Finnish audience responses to myth and mythology in *The Hobbit*: Connections between J R R Tolkien's fiction and Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* film series

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Abstract:
This article focuses on how the expressions of myth and mythology, mythopoetics, and the Tolkien's legend-world is seen on the reception of *The Hobbit* film series in the Finnish audience responses of *The World Hobbit Project* survey. The article asks: what kind of expressions have myth and mythology in the survey answers, and do the Finnish viewers focus on the mythic aspects of the fantasy world? Also, the article discusses whether the Finnish viewers of *The Hobbit* film series consider *The Hobbit* films to be part of Tolkien's legend-world. Are they referring to these elements in the open-ended answers? And lastly, considering the former, what is the role of *The Silmarillion*, a central work of Tolkien's legend-world, in the survey answers?

Methodologically, the focus is selectively and qualitatively on all of the open-ended questions of the Finnish survey. As a background to classify elements from Tolkien's fictive work, this article uses tools of so-called constructive mythopoetics, theories of intertextuality and literary analysis. As a method to study survey answers, I have conducted textual analyses of the answers to open-ended questions given by Finnish respondents.

Keywords: *The Hobbit*, Myth, Mythology, *The Silmarillion*, J. R. R. Tolkien.

Introduction

This article focuses on how myth and mythology, J. R. R. Tolkien's mythopoetic[1] imagined fantasy world, and Tolkien's legend-world is seen in the reception of *The Hobbit* film series (Jackson, USA & New Zealand 2012, 2013, 2014) in Finland.

My original plan for this study was to search for the so-called 'Northern Myth' of Tolkien's legend-world, and how this manifests in the film series. 'Northern Myth' here meaning Tolkien's mythopoetic reimagining of mythical elements inspired and shaped by Finnish, Scandinavian, and Germanic pagan myths of the pre-Christian era. However, during my analysis of the data I noticed that there appears to be only minute elements of these in the research materials – these few (six, precisely) exceptions will be discussed later. Therefore, I shifted my research question to cover all mythical and mythological elements that can be found in the answers to the open-ended questions of the survey answers.

The essay focuses on the answers given by Finnish respondents of The World Hobbit Project survey (Barker et al. 2014–2015).[2] On the one hand, the focus draws mainly on analysing selected responses to all the open-ended questions of the survey. The materials used for my analysis derive from 11 open questions in the questionnaire (Qs 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1, 15, 21, 26 and 27). On the other hand, of the multiple choice questions, it was also essential to pay attention to the answers to Q4: 'Which of the following come closest to capturing the kind of films you feel *The Hobbit* trilogy are? Please choose up to three.' There, 832 of all respondents (N:1614) of the Finnish survey answered that *The Hobbit* films are 'Part of Tolkien's legend-world'. 51.5% of the survey respondents feel that these films belong to this category. Also, it should be noted that to the Q5: 'Are there any of these [kind of films] that you would definitely *not* choose?', 174 (10.8%) of Finnish respondents also selected 'Part of Tolkien's legend-world'. This suggests that there is some incoherence there. Respondents had mixed reactions as to whether the films are part of Tolkien's legend-world, or not.[3]

The main research questions were thus as follows:

I) What roles do *myth* and *mythology* play in the survey answers? Do the Finnish viewers focus on the mythic aspects of the fantasy world?

II) Do the Finnish viewers of *The Hobbit* film series consider *The Hobbit* films to be part of Tolkien's legend-world? Are they referring to these legendary elements in the open-ended answers?

As a method to explore survey answers, I have conducted textual analyses of the answers to open-ended questions given by Finnish respondents. The main focus was on analysing specific terms mentioned in my research questions. These terms are 'myth', 'mythology', '*The Silmarillion*', '*The Kalevala*', and '*The Edda*', which were picked for further analysis for their intratextual and intertextual contexts. These motifs were chosen because of their central roles in Tolkien's mythopoetic vision: 'myth' and 'mythology' are central concepts of (any) mythopoetics, '*The Silmarillion*' is the key source for *intratextual* (that is: inside Tolkien's fantasy world) references in Tolkien's mythopoetics, and '*The Kalevala*' and '*The Edda*' are most noted intertextual references in Tolkien's mythopoetics.

Of the terms used here, firstly, 'mythopoetics', or 'mythopoeic' are used as virtual synonyms, to mean 'productive of myth' (Nagy 2003: 239). Tolkien used the term in his poem 'Mythopoeia' (1931, published in 1988 in an edition of *Tree and Leaf*), and the term has later been connected with authors of fantasy fiction who integrate mythological themes and archetypes into fiction (Korpua 2015: 16-17). Tolkien's legend-world, as a highly constructed fictive world, can be seen as a prime example of mythopoetic vision. There, *myth* is simply meaning legendary story, or a story set in certain legendary milieu, and *mythology* means a body or collection of these stories (myths).

Secondly, what are the meanings of terms 'intratextual' or 'intertextual' in this study? Basically, intertextuality can be understood as any textual connection between text A and text B. Julia Kristeva sees intertexts as manifestations absorbed into and transformed into the text (see Godard 1993: 568-569).[4] As a term, 'intertextuality' is normally used to refer to links to other texts, while 'intratextuality' refers to internal relations within the text or texts (see for example Chandler 2004). References made by the films to the books would therefore be intertextual. But references inside and between the film trilogy would constitute intratextual references. When respondents to the survey see intertextual references from the films to the books (or other mediums) that cannot factually be there (for example, elements from *The Silmarillion* in *The Hobbit* films), I call these *pseudo-intertextuality*. There are also, for example, Michael Riffaterre's concept of *aleatoric intertextualities*, which means that the intertextual reference is possibly made by chance and (quasi) interpretation and the reference is uncertain (Allen 2000: 130). It is possible and understandable that the audience can see pseudo- and aleatoric intertextuality in other texts, such as in the films.

Preface: Finnish audience expectations and the disappointment

Tolkien's fantasy fiction, more precisely his major works *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55), and *The Silmarillion* (posthumously in 1977), have established themselves as extremely popular books and cultural texts. One might say that *The Lord of the Rings* (with more than 150 million copies sold) is the most popular fantasy book of the 20th century (Korpua 2015: 22, see also Wagner). Tolkien's fiction demonstrates a highly original creative work, which creates a coherent and well-balanced *mythic*, secondary world, The Arda, of which Middle-earth is a part. Tolkien's fiction can be described as fantastical and mythical, because his creative art draws from the world of myths and mythology. Although Tolkien's books are very popular, this mythical aspect is not usually understood. Joseph Pierce claims that Tolkien is a misunderstood writer, because he was a *myth*understood writer (Pierce 1999: xiii-xiv, see also Korpua 2015: 117). That is, because Tolkien used and understood myths.

In Finland, folklorism and mythology are experiencing a recent revival. People are interested in mythical stories such *as The Kalevala*, (see Helsinki folkloristiikka). For example the posthumous release of Tolkien's Kalevala based on *The Story of Kullervo* (2015) was a

major media event in Finland, which was reported by all major TV channels and newspapers (see for example Pesonen 2016).

Fantasy and mythical literature has also been very popular in Finland ever since Tove Jansson's Moomin-series started (although they at first gained popularity only in the Swedish language) (see Finland.fi). Also, the new emerging subgenre of the so-called 'Finnish Weird' has become popular domestically and internationally (see Finnish Weird). 'Finnish Weird' texts usually introduce lot of mythic and legendary elements in them. Also, Tolkien's fiction has been extremely popular in Finland since 1970s.

Initially, it would have been easy to assume that *The Hobbit* film series would be popular among Finnish audiences who are fascinated by myth and fantasy, and by Tolkien's fiction. *The Hobbit* films were also a follow up (and prequel) to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy which was extremely popular in Finland. Also, as Barker and Mathijs show in their study on the reception of the *Lord of the Rings* films, myth and legend were an important part of the responses to those movies. In the International *Lord of the Rings* Survey, those participants who nominated 'myth or legend' as an important part of the movie experience, also attached 'extreme enjoyment' and 'importance' to the film. (Barker & Mathjis 2012: 666 & 671). Participants were in a way myth-driven.

But are these kinds of claims evident in the Finnish data of *The Hobbit* movies? Reading the survey answers, it becomes more clear that – despite quite good results as rating – *The Hobbit* is not 'mythunderstood', but rather perhaps 'misunderstood'.

In the Finnish press and Internet, *The Hobbit* movies were given mediocre ratings. The Press claimed the movies to be 'the most anticipated ever' (Leffatykki 2012). But the reporters saw that the movies were a disappointment, not meeting expectations. This can be seen from, for example, Jussi Ahlroth's column on the reasons why *The Hobbit* movies failed, in the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper. Ahlroth writes that the fairy-tale atmosphere is lost in the movies (see Ahlroth 2014). It seems that audience, critics and reviewers did not find the mythic quality and aesthetics of legend and fairy-tale in the movies that were emphasised in Tolkien's original book.

Then again larger international audiences seem to like adaptations of Tolkien's fiction. Audience ratings of the movies in the International Movie Database (IMDB) rate the adaptations extremely highly. Ratings are as follows: *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) 8.8., *Two Towers* (2002), 8.7, and *The Return of the King* (2003), 8.9. *The Hobbit* movies achieve markedly lower ratings, but are still well received: *Unexpected Journey* (2012), 7.9, *The Desolation of Smaug* (2013), 7.9, and *The Battle of Five Armies* (2014), 7.5.

But there were and are many fierce critics who claimed that Jackson (and his creative group) did not understand *The Hobbit*, and even 'ruined it'. For example there are Facebook groups with titles like 'Peter Jackson Ruined "The Hobbit"' with 306 likes. Also, Ethan Gildsdorf's article 'Peter Jackson must be stopped' in *Wired* (December 19, 2014) attracted a lot of comments (947 comments by September 21, 2016) and Peter Jackson himself has said

that: 'I didn't know what the hell I was doing when I made the Hobbit' (*Guardian*). (See Siikilä 2016.)

In Finland, on the fan sites, *The Hobbit* movies were not that well received. In the Finnish Kontu community some commenters did like the movies, but mostly the movies received a lot of harsh criticism (in more than 200 comments) for the quality of the adaptation. For example, 'Mehtis' writes that she/he 'has cried for hours' because the movies were so flat and 'pure shit' (see Kontu).

Then again, in the World Hobbit Project, the Finnish data shows that Finnish audiences tend to be critical towards Jackson's *The Hobbit* adaptations. It seems that those viewers who were beforehand familiar with Tolkien's texts tended to give the films lower ratings (see Koistinen, Välisalo & Ruotsalainen 2016). Finnish audiences also were more critical towards the films than audiences in other Northern Countries, such as Sweden and Denmark (see Hirsjärvi, Kovala & Ruotsalainen 2016).

The next section of this essay seeks to illuminate how elements of Tolkien's legend-world, myth and mythology are manifested in the answers given by the Finnish survey participants. The method used for this was the close reading of all eleven open-ended, free-text questions of the survey.[5] The answers given by respondents were read and analysed using textual analysis. Emphasis was on the selective elements raised by these answers. That is, how are these elements raised by my research questions visible in the answers?

Reading the responses: Myth and Mythology

Mentions of 'myth' and 'mythology' can be found only 26 times among the survey answers, these mentions being made by 23 different participants (respondent #1692 includes mentions in three different answers, and #22049 in two). Also, nothing seems to differentiate these 23 from the overall spread of participants in the Finnish survey when considering age, sex or occupation.

Only 1.4 percent of the Finnish survey respondents mentioned myth or mythology (in any form) in their answers. That is quite remarkable, if we compare it with the fact that 832 (51.5%) of the respondents found the films to be 'part of Tolkien's legend-world'. The few mentions of myth and mythology in the survey are as follows: Q2: 4 participants, Q4 (a quantitative question): 1, Q6: 7, Q7: 1, Q8: 4, Q9: 1, Q10: 1, Q11: 4, Q21: 3.

From these answers, a few patterns emerge. A central notion is the intertextual connection between Tolkien's legend-world and Jackson's *Hobbit* films. This comes up in many answers. For example when commenting on '[t]hose who know Tolkien's mythology' (#1860), or seeing series as '… films based on Tolkien's impressive mythology' (#1925). This feeling of the films as part of a larger entity or totality is evident in the survey answers as a whole, as many respondents experience *The Hobbit* films as part of a broader storyworld (Koistinen, Ruotsalainen & Välisalo 2016).

Respondents raise the question of Tolkien's creative work on many occasions. For example when stating that '[t]he best part of the films were elements from the mythology of the Middle-earth' (#16044), 'I liked the parts in the films that opened Tolkien's created

mythology' (#23046), or, 'Tolkien's world of fantasy with the lore that surpasses the stories he writes, including the mythology, languages and histories make the Hobbit definitely a world of fantasy --' (#34095). Others are simpler, for example, a reference to '[t]he mythology that Tolkien has created' (#1068), or the respondent who is '[i]nterested in Tolkien's mythology' (#1692) or the one sees her imagined community as '[p]eople who like Tolkien's fiction a lot and the mythic world he has created' (#30092).

One respondent raises the question of the wider perspective of Tolkien's *Legendarium*, when reflecting 'much of the scenes to *The Silmarillion* and the bigger picture of [Tolkien's] mythology' (#1692). This was seen as a strength, for example when writing that 'The necromancer-subplot both surprised and impressed me. It wasn't in *The Hobbit*, but it's part of the Tolkien mythology so it didn't feel out of place' (#12887), or in respondent #22049, who comments that '[w]hat impressed me mostly was how the story was tied to Tolkien's mythology'. This answer on the other hand is quite contradictory, since the same respondent comments on Q6 that the films 'cannot be described to be part of Tolkien's mythological world, but more of Jackson's "Tolkien World"' (22049). Some disappointment was also connected with words like myth and mythology. For example respondent #1692 claimed to be '… a fan of more tranquil fantasy, where there would be more digging into the mythology and philosophy', while another respondent saw that '[t]he other mythology should have been addressed in separate films' (#15964).

Another point can be made about the broader mythical tone. One saw the theme of the films as '[m]ythology of the fight between Good and Evil' (#34467). Separate elements of the films were described as mythic: for example characters (#2235), the dragon (#3605) and places and towns (#4683). One respondent also mentioned that *The Hobbit* films are a kind which 'talk about our hunger towards myths' (#660).

Myths and mythologies also raised points of general interest from respondents. For example, one participant 'enjoy[s] researching the mythology of stories' (#34013) and one was 'interested in mythology altogether' (#34418).

Tolkien's legend-world and the Films

As predicted, Tolkien's legend-world was an important factor for Finnish audiences. In the Finnish responses to *The Hobbit* reception survey, over half of the participants (51.5%) saw Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* films as part of Tolkien's legend-world. Then again, many (10.8%) also contradicted this statement and asserted out that the films definitely are not part of Tolkien's legend-world. Many respondents also reacted critically to Jackson's vision. Of those critical viewers, some also criticised the additional elements taken from *The Silmarillion* – although for copyright reasons there are no clear elements taken from *The Silmarillion* in the films.

In the academic field of Tolkien-studies, the term to describe Tolkien's legend-world is 'Tolkien's Legendarium', which usually means the sum total of Tolkien's texts that deal with the created fantasy world Arda and Middle-earth, When researching the survey answers, it became clear that Tolkien's Legendarium was not a familiar concept for the

respondents. The word 'legendarium', or its synonyms, were used only five times in survey answers. Words like 'legendarium', 'imaginarium', 'mythic world' *et cetera* that Tolkien scholars regularly use were not used by the participants answering this survey. This seem to indicate that the audience participating in this survey are not familiar with professional academic works written on Tolkien's fiction, or they simply do not want to use these terms.

The intertextual elements of so-called Northern myth, which were so important originally to Tolkien's fiction, are also hardly mentioned in the films. Of these elements, *The Kalevala* is mentioned only four times in the survey answers, *The Edda* and 'Scandinavia' both once. This mentioning of Scandinavia refers to Tolkien's book, since the respondent feels that in the character of Beorn (in the book), there are 'certain Scandinavian and mimetic tones in the sense of relationship with nature' (#34632). Of the other concepts, The *Kalevala* and The *Edda* do not refer in any way to the *Hobbit* films. They are more likely mentioned as curiosities. The *Edda* is mentioned as a favourite cultural experience (#31811), as is *The Kalevala* once (#11629). Other references to the *Kalevala* are on 'Personal information' of the respondents. Two respondents focus on Tolkien's connection to *The Kalevala* (#3886 & #34939) and one is impressed by epics such as The *Kalevala* (#34787).

Table 1: *The Silmarillion* and the legendarium in the survey

Question:	The *Silmarillion*	The legendarium
Q2: reasons for rating	8	0
Q6: reasons for kinds	3	3
Q7: favourites	3	0
Q8: impressed	5	0
Q9: disappointed	2	0
Q10: broader themes	6	0
Q11: imagined community	3	0
Q15: reasons for debates	3	0
Q21: personal information	24	1
Q26: common activity	0	0
Q27: favourite experiences	10	1

The most important part of Tolkien's legend-world that is seen from the survey answers are references to *The Silmarillion*. There are only five references to the word 'legendarium' in

the answers, but from all the survey answers (of Finnish respondents), *The Silmarillion* was mentioned 67 times (4.1% of the answers). The references are divided as **Table 1** demonstrates.

As we can see, most of the references to *The Silmarillion* come from either 'personal information' or 'favourite experiences'. This of course shows the background and personal interests of these participants as either enthusiasts for Tolkien's legend-world or as fans of Tolkien's fiction. These references to *The Silmarillion* by the participants can be divided thematically as such:

Table 2: References to *the Silmarillion* in the survey

Respondent mentioned reading *The Silmarillion* (or knowing it)	23
Respondent held *The Silmarillion* as his/her favourite experience	10
Respondent pondered on the possibility of *The Silmarillion* –film/films	14
Respondent saw in *The Hobbit*- films elements taken from *The Silmarillion*	10
Respondent mentioned *The Silmarillion* as part of Tolkien's Mythology/*Legendarium*	6
Respondent mentioned *The Silmarillion* on some other occasion	3
Respondent mentioned the copyright of *The Silmarillion*	1

Of these references, 33 were mentions of either reading the book (or knowing it) or treasuring it as the respondent's favourite experience. Some (14) also pondered on the possibilities of a forthcoming film adaptation of *The Silmarillion*. Of these survey answers, most were looking forward to the next possible film adaptation from Tolkien's legend-world, although one respondent (#30870) commented that 'I'm glad Jackson won't be allowed to butcher *The Silmarillion*, like he butchered *The Hobbit*'. At this point, it should be noted that there seems to be an ongoing debate in the Internet over whether there are elements from *The Silmarillion* in *The Hobbit* films, or not. These debates have been going on for years in chats and internet pages and communities, for example on the Facebook pages related to the *Hobbit* films. This positive attitude towards *The Silmarillion* film adaptations in these survey answers differs in many ways to Finnish internet communities, where most of the commentators react negatively to a possible film adaptation of *The Silmarillion*.[6]

The most interesting answers were given by those 10 participants that find elements from *The Silmarillion* from *The Hobbit* films. That is interesting for (at least) two reasons: firstly, Peter Jackson did not have copyright to use any elements or materials from *The Silmarillion* (Nuwer 2013), therefore there should not be any clear elements taken from the book in the films. Secondly, it seems that the assumption made by film viewers that there are elements from *The Silmarillion* there, comes from internet sources (web pages and

communities), false memories (see Harvey 2016), or from the conversations between friends and 'fellow-fans' (Hirsjärvi, Korpua, Kovala 2016).

In these ten answers, there is certain diversity. Some respondents find these 'additions' good and/or needed, and others find them unnecessary and useless. This is of course quite interesting, since a Tolkien scholar or enthusiasts would easily see that there are no straight elements from *The Silmarillion* in the films. That is a clear example that viewers can create meanings and importances that were not 'originally' in the movie.

The following examples illustrate the variety of answers. Most of the answers focused on the positive benefits of these quasi-connections:

> All fit in perfectly, since there were story elements taken from *The Silmarillion* and appendixes. (#1807)

> Although using *The Silmarillion* as an extension was a good thing, saves time and money since there will be no need to make another movie. (#25733)

> Also I didn't expect the bits from *The Silmarillion*, about Dol Guldur and rise of Sauron … (#25733)

> There were parts nicely taken from *The Silmarillion* to add some extra excitement to the story. (#1422)

> Lots of references to *The Lord of the Rings* books and *The Silmarillion*. (#2421)

One respondent (#29833) was impressed by 'the nuances taken from *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*', while another (#34539) was 'impressed that all added scenes were mostly taken from *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Silmarillion*'.

> The film adaptation tried to add more to a story of the book by taking parts from *The Silmarillion*, and these parts did not fit particularly well. (#33992)

> Few extra scenes taken from *The Silmarillion* were good (#1741).

In the Finnish context, it is interesting that the legend-world and Tolkien's mythology comes up in some (although minor number of) answers, and most of these are references to *The Silmarillion*. There are more than a thousand of references to *The Lord of the Rings*,[7] but only a few for Tolkien's other works.

Conclusion

In the Introduction, I asked what roles have myth and mythology in the survey answers of the Finnish audience? This study shows that only 1.4% (23) of the participants commented

on myth or mythology. Respondents focused more on topics like actors, characters, CGI-graphics, *et cetera*, than on myth or mythology. Quantitatively, myth and mythology therefore are not words used by the Finnish participants to describe this legend-world. Also, I asked whether Finnish viewers consider *The Hobbit* films to be part of Tolkien's legend-world. Many respondents (51.5%) feel that the films are indeed part of Tolkien's world, but hardly any (0.3%) refer to the precise term *legendarium* (or its relatives).

The search for comments on Tolkien's legend-world also resulted as a search for the role of *The Silmarillion* inside this legend-world. That is because *The Silmarillion* is the most important single work in elaborating Tolkien's mythopoetic vision, but Peter Jackson and his team did not (for copyright reasons) have permission to use any elements from the book (or related works) in the films. This is important for two reasons: firstly, *The Silmarillion* is a central work for the vision of Tolkien's *Legendarium*, but the film makers could not (directly) use it in *the Hobbit* movies. Is it possible to make the film series part of Tolkien's world without using the most central work of mythopoetic vision as a reference? Secondly, despite that, do the survey participants refer to *The Silmarillion* or see it as a reference, although it cannot directly be such? These are the particulars that I find most intriguing.

When researching the elements of *The Silmarillion*, there were 67 (4.1%) references to it in the survey answers. In comparison to Tolkien's other Middle-earth related books *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* and *The Lord of the Rings*, these references are minor. That is of course because of *The Hobbit* functioning as a source book for Jackson's adaptation, while *The Lord of the Rings* is the source book for Jackson's earlier adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* (Jackson, United Kingdom, USA, New Zealand 2001, 2002, 2003) to which *The Hobbit* films are a prequel. Still, as a core finding, the elements of myth, mythology and legend-world are there in the answers.

The questions raised here that will need to be studied further are for example: 1) How does this element of pseudo-intertextuality (e.g. elements of *The Silmarillion*) affect the audience? 2) Where do the audience search for and gather this knowledge? These questions will be addressed in my forthcoming study done with a focus consisting of fans of both Tolkien's books and Jackson's films who are familiar with *The Hobbit* films.

As this article shows, Finnish audience did not see *The Hobbit* movies through 'a mythic lens'. Christopher Howse writes in his article that the original *The Hobbit* unearths a hoard of myth. I have claimed that same 'unearthing' or familiarisation of myths by the Hobbit characters also in my research (see Korpua 2012: 84-88 & Korpua 2015: 185-193). Howse suggests that 'The tale of *The Hobbit* will survive the film (with Billy Connolly as a dwarf warrior and Stephen Fry as the mayor of Lake-town) in the same way that the *Iliad* survived the film *Troy* (with Brad Pitt as Achilles). For *The Hobbit*, published 75 years ago, is not a fantasy-adventure as it is being described, but a myth, or part of a mythology.' (Howse 2012).

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Notes:

1 Mythopoetic in this case meaning creative myth-making.

2 It should be noted that the Finnish audience answered this survey in multiple languages. Majority of the answers were given in Finnish (1438), Swedish (37), or English (136) but there were also two participants who used Spanish (1) and Russian language (1) In this article, I have translated all non-English answers when necessary. There was also one participant who chose Danish as his language, but he did not write any lingual answers to the questions.

3 As for the other quantitative statistics on our research project, other researchers on our project are focusing more closely to these questions. At this stage, I should only note that of all Finnish participants, 1078 answered 'Female' and 536 'Male' to Q23: 'Are you? Male/Female'. For age and occupation distribution of the respondents, please see Appendixes.

4 See also Allen 2000, Genette 1979: 81-83, Doležal 1998: 199-200, and Korpua 2015: 38.

5 It has to be noted that questions 26 and 27 differ from other questions used here, since the respondents were requested to choose 'top three common cultural activities' and 'three all-time favourite cultural or media experiences or products'. That request did not result in only three answers to the questions. For example respondent 31811 gives 13 favourite experiences and products to Q27.

6 In Finland, Minna Siikilä (University of Jyväskylä) is currently researching these internet debates. This supposition derives from Siikilä's first findings on the subject.

7 Within the Finnish survey corpus, there are for example at least 1149 references to *The Lord of the Rings* or its abbreviation in Finnish, 751 references to *The Lord of the Rings* or its abbreviation in English, and 27 references in Swedish. These are references to both the book/books and the films.