

Harry Potter and the Wizarding Voyage: Fan-Induced Travel through *Warner Bros. Studio Tour*

London — The Making of Harry Potter

A Literature Review

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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 complexities of the field may be broadly known for analyzing early civilizations and their customs, modern anthropological discipline is a social science “*par excellence*” (Burns 1999) to implement for qualitative research on tourists and fan-induced tourism. Yet, the field of anthropology has prolonged the acceptance of tourism review (Salazar and Graburn 2014) and fandom studies as a subfield of research (Jenkins 2018); as critical academic inquiries into both concepts have merely existed for the past two decades (14). Indeed, a cultural phenomenon on a global scale would be necessary to link the two subfields of research together, chiefly to demonstrate the importance of such examination and its impact on human society through an acclaimed topic that intelligibly joins these theories together. By engaging the highest-selling literature series of all time, J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* saga (Bloomsbury Publishing 2022), and connecting its fan-induced tourism to anthropological theories, evaluative research may be conducted to explore this contemporary anthropological shift within the sector. While the absence of analyzing fan-induced tourism through anthropological schemas is a lapse in the field that must be discussed, the research put forth will evaluate *Harry Potter*’s fandom and their willingness to travel and embody themed spaces akin to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*. Thus, literature encompassing anthropological concepts and fandom theories will be used as a means to

showcase the importance of bridging these two ideals into one to expand the ideologies of anthropological fandom studies.

Since the late 1970s, few anthropologists have deeply examined the characteristics of tourism, as “it has been suggested that it would be demeaning for an Anthropologist to be identified with what many think is a frivolous activity,” (Nash and Smith 1991, 15). Although touristic activities have considerable history throughout humankind and global culture, the negative sentiments encompassing tourists and tourism have generated scholarly distortion on the subfield and anthropologists who review them. Despite the foregoing anthropologists who claim the study of tourism does not align with anthropological theories such as space, place, and embodiment, evidence of the contrary has been argued since the 1980s, with a resurgence in the mid to late 1990s (Smith 1981, Brian and Holden 1995, Burns 1999). While these scholars attempted to demonstrate the interconnection between human dynamics and personal identity through tourism, tourists, and cultural destinations, such typologies were dismissed by the greater discipline (Burns 1999). As a consequence, scarcity of chronicled tourism research has undoubtedly hindered contemporary anthropologists with a lack of literature on this subtopic, as decades of partiality within the field averted many from the opportunity to exclusively review this course of study.

However, another angle on this debate suggests that tourism *is* worthy of anthropological assessment, considering anthropologists are concerned with all forms of human interaction. Thus, scholars such as Nash (1996) brought forth discussions to disconcert such initial adverse scholarly claims, as he believes 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 (1990) brought forth 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*,” (as cited in Burns 1999, 32, emphasis original). Indeed, these fresh anthropological ways of thinking established a link between veteran cultural studies and contemporary forms of research, as 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). From this, we can see the field of anthropology began to shift from a one-system approach to a “cross-cultural” (Nash 1996) outlook, as anthropologists used elements, such as film and literature (Urry 1999), to examine the customs of tourism and its effects on humanity. As a result of these scholarly advancements, today’s researchers have the opportunity to arrange new theories that will allow the anthropological subfield of tourism to mature, as the sector now widely accepts ideologies encompassing tourism and tourist customs. Equally, the notional belief that a tourist’s motivation to travel by means of seeking fulfillment through film or literature is one that exclusively connects cultural tourism to fandom studies, as this thesis will greatly pursue these academic links to further anthropological fan-induced tourism analysis.

Each year, more than 160 million tourists travel to media-themed destinations they have seen on screen or read by means of an author’s fantasy world (Wohfeil 2018). Themed spaces, including film studio exhibitions, have drawn travelers from around the globe to view such cultural fantasies as a way of inserting oneself into the fandom community through traveler experiences. In their groundbreaking anthropological analysis, Salazar and Graburn (2014)

showcase tourism as “the human capacity to imagine or to enter into the imaginaries,” as their evidence set the stage for contemporary fan-induced tourism studies (1). Indeed, the authors consider themed spaces to be comparable to ‘guidebooks’ (17) for tourists who seek the imaginaries of fandom themes widely found in organized thematic spaces. Bearing in mind the field of anthropology analyzes humankind and the interconnection of one’s sociocultural customs, the recent prosperity of cultural fandom studies is a valid method to comprehend a fandom’s sense of community (Reichenberger and Smith 2020) within a specific themed space; including their motivation to travel to such destinations. Leite (2014) attests the anthropological perspective of tourism cannot be fully understood without recognizing there can be “no imaginaries without imagining subjects,” or scilicet, people engaging with any given thematic space or place (272). In agreement with Leite, this author postulates the crux of understanding tourist motivations lies between the intersection of *what* the imaginaries are, and *why* they are essential to the traveler’s inner being. In collaboration with analyzing journeyers' embodied practices within a singular themed space (such as *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*) scholarly work alike this thesis can begin to expatiate on how an imaginative space becomes a place within a tourist’s culture.

Notably, fan cultures are recognized to precipitate fan-induced tourism, where the imagined theme is the object of the traveler’s destination (Gyimóthy 2015). Hence, the *Harry Potter* series (and the imaginaries encompassing this global phenomenon) is strongly correlated with fan-induced tourism — specifically through London’s *Harry Potter Studio Tour*. Prominently expressed by Warner Bros. Studios (2022) “*The Making of Harry Potter* has become one of the UK’s most popular tourist attractions,” as the company goes on to state, “the

Studio Tour has welcomed over 15 million visitors since opening in March 2012” (1). This statistic is paramount to the anthropology of tourism and fandom inquiries regarding *Harry Potter* and its undeniable power in our global culture. Indeed, the numbers prove that fan-induced tourism to London’s *Studio Tour* situates itself parallel to other principal tourist destinations such as Stonehenge, Buckingham Palace, and The Tower of London, as Warner Bros. Studio Tour London was officially crowned the number one London attraction in 2022 (Visit London 2022). 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 2021, 1).

Visit Britain (2022) reinforces 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). These imperative intersections between global culture and fan-induced tourism display the notion that the more a traveler identifies themselves with a fandom, the more likely they will be to extend the effort to travel to a specific destination (Reichenberger and Smith 2020). Thus, this scholar argues the reason the *Studio Tour* welcomes a sum of visitors equal to other culturally predominant United Kingdom locations is because the fandom yearns to embody the Potter story world and conceivably has more of a personal connection to the *Studio Tour* than other top United Kingdom attractions.

As a result, various scholarly motifs such as space, place, and embodiment practices may perform as a viaduct between the field of anthropology and fan-induced tourism studies to better comprehend the cultural choices behind a fan's willingness to travel to themed spaces, such as *Harry Potter's Studio Tour*. While targeted anthropological fandom studies are newly unfolding in academia, it is crucial future scholarship links influential pop culture fandoms, like the *Harry Potter* series, with tourism-based anthropological approaches. Indeed, few studies have researched a singular fandom's culture through anthropological schemas, much less linking these academic approaches to fan-induced tourism analysis. By doing so, the emergence of new theories rooted in cultural tourism and fandom scholarship will assemble modern principles through this dual-discipline approach. And so, these underrepresented academic connections uniting anthropology and fan tourism will enable this author's thesis to bring forth intriguing inquiries and valuable answers to this contemporary scholastic sphere.

The current evidence uniting the theoretical ideals of space, place, and embodiment between the fields of anthropology and fan tourism are fresh themes in academia, and yet, are solid representations as to why the scholarship should persist with such inquiries. The cultural view of 'space' is how people's bodies react to the physical area they are in, which ultimately shapes their actions through systematic spatial landscapes. When one begins to tether those veteran anthropological theories to fan-induced tourism, a relationship rooted in themed spaces and cultural imaginaries emerges. Fandom destinations, such as the *Studio Tour*, create a twofold spacial 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 own terms, thus generating an embodied physical and mental approach to space thematics (Meethan

2006, 6). 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 there’s” and where the fan-tourist is “not alone in their passion and physically surrounded by their fandom” (292). Indeed, spaces like the *Studio Tour* allow 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, 101). Consequently, this thesis research will expand upon the relationship fans have with their locality while dually considering their place within a themed space, as the anthropological ideals of ‘space’ and ‘place’ closely align but moderately differ through academic definition.

‘Place’ is an anthropological method of surveying how an individual defines themselves, their role, and their physical and emotional value to a spatial location. With regard to themed spaces akin to the *Studio Tour*, a fan’s sense of place, both individually or within a larger fandom community, is focal to study when questioning why a fan would travel to a specific themed destination. Fandom-themed spaces are avenues for fans to discover their place within themselves, their chosen fan culture, or who they possibly aspire to be through the imaginaries they treasure. Thus, comprehending a fan or fandom’s impassioned motivations to globetrot is a way for scholars to examine how one establishes their place in the world through their chosen fandom. Nicky van Es (2020) reinforces this by insisting that, “visiting the exact place of filming becomes a beloved place and home of one’s fandom,” a theme this research will pursue through *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London* (292). Further, the research described in this thesis will explore these collective fan identity practices through space and place theories, and why one chooses to affix themselves to the *Harry Potter* story world. Indeed, a full-bodied

approach to anthropological fan tourism studies is not complete without the awareness that a fan's mind and culture define their experience of tourism, as experiences exclusively transpire through space, place, and embodiment practices (Palmer 2013, 3). Thus, the fan must experience the culture of the destination through their own body and mind, as one's embodiment in a physical 'space,' or through their feelings of 'place,' complete this thrice approach to connecting anthropology and fan-induced tourism studies.

Completing this triangle of anthropological perspectives, the 'embodiment' theory suggests a person's sensorily personification or behavioral engagement in the world is an expression of the body's lived experience. Scholars may clearly view a fan-tourist's embodied experience through mediums alike the *Studio Tour* by observing a fan's cultural or emotional performance within the bounds of a themed space. Palmer and Andrews (2020) argue that tourist-embodied examinations are an overlooked subfield in anthropology with "no sustained analysis of the concept of embodiment in relation to tourism," (1). However, fandom studies have greatly examined embodiment practices with correlation to fan-induced tourism, as this motif is widely recognized to be a crucial aspect of the fan's cultural experience. Withal, the sensorial features of a fan's embodiment are greatly interconnected to anthropology's space and place concepts, as a linkage between either space or place must be involved in order for a fan to have an embodied experience. For instance, a fan-tourist's bodily expression(s) may emerge from physically being in a thematic space, as their actions are shaped by the fandom's materials encircling them. Or, a fan's sense of placement within the culture may blossom and enact embodied performances once they feel comfortable with their fellow fans in a certain themed environment. Waysdorf (2020) regards embodied behaviors to permit fans an imaginative way of functioning within a space, as

fans “experience the location as a personal connection to the film,” in this instance, the *Harry Potter* series (290). Once one begins to connect 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. Thus, this thesis aims to grow anthropological scholarship of embodiment tactics through the reference of fan-induced tourism at *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London*.

The evidence presented by the literature of the anthropology of tourism and fandom studies is at its dawn when one considers how scarce both topics have been critically examined as one unit of scholarship. From preceding academic examination, one can assemble a rudimentary anthropological approach to fan-induced tourism aligned with themed spaces akin to *The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour*. Yet, modern pop culture ideologies are required for the purpose of constructing contemporary anthropological typologies that will undoubtedly move the needle in this subfield of cultural fandom studies. This scholar suggests additional academic inquiry on behalf of fan-induced tourism in the field of anthropology is necessary to comprehend this contemporary shift in our global culture. Conducting such research will strengthen the current evidence that fan-induced tourism is a cultural phenomenon that affects all human life and is estimable of future anthropological review.

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