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Harry Potter and the Journey to Hogwarts: Fan-Induced Tourism at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*

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A Thesis in the Field of Anthropology

for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

J. K. Rowling's literary success with the *Harry Potter* series has transcended the realm of fiction and popular culture, transforming into a global cultural phenomenon since its debut in 1997. With over 600 million copies of *Harry Potter* sold worldwide, including eleven record-breaking motion pictures, Rowling's achievement has expanded beyond literature and film and has given rise to global fan-induced tourism. The current study focuses on the *Harry Potter* site, *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. This fan-tourist space fuses *Harry Potter's* global fandom with tourism, providing a behind-the-scenes experience of Rowling's Wizarding World through the films' cinematic sets, backlots, and special effects. This study seeks to uncover how *Harry Potter* fan-induced tourism influences cultural, communal, and personal experiences while touring *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* by employing subject methodologies from social anthropology, fandom studies, and tourism research. Through an anthropological examination of space, place, embodiment, emic participant observation, and fan interviews, this research demonstrates how *The Making of Harry Potter* performs as a sentimental fan-tourist destination, offering profound embodied and placemaking experiences for *Harry Potter's* fandom. This study traces the ways *Harry Potter's* fans undertake global travel to London's *Studio Tour* due to the cultural, communal, and personal experiences that can be, and are, established exclusively at *The Making of Harry Potter.*

Dedication

For my Mum, Martha Raymond, who gave me *the world* and encouraged me to run wild with it!

> "If there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn't realize that love as powerful as your mother's for you leaves its own mark. Not a scar, no visible sign… to have been loved so deeply will give us some protection forever." – *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

For my Father, Dominick Simonetta (1931 –2009), who instilled in me the power of the 'Simonetta' name and loved me until the very end.

> "Your father is alive in you, Harry, and shows himself most plainly when you need of him." – *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.*

For my Husband, Keith Kaplan. You are the very air I breathe, my Deathly Hallows. Together, our love is immortal.

> "After all this time?" "Always," said Snape. – *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.*

For Bunny-Bear, my baby boy! A giant breed dog like Fang, you greet me each day I come home from Harvard with booming barks and unlimited joy only you can bring to my life. After a long day's work, you are just what Madam Pomphrey ordered!

> "Fang rested his head on Harry's knee and drooled all over his robes. Fang was clearly not as fierce as he looked." – *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.*

For Mary-Margaret Raymond (1960-2021). My aunt, my protector, *my motivation*.

> "The ones who love us never really leave us; you can always find them in here." – *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.*

Acknowledgments

I could not have undertaken this journey to Hogwarts without the loyal support of my "Golden Trio." While their names may not be Harry Potter, Hermione Grainger, or Ronald Weasley, their influence on my life has been just as impactful. My Golden Trio has given me the utmost professional guidance, inspiration, and *trust* to pursue my ambitions. Because of them, I will continue to dream, "for in dreams we enter a world that is entirely our own" (Rowling 1999), and my Wizarding World has only just begun!

Dr. Richard Martin. My mentor, my teacher, my friend. Learning alongside you has been the highlight of my academic career, and this thesis is a direct result of our unwavering teamwork. In my not-so-humble opinion, I think we can confidently say "Mischief Managed!" – *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.*

Dr. Elisabeth McKetta, my Dumbledore. You are the spark that ignited my true scholarly passion — my advocate in life and Potter. I would not be where I am today if it were not for your steadfast encouragement and friendship. You saw in me what Dumbledore saw in Harry… "It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be." – *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.*

Dr. Carla D. Martin. My champion, confidante, and *sweetest* friend I have ever had. I will always be indebted to you for teaching me one of life's most invaluable lessons, "Anything's possible if you've got enough nerve." – *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.*

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Chapter I.

Introduction

In an unprecedented literary achievement, author J. K. Rowling rapidly became the world's best-selling author with her seven-book series chronicling the tale of a humble boy navigating his unforeseen life in the Wizarding World. The renowned novel series, named after the wizard Harry Potter, has revolutionized our global culture since the series' genesis in 1997. To date, the *Harry Potter* series has sold over 600 million novel copies and has been translated into over 80 languages, totaling one in every thirteen individuals owning a *Harry Potter* novel (Bloomsbury 2024). Rowling's unequaled success has resulted in eleven record-breaking feature films and eight global *Harry Potter* theme destinations, including the world's most exclusive *Harry Potter* site, located in the suburbs of London mere miles away from where Potter's story began twenty-six years ago.

In the spring of 2012, J. K. Rowling and Warner Bros. Studio Tours united and debuted the first official *Harry Potter* tour. This destination fuses *Harry Potter's* fandom and worldwide tourism into one. *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* grants Potter enthusiasts access to the legendary Wizarding World through an authentic behind-the-scenes tour that exhibits *Harry Potter's* culture through the film's original sets, backlots, and special effects that famously took Rowling's text to the screen. Remarkably, since *The Making of Harry Potter's* grand debut, the Tour has welcomed over 17 million *Harry Potter* fans through its magical doors (Warner Bros. Discovery

2023) and has been rated the 'No. 1 Thing to Do in the United Kingdom' (Visit London 2023). With fans from around the world journeying to London to experience this unique location, the *Studio Tour* has produced a remodeled significance for the phrase "tourist destination" by creating a unique interconnection between one's physical self and *Harry Potter's* wizarding culture. Indeed, what was once considered a storyworld space within one's mind is now an embodied experience in the flesh, as the *Studio Tour* permits full entry into the famed Wizarding World.

How do Rowling's imagined spaces become real-world tourist destinations when *Harry Potter's* Wizarding World is based upon a magical realm? This thesis will draw on the principles of the anthropology of tourism and fandom studies emphasizing space, place, and embodiment practices displayed within the *Studio Tour*. Moreover, on-site emic participant observations and in-depth *Harry Potter* tourist interviews examine the fandom's motivation to physically, emotionally, and mentally engage with the *Studio Tour*. By questioning these central fan-tourist motivators and personal reactions, this research intends to advance anthropological scholarship and fan-induced tourism principles by examining *Harry Potter's* global fandom at London's *Studio Tour.* Therefore, this thesis will explore *Harry Potter* fan-induced tourism as a profound cultural and personal experience rooted in fandom customs and passionate mindsets that influence global travel to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*.

Literature Review

The field of Anthropology can be succinctly described as the study of humanity, where matters such as social interactions or cultural traditions are examined to comprehend how human societies function and perform on an individual or communal

level. While the field's specialties are widely known for analyzing early civilizations and their customs, modern anthropology offers opportunities for a better understanding of fandoms and fan-induced tourism. Yet, the broader discipline has not typically included popular culture tourism and fandom review as research subdisciplines. Indeed, extensive academic inquiries into both concepts have only existed since the 2000s, giving present-day academics few resources to explore analytically. However, some scholars have been motivated further to voice critical evaluations on behalf of these scholarly fissures to advance anthropological research for *today's* social world. Lewis (2013) argues that anthropologists of the past have missed fruitful research opportunities and often fail to account for how things have changed throughout our global society (137).

Since the discipline's early days, enhanced access to people, communities, and locations has naturally advanced anthropological theories. Nevertheless, the subjects most choose to study remain trapped in the past, as many scholars continue to examine topics such as human evolution, oral traditions and cultures, and cross-discipline archeological research. In other terms, what global culture may have been to venerable anthropologists (notably Boas [1929] 1962; Mauss [1902] 2001, [1925] 1970; and Malinowski [1922] 1984) is not the global culture we have today, as "world conditions have dramatically changed since the second half of the nineteenth century when the concept of culture was anthropologically formulated" (Lewis 2013, 137). While traditional topics remain essential to analyze, current popular culture continues to develop, yet few anthropologists critically study its influence on global lifestyles. Thus, a worldwide cultural phenomenon would be necessary to influence broad scholarship

concerning today's popular culture by demonstrating its impact on human society through an acclaimed topic that demonstrably bonds anthropological theories.

By engaging the highest-selling literature series of all time, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga (Bloomsbury Publishing 2023, 1) and connecting its fan-induced tourism to anthropological principles, research may be conducted to explore this modern anthropological shift. While the absence of analyzing fan-induced tourism through anthropological schemas is a setback in the field that must be discussed, the research put forth by this author will examine *Harry Potter's* fandom and their cultural interest in traveling to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Therefore, literature encompassing anthropology and fandom principles will be applied to demonstrate the importance of interlacing these two disciplines to expand cultural fandom studies.

Pioneering anthropological research concerning tourism and touristic activities commenced in the 1970s (Cohen 1972; MacCannell 1976; Smith 1977) and encountered intense academic scrutiny and widespread stigma relating to the subdiscipline and its researchers. Burns (2010) attests that the initial scholarly setback was caused by anthropologists viewing tourism as a "study to be avoided by serious scholars [and] deemed frivolous, something not worthy of academic pursuit" (6). Although touristic activities have considerable history throughout humankind and global culture, modern cultural researchers (Stronza 2000; Burns; 2004, 2010; Griffin 2013) believe the stigma lives on and is a "perception maintained by many [anthropologists] today" (Burns 2010). While early anthropologists alleged the study of tourism did not align with cultural theories such as space, place, and embodiment, evidence of the contrary has been explored since the 1980s, with a resurgence nearing the turn of the century (Smith 1981;

Brian and Holden 1995; Burns 2003). These scholars attempted to demonstrate the interconnection between human dynamics and personal identity through tourism and cultural destinations, yet such typologies were dismissed by the greater discipline. Thus, these factors contributed to the scarcity of chronicled tourism research and literature.

However, another angle on this debate suggests that tourism *is* worthy of anthropological assessment, considering anthropologists are attentive to all forms of human interaction. Researchers such as Nash (2007) have challenged previous scholars' dismissals; Nash argues that the field of social anthropology (with an emphasis on peoples' behaviors while traveling) is most relevant to anthropologists who have used the term 'culture' to "refer to the various activities of human groups or societies" (5). Additionally, Urry ([2002], 2011) expressed his description of anthropological tourism studies as places chosen to be "*gazed upon*" through fantasy and anticipation (such as film and literature), which construct and reinforce the "*tourist gaze*" (3, emphasis original). These fresh anthropological modes of thinking established a nexus between classic ethnographic studies and contemporary forms of research. Nash (1996) writes, "Tourism looks particularly inviting for anthropological investigation as it appears to exist in all of the cultures of humankind, which permits those cross-cultural comparisons that are the hallmark of much anthropological work" (11).

And so, a boom of anthropological tourism studies emerged in the 2000s and began to feed the famished discipline with literature on modern tourist adventures and their stimuli to travel (Causey 2003; Tucker 2003; Leite and Graburn 2009; Urry 2011). From this, the study of anthropology began to embrace a multimedia stance, with anthropologists using elements such as film, literature, and popular culture to examine the

customs of tourism and its effects on humanity. Connell (2015) discusses the early stages of popular culture tourism and says spaces like film and literature locations "attract a wide range of tourists" and continue to be "motivational drivers" for tourists seeking media-themed landscapes (21). Indeed, the statistics prove that popular culture tourism is a flourishing business that attracts sightseeing fans from across the globe. Per annum, it is estimated that over 140 million popular culture fans travel to global thematic spaces to embody the cultural imaginaries that create their fandom world (Global Attractions Attendance Report 2021). Notably, *Harry Potter's* fandom deploys numerous ways to find, inhabit, and live the *Harry Potter* experience through Potter-themed destinations. The fan base strictly relies on touristic adventures to discover the magical culture they intensely desire involvement with, and these factors contribute to a vital component of what it means to be a tourist. Jenkins (2018) suggests that fan-tourism allows enthusiasts a lived relationship that often spawns a "deeply moving experience in the physical world rather than in the imaginary, thus strengthening the connections with the story, the characters, and the fictional world" (146). Indeed, Potter fans recognize that *The Making of Harry Potter* offers an experience found only within the bounds of Leavesden's Warner Bros. Studios — an experience that captures their entire being while simultaneously fulfilling their emotional longings.

Whilst fan-tourism studies continue to emerge, enhanced understanding concerning a fan's motivation to travel provides a further academic evaluation of the interconnection of one's sociocultural customs, choices, and emotional mannerisms. Moreover, present-day anthropologists can research fandoms as individual subcultures rooted in traditional themes, social interactions, and an omnipresent sense of belonging

within a trusted community. Hence, anthropological motifs such as space, place, and embodiment may perform as a viaduct between anthropology, fandom, and tourism studies. This tripartite approach offers scholars an enhanced understanding of the cultural choices behind a fan's willingness to sightsee themed locales like the *Studio Tour*.

Fandom destinations like *The Making of Harry Potter* entice universal tourists to participate in Rowling's wizarding culture as a way of inserting oneself into a fandom society through touristic experiences. Stasch (2017) believes that "tourists are interested in the sublime aesthetics and direct embodiment of the spaces they choose to inhabit" (6). In consensus with Stasch, cross-examining tourist motivators will unite anthropology, tourism, and fandom scholarship by producing groundbreaking analyses that have yet to be critically analyzed. Indeed, the parallels between these academic fields share considerable cultural equivalence through practices that unite people, traditions, and shared behaviors. Moreover, cultural meaning and notions of authenticity are often sought through touristic adventures and typically offer fans a deep sense of belonging while sightseeing a particular themed location. Thus, in collaboration with analyzing *Harry Potter Studio Tour* travelers' embodied practices within the themed space, scholarly work akin to this thesis can explore how an imaginative space generates placemaking sentiments in a tourist's life.

Often described in Anthropology as a physical location, geography, or spatial organization, 'space' encircles people's bodies and ultimately shapes their actions through systematic spatial landscapes. Fandom destinations like the *Studio Tour* create a twofold spatial effect: a physical space in one's reality and an imagined space in one's mind. Additionally, fans occupy a themed space while simultaneously interacting with it

on their terms, thus generating an embodied physical and mental approach to space thematics (Meethan 2006, 6). Accordingly, a relationship rooted in themed spaces and cultural imaginaries emerges when one tethers those classic anthropological theories to fan-induced tourism. Waysdorf (2020) believes the crossover of real and imaginary space at filming locations is a world where fans can feel as though the "space is theirs" and where the fan-tourist is "not alone in their passion and physically surrounded by their fandom" (292). Indeed, the *Studio Tour* allows fans to insert their minds and bodies into famous scenes via the *Harry Potter* novels and films, resulting in a unique bond between themselves and the Potter story space (Williams 2018). This spatial connection entices fans from across the globe to experience Rowling's Wizarding World in its most authentic form while producing deep placemaking emotions for the fandom within this themed space.

In tandem, 'place' is a cultural theory that surveys how individuals define themselves, their role, or their physical and emotional value in a spatial location. Regarding themed spaces akin to the *Studio Tour*, a fan's sense of place (individually and within a larger fandom community) is a focal point when questioning why a fan would travel to a specific themed destination. Fandom-themed spaces permit fans to discover their place within themselves, their fandom community, or whom they aspire to be through the imaginaries they treasure. Assimilating a fan or fandom's impassioned motivations to globetrot is a way for scholars to examine how one establishes one's place in the world through one's chosen fandom. Nicky van Es (2020) reinforces this point and says, "Visiting the exact place of filming becomes a beloved place and home of one's fandom" (292), a theme this thesis will pursue through *The Making of Harry Potter*

Studio Tour London. Indeed, a full-bodied approach to anthropological fan-tourism studies is incomplete without the awareness that a fan's mind and culture define their tourism experience. Moreover, cultural fandom experiences transpire through space, place, and embodiment practices in meaningful locales alike the *Studio Tour*. Thus, the fan may experience the destination's culture through their own body and mind, as one's behaviors in a physical 'space' or feelings of 'place' complete this tripartite approach to connecting anthropology and fan-induced tourism studies.

The 'embodiment' theory suggests that a person's sensory personification or behavioral engagement in the world expresses the body's lived experience. Scholars may view a fan-tourist's embodied experience through mediums like the *Studio Tour* by observing a fan's cultural or emotional performance within the bounds of a themed space. The sensorial embodiment behaviors a fan may exude significantly align with anthropology's space and place concepts, considering the interconnection between 'space' and 'place' must be involved for a fan to have an embodied experience. For instance, a fan-tourist's expression(s) may emerge from physically being in a thematic space, as the fandom's surrounding materials shape their actions. Alternatively, a fan's sense of place within a fan setting may flourish and enact embodied performances once they feel comfortable in a particular themed environment. Waysdorf (2020) regards embodied behaviors as permitting fans an imaginative way of functioning within a space, as fans "experience the location as a personal connection to the film" (290), in this instance, the *Harry Potter* series. Once one connects these anthropological themes to fan-induced tourism studies, it becomes evident that these multi-sensory encounters mold the tourist's all-encompassing participation from start to finish.

Considering *Harry Potter's* influence on popular culture, this thesis will draw on insights from anthropology, fandom studies, and tourism scholarship to illustrate how members of *Harry Potter's* fandom experience *The Making of Harry Potter*. Additional analysis concerning how the Tour fulfills fan sentiments and feelings of belonging will be discussed through semi-structured interviews with *Harry Potter* fan-tourists. Cumulatively, this thesis will demonstrate that *Harry Potter's* fandom undertakes global travel to the *Studio* due to the cultural, communal, and personal experiences that can be, and are, established exclusively at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.*

Chapter II.

Harry Potter: A History

In 2023, J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series made history once more by celebrating its silver jubilee commemorating *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* literary milestone in celebration of 25 years of unparalleled publishing success. Enthusiastic Potter fans raised a glass of butterbeer at global events and social meetups to celebrate Harry's illustrious story that changed the landscape of our world ethos evermore. New York City's Empire State Building held a Potter-themed party in the famed Observatory and asked fans to "dress up in your favorite Hogwarts attire and join us as we read the magic atop the 86th floor with free books and butterbeer!" (Empire State Building 2023). Bloomsbury London hosted numerous Potter-themed events "no Potterhead should miss," including a grand Piccadilly Square party that showcased "extraordinary *Harry Potter* guests" and asked fans of all ages to attend in costume (Bloomsbury Publishing 2023). Equally notable, The United Kingdom's Royal Mint was also enchanted by Harry's matchless feat, debuting magical moolah with "four captivating and spellbinding UK coins to celebrate twenty-five years of *Harry Potter* magic" (Royal Mint 2023). Once again, the world's infatuation with *Harry Potter* took command and validated its dominant stance in today's pop-culture society.

However, Rowling's captivating storyworld sprouted from humble beginnings on a tardy train from Manchester to London, where Harry's tale was conceived. In 1990, Rowling's imagination took flight like a Hippogriff in "the most physical rush of

excitement" when *Harry Potter* and Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry saturated her mind with an "idea of a boy wizard who went to wizarding school" (Rowling 2023, 1). Deprived of a pen and paper, Rowling developed Potter's story while sitting on the train, trusting her imaginative memory and eventually scripting the details, most of which found their way into her published works (Rowling 2023, 1). The outcome was not just magical; it was matchless. First published in 1997, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* narrates Harry's tale by illustrating an adolescent boy's newly discovered life as a wizard. But not just any wizard… the most famous wizard to ever be born. The series would then develop into a seven-book saga, illuminating Harry's life, filled with an excess of breathtaking optics, roller coaster storylines, harrowing near-death battles, and a fantastical world unlike anything we live in throughout our conventional reality. Thus, the legend of 'Harry Potter' proliferated in popularity among global readers of all ages, creating a fandom that would one day become just as renowned as Harry Potter himself. "He'll be famous – a legend – every child in our world will know his name!" pens Rowling (1997) in the opening chapter of the series when foretelling Harry's fate in the Wizarding World (15). J. K. Rowling's intuition proved precise in the happenstance of an era.

Bloomsbury's initial hardback release of *Philosopher's Stone* began with a mere 500 copy-print yet swiftly developed into the most in-demand novel in history (Bloomsbury 2022, 1). While other internationally known fandoms seemed to dominate the media landscape around the birth time of Potter (notably *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*), Rowling's spell was too powerful to combat and thwarted all competitors. "There has never been anything quite like it, and nobody knows whether there ever will

be again," writes Rich (2007) in the opening line of his article discussing Harry's global takeover and unrivaled fanbase. From there, it became increasingly evident that *Harry Potter* fans wanted to be revolutionary. Indeed, the fandom was willing to spare no effort to evolve Rowling's singular novel and catapult Harry's story into a cultural movement. The novels became so coveted that Rowling's fandom legitimately created the now globally recognized 'Midnight Release Party' experience, which allows fans access to materials or media at the stroke of midnight. In a fascinating retrospective of midnight releases, Amatulli's (2007) research contests that midnight drops did not exist until Pottermania when worldwide publishers invented mass midnight releases of *Harry Potter* novels to appease "an enthusiasm that reached a crescendo when the books were finally in [the fans'] desperate hands" (2). And just when you thought Rowling's fandom was out of innovative ideas to shake up global culture, *Harry Potter* fans united to create the world's first midnight movie premiere in 2001, as theatres from Asia to America "began to look like the hallways of Hogwarts" (Amatulli 2007, 14).

The BBC (2007) showcased these international accounts of Potter release parties and noted that these midnight celebrations engulfed cities from around the globe by reporting,

> "[Fans in] Hong Kong toured the city dressed as wizards, while in Bangladesh, Customs Officers continued to work on a Friday – a holiday in the country – to ensure the novel was delivered at midnight. In New York, street parties included wand-making, fire-eaters, and magicians, while in Bangkok, an outdoor movie screen was showing all the Potter films throughout the night."

Swarming international cities became the new standard for *Harry Potter* fans, yet the experience lacked complete fulfillment for many enthusiasts. Therefore, the fandom advanced their societal takeovers by becoming the inaugural fan base to sleep on the

streets and stand in line for days before a novel or film release. CNN London (2011) interviewed worldwide fans before Potter's final midnight release celebration for *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, and one fan (who traveled from Petaluma, California) said,

> "I got off three days from work to come to the premiere [in London] and camp outside. We have a tent and lawn chairs, and we're just listening to music and reading the [*Harry Potter*] books before the event!"

Thereon, Potter's mighty fandom spawned Rowling's tale into a seven-book series (accompanied by seven record-selling spin-off novels), an eleven feature-film franchise, the first audiobook series ever to be streamed over one billion times (Scholastic 2023), eight international themed destinations (with two additional sites scheduled to open in 2024 and 2025), a multibillion-dollar merchandise empire, and awarded J. K. Rowling as the first billion-dollar author in recorded history (Forbes 2004). Hence, *Harry Potter's* fanbase became the first fandom to engulf worldwide culture by demonstrating their intense craving for Pottermania. This allowed Rowling's storyworld to expand to astonishing altitudes while simultaneously feeding the fandom what they wanted… *more*.

Thereby, the creative pressure to produce new and exclusive adventures for the fanbase weighed heavily on Rowling and her media partner, Warner Bros. The fandom's sense of communitas relied on its Potter-inspired traditions, cultural behaviors, and renewed experiences that ultimately became the backbone of the fandom. As has been noted, the practices of 'fandom' follow a duality between an individual's way of defining themselves within a fanbase and the community coming together in favor of their chosen culture. Notably, this dual fandom effect produces social identities that surface through the imaginaries embedded within the fandom, thus amplifying the passions formed and found within the fanbase. Dunphy (2011) attests that the Potter fandom is a sophisticated

social community with a complex communal structure that creates fan identity through membership solely supported by the fans (34). The author remarks, "J. K. Rowling created the universe, but the fans are the driving force behind the phenomenon" (14). Indeed, Rowling's international expansion has allowed fans of all intensities to participate in individual or group practices exclusively formulated on shared interests and passions by constructing a participatory culture singular to the Potter fanbase. Kidd (2007) discusses the "hysteria" that unfolds when Pottermania is granted fresh access to the Wizarding World through new modes of participation and maintains that this element is essential to the social bond of the fandom as it "unites the community in the pursuit of a common goal – Potter" (85).

Evidently, Potter's fandom has never been timid to ask for more. Their goal is simple — the story shall never end. Devotees regularly voice their requests to Rowling and Warner Bros. for frequent large-scale rejuvenation of the series' offerings that are pivotal to continuing the fandom's cultural identity and shared practices. The fandom's demand is so great that Rowling's franchise has accrued over $34 billion dollars in book sales, box office tickets, merchandising, home entertainment, table and media games, television revenue, theme park and *Studio Tour* ticket sales, and stage play performances (The Numbers 2023; Business Insider 2021; CNBC 2016). Moreover, in 2023, Portkey Games released the intensely immersive "*Hogwarts Legacy*" video game, which rapidly became 2023's "#1 Best-Selling Game Worldwide" across all video gaming platforms. Indeed, Potter's fanbase shattered popular media expectations by selling over 24 million copies and grossing over $1 billion dollars in the first ten months of *Hogwarts Legacy's*

debut (Maas 2024). Thus, the fandom's expectation of *more* has soared into a total body and mind experience.

These expectations have led to scenarios that physically, emotionally, and mentally transport the fan into the Wizarding World through Potter materials, sensory mechanisms, and personified experiences. In short, *Harry Potter's* fandom has matured into a culture that wants to embody Rowling's storyworld while simultaneously living Potter's reality in a physical setting. This achievement is no small feat, considering Rowling's tale is partly imagined and geographical, producing a fantasy in the fan's mind and a real-world experience in the flesh. Thus, the fandom automatically straddles two separate realities (Muggle World vs. Wizarding World) and can effortlessly differentiate between them and yet choose which reality they wish to embody at their leisure. This effect emerges through the fandom's deep connection and sharp understanding of Rowling's tale, allowing fans to live the *Harry Potter* experience at any given time. Waysdorf (2021) argues that this mode of fandom dually performs via the nexus between our world and the texts by "occupying space in the fan's head in the way that 'real' people and places might" (285). Developing Waysdorf's concept with relation to the *Harry Potter* fandom, Potter's participatory fanbase has dramatically progressed from merely rereading the novels to realistically creating a Potter-centric culture incorporating *all forms* of daily life.

Providing the fandom's passionate need for a Potter-themed space, Rowling's empire unveiled a blueprint of the most authentic *Harry Potter* adventure to date. In this space, fans can embody the essence of Potter while experiencing exclusive admittance to

the dreamworld they sincerely aspire to access. Thus, *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* was born.

On the eve of March 31, 2012, Warner Bros. Studios and J. K. Rowling hosted a grand event to celebrate the opening of *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* The town of Watford, England, erupted with a thrill of screaming fans and a rush for character autographs in a celebration that was evocative of a fan-favorite film scene from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* — Gilderoy Lockhart's Flourish and Botts book signing! The *Studio Tour* had officially opened its doors with the "promise to be one of the most exciting and memorable visitor attractions anywhere in Europe, delivering an experience never before seen by the general public" (Warner Bros. Studios 2011). Although Universal's *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter* opened its theme park doors in 2011, Leavesden's themed exhibit allowed fans to physically immerse themselves in Potter's reality via the authentic sets, props, costumes, and backlot staging. "I predict parents will have to pry their children, and themselves, physically away from the tour," writes Lyall (2012) of *The New York Times* in an article describing the *Studio Tour*, as the columnist exclaims, "If the movies were heroin, [the *Studio Tour*] is the methadone" (1). Contextually, the fandom's response to this revolutionary opening was exemplary of Harry conquering the Triwizard Tournament and winning the $1,000 Galleon cash prize in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

Momentum flourished, and the *Studio Tour* gained significant global recognition as the leading *Harry Potter* destination for fans to embody and express their wildest wizarding wonts. Tom Felton, who famously portrayed Draco Malfoy in all eight films, compared the *Studio Tour's* hype to the 2012 London Olympics, stating he has heard that

"People are excited to come to London this year, not just for the Olympics but for *The Making of Harry Potter*!" (Watford Observer 2012, 3). Popularity was so extraordinary that *The Making of Harry Potter* donned an official Royal Visit by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry. Prince William cheerfully said while holding his new Wizarding World wand, "[the *Tour*] has exceeded our expectations," and joked that Prince Harry has yet to know "*Harry Potter* is fictional – so please don't let the secret out just yet!" (Watford Observer 2013, 1).

Attributable to mass fandom hysteria analogous to *Harry Potter*, contemporary academic research emerged with a focus on media and popular culture assemblages. Fandom studies, a narrow field of study throughout the latter half of the 20th century, quickly developed by means of cultural phenomena like *Harry Potter.* Therefore, fandom studies became a scholarly discipline that examines pop-culture audiences and their effect on global culture. Early scholars examining fandoms developed primary methodologies that became the core of fan studies (Bacon-Smith 2000; Jenkins 2006, 2009, 2019; Gray et al. 2007). Motifs such as participatory culture, fandom traditions, and placemaking behaviors serve as critical concepts for the concentration and those who study fans. Today, social anthropologists can assess these unique themed communities and fandoms' media or textual backbones through their performative actions, cross-cultural customs, and feelings of belonging. Individual participation is how the fandom grows, yet the community creates a safe space for fans to collectively belong in an environment that allows their passions to evolve through expressions based on their chosen fanship.

The discipline of Cultural Studies is frequently referenced as the framework for today's fandom literature. Acknowledged as one of the 'founding fathers' of Cultural

Studies, Raymond Williams (1958) famously wrote, "Culture is ordinary. But cultural norms and values get expressed through, embodied by, and reaffirmed by routine activities, as well as innovative and expressive practices," (93). In accordance with Williams, a fandom's heartbeat relies on its principal values, embodied practices, and daily routines that keep the fanbase alive and constantly *entertained*. Without sustaining these core values, the fandom slowly fades and becomes a memory of what was. Thus, sustaining an innovative and involved franchise is a practice Rowling and Warner Bros. have undoubtedly mastered. Many fandoms have sprouted since Potter's outset (notably *The Twilight Saga, The Hunger Games,* and *The Hobbit*) but have unsuccessfully maintained their audience's long-term attention. Consequently, they have become a conversation of nostalgia, a dot on the timeline that is merely noted before one proceeds to the next pop-culture sensation. Whereby *Harry Potter's* fandom has always expected more, and fandom attention or attendance has never wavered.

Throughout 2023, Rowling announced three new attractions for Potter's fandom to await earnestly – a mega 10-year *Harry Potter* HBO Max television series, the grand opening of Japan's *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour Tokyo,* and a new Universal Florida Wizarding World theme park at Epic Universe. Equally thrilling, the official *Harry Potter* Facebook page celebrated 2024's New Year by asking 68 million fans what "happy memory would you use" to cast a spell for 2024 (@HarryPotter 2024). Thousands of global fans replied, and innumerable responses revealed that their happiest memory would be from their London *Studio Tour* adventure. One fan declared their happy memory would be "when I got to London's Tour and saw Hogwarts. There's really nothing quite like seeing your fantasies come true" (@HarryPotter 2024). Another fan

said, “Going to @WBTourLondon and literally tearing up as I walked through the great hall” would be their happiest spellcasting memory (@HarryPotter 2024). These exemplars demonstrate that consistent interaction and rejuvenation set Potter’s fandom apart from all other fanbases. Because of this, scholarly examination of fandoms, their global impact, and the emotional significance backing fandom communities is crucial to understand. For without popular culture and the fandoms that follow, our world would be much less magical.

Chapter III.

Harry Potter and the Wizarding Tourist: Escape From Reality

Social anthropology has long followed a tripartite approach conjoining comprehensive scholarship on all matters encompassing human life by exploring our lived social reality through daily practices, cultural traditions, and the spaces we populate across the globe. Historically, anthropologists have advanced theories including cultural pilgrimage (Turner and Turner 1978; Morinis and Turner 1992), space and place analysis (Lawrence and Low 1990; Ingold [2000] 2021), and embodiment mannerisms (Lock 1993; Csordas 1994). However, for modern anthropologists, time-honored elements have been reconsidered and reconstructed for contemporary methodologies. Thus, the field must evolve with the 'now' to advance the branch of learning and its newer research areas (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a). In short, the values embedded in social anthropology have a unique opportunity to include modern life matters while still preserving the discipline's traditional methodologies when introducing new foci for discussion. Anthropology and tourism mutually depend on one thing: *people*, for one cannot survive if the other desists.

Anthropological research representing tourists, tourism, and cultural pilgrimages gained traction in the 1970s with fresh observations by distinguished scholars (Cohen 1972; MacCannell 1973; Graburn 1983). Initially, tourism scholarship was classed as the stepchild of pilgrimage research, which heavily focused on the cultural migration of people (typically through a religious lens) and how their voyage transformed their habits

and traditions (Turner and Turner 1978; Morinis 1984; Eliade 1987). Additional early examinations analyzed the concerns surrounding heritage sites and a tourist's right to seek an authentic experience through the position of another culture. Despite tourism's original stigmas and narrow observations, the 1990s was a time of significant flourishment for the socio-study of tourism. Gupta and Ferguson (1997a) suspended the prior treatment of cultures as figments of places or antiquated traditions and shifted the paradigm to customary practices connecting people worldwide. Support for this modernized cognition accelerated, and scholars began to examine the numerous inducements regarding one's motivation to travel and how that affects personal and cultural identity. Thus, tourism studies became recognized and accepted to study, considering traveling is a social activity that has reached even the most remote people anthropologists' study (Gmelch 2018). Thereafter, social scientists began to parse the multiple categories of tourism and established a variety of academic bailiwicks that can be applied and blended with cultural rationale to advance anthropology through a holistic approach. As a result, anthropologists began to consider *why* individuals or groups tour the globe, and one intriguing motive was highlighted above most – popular culture.

Enchantment with visiting and embodying noteworthy popular culture or fandom sites is less modern than some would believe. The famous Grand Tours of Europe (1600 to the late 1800s) allowed young aristocratic men (known as "Grand Tourists") to visit European cities and peruse popular literature, art, music, and architectural spaces to inspire a new generation of gentlemen. Sorabella (2003) explains that these Grand Tourists were "expected to return home with souvenirs of their travels," to showcase their exposure to "great masterpieces," and have a narrative of their experience to retell upon

their arrival home (1). Many Grand Tourists had initially admired these global luxuries through education or widespread storytelling, rooting such trips in fascination and paving the way for popular culture tourism to develop into an experience shaped by early fandom ideals.

Five centuries later, tourism continues to flourish through the strong connections formed between the traveler and their relationship with the mythical or popular culture they seek to explore. At present, the circulation of popular media works in tandem with tourism, given that both perform as a conduit for the other. Akin to the Grand Tourists of Europe, it is reasonable to presume many of today's tourists form a preconceived bond with the spaces they seek through popular culture and fandom elements circulated worldwide. Moreover, tourists have always been more likely to travel to a destination they have a predetermined connection with by way of popular culture or media than they would if they merely spun a globe and arbitrarily selected a place to explore. Low and Lawrence-Zúñgia (2003) argue that research on contemporary themes such as tourism and cultural phenomena has "liberated and challenged anthropologists" to examine popular culture ideals through space, place, and embodiment scholarship (2). Meethan (2006) developed this notion even further and suggested that locations hold diverse meanings to travelers, including impressions of "home and belonging, personal and collective identity, and shared culture through a particular theme pursued by the tourist" (5). By reason of these fresh perspectives, the study of popular culture tourism began to grow, specifically with an emphasis on themed destinations and fan-induced tourism.

Since the mid-2000s, fandom scholars have maintained that popular culture has become one of the globe's stimuli for social construction in tourism (Beeton 2006;

Reichenberger 2020). With over 140 million tourists traveling per annum to embody a storyworld ethos (Global Attractions Attendance Report 2021), fan cultures are recognized to precipitate fan-induced tourism, where the imagined theme is the object of the traveler's destination (Gyimóthy et al. 2015). These global destinations act as powerful location markers for fans and fandoms to live their desires through their chosen culture by physically, emotionally, and mentally being there. And so, the connection between *Harry Potter's* fandom and the anthropology of tourism is undeniable when one considers why fans travel to specific destinations to embody Rowling's storyworld. Turner (1986) argues that anthropologists identify people as "active agents who construct their own world [through] cultural transmission in the experiences and expressions of social life" (12). Indeed, Potter fans have transformed their fandom's sociality into *Harry Potter* cultural transmission, chiefly to engage with the values, beliefs, and modes of participation portrayed throughout the novels and films. In this instance, the most unique way Potter's fandom continues this cultural immersion is through tourism.

Presently, tourism spans an extensive range and has even formed its own vernacular to explain the diverse types of travel one may enjoy. From daycations, staycations, theme-cations, weekend adventures, and extended stays — today's tourism industry has become accessible to the masses and includes nearly every public interest to explore. Stasch (2017) associates these multi-forms of tourism with "rituals" and contends that the emphasis behind a tourist's motivation to travel depends on their motivation to "break with normal life" and explore an "embodied sensory experience" (3). To expand Stasch's perspective, today's travelers (despite the length of their stay) are primarily motivated to travel by reason of popular culture. One's reasons could be as

simplistic as visiting a site, restaurant, or popular feature one saw on social media or heard through a trusted recommendation. Alternatively, one's choice to travel could be as profound as *Harry Potter* fans and their desire to visit Rowling's global wizarding destinations to escape into the magic. Notwithstanding, for many modern tourists, the stimulus to travel derives from popular culture.

Regarding *Harry Potter* tourism, some fans may choose to embody the Wizarding World via a quick but fulfilling daytrip. In contrast, others plan extended stays at popular Potter locations for in-depth fandom exploration. However, the fandom's motivation to traverse derives from Potter-themed rituals and the need to find, inhabit, and emotionally sense Rowling's wizarding realm. While the classically recognized motivators to visit a particular location remain, the embodied action behind one's need to "break with normal life" (Stasch 2017) is intriguing for social scientists to observe and study. Lee (2012) describes *Harry Potter* travel as a proven form of popular culture tourism deriving from Rowling's storyworld and states,

> *Harry Potter* ventures include day trips via buses or specialized taxi services, multi-day expeditions ranging from large-scale 'big bus' cohorts to small traveling parties and walking tours that are professionally organized or self-guided explorations using itineraries and maps freely sourced from the internet and tourism publications. A vast majority of the sites revolve around locations which have rendered J. K. Rowling's fictional Wizarding World into feasible travel destinations (54).

While the abundance of ways one can travel may have evolved since the Grand Tours, one's multicultural inspiration to journey has not. Thus, the intricacies of popular media and what people read, view, and listen to have become a stimulus for tourists who wish to escape their ordinary lives and explore the extraordinary.

One of those extraordinary escapes is the globe's leading *Harry Potter* tourist destination, *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Warner Bros. Studios

(2022) boasts, "*The Making of Harry Potter* has become one of the UK's most popular tourist attractions and has welcomed over 17 million visitors since opening in March 2012" (1). Indeed, the statistics prove that fan-induced tourism to London's *Studio Tour* consistently situates itself parallel to other principal tourist destinations such as Kensington and Buckingham Palace, The Tower of London, and The London Eye. However, in an extraordinary feat, *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour* was officially crowned the number one London attraction in 2023, outranking the famed Westminster Abbey (Visit London 2023). Additionally, in 2021, the Director of England's National Tourism Agency, Patricia Yates, remarked on *Harry Potter's* fan-induced tourism success and said,

> Harry and his Wizarding World continue to hold generations of readers from across the globe spellbound, firing up imaginations and inspiring people to explore locations and landscapes and experience the wonder themselves (Visit Britain 1).

England's National Tourism Agency further reinforces this statement as the report adds that fan-induced tourism akin to *Harry Potter's* influential celebrity are "powerful motivators for travel, with more than a third of potential visitors to the UK wanting to see places featured on screen" (1).

Similarly, other countries have recognized the extent of *Harry Potter's* fan-induced tourism and have initiated the construction of new themed spaces to generate travel to locales that are typically uninvolved in the imaginative geography of the source material. In late 2022, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) formally announced a forthcoming *Harry Potter* theme park at Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi to "show that Middle East operators are willing to continue to invest in an effort to drive visitation" through pop-culture fandoms (Global Attractions Attendance Report 2022). These

intersections between global culture and popular culture tourism suggest that the more a traveler identifies with a fandom, the more likely they will extend the effort to travel to a specific destination (Reichenberger and Smith 2020).

Whilst other tourist destinations may uphold a similar allure to the *Studio Tour*, such locations lack the cherished memories, joyful nostalgia, and placemaking sentiments foundational to *Harry Potter's* impassioned fandom. Therefore, this scholar argues that the reason London's *Studio Tour* welcomes a sum of visitors greater than other predominant United Kingdom locations is that fandom yearns to embody the *Harry Potter* storyworld and conceivably identifies more sincerely with the *Studio Tour* than its competitor attractions where deeper cultural bonds have yet to be formed. However, few academics have researched the correlation between fandom studies and tourism regarding these significant themes. As a result, Potter's *Studio Tour* can be analyzed as a form of fan-based cultural tourism by examining the unique interconnectedness between the site and the cultural enactments outwardly performed or emotionally felt throughout the Tour space.

In their groundbreaking anthropological analysis, Salazar and Graburn's (2014) depiction of sightseeing established strong principles regarding contemporary fan-induced tourism review. The authors describe modern-day tourism as "the human capacity to image or to enter into the imaginaries" through a destination different from one's daily routine (1). Additionally, Salazar and Graburn consider themed spaces comparable to "guidebooks" for tourists seeking the imaginaries throughout their touristic adventures (17). While *Harry Potter* travelers actively pursue the imaginaries of Rowling's constructed culture, their reasons are embedded in finding escapism beyond

our daily reality – a fantasy formed by fandom temptation. Most fan-tourists travel to escape their everyday mundane to experience or feel something new that brings them closer to their particular fandom. However, one must outstrip a piece of their current identity and practices to embrace a new, imagined self. A self that absorbs the destination's customary lifestyle and inspires one to live creatively or differently from their lives back home. Without this sense of escapism or willingness to welcome a temporary identity, the act of being a fan-tourist is stunted.

Leite (2014) attests that the anthropological perspective of tourism cannot be fully understood without recognizing there can be "no imaginaries without imagining subjects," or scilicet, people who are willing to animate their fandom fantasies in the flesh (272). In agreement with Leite, this author postulates that the crux of comprehending fan-tourist motivations lies between the intersection of *what* the imaginaries are and *why* they are essential to the traveler's inner being. Yet, one thing is certain. Fan-tourists travel to inhabit a world that accepts their fandom behaviors and offers the fan(s) a temporary escape into the fantasy. Reciprocally, a sacred bond is born. The tourist and theme infuse into one, and the connection between both entities deepens. Although the fictional Wizarding World may look and feel real to tourists visiting the space, the power lies in the *Studio Tour's* ability to create very real memories. Thus, *The Making of Harry Potter* has the influence to transform the imaginaries in one's mind into an authentic experience incarnate. As a result of this cultural fandom occurrence, social scientists can now examine fan destinations and appraise the fixed features of fan culture through spaces like *The Making of Harry Potter* to better understand the cultural motivation fueling fan-induced tourism.

Whilst Rowling's Wizarding World has expanded to international tourism prominence, the *Studio Tour* remains the most coveted Potter destination for fans to discover. *Harry Potter's* fandom is fueled by the embedded acts of fanship revealed in the magicked spaces they seek and tourist spaces like the *Studio* Tour, which stimulate prominent levels of participatory culture, embodied practices, and a sense of place for individuals and groups alike. Picard's (2015) anthropological views on tourists and their quest to find magicked tourist spaces coincide with this author's aforementioned examples of fanship. Indeed, Picard suggests tourists who seek magic or magical experiences undergo "deeply personal and meaningful" connections and suggests anthropologists should continue to research these modern tourism motivators and their "associations, representations, and symbols" to better understand tourist placemaking sentiments (309-310). Commensurate with Picard, Potter's fandom's quest to find, inhabit, and emotionally feel the magic that awaits them inside the liminal walls of Hogwarts continuously incentivizes the fanbase to routinely visit London's *Studio Tour*.

Moreover, the *Studio Tour's* website boasts magical discoveries and meaningful experiences that will leave one feeling "just like a Hogwarts student as you walk in the footsteps of Harry Potter and explore the wonders of the Wizarding World" (1). These marketed embodied promises jointly promote the opportunity for fan-induced tourists to locate and live *Harry Potter's* magical lifestyle while amplifying the exclusiveness that propels the communitas to discover themselves in the Wizarding World. As Iwashita (2008) asserts, fan-induced tourism provides tourists with essential "imagery, icons, emotions, and sentiments" that motivate people to travel internationally by creating "destination awareness" with the fandom and the location (151). Indeed, the *Studio*

Tour's "destination awareness" emanates from the fandom's desire to bring Potter's magic to life. As a result, a unique fandom culture is born, and feelings of community belonging, and purpose are created through the magicked spaces fan-tourists seek.

It is essential to recognize that finding culture, personhood, or purpose within a *Harry Potter* space is powerfully linked with the fan's discovery of kinship, comfort, and personal or social identity. Suppose the presence of 'place' is absent from the fan's overall experience. Then, the fan will only feel a surface-level connection with the space, halting the possibility of an embodied experience or a profound social bond with the greater fandom. As Waysdorf (2021) affirms, only after a strong bond with the space is made can the fan truly "celebrate their pure relationship" with the themed space and overall fandom (29). For some fans, touring *The Making of Harry Potter* becomes much more than a sightseeing endeavor; it develops into a physical or embodied connection they have sought since Potter's inception in 1997. Lukas (2007) discusses the anthropological importance of tourists locating culture and self in themed spaces. The author argues that themed realities are spaces where "meaningful connections are made among unifying ideas, symbols, and discoveries" of individual selves within these spaces (2). To add context to Lukas' views, much of Potter's fandom has a pre-established social identification with Rowling's storyworld, allowing this socialization to create authentic community spaces out of imagined tales. As a result, Potter tourists can uniquely alter their behaviors, choices, and personalities to engage with fellow fans and wizarding destinations through place and embodiment techniques. From this, scholars can begin to ascertain how a fandom site becomes a sacred space for its community members and, in return, what those emotions may induce its members to do.

Indeed, a fundamental aspect of fandom membership is the everyday escapes the imaginaries produce for its fanbase. Under today's persistent media intake, fans absorb inestimable amounts of content about their chosen fandom. Those daily reminders seep into one's life and produce routine rituals that become the cornerstone in keeping fans continually intrigued. Aside from rereading the novels, binging the films, and sharing stimulating fandom memes, global *Harry Potter* theme locations are just a sprinkling of what fans consume each day. While some pieces of fan media may gain more traction than others, few are more tantalizing to Pottermania than visiting the actual home of Hogwarts, otherwise called *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Jang (2020) attests that fans do not simply visit a media-related space without a sense of sacred longing. Instead, they journey to these locations to add meaning to their relationship with the media and, in return, create a "semi-religious" experience that creates sacred meanings for the individual and the fandom at large (Jang 2020, 55).

Certainly, fan-induced tourism is driven by the fandoms need to insert themselves into a more desirable environment (or, in Pottermania's case, the most magical place on Earth). The attraction becomes less stimulated by the media on one's electronic devices and more inspired by the fantasy directly engulfing their bodies. Several pop-culture academics, namely Geraghty et al. (2020), describe fan-induced tourism as "destination placemaking," where fans are inspired to travel by psychological and sociocultural motivators (244). Such interactions can be associated with "icons, symbols, and fellowship in a group which shares routines, rituals, and a common fan language" (Geraghty et al. 2020, 245). To deepen Geraghty's views, *Harry Potter's* fandom is undeniably seeking these aspects of fandom, but it is vital to recognize the fundamental

sacredness of touring locales like the *Studio Tour* lies in the yearning to belong in a space that has been their escape for twenty-six years. The intense longing for feelings of 'home' and 'inclusion' is paramount to consider when examining what fans do, perform, or accomplish through their fanbase. It is one thing to visit a fandom location, yet it is another to *live* the location.

The fandom's endless pursuit of Potter's customary lifestyle is essential to *Harry Potter's* fan-induced tourism success. *The Making of Harry Potter's* website assures tourists the opportunity to "discover and relive the magic" throughout the Tour, guaranteeing fans a whimsical 4-hour adventure wrapped in embodied experiences (Warner Bros. Studios 2023). Through my observational analysis of the *Studio Tour*, fans of all levels enjoyed the essence of Potter throughout the Tour space. Most fans proudly exposed their emotional connection through embodied practices and shared experiences with fellow enthusiasts. Daytrippers from downtown London to international travelers swarmed the space as if the Tour were a homecoming they had been searching for and finally found. The unbreakable bond Potter tourists feel with Tour is comparable to a magnet pulling the devotee deeper and deeper into the Wizarding World, thus strengthening the fan's bond with every twist and turn designed to swarm the fandom sensorily. Although the fanbase physically lives in the Muggle realm, the imaginaries that construct Rowling's Wizarding World are often vital for the fandom to discover, engage with, and become a member of. Thus, the practice of fan-induced tourism becomes, as Graburn (2018) articulates, a "*kind of ritual*" that travelers use to enhance and add purpose to their lives through the imaginaries they seek by creating a reality in the flesh (23, emphasis in original). After all, the act of touring a space is established by being

present via one's mind, body, and emotions through observation and experience. Indeed, there is no shortage of enthusiastically invested fans at *The Making of Harry Potter*, most of whom are there purely to animate their magical fantasies.

In a recent social media video, the *Studio Tour* asked fans to describe the Tour in one word. This was a tough assignment for many; as one fan utters, "One word simply isn't enough! It was a new world I could have never imagined in my wildest dreams. I grew up with Harry. He feels like an old friend at this point," (@WBTourLondon 2023). However, some were up for the one-word challenge, and expressions of "home, timeless, immersive, and transporting" described this fandom destination (@WBTourLondon 2023). While it is recognized that people find meaning through life experiences, *Harry Potter* fans find personal and communal value when the destination is immersive – evoking elevated levels of imagination while simultaneously feeling as if their surroundings are indeed reality. Potter's passionate fandom reinforces the notion as to why the *Studio Tour* is a significant tourist landmark for anthropological research and modern fan studies. For many *Harry Potter* enthusiasts, *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour* is more than just a tourist destination; it is a way of *life*.

Illustrated in the forthcoming Chapters, *Harry Potter* fans draw inspiration to travel through their aspiration to discover, personify, and emotionally sense a world beyond their wildest wizarding wishes. Therefore, observing fan spaces that wholly unite fandom culture through fan experiences, community sentiments, and modes of participation is essential to survey to expand contemporary scholarship on the anthropology of tourism and fandom studies. This phenomenon can be assessed through

customary anthropology methods, such as space, place, and embodiment, to produce an exciting new exploration for of popular culture and tourism scholars.

Chapter IV.

Hogwarts School of Space, Place, and Embodiment

Located twenty miles North of London lies the original home of *Harry Potter's* Wizarding World, otherwise known as Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden. The 150,000-square-foot complex offers travelers the unsurpassed opportunity to step onto authentic sets and discover the behind-the-scenes magic that brought *Harry Potter* and the Wizarding World to life. During my weeklong fieldwork exploration at *The Making of Harry Potter,* the Tour was celebrating its 11th year with an invitation to "celebrate just like a Hogwarts student" during its brand new 2023 *Discovering Hogwarts* feature ("Discovering Hogwarts" 2023). Fans of the *Harry Potter* series know the number eleven is not just any number; it is *the* number. Eleven is the age when Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry delivers its famous acceptance letters to eager children hoping for admittance to the world's premiere wizarding school. At the stroke of midnight on Harry Potter's eleventh birthday, Harry was gifted his acceptance letter to Hogwarts with the phrase, "Harry – yer a wizard!" (Rowling 1997, 50). This simple yet life-altering statement changed the course of his life forever and gave birth to the fandom we know today.

To celebrate such a monumental Tour birthday, Warner Bros. Studios unveiled a special commemorative feature for Potter's eleventh celebration. Beyond the thousands of additional materials on display, '*Discovering Hogwarts'* brings to life never-before-seen sets and hands-on interactive experiences that allow travelers to intermingle and

embody “Harry’s first experiences in the Wizarding World” (“Discovering Hogwarts” 2023).

Drawing on observational ethnographic research, this chapter contextually analyzes fan experiences and sentiments expressed throughout *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* in July 2023. Indeed, Lukas (2016) believes immersion in popular culture and media spaces has brought forth new and essential anthropological meanings when undertaking an emic assessment of today’s people. Therefore, research akin to this study is imperative for social anthropology, considering pop-culture spaces have reformed how anthropologists examine on-site participatory and immersion procedures.

Preceding studies on fan-tourist perspectives have commonly neglected to acknowledge these spaces’ particular cultural meanings while analyzing a specific fandom and its community members. While numerous fieldwork studies have observed participant exposure at pop-culture destinations (Iwashita 2008; Jang 2020; Waysdorf 2018; Waysdorf 2021; Williams 2018; Williams 2020), most have not promoted a greater understanding of the fan experience and the spaces that shape cultural fandom identities and lasting emotional values. By employing traditional anthropological methods, this holistic examination will emphasize fandom practices displayed throughout the *Studio Tour* to explore the socio-dynamics and communitas factors that sustain *Harry Potter’s* fandom. As the observational data in this chapter demonstrates, the *Studio Tour* is a cultural experience that emotionally strengthens *Harry Potter’s* fandom through profound fandom involvement, community acceptance, and embodied practices.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to employ a system of interpretive anthropological methods to examine the cultural significance of *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Although Warner Bros. Studios privately owns the *Studio Tour,* modern tourism scholars contend that themed spaces are treated as public spaces in today's evolving world (Mitrasinovic 2016). Thus, immersive research at the field site was conducted in July 2023 to better understand how the *Harry Potter* fandom culturally reacts to this themed space through anthropology's space, place, and embodiment methods. Equal analysis of fandom and tourism scholarship was also employed to better understand how these academic disciplines work in tandem with global *Harry Potter* fan-tourists. Ethnographic primary research approaches, such as on-site emic participant observation, guided this examination toward a holistic view of the fandom's global journey to this exclusive themed space. Emic participant observations were conducted on-site to determine the patterns of fan behavior publicly displayed throughout the *Studio Tour.* Participatory observation was over a 7-day period, with the researcher devoting 6 hours per day to *The Making of Harry Potter*, resulting in 42 hours of emic observation.

Anthropologists gather data and conduct fieldwork through various academic methodologies. However, ethnographic procedures (an in-depth examination of a person or culture's everyday customs and lifestyle) are a preeminent technique for on-site emic observation. Emic participant descriptions refer to the meaningful behaviors or feelings of people who belong to a particular culture or community. During the ethnographic data collection process, researchers survey how individuals or communities perceive, behave, or vocalize their cultural experiences. Through unobtrusive observations, ethnographers

write detailed notes regarding what people do and how they participate in life activities. Thus, emic perspectives are fundamental for anthropologists and scholars of fandom studies to comprehensively understand a particular culture and its customs.

Therefore, this researcher's on-site fieldwork at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* was anonymous and unobtrusive to the fan-tourist's environment. Detailed summaries regarding fan-tourist embodied performances were additionally noted to record the fans' cultural immersion throughout the Tour. These successive Tour visits were applied to accurately interpret insider fan behaviors revealed throughout the space. Rich, descriptive, hand-written fieldnotes were taken during the emic participant observation phase with attention to space, place, and embodiment. Following the on-site emic observation, this researcher's hand-written transcripts were dissected and filed for critical analysis in this thesis. Accordingly, this thesis' on-site primary research approaches guided this author's examination toward a holistic view of the fandom's global journey to this exclusive themed space.

In the remainder of this Chapter, the researcher will adjust to a first-person perspective to convey on-site fandom ethnographic observations of fan experiences at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Indeed, the use of the first-person in ethnographic writing (namely by Mahler 2011; Mears 2012; and Venkatesh 2013) has become an "exciting new chapter in ethnographic research as a vantage point of critique and as a mode of exposition" (Venkatesh 2013, 6).

Space

Anthropologically referred to as a location, geography, or spatial organization, '*space*' encircles one's physical body and structures sociocultural behaviors and choices

influenced by the site. Locations akin to *The Making of Harry Potter* have advanced the characterization of space's traditional definition, as the *Studio Tour* is classified as a '*themed space*.' '*Themed spaces*' are a contemporary way of categorizing this academic subject and expand upon the traditional views of spatial organization to include pop-culture symbols, ideas, and theme-embodiment as an expressive locale for people to gather per a particular narrative.

Before *The Making of Harry Potter*, fans constructed their own version of 'space' through their strong imagination inspired by Rowling's novels and films, and those spaces were singular to the individual consuming *Harry Potter* in a location of their choosing. While the fandom relied on their version of space for fourteen years, the *Studio Tour* finally offered the fanbase a physical storyland pre-rooted in deep familiarity for the community to inhabit. Thus, *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* has become the premier space that fuses Potter's fandom with its visual birthplace, thus constructing a spatial location rooted in *Harry Potter's* authentic fantasy. Through this author's unobtrusive observation, it is evident that *The Making of Harry Potter* is the ultimate authentic space that fuses Potter's fanbase with *Harry Potter's* visual birthplace, thus constructing a spatial location rooted in Rowling's fantasy.

Indeed, no stone is left unturned at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. Before visitors enter the mega-complex, they are greeted outdoors by two towering *Chamber of Secrets* chess pieces and classic *Harry Potter* tunes that ring throughout the parking lots. Ornamented along the building are colossal photo banners of notable *Harry Potter* film scenes, including the first visual of Hogwarts Castle (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*), Harry's flashing red spell that eternally defeats Lord

Voldemort (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*), and a snapshot of the Golden Trio (Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ron Weasley) riding the back of the Ukrainian Ironbelly Dragon while fleeing Gringotts Bank after their famous Lestrange Vault raid (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1*). Externally, Warner Bros. Studios quite literally set the stage for fans to get a taste of what is to come inside, as nearly all enthusiasts eagerly paced in line and waited for their tickets to be scanned. Some fans power-walked through the gates. Others ran inside with their Hogwarts cloaks whooshing behind them as if the fabric were trying to keep pace with their lightning-bolt speed.

Aided by the nostalgic soundscape that greeted fans outdoors, the magical milieu continues once fully inside. The pulsating rhythm that enlivens the *Harry Potter* films reverberates throughout the lofted lobby thunderously. It is as if Hogwarts is officially welcoming fans with a tight embrace, the kind you only get when you have arrived home after a long departure. The immediate infusion fans sense when entering the grand foyer is a physical and emotional experience that transports visitors directly into the Wizarding World. The Ukrainian Ironbelly Dragon that welcomed fans outdoors transforms from its two-dimensional shape into a massive three-dimensional sculpture that dangles above the heads of hundreds. The fans that ran inside came to a screeching halt, and the power walkers slowed to a snail's pace. Jaws visibly dropped, and a captivated hush fell upon most visitors. This is the moment when the space truly engulfed its visitors. Some stood underneath the giant dragon for minutes, while others quickly grabbed their tech device to snap an abundance of photos. Other fans were lured to either side of the dangling Ironbelly by the smell of two Potter-inspired cafes. The aroma was thick with toffee and

Butterbeer, and the bakery cases displayed tantalizing Wizarding World sweets that made you wish there was a spell that reversed your calorie intake for the day!

Soon after, your ticket time is called, and you are whisked into the winding hallways as the Tour begins. The music continues, but the lights become dim. After a brief welcome video and Tour description, the fandom bolts off and is running once more. The golden Great Hall doors swoop open, and fans are permitted to animatedly wander through the Tour for as long as they wish. The Tour website states the visit "lasts approximately three and a half hours," yet most fans stay the whole day ("How Long is my Visit Expected to Last?" 2023).

One Hufflepuff enthusiast turned to their Ravenclaw companion when they realized they could freely walkabout the Tour and uttered, "I feel like we're entering Heaven!" Their counterpart clutched their wand, pointed it outwardly, and confidently said, "Accio Marauder's Map." The fans remained motionless and waited to see if the map would magically fly toward them in response to the spell cast. A moment of suspense passed, their eyes wandering the space as if they were anticipating the magicked parchment map would indeed emerge. While the map did not materialize in floating fashion as it does throughout the series, the Ravenclaw fan replied, "That was still really cool to try!" Instances like this evince that the Muggle World becomes a distant memory once inside, as the Wizarding World becomes *the reality.* "For in dreams we enter a world that is entirely our own," says Dumbledore in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Rowling 1999). Parallel to this quote, the *Studio Tour* has a sneaky way of making one's dreams come true in a space that oozes spellbinding experiences.

Every twist and turn opened a new dreamlike portal into the world of Potter. After The Great Hall, interior sets such as the Gryffindor Common Room, Dumbledore's Office, the Forbidden Forest, and Diagon Alley unlock before you. Innumerable wizarding trinkets are splayed across the sets, floors, walls, and ceilings. Some are perceptibly memorable from the films, while others make you wonder how you had not noticed them before. "And you call yourself a *real* Potterhead!" one fan jokingly said to another after their friend shouted, "I can't believe I missed that!" about a unique piece of material in Hagrid's Hut.

Another fan-favorite space that intrigued the senses, both visual and olfactory, was The Weasley Burrow Kitchen. The set revealed quirky Weasley knickknacks and animatronic cooking utensils as if Mrs. Weasley were about to round the corner and set the table for dinner. One fan stood before the kitchen and took a long, deep breath. "I can almost smell the meatballs Mrs. Weasley is making for dinner in *Order of the Phoenix*!" the fan said to the group, as the others emulated by taking a deep-nose breath while happily nodding back in agreement.

The magic continues at Platform 9¾ with echoes of train track rumbles and the unmistakable sound of an air horn as Hollywood smoke billows from the engine, just as it does in each *Harry Potter* film. The space seems so tangible, with Hogwarts trunks littering the set as if the Hogwarts Express was about to depart King's Cross Station to Hogsmeade within a matter of seconds. "All aboard!" the speakers ricochet as the vibrations of the tracks begin to feel like a rhythmic heartbeat, followed by another airhorn eruption and a plume of smoke that vanishes the locomotive's steam engine in a flash. For a moment in time, the space dominates the senses and leaves fans mystified by

the magic. And just when you think the *Studio Tour* has nothing left to arouse the fandom's attention, fans are left agog by the showstopper of the Tour… The Hogwarts Castle Model Room.

Also known as "the jewel in the crown of the [*Harry Potter*] Art Department," the Hogwarts Castle Model Room is the end of the journey to the *Studio Tour* ("Hogwarts Castle," 2023). By this juncture, fans have circulated the space for at least three hours before they round the final bend into the Tour's only stadium-like room. Until now, the space has engulfed Potter enthusiasts with unrestrained amusement via the lively sets and props that encourage fans to experience the Tour with limitless vivacity. Yet, the Model Room influences fans much differently by generating an emotional energy unlike anything previously felt throughout the Tour. The space radiates tranquility and quietude, and many fans dropped to near silence as eye-popping looks of amazement were adorned by nearly all. The Castle's 360-degree view suddenly feels enchanted by the echoes of the series' most iconic orchestrated motion picture song – John Williams' 'Harry's Wondrous World.' The studio lights work in tandem with the melody by softly fading from warm to cool hues that portray Hogwarts from dawn to dusk. And that is the entirety of the space: simplistic, intimate, and poignant.

Each day, I would spend upwards of two uninterrupted hours in the Model Room observing fans. Prominently, the chamber evoked behaviors akin to a memorial-like setting. Fans moved slowly, spoke in hushed tones, and longingly gazed at the only element in the room – Hogwarts Castle. Thus, my observational assessment became just as simple as the room itself. Far from the exuberant energy displayed throughout the other Tour spaces, the Model Room does not *perform* for the fandom. Instead, the

fandom wholly reacts to its pure beauty and nostalgic familiarity. Psychological anthropologist Nico Henri Frijda has extensively researched the culture of emotion and behaviors in sentimental settings akin to the *Studio Tour*. Frijda (2008) maintains, "emotions are passions that clamor for action," and these expressive responses are heightened in meaningful spaces (11). While many fan emotions were subdued compared to the rowdy nature of the previous Tour spaces, Fridja's claims proved accurate in the Model Room. Some fans showed deep respect for the space and visibly put away their tech devices as if the sight were too important not to capture with their eyes versus their phones.

Further behavioral responses ranged from peaceful and inquisitive wandering to others wiping away tears during an intimate moment between them and the Castle. A handful of fans were emotionally overtaken and calmly excused themselves to a discreet corner where tissues were utilized to blot their tears. Still, the room acted as an honest sanctuary for fans to identify who they wished to be in a space offering a warm embrace to all. "I've never seen anything more beautiful in my entire life," one fan said in soft tones to their accompanying group. Their companion replied, "So *this* is what Dumbledore meant when he said, 'Hogwarts was where he had been happiest.'" Examples akin to these emotional responses suggest that the Hogwarts Castle Model Room is, for many, a sacred space. Indeed, if any space were to emulate 'home' throughout *The Making of Harry Potter*, Hogwarts Castle would be *the space*.

Analogously, visitors of all ages wandered the Tour with an acute metaphysical fluency with Hogwarts. While happily surprised by items they had missed within the films, many fans moved throughout the space as if they memorized the Hogwarts

blueprint via the Marauder's Map! Every walkway repetitively reminds fans of their relationship with Potter, and such prompts create a level of excitement that wafts through the space like a fresh batch of fudge from Honeydukes. Tuan (2001) argues that few social scientists have attempted to link space scholarship through the multimode of experiences one can have within a space, including "sensorimotor, visual, and conceptual modes of feelings" (7). However, it is nearly impossible to forego these crucial aspects of space methodology when examining *The Making of Harry Potter*. The entire essence of the Tour relies on the fandom's reaction to the sensorimotor experiences circulated throughout the space. Equally, these required emotions are the primary source of what motivates fans to visit the *Studio Tour*. Ergo, the all-inclusive lived experience the Tour permits reinforces feelings of belonging through dimensions of self-identity and community, a lifeforce fans only discover within the walls of *The Making of Harry Potter*.

Principally, without such vital sensory cues, fans would have little to no connection with the space, thus altering the experience altogether and reducing the Tour's socioemotional impact on its global visitors. In sum, "the real" (Tuan 2001) involves our entire body, and *The Making of Harry Potter* grants the most authentic tangible experience for one to undergo. Thereby, the site becomes a space for fans to animate their magical aspirations and metamorphose into a witch or wizard for a day. Through those lived mechanisms, modern anthropologists can examine such behaviors and intellectually link modern space scholarship to fan-induced tourism, as this thesis claims there cannot be one without the other. Foster (2016) contests, "It is impossible to enter a space and not be immersed by its various thematic, symbolic, and material purposes," and believes fans

visit themed spaces to "remind them why they care about the text" (4). To advance Foster's opinion, the Tour space offers *Harry Potter* fans a location to honor their nostalgic feelings through a previously developed relationship with the tale or on-screen visuals. Many fans visit *The Making of Harry Potter* to expand upon their love of the series and to surround themselves with the materials that built their cherished fandom. Succinctly, few Potter fans need a reminder of their strong connection to Rowling's storyworld, especially those who willingly travel long distances to inhabit the *Studio Tour.* As witnessed during my field site observation, *The Making of Harry Potter* greatly encourages and permits fans to display their fanship throughout the Tour by offering visitors an incredible number of materials that continuously enhance all five senses. The senses are aroused and thus acted upon through wizarding-themed participatory experiences, endless audio-visual frequencies, and innumerable tastes and smells via the various cafes or scented rooms used to allure fans. Because of this, the space creates an amplified adventure and seamlessly reshapes the tourist's fantasy into a natural experience. These immersive sensations concurrently capture one's body and mind through a physical conscious state, and in return, the fandom and space work as one to materialize the Wizarding World into a lived cultural reality.

Notably, most fan-tourism studies have yet to discuss the difference between fans occupying a space for fun versus living through a space out of pure aspiration. Several contemporary media scholars have researched fan spaces to comprehend what fans do or encounter while visiting a theme park or themed space location (Beeton 2005; Iwashita 2008; Godwin 2017; Williams 2020). These studies are the cornerstone of fan-induced

tourism and facilitate this author's scholarship to consider what a space *empowers* fans to do beyond simply having fun.

Through my field research, it became evident that fans chose to occupy this space through their pure desire to interact with the countless wizarding materials arranged for fanbase participation. Tourists of all ages would inquire with *Studio Tour* guides for more in-depth *Harry Potter* information on specific props, sets, and interactive fan performances available throughout the Tour. It is widely known that the *Studio Tour* promotes social interactions and lived experiences to connect the community and fulfill fans' grand expectations when visiting the site. Potter's fandom is authentically permitted to walk in the footsteps of Rowling's story and bring to life the narrative that was once bound to their mind and now released beneath their feet. Many fans require an experience that advances their wizarding aspirations and certifies their fanship by being "part of the magic with a surprise around every corner" ("The Experience," 2023). This physical phenomenon takes ordinary tourism to new heights, seeing as Potter fans genuinely engage with the Tour as if their movement throughout Hogwarts manifests them into the Wizarding World.

Moreover, the space offers fans multiple ways to live like a Hogwarts student by incorporating interactive wand lessons, Quidditch broomstick riding, and innumerable food and beverage options from the famed Great Hall feasts found exclusively at the *Studio Tour* eateries. In union, the space is a conduit for fans to behave in many ways with a trusted community that understands and accepts their mannerisms. I witnessed the *Studio Tour* space influence countless fan enactments during my fieldwork. For instance, numerous fans publicly performed modulated body movements from notable film scenes

or multi-character expressions via their physical actions or vocal replications. Some enthusiasts chose to outwardly dress like specific characters (cosplay) and enact personifications in the Tour spaces that aligned with the character they were embodying. Others used *Harry Potter* roleplay props (notably magical wands) to embody specific character performances by spellcasting in Tour spaces associated with the physical and verbal cues shown throughout the films. These cultural personifications are born from the original space in the fan's mind, which then transfigures into the actual fandom space. Thus, this occurrence creates an exclusive spatial experience that works *for* the fandom, *by* the fandom.

Indeed, the *Studio Tour* has a unique way of individually shaping the tourist's experience across every room they enter. Although the site is virtually the size of three football fields, each room offers fans an intimate opportunity to find their wizarding niche and enter a setting that emotionally resonates with them. Through my fieldwork, I witnessed fans of all levels discovering their fandom pride in spaces such as the Slytherin Common Room, Professor Snape's Potions Classroom, and Professor Sprout's Greenhouse. These physical spaces bring Rowling's imaginary world to life, and the pre-established bonds *Harry Potter* fans have with these spaces only intensify their fandom as they walk through the fantasy.

Paramount to this revelation from reel to real is the design of the *Studio Tour.* Confirmed on the *Studio Tour's* Instagram page, the Gryffindor Story Room that held "famous conversations" was imagined as a space where "Harry could call 'home' for the first time in his life" (@WBTourLondon 2023). Potter enthusiasts of all levels know the spatial essence of 'home' for Harry Potter's character is a sentimental topic. Namely, the

phrase “Hogwarts is my home” has dominated the fandom since the 2002 film *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Throughout the course of my *Studio Tour* research, it became evident that fans chose to inhabit specific spaces that enhanced strong sensory and emotional reactions through its exclusivity and fandom participation. Thus, the Gryffindor Story Room offers Harry’s fandom analogous emotions of ‘identity’ and ‘space’ the characters once felt within the exact setting. This personification creates a bonus sense of imaginative understanding for fans to reminisce on famed dialogues while occupying a room with great placemaking resonance. In part, the *Studio Tour* performs as a mythical space for visitors to cerebrally and physically experience the magic that was once constrained to their imagination.

Anthropologists have long studied the essence of mythical thinking and spaces (Malinowski [1926] 1971; Goody 2010; Lévi-Strauss [1979] 2014). However, few modern scholars have linked said scholarship to fandom spaces. Yet, Tuan (2001) has discussed the “elaborate” power magicked spaces have on the minds and bodies of people and explains, “Mythical space is a response to a feeling and imagination [that is] fundamental to human needs” (99-100). Indeed, Harry’s fandom has grown to unforeseen heights because of this very human need – the need to perform their longtime imaginations in the flesh. Afore 2012, Potter’s fandom constructed these mythical spaces in their minds, but today, *The Making of Harry Potter* assembles those dreams into a lived reality. This crucial materiality generates a strong union between the fan’s relationship with the storyworld and the space itself. Whilst magical spaces may be a construct of one’s intellectual creativity, fantasy locales such as the *Studio Tour* are built on tremendous knowledge and fan nostalgia. These core principles morph into an

anthropocentric fan experience that puts the enthusiast "at the center of the mythical universe" they inhabit (Tuan 2001). And so, whether it is the site at large or the individual rooms fans wander, *Studio Tour* visitors tangibly connect to Potter's cultural history through the spaces they envelop in the present. This phenomenon reshapes the fan's prior magical thinking and morphs their desires into actualization.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that *Harry Potter's* fanbase is more concerned with their cohesion with the *Studio Tour* rather than exploring the space and judging its form of naturalness (or lack thereof). The Tour prides itself on the multi-sensory experience fans undergo throughout the space. There is no confusion – the fandom knows they are surrounded by fiction, but they *choose* to embrace the imaginary and transfigure it into existence. Potter's fanbase is astute and has knowingly teetered between the Wizarding and Muggle Worlds since 1997. Foster (2016) contests, "the real is where human experience takes place," and Pottermania has decided London's *Studio Tour* is the real deal (179). Rather than emphasizing the site's artificiality, Potter enthusiasts create their version of 'real' to experience the space in a manner that is authentic to their version of Potter.

Moreover, it is evident that Rowling and Warner Bros. Studios strived to create a 'near-real' wizarding experience for travelers to create their version of 'real' memories throughout the dramatized space. Thus, the *Studio Tour* offers the fandom a communal space to be as they wish while simultaneously uniting them with the characters, props, and sets that vivify Rowling's storyworld. Touring *The Making of Harry Potter* is another way for the fandom to fall in love once more with *Harry Potter* and afresh their participation amidst the global fan community. This unique fandom affection inspires

fans to visit London in search of Potter's enchantment, and the ultimate space for unrestrained magical access is *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour*.

Place

Anthropologists and scholars of cultural studies have long pondered over the query, "What is home?" For decades, this simple yet compelling examination has produced various challenges for social academics, as the answer to this question has proven complex. Is 'home' a person's birthplace (Bowlby et al., 1997; Gilman [1903] 1980), a spatial dwelling (Chapman and Hockey 1999; Moore 1984; Wright 1991), a placemaking emotion (Somerville 1997; Tucker 1994), or a spirit found in a family or group of like-minded individuals (Douglas 1991; Jones 2000)? For Fandom scholars, the answer has always been definite. 'Home,' as described by Media and Culture expert Bennett (2023), is fostered in a fan's "sense of belonging," or placement, within a greater fandom community ("Where Passionate Fandoms Come to Life" 1). Moreover, *Harry Potter's* magical world routinely employs notions of 'home' when describing Potter's life at Hogwarts. Displayed on social media, Wizarding World published a video called "Moments that feel like Home," showcasing emotional film snippets that reveal Harry's most treasured and safe memories throughout the series (@WizardingWorld 2023).

These sentimental feelings are what anthropologists describe as 'place,' or the characteristic of personal and communal belonging. Customarily, both academic disciplines have interchangeably used 'home,' 'belonging,' and 'placemaking' as emotional explanations for a person's recognition of cultural acceptance. However, this thesis will proceed by using the term 'place' as a descriptor for these sentiments. Accordingly, forthcoming consideration will demonstrate the need to integrate

anthropology and fandom's placemaking theories to construct a modern definition of what it means to 'feel at home' in today's popular culture.

Traditionally classified in Anthropology as an individual's cultural connection or personal identification within a socially constructed space, 'place' explores how one defines themselves, their role, or their physical and emotional value within a spatial milieu. Although independent 'place' scholarship did not emerge until the 1990s (Lawrence and Low 1990; Nash 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1997b; Ingold 2000), esteemed anthropologists began to define one's feelings and behaviors within a 'space' as the backbone of 'place' scholarship. In reference to fandom spaces, placemaking sentiments are how fans transform a location into one that belongs to them. This reaction creates a space where fans can securely perform their aspirations, and a sacred bond is born through those feelings or mannerisms. Without a sense of 'place,' there would be no fandom, as the core of fanship emerges from an engaging community that summons all to participate. Therefore, the pulse of spaces akin to Potter's *Studio Tour* relies on 'place' emotions because, without such dominant feelings, Hogwarts would not feel like home.

Akin to 'space,' *Harry Potter's* fanbase found their essence of place within the fandom well before *The Making of Harry Potter* was erected. In many instances, their version of place matured through different settings associated with the Wizarding World before today's Potter destinations. For instance, some fans established their fandom role through *Harry Potter* book clubs, local Potterhead groups, or online fandom communities that permitted devotees to participate through a medium that resonated with their social identity. These social selves work in tandem with memory and space to create a society

based upon a mission that has been etched into the minds of Potter fans since Dumbledore said, "Hogwarts needs you!" (Rowling 2003, 27).

Therefore, the fandom's preceding affection, history, and experience with Rowling's tale became habitual, if not intimate, in the spaces they find fanship. Thus, when the creation of the *Studio Tour* was revealed in 2011, Potter's fanbase billowed with happiness at the news that they now had a space to visit that cocoons their sensibility of place within the fandom. By 2012, the fandom's concept of space and place was intrinsic, and over one decade later, the *Studio Tour* remains a second home for global Potter fans who seek the sensations linked with Hogwarts. As a result, *The Making of Harry Potter* is a recreation of Potter's sacred world. In this space, fans can visit and tangibly perceive the authenticity that ultimately generates deep placemaking emotions.

The *Studio Tour* has a distinct way of welcoming fan-tourists into the world of *Harry Potter,* as if Mrs. Weasley was greeting you at the door with a plate of her famous homemade fudge. While most travelers have a sharp understanding of all eight feature films, many enter the space with a keen textual recall derived from Rowling's best-selling novels. Due to this preconceived bond, fans are immediately captivated by the *Studio Tour* and instinctually enact elevated placemaking sensibilities with the iconic storyland they meticulously know. Concisely, the better one understands a topic or spatial location, the more likely one will enrich it with personal value. Thus, the fandom's prior experience with Harry's story permits a revival of their sacred memories and, in return, reactivates placemaking emotions. Kim (as cited in Williams 2018) describes this fan-tourist behavior as a way of "expressing a desire for feeling the same sense and emotion

at the actual filming location," as fans once did when reading or viewing the films (71). While 'space' is meant to be dwelled, 'place' is meant to be felt.

And so, throughout my observational fieldwork, two outward emotions were evident amid fans: comfortability and familiarity. These emotions have continually been associated with placemaking behaviors, and such acts create a sense of value, identity, and freedom for the individual. Many fans displayed an animated yet relaxed nature with the space, which presented a juxtaposed reality of serenity in a dramatized environment.

Presented through astonished gazes and hushed-tone personal reflections, numerous fans walked about the Tour in wonder that their communal fan identity was animating in front of their eyes. "I literally don't know anyone else here but you, but I also feel like I'm friends with everyone here because we all love Potter so much… Does that make sense?" one fan questioned their friend outside the set of Hagrid's Hut. "I feel the same! We're in a room full of strangers, but we all have one thing in common, Harry!" the friend replied as they both eyed their fellow tourists in communal admiration. Observations akin to this fan exchange demonstrate the immediate bond fan-tourists feel within the Tour space, thus developing feelings of kinship between strangers and friends alike. Thereupon, Potter's fandom is induced to visit *The Making of Harry Potter* to experience collective fan practices in a space that promises to enhance their preceding relationship with the series and ascend one's emotions to unforeseen heights.

However, to truly deepen one's bond with the *Harry Potter* fandom, one must feel secure in finding their self-identity within the greater fan community. Tuan (2001) declared that a person's "selfhood" is discovered in a public environment that amplifies one's cultured social life, thus asserting that 'place' is a person's "center of value" (164).

This statement represents 'place' accurately, primarily through anthropological fandom examination. While most fan spaces are deliberately dramatized to intensify the fantasy, fandom placemaking is based on achieving one's ambitions and desires within a community. Without the accomplishment of either, it is impossible to feel accepted, and feelings of place are stunted. However, *The Making of Harry Potter's* approach to enabling fan placemaking is evident when one considers the crux of the space is established through deep cultural meanings and Potter-themed traditions.

'Place' scholarship has consistently affirmed that people invest or attach themselves to a site because of the elaborate cultural values the locale offers (Lawrence-Zuiñga 2017). To add contextual weight to this motif, I argue that sentiments of fandom placemaking are more significant today than ever, considering we live in a progressively alienating world. Today's global extremism (displayed through media, politics, and widely circulated opinions) isolates in-person or online environments that can be difficult for individuals or communities to see past. Still, to get lost in a fandom world that is safe and predictable, like *Harry Potter,* is reassuring to many and offers a level of placemaking comfort that irons out the wrinkles from the Muggle World. And so, to feel a significant emotional bond with a community in cultural spaces that permit *all* social identities to flourish is nothing short of magic.

Indeed, many fans discovered their essence of place through elaborate embodiment performances and sensory overloads by virtue of the space. These manifestations greatly aided the fans' ability to explore the Wizarding World through a rush of excitement and lived experiences exclusively found at the *Studio Tour.* "I feel like I found my people!" one enthusiastic fan said to their friends while pointing at another

group of uniformly dressed House members. “HUFFLEPUFF FOR LIFE! Go Badgers!” the fan shouted as the other group turned their heads and applauded in fellowship. Then, a community-wide cheer sprang loose as other fans perusing adjacent sets wanted in on the fun. “Ravenclaw, Ravenclaw!” a cluster of fans began to chant, with neighboring shouts of “No! Slytherin rules, and we should’ve won the House Cup!” resonated throughout the space. Occurrences akin to this exemplar reveal the glee fans exude when they discover like-minded individuals who cherish their same cultural values. Additionally, this community-led banter displays the fandom’s keen awareness of the cultural complexities within the Wizarding World. Nevertheless, fans continue to find avenues of play regardless of the world’s infamous fictional politics. Hence, notable instances as such indicate shared fan discoveries can manifest into placemaking emotions that reshape the space for individuals and groups alike.

These observations point to the ways in which global *Harry Potter* tourists naturally produce a sense of community with tourism locales akin to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour*. The humblest of acts that led to placemaking sentiments were verified through my on-site observation. An example of this can be shown during a moment between a fan and their family while perusing the Ministry of Magic set. “Look at all the other people dressed like me in their House robes, Mum! I told you I’d fit in,” the admirer said as they gazed at a crowd of fans that visibly connected them to their Potter fan identity. Instances like this show that the fandom’s sense of place was accomplished through the space’s materialization and ability to provide the wizarding desires they have been seeking in a judgment-free zone.

Turner (1986) elaborates on this theme in his groundbreaking scholarship, the *Anthropology of Experience*. The author says, "Because our individual experiences are so central to the ways in which we put together our own identity, we should do everything we can to hold on to our sense of uniqueness" (50). The *Harry Potter* series is no stranger to uniqueness, as many characters (namely Rubeus Hagrid, Luna Lovegood, and Neville Longbottom) are celebrated throughout the series for their individuality. Indeed, fans who relate to the identity of these characters can feel placemaking emotions in *Studio Tour* spaces akin to Hagrid's Hut, Luna Lovegood's quirky costume section, and Neville Longbottom's Gryffindor Common Room desk that adorns his cherished Mimbulus Mimbletonia magical plant. Associating Turner's (1986) concepts of experience and identity with *Studio Tour* fans is natural when one recognizes that *The Making of Harry Potter* permits more than just a wizarding experience — it empowers fan-tourists to be just as authentic as the sets themselves. The outcome of such personal authenticity promotes an uplifting and collective membership shared by all fans, regardless of whether they know one another.

Moreover, this author argues it would be surprising if a *Harry Potter* fan experienced the *Studio Tour* and *did not feel* emotions of community acceptance through the uniqueness every fan brings to the space. As Low (2017) writes, "Without the concept of emotions, a critical part of what happens to people and how they experience and express it is lost" (145). Thus, this thesis asserts that the shared fellowship and nostalgic emotions and expressions displayed throughout the *Studio Tour* are the backbone of the fandom's spirit of place when visiting the space. In many observed instances, the Tour influenced symbolic interactionism (Richardson [1982] 2003) that was personal to the

tourist yet induced by the space's fandom familiarity. As a result, *The Making of Harry Potter* tempts tourism through the placemaking and membership opportunities that await fans inside, and through that, community-based tourism is born.

Embodiment

Specified as an approach to detail one's sensorial and emotional experience, Anthropology's 'Embodiment' theory examines the body's behavioral engagement, or 'being-in-the-world' mannerisms (Heidegger 1962), through life encounters. Contemporary embodiment scholarship has included new tactics to traditional methodologies, such as the study of virtual or mythical themes (Harris [1998] 2011), to expand the examination of one's lived experience. To elucidate, a fan's bodily expression(s) may emerge more authentically in thematic spaces as their actions are shaped by the familiar space encircling them. Alternatively, a fan's sense of communal placement may blossom and enact embodied performances once they feel comfortable with the populace and space they inhabit.

For instance, the *Studio Tour* frequently assures fans they can experience magical embodied acts through the personified offerings scattered throughout the space. One online post describes the Tour's Potter-inspired broomstick activity and says, "Grab your broomstick and fly through the sets of #WBTourLondon! Will you be a pro like Harry or need a little more help like Ron?" (@WBTourLondon 2023). Another post reads, "Like Neville Longbottom, you too can dance your shoes off with a magical disco under the belly of the Ukrainian Ironbelly Dragon in the Lobby!" thus enticing fans with unique embodied experiences found only at the *Studio Tour* (@WBTourLondon 2023). These exemplars verify that the *Studio Tour* activates the fandom's power to live the magic in a

manner that brings their cherished Wizarding World to life in a space that is authentic to Rowling's storyworld. Therefore, on-site observation akin to this author's examination demonstrates clear insight into fan-tourists' embodied experiences by analyzing one's cultural or emotional behaviors within the bounds of *The Making of Harry Potter*.

Before entering the *Studio Tour*, fans of all ages engaged in embodied practices. Countless *Harry Potter* wands were employed for lively first photographs underneath the polished silver sign that read, "*The Making of Harry Potter,*" with phrases such as, "Say Potter on three!" instead of the classic prompt, "Say cheese!" Individuals and families alike were outfitted in full wizarding garb as they eagerly waited in line before admission. Many fans wore full-length Hogwarts cloaks or House-specific t-shirts that flaunted their magical pride to those surrounding them. Others wore elaborate, detailed character fashions, and crowds of attendees chose to personify Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, and Hermione Granger for their embodied Tour experience. One daring fan took the risk of personifying Dolores Umbridge and donned an all-pink tweed ensemble while barking, "I will have order!" to others waiting in line. Character wigs, specialty makeup, and wizarding accessories (e.g., Harry's famed eyeglasses) were adorned by all ages and genders. Most memorably, several fans brought their wizarding stuffed pets and affixed characters like Hedwig or Nagini onto their bodies as if these fantastic beasts were going for a leisurely walkabout through the *Studio Tour*!

The visceral connection fans outwardly presented was palpable and set a clear precedent for the embodied practices bound to commence inside. Notably, the genesis of communal unity performed via these behavioral manners is essential to the embodiment process. *The Making of Harry Potter* is not merely a space to be a witch or wizard; it is a

space for one to *define* themselves as one. As a result, on-site ethnographic examination provides an apt approach to studying lived experiences through popular fandom spaces like the *Studio Tour*.

Once indoors, the wild wizarding voyage continues. As previously described, the space devours fans whole through the magnitude of sensory elements swirling around the Tour. Various embodied practices were accelerated by the continuous loop of Potter's exhilarating screen music that swelled the ears as if you were immediately catapulted into the film itself. Some fans began to dance the jaunty movements flaunted in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, while others reenacted the spellcasting scenes that matched the darker melodies from *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.* The space's energetic milieu worked in tandem with the fandom's frenzy and roused Potter-themed manifestations in Tour locales that compelled fans to perform when prompted by sensory deployments. Low and Lawrence-Zuiñga (2003) argue that 'space' versus 'body' simultaneously "contract and expand in relationship to a person's emotions and state of mind, sense of self, and social relations" when experiencing the world around them (3). For many enthusiasts, the Tour is *the space* to expand their emotions with a compatible community outwardly.

An example of this was displayed in the Gryffindor Common Room. On one impromptu occasion, a cluster of fans who identified as Gryffindor House members initiated a group challenge to see who could best personify 'The Fat Lady:' a minor but comical character within the novels and films. Their improvised challenge was to articulate as many Gryffindor Tower passcodes they could recall, or as one fan put it, to "make The Fat Lady proud" of their memory "unlike Neville Longbottom!" Within

seconds, a fan imitated The Fat Lady's low British accent and said to the crowd, "*Password?*" Rapidly, fans began to roar, "Caput Draconis! Fortuna Major! Banana Fritters! Flibbertigibbet!" and "Scurvy Cur!" After successfully naming as many passwords as possible, the fans (who did not previously know one another before this performance but happily introduced themselves to one another thereafter) snapped a celebratory group photo and modeled the various Fat Lady poses shown throughout the films. Evidently, the group was declaring themselves through a new bodily persona that sprouted from inscribed behaviors such as agency, performance, and feeling. Their emotional state heightened, and their physical and verbal gestures made their experience become 'one' with the space.

Richardson ([1982] 2003), who authored pioneering research on embodiment and social reality, attests that embodied spaces sculpt one's experience into meaningful tokens and, in return, become a transforming cultural act. Likewise, although Potter's wizarding realm may be fictional, it does not make the world less significant or meaningful for participants to be part of. The transformative cultural acts Potter's fandom emanates verify that these performances are a way to rediscover, recreate, and relive the magic in spaces like *The Making of Harry Potter*. And so, I shall quote Dumbledore in response to an existence without these embodied behaviors, "Without it, we leave the fate of our world up to chance" (Rowling 2005).

Furthermore, these mimetic factors contribute to the *Studio Tour's* guarantee that you can "Walk in the footsteps of Harry Potter and explore the wonders of the Wizarding World" while visiting the space (Warner Bros. Studios 2023). This embodied promise elevates the fandom's reaction to anthropomorphizing the Wizarding World and implies a

high-value return from a deeply engaged space. Additionally, these manners of embodiment generate a physical, mental, and emotional naturalness for fans to experience throughout the *Studio Tour*. The space permits fans to live within the bounds of the Wizarding World through various methods and, in return, generates fandom personifications. Lukas and Foster (2016) emphasize that themed tours hinge on the strength of the connection, which "matters more than the degree of artificiality or naturalness of the themed experience" (146). To a certain extent, this argument holds. Certainly, the *Studio Tour* would not be the United Kingdom's premier tourist activity if the strength of the fandom's bond were not intact. However, Lukas and Foster's argument is grounded in a standardized approach. The assumption that most themed tours only attract fans via their solid relationship with the theme and faintly through authentic fan materials or desired playacting performances is inapplicable to Pottermania. The fandom's quest to keep the magic alive, albeit its artificiality, gives power to the world they love. *Harry Potter* fans deliberately visit the themed space to be enveloped in the naturalness of the experience, albeit the surrounding materials are artificial in the Muggle realm. While the objects displayed throughout *The Making of Harry Potter* may be a figment of one's imagination, that does not mean the materials are not *real* to fans who believe in Rowling's imaginary. *Harry Potter's* astute fandom understands this juxtaposition between natural and artificial. However, most fans choose to embody the artificial because it brings their Wizarding World aspirations to life. Therefore, the passion generated through these tactics enables embodied acts in a profoundly familiar environment to the fanbase.

What is essential to recognize is that Harry's fans are already traveling to the *Studio Tour* with a deep bond that has, for some, expanded for decades. For others, the fandom has been passed down by generations of older fans who wish to reignite a new wave of Pottermania, so the story *never* ends. Strathern (2011) relates this foundation of unity to embodiment as an "experience that stays with, and can transform, a person over time" (393). The result of this experience empowers symbolic behaviors when touring themed spaces and intensifies one's fanship via exclusive lived encounters. Through this process, embodied social relationships emerge, and fans begin to integrate with compatible enthusiasts in significant spaces that bring their imaginaries to life.

Identified through my ethnographic observations, the trifecta between oneself, fellow fans, and meaningful spaces is the heartbeat of *The Making of Harry Potter*. Such connections manifest a comfortability that instinctually permits fans to physically implant themselves into the Wizarding World and act through spontaneous mannerisms that transport them into Potter's realm. While some embodied performances were intended (cosplay implementation, wand use, or wizarding idioms), others were unrehearsed.

The multiple *Harry Potter*-themed cafés displayed solid examples of unassuming embodied experiences via wizarding-themed menu options. To elaborate, one group of fans ordered a tray of freshly tapped Butterbeer and excitedly took photos of their drinks before taking their first refreshing sip. Yet, one fan had an idea that sprouted from *Harry Potter and Half-Blood Prince* – to cheers while quoting Professor Horace Slughorn's final words to Ron Weasley before his beverage poisoned him. "To life!" the fans said in a nasal voice that depicted Slughorn's expression as they clinked their Hogwarts mugs (Rowling and Yates 2009). One fan took their performance to another level by pretending

to choke on their Butterbeer precisely as Ron Weasley did with his poisoned oak-matured mead. The group roared with laughter as though this performance had made their day, and the choking fan immediately returned to their former self once the playacting had ended. Unaware that this embodied act was an impromptu, community-lead performance, the group swigged their Butterbeer and returned to plotting their next social media post.

This demonstration displays an influential group personification in a space that honors embodied acts. While the fans consciously decided to embody Professor Slughorn, the occurrence was rooted in a profound cultural awareness of the *Harry Potter* series. The act was stimulated by a notable event that once took place in the Wizarding World. Yet, the performance was reimagined and re-embodied in the Muggle World to connect more deeply with the characters, materials, and story. As a result, such performances concurrently add value to the fandom's culture and the fan's overall experience at the *Studio Tour.* Lewis (2013) postulates that fans search for embodied activities or actions as "a performance to be witnessed or participated in" with other like-minded individuals. Assuredly, Potter's fanbase intentionally visits themed spaces to enact certain symbolic behaviors or modes of self-expression to be seen, heard, and experienced *together.* These embodied acts create an experience rooted in Rowling's story, and personifying characters in unique scenarios becomes a rite of passage for fans who pursue embodied activities. Jang (2020) concurs with this examination and states, "These performances act as a kind of spell or magic, creating authenticity of the place in oneself," and therefore enhance the fandom's culture through embodied mannerisms (46). This effect creates a dreamlike essence that lives in our reality through the power of fan-embodied practices. Thus, Potter's *Studio Tour* enwraps this all into one by supplying

fans with a spellbinding space to inhabit while permitting them to create their own magic established in embodied techniques.

Equally important to the fandom's chosen expressions are the daily embodiment teachings *The Making of Harry Potter* offers tourists. To be a tourist is to personify a temporary identity altered or elevated from one's typical routine. It is natural for individuals or groups to briefly change their identity while sightseeing, and these new behaviors noticeably develop when touring sentimental sites. Therefore, the *Studio Tour* is acutely aware that social identities and embodied practices emerge from communal recreation, especially when the activity permits fans to live the *Harry Potter* experience. The Tour's website boasts the opportunity for fans to "get hands on with interactive experiences" by embodying character motions such as Professor Flitwick's legendary 'Wingardium Leviosa' charm, Mrs. Weasley's origami howler performance, or the freedom to "learn wand combat and practice your spells" like the infamous Death Eaters (Warner Bros. Studios 2023). Additionally, the *Studio Tour* assures these "interactive experiences will tell the story of Harry's first experiences in the Wizarding World" while allowing fans to physically "try your hand at the techniques used to bring the films to life" (Warner Bros. Studios 2023).

Such thrills transcend fandom imaginaries by permitting fans to perform famous scenes identically in the same space the Potter actors once performed. These personifications upgrade the tourist experience by fusing wizarding culture and embodied practices into one exclusive *Harry Potter* adventure. The instant storyline and character connection fans feel transmogrifies into a total body experience that attracts fan-induced tourism to *The Making of Harry Potter*. Hence, it must be recognized that embodying the

Harry Potter culture originates from inserting oneself into the storyworld and feeling comfortable enough to perform in the fandom space. To embody is to gain access that is otherwise unattainable without a performative act. Bodily modulations and verbal utterances associated with embodied performances use the physical to enhance one's connection, mindfulness, and self-acceptance to the culture they wish to experience. Moreover, fandom embodiment is a choice that puts one's true self aside and permits a new identity to form – one rooted in fantasy and aspiration. To be precise, the *Studio Tour's* real magic derives from its cultural freedom to play and create a social identity that is enwrapped in Potter's storyworld. In the eyes of Potter fans, nothing is more powerful than that achievement.

And so, through these newly formed cultural identities, anthropologists can uncover the vital intersection between 'space' and 'embodiment' and how these elements frequently influence one another. Through my observational lens, fans cherish their physical, mental, and emotional connection to Potter via the *Studio Tour* space and their permittance to embody the Wizarding World on their terms. The Tour provides enthusiasts the opportunity to populate a space that happily accepts customary wizarding behaviors. Although these actions could be misconstrued or unappreciated in the Muggle World, the *Studio Tour* champions these performances and urges fans to enliven Potter's magic. Indeed, many fans preconfigure their *Studio Tour* embodied performances before they visit the space to ensure their wizarding wishes are fulfilled in the home of *Harry Potter.*

Moreover, the *Studio Tour* frequently uses its social media platforms to promote embodied performances within the space, with posts that inspire fans to "Share your

highly fashionable, highly magical costumes with us! We just LOVE to see your Wizarding World inspired outfits at #WBTourLondon. Which Hogwarts House will you be representing during your *Studio Tour* visit?" (@WBTourLondon 2022). This freedom empowers tourists to bring their version of embodied authenticity to the *Studio Tour*, thus creating a space molded by the films but amplified by the fans.

Palmer (2020) anthropologically reviews the various details of embodied tourism and writes, "Explorations of culture are explorations of how bodies shape and are shaped by their experience in the world" (3). To expand Palmer's analysis, most *Harry Potter* tourists actively search for exclusive fandom spaces that immerse their bodies into the fantastical wizarding realm. Indeed, many everyday tourists explore locales out of curiosity, and consequently, their experience is shaped by the unknown. However, *Harry Potter* tourists do not merely wish to explore; they aspire to live and belong in Rowling's Wizarding World. Most Potter fans intentionally pursue cultural journeys like the *Studio Tour* to discover a world through embodied practices that are guaranteed to revamp their status in the wizarding community. Taken together, these embodiment observations illustrate that, for many fan-tourists, the *Studio Tour* is the ultimate fandom space to *perform* the imaginaries that sustain *Harry Potter's* passionate fandom. Thereupon, this powerful partnership between space and embodiment transforms from a playacting adventure to a deeply meaningful experience, one that has many fans saying, "Hogwarts is my home" (Rowling and Columbus 2002).

Chapter V.

Magical Me! Phenomenology of Fandom at the *Studio Tour*

Welcoming upwards of 6,000 fans per day (Landon 2023), London's *Studio Tour* affords travelers the power to personify and live Harry's wonderous world inside the globe's premier *Harry Potter* fandom destination. While many Londoners visit the Tour each week, the preponderance of tourists reside in other parts of the world and specifically travel to London to immerse themselves in this fandom space. In a comical social media post, *The Making of Harry Potter's* Twitter ('X') account wrote, "Real ones dress up in their Hogwarts house robes when visiting the Studio Tour," and proceeded to ask tourists to share their Hogwarts personification using fan photos or videos in the comments section (@WBTourLondon 2023). Potter fans from around the globe (notably China, Japan, the United States, and Canada) reacted to the post by sharing their *Studio Tour* experiences. Numerous replies included multi-media displays of *Harry Potter* embodiment performances, while others shared their expressive feelings of belonging while visiting the famed fandom site. Instances akin to this demonstrate that *The Making of Harry Potter* presents fan-tourists more than just a space to inhabit their wizarding desires. The site offers enthusiasts a space to discover, personify, and emotionally feel Potter's realm while generating lasting impressions of fandom inspiration once the Tour has concluded. These fandom fantasies assure Potter tourists that *The Making of Harry Potter* is not just a space to explore. It is a space to live the unwritten.

Previously, tourism management scholars Reichenberger and Smith (2020) argued that there have been no direct links found between a fandom's sense of community and their meaningful tourist experiences at global fan destinations. The authors contend that future tourism scholarship examining a singular fandom space will "fill gaps in our current knowledge [and] provide more in-depth insight into how fans collectively create a sense of community in tourism spaces" (176). In part, this statement on fan-induced tourism was the stimulus for conducting fan interviews after observational fieldwork at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. Indeed, this thesis strives to "fill the gaps" in today's pop-culture scholarship and produce innovative ideas for future academics to consider.

In the pages that follow, this Chapter will analyze *Harry Potter* tourists through extensive fan interviews examining their motivation to travel to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. Additionally, this Chapter will explore how *Harry Potter* fans physically, emotionally, and mentally reacted to *The Making of Harry Potter's* fandom offerings via the site's authentic sets, props, and backlot. By questioning these central fan-tourist motivations and personal sentiments, this Chapter will demonstrate that *The Making of Harry Potter* is a fandom site that provides fans a space to find, inhabit, and feel the ethos of *Harry Potter.*

By employing Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method of phenomenological data analysis, the following examination will emphasize influential cultural themes that emerged through *Harry Potter* fandom interviews.

Methodology

This part of the study, conducted after the observational fieldwork, involved interviewing eight global *Harry Potter* fan-tourists about their personal inspiration to travel to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. With a focus on the fan-tourist's lived experiences throughout the *Studio Tour*, semi-structured fan interviews were employed after the fan visited *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* in 2023. Attention was paid to the fan-tourist's physical and emotional reactions to the *Studio Tour's* tourist offerings, such as the site's authentic sets, props, and backlot.

Phenomenology, which is frequently used as a qualitative method in tourism and fandom studies, ontologically presumes there is an essential structure ("essence") of one's lived experience that can be revealed through gathering structured narratives concerning one's lived experience (Cresswell and Poth 2018). Descriptive phenomenology scholarship has vast roots and has been the primary focus for some academics since the late-twentieth century (Giorgi 1985; Van Manen [1997] 2016; Moustakas 1994). However, of the various available frameworks, Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological seven-step approach is a comprehensive method and a solid fit for this research. Colaizzi's detailed seven-step phenomenological method requires a thorough analysis of the data, allowing for concise descriptions and results concerning the studied phenomenon or people. Through thick descriptive first-person accounts, Colaizzi's phenomenological approach ensures a rigorous exploration of participants and their experience(s) via the study's subject matter. Additionally, numerous present-day fandom, media, and tourism studies have successfully applied Colaizzi's phenomenological methodology for these subdisciplines and their contemporary research (Glenn 2019; Han

and Yoon 2020; Reyes and Pit 2022). Thus, the data collected from the semi-structured fan interviews was analyzed through Colaizzi's descriptive seven-step phenomenological method to deeply explore *Harry Potter's* fandom and their lived experience at the *Studio Tour.* The following steps represent Colaizzi's methods for descriptive phenomenological data analysis:

- **Familiarization:** The researcher should read each transcript multiple times to thoroughly understand the participant's narrative or accounts.
- **Identify and Extract Significant Statements:** The researcher should identify and label important participant statements that pertain to the study's phenomenon.
- **Formulate Meanings:** The researcher should thoroughly identify relevant phenomenon meanings that develop from considering the significant statements.
- **Cluster Themes:** Meanings discovered throughout the data analysis should be clustered into common themes across all participant accounts.
- **Create an Exhaustive Description:** The study's findings in its totality should be written into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under examination, including all themes found in Step Four.
- **Produce a Fundamental Structure:** The researcher must summarize the exhaustive description to a concise statement that captures the essential aspects of the phenomenon study.
- **Validate Findings:** The researcher presents a fundamental structure to all participants to verify the results with their experiences.

The collected and analyzed data from the semi-structured interviews showed meaningful themes to convey the multipart findings for this fandom study. Through engagement with Colaizzi's methodologic approach, three themes were identified: 'Finding Magic: *Harry Potter* Tourism' (specifically at 'Hogwarts' or *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*), 'Inhabiting Magic: Wizarding Embodiment' (embodiment or character personification), and 'More than Magic: Home and Belonging at the *Studio Tour*' (personal and collective fan emotions).

Eight interview participants between 18 and 65 were recruited. The participant's identity, gender, sexual orientation, or geographical location was not a factor in pursuing the interviewees. By employing the verified *Studio Tour* Instagram social media account (@WBTourLondon), highly engaged participants were virtually recruited via their public engagement and comments on the official social media account. *Harry Potter* fans are accustomed to publicly revealing their wizarding experiences on the Tour's Instagram account. Such public engagement permitted this researcher to contact public profiled participants through their online participation for a semi-structured interview about their travels and experience at the *Studio Tour.*

Before the interviews, all interviewees were briefed and informed of this research's purpose. All interviewees agreed to sign a Harvard University Adult Consent Form (HRP-502) before the interview, and each participant was cognizant that their information would be kept anonymous via the use of pseudonyms. The eight individuals were briefed that they may leave the research at any time.

Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted over Zoom in the Fall of 2023. All participants were asked a uniform set of five questions with room for additional open-

ended responses. The pairing of questions asked Potter tourists about their motivation to visit the *Studio Tour* along with their emotional sentiments felt throughout the Tour space. Each fan interview was approximately one hour long, and the researcher penned explanatory hand-written notes during each discussion. All interviewees had the unique opportunity to choose a pseudonym forename for their responses reflected within the thesis. Exhaustive hand-written summaries and Zoom interviews were transcribed and analyzed for this thesis' forthcoming fan reactions at the *Studio Tour.* The following exploration will display an advanced understanding of *Harry Potter* fan-tourist perspectives and their motivation to travel to and inhabit London's *Studio Tour.* This Chapter will describe the following findings, 'Finding Magic: *Harry Potter* Tourism,' 'Inhabiting Magic: Wizarding Embodiment,' and 'More than Magic: Home and Belonging at the *Studio Tour*.' Thus, the forthcoming interview findings will illustrate the powerful motivators that inspire fans to travel to the *Studio Tour* while describing the site's influence as a space for tourists to live and feel *Harry Potter's* fandom fantasies.

Finding Magic: *Harry Potter* Tourism

As this thesis has maintained, *Harry Potter* fans travel to discover Wizarding World locations that implant them into their cherished fandom fantasies. Indeed, 'Finding Magic's' foundation is based upon a fan's profound emotions, placemaking desires, and a yearning to locate their fandom wishes. These powerful emotions create action, and, for *Harry Potter's* fandom, action usually transforms into fan-induced tourism. Indeed, Harry's fandom knows that if they want to be physically part of Rowling's Wizarding World, they must travel to specific locations to find and live the magic. And so, "Dumbledore 150," an interviewee who voyaged from Sydney, Australia, discussed their

inspiration to fly almost 24 hours to discover and visit *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*:

> Growing up in Australia, I always knew I was oceans away from Hogwarts and that bothered me because I desperately wanted to go to London to be part of Harry's world. Once I turned 18 there was no turning back! My first international trip was to London and the number one thing on my bucket list was *The Making of Harry Potter.* Before I even stepped foot inside the building, I felt the magic, which was cool because I traveled all this way to find it, and there it was… right in front of me, waiting for me to walk inside and experience it. Since my first trip, I've flown from Australia to London three times now, and every trip was centered around Potter landmarks. The Queen was a close second!

Dumbledore 150 was not the only international fan searching for Potter's matchless magical realm. "Rita Skeeter 4," a self-proclaimed 'Potterhead' and Ireland native, currently resides in London and says their decision to move to the United Kingdom was chiefly "influenced by *Harry Potter*." Significantly, 'Rita Skeeter 4' was the only interviewee who traveled to London to visit *The Making of Harry Potter* by airplane, boat, and car:

> Before I moved to London full-time for university, I used to make bi-annual trips to *The Making of Harry Potter.* Traveling from Ireland isn't as easy as one would think. Sometimes, I would fly. Other times, I would take the car ferry from Ireland to England and then use my car to drive to London. The trips were long but so worth it. During that time in my life, I got to know nautical and flying miles fairly well and to pass the time during my trips, I would make a list of everything Potter-related I needed to do during my time in London to really maximize my time there. As graduation neared, I decided to get a permanent job in London and a lot of inspiration for that big life decision came from Potter. I figured, "Why should I keep traveling back and forth when I can just live here permanently and daytrip to Leavesden whenever I want?" I sort of turned my *Harry Potter* travels into a life decision. At first, my Mam didn't approve, but she gets it now. Like Jo [Rowling] said at the end of *Deathly Hallows,* "All is well."

The enthusiasm interviewees displayed while discussing their inducement to travel was palpable, and all international tourists shared one thing in common – a hunger to discover

Hogwarts. Beeton (2006) believes media tourists find value in their lives through the social construction of their lived experiences, especially those seeking film-induced adventures (182). In agreement with Beeton, most interviewees spoke at length concerning their meaningful reasons for traveling to the *Studio Tour*. To illustrate, many were pursuing feelings of "nostalgia" and "childhood memories" through their *Studio Tour* journey. However, to extend Beeton's evaluation, this researcher argues that Potter's film-induced tourists seek more than just value; they seek a transformative lifeworld that is only tangible in *The Making of Harry Potter*. "Fawkes 59," a *Harry Potter* tourist from Idaho, United States, says:

> I traveled 13 hours to find Hogwarts, and what I found was more than just the *Harry Potter* sets; I found my home. I genuinely didn't think I'd travel to London and leave a different person, but the *Studio Tour* changed a part of me for the better, just like *Sorcerer's Stone* did for me when I was nine years old. My childhood dreams really came true the day I discovered the *Studio Tour.* 'Nostalgia' doesn't fully describe the feeling for me. Being there is a mixture of nostalgia, unreal excitement, and a feeling of, "Ah-ha! I found Hogwarts. Now, let's explore!" The feeling [at the *Studio Tour*] is indescribable but also so real and touchable… it's as if I finally stumbled upon Hogwarts after searching years for its location in the Forbidden Forest. I'm a well-traveled person, and I can confidently say there's no place like Potter's *Tour*… that's why I've been there five times, and my sixth visit is already booked for 2024! At this point, the length of my fight is nothing compared to the feeling I get inside the *Studio Tour.* It's like tourism meets fantasy… or, to stay on brand, where tourism meets wizardry.

Fan sentiments akin to these exemplars reveal a growing trend in today's themed tourism industry, and travel analysts such as Themed Entertainment Association (2022) assert that media tourists are "going to drive future demand in this increasingly competitive entertainment landscape" (8). Indeed, as fandoms continue to grow and mature, the requirement for noteworthy themed spaces and the celebratory feelings that accompany these sites are a noticeable shift the tourism industry must pursue to match modern tourist

needs. Moreover, as these interviewees suggest, it is crucial for fandom spaces to offer fan-tourists a celebratory milieu for enthusiasts to relish in their discovery of their fandom location. In truth, fandom spaces will not endure the test of time if the location itself is not satisfying enough for long-distance fan traveling. The *Studio Tour's* frequent revitalization of Potter-themed exhibits is a solid example of how Rowling's empire satisfies the fandom while offering newly enhanced experiences for tourists. "Sirius 390," who resides in Paris, France, explained their continuous desire to visit London's *Studio Tour* over Paris' famed Disneyland:

> Don't get me wrong, Disneyland Paris is magical but it's not *Harry Potter* magical. The difference lies in each fandom's idea of "magic," and for me, Potter's magic wins over Mickey Mouse every time. The *Studio Tour* does a brilliant job at making every person feel like they found Harry's magic, which is something we've all been searching for since the first movie. Each time I walk in, my thoughts go haywire, and I'm like, "Wow, I'm really here!" The *Tour* keeps you absorbed in Harry's world the entire time, and that's why I travel to London so frequently. To me, it's not a tourist destination; it's a destination where magic is. The experience I have there is unlike anything I've ever experienced in my life. That kind of magic is worth the price of a Eurostar ticket from Paris to London!

Fawkes 59 and Sirius 390 admit their recurrent travels to *The Making of Harry Potter* derive from discovering and experiencing the Tour's frequently rejuvenated exhibitions and embodied demonstrations that promise tourists an unforeseen look into the Wizarding World. Additionally, the interviewees agreed they "did not want to miss" a new showcase that specifically resonated with their fanship, albeit traveling long distances from their daily home base. "If there's an exhibit I can't live without seeing, I'm booking my trip ASAP! I can't wait for the 2024 Tour schedule to drop!" said Sirius 390. In a like manner, while Dumbledore 150 cannot travel to the United Kingdom as freely as other fan-tourists, they routinely reminisce over their past Tour adventures and rewatch the numerous videos they shot during their trip to "Keep the magic alive and

mentally travel back to *The Making of Harry Potter* whenever I like." Therefore, interviewee evidence suggests Potter tourists are multi-motivated via the wizarding culture they desire to inhabit during and after their trip to London's *Studio Tour*. Indeed, one's faraway distance does not appear to hinder one's magical aspirations or cherished *Harry Potter*-inspired memories. As a result, many *Harry Potter* fan-tourists are inspired to find, inhabit, and embody the magic they have been longing to discover since their fandom fascination with Potter commenced.

Inhabiting Magic: Wizarding Embodiment

Foundational to *Harry Potter's* enthusiastic fandom is the discovery of innumerable ways to inhabit the magic. Certainly, fan-tourism is one way Potter's army shows their fandom pride. However, as previously discussed in Chapter Four, character embodiment and participatory behaviors are additional fan-favorite ways to symbolize Rowling's storyworld. Authors Harris and Alexander (1998), in their pioneering fan-involvement study**,** argued that the more active people are with their fandom, "the more power and control they feel they have" (48). For many *Harry Potter* fans, their form of participatory control derives from discovering fandom destinations that permit them the freedom and comfortability to perform meaningful Wizarding World customs with a collective community. "Luna 12," a *Harry Potter* devotee who has visited the Tour nine times, prides themselves on taking the *Studio Tour's* sensory immersion to a higher echelon by fully embodying the series through cosplay implementation:

> The last five times I've gone to the *Studio Tour*, I've gone in full robes, full uniforms, full everything! I've committed and have gone fully dressed to the nines. It's another reason why I feel so comforted there and not judged because I can go around and wear these outfits, and it makes me feel good about myself. I also feel more at home when I'm there and

> dressed up; I feel way more immersed. When you dress as these characters you feel very connected to them, like someone you can relate to. It makes my connection to the Wizarding World that much more intense.

Luna 12's inspiration to embody the *Studio Tour* is a notion all interviewees agreed upon. However, Luna 12's motivation to completely personify the *Harry Potter* series is attributable to a personal goal they wish to achieve each tour visit:

> I love taking pictures in my robes where it looks like I'm actually in the set, like the Herbology Room, the Gryffindor Common Room, or The Great Hall. I have a whole photo album on my phone where it's "Me at Hogwarts," where I'm in the sets fully dressed in all the photos. I'll even bring props with me to the *Studio Tour*. A potions book, a wand, a Marauder's Map… I bring stuff that's related to the film and then take pictures like I'm a Hogwarts student at Hogwarts! That is my goal: to make it look like I'm in *Harry Potter* and I'm a Hogwarts student.

Luna 12's modes of embodiment through props or character immersion represent how intense and personally pleasing fandom participation can be. However, Scott (2015) argues that "the practice of constructing costumes and props inspired by fictional characters and embodying those characters in real-world spaces remains undertheorized within fan studies" (146). Although nearly a decade has passed since Scott's study, fandom embodiment research remains an underserved aspect of fan studies, especially considering how influential trademarked merchandise and homemade products have become. For many fans, these items are what manifest their fandom into actuality. As a result of this manifestation, the realness of the space and objects creates action, and such embodied actions generate fandom accomplishment. The tangible becomes the reality, and the reality becomes the achievement. Interviewee "Sirius 390" traveled to the *Studio Tour* to use prop-implementation exclusively to embody his favorite character, Sirius Black. Yet, this participant has intensified their admiration for Sirius Black by embodying the character's hypothetical thoughts and wardrobe choices by turning them

into an embodied experience that gives them "an intense thrill and personal achievement."

> I've worn this costume so many times to the *Studio Tour* and it's inspired by Sirius' motorbike. One day, I thought, "What would Sirius wear while riding his motorbike?" I thought long and hard about this answer because I didn't want to let Sirius down. I had to accomplish this look and get it exactly right, so I bought a wig that matched his hairstyle, a green velvet sports coat and matching vest, a fob watch, and an oval belt to be worn with black slacks — you know, the outfit he wore in *Order of the Phoenix*. But then I added cool tweaks to the costume; pieces I thought Sirius would have hidden inside his closet and would've shown Harry one day if he hadn't died. I envisioned his closet and bought a worn black leather jacket, black boots, and a badass pair of riding specs I knew he would've rocked. Everyone at the Tour loved my outfit and I felt so cool walking around as Sirius for the day. I wish I had his cool confidence every day, to be honest. But during those special moments at the *Studio Tour*, I'm just as fly as Sirius, and there's no better way to connect with him than thinking, "What would Sirius do?"

Luna 12 and Sirius 390's devotion to their favorite characters are solid illustrations of how intense one's fanship can be. These participants mentally and physically insert the character's culture into their own, thus amplifying their comfort in embodying another person. Nevertheless, this author argues that this degree of fanship can only transpire if the individual is performing in a safe space surrounded by kindred community members. Indeed, many fans choose to embody a theme or character to fuse themselves with the fantasy alongside a community that understands, respects, and admires the practice of fandom embodiment. Strathern (2011) contends that an individual's heightened stages of embodiment or sensory experiences "feeds strongly into memory and forms a residue of experience that stays with them and can transform a person over time" (393). Indeed, most participants acknowledged that their *Studio Tour* embodied experience changed or transformed their lives in a multitude of ways, and all participants were happy to

experience this alongside their fellow fan-tourists. “Fawkes 59” states that *The Making of Harry Potter* “changed their life for the better” and says:

> In my opinion, the Tour is the only fandom site I’ve visited where I feel comfortable enough to live or feel like a magical character. Every day I live some sort of wizarding way, but the Tour allows me to fully live like a wizard without fear of judgment from the Muggle World. Every time I wave my wand inside the Tour and cast a specific character spell, I feel more connected to *Harry Potter*, which is why I go [to the *Studio Tour*]. I go there to laugh, cry, and imagine. I go there to have fun and play! Fawkes is my favorite character because he can majestically fly at a moment’s notice, and that’s how the *Studio Tour* makes me feel: like I can fly. I come here to act like the person I want to be — a wizard.

Manifestly, many Potter tourists intentionally visit the space to enact varying levels of fandom involvement with the expectation that these modes will actualize the Wizarding World. Indeed, the space has a way of offering fans a temporary relocation, as “Dumbledore 150” admits one of their favorite things to do at the *Studio Tour* is to “stand inside Dumbledore’s office and pretend to be him by imagining what he was thinking during all those hours alone in his office.” The interviewee goes on to say:

> The *Studio Tour* is the best place to pretend. When I’m there I feel like I’m living another life, a better life, a magical life! Dumbledore’s Memory Cabinet is my favorite prop in his office because I can stare through the glass and see the hundreds of bottled memories he stored for safekeeping; memories I try to relive or envision to bring me closer to the story. Every time I go into his office I stand beside the Cabinet and take a deep breath in. I tap into Dumbledore’s mind, and I visualize the scenes from the movies and books… I sort of transport my body and mind into his persona and something unexplainable happens every time. The only word that comes to mind is “peace.” I feel at peace when I become Dumbledore. I feel connected to him through the ritual I created, and it brings me personal peace knowing that, in that room, I’m one deep breath closer to him.

All participants detailed the *Studio Tour’s* mastery of permitting fans the freedom to physically manifest or emotionally feel their wizarding wishes without fear of social retaliation. Moreover, most interviewees conveyed that *The Making of Harry Potter*

provides either themselves or the greater fandom with a unique sense of power and control over their fandom expressions. To all, this degree of satisfaction, freedom, and Wizarding World access creates a safe space for fan-tourists to comfortably perform their fandom fantasies. And so, this researcher upholds *The Making of Harry Potter's* dynamism lies in its cultural acceptance of all who wish to metamorphose into Harry's wondrous world, thus amplifying feelings of belonging for tourists seeking home at Hogwarts.

More Than Magic: Home and Belonging at the *Studio Tour*

As discussed in Chapter Four, Potter enthusiasts pursue authentic Wizarding World locations to expressly feel the intense emotions that come with the fandom phenomenon. For many, being a fan is a total-body experience. If one sensory element or emotional reaction is stunted, the adventure is not whole, and the fan is left desiring. Henceforth, most interviewees expressed that their stimulus for visiting the *Studio Tour* was to encounter the wizarding realm and experience the special emotions they had longed to feel. "Professor McGonagall 7," a Scotland native and enthusiast who regularly tours *The Making of Harry Potter*, recalls their initial motivation to inhabit the space:

> Out of all my friends back in school, I was that token *Harry Potter* fan but obsessive about it! At that time, it was a life goal of mine to see the Tour. I had to go and see what it was like and be part of the magic. The moment before the Tour begins, when the curtain rises, and you see the doors to the Great Hall for the first time, it's like every single Christmas has come at once, and nothing can beat that moment. It's overwhelming emotion. It's sheer joy and excitement. Every time I go, it feels like the first time, and I'll never take this off my bucket list.

Yet, one decade later, Professor McGonagall 7's sentiments have developed, and one space has become the impetus for their fandom affection and recurrent voyages:

> I feel an overwhelming sense of calm and happiness when I go into the Model Room. I don't know if it's because of the lighting or the soundtrack they play, but when you walk in, you feel like you're at Hogwarts, and just for a minute, the real world doesn't exist. There are no bills, no jobs, no worries; you're just there in that moment to be at peace with Hogwarts. I feel grounded in that room… It feels like a safe space; it feels like home.

Professor McGonagall 7's feelings of "home" are supported by Mallett's (2004) philosophies, where deeply personal or felt experiences in spatial locations are often considered to be "a safe haven or refuge" for people who value "nurturing environments" in spaces akin to the *Studio Tour* (70-78). For many *Harry Potter* fans, their immersion into wizarding spaces produces a powerful bond that becomes real – so real that the space dictates their emotions. "Ginny 3," a vibrant London-based fan who has visited the Tour seven times, was not shy to explain their expressive relationship with the *Studio Tour*:

> I've become a really emotional person at *Harry Potter* world! When you walk around London, there's no emotion whatsoever; you're just pushing past people trying to get through. In London, I would never cry like I have at the *Studio Tour*… people would be like, "What's going on here?" But at the *Studio Tour*, I feel like you can be yourself to your truest form. If you want to cry, that's fine; if you want to get really excited, nobody's going to judge you. In the Model Room, I began to sob, and I had to stay in that room for like an hour just to stop crying! It's a supportive space, and the Tour doesn't care what type of form you come in; you're a *Harry Potter* fan, and we're treated as one big family.

Moreover, Ginny 3 was eager to share why their favorite spaces feel like Hogwarts:

> The Forbidden Forest is one of my favorite rooms because the smoke brings back film memories and the scent of the room is infatuating. There are such specific sights and smells in the different rooms, and because the scents don't change, it takes you back to the first time you were there. The scent just completely reminds you that you're really at Hogwarts.

Such reactions verify this researcher's belief that fandom spaces become intensely real through dramatization and the fans' willingness to shed their outside skin and happily live through their fandom fantasies. Professor McGonagall 7 and Ginny 3 displayed pure emotional responses to the Tour's sensory atmosphere, and all eight interviewee

participants discussed how influential Hogwarts' sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches were to their overall Tour experience. Furthermore, the connection between cultural fan spaces and sensory responsiveness is an element that must continue to be underscored in anthropology, fan studies, and tourism research. Through this analysis, it is apparent that fans cannot fully immerse themselves within an environment if sensory cues are absent. As Low (2017) contends, "place may be studied phenomenologically through individual or collective experiences, [but] it also derives its meaning through spatial, material, and social form" (32). From this perspective, the intersection between a fan's spatial reaction, emotional response, and sociability is the backbone for many fan-tourists who wish to embody Hogwarts throughout *The Making of Harry Potter*.

Indeed, on-site fandom sentimentalism reassures enthusiasts that their "emotional reactions or identification with a character" is acceptable and when pursuing "personal and social betterment," through fandom spaces or themes (Pugh 2021). In harmony with this notion, "Sirius 390" proclaims, "I have never felt more personal peace in my entire life" than they did while visiting *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*.

> If you really think about it, there are few places each person has on this Earth where you can genuinely feel at peace within yourself or the environment you're in. Before the *Studio Tour*, I had the books and films to turn to, and those gave me personal peace, but I didn't have the legitimate sights and smells of Hogwarts; I only had my mind. For Potter fans, there's no better feeling than being wrapped in magic. Now, I have the *Studio Tour*, where I can be with like-minded fans and still feel that same sense of fitting in. It feels like home but it's more than that. We all belong at Hogwarts and Hogwarts belongs to all of us.

All participants shared similar feelings of placemaking and belonging that were directly related to the *Studio Tour* and its overall effect on the fan-tourist's emotions. Moreover, most participants relished impressions of immersion and cultural community that are otherwise unfound in their daily lives. Feelings of place, as Gray (2003) describes, are the

"dimensions of identity and distinctiveness" found in settings that warmly embrace the senses of "being at home" through communal acceptance (225-233). For example, Fawkes 59's motivation to visit *The Making of Harry Potter* six times solely derives from the essence of home they feel when touring the home of *Harry Potter*:

> The Tour is such an amazing place because you're surrounded by fans of all ages, religions, nationalities, and beliefs, but we're all there for the sole purpose to feel at home in Hogwarts. Sure, outside the Tour we all identify differently. But inside the Tour, we identify as one. At first, the books were my home. Then the movies became my escape. But the Tour takes both 'home' and 'escape' and creates a homebase for us all to visit and feel like we belong. To be frank, I can't think of another place I've been to that offers so many different people the same feeling of home, peace, or collectiveness. But that's what sets our fandom apart and that's why Rowling wrote, "While we may come from different places and speak in different tongues, our hearts beat as one." That line gives me chills every time and it's literally the best way to describe the feeling the Tour gives me.

Akin to Fawkes 59's perspective, 'Rita Skeeter 4's' feeling of place and identity was greatly amplified once they found their community at *The Making of Harry Potter*:

> I've traveled to the Tour eleven times because it's the only place on Earth where I feel most connected with other fans. When I'm there I'm surrounded by a community who understands me, appreciates me, and allows me to be the coolest version of myself. Wizarding culture is wicked because we embrace everyone's authentic self, and the *Studio Tour* is the best fan destination to be whoever you want to be with zero judgment. You can't get that feeling in the real world. Imagine if I went running about London in my Ravenclaw House robes and wand and started screaming spells into the sky. People would think I've gone mad. Mad like Mad Eye Moody! But that type of behavior at the *Studio Tour* is welcomed and appreciated. Everyone there knows what spell I'm casting; everyone there gets it. For goodness' sake, it's the home of *Harry Potter;* of course everyone there is going to understand! But that's why Leavesden feels like an escape. The Tour is where I feel most at home with other fans around me, people who understand me and my choices. Yes, it's magical but it's more than that. It's family.

Rita Skeeter 4's feelings of fandom connection and comfortability derive from an understanding audience of like-minded individuals who make them feel "protected and

safe" while playacting *Harry Potter* expressions. As stated by Williams (2018), embracing acts of tourism may offer fans "connections with others who share their interests," thus allowing for a more immersive experience within the fictional world (98). Akin to Rita Skeeter 4's perspective, "Dobby 8," a London-based *Harry Potter* fan who has visited the *Studio Tour* twice with family and friends, has related thoughts of the shared community feeling felt throughout the Tour:

> It's a warm feeling you get when you're at the Studios. It's easy and safe but also exciting. The Tour is collective; it feels like home, and it's nostalgic. But that's because you are at home when you're at the Studios. You're at *Harry Potter's* home, but you're also at home with part of your childhood. I found more similarities than not with people I didn't know and it's nice to go to the *Studio Tour* and be with people who love *Harry Potter.*

Although 'Dobby 8' did not personally know the thousands of fan-tourists they were amongst during their *Studio Tour* visit, they found a cultural likeness to the fandom community based on their shared interest and purpose of visiting the site. Moreover, their emotional experience swelled by finding a community of like-minded fans who value the *Harry Potter* series just as much as they do, and experiencing this with their family and friends made them "happy to be there" and excited to return. Kidd (2007) believes *Harry Potter* fans share "rituals of popular culture" through the solidarity they find with fellow fans in spaces like *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour* (78). In consensus with Kidd, the most influential *Harry Potter* rituals are rooted in physical presence at Wizarding World locations with a community equally eager to live the *Harry Potter* experience. Nevertheless, this researcher argues that the tourism rituals of "being there" cannot successfully transpire if individuals or group members are insufficient of placemaking emotions. The location itself may induce placemaking emotions that are silently felt or physically acted upon; however, the *realization* of immersive kinship

produces a space for fans to comfortably "be there" with a like-minded community. Indeed, every interview participant shared one universal motif — the *Studio Tour's* ability to bring people together makes this destination feel like a safe and familiar friend.

Interview Discussion

Throughout the interview process, it was intriguing to note that all participants were animated and candid in discussing their fan-induced motivators to visit *The Making of Harry Potter*. Although all participants revealed different intensities regarding their *Harry Potter* fanship and loyalty, all participants agreed that *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* is the only space that wholly presents the magic of *Harry Potter* in its most authentic form. All participants concur that their impetus to travel to London's *Studio Tour* was to find, inhabit, and emotionally feel Rowling's magical world. Indeed, this Chapter illustrates the profound lengths *Harry Potter* tourists will go to discover the magic, as most participants traveled between five and twenty-three hours to visit *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Notably, most participants booked their next trip to *The Making of Harry Potter* soon after their Tour had concluded to relive their fanship and create "new memories" alongside other like-minded *Harry Potter* fans. Therefore, this Chapter's direct participant interview data reveals that *Harry Potter* fans are willing to travel the extra mile to experience *The Making of Harry Potter's* magic, regardless of distance.

Furthermore, all participants were pleasantly surprised by their emotions of fandom discovery, safety or unprejudiced, and joyful nostalgia felt throughout their journey. All participants left *The Making of Harry Potter* feeling "happy," "emotionally satisfied," "connected to fellow fans," and "excited to return." This Chapter also reveals

the fandom's passionate quest to phenomenally insert their body and minds into the home of *Harry Potter* through the site's tangibility and permittance of physical play and emotional belonging. The fandom's ability to seamlessly interact with the *Studio Tour's* imaginary world while physically living in the Muggle realm was a noteworthy observation and outcome through this Chapter's primary data. Indeed, all participants agreed that the *Studio Tour* made them feel "easy" and "comfortable," thus permitting personal acts of fanship through embodied practices and individual emotions. This manifestation is a direct result of the relationship formed between the site's Wizarding World offerings, fellow fan interconnectedness, and the fandom's willingness to embody the *Studio Tour's* milieu. Accordingly, the fandom's experience is intensified, and lasting impressions of fandom satisfaction, home, and belonging are developed and sensed long after their *Studio Tour* experience has come to a close. The pure enthusiasm and openness from all participants confirmed this author's aforementioned remarks regarding *Harry Potter's* enthusiastic fandom and their readiness to engage with all Potter-related matters. These factors conceivably led to the excitement of all participants to engage in this thesis' interview process.

Thus, the results from this Chapter support this thesis' principal themes and reinforces the importance of fan-induced tourism research for future anthropological scholarship. This author maintains that anthropological scholarship concerning fan-induced tourism should persist for scholars to better comprehend the total cross-cultural journey fans experience while traveling to popular culture destinations like *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* By continuing this necessary cultural research, anthropologists, fandom scholars, and tourist researchers will gain insight into fandom

motivators, customs, and passionate sentiments that sustain global fandoms like *Harry Potter.* Through this, scholars can strive to develop contemporary modes of research to understand the complete story behind fan-tourists and their stimuli to travel for a culture that is far from their own but one they have claimed to be *theirs*.

Chapter VI.

"I Open at the Close:" Conclusions and Future Directions

This anthropological fan-tourism study evaluated *Harry Potter's* loyal fandom and their motivation to travel to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* By employing subject methodologies from social anthropology, fandom studies, and tourism research, this examination sought to answer how *Harry Potter* fan-induced tourism influences cultural, communal, and personal experiences while touring *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.* Through the aspiration of this thesis, I hope my contribution to this exciting interdisciplinary study has affirmed that *Harry Potter* fans will always travel in pursuit of finding a world that is entirely their own "until the very end" (Rowling 2007).

Responding to the Research Questions

The intention of this thesis was to investigate how *Harry Potter's* fans experience *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* through anthropological concepts of space, place, and embodiment. The study revealed how the *Studio Tour* space performed as a sentimental fan-tourist destination, offering profound embodied and placemaking experiences uncovered through emic participant observation and fan interviews.

Through phenomenological exploration of the collected data, three significant themes emerged: (a) Finding Magic: *Harry Potter* Tourism, (b) Inhabiting Magic:

Wizarding Embodiment, and (c) More Than Magic: Home and Belonging at the *Studio Tour*.

Notably, themes (a) Finding Magic: *Harry Potter* Tourism and (b) Inhabiting Magic: Wizarding Embodiment addressed the significant lengths Potter fans will undergo to discover and live the *Harry Potter* experience while touring the *Studio*. Fandom discovery, engagement, and personification are the crux of global *Harry Potter* tourism, and all participants confirmed that *The Making of Harry Potter's* on-site exclusivity and endorsement of Wizarding World embodiment was their stimulus to travel. Similarly, on-site emic participant observation revealed numerous *Harry Potter*-inspired expressions through embodied character performances and cerebral imaginings that heightened touring fans' sensory experiences. These embodied acts transformed the fans' overall experience and resulted in feelings of fandom achievement, *Harry Potter* character appreciation, and unprejudiced understanding from their fellow touring fans. Concomitantly, (c) More Than Magic: Home and Belonging at the *Studio Tour* was discovered through on-site emic participant observations and fan interviews, which revealed rich sentiments of fandom involvement, personal and communal belonging, and feelings of 'home' within the *Studio Tour* space. Moreover, these profound sentiments inspired fan-tourists to organization future visits to *The Making of Harry Potter* to relive the personal and fandom emotions felt throughout their Tour experience. These factors help illuminate why *Harry Potter* fans are consistently motivated to travel expansive distances to experience *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.*

Principally, this study reveals that *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* offers *Harry Potter* fan-tourists much more than a themed destination to explore.

The *Studio Tour* presents enthusiasts with an immersive and sentimental experience that magnifies their admiration, loyalty, and fanship for the *Harry Potter* series. This fandom manifestation produces an unforgettable experience with deep personal and communal placemaking sentiments that constantly induce fans to visit the *Studio Tour* to discover, inhabit, and sense the Wizarding World's magic. Moreover, the data suggests that fan-induced tourism promotes social interactions and personal emotions that generate a symbolic escape for global *Harry Potter* fans. As the data demonstrates, this form of escape is produced by modes of physical and mental Wizarding World-inspired embodiment and placemaking feelings that amplify the fandom's mind and body while touring *The Making of Harry Potter* space. For these reasons, the *Studio Tour's* uniqueness (which permits Potter's passionate fanbase to create an authentic version of their Wizarding World through fandom embodiment and placemaking practices) is critical in keeping *Harry Potter's* magical tourism alive. This analysis also underscores the significance of fandom-inspired spaces and their effect on Potter's imaginative fanbase.

In addition, this author contends that *Harry Potter* fan-tourists associate deep belonging values with the *Studio Tour*, which, in return, generates impressions of 'space' loyalty and 'place' acceptance. All participants reported detailed accounts of their participatory engagement with *Harry Potter* activities and fellow tourists that generated feelings of fandom identity and comfort throughout the Tour space. Additional discoveries from this study illustrate fan-induced tourism's impact on Potter's fanbase, with several participants noting the *Studio Tour's* ability to ease their emotions in a safe, predictable, and nostalgic environment. These personal accounts benefit the preceding

research results by confirming *Harry Potter* enthusiasts' journey to London's *Studio Tour* in search of the sensations and symbolized engagements that arise from their Tour experience. This research study verifies that *The Making of Harry Potter* is a premier fan-tourist destination that offers an authentic whole-body experience, in parallel with deep placemaking principles and fandom belonging, found exclusively at London's *Studio Tour.*

This thesis also examines anthropology's space, place, and embodiment theories in collaboration with modern fan-induced tourism studies. Although previous in-depth anthropology of tourism studies (Cohen and Cohen 2017; Graburn 2017; Graburn 2018; Gray 2020) and fan-induced tourism research (Jiang and Yu 2019; Nakayama 2021; Schiavone and Reijnders 2022; Milazzo 2023) have been conducted, most studies have not incorporated both disciplines into one examination. Therefore, this study's impact on fan-induced tourism's current literature is significant through amalgamating anthropological methodologies with fan-tourism exploration. By engaging with traditional methods of culture review and introducing such ideals with contemporary fandom motifs, this study revealed that global *Harry Potter* fans are determined to travel expansive distances to *The Making of Harry Potter* for a physical, mental, and emotional experience that ultimately brings their storyworld to life. Through this understanding, scholars in anthropology, fan studies, and tourism research can begin to examine the multitude of ways popular culture, fandom traditions, and fan-induced tourism affect our global society.

Additionally, contemporary anthropologists and fandom scholars can extract numerous themes from this study. Foremost, social scientists can begin to consider *why*

tourists seek authentic experiences in themed spaces that reflect popular culture phenomena. Likewise, anthropologists can explore fundamental fandom matters, such as cultural identity, self-expression, and communal belonging, by observing enthusiasts and their multimode displays of fandom-inspired culture. Thus, the results of this study support the claim that fan-induced tourism to London's *Studio Tour* is a modern form of traveling that inspires deep cultural, communal, and personal belonging through *Harry Potter's* magicked world.

Limitations

As with all observational research, there is a possibility of researcher bias through the author's preconceptions of what they have heard or seen during the data collection process. Furthermore, the direct quotes used for this study allow for reader interpretation apart from the conclusions assembled by the author. In addition, the participant interview data for this research was obtained through Instagram and Zoom, thus excluding potential participants who do not use the Internet or have a social media account.

However, researcher bias in this study was reduced by the author's involvement with the *Harry Potter* fandom and keen familiarity with *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. On-site tourists were unaware of the researcher's emic observation of their public behavior, and the researcher did not hinder any fans' experience throughout the *Studio Tour.* Zoom interviews were conducted in a relaxed setting chosen by the interviewee to ensure all participants felt comfortable with the interview process.

Nevertheless, transparency of how the topic was chosen should be noted. Having been a longtime member of the *Harry Potter* fandom community, this author has previous knowledge of, and interest in, the subject and its community members.

Moreover, this author's *Harry Potter* fanship and community rapport allowed for more profound fan interviews and on-site emic observation through the researcher's closeness to the subject. Therefore, this thesis' observational findings and subsequent fan interviews could be viewed and understood more deeply by the researcher because of this author's closeness to the topic. Although researcher effects were minimal, the fandom material uncovered by this author may be more insightful than information gathered by a non-*Harry Potter* community member because of the author's connection to the fanbase. The inspiration for this study was the author's fanship with the *Harry Potter* series and her appreciation for global fan-tourism to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.*

Future Research Opportunities

The examination of fandom culture is open to future research in numerous academic disciplines. The purpose of this study was to draw on theories, concepts, and methods from social anthropology, fandom studies, and tourism research to study a phenomenon to which these methods have not yet been systematically applied. The results of this study demonstrate that *Harry Potter's* fans will travel expansive distances to visit *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* to find, inhabit, and emotionally feel the Wizarding World of *Harry Potter.* Such data encourages future academics to continue scholarship concerning today's popular culture through interdisciplinary modes of research such as the anthropology of tourism and fandom studies.

The goal for future research concerning fan-induced tourism should be to study the fan's journey through every experience and cultural interaction they have, including their sentiments and lasting memories after the journey's end. This motif will be

especially helpful to future scholars who wish to investigate the transformative experiences fans undergo while touring memorable fandom locations. Indeed, further research concerning a fan's motivation to routinely visit a themed space like the *Studio Tour* is essential to consider when discussing fan-induced tourism and its repeated travelers.

Future interdisciplinary examinations of fan-tourist 'spaces' will enable deeper awareness of fandom discovery, embodied participation, and the fan's sense of community at global fan destinations. Continued research at a singular fandom destination concerning a fan's sense of 'place' will principally aid anthropology, fan studies, and tourism research through an enhanced understanding of why fans visit fandom sites to sense deep personal placemaking and communal belonging emotions. Finally, proactive exploration of fan 'embodiment' in thematic spaces will advance academic examination of why individuals choose to personify or spontaneously act in embodied manners in spaces that amplify their relationship with an imaginary realm. This author hopes that continued research representing these vital qualities of fandom culture and fan-induced tourism will demonstrate the profound needs that motivate fans to travel to cherished locations to fulfill their fandom desires. For we're all in search of a bit of magic, yet it's *where we go* to find the magic that leaves a lasting mark on us all.

Appendix 1.

Interview Questionnaire Guide

- From where and why did you travel to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*?
- How did your *Studio Tour* experience make you emotionally feel and how did you physically react to *The Making of Harry Potter's* authentic sets, props, and backlot?
- What does *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour* mean to you personally?
- If you identify as a *Harry Potter* fan, how did you see yourself similar to or different from other fans at the *Studio Tour*?
- What makes *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* so meaningful for global *Harry Potter* fans?

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