# Transmedia Synergies – Remediating Films and Video Games

## By Matthias Stork

JW Player

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The essay, "Transmedia Synergies – Remediating Films and Video Games", was borne out of an uninhibited passion for (action) films and (RPG / FPS) video games and was intended to synthesize these interests into a *mash-up* that utilizes digital video technology to showcase film and video game research, with the goal of analyzing their aesthetic similarities. In an age that is defined by the popularity of video games and big-studio blockbusters (many of which are in fact adapted from video games, and vice versa), a large share of critics tends to, haphazardly it seems, conflate the two media, usually for derisive purposes. Terse, dissenting phrases such as 'This looks like a video game' or 'This game is not very cinematic' have become convenient shorthand descriptors to express vague stylistic parallels and obviate, rather than explore, the two media's distinct synergies.

This essay seeks to act as a corrective by providing an audiovisual overview of film-video game synergies. It thereby situates itself in a thriving academic discourse centered on the relationship between the film and the video game industries in the New Digital Hollywood. Using the concepts of Bolter and Grusin's *remediation* and Jenkins' *transmedia storytelling* as its theoretical foundation, this visual essay examines the aesthetic ties the two media have maintained (and diversified) since the 1970s. While the two media are engaged in a reciprocal dialogue, film seems to be the dominant *remediating* force. Video game design is substantially informed by filmic vocabulary as the cultural institution of cinema has significantly informed how we present, process, and produce visual information. Yet, films are increasingly influenced by video games as well, though to a lesser degree, particularly in the realms of adaptation strategy and production technology.  Ironically, even basic cinematic techniques such as the subjective point-of-view shot (POV) and the Bazinian long-take, in form of a deep-focus tracking shot, are nowadays more commonly associated with video games whose popularity reframes (and transforms) classical film language in the popular consciousness. Not surprisingly, our cultural perception classifies cinematic action as video game-esque.

This video essay seeks to work as a unifying lynchpin within the interdisciplinary critical space of film/video game synergies or, more generally, intermediality. More specifically, its blend of *actual*, rather than symbolic, audiovisual material from films and video games, adds a tangible dimension to the critical discourse which is crucial to an understanding of the transmedia encounters that transpire in the sphere of aesthetic symbiosis. Considering the complexity of the topic, the essay by no means represents a complete survey. In fact, the most difficult task faced in the process of its creation was to condense the transmedia context without trivializing it. The net result, as I see it, is a *rough cut*, a cross-section that allows for a more visceral, and perhaps more image-centric, engagement with film and video game aesthetics.

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**Author bio:**

Matthias Stork is currently an M.A. student in the Cinema and Media Studies program at UCLA. He is interested in the intersections of cinema and digital media, especially the synergies between films and video games, the aesthetics of neo-spectacle, and video essays as emergent forms of film criticism and scholarship. Moreover, he ponders the intricacies of the post-cinematic in relation to contemporary visual culture. You can see his video essay experiments at http://vimeo.com/cineessais.

He also coined the term "Chaos Cinema."

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