Intermedial Score – Structural Filiations
in The Context of Music–Literature Relations
as well as Musical and Visual Relations

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Abstract

Musical score since the beginning of the 20th century has been the object of study in other scientific and artistic areas. Its phenomenon lies in the synergy of acoustic and visual domain of perception. The object of study is the selection of works making up a specific type of intermedial score, which is created as a result of structural filiations in the context of music-literature relations as well as musical and visual relations. Contemporary literary works may contain elements of notation or music- related technology and their structure may resemble that of a musical piece. Musical composition may be based on literary text or created in connection with visual arts. Such works manifest signs of the existence of musical composition in literary text or the visual elements in musical pieces. This gives birth to an artefact generated live in the shape of "poem-score", "verbal score", "visual poetry", "musical graphic work", "animated score" or "musical installation art". Such cross-references in works using different media go beyond the traditional scope of study, therefore the analysis and interpretation of selected works will be presented in the context of Werner Wolf's theoretical reflection.

The works selected for analysis were fugues, whose baroque genre, indicated in the title, serves as an intermedial substitute. *Preludio e Fughe* by Umberto Saba, a literary work, is an example of artistic interpretation of the fugue musical form, where literary text may function autonomously without encompassing the musical intertext. The method of text inscription, referring to baroque music genre, determines its intermedial nature. Another work, *Fuge* in *The HeartPiece – Double Opera*, a composition by Krzysztof Knittel is an example of intermedial optophonetic poem, written in the form of graphic score, where the text by H. Müller is recited according to the principles reflecting the structure of a polyphonic form.

Additional aspect discussed in the presentation will be the sphere of vision and sound in the poem entitled *Is that wool hat my hat?* by Jackson Mac Low,

which represents the kind of score to be performed for two, three or four voices without the use of metronome. The composition by Katarzyna Kwiecień-Długosz entitled *Paplanina. Four serigraphies for tape* is an example of musical installation art, in which sound layer was combined with visual layer, making up a kind of animated score. One of its parts (*Runy* rearranged as *Soliloquium*) became an inspiration for Beata Oryl to create live performance (movement interpretation – parallel co-existence of physical body and interactive visualisation, related to the body in a specific manner within the frame of the sounds of music).

The aim of the presentation will be the analysis of selected literary and musical works, whose transcript is not conventional and whose intersemiotic features are manifested in the act of perception.

Key words: **intermediality, literary score, contemporary art and music, intertextuality, fuge.**

1. Introduction. The object of study

Intersemiotic relations between the 20th century poetry and musical notation have been discussed many times in Polish and foreign literature on the subject. References made to music by the authors of the works are displayed mainly as "the score", which is referred to in the title or subtitle of the work, as the author's commentary, as the quotation of technology, as expressive, dynamic or agogic markings, or, last but not least, in a literal form, where "the structure of the page of poetic text follows the same principles as the musical score"[4]. Not much attention, however, has been paid so far to the detailed description of mutual relations between other media (e.g.: filiations between fine arts or visual arts and literature or music) and to discussing the issue of literature blending into music as the main medium – intermedial relation, mentioned for instance by Werner Wolf [15].

This article is devoted to the above mentioned issues, belonging to the domain of widely understood interdisciplinary (intersemiotic) comparative literature, as defined by Andrzej Hejmej, who in his formulation of three text layers of musicality refers to the scheme created by Steven Paul Scher [8]. The object of study is the selection of music and literary works with elements of *performance*, making up a specific type of intermedial score, which is created as a result of structural filiations in the context of music-literature relations or musical and visual relations.

In order to present their clear distinctions, the author chose as the object of her analysis the literary work *Preludio e Fughe* by Umberto Saba (1928–1929), the poem *Is that wool hat my hat?* by Jackson Mac Low (1982), *Fuga*, a part of stage composition *The HeartPiece – Double Opera* by Krzysztof Knittel (1999), and musical composition *Paplanina. Four serigraphies for tape* by Katarzyna Kwiecień-Długosz (2017).

The transcript or the reception of these works may be interpreted as literary, animated or visual score, in which the phenomenon of intermediality is present.

On the one hand, they reveal their hybrid nature and intention-motivated morphology, on the other, create a new artistic discourse, which brings about a new message and a new aesthetic quality. Intermediality, as a phenomenon of post-modern culture, constitutes one of the significant paradigms of contemporary comparative studies. It is an artistic gesture which consists in synthesizing different ways of conveying information, where the media build up a new, integrated *message*.

It is worth highlighting that the art piece may be defined as intermedial, as the expert on intermedial issues – Artur Tajber, puts it, "not only when it combines,

assimilates and synthesises, different means of expression, achieving in this way the state of independence and autonomy, but when it combines them in its own, unique way" [13]. Thus, it is not the number of the media combined in the artefact which makes it intermedial, but only their mutual interaction and transformation by means of the context itself or technological intermingling possibilities. Intermediality "does not mean either a sum of various medial concessions or situating particular works in between media, but rather integrating aesthetic concepts of particular media in the form of a new medial context" [9].

The aim of the article is to analyse the selected musical and literary works whose transcript is not conventional and whose intersemiotic features are manifested in the act of perception.

2. Methodological issues

The score in the intermedial approach of Hejmej is a literary score ("score" without notes), which "refers not to the literary text itself, but merely to its immanent relation with the score in the literal, musical sense, to its relation – in the final aspect – with the musical composition" [7]. The score in Hejmej's interpretation is a certain type of intermedium, in which the connection is made between the sphere of sound and vision, as well as, on a different level, the sphere of music and language.

This means that on the one hand, in the literary text one can trace the *implicit* intersemiotic quotations (composition technique, musical markings, form, *genre* or the title of a particular musical piece) or *explicit* references such as description of the musical composition or other attempts of music thematization, on the other hand, the structure of literary text (its layout) resembles that of musical score transcript. The musical composition or its technology serves the function of a primary interpretative context in the literary work.

Poems, according to Hejmej's definition, are to be viewed differently, due to their structure being similar to the score in the strict sense. They may constitute material to be performed live and he describes them as "sound poetry score" [3]. Johanna Drucker, in turn, defines this type of poem as "performing score" [4]. This type of poem may be listened to or watched, offering an original verbal or visual "score". It may be referred to as "literary *performance*", created in real time.

Also, musical composition may be based on a literary text or created in combination with visual arts. Its score has features of graphic work or animated film. In this case we are dealing with multiple media being used, the combination of which produces an integrated artistic effect.

Such works manifest signs of the existence of musical composition in literary text, of literary text in a musical piece or the visual elements in a musical piece.

This gives birth to an artefact generated live in the shape of "poem-score", "verbal score", "visual poetry", "musical graphic work", "animated score" or "musical installation art".

The references of a given medium in the artistic work to other media go beyond the traditional scope of study, therefore the analysis and interpretation of the selected works and defining music-literature relations or musical and visual relations requires a broader context, based on Werner Wolf's theoretical reflection [15].

In the theory of intermediality, developed earlier by Steven Paul Scher, on the basis of the relations between music and literature, Wolf distinguishes between – *"intracompositional intermediality"* referring to the work in which more than one medium takes part in the signification process, and their presence can be singled out and quoted (*overt intermediality*) or it cannot be singled out or quoted and is only implicit (*covert intermediality*) [14].

The first of the aforementioned cases

results in so called intermedial imitation – *implicit reference* or intermedial thematization – *explicit reference,* the second case results in relations of different media – intermedial fusion or combination – which cannot be isolated and quoted in their performative role, creating a uniform multimedia message*.*

The works discussed in this article which resemble so called "literary scores", both those in the form of "poem score" and "performing score" represent the type of work in which a kind of intracompositional intermediality is present, as implicit references to music, connected with imitating the techniques and generic principles typical for the baroque style (fugue) or as explicit references based on music (dialogue between voices). The musical composition which displays the features of "animated score" is an example of plurimediality, where particular media blend into one another, i.e.: literature, graphics, visual arts, electronic media, digital media.

The structure of the works chosen for the analysis is similar to the one of palimpsest and may rely on "comparing the poetics based on semiological criteria characteristic for a given medium" [10].

Such methodological background makes it possible to approach and describe all that is unique in each work, its novelty, its *differentia specifica*.

3. The Type of Intermedial Score – Structural Filiations

The words of Gérard Genette: "one sings, the other speaks" [5], meaning that it is not possible to transpose one kind of art into another, could be a perfect start for opening a discourse on the mutual relations between arts that result in the creation of an intermedial score. The works discussed below manifest diversified structural filiations of the

media, which can be seen only in the act of perception.

3.1 Music-Literature Relations. Music in literature (*Preludio e Fughe* Umberto Saba)

Preludio e Fughe by Umberto Saba [11] is a literary cycle made up of a prelude and 12 2-voice or 3-voice fugues (for two or three voices), in which the author made reference to formal principles (in terms of construction model) of traditional music *genre*, as well as to the cycle *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier* by J.S. Bach. The works in question, forming a kind of "literary" fugue do not refer to a specific musical piece but only to the structural features of the genre in the strict sense. It has to be pointed out that polyphonic texture and its vertical dimension, determining the structure of the naturally multi-vocal musical piece, posed quite a challenge for the author of a linear text. The poet showed different voices in the fugue by means of different typographical setting in the text, where particular "voices" are represented by intertwining plots of literary content. It is possible, however, to determine in this work the correlatives of musical fugue factors and the means of polyphonic technique, which function in relation to this genre as a intersemiotic substitute. The theme Saba's fugues assumes a slightly different role than in musical fugue, as it does not constitute a main formal factor but is one of the elements of dialogue in the literary utterance.

Such implicit references were, as it seems, intentionally planned by the author – at the time of writing his cycle Saba was taking piano lessons [12]. The reference to the title "prelude and fugue" is not the only one present here, there is also a noticeable reference to Bach's practice of composing the cycle *Kunst der Fuge* consisting in complexity of means of polyphonic technique in subsequent pieces, where the 12th fugue is the most

complex piece in terms of structure.

The structure of two-voice fugues is constituted by the coexistence of antiqua and italics while the three-voice fugue (sixth fugue), omission of italics and using Arabic numerals in parentheses instead in order to mark a particular voice number. The voices in the fugue (signalled by the author in the subtitle) appear in a linear, continuous manner, being seemingly separate and autonomous formal factors. Italics appear in the text in an unorthodox role – namely, they serve a semantic function. Alternating use of regular font and italics additionally overlaps with the verse segmentation and separation of passages carrying different semantic significance (present only in the original language version). In the visual aspect, the addressee experiences the effect of so called literary interpretation of two-voice fugue themes, where one of the voices is the theme, the other is the counterpoint of the fugue (*See Figure 1*).

Sotto l'azzurro soffitto è una stanza
meravigliosa a noi viventi il mondo.
A guardarla nei cuori la speranza
e la fede rinasce. Da un profonde

carcere ascolto. *Tutto in lei risplende,*
nuovo e antico: ogni vita al suo cammino
prosegue lieta, e ad altro più non tende
che ad esser quale ti appare. Il destino

fu cieco e sordo: io dentro una segreta
mi chiusi, dove l'un l'altro tortura
nell'odio e nel disprezzo. *E chi ti vieta*
d'uscirne, e qui goder con noi la chiara

luce del giorno? Oh tu, che troppo sai
farti del mondo una bella visione,
hai mai sofferto di te stesso? *Oh assai,*
oh al di là di ogni immaginazione!

Figure 1. Umberto Saba, Quarta Fuga (a 2 voci) [11]

A different typographical configuration of the text is applied in the three-voice twelfth fugue. Saba already in the subtitle of his work (*a 3 voci: l'Uomo, l'Eco e l'Ombra*) specifies the presumed "cast of performers". In this fugue the poet uses both antiqua and italics, additionally segmenting the text for the stage performance purposes, where italics represent the voices of The Echo and The Shadow whereas the voice of The Man is marked with antiqua [6].

The prelude is a introductory artistic and methodological commentary to all fugues. Apart from its traditional role of an introduction it explains to the addressee the rules of text structure applied in particular fugues. The music is indicated in the text of the prelude as a theme. The use of phrases typical for the music terminology in the text (e.g: "voci discordi", "voci invano discordi", "estremi accordi", "in nuovi dolcissimi accordi") is what allows us to view this work in the category of intermediality with explicit references.

3.2 Music-Literature-Visual Relations. Sonic and visual poem (*Is that wool hat my hat?* by Jackson Mac Low)

Is that wool hat my hat? by Jackson Mac Low is an example of a literary performing score with the elements of visualisation, without the use of musical notation (literary performance). The main aim of the work is the transition from reading the poem silently to its recitation aloud. This work, referring to a musical piece, is divided into voices and designed to be performed on stage without the use of metronome (in identical rhythm), becoming a sphere dedicated to conceptualisation. The poem can be presented as a live performance, resulting in an intermedial spectacle with the performers' participation. Southland Ensemble gave such a performance in

2007 at the Conrad Prebys Music Center's Experimental Theater.

The text layout on the page is ambiguous – the author's intention behind this work is to let it serve a dual purpose: as a verbal text or a musical score to be performed in various configurations (one up to four voices). The text of the poem may be read (performed) in at least three ways, using the same set of words (in rows or in columns). Their different syntactic combinations result in different meanings. The first performer utters the title question, which remains unchanged in the first three stanzas. Subsequently, the question mark disappears, making the sentence an affirmative one and the particular words are repeated. The other voices interact with the first one, uttering the same material in different variations, which makes the initial sense of the sentence vanish altogether (See photo 1).

Photo 1. Jackson Mac Low, "Is That Wool Hat My Hat?" From Representative Works: 1938-1985 (New York: Roof, 1986), p. 307 [1]

Low's work is an example of a simultaneous construction modelled on the musical score. The poem's notation resembles a composition in which aleatoric technique is used (in the form of graphic score), where the elements such as the cast of performers, tempo, dynamics and the manner of *performance* (horizontal, vertical) are not clearly defined . In his transcript the author included many interpretative hints, which make it possible to create numerous invariants of *performance*.

3.3 Music-Literature Relations. Literature in music (Fuge in *The HeartPiece – Double Opera* by Krzysztof Knittel)

Another example of applying music-literature filiations in the artwork is the verbal fugue being a part of the semantic opera *The HeartPiece – Double Opera*. This chamber opera, created in 1999 is the effect of artistic work of Polish composer (Krzysztof Knittel) and American composer (John King) on the verbal text of the libretto based on the play "Herzstück" by Heiner Müller.

The fugue (the 16th scene of the opera) is a striking example of the use of symbolic play on words in a musical piece by Knittel.
Müller's text is a subject matter of the fugue, recited by musicians in three different languages. The fugue consists of

three subjects; each of them is recited in a different language (I – Polish.; II – English; III – German).

The composition, despite the traditional formal factors applied in it i.e.: theme (subject), episode, free polyphonic transformation (augmentation, diminution, subject retrograde), differs from its baroque archetype. The lack of defined sound pitch excludes the fulfilment of the other principles distinctive for this *genre*.

In this case we observe the interaction of different media and their fusion, including the emphasis put on "hybrid" nature of the visual registration of the score. In this fugue the factor of key importance is not the semantics of the poetic text as such but rather the sound as the material element of the text. This extract can be compared to the intermedial *optophonetic* poem, recorded in the form of a score, "in which the spatial transcript is reflected in the simultaneity of sound, paradigmatic in music" [14]. The fugue is thus an exemplification of broadly understood intermediality, where "the attempt is made to fulfill, within the scope of one medium, the aesthetic conventions and/or visual and auditory features of another medium" [2].

The score notation offers the possibility of performing the work in two versions (I – only verbal version; II – verbal version with instruments). The original transcript, illustrating the theme imitation helps to interpret the intention of the form. Below are shown the first two pages of the score (*See photo 2*).
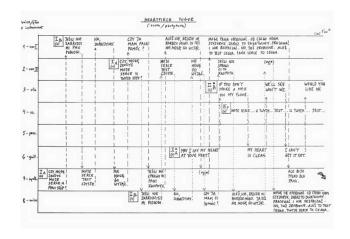

Photo 2. K. Knittel, J. King, The HeartPiece – Double Opera, scene 16 (the first two pages of the score) by kind permission of Krzysztof Knittel

In this case we are dealing with the opposite setting. In the musical piece we can point out implicit references to literature, consisting in quoting Müller's work, which is reproduced in the form of a fugue. The outcome is a kind of 'sound and vision' score, like in the literary work *Is That Wool Hat My Hat?*

3.4 Musical and Visual Relations. Animated score (*Paplanina. Four serigraphies for tape* by Katarzyna Kwiecień-Długosz)

The contemporary composition by

Katarzyna Kwiecień-Dlugosz entitled *Paplanina. Four serigraphies for tape* is a musical installation art, in which the recipient can follow, apart from the layer of music (tape), the visual layer, created on the basis of the drawings by Jacek Papla (graphic artist). The series of miniatures was composed specially for the exhibition of his works held in The University Library in Zielona Góra in January 2017. The first word of this composition's title, "Paplanina", requires additional explanation. In Polish, the verb *paplać* means "talk a lot and sometimes about silly things" (slang), so the title is a kind of joke and could be translated as *talking*. The title itself also refers to the name of the composer.

The work consists of four parts: 1. *Runes*, 2. *Spheres of sensitivity*, 3. *Votive offerings*, 4. *Marks*. The titles of pieces correspond to the titles of drawings. *Runes*,

The sound units used to create the tape contents come from:

- traditional set of instruments: church organs recorded in a monastery in Bavaria, double bass, percussion instruments (bongos, maracas), Vietnamese instruments (litophone, gong, hegaro), the quotation of *Passacaglii C minor* by J.S. Bach BWV 582, the voice of a soprano singer (vocal track from the composer's work entitled *Fantasmagoria* for soprano and electronic instruments),
- phonospheres: human voices in Polish and Vietnamese language, a crying child (the voice of a 3-month old composer recorded by her parents), symbolic holiday song performed by the composer's husband's grandmother,
- sonospheres: street noise, the sound of sea waves in Croatia and the sounds made by swallows, recorded in Dubrovnik, the sounds made by appliances (washing machine, clock, hands feeling the fabrics: wool and silk), music box.

They were processed and generated by means of computer software – a creative digital tool: Cubase and Audacity.

The work can be therefore viewed as an "medial hybrid", made up of different media (musical content, electronic media, digital media, graphic works, visualisations), which, when combined, create an integrated artistic effect. The titles of pieces are the consolidating aspect of the entire project, helping to fully understand the meaning of the intermedial artefact.

The work does not contain musical notation – one may be tempted to conclude that we are dealing with an animated score, which the listener can follow in the act of perception. Sophisticated drawings by Papla were the inspiration for the composition.

The listener, apart from hearing the sounds generated by tape, follows animated graphic images illustrating the scenes of the intermedial spectacle performed live. As further explained in the commentary of Katarzyna Kwiecień-Długosz: "*Runes* are ancient mysterious signs written on stones in the North of Europe. The main characters of this part are stone and water (*See photo 3*). *Spheres of sensitivity* is a story of love, desire, dreams and longings (*See photo 4*). *Votive offerings* are colourful strings fastened on tree branches in Bulgarian woods. They were also tied around the wrists of the youngest child in the family in order to bring good health and luck (*See photo 5*). *Marks* are pictures showing roofs with windows, where the symbols of simple geometrical shapes are emphasized (*See photo 6*).

The listener can imagine life observed through the window or inside the buildings" [16].

Photo 3. Runes II, 2011 (Jacek Papla) by kind permission of Jacek Papla
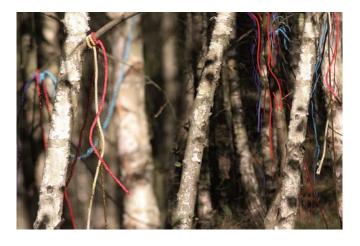

Photo 5. Votive offerings II, 2011 (Jacek Papla) by kind permission of Jacek Papla

Photo 6. Mark II, 2011 (Jacek Papla) by kind permission of Jacek Papla

As a result of fusion of particular media a polymedial composition is created. The interference between *ars* and *techne* determines its aesthetic value.

4. Conclusion

Musical score since the beginning of the 20th century has been the object of study in other scientific and artistic areas. Its phenomenon lies in the synergy of acoustic and visual domain of perception. The score, as a spatial representation of a musical piece is the example of intermedium, combining the visual aspect with the sound and, on a different level, the musical aspect with the linguistic one [3].

This article is an attempt at showing various, evident or covert references to

Photo 4. Spheres of sensitivity, 2007 (Jacek Papla) by kind permission of Jacek Papla

music in literary works, and the references to literary works or visual arts in the musical piece, making up a particular type of score, which is deconstructed and loses its primary (musical) nature.

The choice of poems, which refer to the technology of a musical form characterized by extremely complex and strict formal and intellectual discipline

based on counterpoint and polyphony, producing so called "literary fugue", made it possible to indicate distinctions between the applied media. However, one has to bear in mind that it is not possible to literally transpose a musical work into a literary one, but only to interpret, in a certain manner, the musical structure in literature.

On the other hand, the poems in which the poet included the preforming instructions, so called "performative term" directly impose the associations with music, offering a text to be performed in the form of "performing score".

Paplanina, a piece by a Polish composer is a kind of musical installation art, where the listener hears the sounds generated from tape and simultaneously watches the display of animated, edited images.

The process of creation in case of this composer's work involved the inclusion of the design thinking in the scope of artistic practice of sound exploration.

The combination of different means of communication creates an intermedial discourse, a complementary whole – *new syncretistic medium*.

The methodological principles, taking into account various intermedial filiations, adopted by the author made it possible to evaluate the original "produced text" in terms of its performative aspect.

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