Electronic Screens in Film Diegesis: Modality Modes and Qualifying Aspects of a Formation Enhanced by the Post-digital Era

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Contents

4.1   Screens and Frameworks

Examining phenomena of intermediality (with)in moving images requires supplementary methods imposed by the current post-digital era that "no longer seeks technical innovation or improvement, but considers digitization something that already happened and can be played with" (Cramer

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2013). Besides the most basic substratum of media history and/or philosophical aesthetic theory—as introduced by Paech (2011), Pethő (2011) and Bruhn and Gjelsvik (2018) in the analysis of filmic intermediality—insights from semiotics, communication theory and narratology need to be invoked and combined systematically. Media history and philosophical aesthetics allow for cataloguing the cases of twenty-first-century communication technological and media cultural developments being incorporated, with a relative easiness and rapidity, by filmic diegesis[1] originally formatted for the analogue platform. It is of the latter process that Joachim Paech wrote in the early 2010s that "[w]e shall see what happens with the intermediality of film in those new media surroundings where film cannot be distinguished any more from what it is not" (2011: 19). Trying to answer this question, descriptions of cases of intermediality in/of film need to be complemented with a communication and media theoretical meta-framework which I outline here. Thus, a space may be configured where the poetic methods generated by the relatively quick transformations along 'the analogue to the digital to the post-digital' axis may be conceptualized and structured, simultaneously accounting for the extraordinary 'multimodal heteromediality' of the cinematic medium (cf. Elleström 2020: 73–75).

Theorizing the specific condition of moving images in the post-digital era Thomas Elsaesser envisages a formation that "does not project itself as a window on the world nor requires fixed boundaries of space like a frame", but "it functions as an ambient form of spectacle and event, where no clear spatial divisions between inside and outside pertain" (Elsaesser 2016: 133). In a similar vein, and based on the analysis of moving-image art installations in the twenty-first century—among them Pipilotti Rist's *Layers Mama Layers* from 2010—Giuliana Bruno observes that "We no longer face or confront a screen only frontally but rather are immersed in an environment of screens" (Bruno 2014: 102). Rist's 2007 installation *Dawn Hours in the Neighbour's House* definitely fits Bruno's description of the process "where one becomes an integral part of a pervasive screen environment in which it is no longer preferable or even possible to be positioned in front of the work" (Bruno 2014: 102). From the windowpanes of the terrace, on to the plasma TV screen, through the floor and the edge covers of the books on the shelf in *Dawn Hours* every element functions as a screen that lights up and then fades in the dark, creating a "a fluid, haptic world of surrounding screens" (Bruno 2014: 102).[2]

The argumentation of this chapter starts from the observation that it is possible to isolate an intermediary screen(ic) formation that may be situated somewhere amongst analogue photographic cinema shown on a fixed (canvas) screen that necessitates a fixed spectator; Elsaesser's post-photographic, possibly digital cinema without clearly fixed, window-like boundaries and finally Bruno's surround screen environments that are fully immersive. This intermediary screenic formation may be described as the narratively significant embedding of electronic screens in film diegetic worlds designed for vertical cinematic screens—be they fixed analogue or mobile digital ones. It may be exemplified with television sets that the characters watch, with computers or mobile phones used by characters in action, or indeed CCTV cameras that convey unusual angles on otherwise well-known diegetic spaces. While the filmic narrative which embeds electronic screens to the extent that even "multiple diegetic worlds" (Elsaesser 2016: 69) may be generated was already present in the television and video era, our post-digital age and its givens of digital image-making, image-processing and image-display have led to its enhanced proliferation. Analysing the proposed intermediary screenic formation will constitute the discussion part of the chapter, governed by the hypothesis that its features are most adequately understood in the above sketched multidisciplinary framework, that is therefore demonstrated to be a suitable one to examine the changes in phenomena of intermediality pertaining to film "in those new media surroundings where film cannot be distinguished any more from what it is not" (Paech 2011: 19).

The framework of philosophical aesthetics allows us to observe that such embedded electronic screens tend to be neutralized as pro-, or even afilmic objects,[3] which are there to emanate Roland Barthes' "effect of the real" (1968).[4] In this capacity, these intermediary screenic formations mirror the numeric increase of electronic digital screens as conditioned by the technological changes along the turn of the twenty-first century. Furthermore, and as suggested by Roger Odin's observation, such electronic screens are understood as frames that aestheticize, and also re-order levels of reality (2016: 183). This aspect is also supported by my analyses of such electronic screens in Euro-American arthouse films that create Second Cinema-type filmic dieges adhering to conventions of (hyper) realism, non-hypermediation and character-centred storytelling (Virginás 2018). These screens also focus, in a hypnotic manner, the viewers' attention, as Dominique Chateau so convincingly argues (2016: 197). Finally, thanks to what Jacques Derrida names "the labour of the frame", such

embedded electronic screens "[labour] (travaille) indeed [and generate a] structurally bordered origin of surplus value, overflowed (debordée) on these two borders by what it overflows, it gives (travaille) indeed" (Derrida 1987: 75). While these observations definitely may be invoked to characterize diegetic electronic screens that introduce frames and edges in the diegetic worlds as constitutive backgrounds, they can be used, with the same validity, to describe paintings or photographs hung on film diegetic walls too.[5] In order to account for the medium specificity/ies involved in constructions that involve electronic screens in the process of building the film diegetic world, semiotics and its offshoot, communication and media theory are to be invoked.

Lars Elleström's "The Modalities of Media II" (2020) offers itself as an adequate framework in this respect due to its multi-level design, its multi-angle medium sensitivity[6] and its reckoning with historical change. In a draft of his contribution to the present publication, Jørgen Bruhn identifies "the model's main strength" as "encompass[ing] all imaginable material units that enables communicative interaction", thus "cut[ting] through the oft repeated discussions whether it is the canvas or the motif of an oil painting that is the 'medium' or whether a mobile phone is a medium or a technical device" (2020). Its adequacy is also signalled by Bruhn and Gjelsvik's building on it in their recent *Cinema Between Media: An Intermediality Approach* (2018) or indeed by the successful application of the media modalities model to the examination of moving images by authors in the present publication (Crossley 2020; Lavender 2020; Lutas 2020; Newell 2020; Simonson 2020; Tseng 2020). Obviously, the application of any model also involves its testing on fuzzier cases, thus extending its validity, or, conversely, suggesting its limitations and a number of such adjustments must be signalled already at the outset of the present examination. The scope of the current endeavour is definitely broader than the basic entity of analysis in Elleström's media theory, constituted by "the transfer of cognitive import from a producer's to a perceiver's mind" through "the intermediate stage" named "media product" (Elleström 2020: 13). At least two ways must be mentioned in this respect: the higher number of producer and perceiver minds as well as the complexity of the media products themselves involved in film(ic) communication which is dependent on interlaid electronic screens.

The fundamental importance of the first aspect—namely, that "the minds of scriptwriters, directors, actors and many others combine to create the motion picture, [while] the audience consists of a multitude of

perceiving minds" (Elleström 2020: 25)—must be acknowledged, even if it is only fleetingly touched upon in this analysis. Second, the complexity of the media products involved in the current examination means that "transfers of cognitive import" need to be accounted for. The "clusters of media products" or "media types" (54) are conceived of as "realized by either bodily or non-bodily matter" (35) and ultimately shown to be dependent upon "technical media of display" for their realization (35). The electronic screens present in film diegetic worlds could be easily overlooked as the "technical media of display" par excellence, or indeed simply categorized as metaleptic devices allowing for the change of narrative levels,[7] at the same time contributing to creating the filmic diegesis and consequently forming a part of the filmic medium.

Thanks to Elleström's model, a more detailed scrutiny of these formations becomes possible, and in order to proceed in this direction, Sect. 4.2 is devoted to characterizing diegetic electronic screens as "basic media types", which are defined as the combination of four "media modality modes" (Elleström 2020: 55–58): "at least one material mode (as, say, a solid or non-solid object), at least one spatiotemporal mode (as three-dimensionally spatial and/or temporal), at least one sensorial mode (as visual, auditory or audiovisual) and at least one semiotic mode (as mainly iconic, indexical or symbolic)" (Elleström 2020: 46). My specific task in this respect is in many ways similar to how Mark Crossley examines theatre performances with the aim of "establishing the significance of the spatio-temporal and sensorial modalities, alongside the material modality, in realising the hypermedium and to shed greater light on what this specific hybridised theatrical signification may look like and what it may accomplish" (Crossley 2020: 109).

Though the mentioned four modality modes are evidently interrelated,[8] applying this grid to the specific case of electronic screens embedded in film diegetic worlds highlighted the strong interdependence of the material and the spatiotemporal modes, as well as the chain-reaction triggered in all the four modality modes by one of the modes being changed. These changes in the modality modes of electronic screens may be demonstrated to have a connection to the 'analogue to digital to post-digital' platform and paradigm changes, especially since the media modalities model also includes historical change through the differentiation between "basic" and "qualified media types" (Elleström 2020: 54–66). Thus, Sect. 4.3 in the present study will focus on the embedded electronic screens' "qualifying aspects" in order to offer a historically grounded characterization.[9]

The proliferation of television screens, video monitors, computer or mobile screens (with)in film diegetic worlds is an apparently simple numeric increase of certain objects within the filmed space, a phenomenon conditioned by, and thus mirroring technological changes during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. According to the main argument of this chapter, this intermediary screenic formation should be considered a dense, complex and versatile audiovisual and narrative method that could have emerged only in our current post-digital era. With the aim of fine-tuning the model of media functioning presented in "The Modalities of Media II" (Elleström 2020) for this specific phenomenon, while simultaneously hoping to achieve a systematic description of electronic screens in film diegetic worlds, Sect. 4.4 will aim for a description of the intermedial processes at work in such examples.

4.2   Diegetic Electronic Screens as "Basic Media Types"

Media products and their ensuing communicative effects are characterized by three such modalities—the "material", the "spatiotemporal" and the "sensorial"—that are considered "presemiotic", as compared to the fourth, "semiotic" modality (Elleström 2020: 41–54). While the author stresses that all four modalities are equally relevant, the semiotic modality is seen to somehow sustain all the others since "if the sensory configurations with material, spatiotemporal and sensorial properties do not represent anything, they have no communicative function, which means that there is no media product and no virtual sphere in the perceiver's mind" (Elleström 2020: 49). In line with this observation, we can conceive of the electronic screens in film diegetic worlds as always being—partially or fully—within the semiotic modality. The content that these inlaid electronic screens display might be graphs, texts, videos, television programmes and, evidently, other films: thus all the three semiotic modes (iconic, indexic and symbolic) might characterize their functioning in communicative situations. However, as the diegetic electronic screens are par excellence "technical media of display" as well, a more precise description of the process along which the three presemiotic modalities morph into the semiotic one becomes possible. Hence, after a description of embedded electronic screens from the perspective of the presemiotic modality modes, a focus on how these screens assume their semiotic

modality modes within the diegetic worlds will be discussed in the next subsection.

4.2.1   Changes in the Material, the Sensorial and the Spatiotemporal Modality Modes of Diegetic Electronic Screens

The (electronic) screens that I deal with are generally solid as for their material modality and are made of inorganic canvas, plastic, steel or glass. Very diverse examples fitting the above characterization may be cited: a televisual screenic image watched by the main protagonists and showing an undressing Bette Davis in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's 1950's *All About Eve* as embedded in the credit sequence of Pedro Almodóvar's 1999 *All About My Mother*. The final 'love or death' duel from Billy Wilder's 1944 *Double Indemnity* appears in a somewhat similar manner in Brian de Palma's 2000 *Femme Fatale*, on a television screen on which the female protagonist's profile is mirrored simultaneously. Finally, reference is made to the projection on a portable canvas of a moving image excerpt from a 1940s Veronica Lake-movie in Curtis Hanson's 1996 *L.A. Confidential*, again unfolding under the watchful eyes of the hero couple in the film (Virginás 2019).

The standard screenic materiality is, however, disrupted in the genre (or "submedium"[10]) of science fiction, which may be described as predicated upon the "main formal device [of] an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" (Suvin 1972: 375). In this context, non-solid, near-plasma and even liquid screens as well as organic screens may be mentioned. In Steven Spielberg's 2002 *Minority Report*, the computer screens—as objects in the first-level diegesis—look like translucent windowpanes hanging horizontally, resembling air or water drops as for their texture and mode of existence. They are easy to manipulate, information may be organized and grouped, or processed through hand gestures and also by voice. These *Minority Report* screens may be turned off and integrated seamlessly in the background or they may shine full of information when needed—recalling Rist's rhythmically lighting unusual screenic surfaces in *Dawn in the Neighbour's Room*. As for the organic screen, in David Cronenberg's 1984 *Videodrome*, the bulky TV set in producer Max Renn's bachelor apartment is developing veins and lips in the hallucinatory scene of its transforming into the producer's lover, Nikki Brand (or her body).

However, the conception of non-solid and fluid screen surfaces is perhaps nowhere exploiting to a more astonishing degree the multimodal "heteromediality" (Bruhn 2010) of the cinematic medium than in Denis Villeneuve's 2016 *Arrival*. Here, the screen's mediality can be read as possibly indexing and symbolizing the perception of the alien entities landing on Earth, simultaneously with conveying the perplexed emotional state of the protagonist, Dr Louise Banks, a linguist establishing contact with the outer space creatures. Even on the first occasion of its appearance the giant screen interface separating the aliens from the humans is definitely displaying gas, smoke and plasma-type materiality, being focalized primarily by the members of the human crew and, occasionally, also framed by the more than three-dimensional spatial perception of the aliens (Fig. 4.1).

This aspect of non-solid materiality is further emphasized thanks to a number of elements conditioned by the digital cinematic medium's specificities: the gut-deep roars and fluid movement of the heptapod aliens created through composite animation-and-CGI techniques; the detailed view of the vapour blinding Louise's view from within her spacesuit; and finally, the specific mode of writing that the aliens have, which deforms, disperses and flows away after it has performed its basic role of (possibly) creating cognitive import in Louise and the team's minds. On the occasion of the third visit in the aliens' tower-like spaceship, Louise takes off her astronaut suit and advances towards the two alien entities, in an effort to make them integrate the (written/symbolic) word 'Louise' with the

Fig. 4.1 De-solidifying alien and solid human screens in *Arrival* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2016).

object of her (self/body). Shown from one side, as a small figure dwarfed by an aquarium-like screenic entity containing the heptapods, Louise's human figure serves to counterbalance the liquid, non-solid, possibly organic materiality that makes the aliens perceptible to the human eye as if through a screen interface (Fig. 4.2).

The fully transparent materiality of this dividing screen is re-configured as partly solid when—after Louise's having placed her palm on it—the heptapod also sticks a floral-shaped body member to it. This scene in the film is fundamentally based on how media theorist Sybille Krämer sees the "material modality modes" of all media as dependent on what she defines as transparency: "[m]edia are indeed bound to materiality, but their transparency is practically required: air, water or crystals are thus the most favourable materials for media of perception", she observes (Krämer 2015: 32).

However, it is not only the dividing screen within the spaceship of the alien heptapods—where earthly physical laws of gravity and three-dimensionality do not apply—that de-solidifies. When we are shown the army and the scientific team's common efforts at deciphering the heptapod auditive strings on the large computer screens positioned inside the earth base, these electronic screens' content is effortlessly transferred and complexly mirrored on the transparent plastic dividing sheets of the military tents (Fig. 4.3). A similar effect is created by such set design when several large screens are positioned side-by-side to ensure simultaneous

Fig. 4.2 Transparency as an essence: Louise facing the alien creatures in *Arrival* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2016). All rights reserved
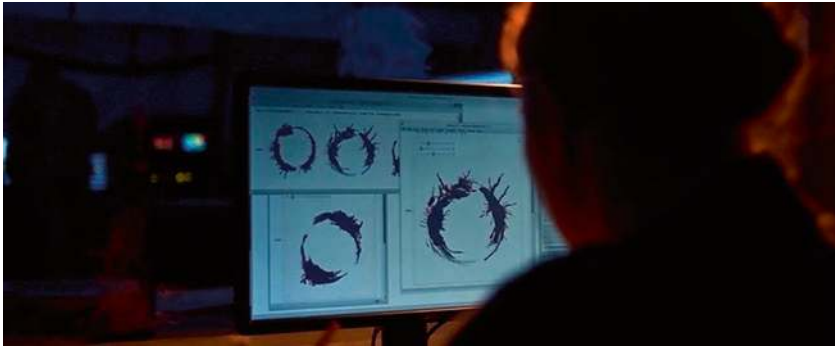
Fig. 4.3 Human screens losing solid materiality in *Arrival* (dir. Denis Villeneuve, 2016).

reception of developments on all the twelve earthly sites where the aliens have landed.

This process of de-solidifying the interface screen between humans (Dr Louise Banks and the team) and aliens (the two heptapods, Abbott and Costello) may be positioned thus as one striking marker of how space, time, memory and ultimately identity will de-solidify in *Arrival*. The process reaches its climax in the scene when Louise is transported to the alien ship within a capsule that they sent for her. Here the screenic interface is first suggested—or indeed "transmediated" (Elleström 2020: 81–83)— through a number of non-(electronic) screenic entities: smoke that is later shown to be emanating from the frost-like cubes Louise lands upon; Louise's slowly fluttering hair; and even her sentiment of angst and extreme fright from maximum exposure in a possibly hostile environment being perceptible to her (and to us) as layers of clouds where the alien heptapods move/swim/fly freely. However, the ultimate screen frame, that of the cinematic image, remains firmly in place, as suggested by the total view of a small Louise facing a giant heptapod, while both of them are limited to the right by a black rectangle, recalling the initial screen that separated the two worlds all throughout the alien–human contact narrative.

These embedded and (generally) electronic screens are characterized by two spatial coordinates: height and width, and by the temporal coordinate when solid, with their sensorial (multi)modality an audiovisual one. However, when the embedded electronic screens are shown to acquire non-solid and/or organic materiality traits, the fourth spatiotemporal

dimension of depth is added and activated as well. When screens de-solidify as in *Minority Report* or *Arrival*, or are attributed organic qualities as in *Videodrome*, they open towards depth. An interesting case where depth is added to a materially "solid and flat" and sensorially "audiovisual [electronic] screen" is to be found in Ridley Scott's 1984 *Blade Runner*, in the famous sequence when Deckard, the detecting figure, is analysing a photograph he found in replicant Leon's apartment. Deckard sits opposite a computing device that seems to be a mix of a scanner, a printer, a computer and a television set, on which he performs the analysis of the found photograph. The device is governed by Deckard's voice, and he quarters, zooms in and out on the originally printed photograph, up to the point when, among details reminiscent in their figurative manner of old Dutch masters, a new figure, unseen up to now in the mentioned setting, appears: a female replicant known as Zhora. That this computer screen in *Blade Runner* is a passageway in depth to an equally important, yet different(-level) diegesis is also suggested by the last element Deckard discovers on the analysed photograph: the fake scales of which club dancer Zhora's shawl is made, which will become the next element in advancing the investigation for the rebellious replicants, among them Leon and Zhora (Virginás 2014). Yet, this opening of a solid screen towards depth is accompanied by a change in one of the other modality modes: a change of proportions within the sensorial modality—this is a voice-governed, rather than just watched screen—engenders depth being added to the other three spatio-temporal coordinates in this scene from *Blade Runner*.

In these scenes quoted from *Minority Report*, *Videodrome* or *Arrival* we can observe that besides watching and hearing the sensorial mode of tactility is also added to the functioning processes of the screens within the examined diegetic filmic situations. Simultaneously we can notice another process of how change in one of the modalities—in this case the sensorial one—entails changes in at least one of the other modalities too. This might be the material one: de-solidifying the 'audiovisualtactile' screens as in *Minority Report* or *Arrival*; or attributing them organic qualities as in *Videodrome*—or, indeed change occurs in the spatiotemporal modality, with tactile screens opening towards depth. To hint at one of the main conclusions of this analysis, material modality changes of the examined screens seem to trigger changes in the spatiotemporal and sensorial modalities too and vice versa. These processes support the displacement of (qualified) media boundaries that we have been witnessing between analogue filmic, analogue electronic, digital filmic and digital electronic media—a

phenomenon sometimes referred to as 'the death of cinema' and dealt with in detail in the next section (entitled "The Qualifying Aspects of Electronic Screens").

4.2.2   *Diegetic Electronic Screens on the Verge of the Presemiotic and the Semiotic Modalities*

As demonstrated in the previous subsection, diegetic electronic screens allow for conceptualizing the interdependences present between the three presemiotic media modality modes: the material, the spatial and the sensorial. Furthermore, electronic screens inlaid in film diegetic worlds somehow bridge over the difference between the Elleströmian categories of "technical media of display" not creating cognitive import and the "media types" that create cognitive import. Thus, they are adequate units of analysis on which to base a description of the passage from the three presemiotic media modality modes to the semiotic one which covers iconicity, indexicality and symbolicity in Peircean terms. Andy Lavender's work pondering on this aspect is also illuminating since he conceives of the material, the spatiotemporal and the sensorial modalities as "rather describe[ing] structuring aspects that will *then affect* cognition", with the semiotic modality evidently originating from cognition (2020: 115, emphasis in the original). Interestingly, presenting a clear case of academic serendipity, as the articles in the present publication were written simultaneously and independently, Tseng's contribution also touches upon these issues. Using the umbrella term of "digital mediated images" she considers that it "should be read as a broader conception than that of just the new digital media used diegetically by fictional characters in the film […]: in this chapter, it describes various forms of added realism, among them news footage, intra-diegetic camera, and computer screen" (Tseng 2020: 175–176). My contribution adds to this observation the categorization of embedded screens to be presented in what follows.

The mediating capacities of the electronic screens examined here may be conceptualized, and also categorized starting from the observation that in the absence of communicative function and a virtual sphere "created in the perceiver's mind" the sensory configurations will not become media products and thus do not represent anything (Elleström 2020: 21). Based on this, I differentiate between three types of diegetic and non-cinematic (electronic) screens embedded in film diegetic worlds: *decor screens*, *diegetic screens* and *metadiegetic screens*. Screens belonging to the first type

constitute a background or an atmosphere-like environment in Bruno's sense, existing in a presemiotic condition always on the verge of bursting into semiotically meaningful surfaces of communication: the diegetic television, video, computer or mobile screens may form part of the decors and will be called *decor screens* henceforth. The second type of diegetic screens are watched, manipulated or otherwise used by diegetic characters, thus illustrating the activation of the semiotic modality too, besides the other three; these will be nicknamed *diegetic screens.* The third type of screens is primarily there for the afilmic/actual sphere/extracommunicational domain viewer to watch and create cognitive import based on it, these might serve the narration and be visible, evident or meaningful only for the actual viewer; therefore I will shorten them as *metadiegetic screens.* Obviously, the positionings of the respective screens may change from scene to scene and within the same filmic narrative.

My classificatory scheme may be seen as somewhat bordering on what Gérard Genette defines as "the main types of relationships that can connect the metadiegetic narrative to the first narrative, into which it is inserted" (1983: 232). Obviously all three types of embedded electronic screens are capable of carrying metadiegetic content with respect to the first diegesis as unfolding on the cinematic screen. However, this aspect must not be equated with these screens assuming a fully semiotic modality within the respective diegetic scene: as we shall see, there are interesting correlations between embedded electronic screens as chiefly characterized by the presemiotic modality modes (or the *decor screens*), inlaid electronic screens as chiefly characterized by the full emergence of the semiotic modality within the diegetic reality (*diegetic screens*), embedded electronic screens as chiefly characterized by the full working of the semiotic modality in the extracommunicational domain of the actual viewer (*metadiegetic screens*) and finally the three types of relationships as described by Genette.

Decor Screens

When in the first case, the respective diegetic electronic screens might serve the purpose of connoting a family, private environment and its social positioning. As an illustrative example, we can think of the rugged TV set that Carla Jean Moss—the declassed girlfriend of one of the chief protagonists—is watching in their even more derelict cabin home in the Coen brothers' *No Country for Old Men* (2007). In contrast, such screens might index an institutional, thus public context, perhaps a secret headquarters with magnificent-scale operations as in the case of Q's base in the

Bond-sequel *Skyfall* (Sam Mendes, 2013). We can categorize *decor screens* as belonging to the sphere of profilmic reality—"the reality photographed by the camera" (Buckland 2003: 47) and with evident links to afilmic reality, which "exists independently of filmic reality" (Buckland 2003: 47). Souriau and Buckland's afilmic reality resembles what Lars Elleström defines as "the extracommunicational domain" preceding and surrounding ongoing communication (Elleström 2020: 27–33)—in our case everything pertaining to the film—containing electronic screens—a viewer is in the process of watching. Relating such *decor screens* (be they televisions or surveillance camera images) connoting a- and profilmic reality to the extracommunicational domain is even more pertinent in the light of the observation that "[v]ital parts of the extracommunicational domain are constituted by perception and interpretation of media products" (Elleström 2020: 28).

The second type of relationship that Genette conceives of between the first narrative and the metadiegetic narrative "consists of a purely *thematic* relationship, therefore implying no spatio-temporal continuity between metadiegesis and diegesis: a relationship of contrast […] or of analogy" (1983: 233). Interestingly enough, it is *decor screens* which are foremost in connoting and also indexing afilmic reality and the extracommunicational domain that are bound to perform this Genettian "thematic, contrastive or analogical" relationship between the filmic diegesis and the (Genettian) metadiegetic level as embodied by the electronic screens. What I name *decor screens* constitute a 'presemiotic screen environment': thus they draw attention to the aspect of the "mediation" rather than that of "representation" (Elleström 2020: 38–40)[11] while communication is going on, and this feature is mirrored in the Genettian model as non-existent "spatio-temporal continuity". An adequate example in this respect may be cited from David Cronenberg's *Maps to the Stars* (2014): in a scene Agatha, the evil-doer incognito who is working as a personal assistant to Hollywood star Havana Segrand, arrives at her employer's home. In the luxurious, English country-style kitchen the "vertical viewing dispositif" (Strauven 2016: 144) stands out through its minimalist, technologically up-to-date outlook, while showing a live television talk show in which Havana repeats the story of her long-dead actress mother, with essentially no new piece of information added to what has been presented up to now in the filmic diegesis unfolding on the cinematic screen. However, the superficial flatness of the television talk-show as mediated through this *decor screen* is in a Genettian 'thematic contrast' to Havana, the actress' inner torments

regarding her abusive mother, and, in addition indexing the hardships of her getting the role about which she is interviewed.

Diegetic Screens

Apparently the same objects that functioned or will function as *decor screens* may re-appear as *diegetic screens* having further function(s) and role(s) within the diegetic world/reality (or "the fictional story world created by the film" (Buckland 2003: 47)). A survey of what I call *diegetic screens* could start with examples of diegetic characters being interpellated by televisual screens: like director Max Renn being addressed by his secretary through a televisual screen in *Videodrome*. Or indeed manipulating data through screens: as journalist Mikael Blomkvist does when examining the digitized celluloid photographs taken on the occasion/day of a four-decade-old crime in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (Niels Arden Oplev, 2009). Thus, if the *decor screens* highlight the extracommunicational domain, *diegetic screens* will direct our attention to the "intracommunicational domain" or "the formation of cognitive import in ongoing communication" (Elleström 2020: 27).

Those scenes where the characters watch, examine, analyse and dissect—usually digitally—stored and displayed audiovisual moving images are detailed examples of representing and conceptualizing the perceivers' minds and those brief moments of perception as followed by lengthy processes of interpretation. The moments with the embedded electronic screens not only draw attention to the various and active modality modes of the involved qualified media types but also dramatize and thus prolong "the act of perception" which "is brief and quickly channelled into interpretation" otherwise (Elleström 2020: 18). Such *diegetic screens* result in the creation of communicative situations where cognitive import might emerge, with the representation conceived of as always already dependent on the material modality of the video, the television or the computer. However, as "[t]he mediated sensory configurations of a media product do not transfer any cognitive import until the perceiver's mind comprehends them as signs", and therefore "the sensations are meaningless until they are understood to represent something through unconscious or conscious interpretation" (Elleström 2020: 50), scenes with *diegetic screens* present us the mess of creating cognitive import while faced with electronic screens. Characters using or watching television or mobile screens, video monitors or laptops may be positioned as providing detailed analyses of the "border zones" between the material modality ("the latent

corporeal interface of the medium"), the sensorial modality ("the physical and mental acts of perceiving the present interface of the medium through the sense faculties") (Elleström 2010: 17) and, evidently, the semiotic modality (which is necessary to create cognitive import in communication).[12]

Genette delimits "direct causality between the events of the metadiegesis and those of the diegesis, conferring on the second narrative an *explanatory* function" (1983: 232, emphasis in the original). This is evidently the case when *diegetic screens* are employed to show content that founds, explains or perhaps precedes the diegetic events, thus performing a temporal re-ordering as well, on the level of the plotline. One of the most striking examples is provided by Alex Garland's *Annihilation* (2018), the story of a five-member female expedition sent to an alien dominated zone, the so-called Shimmer. The main protagonist, Lena, only accepts participation in the dangerous trip to help somehow her soldier husband, who returned from a similar previous mission deeply hurt and deranged. When quite advanced in the territory and also in their process of understanding how the Shimmer decomposes DNA, the group finds a memory card, which they will watch on the minuscule screen of their portable digital video camera. The activity repeats itself when Lena enters the dangerous Lighthouse, where a similar video camera on a tripod faces a sitting corpse covered in ash. Both occasions contain sequences from the previous expedition's experiences and therefore their accumulated knowledge; thus, the electronic *diegetic screens* inlaid in this filmic diegesis reveal the past of, and therefore explain, the diegetic world itself. The small video screen often morphs into covering the whole cinematic surface (screen) in a creative effort to convey to the actual audience the extraordinary destructive effects of the Shimmer, but also as a method to represent the emotional involvement, sadness and painful reminiscences that Lena, as a focalizer character, goes through. Lena is able to see her moribund husband, possibly genetically transformed by the alien forces in the diegetic present, as a fully human, yet already seriously damaged person in the diegetic past as framed by this small electronic *diegetic screen*, which therefore directly re-connects to the cinematic diegetic level too.

Metadiegetic Screens

The third type of represented screens, *metadiegetic screens*, are there only for the afilmic/actual sphere/extracommunicational domain viewer to watch, who is quite different from the intracommunicational domain

viewer existing within the diegetic reality of the given film, such as Lena in the previously quoted *Annihilation*. These screens might serve the narration and be visible, evident or meaningful only for the actual viewer of a given film: no character in the film diegesis is possibly or fully sensing what I name *metadiegetic screens*, and therefore no diegetic character is capable of creating semiotically meaningful cognitive import based on them. An interesting example for such a screen may be recalled from Olivier Assayas' 2014 *Clouds in Sils Maria*. The last part of the film presents the theatrical performance of the play entitled *Maloja Snake*: the story of a powerful firm executive (Helena as played by an older actress in the diegetic world) and her painful lesbian love story with her ruthless young assistant (Sigrid as played by the rising star, Jo-Ann). Sigrid enters the cubes signifying the company offices, takes files from the desks of the office workers, and at the end of the theatrical scene, but also that of the filmic sequence, she exits the geometrical, sterile office space towards the audience, stopping at the extreme edge of the stage. The camera focuses on Jo-Ann-as-Sigrid's angry, disillusioned, tired and sad face: this female face is filmed in real-time and projected on the huge canvas of the stage in magnified proportions, with a bluish lighting effect superimposed on it. The view created is that of a beautiful female head squeezed through the grid of pixels and geometrical lines that define such a body in a digital environment of 1s and 0s. The analogue narrative filmic image of an actress performing a role in the sketchy environment of a theatre play is transmediated into the digital filmic image of the same theatre actress in the front of our very eyes, creating a hybrid representation that is neither analogue filmic image, nor filmed theatre scene, or digital filmic image but all at the same time.

Such (intra)diegetic shots transforming into (meta)diegetic, long-duration, fixed shots, which often are close-ups, exemplify what Roger Odin calls "inclusion", for example, those moments when "the mental cinema screen encompasses and somehow erases the physical space" (Odin 2016: 179). These long-duration shots ambiguous as for their diegetic status—no focalizer character's optical point of view matches them—turn into moments of true spectacle offered to the afilmic, extracommunicational domain film viewers in a digital era, staging the process of immobilizing animate images, of which Gaudreault and Marion write that "within the flow of digital visual media and through the widespread animation of these media, the 'moveable' image has become almost the norm and the still image the exception" (2015: 77). The urge towards an aesthetic attitude that framing entails is also definitely present in such moments: as

Roger Odin argues, "the desire to see something 'framed' reflects a will to transform the world into an aesthetic" (Odin 2016: 183).

This scene with Jo-Ann, the young actress' face projected on the huge theatre canvas—doubling as an embedded screen—while shown as a super close-up for the cinematic viewer, also exemplifies the third type of relationship between the diegetic (in this case, the cinematic) and metadiegetic (in this case, conveyed through the [electronic] screenic embedded within the diegetic world). This is described in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* as "involve[ing] no explicit relationship between the two story levels: it is the act of narrating itself that fulfils a function in the diegesis, independently of the metadiegetic content—a function of distraction, for example, and/or of obstruction" (Genette 1983: 233). Thus, the narratological roots of an apparently intermedial analysis have become evident: besides their evident function as (afilmic) indices of our post-digital era, capable of conveying what Elleström calls "extracommunicational truthfulness", the embedded television or video screens also create "intracommunicational coherence" (2018) through complex metaleptic narrative structures that constitute the fictional spatiotemporal continuity of the film. Thus, a dual functionality may be attributed to them: as a- and profilmic indices and also framing devices that re-order narrative levels. In this respect, this line of analyses may be added as a further argument, achieved through semiotic and narratological methods, to Tseng's statement that "[i]t is the contextualization of these digital frames in the broader narrative structures, which achieve specific narrative functions" (Tseng 2020: 181).

However, such a clear-cut differentiation of *decor, diegetic* and *metadiegetic screens* is a conceptual possibility rather than an always functional method of practical analysis. While it offers a semiotic and narratological basis for understanding the multitude of embedded electronic screens, it is also an adequate tool for describing more fuzzy examples. Spike Jonze's 2013 *Her*, for example, introduces us to a futuristic world where humans occupy the cinematic diegetic space, and the digital Artificial Intelligence inhabits the diegetic computer screens. This is how the romance of ghostwriter Theodore Twombly, surrounded by muted sounds and warm colours, and operation system Samantha, a sensual voice and computer screen operations, unfolds in a fully metaleptic manner, jumping from cinematic to computer screen(ic), from diegetic to metadiegetic level and back. As Liviu Lutas formulates it, "metalepsis should be the violation of the frontier between different levels of representation" (2020: 155). To

Theodore's understated question referring to her functioning, Samantha confesses that "basically I have intuition. The DNA of who I am is based on the millions of personalities of all the programmers who wrote me". Significantly, when Samantha utters this sentence, we leave the spatial parameters of an interior with a human figure seated in front of a computer desk, and we get a view from behind a glassy, transparent surface—a possible space-divider in Theodore's apartment, but perhaps we get outside his apartment's windows. The effect is that contours lose their sharpness, light effects and colour patches become more expressed, and the cinematic filmic image and screen transform into a screenic surface with abstract forms and patterns. So, parallel to the digital objects, graphics and consciousnesses pertaining to the embedded electronic *metadiegetic screens* asking for and getting their place in the cinematic realm, the diegetic filmic image starts to acquire pixelated qualities. Thus, an interesting composite moment of transmediality is offered between analogue (scanning) representation and digital (sampling) representation. It may be suggested to be variation on the process that Joachim Paech describes as "the repetition or retake of characteristic cinematographic forms in digitally produced films" (2011: 18) as here we witness a further layer of digital characteristics overimposed on it.

4.3   The Qualifying Aspects of Electronic Screens

As already suggested, the complexity of the media products involved in the presently examined "transfers of cognitive import" needs to be accounted for. As such a reference to the concept of "qualified media [types]" realized through "technical media of display" (Elleström 2020: 33–37) is an important aspect of this complexity, it shall be dealt with in this section. The "qualifying aspects" of the media types—previously described as based on the four media modalities—refer to "all kinds of aspects about how we produce, situate, use and evaluate media products in the world" (Elleström 2020: 55). There are two qualifying aspects: the so-called contextual and the operational aspects.

The "contextual qualifying aspect" involves "the origin and delimitation of media in specific historical, cultural and social circumstances" (Elleström 2020: 60), and it is in reference to film that Elleström notes that "[t]he combination of these features is no doubt a historically determined social construction of what we call the medium of film, but given these qualifications of the medium, it has a certain essence" (2020: 59).

The fundamental aspects of film—described as "a combination of visual, predominantly iconic signs (images) displayed on a flat surface and sound in the form of icons (as music), indices (sounds that are contiguously related to visual events in the film) and symbols (as speech), all expected to develop in a temporal dimension" (Elleström 2020: 59)—come into question when technological change is as quick and self-evident as in our analogue-to-digital era. Thus, one needs to acknowledge that "some basic modal groupings are commonly distinguishable at a certain time and in a certain culture, and that the future may hold new habits and technical solutions that make novel basic media types relevant" (Elleström 2020: 56). Friedrich Kittler, among so many others, has been right in drawing attention to the diminishing chances of separating film, video or television with the advent of the digital (era) when he observed that "[i]f the historical synchronicity of film, phonograph, and typewriter in the early twentieth century separated the data flows of optics, acoustics and writing and rendered them autonomous, current electronic technologies are bringing them back together" (Johnston 1997: 5–6). Meanwhile, our present is still characterized by the culturally (and perhaps also cognitively) funded differences—or the contextual qualifying aspects—among the mentioned technical and electronic media.

These differences might also be sustained by such constructions in film diegetic worlds where these various media, indexed by the corresponding screens, are present as apparently afilmic, but actually profilmic objects with serious functions in the narrative development. In the framework provided by the concept of the "contextual qualifying aspects", the embedded electronic screens may be definitely described as contributing to fixing the specificity of the media involved, especially in such cases when these screens convey moments of glitch and noise, de-neutralizing television or video as in David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* or David Lynch's *Lost Highway*. With the aim of supporting the general hypothesis of medium specificity being sustained, a number of close readings of noisy non-neutralization of a medium through diegetic electronic screens follows.

Videodrome sets up the rules of its diegetic electronic screen use aiming at making the medium visible and filling it with noises of all kinds already in the introductory credit sequence. First, animated letters fill the cinematic screen, their candy colours and rudimentary design disturbing, evidently, the cinematic immersion, and a shortly visible screenic glitch of a black-and-white nonfigurative formation informs the actual viewer that the sensible surface of this screen does not bear messages as usual

according to norms. In this context, the decrease in image quality may be identified as a Krämerian (media) noise that makes the medium—in this case, video and television image and apparatus—apparent and perceivable to the actual cinematic viewer, as "only noise, dysfunction and disturbance make the medium itself noticeable" (Krämer 2015: 31). The opening sequence from *Videodrome* ends with a cinematic close-up on producer Max Renn's hand and face, while the television screen in the background recedes, its texture and sensible surface losing features, becoming a simple patch of colour in the diegetic space, illustrating Krämer's formulation that "[a]t the same time that media bring something forth, they themselves recede into the background; media enable something to be visualized, while simultaneously remaining invisible" (Krämer 2015: 31).

In David Lynch's 1997 *Lost Highway,* the ominous video cassette left on the dream's pair's villa staircase definitely presents a differently scaled virtual world (Manovich 2001: 112), hypnotically capturing its diegetic, and the actual viewers' attention too (Chateau 2016: 197). The content of the cassette and therefore that of the television screen is full with visual glitches and auditive noises (Fig. 4.4) that often cover the whole cinematic screen. As if an effect of the noiseful video and televisual medium, in *Lost Highway* most prominently the whole cinematic screen becomes blurred and is covered with nonfigurative patches of light, recalling Florian Cramer's observation that "the characteristics of any medium only reveal themselves in its misbehavior at the low end" (2013).

Fig. 4.4 When noise specifies a diegetic electronic screen: *Lost Highway* (dir. David Lynch, 1997).

Noise is introduced to (re)present the cinematic medium, "un-aisthecizing it" to use Krämer's thesis: "*The implementation of media depends on their withdrawal.* I will call this 'aisthetic self-neutralization'. [...] The invisibility of the medium—its aesthetic neutralization—is an attribute of media *performance*" (Krämer 2015: 31, emphasis in the original). These instances where diegetic electronic screens are scattered within the filmic diegetic spaces examined are non-neutralizing the media involved, making them 'visible' according to the Krämerian model, also demonstrating their non-noise-free use primarily for the actual viewer and occasionally for the diegetic spectator too.[13]

Meanwhile, "[t]he second of the two qualifying aspects is the general purpose, use and function of media, which may be termed the *operational qualifying aspect*. This aspect encompasses construing media types on the ground of claimed or expected communicative tasks" (Elleström 2020: 61, emphasis in the original). In their co-authored volume, *The End of Cinema?*, André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion set up a system based on twentieth-century media history, taking as a principle the substitution of the cinema silk screen by the electronic cathodic television screen, and then by the electronic portable small computer screen.[14] They argue that "[w]e might even view the emergence of the small (but highly cathodic) screen as the point of rupture between a 'hegemonic cinema' and this 'cinema in the process of being demoted and shared,' which is often called 'expanded cinema' but which we believe would be more appropriately described as 'fragmented cinema'" (Gaudreault and Marion 2015: 11, citing Guillaume Soulez's conference intervention). Thus, "hegemonic cinema" would denote the first part of the twentieth century when the cinema theatre silk screen was the sole framed surface which displayed electronically mediated and also always pre-recorded moving images. "Expanded cinema" should denote developments of the second part of the twentieth century, when television and then video-camera screens appeared as electronic surfaces where cinematic worlds and narratives would expand, obviously altering the nature and the significance of framed storytelling based on moving images. Finally, the twenty-first century brought us into the era of what Gaudreault and Marion (2015) name "fragmented cinema", with the same cinematically constructed narrative worlds scattering further on "the electronic portable small computer screen", becoming compatible with such surfaces.

Pertaining to how the "operational qualifying aspects" of screen-based technical media evolve in the post/digital era, such constructions as

Fig. 4.5 Caught between *decor screens* and *diegetic screens*: *Loveless* (dir. Andrei Zvagintsev, 2016).

(smaller) electronic screens (with visible frames) inserted in film diegetic worlds may be attributed the role of training the film viewers for experiences of expanded and fragmented cinema. They force the audience to constantly shift between the actual cinematic screen conventions and the mental screen (Odin 2016) of smaller formats. This may be exemplified with further and more recent examples: news presenter Anna living through her diegetic marital (melo)drama on the television screen while she presents the news in Thomas Vinterberg's *Commune* (2016); the emotional happenings banished on mobile or television screens as opposed to the rigidity and frozenness of the diegetic cinematic world in Andrei Zvagintsev's 2016 *Loveless* (Fig. 4.5) or indeed the most important viral video of the diegetic world as encaged on the museum curator Christian's mobile phone screen in Ruben Östlund's *The Square* (2017).

4.4 The Intermedial Processes at Work in the Examined Filmic Sequences

As signalled in the introduction, the identifying of intermedial processes at work in such filmic construction involving electronic screens must close and also generate the analysis that has just been performed. What are the media that are interrelated in film scenes where characters appear on a black-and-white television screen as news presenter Anna in *Commune* or where they watch low-resolution videos on their mobile phone screens as the museum curator Christian in *The Square*? Can we meaningfully assert

that an entangled intermedial happening is at stake when Anna's flat, desaturated, electronic TV image morphs into a cinematic close-up of fine-grained texture, with brighter colour qualities (Fig. 4.6)? Is it possible to argue that the disappearance of the frame belonging to the smaller electronic screens in such instances induces intermedial tensions between film/cinema and other electronic artistic screens of television, video or mobile phone—such as in the scene where the guerrilla marketing video made to promote the contemporary art museum leaves behind Christian's mobile screen to widen and cover the whole cinematic screen area?

The previously presented characterization based on the four media modalities—and the two qualifying aspects of the cinematic, the television, the video, the computer and the mobile (phone) screens—should guide us in this respect. Answering this string of questions requires one to establish the media borders that are crossed whenever (non-cinematic) electronic screens are inserted into film diegetic worlds. This can be achieved via the two operations proposed by the media modalities model: first, "'finding' or identifying media borders between dissimilar basic media types" and second "'inventing' or construing media borders between dissimilar qualified media types based on similar basic media types" (Elleström 2020: 72). The first operation would leave us with "intermedial relations in a narrow sense", while the second with "intermedial relations in a broad sense" (Elleström 2020: 71–73).

Ours is evidently a case of 'broad intermediality', when borders between "dissimilar qualified media types based on similar basic media types" are

Fig. 4.6 A meta/diegetic embedded electronic screen in *Commune* (dir. Thomas Vinterberg, 2016). All rights reserved

crossed, with the medium of film being the paradigm-case for television, video and computer screen-based audiovisual media. However, this border is not simply the one apparently existing between analogue (cinematic/celluloid, analogue television and electronic video) and post/digital (computer and mobile media) qualified media types. As the examples of *Videodrome* and *Blade Runner* show, the modality changes that de-solidify or enliven the diegetic electronic screens, adding depth to their otherwise flat spatiotemporal modality, or sound and tactility to their sensorial modality, cannot be fully identified with the analogue/digital/post-digital divide—even if the post-analogue and post-digital eras present us with more numerous screens that share these characteristics. Therefore, what become pertinent are the changes which seem to exist in the sphere of the so-called presemiotic modalities: the material, the spatiotemporal and the sensorial modalities of these predominantly electronic screens that play a role in the film diegetic worlds. Thus, one of the chief results of the analyses performed is to have demonstrated the mutual chain reactions between modalities or that change in one (presemiotic) modality of the examined interlaid screens triggers changes in the other two as well. Thus, the interconnectedness of solid materiality/non-organic materiality/two-dimensional spatiality/audiovisual sensorial modality and that of non-solid materiality/organic materiality/three-dimensional spatiality/audiovisual-tactile (synaesthetic) sensorial modality with respect to electronic screens embedded in film diegetic screens should have become evident.

The above summarized and interrelated modality changes—with the mobility of screens a subcase in this respect—may be in turn understood as routinely employed to argue for the 'fluctuating qualifying aspects' that separate the television/video era from the digital one. This is a further argument for the case of 'broad intermediality' at work whenever diegetic and non-cinematic electronic screens appear in film diegeses, as the constructedness of these media borders is relatively easy to reveal. Or, as Kate Newell states in her reading of *The Handmaid's Tale* adaptations in various media in the present publication: "such borders, while useful theoretically, are always constructed and perceptual. That is, no material 'border' exists between, say, the animated and live-action segments of a particular film, yet audiences perceive aesthetic differences, and articulate that difference in terms of juncture and border crossing"(Newell 2020: 35).

The cases presented definitely draw our attention to how the borders between the qualified media are displaced, since even if they may "have a certain degree of stability, their defining features are formed by fluctuating

conventions" (Elleström 2020: 57). In the framework of the media modalities model, these questions pertain to the sphere of mediation, or "the material realisation of the media product, made possible by a technical medium of display", as opposed to representation, or "the semiotic conception of the medium" (Elleström 2020: 40). Thus, the analyses pursued in this chapter offer proof of what I consider an important axiom of "The Modalities of Media II", namely that "[a]lthough mediation and representation are clearly entangled in complex ways, it is vital to uphold a theoretical distinction between them" (Elleström 2020: 40). Through the examination of the electronic screens dispersed in film diegetic worlds, a distinction between mediation and representation may be shown to exist, as well as fixed through/in the analyses. Furthermore, analysing the changes in the modalities of the examined screens also allows us a more precise or even more fine-grained examination of how "the transfer of cognitive import among media is restricted by the modal capacities of the technical media of display" or of cases when "technical media allow of modal expansion" (Elleström 2020: 79). Thus, we can have a better grasp of what happens when we see the same thing on a filmic image, as a happening or a view in a film diegetic world, and with the embedded electronic screen's more pixelated, more blurry image, in a mise-en-abyme-type structure.

Both the cinematic screen and the diverse electronic screens dispersed within film diegetic worlds may be situated at the intersection of the categories presented previously: "[b]asic and qualified media [that] are categories of media products" and the "technical media of display" which are "physical entities needed to realise media products and hence media types" (Elleström 2020: 9). To some extent, an analogy to Friedrich Kittler's system of media functioning may be shown to exist. Kittler emphasizes that storage and information manipulation are interweaving with transmission in the case of media as "[t]here are, first of all, media of transmission such as mirrors; secondly, storage media, such as film; and thirdly […] machines that manipulate words or figures themselves" (Kittler 1997: 132–133). Within this context, screens may be described as framed spectacles related to electronic and technical media: film, video, television and computer or mobile (phone). These media not only produce or store but also distribute content, in accordance with Lars Elleström's definition of a technical medium, which "should consistently be understood not as a technical medium of production or storage but of 'distribution' in the precise sense of disseminating sensory configurations" (Elleström 2014:

14). This definition allows one to fix the screens in the moment of "distributing/disseminating sensory configurations" according to the various media(l) apparatuses they are the endpoint of. It is this aspect of the electronic screens embedded in film diegetic worlds that quite blatantly shows their transitory or hybrid position between "technical media of display" as "[d]evices used for the realisation of media products" and media types with semiotic qualities (Elleström 2020: 34). This hybrid nature is also a manifestation of the fact that although "[c]inema, written narrative literature, and sculpture are examples of qualified media types […] it is important to stress that not all qualified media are aesthetic" (draft of Bruhn 2020).

In order to position the examined phenomenon—the functioning of the electronic screens in film diegetic worlds—as one worthy of "careful analysis and interpretation" and also to argue for its presenting a form of "media interrelations" (Elleström 2020: 86), I have crossed a number of checkpoints. I characterized the media products and media types that film and the embedded electronic screens cover according to the corresponding framework of the media modalities model; I presented the filmic examples and established a taxonomy of embedded electronic screens based on the previous descriptions; and finally, I showed that the media borders that are crossed need to be construed (Elleström 2020: 66–68). However, this does not mean that the crossed media borders are arbitrary; moreover, a finely tuned system of interrelations on the level of the presemiotic modalities of the embedded electronic screens has been revealed, and this may be suggested as feeding the currently upheld differences between the various qualified media types—cinema, television, video and computer—involved.

Notes

1. Warren Buckland defines it as "the fictional story world created by the film", based on Étienne Souriau's model referring to the seven levels of filmic reality (Buckland 2003: 47).
2. A similar de-framing conceptual turn in theatre art (theory) is noted by Mark Crossley with reference to the work of Patrice Pavis, who "was alert to this movement in diffuse performance framing towards the end of the twentieth century", observing that "contemporary artists sought to create 'the impression that there is no division between art and life'", thus inventing "'forms in which the frame is eliminated'" (Crossley 2020: 104).

3. While afilmic reality "exists independently of filmic reality", profilmic reality refers to "the reality photographed by the camera" (Buckland 2003: 47).

4. In her contribution to the present publication, Chiao-I Tseng also emphasizes the importance of this aspect, based on empirical and cognitive audience studies, arguing that "blending conventional cinema with the media frames, which the viewers use in their day-to-day life, increases the viewers' perception of message authenticity and enhances the persuasive and rhetoric function of narratives" (Tseng 2020: 182).

5. I am indebted to Beate Schirrmacher and Joachim Paech, who discussed these aspects with me.

6. In her contribution to the present publication, Heather Lotherington points to a fundamental characteristic of the media modalities model, which separates it from the majority of communication models, namely that it has "an innovative theoretical stance grounded in art, rather than linguistics" (Lotherington 2020: 218).

7. See Liviu Lutas' contribution to the present publication, which performs the hard work of re-defining metalepsis as a device that "should also be seen completely beyond its initial connection to the language-based context" (Lutas 2020: 150).

8. "[T]he four media modalities form an indispensable skeleton upon which all media products are built. By 'modalities', I thus mean the four necessary categories of media traits ranging from the material to the mental, and by 'modes' I mean the specific media traits categorised in modalities" (Elleström 2020: 46–47).

9. A possible direction of analysis signalled by Lotherington, too: "a discussion of technical media invites an ontological lens on what constitutes technology, which exceeds the purview of this article, calling into question the relationship of qualified (socio-historical aspects of media) and technical media of display" (2020: 226–227).

10. "The concept of a submedium is effectively the same as most notions of genre. In other words, a genre is a qualified media type that is qualified also within the frames of an overarching qualified medium: a submedium" (Elleström 2020: 64).

11. "Mediation is the display of sensory configurations by the technical medium (and hence also by the media product) that are perceived by human sense receptors in a communicative situation. It is a *presemiotic* phenomenon that should be understood as the physical realisation of entities with material, spatiotemporal and sensorial qualities—and semiotic potential. For instance, one may hear a sound. Representation is a semiotic phenomenon that should be understood as the core of signification, which I delimit to how humans create cognitive import in communication. When a perceiver's mind forms sense of the mediated sensory configurations, sign

functions are activated and representation is at work. For instance, the heard sound may be interpreted as a voice uttering meaningful words" (Elleström 2020: 39, emphasis in the original).

12. In his contribution to the present publication, Andy Lavender also highlights that "[t]he model is geared towards elucidation, and concerns communication that is itself, Elleström observes, always about conveying 'cognitive import'" (Lavender 2020: 116).

13. As Anthony Enns observes, "the danger always exists that the medium might introduce a degree of noise or interference into the act of transmission by making his presence felt instead of remaining neutral and transparent, such as when the devil attempts to manipulate listeners, when the psychoanalyst falls in love with his patient" (Enns 2015: 17).

14. "One of the principal effects of the digital shift has been the big screen's loss of hegemony […] In fact projection onto a movie screen has become just *one way* among others to consume images. The screen may have a greater *aura*, but it is now just one means of consumption among others" (Gaudreault and Marion 2015: 9, emphasis in the original).

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