
Intermediality: phenomena and some research problems

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Intermedial studies represent a recent area of research that has evolved mainly from Comparative Literature. In the United States it started as Comparative Arts and later it became Interart Studies; in Europe, especially in Germany and the Nordic countries, since the beginning the approach was more general with interest in intermedial phenomena (see Clüver, 2001). According to Rajewsky (2005: 44), the recognition of the term intermediality to deal with similar phenomena in different areas opened up “possibilities for relating the most varied of disciplines and for developing general, transmedially relevant theories of intermediality”.

There are several definitions of intermediality. For Clüver (2011: 6), it implies all kinds of inter-relation and interaction between media. How to approach such a broad phenomenon? Clüver notes the importance of semiotics, asserting that it “has supplied useful concepts and methods in dealing with a number of crucial issues” (Clüver, 2007: 20). For Elleström (2010: 4), it is important to answer what is a medium before one could deal with what happen between media. For Müller (2010), one must consider social and historical features of intermedial processes. In fact, there are not consistent or unified theoretical models about intermediality. Different authors try to delineate explanatory ideas to deal with this new and still open area of research. Historically, scholars interested in intermedial phenomena come from Literary,

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Media, Communication and Arts Studies. They tend to privilege the models of their own area of study. Clüver (2007) and Müller (2010) mention the strong influence literary theory has been imposing on intermedial issues. The topics multiplied to include problems related to (i) the precise definition of the fundamental assumptions and explanatory components, such as the definition of “medium”; (ii) the comparison between rival models and theories, such as social oriented theories and communication intermedial models; (iii) the relation between multimodality and intermediality, and so on.

Some important research centers and graduate programs focused on the study of intermediality include: Center for Research on Intermediality - University of Montreal (Canada), Linnaeus University Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies (Sweden), Iconicity Research Group [IRG] - Federal University of Juiz de Fora (Brazil), Intermediality and Performance Research Group - The Monfort University (Great Britain), Núcleo de Estudos sobre a Intermedialidade - Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brasil), Master degree - Comparative Arts and Media Studies - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Netherlands), Department of Intermedia Studies - University of Ostrava (Czech Republic).

This special issue gathers papers with focus on several intermedial phenomena such as intersemiotic translation³ and combination of two different media or media features⁴. They show a small part of the Brazilian production on this area of research. The articles presented here approach intermedial phenomena from several methodologies and theoretical frameworks. In general, they are concerned with the same fundamental question -- how to explain the processes and mechanisms involved in intermedial phenomena?

³ In other works (Queiroz e Aguiar, 2015; Aguiar e Queiroz, 2013) we explored the phenomenon of intersemiotic translation within a Peircean framework, with focus on its iconic features. Other authors refers to this phenomenon as intersemiotic transposition (Clüver, 1989) and medial transposition (Rajewsky, 2005), for example.

⁴ Media combination is explored by Rajewsky (2005) and possible subdivisions to this type are explored by Clüver (2011: 15-16), such as multimedia, mixmedia or intermedia / intersemiotic texts.

The paper “Photo-novel and photo reportage: concepts, confluences, (un)limits”, by Angelo Mazzuchelli Garcia, draws a parallel between the notions of photo-novel and photo reportage. It examines the convergences between both genres with regard to critical receptiveness both to their content and to their form. It also looks at issues related with the concept of narrativity, with the aim of diluting the eventual boundaries between these two narrative forms.

“Rereading Austen: from XIX century young lady hero to XXI century vlogger”, by Maria Inês Freitas de Amorim, analyzes which elements of literary narrative, *Pride and Prejudice*, the novel authored by English writer Jane Austen, were “translated” to webseries (and social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr) considering the necessary contextualization to maintain verisimilitude.

“Still life: a poetic and photographic reflection”, by Maria Adélia Menegazzo, approaches “still life” in the contemporary poetry of Paulo Henriques Brito and Ana Martins Marques, as well as in photographs of Robert Frank and Francesca Woodmann and in a video of Sam Taylor Wood, highlighting its indexical, allegorical and narrative character.

The paper “Autobiography speech, a re-creator element in comics”, by Bernard Martoni Mansur Corrêa da Costa, proposes to relate comics, media usually related to humorous themes, to the autobiographical text. The focus is on two important graphic novels: “The dreamer”, by Will Eisner, and “Maus: a survivor’s tale”, by Art Spiegelman.

The paper “*If*, by Rudyard Kipling - an intermedial production”, by Érica Ignácio da Costa and Ines Saber de Mello, reports a challenge of crossing theory and artistic practice. It aims to describe the transcreation process of the poem *If* by Rudyard Kipling into *doc-poetry*, term for a new kind of media that involves cinema, dance/body and poetry.

“Apontamentos sobre a transposição do romance para o filme *Drácula* de Bram Stoker”, by Erika Savernini, is an analysis of the intersemiotic translation of “*Dracula*”, by the Irish writer Bram Stoker, into the movie “*Bram Stoker's Dracula*” directed by Francis Ford Coppola.

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