Artemis

Foregrounding queer voices using transmedia storytelling

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Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

Date: 09 / 09 / 2016

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Preface

This Doctor of Creative Arts thesis has two sections. The first section is my creative component, *Artemis*, which comprises four parts: the Transmedia Storyworld Bible, which outlines the complimentary transmedia artefacts of the project; the Alternative Reality Game (ARG) outline *Aura*; the feature film screenplay *Artemis Town*; and the Interactive Web Experience, *Artemis: Seeking Asylum*, outline. The second section is an exegesis that contextualises *Artemis* within the broader theoretical framework underpinning my practice-led research. *Artemis* is a work of fiction and all characters and events contained in the creative component of the thesis are products of my imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events, is purely coincidental.

Artwork and Illustrations:

Unless otherwise captioned, all tables, illustrations, and graphs were created by me. Character concept art was created by Nichelle Nolan (charligalgames.carbonmade.com) and Environment concept art was created by Scott Jackson (sajconcepts.com).

Publications arising from this doctoral research:

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—. 2014a, 'Multi-Platform Storytelling and the 'Niche' Market: Producing Low-Budget Transmedia Projects', in D. Polson, A. Cook, JT. Velikovsky, & A. Brackin (eds.), *Transmedia Practice: A Collective Approach*, Inter-Disciplinary Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 35-45.

—. 2014b, 'Transmedia Storytelling: Designing and Constructing Storyworlds for Multiplatform Participatory Narratives', in T. Ravy (ed), *Words, Worlds and Transmedia Narratives,* Interdisciplinary Press, Oxford, UK.

—. Forthcoming, 'Experiencing the Cityscape of The Hunger Games Across Multiple Platforms', in Y. Maurer., M. Koren-Kuik., & S. Edrei (eds.), *Cityscapes of the Future: Urban Spaces in Science-Fiction*, Rodopi, New York, USA.

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Abstract

This practice-led creative writing DCA investigates how screenwriters can develop transmedia entertainment experiences that provide inclusive representation for marginalised queer audiences whilst remaining appealing to the mainstream. Transmedia has been examined from many perspectives including creative, financial, organisational and cultural. This thesis advances discussions of transmedia in entertainment media from a screenwriting perspective by investigating the opportunities transmedia presents in dissolving the long-established barriers between mainstream and niche audiences. The thesis generates a transmedia project that attempts to appeal to both marginalised queer audiences and mainstream audiences by working within popular genres and using participatory and collaborative storytelling experiences, to foreground the queer voice. It analyses four main areas of intersection: gender and sexuality in entertainment media and the marginalisation of queer identity; transmedia practice and participatory culture in an experience economy; audience engagement and community formation in online networked spaces; and storytelling and world-building practices in transmedia.

The thesis is divided into two parts – the creative component and the exegesis. The creative component includes a storyworld bible, screenplay, and interactive online and game outlines. The exegesis contains seven chapters, each examining the research question:

How can queer transmedia storytellers create entertainment experiences for young adult audiences that stay true to the needs of the marginalised queer community, yet remain attractive to the wider mainstream audience?

This creative practice-led research project can be seen to be making an original contribution to knowledge in that it has produced an original feature film screenplay and extended it into a transmedia entertainment experience by linking it to an alternate reality game and an interactive web experience that foregrounds queer identities rather than marginalising them. It addresses the lack of research in transmedia theory and practice that looks at the representation of queer identity by providing new knowledge of how transmedia can be used to invite both marginalised queer audiences and wider mainstream audiences to participate in shared entertainment experiences.