Introduction to New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice

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Introduction to
New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice

**Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, Asunción López-Varela Azcárate,
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New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice — a thematic issue of *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 13.3 (2011): <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/> — presents new scholarship about how "intermediality influences the negotiation of culture and education (in theory and application), and how, in turn, cultural and educational practices shape the use of media and their social significance" (Call for Papers for the journal issue). Following the call for papers, authors discuss the concepts of "materiality" and "(inter)mediality" from various theoretical perspectives in the study of literature, art, philosophy, sociology, and pedagogy and explore texts from a range of genres including the novel, film, painting, comics, the graphic novel, etc. One of several connecting perspectives of the articles is the concept of materiality, with a focus on developments in the digital age. Analyzing different textual orders and forms, authors respond to the challenges emanating from the emergence of digitality and the concomitant impact of (inter)mediality. A central concern is the situation of the "book," its abiding status as a printed object, its digital recasting, and its symbolic status within different ideological systems.

In the digital age, we speak of the "end of the book," but the materiality of the book is tenacious, even where new media are concerned. In the discourse about the disappearance of the "physical book," the implicit assumption is that the electronic book is something other than physical. We argue that, at most, what is taking place is a transition to a different materiality, a different set of constraints on sameness, difference, duration, change, and adaptation. The prospect of a new form for the book means that the printed book loses the invisibility and the inevitability that cloak any tool that fulfills its functions: "tools turn out to be damaged, their material unsuitable … When we discover its unusability, the thing becomes conspicuous. Conspicuousness presents the thing at hand in a certain unhandiness" (Heidegger 68). Thus, with digitality, the "end of the book" stimulates a rediscovery of the printed book. Contrary to the notion that it is in the process of disappearing, we are witnessing the emergence of a parallel materiality: the printed book and the digital book. As the electronic book dangles before us the phantasm of a text reduced to its content of information, we recognize the paratextual roots and branches, implications, and activities of the pre-electronic book. The difference in price and timeliness between the cheap, serialized, or definitive editions of, for example, *David Copperfield*, had always been noteworthy to the specialist, but these facts had not previously been seen as weighing greatly on the understanding of the work or on the interests of the reader. Now they do. Attention to this kind of materiality draws the study of literature closer to the history of art — a discipline that grounds itself in the physical individuality of the objects it examines — and thus engages us to work in inter- and pluri-disciplinarity. The "book" comprehends both type and token: "three books" without further specification can refer to copies of the same book just as well as it can designate distinct works of literature. As a result, we can talk about *David Copperfield* or any other "book," we can agree or disagree about its properties without ever having inspected the particular copies on which our opinions are based. This facility does not depend on mass production of practically identical objects. In the manuscript era, Aristotle could talk just as confidently about what was and what was not in the *Odyssey* without having to point to a particular copy. We may fail to see this as noteworthy. As Martin Heidegger observed, the tool that does its job correctly vanishes, but it should be far more surprising that we can so easily share the reference, considering everything that must differ between Aristotle's copy of Homer and ours. The book commits us to an unobtrusive Platonism and we take it for granted that the individuals (the copies) participate in the form of the text. Materiality, for the people of the book, is a learned behavior and not "natural."

The book as a prime example of materiality comes by its instinctive Platonism for every term of language is beset with the same type/token of ambiguity. In the text of a book — printed or digital — the word "duck," infinitely varied in pronunciation, intonation, handwriting, font, spacing, and so forth, is no thing but a set of criteria with an open field of potential realizations and the same can be said of the concept "duck" when applied to countless individuals of the species, as well as some geese, not to

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mention metaphorical taggings. Having assigned himself the task of specifying the nature of the linguistic sign, Ferdinand de Saussure could do no better than to call it the form produced by the mutual confrontation of two incompatible substances: "linguistics works in this boundary zone where elements of two different orders combine: their combination produces a form, not a substance (157). This strange solution makes sense if we see it as a refusal to do the obvious thing dictated by the philosophical heritage, that is, to designate as "sign" the concept under which, as a universal, various particulars come to nest. For such a theory of the sign, phonetics, writing systems, inscribing technologies, etc., are mere matter manipulated in the service of an immaterial pattern: *hylê* subordinated to *morphê*, as in the Aristotelian example of the various beds realized with different pieces of wood. But Saussure does not concede that causality in matters linguistic can flow in one direction only, and least of all from idea to signifier. Scandalously but with full intent twisting Aristotelian terminology, he says that "in language, a concept is a quality of its phonic substance just as a particular slice of sound is a quality of the concept" (Saussure 144). The phrase describing the sign as "a form, not a substance" lends itself to confusion as long as we expect "form" and "formalism" to evoke a tacit opposition to "matter" and "materialism." What Saussure offers is something different: not really a formalism but more accurately a bi-materialism, a forging of forms out of the clash of matters.

This condition, in which form is never given *a priori* but made to emerge out of the non-teleological behavior of bits of matter, might approximate the strange reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* in the last writings of Paul de Man, which culminates in a notion of "materiality without materialism and even perhaps without matter" (see Derrida 281, 350-58). This reading does not attribute authority over language and thought to matter — "sensuousness" as Karl Marx called it or any other shorthand for the real — rather, it situates matter as a resistance to interpretation, a lack of motive, a "grammatical" formality and inevitability which are discovered in somewhat the same way that Heidegger's hammer becomes "unhandy." De Man's version of "materiality" is "prosaic" and alien to personification and metaphor, historical in the sense that it happens in time but not narrative or end-driven. Materiality, in this reading, is neither primordial nor substantial but emerges as a consequence or byproduct. The revisionary force of this view deserves emphasis. Nothing is more usual than to use "matter," "the material," "materiality" to denote what is outside language, but here the material occurs as an event within language, an "inscription" — which hardly prevents it from having effects outside of language. The apparently random blurting out of the name "Marion" by the young Jean Jacques Rousseau, which had for effect the denunciation for theft of another member of the household, can stand as example (see de Man 278-301). Can these different versions of the problem of materiality and literature be connected or do they stand side-by-side like megaliths missing their lintels? Here is an attempt: the materiality within language is brought to the fore by repetition and citation, what the medieval schoolmen called *suppositio materialis*, that is, the use of a word to indicate itself: not "Budapest is the capital of Hungary," "Budapest is full of mathematical geniuses," etc., but "Budapest is an eight-letter word" or "Budapest is no anapest." As William of Ockham defined it, *suppositio materialis* is what happens when a term does not refer in terms of its meaning, but refers to what is spoken or written (67). When this happens, the "handiness" of the word, its convenience for referring, tool-like, to things, is suspended and its physical being weighs on us with its mere factuality: why should it be eight letters long? Why should it not be an anapest?

In *Le Dernier à parler*, an essay on the poetry of Paul Celan, Maurice Blanchot explores these questions by asking whether language can ever forge relationships, be they connections between people or between discourses, sentences, or individual words. Printed in two columns, the layout of Blanchot's text stages graphically an encounter between one verbal formation and another: the left-hand pages of the essay each present three or four short extracts from Celan, while the right-hand ones contain Blanchot's discussion of the verses. In the first instance, the lyrics are cited in German and accompanied by French translations printed beneath them; but on subsequent pages, the left-hand column offers only the original German, and French translations for each line, in italics, are interpolated into Blanchot's own sentences. Confronting the first quotations he offers, Blanchot begins the formidable task of accounting for the unique way in which Celan's verses speak: "That which speaks to us here reaches us through language's extreme tension, its concentration, the necessity of maintaining, of carrying the one toward the other, in a union that does not make a unity, words henceforth associated, joined for something other than their meaning, simply oriented toward" ("The

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Last" 228) ("Ce qui nous parle ici, nous atteint par l'extrême tension de langage, sa concentration, la nécessité de maintenir, de porter l'un vers l'autre, dans une union qui ne fait pas unité, des mots désormais associés, joints pour autre chose que leurs sens, seulement orientés vers" [*Le Dernier* 11]).

In the course of his essay, Blanchot makes it clear that Celan's oeuvre raises a host of questions about whether a poem can address others, bear witness to the past, herald a future, or even interpellate physical objects in the world as its audience. Before these problems can be explored, however, the relationship of words to words, and more fundamentally, the relationship of any word to itself, must be considered. In this regard, the repetition of *vers* and the prominence it acquires as the final, dangling element of the sentence hints at the overdetermined role that homonyms play here. *Vers* appears twice, as a preposition, "toward," and not just as any preposition, but as the preposition that will characterize the pre-position of all words: the stance, the posture, the orientation of one word "toward" another, before their respective meanings is at issue. Of course, in an essay about Celan's poetry, an essay that begins by quoting his verses and setting them off on their own page, *vers* also has to be read as the French word for "verse." Blanchot's first claim, then, is that before poetry is grasped as a creative or transformative language, it must be understood as a discourse of approach. That this "carrying of the one toward the other" is also a figure for the trans-portation, the *metapherein*, of metaphor becomes clear once we "join" or "associate" *vers* with — that is, once we read it in its orientation "toward" — the other prominent homonym in the sentence, *sens*, which means not just "meaning," but also "direction," e.g., *vers*. If *vers* is to be a unit of *sens* — whether as the "meaning" of a preposition or noun, or as one "direction" among others — it must first be conceptualized as a signifier that assumes a stance toward other words, including itself. The association at work here is grounded not just in links between words, but in the "concentration," the "associative maintenance," whereby *vers* is constantly transported from *vers* to *vers*.

Far from simply constituting the end product of a synthesis or a unification of signifier and signified, *vers* and *sens* are emblematic of the degree to which any word is a force of disassociation, an incomplete transport from "l'un [vers/sens] vers l'autre [vers/sens]" that remains perpetually unfinished whether it takes place within a single language or as a passage between languages, as in the relationship between French and German illustrated by the parallel columns of Blanchot's text. In this particular sentence, this fracturing process is marked by the play of *un*: "dans une union qui ne fait pas unité" ("The Last" 228) ("in a union that does not make a unity") [*Le dernier* 11]). This orientation or association, this "carrying toward" of the letters u and n, spilling across the sentence, is not a transport of *sens* ("sense") from one term to the next, but a redrawing of *sens* as the re-orienting or re-vectoring of direction, a movement or im-movement that in the very act of linking "un" with "une," "union," and "unité," disassociates the terms irremediably. No word is ever more or less than *vers* ("around" or "in the vicinity of" [*aux environs de, aux alentours de*]) itself. Moreover, if this dynamic is presented by Blanchot as a movement of *l'un*, the interplay of association and disassociation does not take place under the sign of "one." No single term — *sens*, *vers*, *langage* — controls this concatenation of vectors. This drifting of directionality is anterior to the articulated signs that will ultimately be oriented and disoriented; indeed, it is the de-schematization of the lexical order in virtue of which *lexeis* first manifest themselves. Every word is always already oriented *vers l'autre* before it has a chance to establish itself as (just) *un mot* tending toward itself — the word is multiple before it is singular, one only insofar as it is already many. Poetry is language that makes explicit this (dis)association of *vers* to *vers* or *sens* to *sens*, prior to the emergence of *vers or sens* as a fixed semantic figure. It is language that is "simply oriented toward," a tending or an alignment in virtue of which words first lay claim to effecting a transport of *sens*. This is why Blanchot's sentence ends enigmatically on a dash, as if only the sparest, and arguably most ambiguous, of punctuation marks could hope to do justice to this proto-verbal posture, as if only "—" can illustrate the link between *vers* and *vers*. In fact, in creating a kind of enjambment, the broken end of the line itself becomes an instance of "verse" (etymologically "language turned toward or against") and ceases to be "prose" (from *prosa oratio*: "straightforward or direct speech").

Over the last thirty years, scholars have discussed the dynamics described by and at work in Blanchot's sentence with reference to the "play of the signifier." To a large extent, however, such attempts to characterize verbal autonomy have wittingly or unwittingly reworked repetitions of syllables or letters into metaphorical or metonymic patterns. If the instances of substitution and displacement

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are thereby said to take place at the level of the letter rather than the word, the resulting rhetorical schemas are thoroughly conventional, and the underlying semantic logic remains unchanged. In contrast, Blanchot tries to show that the repetition of a letter or syllable is not the mark of an insistent form or content, but the disarticulation of form and content as the grounds of marking itself. Far from constituting evidence of the self-same, the recurrence of *un* is a symptom of the collapse of any straightforward homology between reiteration and self-identity. The result is that the "association" and "orientation" of language as a collection of words or letters is no longer comprehensible as an interplay of analogy and substitution or continuity and contiguity, and the status of the word as a concept or as a figure of similarity and difference within a field of signs can no longer be explained with tropological or grammatical paradigms. It is at this juncture that we have to begin considering Blanchot's linguistic (dis)orientation in terms of a notion of materiality. This materiality of language has nothing to do with the physical modality of Celan's texts, their contingent appearance on a piece of paper or an LCD screen. To understand signifiers as "material" is to grasp them in their "extreme tension" over and against their status as medium or mediator. This is language not as immediately given matter, but as *in-mediatus*. It is language impartial to im-parting, language impossibly isolated from its expressive, articulating, and signifying functions. Paradoxically, for Blanchot it is only at this extreme remove from the dynamics of mediality, at the point at which language can scarcely affirm even the barest gesture toward its own status as a field of exhibition or representation so that we can start to speak of a linguistic power to create relationships.

If debates about materiality raise a host of vexing theoretical and cultural questions, similar challenges emerge in discussions of intermediality, which names a dynamic interplay of different medial and mediating formations. In developed economies, the change from analogue to digital formats expands across borders and alters traditional concepts of printed textuality as the privileged form of cognition, communication, and knowledge management. In systemic terms, a text can be considered a multimodal artefact where content and textual and structural patterns process and express communicative action. Schematically, the patterns and functions of text are content (what), form (how), purpose (why), participants (who), timing (when), location (where), participants (who), time (when), and place (where). Although a hierarchy of importance and relevance of the text depends on various factors and perspectives, following (radical) constructivist thought, it is the "how" (form) that is of particular relevance especially in the context of intermediality.

Structures, processes, and functions of (inter)mediality simulate the associative connections and mnemonic networks of the mind and are thus a dominant mediator of human consciousness in the construction of subjectivity and identity. For example, Rachael Langford writes that intermediality highlights "textual relations as a dialogic process taking place between different expressive media, rather than as a set of static references to textual artifacts" (10) and Irina O. Rajewsky points out that there seems to be two distinct approximations to the study of intermediality. Two foci are worthy of mention here: in the study of literature and, in particular, in the field of narratology the objective is to explore how a given medium may thematize, evoke, and sometimes imitate elements and structures of another medium through the use of its own media specific means (see, e.g., Balme; Müller; Spielmann; Wolf, "Towards") and in media and communication studies focus is not on medialized configurations but on the formation of a given medium and on medial transformation processes thus distinguishing groups of media phenomena which exhibit their own distinct intermedial qualities (see, e.g., Chapple; Elleström; Schmidt; Schröter, "Das ur-intermediale"). In terms of its use, (inter)mediality can be defined as the ability to read and write critically across varied symbol systems and related to critical media literacy where the medium becomes central and serves "to mediate signs between people" (McLuhan 9), thus entering processes of production and reception and "relationships of respect and rivalry with other media" (Bolter and Grusin 65), where "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 297). A medium defines its own ontology through relating itself to another medium so that it is not possible to define the specificity of a medium in isolation except through a dialogical encounter with another medium (see Schröter). Thus it is "in the crossovers between arts, politics, science, philosophy [where] new fields of research have constituted" (Oosterling 30).

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The evolution of (inter)mediality is based on conventions largely historical, as well as owing to technological change. Thus, the materiality of new media is already encoded culturally. In the case of artistic genres, for instance, the emerge of new conventions is related to material and technical requirements such as the development of the printing press in the case of written literature versus genres cultivated in the oral tradition (the latter of which of course is often related to music and thus intermedial). Material and intermedial practices constitute themselves in relation to certain delimitations and with the emergence of new media remediation is the "formal logic by which new media refashions prior media forms" (Bolter and Grusin 273). In the case of the computer the logic of the machine influences the cultural logic of media (Manovich 46) and with the emergence of the digital the "mediation of new cultural forms" (Poster 87). The growing interest in (inter)mediality is owing to the emergence of new media in the digital age, in particular with the 1994 start of the world wide web and in the last decade or so with several new types of internet based communication. While in the humanities, generally, there is continuous focus on textuality in its traditional understanding, scholarship on (inter)mediality, its impact, and the applicabilies of the digital are gaining interest albeit slowly (see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek, "The New Humanities"; for an early take on intermediality but much ahead of its time because of the proposition of a "typology" of intermediality, see Pavličić) and the thematic issue of the journal at hand is intended as a "call for attention" to the field.

CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture is a peer-reviewed, full-text, and open-access quarterly in the humanities and social sciences is published by Purdue University Press and indexed (among other indexing services) in the Thomson Reuters ISI Arts and Humanities Citation Index. Apart from the exceptionality of its publication — i.e., in open access by a prominent university press — its ISI indexing is a matter of importance for scholars for promotion, tenure, and research funding. Of note is here that while this "metrics" orientation is increasing in Europe and Asia in particular, it is also taking hold in the U.S., Canada, Australia, etc. (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, "The 'Impact Factor'"). The said configuration of the journal's publication means that it is one of the few such journals published — likely the single such — to date anywhere. The journal's aims and scope since its inception in 1999 include the field of media and digitality and thus the journal is a natural venue for the publication of new work on (inter)mediality. Articles in *New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice* are from the following sources:

1) articles submitted following a call for papers for a thematic issue of the journal processed in the standard peer review of the journal;

2) selected, extended, and revised, and peer-reviewed articles from several panels from the symposium *Materiality Matters* — organized and convened by Jan Mieszkowski (Reed College) and Haun Saussy (Yale University) — held at the 2009 American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference at Harvard University;

3) selected, extended, revised, and peer-reviewed articles from several panels from the symposium *Culture, Intermedialities, and Education* — organized and convened by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (University of Halle-Wittenberg), I-Chun Wang (National Sun Yat-sen University), and Asunción López-Varela Azcárate (Complutense University Madrid) — held at the 2009 American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference at Harvard University; and

4) selected, extended, revised, and peer-reviewed articles from several panels from the symposium *Intermedialities in Comparative Cultural Studies* — organized and convened by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (University of Halle-Wittenberg) and Asunción López-Varela Azcárate (Complutense University Madrid) — held at the 2010 *19th Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association / Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* at Chung-Ang University.

New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice contains the following articles:

In his article "(Inter)mediality and the Study of Literature" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/2> Werner Wolf elaborates on the "intermedial turn" and asks whether this turn ought to be welcomed. Wolf begins with a discussion about the definitions of "medium" and "intermediality" and the impact these concepts and practices exert on scholarly, as well as student competence. He argues that despite of the fact that literary studies ought not simply turn into media or cultural studies, mediality and intermediality have become relevant issues for both teaching and the study of literature especially in the fields of comparative literature and (comparative) cultural studies. Following his postulate of the relevance of mediality and intermediality in the study of

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literature, Wolf explores ways of integrating the said concepts and practices into the study of literature and, in particular, their integration in the field of narratology. In this context, Wolf presents a typology of intermedial forms.

In his article "Discourses and Models of Intermediality" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/3> Jens Schröter discusses the question as to what relations do different discourses pose between different "media." Schröter identifies four models of discourse: 1) synthetic intermediality: a "fusion" of different media to super-media, a model with roots in the Wagnerian concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* with political connotations, 2) formal (or transmedial) intermediality: a concept based on formal structures not "specific" to one medium but found in different media, 3) transformational intermediality: a model centered around the representation of one medium through another medium. Model 3) leads to the postulate that transformational intermediality is not located in intermediality but in processes of representation and thus transformational intermediality is the flip side of model 4) ontological intermediality: a model suggesting that media always already exist in relation to other media. Thus, model 4) suggests that there are no single media but that intermedial relations take place ubiquitously. Schröter comes to the conclusion that one should not start with definitions of media and then discuss intermediality but the opposite: The intermedial field (including the intermedial processes on writing about intermediality) produces definitions of media.

In his article "Intermediality and Aesthetic Theory in Shklovsky's and Adorno's Thought" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/4> Oleg Gelikman places the concept of intermediality in the context of the unresolved conflict between philosophical aesthetics and aesthetic theory. The conflict originated in the response of an influential generation of thinkers to the crisis of the neo-Kantian schools and the emergence of modernism in the 1910s. Despite superficial similarities, aesthetic theory is neither a revamped aesthetics of the subject nor a theoretical vindication of modernism. By severing the connection between subject-object epistemology and theory of artworks, the practitioners of aesthetic theory such as Viktor Shklovsky and Theodor W. Adorno transformed metaphysical aesthetics into a critical historiography of cultural production. The article argues that, while incomplete, aesthetic theory can nonetheless be effective in analyzing the function of intermediality in the environment dominated by the resurgence of naturalistic and epistemological interpretation of the aesthetic.

In her article "Intermediality, Translation, Comparative Literature, and World Literature" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/5> Erin Schlumpf postulates that the study of literature today is best performed in a framework of comparative literature and world literature including intermediality particularly in the case of translated texts. Schlumpf contends that working in comparative and world literature today demands a reexamination of translation and the teaching of works in translation. Following her theoretical postulates, Schlumpf analyzes two films, Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* (1966) and Xiaolu Guo's *She, a Chinese* (*Zhongguo guniang*) (2009).

In her article "Plotting the Pixel in Remediated Word and Image" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/6> Sarah Wyman argues that art's historic negotiation of culture continues into the new digital media age as it both asserts the materiality of the medium and acknowledges the impact of embodied perception. She demonstrates that however revolutionary, the new digital media still relate to many traditional paradigms of aesthetic expression. Problems of representation and simulation continue to catch on questions of time, space and human perception. The contingent relationships between categories and entities once kept separate — word/image, observer/observed — determine and define the process of globalization. The new digital media's ostensible goals of immediacy and transparency clash with its irresistible fascination with the electronic medium itself. A look at the pixeled image in various pre-electronic incarnations – geometric painting, concrete poetry, mosaic art — demonstrates a counterpart to our own experiential existence, now transformed by the impact of contemporary technologies. By examining such cultural artifacts, Wyman elaborates on the way aspects of remediation, intermediality, and hypermediality have always factored in the way people read, create, and use images in the West.

In their article "Making Sense of the Digital as Embodied Experience" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/7> Serge Bouchardon and Asunción López-Varela Azcárate discuss a digital creation — *Loss of Grasp* <http://lossofgrasp.com/> — created by Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert. The work is about the notions of grasp and control. Through an

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analysis of *Loss of Grasp*, Bouchardon and López-Varela Azcárate show how the Cartesian understanding of private isolated experience, independent of reality external to it, has given way to a communal understanding of experience in which the subject constitutes itself by mirroring himself/herself on its objects, producing a mutual engagement or co-creativity among interdependent intersubjects: the experience of the creators, the experience of the user/participant, and the experience of the semiotician. The first seeks to make the reader live through the experience while telling him/her a story. The second attempts to understand what lies behind the artistic creation. And the third proposes a revision of the ontology of perception and of the emergence of human communicative potential by relating neuroscientific research and socio-contructivist understandings of human physical development, and integrating these findings with the evolving nature of the technical media that social beings use to communicate.

In their article "Video Games as Equipment for Living" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/8> Ronald Soetaert, Jeroen Bourgonjon, and Kris Rutten postulate that with the emergence of new media there is need of a re-evaluation of all modes of communication and the ways in which literacy is conceptualized. Drawing on the concept of multi-literacy they suggest a rhetorical/ anthropological meta-perspective to describe human beings as symbol using animals and focus on particular symbol systems: narrative, drama, and video games. Specifically, they focus on the perspective of drama as a tool to analyze cultural artifacts in general and video games — as a new art form — in particular. They implement Kenneth Burke's notion of the pentad to illustrate their perspective in two case studies, the video games *Civilization* <http://www.firaxis.com/> and *Heavy Rain* <http://heavyrainps3.com/>. Soetaert, Bourgonjon, and Rutten illustrate how video games can be described as equipment for living because video game playing has become part of the many ways people create worlds and construct meaning and sense. Thus, they explore how new forms of media and art can be examined from the perspective of traditional disciplines such as rhetoric and anthropology and how rhetoric can transform itself in a digital world.

In her article "Dialogue between Meaning Systems in Intermedial Texts" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/9> "Dialogue among Meaning Systems in Intermedial Texts" Cristina Peñamarín analyzes visual-verbal texts showing different ways of conceiving and representing the world, that in each case involves certain ways of reinforcing or challenging preconceptions about the object and ways of positioning author and addressee. Peñamarín's aim is to explore a method by which to address presupposed world visions in the texts and to ask how images and plurisemiotic texts are used to confirm, discuss, or expand the boundaries of systems of meaning. She raises the question of the possibilities of dialogue, hybridization, cultural translation, and the change of systems without losing sight that communication includes walls, barriers, and collectivities that see themselves as mutually incompatible, of discrimination and inability to dialogue. Peñamarín develops these problems by analyzing examples of maps and other every-day visual-verbal texts in order to investigate the contributions of these intermedial practices to common interpretive resources.

In his article "Intermediality and Human vs. Machine Translation" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/10> Harry J. Huang analyzes translation as a process of transferring meaning and/or information. The process and the translated text represent a new medium. When machine translation originating from human translation is integrated into the world wide web, it becomes part of global media. Accordingly, machine translation may best be studied within the context of intermediality, especially its quality vs. that of human translation. Based upon data generated from an international survey of 300 translators, writers, editors, and translation scholars, Huang analyses the participants' expectations and their acceptance of imperfection in the translated text. Huang postulates the dividing line between the acceptability and unacceptability of the translated text demystifies the concept of "good" translation versus "bad." Huang also proposes a statistical approach toward translation quality assessment intended for machine translation and human translation.

In their article "Intermediality, Rhetoric, and Pedagogy" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/11> Kris Rutten and Ronald Soetaert discuss how the notion of intermediality challenges the institutions that traditionally "mediate" culture and they discuss implications for pedagogy. First, they focus on how the museum as an institution is questioned and problematized by describing it as a "medium" that is increasingly influenced by cultural and

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technological developments. Second, they focus is on what new material culture and intermedial practice imply for pedagogy and how this requires new perspectives. Rutten and Soetaert elaborate on previous work on curricula as a "contact zone" (Pratt) by focusing on the rhetorical nature of curricula and by introducing rhetoric as a theoretical and conceptual framework for discussing the relationship between intermediality, culture, and pedagogy.

In her article "An Intermedial Reading of Paley's *Sita Sings the Blues*" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/12> Ipshita Chanda discusses the film text of Nina Paley's 2008 animation film, a culturally reconceptualized version of Valmiki's Sanskrit epic *Ramayana*. Chanda discusses the film as an intermedial retextualization of the *Ramayana* in the film where media boundaries and genres are crossed in "textual," audio, and visual media. The basic premise from which Chanda proceeds is that the condition of intermediality in film is produced by a "conceptual fusion" of different media which, in turn, are analyzed using theories of reception and contact between different media across time, space, and cultures with regard to "source" text and "received" text.

In her article "Towards a Multimodal Analysis of da Rimini's *Dollspace*" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/13> Maya Zalbidea Paniagua analyzes Francesca da Rimini's *Dollspace*, an early hypertext creation (1997-2001). By analyzing *Dollspace* Zalbidea Paniagua reinforces the proposition that studies on material aesthetics and intermediality encompass a process of rethinking the notion of boundaries across material structures. This is clearly shown in da Rimini's *Dollspace*, where ambivalence cuts across discursive genres and distinct material formats of image, text, and audio. Hypertext engages the user/participant in a dialogue with the machine and, in the case of *Dollspace*, across people's sexual attitudes. *Dollspace* seeks to do more than to just shock the user: it wants to haunt its user to become an intersubjectively embodied act.

In her article "Old and New Materialities in Foer's *Tree of Codes*" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/14> Kiene Brillenburg Wurth analyzes how intermediality works — not what it "is" — in the analysis of literary texts. How intermedial can texts "do," precisely when they consist only of words? Do such texts compel us to reconsider literature as a verbal art? Her analysis focuses on a recent book by Jonathan Safran Foer: *Tree of Codes* (2010), a literary work cut out of the remains of Bruno Schulz's *Street of Crocodiles* (1934). Brillenburg Wurth points out how intermediality works as a productive interaction not only between verbal, visual, and sculptural arts, but also between analog and digital media. She argues that this interaction signals a larger concern with bookness and paper materiality in the present of the age of screens and electronic textualities. Is this concern a sign of nostalgia, of the book coming to an end, or of an unsuspected vitality of paper-based literature?

In her article "Intermedial Representations in Asian *Macbeth*-s" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/15> I-Chun Wang discusses three Asian versions of Macbeths that exemplify the cultural meanings through the interaction of landscape, body, and spectacles of power. Shakespeare remains one of the most popular playwrights in the Eastern world, and playwrights in the Asian world find Shakespearean plays attractive to the Asian audience. Among Shakespearean plays, Macbeth fascinates its Asian audience with its theme on kingship, territory of social relationships as well as moral and emotional development. These adaptations oftentimes become cross-cultural reproductions because each adapted text manifests not only cross-cultural interpretations but also highlights the ways that Shakespeare is read by audiences in other cultures. By probing into the meanings of spectacle and symbolic representations of landscape, I-Chun Wang analyzes how Asian directors, such as Akira Kurosawa, Vishal Bharadwaj, and Xing-guo Wu highlight cultural meanings of power struggle and territory through intermediality.

In her article "The Spirit of Matter in Büchner" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/16> Barbara Natalie Nagel investigates different vectors of Georg Büchner's materialism: historical, philosophical, ethical, physiological. The analysis of what Büchner presents to be a necessary link between physiology and revolution aims to show how Büchner has a tendency first to entangle two relatively static, binary oppositions — literal/figurative and material/spiritual — in order then to play them against one another. Büchner thus uses the dynamics of literalization to evoke necessity: for example, if the revolution is conceived of in physiological terms, then the will either has to become physiological or biology has to become spiritual. With this, Büchner achieves a literary parody of materialism that points to alternative forms of materialism, such as Benjamin's "anthropological materialism" or Gnos-

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tic materialism, neither of which are purely material or purely ideal. Rather, Büchner's literary parody of materialism approaches what one might call "materiality without matter."

In his article "Musical, Rhetorical, and Visual Material in the Work of Feldman" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/17> Kurt Ozment compares early and late scores by Morton Feldman and argues that Feldman's interest in the visuality of the score was not limited to his experiments with graphic notation. More specifically, *Projection 3* (1951) and *String Quartet (II)* (1983) suggest that Feldman experimented with notation from beginning to end. Up until the early 1980s, one of Feldman's main strategies for commenting on his music was to refer to painting. In his essay "Crippled Symmetry" and in an interview with the percussionist Jan Williams, Feldman also turns to rugs, linking the patterns in his scores to the materiality of certain rugs. Feldman's emphasis on the materiality of paintings, rugs, and notation stands in sharp contrast to the materiality of the spoken and written comments themselves, which tend to cross media.

In her article "Intermediality, Rewriting Histories, and Identities in French Rap" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/18> Isabelle Marc Martínez analyzes aspects of French hip hop culture. As an example of resistant cultural manifestations, hip hop scenes all over the world develop strategies to subvert mainstream values and to replace them by new de-localized, contesting identities via intermedial and intertextual processes. In France during the 1990 rap was intended to reassess French national history and national self-perception. Foundational hip hop bands such as Assassin, Ministère AMER, IAM, and NTM aimed at discrediting official narratives concerning the French culture's colonial and social past. hip hop artists, who viewed themselves as poets in a romantic vein, invested themselves with a responsibility that was political, ethical and aesthetic. From this position of poetic superiority, they attempted to alter official narratives by questioning and reviewing the educational system of France. The outcome of these resistant strategies was the forging of new multicultural and multiethnic identities of French culture, which have been in fact partly appropriated by mainstream culture and politics.

In their article "Intermediality as Cultural Literacy and Teaching the Graphic Novel" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/19> Geert Vandermeersche and Ronald Soetaert argue for the inclusion of the graphic novel for the teaching of cultural literacy and literature. As the printed book is no longer the sole carrier of cultural literacy, Vandermeersche and Soetaert postulate that literary culture must be repositioned in intermedial culture and practices. In order to do so, Vandermeersche and Soetaert apply Werner Wolf's typology of intermediality, aspects of narratology, and scholarship about comics. Following a theoretical discussion they analyze the graphic novel series *The Unwritten*, a text that thematizes the intermedial nature of (Western) culture today and mediates the function of literature and cultural literacy. Consequently, as Vandermeersche's and Soetaert's analysis suggests, narration incorporates references to and the thematization of other media and literary texts, which, in turn, creates embedded stories that try to link the entire fabric of literary culture together. As such, it changes the way we look at the transfer of cultural literacy to readers and students of literature and culture.

In his article "Digital Media, 419, and the Politics of the Global Network" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/20> Paul Benzon analyzes advance fee fraud, a scam in which con artists communicate with potential victims via email, promising them a monetary reward in return for financial assistance in extracting an allegedly astronomical (yet ultimately nonexistent) fortune from within a geographical zone often characterized as highly violent and unstable. Advance fee fraud is often referred to simply as 419, in accordance with the section of Nigerian penal code that addresses fraud. Benzon reads advance fee fraud as a practice of epistolary narrative that self-consciously allegorizes central processes of global financial circulation, trading in digitized narrative information rather than in digitized capital. In this sense, he suggests, it functions as a highly abstract financial instrument within the network of the global economy, dealing in a paradoxically literal fashion with imaginary money and thus using narrative form to probe and problematize the question of how and where money might move as data. Tracing the geopolitical and geoeconomic dimensions of advance fee fraud's narrative and formal structure, Benzon argues that its random interpellations, arbitrary twists, and exaggerated claims deploy literary narrative in a manner that both relies upon and mirrors the material instability of global digital mediation itself.

In her article "Digital Humanities in Developed and Emerging Markets"

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<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/21> Verena Laschinger discusses the impact e-culture has on humanities pedagogy both in affluent countries and emerging markets. Claiming that e-literacy training generally offers opportunities to recover the traditional agency of the humanities thus cata-pulting the disciplines into the educational forefront of the creative economy, special attention is given to the chances digital humanities education offers in Turkey's emerging market economy. Given that technology promotes the country's economic development, which includes a rapidly growing private educational sector, digital humanities education helps citizens to adjust to critical democratic ex-change, to facilitate and sustain processes of self-governance, thus reducing social, economic, and juridical disparities. Digital humanities education will work to the benefit of both local and global com-munities, if educators everywhere embrace their chance to educate future community leaders in inte-grated digital humanities programs.

In his article "Computer Mapping of Geography and Border Crossing in Scandinavia" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/22> Øyvind Eide discusses computer based methods for enquiry into a set of border protocols created in the mid-eighteenth century based on interviews with inhabitants of northern Scandinavia. Most of the interviews are with common people: semi-nomadic reindeer herders, fishers, and farmers of Sámi, Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish origin. Eide discusses the value of the interview material as source material which can be used to understand the way people spoke, especially about geographical matters. The data and their analysis suggest the rel-evance of mediality and materiality with not only scholarly but general knowledge impact. Accepting the shortcomings of the data, Eide demonstrates that with available methods of digital humanities the border protocol material is worth a close study as a possible source of knowledge about cognitive structures of people in the multi-ethnic area of northern Europe.

In his article "Intermediality, Architecture, and the Politics of Urbanity" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/23> Virgilio Tortosa Garrigós discusses aspects of the exponential development of large cities, the neoliberal economy, and the "spectacle" of architecture in the context of intermediality. With the connivance between land speculators and politicians — which has led not only to the loss of spatial identity but to irreversible pollution and geographic degradation — urbanity is epitomized on the Mediterranean coastline. In reaction to this development, a series of anti-globalization organizations and social movements, rooted in urban neighbourhoods, resist the homogenization of taste with anti-billboards and anti-advertising against consumerism and urban de-velopment. Architects who view the said urban development critically are also involved with counter movements such as street theatres and documentaries. Tortosa discusses these attempts occurring in various intermedial actions in order to conceive the city as a humane living space against consumer-ism.

In her article "Intersubjectivity and Intermediality in the Work of Serra" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/24> Rocío von Jungenfeld examines the intersubjective space in which artworks are conceived and the cross boundaries of media in order to construct a gen-eral understanding of intersubjective perception in visual and plastic arts and an understanding of the processes that determine works of art, reflective perception, and intersubjective experience. Although the argument is that perception is subjective and untransferable, (i.e., a unique personal experience) influenced by innumerable factors and bound to a specific context, there are some elements of per-ception which can be understood intersubjectively as they apply to human beings in general. The aim of defining these elements of perception is to examine the intermedial nature of and the intersubjec-tive components of works of art. Richard Serra's work has been selected for the implicitness of inter-medial and intersubjective perceptual processes involved in the conceptualisation and materialisation of his artistic creations. Serra's artworks are complex entities with multilayered semantics, and so are the processes and the conceptual definitions of the media used in his creations.

In his article "A Case Study of (Inter)medial Participation" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/25> Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek presents survey data followed by quantitative and qualitative analysis about the daily intake of media in cultural participa-tion. The survey data of the study are the result of questionnaires conducted 2001-2002 with ad-vanced undergraduate students enrolled in media and communication studies at Northeastern Univer-sity and with advanced undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. As the survey was conducted in 2001-2002, the data and the analysis have "historical" relevance with

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regard to (inter)medial cultural participation in the digital age. The data are from a mid-size urban setting (Boston, USA) and from a provincial urban setting of the then just over ten-year old former East Germany (Halle, Germany). The data and the analysis suggest that (inter)medial participation and practices in the two different settings do not differ significantly.

Compiled by Geert Vandermeersche, Joachim Vlieghe, and Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, *New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice* includes a "Bibliography of Publications in Media and (Inter)mediality Studies" <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/26>.

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