

Writing the history of Intermedial Studies through the Digital Humanities

Marco Maggi, Facoltà di comunicazione cultura e società, Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland

Abstract

In spite of their broad spectrum of objects and research questions, little attention has so far been paid to the history of Intermedial Studies, and to their “prehistory” in Interart Studies: as the authors of one of the most recent introductory handbooks on the subject observe, “the long history of interart and thus intermedial studies does not exist yet” (Bruhn, J., & Schirmmacher, B., eds., 2022: 25). In fact, for about twenty years, the few reports on the history of Intermedial Studies have been reduced to periodization sketches, which, as such, constitute the indispensable first step of any historical research, but certainly cannot exhaust it (Clüver, C., 1993/2009: 497-502; Clüver, C., 2007; Maggi, M., 2020; Bruhn, J., & Schirmmacher, B., 2022: 10-14). It is only in the last year, particularly with the recent publication of the Palgrave Handbook of Intermediality (Bruhn, J., López-Varela, A., & de Paiva Vieira, M., eds., 2023), that the first case studies on specific schools, scholars, and national traditions have appeared.

Among other issues, in my project *A Genealogy of Intermedial Studies. The Italian Case*, I address the application of Digital Humanities in writing the history of Intermedial Studies, with specific reference to the tools of recognition of visual and textual patterns and of social network analysis. In this paper I will thematise the epistemological and methodological issues underlying the application of Digital Humanities to the history of Intermedial Studies. I will also show how the Italian tradition in the field of Interart Studies, at the centre of the project, offers an ideal ground to experiment with digital mixed-media approaches aimed at the detection of recurrent patterns and relational networks between subjects. Finally, I will demonstrate, on the one hand, how the use of Digital Humanities can bridge the gap between the generality of the periodizations and the particularity of the case studies; on the other hand, how such use can illuminate the artistic and creative dimension of the iconotexts produced by scholars in their essays.

© Marco Maggi



ISBN: 978-91-8082-113-1

References

- Bruhn, J., & Schirmacher, B., 2022. Intermedial Studies. In: Id., eds., *Intermedial Studies. An Introduction to Meaning Across Media*. London and New York : Routledge, 3-27.
- Bruhn, J., López-Varela, A., & de Paiva Vieira, M., eds., 2023. *The Palgrave Handbook of Intermediality*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan.
- Clüver, C., 1993/2009. Interarts Studies: An Introduction. In: Glaser, S. A. 2009. *Media inter Media: Essays in Honor of Claus Clüver*. Amsterdam-New York, NY : Rodopi, 497-526. (Originally published in Swedish 1993).
- Clüver, C., 2007. Intermediality and Interarts Studies. In: Arvidson, J. et al. (eds.), 2007, 19-37.
- Maggi, M., 2020c. Comparazione letteraria e visualità. In: *Letteratura e arti visive. Atti delle Rencontres de l'Archet (Morgex, 10-15 settembre 2018)*. Morgex : Centro di Studi storico-letterari Natalino Sapegno, 24-32.

Keywords

History of Intermedial Studies, Italian Intermedial Studies, Digital Humanities, Recognition of Verbo-Visual Patterns, Social Network Analysis

Bio

Marco Maggi is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the Università della Svizzera italiana, Switzerland. He is Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Communication, culture and society and Director of the Master of Arts in Italian literature, language and civilization. His work focuses on literary intermediality from critical, historical and methodological perspectives, with a focus on Baroque and Neo Baroque and first half of the 20th century. He is currently engaged in projects on the history of Intermedial Studies and of Intermedial Ecocriticism. He is the author of *Walter Benjamin e Dante. Una costellazione nello spazio delle immagini* (2017) and of *Modernità visuale nei "Promessi Sposi". Romanzo e fantasmagoria da Manzoni a Bellocchio* (2019). He edited books, monographic journal issues and classics of interarts comparison (Rensselaer W. Lee, Mario Praz). He is a member of the scientific board of academic societies and of book collections.

ORCID-ID/Websites

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3292-776X>