Why I will continue to write my real person fan fiction (fanfic)

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TL;DR Summary

I, Shlomi Fish [https://www.shlomifish.org/], writer, software developer, and amateur philosopher, will continue to write real person fan fiction [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real_person_fiction], which is fiction that depicts famous real-life people, either dead or alive. This is despite the fact that some people told me I must not because it can hurt that person’s future and career. I’d like to note why seemingly Hollywood actors have been jinxed by that, and why it cannot happen to singers.

The Technion vs. Project Euler

I joked that my opinion on The Technion [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technion_%E2%80%93_Israel_Institute_of_Technology], the University where I completed my B.Sc degree in Electrical Engineering (= "EE"), has become "untwitterable". The more I think about it, the more it seems that I think less highly of it, despite the fact that some people told me that it wasn’t a waste of time, and that I’ll fondly look back at my studies. Part of the problem was that I studied there only in order to get my degree (while I’m not interested in electronics), which I wanted in order to get more higher-paying jobs.

I paid money to study there, and the people whom were indirectly paid by me, while sometimes being helpful, often had limited time to help me, looked down upon me, and gave me hard tests and unfair grades. It destroyed my self-esteem, harmed my health, made me maniacal, put me on psychiatric drugs which harmed my health [https://github.com/shlomif/why-openly-bipolar-people-should-not-be-medicated] further, and taught me little of lasting value. Despite paying, I didn’t enjoy it, and only did it to get the diploma, so I can get a more lucrative job later on.

Paying and getting paid made the experience worse. This is the curse of professionalism, which used to mean doing something for money instead of because you love it and enjoy it.
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Many years later, I started solving problems at Project Euler [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Euler], one of many competitive programming sites [https://github.com/EbookFoundation/free-programming-books/blob/master/problem-sets-competitive-programming.md]. Since I had quite a bit of maths and programming background, I did quite well at it, and have solved over 300 problems. I didn’t have to pay, but I voluntarily paid a small donation. I am still unhappy by the somewhat degraded user experience [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User_experience] of it, but am otherwise very content.

Despite not paying or expecting to be paid, or rather because of it, I was met with gratitude, respect and admiration by the people I helped on the freenode chat network [https://freenode.net/] with previous problems I solved, or by announcing that I have solved a new one - also without paying.

I was much happier as an amateur - someone who does what they do because they enjoy it and love it, not to get paid. See Paul Graham’s "What business can learn from open source" [http://paulgraham.com/open-source.html].

Lately, by inspiration from a correspondent on an Internet chat who mentioned someone’s one line Résumé, I wrote my "I'm a Rock Star software developer" Résumé [https://www.shlomifish.org/me/resumes/Shlomi-Fish-Resume-as-Software-Dev.html]. I included only amateur achievements there, including Project Euler, and excluded the Technion. At first I thought it was because EE B.Sc. degrees are quite common and so not notable enough. But then I realised something else: I wasn’t proud of my EE degree. These were my most vexing, toxic, soul destroying, unproductive, six years of my life. I regret doing it for greed of money.

That junkie stand up comedian whom I saw at a captioned twitter video was right: if you want to succeed as a writer, entertainer, and amateur philosopher: don’t work "hard".

**Professionalism**

Professionalism seemed the way to go throughout a large part of the 20th century. Frankly, the 20th century was not too bad: cities became self-sustaining, life expectancy grew, women became more empowered, acting [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actor] became a honourable profession, there were many technological advances, and there were philosophical and ideological advances (including by cutting edge entertainers who were held in contempt [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour.html#pbride Philosophers] ).

Nevertheless, during the 21st century, we need to rethink professionalism in the context of Capitalism [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-cards-on-the-table-2019-2020/#amateur-modelled-commerce] because everyone agrees that people who do creative works because they enjoy doing that (= amateurs) can produce better results than those who do it only for money.

**Taylor Swift as an amateur**

In this conversation [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=sharp-gnu—think-big], someone on freenode complained how much he disliked Apple’s Swift [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swift_(programming_language)] programming language (which you may not have heard of) and I suggested he charge more - maybe 300 USD / hour - which he said no one can afford. Its name reminded me of Taylor Swift [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor_Swift] - a successful and popular singer, who has many videos on YouTube, some of which I am fond of and which many people praise. You probably heard of her. Now, I told him that she probably charges more than 300 USD/hour, but the fact of the matter is, she might perform even for free for something that is important to her, because performing is fun. Her videos, despite often being popular, probably do not offset their production value in YouTube ads. But they are good publicity, provide fodder for remixes, parodies and covers, and are fun enough to produce so she can afford to sustain the cost. She doesn’t work for money or even for a shitload of money. She works for fun.
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There is likely a lot of fan fic, fan art, comments and idolisations of her on the Internet. She may not improve significantly, but she can derive inspiration and comments from them, and even if she is criticised or held in contempt, she can either ignore that criticism or learn from it.

If I wrote a Real Person Fan-fiction of Taylor Swift, she won’t be harmed or object. If I depicted her figuratively "kicking the ass" of the NSA in Summerschool at the NSA [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Summerschool-at-the-NSA/], it would not have harmed her reputation a dent, and it may have even give her good publicity and even fodder for songs or videos.

As an amateur, it would not have harmed her, and I would not have been considered a villain.

But I did not.

Sarah Michelle Gellar and Summer Glau

Instead I sent the actresses Sarah Michelle Gellar [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Michelle_Gellar], and Summer Glau [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer_Glau], two actresses who seemed invaluable for that due to previous associations I had. While their acting careers were already on the brink of termination, and I depicted them positively, it likely may have sealed the envelope on both of their Hollywood careers. But it was probably the best for both, because the Hollywood professionals were already intimidated by them, and they could be more productive as non-acting non-professionals activists. Why?

Because they are professionals. The better they played, the more they were scorned and maligned and given poorer roles by other jealous professional movie makers who were jealous of their competency and elevated perception by amateur fans who knew better. There is a whole YouTube search about why Hollywood cannot cast X any more [https://twitter.com/shlomifish/status/1174571159372935168] but it is the same old story. To paraphrase on an old Star Trek (the original series) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Trek:_The_Original_Series] quote: "It does not happen some of the time. It happens all the time."

But in the music industry it never happens. It will be very preposterous to ever see a YouTube feature "Why no one listens to the songs of The Beatles any more.". Moreover, even though Christina Grimmie [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christina_Grimmie] was killed (in part due to her own mismanagement), and I was shocked and saddened by that, her songs are still popular. If I now rewrote my screenplay depicting her as a super intelligent and resourceful female, who kicks the ass of the NSA, people will think I am helping keep her legacy alive, and revere me for it.

JK Rowling vs. Me

I want to become the next big writer, but I want to remain writing for fun, publishing for free on my site [https://www.shlomifish.org/] under Creative Commons licences, and writing mostly fanatic or even real person fiction. People feel sorry for JK Rowling [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._K._Rowling] for being a professional, despite the fact that she is a millionaire.

But people either love my work, respect me, or even think I’m preposterous or blasphemous (which indicates I may be right [http://shlomifishswiki.branchable.com/Encourage_criticism_and_try_to_get_offended/]). People would cringe at reading the Harry Potter books now ("TL;DR") but many of my old stories, aphorisms or factoids [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/] are still funny and fresh.

Emma Watson [https://twitter.com/EmmaWatson] is currently the most highly paid actress in Hollywood, who rose to fame after having played Hermione in the Harry Potter films. It makes her comparable to Arnold Schwarzenegger [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Schwarzenegger] who also used to be the highest paid actor.
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But it’s not as if she is the new Arnold Schwarzenegger. Instead, Arnold Schwarzenegger will forever be remembered as the old Emma Fuckin’ Watson!

Poor Emma. Why do we feel sorry for her?

Let me try it again. It’s not as if Taylor Swift is the new Madonna. In fact, Swift is the new Socrates! I’m sure Ms. Swift will approve of the new Taylor Swift factoid.

It does not have to be this way.

Actors are not replaceable

Jewel Staite testified that only she and Summer Glau could have played their characters on Firefly. Similarly I am more and more convinced that only Emma Watson can play Selina on my Selina Mandrake - The Slayer screenplay but I’d like her to do it because she enjoys it and work for relatively little. It will be preposterous to assume that the late Christina Grimmie can ever be replaced by her YouTuber colleague Tiffany Alvord or even by Taylor Swift, despite the fact that all three were or are wonderful singers.

Actors should become amateurs and work for fun on amateur films they like by amateur writers, who like me, write mostly fanfic and often crossovers and even real person fiction. As much as I like Kermit the Frog and Lucky Luke, I wish Chuck Norris and Summer Glau to star along them, because the latter two are equally as awesome even if real. Just like the old show The Muppet Show featured celebrity guest stars as themselves, and Sesame Street has been doing it since its inception in 1969.

In Ancient times, most philosophers were entertainers who collected donation money after their performances, and in fact were closer to today’s entertainers than our contemporary ivory tower professional philosophers. See:

- Mel Brooks’ Stand up philosopher
- Peter Ustinov: “If Botticelli were alive today he’d be working for Vogue” [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/peter_ustinov_161259]
- “If Ayn Rand was born in the 1990s she would be Christina Grimmie” [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/if_ayn_rand_was_born_in_the_1990s]
- ESR’s post about why most classical music is a bunch of museum pieces [http://esr.ibiblio.org/?p=4229]

Chuck Norris and Bruce Lee are the last in the line of master professional warriors (believed to have passed through Saladin - one of the greatest and most underrated hackers [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/putting-cards-on-the-table-2019-2020/#hacking-heroism] of all time). However, I believe that some of the newer amateur Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighters could have defeated even Bruce Lee. The better the former professional actors like Emma Watson, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Summer Glau, and Chuck Norris had become the more they were resented, hated, envied and mistreated. Until it hit their
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breaking point and they got angry and burst in rage against their mistreatment. Simply because they were professionals and worked for as much money as possible.

It is possible that the reason why it seems like the Chuck Norris Facts [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Chuck-Norris/] have made a comeback [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-cards-on-the-table-2019-2020/#Chuck_Norris] recently, is because Norris has decided to play in roles he liked, even if he got paid little or not at all, or was paid after the fact. He became a happy and respected amateur. I won’t be surprised if he sometimes agrees to star in local school plays, or otherwise star in roles that may seem almost completely unlike his traditional Hollywood image.

But for now I’ll write my real person fic on singers and YouTubers. I already have one more factoid about Taylor Swift and there likely will be more. I assure you that for a long time you won’t see a YouTube video "Why people won’t listen to Taylor Swift’s songs any more?". Poor Taylor! I’m sure she won’t survive reading this new Taylor Swift Factoid, and sue me immediately. (That was irony.)

Emma Watson

Emma Watson is no longer hirable in Hollywood despite the fact that all her films were commercial successes. And it’s because she too became far too powerful and competent for the incompetent and envious professional film makers and critics. But like great action heroes (or "hackers") of the past like David who fought Goliath [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/#david_and_goliath], its modernisation in the Indiana Jones gun scene [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YyBtMxZgQs], or the trailer for "Hamlet" starring Arnold Schwarzenegger [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Eont_yEGZs], she will not accept her fate, and bend and break the rules to carve her unique destiny.

She will give Hollywood the fat finger and start producing fan screenplays (in any conceivable format - not only the overly strict, and pedantic Hollywood screenplay format, which is hard to get right) that she will sponsor out of her own pocket. They will depict her as the sexy, competent, bad-ass ass-kicker that she and her fans know she is rather than her traditional sheepish and recessive (but not quite) Hermione Granger [https://harrypotter.fandom.com/wiki/Hermione_Granger] image, and these videos will be available free of charge on YouTube. Many awesome male and female actor hackers who used to be household names but are now unhirable for becoming too competent, honest and intimidating, will follow suit.

She might opt to make the material available first under relatively restrictive licences such as CC-by-nc-sa [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/] or even All rights reserved [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_rights_reserved] and ask to collect "ransom" money to make it CC-by [https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/] or even CC0 / Public Domain [https://creativecommons.org/choose/zero/]. She might give access to large data files and high quality videos for a pay or sell exquisite collectors sets (just like Nine Inch Nails did with Ghosts I-IV [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghosts_I%E2%80%93IV]).

There are other business models:

• nayafia/lemonade-stand: A handy guide to financial support for open source [https://github.com/nayafia/lemonade-stand]

• "Alternative" Profitable Models for Web-based Commerce [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/computers/web/models-for-commerce/]

As inconceivable as it seems, I think a Terminator [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminator_%28franchise%29] parody with Emma Watson as the evil terminator, and Arnold Schwarzenegger trying to protect from her has a great potential. And I already have written crossovers starring her in anything from an attack of the software industry’s hiring process [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/Emma-Watson-applying-for-a-software-dev-job/]; to a crossover [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/Mup-
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Hollywood will soon be terminated as an inefficient and lazy oligopoly with relatively few remaining active franchises, few remaining able and competent actors who quickly will follow suit, and a flood of indistinguishable high budget comic books movies with incompetent and unattractive actors who didn't have the sense and competence to become YouTubers, empty cinemas, and boring "original" films. Either that or it too will convert to the amateur and "open" [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-cards-on-the-table-2019-2020/] models, which like the signed artists labels of the RIAA [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recording_Industry_Association_of_America] mostly get out of the way (minus some censoring of YouTube content, both "copyright-violating" and legitimate, which I hope and plan will stop soon).

If Taylor Swift was able to depict [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcIy9NiNbmo] her female friends and herself as bad-ass modern day female warriors, and still continue to outsell her shows, so should Emma Watson [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Emma-Watson/], Gellar [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarah_Michelle_Gellar], or Summer Glau [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Summer-Glau/], or Megan Fox [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megan_Fox], or Jennifer Lawrence [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-all-cards-on-the-table-2013/], or Chuck Norris [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/Chuck-Norris/], or Tom Cruise [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Cruise], or countless other awesome hackers who would prosper more as amateurs, rather than in the increasingly money-hungry, soul-sucking, and mind destroying, professional Hollywood.

Hasta la vista baby! We will be back.

More real person fan fiction. I guess I must never do that.

Real Person Fiction in Conclusion

Real Person Fiction is a time honoured tradition which was already practised by the Judean Nevi’im [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevi%27im] (a word which was somewhat mistranslated as "prophets") who spoke prophecies of their past and contemporary fellow men (both positively but often negatively), and by the ancient Greek scholars (e.g.: Plato [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plato]'s dialogues with his mentor Socrates are clearly RPF). It continued to be practised throughout history, with relatively few moral obstacles until in the 20th century, fan fiction and RPF started being held in contempt due to copyright maximalism.

I now realise that fan fiction and especially real person fiction can also be used to help combat the flood of new characters and names that plagues many more "original" stories. People generally have a rough concept of what characters such as Chuck Norris, Emma Watson, Richard Stallman [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Stallman] Moses [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses], or Miss Piggy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miss_Piggy], are like and generally can better remember them because they thought about them a lot.

The reason some people criticise RPF writers of being villains is due to the fact famous actors have been facing increasingly harsh treatment due to the professional (= working for money), non "open", and "original" nature of Hollywood that has been declining in effectiveness following the open source [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source] and open content [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_content] trends. (Whether they are fully "free/open" or only partly so - see Richard Stallman’s opinion about
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the Creative Commons licences [https://features.slashdot.org/story/13/01/06/163248/richard-stallman-answers-your-questions].)

Addendum: Commercial use of characters, concepts and worlds

Before the current regime of copyright maximalism, copyright applied only to text and its printing and reprinting rights. Following a discussion [https://lists.ibiblio.org/pipermail/cc-community/2013-February/008338.html] on the Creative Commons mailing list I have placed the copyrights of my characters, concepts, plot elements and worlds [https://www.shlomifish.org/meta/copyrights/#characters_concepts_plots_and_worlds] under the CC-by licence.

It is well known that most creators of commercial worlds effectively cannot and would rather not enforce noncommercial fan art (fiction, videos, games, etc.) of their worlds. But why not also allow such works to be sold commercially, be filmed, or otherwise make a profit? Let a Thousand Flowers Bloom! [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/fortunes/show.cgi?id=perl-petdance-thousand-flowers]

For example, following Terry Pratchett [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Pratchett]'s death, his daughter Rhianna Pratchett [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhianna_Pratchett], who is his inheritor, announced that she closes her father’s Discworld [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discworld] franchise for commercial and official sequels. But why not allow commercial and unofficial sequels, prequels, fan art, forks, crossovers / mashups, etc.? Put the franchise under CC-by and tell the fans that they can build fan art above it as they please and request (not force - see Saladin-style [https://www.shlomifish.org/philosophy/philosophy/putting-cards-on-the-table-2019-2020/]) that a donation be made to the Pratchett’s estate, if there was a substantial profit.

Yet another case of franchise copyrights abuse is that of “Harry roters: Warner Bros cracks down on Potter fan festivals in US” [https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/jun/16/harry-potter-warner-bros-wizard-fan-festivals] where Warner Bros (who bought the rights to the Harry Potter franchise [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter]) demanded that Harry Potter conventions / festivals not use any names from the books. I have no idea how this demand will be “good for the people”, help make the world a better place, and/or “help someone get laid” [https://www.jwz.org/doc/groupware.html]. It just seems like a dick move [https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/wheatons-law] by some overzealous lawyers.

And now for the other side of the coin, according to the English Wikipedia, International Talk Like a Pirate Day [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Talk_Like_a_Pirate_Day] (which is a fun holiday which I celebrate on the Internet, and have also created some related fan art [https://www.shlomifish.org/humour/bits/facts/]), had become successful in part because its copyrights or trademarks have not been enforced, which led to a "viral" growth.

It is likely that creators of commercial franchises would benefit more by making their worlds, characters, and concepts unrestricted, rather than being territorial around them. Some of my Internet friends agree with me that Spaceballs [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spaceballs] is a better film than the original Star Wars trilogy [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Wars_Trilogy]. However, being a parody and therefore fan art [https://www.shlomifish.org/meta/FAQ/#why_fan_fic], it builds upon the original work and depends on it.

We are all standing on the shoulders of giants [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_on_the_shoulders_of_giants], so why not let others stand on ours?