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Awesome. Thank everyone for coming to what I believe is going to be a lively discussion. If you have ever been to.

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I don't know a good 70% of my presentations at, myth cons and other mythopic society events.

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I have a tendency to choose controversial topics. And, that is where we are today. Our panelists have been chosen because we all have.

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Overlapping experience like firsthand experience with the topics that we are going to be discussing today.

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And, to give everyone a little bit of background, most of what we're going to be discussing today started after the Tolkien Society's diversity conference and has really ramped up surrounding the release of rings of power.

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And.

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Next slide.

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I don't know, like. Forward in slides. Yes, thank you.

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Yeah, and we are going to start with Kara.

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Yeah.

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Hello everyone. Yes, sorry. So I am Dr. Kara, Marta Messina.

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You can call me Kara. I use she her pronouns. I'm currently like traveling right now, so this is not my usual setup sitting in my mom's.

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But like better in floor. So I'm here to talk about phantoms. That is sort of my field of study.

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So. Early this year I made the mistake of posting on the internet. I decided to watch Rings of Power as I had a few friends recommended to me and, you know, it was fun sort of becoming immersed in Middle Earth again and seeing a new look at Tolkien's work and sort of the perspectives.

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So I decided to just post that it on Twitter. I was like, well, I really enjoyed this.

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This was really great. And, you know, I have under a thousand followers.

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I am by no means a well-known Twitter user. Don't really get lots of traction.

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And so I posted this and I sort of started off with, you know, sweet regular power fans being like, well, come to the fandom.

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Like, just, you know, general like gifts and, you know, post and all that. And then there were token fans who really dislike ringing the rings of power that started sort of rolling in and suddenly my mentions were blowing up.

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And most of the criticism was towards me as a person pointing to things in my bios or you know, what I looked like or what I did.

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And a lot of it had coded misogynistic and racist homophobic language. We'll be talking a little about dog whistles, but a lot of those were embedded within the tweets, replies, some of the images, which I'll show you in a second, but you're really fun to look at.

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Just also trigger wording because you know some not so great things there. So I recognized a lot of this sort of language immediately.

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I teach about misinformation and disinformation and hate speech on the internet and how it sort of proliferates.

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I try to stay as up to date as I can on digital spaces. Twitch, you 2, read it, Twitter.

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Now X, you know, whatever. And I know we're going to be talking more about it today.

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And so for your entertainment and, and so for your entertainment and maybe your horror, I will show you a few screenshots and so for your entertainment and maybe your horror I will show you a few screenshots and provide a little bit of. I will show you a few screenshots and provide a little bit of context and background into what they mean.

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So Grace, if you want to find a little bit of context and background into what they mean. A little bit of context and background into what they mean.

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So Grace, if you want to find just clicking once. So the first one is not surprising that a person including pronouns in their name chaos is so mentally deficient to consider that crap fest and masterpiece I can only laugh and fitting.

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Pity. Well, fun. So that was a first fun thing to be called mentally deficient for liking a TV show.

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My pad, this sort of pronounce in bio is a signal to be like, oh, it's all fatal, liberal, you know, she is using she her, although it says chaos.

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I don't think they actually understood that chaos was a joke, whatever. It's crazy, what am I going to the next one?

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Thank you. I feel the need to remind everyone that Sane Rings Power Fans do exist where I come to pause is when someone calls it a masterpiece or brings queerness into token or any other nonsense, right?

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So the idea of queerness being nonsense, right? You know, that sort of connection there is already a dog whistle, right?

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Anything about queerness or doing a queer reading of poin is gonna be, critiqued is a dog whistle.

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Right. if you remember clicking the next slide. Thank you. I hoped it was a parity account.

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My account was parity account. I also had green hair at this point in the picture, which is great.

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I feel like that really added to it. Alas, we can engage the decline of intelligence and cultured civilization by the number of people who think brings power is good.

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Right, so here we're getting like ideas about civilization, right? Any TED, to anyone who talks about civilization or civilize, right?

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That's often used as a dog whistle. Could be used as a litmus test in a job interview.

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College applications and voting rights. Right? So, you know, kind of like implying that links of power fans are stupid, whatever, but the, you know, sort of voting rights is a troubling moment too of you know, potentially connecting to ideas of diversity, right?

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Who is and is not allowed to vote, right? Voter suppression and everything, but you know.

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And I don't need to make that leap, but I'll just throw that in now, sprinkle that.

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And then I'll go to the next one. This is my favorite. Thank you. The virgin rings of power and the Chad, Lord of the Rings, which when this was posted I like was like Is this person joking?

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So for those not familiar, the sort of Chad, the Virgin, rhetoric is often used in in cell communities right in voluntary celibate communities or alpha male ideas right red pilling all of that right this sort of idea of what masculinity looks like right and what masculinity looks like right what should it look like is really anything that is not queer, not feminine, right?

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Ideas and violence, right and power. So yeah, rings of power. It is a virgin because it.

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Cast is prioritizes race and gender over talent, great. Things that we've heard before probably forces modern politics.

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Has a created by SJWs social justice warriors and then of course sort of the rings great casting which i agree with epic battles again i agree with you know like i we can love Lord of the rings and also love forks of power or you don't need to like either of them.

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It doesn't really matter, right? But the sort of point is that this was suddenly a pylon that I was experiencing.

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And lucky for me, I'm a fan scholar, specifically researching critical fan practices that challenge these types of activity, fans who recognize how their communities may intentionally or unintentionally reinscribe systems of power like white supremacy in their fan activities.

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Pants often ties their identities to the text they love seeing it as an extension of self and as a way to explore themselves.

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So there are certain groups of fans, well not many, but loud, right, and do these sort of activities of piling on, right?

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An attempt to both recruit other people who might have similar views, right, and also just to try to, others.

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Who cling to ideas of whiteness and heteronormativity in their fandom practices, right, and really push that as part of their fan engagement.

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So we saw that outrage when Halle Daley was cast as the Little Mermaid, and we see it with rings of power, the focus on sort of Gladriol right and having a diverse cast.

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And a threat to these texts, right? So tokens, tax or whatever texts these lures and these histories, ideas of ethnicity that are often imagined and don't actually reflect our real histories is seen as a threat to fans identities, right?

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Specifically, they're white identities and a threat to the power that they hold through their whiteness.

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And this fear stems from harmful ideas of racial purity and rigid gender and sexual and sex roles. Great.

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Roles that token also challenged in his work. So just want to sort of give some background about who I am, why I'm here.

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I'm here because I got piled on! Woohoo! So thanks for having me.

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Okay, next slide.

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Yeah, so we've discussed dog whistles a little bit now. This is the actual definition of what a dog whistle is.

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It is Using language that an in group understands that anyone not in the in group doesn't necessarily understand the way that it is actually meant.

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It's used a lot in politics when you Here people talk about. The war on terrorism, welfare, queens, that sort of thing.

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Like that's very it's coded. Yeah, illegal aliens. That's a good point.

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It's coded generally racial language that's used in. Okay. And, political speeches and such, but it also has a tendency to trickle.



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Out of the political sphere and into fandom spaces. And next slide. Here are some. Some dog whistles that have been used, in communicating with us.

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Big ones that are very token specific are, The use of the word Anglo-saxon.

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Which doesn't necessarily you would think oh he was a professor of anglo-saxon it makes sense to use anglo-saxon in this particular context but anglo-saxon is also a an all right white supremacist dog whistle.

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You really need to be careful about when you are discussing. Yeah. The terms like Anglo-saxon, anything.

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Related to Norse iconography has also gotten pulled into this. Some of the. More dangerous, racial dog whistles or people who use the, The numbers, 1314 or 88, specifically in their usernames.

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Those are explicitly neo-Nazi numbers and that's not something you would necessarily know.

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Also, generally people will use a scary term agenda. You hear a lot about.

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You know, the queer agenda, the gay agenda, whatever, like those people are generally arguing in bad faith, especially like when people start talking about gender ideology, transgender ideology, like those are very politically loaded terms that are being used to show that this person is not going to.

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Interact with you in good faith. I don't know. Anyone else want to cover some of these?

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Oh, we did also mention pronouns in bio and Kara mentioned briefly that they came for her hair color.

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That I should have included that. My God, if you have non natural colored hair, that is something that immediately gets flagged.

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Yeah, so this is me. So, in terms of the pipeline for a lot of this rhetoric, it is very much an organized pipeline.

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It does come down from a few sources. I've chosen to kind of highlight a couple of here just sort of improve media literacy for those that especially in sort of the genre, media area for those that might not be.

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So this is just a selection of screenshots from one of the websites. Run by a guy named John F Trend called bounding into comics and you can just see in the headlines here like the very inflammatory rhetoric that's being used.

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Most of the time these headlines are taking things extremely out of context. Or extrapolating something that was said in an interview or an unsource report and then treating that as though it is facts.

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So for instance, you know, that, Cynthia, Ally Robinson, who plays Muriel and rings a power, rings a power has really, as you're probably already understanding, has really just been a flash point here.

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You know, it really has just brought a lot of this stuff bubbling out back up to the surface.

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And there's a reason for that, which you'll see on the next slide. So there was, you know, a bunch of rhetoric about that she had said that the purpose of the series was to war people's vision of token and she never said anything of the sort.

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There's now people complaining about the new war of the Rohirrim anime saying that it's going to inject feminism into the tail of Helm Hammer and I don't know how this is like a turkey based or situation maybe.

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The the one here about the this guy going on an unhinged rant.

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Yes, there are absolutely racist in the token fandom. They're absolutely Nazis in the Tolkien fandom and yes some people go again go on rants against them but then the this rage machine will basically associate that or try and associate that with saying, oh, this person is talking about the entire fandom.

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They are slandering every single person that is a token fan with this brush rather than just saying rather than, you know, the southern adage, if you know, hit dogs holler, right?

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You know if you are feeling that if you're identifying with one of these ramps then maybe it's because you feel like you are one of the people that are.

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You know, being that are participating. In, in that the racism or whatever. Next slide please.

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Another one is. Nerd Roddick, who is a YouTube creator, podcaster, this guy, you can just see again here.

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These are the titles of his videos. You can look at some of the screens. The sort of teaser screens for these videos, which are very heavily edited.

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They're often like, you know, photoshopping like male faces over female faces, on the top right there.

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You've got that happening with. So Vienna, you play Dissa, the dwarf princess in rings of power and again it's all it's all about you know the this corruption this is the rings of power is doomed, it is being destroyed by fans or ratings or whatever.

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Yeah, vandalization of token, that it's fake token, destroyed by Tolkien, epic failure, etc.

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Grace, could you, click once more for me?

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And this is what this all comes down to. These people openly admit that this is their job is to generate this rage and to, you know, So to drum up clicks, buy, posting purposefully inflammatory content.

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So this is nerdotic, you know, maybe a couple of months ago, I think within the last month or something like that.

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Proudly proclaiming that, you know, he's got job security for the next couple of years because, rings of power will continue to.

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Yeah, produced. And so from here on, it really starts to filter down into the followers.

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So you get from here, accounts on Twitter mostly is where I've, I've seen the most of it mainly because Twitter is on moderated space.

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I will say on places like Facebook, if you don't see this, thank you moderators because they are probably moderating out a lot of this material.

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There are people as Kara can attest to that do stock mentions of token. They will follow mentions of rings of power, usually from anonymous accounts that, by anonymous, I mean that they're not associated with their, wallet name.

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And that's the story of the entire internet, right? Is that people when they are able to say things anonymously will go a lot further than they would if it was tied to their actual identity.

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And, a lot of the things that they'll be called will be thing, they'll call anybody that's saying anything positive about.

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Rings of power will be called a shell. Or a full keen fan, like a phone token fan is, another one.

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There are, we, know for a fact that there are private at least a couple of private discord servers.

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I'm in some cases associated with these media outlets that, where they, there is private coordination that happens, screenshot sharing around, you know, they'll still post something and say, oh, hey, look at this.

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Go get this person or there are even accounts that will do that publicly. Almost comes down to, stochastic terrorism.

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In that way that somebody will just post or do like a quote retweet. I'm still always gonna call them tweets and Twitter.

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Youon Musk can get bent. And then, you know, these are people that have, you know, in some cases a couple of 1,000 followers and their followers will then go dog pile on that person that is being highlighted.

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And the tweet, cause they don't bother to cop, you know, crop out any of the identifying information or anything like that.

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And they know that's happening. They'll try and deny that they are organizing harassment or piling on of those people, but it is absolutely happening.

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And then it just comes down to a lot of the, attacks are, you know, people being told that their opinions on a piece of subjective media are objectively wrong, that there is only one single way for talking or any.

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I mean, these These pipelines are filled with every major genre, right? Star Wars, Star Trek, you name it.

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It's all in there, Game of Thrones wheel time, it's all in that pipeline.

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And it cycles based on what is current basically so you know we've seen a little bit of a dip in the token stuff because rings the powers between seasons it'll ramp back right up as we get towards season 2.

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Or again like being told that you know you're deep that rings of power whatever any adaptation or interpretation they don't agree with is defiling or disrespectful to or destroying legacy.

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They're even people that will go so far as to say that we need to gate keep our fandom harder basically.

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I don't know what they're gate keeping because none of these people are involved with any sort of significant fan or academic organization or anything like that, but somehow they think they're keeping people out of the fandom by screaming at them on Twitter.

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The.

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What's really good?

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Yeah, and it has gone to the point to tie it into a little bit of a personal note where Alicia and I have been doxed by some of these folks where they've been like creeping on our LinkedIn profiles and one of them may have inadvertently docs themselves to us while creeping on our LinkedIn profiles.

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That.

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Yes.

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But you know and then and then we'll use that in attacks against us and say well you're like my background is science will say you're a scientist you obviously don't know anything about Tolkien.

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You can't possibly be an authority on the matter. And the joke of that is these are people that are saying this from anonymous accounts that have no ties to their identity whatsoever.

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Alright, that's my rant done.

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Yeah, I wanna jump in really quickly. I'm not saying that the people we are actually dealing with are necessarily more globally organized than we already know that they are in these like isolated Discord servers.

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But this

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This behavior is an extension of the culture wars that have been happening. As long as I can remember.



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This is very specifically choreographed and maybe not even intentionally by the people who are doing it, but the movement towards attacking whatever is in popular culture to spread.

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These types of beliefs is largely choreographed and all the people that we are individually dealing with are kind of falling in line.

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So now it's my turn.

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I ended up getting really frustrated. As the rings of power was airing, everything was kind of just hitting this tipping a point where.

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I was trying to respond things on Twitter and give, you know, accurate quotes from the legendarian to contextualize something that you know people would say something critical and say like that's the token didn't write that and you know I give a citation is to well well here's the reference.

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To that and you know it's something he contradicted later on so there are a couple different views that are acceptable right.

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Now read it for anyone who's not familiar, right? Now reddit for anyone who's not familiar is sort of a message board.

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Now, Reddit for anyone who's not familiar, right? Now Reddit for anyone who's not familiar is sort of a message board scenario where you can upload or sort of a message board scenario where you can upload or down vote people's contributions and they have a.

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Vote or down vote people's contributions and they have a Karma system where you can upload or down vote people's contributions and they have a Karma system that, that goes along with that.

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And you get good karma system that, that goes along with that. And you get good karma for getting a lot of like positive engagement and interaction and bad karma.

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If people continue to down vote your contributions. And so, very quickly I watched my account of 3 years suddenly dip way into negative karma because all of these people who had really negative views and really negative expressions of their, token, vanishness, were, attacking, moment by moment, if people are uploading and downloading things at the same time, you'll just get that

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net. The net idea but you'll get a sense of what things get paid attention to how many people like or engage with that comments, all of that.

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So. I was trying to figure out sort of why these people kept doing this, kept saying all of these negative things kept attacking people like what was in it.

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For them. And I have the theory that, Did they were doing it for the engagement and the clicks?

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Some of the people who run these other sites and everything have admitted that that's why they're so negatively focused because it generates more, more engagement.

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And I thought, well, let's test this. So I ran a 24 h experiment in which I created a separate Reddit account.

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That was a little bit of a troll account. And I endeavored to make just a handful of comments.

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That were of the type that I was seeing and that I was responding to and getting down voted on. And these are the type of dog whistle comments that.

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That are so problematic within this fandom. So I have some examples here. And I was then just going to see where we ended up at the end of 24 h.

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So. Sometimes it was, you know, really simple things like just responding wokenness. To something.

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And that would get a lot of really positive uploads and replies because people were really excited that someone was sharing their idea.

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And I was trying, I was endeavoring to be very middle of the road on these comments and not to say any of like the overtly racist sexist misogynistic things and stick to dog whistles and it's still like warnings here folks this stuff is not okay so.

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Sometimes there were things about like misogyny. Usually around Giladriol. So these were some popular comments that, that I had made as this troll account, saying that, you know, Galladra liking horses, does anything counts as character development.

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And this is bad writing because a woman is at the center of it and everything and 2 women talking to each other passing the backbone test is like wokeness and feminist and all of that and this is bad.

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And these got a lot of traction. I also responded to more fit Clark's, Yeah, a screenshot of Martha Clark's talking about her dyslexia.

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And how she had been researched for this role in ways that brought in more auditory. Options and everything and she had worked with some TikTokers and everything to to have you know questions answered and learned things about characters and everything like that.

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And so this comment was that while that explains lot, that you probably still went deeper into lower than the writers did.

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This is a very common sentiment on the internet. It's easily disproved. Anytime that there's an adaptation of token, you can obviously look to, to the places where things have been adopted, maybe with a different vision than I might have, but with a site toward all of the specifics and nuances and all of that.

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2 of the most liked comments were racist dog. Oh, I may have also been responsible for the creation of the term Chi Wag.

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This experiment, happened during the airing of episode 3 of Rings of Power and I typed this one up and shot it off and then I kept seeing it everywhere and I was like, oh.

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Oh dear, I may have actually influenced this a lot more than I meant to. Oh no, oh no, abort.

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And that was about the time that I actually stopped making comments. I didn't make it 24 h.

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I only made it about 20 before I felt so slimy that I could not continue. This is part of why.

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So these are some racist dog whistles taking different pieces of comments that I had seen just in like the week preceding this experiment and talking about you know female elves the fight and L with buzz cuts this is a racist dog whistle about the hairstyle of the black.

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Else in the series. They aren't supposed to be there and what's with the new manorians they don't look like they're related to L.

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Ron, that's for sure. This is another racist dog whistle. L. Rond is white. They don't look like they're white enough.

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And these are the sorts of things that we see all the time that we get piled on all of us.

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And so these are some of the things that I incorporated. And also responding to like, well, this can't be racism because you can't just take away everything that makes Middle Earth amazing like how fair the elves are here meaning skin color even though that's not what token meant.

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And the new manorians are then because they look like the elves. Shoe horn actors into fill a quota, another racist dog whistle, and then expect people not to notice that it's not token or why he stood for.

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I did sprinkle in some, you know, typos and mistakes and everything just to just to see if folks would catch things and these were 2 of the most like these and the misogynistic comments were 2 of or the most liked things and the things that people didn't to to send a message that this isn't appropriate either and there was one other one.

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That I laid out as a trap. This was in response to, people being concerned that they were gonna try to make an on-screen romance happen between Galladra and Hall brand and this response was this is messed up.

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She's married to Keller Brimbor, not some random human, but not like Amazon actually cares.

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Only 2 people managed to make the correction that, married to Calib. Not. Keller.

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None of those folks had any idea of, you know, drafts of the legendary, we're Tolkien was considering Caliburn Bor being interested in Gladrail or anything like that.

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2 people in a reddit that has 48,000 members.

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So by the end of the 24 h when I stop posting, I looked at what the karma score was at the at the end of the time period here and the karma score for this troll account in 24 h.

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Was 9 times that. Of the of my karma score for the account that I had had for 3 years.

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Being negative being racist, misogynistic, sexist. Homophobic on the internet.

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Is rewarded by with engagement and the serotonin boosts that come from that from these people.

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At 9 times the rate of behaving in engaging ethically.

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With that, I will stop sharing the screen. And unless anyone else on the panel has comments, we can take some questions.

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Yeah, I do want to just point out. To go back to what was said before, if you are not seeing this kind of behavior and the spaces you inhabit.

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It is because it is very specifically being moderated out. It's not as bad in the Mythopaic Society Facebook group now as it was before and during the airing of rings of power, but we do get people who try to post this kind of content, but we do get people who try to post this kind of content or even more inflammatory, but we do get people who try to post this kind of content or even more inflammatory and we stop it before

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it actually gets posted.

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Or deleted out of the comments or yeah.

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Is that I have noticed there are a group of people who are not necessarily engaged and what is happening online who deny this kind of racist backlash, misogynistic backlash, homophobic backlash actually exists and it does.

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100% does. Even in spaces that you might as a casual user perceive as being safe.

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Yeah, the analogy I like to use is I've never seen a cruise missile, but I believe they exist.

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I, you know, even, things like this that I, you know, I believe the people that it impacts, right?

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If people are telling me that they have seen this, that it's happened to them and they are the people that have experienced firsthand then what reason do I have to disbelieve them?

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That is an actual, actually a very good question that just came up in the chat. Who wants to speak to what the motive of these people might be?

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I think.

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For the creators, it's financial, I think, to a large, extent. You know they've they literally do rely on you know these are people in some cases that have tens of thousands or if not hundreds of thousands of followers on various social media platforms and they get a lot of money from you know having tens of thousands of views on a video.



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It has been monetized or something along those lines. They do have to walk a line because, you know, there are certain things that YouTube or various platforms will de monetize or even remove entirely.

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But some of them have gotten very good at walking those lines and the dog whistles are a big part of that.

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Yeah.

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And the others, I think there is. Some desire for a sense of community for some of the smaller accounts that don't.

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It's sort of the I don't know, to tie this into, you know, sort of, the right wing conspiracy machine.

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There is the idea that you're sort of unique and special and I have a view that nobody else has or that I have some insight that very few people have or something like that.

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And that makes me special and different and better than a lot of the other sort of, you know, and PC if you want to use that term kind of.

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People out there fans out there, you know, that are just going along with the, you know, the, I support the latest thing if you've ever seen that name kind of thing.

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Whereas realistically there's, nothing wrong with liking things that a lot of people other like also like there's also nothing wrong with not liking a lot of things that other people like.

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The issue starts to come in when you feel that your personal view or the view of whatever range bait.

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Producer that you watch or consume is that you start to think that everybody should have that same view. There's only one view that is valid and correct.

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No.

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And so IA common response that I have to people that say, well, this is the way this should be interpreted, this scene, this characterization, whatever, is that if your personal interpretation of taking's works or any.

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Media or whatever or any adaptation or any fantasy world can be damaged or destroyed by something by someone else holding.

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Alternative or can contradictory interpretation. Examine within yourself why that is. Why does it matter so much that everybody else holds that same interpretation that you do?

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You know why is it's a subjective piece of art either the source material or the adaptation and not everybody needs to have the same experience with it.

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That's the beauty of it.

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Yeah. So.

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Yeah, I think there are different categories of people. So there's the financial aspect and then there's the serotonin boost aspect.

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We've seen a number of people admit that they don't get the serotonin boost from behaving ethically in these contexts because not as many people engage with the posts and that's what my little Reddit experiment was getting at.

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People people fall into that trap and then they are sort of groomed by folks on that side of behavior and feel that that's the way that they should engage and have to engage even if it's not making them feel good because they get the boost from.

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The engagement.

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And I think there's something else that we should, there's another elephant in the room here as well, which is that there are right wing groups, nationalist groups that actively do use fandom.

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And including Tolkien in particular, as a recruiting technique. The most sort of prominent and recent example would be Georgia Maloney and the Italian nationalist party go look up their Campo Hobbit history.

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They have used it as very much like an anti-progressive narrative in a lot of ways going back to I think the  
Is early as the seventies, I think.

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And, Leah's already called out American it in the chat, which is a podcast that has had a couple of  
episodes on the political hate machine around Tolkien as well.

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And then they have an episode on George Maloney and that Italian nationalist party. So I'd super  
encourage people to check that out too.

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Okay. John's had his hand up for a while. It's,

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Oh, you're muted, John.

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Yes, John. Oh, you're muted. Okay.

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Okay, thanks. Trying to respond to this question about why the focus is so much of these people are so  
much on token in particular.

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Very tentative thoughts, but I, Kara said something, in her introduction. About.

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These people feeling the Tolkien expressed a part of themselves. I think most or all of us share that.

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There's something for many people where Tolkien feels Like we have found something that is more deeply meaningful to us than most things that we find.

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It can be for various reasons, but there is this. This feeling of yes, this is me.

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Now, Tim already said it, it becomes the question of, to what extent can, as a person capable of feeling, yes, this is me.

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But it's okay if somebody else has it differently. But for people who Can't do that.

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When there's another point of view, it's an attack on their very self. I think that kind of thing is more likely to be felt for token than for Many other authors or media groups.

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Yeah, often.

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There's also, sorry, there's also the element that, The UK government has actually flagged a number of beloved text like Tolkien's work, Shakespeare, etc, as texts that what right wing recruiters are attempting to use in order to bring people into their belief system because they're well regarded because they're well known because they're well

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as established and because they can. Create an interpretative lens that is convincing to people who aren't overly familiar with them.

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So that is something to be aware of.

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Hmm.

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Yeah, I think also too when, you look at sort of reactionary content like this, a lot of these sort of, and it is like reactionary, right?

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There is a reaction to, you know, diversity becoming more popular to sort of stories changing, right, to who it is, you know, in power is changing, right?

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And often what, you'll sort of. See when people call for equity or diversity, right?

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What it is is, yes, we want equality, right? But those who are in positions of power will see that as threats, right, rather than seeing that as like equality and equity, they'll see that as wanting to, you know.

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Wanting you know black people wanting people of color indigenous folks wanting women poor people to be taking over right So that's sort of where that reactionary element comes in, right?

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Is this sort of need and desire to hold on to that power, right? And then that also ties into the ideas of community rate that Grace talked about in terms of, you know, what that sort of serotonin boost is going to do, right?

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That's really about like what the community thrives in, right? And so I think for, for people who get sort of immersed in this power fantasy, right?

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I'm going to seize my power back, right? They see diversity, feminism, queerness as a threat to who they are.

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And so in order to respond to that often it comes with violent rhetoric and and violence, right, and fascism.

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And I think looking at token you're a hundred percent right that you know all of us see things in token that we identify with and love, right?

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Heaven AO and tattoo on my arm, right? There is like different elements of the story that we love and and are sort of and fall into.

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But the problem is because of that sort of power fantasy that doesn't really have to do with Tolkien at all, but is sort of used as a vessel and he's used as a vehicle for that power fantasy and for creating community that indulges within that power fantasy.

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Right.

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Yeah, there's a certain kind of 0 some thinking about about power. There that yeah, if they have it, I don't. And there's.

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Right.

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You know, and you just have to read the Lord of the Rings to see. That thinking doesn't, is not, you know, is something that token wouldn't support, but.

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Yeah, we can go on and on about that. Yeah.

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Right. Yeah, and it happens. Yeah, and it really it really happens. I think Alicia mentioned this it happens All the time, right?

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This is just sort of one example of a much larger cultural. Like sickness pretty much right where there's always sort of that reaction to diversity and that fear of diversity, right?

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When Gamergate happened in 2,012 when, you know, their ideas of let's talk about feminism and let's talk about how women are represented in video games.

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I have to flee. Yeah.

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There was a horrible reaction to that where people were being attacked and doxed and threatened had to take on their accounts right like you know all of these things yeah so that sort of reaction I think is always going to be there.

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It's just sort of something that we had to recognize and be able to talk about and talk about like why it's happening, man, how to mitigate it.

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And sometimes mitigating it is just deleting it. Awesome. Off of those comments on Facebook.

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There is also an intentional tactic from people who are trying to drive these types of ideology, to deny that things like this have ever happened before ever been refuted before.

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And this these are cyclical every time something one of one of these IPs comes to a greater point in the public consciousness happens again, but we will see all the time at this point people declaring that well, you know, when the Lord of the Rings movies came out, no one, there were no problems.

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There was nothing misogynistic ever said about increasing Arwin's role. There was nothing homophobic said about pasting Certie and Mckellen as Gandolf.

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No one had any problems and they sort of tend to really like revere the text and then the Peter Jackson movies.

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As being something to hold up, in contrast to anything new that's happening, and, will of course deny that there was anything as those movies were coming out or is other adaptations came forward.

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There's a an article that took a quote recently you know they're apologies for the phrasing but saying you know they're raping the text it's it's so terrible and so an article about rings of power the author then revealed that that quote is taken.

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From an article in 1999 or 2,000 about the release of the Lord of the Rings movies that are the Peter Jackson films.

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It keeps happening and we need to keep learning the new the new aspects of it so that we're prepared to not fall into it.

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You know, well, we've got about 5 min left. So yes, what do we do?

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I see Craig, that's his hand up and

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Yeah.

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Hi. I want to go back just one thing to what Carol was saying. I'm sorry about the reactionary element.

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Alright, but

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I want to focus just really quickly on the timing of a lot of the, this, backlash so going back to the token in diversity seminar the token society seminar 2 years ago at this point the backlash happened as soon as the titles of the papers were released.

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Nobody had seen any of the content. Nobody knew what the papers, what, you know, what they were actually going to contain, the vast majority of the backlash was actually just on the titles themselves, which had, you know, talk about like, you know, queer readings of, queer or, to other wise diverse readings of Tolkien's works.

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And the same thing happened with rings of power. The backlash started as soon as you started seeing those images of the characters with just their hands and some of them had dark skin.

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That was the flash point. That was what started the backlash to rings of power. So again, just the tiniest bit of, of representation or diversity and a large contingent of this toxic fan element will get their hooks into it and whole type.

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Craig, you had, yeah.

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Yeah, thank you. I think that, you know, the whole thought experiment, you know, the experiment on, Caliborn and Keller Brimbo is really fascinating and thank you for that.

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Yeah.

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And it made me think of kind of Aristotle and Cicero in terms of how you communicate with Logos, Ethos and Pathos.

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And I think it's 99% pathos. There is all of this. Passion.

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And that made me think about all of these issues of cognitive bias, you know, because clearly that demonstrates there's Dunning Krueger here.

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They are absolutely confident that they know what they're talking about, but they're also absolutely ignorant.

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And you also have this issue of the blind spot bias. Everyone's wrong but me. And conformity bias.

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Everyone has to conform to my view. And if you don't, I mean, I really wonder about how much of this kind of activism drives this without any kind of, engagement with the text and I've I've actually you know I've I don't know how many of you have read Charles Mills's essay on on the orcs, it was published

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posthumously. I think he doesn't do a very deep dive. I mean, I'm In some ways, I'm more sympathetic to his view because he's actually engaging with some of the text, not all the texts.

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But I'm just wondering about what you think in terms of. Is it is it or is it not this kind of unbridled, passion and emotion that just takes over.

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Yes.

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I mean, is, is, is that a accurate or probable account?

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I would say it's a mixture of motivations. There are definitely some of these individuals that are very well read and token, they've read history of Middle Earth, you know, they're also some that really prefer the David Day books and that probably says something about their, their, predilection towards true lore and stuff like that.

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But yeah, it's really across the spectrum. There are some people that just grab on to the concept of token and I would go back to.

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The figure lecture where she talks about you know everybody having their own internal version of Tolkien.

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A lot of these people think that they know what talking would have wanted that they are the arbiter of Tolkien's intention, and they have some special insight into what Tolkien read and anybody that's read letters or anything like that can see that token changes mine, you know, twice a month kind of thing on most topics.

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So it's pretty easy to find. You know, something to back up your opinion and it's really only when you start to consider the whole of the person and all the contradictions that you really start to understand, okay, nobody you can 100% understand.

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What token intended at the time, let alone what he would have thought of an adaptation 50 years after he passed away.

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Okay, I have to cut us off because it's 10 till you can continue this discussion in the discord.

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Yes. Thank you.

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We have a similar panel. Sunday. Track 3 6 30 eastern and that one is rolling over into the next next session.

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So we have a lot of time in that one to discuss rings of power. And that is more focused on rings of power than on.

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Toxic fan response, but I invite you to continue the discussion in Discord and there and we'll see you in the next panel.

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Hey everyone.

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Jenny, give me 15 s to respond to your question of what to do about all of this. Continue educating yourselves, appreciate your moderators, and be aware that you may not know everything that's going on and be willing to learn about the new ways that people are finding to be awful on the internet.

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Thank you.

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Thanks everyone.