

# What if fan-fiction, but also coding: How does fan-fiction differ in style to its original canon and does it affect its success?

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## Keywords

- Canon: The original work, what is official by the author.
- Fan-fiction: Work of fiction using components from a canon to make something new. Appear as “fic” on graphs.
- Stylometry: The field of Natural Language Processing that tries to quantify texts systematically.
- Kudos: Equivalent of likes on AO3 where the fan-fictions were obtained, used as a measure of success.

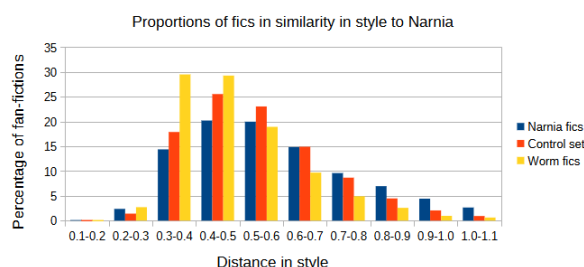
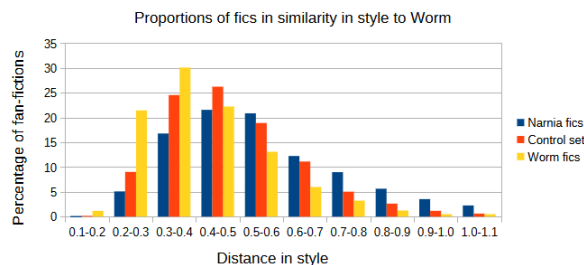
## Background

- Stylometry has mostly been used in authorship attribution<sup>1</sup>.
- Function word frequency is one of the most successful stylometric features<sup>2</sup>.
- Fan-fiction is inspired from a canon.
- Style has been shown to correlate to fan-fiction success<sup>3</sup>.

## Method

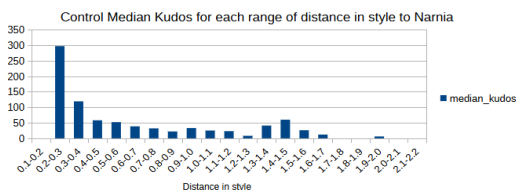
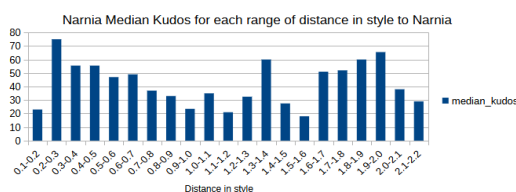
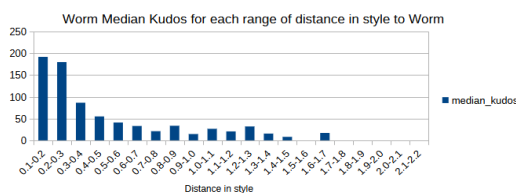
- Count function word frequencies in 7971 fan-fictions and compare them with 2 canons: The Chronicles of Narnia & Worm.
- Establish a “distance”, a difference in style to those canons.
- Check for similarity.
- Check for correlation of similarity to success.

## Results



- Worm fan-fiction more similar to Worm.
- Narnia fan-fiction less similar to Narnia.
- The most similar to the canon are fan-fictions from that canon.

- Narnia and Worm very similar style.
- All fan-fiction more successful when more similar to Worm and Narnia.



## Discussion

- Inheritance of stylistic features inconclusive, true for the Worm set of fan-fiction, but the Narnia set of fan-fiction is less similar to its canon than the control set. May be due to Narnia fan-fiction being an outlier compared to general fan-fiction.
- The few fan-fictions that showed extreme similarity were of the corresponding canon, so inheritance may exist for a subset of fan-fictions.
- Control set of fan-fiction being more successful when more similar to Worm and Narnia suggests there is a generic, “good” style, which Worm and Narnia appear to share.
- Outliers in style have found some success as well.

## Conclusion

- Some writers can be stylistically influenced by original works they use in their writings.
- A “good” style is more important than a similar style for the success of fan-fiction.
- This study could be recreated with different datasets or stylometric methods.
- Authors’ influences could be researched further