

Abstract

The Harry Potter saga by the British author J. K. Rowling became a worldwide phenomenon soon after its publication. As its popularity grew at the turn of the millennium, a fan base began to form, and its ranks expanded in the wake of the film adaptation that followed not long after.

The thesis focuses on contemporary young Czech fans of Harry Potter, representatives of the so-called Generation Z, and their participation in the fandom of this work on the social network Instagram. The aim of the thesis, theoretically based primarily on fandom studies, is to answer the questions of how Generation Z comes to the world of Harry Potter, what meanings it holds for them, what the motivations for their participation in the fandom are, and what form this participation takes.

The research is based on data collected through semi-structured interviews with Czech Harry Potter fans who self-identify as Generation Z, were born within a certain generational cohort (from the second half of the 1990s to the end of the first decade of the new century), and participate on the social network Instagram. Furthermore, participant observation in Great Britain was conducted during April 2023.

The results of the research reveal that fans who self-identify as Generation Z were introduced to the fictional world of Harry Potter at a young age and currently access it through repeated reading and watching of the book and film series and through participation within the fan community (especially in the digital space). For fans, the world of Harry Potter brings friendship, an escape from reality, an understanding of their own difference from mainstream society and life values (love, friendship, tolerance). Participation in fandom creates, maintains, and strengthens relationships between individual members of the fandom. The motivation for participation comes from the desire to profit from one's own work, for entertainment, for personal pleasure, or in an attempt to fill one's free time. The form of participation is influenced by social network design and is mainly visual in nature. Explicit participation includes one's own creation as well as interactive posts, while implicit participation is based on sharing

other fans' creations, information, and reactions to posts. Social media also reflects participation outside the digital space.