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1 Theatre (and You) as Medium and Intermedium

Mark Crossley with original contributions from Lars Elleström

ALONE IN A HOTEL ROOM, SEARCHING FOR A MEDIUM

Picture this scene. Close your eyes if it helps.

You are in a theatre. You can decide what kind – sparse or ornate, open-air arena or intimate basement – whatever works for your imagination. The stage in front of you is dark, but slowly it illuminates to a dimly lit state to reveal a scene set for the opening of a performance. Centre stage is a single bed, covered with the impersonal linen of a cheap hotel chain, upon which sits a solitary figure; the choice of gender is yours, but they are lost in their own world, looking down to the floor. Stage right is the door to the hotel corridor, adorned with an obligatory 'Fire Exit' sign. Stage left is the window, framed by gaudy floral curtains, alongside a battered television set, and on the upstage wall the décor is forlornly embellished by a reproduction painting of a horse and rider, their strident gallop across the wide-open spaces amplifying the claustrophobia of the room. The amber glow from a city street meekly radiates the fringes of the room.

Take time to build this theatrical image, the detail of it. Note the composition of multiple elements within the scenographic whole. Now, slowly let it dissolve from your mind's eye. Let the actor fade away, the set and the lights dissipate into the darkness, until you are sitting in the same theatre, but now the stage in front of you is bare. In the chapter that follows we will, for the purposes of understanding media and intermedia, rebuild this scene, but first notice this new absence, this void, an invitation to place performers, objects, sounds, illumination, images or perhaps nothing at all within its bounds. This is theatre's prerogative, it's unique selling point. It is a capacious host, mutable and generous to whom and what it invites.

MEDIUM: GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Before we begin in earnest, it might be worth offering a brief insight into why you have been asked to imagine. The intention of this chapter is to offer you a clear, robust and useful conceptual framework for considering the practice of theatrical intermediality. It is simply an opening gambit, as every chapter that follows augments these initial ideas with new and challenging perspectives and practices. However, we need to start somewhere in this elusive and sometimes labyrinthine field. There is a compulsion, therefore, to initially consider what may actually be meant by the terms 'intermedia' and firstly its derivative noun, 'media', as to grasp what is occurring in the confluences and collisions between media, it would seem reasonable to comprehend the notion of a 'medium' in the first place. Part of the task here is to untangle and streamline the crowded lexicon these terms inhabit, although it is essential to avoid a mere thesaurus on media and intermediality. So, inherent within the pursuit of clearer terminology is a more fundamental desire to reveal the distinctiveness of theatrical mediation and theatrical intermediality in its capacity to engage and challenge the devisor, performer and audience, and ultimately to create new meanings that other forms may not articulate. You are sitting in the imaginary theatre, therefore, because whatever ideas are unlocked, they will always be more fully expressed through the reality of theatre as it is actually created and experienced, or at least, for now, through your own imagined vision of these practices. You may wish to seek out a real theatre to experiment in later.

> I wanted to be the conduit for somebody else's experiences, filtered through me, and passed on to other people. Which is the job description, really.
>
> —Juliet Stevenson, actor (*The Guardian*, 2009)

At its most basic level, a medium is a tangible means of communication or realisation, a conduit (to use Stevenson's job description for acting) that enables ideas and/or, more prosaically, types of energy to transmit or transfer from one state to another. The 'one' may be the single mind of an author, and the 'other' may be the imagination of the reader via the medium of a book. Or 'one' could be the collective ideas of a theatre company transmitted to an audience via the various media of a play text, actors, action, speech and so forth, this latter example indicating how media invariably work in tandem or sequences. Media *must* manifest themselves physically in some form, to bring to ground and capture our ephemeral or illusive creations, from the kinetic energy of electric light harnessed in the filament of a bulb to existential or romantic angst anchored into poetic verse. The fundamental communicative and realisatory principle of medium/media, echoed in several of the scholarly definitions that follow, may therefore be simple to encapsulate, yet the discourse over media, their origins, functions, forms and interrelationships within society, has been somewhat more extensive, with the arguments often pursuing divergent trajectories.

There have been many prominent postwar theorisations defining media, with Marshall McLuhan notably proposing in the 1960s that media are extensions of our physical engagement with the world: 'All media are extensions of some human faculty – psychic or physical' (1967, p. 26). A book, he suggested, was an extension of the eye, and such media gave us an enhanced perception of the world around us. He also famously argued that 'the medium is the message' (1964, p. 9), by which he inferred that media are the progenitors and facilitators of content, be that events or the movement of people, products and services. Yet we easily forget or ignore that they are entities in themselves. He uses the instance of the electric light as an example of a *pure* medium that holds no content itself, but facilitates the creation and communication of other media within it; think how light irradiates a stage, a sporting event or a surgical process, but we overlook the illumination itself. Media, he contested, are effectively transparent until they are literally or figuratively revealed through another medium. A book, for example, only really manifests itself through the media of literature or factual documentary which it may contain. McLuhan stated: 'This fact, characteristic of all media, means that the "content" of any media is always another medium' (1964, p. 8). He paid particular attention to the impact of technological developments and the new media of the twentieth century, in reference to which he noted the increasing interrelationship and collaboration amongst media, proposing, for example, that film was a 'collective art form', referring to both the collective personnel required to produce it and the collective elements (colour image, lighting, acting, directing etc.) enfolded with it. These propositions of McLuhan offer a clear contention that media are not absolute entities that can be easily delineated, as they are in a constant state of absorption and redefinition with other media in order to function, a process that would later be categorised as *remediation* by Bolter and Grusin (1999). Remediation was introduced as a concept in their seminal work, *Remediation – Understanding New Media,* in which the term is used to explicate the ongoing renegotiation between media and the interdependence that exists amongst them. They write, 'A medium is that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real. A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media' (1999, p. 65) Lars Elleström, however, is somewhat forthright in his opinion of Bolter and Grusin's definition of the term, which he refers to as 'acutely vague' (2014, p. 7) and prefers to delineate remediation as '*repeated* mediation', a type of *transmediation* (p. 14). Using this definition, he goes on to define certain types of remediative intermediality and intramediality (pp. 90–92), some of which are revisited later in the chapter.

In the intervening years since McLuhan's early propositions, there have been many contending media theories which have, at times, because of their divergence, limited the clarity and cohesiveness of any analysis. In 2008, Kati Röttger evaluated the developments in this field and noted the ongoing ambiguity of the terminology: 'There is a problem that is inherent in any historical and any theoretical perspective on media, which is the formulation of a useful and widely applicable definition of media' (2008, pp. 32–33). However, resonant of McLuhan's vision, one common denominating factor, with which many writers in the latter part of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries concur, is that media are not closed systems that can be essentialised[1] or easily demarcated. They do not operate in isolation and are constantly reconfiguring their structures, fundamentally affecting one another. The structure of one medium is bound up in another and our way of perceiving the meaning of a work of art therefore is bound up with our perception of the mediating context in which it is framed. Robin Nelson writes: 'Mediums come together in various ways. In some instances, they collide and create a frisson in the process; in other instances, one medium is imbricated within another so that they are almost dissolved into each other but the form of one remains just visible in the solution of the other' (2010, p. 18). Such fluid affiliations become particularly pertinent when we begin to frame a range of media within a capacious theatrical context.

In recent years, there has been particular attention given to distinguishing the interrelationships between ***modalities***,[2] what we might call the specific and tangible elements through which a medium discloses itself, identifying a complex interplay between what actually manifests itself and how we perceive this manifestation through the lens of our cultural knowledge and experience. Multimodality, as this interrelationship is often referred to, was recently explored by Bateman, Wildfeuer and Hiippala (2017), who use the term 'canvas' to signify the site or situation in which the intentional act of the 'sign producer' is made tangible and decipherable by the 'sign consumer' (2017, pp. 86–87). This 'canvas', or medium, may be as simple as a cross etched on a pebble (the example they proffer) or, in our case, a theatrical event. Bateman et al. go on to emphasise the significance of context and community specificity in the negotiation and intepretation of the 'canvas': '*It is this anchoring in a community that turns that task of understanding what the canvas is carrying from a piece of enlightened guesswork to communication*.' (2017, p. 88; emphasis in original). The significance of our perception of media, situated as we are within cultures, communities and conventions, is underlined by Werner Wolf's definition of media when he stated that they were 'conventionally and culturally distinct means of communication, specified . . . primarily by the use of one or more semiotic systems[3] in the public transmission of contents' (2011, p. 2). This emphasis on our culturally informed decoding of media, the deciphering of its 'signs', finds correspondence in Claudia Georgi's definition of media, which she delineates as 'the material quality of a means of communication that can be identified by its characteristic and conventionally established use of specific signs or semiotic systems' (2014, p. 22).

To make this chapter as useful as possible, it draws upon one of the most current and comprehensive explorations of media and intermedial structures and relationships, as developed by Lars Elleström.[4] His theories over the past decade have sought to demystify and rationalise the composition and significance of media and intermedia in a cultural context, as Charles J. Forceville highlights in his review of Elleström's 2010 text, noting that 'his fine-grained distinctions allow for teasing out different dimensions of attributing meaning to (inter)media' (2011, p. 3092). It will be impossible to interrogate all aspects of Elleström's comprehensive study, as detailed in 'The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations' in *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality* (2010) and developed further in *Media Transformation: The Transfer of Media Characteristics Among Media* (2014), yet we may still aim for a robust interrogation of some of the fundamental terms, definitions and concepts. So, in the context of your imagined theatre, it is predominantly this theory that you are asked to consider.[5] Here is a brief introduction to the subject of intermediality from Lars Elleström himself:

> For me, intermediality and multimodality are everywhere in the world of communication. I simply find it hard to understand how communication, this essential capacity of humans and other living species, can be understood and analysed without the notion that all media products[6] are more or less multimodal and always more or less interrelated. It is thus not the case that we have, on the one hand, "normal" communication, and, on the other hand, multimodal and intermedial communication. I would say that intermediality is a perspective, an analytical angle that can be used successfully for unravelling the complexities of all kinds of communication. Not least, the artistic types of communication, such as theatre and other compound art forms, may be better understood with the aid of such a perspective.

> An intermedial viewpoint helps us to see both what is specific with certain media types and what they have in common with others – what is transmedial.

Elleström, unlike some other theorists, makes no distinction between arts and other media as he states that the arts are unequivocally 'aesthetically developed forms of media' (2010, p. 11), yet he *is* keen to delineate between the *materiality* of media and the *perception* of them. Consequently, his deconstruction centralises this distinction. Although Elleström does not focus on theatre to any major extent in his own work, the clarity of his approach makes it pertinent for practitioners, with immediate applicability to the realities of theatre and performance. Elleström himself highlights the need for his theoretical categories to be grounded and of use when he states, 'They are tools for thinking, indicating that their validity is only proven if they turn out to be helpful for discriminating among things that are worth being discriminated among, and if they help avoid confusion and misconceptions' (2014, p. 10) He also offers a word of caution, though, to anyone looking to delve superficially into his work: 'In this study, I attempt to dig deeper. I avoid much of the standard terminology and instead delineate the essential concepts, using technical terms and doing some difficult theoretical work. Readers seeking easy solutions should beware' (2014, p. 2). With this warning duly noted, it is hoped the 'imaginary theatre' approach that you've been encouraged to adopt may serve you well.

BACK IN THE ROOM: MEDIA AT WORK

Your theatre is still empty. Before anything is placed on the stage, look around: take a walk around the auditorium and out into the foyer or whatever constitutes the entrance in your imagination. The space you are in is already in action. It is a *medium*, a 'distinct means for communication', to borrow Wolf's definition, crafted by our cultural practices and conventions to look, sound and feel a certain way; a 'temple of illusion' as the British dramatist Noel Coward referred to it. We arrive in the theatre with expectations of what is to come, a suspension of everyday rules, a different set of codes to interpret, the special signs peculiar to the 'temple'. These appear even before the performance begins, in its décor – perhaps the gold leaf or the matte black walls, the scale of the space, the evocation in the posters of imminent excitement, confrontation or catharsis. We are skilled decoders of the context we are in, and once the performance begins, we are ready to decipher the intricate signs of the content itself – the exaggerated gestures of physical comedy, the direct address and interaction of pantomime, the verse of

Shakespeare, the distillation of time and space as epic narratives are enfolded into the singularity of one time and one space.[7] We have absorbed the rules of engagement with theatre; some of us may have been 'exposed' to its conventions more than others, because of upbringing, income, geography and so forth, but all of us have a sense that theatre requires a different kind of perception to real life. In Elleström's theory, this interplay between what appears before us and the requirement for us to decode these experiences through our learnt cultural lenses leads him to refer to theatre, along with other art forms and socially constructed means of communication, as ***qualified media****;* only fully realised and understood through the combination of what 'is' and what we interpret the 'is' to be; the context and conventions 'qualify' our understanding of the form and content:

> *Qualified media* is a term that I use to denote media categories – artistic and non-artistic – that are historically and communicatively situated, indicating that their properties differ depending on parameters such as time, culture, aesthetic preferences, and available technologies. Qualified media include classes such as music, painting, television programs, and news articles. A qualified medium is constituted by a cluster of individual media products. (Elleström, 2010, pp. 24–27).

A *qualified* medium can be distinguished from a ***basic*** medium, which can function and be predominantly registered in basic sensorial and semiotic terms (e.g. still or moving image can be recognised as 'basic' visual, iconic data initially), rather than within cultural and aesthetic contexts, although Elleström acknowledges a fine gradation between the two, as a *basic* medium quickly develops interpretative, *qualified* complexity once it manifests itself. In this regard he emphasises that both basic and qualified media are types of media product. The final medium in his taxonomy is ***technical***,[8] which, simply put, is the actual physical means through which the *media product* is communicated. He describes it as the 'technical media of distribution of sensory configurations or the technical media of display'[9] (2010). Elleström clarifies that a *technical medium* is a means of 'distribution', not merely of production or storage, and as an example he identifies the production of vibrating air from our vocal chords as a *technical medium* as our vocal chords 'disseminate' sound but do not store sense-data (2014, p. 19). A *technical medium* may be epitomised by our television set onstage but also by the actor's body itself (the flesh and bones) before it is articulated and then interpreted as 'performer'. We can best illustrate these distinctions between media types and find the delineations and correlations between manifestation and interpretation by returning to your theatre.

MODALITIES AND MODES: THINGS WE FIND IN CHEAP HOTEL ROOMS

Take your seat in time to witness the actor/performer[10] walking on to the stage. The actor has appeared in front of you, ready to perform, and has learnt some lines. We'll put no more detail on it at present. In this sense the actor has *materialised,* their ***material modality*** is their body, three-dimensional flesh and blood with the capacity to manifest itself through different ***modes***, predominantly movement and, if they start speaking or singing, through sound. This is the conduit (if the staging remains as merely a bare stage and a performer) through which the actor's performance is mediated, whilst what they communicate, and its significance, can be, temporarily, detached.

Mode,[11] it must be acknowledged, is one of the aqueos terms within intermediality. Gunter Kress stated in 2012 that 'mode is a term that allows us to get away from using language for everything. They are resources by which we can make meaning material. . . . They are socially produced and become cultural resources for making meaning. They are material.'[12] Sindoni et al. (2016), amongst several theorists, refer to modes as 'semiotic resources' (p. 3), citing elements such as music, voice and language as examples of these resources. In this context, multimodal media refers to those media which articulate themselves through more than one principle mode. Sindoni et al.'s and Kress's descriptions of modes are certainly worth noting, but I take the view that Elleström's precise definitions are more useful 'in the field', and on that premise, here is Lars Elleström's own clarification of modes and their relationship to modalities:

> Just like 'medium', the term 'mode' can, has and should be used to stand for different notions in diverse contexts. One way of using the term must therefore not necessarily compete or be in conflict with very different ways of using it, and so I realise the pragmatic value of thinking about text, sound, image, music, design, visuals, gesture and so forth as different communicative modes. This is the standard way of operation in the research area of social semiotics in the tradition of Kress and van Leeuwen, and it often works rather fine. However, this way of thinking allows for a shifting and overlapping set of modes that are very difficult to compare with each other in a more systematic way. Additionally, both the term 'mode' and the term 'modality' have been used to represent the same entities. My suggested solution has been to introduce a distinction between two levels to facilitate and sharpen the description and analysis of media products: we have, on the one hand, *the types of traits* that are common for all media

> products, without exception, and on the other hand, *the specific traits* of particular media products or types of media products. I call the former *modalities* and the latter *modes*. There are four modalities – four types of basic media traits: all media products must necessarily have some sort of *materiality* and some form of *spatio-temporal* extension, and they must furthermore be *sensorially* perceptible and create meaning through *signs*. This adds up to the material, spatio-temporal, sensorial and semiotic modalities. No media products or media types can exist unless they have at least one mode of each modality. However, most media are multimodal in various ways: they may be materially multimodal, having both solid and liquid modes, for instance; they may be spatio-temporally multimodal, being both, say, two-dimensionally spatial and temporal; they may be sensorially multimodal, being dependent on being both seen and heard; and they may be semiotically multimodal, for instance by way of creating meaning through icons and indexes as well as symbols. This is a much more detailed and specific way of outlining multimodality compared to multimodality understood as the combinations of socially constructed entities such as speech, music and gesture.

Returning to the premise of *material modality,* and that every medium has a material form through which it transmits, envisage the reappearance of the television screen, the simple bed and the painting onstage, as our evocation of a nondescript, down-at-heel hotel room begins to reassemble. The television set, with its flat screen and its projection of light and sound, is the *material* object through which the *qualified medium* of television, with all its cultural conventions, needs to manifest itself. Without the physical screen, the binary soup of digital signals would remain in the ether, indecipherable to an audience. Notice as well how I use terms such as ‘light’ and ‘sound’ here, rather than ‘TV broadcast’ or ‘speech’, as we are identifying that *basic* and *technical* media exist and function in tangible states independently of how we interpret them. Television programmes and comprehensible speech require a cultural context in which to be given such names and thereby decoded. Simply put, if you left the theatre, the TV would continue to emit light and sound without you, but these emissions would only become significant when you returned or when some other curious soul appeared and sought to make sense of them. Likewise, the painting, in its capturing of a still image on a flat surface, is the material expression of art, a *qualified* medium. So, the *material* modality is the physical interface of the medium, and this can be comprised of several features in tandem. We can, in this context, also recognise a television set and paint on canvas as *technical media*, inert until we wish to encounter them, then interpret and bestow significance. Elleström makes a crucial delineation here between ***mediation*** and ***representation***, identifying the different *modalities* that media manifest themselves through in correlation with, but distinguishable from, the process by which we interpret them:

> As I define it, mediation is a presemiotic[13] phenomenon and should be understood as the physical realisation of entities (with ***material***, ***sensorial***, and ***spatiotemporal qualities***, and ***semiotic***[14] potential) that human sense receptors perceive within a communication context. For instance, one may hear the sound of a voice.
>
> Representation is a semiotic phenomenon and should be understood as the core of signification, . . . As soon as a human agent creates sense, sign functions are activated, and representation is at work. . . . (For instance, one may interpret the sound of a voice as meaningful words. . . . [R] epresentation is the creation of meaning through the perceptual and cognitive acts of reception. I submit that to say that a media product represents something is to say that it triggers a certain type of interpretation. (Elleström, 2014, p. 12)

Standing patiently onstage, the actor begins to talk, reciting a melancholic monologue of loneliness and regret. The TV flickers into life, a low-budget Western appears on screen. The stage lighting increases slightly to reveal our horse and rider, a remediated facsimile found in every room down the corridor. Consider our ability to register the fact that a performer stands before us and speaks, that a television is actually onstage and transmitting, or to recognise a picture as the artefact that it is; it is through our senses. The *sensorial modality***,** as Elleström refers to this, concerns itself with physical perception and is subdivided into three elements that work in conjunction: the ***sense-data*** that are transmitted (sound, image, light etc.), the bodily ***receptors*** (within the eyes, ears etc.[15]) that translate these data and transmit them to the nervous system and finally the resultant ***sensation*** itself, which is created partly through our physiological reaction but also affected by our cultural reaction – what a particular sight, smell or sound[16] evokes. In this correlation of sensations, there is a transition to the *representational* stage as we interpret using memory and our own cultural perspective. To revisit our own stage – the bed, simple as it may be, emits light as *sense-data*, illuminated by the amber glow; the *receptors* in our eyes receive this combination of light data, and we respond with a *sensation*, empathy or sympathy perhaps, which may feed from our memory of such dimly lit beds in lonely hotels, or at least our televisual and filmic recognition of them.

The actor, emboldened by their tragic yet stirring monologue, begins to roam the stage for a few minutes – we now have movement through space and time. Elleström refers to this aspect as the *spatio-temporal modality* and identifies all media as having a dimensional framework that may be constituted from a combination of ***height***, ***width***, ***depth*** and ***time***. Our actor, as we can tell by our *receptors*, stands and moves in three dimensions and articulates themselves around the stage so that we know (or at least can be fairly certain) that they are a live, physical body. Likewise, the television has a certain ***height***, ***width*** and ***depth*** which distinguishes it as a TV rather than a larger film screen or smaller monitor. Media that 'lack the fourth dimension, time' (2010, p. 19) – in other words have no noticeable changes over time – epitomised by our hotel picture, are defined as ***static*** in temporal terms. Elleström then demarcates *modes* of ***sequentiality*** *d*ependent on the level of temporal rigidity or flexibility within a medium, from the ***fixed sequentiality*** of a film which we can be fairly confident runs for a set duration and in the same sequence anywhere it is screened in the world; to ***partially fixed sequentiality***, exemplified by our hotel performer or a stand-up comic, who have a degree of fixed time structure (start/middle/end as constructed by a playwright or comedian's set list) but with some room for digression, changes of pace and audience interaction; through to ***non-fixed sequentiality***, perhaps experienced in a fully improvised happening or spontaneous rave, where start, middle and end are all unpredictable and fluid.

Now look again at the television picture or the painting, the images projecting from flat surfaces. This is where a ***virtual*** quality informs materiality, spatio-temporality and sensoriality as we begin to navigate between the *presemiotic* and *semiotic*. We can only comprehend such flat pictorial images if our perception of them is able to draw on our understanding of *virtual* space and time, which in turn is predicated on our capacity to conceive of the *actual materiality* of the original objects. The images on the screen or canvas have to be comprehended as possessing a *virtual* height, width and depth for us to relate to the characters, objects and settings. We must invest them with a range of literal and figurative dimensions; otherwise, they remain undeciphered spots of colour on a flat surface. Lars Elleström offers his own explanation of virtuality in this context:

> When I first, in 2010, published my ideas on how to conceptualise intermediality and multimodality, I included virtual time and space among the spatiotemporal modes but wrote very little about virtual materialities and virtual sensory perceptions. I now think that was an unfortunate omission and have since then spent many years of researching *cross-modal representation*; the imperative phenomenon that meaning-making very

> often goes beyond the media product's actual media modes. For instance, a two-dimensional, static picture may represent something that we perceive to be both three-dimensionally spatial and temporal, such as a body running in a landscape. This is to say that with our eyes we perceive only two actual dimensions but with our mind we perceive, or rather construe, *virtual* third and fourth dimensions. By the same token, we regularly construe virtual materialities and sensory perceptions. A sculpture that is actually made of stone may well be understood to represent a living organism such as a cat, which means that the representation crosses the border between non-organic and organic materiality. When reading a musical score we only actually perceive visual configurations, but they are understood to represent auditory patterns; virtual sound is construed in our minds. All these virtualities, these represented objects and phenomena that are made present to our minds through signs, I would now argue, do not strictly belong to the presemiotic modes but result from semiotic activity.

As we notice a character moving off-screen or scan the inference of physical motion in the picture, we also perceive indirect worlds beyond the limitations of the images, worlds in which the cowboy heads off-screen down the imagined dusty street or the horse gallops across the figmental plain. We create the spatial worlds for the figures and events to occupy. Similarly, we understand that there is a suggestion of virtual temporal realms within these media, a sense of time passing or of concurrent times existing,[17] as the film cuts from one scene to another, or likewise with the horse that we perceive to have galloped for many hours before this moment and likely for many hours hence. The particular modes that certain media adopt encourage us to perceive movement through time, as hours, days, decades or centuries of narrative may transpire within the constraints of a single image or performance. We are similarly adept at distinguishing spatial compression and expansion, whereby multiple locations may be invoked upon one small stage whilst epic vistas can be represented in the confines of pictorial images, or, conversely, the tiniest detail of a facial expression, the curl of a cowboy's lip perhaps, can be amplified on to a vast film screen. Film-space (both what is visually present and what is inferred or imagined) has been analysed at length by many theorists, notably Andre Bazin in *What Is Cinema* (1967). Bordwell and Thompson (2013) distinguish three principles of film-space: *plot space, story space* and *screen space*. In reference to these concepts, Chiao-I Tseng writes: 'Plot space refers to settings in *mise en scene*; story space can include spaces created in the mind of the viewers' imagination associated with the plot space. . . . The third type of space is on-/off-screen space, often akin to camera manipulation of framing' (2017, p. 127).

Virtual sensoriality is also at play in our engagement with *media products*, as our sense memory connects, and often rekindles, sensory experiences beyond the immediate impact of the *sense-data*. The sunset in the hotel picture perhaps creates a thermoceptive recollection of heat, or the cheap bed sheets evoke a tactile memory of similar corporate linen. It may be noted that it was our capacity for sense memory which Konstantin Stanislavski harnessed in his early-twentieth-century acting technique known as 'affective memory' or 'emotion memory', by which actors were encouraged to recall the physical sensations of an emotional event as a conduit to rekindling the emotions themselves, a practice further refined within the postwar 'Method' of Lee Strasberg.

So, at this point we have registered the three *modalities: material, sensorial* and *spatio-temporal* – elements onstage having demonstrable form, enacting upon our senses and functioning in space and time. We have a body near a TV, with a bed and a painting lit by an amber wash, and all having a material form, all sending out *sense-data* predominantly in visual and audible forms. All manifest themselves in physical modalities but are enhanced by our ability to perceive the virtual realms that are inferred. In this alchemy, *mediation* is becoming *representation.*

REPRESENTATION: DECODING THE DIVORCEE AND THE COWBOY

In the same instance that we receive the *sense-data*, we instinctively begin to invest it with significance, moving beyond the *pre-semiotic* stage. All features onstage are starting to coalesce, to *represent* something that has meaning beyond the literal. Theatre, as a generous but not entirely altruistic host, has invited a range of media in but is now representing all of them. Understanding this correlation between the form that something takes and the significance we place upon it leads many theorists, including Elleström, to foreground the importance of ***semiotics***, or sign systems, as notably expressed in the works of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierce in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of the principle correlations explored in semiotics is between what is manifested by the ***signifier*** (the TV or pictorial image, the written forms on a page and so forth) and what this *signifies*[18] – the *sign* being the combination of the two elements. Elleström particularly focuses on Pierce's concepts of ***icon***, ***index*** and ***symbol***, which he considers to be the 'three main types of representation' (2014, p. 13) Here Lars Elleström explains their significance:

> The functions of icons, indices and symbols – iconicity, indexicality and symbolicity – may be simple and straightforward as well as complex and sometimes difficult to grasp. Again, the importance of ***cross-modal representation*** should be emphasised. All three sign types may cross the boundaries of the *signifier*, or the *representamen* to use Peirce's terminology, in the respect that something visual can represent something tactile, something static can represent something temporal, and so forth; however, *cross-modal representation* may also mean that something material represents something mental. This capacity of our minds to connect the experience of concrete objects and phenomena with the experience of thinking, feeling, perceiving and imagining is absolutely fundamental for how meaning is created in communication. A visual circle may be an icon for a material, concrete object such as the sun, but it may also be an icon for mental, abstract phenomena such as harmony, satisfaction or eternity because of a perceived similarity between the visual form and the cognitive notions. A visual circle may also function as in index for the former presence of a material object like a pen or a brush that actually created the circle, but it may likewise be understood as an indexical sign for the mental act of wanting to draw a circle: there is a real connection between the producer's intention and the realised circle. The pen *was there*, but also the idea *was there*. Finally, a visual circle may be understood as a symbol, a sign based on habits, for instance the letter O. The written letter O signifies symbolically in at least two different ways: on the one hand, it stands for a certain kind of sound, or rather a group of related sounds, and sound is a material phenomenon that is perceived with our external senses; on the other hand, the letter O stands for something abstract and conceptual in the sense that it represents a linguistic function – to form meaningful words – that can only be realised in conjunction with other letters.

In the context of our stage, begin by considering the bed and the painting – think of these as *iconic* – they bear a physical similarity to images that we have in our mind of those objects in the real world, so we identify them and 'label' them as such. Like Russian dolls this can go on and on, as within the realistic painting, what is represented in paint (the horse, the rider, the landscape, the sunset and so on) is also all *iconic*. If the picture were more abstract, a cheap copy of a Picasso, let's say, this would not necessarily be the case, as shapes might be less identifiable and therefore less able to be matched to our mental library of images. Turn your attention now to the hotel room door and the standard sign reading 'Fire Exit', with an arrow indicating where to go. In this one instance, we see both *index* and *symbolic* signs. The arrow is *indexical*, as it suggests what it means, it is not an image of an exit or a human being exiting, but we approximate what it means, and the arrow is a universal sign communicating a direction of travel. Likewise, the sound of hooves emanating from the TV Western is *indexical*, as it indicates horses on the move, even before we might see them in shot. The words 'Fire Exit', on their own, however, are *symbolic*, a collection of signs that can only be interpreted by those of us who read and speak that specific language. The anguished, lonesome words of our actor are also *symbolic* and therefore 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing' to appropriate *Macbeth*, unless we are able to interpret them. *Symbolic* signs, notably words and language, have been developed over millennia and distilled to a point beyond real-world resemblance to any actual meaning. Over time, through habit and convenience, we construct and then connect letters into words, words into sentences, sentences into speeches, and each culture codifies and then decodes these combinations through the *basic* media of sound or mark-making (writing or typing) on a page or screen. These written or spoken words are not just decoded literally of course; we always locate them in a specific cultural context, so within the frame of theatre they may be distinguished as the *qualified media modes* of dramatic dialogue or play script. Multiple, rapid cross-references are made in the process of media *representation*. It may be worth reflecting here on the degree of accelerated ***semiotic*** decoding we have already used in evoking the hotel scene. Not only is each single word so far part of the code, but also consider the depth of enculturated knowledge we access to instantly interpret such complex, descriptive terms as 'Western', 'cowboy', 'actor' or 'monologue'. Enculturation,[19] as proposed by Phillip Kottak (1994), is the process by which a person learns the cultural norms and values of a society through her experience and interaction with it. He identifies three processes of enculturation, two of which are conscious and one being unconscious. Firstly, we can be taught directly by others about the values, such as from teachers or parents; secondly, we can observe cultural behaviours and then emulate them; and finally, we can absorb behaviours unconsciously and assimilate them into our attitudes and practices.

What must be remembered about sign systems, and therein the relationship between *signifiers* and *signified* within the *sign*, is the fluidity of these relationships and the shifts that occur over time and across cultures. There are no preordained truths to these correspondences, and any specific manifestation can blur or transfer between categorisations.[20] Within any given media, dependant on the specific forms used or the stylistic traits, different semiotic modes may come to the fore in the process that Elleström earlier referred to as *cross-modal representation*. Take the aforementioned Picasso copy for example; both this and our first realistic version may both be classed as pictures and art, but the 'Picasso' becomes more *indexical* (as opposed to *iconic*) in its suggestion, rather than its clear reproduction, of real-world images. Theatre creates particularly mercurial boundaries, often to be exploited, as it 'theatricalises' all that it encompasses. All the *iconic* elements onstage may also simultaneously operate on an *indexical* level, as the heightened context of the theatre leads us to invest them with significance beyond their immediate materiality; the single bed in a sparsely decorated room with one cheap painting of a horse and rider indicates isolation or loneliness as we approximate this experience of seeing such a room to other comparable artistic or real-life examples. In this theatricalised context, 'the other media become "signs of signs" as opposed to "signs of objects"', in the words of Kattenbelt (2006, p. 37).[21] Therefore, even before an actor delineates their role or narrative through action or speech (assuming there is an actor at all), we begin to read a complex layering of what is *signified* by the staged *signifiers*.

Our interpretation of signs is inextricably bound up with our life experiences. We are, as Elleström suggests, 'a perceiving and conceiving subject situated in social circumstances' (2010, p. 21). Having delineated the four *modalities*, therefore, he 'qualifies' these in relation to ***pragmatic aspects*** that affect our interpretation. Firstly, there is the ***contextual qualifying aspect*** described as 'the origin, delimitation and use of media in specific historical, cultural and social circumstances'. The second 'aspect' is the ***operational qualifying aspect***, referring to the 'aesthetic and communicative aspects of media' (2010, p. 24) As noted earlier, media that are significantly reliant on these two qualifying aspects in their constitution, in particular those media that may be considered art forms such as theatre, are identified as *qualified media*. Here, Lars Elleström explains the differences in his model between basic and qualified media, and the nuances required to articulate qualified media:

> In the end, each media product is unique. However, thinking species such as humans are in dire need of categorising things; otherwise, we would not be able to navigate in the world or communicate efficiently. We hence categorise all media products, and as is often the case with classification in general, our media categories are generally quite fluid. However, some categorisations are more solid and stable than others because they depend on dissimilar factors – and that is why I find it helpful to work with the two complementary notions of *basic media types* and *qualified media types*. Sometimes we mainly pay attention to the most basic features of media products and classify them according to their most salient material, spatiotemporal, sensorial and semiotic properties. We think, for instance, in terms of still images (most often understood as tangible, flat, static, visual and iconic media products). This is what I call a basic medium (a basic type of media product) and it is relatively solid. However,

> such a basic classification is sometimes not enough to communicate more specific media properties. What we do then is to qualify the definition of the media type that we are after and add criteria that lie beyond the basic media modalities; we also include all kinds of aspects on how the media products are produced, situated, used and evaluated in the world. We may want to delimit the focus to still images that, say, are handmade by very young persons – children's drawings. This is what I call a qualified medium (a qualified type of media product) and it is more fluid than the basic medium of still image simply because the added criteria are vaguer than those captured by the media modalities. For instance, it may be difficult to agree upon what a handmade drawing actually is: should drawings made on computers or scribble on the wall be included? And when is a child not a child any longer but rather a young adult? The notion of childhood varies significantly among cultures and also changes over time, not to mention the individual differences in maturity. The limits of qualified media are thus bound to be ambivalent, debated and changed much more than the limits of basic media.

To fully engage with the hotel scene in front of you requires a complex and 'debatable' web of contextual knowledge. The *representation* of theatre through 'perceptual and cognitive acts of reception' is only made possible because we are conversant both in its own conventions, which have evolved over centuries, but also in our own wider social circumstances which inform artistic practice and spectatorship. Consider the scene again, its evocation of loneliness, potential separation or divorce, the intimation of a city merely through the use of a specific amber hue. All of these are reliant upon our enculturated experience and knowledge, our attentiveness to the correspondences and inferences between our scene and the practices of our actual societies. We are alert to the symbolic significance of the staged décor, the irony of the expansive subject matter in the painting in contrast to the stagnant urban setting and the subdued body language of the performer. We would, of course, instinctively decipher these if we encountered them in the real world, but through the magnified theatrical lens we are primed to collate their significances. We understand that the staging represents a distilled reduction of *signifiers*, an edited cluster to be interpreted both individually and in unison. Working in concert with this *contextual* knowledge is the *operational qualifying aspect* which encompasses the specific conventions of any qualified medium that allow us to identify it as such. These are in part a combination of the *modalities* and discreet *modes* through which it manifests itself, often constructed and then mutated from existing media from which it has evolved through remediation.[22] The hotel stage we have created suggests a variety of conventions to us, a dramatic and naturalistic genre due to its realistic scenography and a traditional 'fourth wall' distancing, as our actor is performing within a fictional world into which we observe but are not acknowledged. Intriguingly, each medium within the scene operates within its own contexts and conventions; we expect a TV to transmit popular mass entertainment and news, to be a stationary object with a certain domestic scale and a predominantly *fixed sequentiality* of programming, whereas we expect a painting to be *static* in time and potentially to manifest itself in more abstract forms than television. However, we have the capacity to percolate all these discreet conventions through a theatrical filter and acknowledge them both as separate media yet harnessed to a unifying performance objective. This USP of theatre needs some consideration.

THEATRE AS HYPERMEDIUM: WHEN IS A TV NOT A TV?

Here is a simple question: if we took all the elements that appear in our hotel scene – bed, actor, TV, painting, curtains and so forth – and then filmed and screened this performance, what would all of these become? The answer, of course, is film. All these elements with their diverse *modalities* of *materiality, sensoriality*, *spatio-temporality* and *semiotics*, not to mention their own *qualifying aspects*, all succumb to the specific and – I use this word carefully – 'limiting' *modalities* and contexts of film; essentially a flat image of light and sound most probably with a *fixed sequentiality* of time and a requirement on our part to envisage virtual space, bound by the cultural and operational conventions of film. Likewise, if we converted our hotel scene into an Edward Hopper–esque painting, all elements would subsume themselves within a flat, *static* image, framed literally and conceptually by the conventions of fine art. The marvellous quirk of theatre is that it allows all media to manifest themselves in their own unique forms, expressed by Claudia Georgi as 'its ability to integrate other media without affecting their respective materiality and mediality' (2014, p. 46) whilst simultaneously representing them as theatrical *signifiers*. The television on our stage is an *actual* television in three dimensions, with its own cultural significance, but it also theatrically signifies the isolation of our protagonist, its indifferent transmission emphasising the absence of another human being. The oblate stillness of the painting and its unending invocation of physical vitality juxtaposes with the hunched physical presence of the performer, who wrestles with the unpredictable, non-fixed, three-dimensional uncertainties of life. We, as skilled directors, scenographers or designers, are aware of this poignancy and consciously place them in correspondence within the scene.

This interrelationship, or mobility, between media materiality and theatrical signification is again reflected upon by Claudia Georgi, who identifies and delineates between 'semiotic' and 'medial' mobility:

> To be precise, 'semiotic mobility' therefore does not mean that the incorporated signs are left unaffected, it should rather be understood as a potential to incorporate any sign, an ability that theatre, however, shares with other plurimedial media such as film, television or video. What is unique to theatre is thus not its semiotic mobility as such, but what could in analogy be termed its 'medial mobility,' i.e. the ability to leave the materiality of the incorporated media intact while their respective signs acquire an additional semiotic quality as theatrical signs. (2014, p. 47)

This property of theatre has led to the sobriquet *hypermedium*, capable of incorporating many other media, as notably elucidated in *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance* (2006). In the introductory chapter, the editors, Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt, state that 'theatre has become a hypermedium and home to all', within which all media can be sited and remediated to create 'profusions of texts, inter-texts, inter-media and space in between' (p. 24). However, it must be noted that Elleström is not persuaded on this specific argument of theatre as a hypermedium. In 2010, citing Chapple and Kattenbelt, he wrote that theatre is 'definitely extremely multimodal and it integrates many basic and qualified media, but it is an overstatement to say that "theatre is a hypermedium that incorporates all arts and media"' (p. 45). To an extent, I am in agreement, particularly if we remind ourselves of the complexity of a medium and the contexts in which it exists. Whilst the material modality of any medium may be mediated essentially 'intact' within theatre, it will undoubtedly be devoid of some of its own qualifying context and therein the semiotic complexity this carries. The additional layer that Georgi refers to may not be easily distinguished as an addition when the original semiotic signification may be denuded to the point where we actually perceive a hybrid between the original and the theatricalised. Furthermore, the materiality is linked closely to the other modalities: the spatial intimacy of a book in our own hands; the lengthy, temporal experience of an entire film; or the physical touch of a statue or ceramic, which are less likely to be part of a theatre experience. Materiality may be intact, but without the correspondence of other mediating elements, it is arguable how much of a medium remains once theatricalised. Yet, it is not without merit or purpose to suggest that theatre represents other media with *less* material interference or transformation than other plurimedial forms and thereby with more of the innate qualities of the original medium present. Therefore, the term '*hypermedium*' can still be invoked, but perhaps with less vigour and with a little more nuance.

Having established this, it might be observed that such hypermediated 'profusions' undoubtedly create opportunities and challenges for theatre makers and performers as we are constantly able to look beyond *intramedial* options and on to *transmedial* modes for inspiration and actual practical application in the theatrical environment. *Intramedial* refers to specific modal configurations and qualifying aspects conventionally found within a given medium, such as the static temporality of a picture or the acceptance of a jump cut or dissolve in film. *Transmediality*, on the other hand, refers to the crossing of media borders. This may be seen in the manifestation of one media 'product' occurring across media (*Harry Potter* appearing in the form of book, film, jigsaw, theme park, lunchbox, etc.) or in the appearance of one medium's conventions and modalities within other media (the use of direct theatrical address to an audience within film or *static* artistic tableau appropriated within performance art). Elleström's own definition of *transmediation* reads: 'The concept of transmediation involves two ideas. Transmediation is not only *re*-mediation – *repeated* mediation – but also *trans*-mediation: repeated mediation of equivalent sensory configurations by another technical medium' (2014, p. 14).[23] We have the capacity to draw, intramedially, upon the *modalities* and *qualifying aspects* within theatre (use of live performers, co-presence with audience, acting tropes, narrative forms, catharsis and so on) whilst simultaneously appropiating, transmedially, from the *modalities* and *qualifying aspects* of other media, from the acting style of film, the forms and architecture of art installation or the very iconography of art itself, all of these seen respectively in the work of imitating the dog, dreamthinkspeak and Stan's Cafe, all of which are represented in Chapter 7, 'Practitioner Case Studies'.

From a practitioner perspective, there are many challenges inherent in these new performance realms, as it demands a superfluity of knowledge and skills to be both conversant with individual media and modes, but also confidence (or at least courageous enthusiasm) across transmedial boundaries in the construction of contemporary work. Initially this may seem daunting, but we may all be more adept than we think.

INTERMEDIALITY: THE EVERYDAY KIND

Often, when the subject of intermediality is discussed, definitions and typologies begin to cascade like confetti. It can seem, in the worst cases, to be a somewhat desiccated concept disconnected from our actual experiences and thereby having limited relevance to theatrical experimentation. Let us try to redress that by considering our own intermediality, the kind we experience and engage with ubiquitously. Let me suggest that we are all everyday intermedialists, to some degree or other. In fact, it may initially be helpful to suggest that we are also adept hypermedialists. I shall try to explain before the confetti descends.

Look around you in your imagined theatre, closer to hand this time, away from the theatrical stage and down to your own body, the 'stage' you 'set' every day. You arrange diverse media upon it, a plethora of *technical media*, including clothes,[24] accessories such as bags or umbrellas, but also sophisticated *qualified media* such as novels to read on the train or, more ubiquitously now, *technical media*, including smartphones and tablets which are portals into the labyrinthine *qualified media* of the Internet, including online television, radio or film. You physically and intuitively carry these media with you each day; you site them upon yourself and remediate them constantly: vintage clothes refashioned for the twenty-first century, sections of novels recounted in essay quotes, or comments from one web source retweeted through your own Twitter feed in an instant. You are a walking hypermedium, accessorised by distinct media, all with their materiality 'intact' but all reframed and given unique significance through the prism of your personality and social context.

Rapid developments in our technological means of communication and the consequent shifts in our cultural practices have reconfigured the way in which we engage with the world around us. Jack Kerouac captured this shift as far back as 1957 in his seminal novel *On the Road*:

> He came the following Sunday afternoon. I had a television set. We played one ballgame on the TV, another on the radio, and kept switching to a third and kept track of all that was happening every moment. (1998, p. 238)

Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty, the subjects of this scene, may be identified as erstwhile everyday intermedialists as they encapsulate a cultural condition which we embody in our daily lives. This enculturated intermediality is a state of being, and not merely a conscious act of the mind, but of the whole body, embedded in our 'body schema' as envisaged by the twentieth-century phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty,[25] who stated that the body is our 'medium for having a world' (2002, p. 169). Paradise and Moriarty, in their visual and tactile engagement with the modern technologies of their day, create a collage of media through which they construct their own interpretation of events. They exist in an intermedial space, confident with multiple strands of *sense-data* expressed through a plethora of *media, modalities* and *modes* and then received via numerous *receptors*. The deluge of *sensations* is both deftly managed but also exhilarating for them in its abundance and diversity. To use Amy Petersen Jensen's terminology, they are 'hybrid subjects' operating in a 'hybrid space, [in which] the participatory spectator prefigures a new type of performance that develops out of the interaction between two mediums' (2007, pp. 122–123). In 1945, Merleau-Ponty gave the following example of an object as the extension of our body schema: 'Once the [blind man's] stick has become a familiar instrument, the world of feel-able things recedes and now begins, not at the outer skin of the hand, but at the end of the stick' (2002, pp. 75–76). Now, in the twenty-first century, the 'body schema' for most of us encompasses mousepads, joysticks, on-demand multiscreen TV and smartphones—the 'extensions of man', to cite McLuhan. This conception of enculturated intermediality foregrounds the premise that our *body-schema* is an ever-expanding web of interrelated, intermedial and intermodal discourses within which technology plays a pivotal role. As technology progresses, our perceptual field adjusts to accommodate and engage with simultaneity, and every generation embraces this a little more.

Consciously and unconsciously, we are bombarded with the technologies (both *technical* and *qualified* media) of a digital world that makes many twentieth- and twenty-first-century media and their content readily available through *remediation*. The Internet houses and re-presents filmic and televisual media from across this century as well as the last, from the epics of the silent film era to kitsch cartoons or the banality or fascination of a live feed from the other side of the globe. Digital broadcasters and platforms store and screen countless channels, programmes and clips that allow us to access seminal work from generations ago or simply the mundane from the day before. The value of retaining knowledge and memory are diminishing as we have instant access to that which we have forgotten or never knew. Of equal significance is that the contemporary body itself has assimilated mediated processes into its automatic, pre-reflective[26] motor and postural functions. I am suggesting that such processes and attitudes become consciously and unconsciously embodied and impact upon performative action and interaction. Additionally, we can distinguish this enculturated state from the notion of body as hypermedium, as we not only can 'house' diverse media within our schema but fuse them: the body as an intermedium itself.

INTERMEDIALITY: EVOLUTIONS IN THINKING

It is worth stating that there is no fixed typology of intermediality in theatre or indeed intermediality in a broader sense. As soon as the term 'intermedia' was coined by the composer and Fluxus artist Dick Higgins in 1965, it was, in his own words: ‘picked up; used and misused’. Many people have offered definitions and descriptions for certain manifestations of intermediality, but often these are contested, Many have been redefined over the past few decades, and none of them prohibit further additions to the pantheon of categorisation or indeed the determination to avoid or contest such boundaries. Note that I myself have already offered you ‘enculturated intermediality’ as a new term, chiselled from my own perspectives and preoccupations, but it is only one of many lenses that may be adopted or ignored. What follows in this section is, firstly, a little context to explain how the notion of intermediality has developed, followed by a specific interpretation of key aspects of theatrical intermediality, drawing on some more of Elleström’s most recent ideas of mediality and intermediality. In the spirit of remediation, it is important to highlight that this endeavour is not entirely virgin territory as Elleström is cited as a frame of reference within a number of texts, including Bay-Cheng et al. *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* (2010), Claudia Georgi’s *Liveness on Stage: Intermedial Challenges in Contemporary British Theatre and Performance* (2014) and Bateman et al. *Multimodality: Foundations, Research and Analysis – A Problem-Oriented Introduction* (2017). Andy Lavender has also applied specific elements of the theoretical model (particularly *adaptation* and *transformation*) in analysing immersive intermedial theatre, in his article ‘Modal Transpositions toward Theatres of Encounte, or, in Praise of “Media Intermultimodality”’ (2014). However, this chapter is arguably the most extensive use of his theories in an analysis of theatre. His perspective is interwoven alongside some of the other noteworthy twenty-first-century developments and delineations of intermediality. Perhaps what is most useful to remember is that we will never in writing encompass the endless permutations and expressions of theatrical intermediality, partly due to scale but also to divergences of opinion, as to determine something as intermedial is, in the end, a matter of personal perspective towards what is *mediated* and particularly what is *represented,* let alone a matter of individual interpretation of the term ‘intermediality’ itself. The field, therefore, is yours to inhabit and define or distort as you wish; the practice will determine the possibilities.

Intermediality in theatre is not a new concept. It may appear to be, as the term is often conjugated with contemporary technology, yet theatre, partly because of its capacity as a hypermedium, has always experimented with technologies accessible in each historical period, as well as perpetually fusing diverse media within its bounds. Opera is often cited as the quintessential intermedial *gesamtkunstwerk*,[27] or ‘total work of art’, combining music, voice, dramatic performance and complex scenography, but the tradition of colliding, combining or sequencing different media within a theatrical experience can be witnessed across the millennia, well before avant–garde twentieth-century practices, from the ancient Greek chorus, or *dithyramb*, which fused song with dance and subsequently dramatic performance, through to the eclectic acts of music hall and burlesque[28] of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Over the past fifty or so years, many definitions and invocations of intermediality[29] have arisen, and likewise many attempts to delineate it from other related terms. Within a theatrical context, the debate was, as already indicated, instigated by the British-born, but American-based Dick Higgins in 1965, in his essay, succinctly entitled 'Intermedia', which sought to describe the new hybrid forms of performance that were proliferating at the time. He noted, 'Much of the best work being produced today seems to fall between media' (1965, p. 1). Richard Kostelanetz, writing in the same period, referred to these new hybrid forms as *The Theatre of Mixed Means*, contending that 'the new theatre descends from several arts' (1970, p. 276).

In the last two or three decades, propelled by the exponential rise in such practice, there has been a concerted effort within academia to articulate these intermedial developments. These have flourished in a plethora of texts, from Bolter and Grusin's *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999) to Werner Wolf's *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality* (1999), through to the notable publications of The International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) that established an Intermediality in Theatre and Performance Working Group, out of which came *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance* (2006), edited by Freda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt, and *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* (2010), edited by Sarah Bay Cheng et al. At this juncture, therefore, it would be easy to digress at some length into this range of contrasting typologies and definitions of intermediality sent out into the ether since the turn of the last century. However, the very fact that these topics have been alighted upon before, and you may already be conversant with some of them, means that a brief reconnaissance of existing intermedial definitions and distinctions will suffice for now, beginning again with Dick Higgins. In 1981, responding to his initial influential article of 1965, he wrote that the term 'intermedia' referred to those artistic configurations which were 'fused conceptually' (1984), a notion that was returned to by Jürgen Heinrichs and Yvonne Spielmann in their 2002 editorial for the journal *Convergence*, in which they wrote that 'intermediality addresses the merger and the transformation of elements of differing media . . . resulting in the creation of a new (art) form' (2002, pp. 5–6). Irina Rajewsky, in 2005, perceived intermediality as a broad church, but one distinguished by its ability to transgress boundaries, proposing how 'intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix *inter*) in some way take place *between* media. "Intermedial" therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media' (p. 46).[30] In 2008, Chiel Kattenbelt offered his own definition of the term 'intermediality' in comparison to 'multimediality' and 'transmediality':

> I focus my attention on three concepts of mediality: multi-, trans- and intermediality. To phrase it very briefly, multimediality refers to the occurrence where there are many media in one and the same object; transmediality refers to the transfer from one medium to another medium (media change); and intermediality refers to the corelation of media in the sense of mutual influences between media. (2008, pp. 20–21)

Certain caveats and clarifications are prompted by Kattenbelt's perspective. The term 'transmediality', for example, has matured and found significant gradations since then, notably from Elleström himself. Some of these have been addressed already, and other variants will be returned to later in the chapter. Likewise, a little more delineation between 'intermediality' and 'multimedia' may be constructive, as the latter term has all too readily been invoked as a catch-all to describe any work in which a variety of media share performance space. Phaedre Bell (2000), in discussing film and live theatre, created her own distinction between two types of mixed-media performance, which she referred to as 'dominant medium' productions (akin to multimedia) and 'dialogic media productions' or 'intermedia exchange' (pp. 43–44). Her description of a 'dominant medium', emphasising the more passive scenographic role of an auxiliary medium which merely 'decorates the scene with aesthetically pleasing images' (p. 44) in service of the live event, resonates with Greg Giesekam's definition of live/filmic multimedia performance in *Staging the Screen* (2007), in which the video acts merely as another of the 'apparatuses' of the stage (p. 8). For Giesekam, intermediality can be distinguished from multimediality as the former manifests itself 'where neither the live material nor the recorded material would make much sense without the other, and where often the interaction between the media substantially modifies how the respective media conventionally function and invites reflection upon their nature and methods' (p. 8).

However, it is no surprise to discover that multimedia has not been permanently relegated to merely define certain 'dominant' media interactions, as can be evidenced by Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer's interpretation of the term in their 2012 publication *Multimedia Performance*, in which they note a 'haemorrhaging of nomenclatures', citing amongst others 'Cyber theatre', 'postorganic theatre', 'intermedial theatre' and 'new media performance' (p. 11), and, by destabilised the authority of such terminology, confidently reclaim and reframe multimedia in terms of, amongst others concepts, *interactivity* and *integration*,[31] stating it to be 'an intermedial and interdisciplinary formation in culture' (p. 8). This alternative view of multimedia is persuasive, for if we accept the earlier nuanced interpretation of theatre as a hypermedium, it would be churlish, if not naïve, to think that any medium within its bounds remains passive or merely decorative apparatus, as our perception of any theatricalised element may render it significant and transformative, no matter what the 'dominant' medium may seem to be. However, for clarity's sake, whilst acknowledging the diversity of views, I propose that 'intermediality' as a term is still fit for purpose in encompassing this latter articulation of multimedia.

It may be wise at this point to be cognisant of Andy Lavender's observation: 'We are less concerned with immutable ontological categories, and more interested in nuances, degrees, shifting combinations, and the play of unlike elements that together form something particular and effectual' (2014, p. 503) Certainly, the terminology is less relevant than the substance of media interaction, however we delimit it, and the potential it offers practitioners. A consensus in recent years, as highlighted earlier in the chapter, has undoubtedly centred on the interrelationship of *modes* within and between media, their 'intermultimodality', to use Elleström's awkward term (one that will be returned to shortly). *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* (2010) highlighted these interrelationships and convergences of media in the context of the new media hybrids establishing themselves in the twenty-first century. This acknowledgement of media convergence was tempered in this text by a concurrent recognition of media distinctiveness (not to be confused with essentialism), with Robin Nelson, in the introductory chapter, referring to this as the 'both/and' paradigm, by which we can value the unique modal 'signature' of any medium whilst also acknowledging the multitude of modal and transmedial interactions. More recently, for Andy Lavender,[32] the germane term to express these conjunctions of media is 'hybridity', 'not literally, as some sort of mutant spawn of technologies of presentation, but as an *effect of becoming*, enabled by blended processes and forms' (2016, p. 64).

In the twenty-first century, media are now converging at both a *pre-semiotic* and a *representational* level. Through the blending of modes and cross-modal representation, they are *becoming* 'conceptually fused', making fleeting or durable transformations in their appearance and our perception of them. We possess the intricate capacity to distinguish different *technical* and *qualified* media (there would be consensus, perhaps not unanimity, on what constitutes a television set or a film e.g.), yet simultaneously we, for the most part, accede to the suffusion of these media across borders and the inherent transformations this creates in media we are accustomed to, and often hold affection for, because of their traditions and conventions.

ASPECTS OF THEATRICAL INTERMEDIALITY

What I offer in this section is a proposition of three notable aspects of intermedial theatre – ***convergence***, ***contrast*** and ***transformation*** – that are particularly pertinent in the light of our specific analysis of media, modalities and modes. Mindful of the numerous previous texts on intermediality, and with the luxury of knowing that the rest of the book looks at many other specifics on the subject, these aspects are focused on *mediation* and *representation*, using Elleström's vocabulary of *modalities, qualifying aspects* and *transformation* (2010, 2014), in order to distinguish the multimodal dialogues which may be exposed or hidden within the theatrical experience. The aim here is not to delimit precisely how things are at present or prescribe a way of practising intermediality. It cannot, by any egotistical measure, be deemed comprehensive, as the chapters that follow, let alone texts not yet conceived, are all part of a gradual calibration of intermediality, but it does seek to bring a degree of clarity and practicality to the complexity, which may be overwhelming. The aspects outlined below may occur individually but also in tandem, and there are undoubtedly permeable and multiple relationships between each category. Let us first address the aforementioned complexity head on then, as Elleström himself identifies theatre as a particularly complicated medium

> consisting of different kinds of material interfaces, appealing to both the eye and the ear, being both profoundly spatial and temporal, producing meaning by way of all kinds of signs and, certainly, being circumscribed by way of historical and cultural conventions and aesthetic standards. Theatre may thus be said to be a qualified medium that is very much multimodal and also, in a way, very much intermedial since it combines and integrates a range of basic and qualified media. (2010, p. 29)

In this context, we may say that all theatre is intermedial, manifesting itself in relations between all manner of *basic, technical* and *qualified media*, and then more specifically through precise *modal* compounds. Our hotel room, as already intimated, is perceived through its relationships between multiple media, the *basic* amber light shining through the window in conjunction with the impassive *technical* medium of the television set and the *qualified media product* of the Western genre film emitting the *basic* pulses of sound and light from its screen. The forlorn human *materiality* of the character in sharp contrast to the inert *materiality* of the bed, the *spatial* claustrophobia of the room magnified in the *static* panoramas of the picture hanging on the wall. Whilst this book pays particular attention to contemporary developments in intermediality, it must be acknowledged that this innate complexity of modal and medial hybridity within theatre has existed for millennia, indicating its enduring receptiveness to experimentation.

Elleström refers to intermediality as 'intermodal relations in media' or 'media intermultimodality' (2010, p. 37). He is immediately aware of their slightly unwieldy linguistic quality and, in what Andy Lavender refers to as a 'nicely self-deprecating aside' (2014, p. 500), reflects that 'I do not expect these terrible terms to win general praise but I think there is a point in seeing intermediality as a complex set of relations between media that are always more or less multimodal.' (2010, p. 37) In stating that all theatre is intermedial, we are at risk of nullifying the significance or particularity of its practice, but if we invoke the 'both/and' concept from earlier, then it is possible to recognise, celebrate and harness *both* distinction *and* hybridity.

The 'crossing of borders between media', to cite Rajewsky, is both an overt and covert practice. Intermediality at times seeks to loudly declare its activity whilst on other occasions subtlety or indeed stealth is the favoured means. Sometimes, media are required to coalesce into a seamless event, but in certain contexts the disparity between them is purposely exposed. Often the intention is simply an unrepentant pursuit of entertainment and spectacle, whereas some theatre makers seek a more radical and politicised agenda through intermediality. The three concepts of *convergence, contrast* and *transformation* seek to elucidate some of the key processes within such practices. You will note that some liberties are taken with the practitioner examples, which stray slightly beyond the loose theatrical boundaries of the text, but I hope they creatively serve the purpose of exemplification and reveal the breadth of intermedial practice that has developed over the decades and is now at large today.

Convergence

Theatre is no stranger to appropriating a plethora of complementary *basic, technical and qualified* media alongside specific modes that may putatively be referred to as drama – the creation of role or dramatic narrative and dialogue, for example. With the dawn of the 'electric age', as McLuhan referred to it, at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this fascination with the convergence of 'electric' and corporeal forms advanced apace as the emergent twentieth-century film industry, with pioneers such as Georges Méliès in Paris, was quick to capitalise on the interplay between these media, interweaving film with live action in a theatrical setting as early as 1905. In that year Méliès made a film entitled the *Pills of the Devil*, a Faustian legend in which at one notable point the character on screen was seen to fall towards hell before finally tumbling on to the theatre stage, accompanied by pyrotechnics (Giesekam, 2007). In more recent times, the baton for experimenting with live/filmic convergence has been seized by notable artists including the internationally renowned Canadian theatre maker Robert Lepage, who has made his reputation with technically sophisticated productions from *Seven Streams of the River Ota* (1994 onwards) through to *Playing Cards* (2012), as well as in his work with Cirque du Soleil. His compunction for combining media within theatre was reflected upon in a 1997 interview, in which he stated, 'I've never really been interested in theatre as such. In my adolescence, I was more interested in theatricality' (Dundjerović, 2007, p. 2). He goes on to say that his generation of theatre makers were influenced more by 'rock shows, dance shows and performance art' (p. 2) than theatre per se. Sasha Dundjerović, writing specifically about Lepage, coined the term *'techno en scène'* (2007) to define his sophisticated technological scenography allied to a narrative structure.

Lepage is by no means alone in his aspiration to find synergy in diverse media, as evidenced in West End spectaculars, the integrated screens alongside the live show at large music festivals or the hermetic performance environments created within Disney or Warner Brothers theme parks. The ambition that connects these examples is the creation of a unified performance or presentation, wherein the modes of diverse media are harmonised by the *qualifying aspects* of specific umbrella uber-media, such as musical, rock concert or theme park, so that our perception of the event draws upon conventions that seek coherence between the assorted elements. Our own desire for concordance in these instances is aided by the producers' capacity to reconcile the modes of one media with another. For example, in a stage musical such as *Frozen* or *Wicked,* the *spatio-temporal* and *material* difference of a figure or a landscape on a screen is often given signification as 'magical', thereby reinforcing a sense of fictional coherence with the live action and obfuscating the different mediating processes of live acting and film. Likewise, any potential contrast between the *operationally qualifying* conventions of film and stage acting are frequently blurred by the *transmedial* use of screen acting techniques onstage alongside the film sequences, a technique often used in the genre that Petr Woycicki (2014) refers to as 'post-cinematic theatre', as seen in the work of Kneehigh Theatre, notably their production of *Brief Encounter* (2008), or imitating the dog, who have appropriated their onstage techniques in productions such as *Tales from the Bar of Lost Souls* (2010), from film styles such as noir and French new wave.

These last examples of British contemporary practice in fact lead us into a more nuanced mode of convergence as, whilst they seek to unify the stage experience, there is an element of celebrating and bringing some understated attention to the synergy. In an imitating the dog performance, for example, the theatre audience is often presented with opening and closing credits on screen, which may be recognised as novel and unconventional in that context. Andrew Quick, the artistic director of the company, also once acknowledged in a personal conversation that some of the most exciting moments of a performance were when the actors made minor mistakes onstage, reminding the audience that they were live and not merely embedded and automaton-like in the filmic aesthetic (2011). This delicacy or fragility in convergence is also exemplified, for me, by the current innovations in text/filmic intermediality, as seen in the work of Davy and Kristin McGuire and also Amar Kanwar. In considering this form of intermediality, it may be helpful to foreground the specific *basic, technical* and *qualified* media relationships at play in their practice:

Basic	**Technical**	**Qualified**
Written text	Book	Literature
Moving image	Projector and projection surface (paper)	Film

UK artists Davy and Kristin McGuire have built a reputation for creating pop-up theatre books that use miniature projection mapping on to the paper scenography that appears at each turn of the page. They first created a work entitled *The Icebook* in 2011 and went on to develop a theatre book version of *Macbeth* in collaboration with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Amar Kanwar created his own film/text hybrid for a project entitled *The Sovereign Forest + Other Stories* (2013), which explored environmental and political issues in India. I recall seeing this work at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the United Kingdom, part of it housed in one of their large underground galleries, with three tables supporting large books containing handmade paper pages. One of the books, entitled *The Prediction*, included sheets partly collaged with newspaper articles pertaining to the assassination of an Indian trade union leader, layered on to which were overhead projections of footage from the event, changing as the pages turned. The poignancy of the work was undoubtedly in the content, but also in the ephemeral intermediality, the sophisticated yet fragile interplay between the components. Our expectations of the two *qualified* media, literature and film, are confirmed by the weighty substance of the book and the quality of the projection, but then simultaneously confounded by the unexpected union of certain *basic* and *technical* media, moving image illuminating paper and also page as projection surface, with all the *pre-semiotic* modal elements converging within the same space, overlaid one upon the other. In addition to this, we are presented with the opportunity to blend *spatio-temporal* conventions, turning the pages as we wish, unshackling the *fixed sequentiality* of film via the *partially/non-fixed sequentiality* inherent in our autonomy over the book (Figure 1.1).

To return to our amended notion of hypermedium, the materiality of film and literature were intact, but they created a hybridised signification born out of an augmented text with a fluid blend of *icons* and *symbols* from cinema and newsprint, the definable spatiality and tactile sensoriality of the hand-made pages 'complicated' by the virtual dimensions of film. In this beguiling engagement, the viewer constructs their own narrative, an *interaction* (to cite Klich and Sheer) of *intermultimodalities*. As a final thought for this section, you may wish to revisit the hotel room in your minds' eye, and the profusion of *basic, technical* and *qualified* media coalescing as a *representation* of a

Figure 1.1 Amar Kanwar, *The Sovereign Forest + Other Stories* (2013). Photographer: Jonty Wilde.

coherent, unified fiction. Multiple media have, for a long time, converged in the live event of theatre.

Contrast

One of the most conspicuous manifestations of theatrical intermediality is in the form of overt media hybridity, the collision and contrast of diverse media, 'theatricalised' within the hypermedium of theatre. Citing a number of theorists, Claudia Georgi notes how 'theatre thus does not necessarily figure as a generally transparent receptacle for other media, but it may instead expose the workings of its own mediation as well as those of the media incorporated.' (2014, p. 48) This form of intermediality has many purposes: it may be designed to find wit and comedy, to seek delight and celebration in the discrepancies, as may be witnessed in the practice of the UK company Forkbeard Fantasy, who often in its early work in the 1980s collided spoof lecture with marionettes, inflatable dummies and cyborgs as well as films integrated into the live event or screened post-show (Giesekam, 2007, pp. 176–177). On other occasions, it may be constructed to bring attention to the co-relationships of media and, by exploiting their diverse *modes* and the *qualifying aspects* that we expect from each one, focus our critical attention on to the 'message' of each medium. The potential for this latter technique was seized upon in the early twentieth century by political theatre makers appropriating film on to the stage, as Michael Ingham highlights: 'Brecht and Piscator in Weimar-era Germany, were part of this *Zeitgeist* of mixed-media experimentation in the early decades of the twentieth century' (2017, p. 52). Erwin Piscator developed a dialectical relationship between the illusion of the stage and the realism of the filmic image, a method that Giesekam referred to as 'dynamic montage' (2007, p. 42). In reference to one specific production by Piscator, entitled *Tidal Wave* (1926), a piece inspired by the October revolution in Russia 1905, Giesekam identifies how the director 'used film to ground the more far-fetched aspects of the play in something more politically relevant. . . . a scene of a capitalist selling off his shares was followed by a clip of panic selling on the New York Stock Exchange, drawing an analogy between the fictional action and recent experience' (p. 42). Ingham identifies how 'the practice resurfaced in the postwar decades, starting with avant-garde theatre groups and directors of the 1960s and 1970s – like the 1920s, a more revolutionary period in which innovation flourished – and increased markedly with the advent and development of digital technology in theatre' (2017, p. 52). He refers to this development as the 'cinefying' of theatre and identifies significant recent practitioners in this field, including Robert Wilson and The Wooster Group.[33]

In terms of creating this overt 'awareness' of mediation,[34] the various media may occupy the same theatrical space but retain their modal structures and qualifying aspects more tenaciously than in convergent forms. Let us return to our hotel room, disassemble it and refashion it in this form of intermedial contrast. We are still seeking to explore the isolation and destabilising effects of separation and family breakdown but now uncouple ourselves from the correspondences between media, created in the presentation of the room with objects and body in conventional relation to each other. I will not expose my lack of directorial or conceptual flair by proposing an overly complicated strategy, so simply imagine the key components on wheels, slowly separated from each other by well-choreographed stagehands, stretching and then snapping their dramatic fibres (the components, not the stagehands!) until they come to rest some distance apart from one another. A character on a bed now sits oddly estranged from a window frame and curtains, and the amber light no longer shines through its' pane. We see now the origins of the light in the *technical* medium of a lantern, with its beam detached and redirected into the void of the auditorium. The door and the fire exit sign stand aloof, far away upstage, as the television set blinks into the wings. A projector on a trolley is manoeuvred on to stage, from which the picture of the horse and rider, having disappeared in its original material form, now reappears as a projected looped film, frame and all, on what remains of the wallpapered flats, the horse galloping briefly left to right until it 'hits' the limits of the frame, and then repeating and repeating.

Whilst we may alight upon multiple aspects of this media collage, there are a few concepts to prioritise. Immediately we are struck by the artifice of it all, the technical construction that cemented the original fiction together. The basic and technical media are now isolated and stand in sharp relief to one another – light, image, sound, text, body and projection – whilst the presence of the stagehands underscores the mediating mechanics of theatre. The spatio-temporal illusion of the picture is now exposed, as the rider can never escape to the virtual 'story-space' (to cite Chiao-I Tseng) of our imagination. Perversely, the transformation of the horse and rider image into a projected film serves to accentuate the *fixed* temporality of horse and rider, trapped in time, perhaps echoing the predicament of the character on the bed. The technical modes of production – projector, lantern, television set and so on – are revealed as such, to a point where the usually unconscious connection between pre-semiotic modalities and what they represent is ruptured. We are challenged to construct or reconstruct this image, to notice its composition, its form as well as its content. It is impossible to make bold statements here, as what has been created is purely imaginary and has never been tested upon an audience, but it may be proposed that even such a simple, disassembled scene enables us to construct an emotional response. The disconnections between media and modalities demand that we reconfigure how we view the *qualified* medium of theatre, as we notice the fragility and wilful naivety (on our part) on which it is based. Within the precarity and uncertainty of this, our own theatrical experience, we perhaps find empathy for the vulnerable character on the bed. The dislocation of media, in this instance, becomes a catalyst for meaning; the overt process of mediation directly impacts upon the representation.

Transformation

I am writing this section of the chapter as the sci-fi television persona *Dr Who*[35] transforms from a man (Peter Capaldi) into a woman (Jodie Whittaker), with the subsequent social media storm that this creates across the globe. It is an apt metaphor at this point, as media and their content have a similar capacity to regenerate in other guises or indeed to thrive within other media 'bodies'. Linking to the two previous sections, sometimes these shifts are consciously created in order for the contrast to be noticed, whilst elsewhere there are more subcutaneous transformations, in which media converge and absorb one another. Both these processes, and all variants in between, destabilise and reconfigure modalities and conventions, creating an infinite stream of media hybrids.

If we simplify the activities of convergence and contrast for a moment, then the materiality of the media is relatively straightforward to identify, as the technical media required to materialise the qualified media appear, more often than not, in their original and recognisable forms; musical theatre performers still appear live onstage for example, and, as in our last evocation of contrast, a television continues to project television 'product' consisting of small-scale moving images and sound, no matter where you place it. These technical media and what they produce are then, by their conspicuousness, more readily referenced against their cultural contexts and conventions so that we can interpret them accordingly as qualified media and therefore recognise their content as significant. However, as has already been alluded to in examples such as Amar Kanwar or the transmediative acting style of Kneehigh and imitating the dog, media and their 'products' are often, to switch to a geological metaphor, molten: exploding or oozing from one state to another, shifting and re-forming. Elleström refers to these processes as *media transformation* (2014), identifying *transmediation* and *media representation* as its two key manifestations. Whilst these transformative qualities of intermediality manifest themselves in the two categories of convergence and contrast that I have already proposed, they are particularly significant in contemporary practice and widely adopted within devising methodologies; hence the intention to consider them discreetly. Elleström's definition of *transmediation* reads: 'The concept of transmediation involves two ideas. Transmediation is not only *re*-mediation – *repeated* mediation – but also *trans*-mediation: repeated mediation of equivalent sensory configurations by another technical medium' (2014, p. 14). *Media representation*, on the other hand, 'involves the notion of one medium representing another medium. Media representation is at hand whenever a medium presents another medium to the mind' (2014, p. 15). In *Media Transformation: The Transfer of Media Characteristics Among Media* (2014), he identifies a wide variety of intermedial and intramedial transfers applicable across many artistic and non-artistic forms, but for the purposes of this text, I draw upon selective examples pertinent to theatre.

To ground this theory back on to a stage, consider the following scenario within our imagined theatre. The action onstage has continued, the actor is railing against the world, we feel there is something familiar in their words, an echo of something we've heard before. Their monologue continues with its tale of remorse and regret of all the things they should have done, but now it's too late. There is a recollection on our part . , , this is a book, or rather the adaptation of a book, about the stage. A memory of something read a while ago, now re-presented as a play. Elleström identifies this as a type of *intermedial remediation*, wherein there is intermedial relation between 'two different media products belonging to different qualified media' (2014, p. 89); in this case the product of a novel within the qualified medium of literature transforming into the product of a play within the qualified medium of theatre. I begin with this example as it is a relatively simple category to delineate and also because this strategy is now a ubiquitous practice within both commercial and more experimental theatre. The transmediation of *Harry Potter* from book to film, to stage, to theme park and so on is a well-documented contemporary phenomenon, but transferring literature to the stage is a well-trodden path, including the Royal Shakespeare Company's famous eight-and-a-half-hour staging of Charles Dickens's *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickelby*, adapted by David Edgar back in 1980, through to the National Theatre's acclaimed adaptation of Mark Haddon's best-selling novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2012 onwards), which utilised a range of modern technologies to suggest the complex thought processes and experiences of the central autistic character. Other companies, perhaps like Robert Lepage more influenced by contemporary media, go in search of televisual and filmic source texts, including Kneehigh (in collaboration with West Yorkshire Playhouse), who, as already noted, created a theatre version of the film *Brief Encounter* in 2008 and went on to stage the 1960s TV classic *Steptoe and Son* in 2012. Often in these remediative productions, actors face the inherent challenge of adopting filmic and televisual styles of performance within the live theatrical environment as a means of evoking the original *qualified* medium. It may be acknowledged that the staging of any existing play, let alone a television or film script, is a form of *remediation*, as a written text is transferred into a three-dimensional form, with all the incumbent shifts in *modalities* and *qualifying aspects* that this creates. However, beyond these more overt practices, *media transformations* often become a great deal more elusive, yet no less potent, for practitioners.

Such subtleties are to be found in Elleström's categories of intermedial *media representation*: 'whenever a medium presents another medium to the mind'. Theatre makers are adept at this strategy, exploring the potential of live performance to be evoked through the most inventive and often challenging of modes. In the past decade or so, performance makers have, for example, explored the potential of absenting what would normally be expected as the primary *technical* medium within a specific *qualified* medium and substituting it for another medium, often in the form of verbal explanation, as a means of evincing what would seem to be the 'original', yet absent, medium. In 2005, the choreographer Sally Doughty created a live work entitled *A Dance for Radio*, in which she 'suggested' a whole dance piece, seemingly involving multiple dancers and choreographic sequences, partly through her own solo physical movement in space, but significantly through the spoken word as she represented a 'memory' of dance through voice and text. Forced Entertainment experimented with a similar technique in *Spectacular* (2008), in which a performer, dressed as a skeleton on a bare stage, seeks to explain to the audience what type of 'spectacular' they will be witnessing, if the event had materialised as planned. He explains, in detail, the stage set and performances that should have been there, whilst being metaphorically and literally 'upstaged' by a female performer repeatedly enacting a death scene devoid of any context. This rumination on death and absence is also, as with Doughty's piece, an exploration in intermediality, seeking to interrogate the fundamental physical and visual elements of dance and theatre by consciously absenting, through transformation, these principle modi operandi. This intention is identifiable in Tim Etchells' (artistic director of Forced Entertainment) programme notes for *Spectacular*, in which he reflected upon how the performance investigates the potential of language and words to evoke actual events, as he noted: 'What's spoken in performance after all hovers, gains tangibility, and with the imaginative participation of an audience begins to appear' (2008).

The absence of light and the embrace of darkness has also been exploited as a means of conjuring one medium through another, and several theatre companies and festivals have explored this emphasis on the absence of the 'pure' medium of light.[36] In 2003, the UK-based company Sound and Fury created a piece entitled *The Watery Part of the World*, entirely staged in the dark in order to conjure the brooding unseen depths of the ocean. In 2012, the Odyssey Theatre in Los Angeles ran a performance festival entitled *Dark and More Dark*, comprising work entirely experienced in blackout,[37] whilst more recently in 2017, Benjamin Vandewalle and Yoann Durant created *Hear* for the Utrecht Spring festival in the Netherlands, a piece in which the performers moved and vocalised throughout the space in the light, but the audience, of which I was one, were blindfolded at all times. Whilst the specific merits of such work may be debated, the significance to alight upon here is the interest in and potential for *media representation*. The initial material transfer from light to dark subsequently creates new forms of mediation, arguably akin to a radio broadcast, but with the additional intensity of heightened sensorial awareness triggered by the absence of visual data. This immediately impacts on the sensorial realm, accentuating the significance of auditory *sense-data* and our memory, to conjure virtual images and sensations from the darkness. Counter-intuitively, the experience may become intensely visual in our mind's eye and even trigger physiological responses through the persuasive power of our imagination. We may even perceive changes in temperature or a sense of displacement of our body in space as our usual proprioceptive capacities are dislodged by the blackness. Lyn Gardner, who reviewed *The Watery Part of the World* for *The Guardian*, actually noted that it was 'as if you are experiencing the whole thing through your skin' (2003). Significantly, this type of theatrical transformation is predicated upon our expectations of the qualified medium of theatre, with all its conventional visual aesthetics. Theatre makers are aware that we have a complex, enculturated understanding of how theatre is habitually represented, so even when the expected *pre-semiotic* elements shift or disappear, we are able to map a perceived visual experience around ourselves. Our sense of a physical stage and stage action is arguably heightened by its sensorial absence as we 'bring it to mind' via other means.

IN AMONGST AND BEYOND

Not that long ago, I was fortunate enough to be standing in MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) in New York, staring at the 'combines' made by Robert Rauschenberg for the collaborative piece entitled *Minutiae* (1954 onwards). It was a reminder that in amongst all these aspects of *convergence, contrast* and *transformation*, there are, of course, a profusion of variants and combinations. *Minutiae* was a collaboration between Rauschenberg, a conceptual visual artist, the composer John Cage and the choreographer Merce Cunningham. Rauschenberg's contribution was a set of free-standing coloured panels, which became known as 'combines', alongside which the dancers created improvised 'chance' choreography in response to Cage's score, created independently of both other elements. Watching the 1970s footage of the performance, revisited in that period by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, there are moments of convergence where, by 'chance', the choreography in-amongst 'combine' and score appear to find synergy, whilst at others the object appears in contrast, incongruous to the performance. There are also moments, if you watch long enough, where the combine 'brings to mind' another performer, with its suggestion of human *materiality* in its scale and protruding wooden legs, the interplay of colours, lines and circles on the panels, to the point where it seems to transcend its *static* temporality and engage with the dancers around it. A more recent example of such combinations can be found in Stan's Cafe Theatre Company's production entitled *A Translation of Shadows* from 2015. In this piece, blending live and filmic elements, the actor Craig Stephens performs the role of a Japanese Benshi[38] who comments on the film sequences projected behind him, which seem to portray an idyllic story of young love. There are elements of *media representation* here as the Benshi's role moves beyond mere commentary, in its poetic evocation of images that are not present on screen and that bring to mind, through text, a broader cinematic vision. At times the scenography is designed to seamlessly *converge* as image and spoken text syncronise and appear to respond to each other. This synergy is magnified as it emerges that the male Benshi is infatuated with the female lead of the film and seeks to manipulate the cinematic narrative and thwart the on-screen couple (Figure 1.2).

But then the symbiosis of virtual space and live space begins to fragment as the filmic characters 'rebel' against the Benshi's influence, reaching a climactic moment where a live female performer, in the guise of an aged version of the female lead, launches herself on to the stage to berate the Benshi for his actions. The shackles of the film's *fixed* temporality are broken, exposing the *contrast* between the illusion of film-space/time, which may capture and control an idyllic and youthful image, against the realities of the 'live', with all its encumbrances of conflict and decay. These are but two examples of what lies *in-amongst* and self-evidently there are many other practitioners and performances that experiment concurrently with the categorisations created here or indeed muddy the waters between them all. Thankfully, theatre – and performance in a wider context – are no respecters of boundaries. In the following chapter, Andy Lavender carries this point a stage further to propose that in our modern plurimedial world 'boundary crossing has become so commonplace that the boundary is less noticeable than the journey', reminding us in this text to concentrate

Figure 1.2 Stan's Cafe, *A Translation of Shadows* (2015). Photographer: Graeme Braidwood.

as much on the experience and affect of intermediality as much as, if not more than, an analysis of what it is, propitious as that may be.

The permutations of media and modalities are undoubtedly endless, particularly in the expanding realm of 21st-century performance, articulated in the chapters that follow, which dismantles divisions and creates new hybrids with such rapidity. Bateman et al. address this challenge when stating that 'as more experimental performances continuously attempt to blur the boundaries between audience and performer, it will become increasingly necessary to draw in richer multimodal frameworks to support their analysis' (2017, p. 260). This also returns us to the pertinence of *inter-multimodality* as a phrase for encapsulating these interchanges. Andy Lavender reflects: 'Perhaps Elleström's "terrible" term deserves a longer lease of life, for, contrary to its appearance, media intermultimodality turns out to be rather trim' (2014, p. 518). As he goes on to note, it captures both the 'aesthetic contagion' of certain types of intermediality (resonant of convergence and contrast) as well as the transformational hybrids built upon 'the incorporation of media within one another' (p. 518). For the sake of linguistic elegance, whilst we may respectfully register the applicability of 'inter-multimodality', I would rather propose the simple equivalence of ‘intermediality’ as a word to capture the fluid dynamics of media and modal interactions as described in this book. You are, of course, at liberty to use either term as you read on.

Before we bring this chapter to a close, it should be acknowledged that the theatrical experimentations that foment such hybridity bring risk. The perils of transmediating from novel or TV to film and the derision this can induce (note the reviews of *The Great Gatsby* [2013] or *Dad’s Army* [2016] e.g.) remind us that disrupting the conventions and expectations of ‘products’ within one qualified medium through the modes of another can lead to trouble. We can often, as audience, be surprisingly stubborn and selective in our expectations despite our reliable capacity to accept many forms of media transformation. From a theatre maker’s viewpoint, the observations on practice that follow, whilst celebrating the potential, are also testament to some of the anxieties and predicaments of intermedial creativity. It is impossible to know if a certain new hybrid or transformation will be productive unless experimentation is undertaken in a rehearsal studio or, more perilously, in front of or in conjunction with an audience. What is certain is that this book can only attempt, in its reflection on what exists, to merely speculate on what is to come. It is to our great fortune that theatre and its predilection for intermediality will always propel us beyond what we currently conceive of.

Practical ideas

Experimenting with modalities

Whilst this chapter has emphasised the inter-multimodality of theatre, there is creative potential in experimenting with specific modalities in order to test the boundaries of each parameter within a medium. Try the following with whatever devising idea or text you have to hand:

- **Space** – attempt to stage the ‘text’ in the largest possible space available to you (the whole auditorium), a field (use mobile phones to communicate perhaps) or just the full width of the room, and then compare this to rehearsing it in the smallest possible space: under a table, a narrow corridor, behind a curtain. Consider what the differences are and how intimacy and ‘emotional distance’ may work with or in contrast to the physical proximity.
- **Time** – extend the idea, through pause, movement and so on, into an elongated time span, and then contract it down to a full-paced dash through the material. What effect does this have?

- **Sensorial –** explore the potential excess of specific sense-data and also their exclusion. Try a text within which all actors are in 'touch' contact with each other (and perhaps the audience), or rehearse it in darkness to see what new sensations are revealed. Try staging a written text (perhaps just the sense of its fictional location) through olfactory/smell modes and shifts in temperature using fans, heaters, ice cubes and the like.
- **Semiotics –** explore how everyday objects can acquire a layer of theatrical significance when onstage. Gather a range of everyday objects (spoons, leaves, books, chairs etc.) Place these in equal 'piles' either side of the stage. An actor at each side takes it in turns to bring an object and place it onstage, followed by the other actor and so on. Objects can be placed in contact or at distance from any other object. Think of it like a conversation – how does each object speak to what has come before? Note: This is not the same as Object Theatre, as there is no expectation to animate the objects, but simply to let them 'be' onstage and see what resonates/what is signified. The performers can experiment with time and space (slowing down an entrance, placing an object in a certain way on top of another etc.).

Convergence

Experiment with converging the technical medium/media of one qualified medium with those of another, as in the work of Amar Kanwar.

- Try projecting a short film text, without the sound, on to human bodies (torsos, backs, shoulder blade – either clothed in a white T-shirt or on to skin) and add the spoken text from the film via the 'live' actors, who are being projected on to or others who might be available. A monologue or duologue with a slow paced text works well for this.
- Try performing a radio drama where the recorded text is lip-synced by actors who perform the actions of the work live. Think of the body as a technical medium in these instances.
- Consider how the convergence informs or disrupts the various media and the 'message'.

Contrast

Try a version of the 'disassembling' activity described in the chapter. Create a basic set, lighting rig (use stands if possible) and soundscape (moveable sound system if available) for a text you are familiar with, including actors onstage. It may be advisable to choose a dramatic, naturalistic text to start with. Now perform its disassembly – stagehand 'performers' move as many things as possible (including people) to disconnected spaces so that each technical medium is dislocated from its original place and signification. Ask an audience to watch the original dramatic piece and this new disconnected version in which each medium and its technical function is more overt. What is the effect?

Transformation

Experiment with two key elements of Elleström's transformation:

Repeated mediation: Take a notable object text or image from one medium (famous painting, play, TV programme, board game etc.) and remediate it into another medium. Try turning games such as *Kerplunk* or *Connect 4* into a performance installation, or a TV quiz show into performance poetry using the text verbatim. On a very subtle basis, what occurs when a written text such as a play becomes a radio drama? Try passing each remediation on to a new group for them to remediate again.

Media representation: Experiment with how 'a medium presents another medium to the mind'. Try using the technique from Forced Entertainment's *Spectacular* (2008), by 'explaining' (but not overtly showing) a dramatic text which may or may not exist. Try it with something well known, such as *Hamlet*, or with an event that happened in real life and is being reimagined for stage. This can be converged with modal experimentation as well – retelling a vast dramatic epic in a cupboard, in the dark, with scent, taste sensations and so forth.

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