On No Man's Land

Theses on Intermediality

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Let me start with a puzzling paradox: Neither the social theories concerning modernity, modern publicity or the media nor the humanist theories regarding different cultural forms, types of texts or genres pay any significant attention to the fact that the past and present of contemporary culture and media are indeed part and parcel of multimodal and intermedial culture and media.

The theorising about intermediality (intertextuality transgressing media boundaries) has been sporadic and there is no distinct tradition of studies in the field (unlike the case of intertextuality). The few contemporary researchers I discuss in this essay are rare exceptions and their stray remarks on the topic can function only as heuristic starting points for further explication and critique. Hence the main objective of this text is to introduce intermediality onto the agenda of cultural studies and to outline some possible consequenses of taking it seriously.

I

Anthony Smith, a media historian and former director of BFI, guides us into the everyday of intermediality. In *Books to Bytes* (1993:6) he writes:

> Let us consider a not unusual career for a modern work of fiction. It may begin as a novel about which an individual writer has pondered for years, or it may originate as a commission conceived by an agent or a publisher and fostered upon a writer of recognised skill. If it

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seems likely to sustain the investment, the finished work may be promoted, and through dextrous manipulation of the apparatus of literary review and public discussion, forced through a series of different kinds of text distribution. It will come out in hardcover and paperback, in serial fiction and digest form, and then as an even cheaper paperback. But it may also be transmuted into a set of moving images, where its basic authorship will be further dehydrated and industrialised in complex ways. A film designated for cinema distribution may in fact be shown, in widescreen format, only for further promotional purposes; the 70mm image will be seen only by a small fraction of the emerging audience, as the work passes into 35 mm and 16mm gauges for distribution in various specialist systems (such as the film society network or the college circuit). It will appear in a cassette form (all the framing of the original lost in the transformation to the smaller screen) and videodisk, on cable and pay TV, ending up on 'free' over-the-air television, public or commercial. At later stages in its career, the work may return to one or more of its earlier phases, but it will remain in public consciousness with greater permanency than that bulk of Victorian fiction which failed to become one of the tiny band of classics.

Smith's description of the multiplicity of one and the same texts could be expanded further by talking about soundtracks, novels written based on movies or television series or the re-publishing of novels in connection with their dramatization. In contemporary culture, this kind of recycling becomes increasingly common all the time.

My own interest in the problematics of intermediality was indeed raised through this kind of

connection. As I was leafing through a list of the new offerings from a Finnish book club in the autumn of 1996, I made the observation that each and every book offered to the reading audience had one connection or another to some other medium – in this case, movies or TV series. This simple observation included an equally simple amazement regarding the fact that not one discipline or individual researcher had seized on this matter that is familiar to anyone in our everyday lives.

Despite these matters that are familiar to us all, not only the fact that language and culture have been multimodal since the beginning of history as we know it, but also the fact the throughout history the different media have been inter-related in terms of both structure and content, has been a blind spot to the human sciences. With my *first* thesis, I wish to burst this bubble and emphasize:

Culture is Multimodal

What does multimodality mean? And what is the relationship of multimodality and intermediality with one another? Critical linguists Guther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, write in their work *Reading Images* (1996:39):

> [L]anguage, whether in speech or writing, has always existed as just one mode in the totality of modes involved in the production of any text, spoken or written. A spoken text is not just verbal but also visual, combining with 'non-verbal' modes of communication such as facial expression, gesture, posture and other forms of self-representation. A written text, similarly, involves more than language: it is written on something, on some material (paper, wood, vellum, stone, metal, rock, etc.) and it is written with so-mething (gold, ink (en)gravings, dots of ink, etc.) [.] The multi-modality of written texts has, by and large, been ignored, whether in educational contexts, in linguistic theorizing or in popular common sense. Today, in the age of 'multimedia', it can suddenly be perceived again.

Here, Kress and van Leeuwen are concerned with the multimodality of spoken and written language. However, what they say about written language also applies per se to the third fundamental symbolic language, namely, pictures, from which writing has developed.

The notions of Kress and van Leeuwen have a number of important consequences concerning our topic. If these most fundamental symbolic forms –

speech, pictures and writing – are "always already" multimodal, then multimodality inevitably also covers the more complex symbolic forms that are developed after the three. Hence, *multimodality characterises all symbolic forms utilized by humans*.

From what was said above, Kress and van Leeuwen (ibid. 39-40) indeed draw a total of eight conclusions that have significance to our topic and which are worth examining more closely. The conclusions are the following:

(a) human societies use a variety of modes of representation;

(b) each mode has, inherently, a different representational potential, a different potential for meaning-making;

(c) each mode has a specific social valuation in particular social contexts;

(d) different potential for meaning-making imply different potentials for the formation of subjectivities;

(e) individuals use a range of representatonal modes, and therefore have available a range of means of meaning-making, each affecting the formation of their subjectivity;

(f) the different modes of representaton are not held discretely, separately, as autonomous domain in the brain, or as autonomous communicational resources in a culture, nor are they deployed discretely, either in representation or in communication; rather, they intermesh and interact at all times;

(g) affective aspects of human behaviour and being are not discrete from other cognitive activity, and therefore never separate from representational and communicative behaviour; (h) each mode of representation has a continuous evolving history, in which its semantic reach can contract or expand or move into different areas as a result of the uses to which it is put.

In this context, I ignore the conclusions (d) and (e) because they concern subjectivities rather than intermediality in its most immediate sense. But what do the other six conclusions signify in regard to intermediality?

Firstly, the conclusions of Kress and van Leeuwen attract our attention to the fact that cultures are never constructed by relying solely on one form of representation. The elements of multimodality were present even in the most fundamen-

tal forms of representation, speech and first pictures.

Secondly, there is reason to ponder the thesis of Kress and van Leeuwen according to which each form of representation has, in addition to its own potential that is connected to the formation of meanings, also its own value in each context. Kress and van Leeuwen stress the point that the different forms of representation can not be separate from each other either on the level of individual consciousness or on the level of the entire culture, but that they have an effect on each other at all times. However, here we can go further than them in their conclusions and think that the forms of representation in use at a given time form a certain network that is constructed from differences and similarities. I have not, however, ended up calling this network a "media system" but rather a "*media conjunction*". The word 'conjunction' emphasises the reciprocal connection of media to one another, but unlike the word 'system', in the word 'conjunction' the historically changing character of this union is emphasized.

Perhaps it has been possible to pass over the existence of media conjunctions in the earlier stages of modernity. However, in late modern culture they are more clearly perceptible than before – above all, because the relationships between media are rapidly changing. Hence, study of intermediality in these respects is linked to the expanding study of hybridity of late modern culture.

Anthony Smith writes about the reciprocal relationships of different media in his work *The Age of Behemoths* (1991:17) as follows:

> In respect to newspapers, we are used to a system that involves both mutual competition and competition with radio and television. We are used to cinema and television existing in a state of mutual tension, but also in joint competition with video. We think of newspapers, magazines and book publishing as completely different businesses. We think of the newspaper as a lightly or entirely un-regulated medium, but of television as highly regulated [.] But we are moving into an era in which the distinction between corporations and institutions that own and manage these different media entities is becoming impossible to draw. The processes of the new technologies and the pressures generated in the new regulatory environment are beginning to suggest to managers of these enterprises that survival and further growth depend upon mergers and alliances across the divides that were so carefully contrived in the past.

As we will later see, media convergence has been a reality to company managers in business already for a long time. Researchers, instead, are only beginning to get a grip on that system of differences and similarities which different media form.

Thirdly, as Kress and van Leeuwen emphasize the fact that the forms of representation have their own histories which are always in relation to the histories of other forms of representation, they also offer a heuristic point of departure to the mapping of the historical development of the aforementioned media convergences. However, also in this matter there is reason to go further than the twosome and stress that the reciprocal history is not connected only to the fact that the different forms at times would conquer domains from one another, and at times part with them. As well as the "formal" interaction that is important in itself, there is another fundamental matter included in the reciprocal interaction of different forms of representation. Besides the fact that a certain division of labour occurs between different forms of presentations, they also constantly affect each other's *contents*. For instance the cinema, that in its time was a new mode of representation, probably did indeed in the course of time conquer terrain previously dominated by the two earlier modes of representation, the novel and drama (where the formal change mentioned by Kress and van Leeuwen was realized), but simultaneously both the novel and drama significantly influenced the forms the cinema acquired, while the cinema left its own mark on the development of the novel and drama (of which in this regard we can talk about as contental influence). It is not possible to go into greater detail about the matter here, but it is well known that the person and family-centred perspective of the classical realistic novel had its own effect on the cinema and, later on, also on TV. Indeed, there are strong similarities between the hero-centred classical realism and the language of close-ups of the television.

However, only cultures in general have been discussed above. If we are to believe Kress and van Leeuwen, the notion of the multimodality of cultures applies to all of the cultures we know. On the one hand, here lies the strength of the notion of multimodalism, but on the other hand also its weakness. Kress and van Leeuwen do not pay much attention to those historical changes that occur within and between different modes of representation in their own analysis. Nor do Kress and

van Leeuwen directly concern themselves with the question of why it was possible for their discoveries to take place expressly in the conditions of late modern culture. In other words, they do not deal much with the historical structure or cultural locatedness of their own views. Hence, though their observations on the multimodality of cultures are naturally true also in respect to modern culture – because they apply to all of the known cultures- it is expressly because of this general characteristic that they do not tell much about what is the multimodality characteristic to *particularly* the modern or late modern cultures like.

II

If we analyze the above-mentioned eight conclusions of Kress and van Leeuwen, it is not difficult to perceive that each one of them suits the modern age quite well. Has not the continuous growth of multimodality been characteristic to modern times? The introduction of printing in the 1400s signified in the course of time the appearance of not only books, but also leaflets, magazines, newspapers and other public texts on the cultural scene. Moreover, printing house culture did not develop in a vacuum but as part of the development of modern forms of publicity, which included for instance the development of the narrative art of theatre, opera, painting and the creation of different public spaces. Similarly, the introduction of radio, cinema, television or the digital media in the circumstances of high and late modern culture has not and will not taken place separately from the context formed by other media.

Have not the available modes of representation continuously diversified throughout modernity, and do they not appear to be diversifying also in the future – even at an accelerating speed? Hence, we can arrive at my *second* thesis:

Multimodality Expands and Intensifies in Modern Times

Martin Lister writes (1995:151) about multimodality in the 20th century as follows:

Multimedia may not yet be a familiar term or concept in industrial and post-industrial societies, but it is, and has been, for most of the twentieth century, a common part of the experience of living in one. The designation of a specifically multimedia form within digital technology at the end of the twentieth century

served as a reminder that combined audio-visual technologies have been in continuous use since the mid-nineteenth century. Victorian dioramas, silent cinema, slidetape presentations, theatre sets, happenings, Disneyworld rides, are all examples of public forms of multimedia. The term multimedia could reasonably have been applied to early television, in so far as broadcast programming, containing live dramatic performance, was interspersed with recorded film footage and accompanied by musical soundtracks as intermissions

In this context, Lister himself refers to the "multi-users" of media (although the term is mine). He writes (151-152):

In recognising that there is a longer history to technical forms of combined media technologies, it is also possible to see what available media are combined and become multiple in forms of use. Watching TV with the sound off, whilst playing an audio cassette would be one form; listening to the radio whilst looking through a magazine or book would be another. The developed habit of attending to more than one source of stimulus or information is a recognised human value involving both convergent and divergent forms of attention. On the one hand, many, often stressful, forms of contemporary wage labour demand single-minded attention to a range of information relayed through various levels of technology [...] On the other hand, much of leisure time involves similar, if differently paced, forms of multiple simultaneous concentration, the pleasure of conversing with a friend, registering the ambient music, in pub or on a picnic, where attention shifts back and forth from what is said to what is seen. Our point is that developed social forms of complex stimulus and attention come to be reflected in the cultural forms of media we develop. Nowhere is this more obvious than in advertising. The contemporary television commercial, lasting no more than 30 seconds, will typically draw upon a range of visual referents, styles and techniques drawn from different media forms and genres. Successful advertisements depend upon our familiarity and relationship to a range of both historical and contemporary media texts. The intertextual advertisement is increasingly conditional upon a saturated, multimedia environment. Indeed, it has been suggested that in the context of future multimedia in the

domestic environment, advertising will cease to be distinct from any other source of information with which we interact.

The forms of concentration that Lister describes are the "distracted" reception of texts, in Walter Benjamin's terms. But as Benjamin himself remarked (1989:164) "The distracted person, too, can form habits." On one important aspect, the study of intermediality is precisely sorting out of these "distracted" habits.

Multimodality and the mixing of media borders is characteristic above all to popular culture whereas high culture has traditionally been characterized by media purism. However, in late modernism even this can no longer be taken for granted. Thus, John A. Walker writes in his work *Art in the Age of Mass Media* (1994:2) about the situation is the 1970s and 1980s as follows:

> the task faced by scholars [in 1970s and 1980s – ML] was [...] of encompassing the mass mediation of art itself. That is to say, analysts of contemporary art in particular found that they could not limit themselves to the interpretation and evaluation of works of art because they had also to absorb and consider press releases and other publicity material, colour reproductions, catalogue essays, newspaper and magazine reviews, photographs and films of artists, interviews with them, radio and TV arts programmes about them. (What some theorists call 'the metatextual narrative or discourse'.)

Walker's work is also a demonstration of how visual arts hybridize in late modern culture while high culture and popular culture function in mutual interaction. Walker himself uses the term "crossover" about this phenomenon in his second work (1987:11). This term has been used in the American circles of popular culture to describe how the music made by black musicians for black audiences transgresses "racial" borders and becomes popular among white audiences. From here on, the term began to be applied also in the arts, in regard to which it has been used to describe, for instance, how graffiti art is exhibited in galleries, or how artists already recognized by art institutions exhibit their work, say, at underground stations. In its most common meaning, the term describes the "cross-pollination" of different arts, media, genres, styles and sub-cultures.

Walker's observations remind us of the fact that one important scheme in the study of intermediality

is also the mapping of the high-low interaction and mutual influence that is increasingly important in our culture. In the light of these tentative observations, there is reason to take multimodality seriously not only in the study of popular culture, but also in high culture.

According to Walker, there are several reasons that cultural "cross-overs" have become more common. Among the reasons he notes (ibid., p. 12) the multiplication of media due to the technological innovations of the 20th century along which the channels used by artists have multiplied, the increase in communication among different cultures and social groups due to the development of global communications, as well as the increasingly multi-ethic and multiracial character of the population in the world's leading metropoli.

To further develop Walker's ideas we thus could say that we live in a "grotesque" culture that continuously and in many ways breaks the borders of convention. The increasing breaking of media boundaries is also linked with this transgressing.

III

What then is the relationship of multimodality with the actual topic of my presentation, namely, intermediality? Tentatively it could be said that *if multimodality more penetratingly characterises the modern culture, on its part intermediality characterises the formation of meanings in this multimodal cultural stage*. And moreover: All symbolic forms are multimodal by nature, which means that they simultaneously utilize several material-semiotic resources. However, as such, multimodality always characterises one medium at a time. Intermediality, again, is about the relationships between multimodal media.

In order to get a grip on the concept of intermediality, we ought to take a closer look at the concept of intertextuality, because the former can be considered a further development of the latter.

In the theory of intertextuality, the point of departure is in the fact that all texts are always inevitably read in relation to both other texts and the textual knowledge possessed by readers. The concept of intermediality in turn indicates that these "other texts" are not, nor is that "textual knowledge", always and necessarily derived from the same medium as the text at hand.

This in turn applies to both vertical and horizontal intertextual relationships. What are meant by *horizontal* relationships are those more or less ex-

plicit relationships between primary texts, which usually are entangled with such matters as genres, characters, plots and themes. *Vertical* intertextuality prevails in between the primary text and other texts that explicitly refer to it.

Horizontal intertextuality inevitably also contains intermedial dimensions. Genres, characters, plots of themes naturally are by no means limited to one medium only. On the contrary, texts assuming genres or types of characters or certain plot patterns permeate cultures in such a way that we can use the same genres, characters and plot patterns in, let us take an example from our own time, realistic novels, movies, and the cartoons or computer games. (See Lehtonen 2000)

Narration and popular forms of narrative have traditionally transgressed medial borders. In the late modern, highly mediatized culture this quality is even further reinforced. Hence, horizontal intertextuality is the principal area in the study of intermediality.

However, it must be added that the vertical intertextuality that constitutes the relations of primary texts to other texts which explicitly refer to them is also area of intermedial relationships. Secondary texts, for instance advertisment texts or reviews, often occur in a different medium than the texts they comment on (movie reviews, for instance, are rarely presented in the form of a movie). Furthermore, "tertiary" texts produced by readers/viewers draw from all that socio-cultural knowledge that the producers possess totally regardless of through which mode of representation this knowledge has been obtained. Where vertical intertextuality is concerned, the reciprocal interaction of different modes of representation is thus present, even though this form of intertextuality does not primarily affect – unlike horizontal intertextual relationships – the development of the relationships between different media.

If intertextuality is divided into its three sides – textual, contextual and readers' intertextuality – all of these sides are also inevitably intertextual by nature. Moreover, as the mediatization of culture proceeds, they continuously become increasingly intermedial. Regardless of whether we are producers or recipients of texts, our cultural resources never originate from one medium only. We are never merely readers of novels or watchers of television. Each one of us brings such material to our reading or watching competence that we have adopted, for example, as radio listeners, computer users or newspaper readers.

From this springs forth my *third* thesis:

Intermediality Is Intertextuality that Transgresses Media Borders

However, in here there is reason to stress that the question is not only of expanding the concept of intertextuality in a new area, but in fact taking a new look at modern culture and the formation of meanings in it. To quote Peter Wollen (1993:67):

> The first requirement is the development of a heterogeneous theory of meaning, open rather than closed, involving different types of sign, and bringing semantics together with hermeneutics, reference with metaphor. The second is a specific (formal) theory of intertextual meaning, the way in which re-contextualization changes meaning, the double, hybrid coding involved in quoting, plagiarizing, grafting and so on, the back and forth of meaning between texts. Both these projects entail a reconsideration of the logical form of meaning.

IV

I return to this in the end of my presentation. Now, however, I move on to my fourth thesis:

Late Modern Culture Is Increasingly Intermedial Culture

A number of socio-cultural changes are taking place in late modern culture which intensify intermedial relationships. From our standpoint the most central of these changes are the concurrent mediatization, objectification, globalization and digitalization of culture. As the first sub-thesis of my fourth thesis I therefore propose:

Mediatization Intensifies Intermediality

Treating mediatization can be commenced with Eric Hobsbawm's observation in his history of the 20th century, *Age of Extremes*, where (1995:12) he remarks that in "a world which could bring more information and entertainment that had been available to emperors in 1914, daily, hourly, into every household". The world at the end of the 20th century that Hobsbawm discusses is a world thoroughly mediatized, in which both human culture and the world we perceive and experience becomes increasingly transmitted by media.

Mediatization started in the history of humankind when people no longer used only their own physical resources in communicating with other

people, but began to rely also on other, "non-human" objects and powers for this purpose.

> The development of 'impersonal' communications – as distinct from the model of direct 'face-to-face' exchanges – is at least as early as the development of writing systems and indeed, in their graphic predecessors, much earlier, remarked Raymond Williams (1981:18).

However, Williams also emphasized (1981: 20) that even

> [A]ll societies depend on communications processes, and in an important sense can be said to be founded on them." "...in advanced industrial societies, both in their scale and complexity and their changes in productive and reproductive techniques, the dependence is central, and the elements of foundation, often in simpler societies in effect dissolved into other social relations, are manifest and crucial.

Modernity is naturally an age of the reproduction of cultural texts on a scale never seen before. Hence it is also an age of intensifying mediatization. The ending century in this sense has meant the intensification of the reproduction and mediatization of texts – mechanical, electronic and digital – to such proportions that have not been seen before, but that the new century will overshadow in due course. As Johan Fornäs writes in his work *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity* (1995:1):

> Late modernity is saturated by communication media, which increasinly put culture in focus, in a double process of mediatization of culture and culturalization of the media.

He continues (ibid., 216):

> ...Everyday life is increasingly permeated with media. Cultural practices and expressions are incorporated, disseminated and transformed by mass media, whose presence in daily life is continuously intensified. Mediated texts are more and more central to individual and collective identity constructions as well as to how people relate to each other and know the world around them. [...] The media expansion thus leads to a mediatization of culture. Cultural phenomena that were first primarily based on face-to-face interaction are continuously being included and reshaped by various media forms. And as the speed and range of such micro-processes of mediatization increase, the result is a longer historical process of general cultural

mediatization on a macro-level, whereby media become more important in all cultural phenomena of late modern society.

Mediatization is above all consequent on the spreading and diversifying of media which has lead into expanded mediatization. John B. Thompson (1995:110) uses this concept when he speaks about how it has become common in a world penetrated by diverse media: "[i]t is also common for media messages to be taken up by media organizations and incorporated into new media messages, a process that can be described as 'expanded mediatization'". (Thompson here uses the word 'mediazation' but I prefer the more common 'mediatization'.) Thompson notes that in the conditions of "extended mediatization", a relatively large amount of self-reference occurs in media in the sense that media messages generally refer to other media messages or events reported in them. However, there is reason to expand his notion of "extended mediatization". As a sociologist, Thompson seems to take an interest principally in "factual" media messages. Yet, if we concentrated only on this side of media, our conception of mediatization would remain quite narrow. The mediatization of culture described above does signify the progress of not only multimodality, but also intermediality. Media multiplies, and without exception new media appear to interlink earlier modes of representation and lower the borders between them. This is naturally most perceptible where digital media are concerned, a matter to which I return later.

Mediatization on its part contributes to the fragmentation of the mass media. As I will later demonstrate, the large corporations in the industry attempt to meet this fragmentation with recycling material in different media. Hence, mediatization adds to intermediality in media production. However, the increase in intermediality is not limited only to production. If mediatization signifies an increase in multimodality, this does lead to intermediality marking still stronger the formation of meanings in this multiply multimodal cultural state. Hence, *all in all, the mediatization of culture signifies an increase in intermedial signification both in the production of cultural texts and in their reception.*

In his work *Software for the Self* , Anthony Smith describes the effects of mediatization in their reception in the following way (1996:viii):

> Television and radio, cinema, a proliferated theatre and musical culture, newspapers,

magazines, cable and satellite, and the spread – via camcorders, e-mail, desktop publishing, video recorders – into the home of the ways in which all of these are distributed, have created an indifference as to whether a product of culture has arrived packaged and merchandized or through one of the traditional means of spectatorship and acquisition.

Though Smith does not use the vocabulary in question, he describes in this passage the increasing commonplaceness and banalization of culture brought about by mediatization. Along with the dissolving of the differences between high and low cultures, the differences between media also appear to become more and more unimportant. Media exist alongside each other without having their specificity asked after, or their differences in relation to each other debated. Together they form one single enormous chunk, "the media".

Smith (1996:26) characterizes the situation as follows:

> In the twentieth century we have had to work out a fresh set of attitudes towards the hierarchy of art-forms because of the sheer pervasiveness of mechanical reproduction. Printed forms can be limited in circulation and thus acquire a sense of uniqueness as objects. But cultural experiences transmitted electronically have no such stability and lose their aura or aureole, as Walter Benjamin explained. Reproduction or transmission without limitation and the general democratization of art have dissolved the painfully constructed hierarchies and pyramids of art forms. We seldom find ourselves discussing the question of which is the greatest art-form, which is the chief among arts.

As he discusses mediatization, Johan Fornäs remarks in his aforementioned work that late modernism is characterized by a general increase in reflexivity, which is connected to the processes of culturalization and aesthetization. He continues (1998:251-252): *Both reflexivity and aestheticization are further related to the growing media presence in identity constructions which has been termed mediatization.*

Thus, mediatization is part of a general late modern reflexivity. Fornäs considers that the objects of this reflection are divided into two main types: in the self-reflection of subjects the objects are identities and subjectivities, whereas in textual reflectivity cultural texts thematize themselves. On

this second type of reflexivity Fornäs remarks (1995:211):

> Utterances, books, songs, films and radio or television programmes often point towards themselves by making more or less ironic and intertextual comments on their own styles and structures, putting themselves within quotation marks and inviting their recipients to become more aware of the codes and rules of the genre.

Fornäs' view on the growth of textual reflexivity is thus, in fact, limited to immediate textual *self-*reflection, where texts reflect their own selves. In the late modern cultural reality textual reflexivity, however, reaches significantly further than this, since texts that are produced and received in a multimodal cultural state are in both horizontal and vertical intertextual and intermedial relationships to one another.

Another matter that breeds intermediality in late modern conditions is the commodification of culture. From this, we proceed on to my next sub-thesis:

Commodification Intensifies Intermedialization

Commodification and the increase of intermediality go hand in hand, because the centralization of the cultural industry and the commodification of culture results in the fact that the same texts and characters circulate in different media.

Commodification has naturally been part of media culture since its birth. As John B. Thompson remarks (1995:52-53), the success of printing techniques was linked to the ability to transform symbolic forms into merchandise. Hence the development of printing was, from the very beginning, part of the development of the capitalist economy. The modern mass media is the industrial production of merchandise which is linked to other areas of the capitalist economy not only through reciprocal investments and ownership, but also as an instrument of advertising. Production that took place on a small scale has expanded, distribution and sales have become separated from production and new technologies have led to both mass production and mass consumption. The separation of production, distribution and sales has been followed by a new concentration. We speak about the horizontal and vertical integration of the media industries. In the former case, an enterprise operating in one sector of media production increases its share in that par-

ticular sector, whereas in the latter case an enterprise extends its operation onto several levels, such as the production of contents or distribution. As the joint result of these two processes there are four to five dominating enterprises on each media sector. (Murdock and Golding 1973)

Indeed, as Graham Murdock (1990:4) notes:

> today [...] the modal form of media is no longer a company specializing in one paricular activity, but a conglomerate with interests in wide range of communications industries, often linked to other key economic sectors through shareholdings, joint ventures and inter-locking directorships.

Murdoch stresses the fact that the central communications enterprises have undertaken large-scale efforts to expand their focal interests. They have begun to integrate hardware and software in order to ensure that the new distribution technologies have enough merchandise to be distributed. Sony, for instance, has acquired the CBS Department of Recordings, and as a consequence, dominates not only the market for CD players but also a growing share of the production of CD records. Moreover, the new and old media markets penetrate each other as the operators in the traditional areas move on to operate in new areas where they see new opportunities to exploit their resources. Following in the same fashion, the publishers of newspapers and periodicals have begun to produce on-line services, and television companies have expanded their activities into cable productions. In the background there is the desire to generate "synergy" between the different branches of the company in such a way that activity in one area would also promote activity in another area. (Murdock 1990:5-6.)

As an example of synergy let us mention Emlyn Rees' critical novel on the media, *The Book of Dead Authors*, in which an agent urges a rock star to become a writer as well:

> The massive amount of money Clover Group are already spending on Boast Record's publicity campaigns for your albums can now work twice as hard. If they sign you up as an author as well as an artist, then the publicity generated through your music will be able to give you the sort of exposure no author has ever had. Rationalization. Pure and simple. (1997:86)

The agent also hints at the possibility of "symbiosis – the opportunity to simultaneously publish albums and novels that thematically complement each other" and adds, that "this is only the beginning".

Joseph Turow (1992:683) characterizes synergy as co-ordinating the activities of the different departments of an enterprise in such a way that the entity becomes more valuable that the sum of its separate parts. He writes (ibid.):

> When the TV production division of the Walt Disney Company promotes the firm's theme parks and they drum up business for the record and video division, which, in turn, promotes the book division, which, in a circular action, abets the TV division's programming, that is synergy.

Synergy has indeed become that strategic nucleus with which enterprises attempt to optimize their presence in as many media channels as possible. At the same time, it is a central instrument for companies to reply to the fragmentation of mass media.

The fragmentation of the mass media is indeed a key term in this context. The question is above all one of the shattering to pieces of the audio-visual distribution channels in such a way that each one's piece of the audience pie grows smaller. As Turow (ibid., p. 685) writes:

> This increased fragmentation of media channels has threatened long-standing ways in which media firms have gotten resources and used them efficiently. Most prominently, the increase in audiovisual choices has tended to decrease the audience for most individual channels as people have taken advantage of the expanded menus. According to market research, the shift in habits has been substantial. Particularly startling has been the weakening of the most widespread distributors of audiovisual entertainment, the commercial television networks.

Advertisers, in turn, have attempted to take this fragmentation into account and develop a new advertising of precision, which attempts to speak directly to increasingly narrow audience slices with messages tailored expressly for them. This, in turn, has in practice forced the production machinery to plan their products by keeping an eye on how it is possible to cross the borders between the different forms of the mass media. Turow describes the situation of Hollywood companies in this new situation in the following way (ibid., 686-687):

> When deciding whether or not a film would make back its cost, planners at the major Hollywood studios were considering more than its ability to pull people into U.S. theaters. They were factoring into their budget estimates of the money that the movie would draw across a va-

riety of other windows – foreign theatrical rentals, videocassettes, pay-cable TV, foreign TV sales, U.S. network TV, local U.S. TV, and basic U.S. cable. The timing of a release from one window to another was planned carefully to maximize the audience at each stage and, by extension, the money distributor could demand.

Planning like this has, since the 1980s, also led to the situation that media giants have attempted to spread out in all areas from the "production of content" to distribution. The one that gets their share in all stages of production and distribution is the one who is also able to maximize the profits. Turow describes this as follows (ibid., 695-696):

> In an era of mass media conglomerates, companies have increasingly found that their rights to characters, plots, images, logos, and even news can be used synergistically to fuel lucrative activities throughout the entire firm. Product development teams can concentrate on images that are exploitable in different mass media by different divisions within the firm or through strategic alliances with other companies.

From this viewpoint, the greatest feat of Disney's Hercules would be the character's ability to exist simultaneously in the forms of a movie, a video, as well as printed and other peripheral commodities. As Edward S. Herman and Robert W. McChesney write in their book *The Global Media* (1997: 54):

> When Disney, for example, produces a film, it can also guarantee the film showings on pay cable television and commercial network television, and it can produce and sell soundtracks based on the film, it can create spin-off television series, it can produce related amusement park rides, CD-Roms, books, comics, and merchandise to be sold in Disney retail stores.

Anthony Smith also remarks in his work *The Age of Behemoths* (1991:10) that in these conditions *"[t]echnology is not the important boundary line. So long as there is market, it does not matter whether a particular form of information is tied to a newspaper or to radio or television or is disseminated by satellite."* The objective of the global media giants is to control the entire field of communications. As a certain expert summarises the situation (quoted in Morley and Robbins 1995:13), there are three basic options on offer to media corporations:

> The first is to be a studio and produce products. The second is to be a wholesale distributor of products, as MTV, CBS, and HBO are. The third is to be a hardware delivery system, whether that hardware is a cable wire or a Walkman.

It is obvious that if a media company really desires to be a global operator, it must strive to act simultaneously in all of these three areas.

As becomes apparent from what was said above, the question is expressly one of the activities of global media giants. As John B. Thompson (1995: 160) says, the globalization of communications in the 20th century has taken place primarily with the large communications conglomerates in the lead. Today, there are five of these giants: the American Time Warners, the German Bertelsmann group, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Disney, and the Japanese Sony.

Thompson (1995:161) lists three factors that have had an important effect on the globalization of communications at the end of the 1900s: the introduction of cable systems that are more comprehensive and sophisticated than before, the increased exploitation of satellites and – most importantly – the processing, storing and digitalization of the use of information. David Morley and Kevin Robins on their part (1995:11) speak about "the new global communications landscape" and "the new media order", which they describe as follows:

> Driven now by the logic of profit and competition, the overriding objective of the new media corporations is to get their product to the largest number of consumers. There is, then, an expansionist tendency at work, pushing ceaselessly towards the construction of enlarged audiovisual spaces and markets. The imperative is to break down the old boundaries and frontiers of national communities [.] Audiovisual geographies are thus becoming detached from the symbolic spaces of national culture, and realigned on the basis of the more 'universal' principles of international consumer culture. The free and unimpeded circulation of programmes – television without frontiers – is the great ideal in the new order.

Globalization like this is largely steered by media giants thus connects with the previously mentioned commodification. Hereby, we have reached my next sub-thesis:

Globalization Intensifies Intermediality

Mediatization, commodification and globalization speed each other up. Moreover, the hurricane that sweeps over the media landscape that they have generated is advanced by a process fresher than them, the digitalization of culture. Graham Murdock (1990:2-3) pictures the views it opens in the following way:

> The 'digital revolution' which allows voice, sound, text, data and images to be stored and transmitted using the same basic technologies opens up a range of possibilities for new kinds of activity and for novel forms of convergence and interplay between media sectors.

Murdock warns, with good reason, that we must not over-estimate the significance of technological innovations, nor perceive them as factors that are autonomous and, especially, determining of development. New technologies do create new potentials, but before media companies are able to exploit them to their full extent they must break through a number of political barriers. In this, in turn, digitalization and the new regulatory system – which is not deregulation, but new regulation based on privatization – take a high five.

What, then, are these new potentials created by the new technologies? How do they link with intermediality? Peter Wollen depicts them in his work *Raiding the Icebox* (1993:65-66) in the following way:

> Old distinctions are beginning to blur and lose their meaning as the technologies of image production and reproduction begin to merge. The computer with its capacity for manipulation and simulation becomes part of an integrated system with both the old and new recording technologies. We can sum up the main characteristics of the new systems as follows:
>
> 1. Access to a database of stored images in the electronic memory. This opens up the possibility of recycling the contents of a vast image bank, an archive from which images can be taken and recontextualized at will. The image bank is more immediate and directly accessible than the 'real world'; it is intra-systemic, whereas the 'real world' is extra-systemic.
> 2. Immediate manipulation – matting, combination, distortion, alteration, etc. – of available images. Images from different sources can be combined together. [...]

> 3. Generation of images by the computer. The computer can be used to produce animated imagery. Once images are produced they can be stored, retrieved, rotated, textured, etcetera. The computer can also generate text, and consequently opens up new possibilitis for the combination of text with images. Computer-generated imagery can itself be combined with other images.
> 4. Simulation of the 'real world' by the computer. [...]
> 5. Combinations of all the above. [...] The beginnings of this hybrid imagining can already be seen in many music videos. But this is only a beginning. For instance, we can imagine films in which Charlie Chaplin meets Marilyn Monroe [...].
> 6. Further areas of development include holographs and other types of 3-D imagery; interactivity and other types of spectator-image interface; multiscreen systems; new types of transmission and reception, such as optical fibre

Thus, Wollen sums it up (ibid., p. 66):

> To a lesser or greater degree, the new systems of imagery will be heterogeneous palimpsest. They will combine a number of different types of image (as well as other kinds of sign) and they will refer not only (or not even primarily) to the 'real world' (the extra-textual), but also to the existing archive of images and texts from which they quote (the inter-textual).

Wollen's intertextuality is intermediality, because the pictures and texts cannibalized by digital technologies originate from many different media. From here, we can proceed onto my next sub-thesis:

Digitalization Intensifies Intermedialization

V

How then should one study intermediality?

I begin with an observation that greatly amazes me. The thing is, that in the study of cultural texts there has been two courses of development going on concurrently. One of them is connected to the expansion of the field of the concept of "text" in the wake of the studies of structuralism and post-structuralism and cultural studies. As we know, for

some time now "text" has not referred solely to printed texts. On the contrary, "text" can be any given unit of symbolic discourse which has a relatively stable form. Another course of development, on the other hand, is connected to taking "intertextuality" seriously in the study of cultural texts. However, what is surprising in all this is the fact that the above-mentioned expanded concept of "text" has in practice hardly ever showed up in the study of "intertextuality". This has occurred in spite of the fact that the expanded concept of "text", as well as the notion of "intertextuality", were raised practically simultaneously (at the end of the 1960s), and, moreover, in the texts of the same theorists (particularly in Roland Barthes' 'Theory of Text' [Barthes 1981]) and Julia Kristeva's text 'The Bounded Text' (Kristeva 1980). For some reason little attention has been paid to the fact that in practice, intertextuality is never limited to the internal relationships of one genre or one medium only. To quote myself (Lehtonen 2000):

> For instance, a murder shown in a TV detective series obtains meanings in connection with the crime reports in newspapers and other representations concerning murders in novels, movies, the theatre, and so forth. Intertextuality understood in this sense is not as much extracting meanings from one text through looking for references to other texts in it, but rather it refers to those meaning potentials that exist in the states between texts; to the resource of cultural meanings to which both texts and readers can rely on as they produce meanings.

Despite all this, the study of intertextuality in literary studies, media studies and cultural studies has all and all been limited to the internal intertextual relationships of one and only one medium at a time. In traditional literary studies this would be possible to understand in so far as that kind of study has been characterized by the attempt to separate the researched objects from their worldly contexts and concentrate solely on the research of texts of "high culture" and their reciprocal relationships. However, leaving intermediality outside of study in culturally-oriented literary studies as well as media and cultural studies has unnecessarily narrowed down the scope of critical views and hindered the study of all those components that participate in the formation of meanings.

In cultural studies in particular I trust that there is reason to take intermediality seriously. Cultural studies indeed were generated as critique for the existing disciplinary borders. In the area of textual analysis, the disciplinary borders have largely followed the borders between media. Hence we have special disciplines for studies of the press, books, theatre, television, cinema, etc. Even the new studies of digital culture has in places been organized in accordance with new medial borders, even though the digital media that is studied in a new field chips away all media differentiations.

Therefore, the boundaries of academic disciplines is one of the primary reasons for the fact that intermediality has not ascended earlier to the academic agenda. Another important reason is naturally connected to the fact that intermediality is a phenomenon expressly characteristic to popular culture – be it that it is gaining a firmer foothold also in the circles of high culture. Hence, the under-appreciated status of research directed at popular culture has been a partial factor in preventing the development of the study of intermediality.

Nevertheless, if cultural studies sees itself as a part of an expanding research field from high to popular culture, from texts to contexts, from the academic world to the late modern everyday, intermediality should be tightly attached to its agenda. Intermediality must be studied precisely as an interdisciplinary phenomenon – perhaps even as opposed to the prevailing disciplinary divisions. Therefore, the study of intermediality is in many senses "paradigmatic" cultural study (if such a thing exists).

From this, we step on towards my next – and last – thesis:

Studying Intermediality Questions Academic Disciplinary Boundaries

As I have attempted to prove above, the intermedial formation of meanings does not respect the current disciplinary borders. Therefore, its ascent onto the academic agenda forces us to consider to what extent it is possible to get a grip on late modern culture on the basis of the current disciplinary division which is based on the separation of the modern spheres and media; of the late modern culture to which a partial unravelling of the central modern distinctions, the convergence of previously separate areas and, as a consequence, the birth of new distinctions is characteristic. The study of intermediality belongs to those shady areas, the *no man's lands*, from which arise new questions which hopefully in the course of time will force the adoption of a new outlook not only on culture, but also on researchers' own activities.

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