Literature Review: Importance of Transmedia for fans/culture

The role of transmedia in pop culture has been compared to a religion, with its groups of devotees, developing mythologies, commitments, and transcendent claims. Franchises like Harry Potter, Marvel, Lord of the Rings, and Star Wars, have unique rituals, myths, codes of morals, clothing, and even holidays. Fans make pilgrimages to mass celebrations at fan conventions, such as ComicCon, and are sites of ritual gatherings. Attending the ritualized fan events reinforce their sense of belonging (Chidester, 2005; Jindra, 1994; Ringlestein, 2013; Wagner, 2012).

Transmedia fans create a community that abides by similar rules, expectations, and attitudes towards their fictional universe of choice (Jindra, 1994). When fans share devotion to the same thing they can turn the seemingly ordinary experience of attending a movie into the creation of a sacred space and time, encouraging a sense of solidarity, the same as a family that attends the same church (Chidester, 2005; Ringlestein, 2013). The midnight movie premiere provides the most sacred time and space for the most dedicated franchise fan to celebrate, as one fan described the excitement of sharing the experience with people who love the same thing (Chidester, 2005; Ringlestein, 2013; Staskiewicz and Bell, 2012).

Although their shared community is based on a fictional universe, successful transmedia franchises provide a ‘truth’ that fans use to make sense of their own lives. Wagner calls transmedia a form of religion, one that attempts at order-making, with “beliefs and imagination spun together into webs of meaning, significance crafting products that require our participation and invite our devotion” (p. 229). For fans of transmedia, this form of religion helps them form a human community, focused on human desire, and enter into human relations of exchange (Chidester, 2005).

The transmedia fan is also more than a consumer of content. They are an interpretive community, one whose existence is added by the interactivity of Web 2.0, which provides a forum for user-generated content through blogs and social networks, and online-community formation. They are involved in the interpretation of media texts, intensive communication, various cultural practices and the authoring of their own media content and artefacts within a transmedial fictional ‘universe’ (Sokolova, 2012). The sense of belonging derived from engaging with transmedia provides fans with a means of value-identification, self-development, and imaginative creation.

NEW CITATIONS

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