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Minnesota State University, Mankato

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COMMENTS, GIFTS AND KUDOS:
COMMUNITY AND GIFT ECONOMY IN HARRY POTTER FANFICTION

By

Deanna Almquist

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In

Applied Anthropology

Minnesota State University, Mankato

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Comments, Gifts and Kudos: Community and Gift Economy in Harry Potter Fanfiction

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Abstract

*Comments, Gifts and Kudos:
Community and Gift Economy in Harry Potter Fanfiction*

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May 2020

This research explores the Harry Potter fanfiction community and how fanfiction readers and authors interact in a virtual space. The primary interest is how the virtual community partakes in gift economy and how they motivate each other to produce fanworks in the form of fanfiction, as well as personal motivations that authors carry. Fanfiction participants from multiple social media groups dedicated to Harry Potter fanfiction volunteered to participate in a survey. The survey consisted of qualitative and quantitative questions, and the data was collected, and qualitative responses coded to determine commonalities and differences. The findings of this research show that the Harry Potter fanfiction community is motivated to provide feedback and gifts to authors in the form of kudos, comments and fanworks. Further, fanfiction authors provide gifts of their own to specific followers or editors in the form of dedicated fanfictions.

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Chapter I: Introduction

A fandom community is a collection of fans for any type of movie, tv show, or even a sports team. Someone can be a fan of anything, all it takes is interest, though the intensity of that interest varies. Fandom is a community of fans with more intense interest. These community members want to discuss their fandom; they want to interact with fellow fans; they go to conventions, make trips to locations relevant to their fandom. The experiences of the community and the behaviors expected within that community are specific to fandom, even though much of this behavior is not publicly discussed or published.

Fanfiction is a subcategory of fandom expression where authors utilize characters, worlds, and plots from their fandom as devices in writing stories. These stories can vary from a few sentences to stories that exceed novel-length books and cross all genres of writing. When posted on online platforms, other members of the community can read the stories and provide a response. In the Harry Potter fanfiction community, stories can range from topics like Harry's childhood before Hogwarts, his deceased parents through their school years, or even creating their own original characters living in the Wizarding World.

Fanfiction participation consists of two major roles, the reader and the author. There are other participatory actions; however, those are more 'in addition to' these two roles. The supporting roles that participants take are valuable to the community and allow for a nexus of community involvement. Within fanfiction, there are many subcategories of types of participation, and community members take on multiple roles. Some organize

groups and gather community members, both in the real world or virtual. Others volunteer and take on smaller roles to help fill needed niche's, such as archiving stories.

Fanfiction, as its very core, is a participant-led community that relies on active members and a robust online archive database. On fanfiction websites, dozens to hundreds of stories are updated daily. Readers wait for a new story from an author or the next chapter update, as well as searching through the general story pages looking for something to read. Writing is a performance art within the fanfiction community, and without authors, there would not be fanfiction.

Understanding how authors rely upon and respond to their readers is essential because both reading and writing are construed as a solo task. Writing motivations can also vary extensively, with the driving forces not always evident. Additionally, there appears to be an unstated expectation for readers to respond to authors. There are no formal rules posted or an official guidebook on how to act within the fanfiction community. It can take years of observation and censor from other participants in the community.

Further, in the fanfiction community, gift economy has taken on a large role in interactions within the community. Readers providing recordable feedback and publicly posted notes are gifts to authors. Authors received these kudos and comments from their followers, and on occasion, receive gifts of fanworks. Authors also provide gifts themselves to other community members who have assisted them or play an important

role in their lives. The fanfiction community does not operate with financial currency and this interaction is an important cornerstone of community behavior.

When I was 12 years old, a 6th-grade student, I made a discovery that shifted the course of my future. It was during winter holiday break away from school. I was on the computer looking for anything related to Tekken, a PlayStation based video game. This discovery occurred in late 2002 and Google led me to the discovery of fanfiction. Fandom activities have taken over multiple domains, and to a 12-year-old mind, it all looked overwhelming. I began the day's search by doing what any kid would do, and that was clicking on random website links. Eventually, I encountered a page that listed titles, with the author's names and descriptions of stories that listed characters in Tekken. I soon found that by clicking on the title, it led me to a story. After two weeks of moving in just that Tekken fanfiction grouping, I realized the webpages were part of a large fanfiction archive website, filled with various categories and subsections. This discovery led me down a rabbit hole of experiences, and I made sure to pull my friends and siblings down with me. I had discovered a whole new world of possibilities that began to stretch my imagination and bring me into a virtual space where I felt welcomed. In my decades of reading fanfiction, I have jumped across hundreds of fandoms and read thousands of stories, each more different than the last. I began reading Harry Potter fanfiction in 8th grade and found a virtual community that welcomed me. I was able to delve into a world that I loved with others that shared my interest. This experience has led to extensive participant-observation within the fanfiction community.

The fanfiction community consists of multiple roles that participants take upon themselves. There is a variety of ways a reader can show appreciation to authors, including a simple acknowledgment or in-depth reviews. However, what is the best type of acknowledgment? What do authors expect of their readers? Is it expected of a reader to respond to a story publicly, and how would they take that action? Many of these behaviors and expectations have gone unresearched, with a large part of academia focusing on the social deviance and taboo prospect of fanfiction. The development of gift economy, as well as community expectation for reciprocity from readers, has created a complex virtual community that is worth sharing.

Chapter II: A Brief History of Fanfiction

The origins of the fanfiction community as we know it today started in the 1960s. There was a paradigm shift in media culture that coincided with the release of the science fiction show, Star Trek. Fandom communities and fanfiction did exist before Star Trek, but the numbers were fewer and far between because of both lack of accessibility and community exchange. The shift resulted in people gathering to discuss the show in detail, and even crew members of the show would speak with the fandom community and listen to what they were looking for in a show (Lichtenburg et al, 1975). This attention was significant for fans because now they had a voice and could influence a series that they loved. That involvement is a cornerstone of the fandom community. Star Trek fans, coined Trekkers and/or Trekkies, would gather, with their family, or their friends and tune in weekly to watch new episodes of this Sci-fi show that took place in a future where, seemingly, all current cultural issues had been solved and Earth lives in harmony with other alien species (Lichtenberg et al. 1975). The show wasn't enough, and fans would use the characters from Star Trek to write their own episodes and stories. These individuals would form 'book clubs,' where they would gather and exchange the stories they had written. In some groups, fans would collect their works and publish them as Fanzines and distribute them.

Community communication was kept within newsletters, post-mail, phone calls, and gatherings during this time. Trading of fan stories and art was commonplace amongst these groups, however, the secrecy that resided behind it appeared to be the result of the mistrust these participants felt because they would receive sneers at their interest. The

fanfiction written in some of these groups would remain on the original paper, with light ink and yellow tablet paper, so if photocopy were attempted, all that would result would be a blank page. These fanfictions would be passed person to person, with the permission of that author. It appears as though these groups created secret societies, even with secret languages so the people in their life would remain clueless (Bacon-Smith 1992, Bury 2005).

Rise of the Internet

The rise of the internet created a shift in fanfiction. It allowed for the creation of centers for mass communication exchanges in the form of websites. Suddenly forums and archives became available to any who wished to join, as long as they could access an internet connection. The book clubs created fanlistings for the sole purpose of connecting to discuss their favorite characters and shows. Men and women developed their own forums specific to their fandom interests.

The introduction of GeoCities, a webserver where anyone could create a website, created multiple virtual spaces for fans to find one another and form communities. Many who had a childhood in the 1990s and early 2000s remember entering fansites, shrines to characters and discussion boards littered with fanworks. More server sites arose, such as Angelfire that was designed to support fan sites, as well as legitimate businesses, but fandom spread outward into any area that had a forum, such as Neopets, and interactive game world designed for children, with children under the age of twelve creating guilds, running forums and discussion threads, as well as getting an introduction to HTML

website coding. Many of these children created and developed fan sites as they grew older, and I was one of them. Developing a fan page is not an easy feat and requires time and dedication. With fans creating a 'mobile geography' (Bacon-Smith 1992), communities arose, creating environments of support and alliances between fan pages. These environments do not settle on a mere page, instead developed mass online galleries and forums (Hill 2002, Brennan 2014).

In 1966, Star Trek premiered, the internet started gaining traction in the early and mid-1990s, and in 1998, Fanfiction.net was created (IP Location.net, accessed September 3, 2019). Fanfiction.net is one of the current flagships for fanfiction, with hundreds of fandoms able to gather in one place, as well as forums for open discussion. The website is sorted by categories, such as Books, Movies, and TV Shows, and within those categories reside subsections for each fandom. Within each fandom, there are additional filters for characters, writing genres, and more. Fanfiction.net was not always so well built with filters and use to limit the reader's ability to track fanfiction through favoriting fanworks. When I was first introduced to Fanfiction.net in 2002, users could only favorite 30 fanfictions. Due to that constriction, over five years, I created six users on the website. During that time, the amount of favorited fanfiction allowed grew, first to 100, then to 1,000. Now a fanfiction user can favorite up 5,000 stories under one profile.

In 2004, Facebook was introduced to the public and allowed for open enrollment for profiles and became a large platform for social gatherings. In quick succession, Wattpad, Tumblr and Archive of Our Own joined the fanfiction landscapes in 2006 and 2007 (Hi. We're Wattpad 2019, About the OTW 2019, Tumblr is where your interests

connect you with your people 2019). Wattpad is a literary website that allows for both fanfiction and original writing. Tumblr is a crossroads between social media and blogging and has become a meeting space for anything fan-related. In 2007, Archive of Our Own (AO3), which is the second large fanfiction archive, quickly rose in popularity. AO3 has a similar design to Fanfiction.Net and allows for hundreds of fandoms and has more filter capabilities than Fanfiction.net. Additionally, AO3 comes with a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to fandom studies called *Transformative Works and Cultures*.

The fanfiction community has changed drastically from where it started over fifty years previous. Small, tight-knit groups grew into online groups and communities in the hundreds of thousands. Further, the internet community has developed its own construct of acceptable behavior, though ‘flames’ existed before the internet (Jenkins 1992). To ‘flame’ someone is to bully an author for their story, usually criticism supplied in such a way that creates negative emotion. These comments are usually sent to an author as a review of a story or a direct message. Individuals who consistently send flames to authors are called ‘trolls’ and are not considered a welcome part of the community. If there is an extreme situation or the author feels attacked, they will post the commenter's name in groups, report them to the forums and websites, even block them from commenting on their work. I have viewed multiple posts from Facebook group administrators regarding the ban of a member and stating that trolling would not be tolerated. These types of actions and expectations have become a cultural norm in the fanfiction community.

Chapter III: The Academics of Fanfiction

Fanfiction reaches globally and can reach anyone who has access to the internet. Groups, actors and participants within the community, at one time, existed outside of each other, cut-off and unknowing. As each member was introduced, they had to find their own way, and determine who they were and what roles they would take within the community to create an identity. The fanfiction landscape is a social landscape that has constant interactions, though each member behaves in an individualistic manner, where status can change depending on the interaction (Robbins 1997). The study of these interactions can be compared to the study of similar roles within other cultures and communities. In culture, all are actors who perform to their community's expectations for behavior, or against them. Sometimes some move against what is considered best to the group, then they are could be thrown aside and exiled, or by fanfiction terms 'banned' or 'blocked' in extreme instances. Fanfiction has diverse roles which come with varying levels of prestige, but also expectations from the rest of the community. When a fanfiction author begins to write a multi-chapter story, the readers expect the story to continue with semi-regular updates. An author may not meet those expectations, and the readers and the community as a whole may begin to place pressure on the author to produce. Many fanfiction community participants consider this behavior as a negative result of the consumer culture that fanfiction, and the internet, has created. This behavior is not specific to fanfiction and can also be observed in the literary world with authors. For example, J.K. Rowling encountered pressure from the Harry Potter fanbase for the delays with the later Harry Potter books.

The Online Community

The fanfiction community exists primary online with members rarely interacting outside of the virtual space. Benedict Anderson, a political scientist focused his study on what he referred to as ‘Imagined Communities’ and how it related to nationalism. The fanfiction community does not share leaders or ideology, but they are a community all the same. In his book, *Imagined Communities*, first released in 1983, he wrote that “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (2006: 6). Fanfiction participants will never know all their fellow members, the community is too large and spread out, though they all considered themselves part of the virtual, or imagined, community. The fanfiction community does not have a singular meeting place where members converge, instead, they access multiple websites, with overlapping of community members. This creates multiple virtual settlements that community members can travel between (Jones 1997). This does create a different environment on each website, however, there are enough commonalities among the rules and etiquette for a new visitor to that site to assimilate. Given the chance, individuals with similar interests will gather, and that is how fandom, and specifically fanfiction, formed. Further, interactions in these online spaces is a “public interplay of voices that give rise to an emotional sense of shared conversational context.” (Boyd *et al.* 2010:1). These interactions create stronger ties and trust. When an author has trouble with a scene they will reach out to the community, knowing that someone will assist them or offer words of encouragement.

In these communities that Benedict Anderson wrote of “one could be fully aware of sharing a language and a religious faith (to varying degrees), customs and traditions, without any great expectation of ever meeting one’s partners.” (2006:188). Norm behaviors developed within the fanfiction community, especially that stance on negative behavior performed by individuals who were looking to bully an author, and those individuals are referred to as trolls. Trollish behaviors can have severe consequences for both authors and the community, in both their non-virtual life and their virtual one. Trolls are not singular to fandom communities and have become common in other realms of online interactions and have even made it into the everyday vernacular. Communities police the behavior of trolls, censoring their behavior and exiling them from the group if the behavior continues to go against the norms created by the group (Coles and West 2016). Much of the time, trolls will attack a genre of a story or a pairing, especially one that they find offensive.

Community members often subscribe to multiple other online communities, some that connect and interlace with fanfiction and some that do not share characteristics of fanfiction or the nerd culture that the topics are labeled under. Individual participation also fluctuates for members and is not consistent. There are periods of time where members move to a different fandom or step back from fanfiction, only to return. Samuel M. Wilson and Leighton C. Peterson authored *The Anthropology of Online Communities* (2002) and discuss the anthropological approach to online communities, which they suggest should not differ from how an anthropologist would approach real-world communities. Many of the identity characteristics for both virtual and what they call

'offline' would benefit from being observed utilizing anthropological techniques. Other disciplines who research virtual communities do so from a perspective that does include cultural theories or practice. Anthropology "acknowledges the multiple identified and negotiated roles individuals have within different sociopolitical and cultural contexts." (Wilson and Peterson 2002:456). The study of power, kinship and gift economy which is staples of cultural anthropology should also be included in the study of imagined communities. Additionally, online communities are in rapid states of transformation in behavior, practices and expectations. Anthropology techniques to study culture such as interviewing, observation, participant-observation and ethnographies captures this changing virtual landscape on a more comprehensive level. Further, archeology techniques are being utilized for the study of virtual settlements in MMORPG (massively-multiplayer online role-playing-game) communities and it has been suggested that these communities are "changing their relationship with material culture in the sense in which boundaries of the actual and the virtual are becoming increasingly blurred." (Harrison 2009:95).

Within one of the Facebook groups I visited, there was a post provided by a user stating how disgusting a specific pairing was, this instance was with Harry Potter and Ginny Weasley, which is a canon pairing. However, the way that the user worded their post was offensive and created a large argument through comments between themselves and many other users. After about 30 minutes, an admin stepped in, deleted the post with the attached comments and created their own post about the despicable behavior they witnessed and that was not how community members should be behaving. Additionally,

it was against the rules put in place by the Facebook group. The original poster disagreed with the reprimand and made sure to express their frustrations to the rest of the group. This continuing action resulted in their ban from the group because they did not follow the pre-set rules decided upon by the admins.

Gift Economy

Many cultures and communities engage in what anthropologists call gift economy. Gift economy is when something is given without the agreement of material or monetary return. In the virtual world, this action appears differently. Romele and Severo consider gift economy down to the most basic levels, and that is any interaction from one individual to another that results in a positive notation. They provide an example that is common in social media, and that is the 'like' option on Facebook or the 'retweet' on Twitter. These actions take minimal time for a user to complete, but both of these social media platforms track these actions. Additionally, Romele and Severo quoted Howard Rheingold when he stated that many online communities have "a kind of gift economy in which people do things for one another out of a spirit of building something between them, rather than a spread-sheet calculated quid pro quo" (Romele and Severo 2016:45). There are two dominant forms of gift economy that can be observed in the fanfiction community, the first originating from the reader, who gift positive reactions to stories, and the second originates from the author. Authors will write fanfiction for another person as a gift and not receive material or monetary gain.

Marcel Mauss, a French sociologist, documented actions of gift exchange across multiple cultures and found a variety of forms of gift economy, as well as associated expectations that accompanied them. Mauss theorizes that gift economy is a form of exhibition, an action that should be on a grand scale and to be noticed. He uses the example of the organization of an event, such as a harvest, or a type of celebration, and is provided to those who gave their services (Mauss 2002). In the fanfiction community, gift-fics (gift fanfictions) share Mauss's form of exhibition, though the gift is only directed at one person, perhaps a two, but rarely more. The author of these gift-fics will provide the username of this person, or just their first name if the person does not have a designated username. On AO3, these fanfictions can be identified by the tag 'gift fic', though it is not required to have this associated with a story. Often, I have observed gift-fics to be shorter in length, often of a pairing that the gift recipient enjoys. When not using the before mentioned tag, a gift fic can be identified by a statement in the story summary or by an author's note within the fanfiction. Accompted with the recipient's name is also the reason for the gift. Many times, the gift is for the author's beta, though reasons can range from Birthday gifts to congratulatory salutations.

Mauss also mentions the expectations of obligation in gift economy. Many cultures and communities have the obligation, or the expectation to give, ingrained deep into their values. A leader is expected to give to their community. They must share with the community, to invite others to gather and share in their prestige (Mauss 2002). Within fanfiction, those obligations align with the reader and community member, where they have an obligation to the author. They must show an action of reciprocity to the author

who has posted a story. The fanfiction community carries unwritten expectations for reader response to authors. Mauss stated that “The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted with no thought of returning it.” (2002:83). Readers are expected to reciprocate, and when that action is not completed, then they are not filling their role in the community. After reading a story, I engage in some form of reciprocity, commonly by leaving kudos or a comment on their story to show my appreciation for their work. These types of actions also bolster their numbers, by tracking how many people have commented and liked the story. Other community members complete similar actions. Further, they will share a link of the story to the community, to showcase that author and their work.

Marshall Sahlins, an anthropologist who often cites Marcel Mauss, goes further into gift economy and relates it back to western market structure and material values. Sahlins postulates that gift economy utilizes material items that are held in prestige by cultures and communities and inferior gifts should be avoided (Sahlins 2013). Monetary currency for goods is a dominant practice in much of the world, including in e-commerce. In the fanfiction community, financial currency is not exchanged between authors and readers in return for stories or fanworks. On occasion, a reader will draw or create imagery for the story and gift it to the author, or they will string together video clips to create a trailer of the story.

Gift economy is one of the building blocks of a healthy fandom, someone writes a story for another, makes a fanvid for their favorite author, or does a character drawing for an author depicting a scene they wrote. It is about “giving, receiving and reciprocating”

(Turk 2014:1.1). Referring back to Romele and Severo, there is a hierarchy that I have observed of the gifts that readers bestow upon authors. Sahlins even expressed a hierarchy of gifts and associated prestige, with those who provide gifts can increase their own status (Sahlins 2013). This hierarchy can be correlated with time and energy spent on the gift. The top of the hierarchy is that of fan appreciation in the form of gift fan works to the author. These works, often artwork or fan videos, are time-consuming and show a considerable amount of admiration from the reader to the author. Below that is actions regarding the reader who engages the community on behalf of the author. This can be the reader taking action and sharing, reblogging or suggesting the story to other community members. This is an active form of appreciation with the hope to benefit the author by providing them with more readers. Then the next level is the more time-consuming action of placing a comment or review on the story. This is an interaction with the reader and the author. This exchange can consist of constructive criticism, congratulatory salutations and expressions of gratitude. The most basic type of gift are those that take little effort, such as kudos on AO3. One mouse click is all it takes for the website to log the action, and one does not need to be a registered user on the site to leave kudos on a story. Favoriting and following authors or stories would also be categorized here. These actions do not take formidable effort and are not a direct interaction with the author.

Fandom Studies

With fandom becoming ever-increasingly popular and visible, a new discipline formed to study this rising phenomenon, and it is called Fandom Studies. Many

academics and researchers who engage in Fandom Studies come from a mixed background of academic fields. Music Theory studies filking (fan folksongs), English, Literature and Communication disciplines research writing styles and themes, Psychology wants to see what topics are being written and to unfold the interworkings of participants. Many of the Social and Behavior Sciences find great fascination with Fandom Studies. The peer-reviewed journal *Transformative Works and Cultures* has become a treasure-trove of articles on fandom studies ranging from slash fic production, death acceptance through writing, and gender studies reflected in fanfiction. Many academics research the multitude of homosexual pairings that predominate fanfiction.

There is extensive research into copyright law and how it can affect fanfiction. Copyright infringement and intellectual rights violations is a very serious legal matter that has plagued fanfiction. Fanfictions use characters and stories, unauthorized by their creators. Imagine if J.K. Rowling told her fans that her attorneys would be systematically moving across fanfiction archives to have all Harry Potter fanfiction removed. That would decimate the fanbase. Paranormal Romance author J.R Ward has clearly stated that she does not want fanfiction written using her characters, going as far as having fanfiction stories removed from the internet. There are pockets of fanfiction for her stories, but they are always at a chance to be deleted. Fanfiction participants are always at risk of having their stories deleted, but they still move forward with their works. On the other side of that is Anthony and Joe Russo, film directors who are most well-known for their work with Disney and the Marvel Cinematic Universe, helming *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and both *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: End Game*. They

appreciate fanfiction, and when they posted an open letter requesting people not to share spoilers, they made sure to mention that many fans have spent much energy in fan works, specifically naming fanfiction (Wood 2019). The copyright battle is ongoing and fair-use law is often cited. Though fanfiction participants usually respond with ‘Sorry, not sorry.’

One area of research that is sorely lacking is the interactions between the author and the reader, as well as expectations of appreciation and communication amongst the community. Authors and readers have interactions in every story that is published due to reader comments and author notes. Some fanfiction sites have even developed direct messaging systems to allow for continuing communication. When asked, community members are happy to discuss how much they love their authors and how much they want to show their appreciation.

Chapter IV: Research Design and Methods

The fanfiction community is a large international community that exists predominantly on the internet. While the act of reading fanfiction is solo action, many join online groups in search of comradery and community, as well as recommendations for the next story to read. They search out others with similar interests in the same fandoms and discuss topics such as canon divergences, ‘what if’ scenarios they thought of during the day, and wells as problems they are having in their writing. A survey was created with the intent to determine how fanfiction participants interact with and rely on each other. Since the modern-day fanfiction community resides online, with dedicated websites, forums, and social media groups, the survey had to be accessible to these participants.

One of the most active fanfiction communities is the Harry Potter fandom. There is not an easy way to determine how large the Harry Potter fanfiction community, but the intent was to have a sample size of participants who are active in the Harry Potter fanfiction community. Thousands of active participants are reading, writing and uploading daily, and has a strong social media presence on multiple platforms. This active community consistently shows participation levels as wells as comradery. The sample size allowed for a better determination of patterns of shared behaviors. The survey consisted of a variety of questions, ranging from multiple choice to short answer responses, which assisted in the determination of these shared behaviors. Additionally, fanfiction authors had an additional series of questions because their view on community response may vary from those individuals who only read fanfiction.

The Survey

Approval from the Minnesota State University Mankato Institutional Review Board was received, listed as "[1219448-3] Challenges, Comments and Kudos: Motivations in Fanfiction" (Appendix H). Upon approval, a survey was provided to active members of the Harry Potter Fanfiction community (Appendix G). The survey consisted of twenty questions varying from geographical location to when the survey participant started participating in fanfiction. The survey was broken into two large thematic sections: authors and readers, as well as questions on personal motivations and participatory actions. Specific demographics beyond what country they were from was not collected because a significant characteristic of the fanfiction community is the participant's anonymity. It is not common for individuals to share their age, gender or legal name. Many users create persona's surrounding their username, manifesting identities that exist mainly online. These identities can manifest in the real world and commonly appear at conventions as their fandom persona. Further, while their current age is not necessarily impactful on fanfiction readers, it can influence those who utilize social media. Those currently in their twenties and early thirties grew up with the internet and readily accessible pathways to online groups. Additionally, it was asked what age participants were when they discovered fanfiction. This information is valuable because some participants have been participating in fanfiction through multiple paradigms of fanfiction, some even before the internet communities for fanfiction.

Participating in any activity takes time out of someone's life, and fanfiction is no different. The type of participation is important, these actions can range from the passive

activity of reading, or the active participation of writing, as well as other community involvement. Survey respondents were asked to select from multiple options on how they participate in fanfiction, as well as a space to include additional actions. They were asked how much time they devote to fanfiction. Participation commitment is essential since it can also reflect dedication and interest levels, and respondents were asked to gauge how many hours per week they spend with fanfiction.

Utilizing specific controls provided by Qualtrics, survey participants were asked if they were authors. This was needed because authors have different experiences from interacting with readers and the community than just a reader. Authors engage with the reader on a different level, such as responding to their reviews and suggestions on an individual level. A reader would not have those same experiences when interacting with the community as a whole. I have noticed that when community members ask for assistance with writing a scene on a social media post, those who are authors present that status to give authority to their response. They will comment with “When I write a scene like that...” or “I have found this to be a useful tool...”. When author’s post on their own works, they make sure to thank their followers, again, from a place of authority. Someone who carries the role of the reader does not have that same authority status and do not have followers with whom to interact. Many of an author’s interactions are with those who read and sometimes comment on their work. Those who did not identify themselves authors of Harry Potter Fanfiction advanced to the next section on the survey. Once the authors completed the questions focusing on the author, they also advanced to the reader's section.

It was important to ask all survey participants if they felt that leaving feedback, either as comments or kudos, was needed to show appreciation to the author for their work. They were provided a five-point Likert scale which ranged from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. This question reflects on what I have observed in the fanfiction community when individuals discuss review etiquette in forums and on social media posts. Following that question, they were prompted with an open response to how they specifically show their appreciation to authors. Their own experience and personal expectations for appreciation are important indicators of appreciation practices in the Harry Potter fanfiction community.

The Harry Potter Community

J.K. Rowling published the first Harry Potter book in 1998, and fanfiction soon followed (<https://www.jkrowling.com> accessed 08/24/19). The Harry Potter Fan Community is found across the globe, in schools, libraries, college campus intermural sports, even in workplace costume competitions. There are many far-reaching messages that are found in its pages that can resonate with readers. Utilizing the filters on Fanfiction.Net, the oldest published date of a fanfiction was September 4th, 1999, though authors can delete their stories, so there are likely stories that predate the selection. The community grew with that fandom, assisted by seven books, and as of 2019, two prequel books, a sequel playwright, three supplemental books written by J.K Rowling, ten movies set in the Wizarding World, as well as numerous books documenting the wizarding world written and published by third parties. In just the Harry Potter fanfiction community, there are monthly competitions for authors, as well as various virtual gatherings and

discussions. The community is over two decades, and older, more experienced writers assist the next generation as they came into their writing skills.

Finding the Online Community

Fanfiction participants today interact online through an array of websites, including social media and forums. These areas used to exist on the peripheries of the internet, deep in forum posts. These websites and forums have become easier to locate with the development of social media platforms. The survey link was posted on Facebook and Tumblr, two large stages for interactions amongst fandom participants.

On Facebook, there are multiple groups for Harry Potter fanfiction. These groups were discovered utilizing the Facebook search option and ‘Harry Potter Fanfiction’ was used as the filter. The decision was made to post in groups and on pages that had fanfiction in the title in some form or variation or with a description highlighting Harry Potter fanfiction as its focal point, and for groups that had activity within the previous forty-eight hours. Seven groups had the survey posted to their main page, also known as their ‘news feed.’ The groups that had activity in the previous forty-eight hours had varied numbers of members, ranging from a small group with not even forty members to the largest consisting of nearly 9,500 (Table 1). These groups comprise of admins and moderators who enforce the group’s rules and group members. All members can post links to fanfictions, either their own or stories that they have enjoyed and want to share. Some of these groups have specific themes that need to occur in the stories posted. One such group is called the Death Eater Express. This group focuses on Harry Potter

fanfictions that have a Death Eater as one of the main characters, or multiple Death Eaters in an ensemble cast. In Harry Potter, Death Eaters are agents of the main villain, Lord Voldemort. These Death Eaters carry out his evil plans, attacking and murdering members of both the muggle and wizard population. Most are villains themselves in the books series, or at least characters of questionable morals. The Death Eater Express, a play on the Hogwarts Express from the book series, created a meeting area for fanfiction participants who enjoy that subject of the content. Another such group is Harry Potter OC Fanfiction. This group is dedicated to those stories that have an OC, or original character, the fanfiction author created and inserted into the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Group members do not subscribe to one group but join multiple. As a participant in these Facebook groups, I am a member of at least nine groups, and I have seen authors post their stories in as many groups as they are a part of. Numerous survey participants are multi-group members, moving across and participating in community discourse.

Table 1 - Facebook Groups	
Name of Facebook Group	Number of Members on June 18th, 2018
Harry Potter Fanfiction	240
Harry Potter Fanfiction @ The Department of Mysteries	274
Harry Potter Fan Fiction Writers	617
Harry Potter OC Fanfiction	157
Harry Potter Fanfiction	9487
The Death Eater Express	2939
Harry Potter Fan Fiction	39

In addition to Facebook Groups, a selection of Facebook Pages who had activity in the previous forty-eight hours, and are dedicated to Harry Potter fanfiction, also had the link posted (Table 2) in their public posts section. Facebook Pages allow a user to

‘Like’ the page instead of joining a group. These are more periphery pages and does not have nearly as much member interaction as Facebook Groups. Additionally, follower posts to the page are easily diluted amongst the actual page’s posts and are less likely to be seen by other followers. From the lack of comments or reactions on the post, minimal participants utilized the links on these pages. On Facebook, whenever someone comments, or place a ‘like’ on the post, the whole post would get ‘bumped,’ meaning that any followers to the group or page are more likely to see that post on their main Facebook news feeds as well as the groups newsfeed. In some instances, individuals would even place a comment that would type “bumped” to keep the post near the top of the group page. This type of action is prevalent in the fanfiction community as a showing of support. This ‘bumped’ action allowed for the survey post to be viewed as a top post for multiple days, allowing for more group members to view the post.

Table 2 - Facebook Pages	
Name of Facebook Page	Number of Members on June 18th, 2018
Harry Potter Fanfictions	7524
Harry Potter Fanfiction	1894
HP Fanfictions	1578
Mugglenet.Com	576,782

On Tumblr, users utilize ‘tags’ to show interaction in groups. The survey was posted with the following tags” #harrypotter, #fanfiction, #shareit, #harrypotterfanfiction, #harrypotterwriting, #harrypotterprompt.” Some of these tags are more common ones that are attached to fanfiction posts on Tumblr. Any individuals who follow these tags on Tumble would have been able to see the post across their feeds. Much like the Facebook Pages, there was a minimal reaction to the post.

After a review of the survey post responses, comments, and shares, the majority of survey takers found the survey request through Facebook groups. Based on the number of comments and likes the survey received as validation for completing the survey, it assisted in the survey being ‘bumped’ for multiple days across multiple groups. These actions resulted in the accumulation of over 150 surveys in the first twenty-four hour period. The survey was open between June 24, 2018, and July 3rd, 2018. During those ten days, 247 surveys were completed. The overall ratio of survey participants to group members would be difficult to determine since many users are members in multiple groups and there is an overlap of membership. While the sample size is small, my personal observations as a member of the community allows me to verify that it is representative of member interactions. Additionally, the sample size isn't representative or random, and should not be taken as showing proof of all interactions within the community and that further study would need to be conducted in future research.

Virtual Ethnography

Virtual ethnography is the study and description of those communities that meet and interact in a virtual space that is not structured or limited by physical location. The modern fanfiction community exists entirely online. A fanfiction reader cannot go to their local bookstore and pick up the newest story or chapter or read it in the newspaper. However, what dramatically defines these virtual spaces, as one research notes, is that “...online culture extends without disruption across very personal scenes and practices, structure and unstructured leisure time, participation in public culture and in publicly

visible popular culture, and compulsory as well as less compulsory elements of working life.” (Driscoll and Gregg 2010:16).

Howard Rheingold commented that online communities are “social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.” (Reingold 2000:5). This interaction is what built the community, though fanfiction groups began with interactions in book clubs strewn across living rooms and church basements. The “public discussion” that Rheingold mentions can be transcribed to fit the author/reader relations, as well as the reader/community relationship that is prevalent in modern fanfiction. The technologically mediated social behavior that has risen through these interactions have created unspoken guidelines that community members follow and respect. When a member steps out of line, others censor them and critique their behavior through a variety of channels. Some may receive a discreet private message; others will be directly addressed for the community to see. The community is also not against public-shaming on social media platforms, at least until an admin or moderator deletes the post for acting against the group's rules. Posts and comments that move against the community rules are difficult to find after that fact, especially with admin's deleting the posts. Members of the community would have had to observe this occurring in real-time or be told of the situation from another member of the community.

Further, in the fanfiction community, individuals can create identities as a measure of anonymity. These identities are carefully thought out and evolve. Specifically, “[m]embers of online communities frequently adopt pseudonyms and carefully construct

their digital alias to reflect or refract offline qualities and attributes.” (Paech 2009:207).

Many ethnographers likely feel that a researcher could not get a real sense of individuals in an online community, because they hide behind aliases and avatars (Paech 2009).

While that statement could be considered accurate in many other online cultures and communities, fanfiction participants have molded their online personas over the years and decades. Participants assign whole identities to their usernames and built their characters and identities around themselves until that persona is part of them. Much like those who are different at work then home, they split their persona’s and calculate when it is appropriate to show specific behavior. Many times, those online personas do not have a place in the real world, and if they do make an appearance, those individuals are judged for not fitting into the norm, because those personas usually portray “nerdy” characteristics, or too obsessive.

Data Analysis and Coding

The quantitative questions were studied based on response numbers in proportion to overall results. The more survey participants who agree, the more predominant a behavior is in the community. Several questions used a five-point scale response system called the Likert scale, ranging from ‘definitely yes’ to ‘definitely not.’ Other questions did have more structured responses, such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ that did not allow for added options by the survey participant. Many of the questions permitted for a qualitative answer, allowing for the survey participant to input answers, and on some questions, allow them to give additions to multiple option questions. By offering these types of

questions, it allows the participant to draw from their own experiences and use their own words to explain their involvement in the community.

When approaching the creation of the codebook for the qualitative questions, I utilized my own experience in fanfiction, as well as observation of keywords and themes provided in social media posts and author notes. I utilized H. Russel Bernard's suggestion of developing my own codebook instead of a previously standing tool to allow for more flexibility and data specific coding (2011). This codebook was then applied to the participant's survey results. Occurrences were labeled and actions documented to the corresponding code. Performance ethnographer Johnny Saldaña's method for interview transcript coding utilizing the structural coding technique was used for the responses provided by the participants. Structural coding is "... a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question used to frame the interview." (Saldaña 2009:66). Structural coding is best used for semi-structured data. It labels the information, as well as indexes it. Saldaña expressed that this was best for open-ended survey responses. This process reviews the data collected and indexes how many times a word, phrase or intention occurs within the data.

The results of the coding would assist in identifying commonalities in responses as well as differences in expected behavior. The coding of that data started with the list I developed of expected keywords that I have encountered throughout my experience within the community. Each question's result was focused on separately, then finding commonalities and differences between the responses. More often, respondents listed

multiple keywords, as many discussed specific processes and actions they take when engaging with authors and the community. For example, I asked the survey participants how they feel a reader should show appreciation. From my experiences, I knew that comments and reviews were common showings of appreciation in fanfictions, as well as leaving kudos or a like on a story. Even further, I had observed that readers would share stories on social media that they enjoyed.

Chapter V: Fanfiction Participation

For the past twenty years, Harry Potter has grown into a mega-franchise that started as a single book. Since, there have been two movie franchises, amusement parks, fan conventions, Broadway plays, and international quidditch leagues developed. The Harry Potter fanfiction community is scattered across multiple social media platforms and online archives where authors can post their work. Often, authors will post their work on multiple websites for optimal viewership. There are many actions that participants can engage in beyond just reading fanfiction and the community has developed into one with specified roles and expectations. My own participation in fanfiction has included reading and archiving, with additional actions in recommendations for stories placed on social media and supporting group pages.

Country Demographics

Of the 241 respondents, 236 provided the country they lived in. There are thirty-one countries represented (Table 3). While the country where people live is not always influential, it can significantly affect access to the internet and online communities. Some members of the fanfiction community do not have at-home access to a computer and internet. A person may have to travel to an internet café and utilize their computers and internet access, which does cost money. Additionally, competency in specific languages can affect the amount of fanfiction that is accessible to the reader. There is likely bias in the results since the survey was posted in English speaking Facebook groups and the survey is written in English.

Country	Occurrence
Argentina	2
Australia	17
Belgium	2
Brazil	1
Bulgaria	1
Canada	12
Czech Republic	1
Estonia	1
France	6
Germany	6
India	3
Indonesia	1
Ireland	3
Italy	2
Netherlands	4
New Zealand	1
Nicaragua	1
Norway	2
Peru	1
Philippines	1
Poland	3
Serbia	2
Singapore	1
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	2
South Africa	1
Sweden	2
Switzerland	1
Turkey	2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	18
United States of America	135
Total Responses	236

The top four countries, which consists of 77% of the respondents, are all considered English speaking countries, even though some do not have it as the official language. Other things to take into consideration is access to both the internet and the webpages that host the content. Some countries have very strict sensors and restrictions

on content that contain taboo or be anti-nationalist. After all, Harry Potter is a series about witchcraft and magic, as well as a group of children going against the government while trying to fight an evil tyrant. Access to the canon material may also affect these numbers. It is widely known that the Harry Potter series has been banned in many schools and countries because of its relation to witchcraft. The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom has even tracked the series to be amongst the most frequently challenged book in recent decades (Ahmend 2019, *Harry Potter Books Continue to Stir Controversy* 13 Nov.2001, 1)".

The highest number of survey respondents come from the United States of America (US). Harry Potter was widely published in the US and across multiple retailers, even available in grocery stores for purchase. Since its publication, there have been numerous events, gatherings and even theme parks dedicated to the series. In both Florida and California, Universal Studios has created a theme park called ‘The Wizarding World of Harry Potter’, allowing visitors to live out their fantasy for the day by purchasing a wand, Hogwarts House robes, as well as purchase foods specific to the series. In the past, there have even been Broadway plays, museum exhibits, and art exhibitions that toured. In the United Kingdom, where the setting of the story takes place, they have regular tours of filming locations, a plaque at King’s Cross Station, and museum exhibits. These locations have become favorite tourist destinations for fans. The remaining two countries with top responses are Australia with 17 respondents, followed by Canada which has 12. Once outside of the four English speaking countries, respondents from other countries begin to decrease.

Moving away from predominantly English-speaking countries, the numbers start to lessen, but so does the amount of those with proficiency in English, which can affect participants since the majority of Harry Potter fanfiction is written in English. Growing up in a country where English is a minority or secondary language can create difficulties with joining online communities that are comprised predominantly of English speakers. Globally there are educational programs to teach English from a young age, as well as offer electives and adult enrichment classes. Some of these individuals even state that translating fanfiction from English into their native language is one way they actively participate in the community. The Harry Potter community, beyond fanfiction, consists of both in-person and online interactions, and while access can play a part, the community is accepting of participants, wherever they may reside.

Survey Participants

Of the 241 survey respondents, 239 provided their age, though commonly, age is not information that I have seen publicly shared. The average age of the respondents is twenty-nine, with a range of eighteen years old to sixty-five. The most extensive age range of respondents was in their twenties, followed by the second-largest group in their thirties (Figure 1). Harry Potter was released in 1998, and many of the participants would have been reaching young adult reading levels, which accommodated the more complexly written novels.

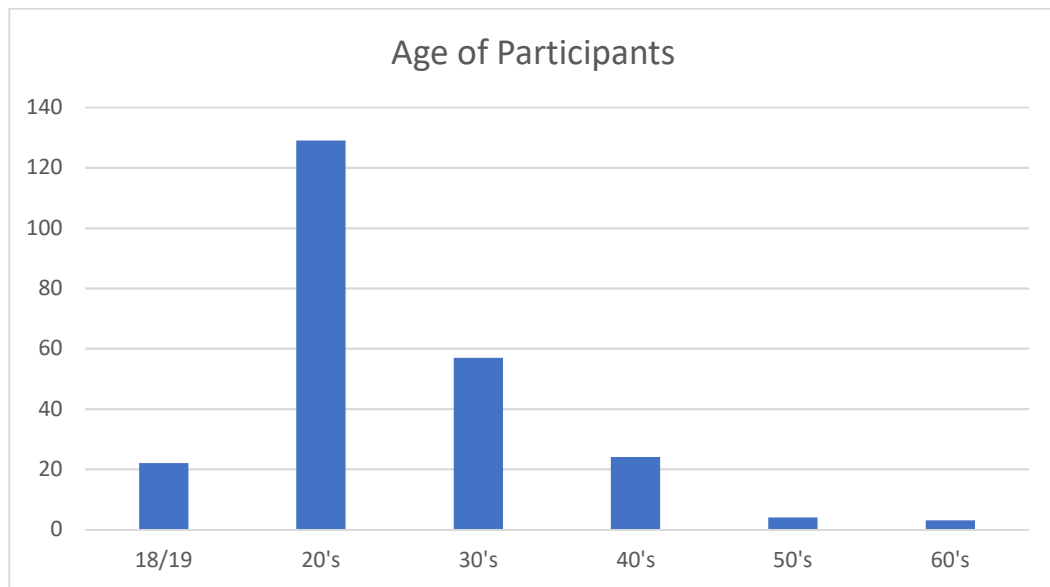


Figure 1 - Age of Participants

The discovery of fanfiction is often spontaneous. Most people do not know what fanfiction is until they come across it themselves or are educated about it. When I first came across fanfiction, I did not know what it was, but I made an effort to share it with my friends and siblings. With the rise of Fandom Studies, it is becoming a more academically discussed community. At some point, all the survey respondents discovered the existence of fanfiction, and the most common age of discovery of fanfiction is set during the teenage years (Figure 2).

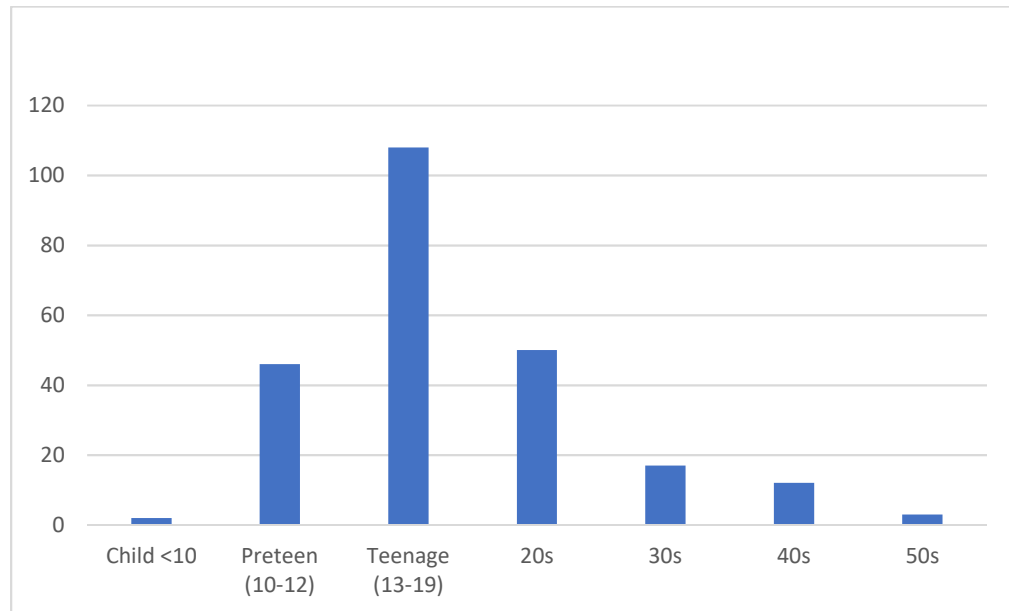


Figure 2 - Age at Discovery of Fanfiction

Fanfiction.Net began its rise in popularity after its creation in 1998 and has not changed much in format, though they have added additional filter controls and varied options to favorite/follow the story/author, as well as receive email alerts. Fanfiction.net was one of the first archival websites where authors could post their work, with additional organization features and content filters. The website allowed for a more streamlined experience for multi-chapter works, instead of having to search each chapter posting on a forum.

Table 4 - Length of Participation in Contrast with Fanfiction Events			
*Years Ago	Count	Year	Era
0	1	2018	Survey Taken
1	8	2017	
2	16	2016	
3	17	2015	
4	14	2014	
5	14	2013	
6	15	2012	
7	13	2011	
8	12	2010	
9	16	2009	
10	16	2008	
11	17	2007	Archive Of Our Own (AO3), Tumblr
12	9	2006	Wattpad
13	10	2005	
14	9	2004	Facebook
15	9	2003	
16	12	2002	
17	11	2001	
18	2	2000	
19	1	1999	
20	5	1998	Fanfiction.net, Harry Potter Released
21	1	1997	
22	3	1996	
23	1	1995	
24	1	1994	GeoCities
25	0	1993	Internet
26	1	1992	
29	1	1989	WWW
36	1	1982	
45	1	1973	
		~ 1966	Star Trek
Total	237		

(<https://archiveofourown.org/about>, <https://www.tumblr.com/about>,
<http://company.wattpad.com/>)

*Age at the introduction to fanfiction minus age at the time of the survey.

Of the participants, thirty-two discovered fanfiction after the age of thirty, with three individuals not finding their way into the overall fanfiction community until they

were into their fifties. There was one individual who stated that they had been reading fanfiction for forty-five years. That means they were introduced to fanfiction around 1973, which is when fanfiction was only beginning, and communities were small pockets of individuals. Table 4 is a visual representation of the survey participant's age to roughly the year they discovered fanfiction. This information is important because the longer someone is a part of the community, the more familiar they are with the expectations in the community. In 2001, fanfiction started to grow in population, though 142 of the 237 participants, 60% of respondents, discovered fanfiction in the past ten years. This percentage represents an increase in community population and fanfiction is gaining more traction every year as it becomes more mainstream to discuss and more accessible globally. During the past ten years, I have noticed an increase in the diversity of themes that have been introduced. In 2004, I remember that song-fics (song fanfictions) were popular in Harry Potter fanfiction and most songs that were used could be linked back to musical bands that were labeled 'emo', a subgenre of music during the mid-to-late 2000s. A song-fic mixes the narrative with song lyrics. These were emotional pieces that carried topics of depression, self-harm and suicide. These types of stories are not posted as often anymore and have evolved past the use of lyrics as a literary tool.

Participation in Fanfiction

Survey participants were asked how many hours per week that they spend participating in fanfiction (Figure 3). The most commonly selected response, with ninety-three of the 241 responses, is six to fourteen hours, which could be considered one to two hours a day throughout the week or lengthy time on the weekends. Many likely

‘binge’ read for large blocks of time. This type of behavior has become more prevalent in modern culture with the introduction of streaming media services.

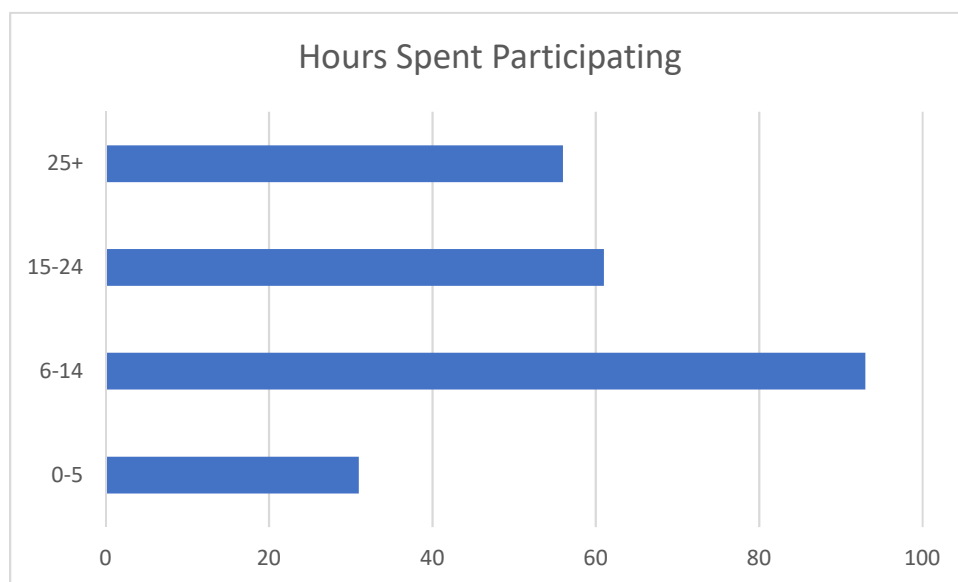


Figure 3 - Hours spent Participating in fanfiction

Participation in fanfiction can cover many spheres from active participation to a more passive one, such as reading. Prompts were provided to the survey respondents, showing the most common participation in fanfiction and they could choose all that applied. Just like any community, there are a variety of roles to take on and many overlaps. Authors share a dual identity of being both an author and a reader, but not all readers are authors, and not all authors take additional roles.

Reading Fanfiction	236
Writing Fanfiction	138
Beta Author/Editing	59
Creator of Prompts/Challenges	17
Prompt Response/Challenges	36
Archiving	13
Commenting	147
Gifts	14

Commenting

One of the most common actions in fanfiction, besides reading, is commenting. Commenting is an active form of participation that creates a link between the reader and the author, as well as the rest of the community. Fanfiction websites allow everyone to view the comments that were made by readers on fanfiction stories. These comments are commonly well-wishes and congratulatory messages. Other comments do offer writing suggestions and story critiques to assist the author.

Beta Author/Editing

There is another role that comes with a title, and that is 'Beta'. To take on the role of a 'Beta' is to be an editor, someone from within the community who offers their services to authors. Many authors provide notes in their stories, thanking their beta writers for their assistance. Not all authors use a beta, even going to go as far as having a 'tag' in the story summary, stating that no beta assisted. This note is added most often to excuse any errors in writing, such as grammar and misspellings. In the Facebook fanfiction groups, an author will post to the group requesting volunteers for the beta role if they feel it is necessary for their writing. This role is held above that of an average reader who only reviews and comments on chapters.

Creator of Prompts/Challenges

Facebook fanfiction groups, as well as other social media platforms, offer challenges to authors and prompts. Of the respondents, eighty-five of 230 (37%), stated

that they have requested a Harry Potter Fanfiction from an author or provided story prompts to authors. Many prompts are one or two sentences, enough to get the author's creativity moving. For example, someone may place a prompt in a social media group suggesting that an author write a fanfiction focusing on what Harry Potter's fourth year at Hogwarts would have been like if his godfather, criminal-on-the-run Sirius Black, had stayed with him at Hogwarts in his magical animagus form. One member of the Harry Potter Facebook Group called The Room of Requirement discussed one such prompt. They stated, "...what if James [Potter] had transformed into his animagus form when Voldemort showed up and Voldemort was like WTF WHY IS THERE A DEER IN THIS HOUSE." (Room of Requirement 2017). Also, when an author has an idea that they do not intend to use, they can provide it in a group where they participate. They offer the plotline up for adoption, or even just a general outline that another author can pick up and run.

Prompt Response/Challenges

Authors take these prompts and challenges and attempt to make a story out of it. Some challenges are very specific and require certain story lengths, themes, characters, or settings. In October 2018, the Facebook Group 'Drarry: Fanfiction and Fanart (a Harry Potter group dedicated to Harry/Draco fanfiction) posted a challenge called Writober 2018. It was a thirty-one-day writing challenge for community members. The intention behind this challenge was to post thirty-one chapters or parts of a story, then post it. A collection was created on AO3 to document the challenge and allow for an organization system to track progress (Archive of Our Own 2018). The topic of this challenge was

vague, just to post Harry/Draco fanfiction, but the pace that the writers had to keep would have been intense, and some were not able to complete the challenge, as seen by the incomplete stories that reside in the collection. Depending on the challenge, these can range from a week for stories that are ‘one-shots’ or even months for multi-chapter story arcs. After these challenges, a panel of judges or a collective of readers vote on the stories, and rankings are provided, with an author winning for best fan work. When an author ranks in a competition or challenge, they can place that title in the story summary as recognition.

Archiving

Archiving, as an action, is a delicate and tedious practice, especially as domain holding and maintenance on the internet becomes expensive. Archiving takes many forms, one being an individual collecting specific work to save from being deleted. Millions of stories have been deleted over the decades because the website disappeared. Some fanfiction participants' primary focus is collection as much work as they can, usually of more obscure fandoms than Harry Potter, to file away for safekeeping. When GeoCities was taken offline, hundreds to thousands of fan-pages were deleted, including the fanfiction residing there. Many of the stories were saved on computers of both readers and the author, allowing them to be archived on new websites. Transformative Works and Cultures, who developed Archive Of Our Own, also operates the Open Doors project merges with smaller fan-content pages to protect the stories from deletion, commonly posting updates of acquisitions of smaller fanfiction websites (<https://opendoors.transformativeworks.org/>). Further, as authors leave fandoms for many

reasons, they either leave their stories posted and disappear or delete all their work and profiles. There are many instances of a reader searching for a specific story that was posted long ago and post the plot or any details they remember in a Facebook group. One user posted to Harry Potter Fanfiction Writers “Searching for a fic! It's where Hermione is sick; with like some type of cancer, maybe bone cancer. And SS offers to heal her with his experimental treatment. It like, replaces her infected bone marrow with new marrow. And supposedly this treatment is extremely vigorous. Does anyone know where I can find this fic and what it's called???” (Perez 2016). Based on the comments associated with the post, someone was able to find the story and supply them with the link. Sometimes they are provided with the link; however, many times, the story has been deleted.

When operating on the internet, there is a chance another person has it saved on their computer and can send it to that person. This action can cause many issues because it can lead back to a discussion on who owns the work. I encountered this situation. An author had deleted their entire collection of work, unknown to me at the time. Another reader was looking for a specific story and posted a request to the group asking if anyone had a link or had it saved in a computer folder. I responded that I did have a copy and then I emailed it to them. The following day, a few others requested a copy of the story as well. Within a week, another community member condemned us all for our actions, because we did not own the story and had no right to keep and share a story that an author no longer wanted to have available. Luckily, the actual author stepped in and cooled the situation. This is an example of a misstep and is a contested point between

authors and readers. When a book is published, consumers purchase the book, put in on a shelf, and perhaps loan it out to a friend or donated the book. The author of that book could not decide that they no longer want the book to be shared and that it must stay with the original person who received the book. There are often public arguments when a deleted story makes a reappearance because who really has the right to keep the story, other than the author. The ‘age-old’ saying of ‘nothing can be deleted from the internet’ is very real. Someone, somewhere, has a copy.

Gifts

Gifts are a specific subsection of fanfiction. An author can create a fanfiction for a specific person, usually with their favorite characters or a specific plotline that the person was looking for. These people are usually fans or even the author’s beta reader. If it is a ‘gift-fic’ it is usually mentioned in the story summary or the authors note at the beginning of the story. On fanfiction author, Brookie88, posted a gift-fic that was a Hermione Granger and Fred Weasley pairing and placed this author note,

“This is a gift fic and I’ve never written for this pairing so I hope I did it justice. She wanted a slow burn which was also a challenge for me. It is so fluffy. I make up a lot of things about magical creatures, but I did use Pottermore as a resource. Thank you to my amazing beta Rachael for all her help.” (2019).

Respondents were also able to include additional roles they partake in for participation (Table 6). The most common is reader response, actions akin to commenting; however, it can include any combination of actions taken by the reader. Translating a fanfiction is an action by fanfiction participants that take on the role of both author and reader. Translating a story between two languages is not an exact science and

many words do not translate well. A translator would gain permission from the author to translate the work, then meticulously comb over the work, making sure the translation is as close to the original meaning as they can get. On Reddit, there is a forum thread titled “Someone wants to translate my fic! What do I do?” (u/dcbrighton 2017). This thread was started by an AO3 author who was seeking assistance when someone approached him about translating their fanfiction into French. Translators want to share the works they love with people who cannot speak the original language that the work was published. Many of the respondents to the thread provided their own experiences and many identified as being flattered to be asked. Though many also expressed instances where the translation was never completed because it is difficult work.

Reader Response	7
Translating	3
Fan Art	4
Fan Fanfiction Group Participation	4

The creation of fanart is an action that can be utilized by authors or as an expression by the readers. The creation of fanart is not a new form of appreciation for fandom. It is another form of fan creation that expresses the love of the fandom and is a common action in fandom gift economy. Types of fanwork produced are banners, fan videos, and fanart utilizing photo manipulation or traditional art media. These activities can take extended periods, for example, fan videos can take hours, having to find footage, cut it, bring in audio, overlays, transitions. All this brought together can create a cohesive video that tells a story, usually matching that of the fanfiction. Harry Potter movies and follow-up films have been a treasure trove of visual representation of characters.

Fanfiction participants, both author and reader, take clips from these movies and create their own ‘trailers.’ Authors will receive fanart from their readers and followers as gifts, and authors may include similar fanworks when presenting a gift-fic.

Fanfiction group participation has become more and more popular as social media platforms have become a gathering place for fandoms. Before the introduction of Facebook, most fanfiction interactions happened in forums buried deep on out-of-the-way webpages. To find most of these, one had to know it existed. GeoCities, again, was a good hub for these interactions, but its collapse cause rifts. Today, a fanfiction participant can be involved with as many groups as they want and can even create groups for specialization. These groups have differentiation tiers of roles, such as admins, moderators (mods) or just regular members. Administrators and moderators are the organizers behind the social media groups, especially on Facebook. These individuals monitor activity in the groups and make sure the group rulers are followed. When a group member is having issues with other members, they will bring it up to an administrator for assistance. All come together to create a community and fill these groups with prompts, story links, story updates or people asking for assistance with their stories.

Chapter VI: The Reader

In most instances, the first role a fanfiction participant takes on is that of the reader. By starting in this role, they learn the etiquette of the community. Some readers transition to the author very quickly and sometimes make mistakes and step on figurative toes. Multiple authors have expressed frustration with other authors and have even gone as far as to post a how-to guide for those aspiring to be authors. Being a reader, while a passive role, does come with its own expectations. There is no one to police readers or force them to show appreciation to authors. Of participants surveyed (Table 7) 173 (76.5%) strongly agree that leaving feedback, either as comments or kudos, is needed to show appreciation to authors. That is followed by an additional forty-three participants who somewhat agree that some action is needed to show appreciation.

Reader Feedback

Strongly Agree	173
Somewhat Agree	43
Neither Agree or Disagree	6
Somewhat Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	226

Overall, 216 of 226 participants at least somewhat agree that leaving some comment or kudos is needed to show appreciation to the author for their work, which is over 95% of respondents to the question. This type of positive reinforcement can be portrayed in a multitude of ways, beyond just comments or providing kudos. The response shows a deeply ingrained part of Fanfiction community culture in expectations

to show appreciation. Further, ninety-eight participants believe that their actions defiantly help authors with their work (Table 8). It is part of the positivity that resides in not just Harry Potter fanfiction, but all other fanfiction fandoms. Readers want authors to succeed because that gives them more content to consume. An additional eighty-three believed that their actions probably assisted authors and zero believed that their actions did not assist authors.

Definitely Yes	98
Probably Yes	83
Might or Might Not	44
Probably Not	2
Definitely Not	0
Total Responses	227

Readers were asked how they show appreciation to authors in an open-ended question; no prompts were provided. Of the survey respondents, 219 offered responses. Some only with one word, others provided a multitude of actions ranging from merely giving kudos to full paragraph reviews (Table 9). The most common action provided was that of providing a comment or review of the story. Fanfiction.net and AO3 both allow for readers to provide comments on stories, as well as each chapter of multi-chapter stories. This allows readers to provide words of encouragement for authors, as well as thanks for a continuing story. 198 participants believe that it was of the utmost importance to provide some feedback, though nine individuals specifically stated that they would provide constructive criticism, whether to assist in their writing style or to help them fine-tune a concept or idea. Though these individuals made it quite clear that

no trolling or ‘flames’ would take place. Many fanfiction participants are aware of these actions, and most do not condone it, even actively fighting against it.

Kudo's/Likes	94
Comments/Reviews	198
Share/Reblog	32
Favorite/Follow	55
Constructive Criticism	9
Fan Appreciation	2
Nothing	2

Kudos

To provide kudos or ‘like’ a story is one of the more basic approaches to convey appreciation to an author. Many participants felt that in addition to commenting, providing this non-verbal affirmation was important. Some chose this avenue because while they like the story, they did not have any further opinions or comments to provide the author but still wanted to leave a response. On AO3, kudos counts are visible to everyone and are even a search filter, allowing readers to filter the results in descending order by which fanfiction has the most kudos. It allows readers to find more well-received and loved stories in the fandom. Additionally, in the case of AO3, a reader does not need to be an enrolled user to leave kudos on a story, or a review.

Comments

As mentioned before, the act of placing a comment on a story can play many roles. It can take the place of cheerleader, critiquer or just a friendly username that has been following their story since the beginning. When prompted for specifics, participants responded with multiple reasons as to why commenting on a fanfiction was important:

Table 10 - How would you show appreciation to authors for their work?	
239	Developped [sic] Reviews are the most valuable appreciations in my view because authors can see real people are reading their stories and seeing things in their stories that help to keep the motivation. Reviews are much more real than kudos or likes or a simple number of views
161	Even leaving a small comment with a heart is better than nothing. It helps the writer know they arent the only one who is invested and like what they are creating.
144	Letting them know (in the review sections mostly) what I loved about each chapter, how I felt while reading. Rec'ing their work to others. Showering them in praise. If it was in person, I'd probably just give them treats like chocolate, candy, crisps, ect...
114	I would leave positive words about their writing, story line, character development ect. I also like telling them how their stories emotionally effect me whether it be me anticipating a new update or if i am sad a character died. It can essentially be any emotional connection. I tend to give critiques about writing style and sentence structure that i feel could positively effect their current and future writing. All in all, I just try to boost the writers confidence. They put alot of time, effort, and even little pieces of themselves into their stories.
74	By giving kudos and commenting that I love their work and am eager to see more of it. I also have a habit of reading all fics of an author whose fic I like in one sitting and giving kudos or commenting on them all
41	Leave a good review that details what I like about the chapter/story or answer a question that the author has asked in A/N.

Sharing Fanfiction

The action of sharing fanfiction stories has been a community pillar since fanfictions inception. While it previously took the form of photocopies and sharing them around book clubs, it has moved on to the social media platforms, such as Facebook and Tumblr. In Facebook groups, such as the Death Eater Express, readers will post a request to the group for story suggestions. Many times, they are looking for specifics, such as a couple pairing, and ask other members of the community to provide suggestions from stories they have written or have read. Facebook allows direct links to be placed in the

comment section of posts, creating a ‘thread’ of conversation. Often multiple people provide several stories that fit the request and begin a discussion on the specific strengths the story has. In addition to that, other community members follow the thread, hoping to find new reading material. Some Facebook requests are very generic; they are looking for a long story to pass the time. Other readers may have just finished a story, and they want to give the story a boost, so they will post a link and summary in a group for others to find. This type of appreciation is essential, because not only can it create more traffic for a story, but it can introduce something new to a reader than may not usually look at the tags associated with that specific story. Reader recommendations are one of the best ways to promote a story for an author in the community. One such community member on Harry Potter Fanfiction, a group on Facebook, asked the community for story suggestions by posting “I’m look [sic] for some long (400k + pref) do-over fics. Preferably Powerful Dark Harry (not necessarily dark lord), Snake or Raven. Dumbles and Weasley bashing ! I’m open to a bunch of pairings.. Thanks!” (Anderson 2019). This individual is specifically looking for a fanfiction that is over 400,000 words and is a ‘do-over’, which means the fanfiction story is altered from the start of the Harry Potter canon. Other community members provided links to stories that they fell match, or were similar enough to, their request.

Favoriting Fanfiction

There is also the more personal act of favoriting a story, which became popular on Fanfiction.Net. Back in 2002, a reader with an active account and verified email address could only favorite thirty stories at one time, leading to some readers have multiple

accounts to accommodate all their favorites, this has changed, and the website now allows for upwards of 5,000 favorited stories. By favoriting the stories, readers could go to their favorites page under their account and see if any of the stories had been updated. Today, readers can also receive email notifications. Additionally, the number of account holders that favorite a story is usually tracked and can be used as a gauge for the quality of the story.

Translating Fanfiction

Of the respondents, one of the participants from France stated that if they loved a story, and they wanted to share it, they would translate the story so others could enjoy it. The skill, time, and energy to translate stories can be astronomical, particularly because not everything translates the same. Many do provide this assistance and even offer their skills. Additionally, this is a fantastic activity for those who believe they may want to translate works for a career.

Fanworks

Fan appreciation, such as fanart and fanworks, which are commonly considered 'gifts' are to show some of the utmost respect for authors. Providing images to represent scenes from stories, or character drawings of Original Characters (OCs). Even the creation of fan music videos, or even offering a playlist of music that the reader feels matches the story, an equivalent of the mixed tape of the 1980's/1990's. YouTube videos are also a popular form of appreciation. Since Harry Potter has produced eight movies, countless hours of behind the scenes videos, as well as a prequel franchise, the amount of

media that a fan has to play with is astounding. In some instances, they also take from other shows and films to create specific storylines, as well as to include a character that has not participated in the canon films.

Chapter VII: The Author

Of the survey participants, 145 identify as authors, meaning that these individuals have written Harry Potter fanfiction at some point in their lives. In fanfiction, being an author does not necessarily mean that they have published fanfiction online. They could very well write it for just themselves and never share the story with the community. There are numerous types of fanfiction, covering vast amounts of styles. Many fanfictions can be broken down into generic categories, such as the number of chapters, or the overlying theme. To gather a concept of what type of authors were participating in the survey, they were asked why type of stories that they write.

Fanfiction Story Types

One-Shots	98
Gift Stories	19
Multi-Chapter Stories	118
Rewrites	37
Other Types	20

The authors gave a variety of answers (Table 11) that cover the vast majority of stories. A one-shot is one chapter in length and has no word limit. Many are just a drabble or interaction; others can be thousands of words long. A one-shot is moving away from the modern concept of a novel and moves back to the short shorts that would appear in newspapers during the Victorian Era. Multi-chapter stories are two or more chapters and can be updated as each chapter comes available. Some authors write their entire story before even posting the first chapter or update regularly and may provide a schedule for

the readers on when they can expect the next chapter. Others update spontaneously and can go weeks, months and years before posting another chapter.

Some familiar tropes in fanfictions are Alternate Universe rewrites and canon-divergences. A canon-divergence is when a fanfiction story will follow the plot from the canon story but then will diverge at a specific spot. For example, many authors change the ending of the seventh Harry Potter book. Of the author's respondents, thirty-seven have rewritten the story. In canon, Harry Potter defeats Voldemort and saves the wizarding world from a wizard bent on blood-purity. Authors will change the story and write on what would occur if Voldemort had won in the end and Harry Potter died. How would such an action change the Wizarding World? Another example is what would these characters be like if they lived in a world that had never had magic. They may write the characters in a modern-day setting where the characters make their way through high school. Another popular theme, which is not regulated to just Harry Potter, is to write fanfictions in the contemporary setting. Additionally, crossovers are also frequent, where authors take characters from other fandoms and introduce them in the wizarding world or vice-versa. There are stories where Sam and Dean Winchester from the tv show Supernatural, a television show where two brothers hunt all things supernatural, are thrown across the pond to teach at Hogwarts as the Defense Against the Dark Arts professors.

Gift Stories

Nineteen authors stated that they have partaken in gift stories. Gift stories play a more significant role in the community, as stated before because the author is actively

engaging with someone else in the community. These actions are important, especially on a predominantly online platform with no face-to-face interaction. The gift economy exchange has many key factors that Mauss and Sahlin's both discussed in their work. For example, the beta editor has been assisting an author with their story. As a sign of appreciation for their assistance, they will write a story for their beta editor. There may be additionally reciprocal behavior on behalf of the beta editor, and they could create a fanwork for the author in appreciation.

Author Motivations

Motivations for authors can vary and is all dependent on personal style; however, when asked, 105 authors provided that readers help motivate them when writing and publishing stories. A further nineteen authors believe that readers and the community may assist their motivation. As previously stated, a high frequency of readers believed that they must show appreciation in some form and listed many avenues in which they portray that appreciation. This stance comes from the unwritten community expectation of community interactions between authors and readers.

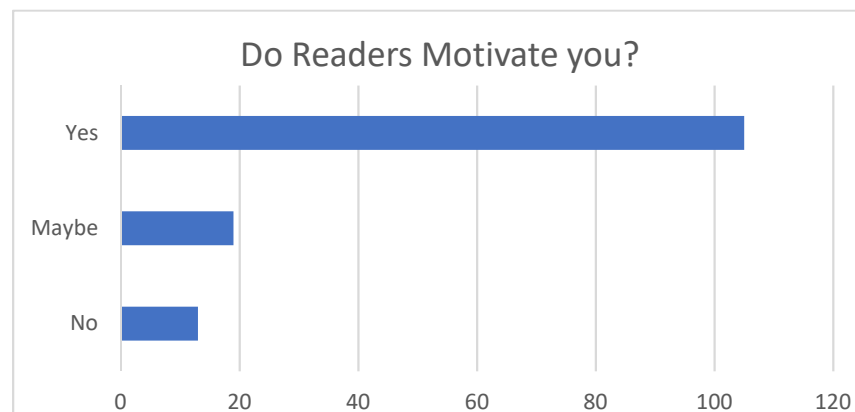


Figure 4 - Do Readers motivate you?

The 120 participating authors did provide additional motivations, though no author has the same motivations to put words on a page (Table 12). An overarching motivation is a love for the fandom. Unless writing a gift-story, authors stick within their fandom and create work. Love for the Wizarding World significantly drives authors to create their works. In their responses, some merely gave one reason; some authors gave in-depth responses.

Practice Skills	8
Community	14
Love of Harry Potter	9
To Tell A Story	55
Stress Relief	17
Not for Others	1
Translations	1
Prompts	3

When asked what motivated these authors to write, the most common response was to tell a story. Of the 120 authors, fifty-five mentioned this as their motivations. These authors wanted to play in the brilliant work the J.K Rowling had created. Exploring characters reacting to different situations or fleshing out characters that rarely had appearances in the books. They also want to write stories that they would want to read. A handful of authors stated that the reason behind the stories they produce is because they could not find a story that they want to read. One author responded that...

I really liked the work of JK Rowling, but sometimes found that it lakrme [sic] of grey nuances (it's almost everything back or white in the book). So I wanted to make some situation more believable, or character more deep, or even re-write some part of the story (notably the epilogue, I didn't like it)

Another common motivation is the act of sitting down to write can lead to therapeutic benefits. In fanfiction, there is no deadline by an editor or a publisher, just the timetable authors give themselves. Authors can get into the zone and push out chapters at an amazing rate. These two authors specifically use writing Harry Potter fanfiction as a coping mechanism for stressors in their life (Table 13).

145	Everything. I write based on things that have and are happening in and around my life. I incorporate them into my love of Harry Potter and I immerse myself into my writing because I always imagined the Harry Potter universe as my personal escape from the problems I dealt with in reality.
16	It is stress relief and a way to work out my thoughts on certain issues. I have PTSD and I feel a strong kinship to some of my characters.
88	I am motivated to write by dreams that I have had or even just by reading someone else's fanfiction. The writing process is usually more complicated. I have ADHD and sometimes have trouble sitting still and working my way through the story like most people from beginning to end. I tend to scribble scenes that come to mind in notebooks and then piece them together into a final product.

Motivated by the Community

Fourteen authors mentioned that the community provided their motivation. The people around them, their readers, friends in the community, the fans who follow all their work, drive them forward. Receiving positive comments from readers is essential, and there is an uplifting feeling the more comments and kudos an author receives for their work (Table 14). Additionally, the interactions between the author and readers each chapter can shape the story further, as well as the writing style.

118	Readers who review and favourite [sic] or give kudos help motivate me a great deal. It often helps inspire to write more as i know people like what i have written...
55	The primary reason I write fanfiction is that I can get immediate response per chapter. You don't have to complete a novel-length writing and get it confirmed by a publishing [sic] house. Also, playing in an existing world with such well-developed characters is much easier than original work which people are weary[sic] of reading for its unfamiliarity. I can avoid that, have the quick response I desire and feel fulfillment.

Story Completion

As shown (Table 15), a majority of the authors have completed five or fewer fanfictions, though these can range of drabbles and one-shots to multi-chapter storied of 100,000 words or more. Sixteen of the surveyed authors have completed over twenty-one stories. A story encompasses an idea, throughout from start to finish, with interconnecting themes, characters, and settings. Even short stories can take a lot of work. There are authors, many having been writing for years, who have built their fanfiction portfolio that has an assortment of stories, of lengths, even some that are part of a more extensive series. Many authors also write for other fandoms and create followings that introduce readers to these new fandoms.

Number of Stories	Participants
5 or Less	80
6 to 10	19
11 to 20	20
21+	16

Following the number of stories posted, forty-eight authors felt that they complete a majority of the fanfiction they publish (Table 16). This can include one-shots, multi-

chapter stories, and series that are published that can contain multiple one-shots or multi-chapter stories. The author's survey shows a great range of authors because not all stories completed. For every story that is completed, there is one that is in hiatus. Hiatus is when a story is put on pause and will not have any updates for an indeterminate amount of time. This status is commonly placed in the general summary on the results page. Some stories even go into a permanent hiatus, meaning that the author has no intention of ever completing the story. Another term for this is termed 'abandoned.'

Probably	38
About Half	18
Probably Not	18
None	13
Total	135

Authors do not start a story with the intention of not completing it; however, fifty-six of the 145 authors said that they had abandoned a Harry Potter fanfiction. Abandoned means that they no longer have any interest or ambition to complete the work. At this point, there are a few paths an author can take. They can leave the story posted, unfinished. They can take the story down and delete the link. Some authors offer up the story of adoption to another author who shows interest in it and is willing to continue work on it. No written code or contract holds an author to complete a story. They very well may get inspiration five years later and decide to come back to the story.

Many authors responded that the reason that they abandoned a story was that they, themselves, lost interest (Table 17). Reader disinterest can be disheartening. All that

work and no one is appreciating. This can lead to authors becoming disinterested in their own stories:

No response from viewers. Didn't know where to take the story (didn't think it through)

This disinterest can grow from many areas; thirteen authors felt that life just got in the way. Responsibilities at home and work. Others have other external motivation that leaves, such as this author who stated, "The person I wrote it for and I had a falling out."

Author Disinterest	30
Reader Disinterest	3
Life got in the way	13
Toxicity	5
Writing Change/Grew out of Story	7
Left Fandom	1

Abandoning a Story

Authors have moved on from writing for a multitude of reasons such as education, jobs and family life. Seven authors felt their writing style changed so much that they no longer felt like the story could be continued, usually because the writing was so horrible. However, this does lead to the previous point that writing fanfiction is excellent practice for writing in general. To increase skill, either in writing style or fine-tuning the creative process. Some authors go forward to become published authors, though they are candid with their beginnings. One author stated "It was one of my first works, and honestly horrible. Filled with clichés and awful writing. I lost motivation for it."

Five authors specifically mentioned toxicity or trolls as a reason for abandoning a story. Toxicity in fandom has been a raging threat across all platforms and is not uncommon to find in every aspect of online culture. There are those individuals who feel that they need to bully and belittle others. These individuals are commonly known as ‘trolls.’ They go out of their way to leave hateful comments on other’s works. Their reviews usually contain hate-speech and negative attitudes that offer no constructive criticism. One author still holds bitterness over “Negative review from readers who clearly didn’t read past the first chapter.”

Story Inspiration

Tumblr Prompts	44
Reader Requests	22
Personal Inspiration	127
YouTube	15
Other Websites	32
Music/Movies/TV	16
External Sources/Life	6
Fan Art	3
Other Fanfictions	5
Friends/Community	3

Inspiration to write can take many forms, regardless if that story is completed or abandoned (Table 18). 127 authors draw upon their personal experiences for their stories. Sometimes they are moving through their days when a thought occurs, one that nags at the back of their head. The avenues at which inspiration can travel are innumerable. Participants were offered a chance to include what avenues their inspiration travel. Many provided that music inspired them and their stories. Lyrics have always played an

influential role in society and can bring emotions to the forefront. Music has always lent itself to compelling storytelling.

Another realm where inspiration can spring from is visual media. Some authors take plot lines from tv shows, movies, and books and use those as plot devices, placing characters in scenarios that would not commonly occur in Harry Potter. For example, taking the plot of the Moulin Rouge and changing out the characters for those that exist in Harry Potter. These could also lead to crossover fanfiction where two or more fandoms cross together in a story.

There is a good amount of writer collaboration that occurs in fanfiction, even though it is an online community. Many fan websites offer competitions and story prompts for their community. Authors create works, then it is judged by a panel, and awards are given out. The competitions are not for the light-hearted and can carry pressing deadlines. Additionally, authors are always asking for assistance via their reader fan-base as well as utilizing social media. Authors use what they can at their disposal. This author states that inspiration comes from...

Reading other's stories, reading discussions on fan site, poking writing themes with other writers on writing site...or just sometimes people leave suggestions in comment section or send private messages about something to ask me as the author...which count as interaction with my own readers I guess.

With great inspiration, comes great length. Lengths of fanfictions vary, but a milestone is a story that has reached 100,000 words. Fanfictions do not track by page count but by the number of words that occur. This is also a common request when readers are looking for suggestions and recommendations from other readers. To put things in

perspective, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban was 107,253 words long. The largest book, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix was 257,045 words (<https://wordcounter.io/blog/how-many-words-are-in-harry-potter>).

These are published works with the authors receiving some compensation. Fanfiction authors in a majority of cases are not receiving any compensation for their time or dedication. Of the authors who responded (137), sixty-one confirmed that they had written at least one story over 100,000 words. That is roughly 45% of surveyed authors who have written novel-length fanfictions.

Story Length

When asked how an author can reach that length, the authors provided multiple reasons (Table 19). The most prevalent is that they did so because there was a story to be told. The author had a concept, a plan; they knew how they wanted their story to end, and it took that long to get there. Some have simple goals; others had ambitious plans. Many authors have rewritten the entire Harry Potter series to fit their narrative. For example, one author rewrote the entire series and changed some rather large detail, also, at the time, the final book had not come out yet, so they also utilized canon-divergence. Their story had a rather large alteration, and that had Harry Potter as the son of Severus Snape. Harry's mother, Lily Potter (nee Evans), had taken him away to protect him from Voldemort, never telling Severus of Harry's true parentage, with James Potter accepting him as his son. This information came out early in the series, at least to the principal cast, then to the rest of the wizarding world in what is considered Year 7 of Harry Potter. The

author also took additional creative licenses with High Elves and other varying types of magic.

Table 19 - Reasons for Writing a Fanfiction over 100,000 words	
Where the story went	37
Therapy/stress relief	4
Love/enjoyment	8
To see if they could	3
Practice	2
Readers/Community motivations	7

There is always the obvious love that authors have for their work. They love their characters and their plots, and it shows in their work. Many also wanted to see if they could. The level of dedication to reach a story of that length puts authors in a different category. It is also irrefutable that any form of writing is good practice, whether it be to improve style and talent or to assist in learning a language. Fanfiction allows for extensive practice, without the worry of world-building. Authors also want to explore more complex storylines and emotions. One author chose their topic for that exact reason:

The topic of my story that explore repercussions of the war on participation in the war, PTSD and survivor's guilt and dealing with such problems. It is a personal challenge to write about it on English that is not my native language.

Community support is a pillar in publishing fanfiction. Many do not need the support of the community but having one's work appreciated can be motivation enough to continue forward. The below selection of authors reinforces that the Harry Potter fanfiction community helped them (Table 20).

Table 20 - What Inspired You?	
109	Nothing in particular. I just kept writing till I realised [sic] it was over 250k words. Probably readers continued encouragement. Even though there is so many chapters, people still keep reviewing and favouriting [sic] & following.
10	Readers. And I just let the story take me in whatever direction it wanted since I didn't heavily outline it. But mostly, reader feedback.
201	It is cowritten with a friend. It has been a constant thing for 14yrs. And we come up with new twists and inspire each other.
177	I didn't set out for it to be longer than a novel, it just happened. Fan feedback and reviews fed the muse and kept the ideas flowing. The story grew to a juggernaut. Actually there are a few that happened that way.

Previously listed in author motivation, some authors presented more when asked how they managed such a long story. There is a sense of stress relief and self-therapy in writing, and many authors seek out that feeling. Many utilize the writing process to work out their stressors in life or find ways to solve problems in their daily life (Table 21).

Table 21 - Author Selection	
167	I have Bipolar Disorder 2. I've written most of my stories during my hypomanic episodes, when I usually have lots of energy, inspiration, and an almost obsessive need to finish a story that I started.
42	I wrote it during a difficult time in my life. I couldn't talk about my issues, so I disguised them in the story.

Overall, it can be observed that Harry Potter Fanfiction Community has strong bonds between the authors and their readers. Authors rely on the readers to provide feedback and appreciation, and readers want to give that appreciation. While some authors did not list readers as their motivation, the apparent response of the author's appreciation expectations supports that interaction. The online community, which had small beginnings as book clubs, has always maintained a supportive culture amongst the participants.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

Due to the specific path that was taken for data collection, a large population was missed. Those individuals who do not utilize social media groups to interact with the community would have not encountered the survey. Those who saw the survey would have had to already be a member of the group and the following posts in the group(s) that were surveyed, or at least visit the page to see the post.

Future research on specific roles in fanfiction would be beneficial for a better understanding of how the fanfiction community operates. Social media group admins and moderators hold a great deal of power, though many were not elected to hold that power. The role a veteran fanfiction participant fills in the community would be significant, as well as their observations on how the community grew from fanzines to large online archives could alter how online communities are understood, as well as how anonymity changed how fanfiction was written and published.

Many believe that when studying fanfiction, it cannot be separated from other fields. Rhiannon Bury stated that “fan practices cannot be analyzed separately from gender, class, sexuality and nationality.” (Bury 2005:206). This statement was made nearly 15 years ago, and behavior in fanfiction has changed, as well as the concept of online identity. She may be correct in some regards, however, increasing anonymity practices on the internet, as well as an individual’s disinterest in sharing even the most basic information will make further study in those areas difficult. An individual’s anonymity in online communities provides a power that many do not carry into the real

world. It creates a fearlessness due to the ability to hide from community sanctions by merely changing their username. Further, the author identity an individual build versus the identity they carry in the real world could greatly influence an author's writing. Authors stated that much of their writing is motivation by personal inspiration. Those writing may represent how the author would solve problems if they were the same person online as in reality.

The results of the research show a reciprocal behavior between author and reader, heavily relying on communication exchange and appreciation from readers to authors for their work. This communication and gift economy exchange takes place in comments sections on published stories, as well as on social media posts. The Harry Potter fanfiction community is one of the most active fanfiction communities currently operating and creates a reasonable basis for how fanfiction communities' function in terms of interactions and expectations. As previously mentioned, there is not a formal code of conduct or published rules for participants within the fanfiction community. The behavior is learned through observation, much like in other cultures and communities. Any missteps can be met with a public censor, sometimes by a regular member of the community, other times by an admin of a Facebook page. The public reactions are also addressed to other group members, to educate the community on proper behavior.

A significantly large portion of the responding participants agrees that a reader should leave some form of response, or gift, for authors. Readers expect from themselves that they show appreciation to an author, and they believe that by showing appreciation, they help the authors. The most popular show of appreciation is that of the comment or

review of the story, followed by the more informal kudos or like. Not only does this action show appreciation but give valid feedback on stories. Authors may place a note in their fanfiction asking readers to offer advice on where the plot should go or have them vote on which couple pairings they would want to see in the story. This interaction with the readers makes the community stronger and shows how integrated fanfiction participants are. Literary authors do not receive that same kind of feedback from their audience. The reliance authors have on their readers for motivation is evident in the responses.

Author's identified that the community helps and motivates them to continue writing. The authors set out to tell a story and complete it. That does not always happen; however, the most common reason given to abandon a story was because the author lost interest. Though some authors believed they may still return to a story that they abandoned, they still leave the readers with a sense of something unfinished. Authors do not often provide a glimpse of the ending unless using it as a literary tool. Additionally, some of the survey participants noted that part of their motivation to write is for their mental health. Creative outlets are used as a variety of therapeutic tools to assist individuals. Further, the action of writing fanfiction for writing practice is inspirational, as is the research that goes into writing on topics that an author has no educational background.

The amount of time fanfiction participants engage in fanfiction activities is significant because while most respondents participate six to fourteen hours per week, the second-largest respondent group participated fifteen to twenty-four hours a week, with

just over sixty participants. This engagement level in the community represents dedication. Community members would not participate as often if they felt that they were not accepted, nor if they did not enjoy the subject matter. During these hours, they are reading stories, commenting on authors' works and engaging in group participation on social media. Further, all but fifty-six survey participants have been engaging in the community for five or more years, and fifty with a tenure of over fifteen years.

While the fanfiction community exists entirely online, it is a vibrant community with participants who rely on each other to produce fan works. Even though fans live across the globe and come from different cultures, they still share a love for Fandom within this virtual community. The Harry Potter fanfiction community is an excellent example of this reliance on each other for motivation and guidance. The fanfiction community has a strong future and the community will only continue to evolve its behaviors. Expectations for readers are likely only to get more complex and move beyond simple actions of posting comments and kudos. The gift economy will continue to progress between readers and authors and is likely to increase. Author motivations will likely also change as the interactions within the community progress. This research is a snapshot in time, as all online communities grow and adapt to ever-changing rules. There is comfort in the fact that the fanfiction community, while evolving, still places importance on community, gift economy and interactions with each other.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Reader Prompted Actions in Fanfiction Codebook

Table 6 Reader Prompted Actions in Fanfiction

CATEGORY	Reader Prompted Actions in Fanfiction
Participatory actions undertaken by fanfiction readers.	
CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
Reader Response	Action taken by the reader to respond to the author in any form.
Translating	Translating a fanfiction from its original language into another, with permission from the author.
Fan Art	Creating imagery in various forms to support a fanfiction, either as a gift or promotion.
Fan Fanfiction Group Participation	Participating online in social media groups such as Facebook Group and engage with other community members.

Appendix B - How Should Readers Show Appreciation to Authors Codebook

Table 9 – How Should Readers Show Appreciation to Authors?

CATEGORY	How Should Readers Show Appreciation to Authors?
	Reader's have many actions to choose from to show appreciation towards an author. Fanfiction websites allow for specific actions and others require action through Social Media and exchanges with other members in the community.
CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
Kudos/Likes	Single-action response that equates to a 'thumbs-up' action. This action is trackable and the amount of kudos and like's are tracked and displayed with the posted story.
Comments/Reviews	Readers will leave a word, phrase or paragraph in response to the story. This ranges from congratulatory comments, expectations and requests. There is no work limit requirement.
Share/Reblog	To provide the story URL to others in the community. Can be placed on social media or supplied to a single individual upon request.
Favorite/Follow	Action taken to save and receive updates on the story/author. To save the story URL, either through the fanfiction sites features or as a bookmark on an individual's web browser. Following allows notifications to be sent via email on updates of the story or author.
Constructive Criticism	Providing feedback to the author to assist them in their story. This includes advice on writing style, the narrative and formatting.
Fan Appreciation	Reader response style that includes art creation to show appreciation to an author.
Nothing	No action taken by reader.

Appendix C - Source of Author Motivations Codebook

Table 12 - Source of Author Motivations

CATEGORY	Source of Author Motivations
What motivations do fanfiction authors have and where can they find them?	
CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
Practice Skills	To practice and improve writing skills and story development.
Community	The fanfiction community.
Love of Harry Potter	The Wizarding World of Harry Potter creates inspiration.
To Tell A Story	Wanting to write a story, from beginning to end.
Stress Relief	Using writing to relieve stress in their life as a distraction or problem solving.
Not for Others	No external motivations. They write for themselves and not for the community.
Translations	Translators want share a story that is written in another language.
Prompts	External story ideas that are presented to authors as a source of motivation. Authors will take the prompt and create a story.

Appendix D - Reason for Abandoning a Story Codebook

Table 17 - Reason for Abandoning a Story

CATEGORY	Reason for Abandoning a Story
	Authors do not always complete stories and abandon the story. Authors were asked what reasons they have had to abandon a story.
CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
Author Disinterest	Author lost interest in the story or the genre.
Reader Disinterest	Readers did not show interest in the story and the author felt that it was unwanted.
Life got in the way	Outside distractions or obstacles interfered with writing the fanfiction.
Toxicity	Negative comments and community members led to author abandoning their store.
Writing Change/Grew out of Story	Author change their writing style or surpassed the level at which the story was being written. As authors practice and gain more experience, stories written previously may not meet the new standards they have placed on themselves.
Left Fandom	Author left the specific fanfiction community and began reading/writing fanfiction from another fandom.

Appendix E - Sources of Inspiration in Fanfiction Writing Codebook

Table 18 - Sources of Inspiration in Fanfiction Writing

CATEGORY	Sources of Inspiration in Fanfiction Writing
Authors have multiple avenues of inspiration and were asked where they can be found.	
CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
Tumblr Prompts	Prompts provided by fanfiction community participants on the social media platform Tumblr.
Reader Requests	Fanfiction reader requests a certain type of story to an author. Or supplies request on social media for an author to pick up.
Personal Inspiration	Author concepts that they have brainstormed themselves without outside assistance and prompts.
YouTube	Posting content on YouTube.
Other Websites	Posting content on other websites: Fansites, archives, database and wiki's.
Music/Movies/TV	Finding a theme or notion through music, movies or TV shows that can be translated into a fanfiction. Song lyrics, movie tropes and TV characterization are rewritten to include characters in the fandom or to inspire action.
External Sources/Life	Outside sources, personal issues, home issues.
Fan Art	Imagery that creates
Other Fanfictions	Reading an author's work and finding inspiration to write one of your own. Can be a character not used before, an unknown pairing or scenario to test out.
Friends/Community	Community and friends within the community. Readers and other participants.

Appendix F - Reasons for Writing a Fanfiction over 100,000 words Codebook

Table 19 - Reasons for Writing a Fanfiction over 100,000 words

CATEGORY	Reasons for Writing a Fanfiction over 100,000 words
CODE	CODE DESCRIPTION
Where the story went	The story narrative required the length for completion.
Therapy/stress relief	Activity to ease the mind, forget problems, ease stress or solve personal issues.
Love/enjoyment	Activity brings pleasure and happiness. Sense of fulfillment.
To see if they could	Author motivation for development and
Practice	To practice writing skills and creating complex narratives and character development.
Readers/Community motivations	Fanfiction community requested more from a story and/or author.

Appendix G - Survey Questions

Question		Response Format
1.	In which country do you reside?	Qualtrics supplied drop-down menu.
2.	What is your Age?	Open response
3.	At what age were you introduced to fanfiction?	Open response
4.	About how many hours per week do you participate in fanfiction (writing, reading, editing, etc.).	Multiple-choice response, single choice response
5.	What types(s) of participation in fanfiction do you take action in? Please select all that apply.	Multiple-choice response – Select all that apply.
6.	Do you write, or have you ever written Harry Potter Fanfiction?	Yes or No response
7.	Please explain your motivations and writing process?	Open response
8.	Do you feel that readers of your published stories help motivate you to publish the next chapter or work?	Multiple-choice response, single choice response
9.	What type of Harry Potter fanfiction do you write? Please select all that apply.	Multiple-choice response – Select all that apply.
10.	Do you feel you complete a majority of the Harry Potter fanfictions you publish online?	Likert Scale
11.	Where to you find inspiration for your Harry Potter fanfiction stories?	Multiple-choice response – Select all that apply plus Survey respondent - Open Response.
12.	Have you written a Harry Potter fanfiction longer than 100,000 words, either that is in progress, abandoned or completed?	Yes or No response
13.	What drove and inspired you to create a work that is longer than a novel?	Open response

14.	Have you ever abandoned a Harry Potter fanfiction?	Yes or No response
15.	What feelings or motivations led you to abandon a Harry Potter fanfiction?	Open response
16.	About how many Harry Potter fanfiction stories have you published online?	Multiple-choice response, single choice response
17.	Have you ever requested a Harry Potter fanfiction or provide prompts to authors?	Yes or No response
18.	Leaving feedback, either as comments or kudos, is needed to show appreciation to the author for their work?	Likert Scale
19.	How would you show your appreciation to authors for their work?	Open response
20.	Do you feel that your efforts to show appreciation help the author continue to write their work?	Likert Scale

Appendix H - Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



April 28, 2018

Dear Rhonda Dass, PhD:

Re: IRB Proposal entitled "[1219448-3] Challenges, Comments and Kudos: Motivations in Fanfiction"
Review Level: Level [I]

Your IRB Proposal has been approved as of April 28, 2018. On behalf of the Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB, we wish you success with your study. Remember that you must seek approval for any changes in your study, its design, funding source, consent process, or any part of the study that may affect participants in the study (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/revision.html>). Should any of the participants in your study suffer a research-related injury or other harmful outcome, you are required to report them to the Associate Vice-President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies immediately.

When you complete your data collection or should you discontinue your study, you must submit a Closure request (see <https://grad.mnsu.edu/irb/closure.html>). All documents related to this research must be stored for a minimum of three years following the date on your Closure request. Please include your IRBNet ID number with any correspondence with the IRB.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Hadley".

Mary Hadley, Ph.D.
IRB Coordinator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Buchanan".

Jeffrey Buchanan, PhD
IRB Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie A. Carlson".

Julie Carlson, Ed.D.
IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Minnesota State University, Mankato IRB's records.