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Diegetic existence: transmedia instauration in artists' cinema

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ABSTRACT

This article engages with differences of experiences generated by transmedia migration of filmic content in artist-filmmaker Albert Serra's two-channel installation *Personalien* and feature film *Liberté* (2019). Made from the same raw footage, the films were seen as iterations of one fictional world. How is diegesis transformed by Serra's distinct negotiation of viewers' patience and perversity at the museum and the film theatre? Responding to this issue requires retrieving Anne and Etienne Souriau's concept of diegesis. Diegesis was exported to narratology and semiotics, though the notion was soon robbed of its relevance: its equal sensitivity to medial environments, circumstantial conditions of experience, and modulations of fictional existence. Reintegrating diegesis within Souriau's multilayered and intensive ontology of filmic universes is of renewed interest in times of cinematic *relocation*, when cinematic experiences are reactivated in new contexts. Artists' moving-images require us to give due weight to the ontic thickness of film. What environments do each experience configurate? Which operations are required in the theatre and the museum? Will viewers support the existence of Serra's precarious worlds? Resituating diegesis within Souriau's philosophy of instauration, I address intermedial differences in *Personalien* and *Liberté* and reflect on logical and metaphysical disparities.

Slow cinema meets cruising libertines: Albert Serra's *Liberté* (2019) promised to be a demanding experience. By way of introduction to its Spanish premiere (Madrid, November 2019), Serra merely shared a viewer's feedback: *Liberté* restores the sense of a public screening. Because the film establishes a sadomasochistic tension with its audience, testing the limits of its patience and counting on its immobility, the theatrical dispositive becomes central. Especially so, as *Liberté* was preceded by two distinct works: a homonymous play shown at Berlin's Volksbühne in 2018, and another filmic work, *Personalien*, shown from February to May 2019 at Madrid's Museo Reina Sofia.[1] Though made from the same raw footage, the installation stands in

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stark contrast with the feature film. Two large screens were set at each end of a long rectangular room kept in total darkness. Contrary to *Liberté*, no seats, no screening schedules, no historical context or narrative background were provided. Only a word of notice at the entrance: 'Some images may contain offensive content. Entrance is not recommended for minors under age 18'.

Cutting across cultural sectors – the art world and the cinema industry – the Catalan artist-filmmaker's practice is established, though provocative. His videos *Els Tres Porquets* (2012) and *Singularity* (2015) were commissioned for Documenta 13 and the Venice Biennale, but their length (more than 100 hours for the first, 12 hours for the latter) made it impossible to watch in their entirety. While more reasonable in duration, Serra's feature films (*Honor de Cavalleria* (2006), *El Cant dels Ocells* (2008), *Historia de la meva mort* (2013), *La Mort de Louis XIV* (2016)) depict European myths in a radically anticlimactic manner. Don Quixote is aging and tired, Casanova spends most of his time eating and defecating, while the Sun King's gangrened leg renders him unable to walk, drink or eat. On screen Serra's heroes ripen into bare life. Because the story is known all too well, Serra can evacuate dramatic conflicts, narrative tipping points and causal articulation of events while still counting on viewers' engagement. They will fill the before and after gaps; the film may start in media res. Serra's works have thus been described as films about 'down time' (Sicinski 2018, 26) – the interstitial moments between actions.

Serra's idiosyncratic historical iconoclasm earned him international recognition in art film festival circuits. In May 2019, *Liberté* had its international premiere at Cannes, as part of the section *Un Certain Regard*, where it was awarded the Special Jury Prize. Inspired by Marquis de Sade's literary universe, his penultimate film is his most subversive to date. Set in a Prussian forest shortly after Louis XV's death, *Liberté* depicts a group of exiled libertines with no moral boundaries seeking a safe place to freely express their unruly desire. Either praised or attacked by the critique – as 'un scandale raté' (Gobbo 2019) or 'the most radical and confrontational film in the [Cannes] official selection' (Lim 2019) – the film attracted a good deal of attention for its sexual explicitness and doubtful morality. But little has been said on its relation to *Personalien*.[2]

For the first time in his career, Serra makes an installation and a feature film from the same rushes: libertines are seen hiding in some eerie, nightly woods, watching or cruising among abandoned sedan chairs. Serra's works share, in part, filmic 'content'. In fact, *Liberté* reviewers were quick to note that the projects stand for various iterations of the same world ("Personalien - Albert Serra" 2020; Reviriego 2019; Sanchez 2019). I saw both works, as did many in Madrid and as more will in the future (as the installation will travel to other art venues). Each experience was uncomfortable on its own terms and raised opposite sets of questions. One lacks a plot, the other is firmly

grounded in a historical narrative. One is practically wordless, the other filled with lengthy and literary dialogues. One portrays anonymous body parts partaking in the orgy in disconnected sequences, the other makes each actor recognizable, and so are the erotic acts they perform. It is often unproblematically assumed that fictional worlds can readily migrate across various media. In fact, well-known accounts of transmedia storytelling and transfictionality are grounded on that assumption (Ryan 2015; Jenkins 2008; Saint-Gelais 2011). Yet, as I will discuss below, Serra's engagement with the specificity of the cinema and gallery-film settings allows him to play a perverse game with his audience on two different levels. To what extent, then, do *Personalien* and *Liberté* share their diegesis? How are fictional worlds transformed by our experience in, and Serra's distinct approach to, both media environments?

In order to address this issue, I shall rewind back to Anne & her father Etienne Souriau's initial conceptualisation of diegesis and of the filmic world at large (Souriau 1951, 1953b). Souriau's all-encompassing philosophical system has recently received renewed attention both in ontology and aesthetics. Following Isabelle Stengers' and Bruno Latour's reedition of *Les Différents Modes d'Existence* (Souriau 2009) and Alain Boillat's retrieval of Souriau's concept of diegesis (Boillat 2009), a collective volume was dedicated to his philosophical work (Courtois-L'Heureux and Wiame 2015) and an issue of *La Nouvelle Revue d'Esthetique* to his aesthetics (Chateau 2017). But his most lasting legacy is diegesis. Initially introduced at the Institut de Filmologie as part of an exhaustive theorization of the filmic universe,[3] the concept was very much in line with Etienne Souriau's philosophy and aesthetics. Transposed into entirely distinct theoretical frameworks (semiotics, narratology, fiction theories), diegesis was subsequently abstracted from the philosophical principles on which it was originally grounded. Along with its recovery by Christian Metz, Gérard Genette, and structuralism at large, the notion of diegesis has suffered several alterations. Souriau's seven-layered system was boiled down to dualistic ones – echoing the structuralist 'rage for binary opposition' as Monika Fludernik (2005) puts it: screen material as signifier and diegesis as significate (Metz 1991, 144), or *histoire-récit* (Genette 1972). In film semiotics, the importation of Souriau's diegesis into the framework of Saussuro-Hjelmslevian linguistics removed the embodied aspects of the film experience. Diegesis was reduced to the textual-discursive sphere, uprooted from the affective materialities of communication to which it as originally bound – a trend semio-pragmatics[4] and, more recently, Hven (2022) attempt to reverse: semio-pragmatics ground it back into linguistics of enunciation, communication studies and pragmatics, while Hven turns to embodied cognition and phenomenology In narratology, diegesis was reduced to the story told or *histoire* (Genette 1972, 72), and upon a later rectification, defined as 'the universe where the story take place'

(Genette 1982, 419). Diegesis was thus given a secondary role in relation to the narrative dimension, a hierarchy which has proven determining for the evolution of structuralism (Boillat 2009) and filmic narrative theory.[5]

Yet Souriau's diegesis moves beyond the bounds of text and narrative. For Souriau, each artwork poses a domain of discourse, *i.e.* a systematic whole organized in a cosmological fashion. It is a *world* of its own; 'a set of beings, things, facts, events, phenomena, contained into a spatiotemporal framework'.[6] *Diegesis* was first defined as what 'relates to the story thus presented filmophanically; to everything that concerns the film, insofar as it represents something'.[7] This prolongs Souriau's comments on the difference between presentative and representative arts in *La Correspondance des Arts* (Souriau 1947). Representative artforms suppose an 'ontological duplication – a plurality of inherence subjects'.[8] Accordingly, the beings inhabiting the film are *both* its phenomena, events, things *and* the entities designated by them – integrating another ontological level altogether, one that I shall examine in the last section. Neither the result nor the source of narrativity, diegesis is a forever incomplete construction site, at the crossroads of seven existential planes composing the world of film: the afilmic (the real), the profilmic (the part of the real presented to the camera), the filmographic (film as material object), the filmophanic (phenomena of film projection), the screenic (phenomena located on the screen), the diegesis, the spectatorial (involving the spectator's subjectivity both pre- and post- film projection) and the creational (involving the creator's mind). My aim here is not to address each layer of Souriau's pre-structuralist distribution. For now, it is sufficient to say that Souriau makes it impossible to discriminate filmic content from circumstantial facts. Diegesis is immediately experiential, and this experience is equally grounded on materialities of production, presentation and affect. In this respect, Souriau's cosmological paradigm speaks to recent development in film theory. It combines views of film as *experience*[9] and *environment*[10] – while also providing a fresh articulation with film narratology.

Souriau is, in fact, of renewed interest in times of cinematic *relocation*.[11] When the cinematic has conquered all kinds of platforms (television, computers, home cinema, smartphones etc.), it is no longer permanently tied to the film theatre dispositive. Just like Souriau's, Francesco Casetti's study of the multiple becomings of cinema foregrounds a concept of medium based on the experience it generates, instead of the technological apparatus it relies on. Expanding on his long-standing pragmatic approach, Casetti asks: How do we appropriate a filmic environment? How do we become included in it? Situations are more decisive than ever, and so are the viewers' practices in adjusting to viewing conditions. An expansion of Souriau's multi-layered model to other filmic experiences is thus fruitful to interrogate the becoming of filmic universes in the contemporary explosion of moving-images. Artists'

films in particular require us to give due weight to the ontic thickness of film. Since the turn of the millenary, artist-filmmakers increasingly move from gallery to cinema, and vice versa. Their filmic projects may be single-channel films designed for the theatre or site-specific multi-channel works. In fact, installation is an unusual object for film studies: both ephemeral and in constant mutation, it is an experience, and an unique one too – only available for a limited period of time to the happy few who were able to visit. Artists' moving-images are highly modulable and unstable in their parts, but also deterministic in their effect, based on carefully orchestrated environments. The physical properties of the exhibition space and the configuration of screens are crucial, for installations must seize the audience adrift, choreograph an itinerary of reception and define an appropriate aesthetic response. Site-specificity and liveness dramatically prohibit any pretension of seizing the *original* film and beg for a more flexible filmic ontology. Though the weight of the situation varies in gallery film universes, installations highlight a problem affecting film studies at large. As my analysis of *Liberté* will suggest, Souriau's model may be expanded to include other forms of cinematic relocation, including theatrical ones.

Lastly, Souriau's model bridges the material, experiential, environmental and narratological existences of film within a broader *intensive ontology*. His philosophy is particularly sensitive to fluctuations of being and the risk – always present – of not acquiring sufficient autonomy to exist, be it for a few instants. Thence comes Souriau's interest for art: the self-determination of the work of art (its *aséité*) rests profoundly on its referred existence (its *abaliété*). In Souriau's ontology, abaliété designates existence as draft – dramatically unfinished, dependent upon other beings to uphold it, to prolong it, constantly running the risk of being discarded. Thus, Souriau preferred the idea of *instauration* to that of *creation*. Instauration owes its intrinsic contingency to the abaléité of the artwork. The creator might be responsible for the artwork but she/he is certainly not the owner nor the origin of the instauration – and neither is the spectator. As we shall see, the same applies to diegesis: it is experiential, but not subjective. Conditions were preexisting and completion is never definite. Instauration is full of unexplored potentials, it is a process characterized by incertitude. How will its existential planes coalesce? Will the spectator support its existence? By adopting an ontology of filmic instauration where no being has substance – where alteration is a mode of subsistence, as Bruno Latour puts it (Latour 2015, 28) – film studies may turn away from objecthood and substantiality. Films have a virtual existence, 'une existence en puissance' (Souriau and Souriau 1990), *une existence à faire*. In the case that interests us here, the problem becomes less one of tracking the original through its versions, but how specifically does the work differentiate? What new kinds of operations

are required from viewers? How does the recombination of a filmic universe affect the diegesis?

Taking a closer look at how *Personalien* and *Liberté* configurate multiple times and spaces thus allows me to shed light on intermedial differences between installation and feature and excavate a broader tension at stake in Serra's controversial worlds. In what follows, I will first pay attention to the *screenic, filmophanic, creational* and *spectatorial*: charting how a filmic environment moves body and mind and which tasks the spectator performs or does *not* perform. As I will discuss, Serra configurates political territories that expose and mobilize viewers' power or powerlessness in the gallery and the theatre. Tracking spectators' operations will allow me to examine the conditions for the momentary actualisation of each diegesis. How does the audience negotiate – rejecting or sustaining – Serra's precarious filmic universes? This will lead me to pay closer attention to *filmographic* issues of editing, post-production, etc., and address the logical and metaphysical implications of *diegetic migration*. Drawing from Souriau's model of diegesis and resituating it within his multimodal ontology, I will examine the filmic worlds of *Personalien* and *Liberté* and reflect on the consequences of intermediality.

1. Diegetic environments: the museum and the film theatre

After wandering along the vast and intricate web of corridors of the Reina Sofia, I come upon an entrance veiled with black heavy curtains. Little information is provided: the title, the artist's name, the film's length (43 minutes) – and an advisory age guideline. If entering the room to watch its 'offensive content', the enticed ones would also need a certain amount of patience. The eyes must adjust to the dark and to a blinding spotlight – the only light source – hovering over the entrance and allowing them to be monitored by those seated in the shadows. The textural soundscape of the forest pervades the room. Very few words are exchanged between the libertines. The slow tempo of the orgy and the limited visibility of the nightly images require some time for visitors to understand what they are watching. Some would arrive in the midst of a whipping scene, others would come at the beginning of a seven minutes-long establishing shot of a dark forest, from which a libertine's leg or a wig reappears every now and then from behind a tree. Once eroticism surfaces within the dim, thick and lush forest, the viewer must make a moral decision. Will I leave? Will I sit in the dark – at the risk of bumping into other invisible voyeurs? Will I stand in front of one of the screens – thus putting my shadow on display?

The two looping screens of *Personalien* (6 × 3.5 metres) were placed at both ends of the room, so that no overall view of the scenes could be achieved. Each sound and visual channel mostly performs autonomously.

Often silent voyeurs hidden behind trees on one screen oppose a barely discernible erotic act on the other. Yet, nothing indicates that the scenes are taking place simultaneously. Radical non-linearity is thus achieved through division into two channels as well as an atmospheric montage. The lack of interaction between mute libertines crossing the forest does not support any causal articulation between shots nor between screens. Hardly any word is spoken throughout, the sexual encounters are undramatic, a series of vague body parts moving and panting, indiscernible within the nightly forest.

The slow and indeterminate progression of the sequences encourages my gaze to drift: from one screen to the other, or to the newcomers. A mother enters with two children, she watches and hesitates – longer than necessary – unaware that her morally questionable delay is the object of the invisible audience's silent judgement. She would need to enter the room to realize how vulnerable to onlookers she had just been. Later, a group of teenagers giggle at the bizarre masturbation scenes, surrounded by eavesdropping ears. The aural and visual transparency of the room invites visitors to monitor one another, while simultaneously granting anonymity to the peepers. Entrance grants invisibility and along with it, certain power over dithering visitors. Noting the rise of total darkness in moving-image exhibition spaces, Catherine Elwes remarks that it allows us to feel alone – a solitude that is ruled out by limited but dimmed lighting in the theatre (Elwes 2015). Here, Serra turns the situation around: we are made dramatically aware of others. Instead of solitude, darkness delivers cozy indiscretion and anonymous freedom.

Spectatorial surveillance mirrors screen settings. As the installation opposes an erotic encounter to passive peepers on the other channel, it demands a more fundamental choice: do I wish to be a voyeur or a partaker? The visitor must choose a perspective. On one exceptional occasion, channels are suddenly synchronized. The screens respectively offer rear and frontal views of the whipping of a woman leaning on a carriage and begging for more. Two distinct points of listening – closer and farther to the scene – encourage the viewer to position her/himself: to watch her whipped buttocks or her facial expressions? Politics in *Personalien* lies entirely on the negotiation of our scopic pulsion. Should we decline Serra's indecent proposal of a world? Should we enter, thus gaining unchecked power over our peers? Inside, invisible and anonymous, it is the object of our gaze that will define us. For if we cannot see it all, what will we choose to see? (Figure 1).

The world of *Liberté* is built upon an opposed set of conditions. Running over two hours, *Liberté* is exclusively shown in theatrical settings. It receives widespread commercial distribution in France, Germany and Spain, in addition to being shown at festivals all over the world. The screening I attend is the sold-out Spanish premiere at the Cine Doré (*i.e.* the official
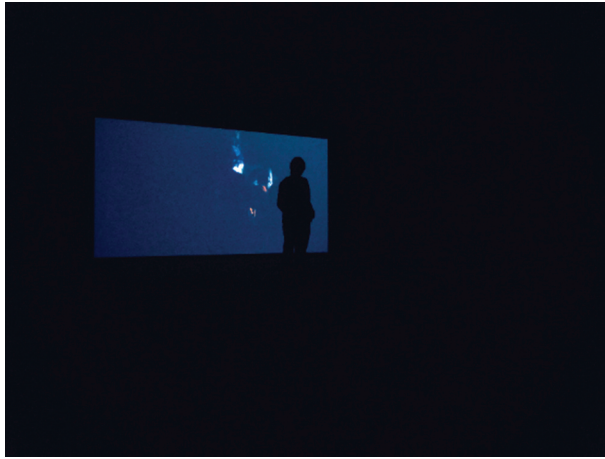
Figure 1. Installation view of *Personalien* at Museo Reina Sofía (March 2019).

screening room of Filmoteca, Madrid) several months after receiving its Cannes award. Serra introduces the film (emphasizing the criticality of theatrical experience, as mentioned earlier) and answers questions after the screening. As Erika Balsom argues, the filmmaker's presence reinscribes authorial control, just as it endows film exhibition with a sense of liveness and authenticity (Balsom 2017). When cinema is relocated across a wide range of digital platforms, film theatre presentation receives increased symbolic value: as a live, unique event offering a situated and original experience. The filmmaker's physical and ephemeral appearance reacquaints the cinematic event with the unreproducibility of performances. The author also guides viewers' interpretations, thus asserting her/his semiotic sovereignty. Therefore, new significance is associated with the creational level, which was mere 'residue'[12] in Souriau's time.

Given the extensive media coverage, excitement is palpable. Around three hundred spectators have attended what had been described as a 'two-hour-plus orgy of X-rated masochism' (Waxman 2019). Further fuelling the frenzy, the director presents the film in a typical Serra fashion as 'the most original film you will see this year'. Soon a prologue (entirely missing in *Personalien*) establishes the stakes of the experience. *Liberté* starts with a daylight conversation. 1774, in a carriage lost in the Prussian woods, two libertines – Duc de Wand (Baptiste Pinteaux) and Comte Alexis Danshire (Alexander García Düttmann) – seek the protection of Duc de Walchen (Helmut Berger). Set at dawn, the pre-title sequence grounds the filmic world in a determined socio-cultural context and sheds light on the precarity of their situation, in exile from the French court and unlikely to find a more welcoming asylum in Prussia. We are invited into an already decaying world.

The libertines promote an ideological and political cause: through their moral transgression, they seek emancipation. Unlike Serra's previous features, *Liberté* lacks an extrafilmic narrative premise to dig through. Here, narrative keys are provided in the first minutes of the screening. The title and prologue establish a strict teleology, in the pursuit of a sadistic and revolutionary ideal. But does the film quench the audience's thirst for transgression? (Figure 2).

According to functionalist (Sternberg 1992) and rhetorical narratology (Walsh 2001), teleology is key to the diegesis. Narrativity is a processual relation, constantly changing from beginning to end, driven by the viewer's interest and orientated *teleologically* towards the eventual resolution of the gaps and diegetic uncertainties. The diegesis is a working version constructed by the viewing – and not reconstructed by it, as Richard Walsh adds.[13] Crucially, 'it is a means rather than an end in itself' (Walsh 2001, 604). Following Walsh's pragmatic approach to fictionality, the problem is then not one of truthfulness but one of relevance for the viewer: 'narrative closure figures less as the resolution of plot in itself [...], than as the resolution of suspended evaluations of relevance' (Walsh 2005). Therefore, narrativity works as a delaying device for the elaboration of a diegesis. It depends on the teleology of communication, according to which the hypotheses of relevance need to eventually take sides.

In the theatre, the audience's choice to attend the screening has already been made, the challenge lies instead in whether the film will meet its expectations. Regardless, the forewarned, well-behaved and informed spectators of Cine Doré remain silent and still throughout. For Catherine Elwes, 'the muting of the audience' (Elwes 2015, 105) is an inherent consequence of

Figure 2. The Spanish premiere of *Liberté* at Cine Doré (November 2019).

the evolution of theatrical design, gradually emphasizing the separation of spectacle and viewers. At the Cine Doré screening, the disciplinary effect of the dispositive is enhanced by a social one: *Liberté* is an arthouse film screened in an art cinema to a well-educated audience. In the crowded room of enlightened cinephiles, little space between rows and seats, along with low but sufficient lighting allow instantaneous recognition. In partial darkness, hardly anyone risks disturbing her/his row neighbours and attracting everyone's attention. Mutual control is enforced through the combined effects of the film's monotony and the conditions of an auteur cinema premiere. This is particularly striking as all the viewers I question after the screening either found the film boring or profoundly disliked it – yet, none of them left midway through. In the Q&A Serra mentions an amusing fact: the few escaping the screening often do so at a specific point, well after the most radical scenes (whipping, arsehole-licking, assassination, urolagnia and torture). At the 113-minute mark, a quarter of an hour before the credits, Comte de Tésis reappears, fully dressed and monotonously rubbing his crotch – just like in the beginning. This is when it becomes clear that the film delivers neither sexual release, nor sadistic transgression. The real victims are cinema-goers, seeking a revolution – the teleological reward promised in the prologue – they will only get more of the same: a slow, joyless and potentially infinite exhaustion of desire. As a bitter critic puts it, '*Discipline and Punish* could have made a title for this instead of the near-meaningless handle it has since it requires discipline to withstand and is a punishment to endure' (Felperin 2019).

Liberté discloses the political territory established by the cinematic space; how power is exercised in a filmic universe and distributed among its planes. Some forces are more critical than others: film marketing, theatrical design, limited but sufficient lighting, social restraint, Serra's introduction and narrative teleology. Negotiating the viewers' boredom and discipline, *Liberté* offers a filmic de-instauration: the instauration of an existence that is already compromised, a tale of extinction. Its diegesis should never gain its autonomy be it not for the disciplinary environment of the theatre. Conversely, *Personalien* establishes a perverse filmophanic territory wherein viewers' choreography and politics of attention take centre stage. Some degree of attentiveness to conditions of presentation is typical of exhibition cinema and has been much discussed.[14] Spectatorship of artists' moving-images is characterized by a *double consciousness* wherein visitors are both immersed in the diegesis and attentive to its material conditions of exhibition. But here, consciousness involves social tensions and ideological judgements that problematize diegetic immersion – as beguiling as it may be. *Personalien*'s filmic world hinges on spectatorial choice, mine as well as every other visitor's: from in the spotlight to anonymity, from object of observation to voyeur, from personal order to impersonal debauchery.

Both filmic universes set a non-neutral stage for a series of decisions that position us towards those universes. Both open a space of hesitations for diegetic immersion, with a notable difference. At the Reina Sofia, in the black shadows of shapelessness, we are not accountable to anybody but ourselves. This is precisely what makes the formation of any cinematic community impossible. Whereas the theatre enforces communal control and discipline, wandering exhibitions visitors are free from each other's gaze – either unaware of being watched or cloaked in secrecy. Let us turn now to our central inquiry. As discussed above, *Liberté* and *Personalien* belong to contrasting environments involving a different set of operations. How does this affect diegesis as a horizon of experience?

2. Diegetic logics: exhausted sadism and environmental eroticism

As Anne and Etienne Souriau made clear, diegesis overwhelms the strict realm of denotation; it includes all that is implied by the film. In the 'diegesis' entry in the *Vocabulaire d'esthétique* (Souriau and Souriau 1990), Anne Souriau writes, 'the diegetic elements that are not directly manifested in the work could be inferred by reasoning, as long as they are sufficiently and virtually present in there'.[15] This would bring her to take a significant step further: 'Various works can share the same diegesis',[16] though it would involve significant logical, psychological and metaphysical questions, she adds. The phenomenon of fictional world expansion has received much attention in the last years. Often based on the model of the Hollywood franchise, narratology examines relatively stable diegesis, shared across various media, platforms or films – thus providing content for different market niches. Artists' cinema provides a welcome counterpoint – and Serra's case is particularly useful for examining this problem. Diegetic migration in *Personalien* and *Liberté* rules out psychological issues (the relation between two authors' imaginations) and allows us to focus on logical (the coherence between various diegesis) and metaphysical (when the virtual existence of the diegesis is treated as an actual one for comparative purposes) issues. By extending our analysis into the filmographic material, let us first examine how experiential differences shape two autonomous – and to some extent irreconcilable – diegetic logics.

The cinematography of Serra's films – *i.e.* shooting with three cameras and a particularly unnatural choice of angles – often shatters transparency and encourages a purely formal approach to images. Yet, while in *Personalien* long shots of unintelligible opacity prevail, *Liberté* yields to the temptation of explicitness. Shot length decreases, added visibility is ensured by a brighter colour grading, and a multiplication of perspectives takes hold. The complete process of erotic acts is illustrated. Characters partaking in the orgy are

named and recognizable. Sexual desire is sparked by a personal affair in *Liberté*: the plot follows two young and attractive women soon to be kidnapped from a nearby convent. On the contrary, anonymity is maintained throughout the installation, making gender and beauty irrelevant. *Personalien* offers an abstract assemblage of impersonal body parts. Sadistic acts are rarely depicted. For instance, one of the most striking scenes in *Liberté* shows men pouring milk and semen on the naked body of Mademoiselle de Jensling (Iliana Zabeth) as she hangs by the wrists. Only its aftermath is left in *Personalien*: a series of shots of the voyeurs around her body crouched on the floor. Smirks grow on the men's face in close-up and the noise of splashing liquid can be heard in the aural background (Figures 3 and 4).

Contrary to *Personalien*'s irrational soundscape (the unsynchronised sound channels are often enigmatic and practically speech-less, reducing the human to cries, breathing and muffled growls), lengthy dialogues assert and reassert the stakes of the game in the feature. Serra's attraction for

Figure 3. Drenched and strung-up Mlle de Jensling in *Liberté* (Albert Serra, 2019). Courtesy of Andergraun Films.

Figure 4. Mlle de Jensling's wet body cowering on the ground in *Personalien* (Albert Serra, 2019). Courtesy of Andergraun Films.

extreme accumulation and seriality (Serra 2019b) is nowhere more exacerbated than in *Liberté*, hereby bespeaking its source of inspiration: Marquis de Sade. Sade's accelerated and multiplied reports of violent acts develop into a repetitive and monotonous delirium. Both Barthes (1989) and Deleuze (1967) have showed the vacuity of sadism, how it turns sexuality into formalism. Pleasure lies less in sensual acts than in their demonstration itself, constituting the supreme violence: a movement of rational negation. Serra transposes Sade's graphic and wordy descriptions either into various conversations about fantasised acts or visually through an accumulative use of camera angles and scales, providing for an exhaustive repertoire of BDSM scenes. Paradoxically, the more images gain legibility, the more they are emptied out, reduced to their sole deductive purposes, arranged according to automatic sequencing, from principles to consequences. Bodies are strictly subordinated to the requirements of the demonstration. As Barthes observed, the living in Sade are part of a great 'machine' (Barthes 1989, 152): shedding their humanity to become interlocked pornographic objects. Yet, whereas order and hierarchy are steadfast in Barthes' systematic sadism, for Deleuze sadist logic is teleological.[17] Sade's quantitative repetitions and tediously obsessive prose are aimed at total transgression, whereby the Idea of the Negative is reached.

But in *Liberté* the dice has already been cast. The impossibility of revolution transpires throughout the joyless debacle. Significant is Serra's interest in libertinage in that regard; focused at its own decadence. Such essentially minoritarian universes, and the radical freedom they believed in, have already fallen into decay. In fact, in the film most libertines are old men, whose impotence is laughed at by the gorgeous Venuses they prey on. Other men do not join the orgy but observe it from a safe distance, unenthusiastically stroking themselves. Taken literally, the impossibility of sadists' uprising is incarnated in all the limp penises invading the screen. *Liberté*'s debauchery is bleak, leading nowhere but to its own exhaustion. The utopia of the title is already compromised. No libertine seems to expect anything but a slow, helpless burn. Comparing both films, Serra described *Liberté* as 'sadder and desperate. It empties you in some way [...]' (Serra 2019a).The film follows the accumulation of impotency, and the human waste it produces along the way. Herein lies the violence of the demonstration: the on-screen bleakness is made increasingly unbearable, in particular as it contrasts with the film's marketing – often emphasizing an experience of sexual freedom in times of political correctness (Gardner 2019; Martinez 2019; Murillo 2020).

Thus, in Serra's feature, linearity persists but the promises of teleology are always eroded further. We were sold some narrative closure to provide diegetic relevance, but it never comes. The configuration of the film theatre as well as the expectations fomented by the press, Serra's introduction, the

title and the prologue sharpen this delay, until it is no longer bearable. Soon the snake bites its own tail: it is a cyclical time, a past already lost yet persisting in an endless decay. There is no 'pay-off': *Liberté* ends with the night, as the last libertine (Lluis Serrat) hides and peeks in-between branches like an animal, his bare chest covered in a dark coat of hair. It is a chronicling of dehumanisation, full of helpless ideals: 'it's the late 18th century – where it looks like this dream is possible, but in fact you feel that it isn't. You wish it could be possible, but it isn't – and you see the disaster' (Serra 2019c). The film offers only a perverted sadism: wherein what matters is the dispositive of the cinematic demonstration – an accumulative linearity like Sade's, but one consuming everything, including the Marquis' negative ideal. And it is precisely because the film has an ending that this sadistic game is possible.

Playing on a loop, in a museum, to an uninformed visitor, *Personalien* lacks the conditions to sustain such a narrative. The teleology of communication does not overlap with the ending of the artwork. It offers a wholly different panorama: no promises to be met, no ideals to be upheld. The sexual scenes are barely discernible, not articulated causally and lacking narrative impact. Upon entering the pitch-dark room and upon deciphering the opaque long takes, *Personalien* installs a suspenseful atmosphere. Instead of the feature's clinical inventory of BDSM scenes, the installation's evocativeness keeps visitors' interest aroused. Less focused on explicit descriptions as it is on building an eerie environment, *Personalien* postulates first and foremost a contestation of the real. The viewers become actual protagonists, they who, just like the on-screen voyeurs, must decide whether to partake or not. As in masochists' affairs, a contract must be established between parties. Those that dither on making the pact are most vulnerable under the spotlight. Darkness wards off the afilmic world, while infinitely suspending perception and dramatic resolution in the nightly forest.

Tree trunks shine like bare buttocks, rain glitters like semen, leaves move like loosened wigs. In such a phantasmatic stasis, the forest itself is charged with eroticism. A lush silence saturates the space, one where crickets, moaning, cowbells, cries, crackling twigs and respirations intermingle. In lieu of a human plot, the landscape takes centre stage. Both beginning and ending – establishing shots from inside and outside the woods, respectively – last longer in *Personalien*. First absent, human beings gradually appear behind the trees during a seven-minute-long take of the peaceful forest. Midway through the film, in a particularly remarkable scene thanks to the synchronization of sound channels, a storm breaks out. Lightning bolts and a diluvian rain saturate the aural and visual field, while a three-some takes place inside a carriage. The screen is illuminated by a sudden squall of light and activated by movement. Only weather undergoes climax in *Personalien*. At the end, light gradually shines upon the dark trees. Dawn is breaking and the leaves seem to come alive.[18] Music (by experimental band MolfForts)

plays for the first time. Following a black screen, it is the mysterious land-scape of the still forest that returns the installation to its quiet and slow pace. The calm of the night, the bursting storm and the alarming break of dawn punctuate the exhibition experience. Within those eerie woods, the BDSM scenes function as undramatic snapshots, a mere symptom of the natural obscenity around them.

Personalien foregrounds the dispersal of vision and disconnectedness of sequences in a mythical space at odds with chronology and societal order. Marginal or non-human micro-events take central stage. Another world logic is at play. Though sharing profilmic material, both universes shape two autonomous dieges, largely incompatible as far as their logical impli-cations are concerned. Because the narrative of *Liberté* is one of degradation, decaying ideologies and teleological failure, its diegesis focuses on the delir-ious collapse of human bodies. Because *Personalien*'s universe dramatizes impersonal desire and organic eroticism, it is caught in a loop, moved by our scopic pulsion and craving anonymity. Diegetic discrepancy between *Personalien* and *Liberté* lies thus on a different politics of human and non-human forces. Whereas *Liberté* highlights the process of exhaustion – of its filmic world and our own – *Personalien*'s erotic suggestiveness shifts our desire away from the human plot to the environment, on and off-screen.

3. Diegetic existence : *Le monde à faire*

Souriau's dramatized philosophy makes diegetic migration problematic, particularly insofar as intermediality is concerned. His intensive model of filmic worlds demands careful consideration of the conditions for a diegesis to coalesce. As seen above, diegetic facts are the most fragile and fluctuant of film's planes of existence, hinging on every other level (Souriau 1951, 238). Logical incompatibility may arise when diegesis is reintegrated within Souriau's multi-layered model. Let us turn to our last inquiry: what are the metaphysical issues involved in diegetic migration? Addressing this problem requires taking a closer look at the specific mode of existence of diegetic beings. This is perhaps Souriau's most critical contribution. According to Souriau, diegetic beings are just as real as the physical and phenomenal elements constituting the world of film. They have a positive existence and belong to a specific kind of reality – a 'reality of fiction'.[19]

Though little is written in filmology about fictional beings, Souriau had dedicated special attention to the problem in his ontological essay *Les Différents Modes d'Existence*. Shifting the debate away from questions of subjectivity or objectivity, he examines their specific mode of existence. Souriau introduces a crucial difference: the existence of the diegesis depends on us, but this does not make it subjective. Fictional beings are just as real as actual ones, what characterizes them is their vulnerability. Like things and

thoughts, they are ontics, but they lack identity, presence and autonomy, for they are entirely situation-dependent. Therefore, and conversely to other ontics, 'these are precarious existences; they vanish along with the base phenomenon' (Souriau 2016).

Thus, doing justice to its suspended mode of existence requires embedding diegesis in its filmic universe. Diegetic existence must be approached from the conditions of its becoming in space and time (the filmic environment), according to the variations of our emotional investment, or lack thereof (our experience). For, as accomplished as it may be, *L'œuvre* remains *à faire*:

> That which we grasp in the state of being fully made, of sufficiently pronounced existence, nevertheless remains, from a certain point of view and up to a certain point, only partway along its course. We are not without responsibility for this incompletion if it is possible for us, especially by means of philosophical instauration, to confer upon it an as yet unrecognized accomplishment.[20]

The filmic universe rests on a fragile balance, which remains packed with virtual becomings. What will you do about me? How will you respond to my right to existence? Souriau speaks of *responsibility*: it is a strong term, indicating the dedication needed from the author and the distracted visitor as well as the precarity of the work's claims to existence.[21]

Fragile, fictional existence is also intensive. The stronger the phenomenon, the more existential consistency it gains. Such intensity is provided by emotions: fictional beings 'are present and exist for us with an existence based in desire, concern, fear, or hope, or even fancy and diversion. We could say of these beings that they exist in proportion to the importance they hold for us' (Souriau 2016, 153). This reciprocal existence is reasserted in his 1953 definition of diegesis, wherein Souriau insists on the recipient: 'all that belongs in *intelligibility* [...] to the story told, to the world suggested or proposed by the film fiction'.[22] Though a detour by *Les Différents Modes* reveals a significant contrast to traditional reception theory: our active dedication is needed to *support* their virtual existence – not to produce it – and this dedication – a transitory, variable, and unsettled one – achieves no mock-existence but a real one (Stengers and Latour 2016).

Fictional beings are 'entirely conditional and subordinate' (Stengers and Latour 2016, 154), both to us that support them and to the material conditions that allow them to appear. They depend on our solicitude, but we do not set the terms of this relation. Film cosmology and its seven layers of becoming must generate sufficient care to sustain, be it for a moment, their feeble existence. Such is the primary characteristic of filmic universes: 'this world, to which we are invited, is made for us, it is dedicated to us and addresses us. It saves us a spot, from which we will be able to see and

understand everything that might be interesting, moving, important, significative'.[23] Contrary to the 'real', *i.e.* afilmic world, where what matters is constantly out of range, filmic universes are ordered to best stimulate our interest. In short, they are *motivated*.

Some films seem to do exactly the opposite. A particular case in point is Serra's cinema. The filmmaker often prides himself on his elitism: instead of stimulating our interest, he puts it to the test. More than any of his previous features, *Liberté* sadistically toys with its viewers' deceptions and ever-growing boredom. Because, unlike his other films, it is not based on a popular myth, there is no exciting story to fill in the gaps. *Liberté* exploits teleology to emphasize the slow, merciless yet inescapable disintegration of libertinage. Conversely, in the museum, the arbitrariness of our stroll already compromises the diegesis. *Personalien* relies on the fragile invitation it issues to its viewers: will they sustain the existence of such a problematic world, one in which the non-human rules and morals are long forgotten? A world in which women masturbate with hollow tree-trunks. This question is central for Souriau – therein lies the metaphysical stake of aesthetics. Artistic instauration intensifies one gaping metaphysical problem: no existence brings with itself its own justification. Accomplishing existence requires instead an inventive and zealous deference: to answer, at each step of the filmic experience, a sphinx: "work it out, or thou shalt be devoured." But it is the work that blossoms or vanishes, the work that progresses or is devoured" (Souriau 2016, 229). Art exhibits the secret of its own existence. A secret, which lies in the question, never resolved: does this virtual universe, which depend so much on us to exist, deserve existence?

This is what Souriau called the *transcendental* plane of artworks in *La Correspondance des Arts* (Souriau 1947, 277). According to this last mode of existence, the spectator is challenged to grasp the filmic universe as instaured rather than created, to understand it as a risky venture instead of a project. This journey is one of progressive determination, following a series of perilous judgements, upon which hinge the existence of the filmic universe. The installation dramatizes those as so many *individual* choices. Should I pass through the dark curtains? Should I step into darkness? Should I watch my neighbour? In the theatre, I trade my freedom for a *community*. *Liberté* highlights my options as they are contemplated and abandoned: to sleep, to leave, to move, to look away. Both works stress the support I lend to diegesis: it is (in the museum) or becomes (at the cinema) critical. Be it individual or collective, perverse or docile, instauration is a hazardous process – whereby the diegesis does not preexist the storytelling, nor is it its culmination. In other words, meaning is neither the premise of the text nor is the text the substrate of meaning. Bypassing sharp dichotomies that have subsequently shaped narratology, Souriau's model sheds a manifold perspective on the viewer's construction *or dismissal* of the filmic

universe in time and space. Diegesis has a virtual existence – and reducing it to an actual one poses metaphysical issues, as Anne Souriau warns us. Souriau's model allows us to compare diegesis in *Liberté* and *Personalien* as an intensive existence, contingent upon multimodal negotiations of each filmic environment.

4. Negotiating diegetic vulnerability

Casetti describes how screens have become 'place[s] on which free-floating images stop for a moment, make themselves available to users, allow themselves to be manipulated, and then take off again along new routes' (Casetti 2015b, 12–13). Today, the cinematic migrates across various transit points and is readily re-configured into different types of experiences. Attuned to the contemporary explosion of film exhibition, Souriau's aesthetics promote sensitivity to both the environment of world instauration and the transitivity of fictional existence. It is an 'ontology of relations' (Hayat 2017) – between the indexical and authorial genesis of an artwork, its material existence, its conditions of presentation and reception. Accordingly, the questions of *what* and *how* regarding a filmic world are intrinsically linked and cannot be separated, even in the name of analytical convenience.[24] Moreover, the *how* encompasses issues that are not covered by style, narration and discourse. What kinds of *umwelts* do each experience configurate? How does the instauration of a diegesis unfold or fail, individually and socially, in time and space?

   In recent years, pragmatic and rhetorical narratology have shed considerable light on the processual and interactive nature of narrative, thus establishing a concept of diegesis more akin to its original conceptualisation by Souriau (Baroni and Revaz 2016; Baroni 2009; Walsh 2005, 150–164; Sternberg 1992, 463–541). More than any of film's planes of existence, Souriau's diegesis is characterized by its radical dependence on human solicitude. Diegetic existence is at play throughout the filmic experience, making the question of its relevance a motor, but one with no definitive resolution. Indeed, the teleology of communication – which is primary for the elaboration of a diegesis in Walsh's paradigm – would be problematic for Souriau. Fictional existence is transitory – not achieved once and for all – as well as relational – subordinate to the instauration of a multimodal filmic universe. This makes Souriau's model more attuned to non-theatrical filmic experience. Moving-image installations commonly challenge the classical adequation of a work's length and communication teleology. They also put to the test the stability of the film object. As Bellour argues, installations have taken over what was once cinema's: a unique experience characterized by its 'missing text' (Bellour 2012), in which content cannot be abstracted from its individual conditions of presentation and attendance, thus escaping any

definitive interpretation. The teleology of instauration is always unsettled, open to the questions and negotiations of those who support it.

Only with an experiential and environmental view of filmic worlds can we take seriously the mode of existence of diegesis – a precarious, intensive and reciprocal one. Serra's politics of spectatorship makes this problem central, in the museum as well as at the cinema. Our analysis reveals the specific world configuration that media activate for an audience. *Personalien* and *Liberté* sustain minimal interest by their own means, each according to disparate media assemblages. Though both emphasize viewers' mutual surveillance and put their audiences to the test, one depends on a choice to take, the other on a choice already taken. One problematises the entrance, the other the impossibility of exit. Diegetic vulnerability is negotiated in duration – undetermined or determined, short or long – and in specific environments ruled by a series of social conventions. In *Liberté*, a literally *exhausting* plot strains the diegesis but is remediated by viewers' discipline in the theatre. In *Personalien*, an alluring diegesis amends for the absence of human plot and distracted attendance in the museum. The layers of each filmic world are held in a delicate equilibrium, wherein decrepit sadists and sensual foliage depend on the fluctuations of our ennui or perversity to support their feeble existence.

Notes

1. Albert Serra's show took place from February through May 2019. He had been selected to produce a work for 'Fisuras', a program providing financing (30.000€) and total liberty to mid-career artists for the production and exhibition of a new project in the museum (Vozmediano 2015).
2. Critic Phil Coldiron makes an enlightening comparison focused on the relationship between fact and fiction (Coldiron 2019).
3. Etienne Souriau was a member of the initial director comity of the Institut de Filmologie and participated to its activities until 1956, then supporting it until its official closure in 1962. The aim of filmology was to provide a rigorous vocabulary for the study of cinema. It was Souriau's daughter, Anne, who first reintroduced the concept at a filmology seminar in 1950. Diegesis was later theorized by Souriau *père* in the published version of a lecture he gave at the Institut (Souriau 1951), and in the foreword of a volume presenting the collective results of the research group (Souriau 1953b). For a behind-the-scenes account of the development and disappearance of the Institut and Souriau's involvement in it, see Lefebvre (2009); see also Domenicali and Le Tinnier (2017). For a more detailed account of Souriau's involvement in filmology and the early institutionalization of cinema, see Le Tinnier (2017).
4. The pragmatic approach was mostly developed by Francesco Casetti, Daniel Dayan and Roger Odin, all of whom emphasize how spectators negotiate the institutional and mediated contexts of production and reception to produce filmic meaning (Casetti 1998; Dayan 1983; Odin 2000). Casetti studies how a film offers and determines textual roles to be assumed by actual spectators.

Dayan emphasizes the spectator's performativity in relation to these suggested roles and operations. Odin's semio-pragmatics focuses on how institutional context dictates particular behaviors and readings. Text (the film) may only block presupposed meanings that do not befit it. For instance, the institution of commercial cinema encourages operations of fictionalization, among which is *diegetization*, the construction of diegesis (according to Odin, diegesis is a world potentially habitable for a character). Thus, for Odin, diegesis is first and foremost a spectatorial *operation* that relies on specific conditions – *i.e.* transparency (the suppression of the medium) – and produces specific effects – *i.e.* it invites narrative readings. A film may then allow, or not, the process of diegetization. Odin's semiopragmatics offer thus a constructivist version of diegesis, more akin to Souriau's. Nevertheless, as Casetti argues, Odin's context serves only to illuminate the required procedures according to which we understand a film, instead of spectators' concrete gestures and operations. Though emphasizing its conditions of intelligibility, Odin's theory is still based on a linguistic understanding of text (Casetti 2015a, 285). Casetti's more recent approach, which I shall discuss below, is more sensitive to the social peculiarities of situations and spectators' active negotiations of their assigned roles (Casetti 2015b).

5. See for instance Bordwell (1985), Branigan (1992), Chatman (1990). With cognitive narratology, diegesis becomes a causally organized world, centered on the character's limited range of representation, and the result of narrative conversion of data (Branigan 1992, 35).

6. 'un ensemble d'êtres, de choses, de faits, d'événements, de phénomènes, contenus dans un cadre espace-temps' (Souriau 1951).

7. 'relatifs à l'histoire ainsi présentée filmophaniquement; à tout ce qui concerne le film, en tant qu'il représente quelque chose' (Souriau 1951, 237).

8. '[…] dans les arts représentatifs, il y a une sorte de dédoublement ontologique – une pluralité de ces sujets d'inhérence' (Souriau 1947, 65). Each aesthetic attribute can refer to either the artwork as thing – *entité réique* – or the beings represented by it. The diegesis results from such a squaring of the filmic world.

9. Film theory has seen accounts of filmic experience proliferate in the past decades (Shobchack 1992; Hansen 2011; Staiger 2000; Casetti 2015b).

10. In line with media ecology, Francesco Casetti has recently introduced the concept of *mediascape*, as the reciprocal transformation of media and space. He explores how we negotiate reality and others within a particular medial situation and how space becomes the environment in which such a negotiation is made necessary (Casetti 2018).

11. In *The Lumière Galaxy*, Francesco Casetti maps differences and repetitions in how the cinematic experience is (re)activated today.

12. Souriau defines the creational as 'all that could have been in the creator's mind that was not accomplished, that did not succeed' – either because of an auctorial shortfall or the spectator's confusion. This 'residue' operates only as a matter of reference but can become more significant, for instance in the case of 'art films' (Souriau 1951).

13. In an attempt to demote the static dichotomy of fabula – sjuzet in formalist narratology, Meir Sternberg's functionalist paradigm pulled narrative theory away from forms and substances supposedly inherent to the text, towards a reintroduction of relationality and functionality. Sternberg's focus lies on the ends of discourse teleology, its effects on the recipient,

rather than the means; he prioritizes communication over representation. Recently, Richard Walsh (2001) complemented Sternberg's model of 'gapping-to-gap filling teleology' (Sternberg 2010, 640). Like Sternberg he argues that the fabula is not logically precedent to the narrative: it is neither the underlying causal logic of narrative, nor a substructure innocent of all perspective. He goes further than Sternberg however by insisting that even on a conceptual degree, it does not constitute 'the raw material in the genesis of the work' (Walsh 2001, 601).

14. After Claire Bishop's seminal essay on installation art and its interrogation of a split subject – both activated and decentered – various commentators have discussed video installation spectatorship and its *double consciousness* (Bishop 2005). See also (Uroskie 2008; Mondloch 2010; Balsom 2014; Bal 2013; Elwes 2015).

15. 'les éléments diégétiques non directement manifestés dans l'œuvre peuvent en être déduits par le raisonnement, dès qu'ils y sont nécessairement et virtuellement présent' (Souriau and Souriau 1990, 613).

16. '[…] plusieurs œuvres peuvent avoir la même diégèse' (Souriau and Souriau 1990, 614).

17. In *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch*, Gilles Deleuze disentangles sadist and masochist logics of pleasure and pain. Rather than lying in the acts themselves, the discrepancy affects the conditions, modality and aims of each literary world. While the sadistic instructor seeks a victim to subdue against her/his will, the masochist needs to persuade and establish a contract with a torturer to realize her/his fantasies. Ultimately, the masochistic operation is a positive denegation, aimed at the instauration of a mythical stasis, wherein both phantasm and real are suspended. Conversely, sadism seeks the gradual condensation of pure sensual energy, stripped of all feelings, to capsize societal order altogether.

18. The same final shot takes another valence in *Liberté, f*or it is a stronger light, pulsing in an artificial manner (from an off-screen light balloon). The uncanny in *Personalien* becomes unnatural in *Liberté*. Libertines have left the screen just like we imagine the shooting crew leaving the set: it is time to turn on the light. As Dominique Païni describes it, 'Suddenly the viewer begins to wonder whether they have really seen the pornographic audacity that still lingers in their memory. This silvery terminal light surrounding the landscape returns the film to the doubts that plague the dreamer upon waking' (Païni 2019).

19. 'une réalité de fiction' (Souriau 1951, 237).

20. (Souriau 1951, 239).

21. There is however some ambiguity concerning such completion in Souriau's philosophy. In his take on Souriau (Latour 2015), Latour accentuates the vulnerability of instauration. Autonomous existence will never be achieved, it is instead a horizon to aim for. Stengers signals that though Latour's reading does not match Souriau's somewhat sublime and intrepid view of instauration, this ontological incompleteness is precisely how Souriau must be inherited in contemporary time. Promises of harmonious plurality do not stand today, instead instauration deals with a cacophony of conflicting interests. More prudence is required: producing a filmic universe becomes less a conquest of autonomy than a diplomatic and fragile art, making visible the ontological concern at heart of each instauration (Stengers 2015).

22. "tout ce qui appartient 'dans l'intelligibilité' (comme dit M. Cohen-Séat) à l'histoire racontée, au monde supposé ou proposé par la fiction du film" (Souriau 1953b, 7).
23. 'Ce monde, nous y sommes *invités*. Il est fait pour nous ; il nous est dédié. Il s'adresse à nous. Il nous prépare une place ; et s'arrange pour que, de cette place, nous puissions voir et comprendre tout ce qui peut être intéressant, émouvant, important, significatif' (Souriau 1953a).
24. Attempting to go beyond the reduction of filmic worlds to the representational, Daniel Yacavone's recent investigation of *film worlds* restates such dualism. He distinguishes the world *in* (*the representational*, *i.e.* broadly equivalent to Metz's diegesis – as the totality of a film's denotations – in addition to the cognitive schema of narrative) to the world *of* a film (*the presentational*, *i.e.* all the rest, what gives a film world its affective, aesthetic and experiential depth). Such bipolarity is unfortunate, all the more as it often overlaps a separation between the objective and subjective realities of film (Yacavone 2015).

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