

# SHIFTING THE LENS

**PERSPECTIVES ON  
LITERATURE, MEDIA,  
AND CULTURE**

A conference for PhD students  
on in-between spaces,  
translations, and intermedial  
perspectives



**MAY 14-16, 2025**  
**UNIVERSITY OF KLAGENFURT**

## **SHIFTING THE LENS** **Perspectives on Literature, Media, and Culture**

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May 14 to 16, 2025 (University of Klagenfurt)

Processes of exchange, shifting and transfer are constantly taking place in the arts - be it through the cinematographic adaptation of a novel, the setting of poetry to music, or the literary ekphrasis of a painting. During our graduate conference *Shifting the Lens. Perspectives on Literature, Media, and Culture* from 14 to 16 May 2025 at the University of Klagenfurt, we invite doctoral students to take a closer look at intermedial processes and think beyond conventional processes of translation. The following questions will take centre stage: How can intermedial and transcultural processes be described? What changes, additions, and losses occur in the transfer? What methodology may we employ to answer transmedial inquiries? Is there an actualisation of the 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes' in view of the creative potential of artificial intelligence?

The following four thematic clusters should serve as possible starting points; however, contributions need not be limited to them:

### **(1) Translation Processes: Aesthetics, Motifs, and Materials**

Translation processes are intermedial processes that transport a message from one medium to another, as the theories of Roman Jakobson, Michael M. Bachtin or Walter Benjamin analyse. The transfer of texts into other languages, of subject matter and motifs into other genres or of aesthetic processes into other techniques and styles are possible approaches to analysing translation processes. Questions concerning attachment and 'fidelity' or freedom and 'infidelity' as well as adaptation and appropriation are just as relevant as questions concerning the mutual influence of intermedial processes on the individual media. In Doris Bachmann-Medick's concept of the translational turn, translation is understood to be at work beyond language and text boundaries and serves as a category of analysis for transcultural communication at large.

## **(2) Transculturality / cultural transfer**

Translations take place not only between media, but also between cultures. These processes are based on hidden power relations. Debates on the canon and canon criticism analyse hegemonic structures between languages and cultures and focus on counter-narratives from marginalised, decentralised perspectives. Postcolonial theory, among others, deals with transcultural intermediality and cultural transfer; the so-called contact zone (James Clifford, Mary Louis Pratt, etc.) was defined as a theoretical space of exchange and negotiation between media, cultures and discourses and applied to readings of different media.

## **(3) Between Text, Image, and Sound**

The relationship between text and image has always been a topic of literary and visual studies. Both Horace ('ut pictura poesis') and Lessing (Laocoon debate) discussed the comparability of different disciplines, which has been updated to the present day. Transfer processes between the visual and the textual put up for discussion how motifs, symbols or concepts behave in different media and techniques. These include, for example, Anselm Kiefer's reference in *Dein goldenes Haar, Margarete* (1980) to Paul Celan's *Todesfuge* (1944/45), the visual poems of E.E. Cummings or the politically motivated conceptual art of Peter Weibel, but also graphic novels, series and films. In particular, two standard works of Norse mythology, Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda* and the older *Poetic Edda*, can be cited as examples of influences and adaptations in modern pop culture, such as in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Netflix's series *Ragnarök* (2020-2023) and in Marvel comics and films (e.g. Thor).

We can also find a number of examples of intermedia exchange in the history of music: be it the extensive material history of the Pygmalion myth, which has been adapted many times (e.g. in Jean-Philippe Rameau's opera *Pigmalion*, 1748 or in Frederick Loewe and Alan J. Lerner's musical *My Fair Lady*, 1956) or the complex interaction of sound, text and visuals in contemporary conceptual art. Multimedia and ephemeral phenomena such as theatre and performances should also be mentioned in this context. Productions that are based on existing dramas and other texts and adapt them for the stage are particularly noteworthy from the point of view of adaptation studies. Every production of a well-known text can be seen as an adaptation in itself.

## **(4) Future Forms of Narrative Expression (human and AI)**

Future forms of narrative expression offer new subject areas that can be explored. Cultural texts are not limited to written works such as poems, novels, short stories and other common literary forms, but are increasingly expanding into the medial space. Video games already represent alternative forms of narrative expression, but also more and more forays are being made into the realms of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR). In addition, literary works are increasingly being translated into these newer forms. We also welcome contributions that examine transmedia storytelling, which simultaneously utilises multiple media and platforms and thus goes beyond the adaptation of an 'original' cultural text into another medium or cultural context.

We invite PhD students from literary studies, cultural studies, the fine arts, musicology, game studies, comparative literature, translation studies, media studies, etc. to send us their abstracts in German or English of max. 400 words with a short biography to [coint2025@aau.at](mailto:coint2025@aau.at). The length of the paper should not exceed 20 minutes. The deadline for submissions is 15 February 2025.

The graduate conference will take place bilingually, in German and English. A publication following the conference is planned.

*Scientific direction: Ferro Agnese (Romance Studies), Ippendorf Elena (English Studies), Mühlböck Magdalena (German Studies), and Urach Tamara (English Studies) together with the speaker of the doctoral programme COINT, Assoc.-Prof. Dr. Angela Fabris (Angela.Fabris@aau.at)*

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