

## **An intermedial perspective on elemental media: The virtuality of environments beyond the digital**

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### **Abstract**

Today's digitized world has made an old truth evident: media are not only communicative tools, but also integral elements of any organism's living environment. This is the simple idea of John Durham Peter's philosophy of elemental media. In this paper, I examine what Lars Elleström's intermedial model has to say about media types whose function cannot be reduced to their use in communicative processes. The theoretical work of Durham Peters and Elleström belong to different traditions in media studies, but share a common ground in early American pragmatism. By investigating their respective use of this common ground, I will delineate the points of convergence and divergence between these two traditions. I argue that Elleström's intermedial model can enhance the analytical precision of Durham Peter's philosophy of elemental media, but also that the latter can expand the analytical scope of the former. In the focal point of attention are the virtual spheres and realities generated by media products of different types.

### **Keywords**

Media ecology, intermediality, virtuality, symbolicity

### **Bio**

**Erik Erlanson** is associate senior lecturer in comparative literature at Linnaeus University. His research interests include media ecology, intermediality and the environmental politics of aesthetics. Erlanson is a member of the Linnaeus University Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies (IMS), where he is active in the research cluster IMS Green. He is also the coordinator of a newly formed research network, "Media as Infrastructure?", which gathers researchers from a wide range of disciplines to explore the analytical benefit of combining intermediality with media ecology.