

“Storytelling [...] is [...] not merely a simulacrum of iterative colonial categorization...”: engaging Indigenous futurism for queer Indigenous futures in video games.

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Keywords

queer Indigenous gamers, Indigenous futurism, Colonial Project of Gender, storytelling, representation.

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous resilience and actions are a continuous opposition against the *Modern/Colonial System of Gender* (Lugones, 2011) and *Colonial Project of Gender* (O’Sullivan, 2021) that seek to not only undermine but also to erase them (O’Sullivan, 2022; Marcos, 2017). It is a historical reality that has been present since the moment of the European colonization of the continent now known as Australia and continues to be practice in the present day through multiple ways of showing strength and continuity of Indigenous lives and cultures. The multifaceted world and worldbuilding of Indigenous futurisms are a clear example that presents the argument in favour of not only considering the resilience and survival but also a thriving and successful continuous socialization in ways of living and relating (James, 2016; Murphy, 2016). Mainly due to it being a statement on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and community in a continuous existence from their multiples present into ways of future being. Therefore, this projection into many and varied futures presents a different truth to the one being pushed by the *System* and the *Project*. However, it is not only in the literary and artistic world that these actions have a place. The common and active presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the different digital platforms, as well as their inventiveness and connectivity (Carlson & Frazer, 2021) are prime examples of their digital involvement. Furthermore, their participation with video games as players, producers, and streamers, among other roles, shows their close and thriving connection with the latest digital media. At the same time, Indigenous theorists have created forms of game sovereignty that enable storytelling to take place without falling into detached or tokenistic forms of knowledge and representation (LaPennsée et al, 2021; Loban, 2023)

Therein lies the importance of understanding the connections between queer Indigenous critique, Indigenous futurism, and video games in so-called Australia, which is the main objective of this presentation. If I am to consider the vision that this digital media is the latest and most technological way of media communication, as it is presented in an evolutionary linear understanding (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2018), then Indigenous futurism works to question the implications imbedded in that believe, particularly ideas about queer Indigenous presents, and agency. At the same time, considering how queer Indigenous perspectives can and are being included in the different forms of storytelling enabled by the different video game genres, allows for

Proceedings of DiGRA Australia 2024

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multiple and inclusive paths into materializing virtually these futures. I will follow Farrell (2023) in understanding the self-determination relevance of knowledge produced by queer Indigenous peoples regarding their own digital pushback against the *Project and System* and I will work on understanding how queer Indigenous sovereignty plays through their video game experiences. In turn, the digital materialization created by queer Indigenous people through Indigenous futurisms can turn into real expressions of Indigenous futures. All these possible digital and real paths relate to the projection of transmedia communications that are a part of worldbuilding possibilities, where Indigenous gamers, streamers, and programmers continue proposing presents and futures where queer Indigenous perspectives and realities thrive.

BIO

Leandro Wallace (he/him/él) is a non-Indigenous PhD Candidate at the Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University, originally from Argentina, in Abya Yala. He works with Prof. Sandy O’Sullivan in their Project “Saving Lives: Mapping the influence of Indigenous LGBTIQ+ creative artists” focusing on experiences and resistances of queer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gamers. In his work, he looks to connect the anti-colonial Indigenous practices and theorizing of both geopolitical spaces: Abya Yala and the continent known as Australia. Leandro is also an Editor-member of the International Online Journal “EnGender!”, co-organizer of their annual Conference, and co-host and co-producer of the podcast “EnGender Conversations”.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to acknowledge the funding provided by the Project “Saving Lives: Mapping the influence of Indigenous LGBTIQ+ creative artists” run by Prof. Sandy O’Sullivan through the Macquarie University Research Excellence Scholarship, that enable for this research to take place.

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