Sacred Time and Ritualistic Behavior at *Harry Potter* Book Releases and Film Premieres

Tyler Dukes, Texas State University

The *Harry Potter* books and films, with their pervasive international appeal and domination of contemporary culture for more than a decade (1997-2011), generated a modern mythical age, constructed and sustained by one dominant myth—the wizarding world and its function in the *Bildungsroman* of Harry Potter. Followers of the "myth of *Harry Potter*," or fans, as they are usually called, were immersed in a culture that valued quests, heroes, rituals, symbols, and their hermeneutic significance. Many fans read and re-read the *Harry Potter* books and/or watched and re-watched the *Harry Potter* films in search of a deeper, sacramental meaning. Identifying and interpreting profound sections of the texts were common practices for *Harry Potter* fans, and cultivating a fandom whose values aligned with the "dominant myth" was a top community priority. *Harry Potter* fans valued community and participation, and these tenets were the foundation for the most important "rituals" in the fandom: attending the "release events" for new texts, in the form of book releases or film premieres. These constituted the most participatory events during the peak of *Harry Potter*'s cultural stronghold, and attendance by the "true *Harry Potter* fan" was practically mandatory. This study will explore the special sacredness afforded to these events and the religious implications for *Harry Potter* fans in attendance.

For fandom members, also referred to as "Potterheads," *Harry Potter* functioned in a religious fashion. In my study of the fandom, many Potterheads participated in *Harry Potter*-oriented culture (e. g. computer games, online forums, community clubs) to feel closer to people who shared the same hermeneutical approach to the sacred texts as they did, and to come in contact with a power larger than themselves—divine myth. Potterheads forged this relationship with the divine "Other" by creating a space of archaic time; they transcended what Mircea Eliade refers to as "profane time," or their day-to-day lives, and entered into sacred time, where myth is the meaning-maker (*The Myth of the Eternal Return* 35). Eliade calls this process "creative hermeneutics," whereby people generate meaning through their imaginative involvement in

religion. He theorized that people "[modify] the[ir] quality of existence" with creative participation, and that by combining religion and creativity, humans become meaning-makers themselves, through the use of images, myths, rites, and symbols (*The Quest* 62; Paraschivescu 60). Potterheads became these creators; a new generation of meaning-makers, simultaneously creative and spiritual in their interactions with the sacred texts – the *Harry Potter* books and films.

Eliade will be the theoretical backbone for much of my argument, but aside from his theory of creative hermeneutics, Eliade's impression of ritual rites is equally as important. Analysis of ritual rites is particularly useful when conceptualizing the religious relevance that the *Harry Potter* book releases and film premieres held for Potterheads; partaking in these events was a ritualistic practice that combined creativity and religion. Fans were active producers of "meaning. " From ornamenting the ritual spaces (book stores and movie theaters) to preparing sacred vestments to wear at the ritual, Potterheads were fully engaged in constructing and proliferating the "myth of *Harry Potter*," so that they might enter into a realm of spiritual, mythic time.

The scope of my argument here is limited to book releases and film premieres as ritual practices, since a complete examination of ritual and *Harry Potter* could occupy volumes. This essay will first focus on the myth, then on the structure of the ritual, and finally, conclude with an examination of the three-part process of ritual performance.

Critical Context and Neomythology

In presenting this argument, I am mindful of the substantial work of reader-response scholarship dedicated to *Harry Potter*, and the antagonistic response the series incited from various parents, schools, and religious institutions (Roland 2013; Gupta 2003; Carney 2005). Like these institutions, I am equally concerned with the phenomenological and religious ramifications of the *Harry Potter* texts, but unlike them, my primary concern is how these texts function for individual fans and their communities; I am not necessarily concerned with the anti-fan's perspective. Additionally, I am cognizant that the *Harry Potter* fandom's inception is interknit with media production, commodification, and appropriation. It is possible to see *Harry Potter* as a manufactured phenomenon, authored by one person, and skillfully marketed by both

Bloomsbury Publishing (books) and Warner Bros. (films). However, in spite of its capitalistic genesis, the *Harry Potter* texts generated an authentic, sincere fan base, whose immediate motivation was to mobilize around a myth, not monetary dividends. It is undeniable that in order for the *Harry Potter* franchise to have garnered the success it did, grossing more than twenty-four billion dollars by 2014, fan participation had to exist; it was essential to the entrepreneurial structures that made the series such a triumph, and it is essential to my argument as well ("Total Harry Potter Franchise Revenue"). Fans are not only the cornerstone of the *Harry Potter* septology's financial achievement, but they are also the basis for the formation of a new mythology, one that was mobilized around creative, hermeneutic models and rituals.

In more general terms, the genres of science fiction and fantasy are considered by many critics as a new mythology for the postmodern age (Voytilla; Perlich& Whitt; Cronn-Mills & Samens), a mythology which provides a "guideboo[k], of sorts, that explain[s] how humans act, how things work, and how human culture has evolved" (Cronn-Mills & Samens 5). However, few of these works have focused on the authority fans have in actively creating this new mythology. *Harry Potter* is fantasy, and therefore in these critical terms, neomythology, but although it certainly equips Potterheads with a guidebook to the sacred, it is just that—a guide. It provides a path, but does not dictate the journey. By creating rituals out of book releases and film premieres, Potterheads journeyed beyond the path, harmonizing "the canon" of the books and films with their originative religious interpretations. Fan participation in these rituals was the fandom's way of manufacturing a neomythology for a community of Potterheads, who were seeking deeper spiritual meaning in the texts.

Applications of Eliade

Thinking in the Collective

In order to provide the *Harry Potter* fandom and its neomythology an adequate theoretical examination, a brief overview of Mircea Eliade and his scholarly work is necessary. Eliade was a Romanian philosopher, fiction writer, and historian of religions. He argued that myth provided a "pattern for human behavior," and his concept of the *Eternal Return* claimed that humans use myth as the foundation for religion; he theorized that when humans go beyond

deification and begin participation in myths, they are attempting to recreate archaic time (*Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* 23). This theory of participation is particularly useful when observing the *Harry Potter* fandom as religious. However, in the last few decades, Eliade's theories have lost popularity in certain circles of academia, particularly in sociology and anthropology. The most common reason cited for this censure is Eliade's anthropological "glossing" of individual culture's practices and customs, for the sake of collective themes (for more see TATU; Paraschivescu). Eliade has been criticized as a generalist, unconcerned with the distinct customs of each religion. While I agree that there are some complications with the way Eliade amalgamates religions, the complications are less discordant when Eliade's ultimate goal is re-examined: he concentrated intentionally on unification, not division. Eliade thought that myth was "the most important form of collective thinking," and this "collective thinking" was the underpinning for his comparative study of religions, so it is in keeping with this aim that he would de-emphasize the individualistic and emphasize the spiritual whole (*Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* 24).

Harry Potter Fandom as Archaic Society

When studied with the "collective" in mind, the center of Eliade's religious theory is clear; he believes that religious life (and life in general) is measured by its participation with, and adherence to, the mythical age. This mythical age, or archaic time, as Eliade refers to it, is constituted by groups of humans communing together with mythocentric values and norms, where "myth happens to be the very foundation" of their "social life and culture" (*Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* 23). Using this definition, the *Harry Potter* fandom qualified as an archaic society, which mobilizes around myth. Like many myths that were popular in classical antiquity, the "Harry Potter myth" included archetypes and quests, e. g. The Boy Who Lived, the Smartest Witch of Her Age, The Quest for Immortality (through the Deathly Hallows or horcruxes), et cetera. To provide further example, The Boy Who Lived is a recurring archetype in Greek and Christian mythology; orphaned boys comprise an entire section of heroes, Moses, Herakles, and Remus and Romulus are a few examples from this category. In alignment with religious tradition, archetypes were the foundation for the *Harry Potter* fandom's social and religious interactions, particularly at ritual performances. At these ritualistic events, Potterheads

deified the characters from their myth by imitating the archetypes, a concept I will discuss at length in the following section.

Ritual, Identity, and Cosplay

According to Eliade, rituals are meaningful because they repeat acts originated by the gods (*The Myth of the Eternal Return* 6). Dueling contests, sorting ceremonies, and potion-making were all acts originated by the gods, or leading characters in the *Harry Potter* series, and these were then orchestrated and repeated by fans at the *Harry Potter* book releases and film premieres. Participation with "the mythic" was crucial to these rituals, and to identification of Potterheads. According to Dustin Kidd, *Harry Potter* fans, as a product of popular culture, share an identity category linked to rituals (Kidd 78). Thus, in an attempt to align their identity as closely to the mythic as possible, they constructed rituals that allowed them to re-create and participate in scenarios originally experienced by the gods.

Perhaps because it was the most visible, the most obvious act of re-creation at the rituals was the reproduction of aesthetic. Potterheads often transformed their visual identity in order to emulate the gods. The act of re-fashioning one's visual presentation in homage to a character or text is commonly referred to as "cosplay. " This cosplay, whether to mirror a specific *Harry Potter* character or general witch or wizard, was a way for Potterheads to undergo a literal and metaphoric transformation, in order to fully participate in the myth. Teri Silvio defines cosplay as "the pleasure of playing with code," but an academic contemporary, Joel Gn, takes this definition a step further and states that not only is cosplay about *playing* with code, but it is about the *simulation* of code (Silvio 216; Gn 584). Although neither Silvio nor Gn examines fandom from a religious perspective, their definitions provide a sample of the academic attitude towards cosplay. Moreover, *simulation* is the key word here, and "simulation through cosplay" is in accordance with Eliade's concept of re-creation as ritual. Through the medium of cosplay, Potterheads visually simulated archetypes at book releases and film premieres (a concept fully explored in a later section on adornment). Gn's states, that "the art of cosplay radically complicates the paradigm of the fan as an active producer or manipulator of the canonical text" (Gn 583). Fans of *Harry Potter* were these "manipulators"; they fully examined and emulated

their gods through cosplay, and created a neomytholgy that would help them transcend their day-to-day lives.

Eliadian Conceptualization of Time

Spiritual transcendence answers the question, "Why participate in the ritual of going to book releases and film premieres?," but it is Eliade's conceptualization of Time that answers the "How" portion of the question, "How do you escape your everyday life in the process?" Eliade divides time in to two distinct categories: chronological/profane time and sacred/mythic time. Chronological time is constituted by a person's everyday routine, e. g. going to school, working, eating, et cetera; sacred time is a religious place set apart from the mundane, or a "time outside of time. " The separation of these two temporal planes, and my previous observations on the archaized *Harry Potter* fandom, are both exemplified in Eliade's theory:

> In *imitating* the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythic hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time. (*Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* 23)

This "Great Time" is what Potterheads enacted at book releases and film premieres; it was a community-oriented creation, and it helped them experience the deeper hermeneutical significance they sought-out in the texts. Religious institutions frequently use rituals to transcend chronological time (e. g. Catholics and the Eucharist, Freemasons and the Initiation of a Higher Degree, practitioners of Islam and the Five Daily Prayers, et cetera), and Potterheads fulfilled this tradition.

Creation of Sacred Time: Organization of Space

Looking at how the ritual is organized and the meaning generated through this organization offers structural indicators of how "Sacred Time" is created. Afe Adogame argues that a religious ritual's organization is best understood by its material expression, e. g. objects, iconography, and spaces (Adogame 24). Although Adogame's theoretical approach is applied to the structure of the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), his methodology is universal, and can be applied to any religion. He emphasizes that,

It is important to understand the varied ways members express, explore, and negotiate their religious identities in and through material objectification, dress culture, visual iconography, and ritual performance. (Adogame 13)

In addition to the link between the *Harry Potter* fan's identity and myth, Adogame highlights a connection between identity and *material expression*, a category that includes the composition of physical space. For Potterheads, space was crucial to the aesthetic of the ritual. Many of the book release events took place at bookstore chains (e. g. Barnes & Noble, Borders) or at locally-owned establishments, and most of the film premieres took place at large, corporately-owned movie theaters (e. g. AMC Entertainment Inc. , Cinemark Theaters).

Part of this study is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at these movie theaters and bookstores during the ritual, as well as an online Q&A with self-proclaimed "*Harry Potter* fans. " My goal was to better appreciate the Potterhead's behavior during the ritual, as well as to extract an understanding of the fandom's collective religious ideology, created through participation. It seemed only fitting that I alsoparticipate. I attended two release events at the same branch of Barnes & Noble: one for the sixth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005), and the other for the seventh and final book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007). I also observed four film premiere events, at four separate theaters, for the following films: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part One* (2010), and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part Two* (2011).

From my observations, it was clear that the management of these establishments and their corporate sponsors were responsible for supplying the large ornamentations for the special event spaces (e. g. cardboard cutouts of characters, hanging signs, posters – see Figure 1). However, when I asked a movie theater employee about the decor, she informed me there had been a volunteer committee of employees, who were also *Harry Potter* fans, who had decorated the vast majority of the space and planned activities for the fans to engage in while waiting in line to see the movie. Therefore, although a corporation provided the supplies, the implementation and participation were fan-driven.

Figure 1. Photo by the author. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part II*
film premiere, AMC. Austin, TX. 2011.

Though in two different types of venues, the spatial organization of the bookstores and movie theaters was surprisingly similar. The fans waited in a line cue, which moved slowly, and progressed towards the book counter or theater room. Here, Potterheads would receive the "new sacred text" to include in their canon of neomythology. In anticipation of this text, which would intensify their spiritual relationship with *Harry* Potter, fans waited in line, travelling deeper into a sacred space, away from chronological time. However, as with many other religious rituals, the space, or more specifically, the "space of the line" was organized by hierarchy. There existed a politics of succession to receive the sacred text. The fans who had waited longer were at the front of the line, and they were deemed more "hardcore," deserving of the first interactions with the myth. This hierarchy went in descending order towards the back of the line, where the more casual *Harry Potter* fans were cued.

As they advanced through the line, inching closer to the "center" of their religious focus, Potterheads migrated through various spatial realms. The three most prominent realms I perceived were: the Encounter with the Archetypes/Gods, the Participation in the Myth, and the Reception of the Spiritual Text. Initially, when the fans walked in to the space, they were confronted with the gods and archetypes from the myth. Large cardboard cutouts and posters

(again, see Figure 1) that depicted various characters and scenarios from the books and films were ubiquitous at all of the book releases and film premieres I attended. Secondly, the fans were given the opportunity to participate in the myth. A sizeable portion of the space was dedicated to interactive games and activities, orchestrated by fans, and consumed by fans. Wand-making stations, tables for letter writing, mini "sorting" ceremonies, board game tournaments, raffles for *Harry Potter* paraphernalia were just a few of the participatory enterprises I witnessed. As part of my online *Harry Potter* Q&A, I asked fans to "list any aspects of attending the film and book releases that [were] significant to [them]. " The following is a portion of Subject 4's Response, which addresses fan participation at a book release:

> The first 100 ppl got free wooden wands (I was number 81) and they had a table with Harry potter merchandise you could buy, a table to make happy birthday cards to Harry. They had a costume contest and other games like guessing Bertie botts jelly beans. (Subject 4 Response)

Trying to re-create the sacred, the space was bursting with opportunities for fans to either view the mythic archetypes, or try to emulate them. Finally, after progressing through the line, fans would receive the new text. This took place in the dark movie theater or at the book counter. These were the most revered portions of the space, and were thronged by fans. The Reception of the Spiritual Text was the opportunity for fans to combine their creative and hermeneutical pursuits. While receiving the new spiritual content, Potterheads began to assign meaning to the new text in their religious canon.

Ritual Performance

With the structure of the book releases and film premieres in mind, the fan's behavior before, during, and after these rituals is more easily examined. Again, to borrow from Adogame, rituals are an opportunity for individuals to negotiate their religious identity, and when considering the *behavior* of Potterheads, this is best done by studying their process of, and relationship to, ritual performance (Adogame 13). Classifying Potterhead's behavior as "performance" provides a theatrical framework for their actions, and removes the fan's ability to be passive. "Performance" denotes that the ritual's participants are figures who are always costumed, staged, or performing. During the conclusion of my ethnographic fieldwork, I began to see a pattern at the book releases and film premieres, and sectioned the course of the ritual in

to three phases: Preparation, Adornment, and Rite of Passage. This separation allows for an examination of fan behavior during distinct thematic processes, providing a guide for an adequate deconstruction of the ritual. Additionally, each phase has its own unique characteristics, which I further divided in to subcategories for clarification.

Ritual Performance: Preparation

The first phase is Preparation. This includes all actions Potterheads performed before the day of the ritual, and is further categorized as either individual or community preparation. Many fans underwent extensive preparatory work, so that they could fully participate in the book releases and film premieres.

Individual Preparation

Potterheads felt an intense need to independently prepare themselves for the ritual, and one of the most common behaviors I observed was the re-reading of the texts before attending the book releases, or re-watching of all of the films before attending a new movie premiere. Fans felt the need to re-familiarize themselves with the foundational texts in order to be worthy of receiving new information. Having an extensive knowledge of the "canon" is something the *Harry Potter* fandom culturally values, because they place such an emphasis on the hermeneutical interpretation of the sacral works. Subject 2 from my online Q&A confirms this:

> I went to the midnight releases of 5-7 (pt 1 & 2) with friends. No dressing up but I re-read them to prepare and it was just awesome to go with friends who were just as invested in the series. (Subject 2 Response)

Another common individual preparation was the acquisition of new skills. This is something that I did not originally anticipate, but after various subjects reporting it in their online responses, it was apparent this was a common practice among fans. Subject 1 stated:

> I looked forward to it for months or sometimes years. The very last book release stands out most to me. We were in high school, so it felt a little silly to make such a big deal about it. We debated dressing up. But it was the end of an era, and we went together and we did dress up again, though a little less cosplay-like and more casual. I wore jeans and a blazer. But I also learned to crochet just so I could make a Ravenclaw scarf for that night. (Subject Response 1)

This fan acquired the completely unfamiliar skill of crocheting so they could create an object which would identify them as a specific "house" during the ritual. This is negotiation of identity through ritual performance, material expression, and myth. By procuring a skill to better participate, this fan actively re-created the archetype of a "Ravenclaw," which not only aligned Subject 1 with a specific wizarding house, but through emulation, brought them closer to the myth of *Harry Potter.*

Community Preparation

There was also large-scale community preparation, most of which took place online. Many fans created homages for the fandom to share in together, whether in the form of YouTube videos, collages, Reddit memes, et cetera. For example, before the release of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part II*, the YouTube user "Paint" paid tribute to the series by making a video titled, "Harry Potter in 99 Seconds. " In this video, Paint recapitulates all of the *Harry Potter* movies to date, and predicts what will happen in the final installment of the series. As of July 2015, this video had 28,186,088 views on YouTube (Paint). Subject 3 corroborates the pervasive online fandom presence as part of the ritual:

> I really felt a part of the community…I listened to podcasts, wrock, went to several wrock [wizarding rock] shows, watched video bloggers, trolled memes on Tumblr. (Subject 3 Response)

Ritual Performance: Adornment

Phase two, adornment, includes all aesthetic aspects of the preparation phase, as well as the visual modifications fans made the day-of the ritual. Many Potterheads dressed up or prepared cosplays to wear during the ritual. Oftentimes, these cosplays imitated specific characters from the *Harry Potter* series, or "gods" (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Photo by the author. *Professor Trelawney and Gilderoy Lockhart at Harry Potter Pre-Release Party*. San Marcos, TX. 2012.

However, fans also wore general wizard costumes, either dressing in "house" colors, or simply wearing a robe, identifying themselves as a part of the broader *Harry Potter* populace. In his article, "Cosplay. Intertextuality, Public Texts, and the Body Fantastic. ," Matthew Hale assumes a folkloric and religious attitude towards cosplay and participatory culture. He argues that cosplayers participate in rituals, and clothe themselves in symbols to become fantastic "other" (Hale 8). In Eliadian terms, this "other" could signify the transition out of chronological time, but Hale's concept of "clothing" oneself in symbols is useful when analyzing the symbolic importance of cosplay in the ritual performance.

Robes

The robe has a powerfully symbolic role in the ritual. This is true not only for the *Harry Potter* fan, but for religious persons for thousands of years. Monks, priests, and various other religious leaders have used robes in public, and secret, rituals and rites. A person whom is enveloped in the sacred vestment of the robe, is regarded by society as someone who is connected with another world, and ready to receive and transmit spiritual knowledge. Placing an emphasis on the robe, Subject 5 stated:

> I remember putting my Alivan's robe on for the first time. I had saved so long for it, and when I put it on I felt like I belonged at Hogwarts with the rest of the

wizards. That, and when I made my first wand. I brought those two things to every premiere. It was so real. (Subject 5 Response)

Markings

Bodily markings were another common visual adornment I recorded at the ritual. Prevalent in various religions (e. g. Catholic ash markings during Lent, scarification of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo), marking oneself in preparation for a ritual is a symbolic gesture. Many Potterheads marked themselves with Harry's lightening scar. In the texts, this scar is a telepathic link between Harry and Voldemort, and for the fans, it was a symbolic link between themselves and the magical world. The lightning bolt and the dark mark were the most frequently used markings I encountered, the dark mark identifying a fan as someone who sympathizes with Voldemort, or the darker side of the wizarding world.

Objects of Magical Power

Overwhelmingly, objects were the most commonplace adornment at the book releases and film premieres. Wands, stuffed animals, brooms, glasses, and crystal balls were all present. These are objects of magical power. Magical objects have long been regarded as conduits by mediums and psychics, and by possessing a magical object during the ritual, Potterheads tried to funnel the mythology directly into themselves. Wands were the most widespread of these objects. From my observations, it seemed every fan had at least one wand with them at the ritual. In the wizarding world of *Harry Potter*, you receive your wand when you come of age (another ritual performance), so it follows that for Potterheads, having a wand is essential to proving authenticity as a fan.

Ritual Performance: Rite of Passage

Reception of the Text

Cultural anthropologist, Victor Turner coined the term "dominant symbol," in his book *The Forest of Symbols*. He stated that,

> Symbols, as I have said, produce action, and dominant symbols tend to become focuses in interaction. Groups mobilize around them, worship before them, perform other symbolic activities near them, and add other symbolic objects to them, often making composite shrines. (Turner 22)

Dominant symbols are the "focus" of the interaction, and for Potterheads, this focus was the literal reception of the text. Receiving the "new sacred text" was the primary motivation for the ritual, and the fandom mobilized around the event. Eliade would identify this section of the ritual as the "rite of passage"; he defines a rite of passage as an event which confirms a change for an individual, in front of a community (*The Myth of the Eternal Return* 105). The "community" in this case is the *Harry Potter* fandom. Following their firsthand experience with the divine, the fan often felt "changed" or "transformed. " They transcended in to sacred time, and returned to chronological time a different individual. Furthermore, after the completion of the ritual performance, Potterheads tried to find ways to incorporate their new-found spiritual knowledge in to their everyday lives. Subject 1 demonstrates this, stating that,

> I didn't dress up cosplay style, but I always made a t-shirt. One year they were quidditch jerseys (Ravenclaw keeper), one year they were based on different characters (Luna Lovegood), one year they were just quotes we loved "It does not [do well] to dwell on dreams and forget to live". I still have most of them, and I still wear the one I made for the last movie all the time. (Subject 1 Response)

Subject 1 wanted to be reminded of the spiritual experience ensuing its culmination, so they incorporated the ritual vestments in to their everyday life. By re-creating the sacred in the day-to-day, *Harry Potter* fans preserved the ritual's stamina, and actively created a neomythology that would endure in their community, but also in popular culture.

Complications of Ritual Suspension

Although this structural and formal analysis clarifies phenomena from the *Harry Potter* fandom, there is a complication with my conceptualization of specific aspects of participation through ritual. What happens when the ritual can no longer be completed? There are no more books or movies to be released in the *Harry Potter* septology, and therefore it is assumed fans no longer have a participatory avenue into sacred time. I would argue that in the wake of the *Harry Potter* series' finale, many of the writers, corporations, and especially fans, have found a way to "fight transience. " Some examples might include the creation of Leaky Con, Harry Potter Geeks

Who Drink, The International Quidditch Association, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, the Warner Bros. Harry Potter Studio Tour, Pottermore, and Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, to name a few. These manifestations may help preserve a transcendent domain for the *Harry Potter* fandom to live on, timelessly.

This is a topic for further critical study. Additionally, an examination of how the public distinguishes a large fandom event from a large religious event could prove insightful. Especially for those who do not believe in God. For an Atheist, Christian worshippers are participating in a made-up story, so what makes this any different from how fandoms "worship"? By separating this scenario, or any fandom's ritual event, in to the three ritual stages (Preparation, Adornment, and Rite of Passage), a dissection of fan participation and religious symbolism can be made.

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