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Intertextuality Revisited: Dialogues and Negotiations in Media Studies

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Purpose

When researchers wish to call attention to questions of intertextuality in contemporary media studies, they often refer to the phrase "inspired by a Bakhtinian approach". But what precisely is meant by this phrase? In this article I shall discuss the various Bakhtinian concepts that revolve around the idea of intertextuality and that are used to reveal the relationships between various interconnected texts in media studies. I wish to examine some of the new possibilities afforded by the Bakhtinian concepts, as well as some of these concepts inherent limitations. Although studies of intertextuality originally emerged within the context of literary theory, they have since been made to encompass other areas. Admittedly, the theoretical work of Mikhail Bakhtin¹ has largely inspired this extension, and the fields in which his work is considered to be fruitful seem to be proliferating. It is relevant in this regard to mention discourse analysis², linguistics³, cinema studies⁴, the philosophy of art and the visual arts⁵ and of course, literary theory and literary analysis.

Reflecting on the use of intertextuality in the context of media analysis, I shall argue that there are essentially four areas of research of Bakhtinian inspiration that can be usefully mobilized in media studies: 1) concepts of dialogue; 2) the functions and development of genres; 3) chronotopes; and 4) the carnival. Bakhtin, however, did not address the combined question of national identity and intercultural transfers, a question which seems to play a major role in media studies today. In recent years Jurij Lotman has become a central figure in this debate. Because his concepts seem to converge with and supplement those proposed by Bakhtin, I shall attempt to assess their utility for intertextual

approaches to the media.

For a very long time the main means of orientation in intercultural transfers were provided by foreign culture experts and intermediaries in education, media, and research. The translation of books and plays, the importing and exporting of films, and cross-national radio-listening have all played a major role in international transfers, and will in all likelihood continue to do so. However, during the past few years the more direct links between various cultures have increased, mainly due to global television and the Internet. As a result, the scope of negotiations of a more direct nature among various cultures has increased, from local to national cultures, and from the regional to the transnational. If the concept of intertextuality is to be seen as more than just another abstraction, it must be set in relation to these ongoing negotiations which have to do with questions of national identity and intercultural transfers. Lotman's approach seems to provide the tools needed to do precisely this⁶. The theories of Bakhtin and Lotman are vast and complicated, and the body of literature which deals with them is constantly expanding. For this reason I have chosen to limit the scope of the present project by presenting my argument in skeletal form. By focusing on the above-mentioned concepts drawn from Bakhtin and the links between them, my aim is to go beyond the phrase "inspired by a Bakhtinian approach," so as to achieve a greater degree of clarity concerning the basis and use of the concepts involved. And it is my suggestion that, in a contemporary context in which the constant circulation and recirculation of both domestic and foreign cultural products is the rule, Lotman's interpretation of intercultural transfers provides a much-needed extension of the relevant Bakhtinian concepts.

The Concept of Intertextuality - Problems and Origins

As stated above, it is not difficult to demonstrate that dialogue and negotiation are going on all the time in all types of media. Most citizens in many parts of the world can see, hear, and participate in the relevant processes, be it a matter of dialogue or negotiation in books or newspapers, in and between television genres, in film, on the radio, on the Internet or in some combination of various types of media. And although the phenomenon in question concerns audio-visual as well as text-based material, it is typically referred to as intertextuality.

Intertextuality can be discussed on many different levels. The choice of a specific title, a certain kind of music, or a particular way of moving a camera in TV fiction all provide examples of intertextuality when analyzed closely and with an eye to the relevant relations. Genre, cultural traditions, and national and international relations constitute a broader notion of intertextuality which is practically indispensable in the interpretation of works' significant relational features and the traditions to which they belong. Yet, what exactly is the nature of the relational features in question? For example, do national and international genre conventions somehow coincide or clash? And if they clash, how does the conflict manifest itself and what are its implications for the genre in question?

In short, what we are dealing with here is a widespread phenomenon, as well as a term that identifies it. What exactly, then, is the problem? Perhaps intertextuality as a phenomenon presents certain difficulties precisely because it is so widespread. A particularly important problem has to do with the fact that the concept of intertextuality appears to be infinitely expandable. Every time the concept of intertextuality is used, a warning identifying the following dilemma should be issued: either an ongoing regression will entail a loss of perspective, to the point where origin, context, and purpose fade and results become uncertain; or a number of subdivisions and typologies have to be developed in order to ensure a rigorous application of the concept in practice. The problem is aggravated in the case of literature on account of certain aesthetic issues and contexts. As a result Culler suggests some ways of limiting the scope of the term 'intertextuality.' One way of doing this is to apply the linguistic concept of presupposition to the way a text produces a "pre-text" - or draws attention to its own conventions. Emphasizing the suggestive aspects of intertextuality while simultaneously calling attention to the many problems involved in its application seems to be a recurrent pattern in the short history of the concept.

Comparative literature represents a critical tradition that can be used to shed light on earlier, characteristic ways of imagining relations between national and international literature, and domestic and foreign literature. Comparative literature focuses on similarities - influences - between various authors and oeuvres, both in domestic and international contexts. As a result it is oriented toward authors and the relationships between them, rather than texts. Comparative literature is also oriented toward continuity within the literary developments in a given country or between countries, rather than rupture, and critics frequently make use of the metaphor of 'currents'. Consequently, in the tradition of comparative literature, literary development is often described in terms of a three-phase model: development, stagnation, and renewal, all of which correspond to different currents⁷.

The Russian formalists propose another framework for understanding the fundamental question of literary development. Concentrating on the dynamic interaction between individual works of art and genres, they adopted a framework which presupposes that texts relate to each other in ways that sometimes take their authors by surprise. How texts relate to each other is made apparent through a close analysis of styles and genres.

Juri Tynjanov played a leading role in elaborating a theory of genres and genre dynamics, bringing to view the mechanisms of the dialogic relationship between genres, styles, and their parodies. Drawing mainly on Dostoevsky's relationship to Gogol, Juri Tynjanov demonstrates that in contemporary criticism this relationship has primarily been perceived in terms of categories of influence⁸. Tynjanov rejected this apperception as inadequate. Through detailed comparisons of characters, masks, names, and styles in the selected works of Gogol and Dostoevsky, Tynjanov foregrounds a quite different kind of

relationship. The main objective of the comparison is to show that in Dostoevsky's early work, e.g. *Bednye ljudi* (*Poor People*) and *Dvojniki* (*The Double*), words have a kind of double existence ("ein Doppelleben", Tynjanov 1967: 83). The results of this double existence can be seen most clearly on the level of style, where stylization and parody testify to the complexity of the relationships in question. Tynjanov thus demonstrates that Dostoevsky takes up the influence from Gogol in a way that transforms it.

Clearly, the work of the Russian formalists provides a starting point for Bakhtin's understanding of dialogues of genre and style. One indication of this is the virtually identical vocabulary used by the formalists and Bakhtin (cf. Bakhtin's interpretation of dialogue, to which I shall return later). Bakhtin learned a great deal from the formalists, but he also disagreed with them about some fundamental issues. With very few exceptions, Bakhtin's translators take great care to comment on his complicated relationship to the formalist movement; this is true for Todorov (1981), Holquist (1990), and Morson & Emerson (1990). However, there is every reason to believe that Tynjanov's scrupulous analysis of the Gogol-Dostoevsky relationship also profoundly influenced Bakhtin's conceptions of style and genre and their mutual relationship.

The double existence of words was later identified as intertextuality in an essay by Julia Kristeva, "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman" (first printed 1967, reprinted in Kristeva 1969). In this essay Kristeva introduces the theories of Bakhtin, only superficially intimating the insights of the Russian formalists that preceded him. The concept of intertextuality is launched in order to identify a fundamental dialogue of discourses and texts. In her essay Kristeva defines the horizontal status of discourse as its simultaneous orientation toward the writing subject and the receiver. Vertical status is defined as the simultaneous orientation of the discourse toward the literary tradition and the present situation (Kristeva 1969: 145)⁹. As has been pointed out by a number of researchers, among them Norman Fairclough (1992) and Anker Gemzøe (1997), Kristeva examines Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue and ambivalence, and ascribes to him the discovery that every text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations, as it absorbs and transforms other texts: "À la place de la notion d'intersubjectivité s'installe celle d'*intertextualité*, et le langage poétique se lit, au moins, comme *double*" (Kristeva 1969: 146).

As Jonathan Culler before them, both Norman Fairclough and Anker Gemzøe comment on the concept in a way that reveals an awareness of both its promise and limitations. Norman Fairclough is intent on introducing a more systematic approach to intertextuality, which would involve various categories and types designed to make the basic concept easier to apply. Thus, he points to a useful distinction between 'manifest intertextuality' and 'constitutive intertextuality,' or 'interdiscursivity' (Fairclough 1992: 117). Manifest intertextuality can be subdivided into the following categories: "Discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and irony" (Fairclough 1992: 119), all of

which are affected by the text in one way or another. Interdiscursivity is more complicated because it construes the categories in question as genres and styles (Fairclough 1992: 125). The concept of genre embraces the others because in many ways it sets the rules for styles and discourses. As Jonathan Culler suggested in 1976, the study of interdiscursivity thus depends on several presuppositions.

Anker Gemzøe calls attention to some significant theoretical implications involved in Kristeva's coining of the term 'intertextuality.' In Gemzøe's opinion Kristeva's gesture involved a critical confrontation with 1) the subject, 2) representation, 3) narrative and 4) the work as an autonomous entity (Gemzøe 1997: 36). The subject and the very notion of representation are replaced by a textual system with its own systems of reference; the narrative is replaced by a textual mosaic; and the concept of the work is opened up to ongoing commentaries.

Two of these four implications could make any use of the concept of intertextuality ambiguous in a literary context, even if the concept is acknowledged as somehow indispensable. Although texts do dialogue, it is difficult to imagine dialogues without some notion of the author. After all, inherent in Tynjanov's analysis of the relationship between the works of Gogol and Dostoevsky is the idea of two different authors with two fundamentally different views of language and representation. Similarly, although works can be seen as part of an author's *oeuvre*, as belonging to a certain trend, or even as still evolving fragments (e.g. on the Internet), it is usually difficult to do without some concept of the work. These objections do not invalidate the idea of intertextuality in literary studies, but they make it clear that it should be handled with care.

The situation is quite different in the context of media studies. Indeed, the objections mentioned above could be construed as two strong arguments for mobilizing concepts of intertextuality in media analysis. In media studies the notion of the subject as an author is in many ways less significant than in literary contexts. For although the efforts of individual talents can certainly be discerned, and although the director in film and TV fiction plays a leading role, team work ultimately shapes the final result¹⁰. As a result, the notion of the work is generally less important in media such as radio and television, where concepts like flow and segment compete with the concept of programs. Within certain contexts a program is still a fundamental category, as in the TV guides. But this is challenged by all the links on the screen, in the intermediary texts, and by the zapping viewer.

On the other hand, representation and narrative are crucial issues in literary theory as well as media studies. The idea of intertextuality can be said to question the relevance of representation, at least when the internal system of references in a text is considered more important than representation. A parallel can be drawn to the area of narrative where, obviously, a textual mosaic offers a rather limited kind of understanding of what a narrative is and can be. There is no doubt that

Kristeva's original aim in using the term intertextuality was to address the conceptual clashes just described; to challenge the traditional ways of understanding how fundamental literary categories work. However, there is no need to assume that intertextuality needs to be understood in such a confrontational manner. I would suggest, rather, that intertextuality should be used in a less ambiguous way as a concept that indicates that various dialogues and negotiations are going on between texts and authors, within and between genres, and between different systems of representation and narrative. In order to outline this kind of broad notion of intertextuality, I shall now turn to a common source for understanding the concept - Mikhail Bakhtin.

Mikhail Bakhtin

In 1998 the Danish academic journal, *Kultur og Klasse* published a special issue dedicated to the study of Bakhtin. The ambition of the issue was to present the most essential aspects of intertextuality as a theory, and to present current discussions of intertextuality related to contemporary Bakhtin research, primarily in Europe and the United States. In their introduction the editors noted the number of paradoxes connected with this research. First there is the strange and annoying question as to what Bakhtin's authorship comprises: Is Bakhtin the real author behind the literary critics, Voloshinov and Medvedev? We obviously have a real problem of intense intertextuality here, presumably due to the level of debate within the so-called Bakhtin circle. Second, there is the less strange, but equally confusing history of reception in Russia and the West following an unstable rhythm of publication: What is the real chronology of the works, and which can we rely on? A third issue, which is closely related to the various solutions proposed to the first two problems, is the ongoing strife among Bakhtin researchers. Some of them tend towards idolatry, others refuse to recognize parts of his theory, and still others dispute the solidity and relevance of his source studies. Finally, it is a matter of fact that in Bakhtin's work as a whole contradictions exist. He made his debut as a critic in 1919 and died in 1975. He lived during a period of revolution, oppression, and war, under extreme physical and psychological hardships. Under the circumstances it is amazing that Bakhtin's work is characterized by the degree of consistency that it is.

The main problem with Bakhtin lies in the nature of his theorizing. His basic methodological approach can be characterized as "systematic" and "chronologic" (Todorov 1981: 26), but it is also arbitrary in many ways. He repeats himself, but still there are interesting variations within as well as among his various essays and books. He coins his own concepts and his own metaphors in a careful manner, drawing on the Russian etymology of the chosen word. He often makes a point of relating the chosen concepts to existing ones, but he can be rather vague in his definitions, slowly elucidating the subject from different perspectives and angles, circling around it in a constant attempt to get to the core of the problem and the proper expression. He is often wary of naming his sources, whether this be for political/strategic reasons, or because he considers footnoting a minor issue in

the larger scheme of things. What is more, he refers to texts and documents which date far back in the history of our culture¹¹, sometimes drawing attention to parallels without explicitly stating the context and circumstances in which they initially arose (for instance the ways in which the late Latin novels relate to the various Greek novelistic types).

The divergent tendencies in Bakhtin research are not conducive to taking up the challenge of foregrounding and evaluating certain of Bakhtin's ideas. However, in this paper I am not out to venture solutions to the problems mentioned above, and I am not going to examine the theory in any detail¹². I simply wish to identify the Bakhtinian concepts that I find most rewarding as a media scholar when attempting to deal with various forms of intertextuality.

Bakhtin's examples of the dialogic use of language in its various forms are primarily drawn from the vast body of printed literature, speech genres, folklore, and the carnival. Cinema, radio and television - the modern means of communication - are not in focus. Clearly, his favorite genre is the novel, and his favorite authors are Dostoevsky, Rabelais, and Goethe. But his theory is located on a level of generality where texts are largely treated as extended examples or illustrations of theoretical implications. The overarching emphasis is hardly ever on textual analysis, but on the way in which a certain word or passage or genre sheds light on his suppositions and theses. Often, it is possible to draw parallels and analogies between Bakhtin's analysis of the novel or speech-genres and media forms such as film, TV fiction, etc. I interpret the way in which Bakhtin himself jumps from Apuleius to Dostoevsky to certain rites and rituals as an indication of the basic breadth of his concepts' scope. The question is whether Bakhtin intended this kind of breadth to serve as an invitation to researchers in other fields of study to borrow elements from his theory. I doubt this was the case, but it is easy to understand why his work has had precisely this kind of impact.

As indicated above, Bakhtin has contributed to a number of fields of study in the course of his own work, and has contributed to several more through the work of his interpreters. Seeking to characterize the common aim of Bakhtin's work, Michael Holquist states that we "lack a comprehensive term that is able to encompass Bakhtin's activity in all its variety," (Holquist 1991: 14) and suggests that the term 'philosophical' captures the spirit of Bakhtin's basic intent. Holquist's suggestion is consistent with the weight that Bakhtin appears to give to the critical scrutiny of presuppositions as well as activities involving synthesizing, generalizing, and the development of an appropriate conceptual apparatus. It is also consistent with Bakhtin's own characterization of his work late in his life: "our analysis must be called philosophical mainly because of what it is not: it is not a linguistic, philological, literary or any other particular kind of analysis. ...On the other hand, a positive feature of our study is this: [it moves] in spheres that are liminal, i.e., on the borders of all the aforementioned disciplines, at their junctures and points of intersection" (quoted in Holquist 1991: 14). In

spite of all the controversies and polemics, this attitude corresponds to the approach adopted by Morson and Emerson: "We have sought above all to communicate our sense of Bakhtin the thinker," (Morson and Emerson 1992: 7-8), and thus the most important concepts are described as "global": "These three global concepts are *prosaics* (our term), *unfinalizability*, and *dialogue*" (Morson and Emerson 1992: 10). That Bakhtin's work has had a certain philosophical impact seems to be a matter of general agreement as far as these key commentators are concerned. The philosophical aspect is crucial, as it partly explains the extent of his work's appeal and influence.

From a methodological point of view, care should of course be taken when transferring concepts from one field of study to another, e.g. from linguistics or literary theory to media studies. And prudence is equally imperative when drawing analogies or parallels between areas like literature and film or TV fiction. The transfer of a theory from one area to another does raise questions concerning its range and validity. But in Bakhtin's case the philosophical ambition underwriting the theory would appear to facilitate its extension¹³.

Consequently, when investigating the relevance of Bakhtin's ideas, concepts and interpretations of meaning for media studies, I have adopted a very direct approach. Of course, it could be claimed that Bakhtin's theory constitutes a whole and should be treated accordingly. Morson and Emerson strongly regret what they consider to be certain prevalent tendencies: the diluting of key concepts through their incidental use, and attempts to systematize Bakhtin's views (Morson and Emerson 1992: 10). The first clearly has its pitfalls, and I shall try to avoid using concepts in an incidental way by pointing out their inherent implications. That the concept of intertextuality can be understood in various ways points to the need for clarification. It is my understanding that when Morson and Emerson warned against systematization, they were issuing a warning against reductionism and simplification. Yet, at the same time it is important to note that systematization can be a crucial moment in a process of conceptual clarification.

Dialogue

In spite of the disagreements among Bakhtin researchers, there seems to be universal agreement on one thing, namely that the concept of *dialogue* is at the core of Bakhtin's theory. That dialogue is the key function of intertextuality is signaled by its inclusion in the titles of two introductions to Bakhtin, the one written by Tzvetan Todorov in 1981, the other by Michael Holquist in 1990. As indicated above, dialogue was also described as a key concept by Julia Kristeva in her introduction to Bakhtin. Holquist relates "dialogism" as he calls it to the fundamental epistemological aim embedded in Bakhtin's theses: "In dialogism, the very capacity to have consciousness is based on *otherness*" (Holquist 1991: 18). And this capacity is closely related to the question of language. One of the crucial discoveries in Bakhtin's work, then, is the concept of *dialogue*

and ambivalence in discourse or, as Bakhtin puts it, in the 'word' ('slovo'). In *Problemy poèтики Dostoevskogo*¹⁴ (1963), Bakhtin launches a new discipline aimed at the study of these dialogic relations, naming it 'metalingvistika' (Bakhtin 1963: 247). The focus of this discipline (which is almost always translated as 'translinguistics', at the suggestion of Julia Kristeva) is "the double orientation of the word" ('dvugoloso slovo'), the 'alien' or 'foreign' word ('cuzoe slovo') and all its various types and ramifications. In this context a main distinction can be made between discourses which are passive towards the foreign discourse, and discourses which actively oppose it in various ways. The difference is a matter of stylistic types such as stylizing or pastiche, as opposed to satire or parody. Both main discourse types react to the foreign word, but in different ways. Whereas stylizing or pastiche represent a subdued and subtle way of responding, which virtually absorbs the foreign word in the response, satire or parody establish a tension between the original context of use and the context of appropriation by foregrounding the foreign word. It is interesting that in this context Bakhtin chooses metaphors from the auditive area, thus underlining the framework of oral speech and active listening (cf. Bruhn & Lundquist 1998: 53). Visual metaphors can also be found, especially in his early essays. As Nina Møller Andersen and others have pointed out, the choice of auditive metaphors is quite consistent in the main part of Bakhtin's theory, demonstrating that the scope of his theory is not limited to the language of literature, but is valid for everyday speech genres as well.

Also remarkable is the emphasis on the fact that the relevant dual orientation can be found on a very small scale - in a single word. The very act of choosing a particular word establishes a certain orientation toward the receiver and thus represents a partial response. There is an "in-between-ness" which is important in all utterances, and as Holquist pointed out, the level of sound is indispensable: "Intonation is the immediate interface between said and unsaid" (Holquist 1991: 60-61).

In media studies the conception of language as fundamentally dialogic proves useful for purposes of close analysis. On the radio and in television talk, simulated interaction and presuppositions play a vital role in most genres. So do the expectations of listeners and viewers, as we all know from program ratings and discussions about programming. But do we realize just how significant the impact of this dual orientation is, even on the level of single words?

Consider, for example, the names of channels. In Europe many countries have based their television on the BBC model and British case, where public television was the forerunner of commercial television channels. This is also the case in Danish television, which will serve as an example of the widespread war of names and numbers that has been going on during the period of deregulation since satellites broke the media monopolies in the 1980s. In Denmark the original institution for broadcasting - first radio and later television - is Denmark's Radio (usually abbreviated DR). This name, which signifies tradition, experience and

competence accumulated over the years, has been maintained, even after the dismantling of DR's monopoly in 1988 when TV 2 entered the arena. TV 2 underlined the notion of television in its name, making a joke of the old-fashioned 'Radio' concept. TV 2 did not hide the fact that it came second, but used its newcomer status to its own advantage. This forced the old channel to adopt a number - 1. Being number one ought to be an advantage. But in the case of the established channel, the claim regarding positionality became a source of serious embarrassment as ratings continued to fall year after year, mocking the number in the name DR1. Only in 1998 did the ratings seem to stabilize. The number 2 also implies an alternative, which was precisely what TV 2 was aiming at - in programming, style, and basic angles. The name of the channel became the message. It was interwoven into the titles of its most popular programs, e.g. 'Eleva2eren' (an entertainment program which ran for 8 years) and 'Fak2eren' (a documentary flagship). And the message conveyed to DR 1 during the war of names was unchanging: We are smaller, we came second, we thrive on commercials (though we do not despise our small portion of the viewer-paid license fees), but we are better and so are our ratings. And the war of names continues. By means of the similarity inherent in the common reference to 'television' in its name, TV 3 communicates that it is (almost) as good as TV 2. DR 2 was established by DR in 1996, and the name essentially informs TV audiences that a 'real' televisual alternative has finally been launched. And TV Denmark competes with all of them, signaling through its name that it takes its national responsibilities seriously. This pattern of dialogue and war by way of names has its close parallels in other countries as well. These kinds of dialogues are a common media phenomenon. Indeed, they are so widespread and basic that we often register them without making them the object of explicit analysis. Here, the concept of a fundamental dialogue within discourse clearly comes in handy.

Genre

Bakhtin's understanding of the function and dynamics of genres is another inspiring part of his theory about which there also seems to be a fair degree of agreement. Fairclough as well as Todorov refer to the notion of genres as "the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language" (Fairclough 1992: 126, Todorov 1981: 125). Although the evaluation of Bakhtin's contribution in different phases varies in Holquist and Morson/Emerson, it is clear that all three scholars find his contribution essential. The concept of genres is contained in the 1963 edition of *Problemy poèтики Dostoevskogo*, and is elaborated on in a very illuminating way in the essay 'Discourse in the Novel' (1934-35)¹⁵. Again, it is typical for Bakhtin that the concept of genres is extended to a variety of levels, from the speech genres we know from everyday conversation (the jargon used by a dentist or a farmer or any other person practicing a specific profession or trade), to the elaborate literary genres, primarily the novel in its various forms. In this way the genres perform a specific function, that of continually presupposing and commenting on other genres. The processual aspect -- the condition of being noticed and going unnoticed -- changes in the development of genres and is

constantly stressed, as is the ongoing exchange between social discourses and social accents. In this connection, the concept of 'heteroglossia' ('rasnorecie' or 'raznojazycie') is introduced: "Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth," (Bakhtin 1981: 291).

Genres perform the function of organizing this heteroglossia and connecting distinctive traits in distinctive genres. The genres tend to assume certain points of view, ways of thinking, and social accents. This is why, according to Bakhtin, the study of style should not be separated from the study of genre. Surely with kind regards to Tynjanov, Bakhtin coins a term for this specific connection between style and genre, 'the stylistics of genre' (Bakhtin 1981: 259). This concept is a crossroads in which genre, conceived as a collective phenomenon, meets style, which may be conceived as an individual phenomenon (cf. Holquist 1991: 70).

The need to know what a genre is, what function it performs, and how genres develop is no less great in media studies than it is in literature. The basic genre system in cinema and television is developed on a literary foundation, which means that rough genre concepts are shared, e.g. documentary, crime drama, biography, etc. In addition, each medium has developed new genres specific to that medium. The melodrama of the 19th century - its labyrinthine feuilletonistic character and its emotional tensions - can be recognized in today's television soaps. But it is indisputable that television soaps have developed their own formats and dynamics, and that these now permeate types of melodrama in other contexts as well. The contemporary development of the musical in theaters all over the world is illuminating in this regard.>P> The characteristics of speech genres mentioned above are valid in television and radio studies. The social accents in everyday speech genres can be used to shed light on what is going on between, for example, TV hosts and their invited guests in discourse mediated through television. Bakhtin discusses the relationship between everyday speech genres and their various transformations in literature. In the same way it is possible to observe how these genres are transformed in mediated discourse, where the notion of an audience is an important factor and the significance of audience expectations more than clear. The idea of the audience is often doubled or tripled in the context of television. Indeed, it is not uncommon for the intended audience to be represented by a live studio audience while the real television audience watching and listening (more or less attentively) in front of the screen is incessantly counted by the rating companies. So everyone watches everyone else, and the notion of the importance of the receiver peaks in the context of television¹⁶.

Bakhtin's conception of genres and their development is also more broadly useful

in media studies. Arguably radio, television, and computers used as multimedia are the most 'talkative', and in some ways most intertextual media ever invented. One program signals to another, advertisements try to place themselves in the middle of programs, the distinctive genre characteristics merge and are revived again, the self-consciousness of the media is incessantly commented upon, and there is a lot of metatalk about the media. Jim Collins makes the following appropriate comment about intertextuality in television: "There is no other medium in which the force of the "already said" is quite so visible as in television, primarily because the already said is the "still being said." Television programming since the fifties has depended on the recycling of Hollywood films and the syndication of past prime-time programs. The proliferation of cable channels that re-present programs from the past four decades of television history marks the logical extension of this process, in which the various pasts and presents of television now air simultaneously." (Collins 1992: 333-34).

The development of the Internet over the past couple of years provides yet another possibility of extended intertextuality. One of the possibilities inherent in the digitalization process is the ever-growing recycling of films and TV programs, vastly multiplying the simultaneity of the "already said" and "still being said." In this way the Internet can carry on the development begun by television, recycling everything all the time, focusing on the individual rather than the collective aspect of simultaneity. Another aspect of Internet development is interactivity as a way of breaking the unilinear mode of communication dominant in the mass media. The widespread use of e-mail and chat-groups has directed greater attention toward the growing possibilities of interactivity in other media when they are somehow digitalized. The concept of interactivity foregrounds the direct response and, perhaps, the intervention of an individual or a family or an audience when confronted with a program, a proposal from Parliament, or a film. Clearly the concept of interactivity has the potential radically to change our basic genre distinctions. It has already expanded conceptions of genre by, for example, allowing individual viewers to determine the ending of certain films¹⁷.

It is clear, then, that media studies are best served by processual and dynamic concepts of genre. Genres talk to each other; they negotiate at all levels. Fictional genres permeate documentaries, underlining the necessity of oppositions and the conventions of narration. Documentaries permeate fiction as hand-held cameras with their ability to distort perspective give us the impression of a sort of reality. New genres such as 'reality television' and 'docu-soaps' are the result. At another level, negotiation takes place between national oldies-but-goldies and more fashionable international genre concepts. As is evident in many European countries, established national genres are challenged by melodramas or sitcoms of American origin. On the other hand, it is a fact that in the case of television, international programming concepts cannot simply be transferred to new local contexts with automatic success. *Jeopardy*, *Wheel of Fortune*, quiz games, talk shows, and so on have to be adapted, made 'homely' in one way or another. They

have to be integrated into well-known circumstances¹⁸. When this is done properly, children or a naive audience will often think of them as being home-grown. The appropriation of American fiction genres seems to be accompanied by problems of a similar nature, as is evidenced by the varying degrees of success of the many German, French, Spanish, and Italian melodramas that have appeared on European screens during recent years.

The Chronotope

In 'Discourse in the Novel' and in the essay 'Form of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel'" (1937-38)¹⁹, the search for principles of genre development sent Bakhtin on long typological voyages into the history of literature. Basically in accordance with Jurij Tynjanov, Bakhtin identifies the principles of development as requiring study both in relation to a given period in a particular society and in relation to certain generic transformations, with dialogue as the key vehicle of change throughout. Later (in 1970) he stresses the function of genres as a form of memory. Genres have amassed a greater body of knowledge than any individual person, and thus new ways of evaluating the past are made possible through the study of genre. Although this concept of the chronotope is linked to the development of the novel, it is quite obvious that it is valuable in the analysis of the special combination of time and space that characterizes fiction in contemporary media, cinema, and TV fiction. All of the above-mentioned chronotopes flourish in this context. Abstract adventure time and space are not restricted to old Greek novels, but are often mobilized in contemporary romances and spy and detective fiction of a formulaic character. Holquist uses *Superman* as an example to illustrate the mechanisms of constant change between ordinary chronological time and adventure time (Holquist 1991: 118). Correspondingly, Robert Stam argues that the notion of the chronotope allows one to "historicize the question of space and time in the cinema" because temporal and spatial indicators are fused into the unity of the film (Stam 1992/89: 41), and the same can be said of TV fiction.

Numerous examples could be provided of how the concept of the chronotope sheds light on key aspects of popular culture. Once again, it is important to consider carefully the implications of a shift from one medium to another. In the visual media, it seems to me, the chronotope can be used to enhance what is going on. In the road movie, for instance, the old chronotope of the road has re-emerged, largely in a contemporary setting, connecting a sense of speed, modernity, and the appeal of certain vehicles with the well-known fascination of the road with all of its surprises, unexpected meetings, and mythical dimensions. Both layers are operative: The old layer implying that there is nothing new under the sun, the new layer demonstrating that this particular road is extraordinary and this particular trip unique. This is, for example, precisely how the relevant chronotope works in *Thelma and Louise* (1991). For *Thelma and Louise* clearly reopens a dialogue with earlier road movies²⁰. And this reopening of a dialogue

involving commentaries on earlier works is presented in a visually appealing way that very directly points to the operative chronotopes, that is, the adventure and encounter chronotopes.

The Carnival

The notion of carnival was taken up in the 1963 edition of the book on Dostoevsky, and in the essay 'Form of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel' mentioned above. In the latter, Bakhtin describes in some detail the rites connected with the carnival, the disruption of authority it is symbolic of, and the ways in which the carnival dialogues with ordinary life and is represented in literature. Bakhtin made these themes the topic of his important work, *Rabelais and His World* (1968). This book and the notion of carnival have been more influential in the area of media research than any of the notions and concepts already mentioned.

In Bakhtin's theory of carnival, the dialogic principle has been extended to incorporate the opposition between power and people, as well as the various ways in which these relations shift during rites of ambivalence, degradation, negation and, most importantly, by way of the laughter which follows as a result of these mechanisms. These mechanisms are shown to be at work in the *oeuvre* of Rabelais, and are analyzed in close connection with the epoch in which he lived. Bakhtin's knowledge of medieval and Renaissance folklore is immense, and the way in which he applies this knowledge to the novels of Rabelais is admirable. And those aspects of Bakhtin's theory that derive from his work on Rabelais have been very influential.

During the 1980s many critics regarded the utopian thrust of Bakhtin's notion of the carnival as an invitation to utilize concepts of the carnivalesque in relation to the mass media, particularly television. With its talk shows and game shows, its ostentatious female hosts showing aggression and humor, and its indulgent attitude toward bodily activities such as soccer and wrestling, outbursts of laughter, and sudden reversals of sympathy and fortune, television has been regarded as a forum in which the popular resistance to dominant modes of representation thrives.

The role of female hosts in talk shows (Pedersen 1995), Madonna as a symbol of subversion brought about by playing with the logics of laughter, negation, degradation, and ambivalence (Lundquist 1998), soap operas (Brown 1994), and many other popular television programs have served as the objects of analyses by media scholars, and the field continues to grow. Obviously, the elements of carnival and contemporary television are well-matched in many ways. Inasmuch as the carnivalesque points to traditions involving cultures of opposition, laughter, and fun, it allows scholars to account for the appeal of many popular programs (cf. Stam 1992: 226).

One of the first scholars to discuss intertextuality in media studies was John Fiske in *Television Culture*, which was first published in 1987. Inspired by a Bakhtinian approach, Fiske examines the role of the audience in television. As mentioned earlier (see footnote 9) Fiske applies the concepts introduced by Kristeva in an attempt to come to terms with intertextuality, and in so doing he draws a distinction between horizontal and vertical intertextuality: "Horizontal relations are those between primary texts that are more or less explicitly linked, usually along the axes of genre, character, or content. Vertical intertextuality is that between a primary text, [...] and other texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it." (Fiske 1989: 108).

Fiske goes on to develop the concept of vertical intertextuality, distinguishing between secondary texts that refer to the primary text (e.g. journalism, criticism), and tertiary texts that refer to the primary text (e.g. viewer's conversations), a distinction widely used by students of the media. However, questions can be raised concerning its implications. In the case of vertical intertextuality, the element of historical awareness figures less centrally in Fiske's account than does the topical aspect. Thus, the impact of the historical dimension is put at risk, and the function of genres as memory, which according to Bakhtin is a decisive factor in the development of genres, is easily underestimated.

In another article, "Moments of Television", Fiske focuses on 'textuality', his thesis being that "neither the text, nor the audience" is important, but rather "the processes of viewing" (Fiske 1991: 56-57). He nevertheless implies that the audience plays a more decisive role than the text, for on his view, the power of the audience prevails over the power of the text, thus pushing the concept of dialogue to the point where the receiver's response to the text determines its meaning. This assumption is clearly questionable. Taken to the extreme, it eventually leads to the idolization of the audience, and a corresponding neglect of programs. Heteroglossia in this context is seen as a phenomenon that produces social heterogeneity, a point that, when exaggerated, takes issue with the conception of the audience as a passive, nondifferentiated entity requiring distraction and entertainment²¹.

The concept of carnival, then, is potentially able to explain the popular appeal of the striking ambiguities characteristic of many television programs. Yet, the point in question can be made without exaggerating the power of the audience. Carnavalesque elements linked to notions of utopia, oppositionality, alternative ways of communicating, the liberation through laughter of the oppressed sex, and the exhibition of the grotesque body provide an inspiring framework for analysis, as is amply evidenced by the proliferation of books and articles on precisely these topics.

Jurij M. Lotman

Bakhtin and Lotman drew on many of the same sources (the Russian formalists,

German aesthetics, and Neo-Kantianism) and were even acquainted with each other's work (cf. Reid 1990). They shared a classical background in Greek and Russian literature, and were both subjected to similar forms of ideological repression. In "Answer to a Question from Novyj Mir" from 1970, Bakhtin articulates a harsh critique of contemporary (at that time Soviet) literary theory which is held to reveal a lack of perspective and to focus excessively on truisms and stereotypes. He does, however, identify some exceptions, and the work of Jurij Lotman is mentioned in this connection. In the same article, Bakhtin mentions the importance of cultural difference and dialogue in terms that are very similar to Lotman's: "It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly ... We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it;" (Bakhtin 1986: 7).

Lotman himself readily acknowledges the significance of his precursors, and in using the words 'continuing' and 'overcoming' he signals his own position in relation to the Russian formalists and the works of Bakhtin, Propp, Saussure, and Roman Jakobson (Lotman 1990: 5)²². Bakhtin's approach can be regarded as culturally semiotic in its practical applications; some have called it pre-semiotic (cf. Børtnes 1993: 49). While he does not make use of semiotic terms, he is always oriented toward the meaning of cultural phenomena. Lotman, on the other hand, takes semiotics as his explicit point of departure in the books, *Lektsii po struktural'noj poĖtike* (1964) and *Struktura chudozestvennogo teksta* (1970). In these books he conceptualizes a work of art as both a semiotically structured text and as a means of communication. His definition places art at the intersection of cognition and communication and is thus situated within the framework of cultural semiotics²³.

According to Lotman the concept of opposition is crucial, whether it is a matter of the opposition between art and non-art or the opposition between text and context. The constant operation of similarity and contrast within a given pattern provides precious pointers during the reader's process of meaning construction. The concept of dialogue as Bakhtin perceived it can be discerned in Lotman's way of viewing the fundamental problems of opposition. Accordingly, it is not surprising that in Lotman's book *Analiz poĖticeskogo teksta* (1972), there is a chapter called "'Cuzoe slovo' v poĖticeskom tekste" ("The foreign word in the poetic text"). Here, with explicit references to Bakhtin's *Problemy poĖtiki Dostoevskogo* and Voloshinov's *Marxism i filosofija jazyka*, Lotman introduces the term 'polilog' ('polylogue') in the context of the following claim: "A polylogue is constantly going on in the text between different systems, for here different ways of explaining and systematizing the world collide, as do different images of the world. The poetic (artistic) text is in principle polyphonic" (Lotman 1972: 110, my translation). However, Lotman's initial inspiration is Saussure, and that makes for a difference in focus from the outset. This difference diminishes as Lotman's scope widens and his aspiration becomes that of developing a cultural, semiotic

theory. In his first books he analyzes the mechanisms at work inside the texts, discussing the structure of verse, rhythm, meter, composition, etc. It is characteristic from the beginning, however, that Lotman's ambition is to set these contributions into an aesthetic context, discussing the relationships between text-internal and text-external factors. That this is the case can be seen clearly, both in the passage from Lotman cited above, and in his attempt to identify an "aesthetics of identity" (in the art of folklore, the Middle Ages, and classicism) as opposed to an "aesthetics of contrast" (in the art of the baroque, romanticism, and realism)²⁴.

The ambitious aim of one of Lotman's last books, *Universe of the Mind*, is to establish a theory of 1) the text as a meaning-generating mechanism, 2) the semiosphere and 3) cultural memory. In some ways Lotman's discussions in this enterprise echo Bakhtin's. Reid's comparative analysis of the two scholars' work (cf. footnote 6) is written before 1990. In a very qualified way, Reid's analysis calls attention to the 'compatibility' of the theories with regard to methodology and stresses the significance of certain conceptions of the text. Also, Reid finds that Bakhtin and Lotman share views on the dual definition of literature as communication and cognition (Reid 1990: 131-153). On the whole Reid's conclusions seem convincing, although Lotman and Bakhtin do part company at key points, as I shall indicate later. The concept of the doubly oriented word ('dvugoloso slovo') in Bakhtin has its equivalent in Lotman's 'autocommunication'. In connection with the concept of autocommunication, Lotman shows that pure autocommunication is impossible. Even when talking to ourselves, taking notes, or writing in a diary, we have a dual orientation. It is in fact this dual orientation that helps us to clarify what we mean, what we find important, and why. Like Bakhtin, Lotman takes as his point of departure the idea that we can only develop self-concepts through interaction with others who in one way or another express their conception of us. There are also remarkable similarities between their studies of genre. It is, for example, striking that both find memory to be a key function of genre. In terms of methodology, both seek to trace the possibilities of moving from an analysis of the smallest unit (Bakhtin: individual words; Lotman: autocommunication) to the spaces where various cultural spheres are connected (Bakhtin: liminal spheres; Lotman: semiospheres).

In his comparison, Reid chooses as his guiding principle an analytic position taken from Lotman. He does so, not in order to "diminish" Bakhtin, but because it allegedly is easier to trace the concepts of communication and cognition in Bakhtin, than it is to trace the concepts of dialogue in Lotman (Reid 1990: 132). However, as indicated above, it would be interesting to compare Lotman's use of the notion of dialogue, as well as his understanding of genre and the connections between various cultural spheres to Bakhtin's views on similar phenomena. In his comparative study of Bakhtin and Lotman, Reid makes it clear that he is not primarily interested in differences between the two thinkers' views. A major difference that is mentioned, however, concerns the authors' attitudes toward an expanded concept of the text, which would include contemporary media. Unlike

Bakhtin, Lotman, who published a book about cinema in 1973, is increasingly aware of the potentialities for cultural analysis which lie in the media texts provided by cinema, radio, and television, and his examples reflect this growing awareness. Another major difference concerns questions of national identity and intercultural transfer, which are not important in Bakhtin's works. In *Universe of the Mind* Lotman investigates the ways in which intercultural transfer works. The notions presented in this connection not only supplement Bakhtin's views, but push us toward new insights, as I suggested in my introduction.

Boundary, Center and Periphery

"Any culture is constantly bombarded by chance isolated texts which fall on it like a shower of meteorites. What we have in mind are not the texts which are included in a continuing tradition which has an influence on the culture, but isolated and disruptive invasions.[...] But in fact they are important factors in the stimulus of cultural dynamics" (Lotman 1990: 18). The point of departure for Lotman's theory about cultural transfer is the abundance of texts in any given culture, texts from the domestic culture, as well as texts from foreign cultures that are both temporally and spatially removed. All these texts are seen as constituting a productive or generative factor within the dynamics of a given culture. What is more, the texts themselves are seen as somehow remembering key aspects of their own history. Lotman's example is Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a text that is held somehow to accumulate the various interpretations that it generates over time. On this view, texts become privileged vehicles of memory.

Lotman distinguishes among cultures according to their quantitative and qualitative orientation toward texts. Some are predominantly oriented toward autocommunication, while others are predominantly oriented toward the acquisition of messages from without: "Cultures, orientated to the message, are more mobile and dynamic. They have a tendency to increase the number of texts *ad infinitum* and they encourage a rapid increase in knowledge.[...] Cultures orientated towards autocommunication are capable of great activity, but are often much less dynamic than human society requires" (Lotman 1990: 35).

The concept of a semiosphere is used by Lotman to grasp the construction of semiotic space. The semiosphere is regarded both as a condition and result of cultural development, and is characterized by heterogeneity, synchronic sections in conflict and involving asymmetry, especially in the relations between center and periphery (Lotman 1990: 125-127). It is interesting to relate the analysis of the semiosphere to the concepts examined above, as this can provide us with ways of understanding intercultural clashes and exchanges, which would be particularly helpful in the context of contemporary media theory. Lotman calls attention to the fundamental concept of a boundary, situating his notions of center and periphery within this frame of reference. Boundaries always indicate differences - differences, for example, of language, manners, food, and culture. A boundary points to key differences between what is "internal" and "external", between "our

own" and "their" space (Lotman 1990: 131). Lotman remarks how striking the similarity is among civilizations with regard to the notions used to express such differences! Notions of center and periphery imply change, for the relevant phenomena are not construed as fixed. What is peripheral today may be central tomorrow, and vice versa. This holds for geographical areas, typically the relationship between the capital and the provinces in a given country, or regional areas such as the USA versus Latin America; as well as for specific arts. The example Lotman provides is especially interesting in the context of media research as it concerns popular media culture, specifically the cinema: "The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed an aggressive upsurge of marginal forms of culture. The 'career' of cinematography is a case in point: from being a fairground spectacle, free of all theoretical restrictions and regulated only by technical possibilities, it turned into a central art form" (Lotman 1990: 134).

The concepts of boundaries, center, and periphery are essential to the way in which Lotman models cultural change:

So we propose the following pattern: the relative inertness of a structure is the result of a lull in the flow of texts arriving from structures variously associated with it which are in a state of activity. Next comes the state of saturation: the language is mastered, the texts are adapted. The generator of the texts is as a rule situated in the nuclear structure of the semiosphere while the receiver is on the periphery. When saturation reaches a certain limit, the receiving structure sets in motion internal mechanisms of text-production. Its passive state changes to a state of alertness and it begins rapidly to produce new texts, bombarding other structures with them, including the structure that 'provoked' it. We can describe this process as a change-over between center and periphery (Lotman 1990: 144-145).

Seen from the point of view of the receiver the cultural change model is divided into five stages. In abbreviated form, the most crucial elements are as follows: 1. The foreign texts which become known in the original language are perceived as "strange" and as belonging to the elite by the domestic audience. 2. A restructuring of both the domestic culture and the foreign culture begins with the help of "translations, imitations and adaptations" (Lotman 1990: 146). 3. The imported texts are considered better off in their new surroundings than where they came from. 4. The imported texts are entirely dissolved in the receiving culture, which in turn begins to develop new texts, stimulated originally by the imported texts, but restructured by the many transformations. 5. The receiving culture is capable of changing into a transmitting culture, re-exporting the now transformed texts to other areas, thus becoming the center of transmission rather than a peripheral sphere of reception.

Tom O'Regan has adopted this model and has described the development of Australian cinema largely in terms of these concepts. In so doing, he has demonstrated in a very illuminating way some significant aspects of the model

which could be employed in other fields of study. O'Regan's notion of what goes on in dialogues - what they do - is 'negotiation'. Again, this notion emphasizes the activity at stake in intercultural transfers, and presupposes that both the sender and receiver are important factors in the fate of the text. Both sender and receiver negotiate²⁵.

The question of cultural transfer has always been a pressing matter in a world of inequality and spiritual combat. And the question does not lose its impact as different cultures increasingly have access to other cultures through new media. On the contrary, problems of national identity and national culture seem to gain in importance as media access develops at global and transnational levels. In this connection it seems to be theoretically consistent to take into account the relations among boundaries, center and periphery, simultaneity and history/memory, different ways of negotiating and adapting foreign cultures. In media studies, Lotman's concepts seem to shed light on some of the changes we have witnessed. However, it is important to relate these concepts to yet another major change taking place today, namely, the crucial role of simultaneity which can be clearly observed in the workings of global television and the Internet.

Intertextuality and Beyond

As my references clearly indicate, many of the concepts developed by both Bakhtin and Lotman have already been applied to various degrees. The Bakhtinian conception of carnival and Lotman's notion of the semiosphere have been particularly influential. As I have also endeavored to show, concepts drawn from Bakhtin's oeuvre are often used in imprecise and muddled ways, especially when they are somehow related to intertextuality. On my view the concept of intertextuality is both indispensable and problematic. It is indispensable because of the growing recirculation of texts on a global scale, and because it points to the much-needed research on the nature of the relations among these texts. It is problematic because it is often connected with Kristeva's attempt to call into question concepts of the work and author and because its very application requires the development of subdivisions and typologies.

The creation of subdivisions is one way of tackling intertextuality, as Culler, Fairclough, and others have shown. Another approach to intertextuality involves the mobilization of Bakhtinian concepts with relevance for media studies. In this respect, the concept of dialogue as it manifests itself in the dual orientation of words constitutes one level of intertextual analysis. The concept of genre and the idea of mutual dialogues taking place in the course of the development of genres together represent another very promising level of analysis considering the number of generic metamorphoses occurring in the media today. The concept of the chronotope could be used as a tool for capturing the specificity of the various spatial and temporal intersections that are so characteristic of media products. Finally, the concept of the carnival helps to identify and explain the special kind of reverse intertextuality that is particularly salient in the context of popular

television genres.

The kind of intertextuality that emerges through constant exposure in any culture to foreign texts is, I believe, best analyzed in terms of Lotman's ideas of cultural transfer, since they highlight the questions of national identity and intercultural exchange that are so crucial in the context of contemporary society. At the same time it is important to keep in mind the many changes that global and local media systems are currently undergoing, changes that seem, at least on the surface of things, to foreground notions of simultaneity.

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