

RELATIONS BETWEEN LITERATURE AND MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF A GENERAL TYPOLOGY OF INTERMEDIALITY

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Summary

The chapter, which is a revised and adapted version of two previous publications (Wolf 2002a and 2005), attempts to map the wide field of musico-literary relations from a typological perspective which focuses on given 'products' rather than, e.g., on authors and recipients or on reception processes. It continues Steven Paul Scher's influential typology, which he devised since the late 1960s, and tries to rechart the field in order to accommodate developments which have since occurred: the rise of intermediality studies in general and, in particular, of musico-literary perspectives that do not merely focus on 'intracompositional' phenomena (which can be observed exclusively within given works), but also on 'extracompositional' relations (which occur between works transmitted in different media). Drawing on more recent intermediality studies by Irina O. Rajewsky the chapter also offers a more detailed view of intracompositional forms than was given by Scher. Musico-literary relations are here seen as part of the wider field of intermediality, of which a general typology is proposed. It comprises, within the formerly privileged variant of 'intracompositional intermediality', the subforms 'plurimediality' as well as 'intermedial reference' through 'thematization' and 'imitation' of other media (with imitation again being subdivided into 'evocation', 'formal imitation' and '[partial] reproduction'). In accordance with the broader sense attributed to the term 'intermediality', the present typological remapping of intermediality also includes 'extracompositional' forms with its subforms 'transmediality' and 'intermedial transposition'. All forms presented are shown to be of relevance for the investigation of

musico-literary relations. The chapter concludes by discussing perspectives of research that go beyond typological concerns.

1. Introduction: The Multiplicity of Musico-Literary Relations as a Typological Challenge

Literature is a verbal form of art that can establish a plethora of contacts not only between individual literary works and genres but also to other, non-literary discourses as well as to other arts and has therefore justly been called an 'interdiscourse' (cf. Nünning 1995: I, 124 and *passim*). This 'interdiscursive' quality comprises 'intramedial' relations, which operate between one and the same (verbal) medium (be it between texts from different national literatures, as discussed in comparative literary studies, or between texts of any kind regardless of their national affiliation, as investigated by intertextuality theory); the 'interdiscursive' nature of literature is also, and in our context most notably, manifest in the manifold 'intermedial' relations between literature and other arts and media, as discussed in intermediality theory.

The relations between literature and music, which are the focus of the present chapter, obviously occupy a sub-field within the area of intermedial relations (or 'intermediality') but also have affinities with the other areas mentioned. Historically, it is therefore no coincidence that literature and music studies emerged from comparative literature and have subsequently often been theorized in terms of 'intertextuality'. Traditionally, musico-literary research was carried out by literary critics and consequently had a strong literary bias. The most common type of this early research was dedicated to collecting evidence of references to, or occurrences of, music in individual literary texts, and to elucidating their uses and functions. The history of what formerly was termed musico-literary 'interart studies' started with Calvin S. Brown's seminal comparative study on *Music and Literature* (1948/87), which concentrated on structural analogies between the two arts. In the wake of Brown's study a growing number of researchers have cultivated the field. One of the most outstanding scholars among these was the late Steven Paul Scher. His first contribution to the field, his research on verbal music (cf. 1968 and 1970), was also literature-centered. However, over the past few decades, literature/music studies have opened up and now include more general subjects, as can be seen, for example, in John Neubauer's (cf. 1997) explorations of the narrative potential of music. In this opening-up process, which also appears in the name of one of the principal scholarly organs in the field, the International Association for Word (not 'Literature') and Music Studies with its book series 'Word and Music Studies' (published by Rodopi/Amsterdam on an annual basis since 1999), the former quasi monopoly of literary scholars was challenged by the work of musicologists such as Lawrence Kramer, who was not only a pioneer in the field of "Musical Narratology" (see Kramer 1991) but also studied "common purposes, effects or values" of music and literature in their historical contexts, applying the method of a "tandem reading of musical and literary works" (1989: 159, cf. also 161). Among the more recent contributions to the field by musicologists Michael Halliwell's research on the transposition of Patrick White's classic Australian novel *Voss* into an opera (cf. 2001) as well as Halliwell's recent book on operatic versions of works by Henry James (2005) deserve to be mentioned. Moreover, musico-literary studies have recently responded to the 'culturalist turn' in the humanities, as is, for example, manifest in the discussion of

the functions of the musical stage in Lodato/Aspden/Bernhart eds. (2002).

This multiplicity of subjects in musico-literary studies may be welcomed as an amazing richness; it may, however, also be viewed as puzzling in its heterogeneity and as such presents a challenge for scholars working in the field. Thus, for anyone who wants to come to terms with this multiplicity, is interested in an overview of the manifold possibilities of contact and intends to set his or her research in a broader context it is an indispensable task to try and classify the various phenomena under scrutiny in a typology. This is what the following contribution proposes to do in continuation of previous research by the present author and others.

To devise consistent and pragmatically useful typologies is, however, not an easy matter, as attempts in the neighboring field of word and image studies have shown (cf. Kranz 1981 and the detailed typological criticism of Kranz by Dieterle 1988: 206-212; Hansen-Löwe 1983: 303-306; Willems 1990; Eicher 1994). It is, for instance, questionable whether one should adopt the method used by Ulrich Weisstein, who tried to map this field by presenting a rather unsystematic and, as he himself said, incomplete list of no less than fifteen parallel types of 'interart' relations (cf. 1992: 20-27; Weisstein devised his typology 'without any claim to completeness' ["ohne [...] Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit" 1992: 20]). Scher's more systematic approach to the forms of musico-literary relations 'literature in music', 'music and literature' and 'music in literature' is more convincing as a general model. Scher had already devised this triadic typology in 1968 (for further typological reflections cf. also Scher 1970 and 1984). It has since proved to be the most frequently used typology in the field and although it has elicited several modifications, for instance by Albert Gier (cf. 1995) and the author himself (cf. Wolf 1999a and 1999b. Chap. 4), its basic features have remained recognizable throughout all of these rewritings.

Yet Scher's typology, as well as Gier's and the present author's own former modifications of it, cover only a special kind of musico-literary relations and cannot account, for instance, for the type of studies mentioned above with reference to Kramer's "tandem readings" (1989: 161) of different media, Neubauer's musico-literary narrativity research or Halliwell's description of an operatic transcription of a novel. This limited scope also characterizes Genette's (1999) discussion of three types of musico-literary relations (116): "musique avec paroles" (vocal music), "musique à propos de paroles" (reference to existing literary works by means of titles and 'illustrations') and music "[qui] se fai[t] texte elle-même" (musical attempts at 'becoming' literature as in the symphonic poem). In the following, the author would therefore like to rechart the field of word and music studies and its objects in a more comprehensive way so that each of these aspects can be accommodated. At the same time the author would like to preserve basic elements of Scher's typology, while integrating it into a larger context.

This larger context is constituted by the various relations between the media, regardless of their status as recognized forms of art. The most useful term to designate this large field is 'intermediality', a term which originated in German research (Aage Hansen-Löwe, drawing on the model of 'intertextuality', coined it in 1983) and is now increasingly used by research in English as well, not least owing to eloquent promoters

such as Claus Clüver (cf. 2000/01). Since word and music studies are in fact a part of intermediality studies, this affiliation should be taken into account in general typological reflections. The author has already tried to do so elsewhere (cf. Wolf 1999a and 1999b). Yet, since then he has come across a valuable extension and reconceptualization of parts of intermediality in Irina Rajewsky's Berlin PhD thesis on literary-filmic relations (accepted in 2000, published in 2003) and her subsequent monograph on *Intermedialität* (2002), a reconceptualization which the author would like to integrate into his rewriting of a general typology of intermediality. In so doing the author's aims are:

- Firstly, to chart the field of musico-literary studies and its objects in a relatively comprehensive way, so that its individual areas can all be described in their essentials for the benefit of future research, and
- Secondly, to provide at the same time a typology which can be used beyond the limits of musico-literary studies and which thus documents their affiliation to the wider and increasingly important field of intermediality studies.

2. Extra- vs. Intracompositional Intermediality and Scher's Typology of Musico-Literary Relations

Let us for a start come back to Scher's triadic typology. Its main characteristic trait is its focus on intermedial relations that can be documented within a given work. This focus applies as much to program music as a specimen of 'literature in music' as to vocal music as a combination of 'literature and music', and to instances of 'music in literature' (this variant can be found in what Scher called 'word music', i.e. a foregrounding of the acoustic dimension of verbal signifiers reminiscent of musical sound, but also in 'structural analogies to music', i.e. the creation of structures in a verbal text so that they resemble structures in musical compositions, e.g. a theme with variations). Scher's typology actually charts what shall be called 'intracompositional intermediality'. The author himself has privileged this type in part of his own previous research and has called it 'intermediality in the narrow sense' (cf. Wolf 1999b: 36 f.). It can generally be defined as a direct or indirect participation of more than one medium in the signification and/or semiotic structure of a given semiotic entity (a 'work'), an involvement that must be verifiable within this entity. However, this type by definition excludes a substantial part of what nowadays is also sometimes addressed as intermediality and what the author terms 'extracompositional intermediality'.

Integrating this second basic form into the general concept of intermediality necessitates a broader definition of the term. In this broader sense 'intermediality' applies to any transgression of boundaries between conventionally distinct media of communication (it is beyond the scope of the present chapter to attempt a clarification of the intricate problem of defining 'medium' [for discussions of this term cf. Wolf 1999b: 35 f. and Clüver 2000/01: 29 f.; for the definition underlying this contribution see the Glossary below]): such transgressions can occur not only within one work or semiotic complex but also as a consequence of relations or comparisons between different works or semiotic complexes. This broader sense of intermediality is in fact desirable for the accommodation of the aforementioned research by Kramer, Halliwell and Neubauer,

because in their objects of research intermediality occurs not as an intracompositional phenomenon that can be observed within individual compositions or works, but only as an extracompositional one that can be deduced from a comparison between certain works or signifying phenomena. In Kramer's terminology this would include both "manifest analogies" between different media and "deep-structural convergences" (1989: 161 *passim*) among them. While in intermediality in the narrow, intracompositional sense the transgression of boundaries between different media appears to be a 'given' of the works under scrutiny, the analysis of which can largely be carried out within the confines of one discipline, one must be aware that the discussion of intermediality in this broader sense is to a large extent dependent on the choice of, and willingness to adopt, a comparative and interdisciplinary approach. In other words: while intracompositional intermediality is predominantly a matter of the given material (work, composition, text), the extracompositional variant depends more on the critic's perspective. This also affects the discernibility of intermediality, which in its intracompositional variants is generally higher than in its extracompositional ones.

3. Variants of Extracompositional Intermediality and their Relevance to Word and Music Studies

Basically, there are two variants of extracompositional intermediality, both of which are relevant to musico-literary studies. The first concerns phenomena that are non-specific to individual media, i.e. they appear in more than one medium and can therefore form points of contact or bridges between heteromedial semiotic entities, bridges that can be used, under certain conditions, for the creation of intracompositional intermediality and always point to discernible similarities (or differences) between different media or heteromedial entities. Following Rajewsky (cf. 2003: Chap. iv.3.4) the author would like to call these phenomena transmedial.

Transmediality as a quality of cultural signification appears, for instance, on the level of ahistorical formal devices that occur in more than one medium, such as the repeated use of motifs, thematic variation or, to a certain extent, even narrativity, a feature which cannot be restricted to verbal narratives alone, but which also informs opera and film and which can moreover be found, e.g., in ballet, the visual arts and, as Neubauer, Kramer and others have argued, to some degree even in instrumental music (cf. Micznik 2001 and Wolf 2002b: Chap. 4). It could be claimed that narrativity, is actually a form of intermedial transposition, since it originates in verbal narrative. However, while narrativity may be a typological borderline case inside the field of extracompositional intermediality and while certain phenomena tend to be transmitted by certain media rather than by others, it would be difficult to maintain that all narrative features, e.g. in film or the visual arts, are a translation of devices stemming from verbal (oral or written) narrative rather than the application of a conceptual (cognitive) frame that can in principle inform more than one medium. It therefore makes more sense to classify narrative as a transmedial phenomenon. Another interesting parallel between music and literature which could be explored from a transmedial perspective is the occurrence of self-reflexivity in, e.g., metafiction and what one may call by analogy 'metamusic' (for perspectives on this widely neglected field of 'meta-reference' cf. Bonds 1991, who concentrates on musical 'irony', Wolf 2007, and Wolf, ed. 2009). Yet further instances of transmediality concern characteristic historical traits that are shared by either the

formal or the content level of several media in given periods, such as the emotional expressivity characteristic of eighteenth-century sensibility, which can be traced in drama, fiction, poetry, opera, instrumental music and in the visual arts.

Finally, transmediality can equally appear on the content level alone. This is, for example, the case in certain archetypal subject matters and 'themes', such as the unfolding of romantic love or the conflicts between generations and genders, all of which matters can be observed in verbal texts, the visual arts, film, the opera or - as far as the gender tension is concerned - even in the classical sonata form, at least in its genderized reading by Adolf Bernhard Marx (cf. *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition*, second edition 1845). What marks these content phenomena as transmedial is the fact that they do not have an easily traceable origin which can be attributed to a certain medium or that such an origin does not play a role in the gestation of the works in question.

There are, however, cases, in which discernibly similar contents or formal aspects appear in works of different media and where at the same time a clear origin can be attributed to them in another medium. In these cases a transfer between two media can be shown to have taken place. This type of intermediality is then no longer transmediality but intermedial transposition (transposition is, however, not yet generally acknowledged as a form of intermediality; cf. Balme 2001: 154; Balme's exclusion of "Medienwechsel" ['media change'] from intermediality rests on a concept of intermediality in a very narrow sense ["im engeren Sinn", 155] and only includes the 'realization of medial conventions of one or more media in another medium' ["die Umsetzung medialer Konventionen eines oder mehrerer Medien in ein anderes", 155]). As with all forms of intermediality, intermedial transposition from a 'source' to a 'target' medium can apply both to parts and to the entirety of individual semiotic entities and also to larger units such as genres. In addition, in intermedial transposition, the range of possibilities applies to both the formal and the content level. An instance of partial intermedial transposition in the field of formal devices would be the employment of a narrator - originally a typical component of the medium of verbal fiction - in film or in drama. In drama such transposition leads to the 'undramatic' incorporation of a 'presenter' character in what characteristically is referred to as 'epic drama', and in film the result of such a transposition is the well-known device of 'voice over'. According to Halliwell's study of "Narrative Elements in Opera" (1999), the operatic orchestra can in part also be regarded as fulfilling narratorial functions and could to this extent be seen as a transposition of a narrator, at least of his or her commenting function, into music.

The most common variant of intermedial transposition in contemporary culture does, however, not apply to elements of specific media but to entire works, in particular to their content, as happens in filmic adaptations of novels (nowadays the process is even frequently reversed in novels written as verbal transpositions of what were originally films). Music, or rather the musical theatre also frequently plays a role in this type of intermediality, as is exemplified not only by the aforementioned creation of an operatic version of Patrick White's *Voss* but also by the transposition of Beaumarchais' comedy *Le Mariage de Figaro* into Mozart's opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* and by numerous similar cases. As is typical of extracompositional intermediality in general, in all of these cases the intermedial quality is primarily located in the space between the two works, here: in

the process of gestation, but not in the end product. In fact, Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* can be understood without previous knowledge of Beauchmarchais' pre-text, although there is no doubt that his comedy is the source of Da Ponte's libretto and hence of Mozart's opera: this genetic relation, however, does not essentially contribute to the signification of the opera as such. Consequently, in this and in similar cases, hardly any references to the original pre-text are included in the end product. In filmic versions of novels sometimes even the original title is changed so that the only remaining reference to the source is relegated to a mention of the original text in the opening or closing credits. This was, for instance, the case in the German version of Michael Winterbottom's 1996 filmic version of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, which appeared under the curious title *Herzen in Aufruhr* ('Hearts in Turmoil'), a title which was also adopted in a recent German translation of Hardy's novel (cf. Hardy 1895/1997).

As we have seen, intermedial transposition and transmediality go beyond musico-literary relations, but both of these extracompositional forms of intermediality are also relevant to researchers working in this specific field, notably to those who approach intermediality with an interest in cultural studies, in general aesthetics, interart periodization, and in comparative media studies. Yet so far, among musico-literary scholars, including Scher, the extracompositional variants of intermediality have not been granted as much attention as their intracompositional counterparts. The reason for this bias is perhaps to be found in the history of the discipline, in particular with the aforementioned foundational role of comparative literature as practiced by scholars raised in the tradition of close textual readings, and this is where a predominant interest in what the author has called 'literature-centered' intermediality (cf. Wolf 1996) has emerged. In contrast to intracompositional intermediality as investigated within this tradition, literature does not necessarily play a central role in extracompositional intermediality, even if it (also) involves literature and music, and this fact was certainly responsible for the neglect of this variant by literature-orientated scholars. The absence of a literary dominance is clearest in transmediality, but is also true of many instances of intermedial transposition, since literature, where it appears, is here more often the source medium than the target medium.

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Context of a General Typology of Intermediality". Lodato/Aspden/Bernhart, eds. 2002: 13-34. [Outlines a general typology of intermedial relations with musico-literary illustrations; discusses 'intracompositional' as well as 'extracompositional' forms.]

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Wolf, Werner, ed. in a collaboration with Katharina Bantleon and Jeff Thoss (2009). *Metareference across Media: Theories and Case Studies*. In *Honor of Walter Bernhart on the Occasion of his Retirement*. Studies in Intermediality 4. Amsterdam/New York. NY: Rodopi [Contains a transmedial theory of metareference and numerous case studies including literature, film the visual arts, comics, computer games and music.]

Wolf, Werner /Walter Bernhart, eds. (2006). *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media*. Studies in Intermediality 1. Amsterdam: Rodopi. [A collection of essays focusing on framing devices as codings of cognitive frames in literature, the visual arts, film and music; illustrates the transmedial phenomenon of framing with various case studies.]

Wolf, Werner /Walter Bernhart, eds. (2007). *Description in Literature and Other Media*. Studies in Intermediality 2. Amsterdam: Rodopi. [A collection of essays focusing on description as a transmedial and transgeneric phenomenon; contains theoretical discussions of description as well as case studies from the fields of literature, music, and the visual media including photography and film.]

Biographical Sketch

Werner Wolf was born in Munich/Germany in 1955. He studied English and French at the universities of Munich, Canterbury/UK and Toulouse/France and received an M.A. (1981), a PhD (1984) as well as a postdoctoral degree (*Habilitation*) in English literature (1991) at the University of Munich.

He is currently professor (chair) of English and General Literature at the University of Graz, Austria. His extensive publications include, besides numerous essays, *Ästhetische Illusion und Illusionsdurchbrechung in der Erzählkunst* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993) and *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999). He is also co-editor of volumes 1, 3 and 5 of the book series "Word and Music Studies" as well as of the volumes 1,2, and 4 of the book series "Studies In Intermediality" all published by Rodopi, Amsterdam (*Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media*, [2006]. *Description in Literature and Other Media* [2007]. *Metareference across Media* [2009]). His main areas of research are: literary theory (in particular aesthetic illusion, narratology, literary self-referentiality), functions of literature, eighteenth- to twenty-first-century English fiction, eighteenth- and twentieth-century drama, intermedial relations and comparisons between literature and other media, notably music and the visual arts.

He is a member of the executive board of the International Word and Music Association as well as of other national and international associations.