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Harry Potter Fans.
An Anthropological Study on Identity, Practice and the Appropriation of the Fan Object Harry Potter

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Alena Brunner BA

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Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand. – Albert Einstein

This master project would not have been possible if it wasn't for the narrative that stands at the centre of this study. Therefore, thank you to Joanne K. Rowling for creating the world so many people feel so deeply connected to. The story of Harry Potter enriched my life – opening up the world of fantasy and friendship.

Also, this study would have not been possible without the help and support of the people I met in the course of my research. Therefore I want to thank all my research partners. To the Nerdfighter community: don't you dare ever forget to be awesome! To the members of the quidditch team Vienna Vanguards: thank you for encouraging me and for enduring and answering my endless questions.

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1. Introduction and Research Questions

In February 2016 Harry Potter, again, made the headlines. The announcement of an eighth book was planted in big letters on newspaper covers all over the world. Once more, nine years after the release of the final novel, the world got excited about the story of "the boy who lived". The news concerning the instalment of a Harry Potter theatre piece, accompanied by a release of the script, stirred the minds and hearts of Harry Potter fans worldwide.

Why and how does Harry Potter matter to fans? Why and how do fans stay engaged in the narrative? And how is the relationship between fans and fan object articulated? The aim of this study is to discuss the complexity of identity in the context of fandom. It focuses on how fan identity is constructed, consumed, and articulated, discussing how fans identify with the fan object Harry Potter (HP) and how (fan)identity is negotiated in fan communities. Exploring how HP fans perceive themselves as fans and how the individuals' identities are shaped by the self-attribution as Harry Potter fans, the study approaches questions concerning the relationship between fan and fan object. This discussion includes the question of how material culture and language are used as symbols that signalise belonging and how fan practices and personal relationships contribute to the construction of fan identity.
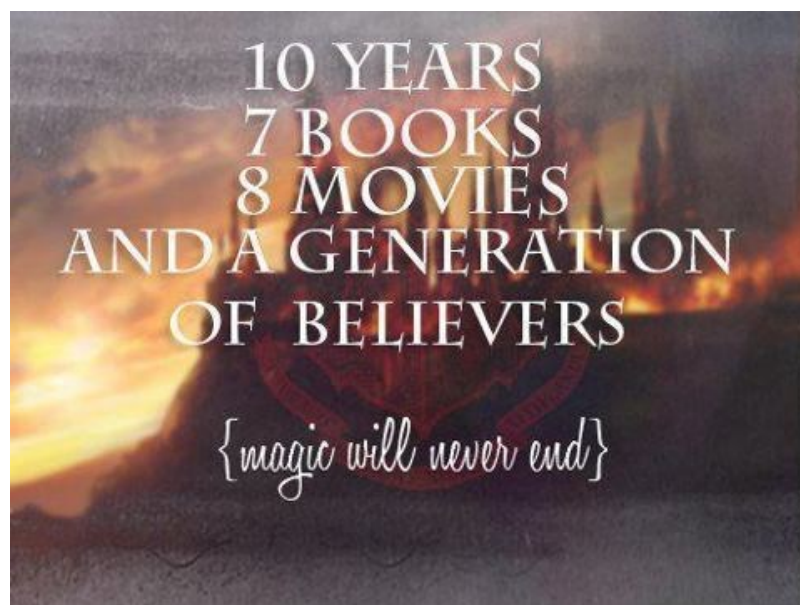
Ill. 1

The fan communities surrounding the Harry Potter franchise are part of a major fandom. Next to such big players as *The Lord of The Rings, Star Trek, Star Wars, Doctor Who, Sherlock* and the *DC* and *Marvel* comics, Harry Potter can be named as one of the most influential pop cultural brands. The fandoms surrounding these franchises have one thing in common - when people decide to engage with a specific thing in such an intense way identity is claimed. Fan identity then becomes a way of how people see themselves, and a reference point for the individuals' identities. From my perspective this aspect makes fandom as an academic field in anthropology especially appealing.

The main research question of this study places its interest on **how the fandoms' group identity is constructed and how individual identities of fans are influenced by and negotiated within fan communities; focusing on how fans experience fandom and how this experience is articulated in processes of appropriation of the fan object. Therefore, the aspect of the symbolic usage of material culture and language is discussed.**

A guideline of further research questions was developed to structure the literature research, as well as the empirical study:

Questions regarding the literature:
- *How did the interdisciplinary field of fan studies emerge and what are the main approaches in researching fans, developed in this discipline?*
- *What characteristics of fans and fandoms are established in theoretic literature?*
- *What are theoretical approaches towards identity and community in the context of fandom?*
- *What role do intertextuality and practice play in fandoms?*
- *In how far does material culture construct and signalise identity?*

Questions regarding the ethnographic research:
- *What are the characteristics of being a Harry Potter fan?*
- *How do Harry Potter fans perceive their relationship to the fan object?*
- *How do identity, personal experiences and relationships shape the experience of being a Harry Potter fan?*
- *What characterises the relationships between fans, fandom and fan communities?*
- *What mechanisms of identification does the relationship between fan and fandom imply?*

- *What practices are central to being a Harry Potter fan and where do they take place?*
- *How do material culture and the use of symbols construct and signalise fan identity?*
- *In how far do objects and practices of the fictional Potterverse move into the real world, by being used and practiced by fans?*

Questions regarding the case study on the Vienna Vanguards:
- *What characterises the practice of quidditch?*
- *What role does Harry Potter play in the sport of quidditch and for the quidditch community?*
- *To what extent can quidditch be characterised as a fan practice?*

As laid out in the chapter on the theoretical framework, my study was heavily influenced by concepts from the field of cultural studies and the interdisciplinary field of fan studies. To establish my master project in the field of cultural and social anthropology I did not only rely on theoretical inputs from anthropological scholars, but emphasised ethnographic methods for the collection and analysis of data. Thus, the study aimed to build an ethnographic pendant to the largely theoretical works on fans and fandoms from the fields of cultural studies and fan studies. By stressing an ethnographic and in-depth approach towards the research on fans I illustrate the importance of an anthropological awareness for such phenomena.

The thesis is structured into eight chapters, the first being the introduction. The second chapter presents an overview over the Harry Potter series, including a short publishing history. Furthermore, it discusses the transmedial Harry Potter universe and looks at the specific use of magic in the narrative. The third chapter offers a literature review on the topic of Harry Potter and the narrative's fans in academic texts. Chapter four elaborates on the study's theoretical framework. In its sub-chapters the history of the interdisciplinary field of fan studies is discussed, as well as the concepts of practice, identity, community and material culture. The fifth chapter then elaborates on the methods used in the ethnographic study, including a discussion on the method of autoethnography and the sampling. Furthermore, it gives insights into the process of fieldwork and the qualitative interview methods, as well as the usage of the questionnaire. My empirical findings are discussed in the sixth chapter. The chapter is structured into three sub-chapters, discussing the overall topics of identity, community and fan practice. In the seventh chapter the case study on the Vienna Vanguards, a Viennese quidditch team, is presented. The last chapter poses an overall conclusion to the study.

The next chapter gives insights into the answer to the question: "Who is Harry Potter? And why do we talk about him?" Thereby, it gives a short introduction to the publishing history as well as a most basic introduction to the Harry Potter narrative, looking at the transmedial network that creates the Potterverse.

2. Who is Harry Potter? And why do we talk about him?

The Harry Potter book series by the British author Joanne K. Rowling consists of seven novels and is one of the bestselling fiction series in publishing history. The British publishing company Bloomsbury initially began publishing the first Harry Potter novel in 1997. By the time of the final book's publication in 2007, a worldwide release in the English language was already established, selling 8.3 million copies in the first 24 hours in the UK and the USA alone. As of November 2015, the books were translated into 77 languages, including translations in Latin and Old Greek (URL Books). Beginning in 2001, the film adaptations of the books were released. The seventh book was turned into two films, the last movie "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2" was released in 2011. It ranks as the third highest grossing movie of all time with over 1.3 billion Dollar at the box office (URL Movies).

The novels, which were conceptualised as young-adult books, combine traditional elements of fairy tales, such as magic, mythical creatures, and the supernatural, with the British tradition of boarding school novels. While many books with mythological references are located in a transcendent place (as for example the "Narnia" book series by C. S. Lewis), in another world (like the "Inheritance Cycle" book series by Christopher Paolini) or the historical past (such as the King Arthur narrative), the story of Harry Potter is located in contemporary Britain. The main storyline begins in the year 1991 and ends in 1998. The magical world is constructed as a parallel society, in which non-magical people do not know about the existence of the witches and wizards who live among them. This allows J. K. Rowling, on one hand, to locate her story in a known world, but on the other hand gives her the opportunity to show British society from another point of view and construct her magical world in distinction to the non-magical world that is known to the reader. This also makes a distinction between wizards, witches, and non-magical people necessary. Therefore, the term 'Muggle' is used by British wizards and witches to address and talk about members of the non-magical society.

2.1. Magic, Ritual and Technology in Harry Potter

Magic in Harry Potter, in distinction to narratives like Star Wars, is not prominently underlined with the idea of a spiritual force that exists in the world surrounding us, but rather the ability to make magic happen is stressed. In this sense, magic in Harry Potter can be defined as performance or act, in the meaning that something is achieved (Grimes 2008: 381). Without the ability to perform magic, magic does not exist[1]. Pointing at this, someone cannot be taught to use magic, but can be trained to perform it properly.

The ability to perform magic in Harry Potter is often inherited, but can also manifest in children with non-magical parents[2]. These children are referred to, in a politically correct manner, as "Muggle-born" (Rowling 1998: 78). As a slur, the term "Mud-blood" (ibid: 76) is used in distinction to "Pureblood" (ibid: 79), describing that the family only consists of magical folk. The ability to perform magic normally manifests in childhood, leading to outbursts of *wild magic*. The education in wizarding schools, like Hogwarts, teaches magical children to control their magic and introduces them to magical practices like the performance of magical spells (transfigurations, charms, hexes, jinxes, and curses) and potion making. For the performance of magic, a wand is necessary. The wand can be understood as an instrument that channels the wizard's or witch's ability to perform magic. The performance of spells does

Ill. 2: Emma Watson as Hermione Granger (Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone 2001)

not only depend on knowing the correct word or phrase, but often involves precise pronunciation and a specific movement of the wand. The most prominent example for this is the levitation charm "wingardium leviosa", a spell that involves the wand movement of "swish and flick" and a precise pronunciation of the phrase (see illustration to the left) (Rowling 1997: 136).

Magical acts, spells and potion making follow a script, a set procedure. This leads to the question of whether the acts of performing magic in Harry Potter can be understood as

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[1] This also is true for magical creatures and plants, whereas magical objects have to be made by witches or wizards or other magical beings with that ability, like goblins.
[2] Among others, Harry Potter's friend Hermione Granger and his mother Lily Potter (born Evans) are Muggle-born witches.

rituals. To answer this question, I draw from Catherine Bell's main characteristics of rituals: formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacred symbolism, and performance (Bell 1997: 139ff). Formalism, in the context of ritual, refers to the distinction between formal and informal acts, formal acts being restricted by "[…] the use of a more limited and rigidly organised set of expressions and gestures, a 'restricted code' of communication or behavior in contrast to a more open or 'elaborated code'" (Bell 1997: 139). Looking at how magic is performed in Harry Potter, this characteristic of ritual is fulfilled, with the act of magic being highly formalised as we can see from the example of the levitating spell.

The aspect of traditionalism points towards a "traditionalisation" of ritual, which means that rituals are rooted in a historic past, both concerning the procedure as repetitions of past practices and the usage of objects rooted in this past (Bell 1997: 145). This aspect also conforms to how magic is practiced in Harry Potter, because the spell work has been already established. Moreover, most of the spells taught at Hogwarts are rooted in classical languages, such as Latin, and are handed down through generations – relying on the exact repetition in the tradition of magic performance.

Invariance as a characteristic of ritual in the case of the magic of Harry Potter connects to the aspects of formalism and traditionalism. As discussed before, the performance of magic is bound to a strict procedure marked by physical control and repetition; two main components of invariance (ibid: 150). As we have seen in the example of the levitating spell, invariance and the strict observance of the formalities are the basic requirements for the performance of magical acts and for achieving the desired result. This is especially the case for the brewing of potions, which involves the strict following of instructions, including the use of and preparation of multiple ingredients, specific counts of stirring (clockwise and/or counter clockwise), the proper temperature settings, periods of rest, and the consideration of star constellations and the lunar calendar (see also Rowling 1998: 108f).

The aspect of rule-governance (Bell 1997: 153) is highly important because it sets limits to the performance of rituals and, in Harry Potter, the practice of magic. The governing bodies are the *Ministry of Magic* that acts as the legislative institution and, on a smaller scale, *Hogwarts – School for Witchcraft and Wizardry*, which sets the rules for its students. On the level of magical government, there are banned spells, potions, and magical objects, because they could potentially harm both magical and non-magical people. Examples of school rules regarding the performance of magic are that students are neither allowed to perform magic in the corridors in between classes (Rowling 1997: 101) nor to jinx other students. Furthermore,

dark magic (as characterised by the Ministry) is mostly banned from the lessons and the unrestricted part of the school library. The rule-governance, therefore, is legitimised by the aspect of safety and well-being.

Sacred symbolism, as a further characteristic of ritual, refers to the use of symbols in rituals and the creation of the "sacred nature of things"– objects as sacred symbols are detached from the profane and conceptualised as sacred (Bell 1997: 157). For the performance of magic, this is especially true for the wand – the raised wand signalises the state of magic performance. Without this object, British wizards and witches are not able to practice controlled magic with sufficient results. Also, the wand in Harry Potter is not only an object channelling the wizard's/ witch's ability to perform magic, but also has a magic consciousness of its own. As explained in the first Harry Potter novel, when Harry received his wand before entering Hogwarts "the wand chooses the wizard", not the other way round (Rowling 1997: 67). This conscious action of the wand as a sacred object marks the ability to perform magic in a person's life.

Ill. 3: Daniel Radcliff as Harry Potter in Harry Potter and the Philsopher's Stone (2001)

The last of Bell's characterisations of ritual is the aspect of performance. She notes that: "While a performative dimension often coexists with other characteristics of ritual-like behaviour, especially in rule-governed sports contests or responses to sacral symbols, in many instances performance is clearly the more dominant or essential element" (Bell 1997: 160). In the context of magic in Harry Potter, the opposite seems to be true. Bell's understanding of performance emphasises the aspects of spectacle and public performance, the framing of the performance being located outside of the routine reality (ibid). This might be true for some acts of magic in the Harry Potter narrative, such as the duelling club scene in "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" (Rowling 1998: 188ff). Nevertheless, the ritualised act of magic in Harry Potter cannot be seen as outside of the daily routine, because it is inherent to a magical lifestyle. Therefore, I want to turn to another definition of performance based on its meaning "to achieve" something (Grimes 2008: 381). This is also rooted in the fact that the magic, in Harry Potter, is something very achievable – provided that a person is a wizard or witch and follows the formal, invariant rules, which are rooted in tradition and involve the proper sacred object – a wand. Nevertheless, the outcome of the ritual - whether the magic act is successful or not also depends on the intent of the

performer. As an example of this, the three "unforgivable curses", whose effects are mind control, pain, or death, can be named. They can only be performed successfully when the witch or wizard casting the spell really wants to create the effect (Rowling 2003: 810). Furthermore, magic in the Harry Potter narrative can be seen as personalised. This most prominently applies to the *Patronus charm*, a charm that creates an animal-shaped spirit guardian (Rowling 1999: 196; 358). Which animal the charm produces depends on the spell's performer and often relates to the caster's character traits or affinities with an animal[3].

Concluding this discussion on magic and ritual, the ability to practice magic in the Harry Potter universe is bound to ritualised acts. The outcomes of these rituals and whether or not they are successful are dependent on the strict observance of the formalised rules, the usage of the one's wand, the personal intent, and the performer's own character traits.

Ill. 4: Harry and his Patronus, that takes on the shape of a stag, by Himeco (deviant art)

What is most interesting about the connection of magic and ritual in Harry Potter is that in this context, magic cannot, as noted before, be seen as a performance in the sense of spectacle, but is an inherent part of magic lifestyle. This is an important distinction because magic and acts of magic, in a non-fictional Western context, often are perceived only as make-believe or as a means of entertainment. Keeping in mind that the magical world of Harry Potter is constructed as a parallel society to contemporary Britain, magic can be seen as an equivalent of technology. In this sense, not every use of technology in our daily lives can be seen as performance, as spectacle, but as part of a technologised lifestyle. In the world of Harry Potter, magic and technology are presented to fulfil the same purposes. The magical population of Harry Potter is largely presented to live their life at a medieval standard: there is no central heating, but rather open fires, and magical folk do not use electricity or modern communication tools etc. Wizards and witches are not accustomed to using basic items of non-magical human life,

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[3] As an example: Harry's Patronus takes on the shape of a stag, which is also the animal his late father James Potter could transform into (see illustration 4)

such as paper money or telephones. This distinction is stressed in the whole book series – moreover, technology is presented to be something Muggles invented to make up for their lack of magical abilities. This point of view is especially visible when wizards and witches who never lived among the non-magical population are confronted with technology:

> Not only was Hagrid twice as tall as anyone else, he kept pointing at perfectly ordinary things like parking meters and saying loudly, "See that, Harry? Things these Muggles dream up, eh?" (Rowling 1997: 50).

This does not mean, however, that wizards and witches do not use objects that were invented by Muggles as parts of technology. The most prominent examples for this are, on one hand, motored vehicles such as cars, buses, and motorbikes, and, on the other, radios. Although these objects are used by magical folk, the technology behind it is mere inspiration for its magical use – magical radio, therefore, is not transmitted via radio waves, nor are magical cars powered by gas, but rather by magic.

2.2. *The Potterverse*

Within the magical society, Rowling creates a universe with its own institutions, such as *Hogwarts – School for Witchcraft and Wizardry* as a primary setting for the story and the British *Ministry of Magic* as a governmental institution. Furthermore, the author created terms emic to the wizarding society, such as names of places and objects, spells, and slang words used by the magical population of Great Britain. In the tradition of fantasy story telling, she also refers to mythological creatures, such as the Sphinx and Dragons, and adapts magical and fantastic beings of the fantasy genre such as elves, goblins, and pixies into her story.

The storyline of the Harry Potter novels follows Joseph Campell's (1988) journey of a hero, focusing on the main character Harry Potter and his life during his seven years of being a student at Hogwarts. In the beginning of the book series Harry Potter, an orphan boy, does not know about his magical abilities until he receives his letter from Hogwarts at the age of eleven. His adventures at Hogwarts start with the house sorting test; a test that decides in which of the four school houses one belongs to: Gryffindor, Slytherin, Ravenclaw or Hufflepuff – each characterised through specific personality traits. Like this, the readers get to know the magical society and its particularities as Harry does. Over the course of the series, Harry, with the help of his best friends Hermione and Ron, among others, has to face the villain, Lord Voldemort, who murdered his parents; in the end fulfilling the prophecy that

"[…] either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives [...]" (Rowling 2003: 841).

Ill. 5: "The Golden Trio": Ron, Harry and Hermione wearing their Gryffindor scarfs, by Johanna the Mad

The Harry Potter universe (referred to in short as *Potterverse*) is quite complex, making a short synopsis of the story line, its characters, and emic terms very difficult. To understand the fans' fascination for the narrative, an important aspect will now be discussed: the expansion of the Potterverse in time and space.

Although the main story line of the Harry Potter narrative is set between 1991 and 1998, the reader is engaged in times before and after this time frame. Insights in the past provide background information on the history of the magical society in Great Britain and the time Harry's parents and their friends and foes were in Hogwarts, as well as Voldemort´s past. An epilogue set in 2017 glimpses on the future of Harry, Hermione, and Ron, as well as their children. By including these different time frames into the books, J. K. Rowling expandes the Potterverse in the dimension of time[4].

Another important feature of the narrative, as noted above, is that it is not a transcendent or distant world of its own, but rather a parallel society to the non-magical world of contemporary Britain. Because Rowling includes stories, institutions, and characters from other parts of the world, she creates a magical society, which spans around the globe, expanding the Potterverse in the dimension of space. This aspect was also strengthened in

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[4] The book "Harry Potter and History" (2011), edited by Nancy R. Reagin, provides a detailed timeline that compares magical history and Muggle history from 753 B.C. until Harry Potter enters Hogwarts in 1991.

2016, when Rowling published detailed information on wizarding schools other than Hogwarts on the homepage Pottermore (URL wizarding schools).

2.3. Canon, Adaptation, and Transmediality – The Intertext that Creates the *Potterverse*

Duffett (2013: 12) characterises transmedial storytelling as "the process of telling different parts of the same story through different electronic media". This definition primarily adresses narratives that are rooted in electronic media, such as films, television shows, and video games. Nevertheless, this definition can also be expanded to narratives originally published as books (and/or e-books) and to how these texts are picked up in other media formats. Jenkins (2013: n.p.) defines transmedia:

> […] as an extension of the information we have available about the world rather than as a replication of the story from one medium to another. I've been suggesting lately that we might identify transmedia projects through the combination of two factors – radical intertextuality (that is, the complex interweaving of texts through the exchange of story-related information) and multimodality (that is, the mixing of different media and their affordances in the unfolding of the story).

Although both Jenkins and Duffett dismiss adaptations as replications and therefore do not include them in their definition of transmediality, my understanding of transmediality does not exclude film or video game adaptations of books. Because, while re-telling the same story, they stress different elements and alter the story in the process of adaption, thus contributing to the intertext. As we will see in this chapter when discussing the film adaptations of the Harry Potter novels, both the factors of intertextuality and multimodality are compiled through the adaption of a written text and its translation into visual imagery. This broader definition of transmedial storytelling is also important in the context of fan practices and connects with the concepts of intertextuality and multimodality.

Transmedial storytelling in the context of Harry Potter refers to the Harry Potter universe, as established in the books, and its expansion into other texts and media formats, such as the additional books, the movie adaptations and the homepage Pottermore. Furthermore, it accounts for comments and interviews by the author J. K. Rowling that are distributed via Twitter and (digital) mass media. It is important to note that the term 'canon' hereby is used to address transmedial content by, or licensed by, J. K. Rowling and companies, which hold

the copyright to the franchise[5]. Whether or not these texts are referred to or acknowledged as canonical by fans will be discussed in my empirical findings.

Next to the seven books, which make up the central story line, three more books were published and issued separately by J. K. Rowling, as well as in a collective edition titled "The Hogwarts Library". These three books further contribute to the intertextual expansion of the Potterverse, in the sense of time and space, as well as revealing more about specific aspects of the narrative's universe. All three books are mentioned within the Harry Potter novels, being read and discussed by the main characters. This contributes further to the intertextual density of the Harry Potter universe. "Quidditch Through the Ages", published in 2001, deals with the history and the particulars of the magical sport Quidditch. "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" (also 2001) follows the fictional author Newt Scamander and the history of magic zoology, describing 85 magical creatures and species. The third book, "The Tales of Beedle the Bard" (2008), is a collection of short stories presented as magical fairy tales or folklore. In the Harry Potter novels, it provides important clues to the main characters and their quest of defeating Lord Voldemort. With the publishing of the three books, J. K. Rowling transferred objects she mentioned in the novels into reality, a process, which as we will see, is also inherent to some acts of fan practice.

With the adaptation of the Harry Potter novels into blockbuster movies by the Warner Bros. Studios, the narrative was transferred into a different media format. The Harry Potter movie franchise, the first movie being released in 2001 and the last one in 2011, not only contributed to the popularity of the narrative, but also opened up a new chapter for fans. In the sense of transmedial storytelling, the films can be seen as visual representations of the books. This includes casting and plot choices, but furthermore the visual representation of the world as such. In this sense, the movies contributed to the Harry Potter canon, much less on the level of narration, but instead on the level of visual imagery. How characters, objects, buildings, and magic in the Harry Potter universe are imagined therefore is heavily influenced or even established by the films. This is also the case with the auditory representation of the narrative, including the casting of actors and their voices, sound effects, and the musical score. Here, we see that adaptations are not only replications of the original text, but they

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[5] This meaning of the term canon derives from the Latin word for "standard" and its use to describe
a: an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture
b : the authentic works of a writer
c : a sanctioned or accepted group or body of related works
(URL Merriam-Webster 1)

inherently alter and extend the canon. The films heavily contributed to the way we visually and auditory imagine the world of Harry Potter and therefore should be acknowledged as part of transmedial storytelling, fulfilling both factors of intertextuality and multimodality as posed by Jenkins.

Hand in hand with the films, video games (for computers and consoles) with designs similar to the films were released. Also, Warner Bros. holds the rights to license merchandise, which is designed to resemble the films' looks. This merchandise is, by now, not only sold via the internet and in stores, but also at the three biggest Harry Potter attractions, namely the *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter* (URL wizardingworld), a theme and adventure park in Orlando, Florida; *The Warner Bros. Studio Tour London – The making of Harry Potter* (URL studiotour), a permanent exhibition of objects and technology used in the movies; and *The Harry Potter Shop at Platform 9 ¾*, located at Kings Cross station in London (URL kingscross). What all these places have in common is that they provide the Harry Potter experience, as established in the films.

Another important transmedial expansion of the Harry Potter narrative, especially in the context of additional canonical information, is the homepage *Pottermore*. It was created through a cooperation between J. K. Rowling and Sony, and first launched in July 2011. The homepage was conceptualised as a free, multi-lingual, interactive online platform, on which users got the chance to explore the Harry Potter novels through chronologically arranged illustrations, clips from the audio books, and mini-games, including a house sorting test. In addition to that, J. K. Rowling used the site to publish exclusive canonical information about the Harry Potter universe, including background information to characters, objects, and places, as well as insights as to how she created specific aspects of the narrative. This version of Pottermore therefore fulfilled both factors Jenkins defines determinative for transmedial projects – intertextuality and multimodality, while also enabling fan participation to some extent.

In September 2015, Pottermore undertook a drastic change. The original homepage as described above was replaced by a different concept: a free, English only, online Harry Potter encyclopaedia featuring the information provided by J. K. Rowling and more overall Harry Potter news, including news from Warner Bros., as well as visual images from the films, and film concept illustrations. While the house sorting test and other mini-games had not been included when the new Pottermore was launched, the house sorting test was re-introduced in January 2016 (URL Pottermore).

Other aspects of the transmedial storytelling of Harry Potter are interviews and comments made by the author J. K. Rowling. Since the book series has ended, J. K. Rowling made several statements that provide additional canonical information. This aspect of transmediality is not easy to capture, because of the fluidity and pace of the distribution channels, mass media and social media. These factors especially apply to Rowling's Twitter comments that answer questions by fans, which otherwise would remain unanswered, and her comments on developments in the fandom. This aspect of transmediality and its effects on the canon are discussed immensely among fans. One controversial factor is that although the book series was concluded, J.K. Rowling keeps presenting new information. This issue will be discussed in the chapter on my empirical findings.

There are some projects under way, which will further contribute to the transmedial narrative of Harry Potter. This does not only apply to the further development of the homepage Pottermore, and the instalment of a new theme park in Hollywood, but also to the film adaptations of "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them", the first of which will be released in November 2016. And furthermore, to the theatre production "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child", which will start showings in August 2016 at Palace Theatre in London, and will be accompanied by the worldwide release of its script.

3. Harry Potter Conquered the Academics: the Current State of Interdisciplinary Research on Harry Potter Fans

With the success of the Harry Potter book series, not only a successful worldwide franchise was born, but also a global fandom centring on the narrative evolved. Hand in hand with these developments, academic research started to focus on the Harry Potter phenomenon. For the literature research I focused on theoretical inputs dealing with approaches towards fans, fandom and fan communities in general, as well as on the concepts of identity, community and practice. Scientific studies on the Harry Potter narrative only played a marginalised role in the final thesis, because of the strong empirical focus of the study. In the following I will give an overview over academic literature on the phenomenon Harry Potter. The studies presented represent diverse approaches to the overall topic of Harry Potter in various fields of research. Concerning the different focus points, they can be divided into three categories:

1) Work that focuses on the narrative itself, making up the largest part of academic writing on the topic of Harry Potter.

2) Work that focuses on the Harry Potter phenomenon as a profitable franchise, looking at the specifics of marketing and PR.

3) Work that focuses on recipients, consumers, and fans of the narrative, located in the discipline of fan studies

Nevertheless, these focus points often overlap. The next paragraph gives a small insight into various publications in different disciplines. The large amount of academic studies on Harry Potter gives us a glimpse of the extent of the phenomenon Harry Potter in general, as well as of its significance for various disciplines. On one hand, the Harry Potter narrative is used to show popular approaches towards academic disciplines. On the other hand, studies that focus on Harry Potter try to understand the various dimensions of the phenomenon[6]. In the following, the three categories of literature on Harry Potter fans along the focus points are discussed. Because of the enormous range of academic works in this context, the following mentions can be regarded as exemplarly:

1) Researching the words

Because this focus point makes up the largest part of academic literature on Harry Potter the works cited can be regarded as exemplarily. Academic studies on Harry Potter in the field of **comparative literature studies** focus on the narrative structure (Whited: 2002) or discuss Harry Potter in relation to other narratives, such as Star Wars (Flotmann 2013) or the Arthurian Legend (Arden/ Lorenz 2003). **Linguist studies** focus heavily on the perspective of the use of language and names in Harry Potter, as well as the various translations of the novels (Fernandes 2006; Jaleniauskienė 2009, Standowicz 2009). A discipline also heavily engaged in the academic discussion on Harry Potter are the **educational studies**, focusing on Harry Potter in regards to education, school, and teaching (Black/ Eisenwein 2001; Phipps 2003). This also relates to studies by scholars of the discipline of **psychology**: researching the impacts of Harry Potter on young readers (Vezzali et al 2015). Theoretical works in the discipline, on the other hand, focus on the characters of the narrative itself – "Putting Harry on the couch" (Noctor 2006). Another discipline that engages with the narrative is **religious studies**, like Soulliere's article "Much Ado about Harry: Harry Potter

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[6] For a list of academic writings on Harry Potter also see: URL Harry Potter Bibliography

and the Creation of a Moral Panic" (2010), which answers to the demonization of the Harry Potter books by Christian fundamentalists. The edited volume "Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle ran Hogwarts" by Baggett and Klein (2004) discusses the narrative in reference to central topics in **philosophy** – such as morality, the existence of different realities, and the construction of personal identity. The reader "Harry Potter and History" (2011), edited by Nancy Reagin, follows a similar approach, by assembling a collection of essays that discuss elements of the Harry Potter narrative from a **historian perspective**, with Reagin in her article asking the question "Was Voldemort a Nazi?". Edited volumes that combine approaches and theories of academic disciplines with the narrative of Harry Potter are especially popular. Publications that also follow this idea are "The **Sociology** of Harry Potter: 22 Enchanting Essays on the Wizarding World" (Sims 2012), "The **Politics** of Harry Potter" edited by Betthany Barratt (2012) and "The **Law** and Harry Potter" (Thomas/ Snyder 2010).

2) Researching the money

The focus on the Harry Potter phenomenon as a profitable franchise and the specifics of marketing and PR is largely rooted in **economic studies** and **marketing studies**, conceptualising Harry Potter as a pop cultural brand. One example for this approach is Gunelius's "Harry Potter: The Story of a Global Business Phenomenon" (2008). Academic works in this field are especially interesting because they deal with consumers and fans of the franchise, but not as their primary focus. The problem I faced with the literature research on the topic of Harry Potter fans is that the theoretical and methodological framework of the scholars largely influences defining what a fan is and how fans act. How fans and fandom are presented in the texts thus depends on the writer's approaches and pursuits. In this context, I want to stress that in contrast to the claim of the discipline of fan studies (see chapter 4.1), many publications set in the discipline of economic and marketing studies stress the construction of the fan as the Other (see chapter 4.4).

In their article, focused on marketing and consumer response and the Harry Potter phenomenon, Brown and Peterson (2006) discuss the "fad" of Harry Potter and how consumers and fans react to the popularity of the franchise. With their article, they pick up stereotypes about fans, furthering the marginalisation of fans in academic literature. Drawing from interview passages made with "consumers" and "non-devotees", they conclude on the topic of adult Harry Potter fans:

> Embarrassment, in truth, is an emotion that figures prominently in the stories told by adult
> consumers. As often as not, it's the embarrassment of buying, or borrowing, or being

seen reading a children's book. Or, alternatively, being caught attending a kid's movie that has none of the multi-level appeal of, say, Shrek or Toy Story or Shark Tale, with their jokes-just-for-adults dimension. However, it's also the adolescent antics of adult Harry Potter fans that many non-devotees find bizarre at best and bananas at worst […] (Brown/Peterson 2006: 157).

Steven Brown, Professor for marketing, also discusses the topic of marketing and Harry Potter fandom in his article "Harry Potter and the Fandom Menace" – treating fans as "consumer tribes" and "brand communities":

There's no doubt that the boy wizard's aficionados are unfailingly fanatical, as the movie and book launch brouhahas bear witness. The teenage mage may owe more than many imagine to promotional long-rolling, kite-flying and pork-barrelling, but there's no denying that the HP tribe is enormous, enthusiastic and evangelical (Brown 2006: 181).

As a counterpoint to the discipline of fan studies, these descriptions show how consumer responses and fandom can be conceptualised from the perspective of marketing strategy and media producers. Another article, which also falls in this line of research, is Terego and Denim's "Riddikulus! Consumer Reflections on the Harry Potter Phenomenon" (2006). Treating fans as the Other and marginalising groups of fans by comparing them to "regular consumers" will also be discussed further in chapter 4.4.

3) Researching the people

Because of its popularity, the Harry Potter franchise and the fandom surrounding it is often used as an example or small case study in fan studies literature[7]. All in all, I argue that Harry Potter fans are well researched. Nevertheless, most academic works on Harry Potter fans in the tradition of social sciences or cultural studies only focus on a specific phenomenon within the fandom, often acting as a small empirical case study to underline theoretical approaches on fans, their communities, and practice, as we will see in the following examples of literature on Harry Potter fans.

Many academic studies in this context focus on fan practice, like the edited volume "Playing Harry Potter" (Brenner: 2015). In addition to other fan practices and fan performances, such as cosplay and Live Action Role Play, the book includes two discussions on the practice of *Muggle quidditch* (see Popple 2015; Dell 2015). This topic was also picked up by

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[7] As, for example in Kidd's critical discussion on consumption, agency and the functions of popular culture (see Kidd 2007).

publications grounded in the field of sport sciences, which are authored by Cohen, Peachey, and Melton[8]. These articles are also referenced in my case study on quidditch (see chapter 7) and largely discuss the appropriation of a fictional sport by fans and the sports development, including a discussion on its benefits regarding gender equality and inclusion.

In her article "Social Networking, Participatory Culture, and the Fandom World of Harry Potter" (2015), Allen discusses various dimensions of fan practices, such as fan fiction and role-playing on the example of Harry Potter, as well as conceptualising "fandom as a shared experience" (Allan 2015: 284). Fan fiction in the Harry Potter fandom is also the topic of Thomas' "Update Soon! Harry Potter Fanfiction and Narrative as a Participatory Process" (2011), which discusses the practice of fan fiction and the specifics of the online spaces in which fan fiction is exchanged. Cutz-Leng (2014) and Darlene Hampton (2015) also discuss fan fiction, focusing on narrative practices in fan fiction writing.

Another article that discusses Harry Potter fans in a specific setting is Cuntz-Leng's "Potterless: Pottermore and the Pitfalls of Transmedia Storytelling" (2013), in which she reflects on the platform's structure and how it can be compared to other spaces of fan practice in the internet - transmediality and agency of fans being central reference points for her argument that Pottermore, in fact, does not provide the freedom necessary for a rich fan experience.

Henry Jenkins, who contributed substantially to the discipline of fan studies with his on-going work in the field (see also chapter 4.1.), also picks up the topic of Harry Potter fans. Next to various posts on his personal blog, which concern his thoughts on the HP fandom[9], his book "Convergence Culture – Where Old and New Media Collide" dedicates one chapter to the Harry Potter fandom as participatory culture. Within this work, he discusses fan practices, as well as the social and legal implications of fan work[10] (Jenkins 2006: 175ff). Jenkins's recent academic work also includes the *Media, Activism, and Participatory Politics* (MAPP) project, which focused on five social activist groups, one of them being the *Harry Potter Alliance* – a group founded by a Harry Potter fan, Andrew Slack, with the aim to transport the values

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[8] (Cohen/Peachey 2014; Cohen/ Peachey/Melton 2014)
[9] for example see Jenkins 2013
[10] Another work which deals with the issue of fan practice and copyrights is Tan's article "Harry Potter and the transformation wand: fair use, canonicity and fan activity" (2013).

taught in the Harry Potter narrative into reality. The core question of the project is how young people engage in social movements in the context of digital media and how these movements draw from popular culture (URL MAPP-Homepage). The topic of fan activism is also central to his article "'Cultural Acupuncture': Fan activism and the Harry Potter Alliance"(2012). Next to its publication in the online journal "Transformative Works and Culture", the article was also published in the edited volume "Harry Potter, Still Recruiting: An Inner Look at Harry Potter Fandom" (2012), edited by Valerie Frankel. The publication features articles on various forms of fan practice and includes 21 interviews with fans central in creating fan work, such as an interview with Erin Pyne, author of the book "A Fandom of Magical Proportions. An Unauthorized History of the Harry Potter Fandom Phenomenon" (2007).

At this point, I want to note that next to academic literature on Harry Potter fans, there are publications focusing on Harry Potter fans without an academic claim or pursuit. This includes the mentioned book by Erin Pyne, as well as, for example, Melissa Anelli's[11] "Harry, A History: The True Story of a Boy Wizard, His Fans, and Life Inside the Harry Potter Phenomenon" (2008), which features an introduction by J. K. Rowling. As well as Lily Zilon's "Dear Mr. Potter. Letters of Love, Loss and Magic" (2011), a collection of fan letters addressed to Harry Potter, featuring letters by famous fans, such as John Green[12], Evanna Lynch,[13] and Melissa Anelli.

One study on Harry Potter fans that stands out is Dunphy's PhD thesis on "Trust, Friendship and Hogwarts Houses" (2011). The anthropological study focuses on the social structure of the Harry Potter fandom, using qualitative methods such as participant observation and interviews, as well as autoethnography in the research design. The paper builds largely on a theoretical framework based in anthropological theories, including Fredrik Barth's concept of ethnic groups (Dunphy 2011: 31ff) in analysing house identity among Harry Potter fans. Thereby, Dunphy focuses on the aspect of community within the fandom and how fan identity is negotiated within Harry Potter fan communities, thus defining the membership to fan communities largely over participation.

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[11] Melissa Anelli is the web administrator for the Harry Potter fan homepage "The Leaky Cauldron" (URL Leaky Cauldron)
[12] American author and You Tuber
[13] British actress, who played Luna Lovegood in the Harry Potter movies from 2007-2011

Concluding this literature review, I argue that Harry Potter, in fact, is not only a pop cultural phenomenon, but also an academic phenomenon. As we saw, the Harry Potter narrative is well-researched. As we will see in the next chapter, fans are well-researched as well. What is missing from the academic discourse on Harry Potter fans is an overall ethnographical approach that implements central theoretical inputs from the discipline of fan studies and an anthropological toolkit. Hence, resulting in a contribution to the academic discussion on fandom and the central concepts of practice, community, and identity.

4. Theoretic Framework: Fans and Fandom – Agency, Practice, and Material Culture

The theoretical framework of this study draws from the field of interdisciplinary fan studies as well as the discipline of media anthropology. This chapter discusses the theoretical basis to work with in the empirical analysis and shows theoretical approaches to the concepts of fan(dom), practice, identity and material culture. In the course of this chapter, the question of what research on fans in anthropology can look like will be addressed. First, the interdisciplinary field of fan studies and its development will be discussed. The second sub-chapter looks at popular and academic definitions of the terms 'fan', 'fandom' and 'fan community'. The third sub-chapter deals with media anthropology and approaches on studying fans with the means of concepts like agency, practice and discussing the anthropological conception of narrative and myth, and picking up the agency debate in the cultural studies. The fourth sub-chapter deals with the concept of identity, talking about fan community, and group identity. The fifth and last subchapter deals with the question of the usage of material culture in fan communities and its interlinkage with identity, agency, and practice.

4.1. Fan Studies, an Interdisciplinary Field

As noted before, research on fans is part of the academic work of multiple disciplines, including but not limited to consumer research and marketing, anthropology, psychology, sociology, and film & media studies. In the following, I discuss the works of Gray, Sandvoss, Harrington (2007), Henry Jenkins (1992, 2000, 2006), and Mark Duffett (2013), among others, as well as drawing from smaller studies on fandom and fans. In the context of

methods, it is important to note that while many of the scholars do not have an academic anthropological background, they are selected to meet the standards of the empirical methods used in the study. To include literature from the interdisciplinary field of fan studies is crucial, since it represents the current state of research on fans. Because the field has gained popularity since the 1990s, thanks to the work of Henry Jenkins, and the technologisation of fandom communities since the 1990s due to digital media, the field is constantly changing and innovating itself.

In their introduction titled "Why Study Fans?" the editors of "Fandom. Identities and Communities in a Mediated World" (Gray/ Sandvoss/ Harrington 2007) engage in the history of fan studies as a discipline. They note that in the beginning of fan studies, spanning from Fiske to Jenkins's "*Textual Poachers. Television Fans and Participatory Culture*" (1992), fans were seen in opposition to the powerful media producers – fandom being approached as a "[…] collective strategy, a communal effort to form interpretive communities that in their subcultural cohesion evaded the preferred and intended meanings […] presented by popular media" (Gray/ Sandvoss/ Harrington 2007: 2). Hence, the first wave of academic fan studies focused on defending fans against their stigmatisation in mass media and stressing their subversive readings of the fan object. (ibid). On the example of *Star Trek* fans, Jenkins posed that popular stereotypes about fans include:

a. brainless consumers who will buy anything associated with the program or its cast [...]
b. devote their lives to the cultivation of worthless knowledge [...]
c. place inappropriate importance on devalued cultural material [...]
d. are social misfits who have become so obsessed with the show that it forecloses other types of social experience
e. are feminized and/or desexualized through their intimate engagement with mass culture [...]
f. are infantile, emotionally and intellectually immature [...]
g. are unable to separate fantasy from reality [...]
   (Jenkins 1992:10)

For Jenkins (1992), the stereotypes are not without factual basis, but are stressed because they threaten dominant cultural hierarchies. With this perspective, he draws from the works of John Fiske, who sees popular culture in distinction to 'high' culture: "This culture is socially and institutionally legitimated, and I shall refer to it as official culture, in distinction from popular culture which receives no social legitimation or institutional support" (Fiske 1992: 31). Fans of popular culture, in this context, are theorised as "subordinated formations of people, particularly […] those disempowered by any condition of gender, age, class and race" (ibid:

30). Fiske's approach on fans is characterised by his critique on capitalism and capitalist industries. He concludes:

> Official cultural capital, like economic capital, is systematically denied to the people and their lack then functions to distinguish them from those that possess it. In capitalist societies popular culture is necessarily produced from the products of capitalism, for that is all the people have to work with. The relationship of popular culture to the culture industries is therefore complex and fascinating, sometimes conflictive, sometimes complicitous or co-productive, but the people are never at the mercy of the industries […]. Fans are among the most discriminated and selective of all formations of the people and the cultural capital they produce is the most highly developed and visible for all (Fiske 1992: 47f)

In the tradition of Fiske, Jenkins argues that fans appropriate and reinterpret cultural text: "Unimpressed by institutional authority and expertise, the fans assert their own right to form interpretations, to offer evaluation, and to construct cultural canons" (Jenkins 1992: 18). He stresses that fan practices and how fans approach cultural texts are seen as inappropriate by authorities – to stigmatise fans ensures the securing of cultural hierarchies. Fans thereby are represented as the Other, something one fears to be associated with: "Public attacks on media fans keep other viewers in line, making it uncomfortable for readers to adapt such 'inappropriate' strategies of making sense of popular texts [...]" (ibid: 19). This approach, dominant in the first wave of fan studies, was left aside because of theoretical dilemmas concerning the conception of the fan as the desired, subversive 'Other', as well as the unwillingness of fans to accept their scholastic definition of being subversive. (Gray/ Sandvoss/ Harrington 2007: 1ff).

The second wave of fan studies, which can be summarised under the phrase "Fandom Is Beautiful" (ibid.3), primarily focused on fan practices and activities. Methodological, these studies often draw from the insider's perspectives of academic fans. This approach did not aim to deconstruct the binary structure of fan communities and mass media, but rather stressed the place of fans and fan communities in these structures. Leaving behind the premise of the first wave of fan studies that fandom is inherently subversive of, the second wave failed to shine a light on the motivations of fans and missed posing the question: How and why do people become fans? Two connected developments in the research on fans and fandom accompanied the shift towards the third wave of fan studies. The technologisation of fandom, which came hand in hand with the rise of the digital media, fastened up the response time of fandoms and fans, enabling a real-time debate between producers and fans. This contributed to a shift in the portrayal of fans in public discourse and public media, portraying "the fan as a specialised yet dedicated consumer" and making this "a centerpiece of media industries' marketing strategies" as long as they confirm to the principles set by the

content producers, including the question of intellectual property use (Gray/ Sandvoss/ Harrington 2007: 4). Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington stress that, in this context, not all fans and fandoms are presented in the same manner, distinguishing for example between fans of high culture, sports fans and fans of popular culture, the later often still being confronted with the same stereotypes Jenkins wrote about in 1992 (see Jenkins 1992: 10). (ibid: 3ff). As we will see in the discussion of my empirical research, these stereotypes still exist in popular opinion. Even influencing how fans see themselves, how they interpret their own fan practices, and how they talk about being a fan, other fans, and fandom in general.

The third wave of fan studies was furthermore accompanied by an empirical shift in the discipline. While the first and second wave focused on studying specific groups of fans, this was no longer compatible with the fans self-perception and the ever growing amount of people participating in (multiple) fandoms, as well as the usage of digital media. Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington therefore discuss two levels of fan studies that are presently dominant within the discipline of fan studies. On one hand, discussing the intrapersonal motivations of fans – "refocusing on the relationship between fans' selves and their fan objects" (ibid: 8). On the other hand, the "contemporary research on fans […]acknowledges that fans' readings, tastes, and practices are tied to wider social structures, […] to the overarching social, cultural, and economic transformations of our time […]" (ibid). With these two approaches fans and fan communities are not treated as an isolated phenomenon, but are connected to the question of the personal motivations and identities, as well as to economic, social, and cultural aspects of modern everyday lives. (Gray/ Sandvoss/ Harrington 2007: 7ff). This also addresses the multi-dimensionality of fandoms, which was, as Matt Hills notes, neglected in earlier studies and led to the idea that fandoms are homogenous groups and "bonded entities" (Hills 2002: xiv).

It is important to note that these shifts in methodological and theoretical paradigms in fan studies took place in a very narrow time frame – occurring between 1992 and today. Scholars like Henry Jenkins formed each of the paradigms and created an understanding for the fluidity of researching fans and how researchers have to confront new developments in their field of study. This, as well as the refocusing on the relationship between fans and fan object, is the reason why works like Jenkins "Textual Poaching" (1992) are still seen as central in the discipline of fan studies. As Mark Duffett puts it: "*Textual Poachers* became a bible for fan researchers a 'how to' book that showed ways to respectfully talk about fandom" (Duffett 2013: 16). Most importantly, Jenkins' book discusses how fans are conceptualised within the public and the media, and how these prejudices are reflected in the academic work

on fans. Stressing fan practices and the agency of fans, Jenkins emphasises the importance to get a better understanding of fans by means of academic research. This also relates to the relationship between fans and researchers. Jenkins *outing* himself as a fan, whose motivation for writing about fans is his fan identity, changed the perspective within the fan-researcher relationship (Jenkins 1992: 1ff). Declaring:

> My motivations for writing this book are complex and bound to my dual role as fan and academic. As a fan, I feel that most previous academic accounts of fan culture are sensationalistic and foster misunderstandings about this subculture. [...] I want to participate in the process of redefining the public identity of fandom, to use my institutional authority to challenge those stereotypes, and to encourage a greater awareness of the richness of fan culture. (ibid: 7).

By *outing* himself as being part of fan culture, Jenkins' work benefits from an insider's perspective. This duality of being both a researcher and a fan is also part of my discussion on methods and my field work experience in general and draws from the understanding that "almost everyone self-identifies as a fan in some sense" (Duffett 2013: 2).

Jenkins' post-Fiskean approach, drawing from cultural studies and scholars like Stuart Hall, as well as his alignment with fans as a fan himself, shaped the discipline of fan studies and its general approaches and methods. His further works include empirical studies on Star Trek fans (2000), works on participatory culture (2006a), and convergence culture (2006b), as well as his most recent field of study that explores fan activism under the key word of "cultural acupuncture" (2012).

Locating my theoretical and empirical work in the field of fan studies, as well as anthropology, does not mean choosing between two approaches. Instead, the interdisciplinary field of fan studies displays a collection of methodological and theoretical approaches by which fans can be studied. Anthropological theories and empirical research methods used in anthropology therefore contribute to the discipline of fan studies and to the discourse surrounding the topic. The next chapter deals with the questions of how fans and fan communities can be defined, as well as which approaches and concepts have been developed in this context.

4.2. Fans, Fan Communities and Globalised Fandom

Drawing from the discipline of fan studies, the definition of the term 'fan' is characterised by the theoretical framework of cultural studies and informed by Jenkins' post-Fiskean approach. This includes asking the question of how one becomes a fan:

> One becomes a fan not by being a regular viewer of a particular program but by translating that viewing into some type of cultural activity, by sharing feelings and thoughts about the program content with friends, by joining a community of other fans who share common interests. (Jenkins 2000: 471)

This definition by Jenkins mirrors one premise made by scholars in this field about fans: being a fan is seen to be connected to cultural activity, practice and participation in a fan community. In this context, Henry Jenkins´ (1992) concept of *textual poaching* and his characterisation of five *fan action categories* come into play*:*

    a. Fandom involves a particular mode of reception
    b. Fandom involves a particular set of critical and interpretive practices
    c. Fandom constitutes a base for consumer activism
    d. Fandom possesses particular forms of cultural production, aesthetics traditions and practices
    e. Fandom functions as an alternative social community
    (Jenkins 1992: 277ff)

Following this line of argument Allen defines fandom as participatory culture, while noting that fandom is "notoriously tricky to define" (Allen 2015: 277). The term 'fandom' partly poses this problem because it is used by fans to describe their own involvement with the fan object. One entry in the Urban Dictionary, an open source online dictionary, reads: "fandom: The community that surrounds a TV show/movie/book etc. Fan fiction writers, artists, poets, and cosplayers are all members of that fandom. Fandoms often consist of message boards, livejournal communities, and people" (URL Urban Dictionary1). This entry stresses both fan practice and the fan community as important features of fandom. Sandvoss (2005: 8) defined "fandom as the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text", also pointing at some kind of cultural practice by fans, but leaving aside the aspect of community. The difficulty in defining fandom lies not only in the emic usage of the term, but also that it is often used as a synonym for fan community and/or fan culture and vice versa. For the purpose of my study I propose a definition of fandom as the shared state of being a fan of a certain fan object, this also addresses the synonymous usage with the term "fan community" when talking about the community as a whole. This approach, which does not stress the fans participation, will be further clarified and discussed in the chapter on my

empirical research. In this context, I will use a distinction between the terms 'Harry Potter fandom' as defined above and 'Harry Potter fan communities'. The usage of the plural signalises that within a fandom, multiple fan communities exist, which differ in fan practices and where these practices take place – both offline and online fan spaces.

Defining fandom as the shared state of being a fan of a certain fan object points to an open definition of what a fan (of popular culture) is, grounded in the individual and emotional aspects. As Duffett (2013: 17) notes:

> The term 'fan' now covers a wide range of ordinary people who positive emotional engagement [sic!] with popular culture. That engagement may take the form of a connection with the text, image, performance or creative signature of a public figure. It might include love for a particular form or genre.

This broad definition addresses fans of popular culture in general. How Harry Potter fans can be located in this broad definition will be discussed in the chapter on my empirical findings. Also, I will engage in the discussion of how fans practice their fandom and how these practices are influenced by and constitute fan communities and fan spaces. Thus, Fan practice relates to anything fans do in the specific context of fandom and to construct and maintain their state of being a fan. To understand Harry Potter as a narrative means to acknowledge that it is open to individual and collective interpretation and appropriation. In this context, Rapport and Overing (2000: 289) point out:

> For, what participating in and performing narratives inexorably give onto are personal interpretations and understandings; individuals impart these forms with meaning which derives from unique perspectives on the world. Hence, individuals create space for themselves beyond the formal surfaces of public and collective performance. However much their narratives might be inspired by living in a particular socio-cultural environment, however much their medium might be a public and collective system of signification, and however much their structure might borrow from a conventional intertextuality, still individuals create something particular to themselves.

The interpretation and appropriation of fan objects by fans in the context of globalised fandoms are one of the focus points of the academic field of interdisciplinary fan studies. Harrington and Biebly (2007: 179) note that fan studies long have distinguished between a macro-level, a political economic approach, and a micro, text based level in their research design. But: "Given rapid advances in technological distribution and evolving formal trade agreements, fan studies scholars have recently turned from the study of imported media to the notion of 'global' media texts and internationally dispersed audiences" (ibid: 180). Fan communities function as global networks interacting with other fan communities, other texts of popular culture, digital media, and content producers, as well as personal life experiences and political, cultural, and social issues. In this sense and referring to Arjun Appadurais

concepts of global cultural flows, global fandoms are connected through mediascapes, technoscapes, ethnoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. (Appadurai 1996: 32ff) – shaping the imaginary world of fandom. While my empirical research was set in Austria, this concept of a globalised fandom is highly significant because it shapes the experience and identity of individual fans. As we have seen in the chapter on the transmediality of the Harry Potter franchise, the narrative that forms the Harry Potter canon does not only consist of the books by J.K. Rowling (which were translated into up to 77 languages). It also involves the movies, produced by a globally acting company, the internet-based platform Pottermore, which contains material that is posted by J.K. Rowling on social media platforms, and furthermore specific locations installed by copyright holders, such as the theme park in Orlando and "The Warner Bros. Studio Tour London". Therefore, fans and fandoms can never be seen as isolated from global cultural discourse and processes, also contributing to these processes with the participation in these -scapes as well as acts of fan practices, which appropriate the canonical materials. Appadurai (1996: 31) stresses that "imagination as social practice" is:

> No longer mere fantasy […], no longer simple escape […], no longer elite pastime […]and no mere contemplation […]. The imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility.

The next chapter focuses on the concepts of practices and agency as discussed in the discipline of media anthropology. This will provide further insights into the topic of fan practice, the agency of fans, and its theoretical embedding in anthropological concepts.

4.3. Practice, Community and Media Anthropology

In her article "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties", Sherry Ortner (1984: 149) argues that "practice" is a key concept in anthropology, focusing on "anything people do". Following the economic interest theory, she states: "What actors do, it is assumed, is rationally go after what they want is what is materially and politically useful for them within the context of their culture and historical situation" (ibid: 151). When the interest theory does not seem to apply, the academic focus shifts towards the construction of the self and the aspects of motive, and emotion, thus setting practice in a specific cultural system (ibid). The main focus of my thesis is on practice and its linkage with the construction of identity, and the emotional aspects and motives that lead fan practice. Nevertheless, questions of power and agency need to be addressed because they shape experience and fan practice.

Looking at fan practice from the perspective of media anthropology, Peterson´s discussion on media reception, intertextuality, and social action presents an interesting perspective. In his text "Performing Media. Toward an Ethnography of Intertextuality", Peterson stresses the concept of intertextuality as central for understanding "how people attend to media texts and how media enter into practices of everyday life" (Peterson 2005: 130). Therefore, textual knowledge is necessary for fans, reproducing it in their fan practice. In this sense, Peterson defines intertextuality as "an active social process involving the extracting of a discourse or discursive element form on setting (decontextualization) and inserting it into another (recontextualization)" (ibid). Drawing from established anthropological theories, intertextuality and fan practices can be connected to Lévi-Strauss' (1962: 17ff) semiotic concept of bricolage and how people act as bricoleurs. One example for bricolage, Lévi-Strauss points out, is the construction of myths (ibid) and how bricoleurs draw from existing narratives and (re)construct them, limited only by their cultural and linguistic setting. Fans, in their fan practice, can in this sense be seen to act as bricoleurs. In his entry on bricolage in the "Encyclopaedia of Identity Volume 1" (2010), Jonathan Wyatt argues: "The bricoleur […] takes materials from a variety of sources and uses them to create an artefact that, because of how she arranges or manipulates these materials to fit her vision, becomes her own" (Wyatt 2010: 71). With this, the bricoleur decontextualises and recontextualises the given texts in creating bricolage. Furthermore, Wyatt (2010: 72) addresses that this process can be seen not only as mere adoptions or adaptations, but also as involving the shaping of the bricoleur's identity, as "The assembling of signs and symbols conveys identification with and difference from others". In the context of globalised fandom, Elke Mader argues that fans create a globalised bricolage by connecting popular digital culture and narrative universes filled with meaning, images, and discourse (Mader 2015: 214). Here, we can see that intertextuality and the assembling of bricolages through fan practices cannot be seen as being located on the micro level of personal fan practices and experience, but have to be recognised in the context of globalised fandom – contributing to the dense network of canonical and non-canonical reference points. To further these theories of intertextuality and practices in the context of media anthropology, Peterson (2005: 133) draws from the work of literary theorist Gerard Genette (1998) to formulate five categories of "intertextual social action":

1) *Intertextual performance*: The reproduction of media texts in social discourse
2) *Paratextual knowledge*: The knowledge about media texts one brings to media reception, intertextual performance, and other encounters with texts

3) *Architextual practice*: The aspect of interpreting media texts that create meaning by recognizing intertextual connections, locating a text in a wider intertextual web, and assigning significance to the text within this web
4) *Metatextual discourse*: Discourse that comments on media texts and on people's textual practice
5) *Hypertextual production*: The creating of new texts out of elements appropriated from media texts

All of these categories of social action apply to some fields of fan practice and influence fans in their activities, both in an offline and online setting.

Research on fan communities often distinguishes between online and offline fan practices. Looking at anthropological theories on community and practice, we find that this distinction is not useful, since online and offline fan practices and fan spaces are always intertwined. Wilson and Peterson argue in their text "The Anthropology of Online Communities" (2002): "An online/offline conceptual dichotomy (...) is also counter to the direction taken within recent anthropology, which acknowledges the multiple identities and negotiated roles individuals have within different sociopolitical and cultural contexts." This is also significant for the conceptualisation of community in general. Anthropological perspectives on the concept of community oppose the notion that communities are homogenous and fixed. Rather than stressing the factor of cohesion and boundedness, interactions and interconnections with other communities are stressed, as well as the heterogeneity within communities. (ibid: 455). This interconnectedness of (fan) communities is also important in the context of fan practice and fan generated content and material culture.

From these insights I want to conclude that fan practices are practices by individuals or groups, which are motivated by the emotional involvement with the central fan object. Fan practices include an intertextual linkage with the text of the fan object, which Peterson (2005: 133) refers to as "intertextual social action". In this context, it is important to stress that fan practices can take various forms and incorporate different mediums, including both online and offline practices, and further connect online and offline fan spaces and communities.

In recent developments in the discipline of media studies, scholars such as Nick Couldry argue for a new paradigm that "sees media not as text or production economy, but first and foremost as practice" (Couldry 2010: 35). Practice theory then treats media as "the open set of practice relating to, or oriented around, media" (ibid: 36). This shift in paradigms leaves aside conceptions of media rooted in literary criticism and places media studies in the field of cultural anthropology, focusing on action, agency, and knowledge. This approach does not

focus only on the audience and media consumers, but allows a broader definition of practice in media, asking the question: "What, quite simply, are people doing in relation to media across a whole range of situations and contexts?" (ibid: 39). This conception of media as practice allows a softening of the strict division between production, distribution, and consumption, and sees all of these stages rather as part of a broad range of practice and participation. Also, practice theory accounts for practices which are informed by non-canonical texts, stressing that media practices anchor other practices, thereby contributing to hierarchies and social structures. (ibid: 36ff) Couldry (ibid: 45) concludes:

> The value of practice theory, as we have seen, is that it asks open questions about what people are doing and how they categorise what they are doing, avoiding the disciplinary or other preconceptions which would automatically read their actions as, say, 'consumption' or 'being an audience', whether or not that is how the actors see their actions.

Hence, this approach takes self-attributions of researched groups and individuals into account and engages with questions about how people experience their media practice. At both the level of community and individuals, fan practices are closely tied to the construction of (fan) identities. In the context of research on fans, Bird (2010) stresses this connection between practice and identity, arguing that fans dissolved the strict distinction between audience, producers, and text. This does not only imply changes in how fans can be researched, but also media itself by challenging media producers. Furthermore, media practices are not only to be seen in relation to media and the fan object, as they also articulate and express other markers of individuals' and groups' identity. (Bird 2010: 89ff). Drawing from Couldry's concept of anchors, Bird (2010: 90) argues that: "At any given moment, another type of practice – for example religious, political – might be considered the prime 'anchor' with which media might link". In this sense, fan practice is not only rooted in media and the canonical texts of the fan object, but is also a form of articulating identity and other practices. Bird (2010: 90) therefore argues:

> Fan practice, then, represents a fruitful way to examine everyday life in a media world in which media texts, and discourse about texts, suffuse not only moments of actual media consumption but also people's world-views in a broad sense – for instance, their sense of ethics, emotions or gender identity.

This interweaving of identity, practice and the concept of 'anchoring' (or as Bird prefers 'articulation' (ibid.)) is important in understanding how fan communities construct their groups' identity and which mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are applied. These mechanisms of identity, self-attribution, and ascription are discussed in the following chapter.

4.4. Culture and Community: Fandom, Identity and the Other

David C. Chaney argues that culture, as a basic concept in social and human sciences, "provides a way of framing individual experience and action so that it can be understood indexically (that is actions can be linked to a context)" and thus "Cultures and communities are [...] mutually constitutive terms – each is established, if need be, by reference to the other" (Chaney 2001: 76). Furthermore, Chaney stresses that individuals can also be seen in reference to culture – explaining actions and individuals' practice with a cultural framing (ibid). The connection between culture and community – the cultural framing of practice then has to be seen in reference to the concept of identity – following the question of how individuals navigate themselves as culturally framed actors.

In the social sciences, the cultural turn established a concept of identity, which differentiates between personal identity and collective identity. The concept of personal identity is applied to an individual, whereas the concept of collective identity relates to the identity of a specific group (Schildberg 2010: 49ff). Schildberg (2010: 51) distinguishes three perspectives on identity:

1) Kollektive (oder soziale) Identität als der Teil personaler Identität, der sich auf soziale Rollen und spezifische Positionen in der Gesellschaft bezieht
2) Kollektive (oder soziale) Identität als ein individuelles Zugehörigkeitsbewusstsein/- gefühl zu einer bestimmten Gruppe.
3) Kollektive Identität als die Identität eines Kollektivs, wobei sich das Kollektiv in seiner Gesamtheit durch gewisse Gemeinsamkeiten, Vorstellungen etc. auszeichnet.

Schildbergs conception of group identity is also reflected in Jenkins' characterisation of the fans´ formation in fan communities:

> [...] fans often draw strength and courage from their ability to identify themselves as members of a group of other fans who shared common interests and confronted common problems. [...] Indeed, one of the most often heard comments from new fans is their surprise in discovering how many people share their fascination with particular series, their pleasure in discovering that they are not `alone´. (Jenkins 1997:507)

This quote also demonstrates how Jenkins' work is influenced by the works of Stuart Hall and his conception of identification. In the introduction to the book "Questions of Cultural Identity" Stuart Hall points out two different theoretical approaches towards the process of identification:

> In common sense language, identification is constructed on the back of recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation. In contrast with the 'naturalism' of this definition, the discursive approach sees identification as a construction, a process never completed - always 'in process'. It is not determined in the sense that it can always be 'won' or 'lost', sustained or abandoned. (Hall 1996: 2)

This discursive approach is essential for the understanding of the process of identification in the context of fandom. Research and studies in the field of fan studies are overall characterised by a theoretical approach towards the topic, often stressing a systematic approach on the characteristics of fan communities. On one hand, this creates the possibility to talk about general issues in such communities, on the other hand it neglects personal fan experiences and individual motivations and ideas. Hence, I not only want to focus on the aspect of group identity, but also ask the question of how individual identity shapes the experience of being a Harry Potter fan. This approach answers to Martin Sökefelds' (1999) critique of the anthropological approach on identity – denying the research subjects an individual self. Group identity in the context of fan communities is especially interesting, because other than different forms of belonging, like ethnic identity or gender identity, being part of a fan community seems to be something that is actively chosen, even more than that something that has to be sought after. In this context Kath Woodward (2000a: 6) points out: "[...] sharing an identity suggests some *active* engagement on our part. We choose to *identify* with a particular identity or group." Matt Hills (2002:xi) defines fandom in this line of definitions of identity work as performative "(…) by which I mean that it is an identity which is (dis-)claimed, and which performs cultural work. Claiming the status of a 'fan' may, in certain contexts, provide a cultural space for types of knowledge and attachment". Hence, Hills sees being a fan as something inherently subversive, because it contests' cultural norms – claiming identity on grounds of popular culture. (ibid: xii).

This approach addresses one important dimension of fan identity: the construction of the fan of popular culture as the Other in media representation. As noted above, producers of popular culture have, in recent years, picked up fans as a specific consumer target group for their products. Nevertheless, this relationship often follows strict rules, set by the producers, threatening fans with legal action under the banner of copyright violations and intellectual property rights (Jenkins 2006: 175ff). Deciding how 'good fans' act and marginalising fans who step out of line of these set rules are mechanisms that go hand in hand with the stigmatisation of fans or specific fan groups. In this context, the stereotypes listed by Jenkins in 'Textual Poachers' (1992: 10f) are still articulated and circulated in mass media. The

concept of 'Othering', as used by Said in his book 'Orientalism' (1978), describes, according to Duffett: "(…) processes in which one group of people label another as different, an embodiment of everything that they are not. For the group in control of media representation, the other becomes a terrain on which to project anxieties and the other" (Duffett 2013: 37). Hence, these mechanisms of Othering are characterised by a power relation between the different actors. In this context, we have to ask the question of how far power relations and modes of representation via media changed with the emergence of digital media and the Internet. This issue will be further discussed in the context of fan practice and in the analysis of my empirical research. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that ascribing other groups of people with specific characteristics is not only used to construct the Other, but constructing a difference also expresses and strengthens group identities. Duffett notes that fans experience Othering not only from producers, but from multiple groups, critics, academics, and other audience members, including other fans. Pointing at the individuals' fan identity and the Othering of fans, this leads to one of my questions asked in the interview: *What characterises a **real** Harry Potter fan?*

As we will see in my empirical results, this question is also related to the aspect of material culture and its connection with the construction of fan identity in the context of fan practice and the participation in fan communities. The next chapter discusses this issue from a theoretical point of view, focusing on the usage and creation of material culture in fan practices.

4.5. Fans and Stuff: Identity, Material Culture and Practice

The concept of material culture is deeply connected to the concept of (group) identity. As Woodward (1997: 1) writes: "[...] identity gives us a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live". In regard to the creation of difference, group identity is often constituted by shared history, values, beliefs, or goals; furthermore, it is also constituted via material culture, which functions as symbols, often only recognisable to other members of the same group. Kath Woodward (2000b: 12):

> Symbols and representations are important in the production of identities. This is how we signal our identities to others and how we know which people we identify with and those who are distinguished as being different. How we speak, the clothes we wear, badges, scarves, uniforms or flags all offer symbols of identity.

Material culture then becomes important for the construction of the fan identity of individuals and within a fandom, not only creating sameness within a group and difference towards outside the group, but also accounting for differences within the fandom.

Ill. 6: school rivalry between Slytherins and Gryffindors, wearing their house ties, by CaptBexx (deviant art)

In this context Stuart Hall's concept of language as a 'signifying practice' (Hall 1997: 5) is significant. Language as a 'system of representation' (ibid: 1ff) not only includes spoken words, but furthermore: "[...] sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects [...]" (ibid) through which ideas, emotions and concepts can be distributed. Hence, language, symbols, and material culture and virtual content are used to share ideas, concepts, and emotions, and therefore to construct identity, culture, and knowledge (ibid). Meaning, then, "is not something 'there' in what we say or do or in the world around us to be appreciated correctly or not, but is something made in the politics of social practice" (Chaney 2001: 80). Chaney argues that material culture, in the context of cultural symbolism, is 'dematerialised' – transformed into representation (ibid). How fan practice shapes the meaning of symbols and these meanings are distributed via fan communities will be further discussed in the chapter on my empirical findings.

First, however: What is material culture? The Centre for Material Culture Studies at the University of Delaware poses various definitions to answer this question:

> The things we make reflect our beliefs about the world; the things around us affect the way that we understand the world. There is an unending circularity to this that implies less a circle and more a kind of wheel moving. – *Lance Winn, with respect to Foucault*

> My idea of material culture studies is a quite literal one: I see us engaged in in-depth studies of the materials of human cultures–of anything (any/thing/) for how it reflects and constructs the culture of which it is a part.– *Marcy Dinius*

> Material culture is the relationship between people and things.- *Arwen Mohun*

> (URL Delaware)

We can see in these definitions that material culture is not merely defined as stuff, but constitutes a relationship between things and people. As Daniel Miller stresses, the concept of material culture was long contested in anthropology, because the focus on objects was associated with fetishism. The Material Culture Group and its conceptualisation of material culture as 'things that matter' picked up this accusation and established an anthropological discourse on material culture, which does not define it as "some separate superstructure to social worlds" (Miller 1998a: 3), but rather in relation to people, identity, and practice. (ibid: 3ff). In this context, identity can be seen "as a discursively constituted social relation, articulated through narratives of the self" and identities as "expressed in relation to particular places and particular material goods" (Miller 1998b: 19). This definition of material culture is carried into the interdisciplinary field of fan studies and the research on fans.

In his article "Praxis. A pragmatic of things: Materiality and Constraint in Fan Practices", Banjamin Woo discusses the use of material objects in fandoms as markers of fan identity. He argues that objects act as signs and furthermore enable people to certain practices. (Woo 2014: [1]ff). He sees fandom as "something people do" (ibid [3.9]), "surrounded by particular things, people produce themselves as particular kinds of agents, as people who can do certain kind of things" (ibid [1.4]). In this context, material culture not only acts as symbols that can be recognised and related to, but also enables fan practices. The 'circuit of culture', as a theoretical concept, used by scholars of the field of cultural studies like Stuart Hall, Paul du Gay, and Gerard Gogin, is a model showing the interconnectedness and processuality of identity, representation, production, consumption, and regulation (Woodward 1997: 4ff).
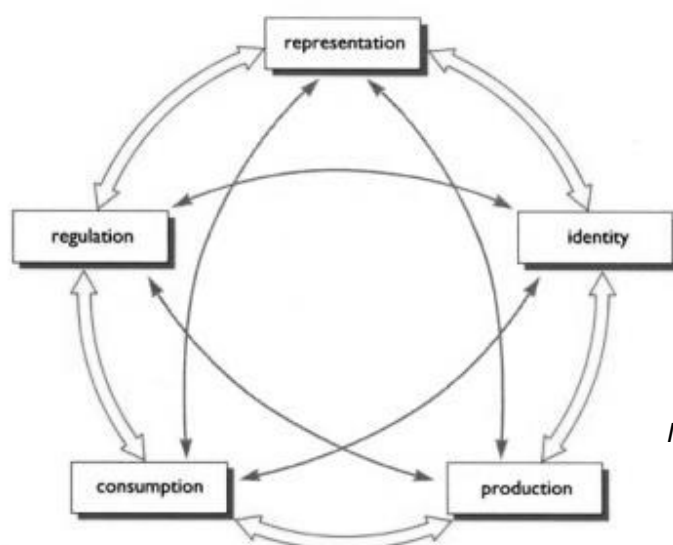
Ill. 7

from Paul Du Gay, Production of Culture/Cultures of Production (London: The Open University), 1997

Looking at the 'circuit of culture', Benjamin Woo's theory on fan practice and material culture does not only relate to the aspects of consumption, identity and representation, but also to the factors of production and regulation – in the case of fandom for example the regulation of licenses for official merchandise and the production of non-licenced fan products. Missing from the circuit, then, is the aspect of distribution. Woo (2014: [4.11]) argues:

> As with Malinowski's ([1922] 2002) account of the Kula ring, exchanging objects anchors relationships, at the levels of both individual friendships and the larger community of practice. Because objects must come from somewhere, private consumption is never really individualized, and these complementary systems of exchange interweave moral and political economies.

As we can see from this quote, the factor of distribution is central to human practice and is hence also important when talking about the practices of fans. Distribution of material culture, either official merchandise or fan made content, is a central practice within fan communities. This phenomena is further stressed by Karen Hellekson in her article "A Fannish Field of Value: Online Fan Gift Culture". She discusses the online exchange of fan made virtual content such as videos, art work, fan fiction, etc., as a symbolic system, because the things exchanged have no value outside the system of the particular fandom and often exist only online (Hellekson 2009: 113ff). Looking at this example we have to address the question of whether virtual content counts as material culture. Vili Lehdonvirta discusses this issue in her text "Online spaces have material culture: goodbye to digital post-materialism and hello to virtual consumption". She dismisses the distinction between material culture and virtual content as non-material culture, because like with material culture, virtual content is assigned with cultural meanings. As an example for this she names virtual objects, which are sold and bought in multiplayer online games. Lehdonvirta argues that online spaces possess material culture in the sense that people attach meaning and value to virtual goods and that they play a role in social relations and practices. Furthermore, these virtual goods are used to express identity and establish social status. (Lehdonvirta 2010: 885f). Drawing from this approach, I acknowledge virtual content as material culture, keeping in mind that virtual content is not only distributed as texts and images on the Internet, but is also adopted by both fans and profit-orientated retailers, into objects such as clothing, posters, and things like mugs, jewellery, and so on.

We can conclude from this chapter not only that the possession of material culture and virtual content enables fan practice, but also that the existence of a symbolic market enables and even encourages the production and distribution of fan-made stuff. The production, distribution and use of those objects are a part of fan practices and further enable fan

practices. Understanding material culture as symbols and as a visual marker of fan indentity also relates to the research questions for my empirical reseach and will be discussed in depth in the empirical chapters.

4.6. Concluding the Theory

Fans of popular culture, such as Harry Potter fans, pose a challenging academic field within which personal motivations and fan identities of individuals collide with group identities and the macro-level of economic, social, and cultural aspects. Fandoms and fan communities thereby cannot be seen as isolated, but are multi-dimensional, global networks. Fans create a globalised bricolage compiled by offline and online fan practices and including canonical and fan content. By approaching media as practice (Couldry 2010: 35) the distinction between media production, distribution and consumption is softened, and allows us to acknowledge that fans take part at all three levels. As Peterson (2005:133) notes, fan practices are informed by intertextual knowledge and mechanisms of decontextualisation, and recontextualisation as social processes. Fan identity then relates to these practices – creating community and strengthening group identity in the sense of cultural framing. Material culture, in this context, articulates fan identity and acts as a marker of group affiliation, by transporting cultural symbols. The stereotypisation of fans and fan communities by media producers, as well as other mechanisms of Othering, create a distinction between fans and non-fans, both in self-affiliations and the evaluation of others.

This brief conclusion to my theoretical framework recapped the most important points that are addressed in my empirical study on Harry Potter fans. The next chapter looks at the methods used in my research and elaborates on the sampling for the study.

5. Methods: Studying Harry Potter Fans

When trying to characterise fans, scholars face two problems: First, to reproduce an outsider perspective that does not fit the fan's self-attributions, such as the reproduction of stereotypes. Second, to reproduce an emic viewpoint that neglects negative features of fan culture or leaves out information that fans see unfit for non-fans, for example because they have the potential of contributing to stereotypes. Using qualitative data and stressing the diversity and fluidity in fandoms can prevent the first problem; employing qualitative methods, thereby gaining inside knowledge into the field, can combat the second problem. This last point, inside knowledge, also refers to my position in the field - being both a fan and a researcher working with the method of autoethnography.

The qualitative and quantitative methods used in my research are reviewed in this chapter, including a discussion on the sampling and the case study. Overall, my research design emphasised qualitative methods, but also relied on quantitative methods to contextualise the qualitative data. While conducting my research, I realised that a multisided approach and use of mixed methods contributed to a more diverse set of data. This also influenced my research questions, stressing a personal level of individual experiences and relationships and how they are connected to the meta-level of fandom. The next chapter discusses the method of autoethnography and my position within the study.

5.1. Fan and Researcher – "Anthropology at home" and the Method of Autoethnography

As I did my empirical bachelor thesis on the same topic, but on a much smaller scale, there were some results that I anticipated. Also, because I am both a researcher and a fan, the findings, for the most part, fit into my own perception of being a Harry Potter fan, although some elements appeared within the results that I had not experienced or expected. The reflective approach on one's own position, within a field of research in which the researcher feels "at home", is connected to questions asked in the context of an "Anthropology at Home" and the method of autoethnography. In their article "Autoethnography: an Overview", the authors point out:

> When researchers do *autoethnography*, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences. (Ellis/Adams/Bochner 2011: 4)

Hence, writing from the perspective of an insider and of a researcher at the same time calls for a reflexive approach on one's own position within the field. This involves questions of accessibility and of how far one's own fan identity influenced the research. Having an "obvious" bias as a researcher helps to reflect upon one's own position and even enables a more open approach on the topic of subjectivity. What is important to note is that although the double role as researcher and fan can be seen as biased, the access to the fandom is much easier. Because fandoms are exclusive to fans, non-fans are often perceived as outsiders. Being able to talk in the "same" language, meaning to understand emic terms, inside jokes, symbols, and to have deep understanding of the fan object, is crucial to getting and retaining access to the field, as well as in analysing the data. This also was exemplified within the research with the Vienna Vanguards (VV, for short) when a journalist mistook the Thestral, a creature emic to the Harry Potter narrative (see illustration to

Ill. 8

right) on the VV emblem for a Pegasus (URL Kroisleitner 2015). This lack in understanding the Harry Potter reference and his misinterpretation of the symbol, instantly became an inside joke, which I would not have understood if it weren't for my intertextual knowledge concerning the Harry Potter narrative.

As discussed in the chapter on the theoretical framework, Henry Jenkins (1992) and his emic perspective deeply influenced the perception of fans and fandoms in the academic discourse within the field of fan studies (Duffett 2013: 16). With the emphasis on fan experiences and practices, rather than on consumption, Jenkins created awareness for the approach to research fans and being a fan at the same time – contributing to a discipline that encourages reflectivity and involvement.

My double role as a researcher and a fan also came with the responsibility to clarify my own role in the field. My constant reflection upon my actions and involvement in the field, being part of the method of autoethnography, was very important and also lead to interesting situations and findings. One example for this is linked to my participant observation with the Vienna Vanguards. As I found, despite them playing quidditch, a game that originated in the HP narrative, they talk very little about Harry Potter. With my presence in their trainings, the topic was forced. Nevertheless, I only truly realised what it means to write from an autoethnographic point of view when I faced the task to include ethnographic descriptions of

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the research process into my empirical chapters. I realised then that every story I had to tell about Harry Potter and the fieldwork involved me not as a bystander, not just as a researcher, but also as a fan. As noted by Ellis, Adam and Bochner (2011: 4) analysing experiences in the context of autoethnography, rather than just "telling them", is one criterion this method has to meet in the eye of social sciences.

5.2. Sampling Harry Potter Fans

The sampling was crucial to my master project because fan communities are not only delocalised, but worldwide, offline, and online acting networks of fans. Thus, the participants can be very hard to isolate. This is why I decided to pick a relatively small group that acts within the realms of Harry Potter fandom and look at them specifically as my research sample. According to "The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods", the process of selecting a sample involves two steps: "Within the broad process of *sampling,* choosing the actual sample is the second step in a two-step process, which begins with defining the population that is eligible for inclusion in the sample" (Given (Ed) 2008: 797). The first step, therefore, was to limit the sample to people who describe themselves as Harry Potter fans. Because this group is also very big, I further focused on a group which was more tangible. Therefore, I selected a sample group, which was not only characterised by being Harry Potter fans, but in a broader context is also part of another fan community.

5.2.1. "Nerds are allowed to love stuff" – Harry Potter Fans and the "Nerdfighters" Community

The fan community of *Nerdfighters* is characterised by a close relationship to multiple fandoms of pop cultural texts, such as TV-shows, books and their authors, and movies. Online activity can be described as the main focus in their interaction. But furthermore, local groups have formed that gather regularly, making participant observation and face-to-face interviews more accessible. The groups that I chose as a sample are localised in Austria, with lots of their members living in Vienna:

- Facebook (FB for short) group *Austrian Nerdfighters* (ca. 400 members, as of December 2015), with regular gatherings in Vienna
- FB group *Austrian Potterwatch* (ca. 70 members, as of December 2015)
- And, for my case study on fan practices and the appropriation of the HP narrative, the *Vienna Vanguards*, a quidditch team located in Vienna (ca. 25 members, as of September 2015)

By limiting the sample to Harry Potter fans within the Nerdfighters community, the sample was narrowed down. Over the course of my research, I engaged in one other FB group, as listed above, connected to the *Austrian Nerdfighters* by members who are part of both groups: the *Austrian Potterwatch.* Many of the members of the *Vienna Vanguards*, who represent the case study, are also members of the FB groups *Austrian Nerdfighters* and *Austrian Potterwatch.*

It has to be noted that not every Harry Potter fan is a Nerdfighter, nor every Nerdfighter is a Harry Potter fan. For this study the Nerdfighter community functioned as a sample because of the close relationship and interconnectedness of the two communities. The fan community of the Nerdfighters formed around the brothers Hank and John Green and their YouTube project *Vlogbrothers*. Initially, the project started in 2007 when the brothers decided to have one year of textless conversation after discovering that they hardly talked to each other. The public videos, therefore, are weekly updates of their lives, mixed with scientific discussions, pop culture, comedy, and music. The connection between the Nerdfighters and Harry Potter fans formed because of the Vlogbrothers' declarations of love for the books and movies in their videos. With Hank's song "Accio Deathly Hallows", the Harry Potter fan community helped the Vlogbrothers to become as popular as they are now.

Ill. 9: album cover for a compilation of Harry Potter themed music by the "Vlogbrother" Hank Green

Furthermore, John Green postulates in a video titled "Harry Potter Fans Win at Life" (uploaded 19.07.2009):

> "The [Harry Potter movie, annotation by. A.B.] was great, but the thirty minutes before the movie started was what I love about being a Nerd. Because Nerds like us are allowed to be un-ironically enthusiastic about stuff. [...] Nerds are allowed to love stuff, like 'jump up and down in your chair, can't control yourself' love it" (URL Video1).

In 2014, the Vlogbrothers made a survey in which more than 100,000 Nerdfighters participated. As one part of it they asked about the reading habits of the participants: the majority of people named J.K. Rowling as the author they read at least one book from. (URL Survey; URL Video2). Furthermore, out of 100,000 members on the online Nerdfighter

platform (URL ning) which closed down in February 2016, about 8500 were members of the group *Harry Potter Nerds*, next to smaller groups like *Nerds who are obsessed with Harry Potter* and *I want to go to Hogwarts*.

Concluding the discussion on the sampling, I next present the characteristics of the final sample, concerning age, gender, and occupation. All in all, my research partners were predominantly female students between the age of 19 and 26.

5.2.2. The Final Sampling

ad) semi-structured interviews
Within the semi-structured interviews with the Potter fans, the average age was 20, ranging from 16 to 23. Concerning the category of gender, most of my interviewees identified as female, one as gender fluid[14], and two as male. All of my interview partners were studying at University at the time of the interview, with the exception of one, who attended high school. All of them were currently living in Vienna, with the exception of one living in Passau. To meet the sample, it was necessary that the interview partners identified as Harry Potter fans. Furthermore, I chose to only interview people who had started reading the books before the release of the seventh, and final, book of the original series.

ad) survey Potter fans
The participants of the survey were predominantly between the age of 19 and 26, with only three each between 15 and 18, and 27 and 30. The majority identified as females, with a ratio of 34 women to four men. A majority of 27 participants were students at the time; the rest splits up into one pupil, nine people working and one person who checked the option "other". Nevertheless, the questionnaire did not consider students that work part-time. During my analysis, I had to exclude two questionnaires; one of them because it was not completed and the other because it did not meet my sample criteria, because the participant checked "neutral" on the question of whether he identified as a Harry Potter fan.

ad) survey Vienna Vanguards

_____

[14] according to Emily's wish the gender neutral pronouns *them, they* and *their* will be used in this study

The members of the Vienna Vanguards were predominantly female with a ratio of 14 women to seven men. 16 out of 21, at the time of the survey, were between the age of 20 and 23, five members being between 24 and 30 years old. Meeting the other sample group in regards to occupation, the Vanguards largely consisted of students, with the exception of two members. As with the other questionnaire, it did not consider students who were working part-time as "working", because the category I was interested in was if people were studying, not if people were working.

The strong emphasis on female fans in the sample was not a planned feature of the study, but occurred during the research project. By posting the interview request in the Facebook groups, I did not actively select the interview partners, but rather waited for them to contact me. In the case of the interviews with the HP fans, no male followed the request. The only two male interview partners for the interviews on Harry Potter ended up being members of quidditch teams (one of the Vienna Vanguards and one of the Passau based team, The Three River Dragons), both of whom I actively invited to take part. The question of why this gender gap occurred is not easy to answer. The all in all stronger participation of females in the studied Harry Potter communities is one reason among others. For my study, I used Zalon's book "Dear Mr. Potter. Letters of Love, Loss and Magic" to further contextualise my findings with experiences by fans. Nevertheless, the gender gap in the Harry Potter fan community is also represented in the contributions of fan letters, which were compiled in said book (Zalon: 2011). The majority of the printed letters, judging by the names, were sent in by girls and women.

5.3. Qualitative Research Methods

Because of their different settings, different methods were used in researching the sample groups. This also plays into the validity of my study, rather than relying on one or two methods a mixed methods approach was applied. Method pluralism can reveal more about a field of study and bring insights in questions asked by the researcher, as well as answers given by the people worked with in the study. Qualitative methods thus open up the possibility to get answers to questions not (yet) thought of by the researcher, by letting the interviewees speak for themselves. The use of qualitative research methods is one of the major characteristics of anthropological fieldwork. Participant observation and qualitative interviews are often called the pillars of anthropological fieldwork. For my study, I also relied on these two pillars, as discussed in the following sub-chapters. The Method of participant observation are part of my study both in an online (social media) and offline context (*Vienna*

Vanguards). The umbrella term of *participant observation* is a very broad one and has to be specified according to the research design.

5.3.1. Virtual Ethnography

The method of virtual ethnography can be seen as a form of participant observation, but it differs from the "traditional" form of the established offline ethnographic method. "The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research" points out: "Whereas an ethnographer would usually expect to observe on-going social existence within a chosen field site, interacting with its inhabitants and learning about their way of life, the virtual ethnographer becomes immersed in a virtual environment, observing and interacting using media appropriate to those who use that site" (Given (Ed) 2008: 921). My online participant observation focused on collecting data from Facebook groups (concerning Harry Potter, as well as the international quidditch community) and the Nerdfighter's online forum *Harry Potter Nerds* (URL ning forum). The research in the online spaces contextualises the data from the qualitative interviews and, therefore, can be seen as a more illustrative approach. In this case, my position as both a fan and a researcher comes into play, as I was active in the FB groups and the Nerdfighters forum before starting the research. This also relates to the aspect of participation. Although I was active in these groups before I started the research, I distanced myself from the idea of posing questions in the forums for the purpose of collecting data. This decision came hand in hand with me not wanting to interfere with the field, using the existing post rather than forcing topics or questions on the group's members, because the question was what topics were discussed in the forum by the members, as well as their reactions to the specific topics and questions posed by other members.

5.3.2. "Break a leg!" - Participant Observation with the Vienna Vanguards

My research with the Vienna Vanguards followed a more "traditional" approach to participant observation. "The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods" opens the chapter on participant observation as follows: "Participant observation is a method of data collection in which the researcher takes part in everyday activities related to an area of social life in order to study an aspect of that life through the observation of events in their natural contexts" (Given 2008: 598). To take part in the (open) trainings as a player was initially part of my research design. Unfortunately, I severely injured myself at the first open training I took part in, rupturing my cross-band in the right knee. This incident, although having a long lasting impact on my mobility, proved helpful in regards to my research, because it

connected me to the team. Also, because the injury was my own fault, it "accidentally" became an inside joke – "breaking the ice" with the team members and providing a topic to talk about other than Harry Potter. Because of the injury my research was limited to observing the games and trainings, rather than actively taking part in them. Furthermore, I got involved in other team activities, such as social activities and events like their participation at the Slavcon, a Sci-Fi and Fantasy Convention in Bratislava. As mentioned in the chapter concerning my autoethnographic approach, when regularly going to trainings, I found that there was no mention of Harry Potter and that my sheer presence had forced the topic in the beginning of my observation. This, for me, showed how important participant observation in a field can be and, furthermore, how the presence of a researcher can alter the field. Bernard (2006: 354) on the topic of reactivity:

> Participant observation reduces the problem of **reactivity**—of people changing their behaviour when they know that they are being studied. As you become less and less of a curiosity, people take less and less interest in your comings and goings. They go about their business and let you do such bizarre things as conduct interviews, administer questionnaires, and even walk around with a stopwatch, clipboard, and camera.

This involvement in the team, although I did not take part as a player, was legitimised by my status within the team as their "personal researcher". What I found during this research, but had also experienced in other research before that, is that having the role of a researcher within an established group requires constant work – being present is not only crucial for the collection of data, but also builds trust and contributes to becoming a part of "normality". In this context, it helps to get involved in the team and take up small tasks, such as taking photos, counting points, acting as a linesman, or even bringing a melon and marshmallows to a team barbecue. "Participation", therefore, not only relates to the central practices of one group, in this case playing quidditch, but also to everything else done as a group and within a group. When documenting my participant observation, I wrote observation reports. As part of my qualitative data, these reports were analysed and are, next to the interviews, an important set of data for my case study.

5.3.3. Qualitative Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were essential to my research and, next to the method of participant observation, were used to collect qualitative data. In anthropological research, semi-structured interviews are used to conduct interviews, which have a concrete topic and focus on an in-depth answering of the questions by the interviewee. "The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods" points out the differences between

structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews as follows: "The researcher has more control over the topics of the interview than in unstructured interviews, but in contrast to structured interviews or questionnaires that use closed questions, there is no fixed range of responses to each question" (Given (Ed) 2008: 838).

All in all, I conducted 14 interviews, which included over 20 hours of audio material from the semi-structured interviews. This count includes the interviews with the members of the Vienna Vanguards and the Facebook groups *Austrian Nerdfighters* and *Austrian Potterwatch,* as well as the podium discussion at the Slavcon, which I filmed. I revisited the interviews made over the course of my bachelor thesis in 2012 and decided to include a group interview with four Harry Potter fans in my data pool. This decision was based on the understanding that I had conducted enough individual interviews, but wanted to include a group interview to exemplify how opinions are shaped in a group setting. This characteristic of group interviews is also stressed by Mayring (2002: 76), who points out: "Viele Meinungen und Einstellungen sind so stark an soziale Zusammenhänge gebunden, dass sie am besten in sozialen Situationen – also in der Gruppe – erhoben werden können."

In my search for interview partners, I posted on the FB pages, explaining my research, and asking if someone would be interested in giving me an interview. The replies were very positive and, in the end, I made appointments with people that had time during the limited time frame I had set. The interviews took place in Vienna, except for the podium discussion in Bratislava and one interview that I did via Skype, due to the interview partners not being in Vienna. The interviews with the members of the Vienna Vanguards were also organised via Facebook. Two of my interview partners did both the interview on being a Harry Potter fan and the interview concerning their quidditch team – the Vienna Vanguards. Also, the interview with Kanishka, a quidditch player of the Passau based team, The Three River Dragons, was arranged when he and his team visited Vienna for a friendly match against the Vanguards. It took place via Skype, combining both the semi-structured interview compiled for the Harry Potter fans and members of the Vanguards.

An interview guide, as DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) point out, functions as a guideline throughout the interview. In comparison to a structured interview, the questions are not as fixed, giving both the interviewer and the interviewee space for an in-depth discussion of the topic. The structure of the semi-structured interview is predetermined by the interview guide, but can change during the interview. When, for example, a question is answered before it is asked or the interviewer decides to ask a question earlier. In the preparation of the interview

guide, a timeline should be considered which determines which questions are to be asked at which time. This structure can deeply influence the interview. (DiCicco-Bloom 2006: 316f). Flexibility during the interview leaves space for both the interviewer and the interviewee to open up new topics. While I had time to ask all my questions in each interview, the length of the interviews varies from 50 minutes to two hours following the same interview guide. This is not only related to the length of the answers given, but also due to the interest of the interview partners. The diversity of content makes each interview quite unique and exemplifies different approaches towards fandom, fan practices, and individual fan identity.

One problem which arose during many of the interviews and that I tried to confront is how fans are stereotyped by others, popular media, non-fans, as well as fans from both similar and different fandoms (Jenkins 1992: 10; see chapter 4.1.) These stereotypes and prejudices make it difficult at times for fans to speak about being a fan, their own identity, and talking about other fans in the fandom, as they may not want to contribute to stereotypes or do not want to fulfil them themselves. Being a fan myself helped with this difficulty in some cases. Nevertheless, because the interviews were recorded and the interviewees knew about the use of their interviews in my study, the worry of contributing to stereotypes was an issue, which needs to be addressed.

5.3.4. Photo Elicitation

In the interviews with the FB group members, I additionally put another method to use. The photo elicitation technique was introduced to get people to talk about their own experiences as fans and get deeper into the topic of how fans identify with characters of their fan object. In his book "Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research", Banks discusses visual methods and their use in research. He points out that photo elicitation:

> [...] involves using photographs to invoke comments, memory and discussion in the course of a semi-structured interview. Specific examples of social relations or cultural form depicted in the photographs can become the basis for a discussion of broader abstractions and generalities; conversely, vague memories can be given sharpness and focus, unleashing a flood of detail. (Banks 2007: 65)

For the method I selected ten symbols central to the Harry Potter narrative and fandom to show during the interviews. I then posed the question of what they associate with these symbols and if they think that non-fans could identify the symbols as being related to the Harry Potter narrative. Also, the interviewees were shown eight pictures of fan art, of the same character, by different creators – asking my interview partners what they thought of them, which they liked best, and why. These questions, alongside with the pictures, opened

up a discussion on the topic of being a fan, the identification with the fan object, and often revoked memories and ideas associated with the symbols (see attachment).

5.3.5. Qualitative Content Analysis

For the analysis of my qualitative data, I drew from the qualitative content analysis from Philipp Mayring. This method includes the analysis of the transcribed interviews, internet-posts, and the protocols of my offline participant observations. Qualitative content analysis is a method to process communication-based data. In a step-by-step process, the written text is summarised, reduced, generalised, and assigned to a code, with the goal to summarise similar quotes and themes under one code. The codes can then be used to establish a common thread throughout the analysis, using the same codes for all interviews and relying on the codes for the structure of the final writing. The codes can be oriented on theoretical concepts used in the paper or created from "within" the analysed data, or even a mixture of the two approaches. (Mayring 2002: 114ff; Mayring 1991: 209).

5.4. Mixed Methods Approach and Quantitative Research Methods

Although the emphasis of my research design is on qualitative methods, I used a mixed methods approach, underlining the results of the qualitative data with quantitative data. Thus, standardised questionnaires were used for the sample groups of my interview partners. Members of the *Austrian Nerdfighters* and *Austrian Potterwatch* got the same questionnaire, focusing on fan and fandom identity, as well as central markers of being a fan. For the *Vienna Vanguards,* a special questionnaire (see attachments) pointing out the questions of fan practice and the connection between quidditch and Harry Potter was arranged.

Using a mixed methods approach can definitely help show a bigger picture and contextualise the findings within a broader spectrum. Punch (2014: 303) argues that the main principle of a mixed method approach is to compensate for the weaknesses of each method and, at the same time, to benefit from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data. In anthropological research, however, the main methods are often qualitative. I found that conducting semi-structured interviews, as well as questionnaires within the same group, is helpful to contextualise the qualitative results with the quantitative data of the survey. Therefore, I relied on single choice and multiple choice questions in my questionnaires. Diekmann (2002: 408ff) points out the following positive aspects of questionnaires: a schematic and statistic comparability of the answers, a high implementation rate, a low time

effort for the participants, and a short evaluation process. The disadvantages of questionnaires are that their closed format and structure do not allow any additional information, other than the answers given within the closed categories. Also, once compiled and distributed, it is not possible to change the questionnaire, since it would no longer be comparable. Most importantly, the questions and answers have to be understandable for the survey's participants. The answer categories should be balanced and there should be room for neutral options, as well as a third category within yes/no questions.

For the analysis of the questionnaires, I used the program SPSS. I chose this program because I had worked with it before over the course of my bachelor thesis project. Basically, the program creates a mask for the survey, in which the response categories are coded as numbers. In the next step, the numbers that equal the checked options on the individual questionnaires are entered into the matrix. The basic analysis of the data, such as the creation of frequency and cross tabulations does not require detailed knowledge in programming or statistics.

6. "Did someone say Harry Potter?" – Identity, Community, Fan Practices and Material Culture

Being a fan can be both something that is carried to the outside world, as well as something very private. It can constitute a relationship to a broader fandom and, in the sense of global fandom, connects people across the borders of nations, language, gender, age and ethnicity. Moreover, it can also be something private, hidden, and something, which constitutes a relationship to a specific time, person, or aspect of one's identity. How fans relate to the fan object cannot be generalised. However, there are key aspects of how fans relate to the fan object and negotiate their fan identity in regards to their personal identity, as well as to the fandom in general and fan communities in particular.

This chapter and its sub-chapters discuss the empirical findings of my fieldwork as described in the chapter on methods. Eleven semi-structured interviews and 38 questionnaires are the basis for the following analysis. Furthermore, quotes from the book "Dear Mr. Potter – Letters of Love, Loss, and Magic" by Lily Zalon (2011), are used to underline my findings with written statements by fans. Fan created content, such as fan art and other online posts are used to give visual inputs on the various topics. The theoretical approaches, which are discussed in

depth in the chapter on the theoretical framework, are included in the analysis. Within the sub-chapters, the following questions will be discussed:

> *- What are the characteristics of being a Harry Potter fan?*
>
> *- How do Harry Potter fans perceive their relationship to the fan object?*
>
> *- How do identity, personal experiences and relationships shape the experience of being a Harry Potter fan?*
>
> *- What characterises the relationships between fans, fandom and fan communities?*
>
> *- What mechanisms of identification do the relationship between fan and fandom im-ply?*
>
> *- What practices are central to being a Harry Potter fan and where do they take place?*
>
> *- How do material culture and the use of symbols construct and signalise fan identity?*
>
> *- In how far do objects and practices of the fictional Potterverse move into the real world, by being used and practiced by fans?*

6.1. The Harry Potter Generation – Harry Potter Fans and the Fascination for the Potterverse

> When Harry got his letter from Hogwarts, I wondered what it'd be like to get a letter of my own someday. When Harry had his first kiss, it wasn't long until I had mine. When Harry was learning to Apparate I was learning to drive. As I followed Harry on his journey, I was living my own. Though I wasn't consciously aware of it at the time, I was growing up with him. Harry Potter was my childhood. (Ashley A., in: Zalon 2011: 47)

This quote, taken from Lily Zalon's book "Dear Mr. Potter. Letters of Love, Loss and Magic" (2011), exemplifies how fans relate to their fan objects, identifying with characters and the story line. As I have argued in the introduction of this thesis, being a fan is informed by emotional investment (see also Jenkins 1992: 56). This chapter and its sub-chapters discuss the question of in how far fan identity is seen as central for the personal identity of fans. Furthermore, it examines the emic definition of what characterises a Harry Potter fan and what they find fascinating about the Harry Potter narrative. This includes a discussion on the HP fan's self-attribution as the *Harry Potter generation* and how the narrative's concept of house identity is adapted by fans of the Potterverse.

6.1.1. "A passion!" – Characteristics of Potter Fans and the Fascination for the Narrative

Relating to my autoethnographic approach, 'Knowing what it means to be a fan' can be named as one characteristic of Harry Potter fans – creating community through a common experience. This notion not only relates to fellow Harry Potter fans, but also to people who

are fans in general – creating a common ground of being excited about something. In my interviews, this was also stressed by Bea, aged 16, who was the youngest of my interview partners. She stated that she can open up to people about being a Harry Potter fan, even when they are not fans themselves, given that they are fans of something:

> Es erleichtert Dinge. Wenn sie gleich von Anfang an sagen, dass sie etwas wirklich lieben und darüber sehr oft reden. Weil ich dann weiß, dass es dann sicher ist, dass ich das auch machen kann und dass sie mich dann nicht gleich schräg abstempeln, das muss nicht unbedingt ein Buch oder eine Serie oder so etwas sein, einfach irgendwas. Eine Passion! (Bea)

As argued above, the emotional investment of fans, their passion, and their love for their fan object informs personal fan identity and constitutes fandom as a shared experience (also see chapter 4.2). Melanie, a 21-year-old social worker, who discovered Harry Potter in elementary school, answered the question "What makes a Potter fan?" as follows:

> Die Liebe zu der ganzen Welt einfach! Denk ich mir, und einfach dieses Herz dafür haben und sich auch dort hin wünschen manchmal. (Melanie)

The relationship between fan and fan object is therefore constituted as love for the fictional world. In this context, Mark Duffett (2013: 25) argues that identifying oneself as a fan should be seen as a central cultural and personal process in fandom. Because the intensity of emotional investment is not scientifically measurable, he argues for an approach that relates to the fan's experiences and connection to the fan object, stressing: "At some initial point the fan has to deeply connect with, and love – or at least be fascinated by – the object of their interest" (Duffett 2013: 25).

Furthermore, this emotional involvement refers to a familiarity and identification with the narrative's characters, which will be discussed in depth later on. The intense involvement of fans in the narrative is marked by a shared state of passion and enthusiasm, and the practice of reflecting on the narrative, its storylines, and characters. The emotional investment also seems to go hand in hand with fans being protective of their fan object[15], as the following quote by Agi, a 23 year old art student, exemplifies:

> [...] also normal weiß ich schon, wenn jemandem etwas nicht so gut gefällt was ich gern mag, dass das kein persönlicher Angriff ist, ... (lachen) aber bei Harry Potter ....

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[15] This protective stance is also made towards new content by copyright holders, such as the upcoming Warner Bros movies, as will be further discussed in the chapter on fan practice and transmedia.

(lachen)... ist das dann an bisschen problematisch (lachen) also ich reagier dann recht rabiat manchmal, wenn jemand Harry Potter disst. (Agi, in: group interview)

I first met Agi while being employed at an English cinema in Vienna. Her boyfriend, a colleague of mine, introduced us because of our common interest – Harry Potter. At the time I was working on my bachelor thesis on Harry Potter fans and from the moment I told her, she was enthusiastic about it. When she heard that Gloria Withalm, lecturer at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, was teaching a class on Harry Potter titled "15 Jahre Harry Potter. Potterverse, Romane, Filme, Fanprodukte, Websites" (see URL uni-ak) she asked me to join her in the seminar. We were both excited for the opportunity, but also, Agi confessed that she was worried about mean comments on the narrative she connected to so deeply. In the first session, we both wore Hogwarts scarfs, Withalm gave a short introduction to the narrative and its history, and one student raised his hand and asked: "Sorry, what is a *Muggle*?" Although this resembled a neutral question and not a mean comment, as she had feared, I will never forget her look of disapproval.

Fans see the Potterverse as a place of comfort, which is protected against people who do not know what it means to be a fan (of the franchise). Taking pride in being a fan, thus often reflects fan identity and a sense of community, which is best exemplified by the Harry Potter fandom slogan 'it's real for us'. The use of this slogan refers to the intertextual knowledge that is inherent to being a fan. In this example, the phrase originally was used by the character of Severus Snape in the books (Rowling: 2007) and was appropriated by the fans as a central slogan for the fandom:

> It's real for us. [...] der Spruch trifft auf das fandom zu. [...] Es ist klar, dass es Fiktion ist, aber es ist einfach real für uns weil es uns begleitet hat und .. uns zu dem macht was wir sind, deswegen ist es für uns in einer gewissen Art und Weise real. (Melanie)

Reading and rereading, as a central fan practice, reflects the original medium of the story – reading the books (repeatedly), therefore, it is often named as the most basic requirement of being a 'true' Harry Potter fan. This characteristic is also underlined by the answers given in the questionnaires: 100% of all fans asked had read all seven Harry Potter books of the original book-series, a majority of 57.9% read them 6 times or more often, 36.8% 2-5 times, leaving two fans who only read them one time on average. Another characteristic of fans, which was made clear in my study, is that they own stuff related to the fan object, both official merchandise and fan created stuff – from books and DVDs, to clothing, jewellery, and replicas of items used in the movies.

These characteristics of Harry Potter fans also meet the characteristics of fans discussed in the literature - passion and enthusiasm, emotional investment and practice and intertextual knowledge (see chapter 4.3). Nevertheless, the question "what makes a true Harry Potter fan", when posed in the interviews, was often answered reluctantly – judging others for their fan practice was largely avoided or immediately qualified (see also chapter 5.4.3). More often the emotional investment and the relationship between 'true' fan and fan object were stressed. Reading the books, as the basic practice, is also explained by the passion for the fan object:

> Wenn du Leidenschaft hast, dann hast du alle Bücher zehnmal gelesen [...]. Und deswegen, wenn jemand sagt er hat nur die letzten vier Bücher gelesen oder so, aber deswegen ist er ein genauso großer Harry Potter Fan, ich mein ich verstehe es schon, das Argument und ich will keinen schlecht machen weil er die Bücher nicht gelesen hat, das ist mir ja egal, aber für mich ich das schwierig, weil wenn ich etwas so sehr mag, dann will ich alles konsumieren was es gibt und deswegen, das kann ich halt nicht verstehen. (Connie)

This line of reasoning opened up the questions of what informs the enthusiasm and passions of fans for their fan object and what fascinates fans in regards to the narrative. Most of these points will be discussed in depth in the following chapters, especially in regards to fan practice. Nevertheless, it is important to establish the following three features as the most named reasons why fans find Harry Potter fascinating and, furthermore, as the main reasons for their on-going engagement with the narrative[16]:

1) The first feature addresses the detailed and complex storytelling, as explained in the following interview quote by the Finnish exchange student and quidditch coach Anna:

> I think the kind of world Rowling created was so wide, so detailed and so incredibly rich. Like, when I was younger, it was like literally diving into something and no matter how deep you dived, there was always something more. (Anna)

This feature also relates to the aspect of world building in Harry Potter, such as that the world is constructed as a parallel universe to the contemporary (British) society. By creating the

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16 The unity of these features was also stressed in the argument that the experience of the Harry Potter narrative is not only limited to young readers, but also relates to adult readers: "Harry Potter war irgendwie etwas … das ist nicht auf eine bestimmte Altersklasse beschränkt und das hab ich auch nie so gesehen, ich finde das kann man immer lesen, egal wie alt man ist" (Max_b).

Potterverse as a parallel world, J.K. Rowling laid grounds for identification and, even more than that, encouraged readers to imagine being part of the story. The following interview quote by Kanishka, an Indian exchange student living in Passau, addresses this matter:

> The story takes place in a world where normal life still exists; in a way everybody could be a wizard. Like you could get a letter from Hogwarts when you are eleven, and I think that was really interesting, and it made the characters really relatable. Like Harry especially, since he did not know he was a wizard until he got the letter from Hogwarts. He was just like any geeky, young kid in the UK. And that was relatable for everyone, that someone who was so normal and so average could experience such great things and transcend into a big hero in a completely parallel environment. (Kanishka)

2) The second feature reflects the narrative's diverse characters and the characters' development throughout the book series:

> Ich glaub es hat einfach eine Geschichte in dieser Form vorher noch nicht gegeben und das hat irgendwie einen Grundstein für viele magische Fantasiewelten gesetzt, weil es den Nerv der Zeit getroffen hat, irgendwie. Und ja, es ist einfach wirklich gut durchdacht. Einfallsreich, und die Charaktere sind alle sehr glaubwürdig und entwickeln sich auch toll über diese ganze Reihe. ... Und es gibt einfach so viele Charaktere mit denen man sich identifizieren kann. Also, ich glaube das ist ganz wichtig. (Emily)

This aspect, underlined with a quote by Emily, aged 21, will be discussed further when talking about the identification of fans with characters (see chapter 6.1.3).

3) The third feature addresses the topics and values the books discuss, such as bravery, love, trust, charity, honesty, courage, solidarity, friendship, and family. These values are not only seen as interesting features of the story, but also relate to the experience of fans, referring to how Harry Potter changed or benefited their life. This we can see from the following quote by Nathan, which is part of his letters as published in Zalon's book (2011):

> Harry, I would not be the person I am today if it were not for you. I would never have learned to stand up for the things I believe in. I owe you so much because you taught me so much. You make me dare to be brave, to love, and to sacrifice for the people I care about. You taught me that […] love is the most powerful weapon there is. (Nathan, in: Zalon 2011: 48)

Referring to these three features, it can be argued that an important characteristic of (Harry Potter) fans is that they, on some level, perceive their fan identity as central for their personal development. This is also expressed in the results of the analysis of the questionnaires: 86.8% agreed that Harry Potter influenced their beliefs and values, 84.2% stated that the narrative influenced their reading habits and 68.4% checked either "strongly agree" or "agree" on the question of whether Harry Potter influenced their hobbies and interests.

<u>6.1.2. "A place to call home" – Growing up with Harry Potter</u>

During the interviews, I found that the period during which one becomes a fan is perceived as crucial for the fan's individual involvement in the narrative. One explanation for why Harry Potter fans perceive their fan identity as central for their personal identity, which can be found in every interview, is the idea of being part of the *Harry Potter generation*.

The average age of my interview partners was 20, and most of the participants of the questionnaire survey were between the age of 19 and 26. The first novel "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" was first published in 1997, followed by the first German translation "Harry Potter und der Stein der Weisen" in 1998. In 2001, the first Harry Potter movie was released. Being born in 1989, I was eleven years old when I saw the first movie in the cinema, making me the same age as Harry and his friends when I was first introduced to the narrative. In 2007, when I was 18, the last novel in the Harry Potter book series was published, in which the main characters were 18 as well. The last movie was released in cinemas in 2011. Hence, the time span for the release of new Harry Potter books and movies based in the original narrative is set between 1997 and 2011. That makes 14 potential years for people to engage in the narrative, while still having to wait for new content. Members of the self-proclaimed *Harry Potter generation* are thus characterised through a time span, in which they shared the same age with the main characters – growing up with Harry Potter, as well as waiting for new content based on the original. These dynamics were also discussed by Kanishka, who stated:

> I think how for me is a significant part of me growing up, you know? Like it's been there. I was kind of lucky that the books and the movies - Harry's age of the movies at least was very similar to mine growing up. I was probably 17 or 18 when the last movie came out. And so it was very relatable. It kind of felt like I was growing up with Harry or I kind of knew Harry through the books and he was like any other friend of mine, so it was a really important part of growing up for me. That is what makes it really special. [...] My generation would probably be the Harry Potter generation, because the hype of waiting in line for the books and the excitement when each book came out, each movie came out – like, my generation felt it. Every generation after me will have Harry Potter, but they will not really know what it felt like to wait for each book, you know? That excitement, they won't feel it. (Kanishka)

we defended the Stone, we found the Chamber, we freed the Prisoner, we were chosen by the Goblet, we fought alongside the Order, we learned from the Prince and we mastered the Hallows

we are the Harry Potter generation

Ill. 10

HARRY POTTER HAS REACHED OUT TO AN ESTIMATE OF 200 COUNTRIES, SPOKE OUT IN OVER 69 LANGUAGES AND HAS TOUCHED THE LIVES OF MORE THAN 400 MILLION PEOPLE. IT IS THE PHENOMENON THAT IGNORES RACE, AGE, GENDER OR RELIGION AND IT HAS BROUGHT US TOGETHER DESPITE ALL OUR DIFFERENCES.

WE ARE THE HARRY POTTER GENERATION.

POPGOESTHEPATRONUS.TUMBLR.COM

Ill. 11

Year	Event
1997	„Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (novel)
1998	„Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" (novel)
1999	„Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" (novel)
2000	„Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (novel)
2001	„Fantastic Beast and Where to Find Them" (book) „Quidditch Through the Ages" (book) „Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (film)
2002	„Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" (film)
2003	„Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" (novel)
2004	„Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" (film)
2005	„Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" (novel) „Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (film)
2007	„Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" (novel) „Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" (film)
2008	„The Tales of Beedle the Bard" (book)
2009	„Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" (novel)
2010	„Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 1" (film) opening „Islands of Adventure" (theme park; Orlando, Florida)
2011	„Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2" (film)
2012	launching of *Pottermore* (homepage) opening „King's Cross Shop" (official merchandise shop)
2013	opening „Warner Bros. Studio Tour London" (exhibition)
2014	opening „The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" (Orlando) opening „The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" (Osaka)
2015	launching the new *Pottermore* (homepage)
2016	„Fantastic Beast and Where to Find Them" (film) „Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" (stage play) „Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" (script) opening „The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" (Hollywood)

Ill.12 by Alena Brunner

Waiting for new content can be seen as an important feature of being and staying engaged in the narrative. Because of publication dates, fans had to wait for new books and movies to be released. In this context, the long waiting period between books four and five is sometimes called "the long summer" (URL Podcast: 00:15:30). During these waiting periods, fan practices were enforced in anticipation of the next canonical release. This also explains why fans of the Harry Potter series re-read the books, or re-watched the movies so often, accompanied by forming theories on how the story will continue, "filling the gaps", and bonding with other fans over the fan object (see chapter 4.3.). The notion of the Harry Potter generation also implies that people who now get engaged in the narrative, miss the experience of being part of that said generation:

> Es gibt auch viele die sagen: 'Ich hab es erst jetzt gelesen und ich beneide euch sehr dass ihr damit aufgewachsen seid' und so. Es ist was ganz anderes, überhaupt weil auch in der Zeit zwischen zwei Büchern, wo man solange warten muss, kommen ja Theorien auf und alles und man kann so lange darüber reden. Man nimmt es auseinander ins Kleinste und da müssen Leute viel aufholen, wenn sie jetzt anfangen zu lesen. Und da ist schon ein bisschen *intimidation* da für neue Fans, ja, ein bisschen Neid auch. (Kathryn)

The aspect of "growing up with Harry Potter" also implements a common association – conceptualising Harry Potter as an important part, or even the essence, of their childhood or teen years. In this context, Dorothea, who started reading Harry Potter in elementary school, stressed the connection between Harry Potter and her childhood by arguing: "[…] würde ich spontan fünf Begriffe nennen die meine Kindheit beschreiben, wäre Harry Potter ganz sicher unter den ersten zwei" (Dorothea). This notion can be explained by the emotional investment in the storyline and the characters, such as Harry being an orphan boy who first finds a home and friends when he himself is introduced to the magical world by being accepted into Hogwarts. Relating to this, the Harry Potter narrative is not only seen as a place of comfort, but a place of belonging and a place where one can escape to - a place to call home. As the following quote exemplifies:

> Thank you Mr. Potter for being there when I needed a place to escape for just a little while to a place where anything could happen. Thank you for making my childhood magical. Thank you J.K. Rowling for giving me Hogwarts, a place I can and will always call home. (Kelsey K., in: URL DearMrPotter)

In their article, Harrington and Bielby (2010) discuss fandom in the context of adult development. Life courses in this context are conceptualised "[…] through general patterns of stability and transition, not evolutionary or hierarchical sequences or stages" (Harrington/ Bileby 2010: 430). The authors argue that popular media and media texts are used as reference points for personal development: "Media texts and technologies help unite cohorts, define generations and cross-generational differences, and give structure and meaning to

our lives as they unfold" (ibid: 431). The self-attribution *Harry Potter generation*, in this context can be seen as one example of a group that claims identity on the grounds of a popular narrative. By choosing this title, the affinity with the Harry Potter fandom is legitimised, because it is seen to be inherent to growing up in a specific time span. When the last novel in the Harry Potter series was published in 2007, Malcolm Jones of Newsweek concluded:

> The sadness that many readers will experience ... has nothing to do with the fate of the characters and everything to do with ... the end of childhood. The readers who have grown up with this series – who have read it, as it were, in real time as it unfolds – are themselves at that end. Saying goodbye to Harry is like saying goodbye to a piece of themselves. (Jones 2007, quoted in Harrington/ Bielby 2010: 449)

Nevertheless, the identification with the characters and the storyline is not limited to the experience made as children, but is carried forward because of the established relationship between fans and the narrative. Fan identity is thus not stable or fixed but is negotiated with the fans' personal identities and experiences across time (Harrington/Bielby 2010: 438ff). Hall's discursive approach on identification as a process (Hall 1996:2; also see chapter 4.5) accounts for re-positioning oneself in regards to the fan object and accounts for shifts in the perception of the same. How these shifts are apparent in the biography of fans is exemplified by Anna's experiences:

> For me it was always like going to another world, it was getting to daydream and going somewhere and being able to relate to these people. And like I said, as I grew up it was always there waiting for me. It was like having this nice cup of hot tea, and a blanket, and curling there, and that is how it felt reading the books. And sometimes, if I feel miserable or bad I just start reading the Harry Potter books […], even if it's like reading one chapter when I'm eating a dinner or something. It's like something you know is always going to be there. (Anna)

Ill. 13

As we can see from this quote, Anna's relationship with the fan object shifted, but, nevertheless, the emotional investment in the narrative is persistent – the Potterverse as a place of comfort is experienced as a place fans can always go back to. This was further established by the narrative's author, J. K. Rowling, in her speech at the opening of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part Two" (2011) claiming: "No story lives unless someone wants to listen. […] The stories we love best do live in us forever. So, whether you come back by page or by big screen, Hogwarts will always be there to welcome you home" (URL Speech). This assurance by the author was also picked up by the Harry Potter fan and musician Lauren Fairweather, in her song "Home" (URL Home):

> […] JK Rowling once said
> that Hogwarts will always
> be there to welcome you home.
> Just like magic, it seems
> these books can make you
> feel like you're never alone.
> You've become a part of me
> And I take you wherever I go
> Harry, I'm coming home
> Harry, I'm coming home […]

Referring to Harrington and Bielby (2010), being part of the Harry Potter generation, growing up with Harry Potter, and recognising it as a central part of one's childhood, legitimises the emotional involvement with the fan object. The relationship formed is thereby ground for an emotional bond, which is transferred into adulthood. Nevertheless, the experience of being a Harry Potter fan is not limited to people who first experienced the story as children. In this context, adult fans refer to other experiences when talking about their involvement with the fan object. The book "Dear Mr. Potter. Letters of Love, Loss and Magic" (Zalon 2011) gives insights into these personal experiences of adult readers, by telling stories of parents bonding with their children over Harry Potter (Jim, in: Zalon 2011: 46); others are reminded of their school days (Lisa in: Zalon 2011: 79), as well as stories of admiration for the characters. Likewise, the author and "Vlogbrother" John Green (see chapter 5.3.1) writes about Harry Potter: "I loved you for your reluctant heroism, for your curiosity, and – although you were 13 and I was 20 – our shared inability to figure out how to say the things we wanted to say to girls" (John, in: Zalon 2011: 69). This quote exemplifies what was also named as one characteristic of Harry Potter fans: the familiarity and identification with characters of the narrative. The next chapter discusses this emotional bond.

6.1.3. "My inner Hermione was really strong" – Identification with, and Fascination for the Characters

The fan's perception of the fan object is important, as it is perceived as a story with diverse characters, this lays the grounds for the possibility to identify, at least with one of the (main) characters. Taking into account that Rowling's depiction of the characters is generally perceived as being very detailed and complex, all fans that filled out the quantitative questionnaire stated that they feel very familiar (63.2%) or familiar (36.8%) towards the characters of the narrative. This familiarity is also related to the notion of growing up with the characters and, because of the practice of rereading, the characters became a part of one's life, as did the narrative itself:

> […] ich glaub es ist auch einfach wirklich weil ich damit aufgewachsen bin, weil ich die Charaktere schon so lange kenn, dass sie mir vorkommen als würde ich sie wirklich kennen, [...] als wären sie nicht nur Charaktere, sondern einfach weil ich die Geschichten so gut kenne, ist es schon so ein Teil von mir. (Susi)

Although Harry Potter is the main character of the story, I found in my research that many of the female fans that I interviewed, at one point, strongly identified with the character of Hermione Granger, Harry's best female friend and "brightest witch of her age" (Rowling 1999). This also relates to Anna's experiences as a young girl:

> When I was growing up, I was kind of a total Hermione, because I was the friendless nerd, who was the teacher's pet – I still get Christmas cards from my preschool teachers. I was the one who did homework during class, and after class I went to the teacher and asked if I could do something more, because I already finished everything. [...] So it was really nice as a young girl to read about another one, who is maybe a bit know-it-all and people find it annoying, but who is still proud of being so smart and hardworking and it was really nice – my inner Hermione was really strongly there. (Anna)

This quote by Anna exemplifies how identification with a specific character is enabled. In distinction to finding characters fascinating, identifying with a specific character is based on common experiences. To link one's own character traits to those of characters, not only enables identification, but also to draw strength from common experiences. Hence, fans draw inspiration and strength from the identification with specific characters:

> Leute die [...] dieselben Probleme oder ähnliche Probleme hatten wie die Charaktere im Buch oder in den Filmen eben, können dadurch dass sie die Bücher lesen und die Filme sehen, und sehen: 'Okay, es gibt Leute oder Charaktere die ähnliche oder gleiche Probleme haben wie ich – ich bin nicht alleine' [...] lernen, glaub ich, damit besser umzugehen. Also ich hab auch ganz sicher dadurch gesehen: Okay es ist kein schlechtes Ding, wenn du eine Hermine bist – du weißt halt viel, lass die Leute eifersüchtig sein darüber, dass du mehr weißt als sie .. keine Ahnung. .. Es ist nichts wofür man sich schämen muss, sondern man kann eigentlich stolz darauf sein. (Dorothea)

Also, this is not exclusive to one character, identification as a process is not stabile or fixed, but is negotiated through the process of reading and, even more important, in the practice of rereading. Thus, different characters or character traits can be important over time, depending on the reader's perception of themselves and the problems the readers face; as argued by Dorothea when asked who she identified with strongest:

> Am Anfang immer mit Hermine, weil ich war [...] auch eher immer die, die ein bisschen gehänselt wurde dafür dass sie so viel weiß. [...] Und dann später war es Luna wahrscheinlich (lacht) weil sie doch eine sehr abstrakte Denkweise hat und das ist bei mir dann mit zunehmendem Alter auch so geworden. (lacht) Dass viele Leute denken, bei manchen Sachen die ich sage oder denke so: 'Okay, ... ich versteh es nicht ganz, aber es wird schon passen'. (Dorothea)

To be able to draw strength, inspiration, and motivation from the narrative is rooted in the intertextual knowledge of fans, as well as the established relationship with the characters, as the following quote by Agi exemplifies:

> Ich weiß nicht, ich kann mir vorstellen, dass wenn jetzt jemand in einer schwierigen Situation ist wo man zum Beispiel Mut braucht, ich mein das muss jetzt ja nicht gleich sein dass man die Welt rettet, sowie Harry das machen musste. (lachen) Aber ich mein, irgendwas, [...] ein Bewerbungsgespräch oder so etwas wo man halt Mut braucht und dann kann man sich denken: ‚Ja, Harry war auch mutig, also kann ich auch mutig sein'. (lachen) Sozusagen, sich selbst ein bisschen zu motivieren. (Agi, in: group interview)

In this context, it is important to note that the distinction between fascination for and identification with characters is seen as crucial within the fandom. Both features are central for experiencing the story on a personal level, identification makes the story more approachable, while fascination for characters, which often includes fascination for antagonists, as the next quote by Anna shows, makes the story more thrilling and complex:

> If we talk about story lines, I really loved stuff like Voldemorts, I love Snapes, I loved Lupins really much and those were really the ones that I don't identify with, but they were always fascinating. And every time their names are mentioned you really like poked up and you really were interested in what they had to say about these characters. (Anna)

Hereby, we can see that a favourite character potentially impacts the perception of the narrative. This also was described by Connie, when talking about her "go-to-person" in the narrative, Ron Weasley, who is Harry's best male friend:

> [...] Ron Weasley ist halt für mich mein Ansatzpunkt. Ich bin ihm gar nicht ähnlich im nach hinein, als Kind hätte ich das nicht gesagt: 'Oh ich bin ganz wie Ron Weasley' oder so einen Blödsinn, aber im Endeffekt ist er so meine go-to-person. (Connie)

Connie's favouring of the character of Ron Weasley is also expressed in her fan practices, as we will see in chapter 6.3.5. The favourite character of a fan, thereby, does not have to be

the character they identify with the most, nor a character they find the most likable. Because of the involvement in the narrative, fans form a bond with characters they find fascinating, drawing from their complex depiction:

> [...] mein Lieblingscharakter ist Bellatrix Lestrange. Weil ich sie einfach cool find und ich liebe Bösewichte. Und sie ist einfach wirklich böse und irgendwie noch grausamer in ihrer Art als Voldemort und deswegen mag ich sie voll gern. (Emily)

Ill. 14: actress *Helena Bonham-Carter as Bellatrix Lestrange*

Ill. 15: Emily dressed as Bellatrix for a costume party in 2007

6.1.4. Slytherclaw and Gryffinpuff – House Identity and the Institution of Pottermore

The fascination for certain characters is also a basis for positioning oneself in the narrative. In this context, the structure and perspective of Rowling's narration has to be taken into account. The Harry Potter novels are told from a third person limited narrator, telling the story, except for a few passages, from Harry's perspective. Because of this, fans often question the depiction of characters, as we can see from the following quote by Kathryn:

> [...] Slytherin ist halt in den Büchern auch sehr typisch böse gezeichnet. [...] Pansy Parkinson und Crabbe und Goyle sind alle gemein und hässlich irgendwie – das ist voll gemein! Man kann nicht das ganze Haus hässlich und gemein machen, das ist nicht fair. Und das sag ich nicht nur weil ich Slytherin bin. Aber es ist natürlich aus Harrys Sicht und so weiter und so fort. (Kathryn)

73

In addition to the identification with the (main) characters, the Potterverse enables identification on the grounds of the four Hogwarts houses [17] : Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw and Slytherin. In the books, the four houses play an important role in the structure of the school and the narrative itself. The school's houses can be seen as categories established through character traits they resemble and encourage. At the start of each school year the new students of Hogwarts get sorted into one of the houses and call it home for the rest of their time at

Ill. 16: Hermione (Emma Watson) gets sorted into Gryffindor, in Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (2001)

Hogwarts. In the sorting ceremony, the Sorting Hat, a bewitched wizard hat, decides which of the houses fits young witches and wizards by reading their minds. In his own words, the Sorting Hat describes the houses as follows:

You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell the brave at heart,
Their daring, nerve, and chivalry
Set   Gryffindors   apart;

You might belong in Hufflepuff,
Where they are just and loyal,
Those patient Hufflepuffs are true
And   unafraid   of   toil;

Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
if   you've   a   ready   mind,
Where those of wit and learning,
Will   always   find   their   kind;

Or   perhaps   in   Slytherin
You'll make your real friends,
Those cunning folks use any means
To   achieve   their   ends.
(Rowling 1997)

Gryffindor, the house into which Harry and his friends are sorted at the beginning of their first school year, stands at the centre of the narrative. Slytherin, as pointed out by Kathryn (see quote above), is largely depicted as negative – housing the antagonists and more ambivalent characters of the story. The houses Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw are mostly represented by side characters and contribute to frame the story lines in Hogwarts in a larger social setting.

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[17] the analysis of the quantitative questionnaire showed that out of 38 participants 35 identify with one of the houses.

As the analysis of my interviews shows, the identification of fans with one of the Hogwarts houses is informed by the Sorting Hat's premise of sorting the students into houses they find fitting for themselves. Harry's sorting into Gryffindor, for example, is largely influenced by Hagrid's[18] comment that the Slytherin house produces a lot of dark wizards (Rowling 1995). This remark led Harry to actively tell the Sorting Hat that he does not want to be placed in Slytherin. Which character traits one values and aspires to, therefore, is seen to be the most important factor in choosing one's house:

> [...] ich mein Gryffindor ist sicher das Haus in das ich wollen würde, also insofern schätz ich hätte mich der Sprechende Hut nach Gryffindor sortiert. Ich weiß aber nicht ob ich jetzt am meisten Gryffindor Eigenschaften in mir hab. Ich mein es ist sowieso so, dass jeder einzelne Elemente aus allen Häuser, glaub ich, in sich hat und es mehr oder weniger die eigene Entscheidung ist was man an sich selbst am meisten schätzt. (Max_b)

In the process of choosing a house,one's own personality is negotiated – stressing character traits to fit the description:

> I mean Slytherin always was one of my favourite houses, mostly because I was all ‚misunderstood Emo youth' with no friends. But, I could relate to kind of level of ambition and doing whatever is necessary to get what you want and I don't necessary see that as a bad thing, that kind of cunning, ambitiousness and well, I'm now a business major, so (laughs) this is probably it. But I never saw anything wrong with this, and I kind of identified with misunderstood, evil guys. But, I kind of like that house, I'm totally Slytherin in the heart (Anna).

Hence, her placing in Slytherin also relates to Anna's fascination for the antagonists of the story.

With the instalment of the online platform Pottermore in 2011, and the included house-sorting-test, *belonging* to a house was made available to the fans. Because Rowling contributed to the platform and to the creation of the test, the house in which fans got sorted into can be seen as institutionalised, insofar as they are established as a transmedial part of a broader defined canon. In this context Jenkins (2013) argued that, as part of fan practice and participation, fans made online house sorting tests before the emergence of Pottermore. Nevertheless, the institutionalised format sparked more controversy because of Rowling's involvement. Her being the creator of the Potterverse, the online house sorting test was largely perceived as authentic – as "the real deal". This lead to various reactions by fans who

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[18] a trusted friend and employee of Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts, Hagrid is the first person to tell Harry about his magic abilities and sees to it that he gets his acceptance letter for the school (Rowling 1995)

were sorted into the "right" or "wrong" house, depending on their original identification; leading to fans sometimes taking the test more than once. In retrospect, this development contributed to the fans' negotiation of their now institutionalised house identity and personal identity, often also stressing that the Sorting Hat would take personal preferences into account:

> Ich hab zwei Accounts, weil ich irgendwann mal gehört hab, dass der Test nur richtig ausgewertet wird, wenn man ihn auf Englisch macht, das heißt ich hab ihn einmal auf Deutsch gemacht und war Slytherin und dann einmal auf Englisch und war Ravenclaw, aber inzwischen find ich Slytherin fast cooler. Aber ich denke, das ist mehr oder weniger dieselbe Richtung, so eher kalt und zielstrebig und mehr so intelligent als Mut. Das klingt jetzt nach einer voll bösen Charakterisierung von mir selbst, aber ich glaube so bin ich. Ja! (Bea)
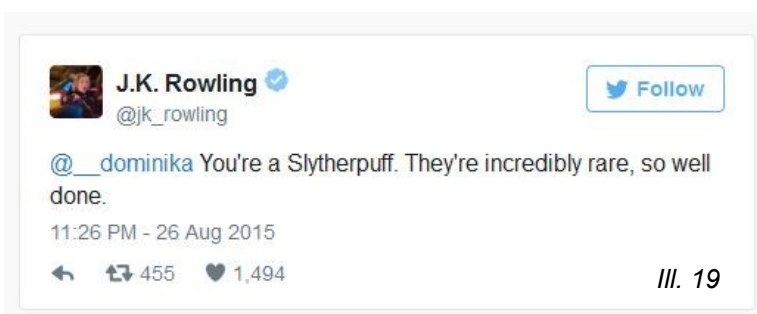
Also, this development lead to the fans combining house names to signalise that they do not feel not an affiliation to only one house, or that they were sorted into different houses when taking the test again. These concepts of "hybrid houses" allow the expression of feelings of belonging towards the Potterverse. At the same time, the fans do not have to limit themselves to the character traits the houses resemble, thereby creating a broader basis for identification. In August 2015, J.K. Rowling officially recognized the possibility of hybrid houses by reacting to a fan's tweet. The tweet exchange was immediately picked up by the media:

Ill. 17 by BetaBadger (deviant art)

Ill. 18

> When a distressed Harry Potter fan contacted J.K. Rowling on Twitter over a Sorting Hat crisis, the author confirmed that Hybrid Hogwarts Houses are a thing. Twitter user Dominika tweeted J.K. Rowling this week about an issue: A few years ago Pottermore sorted her into Slytherin, but after taking the test more recently she was placed into Hufflepuff. (URL hypable)

J.K. Rowling ✔
@jk_rowling

🐦 Follow

@__dominika You're a Slytherpuff. They're incredibly rare, so well done.

11:26 PM - 26 Aug 2015

↩ ♺ 455 ♥ 1,494

Ill. 19

Rowling's tweet (see illustration 19) sparked a new discussion on the topic. Firstly it raised the question of whether or not this revelation can be considered to be canon. Secondly, it showed that Rowling is familiar with the fan concept of hybrid houses:

> J.K. Rowling's acknowledgement of a Hybrid Hogwarts House assignment changes everything. She went out of her way to specifically mention the existence of "Slytherpuff" — it's not like Dominika asked if "Slytherpuff" is a thing. Now we have a few big questions: Is this canon? How does Hogwarts handle this type of issue? Do hybrid students split time in the two common rooms? What do they do about their Hogwarts attire? JO. WE MUST KNOW. (URL hypable)

The fan concept of hybrid houses is significant not only in respect to the identification of fans with the fan object, but furthermore exemplifies how fans appropriate the fan object, and make it their own. Levi-Strauss's semiotic concept of bricolage accounts for this fan practice in the sense that existing material is rearranged to fit the bricoleur's vision (Wyatt 2010:71; see also chapter 4.3).

Another development, which went hand in hand with the instalment of the Pottermore house-sorting-test, was a change in the perception of Slytherin, the house largely represented as negative in the original novels. Because of the platform's concept, it was necessary to have roughly equal numbers of active users in all houses. J.K. Rowling's letter to new Slytherin members therefore stressed the good qualities of the house members. This furthered the acceptance of the house, not only for people sorted into the house, but also in the fan communities. Both these factors are addressed in the following quote by Kathryn, a Slytherin herself:

> Es ist ein cooles Haus, grün passt eh – ist meine Lieblingsfarbe (lacht). Weil auf Pottermore ist es nicht so beschrieben als wenn Slytherin das böse Haus wäre. [...] sie sind sehr stolz und ja, wie ich gesagt habe, sehr cunning und so. Und das hat schon sehr gepasst, wie ich mir es durchgelesen hab, zuerst dacht ich: 'Okay, wieso Slytherin?' Aber dann hat es eigentlich gepasst und seitdem bin ich ziemlich stolz darauf auch Slytherin zu sein. (Kathryn)

As we can see from this discussion, house identity, especially in its institutionalised form, assures and can strengthen the personal identity of fans. It is related to fan identity and taking pride in the fan object:

> Also, ich muss ehrlich sagen auch house pride und Slytherin hat mir ein bisschen Stärke gegeben darin wie ich bin selber [...]: 'Slytherins are cunning and they think about themselves first and about others later'. Ich helfe wirklich sehr gern, aber es hat mir geholfen meine Grenzen zu finden und mir zu sagen: 'Ich kann jetzt nicht. Ich muss mal an mich selber denken!'. [...]... da hat mir das dann geholfen ein bisschen diese Stärke zu finden[...]. Jetzt kann ich sagen: 'That is a Slytherin trait', not just: 'That is me being selfish and a bastard'. (lacht). (Kathryn)

As we can see from this quote, for Kathryn her house identity is essential and acts as a reference point for her actions.

This chapter discussed how fans identify with the fan object Harry Potter, what they find fascinating about the narrative and what characterises a Harry Potter fan. It showed that fan identity is constituted by an emotional investment in the narrative and its characters. Rereading as a central fan practice furthers this emotional investment. The self-attribution *Harry Potter generation* implies a specific mode of reception, the experience of growing up with the characters, and sharing the same age with the main protagonists, while also having to wait for new content. The identification and fascination for characters of the narrative can be named as further characteristics of Harry Potter fans - drawing strength, inspiration and motivation from the fictional actors. The involvement with the characters can also be understood as a reference point for how fans experience the narrative itself and how they make sense of it. House identity, as one central concept of the narrative, is adopted by fans and negotiated with their personality. Especially in its institutionalised form, house identity can contribute to a reflection of the individual person, thus it functions as a reference point that expresses and assures their personal identity. The creation of the concepts of "hybrid houses" by fans created a broad basis for identification with the Hogwarts houses – stressing personal identity traits and relating them to the narrative.

6.2. "It's real for us" – Fans, Fandom, and Community

The last chapter discussed how fans identify as Harry Potter fans, and what they find fascinating about the narrative. Therefore, empirical data of interviews and questionnaires was used to highlight characteristics of Potter fans. This chapter discusses these matters in regard to the creation of a shared experience – belonging to the Harry Potter fandom and the creation of community, also picking up the discussion on the Othering of fans within fan communities.

6.2.1. Fandom – Being a Harry Potter Fan as a State of Mind

For my study I defined the term fandom not by practice or participation, but as a shared state of being a fan (see chapter 4.2). The reason for this broad definition of the term, neither focused on community nor practice, but on the personal experience of being a fan and the emotional investment in the fan object, lies in my empirical data. As pointed out in the last

chapter, passion and love for the fan object constitutes fan identity and fandom as a shared experience. Julia, yet another Harry Potter fan who also strongly identifies as a nerd, talked about this feeling of belonging in the group interview:

> [...] das hat irgendwie dieses riesen Gemeinschaftsgefühl, dass man eben sagen kann:
> „Ich bin nicht alleine mit meiner Obsession" (Julia, in: group interview)

Although fans perceive their involvement in the fandom differently, all fans I interviewed recognised the fandom as something that exists. In this context the terms fandom and fan community, referring to the Harry Potter fandom as a whole, are used as synonyms. Fandom, in this context, is seen as a meta-level, not only including fans who are (or describe themselves as) active in fan communities, but as a "Gesinnung", a state of mind, which is shared by people who identify as Harry Potter fans. This was also noted by a participant of my quantitative survey, commenting:

> (…) if I am a fan it means that I am in the fan community, even if I just keep the books to myself and do not do tumblrs and whatchamacallits on the internet (questionaire28).

Looking at the results of the survey, we see this distinction stressed: 86.8% either checked the answers "strongly agree" or "agree", when asked if they belong to the Harry Potter fandom, 13.2% used the option "neutral". In contrast, only 42.1% checked "strongly agree" or "agree" on the question of whether they see themselves as an active part of the Harry Potter fan community, another 42.1% checked the option "neutral", while 15.8% disagreed. Fandom, in this context, becomes even more complex, because it forms a network of relationships, also including people who do not feel active in the network in the sense of creating, sharing, producing, consuming, but in the sense of belonging. Fandom as a state of

Ill. 20
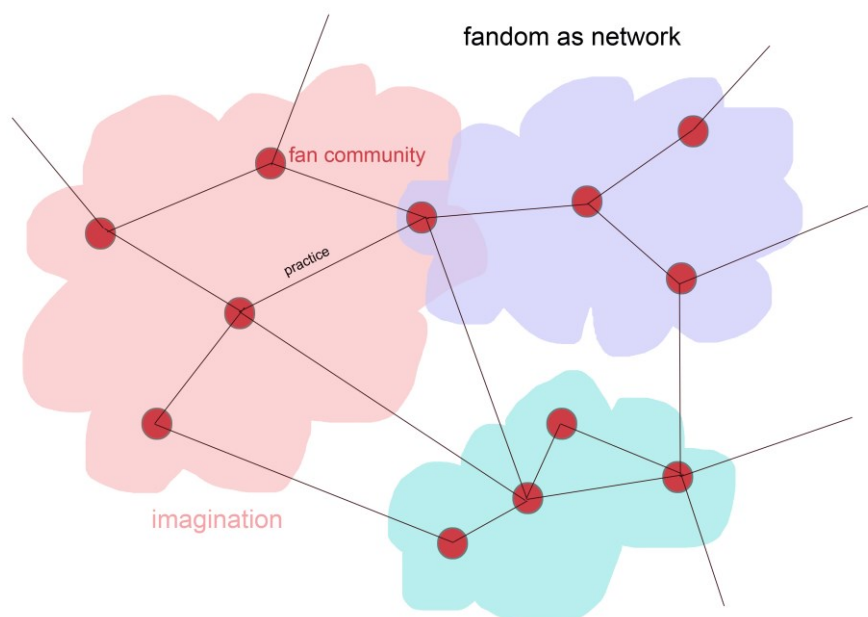
mind therefore is not directed towards the participation of the fans, but rather the emotional investment of the fans in the fan object. Duffett (2013: 293) calls this "personal fandom" – "[…] a way of identifying oneself on a deep level as being a fan and enacting that role".

The diversity of fan participation and practice makes it impossible to talk about a fandom in the sense of a homogenous and fixed group. Rather, it is broken down to the meta-level – a shared „Gesinnung". Fandom, in the sense of network, can be used as an umbrella term for various Harry Potter fan communities, acting in both online and offline spaces and the fans engaging in it, framed by the central practice of imagination. Practice that connects fan communities within a fandom and throughout fandoms.

This definition, including the notion of fandom as network and fandom as a shared state of mind, also refers to the slogan "it's real for us" and the notion of the *Harry Potter generation* – as described in the last chapter. Being part of the Harry Potter fandom therefore relates to the characteristics of Harry Potter fans - being passionate and enthusiastic about the fan object, the notion of having an emotionally invested relationship with the Harry Potter narrative, and the acquiring of intertextual knowledge.

The next sub-chapter discusses how fandom and being part of a fan community enables relationships between fans and how fan identity is negotiated within these relationships.

6.2.2. "They are everywhere" – Fans and Fan Community

How non-fans perceive fans, stereotypes about fans in general, and in the particular case of Harry Potter fans, are a central reference point for fan identity and create community in distinction to the Other – the non-fans. Referring to Jenkins' listed stereotypes about Star Trek fans, fans of popular culture are often associated with being "brainless consumers", "unable to separate fantasy from reality", immature and social misfits (Jenkins 1992:10; also see chapter 4.1). Fans react to this by stressing their experiences as fans, as exemplified with the following quote by Susi:

> [...] wenn es Leute sind, die die Bücher gar nicht kennen, denke ich: 'Ok, die sind nicht damit aufgewachsen, die haben nicht diese Erfahrungen so erlebt', von: ‚Oh mein Gott wann kommt das nächste Buch?' Und: ‚Ich frag mich jetzt was passiert im nächsten Buch' und dann denk ich mir 'Okay die haben das nicht mitgekriegt'. Und ich hab eigentlich niemanden kennengelernt der es gelesen hat und sagt es hat ihm nicht gefallen. Und daher denk ich mir einfach: ‚Okay wenn man es nicht gelesen hat kann man nicht wirklich eine Meinung haben'. (Susi)

The next quote looks at Kathryn's explanation for these mechanisms of justification. In this context she referred to her family in particular: the fan, as the Other, becomes part of a foreign culture too different to understand:

> Die verstehen alle nicht was irgendwie Fan sein überhaupt ist ... [...] 'Okay, das sind irgendwie ein paar Bücher und du zuckst da aus', also es ist meistens so ein bisschen diese .. wie sag ich das .. sie trauen sich nicht wirklich was zu sagen, es ist wie wenn man plötzlich in ein anderes Land fährt und die Kultur ist ganz anders und man traut sich nicht wirklich. So wie: 'Okay, das ist schon interessant und so, aber ich misch mich da jetzt lieber nicht ein'. (Kathryn)

This line of thought also relates to Susi's experiences with her non-fan colleagues at university:

> Ich mein, ein Großteil meiner weiteren Freunde sind keine Harry Potter Fans, grad unter den Jus Studenten. [...] wenn ich da mal eine Harry Potter Anspielung mach ist es so: 'Oh Susi redet wieder über Harry Potter – ok wir lächeln freundlich und nicken'. (Susi)

Both treatments of fans, the pursuit of fan stereotypes, and the perception of fans as a fundamental Other contribute to the formation of fan communities as a space of shared fan identity. As pointed out by Jenkins (1997: 507; also see chapter 4.4), fans often draw strength from fan communities and the engagement with other fans, feeling that they are not alone in their obsession.

In this context, the concept of "fan community" not only refers to online communities, but also to offline operating fan communities, as well as friends or family members who share a common fandom. Fan community, in this sense, is central to fan identity because it is a way to actively engage with the fan object, as stated by the example given by Agi and Paula's response in the group interview. It has to be noted that the four interviewees for the group interview, with the exeption of two, did not know each other in advance:

> Agi: Ich glaub, dass es vielleicht auch voll wichtig ist, weil man halt gern selber dann auf Hogwarts wär und in der Welt wär und dann kann man das Ganze ein Stück [...] in die wirkliche Welt holen [...] dann ist es auch voll schön wenn man Freunde hat, wenn man dann einmal „Stupify"[19] rufen kann (alle lachen) und die spielen dann mit. Also einfach, das mehr real machen für einen auch. ... Ja... . Paula: Vielleicht weil man sich dann auch nicht ganz so komisch vorkommt?! (alle lachen) Und nicht die einzige ist?! (Agi and Paula, in: group interview)

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[19] a stunning spell used in the Harry Potter narrative

As we can see from this quote, fan communities provide a platform for fan practice. Being part of a community and knowing that someone is out there taking pleasure in the same narrative encourages fans to engage in the fan object and to create fan content:

> Weil man sich als Teil des Ganzen fühlt irgendwie. Es ist ja die Natur des Menschen in einer Gruppe sein zu wollen und es ist schön, wenn man da etwas macht und ins Internet stellt und positives Feedback bekommt. (Kathryn)

Being part of a community, in which the fan object Harry Potter is central, can also be named as a reason for staying engaged in the narrative. This was pointed out by Anna, who stated that she stayed engaged with the story, because of the internet communities she found after reading the first books:

> Because, I think, I could have exhausted myself out of it so much quicker, [...] but, I think, when the Internet opens so many doors, suddenly so much more to read and study and discuss, so it kind of kept it going. And without it, I would have probably read the books and I would have obsessed about it for a while, but once I would have read the books for like 10 times, I would have just done something else, once I found out everything I could about it. (Anna)

Also, in my interview with Max, he reported that after a time of not actively being engaged in a Harry Potter community, he rediscovered his fan identity when joining the Vienna Vanguards, a Vienna-based quidditch team that will be discussed as a case study in chapter 7.

> [...] wie ich dann mit quidditch angefangen hab, war es plötzlich so, dass ich in einer Umgebung war wo alle Harry Potter aktiv noch immer gelesen haben und dieselbe Begeisterung gehabt haben wie ich, und dann ist irgendwie alles plötzlich wieder zurückgeschwappt (lacht): Hey.. wow Harry Potter ist offensichtlich immer noch nicht tot und es gibt Leute mit denen man nach wie vor drüber diskutieren kann und die sich tatsächlich für diese Feinheiten interessieren die mich immer interessiert haben! Ich hatte nur nie jemanden mit dem ich drüber diskutieren konnte. (lacht) Und dann war es plötzlich so: ‚Wow cool'. (Max_b).

As we can see from these quotes, "having someone to talk about Harry Potter" is crucial for the expression of fan identity and the articulation of the passion for the fan object. In conversations with other fans (both online and offline), collective feelings towards the fan object can be expressed. Drawing from Jenkins' five *fan action categories* (Jenkins 1992: 277f; see also chapter 4.2), fan communities can be conceptualised as alternative social communities in which being a fan is not only socially accepted, but encouraged:

> […] it's kind of like a support network. And I think with Harry Potter fans especially, most of them are really good people and they are really open minded and accepting and fun to be around with. And I think they are like the kind of people I always like to surround myself with (Anna)

Being a fan, in the context of fan communities, is a quality sought after. My interview partners engaged in the notion that (Harry Potter) fans are special people and that being a fan equals a certain mind-set. This relates to the conceptualisation of fandom as a state of mind, but furthermore stresses how individuals relate to communities they are part of. How individuals perceive communities hence also mirrors how people see themselves, referring to the premise that they engage in communities they can relate to:

> Was mir eben aufgefallen ist, eben weil ich mich auch selbst viel damit beschäftigt habe, ist einfach dass ein großer Teil des Harry Potter Fan-seins ist das selber schaffen. [...] ich schreibe unglaublich viel, ich mache auch *fan art* [...] ich glaub der Punkt bei vielen Harry Potter Fans ist, dass sie halt unglaublich kreativ sind, im Sinne von *fan fiction* und *fan art* machen, aber auch im Sinne von Story gestalten, [...] das ist alles da und das glaub ich macht viele Harry Potter Fans sehr aus, momentan. (Connie)

Because Harry Potter is perceived to have influenced the own values and beliefes (see chapter 6.1), the identification with a fan community also implies the idea of shared values and beliefs related to the Harry Potter narrative itself. Susi picked up this line of thought during her interview:

> Dass die Bücher [...] auch irgendwie von einer moralischen Richtung her sehr universelle moralische Themen vorgeben, das find ich einfach cool. Weil [...] die Werte die Harry Potter vermittelt sind einfach sehr allgemein anerkannt würde ich sagen, von uns Harry Potter Fans und das find ich cool. (Susi)

These values and beliefs also include the understanding of the Harry Potter community as inclusive and as built on solidarity:

> [...] so ziemlich alle Fans die ich bis jetzt getroffen hab waren sehr offene, liebe Menschen irgendwie, die total offen auch waren für Diskussion und so. Das mag ich, ich hab bis jetzt keinen Fan getroffen der gesagt hat: 'Was du hast das und das nicht gemacht? Du bist kein Fan! Geh weg!', also das macht wirklich Spaß und die *community* hält so zusammen. (Kathryn)
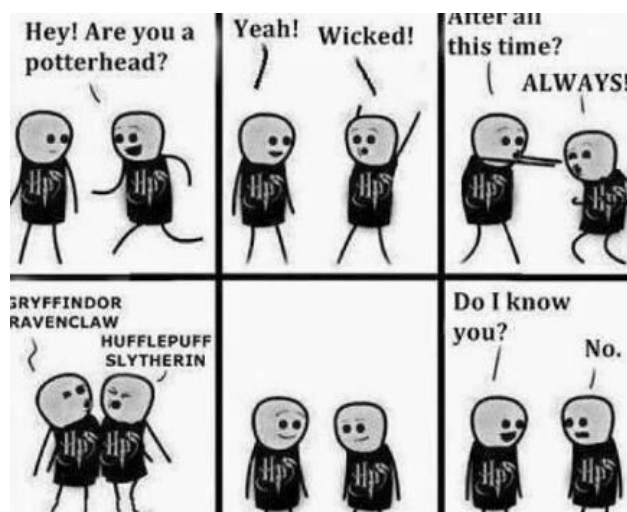
Ill. 21

A common experience for fans, here exemplified by a quote from Emily, is that the fan object works as an instant connection between strangers:

> Man kann sich irgendwie sofort verbinden (lacht). Man kann sagen: 'Hey bist du ein Slytherin oder Gryffindor?' (lacht) und ja, man kann einfach jederzeit an dem laben irgendwie. Das ist voll toll und es ist einfach ein tolles Erlebnis. (Emily)

The relationship between two people, as the smallest entity of a (fan) community, is exemplified by the relationship of my interview partners Emily and Kathryn. They first bonded over Harry Potter in school and are now engaged and have lived together for three years. When I asked Emily the question of whether Harry Potter had influenced their lives they answered:

> Es hat mich zusammengebracht mit Leuten. Also, mit meiner Verlobten (lacht). Weil wir haben uns nebeneinander gesetzt im neuen Schuljahr und sie hat gesagt: 'Kennst du Harry Potter?' und ich hatte gerade letzte Woche den dritten Teil gesehen (lacht). Und ich sagte ja und seitdem haben wir nicht mehr aufgehört darüber zu reden. Und seitdem haben wir praktisch jeden Tag miteinander verbracht. Also wenn das nicht gewesen wäre – wer weiß. (Emily)

In my interviews, I, on one hand, encountered people whose partners, like with Emily and Kathryn, are also fans, bonding over their shared fan identity. On the other hand, I met fans that have partners who do not share their fan identity, but are valued because they acknowledge the strong connections between their partners and the fan object. This was especially visible in Connie's description of her long-term boyfriend and how he supports her:

> Interessanterweise, mein Freund mit dem ich seit 5 Jahren zusammen bin, hat kein einziges der Bücher gelesen. .. Und interessiert sich nicht wirklich dafür, also er war mit mir auf der Premiere und hat dort auch zwei Nächte geschlafen, kann man nichts sagen. Also, er macht den ganzen Scheiß mit mir schon mit, aber er hat halt nicht so viel davon wie ich ... (Connie)

As we can see from this quote, his support is for example shown by him accompanying her to fan events. But also, as she stated in a different section of the interview, by giving her presents that are connected to the fan object; a practice that she also installed with her parents. With such actions, partners and loved ones signalise an understanding of the fans feelings towards the fan object. By acknowledging the importance of the fan object for someone else, the relationship might enter a state of "knowing what it means to be a fan". This empathy is treasured, because it acknowledges fan identity as a central marker of their identity.

Contributing to the common experience of HP fans is that Harry Potter is not a marginalised fandom, but one of the most popular fantasy franchises today:

> [...] man trifft Leute einfach so und dann kommt man auf das Thema. Man trifft Leute in *the most random places*, also Bars oder was auch immer und ja, es gibt eh genug, es gibt eh viele [Harry Potter Fans, Anmerkung durch A.B.]. (lacht) Sie sind überall (lacht). (Melanie)

Thereby, Harry Potter as a common interest can potentially act as the starting point for a friendship.This also relates to my personal experience as a fan. Although a common interest in a fan object does not have to lead to friendship, it might be the initial spark to further a relationship with another person. This happened with two of my interview partners who I met during my research for my bachelor thesis and who I am now, 4 year later, still in contact with. The common ground of being a Harry Potter fan allowed first talks and chats, which then also moved away from the topic of Harry Potter. In this context, I argue that other factors, also contribute to this formation of friendships, like other shared "fannish" interests, but also common hobbies and experiences, and, of course, that you find the other person likable.

The notion of "just because you are a fan doesn't mean we become friends" was also picked up by Dorothea, who engages in the Harry Potter community in Vienna both in an online and offline setting:

> [...] Ich mein, natürlich kannst du dich nicht mit jedem verstehen, das ist mir auch öfter passiert, dass ich gemerkt hab, okay wir haben gleiche Interessen, aber irgendwie persönlich verstehen wir uns nicht so toll. (Dorothea)

Nevertheless, Dorothea noted that she experiences fan communities as a starting point for long lasting friendships, stressing the factor of a common interest and the opportunity to talk about the fan object:

> [...] ich glaub ich hab durch die Fancommunity in Wien sehr, sehr viele sehr, sehr gute Freunde gefunden. Und auch mehr oder weniger nicht nur gefunden, sondern auch behalten vor allem. [...] wenn du solche gemeinsamen Interessen hast, wo das Interesse doch sehr, sehr stark und sehr, sehr groß ist und wo du dich austauschen kannst und halbwegs auf einem Level kommunizieren kannst, das ist schon sehr wichtig. (Dorothea)

Dorothea's quote also refers to a topic briefly touched on in the chapter on fan identity – the characterisation of "real fans", which will be discussed in the following chapter.

6.2.3. The Other (fan)

In the context of fan communities, being a fan not only constitutes a sense of belonging, but also a sense of not-belonging. Encounters and relationships with other fans are marked by difference and sameness. To meet people who share one's fan experience can be equally important meeting people who do not share the experience. This relates to the discussion on Othering as a concept of creating difference and establishing power relations as presented in chapter 4.4. Othering, as a practice among fans, according to Duffett (2013: 45), reflects the narrowing distance between media consumption practices. He argues: "[…] contemporary culture still marks out an emotional and rhetorical divide between the identities of the fan and the ordinary audience member" (ibid). By expressing fan identity, fans risk being marginalised as the "crazy" Other. Because fans are exposed to Othering, these mechanisms often become a central reference point for fan identity. Hence, "Owning a box set does not make one a fan. Neither does watching every episode" but the expression of emotional involvement with a fan object (ibid). The stereotype of "crazy" fan thereby is adopted by fans in their self-attribution:

> Manchmal hält es einen zusammen wenn man weiß, dass da andere sind die genauso verrückt oder noch verrückter sind. (lacht) Und dass sie genauso auf etwas stehen das eigentlich nur Fiktion ist, aber eben doch mehr. (Bea)

A central question that came up in the interviews is how fans differ themselves from other fans, pointing at the intensity of being a fan and central fan practices. Over the course of the interviews, my interview partners implied differences between fans – they themselves being the reference point. On one hand, these descriptions were used to establish characteristics of "real fans", like the central practice of reading the books:

> Well it's like I don't want to judge (both laughing). I don't want to be like: 'You are not a real fan, if you didn't read the books', but I'm like: 'the movies are based on the books and I understand that you can love it based on that, but I just think that you are missing out on a lot, if you just saw the movies. So, of course you can call yourself a fan, if you are a really big fan of the movies, but there is still so much more to the Harry Potter universe – that is outside the movies'. And I would say: 'If you are a fan of the movies, go and read the books, because you will just be happier' (laughs). (Anna)

On the other hand, the descriptions referred to specific events or experiences with **other** fans as the following quotes exemplify:

> I was in Brighton, I went to the British Premiere of the 'Half-Blood Prince', I managed to buy my tickets to see it, it was insane! (laughs) I mean, everyone was in full cosplay, [...] And we were sitting there, and it was the craziest experience of my life,[...] I mean we just went there as horrified book fans, but not so much movie fans. It was so – they

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opened the curtains in front of the screen, everyone jumped to their feet and started applauding, like mad and then the ads began and it was just so weird! […] when me and my friend were chuckling […] there were people next to us squeezing their wands, pointing them at us, like *adava kedavaring*[20] us, […] and we are like: 'Okay, we are in some crazy, *bizzaro* land (laughs). It was so cool. But it was like an entire **other** of crazy, hardcore fandom that I have witnessed live. (Anna)

These two quotes by Anna exemplify how fans position themselves as real fans, by at the same time distancing them from the "hardcore fandom". Although distancing oneself from the "hardcore fans" does not necessarily have negative connotations, but also can be seen as a form of admiration and respect, this mechanism can be traced back to the notion of the "good fan" as proclaimed by media producers and implies the fear of being marginalised (see chapter 4.4).

Strong differentiations between fans and non-fans especially come into play when being confronted with the inability to talk about the fan object.

> [...] bevor ich draufgekommen bin, dass alle meine Uni Freunde nicht Harry Potter Fans sind, haben ein paar versucht, wie man halt so über Alltagsthemen redet, mit mir über Harry Potter zu sprechen, so: 'Aha ja da gibt es ja Dumbledore …', so ungefähr. Aber dann ist schnell rausgekommen, dass sie halt nur ein Buch gelesen haben oder einfach die Filme gesehen haben. [...] also ich kenn sonst Leute die fast nicht Harry Potter Fans sind oder die sehr intensive Harry Potter Fans sind, aber ich kenn wenige die nur so ein bisschen Harry Potter Fans sind.
> Alena: Was ist da der Unterschied?
> Susi: Naja, einfach die Intensität mit der man sich damit beschäftigt, das Wissen das man hat oder ja, wie wichtig es dir ist, mein ich. (Susi)

Hence, intertextual knowledge can be seen as a determining factor in (first) encounters of fans. In this context, intertextual knowledge creates a difference between fans, which makes the communication with a "lesser" fan not as interesting as a conversation with an equally "real" fan. While different opinions on the fan object can be tolerated and discussed when the knowledge of the fan object is perceived as equal, this becomes impossible when one of the discussants is seen to lack knowledge. Thus, the membership to the community of Potter fans is questioned. In this sense, intertextual knowledge can be recognised as, what Bourdieu (1986: 48) calls, the embodied state of cultural capital. In the context of fan communities, this cultural capital serves as the basis for social capital and as a requirement for the membership in a group:

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[20] verb form of "Avada Kedavra", the death curse in the Harry Potter narrative.

> The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed. This work, which implies expenditure of time and energy and so, directly or indirectly, of economic capital, is not profitable or even conceivable unless one invests in it a specific competence (knowledge [...]) and an acquired disposition to acquire and maintain this competence, which are themselves integral parts of this capital. (Bourdieu 1986: 52)

Furthermore, being seen as an authority in questions of the fan object can contribute to the self-attribution as a fan with extensive intertextual knowledge. In my interviews, this was especially visible with one interview partner, Connie. During her on-going studies of communication science and English, she also engaged in small research projects studying the HP narrative and its fans. Having extensive intertextual knowledge and engaging in the narrative from an intellectual point of view separates her, in her self-perception, from other fans:

> Die Freundin von mir im speziellen liest die Bücher gerade noch einmal und hat Englisch und Philosophie studiert und beschäftigt sich viel mit Literatur und deswegen können wir anders über die Bücher reden, auf einem höheren Level. Und sie mag es sehr gern und da machen wir uns Gedanken darüber. Aber ich hab jetzt fast keine Freunde mit denen ich das kann. Das Problem ist auch einfach, dass sie oft nicht meinen Wissensstand haben um mit mir darüber zu reden. Also die Hälfte von den Diskussionen die wir gerade gehabt haben waren: ‚Ja ich hab das und das lesen– weißt du ob das wirklich so war? Oder ob es schon neue Informationen dazu gibt?' Also, ich bin halt oft so das Lexikon. (Connie)

As we have seen in this chapter, intertextual knowledge is crucial in the process of Othering within fan communities. Also, different fan communities, acting in different fan spaces, create and stress different levels and areas of intertextual knowledge, thus making it a characteristic of the specific Harry Potter fan community. How people negotiate the canonical and non-canonical texts is part of the fan practice and the specific fan community, because it functions as a platform, where one's position, emotions, and views are negotiated. How and with whom fans talk about their fan object, therefore, deeply shapes the fan's identity. This dynamic will be discussed in the next chapter, which engages in the topic of fan practice.

6.3. Fan Practices, Fan Work, and the Appropriation of the Fan Object Harry Potter

The distinction between fandom, as a shared state of mind, and fan communities as groups that enforce participatory culture and fan practice, is stressed in this study. As we saw in the literature review, fan practices and participatory culture are heavily discussed in the discipline of fan studies. The distinction between fandom and modes of participatory culture is grounded in the understanding that fans do not always engage in active fan practices, in the

sense of the producing and distributing of self-made content. This relates to a common understanding of "being active" as producing and then sharing it with others. But, as Couldry (2010: 35ff) argues, to understand media as practice softens the distinction between production, consumption, and distribution. Therefore, I argue that fans engage in media practices, not only by taking part in communities, producing, and sharing their own fan content, but also by consuming and sharing content from others (both canonical material and fan content). Re-reading, as a central fan practice, was already established as one characteristic of Harry Potter fans (see chapter 6.1). In this sense, "production" also takes place within the fans negotiation of the fan object. Thinking about the narrative and forming theories then are central to personal fan identity and constitute a relationship with the fan object. Imagination, therefore, can be named as a central fan practice, while not necessarily including the articulation of the imagined in actions towards others. Dorothea stressed this approach of imagination as a central practice in her interview:

> Es ist viel, viel Kreativität von einem als Fan, weil man einfach irgendwas daraus macht und die eigene Geschichte daraus macht. Du kannst dich auch selber hinein träumen in das Harry Potter Universum und musst es dann gar nicht lesen, weil du deine eigene Geschichte hast. Weil es so viel gibt über Hogwarts, du kannst dir einfach selbst vorstellen dort zu sein, das ist ziemlich cool. (Dorothea)

These dynamics contribute to the difficulty of defining what fan practice is and what actions the concept includes. On one side, Duffett argues that "the *primary* practice of media fandom is simply consuming the text or engaging with the performance – listening, watching, thinking and feeling" (Duffett 2013: 166). On the other side, Jenkins' key term of "participatory culture" conceptualises active fan practices as "fan work" (Duffett 2015: 2f), and thereby focuses on the post-Fiskean approach on fan practices as subversive actions (see also chapter 4.1). Nevertheless, the focus on fan work and participatory culture in current fan studies literature, neglects forms of fan practices that are not recognised as being subversive (by fans, as well as by scholars). As Duffett (2015: 3) points out:

> One issue with this perspective [on fan practice as participatory culture, annotation by AB], however, is that either we find it hard to locate ourselves as fans within its framework ("I simply love certain bands; I don't see myself as an activist") or there is a tendency to ignore or discount some of the most common and pleasurable fan pursuits— everyday practices like wearing t-shirts and collecting recordings.

It has to be noted that "fan work" as category is not a concept that should be rejected, but only accounts for a small section of all fan practices. Also, the category of "professional fans" is important in this context, describing fans that make their living out of their fan practice. An example for fans of this category is Melissa Anelli, web administrator for the Harry Potter fan

homepage "The Leaky Cauldron" (URL Leaky Cauldron), president of "The Harry Potter Alliance" (URL HPA board) and author of the book "Harry, A History: The True Story of a Boy Wizard, His Fans, and Life Inside the Harry Potter Phenomenon" (2008).

Concluding this discussion, I argue for an approach that foremost defines fan practices as a practice informed by, firstly, the emotional investment in the fan object and secondly the fans' intertextual knowledge of the fan object. This open definition accounts for both offline and online practices. It conceptualises media as practice (Couldry 2010), thereby softening the distinction between production, distribution, and consumption, and thus the gap between "active" and "passive" fan practices. Furthermore, this definition includes personal fan practices as well as fan work.

6.3.1. Fan Practices – A Short Overview

As mentioned above, research on fans often focuses on "active" fan practices that are output orientated. This also relates to the current emphasis in fan studies on researching online fan practices, whereas offline practices are neglected (Duffett: 2015: 5). The reason for this emphasis might be that they are more visible to a general public, as well as more tangible for researchers. This also explains why the research focus is set on online activity of fans. They are more tangible in the sense that they are not limited to a certain offline space and that fan content and/or texts are displayed and accessible on online platforms, and hence often archived in some way. Also, this approach shows that the research field is limited by the users of the platform and, thus, form a community that can be understood as an entity or sample.

The most common "active" fan practices (as discussed in literature) include[21]:
- fan fiction (fanfic, for short): fan written text that picks up on canonical characters and story lines, at the same time often introducing own characters and story lines
- blogging and contributing content to fan sites
- music: in the case of Harry Potter, so called Wizard Rock ("Wrock", for short), whereby the lyrics pick up elements of the narrative

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21 see: Allan 2015; Cuntz-Leng 2014/2013; Frankel (Ed) 2012; Duffet 2013: 165ff ; Hampton 2015; Jenkins 2012/ 2006a/ 2006b; Mader 2015; Woo 2014

- fan videos: content in a video format, such as fan made movie trailers, video blogs (vlogs, for short), and videotaped performances
- images and gifs[22]: including fan art and, for example, the combination of (movie) images and short texts
- performance: such as impersonation and cosplay, as well as (re-)enactments and Live Action Role Play (LARP, for short)
- collecting: official merchandise
- fan tourism: visiting places connected to the narrative (such as theme parks, movie locations, and places central to the narrative)
- gathering: taking part in fan conventions and small gatherings of fans
- fanactivism: political and social activism on the grounds of the fan object (an example for this is The Harry Potter Alliance, a non-profit organisation founded by the Harry Potter fan Andrew Slack (see also: URL HPA; Jenkins 2012))

In this context, it is important to note that these fan practices can not only be understood in terms of "participatory culture", but furthermore include fans that do not actively take part, but consume and distribute the fan content created within the practices. Thus, they also engage in the practice by forming a platform for such content. Also, many fans produce such content without making it accessible to (a large number of) other fans.

To supplement the overview over fan practices I include other practices, which are often neglected in the discussion on fan practices. Here, I want to note that the different fan practices can often not be seen as isolated from each other, but influence each other and reflect the interconnectedness in and between fan communities.

- imagination: including daydreaming, as well as the creation of theories and explanations
- communication: spontaneous talks or written conversations about the fan object (in an intense form often referred to as *fangirling*[23])
- (re)reading/ (re)watching: the repeated engagement with the original narrative

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22 GIF is short for Graphics Interchange Format: a short, digital sequence of a moving image

23 "a girl or woman who is an extremely or overly enthusiastic fan of someone or something" (URL Merriam-Webster4). It has to be noted that the female connotation of the word in this definition is misleading, insofar as it is also used to speak about male fans. The term is used both derogatively to describe fans and their behaviour and as an empowering self-attribution

- "do it yourself" (DIY, for short) and crafting: including themed cooking, baking, knitting, sewing, and handicraft of every sort
- collecting of fan stuff and fan content
- embodiment: to wear images and symbols connected to the narrative, be it on clothing, as patches, as tattoos, or on jewellery
- "passive" engagement on social media and fan sites:
  sharing: the re-blogging of fan content in social media
  liking: the "liking" or "favouring" of content in social media
  following: subscribing to social media sites, forums and groups

All these fan practices, to various degrees, are used to incorporate the fan object in the (daily) lives of fans. Furthermore, the condition for all these fan practices is the intertextual knowledge of the narrative. Why fans choose to actively engage in fan practices is a question not easily answered. It might relate to personal skills, as well as feelings, for example being too shy to publish one's own content or finding it not worthy of being distributed. Another factor might be the overall engagement in fan practices deemed "passive", as well as not being able to access fan communities due to missing technological or financial means. Also, some fans keep to themselves, sharing their own fan content only with another trusted fan or a small offline fan community.

How fans engage in some of the listed fan practices and in how far this contributes to the appropriation of the fan object by fans will be discussed in the next sub-chapters.

6.3.2. Tumblr vs. Knitting – Fan Practice in an Online and Offline Setting

Fan practices are central to being a fan and being part of a fan community. In which fan practices fans engage is heavily influenced by engagement in fan communities. My interviews with Harry Potter fans have shown that fans distinguish between online and offline practices, although they often engage in both. Furthermore, these practices are often connected to each other. A sole study of online fandoms, therefore, is often not expedient, because this would disregard how relationships or contents of one setting are transferred into the other (see also chapter 4.3). One example for this is how I found interview partners via the Facebook groups and met the interviewees in an offline setting. Another example is that, whereas, Emily is not active on Tumblr, Kathryn shows them interesting and appealing content she finds on the online platform.

Another one of my interview partners, Anna, stated that she used to spend time in online Harry Potter fan communities, but now is not as engaged as she used to be. The transference of the space, in which her fan practice takes place, is grounded in her involvement with the quidditch community in Vienna[24].

> In a way, of course, now with the quidditch team, if you count that as weirdly part of the fandom, then I'm in a way very active. Like, I now hang so much with so much more Harry Potter fans than I ever did, in my entire life. But I'm not on that level active anymore that I would like, I don't know, write fan fiction and read it all that much – sometimes yeah, when it's like a rainy day and I have nothing else to do, but now I have really good real live friends, with whom I can still talk about it and the subject will come up. I'm still knitting myself house socks each winter and house scarfs and stuff like that, so ... but socially not that much online, honestly. But, more with real people (laughs). (Anna)

As we can see from this quote, online fan practices are often seen as being more valid than offline practices. Anna's engagement in the quidditch community, as "weirdly part of the fandom", will be further discussed in the case study on quidditch (see chapter 7). Her practice of knitting Harry Potter themed clothes is part of the fan practices of DIY and crafting. These are often neglected in academic literature, which might also be due to its lack of visibility, except in the context of "professional fans" creating the items for sale on online platforms like Etsy (see Frankel 2012). Nevertheless, I argue that DIY and crafting is a central fan practice, because it incorporates the fan object in everyday life and relates to the fan's hobbies and interests. Baking a Harry Potter themed cake, as an action informed by the fan's own emotional investment in the narrative hence, might not be characterised by fans as fan practice. But what is it if not that? Staying with this example, I want to stress that practices, especially offline fan practices, are part of and accompanied by rituals. To present a fellow fan with a Harry Potter themed cake or a Harry Potter styled Christmas ornament signalises the common marker of Harry Potter fan identity. To dress up for a Harry Potter movie marathon or a book release signalises the investment of fans in the narrative. As Emily pointed out, the practice of rereading the books with their partner are accompanied by rituals, and, thus, contributes not only to their investment in the story, but also to their partnership – taking time and sharing something they love:

> Also ich hab früher mir mal Sorgen gemacht, ob ich da nicht irgendwann rauswachsen werde oder so. Aber ich muss sagen, meine Verlobte und ich wir setzen uns immer noch immer wieder hin und sie liest mir die englischen Teile vor. Und das ist das genialste *ever*, also das ist eine voll schöne Zeit die man miteinander verbringen kann mit etwas das uns beide begeistert. Also, wir haben da schon ein richtiges Ritual. Wir zünden dann

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[24] it has to be noted that she is very engaged in the quidditch Facebook community

eine Kerze und so (lacht) und jedes Mal wenn ein Band fertig ist machen wir ein Selfie. (Emily)

As we can see from this quote, practice establishes and furthers the relationships between fans.

6.3.3. Rereading, Intertextual Knowledge and Marcus Flint

As discussed before, (see chapter 6.1) (re)reading, whether alone or together, can be understood as a central practice of Harry Potter fans. The practice, thereby, is not only a mere consumption of the canonical material, but can be seen as a way of processing the narrative. This is especially visible when talking about rereads over time. Fans gain new insights as they age, as pointed out by Dorothea, talking about rereading the novels as she got older:

> Ich glaube ich hab wie ich jünger war viele Zusammenhänge noch nicht ganz so wahrgenommen, ich glaube ich hab mehr linear gedacht und nicht so vernetzt gedacht. Weil wenn man es öfter liest kommen einem dann auch viele Sachen. (Dorothea)

Emily, being part of the Harry Potter generation and reading the books at a young age for the first time, notes that rereading the original novels contributes to a change of their perspective:

> Es hat sehr viele Metaphern die mit unserer Welt übereinstimmen, was zum Beispiel die Dementoren angeht, dass sie wie Depression sind und so. Und einfach jedes Mal wenn du es durchließt siehst du neue Sachen und jedes Mal wenn du älter wirst wächst du mit Harry mit und dann verstehst du ein anderes Buch besser. ... Also jetzt wenn ich älter werde und es noch einmal lese, merke ich erst wie engstirnig Harry manchmal ist oder wie jung (lacht). Wie viel Blödsinn er macht, und das war mir früher gar nicht klar. (Emily)

The factor of aging also assures a certain reflective approach on the narrative and the characters, as well as their own persona. This enables a critical perspective, sometimes including a demystification of characters:

> [...] als Kind war ich auch ein totaler Dumbledore Fan und wie ich später die Bücher noch mal gelesen habe, bin ich halt draufgekommen dass er nicht so cool ist wie ich ihn als Kind gefunden hab. Oder halt nicht so unproblematisch wie ich ihn als Kind gefunden hab.

Also, rereading is a central practice in acquiring intertextual knowledge and in preparation of the release of new content, like the movie adaptations. Thus, rereading contributes to fans being experts of the canon, thereby enabling fans to question facts and correct or question writers, translators, and/or the producers of movie adaptations. In this context, one popular question by fans can be addressed. It concerns the mention of the student Marcus Flint in

"Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" (Rowling 1999) although he should have finished school by this time. This introduced the term "Flints", meaning when fans find continuity errors in a canonical text:

> „Marcus Flint, who is the Slytherin Quidditch captain in books one and two, appears again in book three," said Cheryl Klein, a senior editor at Arthur A. Levine Books, the Scholastic imprint that publishes the "Harry Potter" series in the U.S. "But he was said to be a sixth-year student in book one, which meant he should have graduated by book three. So that gave rise to this entire category of what we call 'Flints,' when fans find continuity errors after the fact". (URL Flint)

After the revelation of the mistake by fans, J.K. Rowling argued that he had to repeat a year at Hogwarts due to bad grades in his exams (URL Interview Rowling).

Although mentioned before (see chapter 6.2), I want to stress the topic of intertextual knowledge in depth, in the specific context of fan practice. By claiming the status of being experts in "all things canon", fans incorporate the "magical" knowledge of the series. This, not only legitimises the magical features of the story in the eye of the reader, but, furthermore, the specific logic of magic in Harry Potter is applied to the narrative. In my interviews, Max, who stated that he found Harry Potter particularly interesting because the magic makes sense, especially stressed this feature, of how magic works in Harry Potter (for an introduction to magic in HP, see also chapter 2.1):

> Also das war schon ziemlich prägend für mich, einfach weil ich gemerkt habe: Okay, es gibt Literatur die eine so fundamental spannende und irgendwie neugierig machende Welt erschaffen kann, dass man irgendwie will dass diese Welt real ist und das war für mich immer so, dass ich dann versucht hab Erklärungen zu finden: Okay, wenn das jetzt real wäre wie funktioniert das dann? Wäre es theoretisch möglich, so irgendwie, dass die Welt parallel existiert? Und J.K. Rowling hat da eh relativ viele Bedenken angesprochen und Erklärungen gefunden was ich ziemlich cool find und auch damals cool gefunden habe. (Max_b)

The ability to follow a fan conversation on Harry Potter can only be acquired by studying the original text, acquiring the emic vocabulary, and the specific use of language. A passage in Pyne's publication (2007) exemplifies this, by posing a text full of words emic to the Harry Potter narrative:

> How many words would only Harry Potter readers understand?
> It is sad that Muggles and squibs [sic!] will never pass the Quaffle, beat a bludger [sic!], or catch the snitch [sic!] to win a Quidditch match. Muggles just don't understand the study of arithmancy [sic!], legilimency [sic!], or even simple tasseography. You don't have to be a parselmouth [sic!] to understand the language of Potter (Pyne 2007: 12)

In the process of acquiring intertextual knowledge, the readers learn about the specifics of the Potterverse, drawing from the detailed descriptions of characters, objects and places. This opens up the possibility for fans to talk about their fan object as if it was real. How this relates to the fan experience is exemplified by two experiences of mine:

The first took place after my visit of the *Warner Bros. Studio Tour London.* A friend of mine noted that the Butterbeer[25] sold there tasted really bad. Acknowledging his opinion, but also wanting to defend Butterbeer, which is described as delicious in the novels, I replied: 'Yes, but the **real** one is really good'.

The second experience took place a few weeks back, when my flatmate and I discussed our costumes for a Harry Potter themed party. Because Sara's hair colouring, dark brown with a white streak, resembles the one of Narcissa Malfoy's character' depiction in the movies, I suggested that she could go as her. Sara answered: 'Yes, but **really** she is blond', pointing towards her blond mane as described in the books.

Ill. 22: Narcissa Malfoy, fanart by Makani

Ill. 23: actress Helen McCrory as Narcissa Malfoy

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[25] (a beverage drunk by the characters in the HP books)

The emphasis on **real** and **really** thereby relates not to the notion that the Harry Potter narrative is grounded in reality, but rather emphasises the intertextual knowledge of the arguing fan. By incorporating intertextual knowledge, the use of inside knowledge as a communicative tool is made possible; as the following example by Julia shows:

> Was ein paar Freunde und ich immer gemacht haben, so gesagt: „Hey, du bist ja voll wie die oder du bist voll wie der" und das kann man eben auch nur mit Fans machen, das geht eben nicht mit nicht-Fans. Ich mein, man kann nicht zu einem Nicht-Fan sagen: „Hey, du bist wie Hermine" – „Wer ist Hermine"? (alle lachen). (Julia, in: group interview)

By using character references to characterise people or their actions, intertextual knowledge is applied to everyday situations. Also, the use of words central to the narrative can trigger emotions of fans. In this context the phrase "Always" might be one that causes strong reactions, being deeply connected to a plot twist in the story that reveals a character's true intents. The tumblr blog *potterheadproblems*[26] (URL PHP) list this triggering as "potterhead problem #15" (see illustration to the right). Anna, in her interview, told of an incident where the word, although

POTTERHEAD PROBLEM #15

Clutching your chest as your heart breaks after hearing the word 'Always'

Ill. 24

potterheadproblems.tumblr.com

totally out of context, left her thinking of the incident in the story:

> I know it's like so amazing, how one word, even now, ... somebody was like: 'Did you like the bread?' and someone just was like: 'Always' and I'm like (does a tragic voice): 'Ohhh'. (both laughing) Which is really bad, [...] But I think it was such a touching moment [in the narrative, annotation by AB] and I think that really shows something about her [Rowling's, annotation by AB] ability as a writer, to put so much punch into one word. (Anna)

As we can see from this quote, the impact of certain words heavily relates to the aspect of storytelling and is recognised by fans even when out of context.

6.3.4. "Wait, what?" – Transmedia and the Intermedial Knowledge of Fans

To acquire intertextual knowledge not only relates to rereading the books, but also the engagement with other texts of the transmedial Potterverse, such as additional publications by Rowling, texts, and interviews with the author, as well as the movie adaptations (see

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[26] the term *potterhead,* internet jargon for Harry Potter fans, is also used as a term of self-attribution

chapter 2.3). By combining the intertextual knowledge based in different mediums related to the Potterverse, the knowledge enters the state of intermediality.

In this context, it has to be noted that the movie adaptations, while they are licensed, are often seen as separate from the original book series. This notion is founded in the differences between the two depictions of the story. The books, being the original medium are seen as more valid by fans. Because of the transference of the story to another medium, the movie adaptations lack certain qualities the readers like about the books. By stressing that the movies are interpretations of the original novels, the differences in the storytelling and the depiction of characters is legitimised, as we see in the following quote by Emily:

> Ich hab die Filme sehr gerne… Sie sind halt anders! Das muss man irgendwie miteinbeziehen, dass Filme ein anderes Medium sind und deswegen erzählen sie andere Geschichten, oder haben andere Aspekte die interessant sind. Es sind natürlich viele Sachen weggelassen, was schade ist. Aber es ist einfach nicht möglich, in 2 1/2 Stunden alles rein zu quetschen. ... Aber ich finde sie auch sehr toll und schau sie gerne an. (Emily)

In the perception of the movies, as valid or invalid adaptations of the novels, fans are not consistent. This is underlined with the results of my quantitative survey, in which I asked the question of how they perceive the movie adaptations: 21.1% checked the option "very positive", 57.9% "positive", 15.8% "neutral" and 5.3% selected the option "negative". Going back to Emily's argument, because of the changes in the licensed adaptations, the movies can only be perceived as positive when treating it as something separate. This was also stressed by Dorothea, who described her approach to the movies and the necessity to see them as interpretations of the original canon as follows:

> Ich glaub manche schaffen es dann zwischen Büchern und Filmen zu unterscheiden und für manche ist es einfach nicht mehr so möglich. Wenn sie eine zu fixe Idee im Kopf haben. Ich versuche immer einen Mittelweg zu halten, ich weiß, dass manche Sachen einfach nicht ganz möglich sind. Oder, beziehungsweise ich sag: „Ich hatte zwar eine andere Vorstellung, aber so kann man es natürlich auch interpretieren, ist ja klar". (Dorothea)

The reasons for why Harry Potter fans are critical about the licensed movie adaptations are rooted in the intertextual knowledge of the fans, being experts on the canonical material, and how the material was imagined by the individual fan. This was pointed out, among others, by my interview partner, Max:

> Das Problem ist halt einfach mit Harry Potter, dass wir uns alle so sehr damit identifiziert haben, dass jedes Detail was verändert wird für uns einfach sofort auffällt und unmittelbar beim Anschauen noch, nicht so wie bei anderen Filmen dass man sich so 10 Minuten nachdem man etwas gesehen hat denkt: eigentlich passt das jetzt nicht mehr so ganz [...]

> Bei den Harry Potter Filmen ist es mir einfach sofort aufgefallen, wenn etwas verändert wurde. Und nachdem die Bücher fast alle gelesen haben, sind die Veränderungen - sie werden unmittelbar darauf analysiert welche Auswirkungen sie nach sich ziehen könnten oder warum das jetzt eine blöde Veränderung ist oder was auch immer. [...] Es war halt einfach für die Harry Potter Fans so, dass sie sich vom Film erwartet haben, dass die selbe Magie wie in den Bücher ins Kino gebracht wird und das ist halt einfach […], ich glaub, dass die Erwartungshaltung eine andere war von Harry Potter Fans als von allen anderen Geschichten die verfilmt wurden, weil jeder von uns eine persönliche Vorstellung hatte wie es auszusehen hat. (Max_b)

This especially weighs heavy in the depiction of characters, because fans stress the complexity of the narrative's depiction of the characters in the books as one reason for their identification with the story and its characters. In this context, many of my interview partners stated the same examples concerning the characters being used as 'tropes'[27] in the movies, losing their original complexity by being reduced to stereotypes. Connie, who examined the character changes in Hermione Granger for a small research project during her studies, argued:

> […] also es ist einfach dass ganze viele Charakter rationalisiert werden, zu bestimmten *tropes*. Dann haben wir halt Ron als *comic-relief* und […] Hermine wird, find ich, und hab ich auch festgestellt in meiner Arbeit, einfach zu dieser *wonderwoman* die alles kann. Sie kriegt Textpassagen von Dumbledore und sie darf alles, so Sachen wie dass Ron sich opfern wollte für Harry, das sind alles Sätze die sie auf einmal bekommt. […] Noch dazu ist sie sehr gescheit. Emma Watson ist halt noch dazu ein unglaublich schöner Mensch und sie wird halt zu diesem *superhuman*. (Connie)

Susi stated in the interview that she identified with Hermione as a young girl, because of them both being a "know-it-all". She picked up the topic of stereotyping and added the dimension of personal relatability to the discussion:

> Hermine ist irgendwie ziemlich perfekt einfach [in den Filmen, Anmerkung durch AB] und das ist halt schade, weil sie ist sehr hübsch und gescheit und weiß was ich alles, und sie hat ein bisschen was von dem verloren was sie in den Büchern hat– dieses sie schaut nicht perfekt aus, sie hat total verwuschelte Haare, sie hat zu lange Zähne, sie ist besserwisserisch. Sie wurde einfach in den Filmen idealisiert und das ist etwas was irgendwie wichtig war an ihr, wie an jedem Charakter ist, dass er nicht perfekt ist.

This examination of the characters by fans mirrors not only a personal reflection on the adaptations, but furthermore lays the ground for an on-going discussion within the fan communities of Harry Potter. Movie depictions that contradict the original canon are picked out and stressed, becoming inside jokes within communities of fans. A popular example for this is the eye colour of Harry Potter. In the narrative, his green eye colour is of importance,

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[27] a common or overused theme or device : cliché *<the usual horror movie tropes>* (URL Merriam-Webster3)

because it is the only feature inherited from his mother, Lily. To Harry, having inherited his mother's eyes is a central reference point that connects him to his late mother and is stressed by people who knew her. Because Harry's eye colour and his mother's do not match in the movies, they actually missed giving them any such resemblance, but nevertheless use the connection by including the dialogue that stresses the resemblance. While this difference might seem trivial, fans stress the obvious misrepresentation and make it an inside joke, based in their intermedial knowledge. Thus, a certain consensus in fan communities is formed, defining misleads in the adaptions' characterisations of characters, both physical and character-wise. In this context, fans position themselves as experts on the narrative, while at the same time denying the movie producers this authority.

Ill. 25: by George Rottkamp 2015

Other intermedial knowledge that dwells on the difference between movies and books are not as easily made out, contributing to on-going debates within fan communities. Having mentioned the case of Marcus Flint in the last chapter, pointing at canonical mistakes made in the movies is a common fan practice. Anna summarised it like this:

> Sometimes it feels like the fans pick out details that the directors didn't even think about. And then, afterwards, they are like: 'Wait what?'" (Anna).

This, for example, concerns the character of James Potter and the question of which player position he held while playing Quidditch at Hogwarts. The controversy is grounded in the fact that the movie adaptation of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001) states him as Seeker, but Rowling named him a Chaser. The fact that there is no mention of his position in

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the books, but that Rowling clarified his position in an interview (URL Chaser), contributes to the popularity of the question. This lead the creators of the website "Harry Potter wiki" (URL wiki) to issue this notice:

> NOTICE: Please DO NOT add any more posts about James Potter being a **Seeker**. While we are aware this was stated in the *Philosopher's Stone* **film**, **J. K. Rowling** herself has said that James Potter was a **Chaser**. According to this wiki's **Canon Policy**, information directly from Rowling takes priority over what is shown in the films. Furthermore, this is already noted in the article's **"Behind the scenes"** section. Any further posts on this topic will be removed unless any *new* information relevant to this matter is released and/or valid references are provided. Thank you. (URL wiki: talk james potter)

As we can see, the shift from intertextual to intermedial knowledge comes not without problems. This is especially true when additional content by Rowling, such as interviews, tweets, and revelations on Pottermore are taken into account. Also, when the characterisation of transmedial content not exclusively relates to content characterised as canonical, but includes fan created content, too, the extent of the provided and acquired knowledge becomes unclear. In the study of Harry Potter fans this poses a problem because, while the knowledge of the canon can be assumed to a certain degree, intermedial knowledge of "everything Harry Potter", is largely influenced by the fans own research and which HP fan communities the fan is part of. This, for example, is illustrated by illustration 26, which compares not only the main characters depictions in the books and movies, but also includes the fan created "A Very Potter Musical" by the musical group StarKid (URL StarKid).
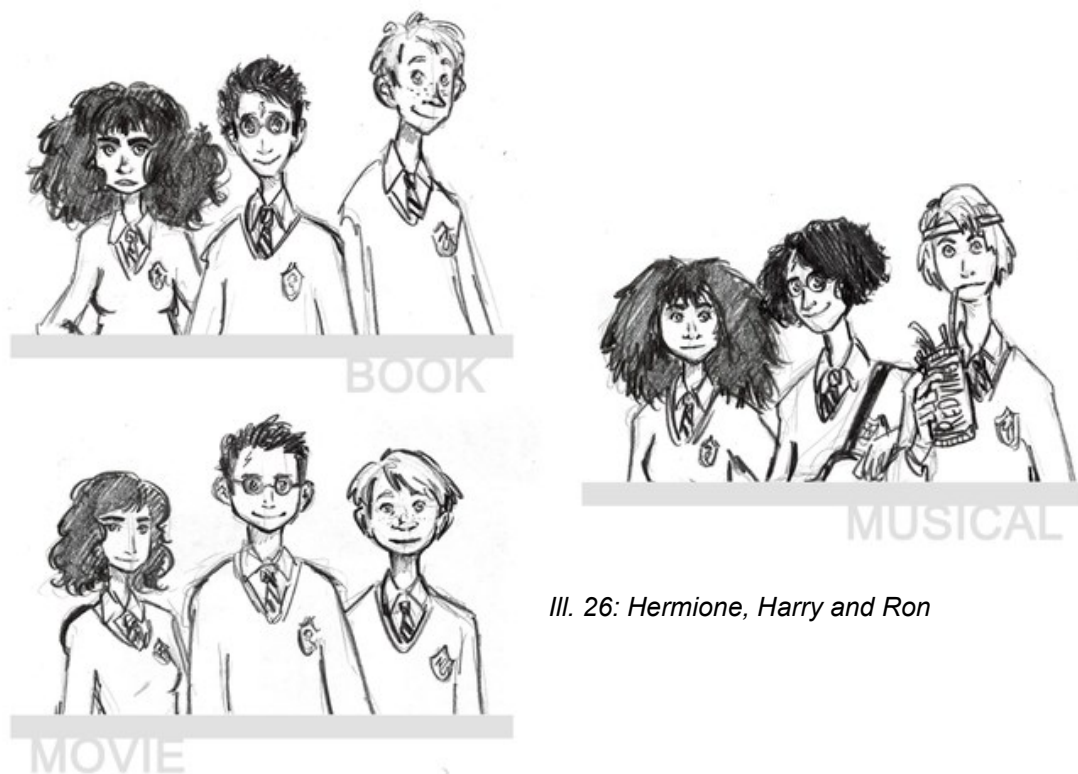
Ill. 26: Hermione, Harry and Ron

The next chapter discusses how fans negotiate canon and fan theories by looking at the practices of fan fiction and fan art.

6.3.5. Fan Theories and Fan Wars: Negotiating Canon, Headcanon, and Fanon

Because the canonical material is open to interpretation, fan practices create new forms of the original text. Susi, who frequently engages in fan made content, stressed this freedom of fans in the interpretation of the fan object:

> Ja, also ich denk mir wenn alles klar und eindeutig in den Büchern wäre, dann gibt es auch nicht viel worüber man reden kann und dann würden wir sicher nicht immer noch so viel über Harry Potter reden. Und das ist ja grad das schöne, dass du Freiheiten hast, wenn du ein Buch liest, dass du deiner Fantasie freien Lauf lassen kannst und eben Details übersiehst oder nicht übersiehst und einfach dir die Personen so vorstellst wie du sie dir vorstellst. Und das find ich schön. (Susi)

Fan practices that engage in the creation of fan content are equally a result of the fans involvement in the fan object and furthers' this involvement. The appropriation of the fan object in fan practices can be seen as personal interpretations. Imagination as a central practice refers to the notion of thinking about the fan object, its story line and characters, and thinking about what could be possible by referencing the canonical material:

> Alena: Wie wichtig ist das für dich, dass du eben die Freiheit hast solche Theorien aufzustellen als Fan?
>
> Dorothea: Oh, wichtig! Ich glaube das macht auch einen großen Teil der Spannung aus. Ich mein für mich hat das erst in den letzten paar Filmen bzw. in den Büchern, wo du noch wirklich auf die Bücher warten musstest – war das sicher ein großer, großer Teil. Weil du immer gedacht hast: Wie könnte es weiter gehen? Wie könnte das zu Stande gekommen sein? Was war die Vorgeschichte? Wie hat das zu dem geführt? Das kann man sich sicher bei einigen Sachen noch immer denken - die nicht explizit erklärt oder aufgeklärt wurden. (Dorothea)

This leads us to the term of "fanon". In distinction to canon, the term "fanon" describes fan theories, ideas, beliefs, and story lines created by fans. Overall, the term fanon is connected to fan practices that pick up the narrative and create fan content, such as fan fiction and fan art. Busse and Hellekson (2006: 9), drawing from their research on fan fiction communities, define the terms as follows:

> Most important to treatments of fan texts are understandings of canon, the events presented in the media source that provide the universe, setting, and characters, and fanon, the events created by the fan community in particular fandom and repeated pervasively throughout the fantext. Fanon often creates particular details or character readings even though canon does not fully support it – or, at times, even contradicts it.

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This definition of fanon accounts for the fans' appropriation of the original text. Fanons thereby supplement the canonical material, in the sense of "filling the gaps" or concluding the story. But, as Busse and Hellekson point out, they sometimes also openly contradict the canonical material. Their definition of fanon is important, because it shows the validity of both fan practices. But also, this conceptualisation of the term poses a difficulty, because it does not differentiate between fan theories that could potentially be canon, in the sense of "filling the gaps", and fanon theories that pose an alternative reality to the canon[28]. Stressing this difference is important for the analysis of fan practice and in analysing how fans engage in the narrative and deal with new canonical revelations by the text's original author. Thus, I want to propose a difference between fan theories that are seen as valid because they do not directly contradict the canon, and fan theories that contradict the canon and are seen as valid reinterpretations, posing an alternative reality of the Potterverse. If and in how far fans engage in fan theories or accept them as being equally important or true as the canon is dependent on the fan communities they are part of. Also, fans that follow certain fan theories create their own spaces in pursuit of the theory. This is why I favour the use of the plural, "fanons", to the singular, "fanon".

Fan theories that do not contradict the canonical material of the books are used to supplement or legitimise the canon. The following quote resembles such a fan theory. By showing that Harry and Ginny are two sides of one coin, the decision of Rowling to let them get married, which is often questioned by fans, is strengthened:

> Ich hab auf Tumblr so einen Post gesehen, dass Ginny und Harry fast so zwei Seiten einer Münze sind. Sie hatten beide einen Teil von Voldemort in sich und können sich gegenseitig damit helfen, und Harry ist jemand der nicht gerne mit Leuten über so etwas redet – was auch mit seiner Kindheit zu tun hat, wo er nie etwas sagen durfte. Und da hilft glaub ich Ginny, weil sie dasselbe durchgemacht hat […]. (Kathryn)

As we can see from this quote, social media platforms, such as Tumblr, act as fan spaces and heavily contribute to the distribution and popularisation of fan theories. By making the ideas of one person accessible to a broader fan community, fanon is created.

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28 The difference between these forms of fanon is made visible in fan practices, like fan fiction, by labelling the content; examples for these labels are: „Alternantive Universe" (AU, for short) or „Out of Character" (OOC, for short) (Allan 2015: 280)

The difference between fan theories that potentially could be canon, and those that are related to the creation of an alternative universe are made clear in what is known as "shipping wars". The fan practice of "shipping" (from "relationship") implies the idea that two characters should be, and therefore are, in a romantic relationship[29]. These ships are established and articulated in fan content, such as fan fiction and fan art. Looking at the practice of shipping before the release of the final book, we can make out the distinction between canonical ships[30], and popular ships in the Harry Potter fan communities. The second category included both ships that had a (more or less) realistic potential to be fulfilled in the canon (such as Ron/Hermione or Harry/Hermione) and ships that (although some fans might insist otherwise) were conceptualised as being part of an alternative Potterverse, such as Harry/Draco or Snape/Hermione. Thereby, shipping can be seen as one way for fans to articulate their fantasies and explore "what ifs" based on the familiar characters. Before the publication of the final book, shipping wars peaked, dividing fans and fan communities by the potential fulfilments of fanon in the canon. By concluding the official canon, the release of the final book resolved many of the shipping disputes. Thereby, some fan ships were established as canon (like Ron/Hermione), while others were banned to being non-canon ships (like Harry/Hermione).

In her interview, Connie, being a long time defender of the now canonic relationship between Ron and Hermione, concluded:

> Ich glaub dass das in Harry Potter mittlerweile im Fandom auch schon friedvoller geworden ist, weil es im Prinzip vorbei ist. Das heißt es gibt keine Kriege mehr zu kämpfen, im Sinne von Harry und Hermine oder Ron und Hermine, oder was weiß ich. Also diese Kriege sind vorbei und deswegen ist das Ganze ein bisschen friedvoller. (Connie)

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[29] While the majority of ships involve romance and intimacy, there are also ships that are predominantly based in friendship.

[30] In this context it has to be noted that due to an overall lack of romantic storylines in the Harry Potter book series the imagination of fans was further challenged. Examples for canonical ships established prior to the seventh book are James and Lily (Harry's parents) and Molly and Arthur (Ron's parents), as well as Harry's romantic involvement with Cho Chang or Hermione's with Viktor Krum.

Ill. 27: Draco and Harry by mihodraws (tumblr)

Ill. 28: Ron and Hermione, by Lile Selle,

*Ill.29: Harry and Hermione, by
blueabyss (deviant art)*

Connie, who stated in the interview that she focuses on the canonical material only, also addressed this revelation by Rowling. She pointed out that, although she is happy about every new revelation by the author, she would have liked her not to question her own canon, because it gives ground to fans shipping Harry and Hermione. Kathryn also picked up this revelation during her interview. Referring to it, she stated:

> Ich hasse, dass J.K. Rowling [...] gesagt hat: 'Nein, Ron und Hermine sollten gar nicht!' Das fand ich so schlimm! [...] Sie war bisschen so: 'Ja, ich hatte es schon geplant, aber ich hätte lieber Hermine mit Harry' - WAS? [...] Ich finde Ron und Hermione super, ich hab es immer geliebt. Ich war immer auf ihrer Seite, seit dem dritten Band war es so: 'Ahhh, macht's schon' (lacht) (Kathryn)

This leads to the question of how fanons and canon are negotiated by fans, and furthermore, to the question of how fans treat the canonical revelations by J.K. Rowling, which were made after the release of the final book.

6.3.6. Canon vs. Non-Canon: WolfStar – it's Fanon

In the interviews, I found that the question of what fans see as canon is deeply connected to personal fan experiences, practices, and fan identity. While the books are recognised as the core-canon by fans, other canonical materials are seen as less valid, such as the movie adaptations or additional information by J. K. Rowling that is published at Pottermore or as parts of interviews. Additionally, fans draw from fan content to supplement the canonical information, and create their own "head canon" by drawing from "everything Harry Potter":

> Alena: Was ist für dich alles im Kanon enthalten?
>
> Dorothea: Das komplette? Okay, natürlich alle Bücher, alle Filme, die ganzen Zusatzbücher, ja, für mich gehört aber trotzdem auch noch alles was an *fan fiction* geschrieben ist, an *fan art* gezeichnet ist, alles was du findest, auch Soundtracks natürlich. [...] Und ja, auch die.. für mich gehören die Schauspieler dann auch schon irgendwo dazu, weil das sind doch die Rollen die sie geprägt haben. .. Und ja, .. ich denke, na gut das ganze Merchandise gehört natürlich irgendwo auch dazu. (Dorothea)

Dorothea's broad definition of the Harry Potter canon relates to her fan practices, such as reading fan fiction and writing it herself[31]. What canon is and how fans handle non-canonical

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[31] Fan fiction is used as a supplement or substitute to the books. Because it is set in the same medium the world-building operates on the same premises, limited by the possibilities of written text.

fan texts are topics also addressed by Susi. She argues that Harry Potter should be fun and thereby legitimises how fans appropriate the fan object, leaving canonical information that contradicts their head canons out of the equation:

> Ich mein es ist allgemein, find ich, in der Harry Potter Gemeinschaft ziemlich so, dass sich *canon* mit sehr beliebten *head canons* vermischt und *fan fiction tropes*, die einfach in jeden in jeder *fanfic* vorkommen, und dadurch fast schon akzeptiert sind. Dadurch ist das so ein riesen Mischmach.[...] ich find bei Harry Potter ist der *canon* nicht so streng. Und jeder kann das für sich selbst entscheiden, nur für mich sind halt die Bücher das Hauptding, weil das das ist wo ich am meisten weiß. Ich weiß halt nicht was alles auf Pottermore steht. Aber manche Sachen von Pottermore hab ich schon akzeptiert, nur halt nicht alles. Da erlaub ich mir sozusagen Sachen nicht zu akzeptieren und anders zu haben, weil ich mir denk das sind Bücher, das ist meine Fantasie, es muss mir Spaß machen – so quasi. (Susi)

Before discussing Susi's motivations for this line of argumentation in detail, I want to stress that fans heavily contest the conceptualisation of canon and how (other) fans treat non-canonical material. Connie, who opposes Susi and Dorothea, stressed her belief in canonical material as being the only valid source for information on Harry Potter. Also, she acknowledges J. K. Rowling as the only authority in the questions of canon:

> [...] mir ist die Person von J.K. Rowling als Autorin und als Herrscherin dieser Welt sehr wichtig, im Vergleich zu vielen anderen Fans. [...] mir ist zum Beispiel unglaublich wichtig wenn sie neue Information *released*, ob in Pottermore oder Interviews, dann ist das für mich Gesetz. Also ich hab eben sehr viele Freundinnen die sagen: 'Ja, Gott. Jetzt wo das raus ist – können wir das wirklich noch ernst nehmen?'. Ich bin da nicht so, wenn sie das raus bringt, dann ist das Gesetz und fertig. Wenn sie sagt, was weiß ich, [...] dass Hugo Weasley braune Haare hat wie seine Mutter, dann hat der braune Haare, und dann ist mir das alles wurscht was in irgendeiner *fan fiction* steht und dann ist alles was ich mir bisher gedacht hab halt nicht *valid*. (Connie)

As with Dorothea and, as we will see in the next example, Susi, Connie's conceptualisation of canon influences her own fan practice. In her fan fiction writing, she concentrates on stories about Ron and Hermione, writing about "missing moments", moments set in the original canon, in which both characters are not mentioned because Harry is not with them. Also, she only reads fan fiction of this category, excluding story lines that are set before or after the years Harry spends at Hogwarts:

> Ich kann nicht mal Post-Hogwarts lesen! Mich interessiert nicht mal was sie nachher machen, weil auch das niemand wissen kann. Die Leute fangen alle an so komische Sachen zu erfinden, ich weiß nicht, eben, das Fandom kreiert immer so gemeinsame Charaktere für die Kinder oder wie sie als Erwachsene sind. Wir können das alle nicht

wissen. Ich will nicht über irgendwas lesen, wo ich mich nicht über die Jo reinfinden kann, und mich interessiert nicht was die anderen machen. Also, nein, ich kann nicht Post-Hogwarts lesen. [...] im Prinzip ist das sehr schwierig, weil mit 13 sind sie noch zu jung [für romantische Szenen, Anmerkung durch AB] und das heißt alle meine Sachen die ich lese befinden sich vom vierten Jahr bis zum siebten Jahr und das müssen im Prinzip fast alles ‚missing moments' sein (lacht), das ist so schwierig! (Connie)

As discussed in chapter 2.2, the Harry Potter narrative includes references to the time Harry's parents were at Hogwarts, as well as to the time his children and the children of his friends attend the wizarding school. These story lines, because they are not very elaborated in the novels, are a common setting for fan text, such as fan fiction and fan art. In the context of the story lines concerning Harry's parents at Hogwarts, these fan texts often surround the "Marauders", James Potter and his three best friends: Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew. Asking my interview partners about what a new official Harry Potter book should be about, many of them stated that a prequel to the original narrative, with the Marauders as the main protagonists, is something they wish for.

Ill. 2: Harry's mother Lily Evans and the Marauders: Remus Lupin, Sirius Black, James Potter and Peter Pettigrew by cawkart (deviant art)

Melanie articulated this wish in her interview, pointing towards the aspect of canonical background information on the protagonists:

Ach, ich hab ja so ein Herz für die Marauders. Es gibt es ja nicht sehnlicheres was ich mir wünsche als dass wir ein Prequel bekommen. Weil ich liebe sie. Da ist so viel Potential drinnen, auch was da die Fans machen an Videos und so weiter, ich liebe es. Da hätte

ich echt gern noch mehr Backgroundinfo. Das ist das wo ich noch am meisten wissen will. (Melanie)
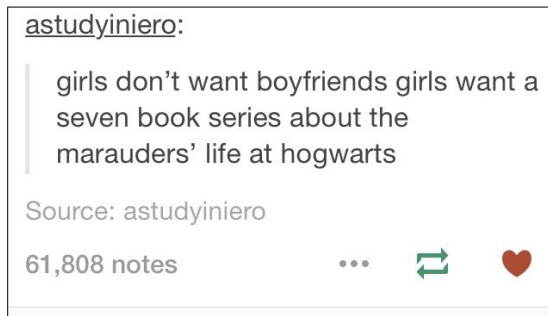
Ill. 31

Nevertheless, such publications are also seen as ambivalent, because they have the potential to contradict specific head canons, fanons and ships, and to change how fans see characters. Emily talked about this by referring to new information by the author published on the Internet:

Hmmm. .. Ich bin mir nicht ganz sicher ob ich es gut finden soll, dass so viele neue Information von J. K. Rowling herauskommt.[...] Über die Bücher, über bestimmte Charakter, ich mein das ist einerseits voll cool, aber andererseits beeinflusst diese Information jetzt doch wie ich die Bücher sehe. Und nicht immer in einer positiven Weise. (Emily)

Appropriation of the fan object in this context goes as far as denying new revelations by J.K. Rowling (as posted on Pottermore or on Twitter) to protect the individual head canon. This for example, is the case with one of my interview partners, Susi. Her favourite head canon concerns two male characters, Remus Lupin and Sirius Black, and their romantic involvement in a time prior to the birth of Harry Potter.

Ill. 32: WolfStar by nucleicacid

Ill. 33: WolfStar by tiny gorilla (tumblr)

The shipping of Remus and Sirius, nicknamed Wolfstar (one of them being a werewolf, the other one being named after a star constellation) is a perfect example for fanon. The ship is now widely accepted within some Harry Potter fan communities (URL Podcast4: 00:17:30 Aaron, Melissa) and is a topic of various fan created content, such as fan fiction and fan art. In the case of Susi, she argued that she could not acknowledge the biography of the character Remus Lupin as posted on Pottermore by J. K. Rowling in 2015 because it states that before he met his wife, he was never in love:

> Aber prinzipiell finde ich es schon cool, auch weil es eine Möglichkeit ist für J.K. Rowling uns noch mehr Informationen zu geben, die sie nicht in die Bücher gepackt hat. Andererseits sind das dann halt auch Sachen die sie raufgestellt hat die natürlich *fan fictions* widersprechen, oder Sachen widersprechen, die man sich als Leser schon dazu ausgedacht hat und die dann einfach für einen dann schon so sind. Und das find ich dann auch wieder Schade, weil ich mir denk die Bücher sind schon abgeschlossen und es ist auch das Schöne an Büchern, dass jeder ein anderes Bild im Kopf hat, dass jeder durch die eigene Fantasie sich automatisch Sachen dazu denkt die nicht im Buch stehen. Und wenn sie dann halt etwas hinschreibt: 'Das ist so und so und das hab ich mir so gedacht' – denk ich mir, es ist schon gut, aber für mich ist es halt die Information mit den Büchern abgeschlossen gewesen und alles andere ist meiner Fantasie überlassen und das ist halt ihre Fantasie, aber das ist dann für mich mehr *canon*. [...] zum Beispiel wie sie gesagt hat, dass Remus Lupin noch nie verliebt war bevor er mit Tonks zusammen gekommen ist. Logischerweise das erste was mir einfällt, weil es meinem *ship* widerspricht. (Susi)


Ill. 34: WolfStar by nastjastark

The official statement by Rowling contradicts and delegitimizes the popular ship of WolfStar. Before it, the ship was seen as valid, not as a fan theory set in an alternative universe, but as a possibility within the canon. How this was negotiated with the later developments in the official canon, namely that Lupin married Tonks, was addressed by Susi, arguing:

> [...] ich *ship* ja WolfStar, aber ich find es wichtig das Remus Lupin trotzdem mit Tonks zusammen gewesen ist. Weil er kann ja einfach bisexuell oder pansexuell oder was auch immer gewesen sein. Das ist mir wichtig. Weil ich hasse wenn Leute sagen: 'Oh mein *ship* ist viel besser als deines und deines ist deswegen jetzt nicht relevant oder richtig'. Deswegen ist mir wichtig das so zu sagen. (Susi)

Because Rowling is the creator of the official canon, her revelations have the potential to legitimise and delegitimise head canons and fanons. The illustration bellow depicts these shifts between canon, fan theories, and fanon.
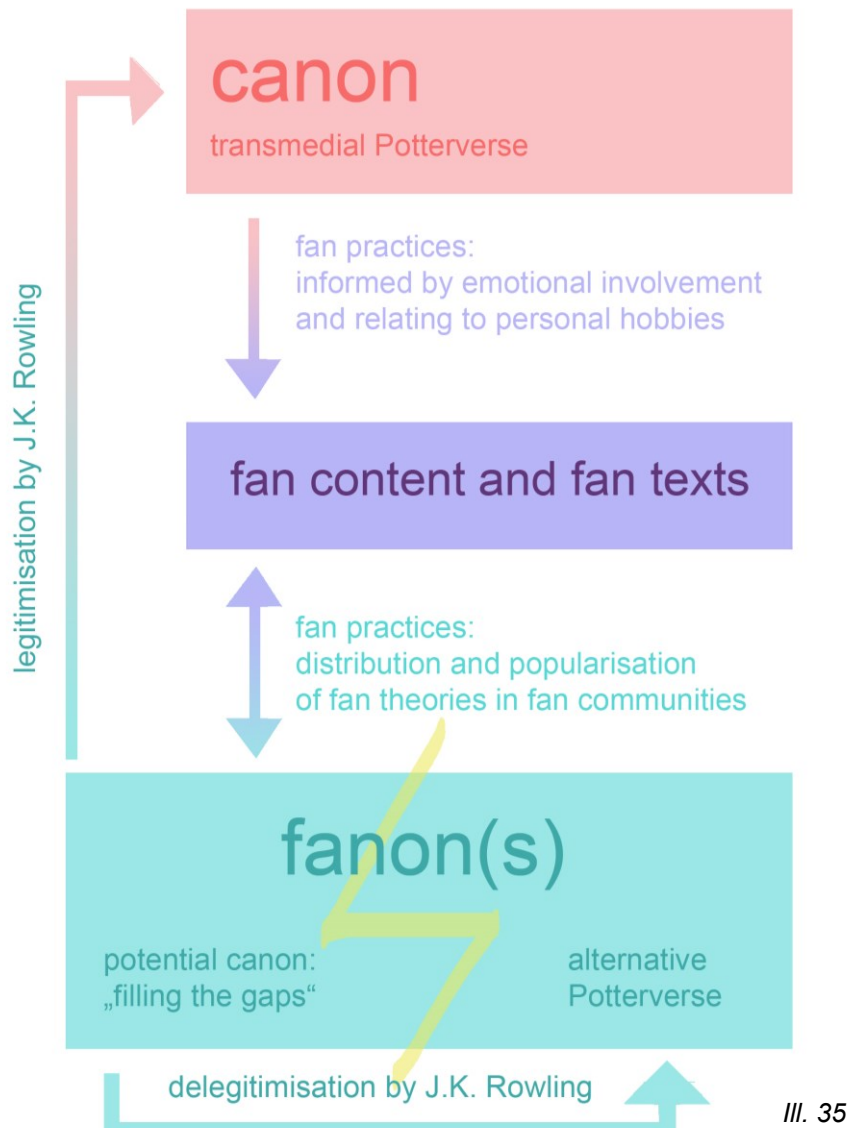
Ill. 35

Concluding this discussion, I want to stress that although the original canon is the source material, providing intertextual and intermedial knowledge, fans appropriate this knowledge. Hence, the ability to stress story lines, as well as leave out information, is often based on the conscious decision to not include them in the personal "head canon" or a specific fan text. Simultaneously, fans include (own) fan theories in their head canons, or specific fan practices, both to further legitimise and supplement the canon. One example for this is a letter by Emily and Kathryn, written during their time at school.

Wien am
31.07.0...

Lieber Harry!

Wie geht es dir? Wie geht's der Cho? Mir geht es gut.
Übrigens, ich hab meinen Liebestrank Mum gegeben („Oh, mein
süßer Ronnieputz!"), und du (Cho?) Ich finde, die Frau
Amtmann ist besser, viel besser im unterrichten als die
Baumi, oder? Hey, was machst du eigentlich grade? Ich
schreibe einen Brief (an einen gewissen Harry Potter, falls du
den kennst)! ACH JA! Hab ich ganz vergessen (eine neue
Idee für das Spiel...)! Im Tagespropheten hat Manilein gelesen,
dass der Todesser Rookwood und die Todesserin Bellatrix
Lestrange IN HOGWARTS rein sollen! Also pass auf...
Hier noch ein Gruß von Hermine:
Lieber Harry! Sei vorsichtig! Such bloß keinen Ärger! Tschau!
Hier noch ein Gruß von Hagrid:
Lieber Harry! Du, Ron und Hermine dürft nicht mehr am
Abend zu meiner Hütte! Tschüss, von Hagrid.
Hier noch ein Gruß von Sirius und dem Orden:
Lieber Harry! Sei vorsichtig! Voldemort soll Werwolf-
anhänger bekommen haben („Remus muss es wissen!" „Ach,
hör auf..), also mach nichts gewagtes, denn übermorgen
ist Vollmond (Moody: „Hast du eh nicht vergessen, den
Trank zu nehmen, Remus?" Lupin: „Nein, alles Okay.") Tschau.
Ich sag jetzt auch mal Tschüss.

Tschüs, dein Ron.

P.S.: Sag mal, Sirius würde halt noch leben, okay!

In it, they take on the personas of Harry and Ron, writing about their day. The post scriptum note at the bottom clarifies an important feature of the setting. Contradicting the official canon, it states that, in this scenario, Sirius Black is still alive. In the example of Emily and Kathryn's letter, we see how the first practice of leaving out canonical information enables the second, to establish an alternative universe. By leaving out the canonical death of Sirius, his further involvement in the story is enabled, opening up an alternative Potterverse in which Harry's godfather is still alive.

The next chapter deals with how fans appropriate the fan object in material culture and visual imagery. Thereby it elaborates on how fans stress certain story elements of the narrative and "make it their own".

6.3.7. The Lightning Bolt Scar – Harry Potter and Material Culture

As noted in the overview over fan practices (see chapter 6.3.1), both the collecting of Harry Potter stuff and the embodiment of the fan object are central fan practices that incorporate the fan object into everyday life. Relating to a private setting, this is true in the case of home decors, such as posters or bed sheets, and the display of a Harry Potter collection. In a public setting, this relates to Harry Potter themed clothing, accessories, jewellery etc.

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For my interviews, I asked my research partners to bring some of their Harry Potter stuff, or photos of it, with them. Some brought objects from their private collections, such as wands, books, and items that resemble the objects used in the movies. Some wore a Harry Potter

shirt, as did I for some of the interviews. Others had patches sewn on their backpacks, wore Harry Potter jewellery, or showed me their HP themed keychains. By material culture, objects and symbols of the narrative wander into everyday life and thereby transfer magical fiction into material reality.

By wearing visible symbols related to Harry Potter, fans recognize and communicate with each other. In this context, symbols are not only related to the fan object, but also visualise details about the person, like their house identity or favourite characters. When I met Susi for our interview, she was wearing earrings that symbolise the characters of James Potter, Sirius Black, and Remus Lupin: a pair of deer' (James Potter's animal form and Patronus), a set of dog paw's imprints (as Sirius's animal form is a dog) and a set of half-moons, symbolsing Lupin the werewolf. Her fascination for these characters was already established in the last chapter. In the interview, she stated that she actively searches for and buys jewellery (not officially sold as Harry Potter merchandise) that has a symbolic

Ill. 38

connection to the Harry Potter universe and her favourite characters, the Marauders (see illustration 38). This practice creates the possibility to carry the connection with the characters into everyday life, as well as for other fans to recognise the symbols and understand the connection. Thereby, material culture acts as a marker of fan identity. It draws from both the intertextual knowledge of the wearer and from the intertextual knowledge of fans who recognise the worn symbols as being related to the Potterverse. The next quotes give insights into the fan practice of embodiment by stressing both of these factors. Max relates his practice of wearing a Gryffindor bracelet to both his house identity and his belonging to the HP fandom:

> Es ist für mich eine schöne Geste das Gryffindor Armband oben zu haben. […] erstens symbolisiert es etwas und es ist eine einfach Art zu zeigen, dass ich einem Fandom zugehörig bin. (Max_b)

Kathryn shows her house identity publicly by wearing her Slytherin scarf and thereby creates a basis for communication with other fans:

> Wenn ich den Slytherin Schal trage und man kommt auf mich zu: 'Hey ist das von Harry Potter', dann geht es sofort los – Diskussion. Ja, das ist so unterbewusst, das hört nie wirklich auf. Ja, es wird nie aufhören (Kathryn)

The following quotes, by Susi and Anna, refer to them recognising symbols and actively engaging with the bearers. Because they share the intertextual knowledge to connect the material culture to the narrative with the people displaying it, this creates a common ground for identification:

> Ich freu mich immer voll, wenn ich Leute sehe damit [mit einem Harry Potter Shirt, Anmerkung durch AB]. Manchmal rede ich die Leute auch an oder sage so: 'Hey cool' oder lächele einfach, weil dann wissen sie es glaub ich sowieso – wenn ich so grinse und hinschaue. Aber ja, ich find das cool, ich freu mich immer voll wenn ich Leute sehe die auch Harry Potter Fans sind. (Susi)

> I just want to go to them like: 'I see what you did there!', mostly it just makes me smile. [...] it always makes me smile if I see something like this, it's the same if I see someone reading the book, or anything like this, it just makes me go, like: 'I get you. We are in the same boat here'. (Anna)

Experiences like this also relate to my own experiences as a fan. By wearing a Harry Potter symbol, the personal fan identity is carried into the public sphere. Nevertheless, because Harry Potter is not an unpopular narrative, the recognisability of such symbols is not exclusively limited to people who describe themselves as Harry Potter fans. This opens up the question of whether fans have a specific approach towards Harry Potter symbols and also, which symbols related to Harry Potter are established within a public discourse and which are established within a (specific) fan setting, relating to fan practice and fan community.

Ill. 39
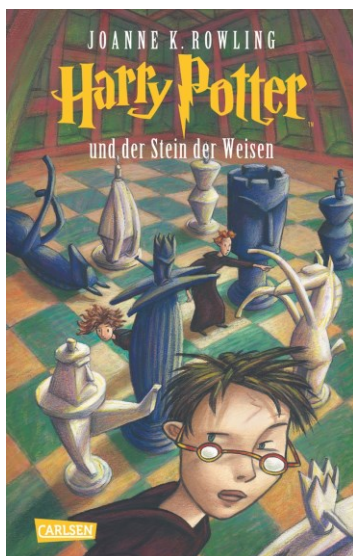
In this context, we can assume that specific symbols and imageries are popularised through advertisements and marketing campaigns of the Harry Potter franchise. This is true for imagery associated with depictions on book covers and the imagery established in the movie adaptations, including the movie posters and other advertisements. This also includes the popularisation of certain symbols through Harry Potter tourist attractions, such as the theme parks, the Warner Bros. Studio Tour and the shop at King's Cross train station. All in all, this applies to symbols that are part of the pop cultural brand Harry Potter. This, for example, includes the lightning inspired Harry

Potter logo, which is also featured on the German translations of the novels.

Other examples are the official King's Cross 9 ¾ logo, and the house crests, as used in the movie adaptations. These symbols, used in official merchandise, create a canonical visual imagery of the Potterverse that is not just recognised by fans. Dorothea pointed this out with the example of the official King's Cross 9 ¾ logo, relating its popularity to the tourist attraction in the train station:

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> 9 3/4, der wahrscheinlich coolste Ort. Also, allein Kings Cross sicher der coolste halbfiktive Bahnhof der eigentlich existiert.[...] Ja und auch dort stehen zu können, also es ist ja mittlerweile leider nicht mehr zwischen Bahngleis 9 und 10, aber alleine das Schild zu sehen und die Möglichkeit zu haben ein Foto zu machen dort, ist schon sehr, sehr cool. [...] Ich glaub auch, dass das eines der offensichtlicheren Erkennungszeichen oder Symbole für Harry Potter ist. Das ist eines, der Dinge die auch Leute die sich nicht so viel damit beschäftigt haben – die sich dann denken: 'Okay 9 3/4 – Harry Potter'. (Dorothea)

What we can see from this quote is the personal investment of Dorothea, as a fan, to the place the logo resembles. Her elaborations concerning the logo imply a certain emotional reaction, as well as a reference to the canon, and draw from her intertextual knowledge as a fan. While she notes that people who do not deal with Harry Potter on a regular basis, will also make the connection, this connection does not imply the same emotional investment. Also, Bea's explanation of what the 9 ¾ logo means to her underlines this argument and relates to how fans make sense of the narrative:

> Es ist auch ein Symbol für wegfahren und alles hinter sich lassen was einen belastet. Harry lässt alles hinter sich was ihn belastet und geht in eine vorerst glückliche Zukunft, ja und 9 3/4, das ist so eine eigenartige Zahl, es bestätigt einfach alles was schräg ist an dieser Welt und nicht ganz zusammenpasst. (Bea)
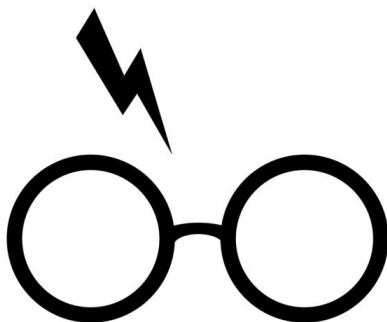
Ill. 41

Another example for the popularisation of visual imagery is the Harry Potter icon we see on the left. The basic pictogram resembles the main features of Harry Potter: his lightning shaped scar and his round glasses. Like with the 9¾ logo, this symbol is widely popular, although the origin of the image is not clear. It likely originated in fan content, but now stands for Harry Potter and is used as an image easily associated with the franchise. For example, it is used in the gaming app "Hi Guess", in which the players must guess the name of

movie characters based on an image (see illustration 42). Moreover the icon is used in material culture and fan created content (see, for example, its use in street art, as depicted in illustration 43).

Ill. 42

Ill. 43: street art in Vienna

Most of my interview partners pointed out that this symbol could easily be connected to the narrative by non-fans:

> Well, I think that is recognisable, whether you are a fan or not. I think the glasses and the lightning scar became such a pop culture phenomenon, it will not matter what age you are either. So I think it's very recognisable and it's like an instant connect. And I think nowadays, even when I see the shape of round glasses, a part of me will always connect it to Potter. (Anna)

In Anna's conclusion, she argues that, for her, even round glasses make her think of Harry Potter, with this the popular icon is exceeded.

How fans appropriate symbols can be connected to specific symbolic meanings related to the narrative, as well as to visual appropriations. This sometimes conflicts with property rights of the franchise holders. But, furthermore, visual imagery and distinct connotations of symbols are created in the context of fan practices. Hence, to recognise certain symbols is not only connected to the intertextual knowledge of fans, but also is part of the process of getting socialised in a specific fan community. This, for example, is the case with the meaning of the number 394, which refers to a specific scene of the movie adaptation of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" (2004) and acts as a "running gag" in some Harry Potter fan communities. Also, in my interviews, this kind of usage of specific symbolic language was revealed in the case with a symbolic depiction of "The Golden Trio" (see

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illustration 44): Ron, Harry and Hermione. In this case, a collection of symbols is used: a crown to depict Ron Weasley, a lightning bolt to depict Harry Potter, and a light bulb to depict Hermione Granger. The use of the specific icons is rooted in the canonical material, referring to the Quidditch song "Weasley is our King" (Rowling 2003), Harry's scar, and Hermione being referred to as the "brightest witch of her age" (Rowling 1999). Picking up the argument of intertextual knowledge, Susi argued that non-fans of the narrative will not understand the combination because it relates to details of the narrative that is not known to them:

> […] ich hab jetzt auch ein bisschen gebraucht bis ich mir gedacht hab okay der Blitz ist Harry, die Krone wegen 'Weasley is our king' und Hermine die 'brightest witch of her age'. [...] Aber vielleicht wegen dem Blitz wieder, dass sie sich denken: 'Okay, das hat etwas mit Harry Potter zu tun'. Aber nicht-Harry-Potter-Fans würden glaub ich nicht auf die beiden anderen Hintergründe kommen. (Susi)

Nevertheless, the meanings of these symbols were not clear to every one of my interview partners. In this context, I argue that the reason for this was that these interview partners did not use the fan spaces in which these symbols (with the exception of the scar, referring to Harry) were established and already incorporated in the symbolic language of fans. In line with this argument, Dorothea stressed that she recognised the symbols because they are used in fan art and fan fiction to symbolise specific character traits:

> Für mich ist die Krone der Mut den Ron über die Zeit eigentlich erhält. Irgendwo schlummert es ja auch am Anfang schon in ihm, man merkt es im ersten Teil dann schon, relativ am Ende. Ja, der Blitz natürlich Harrys Narbe und die Glühbirne ist Hermines Intellekt [...] Die Krone für Ron [...], die Assoziation kommt mir nur so bekannt vor, weil es einfach in *fan art* und *fan fiction* so oft für Ron verwendet wird. (Dorothea)

Also, Kathryn attributed her recognition of the combination of symbols to her involvement in the Harry Potter community on the social media platform Tumblr:

> Es ist sehr minimalistisch auf jeden Fall und man kommt nicht sofort drauf. Aber ich glaub ich hab es mal auf Tumblr gesehen und das ist der Grund warum ich es erkannt hab. Weil man braucht schon ein bisschen bis man draufkommt. Weil man Ron nicht sofort damit verbindet, und Hermine und Glühbirne. Es ist wirklich minimalistisch und symbolisch gedacht. Man braucht ein bisschen. (Kathryn)

From this example we see how fan communities create their own visual imagery. Furthermore, it has to be noted that some of these symbolic meanings wander out of the fan

communities and get distributed via images online and offline, as well as in material culture. In this process the symbolic meanings are consumed by a broader public, as for example with the Harry Potter pictogram, which is now a broadly known and recognisable symbol referring to Harry Potter.

Ill. 45: by RiaVeg (deviant art)

The next chapter focuses on the case study on the Vienna Vanguards, a Viennese quidditch team and the question of whether quidditch can be characterised as a fan practice. The final chapter then concludes the empirical findings of the study and recapitulates the findings in regards to the case study and the theoretical framework posed in chapter 4.

7. Case Study: The Vienna Vanguards and the Appropriation of a Magical Sport

Quidditch is one example for the appropriation and the reinterpretation of a fictional practice into the non-fictional world. The sport of Quidditch was created by the author J.K. Rowling as part of her Harry Potter universe. I first got interested in the sport when a study colleague stopped me in the hallways of our department. With his hands waving, he pointed at the Harry Potter t-shirt I was wearing, yelling: "Quidditch – on Wednesday!!! You're in?" Although I did not follow the invitation, roughly half a year later, I selected the practice of quidditch[32] as my case study. The sport, which is rooted in a fictional narrative, is now the fastest growing sport at US colleges (URL sportnews). Also in the last few years teams have been emerging all over Europe (URL IQA about) quidditch "is now played on every continent except Antarctica" (URL IQA development).

This chapter discusses my empirical findings on the Vienna Vanguards (Vanguards or VV for short), a Vienna-based quidditch team. **It elaborates on the practice of professional quidditch and how the fictional sport was transferred into reality**. As an introduction to the topic, I first give a short overview over Quidditch as it is played in the Harry Potter series before talking about its non-magical adaptation. The chapter examines the findings on the Vienna Vanguards and how the team is embedded into the institutionalised field of quidditch as a competitive sport. Furthermore, it discusses the question of whether or not quidditch can be understood as fan practice. Lastly, I want to focus on the quidditch community and the role of the Harry Potter narrative for the community of *quidkids*[33].

7.1. Quidditch in the Potterverse

In the Harry Potter novel series, Quidditch is a magical sport played by the wizard community worldwide and has its own institutions, such as sports clubs, international tournaments (like

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[32] The capitalised spelling refers to the sport in the narrative; the use of the uncapitalised term "quidditch" refers to the sport as played by the official rules by the "International Quidditch Association". The term "Muggle quidditch" also is used to describe the non-magical sport, and is often used in German speaking countries because the small cap spelling contradicts grammar rules and further signalises the difference to the magical version in spoken language.

[33] The term *quidkid* is used as a self-attribution by quidditch players and to address other members of the quidditch community

the World Cup as described in "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" (Rowling 2000)), and the house based Quidditch competition in Hogwarts.

Because Harry Potter is selected to play for his house's team in the first novel, it contributes to the storytelling process and furthermore aids in the character development of not only Harry, but also with other characters, such as his school-rival Draco and his best friend Ron. Quidditch and the dynamics surrounding it is one of the occasions in the novel where the reader gets to know more about supporting characters. The Quidditch pitch is one central location on the grounds of Hogwarts and that acts as a setting for important twists and challenges for the main characters.

Ill. 46: illustration by Mary GrandPré

Quidditch, as in the Harry Potter novels, is played on flying broomsticks. It involves four balls of three varieties: One Quaffle, a red ball that is used for scoring; two iron Bludgers, which are bewitched to hit the players, and the Snitch: a bewitched, very fast flying, small golden ball, whose catch is worth 150 points and ends the game. Four types of players are on a team: Three Chasers who attempt to score with the Quaffle (10 Points), a Keeper who acts as a goal keeper in front of the three hoop shaped goals, two Beaters who use wooden bats to hit the Bludgers and redirect them towards players of the other team, and a Seeker who attempts to catch the Snitch. All seven players enter the pitch at the beginning of the game. (Rowling 1997: 133f). When a foul is incurred, the other team receives a free kick. Furthermore, it is important to note that although Quidditch in its magical form may be played as a co-ed sport, which means that teams may consist of both female and male players, there is no rule that the teams have to be mixed. Some are not.

7.2. Practicing Quidditch – Magic goes Muggle

> A group of people gather at a public park in Vienna. They bring soccer shoes, PVC pipes, dodgeballs and gumshields. Some set up an oval pitch, three hoop shaped goals at each side; while others start warming up, passing a deflated volleyball with one hand, stabilising the PVC pipe between their legs with the other. A pack of children interrupt their play and start running towards them, yelling: "It's Quidditch! They play Harry Potter!".

Before giving a general overview of the history of quidditch, I want to outline the history of the Vienna-based team, the Vienna Vanguards. Furthermore, this chapter answers the question of how the formalities of the appropriation worked and briefly touches on how the rules and the gameplay were adapted to work in a non-magical setting. In my interviews and the participant observation with the Vienna Vanguards the gameplay of quidditch, put simply, is often explained as a co-ed sport and mixture of handball, dodge ball, and rugby[34].

Ill. 47: Vienna Vanguards training at the Wiener Prater (December 2015), photo by Emina Botic

The first initiative to play quidditch in Vienna was started in October 2014 by students of the University of Vienna. Christoph Gassner, one of the team's founding students who became familiar with quidditch during his exchange studies in Australia, now acts as Captain of the Vanguards. Invitations and announcements were spread throughout various Facebook groups associated with the University of Vienna and Austrian Harry Potter fan pages. Announcement flyers were placed on the walls and in the venues of Vienna University. The Vienna Vanguards were founded in November 2014 out of a group of about 40 students who had followed the invitation to casually explore quidditch. Having begun with around 20 people interested in playing quidditch on a professional and competitive level, the Vienna Vanguards

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[34] For a detailed outline of the research methods see chapter 5

now hold about 25 members in its ranks (December 2015), with about 22 of them being active players. The initial motivation for forming a professional team was to play at the European Quidditch Cup, which was held in Oxford in April 2015. Finally, the team reached place 26th out of 32. The team trains two times a week at the public park "Wiener Prater". Contrary to many other quidditch teams which are officially sponsored or organised under colleges and universities, the VV are a self-organised and self-registered club.

Ill. 48: the Vienna Vanguards (October 2015; not all team members are included in the picture)

Now that I have provided this brief introduction to the Vienna Vanguards, the following paragraph provides a description of the rules of quidditch, so as to give a better understanding of the practice. Like with other established team-sports, the game itself follows a set procedure (also see URL Rule Book Nine):

All field players have to carry a broomstick (a plastic or wooden stick, sometimes with bristles attached) between their legs. For the first twenty minutes, there are six players per team on the field: three Chasers, two Beaters and one Keeper. The players' position is made visible by headbands in different colours: Chasers wear white, Beaters wear black, and the Keepers wear green. In total, there are four balls on the field: Three Bludgers are used by a total of four Beaters – they throw the ball on other players, beating them. When beaten, the player has to dismount the broomstick and drop the ball he/she is holding, this is referred to as the "knock-out procedure". The player is required to return to his/her teams' goal before proceeding in the game. The fourth ball in the game, the Quaffle, is used by the Chasers to score. There are three circular goals, called Hoops, which are guarded by the Keeper (who can also act as a fourth Chaser). Scoring one goal counts as ten points. After 17 and 18

minutes, three additional players enter the game. At 17 minutes, the Snitch-runner, an independent player who is not carrying a broomstick, enters onto the field. After 18 minutes of playing time, each team introduces their Seeker onto the field (distinguishable by their yellow headbands). The Snitch-runner carries the Snitch, a tennis ball in a sock attached to his posterior. The Seeker who is able to detach the Snitch wins 30 points for his/her team and effectively brings an end to the game. In addition to this very basic procedure, there are a variety of rules concerning scoring, tackling and the special rights of Keepers and the Snitch-runner. When rules are violated, the referee has the option to give one of three cards to signalise penalties: the blue and the yellow card send a player in the penalty area for one minute, during which the team has to play with a deficit of one player. If the opposing team scores, the penalised players can prematurely re-join the game. While players can have more than two blue cards in one game without additional consequences, two yellow cards equal one red card. When receiving a red card, the penalised player is banned from playing for the rest of the game and the team is forced to play for two minutes with one less player.

The primary difference between magical Quidditch and Muggle quidditch is that the set of rules answers to the competitive level of non-magical quidditch. Thereby, the game's concept as defined in the books is balanced with the non-magical setting it is played in. Anna, coach of the Vienna Vanguards points out:

> Well, of course there is no flying (laughs). After running 30 minutes in heat in the summer, you wish there was flying (laughs) and that you could sit down. But, I think mostly the biggest difference, of course, since we are not flying, but running, is the knock-out procedure - how we react to Bludgers. Whereas in the books, of course, you just keep going, and it's going to hurt, with us it's, of course, you have to dismount and run. And the Snitch is a lot different, including the point difference where we only give 30 points for the Snitch catch. Which, I think, is a very important difference, because otherwise the game before would be quite pointless, especially at the competitive level. Where getting 150 point difference would be almost impossible, like even in the biggest matches, it's very rare to get anywhere close to this, even with the general amount of goals during a play. (Anna)

As we will see in the following discussion on the history of quidditch, the rules have changed during the development of the sport, and further changes are still ongoing. Because of this, each year sees a new rulebook being issued, with the ninth edition having been published in autumn 2015 (also see URL Rule Book Nine). The necessity of updating the rulebook each year and how this contributed to the sport of quidditch is addressed in the following interview quote:

Yeah […] there is a rulebook nine now for a reason, because rulebook one basically had nothing (laughs). Then it was a lot like: 'Seekers catch the Snitch', and 'Chasers play with the Quaffle,' and it was very Potter-related in the beginning, but when people started getting more competitive and then started doing more tackling and stuff like that, that simply does not exist in the Harry Potter universe. Then we started borrowing words from soccer and rugby and fields were this applies, and also some of the rules. In the first rule book, you could tackle people from behind or hang on to their legs on the ground and trip them, and wear cloaks, and it was really dangerous. And I think that is why the rules and everything keeps evolving so fast, because as the gameplay gets rougher and faster and more professional, you kind of have to start borrowing these rules and looking to other sports to make it safer and much more sensible. (Anna)

Ill. 49: quidditch practice in the Wiener Prater, photo by Anna Koivu (2015)

According to the homepage of US quidditch, Quidditch was first adopted into its non-magical form in 2005 by students of the Middlebury College in Vermont. Starting there, the sport spread to other colleges, beginning with Vassar College. In 2008, twelve college teams participated in the World Cup, which also included the first international team from McGill University (Canada). From this point, quidditch spread in the US, as well as to other countries of the Americas and other continents. (URL US quidditch history). This development went hand in hand with the creation of institutions such as the International Quidditch Association (IQA), founded in 2010, which functions as an umbrella organisation for national quidditch bodies, such as US Quidditch or Quidditch Austria (URL IQA about). In 2016, in addition to the European Quidditch Cup (Gallipoli, Italy), the World Cup will be held in Frankfurt, Germany (URL IQA events).

In the course of this development quidditch was not only appropriated to work as a *real sport*, leaving behind flying broomsticks and self-aware balls, but also claimed the status of being a new, tough, highly-tactical, full-contact and competitive sport. The connection between

Quidditch and Muggle quidditch is very prominent for people engaged in the sport, due to the general popularity of the Harry Potter narrative. As part of my research on the Vanguards, doing participant observations, I attended many trainings and games of the team. During this time I witnessed a lot of reactions from people walking past the pitch, children crying out: "They are playing Harry Potter", others yelling: "Run, Harry, run" towards the players. More than once a passer-by asked me: "Has this something to do with this Harry Potter story?". Because of this instant connection of the sport and Harry Potter quidditch teams face the task of educating people about the sport. Anna stresses this in the following quote:

> Mostly it's that people also realise that [it is a sport] when you tell them there is a lot of rules and how you do it. They start to get what we talk about, so that it is full physical sport and the game time is this long and when we explain the brooms and that you do literally do have to run all the time and how it's highly tactical. (Anna)

Stressing the sportive aspects of quidditch leads to the question of whether quidditch can be understood as fan practice. This issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

7.3. "I just want to win!" – Quidditch as a Fan Practice?

As we have seen in the last chapter, the connection between the sport of quidditch and Harry Potter is something that influences how it is depicted and represented to the outside by the actors involved. The goal of the quidditch community to separate the non-magical sport from the narrative and establish awareness for the sport is also reflected in the qualitative results of the VV questionnaires. When asked the question of whether quidditch should be regarded as separate to the Harry Potter narrative, 66.7% checked "strongly agree" or "agree". 33.3% checked "neutral", and 14.3% disagreed.

This also falls in line with the mission statement of US Quidditch, which reads as follows: "We envision a future where every person in the United States is aware of quidditch as a sport and has opportunities to play and engage at all levels" (URL US quidditch mission). This mission also fits the future perspective of the Vienna Vanguards. To achieve this goal, the team enforces media coverage of their team and presents itself in social media, including a Twitter account and an official Facebook page (URL Vanguards Twitter, URL Vanguards Facebook). The media coverage of the Vienna Vanguards from 2014 and 2015 included newspaper articles, online articles and coverage on TV and radio (URL Media 1-8). An analysis of the articles demonstrates that the connection between quidditch and Harry Potter is made, but also that the distinction is stressed by the members of the team and that the sports aspect is emphasised (URL Media 1-8). This particular strong distinction made in

media interviews was addressed in my semi-structured interviews, by asking the question of why this issue is so prominent in the media coverage of the Vanguards:

> I think to get the sport to grow, I think it's very important that people will hear about us. And when they are writing about competitions and international games and such, it will give us some legitimisation as a sports team and we will be more taken seriously, because I think without people knowing anything but we saying: 'Yeah we play quidditch' the first reaction is a bit like, well I was like: 'Yeah, wait, seriously?' (laughs) 'What do you do? Run on a broom and throw a ball at each other? How does this even work?' And the media has been really good also explaining the rules and not just: 'The team exists,' but almost all the articles are giving the basics of quidditch and show it really well as a competitive, physical sport that is to be taken seriously. (Anna)

In this context, the distinction between magical Quidditch being Harry Potter canon, Muggle quidditch, and fan practices of re-enactment, like Live Action Role Play (LARP), is interesting. In the talks and interviews of the Vanguards team members, quidditch is presented as a valid adaptation of the magical original. LARP-Quidditch, however, is a fan practice based on theatrical re-enactments and makes no practical sense as a sport. When I asked what the distinction between fan practices of re-enactment like LARPing and quidditch was, one Vanguards member put it simple: "Das eine ist ein Sport und das andere ist Live Action Role Play" (Lukas, in: Greta and Lukas). This discourse is also informed by the wish to distinguish the sport of quidditch from fan practices, which could be associated with stereotypes about fandom and fans (see Jenkins 1992: 10). To detach quidditch from fan practices of re-enactments by emphasising the sportive aspects is not only a mechanism to defend it from ridicule, but also to further strengthen the image of quidditch as a sport and hence make it appealing to a more general public. Kanishka, a player with the Three River Dragons of Passau, picks up both of these perspectives:

> I think most people know of quidditch only because of Harry Potter and that's the basis of why they find it weird, too. Because they think: 'O my god, these people are trying to do not some kind of sport but some sort of re-enactment of Harry Potter', you know? But I think it's very interlinked – less so for people actually playing it. I think for me it became as much a sport, like I don't really think of Harry Potter when I'm playing quidditch. I just want to win! (Kanishka)

Nevertheless, in the perceptions of outsiders, quidditch is often only associated with the fictional world of the Harry Potter narrative:

> Die Leute fragen und dann auch so manchmal ob man da auch in die einzelnen Häuser eingeteilt wird, aber das ist halt einfach wirklich gar nicht. Es hat irgendwie mit Harry Potter eigentlich nichts zu tun, außer der Tatsache, dass es halt durch Harry Potter das gibt. Aber es ist nicht irgendwie.. also es können auch Leute die Harry Potter nicht mögen

oder das nicht mal kennen auch quidditch spielen, weil wie gesagt, es ist ein ganz normaler Sport, mehr oder weniger (lacht). (Greta, in: Greta and Lukas)

Therefore, the reason for the distinction of quidditch and Harry Potter can also be found in the notion that quidditch should not be regarded a fan practice. Following this idea, there are practices which are more oriented towards the narrative and therefore more appealing as Harry Potter fan practices, while quidditch emphasises the sportive aspects, thus making quidditch uninteresting as a mere fan practice. The emphasis on the sportive aspect, leaving behind the element of fan practice, also was the reason why some of the students that had previously participated in the first open trainings in autumn 2014 stopped coming:

> [...] wenn man dann merkt, dass die Trainings wirklich Sport sind, ist halt anstrengend und man muss wirklich etwas tun. Dann haben vielleicht die Leute das Interesse verloren. Und die, die dann halt sagen sie sind eigentlich nur wegen Harry Potter Gründen da und weniger wegen dem Sport – sie haben halt irgendwann keine Lust mehr jeden Samstag um zehn (lacht) paar Stunden zu trainieren. (Greta, in: Greta and Lukas)

This chapter showed that the practice of quidditch is presented as detached from its source material Harry Potter towards others. Nevertheless, during my participant observation, it became clear that because many players consider themselves Harry Potter fans, the topic is not completely left aside. The next chapter takes a look at the quidditch community and explores the community's connection to the source material of Harry Potter.

7.4. The Quidditch Community – *Quidkids* and *Potterheads*

As discussed in the last chapter, the practice of quidditch detaches itself from the magical practice of Quidditch as described in the novels, both concerning the gameplay and the representation of the sport towards the general public. This opens up the question of what roles Harry Potter and the Harry Potter fandom play in the quidditch community, of which the members are nicknamed *quidkids*.

The question of whether or not quidditch players are also Harry Potter fans is difficult to answer on a large scale, primarily because it depends on how much the sport is visible as being detached from the Harry Potter narrative in the given context. I will discuss the team of the Vienna Vanguards as an example for this issue. During the process of my research with the Vienna Vanguards,

Ill. 50: VV team huddle and chant, photo by Alena Brunner

I found that many of the members identified themselves as Harry Potter fans, but not all of them. Those who did identify as fans did so to various degrees. 18 out of 21 people checked "strongly agree" or "agree" when asked in the questionnaire whether they would describe themselves as Harry Potter fans, one person checked "neutral", and two people "disagree". As visible in the cross tabulation, these two were not drawn to the sport because of the Harry Potter connection, but because of the sportive aspects. In the interviews with the VV, the interviewees stressed that although 76.2% of the members were initially interested in the sport because of Harry Potter, the focus for the community lies on the sport itself:

> Of course for most of them [the quidditch players, annotation by A.B.] have heard of quidditch through Harry Potter. So many have joined because of Harry Potter. But most of them or all of them stayed for the sport. So it's like after the first few trainings, you really realise: 'Ok. This is a kind of also a separate thing. This is a sport, this is something you can play seriously'. (Steffi, in: podiums discussion)

Also, Anna made quite clear that being a Harry Potter fan is not a requirement for playing quidditch:

> I think after the first view trainings, I don't think we even talked about Harry Potter anymore. Nobody mentions it anymore, we are playing quidditch, but it's not like the trainings are huge nerd-fests where everyone is yelling out spells and doing stuff. Sometimes it can get there (laughing). [...] I think it's kind of a preconceived notion that if you play quidditch you have to be a fan. [...] I think you just need to get people in and make them try. Then they will very quickly realise that it doesn't matter what background

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> you come from. If you want to work and sweat a bit and have fun it's the perfect thing for you. (Anna, in: podiums discussion)

This is important because it marks a difference between theatrical interpretations and re-enactments of the magical sport as played in the Harry Potter narrative and quidditch as a competitive and professionalised sport. Hence quidditch might still be a practice where Harry Potter fan identity can be articulated, but is not exclusive to Harry Potter fans.

In the questionnaires, members of the Vienna Vanguards stressed the factor of friendship, even more than the aspects of a shared fandom when talking about the quidditch community. Next to athletic aspects[35], 19 out of 21 members (90.5%) checked the option "community and friends" as one of their main motivations for being part of the Vienna Vanguards. This compares to only 6.9% who checked the option "possibility to talk about Harry Potter and other fandoms".

Hence, the community within the team of the Vienna Vanguards is not mainly characterised by a shared fandom, but by regularly training together and friendships within the team. The group identity might initially have been sparked by a common fandom, but the motivations for staying in the team are friendship and comradery, a common, competitive hobby, and a common goal, i.e. to be a good and successful team. Also, the team plans social activities, such as Christmas parties and has participated in charity runs and the Viennese pride parade "Regenbogenparade" (see illustration 51) as well as Harry Potter related activities such as visiting the Warner Bros Studios London during the European Quidditch Cup or attending a showing of "A Very Potter Musical" staged by students of the Vienna Conservatory.

Ill. 51: photo by Peter Bolfan

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[35] 90,5% for "possibility to play competitive" and 85,7% "personal fitness"

Next to these social activities and even more than that, the attendance of tournaments and competing with other teams contributes to the team spirit and coherence within the team:

> Weil das schweißt unglaublich zusammen, wenn du jetzt gemeinsam einen Sieg erringst oder auch einen Niederlage – ist komplett egal, aber die Tatsache, dass das Team wirklich zusammenarbeiten muss und... alle Barrieren fallen gelassen werden müssen, alle Rivalitäten die jemals im Training bestehen oder was auch immer, fallen gelassen werden müssen um gemeinsam agieren. (Max_a)

As pointed out in many interviews, the experience of playing at an international tournament contributed to further engagement in the sport and motivated the team: "I think the first tournament is always the most important one in gaining experience, it helped us a lot, I think, in knowing what we have to do, what we can do" (Lukas, in: podiums discussion). The feeling of belonging to a community does not only apply to being part of the team of the Vienna Vanguards, but also to the international quidditch community. Therefore, big tournaments, like the European Quidditch Cup, are not only an opportunity to compete, but also a place to meet fellow sports(wo)men and to connect with other teams:

> Everyone was so lovely, welcoming and nice. I still can't get over how much fun it was and how nice everyone and everything was. And even, [...] on the pitch you are playing against each other, but afterwards everyone comes up to you and hugs you and tells you that you, even though you lost and didn't even score 10 points, you still did good. And it's lovely to hear that. People are just so lovely and positive - it's just great. (Lena, in: podiums discussion)

Ill.52: The efforts to capture the popularity of quidditch as a sport and to enable people to find a team in their setting is also behind the "Quidditch World Map Project" (URL Map Project), which maps out un-official and official teams worldwide.

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The international quidditch community is connected via social media, especially on Facebook, where not only national quidditch groups are used for communication but also groups on a bigger scale, such as "Quidditch Europe" (URL Quidditch Europe). This group is open to everyone and currently has 1255 members (January 2016). It holds a list of about 166, both official (recognised by the national governing body) and unofficial teams, and their captains from all over Europe. The group mainly functions as a communication and networking tool for the European quidditch community, which announces tournaments and distributes calls for participation. Furthermore, the platform is used to sell or swap merchandise products (such as jerseys and patches), sharing informative and fun articles on the topic of quidditch, as well as entries from the blog "The Quidditch Post" (URL Quidditch Post).

An interesting feature of the Facebook page is how the attacks in Paris on November 13th, 2015, interrupted the normal communication within the Facebook group. While the daily entries on the group's page are very much output orientated, focusing on sharing information, and presenting the team or event, the posts surrounding the attacks in Paris are characterised by their expressions of worry for the Parisian quidditch players and their families – asking the question if everyone is in safety and wishing them strength in this situation (URL Quidditch Europe 13-14.11.2015).

Ill. 53

Also, while there is usually more than one post a day on average, between the first post on the 13th concerning the events and the 16th of November, no other topic was posted in the group. The last post concerning the events stated that all Parisian players were in safety (URL Quidditch Europe 14.11.2015). This focus on the safety of the Parisian players gives insight into the closeness of the international

quidditch community and the individual's identification with it. This is even more so when keeping in mind that the group normally focuses not on the individuals, but a common hobby. Thus, it is not used as a platform of one-to-one communication, but of representation. Therefore, the worries for the players can be explained on one hand by the personal relationships that were formed when meeting at tournaments, which do not always extend to one-to-one communication afterwards and on the other hand by the connection formed between individuals and teams because of their mutual investment in a common interest and community.

Another example for the use of social media in the community's communication exemplifies the interconnectedness of the global phenomenon quidditch: During my literature research for this thesis, I came across a paper available only as an e-thesis and for students of a certain Canadian university. After failing to get the library to send it to me and to get a copy from the non-traceable author, I turned to Facebook. All in all it took about 27 hours from my first post on Facebook to get an email containing the thesis as a pdf. By including the network of the international quidditch community, I not only got the paper, but also saw how the community is connected via social media as well as personal relationships. Starting from a member of the Vienna Vanguards who read my post, she tagged a Canadian player she met at a tournament in Frankfurt – at that time playing for a German team while being on Erasmus. The player then reached out to the university town's quidditch team – of which a member then contacted a friend studying at the university, who then downloaded the thesis and sent it to me.

As we can see from this second example, the international quidditch community is not only characterised through a shared interest and hobby, as well as personal contacts made by meeting at events, but these factors furthermore form a network that operates and communicates through social media. Looking at the quantitative survey made with the Vienna Vanguards, "community and friendship" was also the most checked option (85.7%) on the question of what distinguishes quidditch from other team sports, followed by the "complexity of the game" and the "level of inclusiveness".

The keyword of inclusiveness is highly prominent in the quidditch community, both in regard to the Vanguards as well as on an international level. It addresses the inclusion of all people interested in the sport. In this context, the International Quidditch Association states:

Through the sport of quidditch, the IQA endeavors to improve gender education across all sports and communities, promote equality and diversity, and foster a love of reading across all ages. The organisation works to promote youth engagement, leadership, and physical activity amongst players and potential players wherever they are found. (URL IQA About)

Similarly, the US quidditch's (USQ) "core values" reflect this issue of inclusiveness:

- We establish the foundation for long-term sustainability through regulations, innovation, and expansion.
- We provide competitive opportunities for every level of athlete.
- We build a safe, inclusive, and respectful community.
- We strive to be a leader in gender inclusivity for all age groups.
- We create meaningful community partnerships.
- We develop and empower future leaders.
- (URL US Quidditch Mission)

The importance of these values of inclusiveness and tolerance were also stressed by Anna, the coach of the Vienna Vanguards:

That's, I think, in the whole quidditch community, like the quickest way to get yourself estranged from it, is to start go around and insult peoples gender identity, sexual identity, nation, race, whatever. If you start launching very insensitive comments, you are going to get corrected and you will find that you suddenly don't have much friends around anymore. [...] And I think people [...] get very protective [...] and it's a great thing about the community, that it's very anti-asshole (laughs). (Anna)

In 2014 Adam Cohen and Jon Welty Peachey published an article discussing the impacts and benefits of quidditch and its use in sports programs. The authors argue that alternatives to mainstream sports do not only provide an alternative gameplay, but also an alternative to the predominant values in mainstream sports (Cohen/ Peachey 2014: 2). In their study, they asked quidditch players to hand in three self-descriptive adjectives. The 25 provided adjectives are assembled in the illustration below.

Ill. 54: Cohen/ Peachey 2014: 4

Looking at these adjectives, the authors argue: "Although several descriptions would commonly emerge among all athletes (e.g., athletic, dedicated, competitive), others seemingly illustrate the uniqueness of those who partake in quidditch (e.g., nerdy, quirky, creative)" (Cohen/ Peachey 2014: 4) [36] . These self-attributions mirror an important controversy within the quidditch community, with the self-description of many players as nerds[37] or nerdy. The sport tends to be associated not even with the Harry Potter fandom in particular, but with "nerdiness" in general. In her article on Muggle quidditch, Suzanne Dell stresses the struggles within the quidditch community to segregate itself from labels like "nerdy" (Dell 2015: 75f). Because inclusiveness is an important core value, the question of whether or not quidditch is a sport for nerds is mostly perceived as obsolete or stereotypical. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged in my interviews that this notion relates to the inception of the Vienna Vanguards and to people who are generally interested in the sport:

> Because you don't have to be a nerd to play quidditch, but it certainly helps you to get in to it in a way. […] if you just want to play a sport and you have no interest in stuff like this you are going to look at football or basketball. quidditch will not exactly be the first one on your list you want to enlist in. But, definitely, we have some players who never read the books, fell asleep during the movies, (laughs) and like friends we just dragged in […]. So it's not exclusive, but being a nerd will probably make it easier to find. (Anna)

As already established in the chapter "I just want to win! – quidditch as a fan practice?" I want to point out that the efforts to establish quidditch as a sport include mechanisms to make it more approachable by, for example, segregating it from Harry Potter or labels like "Nerds playing on brooms" (URL Video3). In this context, inclusiveness is stressed and makes quidditch interesting not only for a specific demographic, but for everyone. Also stressing the fact that everyone sporty, fannish or nerdy can be part of it:

> Something that is really good about quidditch is that, […] it gives a lot of people who wouldn't play a sport otherwise to play a sport – that is pretty cool. It is one of the most inclusive sports we ever had. There are so many people who are not so physically fit or athletic who come to play quidditch and they do not feel out of place or like an outsider. Because even if they are not the best in the team, they are getting a chance and it's really

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[36] The study found that, like more mainstream team sports, quidditch provides the possibility for developing leadership skills as well as brings social gains, pride and self-confidence for the players, while also providing a positive sporting experience. Furthermore the grassroots component of quidditch ensured leadership opportunities mainstream sports often miss. (Cohen/ Peachey 2014: 10ff).

[37] The term nerd is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as „an unstylish, unattractive, or social inept person; *especially:* one slavishly devoted to intellectual or academic pursuits"(URL Merriam-Webster2). Although the connotation of the term long was negative, in the last years it was retained by people of the "nerd culture" and used in self-attribution. It was especially popularised through TV-series like „The Big Bang Theory" and „Silicon Valley" and is used to show pride in non-mainstream interest, such as fandoms.

inclusive and I think that's awesome. I think that is really, really cool and I think that is one of the best things quidditch is doing. (Kanishka)

One pillar of the values of inclusiveness is that quidditch is played as a co-ed sport with male and female players playing in the same team. This co-ed formula is not just an aspiration but is established in the official international rulebook as the "four maximum rule" (URL Rule Book Nine), also referred to as Title 9 ¾ (URL US quidditch title). The rulebook states:

> A quidditch game allows each team to have a maximum of four players, not including the seeker, who identify as the same gender in active play on the field at the same time. The gender that a player identifies with is considered to be that player's gender, which may or may not correspond with that person's sex. […] USQ accepts those who don't identify within the binary gender system and acknowledges that not all of our players identify as male or female. USQ welcomes people of all identities and genders into our league. (URL Rule Book Nine 2015:12).

From my research with the Vanguards I can conclude that the co-ed element of quidditch is perceived as very positive, both from members of the team and people who get to know quidditch for the first time. The issue of quidditch as an inclusive co-ed sport was also picked up by the discipline of sport studies. In 2014, Adam Cohen, E. Nicole Melton and Jon Welty Peachey published a study on the benefits that quidditch can have as a co-ed sport on the matters of inclusion and equality in sport. On the topic of the co-ed experience of quidditch, they conclude:

> The overarching impact from participation in quidditch resulted in a large percentage of participants gaining an appreciation for coed sport and the positive environment and experience it created. Nearly 90% of the responses involved players giving positive feedback and admiration toward their female and male counterparts, while having limited complaints about the design and structure of the sport. (Cohan/ Melton/ Peachey 2014: 226ff)

This also relates to my empirical findings with the Vienna Vanguards – asking how they perceive the gender rule, 71.4% checked "very positive", 19% checked "positive" and 9.5% checked the option "neutral". In comparison to other teams, the Vienna Vanguards have a high ratio of female players compared to males (about 2/3 female to 1/3 male players), sometimes resulting in difficulties with the "four maximum rule".

In her article on gender equality in quidditch, Jennifer E. Popple discusses the co-ed element from a feminist perspective. She argues that in the magic society of Harry Potter, women and men are equal and that this equality expands into the sport of Quidditch. When the sport was adapted as Muggle quidditch, it was transferred "into the realities of modern masculine society" (Popple 2015: 197), with masculine cultures being predominant in competitive team

sports. In this context, Cohen, Melton, and Peachey discuss the distinction between masculine and feminine sport:

> [...] women's sport was traditionally designated as separate (and less than) men's sport. Furthermore, girls and women were primarily encouraged to engage in gender appropriate sport such as tennis or figure skating (Krane, 2001), as participating in these sports allowed them to act and behave in traditional feminine manners. (Cohan/ Melton/ Peachey 2014: 222)

Therefore, quidditch as a competitive, full-contact team sport does not fit into this "tradition" of feminine sport, but has the potential for girls and women to engage in such male-dominated sports. Kanishka, in his interview, points out the differences between the athletic upbringing of girls and boys as the main difference in athletic performance:

> I think the main problem with girls and sports is not that they are any worse, but because sports are not as much part of a growing up process for girls at it is for guys, which is why by the time you have to join teams guys have been trained better and played more and that is why they are better. And I think quidditch can change that. It would be really cool if girls growing up would be like: 'I rather play quidditch then go shopping' or something: You know? (Kanishka 03.12.2015)

The instalment of the "four maximum rule" in 2011 was necessary because female players were more and more marginalised in the sport, especially in the professionalised setting of college sport in the US (Popple 2015: 188ff). This opens up the question of what will happen to quidditch when the sport gets more and more professionalised worldwide. Anna stressed that she hopes the dynamics of professionalisation in Europe will not intervene with the principle of inclusiveness and the co-ed aspect of the sport:

> [...] it's built in that you have to have both girls and boys, so it has to be, really, a co-ed sport and I think that just makes it so open and welcome. [...] we really recognise it that it doesn't matter how you look like, how you build, what your athletic background is. Some of the best players – you might look at people and never think they are athletes and it turns out they are the best players in entire Europe. So, I think it's very important and I really hope that is one aspect of quidditch that will never go away, ever, if it becomes really big. (Anna)

This development of professionalisation and the changes it brings is clearly one of the most interesting issues in the context of Muggle quidditch. Further anthropological research on this topic could bring answers to the question of how narrative text sparks movements that go beyond the aspect of fan practice, look at the dynamics of professional sport and gender, and furthermore provides an example for a globalised phenomenon, including a transnational community connected via digital and social media.

7.5. The Sport and the Fans – A Discussion on the Case Study

Concluding the chapter, I want to stress that the appropriation of the magical sport of Quidditch, can be seen as a process. Quidditch and its global *quidkids* community are shaped by different factors, fandom being only one of them. The first steps in creating the sport can be seen as fan practice: the involved actors created the sport by employing their intertexual knowledge of the Potterverse and out of an emotional bond with the narrative.

But, what we can see in the example of the Vienna Vanguards is that the element of being a fan can no longer be seen as the primary motivation for the involvement in the sport. The factor of community, as well as the factors of sport and competition can be stressed here. In this sense, quidditch as professional practice did not only move away from the original game play and rules by getting appropriated to work in a non-magical setting, but also detached itself from the Harry Potter fan community. This process can be seen as a collective effort by the members of the international quidditch community to establish the practice as a highly tactical, aggressive, and competitive sport. Intertextual knowledge of the Potterverse is no longer necessary for the practice of quidditch, because it follows its own institutionalised rules. The emotional involvement that informs (fan) practice in quidditch lies no longer on the Harry Potter narrative, but concerns the emotional involvement in the team and the international community. These dynamics are also stressed in the self-representation of quidditch players, teams and the official institutions and their media representation. Nevertheless, many players describe themselves as Harry Potter fans. On one hand, it can be named, in the case of the Vienna Vanguards, as the primary motivation for starting the sport. On the other hand, staying engaged in the team and the sport is related to the gameplay itself, as well as the inclusive community. The sport of quidditch, from an outsider's perspective, still is perceived as being connected to the Harry Potter narrative. The question of whether it will and should detach itself from the narrative in the future is open for debate. The process of the development of quidditch is still ongoing and faces difficulties, both including the establishment of the sport as detached from the narrative and the professionalisation of the sport. As we saw in the analysis, the latter also includes the question of inclusivity and gender equality in highly professionalised quidditch.

All in all, quidditch, and how the sport was transferred out of the narrative into reality, can be seen as an example for how narratives inform human practice, and how these practices then enter processes that unwind these connections.

8. Conclusion

The question of *Why study fans?* is one I often was confronted with during my study. This also shows that stereotypes about fans are persistent in today's public, as well as academic, discourse on media and audiences. Hence, ethnographic research on fans as a marginalised group is important, because fans depict human practice in a globalised media setting. In my study I focused on central questions on fans, fan communities and fandom, leaving aside the dichotomies of active/passive and online/offline practice, as well as academic classification systems for fans. Hence, this study focused on the question of *how the Harry Potter fandom's group identity is constructed and how the fans' individual identities are influenced by and negotiated within fan communities*. It elaborated on how fans experience fandom and how this experience is articulated in processes of appropriation and the symbolic usage of material culture and language. By employing a mixed method approach, using both qualitative methods, such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews, as well as the quantitative method of structured questionnaires, an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon Harry Potter fans was made possible. The methodological approach thereby not only drew from established ethnographic methods, but also considered the positioning of the researcher within the studied field, by employing the reflective method of autoethnography. In the course of the research it was made clear that this autoethnographic approach enables a specific relationship between the researcher and the researched. To enable an in-depth discussion on the topic, I drew from my own intertextual knowledge on the subject of Harry Potter and my experience as a Harry Potter fan. When recapturing the process of the study I can conclude that being a Harry Potter fan myself not only helped with gaining access to my research sample of Harry Potter fans, but also in understanding how people make sense of being a fan and how they locate themselves within fan communities and the Harry Potter fandom. Nevertheless, I also want to stress that as a researcher, the factor of intertextual knowledge weighs heavier than an emotional involvement in the fan object.

The interplay of fans and the fan object is made possible by the narrative's inherent openness to interpretation. The quote of Rapport and Overing (2000: 289) underlines this argument (see chapter 4.2.):

> For, what participating in and performing narratives inexorably give onto are personal interpretations and understandings; individuals impart these forms with meaning which derives from unique perspectives on the world.

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But *what are the characteristics of Harry Potter fans? How do Harry Potter fans perceive their relationship to the fan object? And how do identity, personal experiences and relationships shape the experience of being a Harry Potter fan?* I found in my study that the main characteristics of (Harry Potter) fans are the emotional involvement of the fans in the fan object and the intertextual knowledge of fans concerning the canonical texts. Fan identity draws from the personal relationship fans establish to the fan object. This relationship is established in time and can be seen as a process in which identification (Hall 1996: 2) and identity work takes place. Through the central fan practices of repeated consumption (rereads, rewatches) and imagination, the fan object is related to the own persona. Thereby identification with characters and story lines can be seen as a key factor. Also, narrative elements, such as the school houses in Harry Potter, are central for the question of how fans make sense of a fictional universe and how they find a place for themselves within the narrative. The fandom-slogan 'It's real for us' thereby relates to the idea that Harry Potter is a place the fan can call home and escape to. These notions are in the stereotyping of fans, often seen as escapism, or even the fan's loss of a sense of reality (Jenkins 1992: 10). Facing these accusations Harry Potter fans legitimise their emotional involvement on one hand by stressing the complex storytelling, and on the other hand by arguing that they are part of the Harry Potter generation, a generation of readers that inherently must love Harry Potter because it is a part of their childhood. In this context, fan identity cannot be characterised as stable or fixed but is negotiated with the fan's personal identity and experiences across time (Harrington/Bielby 2010: 438ff). The time in between the release of canonical material can be seen as a waiting period in which fan practices were enforced, furthering the involvement with the fan object.

The slogan 'It's real for us" not only relates to personal fan experience, but also reflects the fandom as a "Gesinnung", a state of mind. The analysis of the question of *what are the relationships between fans, fandom and fan communities* thereby not only offers insights into the connections between fans, fan communities and fandom, but furthermore relates to fandom as a global network of fans. In the context of Harry Potter, fandom can be characterised not over practice and participation, but as a shared state of being a Harry Potter fan, forming a network. A sense of belonging to the fandom is established because members of this network share an emotional involvement in the narrative. Imagination, then, is a central fan practice, because it ensures the identification with the narrative and employs the intertextual knowledge of fans. Fan communities are located in the realm of the fandom

and are linked to each other by various fan practices and globalised scapes that shape the imaginary landscape of fandom (Appadurai 1996: 32ff). Moreover these fan practices and scapes link fandoms to each other, by fan practices that create cross-over content.

The question of *what mechanisms of identification the relationship between fan and fandom implies* then poses the difficulty to detect mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in a system that relies on the values of inclusion, solidarity and friendship. Because fans are marginalised by media producers, as well as by academics and other audience groups, the solidarity within the fandom can be seen as crucial in creating a community of fans. Common interests and emotions directed towards the fan object and shared fan experiences contribute to the feeling of not being alone with one's obsession over the fan object. Hence, the interactions between fans often exceed the common interest in the fan object and functions as a starting point for friendships. Nevertheless, fans also are exposed to mechanisms of Othering by fellow fans. On one hand these mechanisms of Othering are employed by fans to distance themselves from groups of fans that are seen as "extreme" or "crazy", on the other hand people are excluded, because they appear to lack intertextual knowledge and/or emotional investment in the narrative.

The appropriation of intertextual knowledge is closely tied to the practice of rereading and rewatching of the central transmedial and canonical materials. By acquiring intertextual knowledge fans become experts in the field of their fan object. The question of *what practices are central to being a Harry Potter fan and where they take place* was central in my study, because fan practices are both an expression of the emotional involvement with the fan object and also further this involvement. Thereby, intertextual knowledge, as well as personal interests and hobbies are employed. Intertextuality in this context accounts for processes "[…] involving the extracting of a discourse or discursive element form on setting (decontextualization) and inserting it into another (recontextualization)" (Peterson 2005: 130). Fan practices, whether deemed active or passive, are used by fans to include the fan object in their daily life. Looking at the relationship between fans and the fan object we can see how this relationship manifests itself in fan practice. Furthermore, fan practices constitute relationships with other fans and are accompanied by rituals, such as dressing up or taking a selfie whenever one finishes reading one of the books. By conceptualising media as practice (Couldry 2010: 35ff) the distinction between producing, distributing and consuming is softened. In fan practice this reconceptualisation is important because it captures the extent and creative potential of fan practices. The entity of fan created content that moves around in fan spaces creates a globalised bricolage, by connecting popular digital culture and narrative

universes filled with meaning, images, and discourse (Mader 2015: 214). Because the fan object is open to interpretation, fan practices cannot be characterised as mere consumption, but they appropriate the narrative and create something new. In this context the term *fanon* is of importance. In distinction to canon, the term fanon refers to popular theories, ideas, beliefs, and story lines created by fans. Ideas that are formed by individual fans get popularised in fan communities, becoming fanon and thereby inspiring other fans and their fan created content. Therefore, fanons are often used to "fill the gaps" of the canonical material. Nevertheless, they can also contradict the canonical narrative. The emergence of fanons is tied to the incompleteness of the canonical materials and poses a fan practice that was especially relevant in times when the Harry Potter book series was not yet concluded. This includes the notion of completing the story line and imagining the outcomes of the narrative. Since the book series was concluded in 2007, popular fanons on one hand offer stories set in alternative universes, and on the other hand revolve around the years prior and after Harry's years at Hogwarts. Both these practices further the expansion of the Potterverse in the sense of space and time. Because of this J. K. Rowling's new canonical content, published online and in interviews, sometimes poses a problem to fans because they have the potential to delegitimise popular fanons. Therefore, these new revelations are seen critically by many fans, who favour the legitimisation of their own *head canons*, meaning a personal combination of canon and other ideas (including fanons), to the consumption of new canonical releases by the author.

The localisation of a fan within the Potterverse, such as a fan's *head canon* and house identity, is not only communicated via language and text, but also via material culture. As Kath Woodward (2000b: 12) notes:

> Symbols and representations are important in the production of identities. This is how we signal our identities to others and how we know which people we identify with and those who are distinguished as being different. How we speak, the clothes we wear, badges, scarves, uniforms or flags all offer symbols of identity.

The use of symbols is central in fan practices, as well as for the communication of fans. Fans reference symbols used in the narrative to convey a certain meaning. Furthermore, new symbols are created and filled with meaning in fan practice and fan communities. In this context the question of *how material culture and the use of symbols constructs and signalises fan identity* is central. Collecting Harry Potter stuff, be it official merchandise or fan created content, is a central fan practice, by which objects and symbols of the narrative wander into everyday life and thereby transfer magical fiction to material reality. In a public

setting, Harry Potter stuff, such as t-shirts and badges, are markers of fan identity, but also rely on other fans and their intertextual knowledge to recognise this connection. Because Harry Potter is a popular pop cultural brand many symbols are not recognised exclusively by fans, but what distinguishes fans and non-fans in this context is the emotional connection fans make with these symbols. Also, it has to be noted that while some Harry Potter symbols were popularised through marketing and advertisement, others were created in the specific setting of fan communities. The meaning of these symbols then is exclusive to the fans who engage in these communities. Thus, symbols are used as inside jokes and tools of communication. This also touches the question of *how objects and practices of the fictional world move into the real world, being used and practiced by fans*, which was further the topic of the case study on the Viennese quidditch team, the Vienna Vanguards.

The practice of quidditch and Vienna Vanguards were chosen as a case study for this research because the topic posed the interesting question of *in how far objects and practices of the fictional world move into the real world.* Therefore my three main research questions on the case study were: *What characterises the practice of quidditch? What role does Harry Potter play in the sport and for the quidditch community? To what extent can quidditch be characterised as a fan practice?*

The appropriation of the magical sport of Quidditch into a non-magical setting can be seen as a process. Different factors shape the non-magical sport of quidditch and its global *quidkids* community, and, as we saw, fandom is only one of them. The first steps in the creation of the sport can be characterised as displaying features of fan practice, including the intertextual knowledge of the Harry Potter narrative that was applied by its original creators and their emotional bond with the story. Nevertheless, what we can see from the case study is that being a Harry Potter fan is no longer seen as the primary motivation for the involvement in the sport. Community, as well as the factors of competition and sport, are emphasised. Hence, quidditch as professionalised, sportive practice moved away from the original game play and rules by getting appropriated to work in a non-magical setting. By that, it also detached itself from the Harry Potter fandom. While the development of quidditch is still in process, it faces difficulties, including the on-going efforts to detach the sport from the narrative. With the professionalisation of the sport new questions arise, such as how to balance the values of inclusivity and gender equality and the demand to be a highly professionalised, tactical and competitive sport. All in all, how the sport of quidditch was transferred out of the narrative into reality can be seen as an example for how narratives

inform human practice, and how these practices then enter processes that unwind these connections.[38]

Concluding my study, I want to stress that the topic of fandom offers an appealing field for social sciences, and especially the discipline of anthropology. By employing qualitative methods to the field, new insights on the creation of identity and community can be gained, as well as on the question of how people appropriate narratives, pop cultural texts and stories, making them their own. Fans can no longer be seen as a minority, but instead, "almost everyone self-identifies as a fan in some sense" (Duffett 2013: 2). To question the status of fans as a minority means also to question the marginalisation of fans in public and academic discourse. To recognise fans as experts on their fan object, by at the same time acknowledging their emotional involvement, means to recognise people and the creative potential of their practices without marginalising them as the Other. Furthermore, an academic discourse on fans can lead to questioning academic and economic concepts, such as the distinction between media production, distribution and consumption and how we conceptualise media in general.

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[38] For a more detailed discussion of the case study see chapter 7.5

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Illustration 12: by Alena Brunner (2016)

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Illustration 15: photo owned by Emily (2007)

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Illustration 35: by Alena Brunner (2016)

Illustration 36: by Kathryn (2005)

Illustration 37: book collection (Alena Brunner), photo by Alena Brunner (2016)

Illustration 38: jewellery collection (Susi), photo by Susi (2015)

Illustration 39: https://www.carlsen.de/hardcover/harry-potter-band-1-harry-potter-und-der-stein-der-
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Illustration 49: by Anna Koivu (2015)

Illustration 50: by Alena Brunner (2015)

Illustration 51: by Peter Bolfan (2015)

Illustration 52: Screenshot: https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zB-q3nf5Ip6Y.kKhjsuVazwyY (22th of March 2016))

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Illustration 55: photo by Stefanie Kaufmann (2015)

10. Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Guide - Harry Potter Fans

Questions for the narrative part of the interview:
- Please tell me something about yourself
- How did you become a Harry Potter fan?
- What are the characteristics of being a Harry Potter fan?
- What do you think fascinates fans about Harry Potter?
- What are your favorite things about Harry Potter?
- What does Harry Potter mean to you?
- What do you like about being a Harry Potter fan?
- Why is the fan community important to the individual fan?
- What do you don't like about being a Harry Potter fan?
- What was your greatest fan moment?
- How do people react when they find out that you are a big HP fan?
- What do you do that makes you a Harry Potter fan?
- Would you say that HP influenced your life?

Detailed Questions:
- How did you hear about the Harry Potter the first time?
- Which book do you like best?
- Since when would you describe yourself as a fan?
- Do you think that you at some point in the future will stop being a Harry Potter Fan?
- Did you see the Harry Potter movies?
- How do you feel about them?
- Did you have any wishes or hopes for the movies?
- Which movie do you like best?
- How did you get to know other fans?
- Would you say that you are active in the fandom?
- What are the motivations to be active in the fandom?
- How many of your friends are HP fans?
- Is being a HP fan a criterion in making new friends?
- What kind of things connected to Harry Potter do you own?
- Did you ever make things related to Harry Potter yourself?
- Did you ever visit a Harry Potter themed event or place?

Are you on Pottermore?
- Since when are you on Pottermore?
- To which House you belong to on Pottermore?
- Did you identify with this house before you got sorted by Pottermore?
- How did you feel about getting sorted into this house?
- What do you think about Pottermore in general?
- Do you think it's a good representation of the books?

Last Question:
- Would you have agreed to the interview if I was not a HP fan?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide - Vienna Vanguards

- Please tell me something about you.
- How did you hear of the sport Muggle Quidditch?
- How were the Vienna Vanguards formed?
- What is your role in the team?
- What is the difference between Quidditch in the books and in reality?
- What is the difference between LARPing Quidditch and Muggle Quidditch?
- What role does Harry Potter play in the team?
- *Is Quidditch as sport for Nerds?*
- What is your personal motivation to be part of the team?
- What do you think is the motivation for most of the people in the team?
- What is the difference between playing competitively and not-competitively and why did the Vanguards choose to be a competitive playing team?
- What do the VV do- except for playing Quidditch?
- How important are those other activities for the team?
- How important is it to part of big tournaments?
- What are the main differences between Quidditch and other team-sports?
- What do you personally think of the gender rule?
- What is important for the team?
- What are the reasons for people leaving the team?
- How do people react when you tell them that you are in a Quidditch team?
- What is the most asked question?
- Is the connection made between Quidditch and Harry Potter ever annoying to you?

<u>Questionnaires – Harry Potter Fans</u>

by Alena Brunner

alena.brunner@univie.ac.at

Sampling: Members of the FB groups *Austrian Potterwatch* and *Austrian Nerdfighters*

Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, University of Vienna

Summer 2015

Supervisor: Elke Mader

Contact Information (your name and e-mail address will not be included in the master thesis)

HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY: replace checkbox with an x to answer the question. To include more detailed answers when checking the option "other" is not mandatory but can be included. All the questions should be answered by choosing a single answer - include further information and constructive criticism at the bottom of the form ☺

1. Age (in years):

☐ 15-18 ☐ 19-22 ☐ 23-26 ☐ 27-30

2. Gender:

☐ female ☐ male ☐ other (_____)

3. Citizenship

☐ Austria (AT)

☐ other (_____)

☐ dual citizenship: AT and other (_____)

☐ dual citizenship: both other than AT (_____)

4. I'm currently:

☐ working ☐ pupil ☐ student ☐ other (_____)

5. I identify as a Harry Potter Fan:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

6. Have your read the seven books of the Harry Potter series?

☐ yes ☐ some ☐ no ☐ not sure

7. How often have you read the books **in average**?

☐ 0 times ☐ 1 time ☐ 2-5 times ☐ more than 5 times

8. Have you watched the eight movies of the Harry Potter series?

☐ yes ☐ some ☐ no ☐ not sure

9. How often have you watched the movies **in average**?

☐ 0 times ☐ 1 time ☐ 2-5 times ☐ more than 5 times

10. How did you first experience the books?

☐ I read the book on my own ☐ somebody read the books to me

11. How old were you when you first read Harry Potter or it was read to you?

☐ 5-10 ☐ 11-14 ☐ 14-18 ☐ over 18

12. How many of the books where already released when you started reading them?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7

13. I perceive the Harry Potter movie adaptations overall as:

☐ very positive ☐ positive ☐ neutral ☐ negative ☐ very negative

14. I belong to the Harry Potter fandom:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

15. I see myself as an active part of the Harry Potter fan community:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

16. Harry Potter is an important part of my life:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

17. The Harry Potter fandom is an important part of my life:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

18. How many of the people closest to you (friends, family, partners) are Harry Potter fans?

☐ all of them ☐ some ☐ few ☐ no one

19. How important is it for you that people close to you (family, friends, partners) acknowledge Harry Potter as a part of your life?

☐ very important

☐ important

☐ neutral

☐ not very important

☐ not important

20. My family contributed to myself becoming a Harry Potter Fan:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

21. My friends contributed to myself becoming a Harry Potter Fan:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

22. The Internet and social media contributed to myself becoming a Harry Potter Fan:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

23. Most of my activities surrounding Harry Potter are:

☐ online ☐ offline

24. Do you identify with a Hogwarts House?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure

25. If yes: With which house do you identify with?

☐ Gryffindor ☐ Hufflepuff ☐ Slytherin ☐ Ravenclaw

26. Are you registered and did you take the house-sorting test at Pottermore?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure

Please answer the following questions only if you are registered at Pottermore

27. How often do you visit Pottermore?

☐ daily ☐ weekly ☐ monthly ☐ a few times a year ☐ fewer than once a year

28. In which house were you sorted by the Pottermore sorting test?

☐ Gryffindor ☐ Hufflepuff ☐ Slytherin ☐ Ravenclaw

29. I identified myself with the house before the test:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

30. At first I perceived the result as:

☐ very positive ☐ positive ☐ neutral ☐ negative ☐ very negative

31. After further considerations I perceived the result as:

☐ very positive ☐ positive ☐ neutral ☐ negative ☐ very negative

32. All in all I perceive Pottermore as:

☐ very positive ☐ positive ☐ neutral ☐ negative ☐ very negative

33. Do you own Harry Potter related stuff (official merchandise or home-made things- such as jewellery, clothes, figurines, posters etc.)?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure

34. Do you produce, or have at some point produced, material related to Harry Potter (fan fiction, fan art, Wrock, objects like jewellery, gifts, clothes, baked goods etc.)?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure

35. Do you consume, or have at some point consumed, non-canonical material related to Harry Potter (fan fiction, fan art, Wrock, Videos etc.)?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure

36. Since the books and movies came to an end – do you follow new revelations by J.K. Rowling in interviews, Pottermore and social media?

☐ yes ☐ some ☐ no

37. How do you perceive the new revelations by J.K. Rowling about the Harry Potter narrative?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
very positive	positive	neutral	negative	very negative

38. Since the books and movies came to an end I particular enjoy:

☐ new statements on the story by J.K. Rowling

☐ rereading the books and/or rewatching the movies

☐ material created by Harry Potter fans (fan fiction, fan art, videos ect)

☐ nothing of the things listed above

39. How do you perceive your emotional involvement in the Harry Potter narrative?

☐	☐	☐
very emotional	emotional	not emotional

40. How do you perceive your familiarity with the characters of the Harry Potter narrative?

☐	☐	☐
very familiar	familiar	not familiar

41. Harry Potter is an important part of my childhood:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

42. Harry Potter influenced my believes and values:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

43. Harry Potter influenced my reading habits:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

44. Harry Potter influenced my hobbies and interests:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

45. Harry Potter changed my life:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

Please use this space if you have something to add or want to give a feedback regarding the survey:

Thank you for participating :)

Questionnaires – Vienna Vanguards

by Alena Brunner

alena.brunner@univie.ac.at

Sampling: Members of the quidditch team Vienna Vanguards

Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, University of Vienna

Summer 2015

Supervisor: Elke Mader

Contact Information (your name and E-Mail address will not be included in the master thesis)

HOW TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY: double click the checkbox or replace checkbox with an x to answer the question. To include more detailed answers when checking the option "other" is not mandatory but can be included.

1. Age (in years):
   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
   18-19   20- 23   24-26   27-30

2. Gender:
   ☐   ☐   ☐
   female   male   other (_____)

3. Citizenship
   ☐ Austria (AT)
   ☐ other   (_____)
   ☐ dual citizenship: AT and other (_____)
   ☐ dual citizenship: both other than AT (_____)

4. I'm currently *(one choice)*:
   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐
   working   pupil   student   other (_____)

5. Since when are you a member of the Vienna Vanguards?
   ☐   ☐
   since the founding   I became a member when already founded

6. I first heard of the existence of Muggle Quidditch in Vienna:
   ☐   ☐   ☐
   on the Internet/ social media   from a friend   other

7. I was interested in other team sports before I discovered Muggle Quidditch:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

8. I would have described myself as sporty before I started playing Muggle Quidditch:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

9. I initially was interested in Muggle Quidditch because of Harry Potter:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

10. I initially was interested in Muggle Quidditch because of the sportive aspect:

☐ strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ neutral ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree

11. What do you think distinguishes Muggle Quidditch from other team sports (multiple choice)?

☐ inclusiveness

☐ complexitivity

☐ athletic challenge

☐ target groups "Nerds"

☐ community and friendship

☐ other (_____)

☐ nothing

12. I perceive the gender-rule as:

☐ very positive ☐ positive ☐ neutral ☐ negative ☐ very negative

13. How often do you, in average, participate in the trainings (excluding holidays)?

☐ twice a week ☐ once a week ☐ 4-2 times a month ☐ once a month and less often

14. Did you participate in the EQC in 2015?

☐ yes ☐ no

15. **If yes**: In which role did you participate?

☐ as a player ☐ as a viewer ☐ other (_____)

16. What are your main motivations for playing Muggle Quidditch (multiple choice)?

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- [ ] playing against other teams
- [ ] personal fitness
- [ ] meeting friends and team mates
- [ ] fun/ having a good time
- [ ] getting to know new people
- [ ] possibility to connect to other pop culture ethusiast
- [ ] being part of a new sport
- [ ] others (_____)

17. How often do you participate in social activities organized by the team?

[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Very often	often	sometimes	not often	not at all

18. How do you think do the social activities outside the trainings affect the team's community?

[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
very positive	positive	neutral	negative	very negative

19. How do you think do tournaments and matches against other teams affect the team's community?

[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
very positive	positive	neutral	negative	very negative

20. How do you feel about the assumption that Quidditch is a sport for Nerds?

[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

21. I see myself as an active part of the Quidditch community:

[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree

22. How important are Muggle Quidditch and the Vienna Vanguards compared to your other free time activities?
- [ ] very important
- [ ] important
- [ ] neutral
- [ ] not very important
- [ ] not important

23. What are your main motivations for being part of the Vienna Vanguards (multiple choice)?
- [ ] possibility to play competitive
- [ ] personal fitness

- [ ] community and friends
- [ ] social activieties
- [ ] possibility to talk about Harry Potter and other fandoms
- [ ] others (_____)

24. I identify as a Harry Potter Fan:

- [ ] strongly agree
- [ ] agree
- [ ] neutral
- [ ] disagree
- [ ] strongly disagree

25. I see myself as an active part of the Harry Potter fan community:

- [ ] strongly agree
- [ ] agree
- [ ] neutral
- [ ] disagree
- [ ] strongly disagree

26. Did you read the seven books of the Harry Potter series?

- [ ] yes
- [ ] some
- [ ] no
- [ ] not sure

27. Did you watch the eight movies of the Harry Potter series?

- [ ] yes
- [ ] some
- [ ] no
- [ ] not sure

28. Are you registered at Pottermore?

- [ ] yes
- [ ] no
- [ ] not sure

29. Do you identify with a Hogwarts House?

- [ ] yes
- [ ] no
- [ ] not sure

30. **If yes:** With which house do you identify with?

- [ ] Gryffindor
- [ ] Hufflepuff
- [ ] Slytherin
- [ ] Ravenclaw

31. Do you own Harry Potter related stuff (official merchandise or home-made things- such as jewellery, clothes, figurines, posters etc.)?

- [ ] yes
- [ ] no
- [ ] not sure

32. Do you produce, or have at some point produced, material related to Harry Potter (fan fiction, fan art, Wrock, objects like jewellery, gifts, baked goods etc.)?

- [ ] yes
- [ ] no
- [ ] not sure

33. Do you consume, or have at some point consumed, non-canonical material related to Harry Potter (fan fiction, fan art, Wrock etc.)?

☐   ☐   ☐

yes   no   not sure

34. How important do you think is the Harry Potter narrative for the sport of Muggle Quidditch and it's community?

☐   very important

☐   important

☐   neutral

☐   not very important

☐   not important

35. I think that Muggle Quidditch and the Harry Potter narrative should be regarded as something separate:

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

strongly agree   agree   neutral   disagree   strongly disagree

Please use this space if you have something to add or want to give a feedback regarding the survey:

Thank you for participating :)
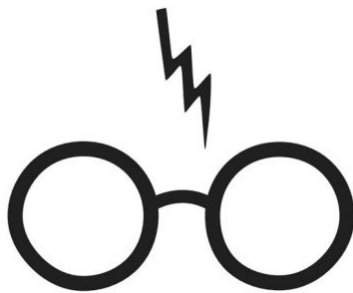
Illustrations Used in the Method of Photo Elicitation

The Deathly Hallows –

http://de.harrypotter.wikia.com/wiki/Heiligt%C3%BCmer_des
_Todes (5th of April 2016)

The Dark Mark –

https://potterspace01.wordpress.com/tag/das-
dunkle-mal/ (5th of April 2016)

Harry Potter Pictogram –

https://img0.etsystatic.com/136/0/12748346/il_570xN.94
4229110_lj4b.jpg (22th of March 2016)

The Golden Trio -

http://www.redbubble.com/de/people/emmafowle/works/
9088753-the-golden-trio?grid_pos=2&p=photographic-
print (22th of March 2016)

It's real for us -
http://fuckyeahharrypottertattoos.tumblr.com/post/6134883111/potterandthep
rince-does-anyone-know-what-font (5th of April 2016)

Childhood -

http://potterhead-s-page.tumblr.com/post/58597258966/we-
are-the-potter-generation (5th of April 2016)

Kings Cross -

http://www.decallous.com/index.php?route=product/product&produ
ct_id=158 (22th of March 2016)

Mischief Managed -

http://www.amazon.com/Potter-Mischief-Managed-
Refrigerator-Magnet/dp/B00E344PBE (5th of April 2016)

Always-by Aeravis:

http://www.hipsterpig.com/product/always-snapes-
patronus-t-shirts-hoodies/
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Dumbledores Army -

https://s-media-cache-
ak0.pinimg.com/236x/ba/cb/68/bacb68d8c4aec12d77bfa004455c
b480.jpg
(5th of April 2016)

Abstract (english)

The Harry Potter book series, by the British author Joanne K. Rowling, consists of seven novels and is one of the bestselling fiction series in publishing history. The fan communities surrounding the Harry Potter franchise, which can be named as one of the most influential pop cultural brands, are part of a major fandom. Fandoms surrounding such transmedial franchises have one thing in common - when people decide to engage with a specific thing in such an intense way, identity is claimed. Fan identity then becomes a way of how people see themselves, and a reference point for the individuals' identities. Moreover, how fans engage with the fan object depicts human practice in a globalised media setting. These aspects make fandom as an academic field in anthropology especially appealing.

This study discusses the complexity of identity in the context of fandom. It focuses on how fan identity is constructed, consumed, and articulated, elaborating on how fans identify with the fan object Harry Potter and how (fan)identity is negotiated in fan communities. Exploring how Harry Potter fans perceive themselves and how the individuals' identities are shaped by the self-attribution as Harry Potter fans, the study approaches questions concerning the relationship between fan and fan object. It includes the question of how material culture and language are used as symbols that signalise belonging and how fan practices and personal relationships contribute to the construction of fan identity.

The theoretical framework of the study draws from the field of interdisciplinary fan studies as well as the discipline of media anthropology. Thereby it discusses the concepts of identity, community and practice in regards to ethnographic data on Harry Potter fans, elaborating on how personal motivations and fan identities of individuals collide with group identities and the macro-level of economic, social, and cultural aspects. Fandoms and fan communities cannot be seen as isolated, but are multi-dimensional, global networks. By approaching media as practice, the distinction between media production, distribution and consumption is softened, and allows the acknowledgement that fans, within their fan practices, take part at all three levels. Motivated by the fans' emotional investment in the narrative, they employ their intertextual knowledge to appropriate the fan object Harry Potter and make it their own. In the study, these mechanisms of appropriation are discussed in regard to fan practices, such the practice of Muggle quidditch.

Abstract (deutsch)

Die Harry Potter Buchserie der Autorin Joanne K. Rowling, bestehend aus sieben Romanen, stellt eine der meist verkauften Buchserien in der Verlagsgeschichte dar. Demnach kann das Harry Potter Franchise, in seiner Gesamtheit, als eine der populärsten und einflussreichsten Marken in der Populärkultur aufgefasst werden. Die Fangemeinschaft der Harry Potter Fans weist damit ein Charakteristikum auf, welches es mit vergleichbaren Fangemeinschaften teilt: die intensive Auseinandersetzung von Menschen mit solchen Narrativen trägt zu der Bildung von Identität bei. Demnach wird Fanidentität zu einem Attribut, welches kennzeichnet wie sich Menschen selbst wahrnehmen und zu einem Referenzpunkt für die eigene Identität. Des Weiteren macht das Engagement von Fans deutlich wie Menschen in einem globalisierten Mediensetting agieren. Diese beiden Aspekte verdeutlichen die Dringlichkeit einer Auseinandersetzung mit Fans in der Disziplin der Anthropologie.

Die vorliegende Arbeit geht dabei auf die Komplexität von Identität im Kontext von Fangemeinschaften ein. Der Fokus liegt hierbei auf den Fragen wie Fanidentität konstruiert, konsumiert und artikuliert wird und wie sich das Wechselspiel zwischen Fanidentität, Fanobjekt und Fangemeinschaften gestaltet. Dabei wird auch die Frage aufgeworfen wie sich Harry Potter Fans als solche identifizieren und inwiefern die persönliche Identität durch diese Identifikation beeinflusst wird. Daraus ergeben sich zwei weitere Fokuspunkte, nämlich inwiefern Fans Materielle Kultur und Sprache als Symbole der Zugehörigkeit verwenden und wie Praktiken und persönliche Beziehungen die Konstruktion von Fanidentität beeinflussen.

Um diese Fragen zu beantworten bezieht sich die Arbeit auf theoretische Grundlagen aus dem interdisziplinären Feld der Fan Studies, sowie auf Arbeiten aus dem Bereich der Medienanthropologie. Konzepte zu Identität, Gemeinschaft und Praxis bilden ein theoretisches Gerüst um die ethnographischen Daten zu Harry Potter Fans zu kontextualisieren. In diesem Zusammenhang ist festzuhalten, dass persönliche Motivationen von Fans und Fanidentitäten in ökonomische, soziale und kulturelle Aspekte eingebunden sind. Fangemeinschaften können deshalb nicht als isoliert und statisch betrachten werden, sondern stellen vielmehr multi-dimensionale, globale Netzwerke dar. Die Konzeptualisierung von Medien als Praxis impliziert hier die Aufweichung der Abgrenzung zwischen Medienproduktion, -distribution und –konsumption. Dadurch entsteht die Möglichkeit einer Rekonzeptualiserung von Fanpraktiken welche alle drei Levels miteinbezieht. Durch die emotionale Verbindung von Fans zum Fanobjekt und ihren Einsatz des intertextuellen Wissens über das Fanobjekt findet eine Aneignung der Narrative statt. In der vorliegenden

Studie werden diese Mechanismen der Aneignung am Beispiel von Fanpraktiken wie der des Muggle quidditch beleuchtet.