

**Transmedia Storytelling in the Warcraft Universe:
the Role of Intermediality in Shaping the Warcraft Lore**

Eszter Barabas

M.Sc. in Interactive Digital Media

2020

Supervised by Dr. Mads Haahr

Abstract

This paper examines the popular franchise known as Warcraft, applying the theory of intermediality to the different mediums that contribute to it, analyzing each of their roles and how intermediality manifests across all platforms. The three established forms of intermediality, that of medial transposition, media combination and intermedial references are used, as well as the concept of transmedia storytelling, considered a fourth type. These categories are first introduced and defined, along with the vast network of media artifacts that contribute to the Warcraft lore. Each consecutive chapter focuses on one form of intermediality, applying it to a few representative works from the Warcraft franchise. The complete lists of these works, along with the categories of intermediality, forms of media and other relevant information are detailed in tables for a summarized understanding of each individual artifact that could not be analyzed in detail. The primary medium of video games is investigated along with its supporting mediums of literature, cinema and tabletop games from two major points of views. The first one is that of narrative progression, taking into consideration how each example utilizes its media-specific modalities to further the plot and expand the fictional universe. It was observed that most works complement each other rather than repeat the same content, thus contributing to the concept of worldbuilding. The second point of view that is applied is that of user identification and/or immersion, where applicable. Fans of the franchise interact differently with each form of media, being able to become part of the fictional world of Warcraft through different methods and characters. The artifacts that they choose to consume determines their knowledge, level of immersion and the sum of their experiences regarding the Warcraft universe. Further research can entail a survey among fans of the franchise to determine their preference and habits of using the various media standing at their disposal, and the roles they fulfill in the players' understanding of the Warcraft lore.