

"It's a Magical Place: Transmedial Counternarratives in the Whedonverse"

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With the release of Marvel's *Avengers*, Joss Whedon moved from his position as cult auteur to a more widely known name in Entertainment by way of an inherently transmedial text, over which Whedon had broad, but not total, creative control. Further, he was tasked to tell a story that was rooted in a storyworld not his own. At the same time that he moved into this wider audience, he also decided to tell another story not his own—this time Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, and therefore, this time to a once again much smaller audience. Perhaps the conventional interpretation of this simultaneity is to view Whedon as a jack-of-all-trades, but I argue here that *Much Ado About Nothing* provides a subtext to his smaller, cult-driven audience—one of inclusion into that smaller narrative system. With alum from all of his major television shows among the cast, and well as an inner look into his very home, Whedon gestures toward his fans with a much more intimate iteration of his interlocking, inherently transmedial narrative 'verse(s). This gesture, I contend, emerges as a counternarrative that challenges the sweeping epic of the hero narrative with a quiet commentary on the quotidian.