

Towards Intermediality in Contemporary Cultural Practices and Education

ASUNCIÓN LÓPEZ-VARELA AZCÁRATE
UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

STEVEN TÖTÖSY DE ZEPETNEK
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY / UNIVERSITY OF HALLE-WITTENBERG

ABSTRACT: Asunción López-Varela Azcárate and Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek discuss how intermediality may influence negotiations of culture and education, and how, in turn, cultural and educational practices can employ new media, with the result of an increase in social impact and significance. Intermediality refers to the blurring of generic and formal boundaries among different forms of new media practices. Intermediality means the employment of theoretical presuppositions in application together with the application of new media technology in action for the betterment of society against essentialisms and towards inclusion and interculturalism. Thus, the notion and potential of intermediality is associated with the incorporation of digital media in a wide variety of loci and spaces of representation and production that deal with the transfer of information and the creation of knowledge in an inclusive society. The trajectories of intermedial spaces between new media and the proliferation of texts, intertexts, hypertexts, and similar acts of remediation, transmediality, multimediality, hypermediality, etc., reveal and offer possibilities about how culture can be negotiated in the context of social and technological change.

Keywords: intermediality, interculturalism, education, globalization, civic education, citizenship.

RESUMEN: López-Varela y Tötösy exploran cómo la intermedialidad puede influir en las negociaciones entre cultura y educación y, paralelamente, cómo las prácticas culturales y educativas pueden utilizar los nuevos media para lograr un incremento del impacto y significación sociales. La intermedialidad significa la utilización de presupuestos teóricos de aplicación vinculados con nuevas tecnologías en acción con el propósito de mejorar la sociedad, evitando los esencialismos y a favor de la

inclusión y la interculturalidad. Por lo tanto, este concepto queda íntimamente ligado con la incorporación de los medios digitales en una variedad de *loci* y espacios de representación y producción que gestionan la transferencia de información y la creación de conocimiento en una sociedad incluyente. La trayectoria de los espacios intermediales entre los nuevos media y la proliferación de textos, intertextos, hipertextos y actos similares de transducción, transmedia, multimedia, hipermedia, etc., presentan un amplio abanico de posibilidades sobre cómo puede negociarse la cultura en el contexto del cambio social y tecnológico.

Palabras clave: intermedialidad, interculturalidad, educación, globalización, educación cívica, ciudadanía.

The theme of our article is the emergent field of intermediality and its relationship to cultural and educational practices in an increasingly digital world; that is in the Western world. The notion of intermediality raises a number of issues including social and cultural practices, education, aspects of globalization and the cultural industries. The theoretical background of our study is based on the framework of comparative cultural studies, a theoretical and methodological framework built on tenets of (radical) constructivism, interdisciplinarity, and the contextual and empirical study of culture (Even-Zohar, 1997; Schmidt, 1997; Tötösy, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2007). It is, indeed, a «puzzling paradox» that neither social theories concerning modernity, modern publicity or the media, nor humanities theories regarding different cultural forms, types of texts or genres have paid 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» (Lehtonen, 2001: 71). It is important that the processing, production, and marketing of cultural products such as music, film, radio, television programmes, books, journals, newspapers and digital media determine that today almost all aspects of production and distribution are digitized. Thus, culture is indeed multimodal as it makes use of technology as well as symbolic forms that employ simultaneously several material-semiotic resources (Lehtonen, 2001: 75). Intermediality, then, is about the relationships between the employment and practices of multimodal media. Does intermediality represent the potential for innovative artistic creation, publishing, and education? Or, on the contrary, is it an attack on aesthetic purity and academic rigour? How can we get the best of intermediality in contemporary cultural practices and in education?

First, we propose that intermediality can be defined as the ability to read and write critically across varied symbol systems and across various disciplines and

scholarly as well as general discursive practices. Rodowick (1991) has explained that thought is concerned with primarily linguistic expression and that even if we live in/with sophisticated visualities in contemporary Western culture, the shapes and processes of the discourse, as they are shaped in and through new technologies, are crucial for understanding symbolic exchange and cultural interaction. As such, intermediality is related to critical media literacy (López-Varela, 2006 c). Lehtonen (2001) has explained how intertextuality is a type of first-level intermediality as its narrative structures transgress medial borders (López-Varela, 2005). Therefore, «intermediality is intertextuality that transgresses media borders» (Lehtonen, 2001: 76). Through the notion of a medium, the centrality of the material, its technological dimensions, mode of transmission and related cultural aspects becomes imperative for the understanding of intermedial dynamics as McLuhan (2003: 9) introduced. A medium serves to mediate signs between people:

A medium is that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real. A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media. (Bolter & Grusin, 1999: 65)

The sense and practice of agency and the very notion of mediation implies that media studies and related disciplines, such as comparative cultural studies, cannot continue to be seen as isolated monads but need to become part of more complex research networks, which will work both in scholarship and education, as well as in cultural practices in general: «Studying intermediality questions academic disciplinary boundaries» (Lehtonen, 2001: 82) and «If media (and also “media-texts”) are to be located in changing relationships, if their function also depends on historical changes of these relationships, then we have to conclude that the idea of isolated media-monads or isolated sorts of media has to be abandoned» (Müller, 1997: 297-298).

At a time when communication and media studies and (comparative) cultural studies – to name disciplines employing the proposed ways of thinking and study, although the impact of the notion of intermediality impacts on all disciplines of the humanities and social sciences – are defined as processes of multi and intermedial construction and interaction, then the development and study of their encounters takes on a primary relevance to the academic community. Furthermore, these loci and spaces, where intermediality and interdisciplinary study touch and then withdraw themselves from definite territorial demarcations as their points of encounter constantly shift, require a more complex theoretical understanding of intermedial processes. Thus,

research has oriented itself in its pursuit as work by such as: Lehtonen (2001); Wolf (1999); Helbig (1998); Müller (1997); Wagner (1996); Chapple & Kattenbelt (2006); López-Varela (2005, 2006 *a,b,c*, 2007) and Tötösy de Zepetnek (2001, 2003, 2007 *a*, 2007 *b*); amongst others, demonstrate. Here, we focus on the practical cultural implications of intermediality based in new media for its users.

1. Intermediality, Cultural Practices, and Social Contexts

Intermediality has become a Western-based phenomenon with global impact and the ability to create new forms of artistic and critical innovation; to find ways for their distribution (i.e., open access to scholarship published on the World Wide Web); to link cultural communities in cyberspace; and to be applied as a vehicle for innovative educational practices. Today, discursive practices, including visualities, form a complex intermedial network of signifying practices that construct realities rather than simple representations of them. Socially constructed meaning or what we call «culture» takes place through processes of the negotiation of stories, images, and meanings, that is, through jointly-constructed and contextual agreements, power relations, and their authorisation, and legitimation of social positions and loci. Therefore, the ways intermedial discursive practices are produced, processed, and transmitted are a relevant and important area of research and practice (Semali and Pailliotet, 1999). We would like to add here that while outside of the Western world access to and the use of new media – and thus the potential of intermediality – is severely compromised because of economic inequalities, its impact is, nevertheless, felt globally. Public discourse and communication are achieved by institutionalized means of transmission that always precede the content of what is communicated. Individual and social identities are developed – at best – by dialogue (Pellizzi, 2006; Tötösy, 1998, 2003) communicated through a given set of practices – mainly spoken, written, and visual communication, and inscribed in supporting materials that change over time and can be manipulated in their own distinct ways. The most relevant supporting material is human memory, including that which is processed and «archived» through books, television, cinema, software, and digital media that provide long-term storage (López-Varela, 2006 *a*). Technological changes affect the way information is transmitted, emerge in particular cultural conditions, and, in turn, result in new social and cultural situations. Technologies produce relational positions of greater or lesser privilege through regulating the flow of intermedial discourse in particular ways. The materiality of media is already culturally encoded and bears a certain institutional validation prior to specific content being transmitted. In this way,

people's lives are spent shaping and responding to new material media and artefacts. New media do not replace or substitute prior technologies but it creates new intermedial configurations of the whole social and economic system of media. Thus, the internet and the World Wide Web have not replaced broadcast media or printed books, while it is causing the re-evaluation and reinterpretation of these media systems and practices. More often than not, the information and communication possibilities of the internet are parasitic of broadcast-mediated communication, as the growth of companion websites which accompany media organizations, newspapers, consumer products, theatre productions, sporting events, etc., demonstrate. However, knowledge sharing is what culture is all about and new media have the potential to be more than just distribution channels for established cultural industries.

Information and the processing of information is the communicative vehicle of culture today. The concept, knowledge management, and uses of information are linked immanently to education, knowledge, creativity, innovation, democratic participation, civic education and citizenship. Technological applications and intermediality play an important role in developing educational and cultural policies and practices; expanding the stock of shared heritage while maintaining cultural diversity and the multiplicities of identity formation. However, the large intermedial capacities of new media, such as the internet and the World Wide Web present problems in need of solution. One of these is related to the processes of distribution. The amount of information generated on the World Wide Web is so large that the organization of knowledge has become an important part of cultural work for the cultural industries. The digital preservation of cultural heritage is as important as establishing criteria for deciding which information is relevant and ensuring free access to digital archives and online documents, an issue linked also to educational aspects (for more on the preservation of culture in the digital age in the EU see <http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/soccul/cult/index_en.htm>). In addition, in many cases new technologies are only providing information, such as giving access to government documents and open-access educational sources, however, most websites do not facilitate interaction that would allow the exchange of ideas and provide cross-cultural relationships and linkages: a matter particularly important in education (López-Varela, 2006 *b*). There is also the question of the digital divide we referred to previously and that is not only a matter of accessibility or purchasing power (Norris, 2002: <<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>>).

Another important issue is electronic publishing, which began some fifteen years ago but it was not until the turn of the twentieth century that it began to gain more importance, especially with regard to peer-reviewed, full text, but open-access publishing of scholarship (Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2007 *a*, 2007 *b*). The establishment of copyright is believed to serve the greater public interest

because apart from guarantying a just reward for the author, it is considered to be an incentive for further creativity and a guaranty for quality. The privileged bond between author and his/her creation as a relation between a point of origin and its demarcated dissemination; the notion of artistic and scholarly work as somehow a fixed and stable entity: these symptoms of modernity helped to reinforce the myth of separate and sustainable media and art forms with their own inner definable essence. However, since open access to information is a precondition for fulfilling the right of any citizen to freedom of expression (protected under the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights), there is a growing need to secure a balance between respect for authors' rights and the need to provide free access to as many users as possible. (This can be seen in the *IFLA Position on Copyright in the Digital Environment*, issued in 2000 <<http://www.ifla.org/ipubs.htm>>). The greatest risk is the growing economic focus of cultural and new media policies; the fear that only marketable cultural products will find their way to the general public: «Commodification intensifies intermediation» (Lehtonen, 2001: 78). Intellectual property and its tracks of distribution have become concentrated in only a few multinational companies and therefore only those profitable products will find their way into the market (Yúdice, 2003). It is necessary to stimulate and create structures and the logistics of production and diffusion other than those of multinational companies, and to create circuits of communication for international intercultural cooperation. In this sense the debate on open-access publishing on the World Wide Web becomes particularly important. The preservation of the public domain is a crucially important aspect. Thus, the future of the information society depends on achieving a balance between commercial and non-commercial initiatives.

Besides problems of publishing, accessibility and media literacy there are socio-cultural issues related to the changing nature of modern societies, which in turn relate to intermedial issues. The massive increase of (im)migration and movements of people have radically transformed the context in which cultural activities are developed. It has been proposed that the national objectives of cultural cooperation, mainly diffusion of historical and artistic patrimony and the strengthening of national identities and the expansion of their markets need to be oriented toward intercultural co-production (García Canclini, Rosaldo, Chiappari, López, 2005; García Canclini, Yúdice, Ashley, 2001). All cultural aspects are now conditioned by a growing non-territorial transnationalism, which develops from the increasing movement of people across the globe, and thus the study of culture needs to be networked in order to facilitate intercommunication among different cultures. In this new panorama of shared cultural products intermedial technology becomes particularly important. The question concerns not only the unfair distribution of technological products

within 20% of world population taking up 90% of internet access (97% of African people do not have access to new technologies, while Europe and the US concentrate almost 70% of internet users. Ibero-America, with 8% of the world population participates only in 4% of internet access) [see García Canclini, Rosaldo, Chiappari, López, 2005]. The Unesco *Proceedings on eCulture and Cultural Policy* (2005) demonstrates that public policies cannot bridge the «digital divide» by focusing solely on the provision of good ICT infrastructure and that educational strategies, which aim to enhance technical literacy, thus facilitating access to cultural literacy by helping people to relate critically and self-critically to other cultures are needed. There is a further need for special measures to level inequalities owing to geographical location, gender, age, education, and position in the labour market; there is also a need to take into account special groups such as ethnic minorities, (im)migrants and refugees, leading to the formation of open-access civil networks.

However, it appears that the growth of new media technologies, and what makes them marketable, responds to three central values of (post)modern society: mobility, communication, and individualisation; and these values are related to a key aspect of intermedial loci and spaces, namely the fact that they are designed to be permanently active. The most popular application of the internet is its interactivity because it can produce immediate feedback (Ryan, 2001). The interactivity inherent to the internet is often felt as a process of interchange and cooperation/collaboration – a dialogue which can promote a sense of connectedness. Thus, (im)migrant communities across the globe choose, where possible, to use the internet in order to find a space of social belonging in their struggle to produce new identities while in diasporas (Doody, Aizlewood & Bourdieu, 2003: 43-56). However, research has also shown some of the paradoxes of connectivity, for instance the fact that an excessive use of net technologies may disconnect the individual from the active political sphere of real space and from embodied interactions surrounding her/him, which has the effect of diminishing their sense of social and personal responsibility to others (Wellman, Quan-Haase, Boase, Chen, Hampton, Isla de Díaz, Miyata, 2003; López-Varela, 2006 c). The more individuals look to (new) media for acquiring cultural identity, the less they look around for social solidarity. The paradox of increasing mobility is the greater individualisation it creates, as people can communicate and interact at a distance regardless of their physical situation. Even more than mobile telephony, the internet enhances this individualisation by providing means of fast asynchronic communication (Langer, 2003). In political terms, new media allow the expression of public opinion while lacking the possibility of real direct interaction, and very often massive control of the media by private interests distorts systematically the content of public discourse.

In territorial terms, the developed world is experiencing a shift from communities based on small-group-like villages and neighbourhoods and towards flexible partial communities based on networked individualism where people have multiple and shifting sets of «glocalized ties» (Quan-Haase, Boase, Chen, Hampton, Isla de Díaz, Miyata, 2003). This is owing to the fact that people have in increasing number multiple locations of residence and citizenships and thus multiple cultural allegiances (Appiah, 2006; Kymlicka, 1995-2004). But it is also that the public/private distinction, which prevailed before the extension of private control in modern capitalist societies is disappearing. Hence the argument that intermediality is helping public discourse to colonize the confined spaces of the home where individuals gain access to the public sphere through the internet. With more and more companies offering their workers tele-work options, the household unit becomes a primary cell of modern public relations. In this context, the generalized interactivity of the internet, along with the ability of anyone with access to put forward their own views in any of a range of forums poses a threat to the distinction between public information – epitomized in the notion of journalistic objectivity – and personal opinion, a distinction central to the formation of the imagined community of the democratic nation-state. Nor surprisingly, geographic and kinship ties of family, local neighbourhood, and nation are yielding new ways of «imagining» (Anderson, 1983) social and national spaces, with individuals becoming dependent on media and the hyperspace to acquire a sense of belonging and attachment to others.

Intermediality contributes to globalization in the sense that it helps the mobility of culture in its crossing of virtual borders. Does it, however contribute to semantic and civic standardization? If not, as recent research shows (Rifkin, 2004), how can we speak across semantic borders? «For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castilian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language?» (Anzaldúa, 1987: 55) The question it raises is how do we cross-over? How do we make the gap become «a chink a window through which I can observe the world» now that «the apertures of perception have widened [...] just as the number “2” implies all other numbers, so a bivalent consciousness is necessarily a multivalent consciousness». (Hoffman (1989: 272) and Jim Rosenberg’s (2004) work on spatial hypertext describes an enormous range of possible types of linkages, where linking is not limited to the binary either-or commonly understood as hypertext, but can be thought of in terms of modes of «gathering» through set and category relations). How do we provide interdisciplinary intermedial bridges? How do we use new technologies,

oriented towards growing individualisation and detached multiculturalism, to create an intercultural, inclusive, and non-essentialist society through comparative approaches in (comparative) cultural studies and with a focus on dialogue?

2. Interculturalism, Intermediality, and Education

Intercultural situations are influenced by negotiation between several, sometimes competing sets of views. Interculturality in the sense of inclusion requires mutual (ex)change in/of both the (im)migrant groups and the larger society. We have already mentioned that, despite the digital divide, (im)migrant communities across the globe co-opt the internet increasingly to find intermedial spaces of social belonging in their struggle to produce and/or cope with new identities in their new loci/space. The state of exilic and diasporic location and existence often strengthens ritualistic, religious, and ethnic identities, and diasporic communities located in democratic nation states often have to confront their local visibility through public acts and demonstrations of the hospitality of their home culture in their struggle for enhanced citizenship rights (Kymlicka, 1995-2004; McClennen, 2004). In order to become a participatory citizen it is relevant to provide positive contributions to the public sphere and exercise civic responsibilities. Therefore, the mechanism of social control is placed inside people's subjectivity so that conforming behaviour is produced voluntarily. In general, people cling to the products of hegemonic/essentialist culture that produce and reinforce the dominant ideology and, in order to fit into the centre and avoid marginalized positions, people will draw upon the dominant discourse to legitimate their claims of entitlement (Foucault, 1980). The internalization of feelings of marginality may lead to passivity instead of participation in the development of sustainable agreements. The main criteria used to justify inclusion and/or exclusion in a given society continues to be that of identity, with a generalized «failure to acknowledge hybridity [...] a political point whose ramifications can be measured in lives» (Pieterse, 2001: 224; and Heidegger (1957) had already questioned this idea of identity, a thesis continued by Derrida (1967) and Deleuze and Guattari (1968) that Brillenburg-Würth (2004) has developed in relation to the concept of intermediality). Slavoj Žižek (1997), among others, has gone even further in holding that this kind of managed encounter with otherness indicates multiculturalism's complicity with the cultural logic of late capital. As Rickert puts it, «otherness can only exist, true difference can only maintain its status, insofar as it accepts a priori a benign, pluralist, universal framework» and he adds that «this framework is already disempowering because it reduces otherness and difference to the benign

framework of tolerance» and hides violent resistances and conflicts that stage underlying traumatic logics. We should be encouraged «to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or *processes* that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences». (Rickert, 2007: 132; author's emphasis):

The in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular and communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation in the act of defining society itself. It is in the emergence of interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest or cultural value are negotiated. (Bhabha, 1994: 2)

The question is: How can contradictory codes and conflicted discourses, which find a new vehicle in intermediality and thus are always caught up with non-rational and affective influences buried in language, find a way to consensus? Which are the «in-between» mechanisms of authentic mediation? Can virtual mediation contribute to remediate the situation?

Mediation contributes to the creation of an atmosphere where problems become «shared problems» and in which the expression of emotions is acceptable under the foundation that symbolic consistence and subjective identity are achieved by means of affective processes. As Eva Hoffman puts it

like everybody, I am the sum of my languages, the language of my family and children, and education and friendship, and love, and the larger changing world – though, perhaps I tend to be more aware than most of the fractures between them, and of the building blocks. The fissures sometimes cause me pain, but in a way, they're how I know I'm alive. (Hoffman, 1989: 272)

Emphasis on the emotional may also lead to uncovering underlying resistances to cooperate and participate. People need to be engaged in social action and (im)migrants should be empowered to do so. However, there are certain social positions that may not entail full participation as a legitimate social agent. Social needs and entitlements are constructed in discourses quite differently with regard to gender, culture, social class, or race. They are assumed within relational contexts, in contrast with interests that are internally referenced to the individual psyche. (Im)migrants, in particular, may feel a lower degree of entitlement to certain social needs. How can we use new media and its intermedial possibilities in a constructive way to build platforms from which migrants can be heard and get involved in joint social action?

The influx of (im)migrants in European countries has brought about structural changes at every level of the educational system. There is at present a social consensus that the main «political» problem (in the sense of building citizenship) is the result of demographic decline in most of developed nations and the entrance of (im)migrants and the subsequent effects on the (sub)systems of production, culture, and education. Mobility and (im)migration are favouring the development of new forms of political administration based on citizenship, with the subsequent acceptance of cultural pluralism, in detriment of national models, even if simultaneously these continue to grow in different parts of the world. Global displacement, together with the growing use of networked communication, which employs forms of intermediality, could be affecting a socio-cultural revolution towards the belief in multiple citizenship definitions. Intermediality shows reality as a changing and dynamic process where the individual is defined within a plurality of times and spaces – genre, language, group, etc. – multiple and intercultural. Therefore, all understanding of cultural change is seen as open to contacts and interferences, crossroads, and meeting points within a dense network of informational structures and reminiscences. The feeling of belonging not to a single space, but to a dynamic network of translations and cultural hybrids is, we argue, mediated by technological changes and media structures that offer possibilities of network and intermedial representation and production.

Ideology is inscribed in every aspect of the pedagogical situation, not only through the authority of the instructor at all levels of the curricula but also in such factors as the classroom layout, the educational institution's structure, the evaluation system, the ways education is valued socially, in the systems of social and individual group interaction, etc. Established since the formation of nation states, one of the goals of education is to provide competent and responsible citizens who understand their obligation and their right to insist that economic, social, and political power be exerted in the best interests of the community. Thus, in recent years, educational (radical) constructivist approaches that inspire European educational convergence have recovered the humanist tradition that focuses more on quality and the development of abilities and attitudes, that is, the «how» of education (Riegler, 2007). This has been due to the need to accommodate greater flexibility, mobility, and tolerance in European systems in order to work towards an educational convergence that has been encouraged from the economic point of view for several reasons. First, we can mention the compromise achieved with regard to the free movement of workers within the community after the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and economic considerations meant to encourage a flow of investment and the free movement of capital. A

further reason was the pressure that came from the ideal of a hypothetical cultural unity of Europe. *The Janne Report* (1976) was the expression of this vision of a European society whose cultural memory could be built on the basis of its educational system and the «glocalized» teaching of history, literature, languages, etc. The 1988 *European Educational Policy Statement* and the *Maastricht Treaty* of 1992 continued to reinforce the central value of the European dimension in education (Commission of the European Communities (1973; on community policy in education [the *Janne Report*, see *Bulletin of the European Communities*, supplement 10/73 Brussels European Commission; Council of the European Communities, General Secretariat (1987), *European Educational Policy Statements*, 3rd ed., Luxembourg Office of Official Publications of the European Communities. Supplement to the Third Edition, 1990, 19-21; *Treaty of the European Union* 1992, Article 126, 2). Finally, there is the immanent pressure when work mobility was delayed owing to the incapacity of the European community to reach consensus in the recognition of professional qualifications and when student mobility flourished in the 1980s (Lenearts, 1994).

Parallel to these moves towards European unity, collaborative learning spaces and the moving away from hierarchical notion in the teaching and learning processes, has been a growing interest in the use of computer-mediated communication, networked, and internet-based applications in educational environments (López-Varela, 2007; Gómez Peña, 2005; McLaren, Hammer, Scholle, Reilly, 1995; Sleeter, 1999). Present-day students working in various modes of media and communication (visual, audio, and verbal/textual) require them to engage in productive tasks and activities in a variety of modes. These environments (virtual trips, webquests, miniquests, etc., (López-Varela, 2006 b) offer new possibilities to educational institutions not only in the form of on-line instruction (courses, lessons, tutoring, etc.) but also in the form of multi-institutional project collaboration and professional activities employing new media technology online (i.e., intermediality in education and scholarship). They seek not only to treat information, that is, question, research, the finding of meaning, the developing of ideas, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, the solving of problems, etc., but also to communicate, transfer information and to use such in making decisions in an effective and responsible way, by applying it to concrete social situations. Hypermedia, as an online learning resource, is only given shape and meaning through user interaction. In this way, autonomy, the key to future responsible citizens, is not taught theoretically but achieved through experiential learning, becoming a course strategy that concerns the entire curriculum, its materials, tasks, and learning arrangements with and via dialogue between instructor and students along with their cultural and spatial contexts.

3. Conclusion

Intermediality, intertextuality, and related cultural terms such as hybridization, border-crossing, interculturalism, and collaborative learning pervade contemporary critical media and culture theory and practice. The variety of terms and taxonomies stems from the once heterogeneous theoretical approaches rooted in different fields such as literary studies, linguistics, (comparative) cultural studies, sociology, cultural anthropology, media and communication studies, education, etc., in an attempt to draw interdisciplinary bridges in their response to the growth of virtual environments and their merger in intermedial networks and practices. We would like to emphasize the potential of intermediality to serve as a model that not only increases our understanding of the mechanisms of media convergence, but also applies to parallel phenomena in intercultural and educational contexts. We propose that the basis for a constructive conceptualisation of social change is mediated through technology and that the application and practice of intermediality as a vehicle for socio-cultural needs to be further explored, both theoretical and practically, in its aspects of production, distribution, and usability. In addition, the understanding and implementation of cultural policy in different parts of the globe needs to be understood as mediated and re-mediated by public as well as scholarly discourse. As scholars and educators, our efforts ought to be directed not only upon our students, but also society at large, aware of the cultural codes and the competing discourses – of race, class, sexual orientation, age, ethnic, and gender formations, for example – that influence our positions as subjects of experience. Thus, future research should extend even more to explore intercultural intermedial pedagogic methods in order to investigate how cultural beliefs, values, and cognitive styles influence the development of intergroup interaction (Tötösy, 2007) so that passive and excessively individualistic positions can be overcome. The classroom should be used to show students the dynamics of discursive positioning and train them to think and perform differently, while at the same time achieving a way to consensus. As Nafisi puts it

an absurd fictionality ruled our lives. We tried to live in the open spaces, in the chinks created *between that room*, which had become our protective cocoon, and the censor's world of witches and goblins outside. Which of these two worlds was more real and to which did we really belong? We no longer knew the answers. Perhaps one way of finding out the truth was to do what we did: to try to imaginatively articulate these two worlds, and through that process, give shape to our vision and identity. (Nafisi, 2003: 26)

If modernity turns to essentialist notions, postmodern media power has given way to a certain sense of futility of critique that undermines any attempts to change the world substantially for the better. Passivity, irony, and cynicism are common not only in the classroom and academe but in society in general. Both resistance and participation – as proposed here with both theoretical and applied intermediality – should replace resignation. Intermediality and the supplementary relation between subject and media always hinges on the notion of becoming. Becoming holds an «in-between» space, a gap between absence and presence that invites an analysis to the process of intermediality in terms of philosophies of difference (Derrida, 1967) as an opening up but also a crossing-over. Comparative bridges to cross over from the theoretical development, with its contingent application of intermediality to cultural remediation and back towards interculturality would advance society in all its contexts and processes.

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