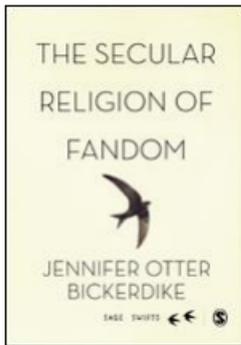


**Welcome to**
REX **STYON****Marc Bolan & T-Rex**
Members Newsletter**NON-MEMBERS COMPETITION****NEW BOOK - WITH MARC AS WELL AS ELVIS, IAN CURTIS & MORE.**

We were delighted when we were contacted a few years ago by Jennifer who was researching her PhD at the time. We are delighted that her research has culminated in this book Visit the Members Web Site update which lists this Issue (#27) as being published) for the competition to win a copy of this book.

**The Secular Religion of Fandom**

Pop Culture Pilgrim

[Jennifer Otter Bickerdike](#) - Buckinghamshire New University

October 2015 | 120 pages | SAGE Publications Ltd

Format	Published Date	ISBN	Price
Hardcover	19/10/2015	9781473907799	£45.00
Electronic Version	30/10/2015	9781473912663	£13.99

DESCRIPTION

Media pilgrimage has become a booming business in the 21st century. Fans of television shows, rock groups and books flock to places associated with their favorite series, artist or writer, trying to embody and perhaps understand what inspired the beloved piece of work, and, more importantly, to cobble together their own personal identity, seeking meaning in an ever-more divergent and fast-paced world.

At the same time, participation in organized group activities are dropping. One of the largest down turns in the US and the UK can be seen in the steep decline of attendance at traditional religious venues. This trend dovetails with the radical uptick in on-line sites dedicated to pop culture and celebrities, as well as an array of niche-focused real-time tours allowing fans to experience the spaces, places and scenery featured in their favorite entertainment medium.

The Secular Religion of Fandom: Pop Culture Pilgrim examines the function of fandom, specifically the visiting of spaces which have been recently deemed worthy of sanctification and a newly elevated status of importance. It examines how such pilgrimages are used as a means for forming and maintaining a common language of culture, creating a replacement apparatus based on more traditional frameworks of religious worship and salvation, while becoming an ever more dominant mechanism for constructing individuality and finding belonging in a commodified culture.

Looking at television shows such as *The Walking Dead* and *Game of Thrones*, bands like *The Stone Roses* and *Joy Division*, and authors like J.K. Rowling and the Brontë sisters, **The Secular Religion of Fandom: Pop Culture Pilgrim** delves into these issues by examining spaces, fan communities and rituals, providing a unique and provocative investigation into how technology, media and humanistic need for guidance are forming novel ways of expressing value, forging self and finding significance in an uncertain world.

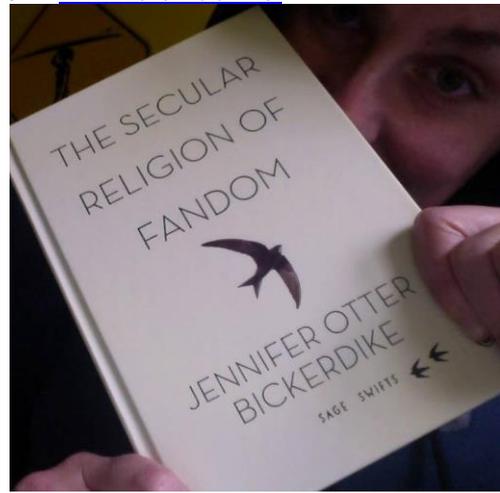
CONTENTS

Introduction: Mecca for Muggles
 Chapter 1 Symbolic Pilgrimage
 Chapter 2 Mr. Mojo Risin'
 Chapter 3 For the Love of Blood Suckers
 Conclusion: The Mighty Hoards

REVIEWS

The secular religion of fandom permeates and animates our late modern lives. In a media-saturated society, pop-culture and fandom provide the sights and sites of a type of religious devotion, pilgrimage and search for enchantment and meaning that are widely experienced, but little studied and even less understood. This is the religion we live amongst, a religion constantly being remade and relocated, a polytheistic religion of places and people, texts and images re-enchanting the world through technology and capitalism. Thankfully we have Jennifer Otter-Bickerdike who, in a groundbreaking drawing together of fieldwork and theory, has provided a fascinating, intelligent, lively and accessible guidebook to this widespread phenomenon. If you want to understand the late modern Western search for meaning in a technologically driven world then you need to read this book.

Professor Michael Grimshaw. University of Canterbury



The Secular Religion of Fandom: Pop Culture Pilgrim is a timely and often provocative examination of a phenomenon that has always been with us, and yet feels suddenly new again. Jennifer Otter Bickerdike asks why we seek solace, spiritual fulfillment, and connectedness in spaces that are not traditionally religious in nature, creating our own sacred spaces as we go. In the process she paves the way for us to reflect on how we confer meaning on the everyday via our new sacred texts, providing an excellent entry into our ongoing conversation about what constitutes religion in an increasingly secular world.

Katherine Larsen

Editor, Journal of Fandom Studies

The Secular Religion of Fandom is an essential addition to an increasing body of literature examining the impact of fan activity in contemporary society. In this book, Otter Bickerdike furthers the field of study by arguing that fandom is actually replacing religious activity and explores a wide field from music, literature and popular culture. This book is well written – theoretical but accessible; incisive but playful.

Dr Gail Crowther

Written in an accessible tone, with personal asides interspersed throughout the theoretical exploration, *The Secular Religion of Fandom: Pop Culture Pilgrim* is both a fascinating and enjoyable read. Otter Bickerdike vividly captures the allure of being a fan while also drawing convincing parallels to religious experience in finding meaning, establishing identity and deepening emotional connection. Just as worshippers gather at a church, with the physical space anchoring their emotional experience, fans gather both in virtual spaces and at the physical spaces which hold meaning for them. The experience is a shared one – with the object of adulation as well as fellow fans – but also serves as an escape from the stresses of everyday life through a new kind of cultural ritual.

Like many of the facilitators of pop culture pilgrimage who populate her book, the author is a knowledgeable and engaging tour guide. She doesn't shy away from pushing the envelope, provocatively characterizing Christians as Jesus fans and traditional worship as the ultimate parasocial relationship. As she examines the appeal of sites of fan pilgrimage, the author explores not only the psychological impact of such an experience, but the sociological and economic impact as well. From Elvis to *The Walking Dead*, *Game of Thrones* to *Jane Eyre*, *The Secular Religion of Fandom: Pop Culture Pilgrim* takes the reader along on the fans' journey, opening up new possibilities for understanding and insight along the way.

Lynn Zubernis

West Chester University

'Today, tastes in media consumption shape identity and community stronger than ever. Otter-Bickerdike follows the yellow-brick road of the superfans-turned-pilgrims deep into their new sacred pop-culture spaces. Walking this path with her is as fun as it is enlightening.'

Ian Fowles

WIN THE BOOK**THE QUESTIONS**

- 1) What was the name of Marc Bolan's original partner in Tyrannosaurus Rex?
- 2) Marc's wife June had a sister. What was her name?
- 3) Who was the 'Wizard' Marc went to France with?

SEND YOUR ANSWERS TO US VIA EMAIL, FACEBOOK OR SNAIL MAIL. JUST MAKE SURE WE HAVE THEM BY THE 31ST MARCH, 2016.

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