

## Intermédialités

Histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques

## Intermediality

History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies

# Introduction. Intermediality Is the Map as Much as the Territory

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# Intermediality Is the Map as Much as the Territory

CAROLINE BEM

The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation.<sup>1</sup>

## OPENING

The publication of this issue, titled “Mapping (Intermediality),” marks the fifteenth anniversary of *Intermedialités/Intermediality* journal. Conceived both as an introduction and a companion piece, the present text thinks of itself as a meditative *flânerie* moving both *through* and *across* the intermedial map. My aim is, on the one hand, to grasp the intermedial potential of the map-as-object and, on the other, to map intermediality in all of its indiscipline.<sup>2</sup> I have identified a series of keywords within the above-cited definition of the map to use as anchoring points for

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and foreword Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> “Indiscipline” is taken here in the sense in which it was used by art historian W.J.T. Mitchell when he argued that “visual culture” was to be understood “as an ‘indiscipline,’ a moment of turbulence at the inner and outer borders of established disciplines.” W.J.T. Mitchell, “Interdisciplinarity and Visual Culture,” *Art Bulletin*, vol. 77, no. 4, December 1993, p. 542.

this methodological, geographical, and mediatic journey. In the spirit of the journal, these keywords have been transposed into verbal forms: *opening, connecting, detaching/reversing/modifying, drawing/conceiving/constructing, meditating...*

92 Mapping intermediality, naturally, is to reflect on the territory of a method, as vast and unbound as it might be, but it is also to ask about the *sui generis* nature of the map. This double inquiry, then, focuses both on the map as material and media object, and on the map as “operator of mediation.”<sup>3</sup> In the opening pages of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), where Deleuze and Guattari first catalog the constituents of the rhizome, the map—taken as both figure and structure, material object and concept—makes a first appearance, which has not gone unnoticed by those who are interested in material as well as conceptual territories. According to the two philosophers, the map is integrally part of the rhizome—that arborescence that knows neither hierarchy nor limits—and, just as the rhizome, the map is also a symbol of openness, of connection, of fertile (as opposed to sterile) repetition, of transformation. Yet, when considered more closely, this definition is profoundly intermedial: taken as a material object first and foremost (“connectable in all of its dimensions, detachable”), the map is always already falling prey to its own destruction (“torn, reversed”), but it is also able to make visible and further strengthen existing ties. Similar to the numerous intermedial objects that have been discussed in the pages of this journal, the map of *A Thousand Plateaus* is thus simultaneously a matter of materiality (as an object) and of sociality and even politics (it is “reworked by an individual, group, or social formation”). Deleuze and Guattari have been practicing intermediality without knowing it: not only does their map take for granted the mobilization of different media for the purposes of its own embodiment (“it can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art”), but the map is also part of a social fact (it can be “constructed as a political action or as a meditation”).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I use this term in the sense put forward by Marion Froger to designate those objects that carry within themselves the theoretical tools necessary for their own decoding. In particular, this idea was laid out in a conference presentation titled “Le débat théorique dans les ‘études de cas’ de la revue *Intermédialités*,” which was given by Froger and myself at the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) on 26 July 2016 in Vienna.

<sup>4</sup> Since its inception, *Intermédialités/Intermediality* has focused on media matters, of course, but it has also been interested in the social dimension of intermedial relations. See in particular the issues “Including (The Third Term),” no. 21, Spring 2013, edited by Marion Froger and “Inhabiting (The Night),” no. 26, Spring 2015, co-edited by Luc Gwiazdzinski and Will Straw.

## CONNECTING

93 For about 20 years now, the Montreal version of intermediality, which took hold both in the pages of this journal and around the Center for Intermedial Research in Arts, Literatures, and Technologies (CRIalt), has situated itself at the very intersection between the body of media and their social exterior. From the outset, *Intermédialités/Intermediality* has positioned itself firmly on the side of humanistic study, in a relational context that goes far beyond that of a mere technicity of transmission—this is further illustrated by the use, since the journal’s inception and in accordance with the original idea of its founder, Éric Méchoulan, of titles that adopt a verbal form in French (infinitive verbs: *naître, raconter, aimer, transmettre, jouer, bâtir, archiver, refaire...*) and, since 2009, also in English (in that language, the verbs are translated in the present continuous tense: building, archiving, redoing...).<sup>5</sup> Among the journal’s publications, some have explicitly aimed to contribute to a theorization of the intermedial method while, by virtue of the quality, inventiveness, and diversity of their case studies, many others have participated implicitly in its ongoing theorization.<sup>6</sup> Thus, with 29 issues published between 2003 and 2017, *Intermédialités/Intermediality* as a whole might well be considered as a vast cartographic enterprise of the intermedial method “in progress.”

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<sup>5</sup> The issue “Including (The Third Term)” is perhaps where this reflection on sociality in intermediality has been taken the furthest. As Marion Froger writes in the introduction to the issue: “Trois moments-clés, donc—la médiation, la réserve, le liant—que l’on peut facilement repérer dans les pratiques sociales : les rôles du médiateur, les postures de réserve et la capacité à lier peuvent être distribués ou attribués aux acteurs sociaux comme à leurs œuvres. Les choses se compliquent un peu cependant sous l’angle des *médialités*, puisqu’il nous faut alors considérer des opérations qui injectent du tiers dans la dynamique sociale et culturelle. Il n’est donc plus tant question d’acteurs et de rôles sociaux (personnes, groupes, institutions), que d’opérateurs de tiercéité.” Marion Froger, “Introduction. Socialité et médialité : inclure du tiers,” *Intermédialités* “Inclure (le tiers),” no. 21, Spring 2013, para. 10, <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/im/2013-n21-imo1011/1020617ar/> (accessed 30 May 2018).

<sup>6</sup> The richness of the case studies published in this journal, and of their contribution to the development of intermedial thinking, has been noted by both Marion Froger and myself in various oral presentations (during our presentation at the ICLA congress in Vienna in 2016, during a summer school on intermediality, which was co-organized by Rémy Besson and Claudia Polledri in May 2017 and, most recently, during our guest lecture in Philippe Despoix’s seminar on intermediality in the winter of 2018). The importance of case studies has also been highlighted by Éric Méchoulan, for instance in a recent article: “Intermédialité: ressemblances de famille,” *Intermédialités*, “Rythmer,” no. 16, Fall 2010, para. 58, <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/im/2010-n16-im1514743/1001965ar/> (accessed 30 May 2018).

However, intermediality is far from being a strictly Montreal affair. From its inception, it has been theorized concurrently in a variety of places, and the great names of the first wave of intermedial research—Jürgen Müller, Werner Wolf, Irina Rajewsky, François Jost, Lars Elleström, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Leonardo Quaresima, André Gaudreault, Eric Méchoulan, Philippe Despoix, Silvestra Marinello—stand for as many disciplines (literature and comparative literature, cinema, philosophy, et cetera) as territories (France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Quebec). Thus, and still from its outset, intermediality has been careful to define and, most importantly, differentiate itself from the other “inter-” currents, such as intertextuality and interdisciplinarity, which had influenced its early theorizers. Without aiming to establish a comprehensive list, let us note that a starting point was provided by Jürgen Müller’s influential piece “*Intermedialität und Medienwissenschaft: Thesen zum State of the Art*” (1994), which was followed, almost a decade later, by Irina Rajewsky’s 2002 publication *Intermedialität*, Éric Méchoulan’s introduction to the first issue of *Intermédialités* (“Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues,” 2003), Henk Oosterling’s contribution to that same inaugural issue (“Sens(a)ble Intermediality and Interesse: Towards an Ontology of the In-Between,” 2003), Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht’s article in the journal’s second issue (“Why Intermediality—If at All,” 2003), and François Jost and Irina Rajewsky’s contributions to the journal’s sixth issue “Remediating” (respectively, “Des vertus heuristiques de l’intermédialité” and “Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality,” 2005), as well as Werner Wolf’s dictionary entry titled “Intermedialität,” which appeared in the *Metzler Lexikon Literatur und Kulturtheorie* (2004).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Jürgen Müller, “*Intermedialität und Medienwissenschaft: Thesen zum State of the Art*,” *montage AV*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1994, p. 119–38; Irina Rajewsky, *Intermedialität*, Tübingen, Franke, 2002; Éric Méchoulan, “Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues,” *Intermédialités*, “Naître,” no. 1, Spring 2003, p. 9–27; Henk Oosterling, “Sens(a)ble Intermediality and Interesse: Towards an Ontology of the In-Between,” *Intermédialités*, “Naître,” no. 1, Spring 2003, p. 29–46; Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht, “Why Intermediality—If at All,” *Intermédialités*, “Raconter,” no. 2, Fall 2003, p. 173–178; François Jost, “Des vertus heuristiques de l’intermédialité,” *Intermédialités*, “Remédier,” no. 6, Fall 2005, p. 109–119; Irina Rajewsky “Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality,” *Intermédialités*, “Remédier,” no. 6, Fall 2005, p. 43–64; Werner Wolf, “Intermedialität,” in *Metzler-Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie: Ansatz—Personen—Grundbegriffe*, Ansgar Nünning, Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler, 2008 (2nd ed.), p. 327–328.

95 If the intent of these early texts was to delimitate an intermedial territory—to establish a profile of intermediality’s methodological specificities but also of its objects and disciplinary origins, and even to question the very interest of an intermedial approach, as did Gumbrecht in his contribution to *Intermédialités/Intermediality*’s first issue—a second current of more recent writings seeks to trace the applications and contours of intermediality at both a disciplinary and an international level. In “Remains to Be Seen: Intermediality, Ekphrasis and Institution,” James Cisneros, another member of the Montreal intermedial school’s first generation of scholars, establishes a connection between the crisis of the university, which he describes following Bill Readings’ *The University in Ruins* (1997),<sup>8</sup> and the emergence of intermediality.<sup>9</sup> According to Cisneros, due to intermediality’s heterogeneity and its capacity for establishing connections, as well as in reason of the historical moment of its emergence, the function of intermediality is simultaneously to create and to make sense of the collapse of the great disciplines and, more generally, of the academy as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

96 In “Intermedialität — une affaire allemande? Interkulturelle Annäherungen an die Intermedialitätsforschung in Deutschland und Frankreich” (2013), Christoph Vatter focuses on the ways in which intermediality is practiced in both France and Germany; beyond this, however, he wants to quantify the impact of intermedial research on each of these cultural-linguistic spheres. As he concludes, German intermedial works greatly dominate in search results on Google and Amazon, but they also dominate in searches within the catalogues of German and French national libraries and within the intermedial bibliography that was put together and published online by the CRIalt.<sup>11</sup> According to Vatter, this discrepancy is explained through a

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<sup>8</sup> Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> James Cisneros, “Remains to Be Seen: Intermediality, Ekphrasis and Institution,” in Marion Froger and Jürgen Müller (eds.), *Intermédialité et socialité. Histoire et géographie d’un concept*, Münster, Nodus Publikationen, 2007, p. 15–28.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15–16.

<sup>11</sup> In respect to German intermedial studies, the author counted 374 hits on Amazon and 303 000 pages on Google, against 12 Amazon hits and 65 200 Google pages for French intermedial research. A search in the catalogue of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek revealed 486 hits, while the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) returned only 74 hits. Within the short bibliography of intermediality offered by the CRIalt, <http://crialt-intermedialite.org/fr/pages/>, the author counted 17 books and 7 articles in German against 12 books and 6 articles in French, out of a total of 22 catalogued texts. See Christoph Vatter, “Intermedialität—une affaire allemande? Interkulturelle Annäherungen an die

fundamental cultural difference: not only do the requirements for the German academic rite of passage of the habilitation thesis give rise to more “macro” level forms of scholarship (in contrast to what Vatter refers to as a French interest in “micro” studies), whose results are then typically disseminated in book form, but there also exists an important difference between the development of media studies in both countries. In France, more emphasis is placed on information and communication, while German intermedialists remain arguably closer to their original training in literary studies, thusly inscribing their work within the original lineage of intermedial studies.<sup>12</sup>

57 In 2009, the anthology *Intertextualité, interdiscursivité et intermédialité* brought together a great number of Québécois and French contributions as well as texts from Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Korea, and the United States.<sup>13</sup> The volume’s focus is not exclusively on intermediality and the definition offered remains very close to that of intertextuality, with intermediality being understood as that which describes the connection between at least two distinct media. Yet, in terms of both the geographic and disciplinary origins of its contributors, this anthology provides the most diverse overview of intermedial studies to date.

58 In 2010, Lars Elleström published another anthology titled *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, which showcases the writings of primarily Swedish and German scholars (it is noteworthy that not a single example of Francophone, Italophone, or Hispanic intermedial writing is represented in this book).<sup>14</sup> Titled “Intermedial Topography and Metaphorical Interaction,” Axel Englund’s contribution to this volume establishes a comparison between a topographically inspired media theory whose aim is to map the boundaries that separate arts from media, and a metaphorical model that might arguably give rise to a more fluid conception of intermedial objects. In “Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate about Intermediality,” Irina Rajewsky sheds light on the parallel between two recent developments: on the one hand, she

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Intermedialitätsforschung in Deutschland und Frankreich,” in Christiane Solte-Gresser, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Manfred Schmeling (eds.), *Zwischen Transfer und Vergleich: Theorien und Methoden der Literatur- und Kulturbeziehungen aus deutsch-französischer Perspektive*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, coll. “Vice Versa. Deutsch-französische Kulturstudien,” 2013, p. 403–405.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15–16.

<sup>13</sup> Louis Hébert and Lucie Guillemette (eds.), *Intertextualité, interdiscursivité et intermédialité*, Québec, Presses de l’Université Laval, coll. “Vie des signes,” 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Lars Elleström (ed.), *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

notes that since its inception, intermediality has been accumulating parallel definitions, thus evading any exhaustive theorization; on the other hand, Rajewsky brings attention to the fact that in the current era, which is marked by the convergence between media, the very notion of “media border” is in the process of disappearing. Paradoxically, while intermediality is often criticized for its lack of ability to capture the specificity of a singular medium, the differences between media are in fact demonstrably fading, as a variety of artistic intermedial practices cited by the author make clear. As Rajewsky concludes, intermedial artworks, then, continue to highlight the particularity of the various media they mobilize. The author’s largely implicit conclusion suggests that intermediality will likely remain a discipline of choice for inquiring into the “border zones” between media and the questions they raise.<sup>15</sup>

99 In 2015, Éric Méchoulan edited a special issue on intermediality for the US-based journal *SubStance*. Titled “Intermediality: Axis of Relevance,” Rémy Besson’s contribution to this issue offers a response to Rajewsky’s text and, in light of the author’s historical approach, the article also functions as a response to Jürgen Müller’s contribution to *Media Borders* where the “German father” of intermediality had laid out a series of aphorisms to capture the growing international field of intermedial studies.<sup>16</sup> Where Rajewsky does not question media primacy and views intermediality as the study of the fluctuating borders between media, Besson conceives of intermediality as central in itself and puts forward its polysemic character: contrary to intertextuality and interdiscursivity, intermediality does not limit itself to a unique definition of the medium, foregrounding instead the relational aspect of the milieu a given medium exists in.<sup>17</sup> Here, Besson rejoins Méchoulan when, in a recent article, the latter suggests that:

Ce qui est en jeu [dans l’intermédialité] est le *fait général* de mettre en relation des façons de relier, des modes de transmission ou de communication, des

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<sup>15</sup> Irina Rajewsky, “Border Talks: The Problematic Status of Media Borders in the Current Debate about Intermediality,” in Lars Elleström (ed.), *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 64–65.

<sup>16</sup> Jürgen Müller, “Intermediality Revisited: Some Reflections about Basic Principles of This Axe de Pertinence,” in Lars Elleström (ed.), *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 237–252.

<sup>17</sup> Rémy Besson, “Intermediality: Axis of Relevance,” *SubStance*, vol. 44, no. 3, #138, 2015, p. 139–140.



manières d'inscrire ou de tracer des expériences, bref il s'agit d'une méthode. On peut ainsi parfaitement imaginer traiter de problèmes intermédiaux dans un seul média, voire dans un seul « et même » objet.<sup>18</sup>

510 Thus emerges a fundamental difference between the “Montreal School” and the other above-cited approaches to intermediality. By privileging the relational aspect within both social structures and the singular intermedial object, the Montreal School differentiates itself from two important currents that, as noted by Chrisoph Vatter among others, typically define intermedial studies: on the one hand, a vision of intermediality as media science, and on the other hand, a conception that views intermediality as being closely related to intertextuality and focused on the literary and artistic aspects of relations among media.<sup>19</sup> This unique trait of the Montreal School might serve to explain how, over a span of 15 years, *Intermédialités/Intermediality* was able to bring together a great variety of intermedial conceptions and why, today, it provides an ideal platform for the establishing of an intermedial map whose foci differ from those privileged in the above-cited earlier mappings of intermediality.

## DETACHING/REVERSING/MODIFYING

511 The short overview laid out in the previous pages calls forth a number of observations. Firstly, it is obvious that intermediality is no stranger to a tendency that is prevalent among “new disciplines,” namely that, since its emergence, it has been subject to a definitional impulse giving rise, early on, to a great number of overviews and retrospectives. What is more, a marked tension appears to exist between, on the one hand, a European understanding of intermediality, which is characterized by the above-noted binarism between media studies as well as literary and artistic studies and, on the other hand, a more North American approach, close to the predominantly US current of media ecology, which privileges the media milieu or environment and, generally speaking, the issue of connections. Finally, existing theorizations focus predominantly on Northern Europe (wherein I include France

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<sup>18</sup> Éric Méchoulan, “Intermédialité, ou comment penser les transmissions,” *Fabula / Les colloques*, *Création, intermédialité, dispositif*, para 11, <http://www.fabula.org/colloques/document4278.php> (accessed 11 April 2018).

<sup>19</sup> As Vatter notes, these two intermedial traditions pay relatively little attention to one another: “In spite of a series of similarities and differences, more media studies oriented conceptions of intermediality, as well as those that draw on literary studies and art history, make little note of one another in their respective publications.” Vatter, 2013, p. 410–412 (my translation).

for the purposes of this discussion) and Québec, with intermedial research published in languages other than English, German, and French remaining largely excluded from state of the art overviews. Some of the causes for this development are likely generational—the rise of intermedial research in South America, in particular, is still fairly recent—and, on the other hand, they are, most probably, the result of both linguistic and institutional problems. Indeed, while *Intermédialités/Intermediality* is published on the *Érudit* portal, which is accessed almost exclusively by Francophone institutions, research conducted in Italian and Spanish is not easily accessible to a French, English, or German readership. This is the reason why this introduction is published in English and Spanish alongside the original French version (this follows the circulation of the call for papers for this issue in French, English, German, and Spanish). The hope is to make the issue more accessible to a greater number of readers, especially in Latin America where intermediality is currently garnering a great level of success.

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Without aiming to be comprehensive, this issue places a strong emphasis on contributions stemming from subject areas (for example, African theatre, video games) and geographic areas (the United Kingdom, Latin America, the South of Europe, the South of Africa) that have received less recognition for their intermedial research than have the great German, Swedish, French, and Québécois hubs. As such, this issue strives to give visibility to *another* intermedial research, one that, without necessarily defining itself as “intermedial,” nevertheless symbolizes directions, objects, and issues that fall within the scope of intermediality. A form of intermedial research, also, that is turned more towards the future than the past—indeed, in order to even envisage the future of intermedial research it is important to accumulate some indicators of how intermediality is performed today, whether it defines itself as such or not. This issue, then, showcases the work of the current “avant-garde” in intermedial research in order to map the evolution of its methods, tools, and objects after they have come into contact with a young generation of scholars for whom intermediality has always been an integral part of the curriculum. Due to their diversity (as much at the level of objects as at that of the methods they deploy), the articles that are featured in this issue suggest that intermediality continues to have a promising future within the humanities (in particular, through its contributions to memory studies, to philosophy, to political science). But intermediality is also an approach that depends, more and more, on the analysis of objects (featured objects include a presentation, a video game, a genre film, etc.) that lie beyond the realm of the artistic avant-garde where intermediality first emerged. Thus, intermediality 2.0

invites scholars to perform in an intermedial way in order to better take advantage of the specific modalities of inquiry that this practice introduces into research.

## DRAWING/CONCEIVING/CONSTRUCTING

913 The article that opens this issue takes as its starting point a statement from *Intermédialités/Intermediality*'s founder at the CRI's 1999 inaugural conference. On that occasion, Eric Méchoulan introduced the notion of immediacy into a reflection on the philosophical function of intermediality. Building on Méchoulan's presentation, Fabien Dumais goes on to discuss Deleuzian philosophy's important contribution to intermediality (especially in its Montreal version): by considering intermediality's formalist contribution, as well as its rapport to eventness, this article represents a significant addition to the limited number of purely philosophical writings that focus on intermediality.

914 This philosophical reflection is followed by two case studies of historical value. With "'Arts Once More United': Bridging Disciplines through Creative Media Research, Toronto, 1953–55," Michael Darroch engages with a social object that also marks a moment of innovation within the history of media studies: from 1953 to 1955, a group of University of Toronto scholars, which included media theorist Marshall McLuhan and anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, hosted a series of conferences and published a journal (*Explorations*, 1953–1957). Drawing on the archival documents of the experimental research group, Darroch contributes an important piece to the puzzle of intermedial "pre-history." Even before Deleuze and Guattari, the University of Toronto theorists had also been practicing intermediality without knowing it; Darroch makes this clear, especially when he deciphers the modalities by which the group perceived media as art forms, thusly establishing one of the first parallels between media infrastructures and human modes of communication. Claire Holdsworth, on the other hand, concerns herself with yet another instance of early intermedial practice: *Readings*, a British magazine whose short-lived existence, with only three issues published in 1977, functions as an intermedial chronotope that makes visible the relations between media and artistic forms. What is more, as in Darroch's piece, the media-object-as-archive does not simply bring to light an intermedial world, but it also serves to crystalize the web of complex social relations that formed around a singular object.

915 Darroch's and Holdsworth's case studies, which offer localized intermedial "pre-histories," are followed by three theoretical panoramas that weigh the intermedial method against other theoretical approaches. In Jean-François Vallée's

contribution, which echoes a recent article by Méchoulan<sup>20</sup> that presented an overview of the “theoretical conceptions” that gave rise to intermediality, Vallée adds a further element to the list of approaches that fall within the scope of intermediality without necessarily adopting its terminology: media ecology, a current that originated nowhere other than in the journal *Explorations*. According to Vallée, numerous historical and conceptual similarities exist between media ecology and intermediality (particularly in its Montreal version, as defined above), but there are also substantial differences in the ways each movement apprehends the role of media. In his conclusion, Vallée follows Cisneros to suggest that, through their interdisciplinarity, both currents—media ecology and intermediality—continue to offer reflexive tools through which techniques and institutions can be rethought.

916 Sébastien Fevry establishes a parallel between intermediality and another interdisciplinary area of research: memory studies. Where Vallée’s interest is in illustrating the parallels and complementarities between two methods noting that media ecology constitutes a form of North American intermediality that does not name itself (it is worth noting that, in the United States, the spread of intermediality remains quite limited), Fevry uses intermediality as a disciplinary lens: according to him, a distinction can be drawn based on the way media relations are conceptualized, between memory studies, which are more closely aligned with media-related issues, and French memory studies (*études de mémoire*) whose primary concern is memorialization. The central focus of Philip Rousseau’s text is somewhat similar: taking as his starting point the *Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (UNESCO, 2005), Rousseau takes up an intermedial notion—that of interface—in order to adapt it to cultural diversity as it is characterized within the UNESCO document. Through this process, the author creates a hybrid concept—that of convention/interface—which Rousseau imagines to be simultaneously an object and a methodological tool: an object of study that contains within itself the source of its own theorization and, simultaneously, reconciles within itself the two fields under investigation, namely intermediality and theories on cultural diversity.

917 These theoretical reflections are followed by a triad of texts that, by practically applying intermedial methods to national and regional issues, open a window onto another facet of intermedial research. In her contribution, Catherine Makhumula draws on Jens Schröter’s 2006 “The Politics of Intermediality,” which appeared in

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<sup>20</sup> Méchoulan, 2010.

the edited volume *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, in order to offer an overview of contemporary theatre in the South of Africa.<sup>21</sup> Here too, an intermedial approach is put into practice without, necessarily, being named as such. Following Schröter, Makhumula demonstrates that the question of intermedial relations as it appears within discourses on theatre in the South of Africa is far from posing solely theoretical or aesthetic questions, but also gestures towards political connotations. “Thinking Intermediality in Mexico through Artistic Input,” Susana González Aktories and María Andrea Giovine Yáñez’s contribution, offers a response to previously published overviews of the state of the art of intermedial research in Europe as well as in Anglophone and Francophone North America. For these authors, artistic creation first opened the door to intermediality in Mexico starting in the 1950s when intermediality became an integral part of the artistic process of numerous artists, before it infiltrated discourses on art through the introduction into Mexico of concepts and writings such as, for instance, that of Dick Higgins’ “intermedia.”<sup>22</sup> Within recent artistic production in Mexico, the authors identify an increase in the spread of the language of intermediality. Ultimately, their reflection opens onto a greater question since, according to the authors, the next step should be to identify and trace the presence of a more generalized “intermedial turn” in Mexico. Finally, Maddalena Pennachia’s “Intermedial Products for Digital Natives: British Theatre Cinema on Italian Screens” takes as its starting point a culturally and medially specific object—a young Italian film-goers’ reception of live screenings of productions of canonical English theatre plays—in order to consider the ways in which the film industry and its young audience relate to the notion of intermediality. Drawing on audience research that the author conducted by analyzing the viewing habits and reactions of a sample of Italian teenagers, Pennachia concludes that fundamental intermedial practices, such as subtitles’ on-screen remediation of the book, remain highly relevant to a young audience of Italian spectators who intuitively understand the media environment that surrounds them as profoundly intermedial.

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Writings focusing on national questions within intermedial research give way to the contributions of Rémi Lauvin and Christophe Duret, which reconnect with the idea of the map as heuristic metaphor: here, it is the media case study that reveals new aspects of what an intermedial approach allows. In “Cartographie/Thermographie. Regards et corps instruits dans *Hollow Man* (Paul

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<sup>21</sup> Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (eds.), *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Dick Higgins, *Intermedia*, New York, Something Else Press, 1966.

Verhoeven, 2000),” Lauvin offers a close reading of Verhoeven’s film in order to illustrate how it uses thermography, a form of medial cartography, in its *mise-en-scène* in order to represent techniques of surveillance and the ways they relate to digital media. If thermography gives rise to what Lauvin terms an “impure” and “primal” state of the film image, this image is put in the service of a transformation of the real into a “raw material” through what Lauvin calls a “truly technological intermediality,” which is instituted by Hollywood cinema. Duret, on the other hand, aims to expand on the notion of transmediality, which was conceptualized by Henry Jenkins amongst others, by revealing its intermedial dimension. In order to do so, the author takes up the example of the connection between video games and other media within transmediatic franchises. From this perspective, Duret questions a number of the fundamental precepts of transmedial theory such as, for instance, the idea of a synergy between media. Through numerous franchise examples, Duret offers an overview of different intermedial modalities within transmedia narratives before, by way of conclusion, putting forward a pair of twin concepts that show up the intermedial aspect of such narratives: “intermedial transfiction” and “transfictional intermediality.”

919 Finally, in conclusion to this issue, two documents, each of which is presented under its own heading, speak frontally to the future of intermedial research. “De la critique des dispositifs à l’intermédialité pour approcher les productions artistiques: bilan des travaux du séminaire *Intermedialidades* (Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès, France)” is the result of a collaboration between multiple Hispanic studies membres of the research group LLA-CREATIS at Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès. This contribution, which takes the form of “lab notes” that are interspersed with accounts of important moments such as conferences and artistic events attended by the scholars, documents the authors’ training in intermedial studies and the impact this training had on their research. The text captures a young generation’s enthusiasm for a flexible and heuristic method that seems to apply itself to all works of art, allowing for mediatic specificities and the interconnections between them to be brought to light.

920 In their written notes on the audio-visual performance titled “*La nouvelle sphère intermédiatique* (colloque du CRI-1999) à l’épreuve de la remédiation: supports, approches et discours,” which was presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for the Study of Intermediality in May 2017, the CRIalt’s four postdoctoral researchers reflect both on the intermedial gesture of putting together this performance and on the fact of having been trained at the CRIalt. The performance, whose documentation will be made available on the journal’s website

to coincide with the release of this issue, takes the shape of an audio montage that juxtaposes short archival extracts from the CRI's 1999 conference on intermediality with reactions that a revisiting of these excerpts elicited in the CRIalt's first generation of members. During a series of interviews conducted with several first wave intermedialists, the young scholars were able to ask a series of questions pertaining to the impact that intermediality has had on these scholars' work. In addition, Suzanne Beth, Rémy Besson, Claudia Polledri, and myself also recorded ourselves while we were putting together the performance. Thus, two extracts within the final audio-visual piece reveal our own positions, fears, and hopes in relation to intermediality, taken as both a scientific method and a disciplinary area.

## MEDITATION

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The entrance to the hall was barred by a big panel, leaving two-meter-wide passageways at either side, on which Jed had displayed a satellite photo taken around the mountain of Guebwiller next to an enlargement of a Michelin Departments map of the same zone. The contrast was striking: while the photograph showed only a soup of more or less uniform green sprinkled with vague blue spots, the map developed a fascinating maze of departmental and scenic roads, viewpoints, forests, lakes, and cols. Above the two enlargements, in black capital letters, was the title of the exhibition: THE MAP IS MORE INTERESTING THAN THE TERRITORY.<sup>23</sup>

Driven by a formal fascination that, as often in Houellebecq's writings, comes close to perversion, Jed Martin collects road maps. With the help of his partner, he finally completes a Borgesian project that causes quite a stir in the Paris contemporary art world: an exhibit where giant photographs of landscapes are overshadowed by the large maps of the photographed territories that hang beside them. Not without announcing the exhibit "Rester vivant," which assembled large visual works,<sup>24</sup> installations, and poems by Houellebecq at Palais de Tokyo in 2016, the fictional exhibit "The Map Is More Interesting Than the Territory" functions as the corner stone of this highly intermedial novel. The tautological equalization of map and

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<sup>23</sup> Michel Houellebecq, *The Map and the Territory*, trans. Gavin Bond, New York, Vintage Books, 2012, p. 45.

<sup>24</sup> One is reminded, for instance, of the giant black and white photograph where the word "Europe," spelled out in enormous concrete blocks before an industrial landscape, grimly evoked the contemporary crisis of the old continent.

territory (this is, strictly speaking, the Borgesian aspect of this project where Jed mobilizes the conventions of modernism in order to move beyond postmodernism) is in itself a matter of mediality. After all, it is photography that encounters cartography in this novel where the written form is in itself sufficient to reproduce the maze, to take up Houellebecq's term, between medial and artistic forms. The hero's fascination for the road map's rhizomatic structure echoes the at-the-surface feel of the contemporary—what Agamben, referring to fashion, called the “ungraspable threshold between a ‘not yet’ and a ‘no more’.”<sup>25</sup>

922 But if the metaphor that Houellebecq's fictional exhibition title calls forth seems ironic—the map overshadows the territory, the market eliminates the art—it also stages a philosophical debate that centres on an aesthetics: the “soup of more or less uniform green sprinkled with vague blue spots” points to a modernist and abstract aesthetic, reminiscent of Rothko paintings and of the famous aerial view of Sylvia Plath's verses: “And a head in the freakish Atlantic / Where it pours bean green over blue / In the waters off beautiful Nauset.”<sup>26</sup> By contrast, the map, with its “fascinating maze of departmental and scenic roads, viewpoints, forests, lakes, and cols,” falls under the scope of a realist, even naturalist, aesthetic, much like the novels of its author. A similar debate appears to course through intermedial research where two dominant practices emerge: one utilizes the paint kit of intermediality to continue to paint, in detail, the connections between media (through case studies) as well as their proliferation in its entirety (through typologies of the nuances of intermedia borrowings and interconnections). The other aims to trace the paths followed by the method and its objects in order to establish a map as vast as the territories, both geographic and disciplinary, where this research unfolds.

923 Case in point: a few days before I finished writing this introduction, I received in my inbox a message signed by Agnes Pethő, professor of film studies at the Sapientia University of Cluj-Napoca in Romania, which announced that in October 2018 a new group of scholars would investigate the question of “Intermediality Now: Remapping In-Betweenness,”<sup>27</sup> likely with the aim of publishing another collective volume. This is precisely the dynamism that this second current within intermedial research brings to light: spreading, without clearly defined structures or limits,

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<sup>25</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *What Is the Contemporary?*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011, p. 48.

<sup>26</sup> Sylvia Plath, « Daddy », *Ariel* [1965], London, Faber et Faber, 1999, p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> See the group's website at: <http://film.sapientia.ro/en/conferences/intermediality-now-remapping-in-betweenness> (accessed 20 April 2018).



intermediality extends its range and allows itself to be rethought at the pace of various disciplinary and linguistic-cultural currents. To think the intermedial map, then, is to think intermediality itself as an intermedial object. The definitional limits of intermediality matter very little: as the articles assembled in this issue show, as they move from Deleuze and McLuhan to contemporary US media ecology theorists, it is possible to practice intermediality without knowing it or, on the contrary, intermediality itself can become the starting point for an international reflection on the future of methods and disciplines within the humanities.

## Intermediality Is the Map as much as the Territory

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