



The Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media. (Studies in Intermediality)

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One possible description of the contemporary medial landscape in Western culture is that it has gone 'meta' to an unprecedented extent, so that a remarkable 'meta-culture' has emerged. Indeed, 'metareference', i.e. self-reflexive comments on, or references to, various kinds of media-related aspects of a given medial artefact or performance, specific media and arts or the media in general is omnipresent and can, nowadays, be encountered in 'high' art and literature as frequently as in their popular counterparts, in the *traditional* media as well as in new media. From the *Simpsons*, pop music, children's literature, computer games and pornography to the contemporary visual arts, feature film, postmodern fiction, drama and even architecture - everywhere one can find metareferential explorations, comments on or criticism of representation, medial conventions or modes of production and reception, and related issues. Within individual media and genres, notably in research on postmodernist metafiction, this outspoken tendency towards 'metaization' is known well enough, and various reasons have been given for it. Yet never has there been an attempt to account for what one may aptly term the current 'metareferential turn' on a larger, transmedial scale. This is what *The Metareferential Turn in Contemporary Arts and Media: Forms, Functions, Attempts at Explanation* undertakes to do as a sequel to its predecessor, the volume *Metareference across Media* (vol. 4 in the series 'Studies in Intermediality'), which was dedicated to theoretical issues and transhistorical case studies. Coming from diverse disciplinary and methodological backgrounds, the contributors to the present volume propose explanations of impressive subtlety, breadth and depth for the current situation in addition to exploring individual forms and functions of metareference which may be linked with particular explanations. As expected, there is no monocausal reason to be found for the situation under scrutiny, yet the proposals made have in their combination a remarkable explanatory power which contributes to a better understanding of an important facet of current media production and reception. The essays assembled in the volume, which also contains an introduction with a detailed survey over the possibilities of accounting for the metareferential turn, will be relevant to students and scholars from a wide variety of fields: cultural history at large, intermediality and media studies as well as, more particularly, literary studies, music, film and art history.

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