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Harry Potter and the Wizarding Tourist



**Margaret-Ann Simonetta, Lecturer and Researcher
Anthropology, Harvard University**

Friday, December 15th, 4PM-6PM PDT
Join the Zoom webinar [[click here](#)]

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Abstract

Each year more than 140 million tourists travel to media-themed destinations they have seen on screen, online, or have read by means of an author's fantasy world. Themed spaces, which include film studio exhibitions, draw travelers from around the globe to view these cultural fantasies as a way of inserting oneself into a fandom community through touristic experiences. These spatial organizations boast principal themes through symbols, ideas, and embodiment tactics as expressive spaces for people to gather. Recognizing an anthropologist's main intention is to reveal the diversity of human behavior in communal settings to discover displays of performance and feeling, the recent prosperity of cultural fan tourism is a valid method to comprehend a fandom's sense of community within a themed space.



J. K. Rowling, the world's best-selling author in recorded history, is the creator of a seven-book series about a boy navigating his new and unpredictable life in the wizarding world. His name is Harry Potter. Since the series' inception in 1997, the Harry Potter books have sold over 600

million copies and have been translated into more than 85 languages, equating to one in every thirteen individuals globally owning a Harry Potter book. Rowling's unparalleled success has additionally produced eight record-breaking feature films and five Harry Potter global theme parks, including the world's most exclusive Harry Potter themed destination located on the outskirts of London. In March of 2012, J. K. Rowling and Warner Bros. Pictures joined forces and debuted the first official Harry Potter tour, one that fuses the Harry Potter fandom and global tourism into one. The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London grants Potter enthusiasts' access to an authentic behind-the-scenes experience, as witches and wizards have an opportunity to live through the culture of Harry Potter by means of the film's original sets, backlot, and special effects that famously took the text to screen. Notably, the Studio Tour has evolved into one of the United Kingdom's most popular and visited tourist destinations, as visitors from around the world journey to London to embody this unequalled location. Indeed, this unique themed space creates a remodeled significance for the phrase "tourist destination," as the Studio Tour performs as a nexus between Harry Potter's magical culture and one's physical self. Due to this cultural phenomenon, global Harry Potter fans now have access to what was once considered an imaginary within one's mind to an embodied reality in the flesh.

Harry Potter and the Wizarding Tourist is an analysis on how the Harry Potter fandom culturally symbolizes the milieu of The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London using anthropological concepts of space, place, and embodiment. With equal regard, an examination on this Harry Potter themed space also considers how the Studio Tour performs as a fan-induced tourist destination, thus analyzing these cultural elements and their potential to elevate the study of tourism and fan scholarship in the field of anthropology.



Speaker Bio

Margaret-Ann Simonetta is a Harvard University ('19 & '24) Anthropology Lecturer and Researcher with a concentration in fandom culture and screen tourism. Her fan studies and tourism specialty is based on the Harry Potter series, and her current international work covers the United Kingdom and United States. Forthcoming, Margaret-Ann plans to expand her fan-tourism research to include Japan and the U.A.E., which recently opened three new Harry Potter themed spaces. Margaret-Ann's intrigue on fan-induced tourism sprouted from her personal love for the Harry Potter series and the innumerable fan tourist trips she's taken on behalf of her chosen fandom. Her Hogwarts House is Gryffindor and her favorite Harry Potter tourist location thus far is The Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour London.