

14. From Transmedia Storytelling to Transmedia Experience

Star Wars Celebration as a Crossover/Hierarchical Space

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To date, transmedia storytelling has been analyzed formally, in terms of whether it promotes diegetic coherence or expansion,¹ as well as politically, in terms of how it articulates capitalist values.² Transmedia has also been theorized via audience productivity³ and memory.⁴ Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that transmedia extensions occur within a proliferating, ubiquitous screen culture, the issue of transmedia's locatedness in space and place has generally been under-explored. Only the subcategory of transmedia storytelling dubbed "Alternate Reality Games" (ARGs) has tended to merit analysis of extra-diegetic spatiality and how this is utilized within the ARG's real-world gameplay.⁵ Otherwise, transmedia is assumed to float free of spatial constraints, flowing across devices, platforms, and varied screen media.⁶

However, this assumption does not match up with embodied and spatialized realities of transmedia branding/storytelling. Media tourism, for example, can involve the extension of film and television narratives through located performances forming part of an "experience economy."⁷

1 See Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006) and Matthew Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling: Early Twentieth Century Transmedia Story Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

2 See Dan Hassler-Forest, *Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Politics: Transmedia World-building Beyond Capitalism* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

3 See Benjamin W.L. Derhy Kurtz and Mélanie Bourdaa, *The Rise of Transtexts: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

4 See Colin B Harvey, *Fantastic Transmedia: Narrative, Play and Memory Across Science Fiction and Fantasy Storyworlds* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

5 See Paul Booth, *Digital Fandom: New Media Studies* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) and Stephanie Janes, "'You Had to Be There': Alternate Reality Games and Multiple Durational Temporalities," in *The Politics of Ephemeral Digital Media: Permanence and Obsolescence in Paratexts*, ed. Sara Pesce and Paolo Noto, (New York: Routledge, 2016).

6 See Mark Bould "Doctor Who: Adaptations and Flows" in *Science Fiction Film, Television and Adaptation*, ed. J.P. Telotte and Gerald Duchovnay (New York: Routledge 2012), 152.

7 See B. Joseph Pine and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

The *Doctor Who Experience* based in Cardiff from 2012-2017 enabled fans to physically interact with a diegetic expansion and enactment of the Whoniverse. The *Harry Potter Studio Tour London* also enables fans to imaginatively “enter” diegetic spaces that are simultaneously physical spaces; it is necessary to travel to Leavesden to do so. In a sense, then, such media tourism can be thought of as transmedia tourism, and as Matthew Freeman has recently noted:

This attraction [...] allows audiences to visit the sets, props and costumes created for the films. As well as seeing the spaces from the story world in person, such as Privet Drive, the home street of Harry Potter [...] those audiences can also extract many of the physical artefacts from the story world by purchasing the likes of Butterbeer, Gryffyndor [sic] scarfs [...] and wands.⁸

Here, transmedia storytelling facilitates a sense of the storyworld operating as if it were real and as if diegetic materials could become “extractable,”⁹ i.e., capable of ontologically moving out of diegetic realms and into extra-diegetic spaces.¹⁰

Given Star Wars’s powerful links to merchandising, it has, of course, rarely been short of its own geographically and spatially located transmedia tourism, in the form of assorted exhibitions or displays occurring over time. Disney theme-park attraction *Star Tours* has offered a prime space for transmedia tourism and will soon be joined by *Star Wars Land* at Walt Disney World and Disneyland, a theme-park arena that promises to allow visitors to “fly” a life-size *Millennium Falcon* and to enter the Mos Eisley Cantina, among other delights.¹¹ If one mode of transmedia storytelling does indeed “flow” across spaces, then it should be apparent that a rival class of franchised *transmedia experience* remains, by definition, rooted in specific physical locations. In fact, located transmedia can confer value on these very places, positioning them as symbolically hallowed or “auratic” sites to which fans travel by way of “pilgrimage.”¹²

8 Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling*, 30.

9 Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling*, 30.

10 Bob Rehak, “Materializing Monsters: Aurora Models, Garage Kits and the Object Practices of Horror Fandom,” *Journal of Fandom Studies* 1, no. 1 (2013): 29.

11 Secret Cinema Presents The Empire Strikes Back also offered a Cantina experience in the lead-up to its “immersive cinema” production in 2015, though this occurred in Shoreditch Town Hall, East London, rather than inside an official Disney venue.

12 Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 144.

In this chapter, I want to address one example of a Star Wars transmedia experience: the Star Wars Celebration event which has been run periodically by Lucasfilm since 1999 and which now features almost annually in Disney's roster of events. Having attended Star Wars Celebration Europe 2016 at the ExCeL in London,¹³ I am interested in how the Celebration—as an official, corporatized convention—engages with multiple iterations of the Star Wars franchise. At times, Celebration Europe 2016 almost felt like a Star Wars trade show aimed at promoting and selling every officially licensed incarnation of the franchise to its established or new fans. Given that fact, I will begin by examining the transmedia completism on show at Star Wars Celebration (hereafter Celebration) and how it blurs together different versions of the franchise. I will then move on to consider how the event becomes auto-commemorative, as fans are encouraged to purchase a vast array of “show exclusive” merchandise that demonstrate the “extractability” not just of pseudo-diegetic merchandise but also of souvenirs that position Celebration as auratic. Its incessantly commemorative, nostalgic use of spatiality both reflects the integrative “transmedia economy” put in place by Disney,¹⁴ but also implicitly restores an older, hierarchical model of transmedia storytelling set up by Lucasfilm. First, though, how does this official fan convention navigate its status as singularly brand-focused?

The Crossover Space of Star Wars Celebration as a Mono-Brand Convention

Although fan conventions have arguably received less attention in contemporary fan studies than online fan practices, when work has explored the material culture of “Cons” then it has frequently focused on multi-fannish events bringing together fans of different film franchises, television shows,

13 See Emma Pett, “Cosplay Rey: Intergenerational fandom and the importance of play at the 2016 Star Wars Celebration, London,” *Deletion* 12 (November 24, 2016), <http://www.deletionscifi.org/episodes/episode-12/cosplay-rey-intergenerational-fandom-and-the-importance-of-play-at-the-2016-star-wars-celebration-london/>, for another critical account of Star Wars Celebration Europe 2016.

14 William Proctor and Matthew Freeman, “The First Step into a *Smaller World*: The Transmedia Economy of *Star Wars*” in *Revisiting Imaginary Worlds*, ed. Mark J.P. Wolf (New York: Routledge, 2016), 234.

anime, comics, and so on.¹⁵ Barbara Brownie and Danny Graydon also tackle this type of multi-fannish convention when they argue that:

The fan convention is typically a crossover space. Its participants are aware of multiple fictional universes, and those universes share the same physical space in the convention venue. As cosplayers move through this space, different fictional universes become blended in the same physical [location]. [...] This [...] is a condition that allows crossover fiction to occur.¹⁶

Yet, since Celebration involves only Star Wars it might be said that no such blurring or blending of diegetic material can occur in the extra-diegetic spaces of the convention hall. In contrast to the likes of San Diego Comic-Con or even London Film and Comic Con, Celebration offers a corporate sense of “full control” over the context in which Star Wars’s branded goods are encountered: “Disney and Lucasfilm’s profits extend beyond ticket sales to concessions and branded merchandise. And there’s nothing to distract fans from consuming that ‘Star Wars’ culture.”¹⁷

However, pitting multi-fannish conventions against mono-branded events (in a binary of “crossover storyworlds” versus a sort of “walled diegesis”) fails to perceive how different kinds of crossover and storyworld blurring can occur at Celebration. Such official events can gather together under one roof, or perhaps in one hall, every commercially available (and soon-to-be-available) version of a media franchise. At Celebration Europe 2016, presentations of Star Wars LEGO abutted those of the Star Wars Battlefront game; realistic Black Series action figures aimed at collectors were adjacent to Funko Pop’s highly stylized and cartoonish character renderings, and not far from Hot Wheels’s character-inspired diecast toy cars; tie-in novels were side-by-side with spin-off comics; and promotions for the then-forthcoming live-action film *Rogue One* and the animated

15 See, e.g., Louisa Ellen Stein (2015) *Millennial Fandom* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 171-176 on “LeakyCon”; Lincoln Geraghty, *Cult Collectors: Nostalgia, Fandom and Collecting Popular Culture* (London: Routledge 2014), 93-119 on San Diego Comic-Con and 143-148 on Memorabilia/Collectormania; and Jen Gunnels “‘A Jedi like my father before me’: Social identity and the New York Comic Con,” *Transformative Works and Cultures* 3 (2009), accessed April 2, 2017, doi: 10.3983, on New York Comic-Con.

16 Barbara Brownie and Danny Graydon, *The Superhero Costume: Identity and Disguise in Fact and Fiction* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 112.

17 Kate Erbland, “Star Wars Celebration: What Other Studios And Festivals Can Learn About Balancing Art And Fan Service,” *IndieWire*, July 20, 2016, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.indiewire.com/2016/07/star-wars-celebration-europe-2016-art-fan-service-1201706742/>.

Rebels series shared promotional spaces. Whether repurposed for LEGO fans,¹⁸ devotees of cute reversionings, or proponents of a darker Star Wars, all the differently merchandised versions of transmedia Star Wars collide at Celebrations. As such, the event offers fans a smorgasbord of storyworld options and fetishized diegetic objects—a transmedia experience that could be touched and photographed as well as purchased, thus furnishing fans with a sense of “haptic-panoptic control over images (and perhaps feelings) that formerly sped past them during [...] viewing.”¹⁹

As Nicolle Lamerichs has noted, the fan convention is a constructed site “in which the place is arranged to have connections to fiction.”²⁰ Yet, Celebration Europe 2016 was constructed to have connections to all of Disney’s different merchandised pathways into and out of the Star Wars films and television series, displaying a level of paratextual and transmedia completism for fans to revel in. Indeed, at *TheForce.net*’s Jedi Council Forums, fans compiled a list of all the “CE 16” show exclusives that were available. The auratic status of the event for fans²¹ was therefore partly premised on gaining access to star actors and subcultural celebrity producers/performers, along with being among the first to learn Star Wars news.²² But it was also produced through the fact that all current versions of the franchise were represented via their physical co-presence and highly unusual spatial adjacency.

Although fan-targeted stores such as Forbidden Planet tend to gather together Star Wars books, toys, comics, and other merchandise, there are product lines that they typically do not carry (e.g. video games), just as toy stores such as Toys“R”Us also exclude specific product ranges (e.g. tie-in novels). But at Celebration it does not matter if you are interested in a DK guidebook or a Del Rey/Penguin novel—Star Wars’s transmedia extensions are fully arrayed together. Of course, not all fans will consume all the various incarnations and expansions; as Cornel Sandvoss has observed, it is

18 Geraghty, *Cult Collectors*, 168–178 and Mark J.P. Wolf, chapter in this volume.

19 Kurt Lancaster, *Interacting with Babylon 5: Fan Performance in a Media Universe* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001), 102.

20 Nicolle Lamerichs, “Embodied Fantasy: The Affective Space of Anime Conventions,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures*, ed. Linda Duits, Koos Zwaan and Stijn Reijnders (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 268.

21 Geraghty, *Cult Collectors*, 96.

22 Jason Scott, “From Behind the Masks to Inside: Acting, Authenticity and the *Star Wars* Co-Stars,” in *Cult Film Stardom: Offbeat Attractions and Processes of Cultification*, ed. Kate Egan and Sarah Thomas (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

common for fans to construct a sense of their own fan object by accepting some versions of it while rejecting others.²³

And so visitors to Celebration, then, can plot their own specific pathways through the halls and exhibits in line with their specific interests. Even while doing so, however, one unavoidably walks past and physically encounters versions of Star Wars that are perhaps less familiar or possibly even charged with nostalgia. Despite not having collected Topps Star Wars trading cards since the age of ten or so, I particularly enjoyed the Topps stand, for example, and its show-exclusive merchandising. By bringing together such a proliferation of licensed paratexts, Celebration Europe positions fans as simultaneously nostalgic and current consumers, both opening a door to transmedia memories of Star Wars comics and cards from childhood²⁴ and cueing transmedia recollections of recent novels or television series.²⁵ The density of this transmedia experience is very much akin to one possible future for transmedia envisaged by Matthew Freeman when he writes of “experiential convergence, bringing together [...] multiple stories and multiple pieces of different types of media content—text, audio, comics, video, game etc.—within the same [space], [...] bringing together different forms of engagements, pleasures and media experiences.”²⁶ If Celebration can be said to act as a “crossover space,”²⁷ then it is exactly as a crossover of assorted media pleasures and experiences aligned with the Star Wars brand. Freeman’s future of transmedia is already here, not only in the example he gives (Blu-ray menu screens and hidden extras), but also in the form of corporatized and mass-attendance fan conventions.²⁸

Writing about the *Doctor Who Experience (DWE)* in Cardiff, Paul Booth argues that this transmedia tourist attraction uses “convergent incorporation” to proffer a “commercialized incorporation of the fan experience.”²⁹ That is, fans interactively immerse themselves in the franchise by accumulating knowledge about its fictional universe and/or creating their own fictions, but the paid-for *Experience* shapes a specific version of “immersion” and

23 Cornel Sandvoss, *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 131-132.

24 Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts*, New York: New York University Press, 2010), 184.

25 Harvey, *Fantastic Transmedia*, 146.

26 Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling*, 199-200.

27 Brownie and Graydon, *The Superhero Costume*, 112.

28 Celebration Europe 2016 was rumored to host around 60,000 attendees across its three days; see Erbland, “Star Wars Celebration,” 2016.

29 Paul Booth, *Playing Fans: Negotiating Fandom and Media in the Digital Age* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), 103.

pre-scripted interaction whereby fans are required to play their part and behave in appropriately disciplined ways. As Booth puts it, “Engagement is key to convergent incorporation. The *DWE* is effective at convergent incorporation not only because it offers a ‘safe zone’ of fannish enthusiasm but also because it sequesters fandom into a particular arena.”³⁰

Although Celebration Europe is a very different kind of transmedia experience—one built out of memories and promotions of multiple transmedia storytelling/branding—it too represents a “safe zone” of fan sentiment and a sequestering of fandom. As if being shepherded through an interactive “walkthrough adventure” (part of the *DWE*), fans at Celebration are disciplined into playing their part. Anyone who wants to visit the official Celebration Store, for instance, has to tolerate a lengthy wait in the queue unless they have privileged access. Anyone wanting to attend the Celebration Stage talks—e.g. Mark Hamill, Anthony Daniels, or Carrie Fisher, along with an opening day session promoting *Rogue One* and a closing session on “Future Filmmakers”—similarly needs to have queued very early in the morning in order to secure an entry wristband. Celebration has its rules and systems and attendees are required to observe them. On occasions, one uncovers a feeling of profound resignation rather than joyous celebration—that this is just what large corporate conventions are like and if you want the pleasures of access and exclusivity based on being there, then you simply have to put up with endemic queueing, extremely early starts, bad/expensive food, and so on. There are 594 reviews of Star Wars Celebration Europe 2016 on *TripAdvisor.com*—hardly a niche fan space—and many complain about the ExCeL’s facilities and the queue times, with one contributor summing up:

The ExCel is exactly like every other convention hall I’ve been to [...] They just can’t cater for so many people all having lunch at the same time [...] A convention is hot, sweaty with lots of queuing. That’s pretty much guaranteed [...] My only peeve is how much the eateries charge, it is extortionate for pretty average food with shabby service. Again, unfortunately this is the same at all conventions.

Whether thought of as “experiential convergence” or “convergent incorporation,” Celebration is evidently not always experienced as celebratory. Warm-up hosts address the Celebration Stage spectators prior to the Star Wars guests coming on stage, for example, working to ensure that an on-brand level of excitement is forthcoming from the crowd. At the same time, fans

30 Booth, *Playing Fans*, 121.

are insistently addressed as “one of us,” with media professionals displaying their fandom:

More than anything, Celebration pushes the notion that “Star Wars” isn’t just *for* any and all fans, it’s made by them too. From Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy to “Rebels” co-creator Dave Filoni, the sentiment that everyone who works on every “Star Wars” property is a massive fan of the universe is a common refrain. It was also a major theme of panel presentations featuring freshly minted directors like Gareth Edwards, Rian Johnson, Phil Lord and Chris Miller, all of whom shared stories about how much the original films meant to them.³¹

Celebratory Star Wars fandom and celebrations of fandom are hence constantly reiterated for attendees; celebration is the default affective performance. Yet, fan blogs and *TripAdvisor.com* reviews alike testify to aspects of the event’s misery and restrictiveness, where positive sentiment can only be achieved “despite” the commercialism, the hyping of new product, the constant queuing, and a need for “absurdly” early starts. As another fan blog similarly and more succinctly says in a *Spoiler Alert* review: “It was, as expected, crowded, expensive but damn right worth it.” Celebration’s disciplining of fans may appear ostensibly successful, yet it is achieved grudgingly, with many attendees exhibiting not univocal fan fervor, but, rather, a mixture of resigned annoyance and fannish passion. By contrast, the on-brand fandom of star actors, Lucasfilm executives, and Story Group members is resolutely upbeat. Even if these performances of fandom from the stage are entirely genuine, their unrelenting positivity nevertheless casts them as somewhat faux or posed. The fandom of paying customers seems more rebellious, more defiant, and more alert to the dark side of commercial exploitation.

Thus far, I have argued that Celebration Europe 2016 can be thought of as a transmedia experience rather than as transmedia storytelling: it auratically housed different mediated pleasures and transmedia expansions of the franchise within one event and, at one site, including commodified and professionalized fan art. But Celebration was not only a “crossover space” bringing and blurring together varied extensions of Star Wars, it also played a role in spatializing the hierarchies of the franchise’s “transmedia economy,” as I will now show.

31 Erbland, “Star Wars Celebration,” 2016.

Star Wars Celebration as an Auto-Commemorative and Hierarchical Convention

Celebration may be, in part, a collaged promotion of transmedia storytelling where even the Lucasfilm Story Group has its own on-stage session, but it is not only a celebration of Star Wars's many iterations and extensions. Fans are also encouraged to celebrate being there at the event itself.³² As well as paid-for photo opportunities and autograph sessions with celebrities, there are also chances to queue up and pose for a range of souvenir photos, whether astride Rey's speeder from *The Force Awakens*, standing in a gigantic replica of an action figure's card-backing (the illusory result of which is to make the person standing there appear to be an action figure), or participating in the Disney SnapCube photo booth, which automatically composites the Celebration logo into one's image. The SnapCube souvenir thus combines official event branding with indexical evidence of "being there," creating a branded authenticity that is entirely of a piece with the official merchandise on sale in the Celebration Store. Fans are not simply placed in a *mélange* of Star Wars transmedia; they are also placed photographically within Celebration's brand identity.

In addition, *Rogue One* costumes, props, and models were on display, with this exhibition serving to promote the latest film in the franchise. Fans could commemorate their presence at Celebration by snapping away in front of Death Troopers, for example. Likewise, fans fortunate enough to gain access to the *Rogue One* panel on the Celebration Stage on Friday, July 15, were given movie posters when they left the auditorium, making this an "extractable" souvenir of having been there. By contrast, fans who watched the panel screened on the second-tier stage, the Galaxy Stage, or in the Exhibitors' Hall, were not presented with a souvenir poster: this "gift" was strictly a marker of exclusivity, rewarding those who had successfully queued for entry wristbands.

We should not, therefore, view "extractability"³³ only as a matter of pseudo-diegetic merchandise that works to create the impression for fans that they have materially and physically entered diegetic space. This "object practice" of ontological bridging³⁴ is not just a part of transmedia tourism such as the *Doctor Who Experience* or *Star Tours*, given that a related practice

32 Matt Hills, *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Event—Marketing, Merchandising and Mediatizing a Brand Anniversary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 72.

33 Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling*, 30.

34 Rehak, "Materializing Monsters."

also forms part of Celebration's auto-commemorative activities. That is, fans are encouraged to take away mementoes from ExCeL London, especially materialized memories in the form of assorted photo opportunities. "Being there" at the auratic event can thus cross over into fans' everyday lives, blurring sacred and profane or extraordinary/ordinary culture. Other kinds of pre-structured souvenirs are, of course, provided by the many "show exclusives" that can be bought from exhibitors as well as in the Celebration Store.

And yet, there is one aspect of CE16's locatedness that is strangely glossed over by the event's key branding and auto-commemoration: its specific presence in London. When Celebration is based in the US, it is named after the host city; 2015 was Celebration Anaheim (Celebration events had previously been numbered, as if they were akin to instalments or episodes in the Star Wars saga itself). 2017, in turn, was named Celebration Orlando. Celebration Europe, however, retained this designation from the first CE event at the ExCeL in 2007 (CEII occurred in Essen, Germany, in 2013). The result of naming US cities yet exnominating London—at least in the official and on-brand title—is that America is defined as the unspoken, taken-for-granted home of Star Wars as a franchise. Different world cities are not placed on an even footing with regards to Star Wars Celebration; labelling some years as "Celebration Europe" or "Celebration Japan" demarcates them relationally as not-American. By contrast, hosting events at named US cities reinforces a sense that "Celebration America" can always remain unstated, with the US instead being wholly obvious and naturalized as the home of Star Wars. Some might argue that the UK at least has a claim to this designation, given that Pinewood Studios hosted production of *The Force Awakens* and *Rogue One*, with the original trilogy produced at Elstree in Borehamwood and *The Phantom Menace* utilizing Leavesden Studios. However, Pinewood's recent involvement was barely acknowledged in CE16's official merchandise, though the Pinewood Studios-based "Creature Shop" was featured in a Celebration Stage talk, "The Creatures, Droids & Aliens of Star Wars: The Force Awakens" on Saturday, July 16, whilst the ExCeL's relative proximity to Pinewood was also noted in the event's program book. Despite the President of Lucasfilm, Kathleen Kennedy, penning a sharply on-brand, celebratory message in the printed program that the UK is Star Wars's "second home," there is no doubt of its first home, given the manner in which this is structured into the very nomenclature of Celebration events.

But the largely unspoken US-centrism of Celebration is not the only hierarchy underpinning Celebration Europe 2016. The show's commemorative guide includes a rundown of different stages, beginning with the

Celebration Stage and concluding with the One Force Stage. The Celebration Stage/Auditorium is described as follows:

[it] will shine with the biggest shows and presentations of the weekend. Hosted by Celebration fan favorite and actor Warwick Davis, the Celebration Stage will present the not-to-be-missed productions [...] DJ Elliott and Mark Daniel will get the stage rocking before every performance. Get your seat early.

Following this up is the Galaxy Stage, which acts as an overflow screening venue for some of the Celebration Stage events such as the “Future Filmmakers Panel,” but also offers “a wide variety of panels and presentations that cover the depth and breadth of the Star Wars universe.” Thirdly, the Behind-the-Scenes Stage—rather curiously named since both preceding Stages serve this role just as well—is described as “hosting guests who made it happen for the movies, television, toys, books, comics and more.”

Disney’s model of an integrative rather than hierarchical Star Wars “transmedia economy”³⁵ runs counter to how Lucasfilm had previously valued George Lucas’s films, or “G-canon,” over events described in the EU of television shows, books, comics, and beyond. At the same time, Celebration continues to implicitly value the films over other media. The Celebration Stage is clearly presented as the main venue and it hosted talks with Mark Hamill, Anthony Daniels, and Carrie Fisher. One talk focused on *Rebels* and another on EA Games, but the considerable majority of “not-to-be-missed productions” were strongly oriented around Star Wars films of the past, present, and near-future. The “breadth and depth” of Star Wars transmedia only begins to be gestured at by the second-tier Galaxy stage, and it is notable that the EU texts are only explicitly referenced when introducing the third-tier Behind-the-Scenes stage. The transmedia experience offered to fans is, I would argue, very much coded hierarchically through the use of these differently sized and identified venues. Film comes first. Current television and video productions are admitted into the “premier league” of transmedia storytelling, but seemingly only somewhat begrudgingly; they certainly are not placed spatially on an even footing with Star Wars’s cinematic presence. Comics, books, and other transmedia expansions are relegated to secondary or tertiary status—these are very much made to feel as if they are *not* the main event and are there for subgroups and niches of attendees who may be interested.

35 Proctor and Freeman, “First Step into a *Smaller World*” 234.

In this implied hierarchy, fan-oriented stages are at the bottom of the league, with the Star Wars Fan and Collectors' Stage and the One Force Stage listed last. Unlike the Celebration Stage's promise to "shine with the biggest shows" and "not-to-be-missed productions," the One Force Stage is described in the printed program far more matter-of-factly in just two lines of text: "Presented by Jedi News [...] Enjoy podcasts, DIY cosplay presentations and more." Thus, there is a pronounced tension between the way Celebration is introduced by Kathleen Kennedy and the Celebration Team—both focusing on the fans and on the event as "by fans for fans"—and the politics of spatiality within the ExCeL, where major spaces are predominantly occupied by commercial exhibitors and by film-related marketing "reveals" and promos. Although this auratic event is undoubtedly a kind of transmedia experience, amply demonstrating the "experiential convergence" set out by Freeman,³⁶ it is also very much a hierarchical experience. Specific versions (and media) of current Star Wars are not more canonical than others in Disney's official discourses, but the movies nonetheless remain performatively and spatially dominant at Celebration.

In this chapter, I have argued that we need to consider transmedia not just as storytelling but also as a kind of experience; not just as a "flow" across platforms and screens, but as potentially and spatially located. Celebration offers one instance of how transmedia experience can possess a "crossover" quality, even at an official mono-branded convention. At the same time, the politics of convention space and place can work to prioritize films as primary texts at such events, over and above transmedia extensions, even where Disney discourses supposedly view all of these as part of a flattened, non-hierarchical transmedia economy. Transmedial hierarchies—in line with Lucasfilm's prior "G-canon"—can hence be tacitly restored within the commemorative Celebration event. Offering a completist's commercial and paratextual inventory of Star Wars's transmedia experiences,³⁷ Celebration spatializes and renders auratic the commodity-completism that it wishes to incite amongst dedicated, disciplined fans.

36 Freeman, *Historicising Transmedia Storytelling*, 200.

37 Geraghty, *Cult Collectors*, 97.