Natural Habitat.

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, 2007.
DECLARATION:

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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**ABSTRACT:**

The research herein relates to the development and ideology behind the creative piece *Natural Habitat*, and is concerned with exploring effective narrative techniques. The goal of this research is to provide a methodology towards creating effective narrative in the medium of hypertext by developing a better understanding of how narrative functions.

The research explores the social and cognitive elements of narrative, and the manner in which structure impacts the understanding and development of narrative. The genre boundaries of medium and content are explored to gain an understanding of reader preference and expectation. The concept of reader expectation is then applied to multiform narrative in order to understand its functionality, before the question of effective combination of these elements is raised in regards to the medium of hypertext. This methodology is then implemented in the piece *Natural Habitat*, testing the merit of this approach in the resulting work of fiction.
Natural Habitat is a story describing the journey four friends make through the Amazon jungle after surviving a plane crash. Isolated and in a hostile environment, the four survivors find themselves slipping into surreal worlds that seem futuristic, fantastic, horrific, and tinged with noir. Some begin to question their sanity, while others adapt to their environs readily, but each faces their darker side as the fears in their minds begin to play out on the landscape around them. Fighting to survive, their only chance is to find each other and to conquer their inner demons.

The story is both the exploration and implementation of the arguments of the thesis, with the research guiding the construction of the story from planning, through initial writings and up to the final presentation. Natural Habitat itself is presented as a traditional novel and a piece of hypertext, facilitating comparative analysis between the two mediums.
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