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Theme Park Queues as Diegetic Worlds: Using Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance as a Case Study for Core Design Elements

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THEME PARK QUEUES AS DIEGETIC WORLDS:
USING *STAR WARS*: RISE OF THE RESISTANCE AS A CASE STUDY FOR CORE
DESIGN ELEMENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to establish core design elements for use by theme park designers to complement the guidelines established by Ledbetter and his colleagues for theme parks. Building upon Rose Biggin's "strands of enquiry" for examining immersive theatre, the suggested core design elements for immersive theme park queues serve as guidance to craft queues where audiences can actively engage with the queue's storyworld and narrative. Implementation of the core design elements alongside the already established queue design guidelines should assist designers in crafting queues that minimize discomfort and maximize narrative immersion.

Theme parks offer location-based narrative landscapes, often contributing to transmedia storytelling across a wide variety of media, especially those based in film and television. In this capacity, "immersive lands" and their attractions serve as "diegetic worlds" where guests enter into a physical manifestation of fiction. These lands and attractions increasingly embrace forms of interactivity including digital and video game interfaces.

The queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance serves as a case study to examine contemporary queue design choices and further develop the design elements. Established as a canon theme park experience in a wider transmedia narrative, it also serves as a lens through which to see the core design elements in action along with forecasting future queue design considerations across a spectrum of scalability.

The twelve of us met in 2019, completely unaware of the roller coasters we would experience—both the literal and metaphorical—as trailblazers for an entirely new academic track to design future guest-favorite attractions. This thesis is dedicated to my eleven counterparts who were the first to join the University of Central Florida's themed experience program: Alex Marcello, Amy Avalos, Carson Luter, Danny Escoto, David Brescia, Duncan MacPherson, Lauren Littler, Lindsey Leffel, Matthew Moore, Nikki Sutterby, and Sidney Wolf.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Queues are an inherent and, arguably, unavoidable component of the theme park experience (Alexander et al. 875; Ledbetter et al. 27; E. Nelson 56; Younger 470). Queues can become long when demand for a particular ride or attraction is high, and long waits often draw ire and dissatisfaction from theme park visitors (Anton Clavé 353; Lewison 281; E. Nelson 50; Torres et al. 80). However, it is not the rides where visitors spend the majority of their time but instead the designed environments that rides inhabit (King and O'Boyle 7). Over time, queues have mimicked the themed landscapes outside their often-snakelike pathways, offering visitors immersion and entertainment within the physically realized stories of fiction and the exotic (Anton Clavé 27, 372–73; Torres et al. 80; Waysdorf and Reijnders 182; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 105). This practice, today, often primes visitors for the characters, narrative, and storyworld the ride or attraction offers (Lukas, *The Immersive Worlds Handbook* 226–27; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 75–76; Younger 474–75).

For some of the world's most popular parks, the queue experience continues to transform with the inclusion of paid access to priority queues, creating an oppositional relationship between guest satisfaction in standby queues and the value proposition of priority access (Alexander et al. 881). Yet, this problem begets an interesting creative opportunity. Already, themed queues introduce story elements to the audience (E. Nelson 52–53; Younger 475), immerse visitors within a built environment (Godwin, par. 1.4), and communicate a more linear experience difficult to achieve in large-scale themed landscapes (Rohde). When done successfully, themed queues generate a positive

reaction from guests, citing these experiences as pleasurable (E. Nelson 56; Waysdorf and Reijnders 182; Younger 471).

In December of 2019 at Disney's Hollywood Studios and January of 2020 at Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California, *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance premiered at the recently opened *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge themed land. The attraction's queue implements a wide selection of techniques—detailed environmental design, app-based gaming, immersive theatre, and motion simulation to name a few. Each of these elements were crammed into the queue experience in an effort to elevate storytelling, entertainment, and overall experience while waiting to board the attraction. As a themed land, *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge continues the trend of deeply immersive fictional worlds within theme parks (Waysdorf and Reijnders 174; Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 142). Due to its broad range of storytelling experiences, the queue provides a useful case study for key elements to craft engaging queue experiences for theme park and immersive attractions.

Queuing theory already addresses obstacles, negative responses, and positive affect for guests waiting in lines. Studies and results from this field formed the foundation for eight guidelines established by Jonathan L. Ledbetter and his colleagues for theme park designers and operators. When properly executed, the guidelines are meant to diminish the "negative impact" and increase comfort for waiting guests (22). These guidelines do not, however, provide insight into how designers and storytellers can engage and entertain guests. Designers, such as John Hench and Joe Rohde, have imparted tools, techniques, and concepts for theme park storytelling, and David Younger has authored a tome dedicated to design for themed spaces. Yet, none have laid out necessary creative elements for immersive queue design. Similar to attractions, no "formula" exists for a perfect queue experience (Younger 22). However, repeated patterns of narrative expression and technological implementation can provide foundational criteria for designers to consider for

theme park queues. Ultimately, the guidelines suggested by Ledbetter and his fellow researchers are in need of complementary creative tenets, which would provide designers the necessary toolset to craft satisfying queues that aspire to invite visitors into immersive worlds.

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance does not represent the capabilities and resources of most theme park operators. However, the queue's extensive use of storytelling techniques offers an ideal example from which to observe the suggested design elements. The elements, though, will be scalable, ensuring a dependable framework across a range of budgetary considerations.

Adjacent to theme parks, immersive theatre also offers an immersive experience often allowing guests a sense of freedom, displaying its narrative through its physical manifestation, and integrating elements of interactivity including gaming (Biggin 2). In her exploration of immersive theatre through the lens of productions by theatre company Punchdrunk, Rose Biggin identified three "strands of enquiry" which foster the "immersive experience" within audiences of these unique theatrical productions (48). Biggin extends an invitation to examine these precepts in other immersive mediums, which justly apply within the world of theme parks and particularly within immersive queue design (209).

Research Questions

Complementing the eight guidelines for a comfortable queue experience developed by Ledbetter and his co-authors, this thesis builds upon the insights of Biggin in fostering the immersive experience within a narrative space. From this foundation, core design elements are identified and offered so designers can craft a narrative-driven immersive queue experience.

In short, the ultimate research question is the following:

What criteria must theme park designers most consider when crafting an immersive queue experience?

Before detailing the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, a review of the current literature on design, storytelling, terminology, and techniques is necessary to ground the discussion. These topics will be addressed under the guidance of the following questions:

1. *What is unique about theme parks and their methods of storytelling?*

2. *What is meant by "immersion" in today's discussion of theme park storytelling?*

3. *What are the foundational considerations in story-based gaming and interactivity?*

4. *What developments have taken place within theme park queues thus far?*

The answers to these questions will provide the foundation for examining the narrative experience and design choices in the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. The queue experience will then provide a case study to identify and witness the core design elements, which are based upon Biggin's three foundations of immersive experience—environment, narrative, and interactivity—along with a proposed fourth: performance. Because of the reiterative nature of theme parks, it is possible that changes to the attraction may occur over time or a complete overhaul could transform the queue (Baker, "Summary of Exploring" 5). To maintain clarity in the discussion of the attraction's features, a detailed account of the queue experience is provided in Chapter Three.

Research Methods

This thesis employs two main methods of research: an analysis of established literature combined with on-site observation. On-site research was performed in a similar fashion as that of Rebecca Williams in her work for *Theme Park Fandom* and that of Chris Wright. Observation occurred at Disney's Hollywood Studios located within the Walt Disney World Resort between January 24 and May 11, 2022. References to visits prior to these dates are noted explicitly when referenced. During all observations, like Williams and Wright, I took on the role of "tourist" observing the environment and interacting with employees and fellow guests as a guest. At no time

during these trips was I engaged in empirical research of guests' behaviors (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 21). In my observations, general guest behaviors are mentioned from these trips that were incidental and are not meant to provide empirical evidence of typical guest behavior. Similar to Williams, ethical issues are minimal as no identifying information is given within this text nor was obtained or recorded during observation. Theme parks, while privately owned property, represent a public place insomuch as they function similarly to that of common spaces and publicly attended tourist attractions (21).

The Disney Bias in Theme Park Research

Unfortunately, this thesis continues the relative bias toward the analysis and discussion of theme park products produced by The Walt Disney Company (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 250). Admittedly, this analysis is not meant to assert a cultural dominance over theme park design by the company but is the result of several factors. There is validity to the statement that a large body of previous scholarly work and design discussion surrounds the Disney parks (250). Another factor for studying this particular experience includes the breadth of narrative outlets within the attraction's queue (i.e., *Star Wars*: Datapad, immersive theatre elements, reference books) and the close proximity for on-site observation. The core design elements presented at the conclusion of this thesis are intended for use by any design organization within the theme park and immersive experience industry, not just those related to Disney parks. Lastly, this thesis is not meant to cite Disney as the origin of any specific narrative method within *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. Instead, the attraction's inclusion of a variety of methods makes it ideal for this research despite not necessarily originating some of the explored concepts. This thesis also does not delve into the history or origin of each individual element as it does not directly contribute to the resulting proposal.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theme Parks as a Unique Entertainment Medium

Theme parks are an art form based on reiterative entertainment configurations. Because of this, scholars debate the first of its kind and its primary definition. While the following represents a brief exploration on the defining aspects and cultural relevance of theme parks, it provides context for the unique value and nature of theme parks and their significance as a narrative medium.

The attractions industry has not established a formal definition for theme parks nor how they specifically differ from their amusement park counterpart (King, "The Theme Park: Aspects of Experience" 2; King and O'Boyle 5; Milman 221). Despite this, several scholars have defined the term *theme park*, yet the proffered definitions have not been embraced by the industry as a whole nor by its leading representational bodies, such as the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) and the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA). Still, these delineations are worth exploring to differentiate the storytelling goals of theme park attractions including their queues.

In Browne & Browne's *The Guide to United States Popular Culture*, Margaret J. King defines theme parks as "a social artwork designed as a four-dimensional symbolic landscape to evoke impressions of places and times, real and imaginary" (837). This broad definition establishes three key aspects of theme parks that differ heavily from the more exposed, lightly decorated amusement parks: (1) theme parks are a creative work, (2) theme parks are a creation within built physical reality—or, at least, in media with three-dimensional immersion—paired with time, and (3) theme

parks depict specific places, whether fictional or real-world based. In the eyes of designers and Walt Disney Imagineering employees John Hench and Peggy Van Pelt, the "fourth dimensional" aspect of theme parks is integral in the telling of all stories, which always take place over time (68).

King has further elaborated on this definition throughout her greater body of work. For *Material Culture*, King differentiates theme parks as places of meaning built upon "cultural narratives" that convey their message in logical yet "multi-dimensional" methods. Amusement parks, however, focus almost solely upon the physical sensations offered to its audience, failing to provide coherent context or meaningful narratives (3). King insists that true theme parks play on the human experience of "mental submission to the power of a physical landscape and in its effect on the imagination" (6). They achieve this goal not just through the carnal sensations of rides like roller coasters but through "multimedia installations" that encapsulate a myriad of artistic and technological disciplines (Freitag 125; Younger 11). Examples of these disciplines include "architecture, public space design, landscaping, musical cueing, detailing, and the use of symbols, archetypes, and icons" (King, "The Theme Park: Aspects of Experience" 3). All of these elements contribute to the creation of retail locations, ride attractions, merchandise, and food and beverage products in order to convey the themes found within the park and its derivative elements (Geissler and Rucks 127). While some theme parks revolve around a single theme for their entire property, many parks contain multiple sections, each with their own distinct themes or "lands" (Geissler and Rucks 128; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 42). Theme parks uniquely and intentionally engage a broad spectrum of sensorial stimulation, including smell and taste within their design fabric (Grice 131; Godwin, par. 1.3; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 83).

Nearly a decade after her contribution to *Material Culture*, King and frequent collaborator Jamie O'Boyle further fleshed out previous definitions. Continuing to underscore the separation between the physical thrill of amusement parks from the environmental storytelling of theme parks,

King and O'Boyle go so far as to plainly state the "overall theme park experience … averages eight hours" (7). Logically, this number varies per visiting party, and some empirical studies have shown this length of time to be closer to 5 to 7 hours on average (Geissler and Rucks 128, 131). The general impression, though, is that the overall theme park experience tends to be a much longer duration of entertainment than theatre or film. Interestingly, rides constitute a small fraction of the overall experience (King and O'Boyle 7). This fact places an even greater importance upon the environmental storytelling and other offerings provided within the borders of a theme park. King and O'Boyle conclude that "the theme park is not ride-dependent, while rides are the raison d'être of the amusement park. A theme park without rides is still a theme park" (7). King claims that some parks popularly referred to as theme parks do not engage in the complex tasks necessary to create such landscapes and, instead, place veneers of theming upon their attractions to mask the amusement park experience ("The Disney Effect" 226). With the influence of detailed environmental storytelling affecting both theme park and amusement park design, the difference between theme park attractions and amusement park attractions increasingly depends upon the narrative storyworld developed for guests to either witness or join the "unfolding line of action" (A. Nelson 38).

King and O'Boyle, along with other contemporaries, heavily acknowledge the influence of visual media—namely film and television—on theme park environments (Anton Clavé 25–26, 160; Freitag; King and O'Boyle 17; A. Nelson). As film and television rarely depict reality itself (even in the genre of reality television), theme parks represent their aesthetic sensibility, specifically that of hyperreality (Hench and Van Pelt 56; King and O'Boyle 11–12). This integral distinction illustrates why theme park settings based upon real-world locations focus the guest experience upon a sensation rather than an exact replica of the depicted locale.

In his volume exploring the theme park industry including its development and globalization, Salvador Anton Clavé identifies twelve traits that are shared by most theme parks. However, these traits describe a broad variety of venues. Anton Clavé clarifies that his traits include locations that aren't theme parks in their entirety but might only "contain one or more themed areas" (28). His categorizations, though, center more upon the commercial and economic properties of these locales, where King and O'Boyle instead desire to explore the cultural significance of theme parks and their stories. Anton Clavé's focus is valid considering financial and operational success are a key aspect to the continual and perpetual existence of a theme park. Through Anton Clavé's perspective, the theme park's purpose is "entertainment and consumerism" (31) where its narrative serves as a basis for the consumption of goods and services within its boundaries along with the intangible unique experience it offers (Anton Clavé 34; Younger 7). The experience visitors purchase when attending a theme park may be what King refers to when she declares that Disney "made the invisible and abstract concrete" (King, "The Disney Effect" 225). In short, theme parks serve as a "recreational product" (Anton Clavé 318).

Addressing their symbolic landscapes, Anton Clavé argues that the symbols and references found in theme parks rely heavily upon a shared culture and history of its intended audience. Frequently, this shared culture includes the pervasive stories and symbols displayed within cinema, often created by the same media companies operating theme parks or licensing their properties to theme parks (159–60). Despite concentrating attention toward the commercialism and consumerism that makes theme parks possible, Anton Clavé agrees that "parks are cultural creations equivalent to a painting, a photograph or a film" (178). Aligning with the Browne & Browne definition, Anton Clavé details theme parks as places where guests visit a physical location and journey through the space over time, viewing its symbols and interpreting their meanings (178). He relates the journey through a theme park as experiencing film scenes through a "multidimensional" setting (17). Much

of the experience invites consumerism in its admittedly "corporate" landscape of "copyrighted urban environments," (Sorkin qtd. in Anton Clavé 178) but it does not discount the aesthetic experience and narrative crafted by designers for audiences to experience narrative and themes (Anton Clavé 24).

The theme park is a contentious object, made complex by its array of purposes as a profitmaking enterprise, a center of consumerism, a synergistic transmedia object, an object of mass entertainment, and a showcase of multiple artistic and creative disciplines that tell a story. Separating any single aspect creates a challenge and risk of ignoring its other ulterior aims. Still, this thesis focuses upon goals in creative design for the purpose of entertainment and narrative, specifically those presented in the queue of an attraction.

Helpful for the examination of these creative and narrative aspects of theme park attractions, Carissa Baker establishes six unique and defining attributes of theme parks that resulted from her thorough examination of theme park attractions, their narratives, and detailed inquiry in creative intent. She lists them as "*dimensionality*, *scale*, *communality*, *brevity*, a *combinatory* aspect, and a *reiterative* nature*" ("Summary of Exploring" 5). Dimensionality encapsulates the dynamic aspects of the physical landscape: ultimately their nature as a "living storyworld and setting" (5). Somewhat obvious but still unique to the art form is its sense of scale. Theme parks are a massive "stage" where its experiences can be consumed by its audience. These large locations are also crafted by and delivered to a large number of people. Baker notes brevity as an attribute of theme parks. This term initially appears to contradict the prior determination regarding length of visit by King and O'Boyle along with empirical research findings on typical visitation. But brevity here refers, in part, to the short nature of rides themselves, which King and O'Boyle also insist. Brevity also characterizes the narratives that theme park settings impart. These brief narratives are then displayed throughout the symbolic landscape in a fashion which continuously reaffirms the story and themes of its location to

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ensure its understanding by a wandering audience unbound by linear constraints (Rohde). As insisted by several scholars and commentators, theme parks are combinatory in their methods through their multimedia usage and reliance on a vast array of disciplines. Lastly and most uniquely, theme parks are not permanent in their nature. Attractions and entertainments are added, subtracted, and reinvented. Baker best describes this aspect of parks when she refers to theme parks as "living canvases" ("Summary of Exploring" 5). In some ways, theme parks share aspects of other art forms, like theatre and film, in their creation by an array of artist and designers to craft their experience, yet theme parks stand as uniquely separate in their end product and their overall storytelling experience.

<div align="center">Theme Parks as Location-Based Narrative</div>

Theme parks serve a multitude of purposes as commercial spaces, locales of consumerism, and places of entertainment. Often, from the designer's viewpoint, narrative and storytelling are the central task in creating theme parks. In an early investigation into the design intents of the creators of Disneyland, Charlie Haas spoke with designer John Hench who described the park "as a 'storyboarded' environment" (16). Hench and Van Pelt later clarified that designers at Disney sought to "transform a *space* into a *story place*," (69) utilizing "every aspect of the physical environment" from transition spaces to landscaping to convey and support the story (49). Other researchers perceive theme parks primarily as "location-based narrative" encouraging a sense of exploration (Eddy et al. 38) and engaging a wide array of visitors' senses (Godwin, par. 1.10). In fact, the focus of this case study examines theme park storytelling particularly within the queue space; therefore, discourse regarding theme park narrative and storytelling techniques will become a foundation for understanding and interpreting the experience of the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance.

Central to a theme park, quite obviously stated, is its theme or central story. From a macro perspective, designer Joe Rohde refers to theme as "the driving universal idea that each moment in

the story revolves around." In this definition, Rohde separates the theme (an idea) from the story (a narrative). However, the two are deeply connected as, according to Rohde, the narrative's purpose is to restate and continually present its deeper meaning which manifests as the theme. It is this theme-story connection that Rohde's predecessor refers to when discussing the ways in which theming connects to "a Disney story" through guests' sensorial experience. And the way in which that story manifests transcends naturalism or realism into that of hyperreality, or "realer than real" (Hench and Van Pelt 56). This intense "tightly edited, stylized" expression gives theme parks their unique narrative attribute, manifesting as symbol-filled terrains instead of pure replicas or "reconstructions" (King and O'Boyle 12).

The storytelling within theme parks goes beyond the visual (Grice 131). Every conceivable element contributes to the emotional and narrative experience within a theme park. Non-diegetic elements found within these landscapes are viewed as "mistakes" or "contradictions" (Hench and Van Pelt 78; Younger 12). These elements, however, apply beyond plot and story. Williams rightfully attests that a difference exists between worldbuilding—the construction of a fictional world and its rules—and storytelling, which is the expression of a coherent narrative. Examining Disney's Haunted Mansion attraction (located in Walt Disney World Resort's Magic Kingdom Park and California's Disneyland Park in similar iterations), Williams notes that, apart from the guest journey to visit a haunted house filled with ghosts, the story of Haunted Mansion as experienced by guests remains incredibly nondescript with little to no explicit backstory for its characters (*Theme Park Fandom* 122). Over time, guests and producers alike have sought to expand or detail the story through clues, conjectures, and adaptation, complicated by designers who identify conflicts from their original intentions (121). For the purposes of this case study, storytelling refers not to the coherency of the narrative being told but instead to the story- and storyworld-related elements

unfolding during a guest's journey through the queue. As related later, all diegetic and extra-diagetic elements in a queue can be connected to an attraction's story, worldbuilding, or narrative.

Similar to its theme, the stories and subjects of theme parks require broad appeal and recognition (Lillestol et al. 232). In the example of Haunted Mansion, Disney Imagineers created an original story, relying upon the collective American perception of ghosts, haunted houses, horror themes, and humor. In part, this need for broad appeal and audience connection falls in line with the contemporary aim for intellectual property to be far-reaching franchises that provide a plethora of product and experience options (Michael Wolf 227). To do this, designers select recognizable locales within reality, such as major worldwide cities or landmarks, or within the world of fiction, namely movies (Godwin, par. 1.10). Film originally influenced the creation of theme parks as it is often noted that filmmakers conceived the arguable prototypical modern theme park: Disneyland (Freitag 125; Younger 12). To this day, this influence continues in the development of theme parks, themed lands, and stories within their borders. From a contemporary perspective, large box office success can stimulate the creation of a theme park, its requisite land, or attraction (Freitag 127). Recent examples include *Avatar* (Pandora – The World of Avatar in Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park), *Star Wars* (*Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge in Disney's Hollywood Studios and California's Disneyland Park), and the Marvel Cinematic Universe (Avengers Campus in Disney California Adventure Park and Paris's Walt Disney Studios Park, Stark Expo in Hong Kong Disneyland, and Guardians of the Galaxy: Cosmic Rewind in EPCOT). Guest familiarity with beloved and recognized intellectual property, whether film-based or otherwise, creates an environment ripe for guest satisfaction. Younger poses three pillars of design: "aspirational design," "popular design," and "medium design" (88). Popular design relieves designers and operators from introducing an entirely new storyworld to their guests. Instead, guests enter the space with an already established affection for the property's characters or world. Designers and producers rely upon the proven mass appeal of

the characters and narrative for newcomers to discover. Additionally, an incredibly enticing

intellectual property satisfies aspirational design, where guests also crave certain experiences (88–89).

However, theme parks' necessity for mass appeal limits the number of shared aspirations by its large

audience, often resulting in repeated sensations, simulations, and tropes (Anton Clavé 195; Younger

89).

Theme Parks as Objects of Transmedia Storytelling

Often incorporating established intellectual property, theme parks and their attractions

almost always exhibit transmediality, connecting to their source material while also sometimes

inspiring other canonical or noncanonical adaptations of their stories and themes. By allowing the

story, characters, and narratives of the themed land to overflow into adjacent media, *Star Wars*:

Galaxy's Edge places itself in no uncertain terms within the world of transmedia storytelling. "A

transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive

and valuable contribution to the whole" (Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* 95–96). Therefore,

transmediality, or transmedia storytelling, refers to the process by which that narrative is dispersed,

ideally through the most appropriate medium to tell that story (Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* 96 and

"The Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: Seven Principles"; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 107). Henry

Jenkins credits theme parks as a point of origin for transmedia storytelling where stories from the

screen came to life in a physical environment (Lukas, *The Immersive Worlds Handbook* 246). Even

today, theme parks remain an integral location for synergistic storytelling "allowing visitors to

inhabit the hyperdiegesis of narrative worlds" (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 103). In these location-

based transmedia spaces, guests can explore the physical setting of a place formerly restricted to the

screen or page and can actively interact with characters (51).

The formation and authorship of these transmedia narratives differs quite heavily. Crafting every attraction and its related narrative media (or vice versa) to fit within the same "canon" may not always be the right choice (Jenkins, "The Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: Seven Principles"). Regarding Disney's Haunted Mansion, many comics, books, and games have spun-off, reference, or were inspired by the original attraction, including an upcoming theatrical film in 2023—the second feature film to be inspired by the attraction (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 51). Marvel attractions in the Disney parks all exist outside the later stories of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Instead, they occupy a part of the multiverse where events from the films never happened, allowing guests to see and interact with characters who no longer are alive within the film's narrative (Bonomolo; Lussier; Radulovic). *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge, and its encompassing attractions and related *Star Wars*: Galactic Starcruiser experience, entail a different contribution within its transmedia library. When opened, it entered the official canon of Disney's *Star Wars*, depicting a specific time within the story (Plante). As of now, multiple media now expand and support the storywold of the land, including novels, comics, children's books, VR experiences, music, reference materials, and web series episodes. However, the specific experiences and narratives within *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge unfold exclusively within the themed land itself without alternatives in other media.

The interpretive openness and lack of coherence presented by Haunted Mansion has been stomped out by the creators and producers of *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge to ensure dominance over the narrative presented through intentional planning (Godwin, par. 3.6; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 107–08). Disney acts as "mothership" of the themed land, gating and controlling the storytelling through systematic means where contributions by guests can either by negated by its characters and employees or clarified by supplemental narrative texts and disseminated to fans (Scott 46). Recently, though, this tight authorial control has come into question as characters outside the timeline of *Star*

Wars: Galaxy's Edge have been integrated into California's rendition of the themed land. Still, Disney maintains that:

> While we as visitors may be able to experience different stories throughout *Star Wars* history, the characters on Batuu can not. They will remain in their specific story and timeline and won't intersect with other characters or stories that would not be appropriate for them. (Trowbridge, "New *Star Wars* Characters")

This further complicates the guest experience of the land's spaces, narratives, and characters. Notably, both *Star Wars* Launch Bay locations, that in California and in Florida, were temporarily closed at the time of the announcement.

This themed land offering of the *Star Wars* canon presumably stems from an audience desire to tangibly explore the fictional universe, diving into the hyperdiegetic elements of its fiction (Godwin, par. 2.2). Because of the unique physical art form of theme parks, audiences are able to experience *Star Wars* in a unique way that differs from the more presentational, distant medium of film and the more ephemeral nature of novels and comic books.

"Immersion" in the Context of Themed Entertainment Design and Consumption

Within themed entertainment, designers often describe theme parks and their attractions as "immersive" (Younger 86). However, the concept of immersion is often disputed, generating contention around its definition across a spectrum of industries from tourism to media studies (Biggin; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 45). Still, the meaning of "immersion" in the context of themed entertainment assists with how to view "immersive themed lands" based upon popular fiction, such as *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge or Universal Parks & Resorts' The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Predating theme parks, world's fairs often constructed locations and experiences that exemplified "leisure in one unified space" to delight its visitors (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Got Its Power" 396). Early theme park designers sought to "encourage guests to accept their experience

in the parks as real in the same way that a filmmaker asks the audience to accept the story of a film as real" (Hench and Van Pelt 124). While the term *real* is often used to describe immersive experiences, designers and researchers place a heavy emphasis upon a willingness of the guest to embrace the presented narratives and built physical terrains. First and foremost, theme park visitors are not "fooled" into believing they have truly entered the actual worlds presented; in fact, they are privy to the artificiality of what they experience (Bell qtd. in Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 245; Godwin, par. 5.2; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 137; Younger 86). Pushing this concept to its extreme, Scott A. Lukas argues that complete and total immersion, especially existentially, is impossible as visitors are unable to "become one with that space" ("Questioning 'Immersion'" 117). How, then, is this "reality" experienced by guests? Initially attributed to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, researchers indicate that guests engage their "suspension of disbelief" when they enter into a theme park space, similar to how they would a film story (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 191; Younger 86). Reijnders further clarifies that guests engage their "belief in the imaginary," setting aside critical awareness yet still potentially sensitive to inexcusable inaccuracies (241). Rose Biggin draws heavily upon the concept of conceptual blending, borrowed from cognitive psychology and applied to theatre audiences. Conceptual blending helps to describe the "inherent doubleness" that occurs in presented fiction (30). This is how audiences empathize with a fictional character while fully knowing that they are portrayed by an actor. This concept manifests just as readily within theme parks as it does with film and theatre. Suspension of disbelief and employing imagination are pivotal to the concept of guest immersion (Godwin, par. 1.9).

Yet this "suspension" is not a binary adoption by guests or, as Lukas refers to it, "some sort of on-off switch" ("Questioning 'Immersion'" 120). Lukas challenges researchers and designers to avoid simplistic perspectives of immersion, stating that visitors are not always "fully engaged in every space" or may choose to not be engaged at all (116–17, 120). Pivotal to Biggin's exploration of

the "immersive experience" within immersive theatre, she determines the experience of audience members "is not a felt/not-felt binary, but exists as a series of graded states" (47). Speaking in terms of cultural anthropology and tourism, immersion and authenticity represent contested terms that lack unambiguous definition. They almost always involve subjective experiences lacking any kind of universal form (Chhabra; Lukas, "Questioning 'Immersion'" 117, 120; Reisinger and Steiner 80–81).

Mark Wolf indicates that "immersion" can define three separate experiences. The first is physical, where guests are literally surrounded by an experience. He directly credits theme park rides as accomplishing this type of immersion. In sensual immersion, the person may not have their entire body immersed but one or more senses engaged, such as in virtual reality. Lastly, conceptual immersion refers to the activation of the imagination while engaging with a text (Mark Wolf 48). While the latter form specifically references books and other fictional written texts, the theme park visitor is no less engaging with their imagination while experiencing the "text," (in this case, the built environment) and, thereby, enter a conceptually immersive state. In fact, it could be argued that in its physical immersion theme parks have the ability to achieve all three experiences of immersion. However, Wolf rightly acknowledges that the physical elements within a theme park, or its "material culture," are key to its accomplishment of its immersive goals (Lukas, *The Immersive Worlds Handbook* 208 and "Questioning 'Immersion'" 117). But while all theme parks are a built environment, not all theme parks intend to envelop guests within an immersive world of fiction (Younger 86). Younger demonstrates this assertion by underscoring the nonfictional and educational attractions of EPCOT or non-diegetic shows like the Indiana Jones Epic Stunt Spectacular at Disney's Hollywood Studios (86). On the other hand, Lukas argues that immersion "need not imply simply telling a story or creating a fictive world" ("Questioning 'Immersion'" 121) and states that immersion is "context dependent" (117). Ultimately, he posits that immersion, especially in themed spaces, means placing

visitors in a space with a given context, often symbolically marked. He argues that such spaces can include a cruise or even a library (115).

<p style="text-align:center">The Built Themed Environment as Diegetic World</p>

If *immersion* is an unhelpful term with which to frame this exploration of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, then in what context should this entertainment be viewed? While it is Lukas who questions the general concept of immersion, he also recognizes that "narratives or forms of storytelling" constitute the foundation for visitor immersion alongside the material culture, performances, technology, and media found in theme parks and their attractions ("Questioning 'Immersion'" 115). These symbolic manifestations rooted within narrative context lend coherency to the themed land and its attractions, contributing to both the physical and conceptual experiences of immersion (Lukas, "Introduction" 3). It is this differential of storytelling and narrative context that Younger refers to when labeling Universal Parks & Resorts' The Wizarding World of Harry Potter as an immersive experience while marking The Making of Harry Potter experience at London's Warner Bros. Studio Tour as not an immersive experience (86). It is the "representation of a fictional world" accomplished by The Wizarding World of Harry Potter that makes the difference (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 47). What generates this connection to theme parks' fictional landscape is the storyworld, which Lancaster defines as "places people can visit and live in for a time" (qtd. in Godwin, par. 1.2). Examining fan experiences of texts, Jenkins claims what initiates immersion is the entrance into "a world of story" ("Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: The Remaining Four"). This is why Younger emphasizes story as the differential element for theme parks (83). And it is detailed storytelling that continues to be a trend within the industry.

In their exploration of fan experiences in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Abby Waysdorf and Stijn Reijnders note the themed land "exemplifies a push in the industry towards

more immersive theming around narrative worlds" extending "into full, complete environments…into a favourite text" (174). In a word, it is the experience of diegesis within theme parks that become the factor by which "immersion" is achieved. Fans continue to "demand a more coherent narrative" from attractions present and past (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 103). *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge follows in the footsteps of recent additions like The Wizarding World of Harry Potter to increase "immersion" namely through its expression of diegesis within the physical space (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 142).

In terms of theme park storytelling, Younger delineates diegesis—"the method of identifying whether an element is inside or outside the story the designer is presenting"—into three levels (84). The first, *diegetic*, refers to any element, whether written, physically built, or performed, that is within the storyworld of the attraction. Second, the *extra-diegetic* includes designed elements that do not exist within the storyworld but aid in visitor experience. Music that is played within an attraction's queue, if not included as part of its diegesis, would be considered extra-diagetic. Lastly, the *non-diegetic* encapsulates all elements that are not part of the story. As stated before, anything that is non-diegetic in nature can detract from the guest experience, serving as a stark reminder of the artificiality of the experience or indicating a lack of care in the creation of the experience (85).

Theme parks are trending in crafting more complete diegetic worlds, yet the ultimate goal is not necessarily complete diegesis. Younger argues that complete diegesis without extra-diegetic elements detracts from the theme park's hyperreal aesthetic, ultimately sacrificing its entertainment value. He also acknowledges that some aspects of non-diegetic elements are unavoidable, but as shown in *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, even these elements can be integrated within the storyworld appropriately (Younger 85).

The Guest's Role within Diegetic Worlds

As theme parks continually craft diegetic worlds, the role of guests has also transformed over time. Early attractions inspired by the art of film offered passive entertainment for the guest, requiring no action nor interactivity from the audience. These less active experiences contributed to the perceptions of guests as passive with some observers going so deep as to label visitors as "automata" or mindless consumers (Baker, "Creative Choices," par. 6.1; Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 183–84 and "Questioning 'Immersion'" 115). Over time, though, this notion has been challenged and generally invalidated by fan studies and cultural anthropology by acknowledging guests' acceptance of the consumerism, commercialism, and escapist entertainment provided by theme parks and location-based entertainment (Lukas, "Questioning 'Immersion'" 121, 122n8).

In early theme park development, guest choice was considered within design but often from a more macro perspective, such as what themed land to travel to or what attraction to enjoy (Hench and Van Pelt 37). Over time, interactivity has increased, allowing guests to directly affect the attraction through play, participation, and, in some cases, roleplay (Baker, "Creative Choices," par. 1.2 and "Summary of Exploring" 2). In today's theme park designs, interactivity and roleplay are desired by guests. A contributor to this desire includes visitors' familiarity with gaming and interactive media along with encouraging exploration and depth in immersion (Baker, "Creative Choices," pars. 1.2, 6.1; Godwin, par. 3.2). In an examination of interactivity within The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Victoria Godwin views the Interactive Wands experience as a method to further the "suspension of disbelief" by giving visitors the power to enact actions only available within the fiction (pars. 2.7, 3.2). In her examination of the now-extinct Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom experience at Magic Kingdom Park, Baker notes that guests possess a "greater role in the fantasy story" by participating in the plot and helping heroes defeat villains ("Creative Choices," par.

3.6). While constraints and narrative inconsistencies exist within both of these examples, they exemplify the willingness and enthusiasm of guests to actively participate and interact within the themed environments they occupy. These notions support Hench and Van Pelt's assertion that theme parks represent a *story place* (69), providing a "play space…clearly marked as separate and distinct from everyday routine" (65).

Elements of Interactivity and Gaming

One of *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge's most interesting contributions is the *Star Wars*: Datapad experience. Integrated into the Play Disney Parks mobile app, the experience extends the stories within the themed land and its attractions through game-like challenges and digital item collecting throughout the physical space. This app is integral to *Star Wars*: Galactic Starcruiser, the multiday "vacation experience" that complements the story of *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge with accommodations and exclusive immersive theatre-style storytelling (Palicki). Often, smartphones and personal devices have been conceived as disruptive to the immersive nature of theme parks (Eddy et al. 40). However, the presence of technological play derives from the pervasive nature of smartphones and the instant possibility of digital play they bring to any physical location (37).

For the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, a "game" called Resistance Encampment allows those within the queue (or even outside the queue) to side either with the Resistance or the First Order to actively engage with characters and discover the backstory of the attraction. Interactivity and game mechanics differ between the two versions, along with location dependency. Each version's gameplay and plot is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. However, the idea of game and narrative is one worth exploring, even in the most general sense, to understand where "game" ends and "narrative" begins.

As an early work diving into ludology, game studies topics, and academic discourse on video games, *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game* brought diverse perspectives together to discuss what qualifies as a game, where narrative storytelling lies within game studies, and what "requirements" ensure a video game is "immersive." Stories and games produce quite a bit of debate among commentators (Biggin 158). Espen Aarseth underscores that there are two camps of thought: one side arguing that games are essentially a medium to tell stories while another side believes that narratives and games are accomplishing opposing tasks (45). Rightfully, Aarseth acknowledges that games are diverse in their gameplay and are combinative in their nature (47). Yet, some contributors agree that games tend to be overwhelmed with narrative by designers and hyperfocused on by academics (Aarseth 49; Eskelinen 36; Montfort 310). Aarseth later labels "narrative with game elements" as a form of digital literature (53). On the opposite end of this spectrum, Janet Murray, whose contributions within game studies focuses heavily upon their use as a narrative medium, suggests that games always tell a story, even purely puzzle-based ones such as *Tetris* (2). From this assertion the concept of game-story—or story-game, depending on the contributor—emerges in which narratives drive gameplay and gameplay unravels story (Montfort 312; Murray 2). Yet as alluded by Aarseth and Eskelinen, these elements are not always the same but often drive each other. For example, the puzzle section of a narrative game usually is rewarded with a story element, driving the player to unravel the story but not always conflating the two on top of one another.

Eric Zimmerman best categorizes how game-stories are built through the intermixing of four concepts: narrative, interactivity, play, and games (155). From J. Harris Miller's "Narrative" in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, Zimmerman uses a three-part definition, adopting an inclusive yet clear definition of a narrative experience:

> 1. A narrative has an initial state, a change in that state, and insight brought about by that change. You might call this process the "events" of a narrative.

2. A narrative is not merely a series of events, but a personification of events through a medium such as language. This component of the definition references the representational aspect of narrative.

3. And last, this representation is constituted by patterning and repetition. This is true for every level of a narrative, whether it is the material form of the narrative itself or its conceptual thematics. (156–57)

These three definitions are broad yet do well to elucidate the breadth of narrative experiences found across a wide assortment of media. There is no single requirement for narrative, whether it be dialogue or cinematic cutscenes. As long as the parameters above are intentionally designed within the experience, we can logically expect a narrative to be present, whether explicit or implicit.

In the same vein, Zimmerman and colleague Katie Salen Tekinbaş then craft four modes of interactivity, not distinctly separate but "overlapping flavors" that commonly occur in interactive media (Zimmerman 158). The modes are listed as such:

Mode 1: Cognitive interactivity; or interpretive participation
Mode 2: Functional interactivity; or utilitarian participation
Mode 3: Explicit interactivity; or participation with designed choices and procedures
Mode 4: Beyond-the-object interactivity; or cultural participation (Salen and Zimmerman qtd. in Biggin 74)

Zimmerman acknowledges that there is no single mode of interactivity that legitimizes an interactive experience but instead highlights that interactivity can occur in multiple methods. This differs from some of the discourse within *First Person*, especially around the goals of cyberdrama and interactive fiction where input ideally should resemble natural speech (Mateas 28; Montfort 313, 316). Ultimately, interactivity and inputs vary between games, including those that are narrative driven.

For play, Zimmerman builds upon three expanding circles of the term *play* to build the following definition: "Play is the free space of movement within a more rigid structure. Play exists both because of and also despite the more rigid structures of a system" (159). Games such as

checkers, *Tetris*, or narrative-based video games fall within "Category 1: Game Play, or the Formal Play of Game." Interestingly, theme parks as environments of play often contain the other two categories of play: "Category 2: Ludic Activities, or Informal Play" and "Category 3: Being Playful, or Being in a Play State of Mind" (159). He goes on to list games as a formalized structure bound by rules where play occurs. It is the formalized rules bounding players to certain actions that creates the status of "game" (161). In conclusion of this breakdown, narrative serves as a framing structure for game experiences, one which became an incredibly popular structure within the video game market (163).

Addressing the generic term of *game* for any and all interactive media, Stuart Moulthrop notes that "games do seem to offer a useful way of thinking about such media" (64). This observation by Moulthrop aligns with the modes of interactivity listed by Zimmerman, proving that interactivity can be a more open concept in which to engage players. Zimmerman echoes the response by J. Yellowlees Douglas that the discourse surrounding narratives in games and "game-stories" is more about genre than games in general (36–37).

It is this acknowledgement that some games are deeply oriented around narrative that Jenkins bases his thoughts regarding game design as narrative architecture. Jenkins agrees that not every game is a story or narrative, but he also acknowledges that games are a unique medium for storytelling ("Game Design" 119–20). He connects the environmental storytelling methods of theme parks with that of games, where the spatial environment communicates a storyworld for players to explore (122–23). While much of Jenkins's contributions center around the three-dimensional narrative video game, he raises several key points regarding gameplay, narrative, and player-designer relationships.

Jenkins begins by rightfully placing franchise-related games within their transmedia context. Specifically, he addresses a critique by Jesper Juul regarding the narrative role of *Star Wars* games.

According to Juul, the story of *Star Wars* cannot be gleaned in a game based upon the film. Jenkins argues that games uniquely build on the world and stories of their associated films and media for players to explore the storyworld in a playful context ("Game Design" 124). He notes that critics often discuss the tension between the narrative "rails" of a game versus the promised freedom of open gameplay, but this issue is not exclusive to the medium of gaming (125). In immersive theatre, the proposed "freedom" offered by the medium can prove to be a cause for anxiety and tension for audience members attempting to understand the wider narrative (Biggin 120). In fact, this issue arises within the world of theme parks, especially those allowing guests the freedom to interact and roleplay alongside the controlled narrative worlds within a park's borders.

Considering the contributions above, Resistance Encampment provides players with an experience where they can interact with *Star Wars* characters via prescribed text responses, solve simple puzzles, and uncover the narrative while moving the plot forward. This experience provides low agency and highly structured interactivity, yet it still qualifies as a game as puzzles provide a win state, rewarding players with collectible digital items. Players are also able to achieve a final win state where they experience a finale to the respective version's narrative. There is room for "play," namely in discovering characters' reactions to certain responses. This game, though, lies low upon its ability to challenge players, provide them agency, and borders heavily into a modern form of digital literature or interactive fiction.

In general, locative and augmented games offer guests another opportunity for positive experiences, especially in relationship to beloved intellectual property (Eddy et al. 38). While Resistance Encampment does qualify as a game, it is more important to view games as just one form of interactivity within the context of theme park storytelling. Interactive play can occur within many different forms, many of which existed in theme parks long before the opening of *Star Wars*: Rise of

the Resistance. The gameplay offered by Resistance Encampment and *Star Wars*: Datapad represents an embrace of technology-based interactivity.

Queues

As this thesis specifically explores the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, the examination of queues' purpose, effect upon guests, and design is imperative. As of now, a heavy amount of literature focuses upon queues' negative and positive stimulation of guests. Often, this literature crafts solutions for designers through a logistical lens. These tools are limited, as they don't address the primary objective of theme parks, especially those that encompass diegetic worlds: storytelling. It is helpful to review the past innovations and suggested design solutions for guest comfort so that the core design elements complement and expand on these suggestions.

Due to the physical limitations of theme park locations and the maximization desired for economic and service productivity, queues are a necessity to ensure a constant supply of people board a ride or occupy an offered attraction (Alexander et al. 875). In addition, queues also amass guests who might otherwise crowd the park's walkways and public spaces, allowing higher attendance inside the park (E. Nelson 56). Despite attempts by theme park operators to ensure a consistent audience for their attractions, queues have been surveyed as problematic to the guest experience, often hindering satisfaction due to visitors' distaste for waiting (Alexander et al. 875; Ledbetter et al. 22; E. Nelson 50; Torres et al. 80; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 75; Younger 470).

To combat dissatisfaction, theme park designers have developed methods to hinder negative experiences within queues. Switchback queues were an early innovation to condense the space guests occupied while waiting and disguise its length through illusion (King, "The Disney Effect" 224–25; E. Nelson 49). Switchbacks involve a divided walkway that snakes back and forth in close proximity, often done in a fashion that can be difficult for guests to determine which direction the

queue is traveling. In their early implementation in Anaheim's Disneyland Park, Imagineers viewed this method as not only spatially efficient, but a delight for guests who would socialize while waiting, producing a "friendly environment" (Hench and Van Pelt 32). Other implementations included the addition of shade and the breaking up of a longer queue into multiple smaller rooms and areas (Hench and Van Pelt 32; E. Nelson 50). As part of achieving high rates of guest satisfaction, operators learned to manage expectations via "under-promise and over-deliver" (Geissler and Rucks 137). This generated the practice of posting wait times outside attractions and overestimating the time so as to satisfy guests with a shorter wait (129).

Yet the unadorned switchback queue did little to entertain guests while they waited. Designers, at least in the case of Disneyland, saw that the environmental storytelling found outside the attractions needed to "spread to every inch" to satisfy their guests' desires (Anton Clavé 27; E. Nelson 50). Emily Nelson surveys the history of the queue at Disneyland Park, noting that Imagineers discovered that satisfaction grew according to how long guests were entertained. What was dubbed as the "themed queue" grew in popularity during the 1960s, pairing the design of the waiting area with that of the attraction. This grew into extending the necessary storytelling of the attraction into the queue. Eventually, the settings and iconography presented in the queue served a dual purpose: it entertained those waiting, distracting them from the passing time, while also informing them of the characters, plot, and settings of the storyworld they were entering (E. Nelson 52–53). The separate rooms used to break up the queue became ideal for staging sets, unraveling in a linear fashion and steeping guests within the storyworld of the attraction (Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 75–76). An eventual addition to the queue experience included the congregation of guests into a holding space where a short spiel would be given, introducing the main ideas of the attraction prior to boarding the attraction. These theatre spaces, sometimes referred to as "briefing rooms," represented the preshow (E. Nelson 51–52). Queues then began to transform into narrative spaces,

broken up into logical, story-driven pieces that allowed guests to uncover more of the story, drive repeat visitation, and invite ideas of roleplay.

While waiting in lines still has a strong relation to guest satisfaction (or lack thereof), theme park queues have become far more entertaining than past drab designs (E. Nelson 55). Recent examples showcase how the queue itself becomes its own offering. In The Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Hogsmeade at Universal's Islands of Adventure, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey allows guests to tour Hogwarts Castle, where they can visit familiar scenes from the films, such as Dumbledore's Office and the Gryffindor Common Room. They also can see familiar characters including Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, and Professor Dumbledore. Just before guests board the ride, they also find the Sorting Hat, brought to life by the "magic" of animatronics. The experience of this queue became such a popular favorite by fans and visitors that guests often tour the queue without boarding the attraction, treating the queue experience as an attraction itself (Godwin, par. 3.5; Waysdorf and Reijnders 182). Figures and techniques typically associated with the main attraction have begun to be integrated within the queue, ensuring visitors are engaged, entertained, and immersed within the queue experience.

Even with these queue design innovations, issues around waiting in theme parks continue to affect the guest experience today. Priority queues alone present a challenge to the waiting experience in theme parks. Matthew Alexander and his colleagues list priority queues as a point of frustration by those waiting in standby queues (878). They also underscore the opposing relationship between wait times of standby and priority queues: the longer the wait time in the main queue, the more value perceived in the priority queue (881). Many major theme parks offer a paid priority queue product. Examples include Universal Parks & Resorts' Universal Express, Six Flags' THE FLASH Pass, and recently Disney has transformed their free FastPass+ service into a paid product through their Genie+ and Individual Lightning Lane services. These theme park operators now have to contend

with ensuring the paid product maintains or increases in value in the eyes of its visitors while still

ensuring an overall satisfying experience for guests waiting in the standby queues, which now may

constitute a longer experience.

Queuing theory investigates logistical concerns with waiting. However, the location-based

nature and entertainment factor of theme parks make them unique. In fact, as previously stated,

queues are a necessity for a multitude of reasons including to ensure a consistent flow of riders, to

amass visitors to allow greater overall park attendance, and, a somewhat more recent development,

to encourage the use of priority queues as an income generator. All this must be achieved while still

ensuring visitors have a sufficient and satisfying amount of entertainment.

Ledbetter and his collaborators constructed guidelines for queues based upon solutions and

suggestions generated by researchers in the field of queueing theory. Ledbetter and his coauthors

desired to establish a set of practices for designers and operators to minimize negative guest

experiences and maximize guest satisfaction and comfort. The eight guidelines they developed are

the following:

> Guideline 1: A queued design needs to foster engagement.
> Guideline 2: The queue environment should maintain the guest's level of interest in the attraction.
> Guideline 3: Queued environments should support positive affect.
> Guideline 4: Comfort should not be overlooked in queue lines.
> Guideline 5: Visually separate inequitable wait queues.
> Guideline 6: Line layout should facilitate interpersonal interaction.
> Guideline 7: Guests should be adequately informed about the wait duration.
> Guideline 8: Line design should encourage guests' feeling of consistent progression toward the attraction. (Ledbetter et al. 23–24)

Solutions, like the themed multi-room switchback queue, have been attempts to satisfy

multiple guidelines—in this case, Guidelines 1, 2, 3, and 6. These guidelines provide designers with

benchmarks to ensure the comfort and satisfaction of guests, but these are not creative design

guidelines for building an engaging diegetic world. The core design elements explored through this

case study and suggested by this thesis hope to complement these guidelines, providing designers

with a complete toolset to craft queues not only built for the comfort and satisfaction of guests but to engage them through the queue's storyworld.

CHAPTER THREE: THE QUEUE EXPERIENCE OF *STAR WARS*: RISE OF THE RESISTANCE

Star Wars in Disney Parks

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge does not mark the first iteration of *Star Wars* attractions within the Disney theme parks. The history of *Star Wars* attractions reflects the industry-wide transformation from passive experiences to active participation with beloved franchises. After working on *Captain EO*, George Lucas collaborated with Disney to open Star Tours in California's Disneyland Park in 1987 (Freitag 128). The motion simulator attraction eventually made its way to Tokyo Disneyland and Disney-MGM Studios (now Disney's Hollywood Studios) in 1989 and to Disneyland Park in Paris, France, in 1992 (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 139). The attraction was a standalone *Star Wars* experience placed within the context of Tomorrowland, as is the case for Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California, and Tokyo, Japan. Paris's Discoveryland, a Jules Verne-inspired twist upon the Tomorrowland concept, was home to its iteration of Star Tours. Within Disney-MGM Studios, Star Tours fit within the movie-based concept of its attractions, lying at the furthest reaches of the centrally located Echo Lake section and bordering the park's former Streets of America. The attraction's Florida iteration presented a duplicitous "story" between its outdoor queue and its indoor sections. The outside purposefully revealed its artificiality, giving the illusion of a film set with "open façade rears" (Younger 87). Once inside, the story disregarded the artifice to instead invite guests into the *Star Wars* universe with C-3P0 and R2-D2 interacting with guests walking through the queue. Despite this more "in-universe" approach for the queue and the

attraction itself, it sacrificed its canonicity by transporting guests to iconic scenes and battles that took place in widely separate parts of the timeline during its tightly contained ride experience (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 140). Prior to the canon reset by Disney in 2014, Lucasfilm attempted to clarify the canonicity of the attraction's events in a *StarWars.com* blog (McFadden).

The attraction underwent a major update, reopening in 2011 with 3D technology (Freitag 128). This reimagined version, entitled Star Tours – The Adventures Continue, added in references—including new characters—from the prequel trilogy and the in-development sequel trilogy. The attraction also developed a new structure in which multiple scenarios and locations were possible, ensuring variety for riders (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 141). The updates for Star Tours – The Adventures Continue were installed in both United States parks in 2011, Tokyo in 2013, and Paris in 2017 (140). During the entire development of the sequel trilogy and *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge, additions continued until as recently as 2019 for the final sequel trilogy film *Star Wars: Episode IX – The Rise of Skywalker* (Fitzgerald; Trowbridge, "Star Tours"). This model of combining different sequences to craft unique experiences lent the attraction "re-rideability," encouraging those visiting to re-experience the attraction during their trip or subsequent visits to the theme park (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 141). The customary updates also encouraged audiences to ride the attraction again to experience the newly added locales and characters.

Another *Star Wars* attraction in the theme parks included Jedi Training Academy, the interactive show for young children, which debuted in California's Disneyland Park in 2006, Disney's Hollywood Studios in 2007, Paris's Disneyland Park in 2015, and Hong Kong Disneyland in 2016 (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 144). The American versions of the show underwent an update in 2015 to Jedi Training: Trials of the Temple, adding new characters for

participants to encounter (Glover, "Season of the Force"; Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's

Edge" 144). As for events within the parks, *Star Wars* Weekends began in 1997 and occurred at

somewhat irregular intervals until becoming annual from 2003 to 2015. These events brought the

franchise's characters, select merchandise, and activities for a limited time within the parks. Disney

also created *Star Wars* overlays for Space Mountain in California, Paris, and Hong Kong along with

creating *Star Wars*-themed events for runDisney ("Hong Kong Disneyland"; Williams, "From Star

Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 144).

Disney bought Lucasfilm from George Lucas in October 2012 for the price of "$4.05 billion

in stock and cash" (Cieply). At the time, CEO Bob Iger confessed that Disney would be promptly

reviving the film series with a new theatrical release in 2015 and planned "to utilize *Star Wars* in

other businesses including Parks & Resorts" ("Disney to Acquire Lucasfilm Ltd."). One of the first

park expansions included *Star Wars* Launch Bay, a meet-and-greet experience that also allowed

guests to see replicas and props up-close. This new experience signaled the end of *Star Wars*

Weekends, eventually replaced by the ticketed evening event *Star Wars* Galactic Nights (Thomas,

"Disney's Hollywood Studios"; Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 145).

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, the entirely *Star Wars* themed land expansion, was formally

announced to the public in 2015 at the D23 Expo (Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge"

142). From the beginning, Disney indicated that the land would feature "a never-before-seen planet"

(Glover, "*Star Wars*-Themed Lands"). Before completion, insights by designers and the company

hinted at a level of interactivity and immersion where guests' choices would have consequences.

Examples given by Imagineers included interactions at the Milk Stand if guests "made poor choices"

in Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run or interactions with characters that would give guests the

opportunity to make choices while shopping in the Marketplace (Brigante). However, many of these

promised moments of interactivity never made their way for guests to experience (Walker). Based on

the previous vague statements, the intentions for the themed land seemed to make their way into the *Star Wars*: Galactic Starcruiser experience, where guests are able to have more personalized story-driven interactions with characters across the ship (Palicki).

The themed land opened in Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California, on May 31, 2019, and at Disney's Hollywood Studios on August 29, 2019 (Allan; Ramirez). Diegetically, the land is a trading town called Black Spire Outpost on the Outer Rim planet of Batuu (Throno 10, 14). Both versions opened without the *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance attraction, which premiered in reverse order of the lands at their respective parks on January 17, 2020, and December 5, 2019 (Martín, "Disneyland's Rise of the Resistance"). It is worth noting that the entire theme park industry, including Disneyland Resort and Walt Disney World Resort, were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, causing closures for both resorts' theme parks in early 2020. Immediately upon reopening, the ride experience changed (Martín, "How COVID Changed Disneyland's Star Wars"). For the purposes of this observation, the attraction is considered in its most complete state with no alterations listed by The Walt Disney Company for the attraction during the spring 2022 observation period. Past visits to the attraction by the author in late 2019 and early 2020 corroborate that no major changes to the queue experience have occurred. Any minor changes are noted and addressed in the observations shared later in this chapter.

Location and Experience of *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge lies in the southernmost corner of Disney's Hollywood Studios at the Walt Disney World Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. It is the furthest themed land from the park's entrance and represents the largest single themed land expansion in the history of any Disney theme park ("*Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge – Fun Facts"; "Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge Opens"). Its sister location at Disneyland Park in Anaheim, California, also sits far from the main gate entrance in the

northwest corner beyond Frontierland and directly west of the comparatively minuscule Mickey's

Toontown. During early construction for the themed land, the Disneyland Railroad closed in

January 2016 to be rerouted, reopening in July 2017 where its track remained outside the borders of

Black Spire Outpost and its surrounding property (Eades). Due to the use of the Disney's

Hollywood Studios location as the site of observation, all following directional descriptions apply to

that specific instance of the themed land. It should be noted that *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge was

designed and "codeveloped" in tandem with the *Star Wars*: Galactic Starcruiser experience currently

available only at the Walt Disney World Resort ("Track 21" 00:03:30–40).

Land Entrance to Attraction Entrance

There are two distinct entrances to the themed land. In Disney's Hollywood Studios, the

northeast entrance of *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge connects to the Grand Avenue section of the park,

home to the Muppet*Vision 3D attraction. Entering *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge from Grand Avenue,

the concrete tunnel, reminiscent of those found on some American highways, transitions into a

rough, rocky cavern. The more ordered modern lighting also changes into a design indicative of

provisional electric lamps, installed unevenly with exposed wiring connecting each lighting module.

Musically, the light, sing-songy melodies of Grand Avenue dissolves as the transcendent and

mysterious Grammy Award-winning symphonic arrangements by John Williams swell (Burlingame;

Smith, "And the Grammy Goes"; "*Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge – Fun Facts"). Emerging out of the

covered passageway, the landscape blends the rocky ground with a mix of low trees and greenery

bordering the walkways, leading toward an area simply referred to as "The Forest" (Throno 118).

The thematically designed concrete paths span widely, allowing large crowds to flow in both

directions. It is also from the exit of this tunnel that part of the outdoor queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of

the Resistance can be viewed, distinguished by its integration of explicitly manmade (or perhaps

droid-made) objects, such as fans, lighting, and its stanchions. The pavement continues toward a more open courtyard where the entrance to the *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance attraction is located.

The other entrance to *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge sits at the land's northwest corner. The pathway through Toy Story Land—ostensibly Andy's Backyard in its diegesis—leads straight south toward Black Spire Outpost's Land Port area (Throno 32) Along the walkway connecting the two disparate themed areas, the K'nex-inspired fence posts abruptly end, replaced by low trees and greenery past an access road that inconspicuously cuts between the two lands. The cluster of trees is interrupted by rock formations fabricated in a similar construction to the rockwork found at the other entrance. Some of the rocks also have linear grooves, physical evidence of excavation by machinery.

The downward sloping path leads to the Land Port, where those entering find Droid Depot straight in front with Black Spire Station to the left, occupied by several landspeeders in need of repair (Throno 32). From this point, the shortest pathway toward *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance is by traveling east along this road between Black Spire Station and Savi's Workshop and just beside Merchant Row with its often-bustling Market.

The Market, a typically crowded section of Batuu's Black Spire Outpost, lies just before a curved tree-lined pathway that leads toward the open courtyard outside of the *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance attraction entrance. The layout prevents each area from being within view of the other. However, within several paces from The Market area, the presence of Resistance starfighters, vendors, and the large cannon turret are not easily missed by passersby. For those uncertain where to find the attraction, signs within Black Spire Outpost have the listed location of Old Outpost defaced by a red graffiti-like stamp stating "Rise of the Resistance," seen in Figure 1, loosely tying the attraction name to a rebellious mantra adopted by the planet's locals. The path toward the

attraction, occupied almost exclusively by surrounding greenery, public seating, and the occasional

droid-piloted "Jat Kaa's drink cart," eventually leads to the large clearing in The Forest (Throno

109).

Figure 1: A sign in *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge with diegetic "graffiti" denoting the location of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Signage in *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge. 11 May 2022. Author's personal collection.

This open courtyard exhibits little of the undetectable qualities suggested by the section's

story. In the south part of the clearing, Resistance Supply serves as a gift shop for guests in the

courtyard along with those emerging from the exit of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. This

collection of outdoor stands houses merchandise depicting characters and symbols from the original

trilogy's Rebellion and the sequel trilogy's Resistance. At the southwestern and western edges of this

courtyard, ships and aircraft, such as the highly recognizable X-wing starfighter, seen in Figure 2, sit

parked, sometimes issuing sounds of power, discharging steam, or, during one visit, providing a

setting to meet in-universe Resistance characters. During the sole visit I witnessed it, both Rey and

Vi Moradi stood conspicuously on the elevated landing platform as guests distantly posed for photos

several yards from the heroes. This took place before visitors were once again allowed to physically

touch characters within the Disney parks (Slater).

Figure 2: An X-wing starfighter in plain view near the "secret" Resistance encampment. Jordan
Zauha. Photograph of X-wing Starfighter in *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge. 11 May 2022. Author's
personal collection.

Technically serving as the location of Ancient Ruins hidden among The Forest, this large

open area attempts to impart the notion that it lies "far enough from the Outpost to avoid detection

yet close enough to take advantage of the people and resources nearby," a conceit that begs an

enormous amount of suspension of disbelief from guests who easily travel to and from the nearby

Outpost and whose foot traffic makes the "quiet" area far from Batuu's "best-kept secret" (Throno

118).

As stated earlier, the most striking "evidence" of Resistance occupation is the cannon turret that stands as the central pillar of the attraction's entrance gateway, shown in Figure 3. As is typical for nearly every Walt Disney World Resort attraction, clearly marked signage denotes one entrance, the left in this case, as "Stand By" while the right archway demarcates "Lightning Lane" along with a digital clock to assist guests with ensuring they enter during their arrival window.

Figure 3: The cannon turret that stands guard outside the entrance to *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Entrance to *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*. 24 Jan. 2022. Author's personal collection.

Several cast members manage the queue entrance, greeting approaching guests, answering questions, and ensuring those with Lightning Lane reservations or utilizing Disney's Disability Access Service have the proper credentials before entering the priority queue. While it did not occur

during the observational period, during visits in the latter half of 2019 and early 2020 before the

theme park closures induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, cast members at the entrance often

greeted approaching guests with phrases such as "Good luck, recruit." These person-to-person

interactions often act as the initial clue to guests of the role endowed upon them by the attraction,

its storyworld, and its "characters."

Figure 4: The posted signage at the entrance of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance detailing the
attraction's summary and safety notices. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Safety Signage for *Star Wars*:
Rise of the Resistance. 24 Jan. 2022. Author's personal collection.

At the threshold of the queue entrance, just below the Stand By sign, a placard with the ride

description, as shown in Figure 4, denotes the following: "Join us on an exhilarating mission to stop

the First Order! This mission includes rapid motion, sudden stops, sharp turns and a swift drop as

you evade capture from the First Order." Below this text lie notably non-diegetic safety notices

addressing hazards, height restrictions, and health warnings. This sign is duplicated and placed over

by the Lightning Lane entrance. During observations, this notice typically went unexamined by an overwhelming majority of visitors.

The outdoor section consists of a switchback-style queue, typical of lines for Disney attractions and other major theme parks around the world (Hench and Van Pelt 32; King, "The Disney Effect" 224–25; E. Nelson 49). The pathways mimic the concrete hardscape found in the courtyard outside the entrance. The queue is lined with handrails modeled to look like thick cords or power cables. Upon touch, these cables betray their stiff metal construction. Along the edges of the queue lanes and in between lie greenery, often serving as shade for the morning and afternoons. Also quite discernible are the conspicuously located fans and lighting instruments. Their fabrication, though, falls in line with the quasi-dieselpunk aesthetic often attributed not only to the *Star Wars* franchise but the rustic underdog aesthetic often associated specifically to the Rebellion and Resistance. Cords and wires droop above the heads of guests, indicating power transference from an unseen source. Within this area, neatly placed half walls also define the space. These appear to indicate potential foundations of the ancient civilization that formerly occupied these caves. Announcements periodically play through the speaker system. Multiple characters use the communications system, sometimes denoting the arrival of unseen aircraft and imparting updates to Resistance operations.

As the outdoor queue begins to transition inside, the winding walkway enters a cave archway with large window-like openings. Through these cavities, recruits see a shallow "natural" pool and waterfall outside. It is from this small transition space that the queue continues through an even smaller metal-framed doorway into the proper indoor queue.

The indoor sections of the Stand By queue continue some of the switchback patterns along with the aforementioned sectioned rooms, often barring guests' view from seeing the next section of the queue. In the gameplay of the First Order version of Resistance Encampment on the Play Disney Parks app, the queue is divided into three sectors—Sector A, Sector B, and Sector C—and within each sector are named areas denoting each room's purpose at the Resistance camp. These sectors and names will be used to organize the sections of the queue.

Sector A

Past the open-air cavern beneath the waterfall, the first indoor room is Power Storage. Starting in this room and continuing throughout the rest of Sector A, the weaving switchback style is still apparent. The major difference, however, lies in the smaller breakdown of rooms where the next room is often obscured until just before exiting the former. Within Power Storage, stacked crates and inactive droids divide the room. Installed lighting, matching the construction found outdoors, and electronic panels also appear in this initial room. These items become commonplace throughout the rest of the interior queue before the first preshow and serve as objects to scan or hack within the Resistance Encampment mobile game as well as the overall *Star Wars*: Datapad experience.

Exiting Power Storage, the walkway continues to Equipment Storage, a somewhat more open area where the switchback is divided instead by metal rails, and beyond this, Sector A concludes with the Power Routing area. This latter area reveals the ancient foundations of the past civilization with eroded bricks and organized stone formations blended into the cave interior. It also showcases the "natural" environment with a shiny substance in a cavity seemingly formed by erosion from dripping water. Low walls and carvings in the cave façade reveal potential seating for those who need to rest their legs. Areas of rest like these can be found throughout the queue, a

notable design choice that follows the guideline by Ledbetter and his fellow researchers regarding guest comfort (25).

Sector B

Sector B encapsulates two subsections: Mission Prep Storage and Navigation. Similar to Power Storage, a combination of encased equipment and the cave's geology form the winding path in a roundabout manner. It is in the next section, Navigation, that has one of the first major references to quintessential *Star Wars* iconography (outside the earlier unpowered droids)—the Tactical Display. Glowing with turquoise light, the static screen technology presented in the original trilogy of films serves as a barrier for recruits alongside the crates, equipment, and supplies beside the astrogation chart display and in the corners of the room.

Sector C

Exiting the Navigation room, recruits journey through the last sector of the queue before the preshow: Sector C. Rounding the corner into the large passageway connecting Navigation to Munitions Storage, the first metal grid storage locker appears containing a multitude of rusted tools and firearms. Throughout Sector C, these lockers, sealed tight, appear frequently against walls and sometimes dividing pathways in the queue. The first part of this passage has a higher ceiling than past areas, especially as the following rooms become more linear in style with less open areas of switchbacks. While much of the queue appears to occupy somewhat natural passages of the caves, the second part of this cave channel has part of its walkway formed via a seemingly recent carving through the cave. Braces placed at intervals support the ceiling of this artificial hallway. Entailing the most enclosed section of the entire queue, the walls and ceiling are carved with neatly patterned grooves as if sculpted by machinery.

At the other end, the pathway rejoins the "natural" passages of the cave system, housing the most concrete evidence of the ancient civilization that once lived here. In Munitions Storage, remains of pottery, possibly petrified, are embedded in the walls. Any specific indications regarding the creators of the pottery or their contents remains unknown and unclear. Also within this room are a large assortment of weapons. Wire grid lockers with racks of blasters lie in the central part of the room, while opened crates filled with pyro denton explosives—which look almost identical to the iconic thermal detonator—lie exposed for recruits to examine. However, the explosives remain firmly attached to their containers despite any efforts made by recruits to remove them. Apart from the myriad of weapons, a portable navigation analysis computer, shown in Figure 5, lies open just at the exit of this room. While many of the buttons and indicators light up, it remains woefully noninteractive, at least in a physical sense.

Figure 5: The portable navigation analysis computer located in the Munitions Storage room in the queue of *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Portable Naviagion Computer within the Queue of *Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance*. 24 Jan. 2022. Author's personal collection.

Past the doorway, recruits enter Flight Prep, where lockers store various flight suits. Recruits wind their way around these lockers and along the wall where a wide ledge, perfect for sitting, leads toward the final subsection.

Medical Supply is a tight, cozy room filled with crates, lockers, and items. For those entering, a flexpoly bacta suit, identical to the one worn by Finn at the beginning of *Star Wars: Episode VIII – The Last Jedi*, sits in locker storage. Considering this is the final room, this prop should be noted as a possible suggestion for the character of Finn, a central figure of the ride element of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, which notably takes place in between *Episode VIII* and *Star Wars: Episode IX – The Rise of Skywalker* (Baver).

The exit of this room leads to an open section where cast members sort recruits and their respective parties between one of two large sliding doors. It is in this room where those who have journeyed through the Stand By queue and those who have taken the Lightning Lane queue merge for the rest of the queue experience. In this room lies another Tactical Display glowing turquoise. Recruits are organized in groups outside each sliding door until the doors open, allowing them to begin the feature presentation of the attraction queue.

Lightning Lane Queue

From the right archway located beside the cannon turret, the outdoor section of the Lightning Lane queue begins. On the left side as guests walk through the path, a half wall of rockwork sporting trees and greenery separates the Lightning Lane queue from the outdoor part of the Stand By queue. On the right, a handrail serves as a method of support if a backup occurs. There is also a small switchback section in this area that, during observation, was unnecessary. The speakers and fans found in the Stand By section are far more sparse in this queue. Some barrels and

storage crates lie out of reach on a high shelf of rockwork that slowly morphs into evidence of ancient ruins.

Figure 6: The ancient ruins found in the outdoor section of the Lightning Lane queue for *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Outdoor Section of Lighting Lane Queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. 11 May 2022. Author's personal collection.

Still outdoors, concave indentations in the rock cut the surface, seemingly made by the hands of the ancient people who once called these caves home, shown in Figure 6. Being filled in completely, it is difficult to determine if these indentations served as small windows and tiny doors or instead served a more decorative purpose, perhaps as carved architecture or for items placed within the cavities.

After traveling a short distance, the queue continues into the rocky cavern passageway. This passageway is narrower than the those found in the Stand By queue and feature almost none of the décor such as the crates or the Tactical Display. After traveling through the short cavern passage, the hallway ends at the merge point, where guests in the Lightning Lane queue join those in the Stand By queue to be placed outside one of the two sliding doors before the briefing room.

In the entirety of the Lightning Lane queue, there are no labels to scan nor does the

Lightning Lane queue at all resemble or replicate any aspect of the Stand By queue other than the

cave walls and ceiling. This eliminates the possibilities of using the *Star Wars: Datapad* to scan crates

and makes the First Order version of Resistance Encampment virtually impossible to play.

Merged Queue Experience

Briefing Room and I-TS Pre-Boarding

This first preshow theatre earns its title as a briefing room not just due to its place within

typical theme park queue structure but due to it being a literal briefing room for the huddled recruits

by leaders of the Resistance (E. Nelson 51). In brief, those entering see the astromech droid BB-8

perched high above examining charts. A large clearing on one end serves as a massive holoprojector

while the other end has several screen displays showcasing various maps and planetary charts. A

computer announces the arrival of a transmission from Rey and within seconds Rey appears in the

holoprojector as a "hologram" before the recruits.

During this transmission, Rey signals BB-8 to prepare for flight and addresses the recruits

gathered in the room. She informs them that Finn along with other members of the Resistance have

invaded a First Order Star Destroyer. The special Resistance forces on board have learned that

Resistance members on Batuu, including those gathered, may no longer be hidden from the eye of

the First Order. A ship led by Lieutenant Bek will transport recruits away from the Batuuan

encampment to a secret base on the nearby planet of Pacara.

At this moment, Bek and Nien Nunb appear on the screen displays affirming they are ready

to receive the recruits. The screen showing Nien Nunb then changes to display Commander Poe

Dameron who is introduced to the recruits as the escort for the transport ship leaving Batuu. Here,

the sliding doors open to an outdoor landing area where the Resistance I-TS Transport ship awaits

those exiting (Throno 122). Poe's starfighter can be seen with BB-8 already in place, spinning his head around as if to view those coming into the clearing. A Resistance member ushers the recruits toward the transport ship and prepares them before the sliding doors open, and recruits are ushered into the ship.

Onboard the Resistance I-TS Transport

Once the sliding doors of the transport ship open, recruits board the vessel which has railings built into the interior around the outer edges and in the central areas of the space. At the head of the ship sits Bek, able to swivel around to face those entering and speak with them. Those onboard are able to view the landscape from the front windows along with those in the back. There are also screen displays to the left and right of the open cockpit area where video transmissions often appear throughout the experience aboard the transport.

To start, Bek checks in with Nien Nunb, piloting the transport, and Poe, who will fly beside the transport in his starfighter. Upon confirmation that all parties are ready, the ship takes off. Those inside can feel movement as if the ship were gently rising into the atmosphere, completing the illusion created through the windows. The ships fly away from Black Spire Outpost into space just outside the planet of Batuu. Not long after takeoff, Bek turns to the recruits reintroducing himself and reminding them of their goal to flee Batuu to the secret base on Pacara. Shortly after this exchange, Bek realizes that starcraft are entering the area and a fight breaks out between First Order troops and those escorting the transport.

During the fight, a First Order Star Destroyer apprehends the transport ship via tractor beam and sends a video transmission to the ship. A First Order officer interrogates Bek regarding the nature of the ship's itinerary to which he responds that it is a "civilian vessel." When Bek responds with a question regarding who is commanding the Star Destroyer, General Armitage Hux

shoves his way into view on the screen to declare the First Order has taken charge over the vehicle and believes they are aligned with the Resistance.

The transport enters the onboard hangar of the Star Destroyer. Bek requests that recruits share none of the details of their mission and warns them to watch out for the sliding doors. On the same side recruits originally entered, the doors slide open as a First Order officer enters and declares that those on board are now under command of the First Order and to exit for interrogation.

The Journey to Interrogation

Recruits exit the transport onto the hangar of the Star Destroyer. The most notable feature is the large opening separating outer space via a magnetic shield. In the distance at certain moments, another Star Destroyer or group of TIE fighters can be seen, providing context and scale to the large, vast window. Within the hangar, a veritable platoon of stormtroopers stand at the ready, sometimes adjusting an arm or slightly moving their head ("*Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge – Fun Facts"). Several First Order officers are present to ensure that recruits continue moving to form lines for sorting. Also contained in this room is one vehicle nearly identical to the attraction's ride vehicle, presumably for captured recruits to test their eventual trip. Lastly, a TIE fighter can be spotted parked on the extreme right side of the hangar just to the left of the hallway where recruits are led for processing.

The hallway exiting the hangar creates a much more efficient cramped environment, surrounded by the cold angular gray aesthetic often associated with both the Galactic Empire and especially the more contemporary First Order. The entire hallway is separated by a single handrail that splits groups for processing. After two short turns in the path, recruits reach the end where First Order officers inquire about the number of people in each party and sort them into groups before being led to their next station.

From here, the groups of captured recruits are led to the outside of their designated cell. During this journey, recruits see two more stormtroopers, standing by input terminals with blasters in hand. Once outside their cell doors, First Order officers assign colors to parties and remind recruits to memorize their colors. Captive recruits are informed that they will be interrogated about their intelligence on Resistance operations. Often during this time, officers will engage in unscripted or lightly scripted exchanges with recruits, allowing recruits the opportunity to engage in whatever dialogue they feel appropriate. Eventually, the sliding doors open where recruits are shuffled into the holding cell.

Holding Cell

The final portion of the queue experience consists of the holding cell where recruits are held while being watched over by a stormtrooper above. Eventually General Hux enters, dismissing the stormtrooper before attempting to intimidate the recruits. Shortly after, Supreme Leader Kylo Ren walks in and stands beside Hux. Ren accesses the Force to inquire about the location of the secret Resistance base. Hux informs Ren that the leader is needed on the bridge of the ship. Both swiftly exit, leaving the recruits alone. After a brief period of time, jagged lines of glowing orange light begin to carve out a section of the wall, pulling away to reveal Resistance members who arrive to rescue the recruits. The rescued recruits are ushered out of the interrogation room to enter their vehicles. The Resistance members ensure that all recruits have boarded properly and safely, informing them that the seemingly First Order R-series astromech piloting the First Order Fleet Transport vehicle now work for the Resistance and will help them escape.

Just before the ride begins, the Resistance members take their place at consoles while a large display shows Finn, donning stormtrooper armor. He informs recruits of the pathway they will take

for their escape before passing off to Bek who communicates via audio with the recruits as they begin their ride journey.

<center>Star Wars: Datapad – Resistance Encampment</center>

Included within the *Star Wars*: Datapad experience in the Play Disney Parks mobile app, Resistance Encampment allows players to actively participate within the narrative of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. Utilizing location data, the experience is available only to visitors within close proximity to the attraction (Eddy et al. 38). Visitors can choose between two versions: Resistance and First Order. Each provides a unique storyline and varied gameplay.

<center>Resistance</center>

In the Resistance version, recruits connect with Finn who has put out a distress signal after his reconnaissance mission on a First Order Star Destroyer has gone haywire. Finn communicates to the player through text communication while players respond via predetermined choices they can select. Throughout the experience, Finn will send data including maps and other images, following up by asking recruits to interpret what course of action is best to take next. Recruits assist Finn in traveling from Custodial Storage to the ship's command center. Along the way, the player hacks doors open and decrypts files containing First Order intelligence. As part of this assistance, it is the player who ultimately helps Finn to accomplish his original mission: deleting sensitive Resistance information from the First Order's intelligence files, thereby helping to protect the Resistance's fight against the enemy.

Deviance from the intended narrative is difficult as gameplay is made up only of tightly scripted dialogue options and puzzles. However, an interesting attraction-related story beat includes players assisting Finn to don stormtrooper armor, which he wears when communicating via video

just before the ride vehicles leave the boarding station. The win state for players who complete the challenge includes not only the successful end of Finn's mission but a message of gratitude from Rey. Unlike the First Order counterpart, this game does not evolve as guests travel through the queue. In fact, as long as a guest is near the attraction, they should be able to complete this mission without viewing or interacting with any part of the attraction's Stand By queue.

<center>First Order</center>

For the First Order version of the game, recruits connect with Officer Anjay, a First Order officer stationed on Batuu. To note, unlike Finn or Rey, Officer Anjay does not appear (yet) in any other *Star Wars* media outside the *Star Wars*: Datapad experience. Anjay says that the First Order is aware that the Resistance is enlisting recruits on Batuu somewhere in the "remote" Forest. The officer then provides an image of the attraction's entrance, including its massive cannon turret. Anjay explains that what the First Order is seeking from the remote base on Batuu is actually the location of a different secret base on a nearby planet. Anjay requests the player to join the line and pose as a recruit for the Resistance to collect intel for the sake of the First Order. Just like in the Resistance version, the player responds with preordained responses.

This version differs heavily from its Resistance counterpart as the player's location within the queue is integral to the play experience. Unlike the Resistance version, this part of the experience is incredibly difficult to play without being in the queue. From the start, Anjay inquires if players have reached the cave just before entering Sector A. Throughout the experience, Anjay will check in to inquire where players are in the queue. Players then have to indicate what sector and which room they are in each time they change rooms. The experience ends in Medical Supply just before the merge area and first preshow. For the win state in this version, Officer Anjay shares a report of the player's contributions with General Hux, stating that the player has helped in the First Order's

<center>53</center>

attempts to learn about the Resistance. Anjay then transfers the player to General Hux who curtly shares a message of appreciation before ensuring that the owed payment of credits is sent to the player.

Listed above are the story-relevant elements of the queue experience, contributing to the attraction's backstory, storyworld, and connection to the larger transmedia narrative of *Star Wars*. Continuing the trend of diegetic worlds, the queue experience casts guests in a specific role endowed by characters and employees. The many diegetic and extra-diegetic elements of the queue will be explored even further in illustration of the core design elements.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEVELOPING CORE DESIGN ELEMENTS FOR IMMERSIVE QUEUES

In her research on the "immersive experience" in the immersive theatre work of Punchdrunk, Rose Biggin identifies three areas in which immersive theatre differentiates itself from that of traditional proscenium theatrical productions: environment and space, narrative and story, and interactivity and game (2). Biggin then derives three succinct "strands of enquiry" in which to examine the audience experience within immersive theatre: interactivity, narrative, and environment (48). Biggin later notes that the use of these "defining tropes of the form" do not automatically induce the "immersive experience" within audiences (208). This relationship is due in part to the experience of immersion as "graded states" instead of a "felt/not felt binary" (47). As previously discussed, it is helpful, from a design perspective, to view immersive queues as diegetic worlds in which all design elements contribute to the crafting of the storyworld and its narrative. As the three pillars of crafting immersive theatre are, first and foremost, design principles, they become incredibly helpful in design considerations for immersive queues.

Theme park queues achieve the physical version of virtual reality's "presence" through its ability to surround its audience in its environment (Biggin 22). Over time, theme park queues often placed story elements into its environment to introduce the story of the attraction and entertain its audience (E. Nelson 52–53). Interactivity varies in its modes and forms (Zimmerman 158). While, on a large-scale, theme parks have always offered choice (Hench and Van Pelt 37), the more explicit choices of gaming and interactive media have blossomed in the theme park market, such as

Interactive Wands and the Play Disney Parks app (Eddy et al. 38). Specifically regarding the Play Disney Parks app, a major function of the app's games is to offer experiences while guests wait in attraction queues (40). These experiences elaborate the attraction's characters and storyworld.

In the examination of the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, a unique element emerges: performance. While performance is often implied in the art form of immersive theatre, it is not often regarded as a necessity within the theme park queue experience. Still, preshows, the "briefing room," and the literal *theatre* space containing them have become a staple within queues to communicate story and safety for guests before boarding an attraction (E. Nelson 51–52). Attraction employees are often costumed, like actors, to their respective attraction and follow guidelines to ensure that storytelling and style are not contradicted (Hench and Van Pelt 29; Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 186; Younger 277–79). Some attractions also include in-person spiels by employees that "act" across from fictional characters, such as the pre-performance speech at Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 190). Lastly, animated figures and animatronics have also occupied a place in queues, delivering dialogue to guests before boarding an attraction, such as at the now defunct Stitch's Great Escape! at Magic Kingdom Park. While "performances" such as the previously listed are not included in every attraction, they are so often integrated it is worth including as a pillar in designing queues for diegetic worlds.

Each of the four core design elements—environmental design, narrative, interactivity, and performance—overlap in their execution within theme park queue design, as illustrated in Figure 7. For this discussion, each will be addressed separately, starting with an overview of their use in immersive theatre. Then, a survey of their application within the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance will follow. To conclude each element's discourse, a re-alignment will be established for use in theme park design followed by design considerations inclusive of a breadth of scalability.
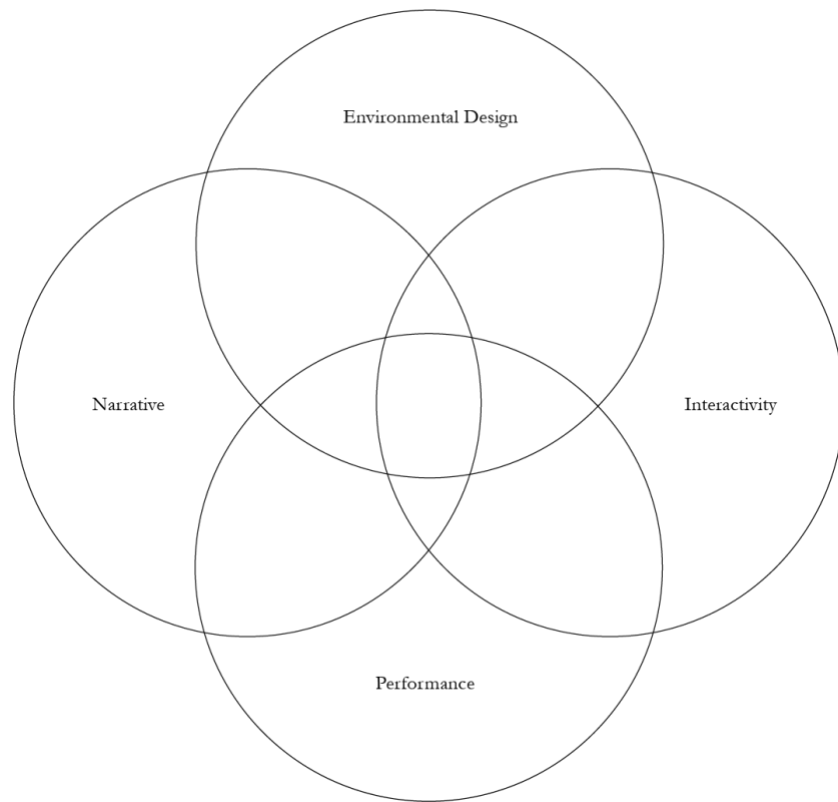
Figure 7: A diagram illustrating the overlapping nature of the four core design elements for

immersive queues. Diagram created by the author.

Environmental Design

Biggin notes that often it is the environment that denotes whether a piece of theatre is

"immersive":

> Environmental innovations signify that a production is a piece of *immersively* shaped
> theatre—*immersive* implying that a space has been created for the audience to wander
> about in (large and open-plan or smaller and maze-like, or some combination of the
> two): perhaps scenographically detailed and musically rich, certainly demonstrating
> some quality of deliberate design or curation on the part of the makers. (177–78)

Similar to non-diegetic contradictions in theme park queues, elements or moments within the immersive theatre environment that "seem out of sync" (Biggin 188) will inhibit the immersive experience within audience members, creating "contradictions" (Hench and Van Pelt 78) and "intrusions" (Younger 12). Despite the best intentions of designers and creators, a certain sense of awareness is inevitable within audience members that may or may not negatively affect the immersive experience (Biggin 202). Yet, the audience's ability to conceptually blend the fictional storyworld with the realities of the physically built environment can lend a sense of awe and wonder in itself, such as when an audience member is impressed by an actor's ability to express character (102).

Figure 8: The in-universe comm systems and cameras fabricated to match the aesthetic of the storyworld. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Lighting and Sound Equipment in Outdoor Queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. 24 Jan. 2022. Author's personal collection.

Within the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, the physical materials surrounding the guest constitute environmental design. Notable among its physically designed

features includes the involvement of typically non-diegetic items, shown in Figure 8, such as speakers, fans, and handrails, into the visual design of the storyworld. These objects are fabricated in the style of the storyworld, adopting them into the hyperdiegetic experience of the audience. This diegetic transformation of necessary objects within the art direction also includes the control panel and paging boxes used by the First Order. Outside each holding cell, the panel door for operators is themed appropriately to the Star Destroyer, seen to the left of the sliding door in Figure 9. Believable in the world of *Star Wars*, its light-up buttons and levers logically fit within the setting of a Star Destroyer. Regarding these "unavoidable" objects, Younger states "the goal of the designer in this regard is to minimize the number of non-diegetic elements and their impact" (85). In *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, however, these typically non-diegetic elements are, instead, adopted into the diegesis as comm systems (speakers), wiring (handrails), necessary lighting for the area, and Star Destroyer control panels. As discussed later, where environmental design fails, narrative may be able to adopt typically non-diegetic elements, such as personal mobile devices.

In the creation of *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge, Disney has adapted a franchise originating from film into built reality. As appropriate, they have built the themed land, including this particular attraction queue, with precise detail. Rockwork encompasses guests 360 degrees. Props displayed throughout the queue maintain a believable sense of reality. As mentioned prior, details such as the wet rock indicating water droplets are included, despite revealing its artificiality upon touch. Essentially, designers for this attraction have avoided unnecessary non-diegetic designs, such as unfinished ceilings, doorways in illogical locations, and lack of detail in props or settings.

Figure 9: The entrance into the holding cells aboard the First Order Star Destroyer with a panel for employee use on the far left. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Holding Cell Door in the Queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. 24 Jan. 2022. Author's personal collection.

Inclusive to environmental design, some sound design also represents extra-diegetic elements. Within the cave passageways, soundscapes not only indicate sounds of cave winds and landing ships in the distance, but atmospheric sounds contribute to the overall soundscape. Upon entrance into the briefing room, orchestral music accompanies the guest through the experience until rescue, providing a sense that guests are living the film. While not diegetic, this element contributes to the hyperreal aesthetic and intensifies the experiences of guests.

Sense of scale was also an important consideration within the queue. Notable examples include the Resistance I-TS Transport ship, the TIE fighter ship aboard the Star Destroyer hangar, and the Star Destroyer hangar itself. Designers have believably brought to life fictional objects and places by staying true to the sense of scale, either through one-to-one recreations or through the aesthetic use of forced perspective (Younger 170). As the objects presented are fictional, seen only

on the screen, the actualization of these large objects contributes heavily to the sense of reality of the diegetic world.

Lastly, *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance includes an attraction-like element within its queue experience. As described earlier, the transport ship behaves as a mild motion simulator, completing the effect of taking off into space. It echoes the adventures of Star Tours where guests are often thrust unexpectedly into a *Star Wars* fight in space. Including an attraction-like experience within the queue offers a moment of awe for audiences who have not boarded the attraction yet. However, this inclusion, in some ways, alludes more to the resources and capabilities of a large theme park operator. It may be possible, however, to endow theatre spaces and other holding rooms in the queue with stories that hint at travel or something other than waiting in a queue as a way to break up the experience and maximize entertainment.

As a detraction to environmental design, the illusion of the diegetic world becomes shattered on days when the queue for *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance becomes overcrowded. On these days, the queue is rerouted beyond its typical barriers, traveling under the tunnel and back into the Grand Avenue area of Disney's Hollywood Studios. During one observation, the line went past a set of doors and joined the extended portion of the Muppet*Vision 3D queue. For those in line, the diegesis was spoiled as guests went from a galaxy far, far away back to Earth in a few steps and were now surrounded by Muppets. Are Muppets part of the canon of *Star Wars* according to this experience? While the logical answer is no and many guests are able to interpret this themselves, it shows how the operational needs of the attraction can, when pushed to their brink, encroach upon the worldbuilding of an attraction's queue.

Environmental design in the theme park experience is, arguably, the most widely discussed facet of the art form. King and O'Boyle refer to the theme park as a "landscape" precisely because of its built nature along with the overt tangibility of the medium (6). Theme parks and their

attraction queues ultimately originate as "multimedia installations" that, through their materials, communicate symbolic and narrative meaning to their visitors (Baker, "Summary of Exploring" 5; Freitag 125; King, "The Theme Park: Aspects of Experience" 3; Younger 83). *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance continues in the footsteps of prior "immersive lands" such as the Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley locations of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter and Pandora – The World of Avatar. By setting *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge on a planet unexplored by previous media, Disney has avoided the need to replicate an already familiar location, such as those related to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Yet, the themed land and its attraction queue still maintain a film-like eye for detail.

It should be noted that realism and naturalism are not the ultimate goals in building diegetic worlds. As Younger states, "complete diegesis" is never the goal as theme parks almost always exist within a sense of hyperreality (Hench and Van Pelt 56; King and O'Boyle 11–12; Younger 85). *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance takes much of its inspiration in materials, objects, and textures from the real world which form a foundation for its fantastical storyworld. In contrast, an attraction with an unrealistic or highly stylized art style has the same abilities to douse its environmental design with intent and diegesis while minimizing or "adopting" the non-diegetic as much as possible. Regarding details in immersive venues, Biggins states that "the level of detail in any immersive environment facilitates, but does not guarantee, immersive experience" (33).

No matter the necessary aesthetic for the intellectual property, designers should *stay true to the design intent of the intellectual property*. Even while adopting a brand new locale, *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge evokes architectural inspiration from prior *Star Wars* film and television experiences along with directly adopting specific iconography from the series. This same devotion to the design intent of environment occurs within the never-before-seen Carkitt Market section of Diagon Alley at Universal Studios Florida, continuing the art direction of the iconic locale of the Wizarding World

and originating new areas for guests to explore. Lastly, Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi adopts its

constraint as an indoor facility to craft Gotham City as a location perpetually set at night. Ultimately

staying true to the character and storyworld of Batman, the hero's adventures nearly always take

place under the cover of dark, allowing designers to still craft a diegetic world that invites suspension

of disbelief without their constraints inducing contradictions.

Lastly, designers should *embrace the non-diegetic in the diegesis*. While certain elements such as

handrails may pose as a storyless requirement, it is possible to embrace non-diegetic factors into

either narrative (discussed below) or into environmental design. Typically, if the fabrication or

design of any one of these elements is too great, narrative can assist in justifying the use of these

objects. The audience's suspension of disbelief and conceptual blending is a tool for designers to

utilize but not one that should be relied upon too heavily when crafting queues for immersive

diegetic worlds.

<center>Narrative</center>

Narrative, story, and plot each differ. This is compounded by the fact that narrative

perspective also shifts between the producer, crafting the narrative for an audience, and consumer,

interpreting the narrative from their viewpoint (Biggin 117). Biggin refers to Cobley to succinctly

differ between the three related terms:

> "Story" consists of all the events which are to be depicted. "Plot" is the chain of
> causation which dictates that these events are somehow linked and that they are
> therefore to be depicted in relation to each other. "Narrative" is the showing or the
> telling of these events and the mode selected for that to take place. (Cobley qtd. in
> Biggin 121)

What is meant by "narrative" within a physically built story place can be difficult to narrowly define.

Biggin explores and evaluates a broad range of definitions of narrative to conclude that "narrative is

a representation of a sequence of events; narrative occurs within and creates a storyworld: it exists in

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space and time; it is bound up with sequence and causality: and it changes its form depending on its context" (117). This definition follows suit with the truncated three-part definition established by Zimmerman.

Typically, within an immersive theatre experience where audiences are free to roam, guests are encouraged to piece together the plot and narrative through their own experience. A frustration or "barrier to immersion" that can arise from this scenario is a desire for coherency and clearly expressed story or plot (Biggin 120). Theme park designers craft open areas, such as themed lands, with a 360-degree mindset utilizing "concentric layers of space" to reiterate story and theme when guest flow is uncontrolled (Rohde). Queues, however, provide designers an opportunity to express narrative in a more clear and linear context. Due to its tightly controlled nature as a queue, the storytelling opportunities become easier to shape. As discovered in Punchdrunk's linear production *The Crash of the Elysium*, producers were able to "minimize any conflict between the events of the story and the physical events provided by moving through the space" (Biggin 121).

While spatial linearity provides greater ease in visual control, it should be noted that plot linearity or logical chronology are not required for spatially linear experiences. Punchdrunk also produced *It Felt Like a Kiss*, which ultimately was a linear walkthrough experience, yet guests "returned" to the (seemingly) same space multiple times in different iterations. They also experienced similar physical surroundings, such as the "rat's maze" multiple times. Yet the in-the-moment experience within this production requested that guests reexamine these repeated spaces with new perspectives. Familiarity and return created a sense of newfound appreciation for what had changed, what events had taken place, and what story was being shared (Biggin 147–49). Chronology in *It Felt Like a Kiss* displayed itself in an almost cyclical fashion, exhibiting that a variety of chronological patterns—or lack thereof—are possible for immersive experiences. "When

chronology is disrupted, structural and logistical elements of the show become the narrative events" (137).

Narrative in the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance occurs on a variety of planes. Within the Stand By queue and Lightning Lane queue, narrative is light—ostensibly relegated to the *Star Wars*: Datapad experience. While the environmental design does well to establish the setting of a *Star Wars* story, the queue experience ultimately communicates the storage of goods and supplies for the Resistance. Iconography, such as the Tactical Display, flight suits, and other recognizable props, do not contribute specifically to the story. Up until the merge point, the attraction signage provides the best summary for the story guests are entering: "Join us on an exhilarating mission to stop the First Order!" This single sentence paired with the occasional "Good luck, recruit" form the sole narrative backbone until more pertinent information is given in the briefing room. Voiceovers through the comm systems also do not relate directly to any specific mission for the recruits lined up outdoors, instead contributing a general aesthetic of military operations within the *Star Wars* universe. Stated simply, guests are lining up to join the Resistance as new recruits for missions to fight off the First Order. While the lack of time-sensitive urgency parallels the potentially long wait until the briefing room, it does not provide guests with an abundant amount of story to glean.

Upon entering the briefing room with Rey, this trajectory changes. Within a short amount of time, recruits are given a barrage of information including their relative danger of discovery, the location of a secret base on a nearby planet, and the subplot of secret Resistance forces aboard the First Order Star Destroyer. Emerging from the briefing room, the narrative transforms into something more personal. As recruits attempt to escape, they are captured and held in prison cells for interrogation until rescued by the Resistance. This mimics aspects of immersive theatre where two stories come into play: "story-as-told (performed, enacted)" and "story-as-experienced (what

'story' an audience member builds for herself)" (Biggin 117). From the inciting action and overall change in the narrative world, guests are fully able to embrace their place as characters within the attraction's story.

Resistance Encampment provides another major source of narrative within the queue experience. Essentially a text-based puzzle adventure, each version supplies players with the attraction's respective Resistance and First Order subplots. There are no indications in the queue experience of how Finn acquires his stormtrooper armor other than through the narrative of Resistance Encampment. Meanwhile, the First Order version deepens the believability regarding the intelligence acquired by the First Order on the Resistance base. However, potential to connect players' contributions to the narrative of the queue experience and attraction are never fully realized. The win state of the Resistance version of Resistance Encampment is a personal message of gratitude from Rey. Though, she never mentions the contribution of a remote recruit in her holoprojector briefing. General Hux appears twice to guests in the queue—first, via screen displays on the Resistance I-TS Transport ship and, second, in the holding cell—without ever mentioning that a spy among the recruits has aided the First Order.

Storytelling in queue design can vary from the explicit (i.e., voiceover, dialogue, narration, written text, etc.) to the implicit (e.g., environmental storytelling). Queues present an opportunity to feature narrative as a linear structure while guests occupy physical space over a length of time. While narratives are not required to take a linear fashion in their telling, queues provide a much easier opportunity to control the gaze of its audience than the more sprawling areas of theme parks outside the walls of an attraction, as shown in the case of *The Crash of the Elysium*. Designers also have an opportunity to experiment with chronology inside the linear constraints of queues like in *It Felt Like a Kiss*.

Regarding narrative, theme park designers should *begin the story upon entrance to the queue.* Because queue length varies, the temptation is to delay the story until the start of the attraction or upon the first preshow room, where standby and priority queues often merge. However, the lack of narrative drive and purpose lowers the value of entertainment in the queue experience, especially when needing to entertain guests waiting in long queues. *Star Wars:* Rise of the Resistance, unfortunately, exemplifies this in its Stand By queue where environmental design overwhelming dominates the aesthetic experience and narrative is relegated to the optional and repetitive Resistance Encampment experience. The digital app experience, though, does well to add layers of narrative storytelling to the attraction for fans to explore and discover, even if the agency and variety it provides players is low.

Secondly, just like environmental design, theme park designers should *embrace the non-diegetic in the diegesis.* As noted earlier, personal mobile devices have been made to conform to the storyworld of *Star Wars* as diegetically endowed datapads. Other constraints such as height restriction for riders are written into the voiceover narration as part of the world. Another example is a warning over the comm systems that recording via datapads is restricted during briefings. While potentially unclear to listeners, these stylistic choices decrease breaks in the narrative flow of an attraction's queue.

<center>Interactivity</center>

In her discussion on interactivity, Biggin points to Salen and Zimmerman's four modes. When exploring immersive theatre, she addresses the openness in this perspective of interactivity when detailing the "explicit mode of interactivity" audiences engage when navigating open immersive spaces (Biggin 89). Those bound within queues don't often have this choice (although this presents potential for future queue designs). Still, Biggin's example illustrates the simplicity interactivity can encompass as opposed the more presumptive interactivity of digital interfaces.

In the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, two obvious modes of interactivity were designed, both optional for guests to adopt. The first is *Star Wars*: Datapad and its Resistance Encampment games. These provide guests an opportunity to "play" the backstory of the attraction from both sides of the warring factions. Each version differs, though, in its relevancy of queue location and interaction with specific props and objects placed in the queue. Even in the First Order version, which allows guests to "hack" objects within the queue, reaction by the environment is nonexistent as opposed to the same opportunities found throughout the rest of the themed land.
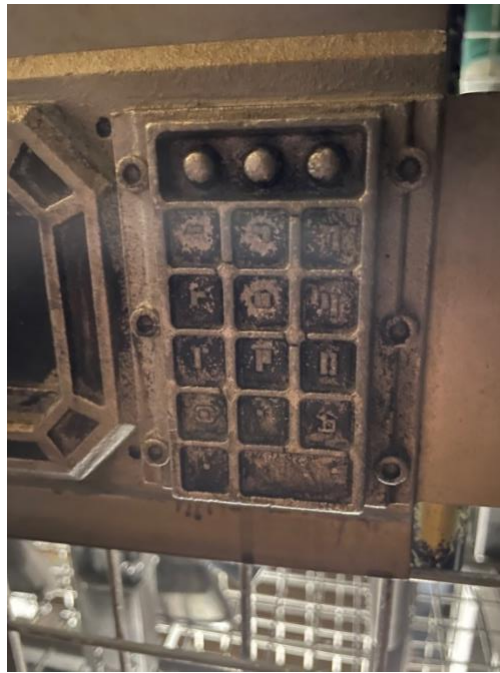
Figure 10: The noninteractive keypad attached to the storage lockers found throughout the queue. Jordan Zauha. Photograph of Keypad to Storage Locker in the Queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance. 24 Jan. 2022. Author's personal collection.

The second interactivity option rests in the hands of the theme park employees as Resistance members and First Order officers. These actor-operators allow guests to interact in improv dialogue in the context of the storyworld, but the choice to do so lies solely on the guest. These also provide

opportunities for guests to intrude on the diegesis through mentions of real-world references or comments that acknowledge the artificiality of the experience (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 196). Despite this, park employees customarily have planned or improv responses to disregard guest interjections that do not fit in the narrative of the storyworld (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 194; Younger 277).

While exploring the queue, certain elements that appear interactive reveal their noninteractive reality. Each of the storage lockers have a keypad, shown in Figure 10, indicating the method to lock and unlock the doors. These keypads have no reaction upon touch, whether a physical compression, sound, or light. The portable navigation analysis computer found along the path does not respond via touch nor when hacked via the *Star Wars*: Datapad app. Somewhat thankfully, the pyro denton explosives do not activate when touched, but they reveal the artificiality of the set piece precisely because they are fused to their cases and noninteractive.

There exists a wide range of other already existing interactive queue experiences. As established by Zimmerman, four modes of interactivity exist including cognitive, functional, explicit, and beyond-the-object (158). Notably, gaming elements have heavily entered the immersive theatre genre (Biggin 157) and that of theme parks ("Joe Garlington").

Examples within other theme park queues already exhibit a range of interactive opportunities from low tech, such as the kid-friendly play space built inside the queue of Magic Kingdom Park's The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh, to high tech, such as the app-integrated, wristband technology-required Power-Up Band Key Challenges at Universal Studios Japan's Super Nintendo World. For any attraction queue, assessments should be made on why interactivity is integrated, its effect upon the guest experience, and its ability to extend the storyworld.

Not all attractions include explicit interactivity for guests to engage with, but almost every attraction allows guests to "interact" with employees. Even when no dialogue occurs within the queue space, guests often are required to interact directly or receive instructions from employees just before boarding ride vehicles.

For theme parks designers creating queues for diegetic worlds, *gaming elements are not required for interactive elements*. Salen and Zimmerman's modes of interactivity paired with Zimmerman's categories of play exemplify the fact that interactive play encompasses a much broader range of experiences other than video game experiences. In fact, "gaming concepts such as 'levelling up' and gradually increasing levels of difficulty can potentially facilitate immersion or raise barriers to it" (Biggin 174). Just like any other aspect of design, creators must consider their audience, intellectual property, and constraints in deciding which methods of interactivity to use.

Interactive interfaces do not always need to be digital. Truthfully, smartphones and other digital devices have brought digital play to virtually every physical space (Eddy et al. 37). However, in the case of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, even when a digital interface is offered, guests may still search for physical interactive opportunities. Accessing the more open interpretation of interactivity, theme parks already lend choice to guests in their progress through the parks themselves (Hench and Van Pelt 37). This is somewhat similar to immersive theatre's spatial freedom for its audience (Biggin 91). However, most queues do not provide this same freedom of movement, therefore interactivity must lie elsewhere. Biggin offers the following in regards to the inclusion of interactivity in an immersive theatre production:

> When considering immersion and interactivity within the walls of an immersive theatre production, what matters is less how interactive a production actually is at any given moment, and more the question of how it manipulates various modes of interactivity to allow for the experience(s) of its audience. (91)

This suggestion offers a "quality over quantity" sentiment but also addresses how environmental and performative responses to (potential) guest interactions can lend to the illusion of interactivty. In circumstances, like the lack of acknowledgement of recruits' help by Rey or General Hux in the queue experience, the scripted dialogue could reference the actions of participating guests, whether or not those in attendance played the game.

Adjacent to the prior suggestion, *craft interactive person-to-person experiences*. These need not be complex or filled with jargon. Employee-guest interactions are inevitable in the realm of theme parks. The improvisational abilities people possess ensure a broader range of story-related outputs and personalized responses within these diegetic worlds. Whether conversing in a highly creative improvisational manner or in tightly scripted scenarios, these interactions form the final core design element of queues.

Performance

Performance is inherent to the world of theatre including its immersive iterations, but the term is not often employed to describe essential elements of queues. As stated before, nearly every queue has opportunities for performance and interactivity between employees and guests. But these moments are not the only cases in which performances already exists within queues. The term *performance* can be applied across a wide variety of elements, including prerecorded media, voiceover, and animatronic animation.

While performance is inherent within the studies of Biggin, she examines a piece of immersive theatre in which actor-based performances were almost nonexistent. This did not discredit the production as immersive theatre, but instead became a design choice that focused more upon environment and underscored the single use of performer through minimization. These same

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principles can apply to theme park queues, but designers should note that performance in some respect has become a staple in theme park storytelling.

Elucidating upon this notion, Lukas credits the "performative dimensions of themes" as an integral aspect of theming alongside its material culture ("How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 184). He even goes so far as to insist that theming and its adoption by the guest rests upon the ability of workers to perform in tandem "consistently and convincingly" with the themes present (186) which, ideally, would play out almost invisibly for the audience like a living movie or stage performance (191). This is not surprising, though, as theme parks ultimately are a service space, where employees provide goods and services to guests with a focus upon guest satisfaction (184). Performance should be given the same attention and care as environmental design and narrative.

Within the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, performance has been given a central role within the merged queue experience. Prior to the merge point, performance is minimal. Park employees at the entrance to the queue are the only deliverers of performance. During observations, the delivery of this performance was inconsistent for the large amounts of guests entering the attraction's queue. Some entering may be told "Good luck, recruits," signifying a little greeting into the storyworld along with a title or role within the world. This greeting, though, was not experienced in the majority of my observations.

In the outdoor queue, voiceovers through the comm system constitute a performance. However, these performances typically contribute more toward environmental design, delivering text that indicates typical communications for the base, instead of text that contributes to the attraction's plot. Once inside the caverns of the Stand By queue, the only potential performances available are from park employees posted around the pathway, but these performances, theoretically, must be activated by guests within the queue as, during observation, the employees' sole responsibilities appeared to include ensuring mask mandates were enforced and guest behavior was

satisfactory. As for the Resistance Encampment digital experience, the text-based nature of the games aligns far more heavily as direct narrative with interactive elements than performance.

Once the Stand By and Lightning Lane queues have merged, performance occurs in nearly every other part of the queue. Within the briefing room, performance is delivered through the Rey holoprojection; video feeds of Lieutenant Bek, Nien Nunb, and Commander Poe; and the animatronic BB-8. In the landing field before boarding the Resistance I-TS Transport ship, another animatronic BB-8 reacts to guests along with a live Resistance member who improvises with the crowd before boarding. Upon the Transport ship, an animatronic Bek performs for the crowd along with video feeds of familiar and newly added characters. Upon capture of the ship, First Order officers invade and order the guests off the ship. These officers are seen throughout the rest of the queue experience, interacting with guests on an improvisational basis until guests are finally left in a holding cell where media of a stormtrooper, General Hux, and Kylo Ren play for the guests. As a finale before the ride vehicles leave, Resistance members "rescue" guests, performing both as characters in the storyworld and as employees ensuring that guests are safely loaded within their ride vehicles as a video feed plays a pre-recorded performance of Finn. From a certain point of the queue experience, this core design element of queue storytelling commands a spotlight that reveals the nature of this element within this specific attraction. As an overall experience, the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance features a variety of performances. The emphasis placed upon performance in the queue marks its strengths in completing the illusion of its diegetic world.

The placement of animatronics sporadically around the queue is not an accessible option for every attraction or theme park operator. Designers and planners should *start with performative labor*. It is already a common expectation of theme park employees to attend to their job tasks while contributing in part to the storyworld (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 192). Designers and operators must support staff to ensure the methods in which employees

communicate the diegetic world are effortlessly executable. Training in the diegesis along with necessary job tasks and safety practices also assists in providing employees the tools they need to differentiate between a moment to provide story and when to help guests in need. Ideally, both can be achievable simultaneously. Employees, like guests, are nuanced. They exhibit immense creativity in understanding, interpreting, and performing the themes and stories expressed by their workplace, especially when provided with the tools and conditions to thrive (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 200).

Performance should foster relationship. Common elements like preshows and animatronics in the queue experience provide not only an opportunity to entertain guests but also a chance for guests to relate to characters that populate the storyworld. In the case of widely popular intellectual property, the chance to witness favorite characters in dialogue with guests, even when prerecorded, satisfies the aspirational design element of attractions. Even when characters are less well known, designers should embrace the opportunity to create a chance for guests to directly relate to those within the storyworld, helping to pull guests into the diegetic world they have chosen to enter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Due to economic and operational needs, queues are an inherent facet of the theme park experience (Alexander et al. 875; Ledbetter et al. 27; E. Nelson 56; Younger 470). Lengthy or poorly designed queues can detract from the overall experience and entertainment value of theme parks (Anton Clavé 353; Lewison 281; E. Nelson 50; Torres et al. 80). Research in queuing theory aims to address the negative impact of queues, offering solutions for the industries that utilize them. Leveraging established research, Ledbetter and his colleagues constructed eight guidelines that encourage features and operational practices to ease guest comfort in theme park queues. However, the guidelines fail to guide designers upon theme parks' prime operative: narrative placemaking.

In recent decades, the creations of "immersive themed lands" or diegetic worlds has increased, often bringing to life the locales and characters of popularized fiction. *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge and its enclosed attractions and offerings continue this model, producing an entirely new locale in the established *Star Wars* universe and canon. As part of its offerings, *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance allows guests to join the Resistance as "recruits" in a story-driven experience that begins in the queue before ever boarding a ride vehicle.

Among narrative-based art forms, theme parks are unique in their location-based, transmedia nature, offering guests the opportunity to experience the hyperdiegesis of favorite texts in multimedia hyperreal displays (Baker, "Summary of Explory" 5; Freitag 125; Hench and Van Pelt 56; Jenkins qtd. in Lukas, *The Immersive Worlds Handbook* 246; Waysdorf and Reijnders 174; Williams, *Theme Park Fandom* 103; Younger 11). A key aspect of theme parks, though, are their overall

experience, spanning hours, despite the rides that occupy them lasting only minutes (Geissler and Rucks 128, 131; King and O'Boyle 7).

Over time, theme parks have transitioned toward "immersive lands" or diegetic worlds, where the environment, narrative, and experience are steeped within the storyworld, adopting as much as possible in the fabricated reality of built fiction (Lancaster qtd. in Godwin, par. 1.2; Waysdorf and Reijnders 174; Williams, "From Star Tours to Galaxy's Edge" 142 and *Theme Park Fandom* 47; Younger 86). Designers accomplish this, in part, by maximizing diegetic and extra-diegetic elements while minimizing or masking non-diegetic features (Younger 84–85).

Gaming and interactive elements have increased their presence within theme parks in recent years, due in part to the prolific usage of smart devices where digital play is available nearly anywhere (Eddy et al. 37). Narrative's place within gaming, particularly in video games, has been a contentious discussion among ludologist and narratologist (Aarseth 49; Douglas 36–37; Eskelinen 36: Montfort 310, Murray 2). However, Jenkins's assertion that some games do tell stories—and they do so distinctly—frames gaming as a unique narrative medium ("Game Design" 119–20). Zimmerman, and Salen Tekinbaş broaden the spectrum in which to view narrative, interactivity, play, and games, ultimately suggesting an openness in which players explore, play, and consume narrative. Through this lens, gaming encompasses one form of interactivity out of a variety that may occur within the physical boundaries of the theme park.

To assuage the discomfort and dissatisfaction of guests waiting in queues, designers have employed a number of solutions, including switchbacks, shaded walkways, divided rooms, posted wait times, and extended theming (Anton Clavé 27; Geissler and Rucks 129, 137; Hench and Van Pelt 32; King, "The Disney Effect" 224–25; E. Nelson 49–50). These innovations naturally led to extending the entertainment value of the attraction through integrating story, narrative, and characters into queues (E. Nelson 51–53; Willams, *Theme Park Fandom* 75–76). With the emergence

of diegetic worlds in theme parks, queues have adopted the highly detailed qualities of their requisite lands, transforming the queue experience into an attraction-in-itself (Godwin, par. 3.5; Waysdorf and Reijnders 182). In turn, the need to ensure guest satisfaction, especially in the age of economically valuable paid priority queues, has cemented the need of theme park designers to not only include logistical considerations in queues but apply the same high degree of storytelling found in themed lands, retail locations, live entertainment, and ride attractions.

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance follows in the footsteps of this theme park trend, steeping guests within the established canon of the *Star Wars* universe while offering storytelling in a variety of forms throughout its queue. As one of the newest attractions to adopt this detailed level of storytelling, the attraction's queue provides an ideal case study to examine the diegetic experience and develop core design elements based upon its own design and that of research in related immersive entertainment fields.

Researching the "immersive experience" in immersive theatre, Rose Biggin based her inquiry around three pillars of the art form: narrative, interactivity, and environment. As differentials to immersive experience, they apply aptly to theme parks as well, especially those parks and lands that host diegetic worlds. These three pillars have been recontextualized and transformed into core design elements for theme park queues along with an added fourth—performance—each often overlapping in their execution. Referencing the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, these elements are given concrete examples of action in a theme park setting. Based upon the unique needs of theme parks, design considerations are assigned to each for future theme park designers and operators across a spectrum of budgets. They break down as the following:

- Environmental Design
  - Stay true to the design intent of the intellectual property
  - Embrace the non-diegetic in the diegesis
- Narrative
  - Begin the story upon entrance to the queue

- o   Embrace the non-diegetic in the diegesis
- Interactivity
  - o   Gaming elements are not required for interactive elements
  - o   Interactive interfaces do not always need to be digital
  - o   Craft interactive person-to-person experiences
- Performance
  - o   Start with performative labor
  - o   Performance should foster relationship

Environmental design is, arguably, the most discussed facet of theme park design. In the case of diegetic worlds, the environment must communicate the aesthetic of the narrative world, even if it explores a new locale within that world such as *Star Wars*: Galaxy's Edge or the Carkitt Market section of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter – Diagon Alley. While many of the newly established diegetic worlds by major theme park operators communicate a more realistic design, designers need not create only realistic spaces but should remain true to the aesthetic of the intellectual property so as to not produce a contradictory experience and inhibit guests' suspension of disbelief. The biggest challenge for designers is to embrace the non-diegetic elements and features into the diegetic environmental design. By doing this, designers reduce the experiential "seams" in which guests notice the artificiality of the experience. Complete diegesis is never the goal, but creators must not abuse guests' ability to overlook certain aspects of theme park placemaking (Younger 85).

Alongside environment, narrative is an oft-discussed aspect of theme park design; however, its utilization within queues tends to be uneven. Within the queue experience of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, excusing the Resistance Encampment experience, very little narrative is communicated to guests until the first preshow. Once the briefing with Rey begins, guests are presented with emerging story beats every step of the way. Through endowment by employees and prerecorded performers, guests are bestowed a role in the world that has canonical meaning, allowing guests to adopt their role in the storyworld and engage with the actor-operators in a fashion

befitting the world. Backstory is given through the Resistance Encampment game; however, agency is low, and environmental effects are nonexistent as objects do not react to actions like they do in the land outside the queue. Additionally, characters who acknowledge players in the game do not reference them in the queue or attraction experience. *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance affirms the need for story from the the very start to engage guests within its narrative world. The first part of the queue, prior to merge, relies far too heavily upon environmental design, and narrative is relegated to the optional app experience. As guests in standby queues often have more time to engage in a story than those who purchase priority queue access, they are free to be entertained through more narrative opportunities, which can manifest through a variety of methods and media.

Gaming continues to grow more prevalent both in the theme park medium and in immersive theatre (Baker, "Creative Choices," par. 1.2; Biggin 2; Godwin, par. 3.2). The popularity of digital play through personal smartphones has elevated these devices from disruptive technologies to interactive tools for locative play (Eddy et al. 37, 40). While many park operators including Disney have embraced this, designers should note that technology-based interactivity is not the only form of interactivity available. As theme parks are, first and foremost, a location-based art form, digital experiences do not satiate the desire of guests to experience physical activity and social interactions with the location's environment, characters, and employees. As exhibited through the Resistance Encampment experience, the need for broad appeal can tighten the gameplay experience, and the control of narrative can leave agency low for guests to choose from a range of possibilities. However, through person-to-person interactions, creativity and improvisation allow for a wider range of possible inputs and outputs by both guests and operators. Often, diegetic worlds are ones inhabited by some form of population; guests enter into this populated world ready to interact with it, albeit in an ultimately playful manner for the purpose of entertainment. Methods to generate low-cost, low-tech interactivity include printed materials and guidebooks, similar to the Wilderness

Explorers experience at Disney's Animal Kingdom Theme Park, which also allows guests to engage with person-to-person interactivity and experience the performance of actor-operators.

Once guests enter the first preshow room in the queue of *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance, they are beginning a journey filled with a variety of performances, including video, audio, animatronic, and live. Often not as acknowledged as its material components, performance stands as an integral aspect of theming and one that enhances the queue experience (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 184, 186). Notably, *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance employs the use of Hollywood actors to aid in its prerecorded video, a constraint for many theme park operators without the necessary resources or budget. This is why performative labor, an already established dimension of theme park operation, is ideal for designers to consider. Out of the four core design elements, performance begets some of the most challenges. To start, employee improvisation and embrace of thematic storytelling can diverge from operators' and designers' intents, generating the sense that employees have gone "too far" or behave in a way that contradicts the hospitable nature expected of theme park employees (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 190, 193). Because of this, theme parks attempt to recruit, train, and promote employees who not only can perform the designated function—such as retail or attraction operation—but also can dependably and believably express the stories and themes of the requisite land and park (189–90). Also while doing so, theme park operators must avoid discrimination of employees when hiring for such roles (192).

Traditionally, theme parks hire employees to perform a specific task while also training these employees to communicate story and theming in their role. Because of this, employees strategically juggle multiple roles and tasks while ensuring the safety of guests, communicating the story-driven atmosphere, and satisfying guest expectations (Lukas, "How the Theme Park Gets Its Power" 184). When performance is the sole task, theme parks will employ character actors and performers, but

this does not discount the performative work of other types of employees. As guests' taste and expectations rise, the performance ability of guest-facing employees must also reach new heights, especially within these diegetic worlds where guests desire to interact within the hyperdiegesis of their favorite stories. This can result in several options. The first is to distinctly divide between performance tasks and necessary service tasks. *Star Wars*: Rise of the Resistance already utilizes this to some extent by having workers rotate through roles. At some points, employees portray a First Order officer storming onto the Resistance I-TS Transport ship. At other times, they separate parties, still maintaining the story but through their efficient separation of guests before the next story beat. This divide eventually could carve out performer-only roles, where those specially trained can take over interactions entirely as seen in attractions like Universal's Islands of Adventure's Poseidon's Fury. In this attraction, a performer solely tackles the role of character, ushering guests along the story while playing across from the environment and prerecorded performances. Less noticeable are employees who serve an almost stage manager-like role, ensuring guests remain in safe areas and do not travel beyond designated sections. Even in these circumstances, though, designers must, once again, imbue the non-diegetic with diegesis.

Other concerns around performative labor include casting. As previously stated, operators must ensure that discrimination never occurs in the hiring of employees. Yet in roles that require specific skills, like performance, they must find ways to employ those who can portray the story and themes in a convincing manner. While hiring specially trained talent proves an obvious option, theme parks may also need to invest in more rigorous training methods for the purposes of storytelling. Also, depending on jurisdiction, theme parks may have to contend with labor unions for performers and other performance talent. To ensure a proper balance, this is where a variety of performance options can help to ensure that this element is viable by balancing between live, audio, video, and animatronic.

Note, though, that performance proves better when quality is focused over quantity. For smaller operators, there is no need to employ a literal army of talented actor-operators to tell a story. Performance already occurs in solo acts, such as spiels and live entertainment. Solo performers within the queue experience can still satisfy this core design element for theme parks. Also, if cost is more effective for prerecorded performance, these can be used to offset the lack of live, in-person talent. No matter the method chosen, designers should consider the storyworld, the quality of the performance, and the methods that will most engage their audiences. As illustrated in Chapter Four, the core design elements often overlap, and quality performance can help satisfy so many of the core elements of theme park queues by embedding interactivity and narrative through the performance.

As theme parks continue to craft more diegetic worlds while sufficiently entertaining guests, the design of queues as attractions themselves will only increase. This especially applies as theme parks continue to embrace the paid priority queue pass as an income generator. To not alienate guests who experience standby queues while delivering the promised product of cultural and narrative landscapes, designers must embrace diegesis, even in the process of waiting for an attraction. King and O'Boyle insist that rides are a short part of theme park experience (7). In the end, immersively built and narratively fulfilling queues deliver upon their edict that "a theme park without rides is still a theme park" (7).

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