

Picture, text, and imagetext: Textual polylogy

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Abstract

This article summarizes earlier attempts at systematizing the relations between pictorial and verbal representation. The relations between text and pictorial representation were, at first, presented hierarchically or on the basis of the dominant. Second, the explicit and implicit expressions of picture and text were distinguished. Next, different functions of picture and text in the picture-text relations were pointed out. The current article attempts to determine some crucial notions regarding the examined phenomena, to offer certain initial classifications for the analysis of picture-text relations, to point out that there are no simple texts based on just one means of expression, and to find the main functions of the message and its parts revealed in the mutual impact of text and picture.

Keywords: *pictorial image; text; pictorial and verbal representation; transtextuality; paratext; imagetext.*

1. Introduction

The current article examines the connections between pictorial representation and verbal language, with the aim of producing a synthesizing and comprehensive overview of the relationship between pictorial image and verbal message.

A growing interest in the pictorial methods of signification in recent decades has been caused by several intertwined trends. We can summarize them under three items.

1. The relative importance of pictorial information is steadily increasing (“We live in the era of visual communication”).
2. Pictorial images are more generally understood, and less determined by local culture/language than verbal messages, meaning that

pictorial information created in different cultural contexts is more easily translatable, and the ‘pictorial language’ is more universal); the pictorial image is a typical example of natural signification, of iconicity (the so-called Peircean tradition).

3. The viewpoints that are opposed to the above stress either the ambivalence of pictorial information, its dependence on context (a trend that followed the spread of poststructuralism), or the conventionality of pictorial images and even their lack of motivation (let us call this the Nelson Goodman tradition). Consequently, the preconditions and conclusions of the previous analyses of pictorial signification range widely, and both art history and semiotics are still lacking a widely accepted theory of pictorial representation.

The first statement could be challenged from the following standpoint:

It is obvious that pictorial representation has gained new fields during recent decades, such as television, video, and advertising.

A few decades ago, the emergence of the Internet and computer communication seemed to point to the increasing importance of written expression; paraphrasing Walter J. Ong — the age of “secondary literacy” (1982: 136). Electronic post has certainly taken over several functions of the telephone. The messages of the early Internet era were purely verbal and thus a special form of imagetext was born — ASCII-art based on characters with a certain code.

One of the factors determining the role of pictorial information has been the expense and technical complexity of creating and copying the pictorial image. The development of technological means, from ordinary printing and copying to digital recording, has, no doubt, greatly facilitated its usage. Both in computer communication and in print, the relationship between image and word is largely a technical problem and the image has indeed become an increasingly organic part of information. At the same time, we must keep in mind that, besides the pictorial, the amount of general information increases all the time as well, and against this background the change of proportions might not seem so radical as to justify the name of the era being merely “visual” communication. It would probably be better to say that the increase is not so much in pictorial information as in information that synthesizes different media: image + sound, image + accompanying verbal text, etc. In sum, the borders are becoming vaguer.

The second and third viewpoints — the general understandability of a pictorial message, or its greater dependence on context and the fact that it can easily be manipulated — converge on the notion that a pictorial image, irrespective of whether the representation is believed to be based

on natural or conventional signification, is more easily and rapidly understandable than a verbal message. Even if the conventional pictorial code is dominant, it can still be more easily mastered than a totally unfamiliar foreign language.

Perhaps without even being conscious of the fact, none of the three trends proceeds from the pure homogeneous visuality and hermeticalness of the pictorial image and its context-free understandability. An absolutely pure and unified means of expression can, both historically and in the context of the modern heterogeneity of messages, only be a theoretical construction. Therefore, I will focus here on the analysis of one such mixed version — the combination of the image and the word.

The aim of the current article is not to give a comprehensive overview of relevant literature. The majority of the article focuses on specific empirical material, different characteristic examples in the history of art and literature. A relevant international organization is operating,¹ conferences are organized, specialized magazines appear, etc. A distinct research field, which has acquired an increasingly clear form in recent decades, therefore, does exist. Still, relatively less has been done in the field of more general approaches. Most bibliographies refer to a dozen or so chrestomatic texts: Roland Barthes's *La rhétorique de l'image* (1985 [1964]), Áron Kibédi Varga's article that tries to typify the word-and-image relations (1989), and some texts by Michel Foucault (1983), E. H. Gombrich (1985, 1996), Meyer Schapiro (1996), W. J. T. Mitchell (1986, 1994), and others (e.g., Bryson 1981; Welchman 1989; Bal 1991).

Examining the relationship between image and text requires three interconnected levels of analysis:

1. the conceptual level, and equally the choice of a starting point and methodology: what we mean by pictorial representation and text, the relations between representation, pictorial and performance art, the various forms of textuality connected with pictorial representation;
2. the hierarchic and syntactic levels: typifying the formal relations between pictorial representation and text;
3. the semantic and pragmatic levels: how the existence/absence of text influences a pictorial message; the relationship between pictorial and verbal art or, in a wider sense, to what extent the means of expression of a message influences its meaning and interpretation.

2. Picture and textuality

The relationship between verbal text and pictorial representation is tackled by perception and cognitive psychology, analysis of text and

discourse, media and communication theory, (art) philosophy and, naturally, semiotics. One possibility is a comparison of different art fields, whether to produce clear formal and contextual distinctions (the trend based on Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoon*) or to try to find common features between various arts (the *ut pictura poesis*-tradition). This starting point takes for granted the formal differences between verbal and pictorial arts: it is possible to compare two clearly distinguishable phenomena, whereas everything in between is ignored. The other possible starting point is to focus on distinctive intermediate forms, which from the point of view of modernist art culture have been seen as quite marginal — comic strips, caricatures, illustrations, and advertisements. They have been gradually rehabilitated, and one of the initiating factors here was the coexistence of different media typical of essentially new information carriers (television, computers, etc.).

The third possibility, which has been used in the current paper, is functional and comparative: to focus on artifacts where word and image exist together, and compare them with similar phenomena that mainly rely on one means of expression, analyzing their different and similar functions in the communication process.

The most significant notions to be determined for the benefit of the following include *text*, *work of art*, *textuality*, *pictorial representation*, and *image*.

Text is among the general terms that are mostly assumed to require no special definition. One of the problems here is whether to tackle text as a linguistic (thus a further diminishing written) coherent whole/system (cf., e.g., Van Dijk 1997: 3, 7) or to expand the notion according to the works of the Tartu-Moscow school, as a basic unit of a certain culture, a bearer of compact meaning and function (e.g., Ivanov et al. 1998 [1973]; also compare Bakhtin 1986 [1979]).² The expansion of the term, starting in the second half of the 1960s, into various fields (e.g., images, films, and music are also regarded as readable texts) has made it rather vague and obscure. On the one hand, text is indeed a tempting opportunity to signify the realizations of, for example, various arts or different media with a common denominator, stressing their common features and, at the same time, it is the manifestation of a linguistic paradigm. In general usage, the text is connected with verbal expression and, if we want to expand the term, we have to find something new to create a narrower meaning. The following distinguishes between text in its narrower and wider senses. Text in the narrower sense is an intentional message expressed in a natural language. Text in the wider sense — hereafter denoted as *text* — is an intentional, coherent, and compact carrier of the meaning, which can rely on homogeneous, as well as on heterogeneous, semiotic systems. A more

detailed restriction of text in each case is inevitably intuitive and cannot be fully formalized.

Regarding the ontology of a *work of art*, Gérard Genette refers to its dual existence, its immanence — the type of object of which the work “consists” — and transcendence — various ways a work of art exceeds that immanence (Genette 1997b: 10–11). Genette also critically develops Nelson Goodman’s terms of autographic and allographic art (Goodman 1976: 113), trying to thoroughly analyze all kinds of border phenomena and avoid strict differentiation between various fields of art. The immanence of a work of art can, according to Genette, be either physical and single-object (autographic works) or ideal (allographic works), which in turn possess different physical manifestations (Genette 1997b: 91). Ideal immanence is also unique, each work of literature has only (ideal) text, and a work of music has one arrangement of notes. In order to reach that, to establish the text, as it were, we need correct manifestations (Genette 1997b: 116). However, Genette, just like Goodman, is not too consistent in differentiating autographic and allographic works of art. From his examples of borders and exceptions,³ and the fact that Genette admits the possibility of arts developing from the autographic towards the allographic (Genette 1997b: 157), we can easily take a step forward and talk about the ideal and physical existence of immanence of single-object works of art.

The conclusion that a work of art does not exhaust itself in *text*, or in any other object, is essential for the current treatment. We must thus distinguish between at least two states of a work of art, its dual existence. *Text* is what is given, what is open and ready to be read by the reader and viewer. The usage of that term here approximately corresponds to the immanent existence of a work of art, according to Gérard Genette. *Text* could be a painting in its sensual form, rows of words making up a book, or a sequence of images and sound in a film. However, an extensive art project or exhibition can also constitute a *text*. Therefore a part of *text* can, in certain conditions, function as an independent *text* and, the other way round, a compact *text* can consist of independent *texts*. A work of art is an interpreted *text*, the meaning of which is shaped in the mutual impact of the author, receiver, and the *text*; it is a possibility of the immanence of the *text*. *Text* is the *minimal* precondition of a work’s existence; its absolute absence makes the existence of the work doubtful as well. Meaning emerges in the work and is not separable from it. Differentiating between *text* and work does not refer to extreme dualism — just as a work of art links meaning to it, it also links the *text*; the *text* actually constitutes the possibility of the work. This difference is mostly practical — after all, we cannot claim that nothing is left behind if the

text is destroyed. Thus, a work of art must have an ideal and conscious state.

In determining the boundaries of *text*, both external and internal factors count. *Text* as a socio-cultural construct depends on what the given society accepts as text and what it considers merely meaningless chaotic noise (see, e.g., Hanks 1989: 95–127). Experimental poetry, sing-song, performance- or ready-made art, placed in another era, is probably not regarded as *text*. *Text* needs boundaries, a certain social status; pictorial arts have always used a simple tool — the picture frame — but the frame can be institutional, considering the existing cultural conventions. The status of *text* also requires that we place it in certain interpreting frames (Hanks 1989: 103). In addition to external norms, however, *text* needs certain immanent features.

I regard *textuality* or *texture* as the inner coherence of *text*, thus something on which the *text* is based. The direct analysis of textuality, for example in pictorial images, is often complicated because of the lack of explicitly presented formal elements. Here we focus on the homogeneous and heterogeneous manifestations of textuality.

2.1. *Transtextual relations of text*

Genette has tackled the issue of transcendence in many of his works, and this interest — a work of art and its extratextual meaning and text and textual transcendence —⁴ developed into his renowned five-part scheme of transtextuality: (1) intertextuality (in a narrower sense than used by Julia Kristeva), (2) paratextuality, (3) metatextuality, (4) hypertextuality, and (5) architextuality.

Genette mentions this for the first time in the rather free-form dialogue with his *alter ego* (Genette 1992: 81–82) in the epilogue of his book (then still in four parts) *Introduction à l'architexte*. The second mention occurred in the introduction of his book *Palimpsestes* three years later, then already in five stages (Genette 1982: 8–12). In the third book dedicated to paratextuality, Genette does not directly refer to typology, although the translator explains this in the foreword to the English edition stages (Genette 1997a: xviii–xix). However, the scheme of five parts has not often been used. Independently of Genette, both intertextuality (in its wider sense) and metatextuality are extensively employed terms. Architextuality and hypertextuality have not been used as widely; the spread of the latter in Genette's sense is restricted by its better known meaning as computer-based hypertext. Paratext has turned out to be the most fertile, having also extended outside literary research.

From the point of view of this topic, we need two of Genette's five textualities:

1. *Paratextuality* in verbal arts involves peritexts between the covers of a book (title and author, dedications, epigraphs, etc.) and epitexts outside it (the author's explanations and addresses, e.g., a letter to the publisher), but also the book's formal and pictorial elements: illustrations, typography, layout, format, and paper. Paratexts in pictorial arts are primarily the verbal supplements (title, the author's name and other data, and the author's texts), and also the frame, format, technological data, and print run, plus the location of the work and its duration. Paratext is therefore a kind of intermediate layer between the work and the context, the work and the receiver.
2. *Architextuality* is the most abstract and directly inexpressible of all transtextual relations. It consists of elements referring to the genre (thematic, formal) character and the discursive belonging of *text*, and some paratexts (e.g., printmaking techniques, rhematic title) also feature in that role. A work of art can reveal which genre it belongs to or, on the contrary, conceal it at all cost.

Genette's scheme focuses on text; all transtextual relations regard other texts that are more or less independent as functioning in relation to *that* text and not as a whole in, for example, (literary) culture. Accordingly, Genette's transtextual frames do not consider the notion of the context of a work especially important and the author functions first of all as a name.

The analysis of context as a heterogeneous and undeterminable extra-textual (from the point of view of the text's single elements also intertextual) world requires some sort of classification.

3. The *socio-cultural context* of a work is characterized by semiotic heterogeneity. It is important to differentiate between the impossibility of determining the context and the minimal context and synchronic context of the era needed to interpret a given work.
4. *Textual (verbal) context* of a work, a singular verbal space surrounding the work, embracing everything that has been thought, said, and written about the work.

Metatexts can also function as textual context, but metatexts do not exhaust it and they need not only be verbal. An example of a non-metatextual context is conversation or description that does not direct a work's interpretation (e.g., the dialogue of people transporting an exhibition, or the work's numerical code in the museum archive). Textual context is therefore a wider and more formal notion than metatext.

5. *Co-text*: the immediate surroundings of a part of the full text, the semiotically homogeneous environment of a sign or text in a given situation that is formed of the same semiotic system (cf., e.g., Johansen and Larsen 2002: 204). The co-text of a part of a novel (phrase, sentence, chapter) is the text of the novel around it; a painting's co-text could be other paintings at the same exhibition.

From the aspect of pictorial arts, two more types of context should be pointed out.

6. *Prottext*. For autographic works we need methods with which to replace them in real communication. We do not see most of the existing works at all, or we see them only a limited number of times. Works on the walls of museums in our own home town also require a special visit. Thus a number of elements fulfill a substitute function, replacing real *text* in communication: the author's name and the title of the work, the work's verbal description (textual context) and, most successfully, copy and reproduction.

Texts that functionally replace the *text* in art communication are here called protexts, and the relevant relation is protextuality. The *text* of a destroyed work is replaced by a protext — at best a reproduction, but historically all kinds of written messages.

Although substitute textuality is essential, especially in autographic works, it also, of course, occurs in literary culture — adaptations, summaries, etc.

7. In regard to pictorial arts and mostly narrative works, we cannot ignore *pretext*. This is the 'ground,' the basis that justifies the creation and interpretation of a text (cf. Hanks 1989: 96). Among the limited narratives of earlier art, the viewer recognized the depicted plot by iconographic rules. Besides exhibitions and art trade, the increase in the variety of contemporary pictorial narratives was certainly one factor in the emergence of titles fixed by the author.

Picture is here regarded as a truly existing artifact, which, by means of certain features (e.g., conventions of depiction and relations of similarity), signifies another object or object class, whereas the signified object might not exist at all. *Picture* and *pictorial representation/image* are used as synonymous notions. *Image* is a wider notion than picture. A picture has a specific material carrier, whereas image might lack it — e.g., after-image, mental image, reflection, mirage, etc. (cf., e.g., Mitchell 1986: 9–10).

Imagetext (also *iconotext*) occurs when image and text are side by side, or it constitutes their synthesis: comic strips, caricatures, works of art using pictorial representation and writing together, or books where illus-

trations are an inseparable part, thus *text*, which would not be understood the same way if one component were missing.

3. Taxonomy

In the case of the following taxonomy, we can only talk about trends and dominant factors, and not about clear-cut categories. Picture-word relations are too heterogeneous; they have too many transitional forms, intermediate stages, and possibilities to try and classify them fully and distinctly. Generally, the variety of consumer pictorial images is smaller, and the typical cases clearer. Different associations of picture-word in art, however, often rely on singular ambivalences.

Relations between the text and the pictorial image can, *first*, be presented hierarchically:

- (a) The pictorial image is dominant.⁵
- (b) The verbal text is dominant.
- (c) There is an equal relationship (image-text).

The second criterion is whether both components are presented in coexistence in time and space, and whether they have been realized or not. Thus, we can speak of the explicit and implicit existence of both components.⁶

Principally, both the image and the word can exist only in our consciousness, not having been realized in the material (film-like memorial narratives, conscious fantasies), but these are not included in the present discussion.

Third, the word can be connected with its concrete visual/auditory form (e.g., the painted word), or not connected with it: it can be autographic or allographic. Generally, the content of the verbal text is independent of its form; this is a characteristic feature of verbal messages. Different editions of the same book printed on pages of different colors and textures may alter our personal relationship with it, but not its meaning.

The use of written words as a component of a painting introduces a principal difference here. When an artist called Leonhard Lapin paints the word *lapin* on canvas and then titles his painting *Signed Room*, it is no longer the same message as when the word is simply voiced (see Figure 1). The text joins its form of realization, and its form becomes a part of it.

The fourth criterion operates for pictorial images, which can be motionless (a single photo) or in motion and changing over time (film, television and, as a possible intermediate stage, a series of pictures and comic strips). The text that accompanies films and other moving images

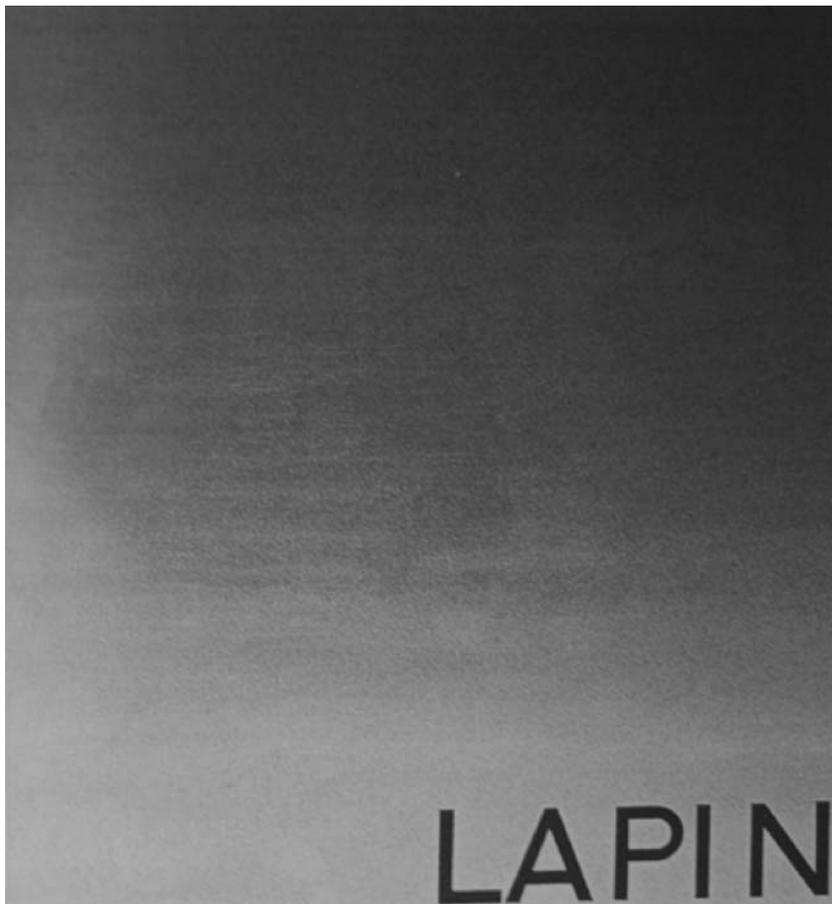


Figure 1. Leonhard Lapin. *Signed Room*. Oil on canvas. 1978. The Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University

can be either auditory (speech of the characters, voice of the narrator) or written (subtitles, text stills of the silent films).

In the interests of restricting the matter, in the following we rely on the first three. We can thus present the main types of word-and-image relations.

3.1. *Picture dominates*

1. The verbal text accompanying the pictorial representation is explicit and realized, connected with its material form (i.e., it is autographic):

- meaningful verbal text as part of pictorial representation;
 - meaningless script as part of pictorial representation (i.e. the written word is depicted as an ornament, a collage, without wishing to say anything with it);
2. The verbal text is explicit, but ideal immanence dominates; the meaning of the text does not directly depend on realization (i.e., it is allographic):
 - paratexts connected with representation: title, author's name, author's supplementary text.
 3. The verbal text is implicit, not expressed in any definite form, but can be derived from the picture, and thus takes its form in the consciousness of the receiver who undertakes its verbalization:
 - narrative or pre-text depicted in the picture;
 - rhetorical figures: allegory, allusion;
 - possible verbalizing/description of the depicted.

3.2. *Text dominates*

1. The picture is expressed explicitly and is connected with the content of the text more or less loosely; the text is allographic:
 - illustration, including author's illustration;
 - pictorial example in an encyclopedia, textbook;
 - photographs in newspapers/magazines.

We might also mention interconnected hierarchies. On the whole, the page of a newspaper is usually dominated by a piece of news, and press photos are connected with it and contextually subjected to it. Photos, in turn, have explanatory captions that are secondary in regard to the picture. Similar interconnections can be found in an illustrated book, i.e., an illustration can have its own caption (e.g., a quotation from the text).

2. Pictorialness of spelling; the text in the first and second examples are generally allographic, in the third and fourth autographic:
 - graphic presentation of sound (text in capital letters as a shout; ellipsis as the signifier of pause, silence);
 - a written usage that cannot be expressed in speech (striking out, depicting abuse in a written comic strip; we can also include here changes of font, using italics);
 - layout and typeface of a page as an expression of an era, etc.; calligraphy: the text is usually 'transparent,' and we do not notice its visual characteristics, whereas stressing the peculiarity of the spelling, i.e., its realization, bears a kind of indirect message (see Figure 2);



Figure 2. A postcard from 1906

Table 1. *Typical examples of the picture–text relations*

expression \ dominant	picture	imagetext	text
<i>explicit</i>	text on picture	imagetext (coexistence)	illustration
<i>implicit</i>	paratext pretext	pictogram trace	calligram ekphrasis, description

- concrete poetry, calligram, writing as a picture (e.g., a painting or a plastic object).
3. Expression of a visual experience in a verbal text:
 - expressions, epithets, metaphors and other figures referring to visible qualities (*red tomato, white crow, flaming heart*);
 - ekphrasis (also of a non-existent picture);
 - description (environment, landscape, portrait etc.).

3.3. *Imagetext, equal relations or synthesis*

1. The coexistence of picture and verbal text where both retain their meaning, but are inseparable from each other, although they can be formally distinguished: comic strip, caricature using text, emblem, advertising poster combining text and picture, graffiti, hypertext employing pictures (and/or accompanying sound).
2. Synthesis of picture and text, unity expressed in allographic form:
 - hieroglyph, pictogram.
3. Intermediate forms of picture and text without a direct meaning:
 - trace, scratch, scrapings, wiping.

On the basis of the fourth criterion, the subdivisions of the main types are delineated according to whether there is one representation, whether it is in series or moving (correspondingly also, whether we are talking about an illustration of one page or a whole book), and the foundation for further segmentation relies on whether the verbal message is oral or written.

4. Coexistence of picture and text

In the following I focus on the associations of text and picture where both components have been realized and coexist. Spoken language usage is

not tackled, first because many peculiarities of relationships between language and pictorial presentation are revealed, namely when they are visible. Second, the possible differences and coincidences between an oral message and picture, and a written text and picture would require a more comprehensive analysis, far exceeding the scope of the current article.

We therefore examine the following issues:

1. how the existence/absence of written text influences pictorial message or, more widely, to what extent the means of expression affects the meaning and interpretation of a message;
2. how the text operates in pictorial space.

We must first refer to a few terminological problems.

Influenced by neighboring domains, notions such as *medium*, *mediality*, etc., have appeared in art theory and semiotics during the last decade or so. Medium is rather vague and its content differs in various domains and, thus, almost always needs separate explanation. Another partly interlaced problem is the spread of such terms as *visual art*, *visual culture*, and *visual semiotics*.

The main problem with the compound *visual* is the apparent ignoring of other senses in the reception and also in the creation, e.g., pictorial art but also other phenomena categorized as visual. Touch, however, is an integral part of pictorial and plastic arts. A painter might wipe the surface, using the palm of his hand and fingers, scratch, or rub with a spatula, to say nothing of the varying pressure on the brush. An impression of a print is produced in the direct symbiosis of rubbing-wiping; the immediate contact of hand and picture is typical of all art forms. The author's touch experience survives in his work and emerges, again, synesthetically in the senses of the receiver.

A title that only refers to sight is best suited to the new, technological arts — works that we only see via a computer screen, projected on the wall — or even mechanical reproduction, where the master's fingerprint has already left the work or has been mechanically conveyed. Still, these are the very arts that have stressed the multiplicity of media and sensory organs, or at least the blending of hearing and seeing, defining themselves as both multimedia and (new) media art forms and writing their history on the basis of the phenomena of synthetic arts.

Classic museums instilled a ban on touching in our pre-consciousness, whereas today's art has tried to demolish this ban, under the label of interactivity. However, even the traditional works of art filling the exhibition halls require some body experience, e.g., walking from one exhibit to the next. The leaden tiredness in our feet after visiting huge museums offers new opportunities for synesthesia.

Despite the spread of the term visual semiotics, a number of semioticians are quite careful, or even negative, about the perception-based division.⁷ Many, if not most, semiotic systems rely on the data of several senses. Perception-based semiotics, or at least the division of semiotic systems, blends with the usage of the term medium. Both the medium and the type of perception can denote the channel conveying the message; the medium is still mostly the means used in materializing the message.

In semiotics the word ‘medium’ has quite a range of usages (cf., e.g., Nöth 1997: 1; Danesi 2002: 2–3; Johansen and Larsen 2002: 212), starting with the spoken language sense ‘means.’ When the term only denotes information-technological means used in society, its usage is clear and justified. Other meanings, including medium as a form of message or a field of art, tend to blend with a semiotic system or its means of expression, and then we simply have two words for the same thing.

For the current treatise, the notion of ‘mode,’ and correspondingly ‘multi-modality,’ as they were used by Gunther Kress et al. seem more suitable (e.g., Kress, Leite-García, and van Leeuwen 1997: 257; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Kress 2003). The authors regard mode as “semiotic resources which allow the simultaneous realisation of discourses [socially restricted knowledge of reality] and types of (inter)action” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 21). Narrative, for example, is also a mode, and can be realized in a range of different media. The notion of medium gets considerably narrower, constituting purely material resources in creating “semiotic products and events, including both the tools and the materials used (e.g., the musical instruments and air . . .” — Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 22, see also 79). A medium is a book, its page or a computer screen, while a mode is a pictorial presentation, writing or oral speech (e.g., Kress 2003: 5–6).

As mentioned above, aiming for the homogeneity of one means of expression in art theory is in retreat, although to some extent the notions of multimodality or multimediality also express a faith in the possibility of one united medium (cf., e.g., Kress and van Leeuwen 2001: 1). In that sense, a semiotic system does not have to be homogeneous to be described only as written or pictorial; the coexistence of different aspects has been consistently taken into consideration by Umberto Eco’s code theory, the cultural semiotics of the Tartu-Moscow school, and Peirce’s sign systems. We might wonder whether this could be a gap in memory, an unexpected shift in thought — that one media could exist at all, and hence there is a need to stress heterogeneity.

With the concept of multimodality, there is a remarkable withdrawal from stressing only the ideal immanence of the text: “. . . language exists only in its realizations; but from the moment when it is realized —

whether in speech or in writing — it is *material*, substantial; and in this *substance* it is necessarily multi-modal. Written language, for instance, has to have a material of inscription, whether rock or clay, paper or plaster, brass or plastic” (Kress et al. 1997: 258). Naturally, another danger is lurking here — overestimating the materialization of the linguistic message.⁸ Although I may be fonder of one edition of a text than of another (it is often the issue that I read first and thus it is associated in my memory with the same text), it is just my personal impression and does not influence the meaning of the text. In the interpretations of the same texts, what matters is their ideal immanence; for others it might also include realization. Imagetexts certainly belong among the latter. Genette finds that some parts of a work can be autographic and others allographic. This is especially true of works of pictorial art that also contain elements of the written word (Genette 1997b: 97).

Textual heterogeneity is best expressed by Yuri Lotman’s understanding of text. Although it varies a bit from his earlier to his later works, the essentials do not change. In his book *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, Yuri Lotman limits text with the following conditions:

1. *Expressedness*: the text is fixed in certain signs and thus opposes the structures outside the text. In literary works, these are primarily signs of the natural language. Depending on the type of text, the expression can be graphic, materialized in stone, on canvas, etc.
2. *Restrictedness or framing*: in temporal arts, these are the beginning and the end; in the painting, the frame.
3. *Structurality*.

These are supplemented by the text’s *hierarchism*, i.e., text is formed of a complicated hierarchy of sub-structures (Lotman 1998 [1970]: 61). The text is always coded at least twice, and generally more often. Lotman uses the notion of code without defining it, as with many other notions, and its meaning becomes clear in the course of discussion. Code is an abstract construct emerging during analysis, which functions differently while creating a message (coding) and receiving it (decoding) (Lotman 1998 [1970]: 35–37). In earlier works, Lotman occasionally used language and code as parallel notions (e.g., Lotman 2000: 155–156), whereas in later works he abandons the practice, and the code (Lotman 1992: 12–13), as well as several other notions of the era, influenced by information theory, retreat. Lotman tackles text, too, much more dynamically in his later works, as a functional but not stable unit that is produced in the mutual effect of creation and reception (Lotman 1992: 178–180).

Language is not inevitably preexisting in relation to the text, or at least it is not as analyzable: “Language realized in an artistic model and artis-

tically presumed language (language of style, trend) relates to, besides natural language (Russian language, French language in literature, language of natural visual images in painting), the language that has still to be reconstructed on the basis of the speech of the presented artistic text (model)" (Lotman 1967, my translation). Thus the significant conclusion is the multiplicity of codes (or multilingualism) and this, in fact, points out the impossibility of a linguistically homogeneous text.

Eco has developed his code theory in more or less the same direction. Eco, too, finds that simple messages do not exist. As each sign-vehicle conveys intertwined contexts, the message tends to be the text with a multilayer discourse as content (Eco 1979: 57). Eco's notion of language is more defined; in the semiotic practice of marking, it is replaced by code that binds syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic systems (or s-codes, system-codes) (Eco 1979: 36–38). It is, thus, more correct to examine code as a complex network of sub-codes and extra-coding (Eco 1979: 125, 129).

Thus code primarily constitutes a supporting means emerging during the analysis of semiotic phenomena, and not an independently existing universal. The codes operating in visual arts cannot be fully abstracted or described in meta-language, and we can only deduce some regularities on the basis of existing *texts*. Regardless of whether we only have messages or a system connecting these messages — code-text or language — the codes operating in a work are, on the one hand, intertwined with others, e.g., the codes of the cultural context; but on the other hand, they form a network of intertwined sub-codes, and under- and over-coding. We can therefore talk about the polycoding of *text*; i.e.; it is not only the case of several media, but the given *text* has been coded in different ways and on different levels.

A literary text relies on more than natural language as a primary system. What are also important are the socio-cultural codes of the era (both the creating and receiving of the text); the custom of describing man and landscape; how the narrative is presented; and the codes that restrict the completion of the book and the paratextual relations. Some codes in pictorial art are more persistent, for example the tradition of the rectangular, less frequently the oval or curved format and framing of paintings surviving in European art for centuries, a central perspective, the signature that became more widespread after Romanticism. Others change together with historical styles or even quicker. Some are valid in the work of one or several authors, while others are shared by all of the art of a certain era. The dynamic caused by the opposition of constant codes, including contextual ones, and changing texts is one of the factors that shapes the art culture into a singular self-regulating non-linear system.

The phenomena examined in the current article are, in principle, semiotically heterogeneous. My starting point is that every field of art, as well as the mode of conveying the message, forms a semiotic system. Presented this way, however, semiotic systems might seem like logical categories that exclude one another. “Semiotic system” has been largely used as synonymous with “sign system,” “language” and “modeling system” (in the works of the Tartu-Moscow school; see also, e.g., Sebeok and Danesi 2000). In any case, the semiotic system is a heuristic, *ad hoc* notion for analyzing an intuitively defined practice of signification. We could admit that semiotic systems indeed can function as phenomena that categorize the semiosphere or its parts, but in that case they resemble natural categories (e.g., Rosch 1973; Rosch et al. 1976), together with the blending of superordinate and subordinate categories, prototypical and deviation examples, and a different possible categorization of a phenomenon.

5. Text in pictorial space

In the following, I mostly focus on the autographic existence of text, or a state where the verbal part cannot be separated from its realization without losing its meaning.

An example of allographic text is the title of the picture, usually a message spatially isolated from the picture. As a starting point of relations between the written word and picture, I present the most significant types of titles. The functional variability of titles in pictorial art is certainly bigger, and their poetics more fascinating, than in literature. This is caused by the plenitude of possible relations between picture and text, and the idea that emerged in the late nineteenth century that the title, its poetic value and connections with the pictorial representation can add value to the picture — and playing with titles are peculiar textual activities.

Functionally, the title operates in two ways:

- it marks the work (or has a naming function),
- it forms a connectedness with the content of the work (or has an interpretive function).

Both are inevitable — each work is somehow marked, but naming immediately produces a connection with the content of the work. The title has, by way of naming, some common features with proper name, whereas the other function — connection with the content — is almost an opposite.

An everyday picture (e.g., advertisement photo) differs for various reasons. First, this kind of pictorial representation usually lacks a title given by the author. Explanatory texts may exist, for example, in the family photo album, but these are merely background data, not titles of the pictures. The same goes for illustration and press photography. A book or a newspaper may (but need not) contain a supplementary text, which is not a title in the same sense as in artistic photography or painting. However, the main functions of supplementary texts of catalogues and press photos are the same as titles.

In his *La rhétorique de l'image*, Barthes presents two relations between the written word and representation: anchorage, which is more traditional, and relay (Barthes 1985 [1964]). These are indeed quite universal categories. The first is associated with one of Barthes's later works, *Camera Lucida*: punctum (Barthes 1981 [1980]: 27, 42, 43) — i.e. not only written word, but also a detail of another image can, by attracting attention, set off an interpretation and also prevent other possible interpretations. Barthes derives these two relations from the connections of the advertisement picture and text. This justifies the examination of the mentioned pair.

First of all, we must distinguish between using the written text in a work of art and in an ordinary message. In the first, interference games and a feel for boundaries, starting in the twentieth century, have made this relationship much more complicated. The aim of both elements in an ordinary text is communication, a referential function, and the poetical is subjected to it.

In the picture-written text associations, we should distinguish between the following *functions of text*:

- *text as a signal*, with the aim of attracting attention by seeming different, non-familiar in relation to the picture;
- *text as a reference*: confirms and elaborates what is depicted in the picture (approximately corresponds to Barthes's anchorage);
- *text as a proposition*: conveys a message, which the picture may confirm, or it could simply be the background of the message;
- *text as an addition*: the creator of an additional meaning, where the text (a) tells the story that corresponds with the picture (narrative function) or (b) creates tension between the written message and picture, conveying in words something that the picture does not depict (approximately corresponds to Barthes's relay, the difference from the previous one lies in the mutual impact, the emergence of tension);
- *text as a poetic message*: (a) the poetic could be text as text or (b) text as a visual element can have an aesthetic function without directly possessing content.

The relevant functions of *picture* are as follows:

- *picture as a signal*, i.e., activating the message: the picture against the background of text attracts attention;
- *picture as a representation*, i.e., the picture refers via depiction to an object;
- *picture as an exemplification*: the picture (a) exemplifies or (b) illustrates the text;
- *picture as an addition*: the illustration supplements the text and gives new information;
- *picture as an aesthetic message*.

Thus expressed, the functions of the picture and text are a bit different, and it is clear that in each picture-word association they are not all realized, or are of different weights. An everyday message has text mostly in order to tell something, to confirm the message conveyed by a picture (referential function). Advertising text (as pointed out already by Roman Jakobson [1960]) also fulfils a poetic function — the message must be interesting, attract attention and be memorable. The narrative function, as already shown by Kibédi Varga, has an impact primarily when we are dealing with a picture series (Kibédi Varga 1989: 35). Still, the text may add a story to just one picture.

It is more difficult to list the functions of the picture, and they certainly do not correspond to the functions of the text. First, a picture may be added to the text only to attract attention, without directly aiming at anything else. On the page of a handbook or textbook, a picture helps to explain and exemplify the text. However, pictorial representation may have a mutual impact with the text, produce additional meanings, or refer to something besides what is depicted.

The above is valid primarily when the text and picture can be clearly distinguished, whereas messages determined as *imagetext* have somewhat different functions. The major factor here is the connection between the two components.

Imagetext is formed either as

- the parallel existence, spatial separation of picture and text (Kibédi Varga [1989: 39] calls such a relationship “interference”);
- compound or intertwining (coexistence⁹), or
- synthesis or blending (pictogram, ideogram),

and finally we have the meaningless intermediary forms of text and picture: traces, scratches, etc., which only have irritating/attention attracting and aesthetic functions, and are ontologically unstable, ready to join both the text and the image (see, e.g., Elkins 1995: 841).

The synthesis of word and picture, or smooth transition in art, are shown by the works of Joan Miró (e.g., Welchman 1989: 85) or Paul Klee's later paintings (e.g., Foucault 1983), where the depicted images seem like either primitive drawings or signs of unknown text (Miller 1992: 74).

There are fewer examples among everyday pictorial images; still one can mention here pictograms, logotypes, ideograms, etc. Pictograms differ from the usual pictorial image, first of all, by the existence of *type* or ideal immanence, and second by the fact that the pictogram does not aim to directly depict what it seems to depict, but instead signifies something different, a wider, and usually more clear-cut, message than, for example, a photographic image. The road sign warning against animals does not aim to depict a deer, and the sign on a toilet door is not meant to portray a woman. By crossing the image out, a pictogram makes it possible to present negation and prohibition.

Although authors analyzing multimodal texts mostly rely on the coexistence of text and pictorial image, either on a book page or computer screen, various well-known methods of noting and marking are included here: musical notes with additional remarks, numbers and, finally, formulas, schemes, diagrams, graphs, and their combinations (see Figure 3).

Examples of image-word synthesis are drawings by children. A child's first experience of drawing leaves a trace through his movement, a new enjoyable activity (Arnheim 1974: 171–172) that is realized, against the parents' opposition, everywhere from his own body to walls and ceilings. This constitutes an experiencing of the material, comparable to the previous joy of crumpling and tearing paper. The difference between depicting and writing is learned from adults, whose first question to a child busy with a pencil is: What did you draw? (e.g., Dyson 1991: 139–162).

Scribbling is followed by a certain stage of conventional signs, i.e., an attempt is made to draw lines with a clear beginning and end, join them into circles, etc. Although this kind of depiction of things does not function as a developed system of symbols — a child's drawing skills at that stage advance quite quickly and the signs change — it is similar to a limited extent. Here, the shapes of letters and images truly blend, and the child cannot quite distinguish between them (see Figure 4).

Another typical type of children's drawing is 'imitating the appearance of writing' (cf. also Kress 2003: 146), where the child realizes that writing is another kind of process and often wants parents to read what he has written (being able to advance this quite creatively — see Figure 5). The third stage of 'drawing a text' focuses on capital letters. The child usually already knows a few letters, invents new forms of letters and creates a message from them (see Figure 6, *Monster*). Then come more conscious

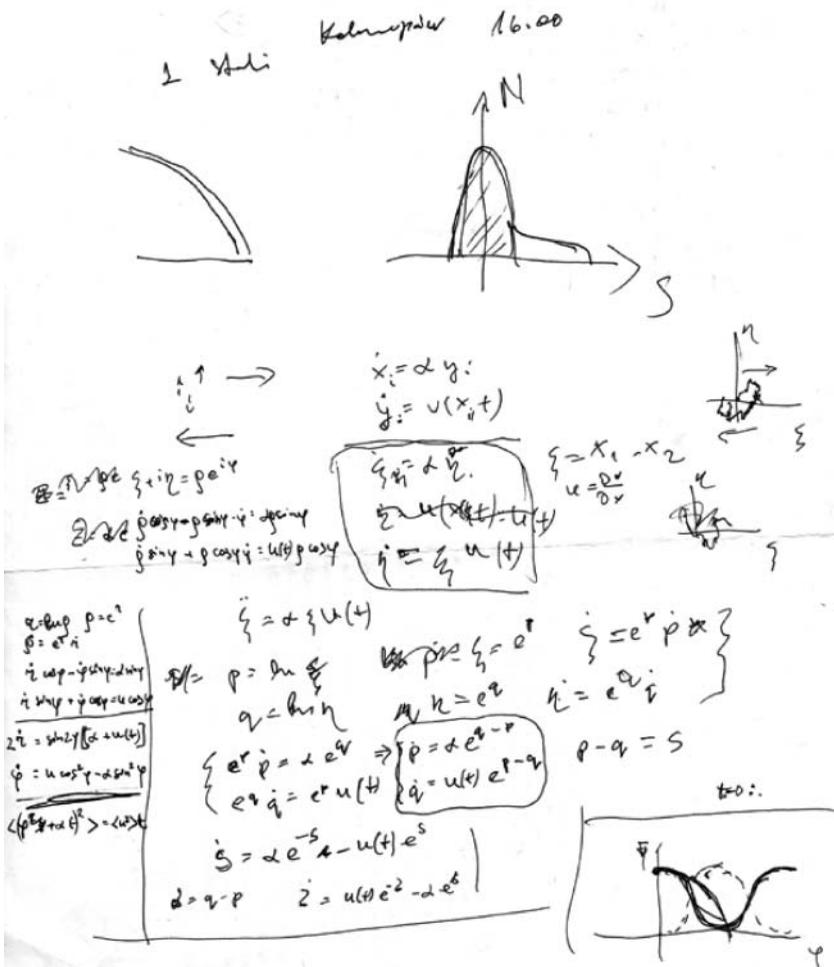


Figure 3. Formula text

writing attempts, although the direction of writing has not been fixed (writing from right to left may last until the sixth year, see Figure 7).

Writing as an element of the picture in pictorial art is far from uniform and relies on at least four phenomena with essentially different geneses:

- (a) *Signature*. This is not merely a piece of writing, but also an act leaving a marking trace that produces finiteness and an ownership relationship with the work.



Figure 4. *Child's drawing (T. K., three years old)*

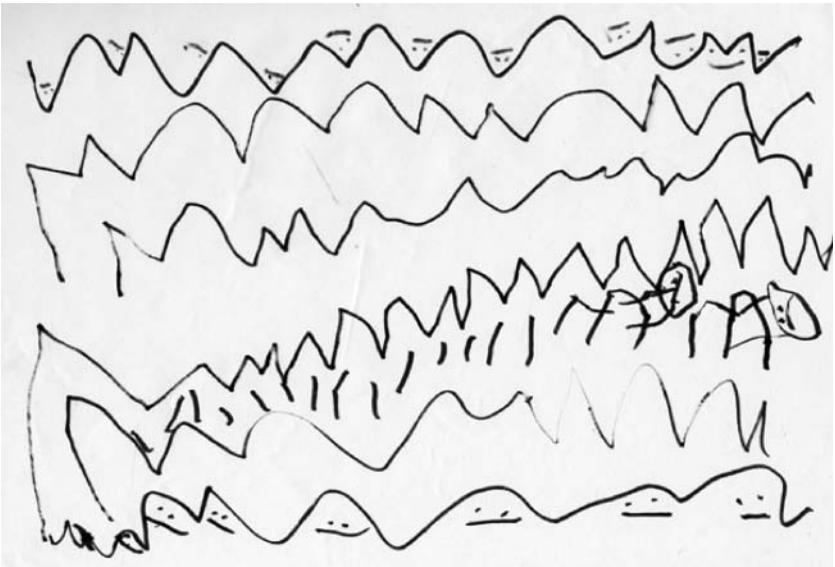


Figure 5. *Child's drawing, depicting a writing (R. K., three years old)*



Figure 6. *Child's drawing Monster (R. K., five years old)*

- (b) *Calligraphy and typographic collage.* Calligraphic writing seems like texture and need not be legible. What matters is the impression of the existence of writing with the aim of creating an illusion of writing. Calligraphic writing creates its own space in the picture. A similar impression of space emerges while reading the text: on a book page we see only letters and not the white paper between them; the surface retreats and the letters float in their immaterial existence, producing meanings.
- (c) *Writing presenting a direct message,* a message that must reach the viewer. A direct message could be the title written on the picture, names of the depicted persons, or speech given in comic strip speech bubbles. Such writing must convey the voice of the author or protagonist, presenting silent speech meant for hearing.
- (d) *Indirect message,* illusory writing on an object (often on a book or letter) which can contain hints for interpreting the painting. It differs from the second type (b) mainly because of its spatial location. Compared with pictorial image, calligraphic or typographic writing seems to be situated in another space — on the surface of the picture, in the background. Calligraphic/typographic writing means writing on the surface of the picture, whereas in an indirect message it is situated in the pictorial space.

Direct and indirect messages are linked by Meyer Schapiro's idea of the difference between depicting writing and speech or an uttered and written

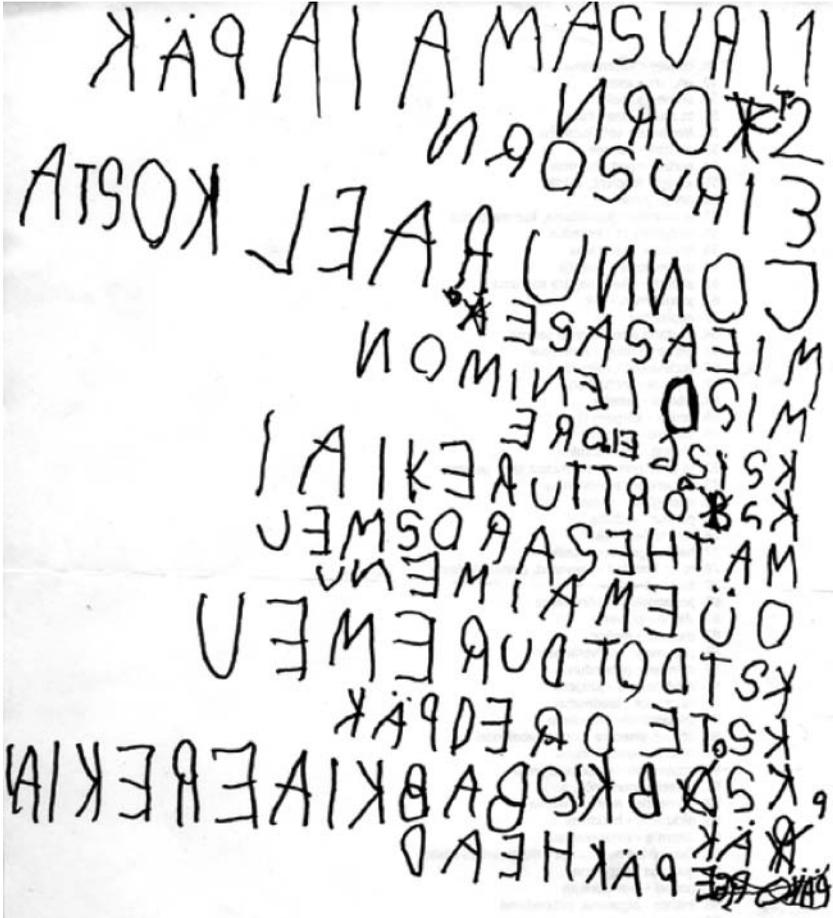


Figure 7. *Child's writings (J. K., five years old)*

word in medieval art (Schapiro 1996: 117). In twentieth century art, these four phenomena intertwined and produced new combinations, although even against the background of such heterogeneity the four basic elements — marking and leaving traces, uttered and written word — can nevertheless be clearly differentiated.

Some of the best examples of multiple interferences of heterogeneous image-text are Peter Greenaway's films, especially *The Pillow Book* (1996), where we see all four elements. Today's visual culture is indeed characterized by their mixing: typography presents indirect messages, signature blends with either indirect or direct messages (e.g., Figure 1).



Figure 8. *Child's drawing (J. K., five years old)*

Writing bearing a direct message is relatively more stable. Compared with pictorial space it is situated on another level and playing with the form of the text is considerably restrained.

These elements can be observed also in children's art: marking and leaving one's name on the drawing, which is one of the first intentional acts of writing; imitating writing and invented letters, as mentioned above; direct oral message and marking (e.g., writing presenting speech or marking the depicted things — Figure 8). Indirect message is less frequent, for example occurring as normal writing/text on the depicted objects (the word *post* on the post box).

When picture and writing are side by side, both are perceived separately — reading fixes the eyes on writing, while looking at the picture does not allow reading at the same time. This combination is characterized by a kind of dual reading, a constant shifting from one expression to the other, whereas both stay in the field of vision. Imagetext, the synthesis of picture and writing, is perceived as whole and compact, and dual reading disappears. Some tension might emerge when the pictogram and the ordinary text meet; it is practically non-existent between formulas-notes and text. Even more distinguishable are the realistic picture and pictogram or diagram. Here they cause tension, just as the writing does.

Table 2. *Perception of the image-text relations*

separate reading	dual reading	synthesized reading
the spatial separation of picture and text	coexistence of picture and text	imagetext: synthesis or blending

Having suggested the possibilities of tension, opposition, and mutual amplification in the image-text relations, we should briefly return to the question again. Partly urged by a desire to find a modernist pure means of expression, several authors regarded text and picture, or painting and literature, as phenomena that are mutually excluding, or at least clearly distinguishable and untranslatable. Various recent writings have tried to balance the opposition, trying to claim that this split is ideologically induced rather than ontological (e.g., Bal 1991; Mitchell 1986, 1994).

It has been increasingly disputed over the last decade whether combinations of picture and text, such as comic strips, pictorial lexicon, textbooks, newspapers, and magazines, perhaps constitute independent and also very effective types of message (e.g., Reynolds 1998; Kress 2003: 167). Proof has been provided, for example, by the development of the comic strip, and also by special kinds of notation systems that have been in use for a long time: musical notes, scientific formulae, and diagrams that really demand a different kind of reading knowledge. However, reading new imagetexts (or multimodal texts) is not altogether universal and cannot be extended to all the mentioned forms. Clearer and more readable design principles for picture-rich papers and reference books are being developed, naturally also relying on various historical customs — for example, the trend of reading in a particular written culture (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996), and norms derived from vision, which are partly experiential (recognizing the perspective), partly physiological (attention-grabbing colors and other visual elements). Other design principles of pictorial images are more local and depend on the type of message. The image-word combination on the computer screen works differently from the printed version: the screen format is different, contrasts are bigger, and point of view and reading position vary as well. On the screen and in books, the message should mostly be easily acceptable, whereas in advertising, to say nothing of artistic pictorial texts, attention is sought mainly by breaking these rules. Tradition survives as long as its existence can be guessed, and then someone turns it upside down, quotes it ironically and annuls it. The entire world of professional art education is not, after all, aimed at acquiring simple rules, but at breaking them creatively. This is the reason why the grammar of reading the images of Kress and

van Leeuwen may help to decode the everyday message, but does not exhaust the variety of pictorial art.

6. Conclusions

In sum, there is no point or possibility to write the art history or the history of visual culture using text as an independent sub-type of the 'great history.' Another form element can function in the same time section and function as the text (e.g., diagrams or the medieval 'language of objects'). Word-picture coexistence is therefore not so independent and exclusive of others that it could be taken as a singular way of conveying messages. This is a relationship that in certain cases may (but does not have to) form a new type of message — e.g., comic strip — thus a semiotic system or at least its sub-type.

This article summarizes the earlier attempts at systematizing the relations between pictorial and verbal representation that rely on clearly different methods. It is obvious that the version of merely two dominant relations (e.g., Barthes) does not exhaust all possibilities; on the other hand, a highly complicated multilayer segmentation (e.g., Kibédi Varga) cannot be successfully applied.

The relations between text and pictorial representation were, at first, presented hierarchically or on the basis of the dominant (what dominates is either picture or text or, in the case of *imagetext*, the relationship is equal). Second, the explicit (realized) and implicit (guessed) expressions of picture and text were distinguished. The explicit expression could in turn be divided into *autographic* and *allographic*. On the basis of these categories, we can indicate nine characteristic occurrences of picture-text relations.

Next, different functions of picture and text in the picture-text relations were pointed out. In both cases, five functions were described, some of which coincide with Roman Jakobson's linguistic functions: text/picture as signal (= phatic), text/picture as representation (= referential); and text/picture as bearer of poetic/aesthetic message (= poetic). The rest of the functions indicated by Jakobson can be analyzed in the pictorial/textual message as a whole. In addition to these, there are other functions that derive from the heterogeneous character of the message (text as proposition and picture as exemplification; text/picture as creator of extra meaning or additional function). In a specific pictorial message, these five functions occur in different measures and only when the pictorial and verbal components can be distinguished. The tension emerging from two components in a synthesized message, the possibility of dual reading of

the message, and the respectively different messages retreat, and a qualitatively new type of message is created.

Writing as part of the pictorial work of art is a considerably more complicated phenomenon than in ordinary daily messages. Four possibilities with different geneses were indicated to describe this phenomenon: (1) signature, (2) calligraphic and collage text, (3) writing presenting a direct message, and (4) indirect message.

The current article attempted to

- determine some crucial notions regarding the examined phenomena;
- offer certain initial classifications for the analysis of picture-text relations;
- point out that there are no simple texts based on just one means of expression;
- find the main functions of the message and its parts revealed in the mutual impact of written text and picture.

However, various significant topics were left out of this article: contextual or cultural and ideological conditionality of the picture-word relations; social functions of imagetext compared for instance with relevant functions of a natural language; implicit presence of the pictorial and the textual; relations between oral speech and pictorial image. And much else as well, because the coexistence of these two principles in their diverse personifications inevitably constitutes an infinite interference.

Notes

1. For example, International Association of Word and Image Studies / Association Internationale pour l'Etude des Rapports entre Texte et Image (IAWIS/AIERTI) established in 1987; in addition, various local word-and-image-societies are also operating.
2. In contemporary semiotics, there is possibly even a wider definition of the text that discards the condition of intentionality (e.g., landscape as a text in Johansen and Larsen 2002: 221).
3. For example, the work can change over time; it is even more difficult to fix the object of a conceptual work of art.
4. Textual transcendence or transtextuality is "everything that brings it [text] into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts" (Genette 1992: 81).
5. Here I cannot agree with the opinion of Kibédi Varga that "In single verbal-visual objects, image dominates only in the exceptional case when the given image is so well known to the beholder that he does not need any words to identify it . . ." (Kibédi Varga 1989: 42) In the pictorial arts, the domination of the image is a quite normal paradigm.
6. Kibédi Varga writes, in the same connection, of the simultaneous and consecutive word and image relations (Kibédi Varga 1989: 33). However the simultaneity and successivity of reading and looking depend on the format of the picture and on the length of the text, and the transition between them is nondiscrete.

7. Corresponding entry words are missing in several semiotic dictionaries (Greimas and Courtés 1982; Sebeok 1986; Bouissac 1998).
8. The visible form of the word, facture of the paper, etc., have been the targets of research on book design and typography. However, in that case the text as a text, its content and poetics recede into the background (cf., e.g., Larkin and Pon 2001: 1–5; Drucker 1994).
9. Kibédy Varga adds here co-reference, where the relation between word and image is only derived from the same reference from which they refer independently to each other. But it is not a word-and-image relation in the direct sense, but more a principle of *ut pictura poesis* (Kibédy Varga 1989: 42).

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