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Games & Movies. Convergence vs. Complementarity: Towards a Theory of Audiovisuality in the Digital Age

Within the contemporary mediascape, works of linear and nonlinear audiovisuality seem mainly to compete with one another: for attention and money, users and talent. A closer look, however, reveals constant artistic collaboration and aesthetic exchange between both branches and variants of audiovisual art and entertainment. Adaptation of content is rampant: Games like *Tomb Raider*, *Final Fantasy, Resident Evil* or *Max Payne* become movies, blockbuster series like *The Matrix*, *Lord of the Rings*, *James Bond* or *Harry Potter* are turned into games. Games like *Bioshock*, *Assassin's Creed* or *GTA4* strive for photorealism, movies like *Sin City*, *A Scanner Darkly* or *Beowulf* strive for hyperrealism. Games and movies are also adopting key elements of mise-en-scène and visual story telling from each other. The intensity of this collaboration and aesthetic transfer has recently led several artists and academics to suggest that games and movies are converging.

By investigating two earlier instances of such "audiovisual rivalry" – the rise of film and its interchange with theatre; the rise of television and its interchange with film –, this paper proposes a different view: that we are not witnessing the aesthetic convergence of games and movies, but the forming of a new digital media dispositive of complementarity.