Incorporation facilitated in a transmedia experience

And the case of Bobbejaanland

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Abstract

In theme park literature it is stated that guests of a theme park area can engage in the process of absorption into a fictional world.[1] This process has also been subject to research in the field of media and culture studies. Related to video games, Gordon Calleja has named this process incorporation: "The absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness, yielding a sense of habitation, which is supported by the systemically upheld embodiment of the player in a single location."[2] This research implements theory from media and culture studies to gain insight in the experience of a fictional world in a theme park. It demonstrates how incorporation is facilitated within the storyworld of Khyonesia present in a theme park area in Bobbejaanland. Incorporation is aided through the design of the storyworld which encompasses different media channels; physical as well as digital. Therefore it is perceived as a transmedia experience which according to media scholar Henry Jenkins "unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole."[3] With the method of textual analysis supplemented with participant observation this research will show how the design of the transmedia experience facilitates incorporation. The preparatory phase offers clarification on the inner logic of the storyworld and therefore encourages "the absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness."[4] Additionally, visiting the theme park area allows guests to roam the area without the need of being "represented by the avatar."[5] Last, the absorbing components of the storyworld may yield "a sense of habitation,"[6] since guests are addressed as storyworld inhabitants and experience the environment from a first-person perspective.

Keywords

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[1] Randy Pausch et al., "Disney's Aladdin: First Steps toward Storytelling in Virtual Reality," in *Proceedings of the 23rd Annual*

[2] Gordon Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2011), 169.

[3] Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, 1st ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 95–96.

[4] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 169.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

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Introduction

As chronicled by leisure researcher Ady Milman, in the last 50 years, theme parks were designed to offer guests a leisure activity providing an opportunity to experience a storyworld alternate to their daily lives.[7] Human-computer interaction scholars Randy Pausch et al. argue that a good way to soften the transition between a theme park's guest daily lives and the fictional storyworld is "to provide a background story that familiarizes the guest with the new environment."[8] Literature dealing with theme parks, such as the just-mentioned research, primarily deals with industry concerns. These studies focus on applied research that, for example, analyses how an environment can convey a storyworld. While there is no explicit part of media and culture studies that is dedicated to theme parks, this research implements theory from media and culture studies to gain insight in the experience of a fictional storyworld in a theme park as described by, amongst others, Milman and Pausch et al.

Within media and cultural studies, the process of absorption into a fictional storyworld has been named presence and immersion. Regarding this mediated experience, game scholar Gordan Calleja argues the following:

> Two terms have been formulated in different disciplines to articulate this experiential phenomenon. Technologists, media psychologists, and human-computer interaction researchers, among others, refer to this experience as *presence*, while humanists and, later, social scientists adopted the metaphor of *immersion.*[9]

Calleja mentions it is important to research the effects of such an experience.[10] However, both concepts of presence and immersion have "suffered from varied application."[11] To tackle this problem for research focusing on video games, Calleja suggests using the term incorporation that "can account more satisfactorily for the complex range of factors that make up the sense of virtual environment habitation."[12] Incorporation is "the absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness, yielding a sense of habitation, which is supported by the systemically upheld embodiment of the player in a single location, as represented by the avatar."[13] It is "an intensification of internalized involvement that blends a number of dimensions."[14] These dimensions can be found in Calleja's "player involvement model" which encompasses six dimensions: affective, ludic, kinesthetic, spatial, shared, and narrative involvement.[15] Together, these dimensions "have the potential to culminate in

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[7] Ady Milman, "The Future of the Theme Park and Attraction Industry: A Management Perspective," *Journal of Travel Research* 40, no. 2 (2001): 139.

[8] Pausch et al., "Disney's Aladdin: First Steps toward Storytelling in Virtual Reality," 202.

[9] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 33.

[10] Ibid., 32.

[11] Ibid., 34.

[12] Ibid., 5.

[13] Ibid., 169.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 37.

incorporation."[16] He argues, "whatever we decide to call this phenomenon", the absorption into a fictional world, it "will emerge from the combination of these forms of involvement."[17]

While Calleja focused on explaining this phenomenon of absorption within games, this process can also be recognized with a storyworld presented primarily in a theme park area. Whether playing a game or experiencing a theme park area, people visit the fictive storyworld and the "physical 'here' and the virtual 'there'" are experienced simultaneously.[18] When guests roam the storyworld in a theme park area, they are physically in a certain place, but they may experience the "virtual 'there'"[19] since they are involved with the storyworld. This can, for example, be recognized in the storyworld of Khyonesia designed by Bobbejaanland. Over the last two years, the theme park Bobbejaanland has begun to improve the immersive possibilities of one theme park area using storytelling as its core. This case study is unique because the theme park area, Adventue Valley, with its attractions includes one overarching storyworld. Within other theme parks a storyworld mostly is represented in one or a couple theme park rides, and an area only has a genre.

The storyworld of Khyonesia is dispersed via different media platforms; the physical theme park area complemented with online utterances such as Instagram, Facebook and websites. This collection of media platforms can be perceived as a transmedia constellation. Media scholar Henry Jenkins notes, "transmedia projects have multiple points of entry that follow multiple storylines across several platforms."[20] Using Khyonesia as a case study, this research will answer the following research question: "How does the transmedia experience of Khyonesia facilitate incorporation as stated by Gordon Calleja?" Three sub-questions are formulated to guide this research:

1. How does each component of the transmedia constellation add a different dimension to the transmedia experience?
2. How do the components of the transmedia constellation relate to each other in the transmedia experience?
3. How do the components of the transmedia constellation facilitate incorporation?

While examining each media outlet, this research will demonstrate how every aspect, to some extent, contributes to the overall experience of the storyworld. Each aspect fulfills a certain purpose, ranging from preparatory to absorbing. This research will show how, and in what ways, the different platforms that surround the fictive storyworld of Khyonesia each add a different dimension and ultimately lead to the emergence of a transmedia experience. Consequently, this research will provide insight into how the transmedia experience facilitates incorporation as mentioned by Calleja. This research uses media and culture studies knowledge and theme park expertise as a critical tool to study the complex transmedia experience that creates entry into the fictional world of Khyonesia. Literature concerning theme parks shows there are concerns that leisure

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[16] Ibid., 3.

[17] Ibid., 34.

[18] Gordon Calleja, "Immersion in Virtual Worlds," in *The Oxford Handbook of Virtuality*, ed. Mark Grimshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 222.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Henry Jenkins, "Keeping Your Sanity While Engaging Your Audience Through Transmedia," *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, 2011, para. 3, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/06/keeping_your_sanity_while_enga.html.

researchers should start seeing theme park areas as mediated storyworld experiences.[21] Literature from media and culture studies points to interesting avenues that can help the industry move in that direction.

The first chapter of this thesis, which starts after this introduction, explains the relevant theoretical standpoints from media and culture studies on, as Calleja mentions, the emerged "particular form of mediated experience".[22] The chapter briefly discusses the concepts of presence and immersion and elaborates on incorporation as a substitute. In addition, this section elaborates on the concept of transmedia, which in the case study of Bobbejaanland facilitates incorporation into the fictional world. Consequently, the method of textual analysis supplemented with participant observation that was used to research the design of the storyworld of Khyonesia is explained.

The second chapter first clarifies the design of the storyworld and demonstrates how its leitmotiv is dispersed via different components in the transmedia constellation, which each serve one of the following purposes: preparatory, for visiting available or absorbing. Second, the chapter demonstrates how shared involvement is facilitated by the presence of other guests and the liveliness of storyworld inhabitants. Third, it shows how affective involvement is possible via the creation of mental imagery connected to the action-adventure genre, which guests can roam instead of only view. Last, the chapter explains how narrative involvement is facilitated when guests can generate an alterbiography and experience pre-scripted story events by browsing the different components of the transmedia experience.

The third chapter demonstrates how the complex transmedia structure surrounding the storyworld of Khyonesia facilitates incorporation. The preparatory phase offers clarification on the inner logic of the storyworld and therefore encourages "the absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness."[23] Additionally, visiting the theme park area allows guests to roam the area without the need of being "represented by the avatar."[24] Last, the absorbing components of the storyworld may yield "a sense of habitation,"[25] since guests are addressed as storyworld inhabitants and experience the environment from a first-person perspective.

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[21] Carlos Alberto Scolari, "Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production," *Internation Journal of Communication2* 3 (2009): 586, http://beta.upc.edu.pe/matematica/portafolios/nmynt/transmedia_storytelling-.pdf; Geoffrey A. Long, "Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company" (Massachusetss Institute of Technology, 2000), 10; Göran Bolin, "Media Technologies, Transmedia Storytelling and Commodification," in *Ambivalence towards Convergence: Digitalization and Media Change*, ed. Tanja Storsul and Dagny Stuedahl (Göteborg: Nordicom, 2007), 245.

[22] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 33.

[23] Ibid., 169.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

Chapter 1

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this research first discusses the concept of incorporation, which is coined by Calleja as replacement for the fuzzy concepts of presence and immersion. With the help of a case study, which adds knowledge from an applied perspective, this research demonstrates how a storyworld represented in a theme park area with its surrounding transmedia constellation can facilitate incorporation. The concept of transmedia, and its connected ways of storytelling, transmedia storytelling and environmental storytelling, will be explained in the second section of this theoretical framework.

Incorporation

According to Calleja, the main goal of a game is to encourage involvement that yields "a sensation of inhabiting the space represented on-screen". [26] Through successful game design, a guest may be drawn into the process of absorption into the fictive storyworld represented in a game.[27] Calleja focused on this process as recognizable within a video game. However, he argues that this process of absorption can also be recognized within other media cultures.[28] This research demonstrates how involvement can also be recognized within a storyworld dispersed via a transmedia constellation which encompasses the physical theme park area as well as digital media outlets. According to Calleja, this phenomenon of absorption is "generally referred to in terms of *presence* and *immersion*."[29] Calleja notes, "*immersion* is being used to describe the affective properties of the hardware."[30] The concept of presence is regularly discussed in terms of "a human reaction to immersion."[31]

For the purpose of this research, it is important to understand various scholars have understood presence in different ways. The notion of presence is borrowed from the term telepresence, as stated by Artificial Intelligence researcher Marvin Minsky in 1980.[32] According to Minsky, presence in its most broad sense may develop in "achieving that sense of 'being there'."[33] In relation to Minsky's understanding of telepresence human-computer interaction, professor Thomas Sheridan further specified a possible interpretation and coined the term virtual presence, which refers to "feeling like you are present in the environment generated by the computer."[34] Moving into a different area of expertise, mass media scholars

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[26] Ibid., 2.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 21.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Marvin Minsky, "Telepresence," *OMNI Magazine*, 1980.

[33] Ibid., para. 18.

[34] Thomas B. Sheridan, "Musings on Telepresence and Virtual Presence," *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments* 1, no. 1 (1992): 120, doi:10.1162/pres.1992.1.1.120.

Matthew Lombard and Therese Ditton defined presence as "the perceptual illusion of non-mediation".[35] This definition refers to the perception a person might have that a mediated experience is not mediated.

Just as with the concept of presence it is important to notice that the concept of immersion has many associations in different fields. Media scholar Janet Murray refers to immersion as follows:

> The experience of being transported to an elaborately simulated place is pleasurable in itself…*Immersion* is a metaphorical term derived from the physical experience of being submerged in water. We seek … the sensation of being surrounded by a completely other reality, as different as water is from air, that takes of all of our attention.[36]

Game scholars Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman critiqued this vaguely described ultimate version of immersion. They argue that such a view includes an "immersive fallacy," which is "the idea that the pleasure of a media experience lies in its ability to sensually transport the participant into an illusory, simulated reality."[37] They note, "immersion is not tied to a sensory replication of reality."[38] Another view on immersion is offered by game scholars John Dovey and Helen Kennedy, who refer to immersion as a form of engagement. They note, "this quality of immersion or engagement within the game world may account for the ways in which a sense of time or physical discomfort may recede as the player's skill develops."[39]

These different associations for the same term have troubled its understanding.[40] Focused on the term immersion Calleja argues that it faces four key challenges. First, the term immersion is used for "general involvement in a medium," as well as "the sense of being transported to another reality."[41] Second, he argues scholars do not note "specificities of the medium in question" when they talk about immersion.[42] Third, he argues immersion is often looked at "as being determined by the qualities of the technology," while there are more factors involved.[43] Fourth, according to Calleja, immersion is often seen as a single form of experience. However, it should be "considered on a continuum of attentional intensity rather than as a binary, on/off switch."[44]

Based on these struggles, Calleja decided, since the terms presence and immersion already have many "theoretical associations," to choose the term incorporation to refer to the mediated experience of a virtual environment and absorption into a fictive storyworld.[45] Based on his own research, he distinguished six

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[35] Matthew Lombard and Theresa Ditton, "At the Heart of It All: The Concept of Presence," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 3, no. 2 (2006): para. 30, doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.1997.tb00072.x.

[36] Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 98.

[37] Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 451–52, doi:10.1093/intimm/dxs150.

[38] Ibid., 170.

[39] Jon Dovey and Helen W. Kennedy, *Game Cultures: Computer Games As New Media*, 1st ed. (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006), 8.

[40] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 18.

[41] Ibid., 32.

[42] Ibid., 33.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 32.

different dimensions of involvement that in a certain combination may facilitate incorporation. He combined them into his "player involvement model."[46] He argues that a "combination of several dimensions of the player involvement model" emerges in "incorporation."[47] Incorporation is "the absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness, yielding a sense of habitation, which is supported by the systemically upheld embodiment of the player in a single location, as represented by the avatar."[48] The several dimensions of involvement can be summarized as follows: First, "kinesthetic involvement" focuses on "control and movement"; second, "spatial involvement" on "the exploration and learning of the game's spatial domain"; third, "shared involvement" on the "co-presence, collaboration, and competition with other agents"; fourth, "narrative involvement" on "the formation of an ongoing story and interaction with the scripted narrative"; fifth, "affective involvement" on "the affect generated during gameplay"; and last, "ludic involvement" on "the decision making undertaken in the pursuit of both game- and self-assigned goals".[49]

Calleja argues every case embodies a "combination of several dimensions of the player involvement model". This research demonstrates that, within the context of a theme park area, the dimensions of affective, shared, and narrative involvement facilitate incorporation. To explain, regarding affective involvement, Calleja notes, "The appeal of beautifully rendered environments can be particularly powerful when contrasted with less attractive everyday surroundings."[50] Within Khyonesia, guests can enter a mystical and fascinating world that differs from their everyday surroundings. Consequently, a guest can roam this "beautifully rendered environment,"[51] which results in a more absorbing experience since a guest can physically walk through the environment of the storyworld. Concerning shared involvement, Calleja argues, "The presence of other players as a potential or actual audience considerably modifies how we conceive of and interact with the game environment."[52] This also applies to the storyworld of Khyonesia, where guests can see other guests participate on the Facebook page and, more explicitly, walking in the theme park area alongside fictive storyworld inhabitants. The last element that aids in facilitating incorporation in the context of Khyonesia is narrative involvement, which according to Calleja refers to the process of "the active construction of an ongoing story that develops through interaction with the game world's topography, inhabitant objects, and game rules and simulated environmental properties."[53] While browsing the different parts of the transmedia constellation, where each component has a particular function, guests can choose their own path that blends narrative cues dispersed via different media outlets. This choice influences the "ongoing story," [54] and allows guests to actively get acquainted with the storyworld.

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[46] Ibid., 4.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 169.
[49] Ibid., 4.
[50] Ibid., 135.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 94.
[53] Ibid., 127.
[54] Ibid.

Transmedia

Calleja recognizes incorporation in a storyworld within video games and suggest that it can be encountered in different media cultures.[55] This research demonstrates that it can be facilitated in a transmedia experience where the storyworld is dispersed across different media outlets. This section explains the current understanding of the concept of transmedia and its possibilities for the representation of a storyworld. These insights will guide the analysis of the design of the storyworld of Khyonesia.

For the second edition of their book, Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon changed the name of the book from *Narrative across Media* to *Storyworlds across Media*. They note, "The replacement of 'narrative' with 'storyworld' acknowledges the emergences of the concept of 'world' not only in narratology but also on the broader cultural scene."[56] Part of this shift is the development of "transmedial storyworlds that are deployed simultaneously across multiple media platforms."[57] However, while Ryan and Thon mention this shift in 2014, digital narrative scholar Janet Murray discussed the foundations in 1997.[58] In her book *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace,* she predicted how new media and the changes in consumption due to new media formats could encourage imaginary worlds.[59] She named the emergence of new nonlinear storyworlds "hyperserials."[60] Murray states, "Probably the first steps toward a new *hyperserial* format will be the close integration of a digital archive, such as a Web site, with a broadcast television program."[61] Through these developments, "the sensation of several overlapping viewpoints comes into focus."[62]

Consequently, communication scholar Mark Wolf acknowledges Murray's thoughts have become reality. He, as well as Ryan and Thon, sees a "shift in audience attention from the central storyline to the world in which the story takes place, where multiple storylines can interweave in a web of story."[63] In this web "users can explore the content of imaginary worlds, each containing narrative (or at least informational) elements which add detail to the imaginary world."[64] This shift can be recognized within the storyworld of Khyonesia. The storyworld is also dispersed simultaneously across multiple platforms: the theme park area with its attractions complemented with digital online platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. The audience can roam the web and thus explore the imaginary world.

The above-described idea of "distribution of stories over and across a variety of media" is the idea behind transmedia.[65] One of the most prominent transmedia theorists is media scholar Henry Jenkins. Several

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[55] Ibid., 2.

[56] Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon, *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, 1st ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 1.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*.

[59] Ibid., 253.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 254.

[62] Ibid., 258.

[63] Mark J.P. Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 8.

[64] Ibid., 9.

[65] Ibid.

media scholars refer to his understanding of transmedia as recognizable in the current media landscape.[66] Jenkins notes, "transmedia projects have multiple points of entry that follow multiple storylines across several platforms."[67] This results in the possibility for a guest to carry out "hunting and gathering practices of finding the dispersed pieces of information and figuring out how they all fit together to form a meaningful whole."[68] Within the case study of this research these multiple points of entry are offered digitally and physically. Together these outlets operate via transmedia storytelling. According to Jenkins "transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the pupose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story."[69]

While transmedia storytelling can be recognized within the overarching representation of the storyworld of Khyonesia, the physical components operate via a different sort of storytelling, namely the spatial type of storytelling named environmental storytelling. Theme park designer Don Carson introduced the concept of environmental storytelling in 2000. Based on knowledge of theme park and game development, he began the conversation about designing environments. Carson argues that environmental storytelling occurs through "the design of entertaining themed environments" where "the story element is infused into the physical space a guest walks or rides through."[70] To explain how producers may embed environmental storytelling, he offers game developers techniques to implement narrative elements into game environments on his game industry oriented website *Gamasutra.*

Jenkins joined the conversation regarding this form of spatial storytelling in 2003 by arguing "for an understanding of game designers less as storytellers and more as narrative architects."[71] Within his text *Game design as narrative architecture*, communication scholar Lindsay Tarnowetzki distinguished five ways in which environmental storytelling, according to Jenkins, operates. First, environmental storytelling occurs when "stories can draw on pre-existing narratives"[72]; second, when "these narratives are driven by geography"[73]; third, when there is "a space for people to enact narrative events"[74]; fourth, when "narrative hints may be embedded in game space or objects";[75] and last, when "narratives may be shaped by gameplay instead of being pre-

[66] Carlos Alberto Scolari and Indrek Ibrus, "Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production," *Internation Journal of Communication* 3, no. 9 (2009): 586; Long, "Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company," 10; Bolin, "Media Technologies, Transmedia Storytelling and Commodification," 245.

[67] Jenkins, "Keeping Your Sanity While Engaging Your Audience Through Transmedia," para. 3.

[68] Henry Jenkins, "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections," *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*, 2011, para. 26, http://henryjenkins.org/2011/08/defining_transmedia_further_re.html.

[69] Henry Jenkins, "Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment: An Annotated Syllabus," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 24, no. 6 (2010): 944, doi:10.1080/10304312.2010.510599.

[70] Don Carson, "Environmental Storytelling: Creating Immersive 3D Worlds Using Lessons Learned from the Theme Park Industry," *Gamasutra, March 1st*, 2000, 1, http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/131594/environmental_storytelling_.php.

[71] Henry Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture," *Comprative Media Studies | Writing*, 2003, 3, doi:10.1111/b.9781444331899.2011.00023.x.

[72] Lindsay Tarnowetzki, "Environmental Storytelling and BioShock Infinite: Moving from Game Design to Game Studies" (Concordia University Montreal, 2015), 19, http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/979820/1/Tarnowetzki_MA_2015.pdf.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

structured, such as through the use of cinematic cutscenes."[76] This research argues that, within a storyworld represented in a theme park area, the coexistence of environmental and transmedia storytelling in a transmedia project may facilitate incorporation. The storyworld of Khyonesia is considered a complex transmedia experience where guests can experience the storyworld by browsing the different components of that experience, which each make its unique contribution to the whole.

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[76] Ibid.

Methodology: approach and considerations

To collect relevant data, this research used a mixed method approach based on textual analysis supplemented with participant observation. To provide an answer to my research question ("How does the transmedia experience of Khyonesia facilitate incorporation as mentioned by Gordon Calleja?") I researched the design of the storyworld by closely examining every media outlet featured in the transmedia constellation using textual analysis. To supplement, I performed a participant observation that explained how I completed the textual analysis and, consequently, allowed me to back up my analysis by actually roaming this constellation. This ultimately showed how incorporation is facilitated in the transmedia experience of Khyonesia.

Textual analysis

Media and popular culture scholar Elfriede Fürsich mentions, "Textual analysis allows the researcher to discern latent meaning, but also implicit patterns, assumptions and omissions of a text. Text is understood in its broader, post-structural, sense as any cultural practice or object that can be 'read.'"[77] From this explanation, I derived that the transmedia constellation of the Khyonesia storyworld, which is dispersed via themed spaces in the theme park area and other content that can be found in the digital components of the transmedia constellation, can be understood as a text. With the use of textual analysis, I researched how the various components relate to each other in the transmedia experience. However, Fürsich notes, "The measure for a well-executed textual interpretation then cannot be to explain how closely the text represent the producers' intentions nor does it mean how close does the textual analyst come to the actually prevalent audience interpretation of the text. Instead, the textual analyst needs to establish the *ideological potential* of the text between production and consumption."[78] Therefore, this research does not provide insights into guests' behavior, reasons for guests' behavior, or Bobbejaanland's motivations. Instead, this research mainly focuses on the design of the storyworld and how it may facilitate incorporation; thus, there was a focus on the potential of the text.

To illustrate, while performing the textual analysis, I examined the different content that revolve around the storyworld of Khyonesia. I looked at channels that the storyworld's producer (Bobbejaanland) used to circulate utterances and to communicate with (future) guests. The corpus I examined was composed of online utterances: Bobbejaanland's Facebook page; the main character Jasper Dubois's Instagram account; Mount Mara's website, which informs guests about the rollercoaster ride; and finally, the Adventure Valley website, which provides guests with backstories about Khyonesia. Complementary, I treated the physical location of the storyworld, which consists of the area and its rides, as part of the transmedia constellation. This resulted in an overview of the storyworld. Consequently I examined how each component of the transmedia constellation

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[77] Elfriede Fürsich, "In Defense of Textual Analysis," *Journalism Studies* 10, no. 2 (2009): 241, doi:10.1080/14616700802374050.
[78] Ibid., 249.

adds a different dimension to the transmedia experience and how the components relate to each other. I could then delve deeper into the incorporative capabilities that are achievable within the storyworld.

Participant observation

As mentioned, this analysis does not provide insight into guests' behavior, reasons for guests' behavior, or Bobbejaanland's motivations. The analysis cannot "explain how closely the text represent the producers' intentions nor does it mean how close does the textual analyst come to the actually prevalent audience interpretation of the text."[79] However, with the use of participant observation, I could embed personal encounters with the storyworld, which allowed me to back up the analysis of the constellation with experiences of actually using it. This method allowed me to include photos I had taken, observations of seeing people engage in certain activities, and descriptions of what I experienced when I was, for example, riding a rollercoaster. After the participant observation, I could explain what I experienced at the time; other guests' experiences may differ, but my perception showed that the transmedia experience allowed for this type of experience.

Participant observation is a fruitful methodology within this research since it stems from ethnographic research, the study of people and cultures. Professor of Journalism and Media Studies Bonnie S. Brennen defines participant observation as a flexible research process in which "researchers go into the field to gain knowledge about activities, beliefs, values, relationships and interests so that they may learn more about how others make sense of their everyday lives."[80]. To understand the complex transmedia experience, I went into the field. I encountered the different parts of the transmedia constellation: the physical as well as the digital components. The corpus of my research contained field notes that were taken when roaming the transmedia constellation. During the analysis, I documented my findings in field notes, which contained words and pictures to further interpret later.

The participant observation was designed as a single-case study. Social scientist Robert K. Yin notes that a single- case study is based on the assumption that "lessons learned from these cases are informative about the experiences of the average person or institution."[81] This suggests that it is possible to generalize, but that generalization needs to be analytical and considered.[82] Therefore, this research is based on a theoretical framework that helps define the current understanding of the concepts of incorporation and transmedia. When participating as a guest, I generated questions and findings to start the conversation about an understanding for the concept of incorporation in a transmedia experience.

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[79] bid., 249.

[80] Bonnie S. Brennen, *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 163.

[81] Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009), 48.

[82] Ibid.

Chapter 2

This chapter elaborates on the findings gathered through textual analysis and participant observation. The first subsection clarifies the design of the storyworld and explains the leitmotiv of the main storyline in the storyworld of Khyonesia. Consequently this chapter demonstrates how this leitmotiv is dispersed via different components in the transmedia constellation where each section serves a certain purpose: preparatory, available for visit, or absorbing. This will show how each part of the transmedia constellation adds a different dimension to the transmedia experience. The second subsection of this chapter explains how, through the design of the storyworld, affective, shared, and narrative involvement are facilitated. Through this clarification, each subsection, focusing on one type of involvement, will demonstrate how the overall transmedia experience facilitates incorporation as mentioned by Calleja.

Design of the storyworld

To understand this section, it is first important to elaborate on the relevant components of the Khyonesia storyworld. To offer an overview of the storyworld that is as complete as possible, a categorization offered by scholars Ryan and Thon, in their previously mentioned book *Storyworlds across Media,* will be used. These authors propose that a storyworld is composed of six elements. First is the "existents: the characters of the story and the objects that have special significance for the plot."[83] Second is the "setting: a space within which the existents are located."[84] Third is the "physical laws: principles that determine what kind of events can and cannot happen in a given story."[85] Fourth is "social rules and values: principles that determine the obligations of characters."[86] Fifth is the "events: the causes of the changes of state that happen in the time span framed by the narrative."[87] Finally, the sixth element consists of the "mental events: the character's reactions to perceived or actual states of affairs."[88]

The most important non-human existent within the storyworld of Khyonesia is the purple crystals, that according to the myth, have supernatural powers that make insects grow fast and big and can raise the dead. These characteristics are the most relevant physical laws. The main character Jasper Dubois is searching for the crystals in The Forbidden Caves in imitation of his grandfather, Jean-Pierre, an additional character within the storyworld of Khyonesia. Jean-Pierre's goal is an important social value: to solve myths all over the world. During his life, he has solved every myth he came across except this one of the Forbidden Caves. This myth surrounds the purple crystals, which when Jean-Pierre visited the caves were not found. In his days, Jean-Pierre searched the Forbidden Caves together with King Morowath of the land of Khyonesia, where these caves are located. The land of Khyonesia is the setting of this storyworld. Within the area, the civilization has fled. King Morowath and Jean-Pierre cannot find a comprehensible reason for their disappearance. During Jean-Pierre's

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[83] Ryan and Thon, *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, 34.
[84] Ibid., 35.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 36.
[88] Ibid.

and King Morowath's search, they dig in the tunnels and caves, but unfortunately, they cannot find the crystals. Jean-Pierre returns to his home country, Belgium, and takes the only crystal he could find with him. Eventually, Jean-Pierre disappears, and after five years of searching for him, his family gives up. An important mental event in the storyworld can be recognized when the grandson Jasper wants to finish the search for the magical crystals and travels to Khyonesia, where he keeps looking in the complex dug out by his grandfather. Here, he starts his Cave Tours to show people around; consequently, he hires personnel that can guide guests. These guides are also important existents in the storyworld.

This leitmotiv is communicated through different parts of the transmedia constellation. Since Khyonesia is considered a transmedia storyworld, it is as Ryan notes, "deployed simultaneously across multiple media platforms."[89] These different media platforms each serve a purpose, and as a whole, they represent the storyworld for guests. Through this constellation of platforms, guests can, as mentioned by Jenkins, carry out "hunting and gathering practices of finding the dispersed pieces of information and figuring out how they all fit together to form a meaningful whole."[90]

The following components are considered to prepare the guest for entry into the fictional world of Khyonesia: Bobbejaanland's Facebook page, the Mount Mara website, The Forbidden Caves website, and Jasper Dubois's Instagram account. Bobbejaanland's Facebook page links with the Instagram account and the websites; see image 1.[91] The page points guests toward different parts of the transmedia constellation, which guests can roam. Here, the "close integration of a digital archive, such as a Web site, with a broadcast television program,"[92] which is necessary in a transmedia constellation, according to Murray, is noticeable. Consequently, the website specifically created for the ride Mount Mara explains it is a virtual reality rollercoaster surrounding a volcano situated in Khyonesia.[93] The Forbidden Caves website also explains the ride in the theme park area. The ride is a tour through the mines and ruins of Khyonesia. Additionally, the Forbidden Caves website offers more information about the storyworld. Stories regarding the civilization, Jean-Pierre's life and Jasper's adventure can be read on that website.[94]

Image 1 Link from Facebook to Instagram

Jasper Dubois's Instagram page fulfills a similar purpose. There, he shares status updates while traveling through Khyonesia. These components of the transmedia constellation are treated as preparatory since, on these platforms, the atmosphere of the storyworld is sketched; the future guest may feel visiting the theme

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[89] Ibid., 1.

[90] Jenkins, "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections," para. 26.

[91] Bobbejaanland, "Bobbejaanland - Berichten," *Facebook*, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/pg/bobbejaanland/posts/?ref=page_internal.

[92] Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, 254.

[93] Bobbejaanland, "Mount Mara," *Mountmara.be*, 2015.

[94] Bobbejaanland, "Jaspers Tips and Tricks," *Theforbiddencaves.be*, 2015, http://theforbiddencaves.be/hetverhaal/jaspers-tips-tricks/.

park area is appealing. Additionally, these elements of the transmedia experience offer guests information about the storyworld that will help them understand certain hidden narrative cues, dispersed via environmental storytelling, in the theme park area.

These preparatory components serve as a constituent that invites guests to visit the storyworld. The following elements primarily allow guests to visit Khyonesia: the environment of the theme park area; the merchandise store called Jasper's Supply Depot; and the rides King Kong, Banana Battle and Naga Bay. Narrative cues within the components of the transmedia experience that allow guests to visit the fictive storyworld do not explicitly focus on the main storyline of Khyonesia; Jasper's experience with the Forbidden Caves as made clear in the preparatory branch. The central storyline thus is not the only eye-catcher of the storyworld. This connects with the "shift in audience attention from the central storyline to the world in which the story takes place, where multiple storylines can interweave in a web of story."[95] Bobbejaanland fulfills this audience need by embedding additional components that mainly outline the genre of the theme park area: action-adventure. According to film and television professor Barry Langford, "action-adventure often involved a significant displacement from contemporary American life, into exotic, far-flung locales like colonial Africa or the 'mysterious Orient'."[96] Some props in the theme park area, the merchandise store and rides, pointing to the action-adventure genre are ropes, suitcases, jungle hats, and bamboo; see image 2.[97] Within the merchandise store, guests can buy merchandise tagged with the name of the ride The Forbidden Caves; see image 3.[98] However, there is also more general action-adventure genre-related merchandise, such as jungle hats; see image 4.[99]

Image 2 Action-adventure genre props

Image 3 The Forbidden Caves themed merchandise

Image 4 Action-adventure genre related merchandise

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[95] Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation*, 8.

[96] Barry Langford, *Film Genre: Hollywood and Beyond*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 238.

[97] Action-adventure genre props, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[98] The Forbidden Caves themed merchandise, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[99] Action-adventure genre related merchandise, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

Image 5 Banana Battle

Image 6 King Kong

Image 7 Naga Bay

Within the ride Banana Battle, animals living in the jungle, such as monkeys, are depicted; see image 5.[100] In the ride King Kong, a monkey is also the main character; see image 6.[101] In Naga Bay, skeletons and fossils could be perceived to indicate the destructive nature of Khyonesia, where the civilization has fled; see image 7.[102] These hints to the action-adventure genre were also visible in the preparatory components of the transmedia experience. However, within this setting, the storyworld becomes viable since, as mentioned by Milman, "stories are blended with visual statements around which architecture, landscaping, costumed personnel, rides, shows, food services, and merchandising were coordinated."[103] Jenkins notes that, within a transmedia project, "each medium does what it does best."[104] The theme park area with its rides offers a stage for more spatial forms of storytelling. Here, environmental storytelling can be recognized as it offers "a space for people to enact narrative events" where "narrative hints may be embedded in game space or objects".[105]

The absorbing components of the storyworld are the attractions Mount Mara and the Forbidden Caves. Within the Forbidden Caves, employees guide guests through the caves mentioned in the preparatory components of the storyworld; see image 8.[106] Guests can follow their guide, from whom they receive more information about the complex. Eventually, they end up in a room where they are placed in a carriage surrounded by screens that
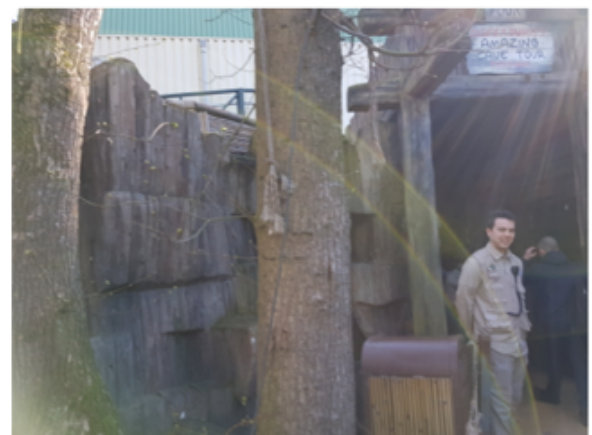

Image 8 Guide of The Forbidden Caves tour

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[100] Banana Battle, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[101] King Kong, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[102] Naga Bay, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[103] Milman, "The Future of the Theme Park and Attraction Industry: A Management Perspective," 139.

[104] Jenkins, Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide, 95–96.

[105] Tarnowetzki, "Environmental Storytelling and BioShock Infinite: Moving from Game Design to Game Studies," 19.

[106] Guide of The Forbidden Caves tour, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

show imagery of the Forbidden Caves; see image 9.[107] Here, guests follow digitally depicted Jasper, who is riding a jeep through the tunnels and caves. During the participant observation, while wearing 3D-glasses, I felt as if I was roaming the caves myself with Jasper as my guide. In addition, in Mount Mara, guests wear a Samsung Gear VR set; see image 10.[108] This set replaces the guests' sight with digital imagery that shows, while the vehicle follows the tracks of the rollercoaster, the volcano of Mount Mara where evil spirits made the volcano erupt. While the preparatory components of the transmedia experience sketch the atmosphere and offer guests information about the storyworld, the components guests experience while visiting the area further make the genre noticeable and the storyworld viable. These absorbing rides allow for close contact with Khyonesia as they place a visitor's body in the scene by implementing digital imagery in the guest's direct surroundings, placing that guest in a role of visitor of Khyonesia and allowing him or her to experience the storyworld from a first-person perspective.

Image 9 Carriage in The Forbidden Caves tour

Image 10 Samsung Gear VR set in Mount Mara

Incorporation

As mentioned, Calleja argues that every storyworld case embodies a "combination of several dimensions of the player involvement model." Incorporation occurs when there is "an intensification of internalized involvement that blends a number of dimensions."[109] This subsection explains how, in the case of Khyonesia, shared, affective, and narrative involvement can be recognized and how this combination facilitates incorporation. For this purpose, this subsection will demonstrate how each division of the storyworld's design assists in the progress of a type of involvement.

Shared involvement

According to Calleja, shared involvement deals with "the engagement derived from player's awareness of and interaction with other agents in a game environment."[110] This subsection shows that, translated to the theme park area, shared involvement includes contact with other guests and fictive storyworld inhabitants. This subsection first examines the awareness a guest may have of the presence of other guests. It explains how during each phase of the transmedia experience a guest may encounter other guests. Second, it demonstrates

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[107] Carriage in The Forbidden Caves tour, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[108] Samsung Gear VR set in Mount Mara, Bobbejaanland, personal photograph by author, April 2, 2017.

[109] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 169.

[110] Ibid., 43.

how interaction with fictive characters is organized within the three different phases of the transmedia experience of Khyonesia.

Concerning the presence of other guests, shared involvement is facilitated through first, allowing guests to notice each other via social media, second, offering the possibility of spectatorship of people enjoying rides, third, providing a space where guests can walk the streets of Khyonesia together, and fourth, arranging groups of people to visit the rides simultaneously. During the participant observation, on the Facebook page and Instagram account, which belong to the preparatory components of the transmedia experience, I was made aware of the existence of other (future) guests. I could see their reactions on posts. This awareness facilitates shared involvement since it made me "aware of the fact that actions are occurring in a shared context."[111]

Consequently, while visiting the theme park area, according to Calleja, the awareness of this shared context "modifies how we conceive of and interact with the game environment."[112] This also applies to the experience of the theme park area. To illustrate, while enjoying the King Kong ride, other people can see how guests behave during the ride. As described by Calleja, the awareness of this spectatorship may "prompt players to perform in a way that is more appealing to the audience."[113] The participant observation showed such an encounter: a mother shushed her scared crying child. A reason why she did this may be because there were people who were watching the ride. The shared context in which the ride is positioned thus influences the experience.

Additionally, while roaming the theme park area, other guests are also wandering the area. Calleja notes, "Human players offer the most potent sense of cohabitation, as the player is aware that there are other human minds sharing the experience."[114] Calleja mentions, while a guest is walking down the streets of the storyworld "that is full of agents walking, talking, and interacting, she will tend to get the feeling of being in a living city, obfuscating the fact that she is interacting with a simulation." As other guests experience Khyonesia, this shared context supports the authenticity of the storyworld and presents it as bustling and viable. This lays the foundation for the absorbing nature of the shared environment.

Concerning the absorbing components of the transmedia experience, the participant observation revealed that, while sitting in the carriage that represents the jeep in the Forbidden Caves ride, the group dynamic influences the experience. When a different guest pointed toward a snake hidden under a rock, I noticed it too. Without that different guest, I would have not seen that snake as it slowly moved toward the carriage. Due to shared involvement, the other guest's perceptivity changed my focus and thus my experience of this absorbing tour.

The second category of agents consists of the fictive inhabitants of the storyworld. Calleja notes, "the writer can decide to place certain characters in leading roles through extended parts of the work, while other

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[111] Ibid., 112.
[112] Ibid., 94.
[113] Ibid., 104.
[114] Ibid., 101–2.

characters play a more minor, supporting role."[115] By allowing guests to first see the storyworld through a main character's eyes, and consequently to encounter inhabitants of the storyworld physically, shared involvement is facilitated. Within the context of Khyonesia, Jasper is placed in a leading role. He is a central existent in the preparatory and absorbing components of the storyworld. This facilitates shared involvement since his companionship creates awareness of the liveliness of Khyonesia. During the preparatory segment, a guest can see Khyonesia through Jasper's eyes since he shares his encounters in Khyonesia. Within these components, Jasper as a character is introduced, and his motives and the events he experiences are explained.

Consequently, within the absorbing components of the transmedia experience, the fictive storyworld inhabitants introduced in the preparatory phase of the storyworld play an even more important role. The absorbing qualities of the storyworld can mainly be recognized in the presence of human controlled inhabitants of the theme park area. Calleja mentions that these agents "are like improv theater actors set in a larger environment than a stage."[116] In the Forbidden Caves, guides perform an act as they play the role of a guide in the caves. They stage the dangerous situation Jasper is in and guide guests to their jeeps, which will be used to roam the caves and follow Jasper. Due to these human controlled inhabitants, digitally represented main character and presence of other guests, shared involvement is facilitated within the storyworld of Khyonesia.

Affective involvement

Next to shared involvement, within the theme park area the dimension of affective involvement aids in incorporation. Calleja argues that affective involvement is encouraged through alluring imagery that initiates the creation of mental imagery. He notes, "Mental imagery allows us to retain in consciousness past experiences and potential future actions along with awareness of the present moment."[117] This subsection explains how, with the use of preparatory components, the transmedia experience offers guests insights into the genre of the storyworld, which encourages the creation of mental imagery. Consequently, while visiting the theme park area, this imagery cannot only be viewed; it can be roamed. Lastly, while experiencing the absorbing features of the transmedia experience, affective involvement is facilitated when the guests can place themselves in the role of explorers as they are physically surrounded by imagery of Khyonesia, which allows them to experience the surroundings of Khyonesia from a first-person perspective.

In the preparatory phase of the transmedia constellation, images of the theme park area are shown. These images offer guests an initial hook they can use to decide whether they find the storyworld appealing. Calleja argues, "The graphical style of a game gives a good idea of the genre."[118] Thus, by showing imagery and drawings of the storyworld, Bobbejaanland provides guests the possibility to connect the atmosphere of Khyonesia with "past experiences and potential future actions." [119] These initial thoughts form the foundation of a guest's understanding of Khyonesia. This is where imagination is triggered. Calleja notes, "Imagination

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[115] Ibid., 100.
[116] Ibid., 101.
[117] Ibid., 137.
[118] Ibid., 140.
[119] Ibid., 137.

allows for the possibility of mentally detaching ourselves temporarily from the present moment."[120] Thus, continuously looking at these snapshots, during the preparatory phase of the transmedia experience, of the theme park area allows guests to find entry and start experiencing the storyworld more intensively. As Jenkins mentions, "transmedia projects have multiple points of entry that follow multiple storylines across several platforms."[121] The preparatory components can be viewed as points of entry where the imagination triggered by showing digital imagery prepares guests and sets expectations for further affective involvement.

Consequently, with mental imagery, which is triggered through the use of imagination, in play, and sketched in the atmosphere, guests who have seen the media outlets in the preparatory section can recognize these images while roaming the theme park area. According to Calleja, here, they perceive "the representational qualities of their environments, which enable a sense of habitable space that can be very appealing to navigate."[122] Since an image of, for example, the entry to the Forbidden Caves is repeatedly shown within multiple components of the transmedia constellation, noticing and remembering the narrative cues makes it easier to understand the storyworld as a consistent whole. Through repetition in central elements guests can, as mentioned by Jenkins, carry out "hunting and gathering practices of finding the dispersed pieces of information and figuring out how they all fit together to form a meaningful whole."[123] In addition, Calleja notes, "the appeal of beautifully rendered environments can be particularly powerful when contrasted with less attractive everyday surroundings."[124] Bobbejaanland sketches a fictive world, very different from everyday life where guests can roam freely within the boundaries set by Bobbejaanland. Calleja argues that roaming creates more involvement than viewing.[125] Therefore, the setting offered by Bobbejaanland facilitates affective involvement.

Since the storyworld of Khyonesia can be roamed physically, fantasy and imagination are encouraged. Calleja argues, "digitally mediated experiences aim to satisfy the desires generated by movies, literature or free-ranging fantasy."[126] In the setting of Khyonesia, this happens through the use of digital imagery in the preparatory components of the transmedia experience and, subsequently, by allowing guests to visit the storyworld physically. Consequently, while visiting the absorbing rides Mount Mara and the Forbidden Caves, a guest can have a digitally mediated experience that may fulfill wishes generated through the encounter of other media outlets in the transmedia experience. Consequently, through the previously mentioned use of the action-adventure genre, guests may generate desires based on links with movies and literature in the same genre-trope they were already familiar with. This connects with the feature of environmental storytelling, as mentioned by Jenkins, which states that "stories can draw on pre-existing narratives".[127] The atmosphere sketched by Bobbejaanland connects with pre-existing narratives that connect with the action-adventure genre.

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[120] Ibid.

[121] Jenkins, "Keeping Your Sanity While Engaging Your Audience Through Transmedia," para. 3.

[122] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 138.

[123] Jenkins, "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections," para. 26.

[124] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 135.

[125] Ibid., 142.

[126] Ibid., 146.

[127] Tarnowetzki, "Environmental Storytelling and BioShock Infinite: Moving from Game Design to Game Studies," 19.

Through the absorbing nature of elements in the transmedia experience, Bobbejaanland facilitates the experience for its guests to engage with the storyworld from a first-person perspective. As a guest of Mount Mara or the Forbidden Caves, a person is the main character in the story. This experience may encourage a guest to make links with a story where the action-adventure genre is noticeable, for example, the movie *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom,*[128] or the movie *The Legend of Tarzan.*[129] When a guest can link a story connected to Khyonesia with a different story that fits the genre, emotional engagement is encouraged since guests can reminisce the experience of these other action-adventure-related media products, and thus, affective involvement is facilitated.

Narrative involvement

According to Calleja, narrative involvement can occur in two ways. First when an alterbiography, a "story generated by the individual player as she takes action in the game", is achieved.[130] Second through the use of "scripted narrative," which encompasses "the pre-scripted story events written into the game."[131] This active story construction connects with Jenkins' thoughts regarding environmental storytelling where "narratives may be shaped by gameplay instead of being pre-structured."[132] The alterbiography is created and shaped by gameplay, and the pre-scripted story events can be understood as the pre-structured narratives. This subsection demonstrates how, in the context of Khyonesia, the preparatory section of the transmedia experience allows the creation of an alterbiography, which encompasses different story paths and thus different experiences. Secondly, while visiting the theme park area, a guest can experience the different scripted narratives dispersed by a design that offers space to roam freely and the experience of secondary storylines featured in specific rides. Finally, the absorbing components of the transmedia experience facilitate the occurrence of the alterbiography of self where a guest is placed in a position where he/she can interpret the events happening to him/her specifically.

Concerning the preparatory section of this transmedia experience, the most information can be uncovered through browsing the Forbidden Caves website. There, a guest needs to, as mentioned by Jenkins in a transmedia project, actively "hunt and gather" to be able to view all the articles.[133] This search is necessary since there is no home page that showcases all the articles. A guest needs to click through multiple articles to retrieve new information, which generates an alterbiography since the story is generated "by the individual player as she takes action in the game."[134] During the participant observation, I noticed that this search might result in different story paths and thus in different experiences. One possible story path a guest could follow may include visiting the articles on the Forbidden Caves website before visiting the ride in the theme park area. This route announces the purple lights and crystals, visible in the Forbidden Caves, indicate evil spirits infected

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[128] Steven Spielberg, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (USA: Paramount Pictures, 1984).

[129] David Yates, *The Legend of Tarzan* (USA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2016).

[130] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 115.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Tarnowetzki, "Environmental Storytelling and BioShock Infinite: Moving from Game Design to Game Studies," 19.

[133] Jenkins, "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections," para. 26.

[134] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 115.

by the crystals roam this area. Guests who have read the articles on the website know that information, and thus, they are more prepared for what will happen in the attraction than guests who did not read the article. Through browsing the transmedia constellation, clarification of the storyworld is offered to guests. Consequently, through the "hunting and gathering practices,"[135] an alterbiography can be generated.

Thereupon, while visiting, a guest enters the storyworld physically. Calleja notes, regarding games, that "whether or not players are interested in the scripted narrative, they will inevitably engage with it at least on the most rudimentary level."[136] Since the whole theme park area revolves around one storyworld, in contradiction to most theme parks where a storyworld could also be featured in one ride only, narrative cues that resemble the atmosphere in Khyonesia cannot be avoided. Calleja suggests a game could be structured as follows: a producer could "offer the choice to engage with the main storyline, roam in the game world freely, or engage in similarly sectioned secondary story lines."[137] Translated to the theme park area, concerning the available visiting components of the storyworld, a "space to roam freely" is offered.[138] Using dispersed narrative cues, which operate through environmental storytelling, guests are able to explore narrative aspects. This occurs through a "pull narrative," which, according to Calleja, happens when "the designers embed narrative elements in the world…and rely on the player to *pull* the narrative to them."[139] Since this requires and thus encourages active involvement, narrative involvement is facilitated. Thereupon, the other rides in the theme park area, such as Naga Bay, King Kong, and the Banana Battle, are secondary storylines that can be linked to the action-adventure genre. They do not offer information regarding the main storyline of how Jasper is following his grandfather's footsteps roaming the caves in Khyonesia. The theme park area sets the stage of the physical components of the transmedia experience where the audience can focus its attention on "the world in which the story takes place" instead of "the central storyline," which was favored a couple of years ago.[140]

However, the absorbing parts of the transmedia constellation which encompass the Mount Mara and Forbidden Caves attractions do revolve around this main storyline and offer guests the possibility to view the happenings more closely. This can be compared to the "alterbiography of self" as mentioned by Calleja to be occurring "in first-person games".[141] Here "players interpret the events happening in the game as happening to *them* specifically, rather than to an external character."[142] Through the technology that allows guests to experience imagery of the settings within close range an alterbiography of self may also be evoked within the context of a theme park area. During the participant observation I noticed that while traveling through the surroundings of the volcano Mount Mara I ducked for flying objects. I experienced the drive as if the events where happening to me, "rather than to an external character."[143] When I would not have felt this way, it wouldn't have been necessary to duck. Consequently while walking through The Forbidden Caves the guides

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[135] Jenkins, "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections," para. 26.
[136] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 121.
[137] Ibid., 122.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid., 123.
[140] Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation*, 8.
[141] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 126.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.

are treating you as if you belong to their tour group. Just as in a tour of for example a museum the guide explains what the group is visiting and points the guests in the right direction. This places the audience in the role of a visitor. Therefor the events that will occur can be considered as happening to the guests themselves. Thus an alterbiography of self is evoked within the absorbing components of the transmedia experience. Hence narrative involvement is facilitated through the design of the storyworld of Khyonesia.

Chapter 3

Conclusion

As mentioned before, Calleja argues that every case embodies a "combination of several dimensions of the player involvement model". Incorporation occurs when there is "an intensification of internalized involvement that blends a number of dimensions."[144] The previous chapter explained how the dimensions of shared, affective and narrative involvement are facilitated in the transmedia experience of the storyworld of Khyonesia. This conclusion will demonstrate how the design of the transmedia experience operates through the combination of these types of involvement that together facilitate incorporation. Incorporation is "the absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness, yielding a sense of habitation, which is supported by the systemically upheld embodiment of the player in a single location, as represented by the avatar."[145]

The preparatory components of the transmedia experience sketch the atmosphere and offer guests information about the storyworld. The Facebook page of Bobbejaanland, the website of Mount Mara, website of The Forbidden Caves and the Instagram account of Jasper Dubois facilitate incorporation as they first, evoke shared involvement by introducing the other guests and allow guests to become acquainted with Khyonesia through the eyes of the main character. Second, expedite affective involvement as they show digital imagery that offers guests an initial hook and look-in the genre that is present in the storyworld. Here imagination is encouraged which helps guests decide whether they find the storyworld appealing. Third, based on the information offered by the main character and their imagination guests can carry out "hunting and gathering practices,"[146] which allows the creation of an alterbiography as necessary for narrative involvement. Through the design of the transmedia experience a guest may encounter the storyworld of Khyonesia via different points of entry. The accessibility of the storyword gets extended. By embedding different media outlets where "each medium does what it does best,"[147] Bobbejaanland offers guests clarification of the inner logic of the storyworld. Repetition and recognition of these elements helps to take in, as Calleja mentioned in his definition of incorporation, the "virtual environment into consciousness."[148]

The previous paragraph explained how a guest might find entry when experiencing the preparatory phase of the transmedia experience. Additionally, a guest may find access through physical parts of the transmedia experience where he/she can walk through the area that represents Khyonesia. Here environmental storytelling can be recognized. Within the area, the scripted narratives, which facilitate narrative involvement, can be encountered. Through narrative cues dispersed via environmental storytelling, this media outlet (the theme park area) allows guests to engage with storyworld aspects that connect with the action-adventure genre. This occurs through a "pull narrative," which, according to Calleja, happens when "the designers embed

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[144] Ibid., 169.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Jenkins, "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections," para. 26.
[147] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, 95–96.
[148] Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, 169.

narrative elements in the world…and rely on the player to *pull* the narrative to them."[149] Consequently, in this area, the shared involvement that is facilitated modifies how a guest conceives of and interacts with the storyworld. Stories that are secondary to the leitmotiv story of Jasper's adventure can be experienced within several rides. Possible spectators of a guest's experience may influence how he/she behaves and cohabitation in the area makes the storyworld viable. While roaming the theme park area, with its possibilities to collect narrative cues and experience the storyworld with other guests, the imagery shown in preparatory components of the transmedia experience can be viewed more actively. This facilitates affective involvement since roaming creates more engagement than viewing. Bobbejaanland offers its guest a "space to roam freely".[150] While experiencing this space, the encounter "is supported by the systemically upheld embodiment of the player in a single location."[151] However, while Calleja explains that, within a game, incorporation is possible through representation "by the avatar,"[152] within the theme park area, a guest may physically be present and thus does not require representation by an avatar.

Within the theme park area, there are also absorbing components that offer entry to the storyworld of Khyonesia. The rides Mount Mara and the Forbidden Caves allow for close contact with Khyonesia as the rides place a visitor's body in the scene by implementing digital imagery of Khyonesia in the guest's direct surroundings. This allows guests to experience the atmosphere from a first-person perspective. Here, narrative involvement is facilitated since the technology used to place the guest within the digital version of the storyworld allows for the creation of an alterbiography of self. This occurs when "players interpret the events happening in the game as happening to *them* specifically, rather than to an external character."[153] Continuously affective involvement is facilitated since this first-person perspective allows guests to reminisce and remember encounters of other action-adventure-related media products. Additionally, the Forbidden Caves tour addresses the guests as inhabitants as they follow their guide through the tour. These inhabitants of the storyworld, represented by actors that fulfill the role of guides, place a guest in the role of a visitor in the cave tours and thus facilitate a shared context where shared involvement may occur. Here, incorporation is facilitated since this setting invites guests to feel as if they, themselves, are a visitor of the storyworld. Consequently, this may yield "a sense of habitation,"[154] which, according to Calleja, represents incorporation.

This research has demonstrated that a theme park may facilitate incorporation. Calleja suggests incorporation as substitute for the fuzzy terminology of the concepts of immersion and presence within the context of a video game.[155] This research has used his view on the process of absorption in a fictional storyworld as a critical tool to explore absorption in a different setting: the theme park area where the fictive world of Khyonesia can be explored. This storyworld is considered a complex transmedia experience where preparatory, for visiting available, and absorbing components together facilitate incorporation. The preparatory

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[149] Ibid., 123.

[150] Ibid., 122.

[151] Ibid., 169.

[152] Ibid., 169.

[153] Ibid., 126.

[154] Ibid., 169.

[155] Ibid., 5.

phase offers clarification of the inner logic of the storyworld and thus encourages "the absorption of a virtual environment into consciousness."[156] Visiting the theme park area allows guests to roam the area without being "represented by the avatar."[157] The absorbing components of the storyworld may yield "a sense of habitation"[158] since guests are addressed as storyworld inhabitants and experience the environment from a first-person perspective.

This research showed how a transmedia experience could facilitate incorporation into a fictional storyworld represented in a theme park area. The answer to the main research question should be considered as a starting point for further research. This research examined the specific case study of Adventure Valley in Bobbejaanland, and therefore, it cannot be generalized to different situations where a storyworld is dispersed via different media outlets in a transmedia experience. The analysis is my interpretation of the articulation of incorporation as substitutes for the concepts of immersion and presence within the storyworld of Khyonesia. Other researchers might interpret this transmedia constellation in a different way. With the use of a grounded theoretical framework, this research can be understood as a starting point as it raises questions about the coexistence of the concepts of incorporation and transmedia.

As stated, the research demonstrated in this thesis was performed using a case study. In further research, it would be of interest to investigate the extent to which incorporation can be recognized in a different storyworld based on a transmedia constellation with different components and a different focus than a theme park area. This shift in focus could provide further insights into how incorporation can be recognized within a transmedia experience. Additionally, it would be of interest to research how guests experience the possibilities for incorporation in the theme park area. Using a focus group and interviews with guests of Khyonesia, research could establish whether the suggested possibilities for incorporation are experienced to offer entry into Khyonesia.

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[156] Ibid., 169.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid.

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