

Justyna Bucknall-Hołyńska
The University of Szczecin

Intermediality in Miranda Hart's Performance

Introduction

Intermediality, a term which can be defined here briefly as interrelations between different forms of media, appears to be a sign of “liquid modernity”. We live in a mediatized culture and concomitantly “exist” within different forms of media, logging on and off and jumping between platforms and simultaneously communicate with several people. It is reasonable to assume that intermediality is an important feature of cultural communication and has become “a fundamental dimension of human activity and a new social phenomena” (Chmielecki, 2007: 118). It is prevalent in the everyday life of many people, and has been utilised in contemporary art and by artists with interdisciplinary practices using various traditional and new media, “enabling the abolition of distance between a mentor or an authority role and the audience” (Szykowska, 2009: 65–66), refusing to treat recipients in a traditional way but pulling them into the dialogue, allowing them to be closer, to be a part of the performance, to be a co-author, or even lead-author.

The creativeness of Miranda Hart – one of the most popular comedy artists in Great Britain – is a good case in point. She presents a unique model of performance which we could call intermedial. The aim of this paper is to examine her work in this context. It will start with the introduction of the term “intermediality” and will then present Miranda Hart and her depiction in contemporary culture. The main part of the article deals with her (pop)cultural works of art, analysing “texts-events” (Kluszczyński: 41), focusing on the image of the artist emerging from this output, and the final part provides a brief overview of her current audience and her relationship with them.

I. Intermediality

Intermediality is a term frequently used in different discourses and with different meanings since the 1960's when Dick Higgins was the first who applied it to describe the activities of the Fluxus artists in his article *Intermedia*. To date there is no consensus definition of intermediality, mostly owing to technological changes in modern media, altering their status and functions, but also to the cultural practices connected with them (Hejmej, 2013: 100). It is, therefore, necessary to clarify the meaning and context with which it shall apply in this paper. The concept of intermediality has been developed to characterise specific relationships between the arts and media, and it is generally understood to mean correlations between at least two different media. In accordance with this, the medias may remain separate but also create a new compound medium, which can be called 'intermedium' (Kluszczyński, 2004: 22). Furthermore, "intermediality assumes an in-between space – «an inter» – from which or within which the mutual affects take place" (Kattenbelt, 2008: 7). Intermediality therefore can be said to have two senses relevant to this paper: the inter-reaction between different forms of media; and a position between the medias (the 'inter') which can be understood to be the results of the media, as applied to the subject of the media or its audience, and to be contrasted with the media itself. In the present case, Miranda Hart's character has been generated through various media incarnations, and this multi-media interaction has combined to create a persona that can be considered independently from any one media instance, and the product can therefore be said to exist in a space between them.

From the beginning of the 21st-century, media has been rapidly evolving and correlations between different elements of media become important tendencies in the development of the arts. Henry Jenkins identified this as the "convergence culture" in two overlapping senses. The first sense is technological and means a process of combining functions of different media in the same device. The second is the cultural change resulting from encouraging the audience to participate in media communication by searching for texts and information distributed in different media. This brings us to the essence of the convergence culture, being a process that occurs in the mind of participants (Jenkins, 2007: 9). These concepts of intermediality and convergence are closely situated and associated with: intertextuality, diversity, transgressions between genres, hybridization, nonlinearity, interactivity, processuality, immersiveness, among others. The selection of these concepts and

their intensity depend on both the attitude of the artist and the chosen medium or multimediality (Kluszczyński, 2004: 11).

Media has been changing and correlations between media have resulted in new forms of representation, ways of positioning performing works in time and space, dramaturgical strategies of communication with the participants, and generating new cultural, social and psychological meanings (Kattenbelt, 2008: 7).

It would appear that Miranda Hart understands those changes very well and adopts all aspects of developing media and intermedial features to create her work as a “total product” (Zajac, 2000: 164). She is also an artist who can combine several cultural roles at the same time whilst creating one consistent image with which she is identified.

II. Miranda Hart

Miranda Katherine Hart Dyke (born in 1972) is known professionally as Miranda Hart. As can be read in an unauthorised biography or on Wikipedia, descended from aristocracy, Miranda is the eldest daughter of Diana Margaret Luce and naval officer David Hart Dyke (Jonson, 2012: 13–15). Miranda has said that despite her family's apparent upper-class status, she does not view herself as such, and uses this disconnect for humor. She was educated at Downe House (as was the Duchess of Cambridge), studied political science at the University of West England in Bristol and then completed a post-graduate course at the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA) in London.

ALRA was the first drama school in the United Kingdom offering courses to prepare candidates to work in all media: theatre, film, television and radio. Examples of subjects taught include acting strategies and techniques for stage, screen and microphone; how to train voice and body; and, most interestingly for the purposes of this article, it ensures that students “will gain an understanding of how the industry works” (<http://alra.co.uk>). In fact, the programme of the acting course contains, among other evident subjects: script preparation, critiquing, storytelling and industry opportunities. Today students not only play on the stage but also produce a film, prepare a television and audio showreel, as well as perform live in front of industry professionals. In my opinion, ALRA's breadth of syllabus exerted an influence on Miranda's career and her decision to create an intermedial performance.

In 1996, pitching a comedy show written for the BBC, she failed to win over the corporation's executives but Jennifer Saunders, impressed by her and her show,

included Miranda Hart in her famous *Absolutely Fabulous*, helping her start her career as a comedienne. From these origins, Miranda Hart's career has developed to a stage when she is a film and television actress, an author (a creator, a script player and an actress) of sitcom *Miranda*, a stand-up and television comedienne, and a social media operative. A variety of media is utilised and converged, resulting in a sequential performance that creates the persona called Miranda.

For the purposes of analysing intermediality in Miranda Hart's performance, this paper first describes the forms of media she uses. Following this shall be a description of the image of Miranda as a performer, the purpose being to review the distance between the artist and her intermedial image (level of identification) and between the artist and her audience. It also contributes to an understanding of the correlation between media based on Miranda Hart's output, considering their intertextuality and interactivity, together with the rest of the features that can be considered to constitute intermediality, as well as assessing this form of intermediality as a cultural and social phenomenon.

III. Miranda Hart's Medial Roles and Intermedial Performance

It is evident from her filmography that Miranda Hart is first and foremost a comedy actress. From early 2000 she was a part of the cast of various TV-series and television or feature films, all of them within comedy genres or hybrids with a comedy aspect. Her career was developing systematically and, between 2004 and 2009, she had started to play more substantial roles and those recurring in several episodes. The most significant from that time are Chloè Alice Teal in a sci-fi comedy *Hyperdrive* (BBC Two, 2006–2009) and Barbara in the sitcom *Not Going Out* (BBC One, 2006–).

Being very tall, big and gawky, as she describes herself (Hogan: 2010), Miranda Hart is also a character actress. In *Monday Monday* (ITV, 2009) her character was described as a Tall Karen. Being typecast as such possibly made it harder to play alternative roles. Her own series *Miranda* enabled her distinguishing features to complement the show's source of humour, based as it is on her character. Before *Miranda*, she created a television image of a clumsy, incompetent, lazy, frivolous woman and food enthusiast absorbed in fantasies and living in her own world, hopelessly in love with seemingly out of reach men, but ambitious enough to overcome her mental or physical weaknesses and imperfections in order to become

an police officer and yoga instructor in *Hyperdrive*, as well as a perfect cleaner and managing director in *Not Going Out*.

The year 2009 was a watershed as the *Miranda* TV-series was released. She was presented to the British audience as an actress and the creator of the character of Miranda, through which she became widely known and which she followed with the successful TV-series *Call the Midwife* (BBC One, 2012–2015) where she performed the role Chummy. Thanks to these creations, Miranda Hart was nominated for and won many awards and came to be widely known as one of the most popular entertainers and comedy artists.

Miranda Hart is the writer of sitcom *Miranda*. It was developed from her previous radio comedy series *Miranda Hart's Joke Shop* (BBC Radio Two, 2007–2008). The show was a huge success for the BBC, attracting millions of viewers between 2009 and 2013. The show is premised on the socially inept Miranda incessantly finding herself in awkward interpersonal situations. That she is the author of this work demonstrates her multi-functionality. On one hand, she is a creator, writer, main character, co-producer and so on, and on the other hand she created an original show by merging the elements of her individual style that had featured in her previous roles. It is not very often in the world of television that a woman has full control over the entire process of creating a TV-series. Even in Britain, where the tradition of the writer-performer spectacle is long and rich, one can only point to a handful of instances, most notably Jennifer Saunders' sitcom *Absolutely Fabulous* (BBC, 1992–2012) as well as Victoria Wood, Caroline Aherne, Catherine Tate, among others.

The British comedy scene is very competitive and of a high standard, proven by its status as a worldwide phenomenon owing its popularity to its specific British sense of humour and level of artistry, thereby meriting its own name as a recognised genre: "Britcom". Original shows are often written by one or two well-known and highly educated comedians (frequently graduates from Oxbridge), presenting new ideas characterised by a specific comicality (examples including black humour, irony, absurdity, allusions, insinuations, as well as juvenile, puerile jokes or jokes premised on stupidity), and incorporate themes and scenes that may break taboo or encroach on the border of obscenity (Bucknall-Hołyńska, 2014: 17–20). Bucking this trend, the individuality and originality of Miranda Hart's TV show utilises old-fashioned comedy, including slapstick, frequent "gags" ("gag-happy"), is set in a brightly lit studio in front of a live audience, filming with one camera, a welcome from the main character at the beginning, a short recap of what had happened before ("Previously in my life..."), "stop action" and "straight-to-camera" soliloquies, the

main character's comment or a gesture on the developing scene as an aside to the audience, a short reminder again as to what the viewers have been watching, and a farewell full of waving from all appearing actors. These old-school elements are a nod to traditional British productions such as *The Two Ronnies* (BBC, 1971–1987) and *The Morecambe & Wise Show* (BBC, 1968–1977), whilst also being utilised in an intermedial fashion as seen below.

Miranda Hart connects these old media features with new media, including behind-the-scenes material and interviews with characters from the show which are posted on the official website. Revealing to the audience the creation process (processuality) and the actors and other “real people” involved is a feature of self-referentiality and intermediality, but is also a genre of reality TV, in the name of the “cult of authenticity”, or wider, “striptease culture” as defined by Brian McNair, or “staged authenticity” as described by Dean MacCannel (Ogonowska, 2006: 18). It appears as if it unmasks the media reality (the producer and crew's workshop) but in fact is a part of the interactive media image, which should generate the impression that a spectator-participant is part of the show (immersiveness). Moreover, this new form of sitcom presentation places Miranda – the main character, and Miranda Hart – the artist, “in-between” medial spaces. Miranda Hart identifies with her character through her body, which she frequently exploits for comedy effect, and through making the scenes semi-autobiographical. The border between Miranda Hart's sitcom and her life, likewise between her person and character, is blurred, and thus needs to be analysed in a separate chapter.

Miranda Hart built her career from stand-up and sketch shows at the Edinburgh Fringe and appeared on different TV panel comedy shows. Her success led to a forty-nine show British tour called *My, What I Call, Live Show*, also released on DVD. A major theme of the live show's comedy is upper-middle class embarrassment. Miranda acts as a hostess and welcomes her 16 000 plus audience to her “cocoon o' fun”. This is essentially a posh party which provides the audience with a range of impressions on social rules and approaches to life, especially on the subject of intimacy, which can appear to be taboo for Britons, and caricaturing her own social awkwardness. She makes many references throughout to herself, with jokes making fun of herself being single and gawky.

The show created and performed by Miranda is a traditional physical stand-up, which appears retro compared with the prevailing currents of standup (Merritt, 2014). Yet it still contains intermediality by virtue of involving interactive actions such as participation of the audience in Miranda's party by singing, shouting, playing assigned roles, eliciting responses to her flirting, sharing a buffet, and so

on. All these elements of the performance combine to form the impression of immersion, of actually being at the party ("So we all went out tonight"), and sharing in the process of creation of the show (as the show can diverge according to the contributions of its many participants). Another component of intermediality utilized in the show is intertextuality. Hart includes references to her previous works, especially sitcoms, not only by applying the same themes which embody her consistent image or form of humour (much of which is self-deprecating) but also by adopting similar techniques, such as looking directly into the camera to send a non-verbal message to the subsequent DVD-viewer, or the visuals she uses to illustrate her flashbacks and her thoughts expressed in television catchphrases.

Miranda Hart extends her interaction with the audience beyond the stage and live television interviews to direct contact, arranging forums where she can meet her public live and discuss her current and new projects, as she has done for her latest book. As appeared on her official website: "For one-night only... Join Miranda Hart live in conversation at the London Palladium, talking about her hilarious and moving new book *Peggy and Me*, all about her best friend, Peggy, a gorgeous Shih-Tzu Bichon Frise cross. That's a dog, by the way".

Miranda Hart authored three books to date. Her first book, *Is It Just Me?* (2012), was the best-seller of the year in 2013 in the Non-Fiction Hardback category and won Non-Fiction Book of the Year at The National Book Awards. The second book is titled *The Best Of Miranda*, published in 2014, and shared the success of her first. Her third book *Peggy and Me* was published in October 2016.

Is It Just Me? juxtaposes common popular culture genres of quasi-literature by including a diary, a life guide and an autobiography. This hybrid form of expression is providing competition for more standard literature nowadays. This book could be considered a guidebook, with the difference being it fails to be a how-to-achieve-success or how-to-be-a-perfect-housewife type guidebook, but rather a how-to-handle-a-date, a holiday, someone's wedding survival guide. Many contemporary issues are discussed, although Miranda is at pains to stress she is not an expert unless qualifying as "an expert having made every mistake going" (Hart, 2012: 17) or as being unique among ordinary women for her extraordinary and habitual social and personal problems. Referencing her apparent peculiarity evidenced in everyday matters, Miranda Hart frequently asks within a title of a book, its chapters, as well as in her sitcom and stand-up shows, "Does anyone else ever... or is it just me?". Her book serves as a diary also, although not one written in dotage after a lifetime of fame and/or achievement, but by a thirtysomething woman who wants to "get these weighty issues off her chest" (Hart, 2012: 17). Miranda Hart's diary can be

considered unusual in the sense that within the diary genre, such a book is often written to record difficult or everyday problems without the expected intrusion of the reader, and is very much a self-focussed exercise. However, Miranda's diary is centred on an imaginary reader. The narrator communicates directly to the (female) reader and looks to draw her into the text via interactivity. Moreover, there is a dialogue with an imaginary eighteen-year-old version of Miranda who appears in each chapter to confront her older self with stories from her past. The hybridization of the book is completed by many graphic drawings portraying Miranda and illustrating her everyday troubles.

The second book, *The Best of Miranda: Favourite Episodes Plus Added Treats – Such Fun!*, was published for Christmas 2014 and is an interesting and unusual example of a fun-book for fans. It contains six scripts of Miranda's favourite episodes from her eponymous TV show with some "notes made in rehearsal never seen outside of the sitcom production family" and unused material. She called it "book o' scripts". This book could be called a nonlinearity (a feature of hypertextuality) and an interactive "playbook", both in the literal and figurative senses as it contains a mind mapping cover and a board game played with pawns and dice. The board game is a graphic illustration of Miranda and Gary's relationship with some funny and significant moments, like the falling from a bar stool or the pretence of being an Olympic gymnast. Moreover, it includes an instruction when to eat or drink every time the player is up or down. Here, and while reading the rest of the book, the reader is a player and a participant in the game, especially when she asks questions to the reader, viewer and internet user, pressing them to guess what had happened before or what will happen in the future, predicting their answers, behaviour and attitude, and commenting on it. The book can also be considered a good example of the "convergence book" (Zajac, 2000: 3). In addition to situation comedy scripts and board games, the book contains notes and photos. It becomes an intermedial artefact representing an open format to be filled with other content from the overall Miranda Hart narration. The base or centrum in the audiovisual experience now reverts back from the book to the original creator's preferred art form – sitcom. A reader-user is thereby invited to be sufficiently active, intelligent and creative to complete the intermedial text comprising the "in-between", that is, the space left between the narrative provided by the shows, books and interviews, and the questions or invitations for reader-user involvement or interaction.

The contemporary recipient of Miranda Hart's performance, especially coming from developed west culture, mostly from United Kingdom, has no problem with this, and can perfectly fill the spaces. The proof of that is Miranda Hart's fandom

creating posts and texts on the Internet, demanding more of Miranda's pop-cultural artefacts. The comedy artist responds to their needs because her inclination is to produce multiple cultural text on many multimedia platforms (Mochocka, 2001: 159). This is a result of current social practices and needs, as well as being a strategy of the commercial product of Miranda which enables it to reach to more consumers and generate increased profits.

The commercialisation of culture has forced artists, including Miranda, to create strategies to acquire new consumers who are surrounded by a plethora of culture texts and devices and are attracted to new impressions, experiences and pleasures. There is seemingly a need to acquire, possess and collect products by their favourite artists. People today are often engaged in many distinct forms of discourse. The media industry both produces the cultural materials and creates new distribution channels to promote themselves as the suppliers able to sate these demands. (Ogonowska, 2006: 15). On her official website mirandahart.com, her fans can read about her, her tour, watch episodes of her sitcom, and be updated with the latest news, view the gallery, support her charity campaign, and more.

Miranda's website promotes various merchandise for sale which can be considered intertextual and contextual as they are printed with quotations ("Bear with...", "Such Fun!") from the sitcom or other works. Furthermore, an analogical concept of the on-line shop is based on the sitcom's plot and the main character, and the products for sale are consistent in appearance and style with Miranda's work as a whole. One could propose that even her on-line shop is a form of the intermedial phenomenon in addition to promoting Miranda's commercial brand, and through which Miranda is assuming the role of distributor.

Establishing a profile across social media platforms, Miranda Hart demonstrates that she understands modern society and mediatized culture. People nowadays want to have permanent contact (even imaginary) with the idol, or performer. They want to feel that direct connection without filter or medium. They want to have news and jokes delivered immediately and directly. Miranda Hart participates in it as a social media operative by virtue of having accounts on Twitter (@mermhart) and Instagram ([realmirandahart](https://www.instagram.com/realmirandahart/); [miranda_hartt](https://www.instagram.com/miranda_hartt/), [miranda_hartt](https://www.instagram.com/miranda_hartt/)) and publishing posts regularly to her followers and other Internet users. She posts either about her work or life, and very often shows what could be called "behind" or "private" content (an unclear term in new media reality where it is no longer clear what is "public" and what is "private", or what we should show and what we should not). This includes photos and information available to visitors revealing Miranda without make-up, practising sport, her home and Peggy. Miranda is therefore seen having fun (as per

her Instagram profile description) and seemingly communicates openly and keenly with people interested in her work and Miranda herself. Owing to the proximity between the two, the border between Miranda Hart and her intermedial image becomes unclear, and this is looked at below.

IV. Miranda Hart and Her Intermedial Persona

Miranda Hart had been creating her screen persona since 1994, culminating in her self-titled sitcom *Miranda* and has been presented and developed upon in a variety of formats as previously discussed. Miranda has found great success as a comedy and character actress by embracing her unique distinguishing characteristics and features, making them a pivotal and focal point of her performance. Miranda's appeal through exploiting her foibles, idiosyncrasies and struggles can be likened to that of Bridget Jones, and is similar in that some of these aspects appeal to their audience as the audience feels they can identify with the characters. However, Miranda is unable to change her look for a man (and indeed does not want to) and become an unrealistic and idealized reflection of mass media standards of beauty, and is herself directly responsible for exploiting and exposing this for comedic effect, whereas Bridget Jones' diary is written as a private diary where she aspires to attain, and does achieve, such standards.

Through her continual use of multiple forms of media, Miranda self-propels her character into an ongoing existence, affording herself wider reach and a larger audience. The intermedial image of Miranda created by Miranda Hart through various media outputs can be considered to be consistent. Although her image is made up of many medial representations, it merges into one in the participant's mind. This can be considered representative of human existence in the mediatized culture. Everyone appears to exist like Miranda by being and creating, or attempting to create, himself or herself at the same time. A person then becomes the sum of the produce as generated by their social and cultural roles, their virtual and real profiles, and their essence is somewhere within, or between, the consolidated mass of their output. This concept of intermediality illustrates the condition of human beings in a "liquid modernity".

In all media used by Miranda (both in the meaning of the artist and her persona) her body is often given prominence. Attention is frequently drawn to her height and weight. She has contrasted herself with more typical illustrations or expectations of feminine charm, for instance comparing herself with Miranda Kerr and claiming

she is sometimes mistaken for a man and addressed as “Sir”. Through her clothes, movements and incompatibility with other people, much of the idea of her medial image is based on the proposition that Miranda simply “doesn’t fit”. As referred to before, she also appears not to conform to media standards of beauty. She states in her book *Is it Just Me?:* “Our bodies are expected to look a certain way. Or at the very least, most of us wouldn’t mind looking a little bit more like him or her from “Men’s Health” or “Grazia” magazine, and a little bit less like, well, a sackful of ham. I know it’s not just me”. It appears Miranda Hart has little concern for beauty standards from the pre-feminist era or the ceaseless fight between two dominant extreme philosophies of human life and body in the consumer society of individualists (expressed precisely in the television series *Sex and the City*, HBO 1998–2004 and other TV-series): hedonism and asceticism, whereby a person on one hand is expected to celebrate life by collecting pleasures and sensations: eating, drinking, relaxing, dancing, having sex etc. and on the other hand is required to maintain a healthy diet, practice sports, work, stay young, slim and beautiful. These two opposites appear to us to be coherent with one another. A human and its body should be subjected to asceticism in order to be able to enjoy the hedonistic pleasures. Miranda ridicules such expectations and conventions on stage, screen and in her books, and rebels against them by disregarding any expectations she should be tentative about her appearance. Instead she makes her body a prime focal point of her performance, thereby deconstructing a model feminine normativity through the exposure of the inadequacies the body. This can be seen clearly on her Instagram profile. Instagram, as a photo-sharing site connected with other social networking platforms, has gained many millions of users and is, at the moment, one of the most popular mobile applications owing not only to its simplicity of communication (via photos) but also due to the dominant way of presenting them (thanks to a number of photographic filters) in tasteful and often artistic photographs, corresponding with the tendency to aestheticize everyday life and reality. Miranda Hart on her profile presents herself, contrary to the majority of profile users, without filter and naturally – without make-up, special light, sophisticated cropping and editing of photos, and with ordinary clothes and interiors. It is often considered unacceptable to post in this fashion in this medium (an example being Polish comedian Magda Mikołajczyk and her realistic photos on Instagram), and is why it arouses our curiosity and can trigger voyeurism (Major, 2014: 142). Yet such contravention of convention is what fits perfectly with the rest of Miranda Hart’s intermedial persona, and with which so many women can identify. Miranda’s natural and open presentation encourages this identification, and it may be the

case that if Miranda's intermedial image were feigned or mere affectation, such connection with her audience would not be possible.

Miranda is one of many comedy characters that bases humour on typical British national traits and defects. This "unruly woman" (term used by Kathleen Rowe in her book *The Unruly Woman. Gender and the Genres of Laughter*) with her "doesn't fit" body gallops, stumbles, falls, makes strange noises in stress-full situations and hysterically laughs at inappropriate moments, and such awkwardness is representative of a common feeling among a number of British people who can be uncomfortable with interactions with other people. Her physical (slapstick) humour is supported by her verbal humour. Miranda fails to control what she is saying, confuses many words, makes many slips of the tongue, plays with words she likes or hates, and has fun creating new ones. The upper-middle class language used by her mother is a bountiful source of humour for her. Moreover, it is the personality of Miranda that draws the most laughter from her audience. She is, as with many thirty-something Londoners, single, immature and socially awkward. Miranda feels uncomfortable with strangers and men, especially those she might like, becoming uptight and panicky. It appears she feels comfortable only by herself in her home, surrounded by her many toys and her beloved dog *Peggy* and, at most, her very closest friends. However, as mentioned above, she is aware of the social expectations of women, but appears to take delight in acting contrary to social conventions.

It is seemingly for these reasons that Miranda Hart's audience is mostly, although not exclusively, made up of women who can identify with her and share in her pleasures. They are also appealed to as "ordinary" women (in contrast to idealized media images of women seen performing successfully several social roles simultaneously without hassle or difficulty) having similar problems, fears and doubts as Miranda. This form of realism serves several functions. It appeals to the tastes of the audience, providing entertainment that addresses some social and cultural problems. It can serve as therapy for those who find themselves in a similar position to a character. It is also a form of escapism, showing how to find pleasure and comfort away from the oppression of social norms and expectations.

The perceived identity of Miranda Hart with her character is strong owing in part to the consistent and voluminous communication she takes part in with her audience, from her books to use of Twitter. Miranda's intermedial performance revolves around the concept of a conversation with the consumer who becomes an interactive participant in the dialogue and, through engagement with the media, becomes Miranda's friend and is invited to her home (sitting opposite her on sofa in the sitcom; being in her garden, bedroom and kitchen as shown on Instagram;

these experiences facilitated and enhanced through immersive audiovisual methods) and to a party organised and hosted by her on stage during her stand-up tour. She reduces the distance between herself and her interlocutor and engages on a spectrum of feminine and private issues. Miranda Hart's expressions are dominated by the contemporary (pop)culture of confession form and overexpression of "I" (Ogonowska, 2006: 14). Hence, she moves the border between different genres and media and creates a new form of intermedial transgression.

Miranda Hart's audience's engagement with her work cultivates and shapes her output and intermedial image. Miranda's fandom is changing, in the name of processuality and convergence, beginning its path from the initial phase of infatuation with a pop culture object of praise (seeking to collect information as well as marketed products) to the subsequent phase of analysis and criticism of the works of their in-depth knowledge (Kobus, 2016: 152). Although, from the context of mediatised culture and intermedial performance of this artist, the most interesting phase of fan culture is the reconstruction, transformation and creation of alternative stories of Miranda Hart which are self-published on a fanfiction website (www.fanfiction.net/tv/Miranda). There are around one hundred and fifty stories about Miranda's life and adventures (eg. "alternative points of view", "missing moments", "I wonder ifs...") and written in different forms of comic narration. They provide a good example of fan interaction and demonstrate that the intermedial culture blurs, or even abolishes, the distance between creator and viewer, and the roles between producer and consumer, creating a hybrid "prosumer", are exchangeable, or even disappear (Jenkins, 2007: 9–10).

V. Conclusion

Miranda Hart's intermedial performance is a result of contemporary culture as identified in this paper: mediatised, convergent and participatory. It appears that, in this culture, the audience is most important through the process of communication. And because this process of communication takes place through different media, the audience belongs to a network society that has its own needs, such as intellectual and physical engagement (interactivity), a sense of being closer to authentic situations and persons (immersiveness), always and instantly available information and creation of more product (insatiability). This audience desires to be an almost equal participant in the performance and even the creation process.

Understanding contemporary culture, Miranda Hart presents a new model of communication with the audience through many intermedial “text-events”. Participation across these platforms provides the impression of an interaction with a consistent yet developing image of Miranda and her incident-filled life, both exaggerated for comic effect. Her in-between portrait is unique and intriguing, and as such can be considered a cultural phenomenon. At the same time Miranda, as an intermedial persona, is a typical example of the social existence of western culture’s 21st-century person, living their life stretched between two worlds – the virtual and the real, trying to find, establish and further themselves in those instantly developing and changing worlds.

Works cited

- Bucknall-Hołyńska, Justyna. “Źródła angielskiego humoru w sitcomach *Peep Show* i *Miranda*.” *Seriale w kontekście kulturowym. Gatunki, konwergencja, percepcja*. Eds. Anna Krawczyk-Łaskrzewska, Alina Naruszewicz-Duchlińska, Piotr Przytuła. Olsztyn: Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 2014.
- Chmielecki, Konrad. “Estetyka intermedialności.” *Przegląd Kulturoznawczy* 1 (2006): 118–133.
- . “Intermedialność jako fenomen ponowoczesnej kultury.” *Kultura Współczesna: teoria, interpretacje, krytyka* 2 (2007): 118–137.
- Dunham, Lena. *Not That Kind of Girl. A Young Woman Tells You What She’s “Learned”*. Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2015.
- Hart, Miranda. *Is It Just Me?* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012.
- . *The Best of Miranda. Favourite Episodes Plus Added Treats – Such Fun!* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014.
- Hejmej, Andrzej. “Intermedialność i komparatystyka intermedialna.” *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 4 (2013): 13–18.
- . *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie – studia kulturowe*. Kraków: Universitas, 2013.
- Higgins, Dick. “Intermedia”. Trans. Monika and Tadeusz Zielińscy. *Nowoczesność od czasu postmodernizmu oraz inne eseje*. Ed. Piotr Rypson. Gdańsk: słowo/obraz/terytoria, 2000. 117–133.
- Hogan, Phil. “Whatever you do, don’t call me ‘sir’.” *The Guardian* 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2010/apr/11/miranda-hart-interview>.
- Hopfinger, Maryla. *Doświadczenia audiowizualne. O mediach w kulturze współczesnej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo „Sic!”, 2003.

- . *Kultura audiowizualna u progu XXI wieku*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytut Badań Literackich, 1997.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Kultura konwergencji. Zderzenie starych i nowych mediów*. Trans. Małgorzata Bernatowicz, and Mirosław Filiciak. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2007.
- Jonson, Sophie. *Miranda Hart*. London: John Blake Publishing, 2012.
- Kattenbelt, Chiel. "Intermediality in Theatre and Performance: Definitions, Perceptions and Medial Relationships", *Culture, Language and Representation* VI (2008): 19–29.
- Kluszczynski, W. Ryszard. *Estetyka sztuki nowych mediów*, 2014. <http://www.medialarts.pl/download/skrypty/Estetyka-sztuki-nowych-mediow.pdf>.
- . *Sztuka interaktywna. Od dzieła-instrumentu do interaktywnego spektaklu*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2004.
- Kobus, Aldona. "Burzenie czwartej ściany. Strategie relacji twórców popkultury z fanami." *Seriale w kontekście kulturowym. Widzowie – Fani – Twórcy*. Eds. Anna Krawczyk-Łaskrzewska, Alina Naruszewicz-Duchlińska. Olsztyn: Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 2016.
- Major, Małgorzata. "Miranda vs. Hannah, ciało vs. ciało." *Władcy torrentów. Wokół angażującego modelu telewizji*. Eds. Małgorzata Major, Justyna Bucknall-Hołyńska. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2014.
- Merritt, Stephanie. "Miranda Hart: *My, What I call Live Show* review – 'a triumph of old-school entertainment'." *The Guardian* 16.03.2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2014/mar/16/miranda-my-what-i-call-live-show-review-hart>.
- Mochocka, Aleksandra. "Między interaktywnością a intermedialnością. Książka jako przestrzeń gry." *Homo Ludens* I (2001): 155–176.
- Ogonowska, Agnieszka. "Międzyprzestrzenie dyskursu: intertekstualność i intermedialność. Analiza zjawisk w kontekście wybranych tekstów audiowizualnych, literackich i liternetowych." *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 2 (2006): 15–24.
- . "Współczesne praktyki dyskursywne: intertekstualność, intermedialność, pantekstualizm." *Zeszyt Naukowy – Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania i Bankowości w Krakowie* 4 (2006): 188–203.
- Rowe, Kathleen. *The Unruly Woman. Gender and the Genres of Laughter*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995.
- Szykowska, Anna. "Intermedialność jako sztuczna struktura wydobywania znaczeń: na przykładzie *Ostatniego tanga w Paryżu* Bertolucciego i malarstwa Francisca Bacona." *Sztuka i Filozofia* 34 (2009): 65–75.
- Zając, Michał. *Promocja książki dziecięcej. Podręcznik akademicki*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Stowarzyszenia Bibliotekarzy Polskich, 2000.

Intermediality in Miranda Hart's Performance

Summary

The article refers to the problems of intermediality in the context of contemporary audiovisual culture and performance of Miranda Hart – one of the most popular comedy artists in the United Kingdom. The aim of this paper is to examine her work in this context. It will start with the introduction of the term “intermediality” and will then present Miranda Hart, her depiction in contemporary culture. The main part of the article deals with the (pop)cultural works of art, focusing on the image of the artist emerging from this output, and final part provides a brief overview of her current audience and relations between them.

Keywords: intermediality, new media, Miranda Hart, situation comedy, stand-up show

Słowa kluczowe: intermedialność, nowe media, Miranda Hart, komedia sytuacyjna, stand-up