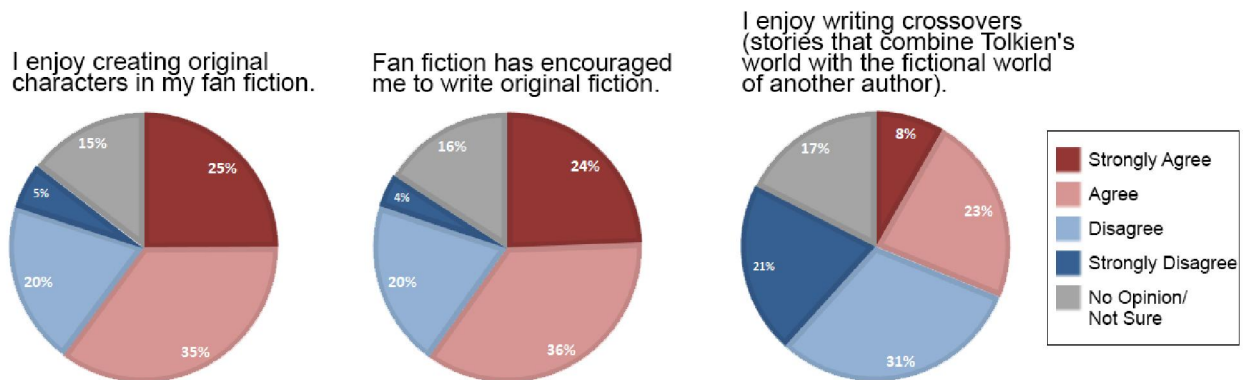


Figure 11.3. Authors’ writing beyond Tolkienfic. (n = 631; n = 631; n = 627)

Discussion. I was curious if the near-identical data for the first two questions—about original characters and about writing original fiction—indicated an overlap in participants. Do people who enjoy writing original characters (OCs) tend to enjoy writing original fiction, and vice versa? Could creating OCs possibly lead to writing original fiction?

There was, however, no data to suggest that writing OCs correlated with writing original fiction. Of those who agreed that they enjoy writing OCs, 63.5 percent also agreed that fanfiction has encouraged them to write original fiction. It is worth considering, however, that the wording of the statement about original fiction would miss a portion of writers who *do* write original fiction but do not feel that fanfiction especially encourages them in this endeavor. It is possible that, among original-fiction writers, creating OCs is more common than among authors who write just fanfiction. It is impossible to know this with the data we have. What the data for the statement about original fiction shows, however, is that fanfiction does nudge a majority—roughly 60 percent—of authors toward creating original fiction as well.

Reader Perceptions of Tolkienfic Quality

Three survey items inquired about the perception of quality among readers of Tolkienfic. The data for those three statements are shown in Figure 11.4.

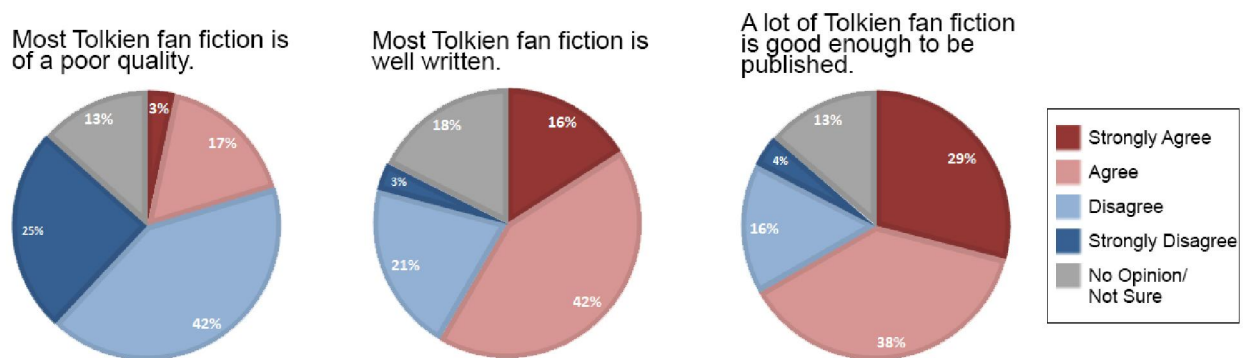


Figure 11.4. Reader perceptions of the quality of Tolkienfic. (n = 1020; n = 1009; n = 1013)

Discussion. Even a cursory glance at Figure 11.4 shows that the slice of pie belonging to readers who generally perceive Tolkienfic to be high-quality is the same across the three questions. A closer look at the data for these three items shows a fairly high level of concordance between them. There were 636 participants who disagreed with the statement, “Most Tolkien fan fiction is of a poor quality” (i.e., they perceive the quality of Tolkienfic to be good). Of these participants, 94 or 13.9 percent *also* disagreed with one or both of the other two positively worded statements. In other words, 86.1 percent of participants who perceived Tolkienfic as of a good quality did so consistently across all three items. (Please note, however, that some of these participants would have chosen No Opinion/Not Sure or may not have responded to the item at all.)

Future analysis should consider what, if any, differences exist between the groups that consider Tolkienfic to be quality and those who do not.

Chapter Twelve: Community

An essential element of fanfiction is the community. After all, unlike traditional publication, stories are not shared with predominantly anonymous but paying audience in a situation with clearly delineated roles for the author and reader. Instead, stories are shared with an online community where the boundaries between roles are often blurred: An author who has posted a story one minute can become a reader in the next minute without gaining or losing authority or status in transitioning between those roles. Stories often build on or respond to other stories, becoming a conversation or debate told in the form of fiction. The story addresses the original text but also the community around it, its common or preferred interpretations, its fanon.

Nor is the community only or even primarily exegetical in its purpose. There is also a significant social component, with fans socializing and befriending each other. Every fanfiction community has anecdotes of the power of its friendships, from fans who fly thousands of kilometers to meet each other in person to communities that rally around a member during a time of crisis or need in extraordinarily generous ways.

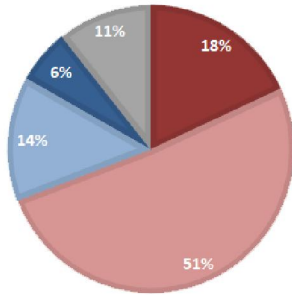
In addition, communities often function as writers' groups, with members brainstorming ideas, sharing resources, and providing constructive critique of each other's work. Again, these roles often have blurred boundaries, and an author seeking help from her community on one matter may be acting as a beta-reader to another community member at the same time. The traditional role of editor is absorbed by the community, who perform the task without the usual expectation of status that comes with it. (Please note that commenting will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, **Chapter 13: Commenting**, p. 93.) This chapter discusses survey items that concern all of the myriad functions of Tolkienfic communities.

Collective Creativity

The survey items discussed in this section refer to authors' use of and readers' perceptions of narrative elements and interpretations of canon that are widely accepted, often termed *fanon*. *Fanon* can be an emotionally loaded term, sometimes used to discuss ideas that are perceived as overused in Tolkienfic or to refer to mistaken understandings of the canon that have become popularly accepted. (The latter can range from the reasonable, such as the notion that Elves are vegetarian, to the absurd, such as the mid-aughts ideas that Elves did not have sex or excrete waste.) Two items asked authors about fanon, one indirectly ("characters, details, or interpretations developed by other fan fiction writers"), while the other directly mentioned the loaded term *fanon*. These data are shown in Figure 12.1.



I use characters, details, or interpretations developed by other fan fiction writers in my fan fiction.



I enjoy using popular fan interpretations or fanon in my fan fiction.

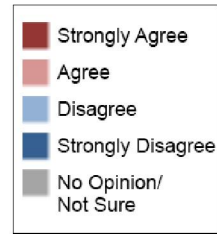
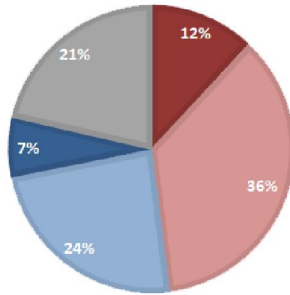
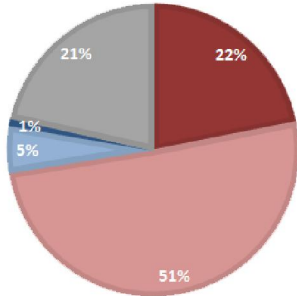


Figure 12.1. Use of collaboratively developed story and fanon elements by Tolkienfic authors. (n = 636; n = 631)

Figure 12.2 shows reader perceptions of “collective creativity.” Again, the survey included two items, one using the neutral “characters, details, or interpretations developed by other fan fiction writers” and the other employing the loaded term *fanon*. (Note that the fanon item asked of readers was opposite that asked of writers.)

I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.



Too much Tolkien fan fiction uses popular fan interpretations or fanon.

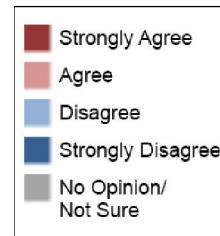
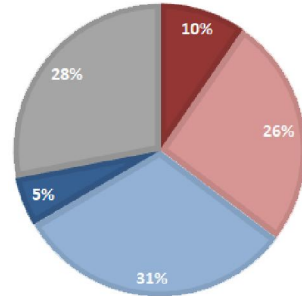


Figure 12.2. Perception of collaboratively developed story and fanon elements by Tolkienfic readers. (n = 1015; n = 1011)

Finally, Figure 12.3 presents data about fanfiction that serves a critical or corrective function toward collaboratively developed elements (fanon) and the stories that use them.

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in other fan fiction writers' portrayals of Tolkien's world and characters.

I like reading stories that correct or criticize popular fan interpretations of Tolkien's world and characters.

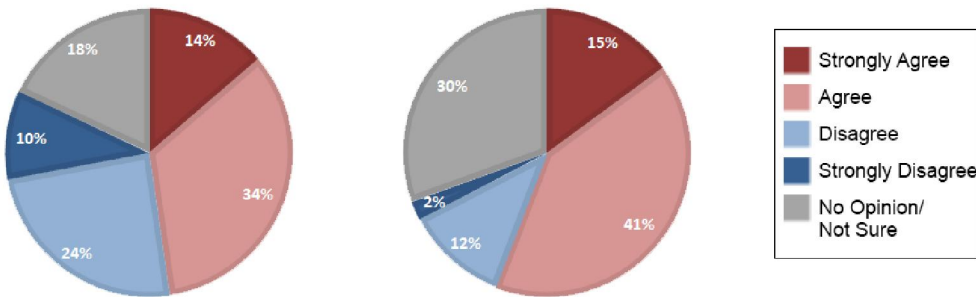


Figure 12.3. Use and perception of stories with a critical or corrective function toward collaboratively developed elements. (n = 635; n = 1016)

Discussion. The data presented above show that the both readers and authors in the Tolkienfic fandom have a generally positive view toward collaboratively created elements and stories. As Figure 12.1 shows, though, the word *fanon* does indeed carry a negative connotation. The neutrally worded item about using “characters, details, or interpretations developed by other fan fiction writers” received agreement from 69 percent of participants. Add the word *fanon* and agreement drops to 48 percent. Similarly, while 36 percent of readers agreed that “Too much Tolkien fan fiction uses popular interpretation or fanon,” only 6 percent disagreed with the more neutrally worded statement, “I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.”

The use of fanfiction to criticize and correct fan interpretations is relatively uncommon, at least compared to other motives. As seen in **Chapter Nine** (p. 56) and **Chapter Ten** (p. 72), for both authors and readers, these motives are among the least often reported. Nonetheless just about half participants (48 percent of authors and 56 percent of readers) do agree with these statements about using fanfiction to criticize and correct fan interpretations, which is also not an insignificant number.

Overall, no matter the approach, these data suggest that most Tolkienfic authors are aware of (and often intentional in) their use of collaboratively developed elements in their stories, and that these types of stories, generally, are stories that readers want to see. The use of other fans’ interpretations—whether to add or to criticize in one’s own work—can take various shapes, and readers are interested in these various approaches as well.

Communal Interests, Revisited

Chapter Nine: Communal Motives (p. 63) discusses the various motives of authors of fanfiction. Those two items are relevant here as well. I am duplicating the data here in Figure 12.4 since it is not specifically discussed in the earlier chapter.

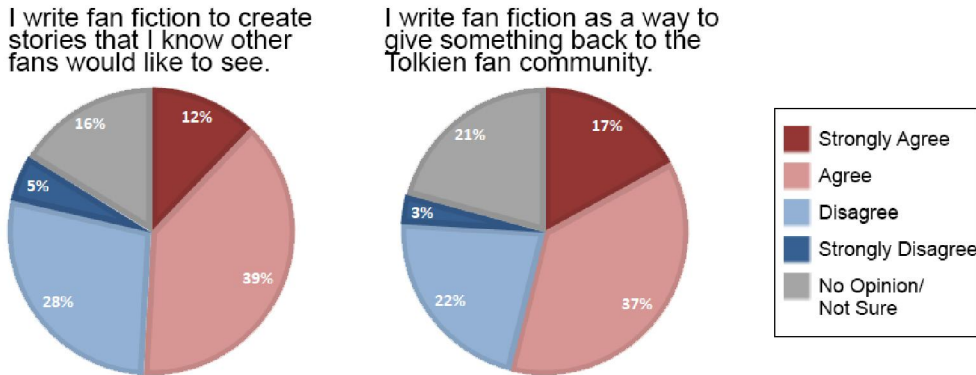


Figure 12.4. Communal motives for Tolkienfic. (n = 630; n = 631)

Discussion. The idea of fandom as a gift economy has been much-discussed in both fannish and scholarly circles. These data suggest that Tolkienfic authors feel relatively little motivation to write stories for the sake of giving a gift to readers or their community. Only about half (51 percent) self-report that they write stories with the interests of other fans in mind, and only slightly more (54 percent) acknowledge that fanfiction is a way to “give something back” to the community they belong to. Authors identify many other motives as more important than these two.

Using the data from the section about collaboratively developed elements (**Collective Creativity**, p. 88), the communal influence on Tolkienfic fandom authors appears to be stronger for interpretive elements than gift-giving. For example, an author might feel motivated to write a story using an interpretation of a character or idea that she finds especially compelling. (Or in explicit defiance of an interpretation she finds incorrect or distasteful.) She is less likely to write out of a sense of wanting to show gratitude either to readers or to the community.

Social Needs

Finally, participation in fanfiction communities can meet any number of social needs. There are the simple needs for belonging and friendship. Fans also express that fanfiction communities are places where they can socialize with people who share their deep interest in and understanding of Tolkien’s world, and specifically the interests common to fanfiction writers (which may not be shared in the broader Tolkien fan community). Finally, fans sometimes self-identify as shy, introverted, or socially anxious. To what extent do they view fandom as something that has helped them overcome barriers to socialization? Figure 12.5 shows survey responses to these three items.

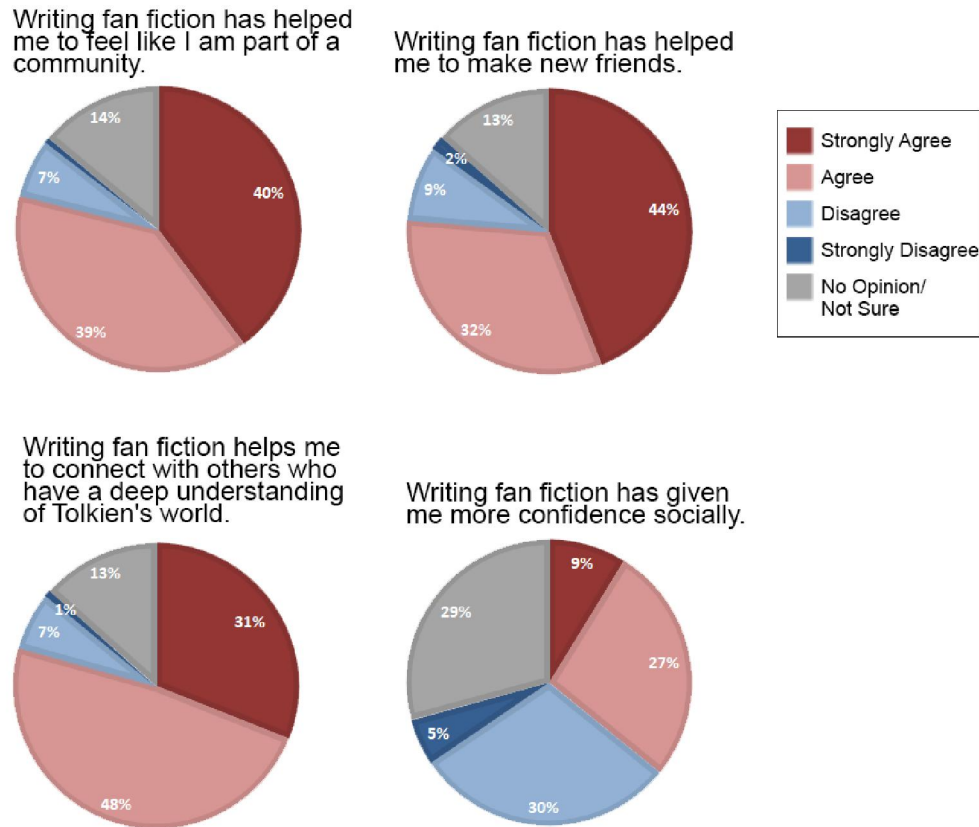


Figure 12.5. Participation as an author as a way to meet social needs. (Top Row: n = 639; n = 638; Bottom Row: n = 635; n = 636)

Discussion. Even a simple glance at the first three data sets in Figure 12.5 shows that all three pie charts look nearly the same: just under 80 percent of authors agreed with each of the three statements. Furthermore, only seventeen authors (about 3 percent) chose Disagree or Strongly Disagree for all three items. These are participants for whom, presumably, none of these basic social needs—a sense of belonging, friendship, or a shared depth of interest—are being met by participation in the Tolkienic community. In short, for the vast majority of fans, at least *some* basic social need is being met. This contrasts with the modern notion of the writer as a solitary being and writing as a solitary act. For most fanfiction writers, the data supports the idea that there is a social component—for some, a social component that is quite significant.

The fourth data set (“Writing fan fiction has given me more confidence socially”) stands apart somewhat from the others. Of course, it *looks* very different: Only 36 percent of authors agreed with it, and 35 percent disagreed. But it’s understandably going to show less agreement than the other three. Not all participants are going to feel like “more confidence socially” is something they even *need*. While fandom participants do sometimes express social unease or even anxiety, this is far from universal, and the fandom also includes fans who are outgoing and confident already. Nonetheless, the fact that 36 percent—more than one in three fans—*do* feel that writing fanfiction has helped them gain social confidence is a strong statement on not only the quality and availability of social interaction in the Tolkienic community but the positive role participation can play in helping fans push past their own limits in more than just writing skill and canon knowledge.

Chapter Thirteen: Commenting and Feedback

Another aspect of the Tolkienic community, not discussed in **Chapter Twelve** (p. 88), is commenting: an interaction between the reader and the author, initiated by the reader, to which the author often responds to. Commenting may involve a single comment, possibly with a reply, or entail a back-and-forth; this is somewhat contingent on whether the site allows “threaded comments” or comments with more than one reply.

Commenting has typically been and remains somewhat controversial. There are questions of etiquette: What types of comment are acceptable? For example, is unsolicited constructive criticism acceptable? Harsh comments, also called “flames”? Are gushing comments, single-sentence comments, or questions acceptable? Should readers ask for updates? Should authors ask for comments? What obligations upon readers are there to comment? If a reader enjoys a story? Frequently rereads it? Enjoys the author’s work generally? Should readers try to comment on everything they enjoy? Are there acceptable reasons—English as a second language, social anxiety, technological barriers—for never commenting? For at least fifteen years, fans have discussed these and other questions, sometimes quite contentiously.

This chapter provides a snapshot in data of what commenting and perceptions of commenting look like in the Tolkienic fandom. There is also some data on other forms of feedback, such as kudos, but this is much more limited.

Commenting Frequency

Frequency of commenting is discussed in **Chapter Two: Commenting** (p. 18). Three additional items, not discussed in Chapter Two, also concern how frequently readers comment. The results for these data are shown in Figure 13.1.

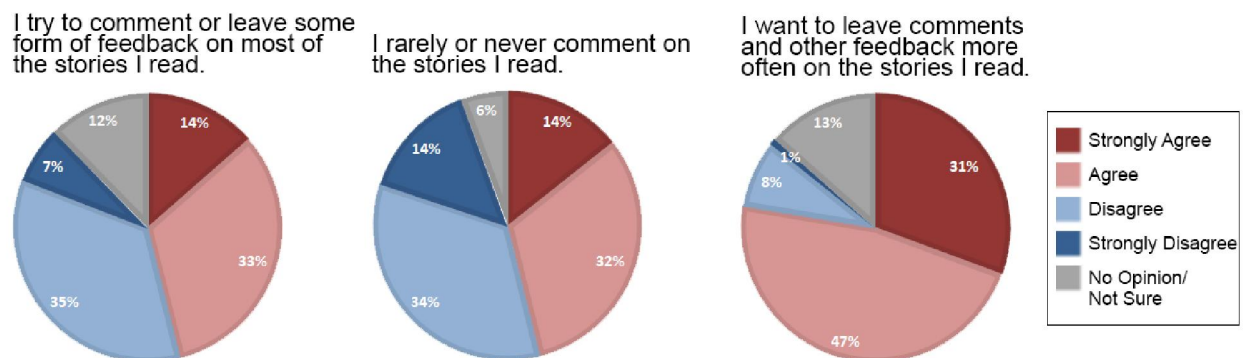


Figure 13.1. Frequency of commenting among Tolkienic readers. (n = 1026; n = 1021; n = 1013)

Discussion. The number of readers who “try to comment or leave some form of feedback on most of the stories [they] read” is slightly higher than the number who, in the survey items that asked readers, “Estimate the percentage of Tolkien-based fan fiction stories that you leave comments or other feedback on.” Readers who comment or leave feedback on half or more of the stories they read total 39 percent on this item; on the survey item from Figure 13.1, that number jumps to 47 percent.



Truly, as I noted in **Chapter Two** (p. 18) both numbers seem high. Complaints of low—and worsening—rates of feedback are common in the Tolkienic community. Any author can tell you that click data does not reflect that half of readers leave feedback on 50 percent or more of the stories they read.

The numbers who “rarely or never comment” (46 percent) and those who report leaving feedback 20 percent of the time or less (37 percent) show a similar pattern with the survey item from Figure 13.1 receiving an increased response. Granted, how readers define “rarely” could vary from reader to reader and certainly not align with my own definition of “20 percent or less” and explain the discrepancy.

The data for the survey item, “I want to leave comments and other feedback more often on the stories I read” is particularly interesting. A strong majority (78 percent) agreed with the statement, and a relatively low number (9 percent) disagreed. This shows that most readers feel that the feedback they leave on stories is at least somewhat inadequate from what they perceive they *should* be leaving. This is the first sign of a tension that persists in discussions about commenting: readers’ sense that they *should* comment and leave other feedback, coupled with the reality that the majority do not. The reason for gap between ideal and actual behavior will be discussed below.

Praise and Criticism in Comments

Among the commenting issues under constant discussion is what level of praise or criticism is appropriate in a comment. Constructive criticism, or concrit, is particularly contentious. Should readers point out, publicly, areas where they think the author should improve? Is it appropriate to assume that all authors are writing to improve? Should readers assume that their unsolicited advice is welcome? Praise is less contentious but—in the controversial realm of commenting—nonetheless under discussion, with some authors discouraging “gushing” and some readers fearing that their enthusiasm about a story will be read as insincere, fawning, or not useful enough to be worthwhile. Finally, while nearly all readers will express disapproval of flames—extremely harsh criticism that often includes personal attacks against the author—flaming was/is a behavior in Tolkienic fandom, which means *someone* is doing it. Figure 13.2 shows responses to three survey items related to praise, concrit, and flames.

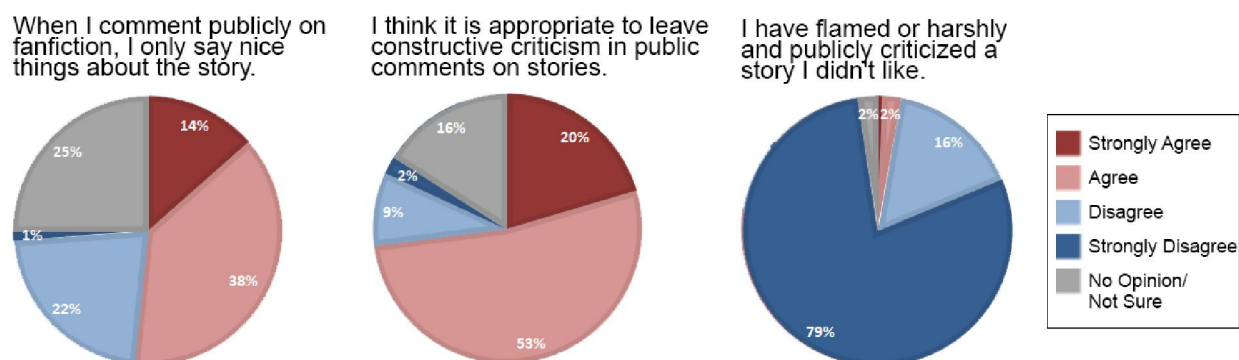


Figure 13.2. Commenters’ use of praise, constructive criticism, and flames. (n = 1013; n = 1030; n = 1023)

In addition to the data shown in Figure 13.2, which includes all participants, I also compiled data for the same item for authors and for participants who were readers only (not authors). This data is in Table 13.1.

	All Participants		Authors		Readers Only	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly Agree	210	20.4	134	21.4	73	18.6
Agree	541	52.5	314	50.2	220	56.1
Disagree	91	8.8	62	9.9	28	7.1
Strongly Disagree	22	2.1	19	3.0	3	0.8
No Opinion/ Not Sure	166	16.1	97	15.5	68	17.3

Table 13.1. Approval of public concrit among Tolkienfic authors and readers.

Discussion. Comparing the data in Figure 13.2 for the number of participants who believe that public constructive criticism is acceptable and those who only leave praise in comments shows that while members of the Tolkienfic community generally claim to value concrit, many of those people are not actually practicing this by leaving concrit on stories. Nonetheless, it is powerful that 73 percent of participants believe that public concrit is acceptable on stories and reflects, I suspect, a fandom culture that historically tended to depict authors as collaboratively working to improve their craft as writers. To represent the data another way, one in five fans strongly agreed with the statement; only one in ten disagreed *or* strongly disagreed. Likewise, those who agreed with the statement (and disagreed) does not differ significantly when looking at authors or people who only read Tolkienfic without writing their own. Again, this likely reflects a value that is deeply embedded in the fandom culture that values seeing Tolkienfic stories as an opportunity for authors to learn and grow as writers.

The item shown in Figure 13.2 about flames or harsh, public criticism shows that this is a rare habit among Tolkienfic fandom participants. Under 3 percent were willing to acknowledge this as a behavior that they engaged in, and overall, there was strong disapproval of this practice, with 95 percent disagreeing with the statement.

Motives for Commenting

Why would a reader even bother to comment on a story? Tolkienfic stories are offered for free in an anonymous—or at least pseudonymous—environment where one can gobble down as many stories as one wants without being accountable to the author for anything. While, as noted above, the complaint is common (and long-lived) in the Tolkienfic fandom that readers do not comment often enough on stories, some clearly do. Why?

The first data set, presented in Figure 13.3, asks simply about whether commenting is viewed as important, intrinsically, in and of itself. Yes, readers can leave comments on stories, but is it *important* that they do so? Is this something they should concern themselves about?

I think it's important for readers to leave comments and other feedback on the stories they read.

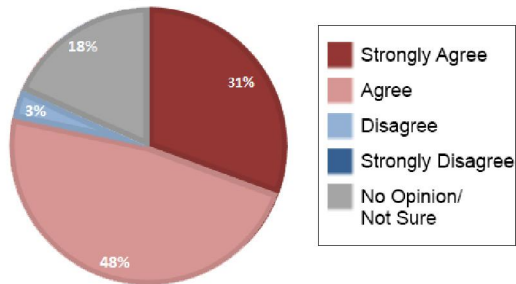
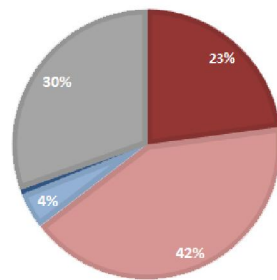


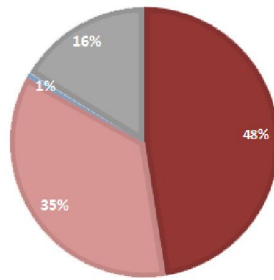
Figure 13.3. Intrinsic valuation of commenting in the Tolkienfic community. (n = 1017)

Figure 13.4 presents data for three survey items about the perceived benefits of comments to writers.

I hope the comments I leave on stories help the writers to improve.



I hope the comments I leave on stories encourage the writers to keep writing.



Commenting on stories is a way to give something back to the authors.

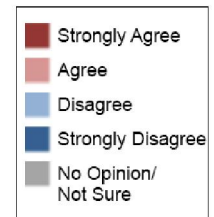
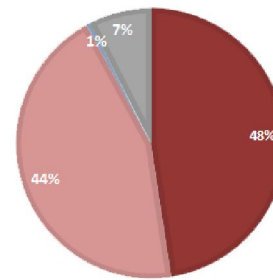
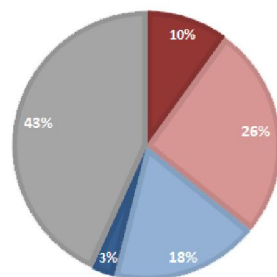


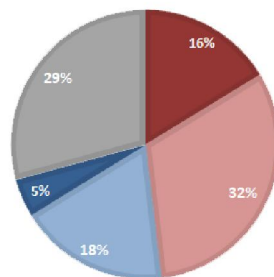
Figure 13.4. Perception of commenting as a benefit for authors. (n = 1005; n = 1012; n = 1019)

Finally, Figure 13.5 shows data for three items related to perceived benefits to the readers/commenters themselves.

Commenting on stories I've read has helped me to deepen my understanding of Tolkien's world.



Commenting on stories I've read has allowed me to make new friends.



Commenting on stories I've read has allowed me to feel like part of a community.

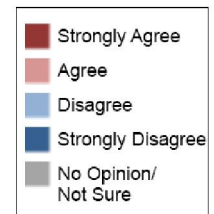
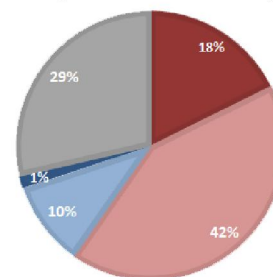


Figure 13.5. Perception of commenting as a benefit for readers/commenters. (n = 1005; n = 1011; n = 1002)

Discussion. Figure 13.3 shows that commenting is perceived by most of the fandom as having intrinsic value, i.e., it is something important that readers should do. Diving deeper into what readers hope their comments will accomplish shows that they perceive commenting as having benefits for both the author and commenter, but more agreed with the statements concerning authors. Once again, the idea of fandom as a space where authors collaborate in order to improve as writers appears, with 63 percent of participants hoping their comments “help the writers to improve.” More, however, view commenting as an act of encouragement. This perhaps reflects the data in **Praise and Criticism in Comments** (p. 94), which shows that while a majority of readers believe that public constructive criticism is acceptable, slightly more than half “only say nice things about the story.” In other words, while improving as a writer is an important value in the fandom, encouragement is even more important.

Nearly all (92 percent) of participants agreed with the item, “Commenting on stories is a way to give something back to the authors.” This item suggests that most readers acknowledge that producing a fanfiction story is effortful and believe that this action should be rewarded or reciprocated in some way.

Finally, most participants did not see benefits for themselves in expanding their understanding of Tolkien’s world or making new friends. A majority (60 percent), however, felt that “Commenting on stories I’ve read has allowed me to feel like part of a community.” This may tie back in to the sense that commenting is a way to show appreciation or repay the authors whose stories form the foundation of the community.

Author Perceptions of Commenting

Authors, of course, are the receiving end of comments and therefore have their own unique perspective on how comments influence (or don’t) their writing. It’s safe to say that authors almost unequivocally enjoy comments, but what do they gain from them? As the items discussed above show, readers perceive their comments as instructive—and the use of fanfiction to improve writing skills is valued in the community—but more importantly as encouraging. Figure 13.6 shows two items that address these purposes from the perspective of authors.

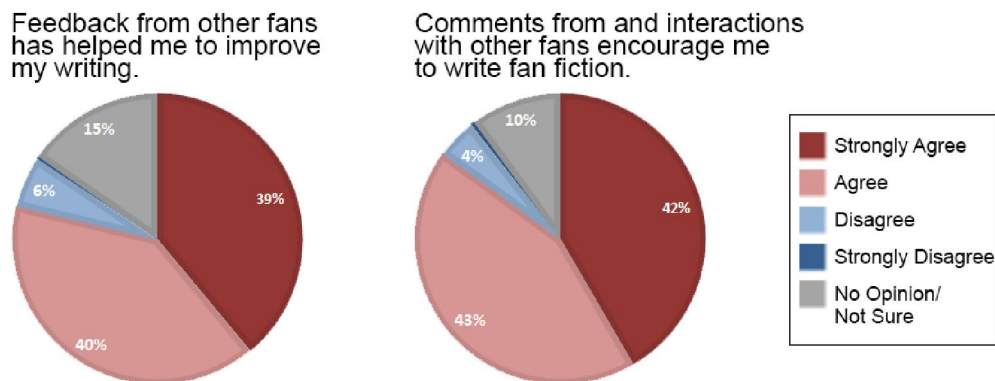


Figure 13.6. Author perception of comments. (n = 632; n = 634)

Discussion. Author perceptions echo the items discussed above: While a majority believe that fanfiction helps them to improve as writers, slightly more find that comments and “interactions with other fans” encourage their writing.



Lack of Commenting

A discussion of commenting is not complete without considering why authors *don't* comment. I have explored this question more fully in an essay written for the Long Live Feedback project: [Why People Don't Comment: History and Data from the Tolkienfic Community](#). I will present the data here as well, in Figure 13.7, with a summary to follow of the data and conclusions from the essay. Please refer to that essay for a full discussion of the data.

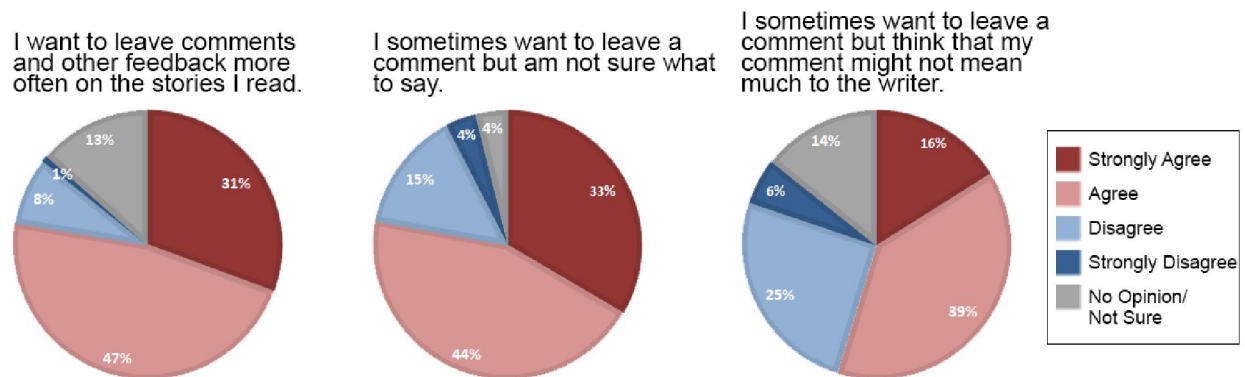


Figure 13.7. Perception and reasons for not commenting on stories. (n = 1013; n = 1024; n = 1009)

Discussion. The data leaves no doubt that commenting brings with it a measure of anxiety for many readers. Commonly expressed sentiments include doubts over how to accurately capture a reader's reaction to an author's work or the worry that a comment will be so trite as to be meaningless—even annoying—to the author. These doubts—reflected in the data—come despite reassurances, even pleas, from authors to hear from their readers.

Diving deeper into the data, as discussed in the linked essay, shows that these doubts come from a combination of factors. First, commenting is a specific type of writing—one that is not widely taught in classrooms—and readers without that skill will understandably struggle with that type of writing, just as someone who has never written an article or a technical manual or a sestina will struggle if expected to produce an example of the form—and in public, no less. Secondly, commenting is a matter of confidence, which connects back with the lack of skill in that type of writing. Finally, commenting is connected also with a sense of belonging to the Tolkienfic community. Readers who did not feel like they were part of the community, based on their responses to survey items about community, also tended to comment less, if at all. Again, these conclusions cannot be drawn from the data in Figure 13.8 alone; see the essay for the complete data set.

One-Click Feedback

One-click feedback has become more frequent in recent years, primarily due to AO3's somewhat embattled kudos system but also including likes or hearts on social media and, delving further back in the fandom's history, the option available on some sites to rate a story with a number of stars. Bookmarking or "favoriting" a story is another form of one-click feedback that has received relatively little attention. Figure 13.8 shows the number of readers who leave one-click feedback on stories.

I have left one-click feedback such as likes or kudos on stories I enjoyed.

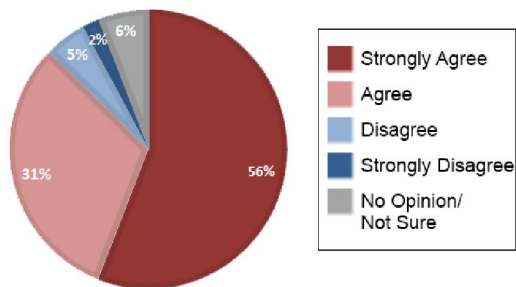


Figure 13.8. Use of one-click feedback by readers. (n = 1025)

Appendix A: Survey Consent Form and Questions

Transformative Works as a Means to Develop Critical Perspectives in the Tolkien Fan Community Informed Consent Form to Participate in Online Survey

Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of the survey is to collect data on the habits, beliefs, and preferences of Tolkien fans who participate in reading and/or writing fan fiction. The survey is being conducted as part of a research paper that will be presented at the Mythmoot III conference in 2015. The paper aims to show how Tolkien fans use fan fiction as a means to interact with, critique, and expand upon Tolkien's works.

The survey is being conducted by Dawn "Felagund" Walls-Thumma, a graduate student at American Public University and a participant in the Tolkien fan fiction community for ten years now as an author, reader, and archive owner.

What Will Be Done

You will be asked questions about basic demographic information (age and gender), sites that you use, participation and publishing history, textual sources that you use, the types of stories you read and/or write, your reasons for reading and/or writing fan fiction, and your interactions with other fans through fan fiction. No identifying information, such as your name or IP address, will be collected. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete.

Benefits of the Study

This survey will expand what we know about the habits and preferences of the Tolkien fan fiction community, a long-standing community that has received relatively little attention from media studies scholars who focus on fandom and fan fiction. The results will contribute to our understanding of this community and a deeper understanding of Tolkien fandom history.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no risks to your participation in the survey. The survey does ask questions that may be uncomfortable for some participants, such as about fandom and sexuality or reviewing habits. No identifying information is being collected, and you are free to skip any questions that you are uncomfortable answering.

Confidentiality

Your responses are completely confidential. The survey does not collect your IP address. You are not asked to provide your name, email address, or other identifying information, including information (such as national origin) that may be combined with other data to identify participants. You may skip any questions, including those requesting demographic information.

Decision to Quit at Any Time

Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this survey at any time. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the "submit" button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. You also may choose to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.



How the Data Will Be Used

Data gathered will be used in a paper about Tolkien fan fiction presented at the Mythmoot III conference. The data may also be used in future papers or presentations about the Tolkien fan fiction community. The data will be made available to other researchers who wish to use it.

Contact Information

If you have concerns or questions about the survey, you may contact the primary investigator Dawn Walls-Thumma at DWallsThumma@gmail.com.

By beginning the survey, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.



Do you read and/or write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past? YES NO

An answer of YES allows the participant to proceed with the survey. An answer of NO discontinues the survey and redirects the participant to a page thanking them for their participation.

What is your age? _____

What is your gender? _____

Do you write Tolkien-based fan fiction, or have you done so in the past? YES NO

An answer of YES allows the participant access to questions for Tolkien fanfic writers.

For how many years have you been writing Tolkien-based fan fiction? _____

Approximately how many works of Tolkien-based fan fiction have you written? _____

Approximately how many of these works have you shared publicly or semi-publicly online? _____

Do you write fan fiction for other fandoms? YES NO

Please list other fandoms you write or have written for. _____

If you write fan fiction for other fandoms, would you define the Tolkien fandom as your primary fandom?

YES

NO

I do not write for other fandoms.

Which sites have you used or do you use to post Tolkien-based fan fiction? Please check all that apply.

Adult-Fanfiction.org
Archive of Our Own (AO3)
Axe and Bow
Borderland
Dreamwidth
Elf Fetish
Faerie
Fanfiction.net
Faramir Fiction Archive
Henneth-Annûn Story Archive
Last Ship
Library of Moria
LiveJournal
LOTRFanfiction.com
Many Paths to Tread
Mirrormere
Naice a Nilme
Of Elves and Men
Open Scrolls Archive
Parma Eruseen
Quills and Ink
Silmarillion Writers' Guild



Skyehawke
Stories of Arda
The Trees Remember
Tolkien Fan Fiction
Tumblr
West of the Moon
Yahoo! Groups
Other _____

What sources do you base your fan fiction on? Check all that apply.

The Hobbit
The Lord of the Rings
The Silmarillion
The History of Middle-earth
Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* movies
Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* movies
Other _____

Select the best option with respect to your experiences writing Tolkien-based fan fiction.

I have learned more about Tolkien's world by writing fan fiction.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I take my writing seriously when writing Tolkien-based fan fiction.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me develop cultures that Tolkien didn't fully develop.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I identify myself as a genfic writer.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't feel welcome there.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me see the story from points of view not used in Tolkien's books.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Feedback from other fans has helped me to improve my writing.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction is a form of escape for me.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me express my views or interpretations of Tolkien's world.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction has helped me to feel like I am part of a community.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



I enjoy creating original characters in my fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I identify myself as a femslash writer.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about characters Tolkien didn't focus on.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Tolkien's realistic world-building encourages me to write fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Sometimes writing fan fiction causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of female characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I have a site or archive that I view as my Tolkien fandom home.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I write fan fiction to create stories that I know other fans would like to see.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Fan fiction has encouraged me to write original fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

It is important to keep my stories consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction has helped me to improve as a writer.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to feel like I am extending the story in new directions.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction has helped me to make new friends.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Fan fiction has encouraged me to read texts by Tolkien that I might not have read otherwise.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I write fan fiction to entertain myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I identify myself as a het writer.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to form my own opinions about Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that I see in Tolkien's books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



Peter Jackson's movies have encouraged me to write Tolkien-based fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Tolkien's characters inspire me to write fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of characters of color.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to better understand the characters in Tolkien's works.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I write fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I write fan fiction as a way to give something back to the Tolkien fan community.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to interpret or analyze Tolkien's books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I am realizing Tolkien's dream of creating a realistic myth.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me fix parts of the story that I think Tolkien did wrong.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about the cultures of Arda.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction has given me more confidence socially.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

The gaps Tolkien left in his stories are an inspiration for me to write fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of LGBTQ+ characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



I use characters, details, or interpretations developed by other fan fiction writers in my fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Fan fiction has encouraged me to do more research on Tolkien's world than I would have done otherwise.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me develop characters that Tolkien didn't fully develop.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I identify myself as a slash writer.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in Peter Jackson's movies.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to see connections within Tolkien's universe.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy writing fan fiction to explore fun or silly scenarios.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy writing crossovers (stories that combine Tolkien's world with the fictional world of another author).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

When writing fan fiction, it is important to me to stick to the facts that Tolkien gave in his books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to connect with others who have a deep understanding of Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me relate Tolkien's world to my own experiences.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me criticize Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Comments from and interactions with other fans encourage me to write fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

It is important to me to write stories that I think Tolkien would have approved of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me explore what relationships might have been like between characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction has helped me to become a more confident writer.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy pairing characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in other fan fiction writers' portrayals of Tolkien's world and characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I write fan fiction because it is how I express my love for Tolkien's books and his world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me explore racial and cultural relations in Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me tell the story how I wish it had been told.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't agree with the approach writers there tend to take toward Tolkien's books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me explore gender and sexual roles in Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy using popular fan interpretations or fanon in my fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy trying to combine Tolkien's universe with our real-world history.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me try out alternate storylines or endings.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction helps to keep Tolkien's world and his vision alive.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Writing fan fiction lets me add sexuality to Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Do you read Tolkien-based fan fiction? YES NO

An answer of YES allows the participant access to questions for Tolkien fanfic writers.

Approximately how many hours per week do you spend reading Tolkien-based fan fiction? _____

Do you leave comments or other feedback on Tolkien-based fan fiction stories? YES NO

Estimate the percentage of Tolkien-based fan fiction stories that you leave comments or other feedback on. _____

Do you read fan fiction for other fandoms? YES NO



If you write fan fiction for other fandoms, would you define the Tolkien fandom as your primary fandom?

YES

NO

I do not write for other fandoms.

Please list other fandoms you read fan fiction for. _____

Which sites have you used or do you use to read Tolkien-based fan fiction? Please check all that apply.

Adult-Fanfiction.org
Archive of Our Own (AO3)
Axe and Bow
Dreamwidth
Elf Fetish
Faerie
Fanfiction.net
Faramir Fiction Archive
Henneth-Annun Story Archive
Last Ship
Library of Moria
LiveJournal
LOTRFanfiction.com
Many Paths to Tread
Mirrormere
Naice a Nilme
Of Elves and Men
Open Scrolls Archive
Parma Eruseen
Quills and Ink
Silmarillion Writers' Guild
Skyehawke
Stories of Arda
The Trees Remember
Tolkien Fan Fiction
Tumblr
West of the Moon
Yahoo! Groups
Other _____

Select the best option with respect to your experiences reading Tolkien-based fan fiction.

I have learned more about Tolkien's world by reading fan fiction.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories that are consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading fan fiction about characters of color.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



I enjoy reading slash stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I think it is appropriate to leave constructive criticism in public comments on stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories with original characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Most Tolkien fan fiction is of a poor quality.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

There are sites or archives where I don't read because I don't agree with the approach writers there tend to take toward Tolkien's books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the cultures of Arda.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like stories that explore fun or silly scenarios.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I try to comment or leave some form of feedback on most of the stories I read.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy reading het stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Fan fiction has encouraged me to read texts by Tolkien that I might not have read otherwise.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories about characters that Tolkien didn't focus on.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I will read a story if the summary sounds interesting.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

A lot of Tolkien fan fiction is good enough to be published.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I rarely or never comment on the stories I read.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories that criticize Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I have a site or archive that I view as my Tolkien fandom home.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the relationships between characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



There are sites or archives where I don't read because I don't feel welcome there.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories based on Peter Jackson's movies.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction is a form of escape for me.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I sometimes want to leave a comment but am not sure what to say.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading fan fiction about female characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories that try out alternate storylines or endings.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I have flamed or harshly and publicly criticized a story I didn't like.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading fan fiction that addresses social justice issues such as racial and gender equality.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Commenting on stories I've read has allowed me to make new friends.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I read fan fiction for entertainment.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories that don't stray too far from the details that Tolkien gave us in the books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I hope the comments I leave on stories help the writers to improve.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading crossovers (stories that combine Tolkien's world with the fictional world of another author).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Most Tolkien fan fiction is well written.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



I like reading stories that fix parts of the story that the author thinks Tolkien did wrong.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I hope the comments I leave on stories encourage the writers to keep writing.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I will read a story if it was written by a friend.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Sometimes reading fan fiction causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien's world.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy reading femslash stories.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories that fill in the gaps in Tolkien's stories.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I think it's important for readers to leave comments and other feedback on the stories they read.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories that develop Tolkien's characters in new and surprising ways.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I read fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories that challenge Tolkien's worldview.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

When I comment publicly on fanfiction, I only say nice things about the story.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like stories that pair characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Too much Tolkien fan fiction uses popular fan interpretations or fanon.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Commenting on stories I've read has helped me to deepen my understanding of Tolkien's world.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I will choose to read a story if it is about a character, pairing, or time period I enjoy.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories that correct or criticize the Peter Jackson movies.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading fan fiction about LGBTQ+ characters.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



I have left one-click feedback such as likes or kudos on stories I enjoyed.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I read fan fiction because I like seeing the different ways that fans view and interpret Tolkien's books.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction helps me to see connections within Tolkien's universe.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I think that more sites should have rules about the quality of fan fiction they accept.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Commenting on stories I've read has allowed me to feel like part of a community.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories that have an unusual or thought-provoking interpretation of Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I want to leave comments and other feedback more often on the stories I read.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories that explore what sexuality might have been like in Tolkien's world.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I sometimes want to leave a comment but think that my comment might not mean much to the writer.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Fan fiction has encouraged me to do more research on Tolkien's world than I would have done otherwise.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Commenting on stories is a way to give something back to the authors.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like to read stories that explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts. .

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I enjoy reading genfic stories.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

I like reading stories that correct or criticize popular fan interpretations of Tolkien's world and characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure

Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the characters.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree No Opinion/Not Sure



Appendix B: Additional Fandoms Listed by Participants

Data is for authors only (n = 478) and is alphabetical by fandom.

Fandom	# Responses	Type
13 th Warrior	1	Film
3:10 to Yuma	1	Film
50 Shades of Grey	1	Book/media
9	1	Film
A Dangerous Method	1	Film
A Posse of Princesses	1	Book
A Separate Peace	1	Book
A Song for Arbonne	1	Book
A Song of Ice and Fire/Game of Thrones	31	Book/media
Actor RPF	2	RPF
Adam-12	1	Show
Adventure Time	1	Show
Agent Carter	1	Show
Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.	1	Show
Alan Furst books	1	Book
Aldnoah.Zero	1	Anime/manga
Alex Rider	2	Book
Alexander/Alexander the Great	2	Film
Alice in Wonderland	1	Book/media
Aliens	1	Film
Almighty Johnsons	1	Show
Amelia Peabody	1	Book
Andromeda	1	Show
Anita Blake	2	Book
Anne of Green Gables	2	Book
Anne Rice books	2	Book/media
Arc the Lad	1	Video game
Archy and Mehitabel	1	Book
Arrow	2	Show
Artemis Fowl series	1	Book
Arthurian Legend	5	Myth/folklore
Assassin's Creed	2	Video game
Avatar (ATLA/LOK)	16	Show
Avengers	28	Comic/media
Ayakashi	1	Anime/manga
Babylon 5	5	Show
Band of Brothers	2	Show
Bandom	3	RPF
Batman/Dark Knight	11	Comic/media
Battle of the Planets	1	Anime
Battlestar Galactica	5	Show
Beast Wars	1	Show
Being Human	3	Show
Belgariad/Mallorean	2	Book
Bible	1	Myth/folklore



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Black Hawk Down	1	Film
Black Jack	1	Unknown
Black Jewels series	1	Book
Black Sails	1	Show
Blackadder	2	Show
Blake's 7	4	Show
Bleach	12	Anime/manga
Bonanza	1	Show
Borderlands	2	Video game
Bourne series	1	Film
Braveheart	1	Film
Breaking Bad	1	Show
Bridget Jones' Diary	1	Film
Broadchurch	1	Show
Brokeback Mountain	2	Film
Brother Cadfael	1	Book
Brothers and Sisters	1	Show
Brokeback Mountain	1	Film
Bubblegum Crisis	1	Anime/manga
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	9	Show
Cabin Pressure	4	Radio series
Calvin & Hobbes	1	Comic
Captain America	7	Comic/media
Card Captor	2	Anime/manga
Carmilla	1	Book
Carnivale	1	Show
Castle	1	Show
Castlevania	1	Show
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2	Book/media
Child Ballads	1	Myth/folklore
Christopher Paolini books	13	Book
Christy (Catherine Marshal)	1	Book
Chronicles of Amber	3	Book
Chronicles of Narnia	23	Book/media
Chronicles of Prydain	1	Book
Chronicles of Riddick	1	Film
Chuck	1	Show
Cirque du Freak	1	Film
City of Ember	1	Book/media
Clive Cussler books	1	Book
Cloud Atlas	1	Book/media
Command and Conquer	1	Video game
Cosmere	1	Book
Criminal Minds	8	Show
Crusade	1	Show
CSI	1	Show
Cyteen	2	Book
D.Gray-man	2	Anime/manga
Damar series	1	Book
Dan and Phil	1	RPF
Danny Phantom	1	Show
Darkborn Trilogy	1	Book



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Darker than BLACK	1	Anime/manga
DC Comics	5	Comic
Death Note	8	Anime/manga
Demon Souls/Dark Souls	1	Video game
Deryni Chronicles	1	Book
Desperado	1	Film
Dexter	1	Show
Diana Wynne Jones books	2	Book
Digimon	2	Anime/manga
Dinotopia	1	Show
Discworld	4	Book
Dishonored	1	Video game
Disney	2	Film
Divergent	2	Book/media
Doctor Who	48	Show
Don't Starve	1	Video game
Dorian Gray	1	Film
Downton Abbey	1	Show
Dragon Age	24	Video game
Dragonball Z	1	Anime/manga
Anne McCaffrey books	4	Book
Dresden Files	1	Book
Dune	1	Book
Dungeons and Dragons	2	Game
Durarara!!	1	Book/media
Elder Scrolls	5	Video game
Elementary	1	Show
Elfquest	1	Comic
Elric of Melnibone	2	Book
Emergency!	1	Show
Endeavour	1	Show
Equilibrium	1	Film
Er Ya's Danmei	1	Unknown
Eternal Dungeon	1	Video game
Eyeshield 21	1	Anime/manga
Fable	2	Video game
Fae Tales	1	Book
Fairies	1	Myth/folklore
Fairy Tail	1	Anime/manga
Fairy Tales – nonspecific	2	Myth/folklore
Farscape	2	Show
Fight Club	1	Film
Figure Skating	1	RPF
Final Fantasy	24	Video game
Fire Emblem	2	Video game
Fire's Stone	1	Book
Firefly	10	Show
Five Little Peppers	1	Book
Forever Knight	2	Show
Forgotten Realms	2	Game
Frozen	2	Film
Fruits Basket	1	Anime/manga



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Fry and Laurie	1	Show
Fullmetal Alchemist	6	Anime
Fushigi Yuugi	2	Anime/manga
Gakuen Alice	1	Anime/manga
Georgette Heyer	1	Book
GetBackers	1	Anime/manga
Ghost Hunt	1	Anime/manga
Good Omens	8	Book
John Norman books	1	Book
Gorillaz	1	Multi
Gotham	1	Show
Grey's Anatomy	1	Show
Grimm	1	Show
Gundam Wing	10	Anime/manga
H.P. Lovecraft	1	Book
Haikyuu	1	Anime/manga
Hairspray	1	Film
Hakuouki: Demon of the Fleeting Blossom	1	Video game
Half-Life	1	Video game
Hanna Is Not a Boy's Name	1	Comic
Hannibal	12	Show
Hard Candy	1	Film
Hardy Boys	1	Book
Harry Potter	160	Book/media
Hawaii 5-0	2	Show
Hayate the Combat Butler	1	Anime/manga
Hellboy	1	Comic/media
Hellsing	1	Anime/manga
Hetalia	17	Anime/manga
Highlander	5	Show
Hikaru no Go	2	Anime/manga
His Dark Materials	3	Book
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy	1	Book
Hockey RPF	1	RPF
Homestuck	7	Comic
Horatio Hornblower	3	Book/media
House MD	1	Show
How to Get Away with Murder	1	Show
How to Train Your Dragon	2	Film
Hunger Games	9	Book/media
Hunter x Hunter	1	Anime/manga
iCarly	1	Show
In the Flesh	2	Show
Inception	1	Film
Inglorious Basterds	1	Film
Inuyasha	11	Anime/manga
Iron Fey	2	Book
Ironman	1	Comic/media
JAG	1	Show
Jak and Daxter	1	Video game
James Bond	3	Film
Jane Austen	4	Book



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Jane Eyre	1	Book
Jeeves & Wooster	2	Show
Jeremiah	1	Show
John Buchan – Hannay	1	Book/media
J-Rock	1	RPF
Jules Verne books	2	Book
Jurassic Park	1	Film
Justice League	1	Comic/media
Kamen Rider Kabuto	1	Show
Katekyo Hitman Reborn	4	Anime/manga
Kindred: The Embraced	1	Show
Kingdom Hearts	6	Video game
K-Pop	3	RPF
Kung Fu	1	Unknown
Kuroko no Basuke	2	Anime/manga
Kuroshitsuji/Black Butler	2	Anime/manga
Kya Kara Maoh	1	Anime/manga
L.I.E.	1	Unknown
Labyrinth	3	Film
Last of the Mohicans	1	Book/media
Latter Days	1	Show
Law and Order: SVU	1	Show
Lawrence of Arabia	1	Film
Legacy of Kain	1	Video game
Legend of the Galactic Heroes	1	Anime/manga
Legend of the Seeker	1	Show
Legend of Zelda	4	Video game
Lego Movie	1	Film
Les Miserables	12	Book/media
Leverage	3	Show
Lewis	1	Show
Lexx	1	Show
Life on Mars	1	Show
Lion in Winter	1	Film
Little Dorrit	1	Book
Little House on the Prairie	1	Book
Little Mermaid	2	Film
Lois McMaster Bujold books	5	Book
Lonesome Dove	1	Show
Lord John Grey series	2	Book/media
Lord Peter Wimsey	3	Book
Lost	2	Show
LotR RPF	3	RPF
Love Live!	1	Anime/manga
Macron I	1	Unknown
Mad Men	1	Show
Magnificent Seven	2	Film
Mahabharata (Mythology – Hindu)	1	Myth/folklore
Mai Hime	1	Anime/manga
Major	1	Unknown
Mamur Zapt	1	Book
Marauders	1	Movie



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Marvel/MCU	81	Comic/media
Mary Renault books	6	Book
Mass Effect	7	Video game
Maze Runner	2	Book/media
Mercedes Lackey books	3	Book
Merlin	15	Show
Metal Gear Solid	1	Video game
Mighty Boosh	1	RPF
Mighty Ducks	1	Film
Minecraft	1	Video game
Mistborn	1	Video game
Mob City	1	Show
Moby Dick	1	Book
Monk	1	Show
Moonlight	1	Film
Motorcity	1	Show
Mutant X	1	Show
MyMusic	1	Show
Mythology – Egyptian	1	Myth/folklore
Mythology – Finnish	1	Myth/folklore
Mythology – Graeco-Roman	6	Myth/folklore
Mythology – Norse	2	Myth/folklore
Mythology – Polynesian	1	Myth/folklore
Nancy Drew	1	Book
Nanoha	1	Anime/manga
Naruto	34	Anime/manga
NCIS	4	Show
Neil Gaiman books	1	Book
Night World	1	Book
Nightmare Before Christmas	1	Film
Nightwalker	1	Anime/manga
Nimona	1	Comic
No Night Is Too Long	1	Film
North and South	1	Show
Numb3rs	1	Show
Oblivion	1	Film
Offspring	1	Show
Once Upon a Time	7	Show
One Piece	7	Anime/manga
Opera – nonspecific	1	Stage production
Ouran High School Host Club	3	Anime/manga
Over the Garden Wall	1	Show
P.G. Wodehouse books	1	Book
Pacific Rim	11	Film
Pandora Hearts	1	Anime/manga
Paranorman	1	Film
Parasol Protectorate	1	Book
Peacemaker Kurogane	1	Anime/manga
Rick Riordan books	10	Book/media
Person of Interest	1	Show
Persona	1	Video game
Peter Pan	3	Book/media



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Petshop of Horrors	1	Anime/manga
Phantom of the Opera	8	Stage production
Phoenix Wright	1	Video game
Pirates of the Caribbean	16	Film
Points series	1	Unknown
Pokemon	7	Video game
Portal	2	Video game
Press Gang	1	Show
Pretty Little Liars	1	Show
Pride and Prejudice and Zombies	1	Book
Prince of Tennis	8	Anime/manga
Princess Mononoke	1	Anime/manga
Princess Tutu	2	Anime/manga
Professor Layton	1	Video game
Prometheus	1	Film
Psych	1	Show
Puella Magi Madoka Magica	1	Anime/manga
Pushing Daisies	1	Show
Quantum Leap	1	Show
Queer as Folk	3	Show
Ragnarok Online	1	Video game
Rai-Kirah	1	Book
Ranger's Apprentice	1	Book
Ranma ½	1	Anime/manga
Real Ghostbusters	1	Show
Realm of the Elderlings	2	Book
RED	1	Film
Redwall	1	Book
Reign	1	Show
Revolution NBC	1	Show
Rise of the Guardians	4	Film
Rivers of London	2	Book
Robin Hood/Robin of Sherwood	5	Myth/folklore
Rome	2	Show
Rosemary Sutcliff books	1	Book
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead	1	Stage production
Roswell	1	Show
RPF	4	RPF
RPS (football)	1	RPF
Rudyard Kipling books	1	Book
Ruroni Kenshin	2	Anime/manga
Sacura Taisen/Sakura	3	Video game
Sailor Moon	8	Anime/manga
Saint Seiya	1	Anime/manga
Saiyuki	2	Anime/manga
Sanctuary	1	Show
Sandman	3	Comic
Santa Clause	1	Film
Saw	1	Film
Scandal	1	Show
Sekai Ichi Hatskoi	1	Anime/manga
Shakespeare	6	Book/media



Fandom	# Responses	Type
Sherlock	67	Show
Shingeki no Kyojin	3	Anime/manga
Shrek	1	Film
Siewca Wiatru	1	Book
Skyrim	3	Video game
Slave Breakers	1	Book
Sleepy Hollow	2	Book/media
Slender	1	Multi
Smallville	1	Show
Snow White	1	Film
Snowpiercer	1	Film
Sonic	1	Video game
Sons of Anarchy	1	Show
South Park	2	Show
Southern Vampire Mysteries/True Blood	3	Book/media
Sparkhouse	1	Show
Spooks	1	Show
Star Fox	1	Video game
Star Trek	60	Show
Star Wars	40	Show
Stargate	18	Show
Starkid	1	Stage production
Steven Universe	1	Show
Studio 60 on Sunset Strip	1	Show
Suikoden	1	Video game
Suits	1	Show
Supernatural	48	Show
Swallows and Amazons	1	Film
Ellen Kushner books	6	Book
Tales of Symphonia	1	Video game
Tales of Xillia	1	Video game
Tamora Pierce books	2	Book
Teen Titans	1	Show
Teen Wolf	11	Show
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	3	Film
Temeraire	2	Book
Tenchi Muyo	2	Anime/manga
Terminator	1	Film
The 100	1	Show
The Banner Saga	1	Video game
The Beatles	1	RPF
The Black Magician	1	Book
The Boondock Saints	1	Film
The Borgias	1	Show
The Cell	1	Film
The Dark Is Rising	3	Book
The Dwarves	1	Video game
The Eagle	2	Film
The Edge Chronicles	1	Book
The Faculty	1	Film
The Fall	2	Show
The Giver	1	Book/media



Fandom	# Responses	Type
The Killing	1	Show
The Legends of Alfar	1	Book
The Librarians	1	Show
The Lost Boys	1	Film
The Matrix	1	Film
The Monkees	1	RPF
The Mortal Instruments	1	Book
The Mummy	3	Film
The Name of the Rose	1	Book
The Old Kingdom	2	Book
The Pretender	2	Show
The Princess and the Goblin	1	Film
The Professionals	2	Show
The Sarah Jane Adventures	1	Show
The Scarlet Pimpernell	2	Book
The Secret Garden	1	Book
The Sentinel	3	Film
The Tudors	2	Show
The Walking Dead	7	Show
The Watchmen	1	Comic/media
The Wire	1	Show
The Witcher	2	Video game
Thor	12	Comic/media
Three Musketeers	3	Book/media
Thunder Cats	1	Show
Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy	1	Film
Titanic	1	Film
Tomb Raider	1	Video game
Torchwood	11	Show
Tortall	1	Book
Touched by an Angel	1	Show
Tour of Duty	1	Show
Transformers	7	Film
Trebizon Series	1	Book
Trinity Blood	2	Anime/manga
Tron	3	Film
Troy	1	Film
Tsubasa Reservoir	2	Anime/manga
Twilight	9	Book/media
Twin Peaks	1	Show
Umineko no naku koro ni	1	Anime/manga
Ursula LeGuin books	4	Book
Utena	1	Anime/manga
V for Vendetta	1	Film
Vampire Diaries	2	Show
Vampire Knights	1	Anime/manga
Velvet Goldmine	1	Film
Veronica Mars	1	Show
Vertigo Comics	1	Comic
Vikings	3	Show
Vocaloid	1	Software
Waking the Dead	1	Show



Data on Tolkien Fanfiction Culture and Practices

Fandom	# Responses	Type
Warehouse 13	2	Show
Warriors	1	Show
Watership Down	2	Book
Welcome to Night Vale	5	Radio series
Wheel of Time	1	Book
White Collar	1	Show
Winter Blue, a Fairy Child	1	Unknown
Withnail and I	2	Film
Wolf's Rain	2	Anime/manga
World War Z	1	Film
Storm Constantine books	4	Book
Xena: Warrior Princess	1	Show
Xenosaga	1	Video game
X-Files	7	Show
X-Men	17	Comic/media
Young Justice	2	Show
Young Wizards	2	Book
Yowamushi Pedal	1	Anime/manga
Yu Yu Hakusho	7	Anime/manga
Zorro	1	Book/media



Appendix C: Data for Selected-Response Survey Items

Items are listed in the order they were presented on the survey.

I have learned more about Tolkien's world by writing fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	366	57.8
Agree	210	33.2
Disagree	20	3.2
Strongly Disagree	7	1.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	30	4.7
	633	

I take my writing seriously when writing Tolkien-based fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	354	55.9
Agree	239	37.8
Disagree	10	1.6
Strongly Disagree	2	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	28	4.4
	633	

Writing fan fiction lets me develop cultures that Tolkien didn't fully develop.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	302	47.3
Agree	244	38.2
Disagree	24	3.8
Strongly Disagree	4	0.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	65	10.2
	639	

I identify myself as a genfic writer.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	78	12.2%
Agree	170	26.6%
Disagree	125	19.6%
Strongly Disagree	38	5.95%
No Opinion/Not Sure	228	35.7%
	639	



There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't feel welcome there.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	58	9.12
Agree	134	21.1
Disagree	140	22.0
Strongly Disagree	57	8.96
No Opinion/Not Sure	247	38.8
<hr/>		
	636	

Writing fan fiction lets me see the story from points of view not used in Tolkien's books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	415	64.7
Agree	201	31.4
Disagree	3	0.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	22	3.4
<hr/>		
	641	

Feedback from other fans has helped me to improve my writing.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	246	38.9
Agree	251	39.7
Disagree	36	5.7
Strongly Disagree	2	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	97	15.3
<hr/>		
	632	

Writing fan fiction is a form of escape for me.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	316	49.5
Agree	229	35.9
Disagree	39	6.11
Strongly Disagree	10	1.57
No Opinion/Not Sure	44	6.90
<hr/>		
	638	

Writing fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	78	12.2%
Agree	153	24.0%
Disagree	175	27.5%
Strongly Disagree	83	13.0%
No Opinion/Not Sure	148	23.2%
<hr/>		
	637	

Writing fan fiction lets me express my views or interpretations of Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	341	54.2
Agree	258	41.0
Disagree	4	0.6
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	26	4.1
<hr/>		
	629	

Writing fan fiction has helped me to feel like I am part of a community.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	254	39.7
Agree	249	39.0
Disagree	43	6.7
Strongly Disagree	4	0.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	89	13.9
<hr/>		
	639	

I enjoy creating original characters in my fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	157	24.9
Agree	223	35.3
Disagree	124	19.7
Strongly Disagree	35	5.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	92	14.6
<hr/>		
	631	

I identify myself as a femslash writer.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	21	3.32%
Agree	85	13.4%
Disagree	238	37.6%
Strongly Disagree	156	24.6%
No Opinion/Not Sure	133	21.0%
<hr/>		
	633	

Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about characters Tolkien didn't focus on.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	376	58.9
Agree	235	36.8
Disagree	10	1.6
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	17	2.7
<hr/>		
	638	

Tolkien's realistic world-building encourages me to write fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	336	52.6
Agree	228	35.7
Disagree	29	4.5
Strongly Disagree	6	0.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	40	6.3
		639

Sometimes writing fan fiction causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	30	4.8
Agree	227	36.0
Disagree	219	34.7
Strongly Disagree	56	8.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	99	15.7
		631

Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of female characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	222	35.0
Agree	275	43.3
Disagree	37	5.8
Strongly Disagree	14	2.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	87	13.7
		635

I have a site or archive that I view as my Tolkien fandom home.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	175	27.4
Agree	238	37.3
Disagree	105	16.5
Strongly Disagree	9	1.41
No Opinion/Not Sure	111	17.4
		638

I write fan fiction to create stories that I know other fans would like to see.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	77	12.2
Agree	243	38.6
Disagree	175	27.7
Strongly Disagree	33	5.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	102	16.2
		630

Fan fiction has encouraged me to write original fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	154	24.4
Agree	224	35.5
Disagree	127	20.1
Strongly Disagree	25	4.0
No Opinion/Not Sure	101	16.0
	631	

It is important to keep my stories consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	49	7.7
Agree	88	13.8
Disagree	220	34.4
Strongly Disagree	178	27.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	105	16.4
	640	

Writing fan fiction has helped me to improve as a writer.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	393	62.0
Agree	215	33.9
Disagree	5	0.8
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	20	3.2
	634	

Writing fan fiction helps me to feel like I am extending the story in new directions.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	270	42.3
Agree	305	47.7
Disagree	21	3.3
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	43	6.7
	639	

Writing fan fiction has helped me to make new friends.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	281	44.0
Agree	206	32.3
Disagree	55	8.6
Strongly Disagree	10	1.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	86	13.5
	638	

Fan fiction has encouraged me to read texts by Tolkien that I might not have read otherwise.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	241	38.2
Agree	221	35.0
Disagree	102	16.2
Strongly Disagree	29	4.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	38	6.0
		<hr/>
		631

I write fan fiction to entertain myself.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	372	58.9
Agree	241	38.1
Disagree	8	1.3
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	10	1.6
		<hr/>
		632

I identify myself as a het writer.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	41	6.46%
Agree	142	22.4%
Disagree	168	26.5%
Strongly Disagree	85	13.4%
No Opinion/Not Sure	199	31.3%
		<hr/>
		635

Writing fan fiction helps me to form my own opinions about Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	211	33.5
Agree	347	55.1
Disagree	25	4.0
Strongly Disagree	3	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	44	7.0
		<hr/>
		630

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct problems with race, gender, and sexuality that I see in Tolkien's books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	196	30.8
Agree	198	31.1
Disagree	102	16.0
Strongly Disagree	36	5.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	105	16.5
		<hr/>
		637

Peter Jackson's movies have encouraged me to write Tolkien-based fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	221	34.7
Agree	232	36.5
Disagree	86	13.5
Strongly Disagree	58	9.12
No Opinion/Not Sure	39	6.13
<hr/>		
	636	

Writing fan fiction lets me explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	144	22.9
Agree	313	49.8
Disagree	58	9.2
Strongly Disagree	9	1.4
No Opinion/Not Sure	104	16.6
<hr/>		
	628	

Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	382	60.5
Agree	204	32.3
Disagree	12	1.9
Strongly Disagree	3	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	30	4.8
<hr/>		
	631	

Tolkien's characters inspire me to write fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	411	64.3
Agree	209	32.7
Disagree	5	0.8
Strongly Disagree	2	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	12	1.9
<hr/>		
	639	

Fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of characters of color.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	105	16.6
Agree	161	25.4
Disagree	89	14.0
Strongly Disagree	21	3.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	258	40.7
<hr/>		
	634	

Writing fan fiction helps me to better understand the characters in Tolkien's works.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	248	39.5
Agree	318	50.6
Disagree	18	2.9
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	43	6.8
		628

I write fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	346	55.1
Agree	192	30.6
Disagree	45	7.2
Strongly Disagree	5	0.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	40	6.4
		628

I write fan fiction as a way to give something back to the Tolkien fan community.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	107	17.0
Agree	233	36.9
Disagree	139	22.0
Strongly Disagree	21	3.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	131	20.8
		631

Writing fan fiction helps me to interpret or analyze Tolkien's books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	183	29.1
Agree	307	48.9
Disagree	57	9.1
Strongly Disagree	5	0.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	76	12.1
		628

Writing fan fiction lets me feel like I am realizing Tolkien's dream of creating a realistic myth.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	111	17.6
Agree	222	35.3
Disagree	106	16.9
Strongly Disagree	22	3.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	168	2.7
		629

Writing fan fiction lets me fix parts of the story that I think Tolkien did wrong.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	100	15.7
Agree	161	25.2
Disagree	182	28.5
Strongly Disagree	81	12.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	114	17.9
638		

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	113	17.8
Agree	178	28.0
Disagree	121	19.1
Strongly Disagree	55	8.66
No Opinion/Not Sure	168	26.5
635		

Writing fan fiction lets me see more and learn more about the cultures of Arda.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	236	37.5
Agree	334	53.1
Disagree	16	2.5
Strongly Disagree	2	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	41	6.5
629		

Writing fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	176	28.0
Agree	275	43.8
Disagree	78	12.4
Strongly Disagree	12	1.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	87	13.9
628		

Writing fan fiction has given me more confidence socially.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	56	8.8
Agree	172	27.0
Disagree	189	29.7
Strongly Disagree	33	5.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	186	29.2
636		

Writing fan fiction lets me challenge Tolkien's worldview.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	97	15.3
Agree	234	36.8
Disagree	115	18.1
Strongly Disagree	44	6.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	146	23.0
		636

The gaps Tolkien left in his stories are an inspiration for me to write fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	316	49.9
Agree	271	42.8
Disagree	20	3.2
Strongly Disagree	3	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	23	3.6
		633

Writing fan fiction allows me to explore the perspectives of LGBTQ+ characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	208	32.9
Agree	172	27.2
Disagree	51	8.1
Strongly Disagree	43	6.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	159	25.1
		633

I use characters, details, or interpretations developed by other fan fiction writers in my fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	115	18.1
Agree	325	51.1
Disagree	89	14.0
Strongly Disagree	39	6.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	68	10.7
		636

Fan fiction has encouraged me to do more research on Tolkien's world than I would have done otherwise.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	324	51.4
Agree	227	36.0
Disagree	49	7.8
Strongly Disagree	14	2.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	17	2.7
		630

Writing fan fiction lets me develop characters that Tolkien didn't fully develop.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	325	51.1
Agree	265	41.7
Disagree	18	2.8
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	27	4.2
<hr/>		
	636	

I identify myself as a slash writer.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	138	21.7%
Agree	160	25.2%
Disagree	125	19.7%
Strongly Disagree	93	14.6%
No Opinion/Not Sure	120	18.9%
<hr/>		
	636	

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in Peter Jackson's movies.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	148	23.3
Agree	186	29.3
Disagree	129	20.3
Strongly Disagree	31	4.89
No Opinion/Not Sure	140	22.1
<hr/>		
	634	

Writing fan fiction helps me to see connections within Tolkien's universe.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	210	33.5
Agree	334	53.3
Disagree	18	2.9
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	64	10.2
<hr/>		
	627	

I like stories that explore fun or silly scenarios.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	259	25.2
Agree	555	54.0
Disagree	110	10.7
Strongly Disagree	28	2.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	75	7.3
<hr/>		
	1027	

I enjoy writing crossovers (stories that combine Tolkien's world with the fictional world of another author).

	n	%
Strongly Agree	52	8.3
Agree	143	22.8
Disagree	192	30.6
Strongly Disagree	130	20.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	110	17.5
		<hr/>
		627

When writing fan fiction, it is important to me to stick to the facts that Tolkien gave in his books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	90	14.2
Agree	227	35.7
Disagree	168	26.4
Strongly Disagree	60	9.4
No Opinion/Not Sure	91	14.3
		<hr/>
		636

Writing fan fiction helps me to connect with others who have a deep understanding of Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	197	31.0
Agree	307	48.3
Disagree	41	6.46
Strongly Disagree	5	0.787
No Opinion/Not Sure	85	13.4
		<hr/>
		635

Writing fan fiction lets me relate Tolkien's world to my own experiences.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	129	20.6
Agree	275	44.0
Disagree	84	13.4
Strongly Disagree	13	2.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	124	19.8
		<hr/>
		625

Writing fan fiction lets me criticize Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	89	14.0
Agree	229	36.1
Disagree	134	21.1
Strongly Disagree	53	8.36
No Opinion/Not Sure	129	20.3
		<hr/>
		634

Comments from and interactions with other fans encourage me to write fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	264	41.6
Agree	275	43.4
Disagree	28	4.42
Strongly Disagree	3	0.473
No Opinion/Not Sure	64	10.1
	634	

It is important to me to write stories that I think Tolkien would have approved of.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	30	4.7
Agree	66	10.4
Disagree	239	37.6
Strongly Disagree	177	27.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	123	19.4
	635	

Writing fan fiction lets me explore what relationships might have been like between characters.

	N	%
Strongly Agree	351	55.7
Agree	250	39.7
Disagree	10	1.6
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	19	3.0
	630	

Writing fan fiction has helped me to become a more confident writer.

	n	%	% for all participants
Strongly Agree	28	34.1	50.2
Agree	41	50.0	40.7
Disagree	3	3.66	3.00
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0.473
No Opinion/Not Sure	10	12.2	5.68
	82		

I enjoy pairing characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	212	33.3
Agree	186	29.2
Disagree	94	14.8
Strongly Disagree	44	6.92
No Opinion/Not Sure	100	15.7
	636	

Writing fan fiction helps me to correct what I view as mistakes in other fan fiction writers' portrayals of Tolkien's world and characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	87	13.7
Agree	216	34.0
Disagree	155	24.4
Strongly Disagree	63	9.92
No Opinion/Not Sure	114	18.0
		635

I write fan fiction because it is how I express my love for Tolkien's books and his world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	289	46.0
Agree	268	42.7
Disagree	22	3.5
Strongly Disagree	3	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	46	7.3
		628

Writing fan fiction lets me explore racial and cultural relations in Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	176	28.1
Agree	313	49.9
Disagree	32	5.1
Strongly Disagree	3	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	103	16.4
		627

Writing fan fiction lets me tell the story how I wish it had been told.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	131	20.9
Agree	229	36.5
Disagree	133	21.2
Strongly Disagree	37	5.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	98	15.6
		628

There are sites or archives where I don't post my stories because I don't agree with the approach writers there tend to take toward Tolkien's books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	45	7.14
Agree	117	18.6
Disagree	157	24.9
Strongly Disagree	51	8.10
No Opinion/Not Sure	260	41.3
		630

Writing fan fiction lets me explore gender and sexual roles in Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	185	29.6
Agree	271	43.3
Disagree	39	6.2
Strongly Disagree	19	3.0
No Opinion/Not Sure	112	17.9
		626

I enjoy using popular fan interpretations or fanon in my fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	75	11.9
Agree	228	36.1
Disagree	151	23.9
Strongly Disagree	42	6.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	135	21.4
		631

Writing fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	250	40.2
Agree	311	50.0
Disagree	16	2.6
Strongly Disagree	2	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	43	6.9
		622

I enjoy trying to combine Tolkien's universe with our real-world history.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	69	11.0
Agree	164	26.2
Disagree	190	30.3
Strongly Disagree	60	9.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	144	23.0
		627

Writing fan fiction lets me try out alternate storylines or endings.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	250	39.8
Agree	266	42.4
Disagree	54	8.6
Strongly Disagree	13	2.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	45	7.2
		628

Writing fan fiction helps to keep Tolkien's world and his vision alive.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	287	45.6
Agree	254	40.4
Disagree	22	3.5
Strongly Disagree	2	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	64	10.2
		629

Writing fan fiction lets me add sexuality to Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	175	27.6
Agree	227	35.7
Disagree	74	11.7
Strongly Disagree	41	6.46
No Opinion/Not Sure	118	18.6
		635

I have learned more about Tolkien's world by reading fan fiction.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	516	50.3
Agree	388	37.9
Disagree	75	7.3
Strongly Disagree	10	1.0
No Opinion/Not Sure	36	3.5
		1025

I like to read stories that are consistent with Tolkien's moral beliefs.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	90	8.8
Agree	204	20.0
Disagree	292	28.6
Strongly Disagree	137	13.4
No Opinion/Not Sure	299	29.3
		1022

I like reading fan fiction about characters of color.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	280	27.2
Agree	419	40.8
Disagree	30	2.9
Strongly Disagree	8	0.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	291	28.3
		1028

I enjoy reading slash stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	413	40.1%
Agree	340	33.0%
Disagree	88	8.55%
Strongly Disagree	72	7.00%
No Opinion/Not Sure	116	11.3%
	1029	

I think it is appropriate to leave constructive criticism in public comments on stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	210	20.4
Agree	541	52.5
Disagree	91	8.8
Strongly Disagree	22	2.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	166	16.1
	1030	

I like to read stories with original characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	112	10.9
Agree	397	38.7
Disagree	251	24.5
Strongly Disagree	75	7.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	190	18.5
	1025	

Most Tolkien fan fiction is of a poor quality.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	35	3.4
Agree	173	17.0
Disagree	424	41.6
Strongly Disagree	251	24.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	137	13.4
	1020	

There are sites or archives where I don't read because I don't agree with the approach writers there tend to take toward Tolkien's books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	76	7.5
Agree	244	24.0
Disagree	248	24.4
Strongly Disagree	76	7.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	372	36.6
	1016	

Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the cultures of Arda.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	360	35.3
Agree	515	50.5
Disagree	71	7.0
Strongly Disagree	7	0.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	66	6.5
<hr/>		
	1019	

I like stories that explore fun or silly scenarios.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	259	25.2
Agree	555	54.0
Disagree	110	10.7
Strongly Disagree	28	2.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	75	7.3
<hr/>		
	1027	

I try to comment or leave some form of feedback on most of the stories I read.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	139	13.5
Agree	334	32.6
Disagree	356	34.7
Strongly Disagree	71	6.92
No Opinion/Not Sure	126	12.3
<hr/>		
	1026	

I enjoy reading het stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	138	13.5%
Agree	523	51.0%
Disagree	109	10.6%
Strongly Disagree	42	4.10%
No Opinion/Not Sure	213	20.8%
<hr/>		
	1025	

Fan fiction has encouraged me to read texts by Tolkien that I might not have read otherwise.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	241	38.2
Agree	221	35.0
Disagree	102	16.2
Strongly Disagree	29	4.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	38	6.0
<hr/>		
	631	

I like to read stories about characters that Tolkien didn't focus on.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	519	50.9
Agree	434	42.5
Disagree	31	3.0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	36	3.5
<hr/>		
	1020	

I will read a story if the summary sounds interesting.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	510	49.6
Agree	499	48.7
Disagree	7	0.7
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	13	1.3
<hr/>		
	1029	

Reading fan fiction allows me to explore or enjoy my sexuality.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	258	25.4
Agree	311	30.6
Disagree	153	15.0
Strongly Disagree	62	6.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	233	22.9
<hr/>		
	1017	

A lot of Tolkien fan fiction is good enough to be published.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	294	29.0
Agree	382	37.7
Disagree	160	15.8
Strongly Disagree	38	3.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	139	13.7
<hr/>		
	1013	

I rarely or never comment on the stories I read.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	149	14.3
Agree	324	31.7
Disagree	345	33.8
Strongly Disagree	146	14.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	57	5.58
<hr/>		
	1021	

I like reading stories that criticize Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	95	9.4
Agree	324	32.0
Disagree	226	22.3
Strongly Disagree	98	9.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	271	26.7
<hr/>		
1014		

I have a site or archive that I view as my Tolkien fandom home.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	250	24.7
Agree	374	36.9
Disagree	185	18.3
Strongly Disagree	26	2.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	178	17.6
<hr/>		
1013		

Reading fan fiction has helped me gain a better understanding of the relationships between characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	388	38.2
Agree	515	50.7
Disagree	59	5.8
Strongly Disagree	7	0.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	47	4.6
<hr/>		
1016		

There are sites or archives where I don't read because I don't feel welcome there.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	49	4.8
Agree	128	12.7
Disagree	373	37.1
Strongly Disagree	146	14.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	310	30.8
<hr/>		
1006		

I like reading stories based on Peter Jackson's movies.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	242	23.6
Agree	434	42.4
Disagree	146	14.3
Strongly Disagree	82	8.01
No Opinion/Not Sure	120	11.7
<hr/>		
1024		

Reading fan fiction is a form of escape for me.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	541	52.8
Agree	393	38.4
Disagree	41	4.0
Strongly Disagree	11	10.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	38	3.7
<hr/>		
	1024	

I sometimes want to leave a comment but am not sure what to say.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	342	33.4
Agree	455	44.4
Disagree	151	14.7
Strongly Disagree	37	3.61
No Opinion/Not Sure	39	3.81
<hr/>		
	1024	

I like reading fan fiction about female characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	392	38.3
Agree	436	42.6
Disagree	57	5.6
Strongly Disagree	16	1.6
No Opinion/Not Sure	123	12.0
<hr/>		
	1024	

Reading fan fiction lets me feel like I can spend more time in Middle-earth.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	619	60.9
Agree	341	33.5
Disagree	20	2.0
Strongly Disagree	1	0.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	36	3.5
<hr/>		
	1017	

I like reading stories that try out alternate storylines or endings.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	511	50.1
Agree	398	39.1
Disagree	51	5.0
Strongly Disagree	12	1.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	47	4.6
<hr/>		
	1019	

I have flamed or harshly and publicly criticized a story I didn't like.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	6	0.6
Agree	23	2.2
Disagree	163	15.9
Strongly Disagree	806	78.8
No Opinion/Not Sure	25	2.4
<hr/>		
1023		

I like reading fan fiction that addresses social justice issues such as racial and gender equality.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	273	26.8
Agree	438	43.0
Disagree	95	9.3
Strongly Disagree	38	3.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	174	17.1
<hr/>		
1018		

Commenting on stories I've read has allowed me to make new friends.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	165	16.3
Agree	322	31.8
Disagree	183	18.1
Strongly Disagree	46	4.55
No Opinion/Not Sure	295	29.2
<hr/>		
1011		

I enjoy reading stories that use interpretations, details, and characters that were developed by more than one author.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	222	21.9
Agree	514	50.6
Disagree	52	5.1
Strongly Disagree	9	0.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	218	21.5
<hr/>		
1015		

I read fan fiction for entertainment.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	751	73.3
Agree	270	26.3
Disagree	2	0.2
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	2	0.2
<hr/>		
1025		

I like to read stories that don't stray too far from the details that Tolkien gave us in the books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	167	16.5
Agree	395	39.1
Disagree	217	21.5
Strongly Disagree	56	5.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	176	17.4
<hr/>		
	1011	

I hope the comments I leave on stories help the writers to improve.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	230	22.9
Agree	419	41.7
Disagree	44	4.38
Strongly Disagree	6	0.597
No Opinion/Not Sure	306	30.4
<hr/>		
	1005	

I like reading crossovers (stories that combine Tolkien's world with the fictional world of another author).

	n	%
Strongly Agree	97	9.5
Agree	314	30.9
Disagree	265	26.1
Strongly Disagree	190	18.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	151	14.8
<hr/>		
	1017	

Reading fan fiction helps me to connect more deeply to Tolkien's stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	389	38.5
Agree	515	50.9
Disagree	41	4.1
Strongly Disagree	4	0.4
No Opinion/Not Sure	62	6.1
<hr/>		
	1011	

Most Tolkien fan fiction is well written.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	161	16.0
Agree	428	42.4
Disagree	209	20.7
Strongly Disagree	33	3.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	178	17.6
<hr/>		
	1009	

I like reading stories that fix parts of the story that the author thinks Tolkien did wrong.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	155	15.4
Agree	394	39.0
Disagree	161	16.0
Strongly Disagree	51	5.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	248	24.6
<hr/>		
	1009	

I hope the comments I leave on stories encourage the writers to keep writing.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	481	47.5
Agree	359	35.5
Disagree	6	0.593
Strongly Disagree	1	0.0988
No Opinion/Not Sure	165	16.3
<hr/>		
	1012	

I will read a story if it was written by a friend.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	319	31.2
Agree	547	53.6
Disagree	45	4.4
Strongly Disagree	3	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	107	10.5
<hr/>		
	1021	

Sometimes reading fan fiction causes me to learn incorrect information about Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	80	7.9
Agree	510	50.6
Disagree	205	20.3
Strongly Disagree	40	4.0
No Opinion/Not Sure	173	17.2
<hr/>		
	1008	

Reading fan fiction is a way to explore my wishes, dreams, and desires.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	286	28.1
Agree	427	41.9
Disagree	117	11.5
Strongly Disagree	14	1.4
No Opinion/Not Sure	175	17.2
<hr/>		
	1019	

I like to read stories that fill in the gaps in Tolkien's stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	543	53.6
Agree	441	43.5
Disagree	4	0.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	25	2.5
<hr/>		
	1013	

I think it's important for readers to leave comments and other feedback on the stories they read.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	311	30.6
Agree	485	47.7
Disagree	34	3.34
Strongly Disagree	1	0.0983
No Opinion/Not Sure	186	18.3
<hr/>		
	1017	

I like to read stories that develop Tolkien's characters in new and surprising ways.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	418	41.3
Agree	501	49.6
Disagree	29	2.9
Strongly Disagree	3	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	60	5.9
<hr/>		
	1011	

I read fan fiction because I don't want the stories to end.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	605	59.5
Agree	326	32.1
Disagree	33	3.2
Strongly Disagree	4	0.4
No Opinion/Not Sure	49	4.8
<hr/>		
	1017	

I like reading stories that challenge Tolkien's worldview.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	211	20.8
Agree	396	39.1
Disagree	127	12.5
Strongly Disagree	33	3.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	246	24.3
<hr/>		
	1012	

When I comment publicly on fanfiction, I only say nice things about the story.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	137	13.5
Agree	386	38.1
Disagree	225	22.2
Strongly Disagree	12	1.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	253	25.0
<hr/>		
	1013	

I like stories that pair characters together romantically or sexually that were not paired in the books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	336	33.0
Agree	385	37.8
Disagree	102	10.0
Strongly Disagree	56	5.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	140	13.7
<hr/>		
	1019	

Too much Tolkien fan fiction uses popular fan interpretations or fanon.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	97	9.6
Agree	260	25.7
Disagree	315	31.2
Strongly Disagree	56	5.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	283	28.0
<hr/>		
	1011	

Commenting on stories I've read has helped me to deepen my understanding of Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	100	9.95
Agree	260	25.9
Disagree	182	18.1
Strongly Disagree	28	2.79
No Opinion/Not Sure	435	43.3
<hr/>		
	1005	

I will choose to read a story if it is about a character, pairing, or time period I enjoy.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	640	62.5
Agree	368	35.9
Disagree	4	0.4
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	12	1.2
<hr/>		
	1024	

I like reading stories that correct or criticize the Peter Jackson movies.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	123	12.1
Agree	303	29.9
Disagree	207	20.4
Strongly Disagree	53	5.23
No Opinion/Not Sure	327	32.3
		1013

I like reading fan fiction about LGBTQ+ characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	416	41.1
Agree	326	32.2
Disagree	35	3.5
Strongly Disagree	48	4.7
No Opinion/Not Sure	188	18.6
		1013

I have left one-click feedback such as likes or kudos on stories I enjoyed.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	573	55.9
Agree	322	31.4
Disagree	50	4.88
Strongly Disagree	20	1.95
No Opinion/Not Sure	60	5.85
		1025

I read fan fiction because I like seeing the different ways that fans view and interpret Tolkien's books.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	474	46.8
Agree	474	46.8
Disagree	23	2.3
Strongly Disagree	3	0.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	38	3.8
		1012

Reading fan fiction helps me to see connections within Tolkien's universe.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	378	37.3
Agree	521	51.4
Disagree	37	3.7
Strongly Disagree	2	0.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	75	7.4
		1013

Reading fan fiction helps me to explore my spirituality.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	90	8.8
Agree	195	19.2
Disagree	255	25.1
Strongly Disagree	161	15.9
No Opinion/Not Sure	316	31.1
<hr/>		
1017		

I think that more sites should have rules about the quality of fan fiction they accept.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	73	7.2
Agree	195	19.3
Disagree	333	33.0
Strongly Disagree	194	19.2
No Opinion/Not Sure	216	21.4
<hr/>		
1011		

Commenting on stories I've read has allowed me to feel like part of a community.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	177	17.7
Agree	421	42.0
Disagree	102	10.2
Strongly Disagree	15	1.50
No Opinion/Not Sure	287	28.6
<hr/>		
1002		

I like to read stories that have an unusual or thought-provoking interpretation of Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	367	36.4
Agree	504	50.0
Disagree	28	2.8
Strongly Disagree	5	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	105	10.4
<hr/>		
1009		

I want to leave comments and other feedback more often on the stories I read.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	310	30.6
Agree	476	47.0
Disagree	82	8.1
Strongly Disagree	8	0.79
No Opinion/Not Sure	137	13.5
<hr/>		
1013		

I like reading stories that explore what sexuality might have been like in Tolkien's world.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	305	30.0
Agree	457	45.0
Disagree	62	6.1
Strongly Disagree	41	4.0
No Opinion/Not Sure	150	14.8
<hr/>		
	1015	

I sometimes want to leave a comment but think that my comment might not mean much to the writer.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	162	16.1
Agree	390	38.7
Disagree	256	25.4
Strongly Disagree	56	5.55
No Opinion/Not Sure	145	14.4
<hr/>		
	1009	

Fan fiction has encouraged me to do more research on Tolkien's world than I would have done otherwise.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	428	42.5
Agree	421	41.8
Disagree	84	8.3
Strongly Disagree	23	2.3
No Opinion/Not Sure	51	5.1
<hr/>		
	1007	

Commenting on stories is a way to give something back to the authors.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	485	47.6
Agree	453	44.5
Disagree	5	0.490
Strongly Disagree	0	0
No Opinion/Not Sure	76	7.46
<hr/>		
	1019	

I like to read stories that explain inconsistencies or things that don't make sense in the texts.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	321	31.8
Agree	551	54.5
Disagree	35	3.5
Strongly Disagree	5	0.5
No Opinion/Not Sure	99	9.8
<hr/>		
	1011	

I enjoy reading genfic stories.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	309	30.4%
Agree	432	42.6%
Disagree	43	4.23%
Strongly Disagree	17	1.67%
No Opinion/Not Sure	215	21.2%
<hr/>		
	1016	

I like reading stories that correct or criticize popular fan interpretations of Tolkien's world and characters.

	n	%
Strongly Agree	151	14.9
Agree	416	40.9
Disagree	118	11.6
Strongly Disagree	21	2.1
No Opinion/Not Sure	310	30.5
<hr/>		
	1016	