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**Rhetorics, Innovation and
New Media**

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Rhetorics, Innovation and New Media

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Abstract

Innovation, when it is discussed in the social sciences is often given definitions consistent with economics or technology oriented approaches. This paper offers a culturally substantiated approach. It looks at how innovations in new media forms can be understood from a semiotic analytical perspective. A new media form, for instance, a multimedia videogame, is considered as an infinitely heterogeneous and multimodal entity, a 'text', that inherits many of its constituting elements or structural principles from earlier forms of media. The analysis suggests how a particular new form of such a constellation may come together. It shows how new media forms are often 'translated' piece by piece from the 'reservoirs of culture'. This paper takes Nike's 2002 Soccer World Cup global inter-media campaign as an example to show how it might be useful to develop an analytical toolset derived from the semiotic tradition for analyzing these processes.

1 Introduction

This paper is about the ‘morphodynamics’ of new media. Morphodynamics is a term referring to the evolutionary dynamics of forms (see, for instance, Andersen 1996). It focuses on the mechanisms of innovation and evolution of the forms of media – where, how and why new representations and forms of media spring from the existing reservoirs of culture. The paper offers a conceptual tool-set that can be used to analyse the build-up and functions of multimodal texts. It demonstrates how cultural semiotics helps to re-theorise aspects of multimodality as an energising phenomenon that provides culture with innovations and supports its evolution. The next section introduces the Nike media campaign. This section is followed by an introduction to the notion of a ‘text’ as developed by the semiotic theorist Yuri Lotman. His concept of the ‘semiosphere’ is discussed and then applied to consider the strata or layers of what can be designated as ‘intersemiotic translations’, using the Nike campaign to illustrate these concepts.

2 The Case Study: “The Secret Tournament”, an Inter-Media Campaign

"The Secret Tournament", the worldwide advertising campaign, said to have been the most expensive of its time (estimated to have cost more than £10 million), was launched by Nike, the world's biggest sports clothes retailer, in Spring 2002 – a few months before the start of football's World Cup in Japan and South Korea (See Figure 1). The central elements of the campaign were the two TV commercials – "The Secret Tournament" and "The Rematch" – directed by Monty Python's Terry Gilliam. According to the script, the commercials were set in the hold of a cargo-liner docked in an unknown harbour. A massive cage with football turf was built into the empty liner and in this cage 24 of the world's élite players held a secret tournament, with eight teams of three players playing against each other. The fictional competition was refereed by Eric Cantona – an ex-football star.



Figure 1. Snapshots from “The Secret Tournament”

The commercials, while implicitly advertising Nike’s products and promoting its brand, referred explicitly to Nike’s promotional football-related website (www.nikefootball.com), which was declared as the official channel of the 'secret tournament'. As the narrative of the campaign rolled out in real time, the users were first informed about the developments in the tournament on that website. The different versions of the "Secret Tournament" were screened on TV in parallel - first the quarter-finals, then the semi-finals and the final. On the website, which received that same year the most renowned advertising trophy, the Cannes Lion, for the best Internet site, one could find different sub-sites and applications that all supported the campaign in one way or another. Here is a quote from Nike’s press release: "Football fans everywhere can participate in the Secret Tournament at www.nikefootball.com. ... If they are brave enough to enter, they will find a devastating blend of design and interactivity: 3D gaming, downloadable posters and commercials, exclusive commentary from Cantona, the "Mind Cage", and full product information, all in 12 languages ..."

Prior to the TV and online-campaign, Nike also posted an enigmatic campaign involving a scorpion sign sprayed on walls and depicted on billboards and fly-posters around the world. The meaning of this remained secret for a while, but once the TV commercials were screened, the relevance of the symbol was revealed and the mystery solved. In time this symbol, the scorpion, became the main integrating 'intertextual switcher' that held together all the composites of this grand-scale inter-media campaign (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Scorpion graffiti and posters in Italy.

Although the primary goal of this campaign of fly-posters, billboards and scorpions was to refer back to the TV commercials and in the end to advertise the company's products, the secondary goal was to promote a series of events - the Scorpion Knockout tournaments (see Figure 3). This series of actual tournaments was held prior to the World Cup in June 2002 for 11-15 year-olds in many cities around the world.

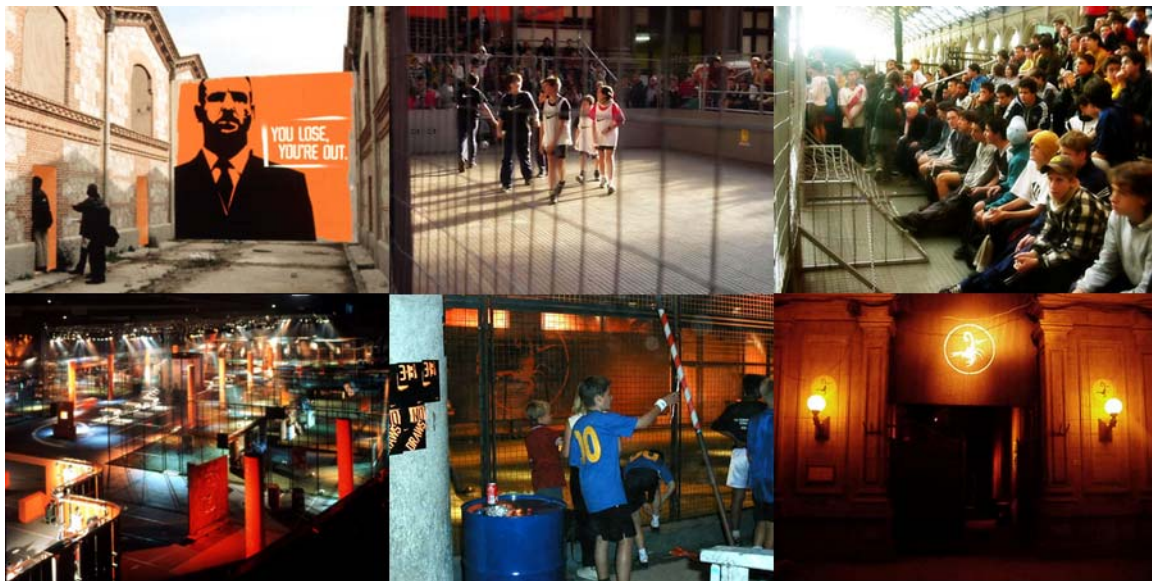


Figure 3. Scorpion Knockout tournaments around the word (pictures are from the tournaments in Montevideo, Berlin and London).

Notwithstanding the immense scale of the campaign, we can define its main constituent texts as follows:

1. The different versions of two TV commercials;
2. The website with its constituent subsites – informational subsite on the narrative of the secret tournament, two games – "The Scorpion Knockout" and "The Mind Cage", downloadable wallpapers and posters, informational subsites on street tournaments;
3. The campaign on streets – fly-posters, billboards and scorpion logos sprayed on city walls around the world;
4. The actual "Scorpion Knockout" tournaments for kids around the world.

The question is how did these different textual entities, realised in different materials and sign-systems and making their appearance in quite different spatio-temporal places and conditions and with different frequencies relate to each other? How did they grow from each other or how were they translated from and into each other? Can they be said to make up one integral whole, one culture, one text? How do these constituent texts still define their identities, separate from the rest of the campaign and its intertextual universe? And in the end, how does this universe

communicate with its outside, its extratextual reality? The analysis in the following sections suggests how this inter-media event emerged from the existing culture as a new semiotic space and poetic innovation and indicates how it fed back into this culture.

3 Lotman's 'Text' – The Bed of Cultural Innovations

Answers to these questions can be developed by turning to the textual semiotics of Yuri Lotman, the leading figure of cultural semiotics and by introducing his concept of the semiosphere – an analytic model for analysing the dynamic relations in culture and its texts. To understand this model we need to start with the Kantian essence of Yuri Lotman's semiotics (see M. Lotman 1994, 2001, 2002; Kull & M. Lotman 1995). The central notion in his theory, where everything starts from, is the text (as an act of language use), not a language, sign, structure or binary oppositions. In terms of Kant's epistemology, a text is a certain *Das Ding an Sich*, it comes before the language, it is always new (through constantly redefining itself in time in its relations with the outside and generating new contexts it is like a river or a self-growing logos in Heraclites' terms). As such, it creates its own languages, its own universe, and is therefore a closed and sovereign structure, an immanent entity for the outside reality. The elements of that structure do not have an independent value, meaning or function, their role being determined by their structural functions. Or in Eco's terms (1977, 1979) by the new code that deductively covers the composite text and that is born through the new rhetorical relations within the text. As such a text could be understood as a self-generating system which constitutes the most basic semiotic entity – as everything else (the signs, their meanings, the languages and their grammar) is derived from or depends upon it.

Another central principle of cultural semiotics is that the text, even a verbal one, is always at least bilingual, it is organised by multiple codes and consists of several 'languages'. Yuri Lotman explains this (2001:10) using the principle that the ideal language is impossible, as then there would not be need for any kind of communication as the world and existence would already be explained. Therefore,

explaining reality presumes at least two languages. Hence, a minimal functional structure, a text, presumes inherent plurality, semantic conflicts and ambiguity, a dialogue, which consists of at least two constituent structures. For instance, a prayer is organised by the discreet and inductive logic of verbal language but also by deductive logic, by the symbolic message of a particular religion and its specific organising conventions.

Another example is a poem which is governed by the vast number of cultural codes that are not tied to or derived from the verbal language: metrics, rhythm and plot, but especially its rhetorical structure – metaphors, comparisons, metonyms, etc., that we can find in a poem and that make it work poetically. These make up a system that functions entirely differently from that of a natural language. In natural language conventionality dominates (symbolicity in terms of Charles S. Peirce's) but in rhetoric it is determination through similarity (iconicity or diagrammatic relations in Peirce's sense). The poetic tension of a poem comes from such a tension between the innovative co-functioning of such different modes and principles.

Such a creative mechanism of co-existence of the semiotic elements with various degrees of determination in Peirce's sense is more plausible, of course, in the case of texts that are explicitly multimodal – as are most modern new media interfaces. These are all about the conflicting logics of continual (visual and aural) and discrete textual elements and their apparent mutual untranslatability, which is paradoxically still achieved through the principle of semantic integration, known as rhetoric figure or trope. This is why it is useful to consider the concept of 'rhetorical texts' in relation to multimodal textual wholes.

Lotman distinguishes rhetorical text from non-rhetorical text by arguing that the first can be conceptualised as a structural unity of two or more subtexts encoded with the help of several mutually untranslatable codes.

"These subtexts may be conceptualized as local subsystems and the text therefore, in its different parts, must be read with the help of different languages, or alternatively, the text looks like different discourses which have equal rights throughout its course. In the latter case the text can be read on two levels, for instance, realistically and

symbolically. Rhetorical texts include all instances of contrapuntal collision of different semiotic languages within a single structure (Y. Lotman 1990:57)."

Lotman and Eco share the understanding that what we have in such a case is again a text as an heterogeneously-coded whole – where the integrity of a text is, according to Eco, achieved through the mechanism of semantic 'overcoding'. In this case all entities of the whole acquire additional meaning because, as part of something, they inevitably refer to 'something else' in addition to that which they originally signified. For Eco, overcoding proceeds from existing codes to more analytic subcodes: on the basis of a pre-established rule, a new rule is proposed which governs a rare application of the previous rule (1977:133). But it is also a generally acknowledged understanding in semiotic theory that in such situations, where a relationship of adequacy is established between mutually non-juxtaposable signifying elements (owing to the context they share), they form a rhetorical figure. Over the centuries, the theory of tropes has accumulated an extensive literature defining the main types: metaphors, metonyms and synecdoches, but whatever attempts have been made to give tropes a logical definition, Yuri Lotman argues (1990:37), it is obvious that one half of the trope has a verbal aspect and the other, a visual one, however masked the latter may be. What he refers to is the collision of two modalities – of conventionality and determinedness (paradigmatic replacements in metaphors are not conventional but are determined by the principle of similarity) in Peirce's sense, which gives a trope its innovative tension and poetic power. We can therefore suggest that in the case of multimodal new media forms it is the tension between various degrees of determinedness and conventionality that creates the potential for the semantic innovation and dynamicity needed for the evolution of new representational means and forms.

"What is important is that the meaning-generating principle of the text as a whole lies in the juxtaposition of segments that are in principle not juxtaposable. Their mutual recording creates a language capable of many readings, a fact which opens up unexpected reserves of meaning. A trope /-/ is a mechanism for constructing a content which could not be constructed by one language alone (Y. Lotman 1990:44)."

In the context of multimodal media-texts, Lotman shares the popular view (for instance, Barthes 1977:18, Lemke 2002:303) that attempts to translate messages

between the modally-different sign-systems are impossible. In the context of media innovation, however, it is precisely in these situations that efforts to translate are most valuable.

"For the results are not precise translations, but approximate equivalencies determined by the cultural-psychological and semiotic context common to both systems. This kind of 'illegitimate', imprecise, but approximate translation is one of the most important features of any creative thinking. For these 'illegitimate' associations provoke new semantic connections and give rise to texts that are in principle new ones (Y. Lotman 1990:37)."

With this understanding Lotman comes close to Peirce's thesis that abductive thinking, associative reasoning on the basis of similarity, is the essence of all creativity. Creativity is explained similarly also in Eco's philosophy of knowledge where there are two different ways to achieve innovations: factual judgements and metaphors. The factual judgement is the discovered 'object' in Peirce's sense, it is something born outside the language system and only afterwards is it transformed into semiotic knowledge. But the metaphor is born from an internal disturbance of semiosis. If it succeeds, it produces knowledge because it produces new semiotic judgements and, according to Eco, in the final outcome it obtains results that do not differ from factual judgements.

"It is the moment that new codes *could (should)* be born and that the old codes cannot resist the impact. When finally metaphors are transformed into knowledge, they will at least have completed their cycle: they become catachreses. The field has been restructured, semiosis rearranged, and metaphor (from the invention which it was) turned into culture (Eco 1979:87)."

From the perspective of cultural semiotics, tropes that are born on the points of collision of different modalities in textual wholes are the mechanism that facilitates the dynamic evolution of languages and other forms of communication and of culture. Tropes are therefore the main mechanism whereby new media applications and their increasingly multimodal forms are generated.

If texts are always heterogeneously coded by such newly-born subcodes, as Eco puts it, the crucial question is how a text can still preserve its integrity. The answer is

that the textual whole also constitutes a meta-trope through the process of textual overcoding – it is transformed into a single sign bearing a single meaning. It is through such heterogeneous integration and overcoding that a textual space starts functioning 'auto-poietically'¹ and declares its borders, its own 'I', and what remains outside it. Such a dichotomy, the simultaneous movement towards both the ultimate integration and growing heterogeneity, is the paradoxical nature of such texts and also of culture as a whole, as recognised by cultural semiotics.

4 The Characteristics of the 'Semiosphere'

What is also crucial in Lotmanian cultural semiotics is the insight that putting together texts and culture in this way is hardly accidental. It is one of the central principles of cultural semiotics that texts and culture are part of the same dynamic. Culture is materialised in texts and texts make up a culture. It is through texts that culture communicates and it is through the culture as a text that it fulfils its function to preserve its memory. It is because of that 'sameness' that it is possible to apply the concept of the 'semiosphere' to both. This concept, originally coined by Lotman drawing upon the example of Vladimir Vernadski's (1998) biosphere, has as its central features:

1. its inherent heterogeneity in terms of languages that fill its continuum;
2. its structural asymmetry (constituent languages are in their different phases of development; but also the contrast of centre and periphery);
3. its boundedness by the boundaries of the translatory function;
4. the principle of binarity – that every textual entity is based on the binary distinction of internal versus external space.

¹ Autopoietic functioning or 'autopoiesis' is a concept that refers to self-production or self-creation. Derived from theoretical biology and the works of Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela from the 1970s the concept has by now sparked debates in research fields as diverse as artificial intelligence and sociology. In the semiotic domain the concept has been successfully integrated into the frameworks of biosemiotics and cyber-semiotics - where it essentially refers to the mechanism by which systems continually re-produce themselves as autonomous units.

Using these characteristics we can analyse the structure as well as the dynamic of change in smaller textual spaces and in culture as a whole. The conception and definition of a semiosphere are matters of perspective and depend on the aim of the analytic exercise, that is, what we define as the boundary, the first discontinuity that ends the self-defined semiotic continuum. We could perceive as one a single website that constitutes an inherently heterogeneous but bounded textual entity – as, for instance, the Nike football site in its hypertextual entirety. But we could define as one also the whole 'web-culture' as a textual entirety and a semiotic space that is structured in a certain way. In the latter case, one website is part of the cultural whole, it is one of its articulations and functions as a certain sub-semiosphere, where the semiotic 'I' is realised as a certain assembly of particular codes, conventions, languages and texts, but which has strong bonds with the rest of the culture which is its extra-textual reality.

We can also take a middle way and use the semiosphere concept as an analytical tool for examining the communicational relations within an inter-media campaign. In this case, we can define as a sub-semiosphere the computer game, which is part of the website that serves as a core of the advertising campaign. This website constitutes a sub-semiosphere of the textual whole of the campaign – a bounded semiosphere in its own right.

Lotman argues (1990:138) that the entire space of a semiosphere is transected by boundaries at different levels, of different languages and texts. That is so if we think of the ways in which the universe of the Nike campaign relates to, and communicates with, the rest of the culture, that is, the grand semiosphere in this respect. Therefore, these boundaries can be understood as 'the hottest spots' for the process of cultural innovation.

"The notion of boundary is an ambivalent one: it both separates and unites. ... The boundary is bilingual and polylingual. The boundary is a mechanism for translating texts of an alien semiotics into 'our' language, it is the place where what is 'external' is transformed into what is 'internal', it is a filtering membrane which so transforms foreign texts that they become part of the semiosphere's internal semiotics while still retaining their own characteristics (Y. Lotman 1990:136-37)."

The entire conditional space of the semiosphere is transected by boundaries of different levels (Lotman 1990:138), turning the whole textual space into an engine of semiosis. In this respect, Lotman is close to Bakhtin, for whom a man is "wholly and always on the border, looking himself into an eye of the other or with the eyes of the other (Bakhtin 1979:312)." Bakhtin suggests that one should not imagine culture as a spatial whole that has borders and also an inner territory, arguing that culture is wholly located on borders, whereas boundaries route everywhere, pierce all its moments. But for Lotman, as explained by Torop (1999), the notion of boundary is inseparable from individuality. Individuality is the outcome of the autopoietic process where the system identifies itself and its boundaries in space and/or time. It is the self-defined continuum inside the self-generated boundaries that thereafter become the mechanisms of translation – as in identifying oneself presumes the realisation that between the I and the alien there exists a difference. A cultural system, while identifying itself, its boundaries and the outside, also has to identify the Other and its characteristics. It has to understand and translate its features for itself. And when the translation through the boundary, the 'bilingual membrane' is conducted, the communicative act finds a place and through this, new information enters the cultural space. According to Sebeok (1991:22), it is the act of communication that decreases entropy locally, i.e. produces change within the system. Hence, it is the communication between different semiotic spaces and systems, different languages and modalities, that facilitates production of new information and innovation.

5 Intersemiotic Translations as Ggrounds for Media Innovation

As explained above, in multimodal, and especially new multimedial textual wholes, communication between cultural spaces (or places in spatiotemporal space) functions according to the principle of rhetorical figures – i.e. how dislocations of media content and/or conventions and, hence, evolution in media design, take place.

This recognition relates to a phenomenon that in new media studies is regarded as the quintessential feature of new media evolution: it is the concept of "remediation" – a term coined by Bolter and Grusin (1999). The concept refers to the representation

of one medium in another and the authors claim that this phenomenon is the defining characteristic of the new digital media.

"...at this extended historical moment, all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well. Our culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media" (Bolter & Grusin 1999:45).

Above we saw that the practice of 'remediation' can be re-theorised on the grounds of the 'neo-rhetoric' as a classic principle of rhetoric dislocations – the universal mechanism for how culture provides itself with innovations and leads to feasible evolution. It would be presumptuous to assume that this practice characterises the current media revolution more than any previous one or in the future. But the principle that every text is part of wider cultural dynamics is especially important because one of the keystones of a semiosphere is that everything contained in the memory of culture is directly or indirectly part of that culture's synchrony. Hence, all sorts of traditional structures can be said to continue to exist in culture's modern textual expressions. This phenomenon suggests some of the intertextual relations with the rest of culture that modern media interfaces may have. As every element is always 'remediated' it takes into the text the different semiotic circumstances of its earlier contexts of use – every text embraces a multilevel intertextual discourse. In the words of Eco (1979:21), every text refers back to previous texts, and no text can be read independently of the reader's experience of other texts. Intertextual knowledge is hence a special case of overcoding and it establishes its own intertextual frames that help to evoke the particular discourse. For instance, when a TV commercial is 'translated' into a computer game then all the elements in the game's composition, which are derived from the original movie, start to function as 'intertextual switchers', through which other texts and contexts are inserted into the new. Such elements work rhetorically, being derived from 'outside', from different kinds of media reality, and having a 'history' they bear the illusion of being more 'real'. Hence, in their new context, they have a new modal contrast with the rest of their new environment.



Figure 4. Snapshots from the Nikefootball.com online-game “The Mind Cage”

In Figure 4 we see snapshots from “The Mind Cage” – a Flash game that was on the Nike football website in 2002. The game, designed in a flat-colour poster style, was visually in constant movement, lasted exactly three minutes, consisted of several ‘sub-games’, had an enormous pace and was accompanied by a pressing jazz-loop and several sound effects. It was not so much a game as an impressive sequence, where the quick-witted users were given the possibility not to fail the ‘test’ (if one had the mental abilities required to survive the real game in the cage). In most of the snapshots we can see an abstracted figure of a bald man in a suit – that is Eric Cantona, the referee of the fictional secret tournament and the ‘host’ of both the TV ads and the web environment. As such he was one of the main unifying emblems of the campaign, together with the scorpion logo and the visual design of the campaign. In the snapshot, where one has to match the ‘television sets’ with the four teams, reference is made to the fictional teams from the commercials. At the same time, the scene where the host is about to throw the ball into the hatchway refers to the actual scene in the commercials – where games were started ‘in the Cage’. These elements function as intertextual switchers through which the other texts are inserted into the new textual entity. Within the multimodal whole of the Mind Cage, the image

of Cantona as a 'text in text' appears because of its background and existence in other media as more 'real' and, hence, in contrast with its new 'more fictional' environment. Through this contrast other elements in the composition are put into context and given new meaning – i.e. the whole composition starts to work rhetorically because of the translatory dislocation of the textual entity from one environment to another.

Peeter Torop, Lotman's student, defines such a translation as intersemiotic – a concept which was first coined by Roman Jakobson and has a central position in the semiotics of the São Paulo school. Jakobson distinguished in his classical work (1971) between three types of translations: intra-, interlinguistic-, and transsemiotic translation or transmutation. Transmutation is defined as interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign-systems. Torop comments (2000) that intersemiotic translation in Jakobson's sense becomes associated with all manifestations of translation activities in culture. It can be autonomous in the event of a screen adaptation of a novel and complementary in the case of an illustration or a photo accompanying a newspaper article, etc. Torop takes this one step further and argues that the co-existence of languages in culture, with the constant and simultaneous specialisation and integration of those languages, with the processes of creolisation and different levels of meta-descriptions, with migration, translation and transformation of meanings, shows that culture as a dynamic system is permanently in the state of *total translation*.

"Intersemioticity is one of the principles of texts generation and, correspondingly, the description of intersemiotic translation brings us closer to the analysis of texts generation in contemporary culture ... A permanent interweaving of texts, discourses and media, i.e. messages and meanings, takes place in culture. It might be said that culture is a permanent process of intersemiotic translation (Torop 2000)."

6 Strata of Intersemiotic Translations

Torop's definition of culture as an infinite process of total translation refers to a system and possible distinction of smaller strata of translational flows and activities. Distinguishing between these is important as we need an analytical means for recognising possible translational paths associated with cultural dynamics, the remediatory practices and rhetorical dislocations in the new multimodal texts. According to Torop's classification, the first type is textual translation or 'ordinary translation', where whole texts are translated into other texts. In the textual universe of the Nike campaign we can think of the downloadable TV commercials which were linked to the Nike football website. As such, they were dislocated to appear as full and bounded texts in the other text, that is, in the whole of the website.

The second type is metatextual translation – the outcomes of which are texts of a reflective nature - annotations, reviews, commentaries, parodies, but also advertising. In Nike's campaign, we have several levels of such metatextual translation. Firstly, there are the concepts of the campaign and the fictional performance of the football superstars that were translated into 30-second or 60-second audiovisual narratives of TV ads. Secondly, there is the hypertextual web environment, Nikefootball.com, that functions metatextually in relation to the ads – explaining their grand narrative and updating it in time. In fact, the website had the central metatextual role in relation to the whole campaign – explaining the functions of its different composites and defining autopoietically their relations to each other, for instance, the relation of the Mind Cage game to the TV ads and then the game's fictional function of testing the abilities of the youngsters, who were maybe planning to take part in the actual SKO tournaments.

The third type is one where texts or text groups are translated into text units. Torop calls them in-textual and intertextual translations. The fourth and final type is extratextual translation, where texts made of one substance (for instance, verbal) are translated into texts made of another substance (like audiovisual). In the case of the Mind Cage and its host Cantona and other elements derived from TV ads, we have a mixed case of the third and fourth alternatives: the group of audio-visual texts are

translated into various text-units of different modalities of the multimodal and hypertextual game.

The translation of the principles of the game seen in the TV commercials into the rules of the kids' tournament or into the second online computer game "The Scorpion Knock Out", is the fourth type. In the first case, the fictional narrative of the game is translated into another modality – a real-life and real-time game in the physical environment, a sports game and a ritual, which could be repeated and replicated as the rules of the game were meta-communicated on the web-site of the campaign. In the second case, the rules of the game derived from the audio-visual story were translated into an algorithm of a computer game, into a multimodal and hypertextual whole or an 'interactive text' (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Modelling translation between modalities and materialities – TV commercial, computer game and the tournament.

The concept of 'remediation' (Bolter and Grusin 1999) can be argued to refer to certain mixed cases of third and fourth strata of Torop's classification. It can serve as a reflective tool when the structure of a text or a sub-text is translated into a new textual environment or media place or different modality, and when it is translated generically, as a more or less abstracted *model* of the original text, a genre or a media technique. Acknowledging this serves as another indication that rhetoric dislocations are always based on the similarity between the paradigmatic replacements –for both Lotman and Peirce models are iconic signs which manifest their objects through the syntactic relations – the conceptual structure is communicated by syntactic structure (Lotman 1990b:10). Such a syntactic structure

is also what Eco refers to when he talks about intertextual frames and argues that these are usually identified with genre rules (1979:21). This applies especially to the elements that are crucial for progressing the 'story' and which encourage the user to activate the hypotheses which are based on his or her earlier experiences with similar texts. For instance, most of the 'sub-games' of the Mind Cage rely on such intertextual frames and they could be defined as a sort of remediated computer-game artifice. For instance, the one where the user has to score goals uses the basic structure of 'The Pong,' the oldest video-game, which is customised for imitating football this time (although originally it was tennis) (see Figure 6).

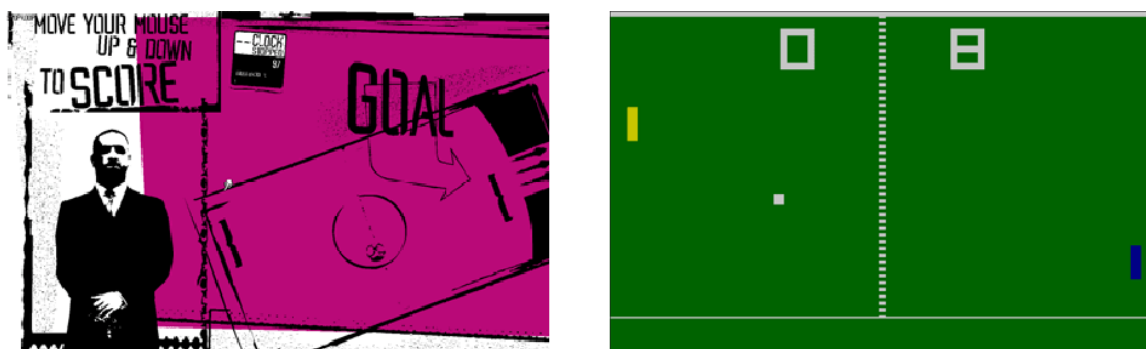


Figure 6. One of “The Mind Cage’s” sub-games and “The Pong”.

Such customisation refers to another translational activity, which essentially works metaphorically – it is the playing activity itself. The game as a model of actual behaviour of playing football, the act of its modelling as its translation into another language. Here the game of football is presented in quite an abstracted manner: the general context of the campaign and the co-operation of different modes help us to conceive it – the 'goal' and the need to 'score' are explicated by words.

Another example of the modelling translation or remediation from this campaign is from the second computer game – the Scorpion Knockout. When users enter the game they have to select their three-man teams. After that they have to ‘train’ their team through five practice games. The better-trained the individual players are, the better they perform when it comes to the online tournament. As demonstrated by Ahonen (2005), such a training sequence in a game is structurally a remediated form of another major artifice of electronic entertainment – the Tamagochi. This was an

electronic toy-gadget that was popular in the mid-nineties which had to be carried and virtually fed and played with on a regular basis or else it 'died'. Since the original form became unpopular it has produced countless copies and has turned into a genre. A close form to the Scorpion Knockout online game is Super Stable – a popular mobile game in Hong Kong. In that game the players have to breed and groom their horses, so that they can race against others. In Hong Kong, then, these virtual horse races are broadcast on TV and just as in real horse races, the fans and viewers can place bets on the virtual horses. This is another instance of a media innovation that is based on a set of translational activities from different media and reservoirs of culture.

7 Conclusion

These examples raise the question of how in the media-intensified process of 'total translation', we should understand the concept of text. This paper suggests that the approach of cultural semiotics allows us to redefine 'text' under the new conditions of modern culture, where communicational practices with different modes are increasingly integrated. The 'semiospheric approach', in addition to interpreting the text as a coherent whole, helps to analyse the position of a text in the semiotic space and its relations with other semiotic structures in culture. It offers a means for interpreting a nascent new media form as such a 'text' – as a dynamic process and as an 'open system' which gets its meaning from its relations with other forms and texts. This approach helps to distinguish the paths through which the forms and generic structures of texts move in the culture and borders they have to cross – offering a means to understand the morphodynamics that lead to innovative new media forms.

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