

# Picturing the Language of Images



# Picturing the Language of Images

Edited by

Nancy Pedri and Laurence Petit

**CAMBRIDGE**  
**SCHOLARS**

---

P U B L I S H I N G

Picturing the Language of Images,  
Edited by Nancy Pedri and Laurence Petit

This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2013 by Nancy Pedri, Laurence Petit and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-5438-7, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5438-2

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	xi
----------------------	----

Introduction .....	1
--------------------	---

## Picturing the Language of Images

NANCY PEDRI AND LAURENCE PETIT

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

UNIVERSITÉ PAUL VALÉRY-MONTPELLIER 3, FRANCE

## Part I: Verbal and Visual Literacy

Chapter One.....	13
------------------	----

### From Intersemiotic to Intermedial Transposition:

“Ex-changing Image into Word / Word into Image”

LILIAN LOUVEL

UNIVERSITÉ DE POITIERS, FRANCE

Chapter Two .....	33
-------------------	----

### The Order of Knowing: Discourse on Aesthetics and the Language of Vision

JACOB BODWAY

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BUFFALO, USA

Chapter Three .....	45
---------------------	----

### *Ecoutez-Voir*, by Elsa Triolet: Situating an “Iconotext”

JEAN-PIERRE MONTIER

UNIVERSITÉ RENNES II, FRANCE

## Part II: Iconotextuality and the Limits of Representation

Chapter Four.....	63
-------------------	----

### “A Story in Geometric Shapes”: The Cross between Text and Image in “The Kiss” by Angela Carter

PASCALE TOLLANCE

UNIVERSITÉ LILLE III, FRANCE

Chapter Five .....	73
<i>Tableaux Vivants</i> or <i>Nature Morte</i> ? On Descriptions of <i>Tableaux</i> in Goethe's <i>Elective Affinities</i>	
JOANA KONOVA	
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO, USA	
Chapter Six .....	87
The Quest for the "Thing Itself" in A. S. Byatt's <i>Still Life</i>	
EMILIE BOURDAROT	
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS VII, FRANCE	
<b>Part III: Ekphrastic Strategies</b>	
Chapter Seven.....	101
Walter Scott's Politics of Ekphrasis in <i>Waverley</i>	
ANNE-LAURE FORTIN-TOURNÈS	
UNIVERSITÉ LILLE II, FRANCE	
Chapter Eight.....	111
Written on Flesh: Peter Verhelst's <i>Tonguecat</i> and the Ekphrastic Tradition	
KIM GORUS	
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL, BELGIUM	
Chapter Nine.....	119
"Sound Apples, Fair Flesh, and Sunlight": A. S. Byatt's Feminist Critique of Matisse's Depictions of Women	
SARAH GARDAM	
DREW UNIVERSITY, USA	
Chapter Ten .....	133
"Lots of Little Lies for the Sake of One Big Truth": Ekphrasis and Memory in John Banville's <i>The Sea</i> and W. G. Sebald's <i>The Emigrants</i>	
SEAN MCGLADE	
THE COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART, USA	

**Part IV: Graphic and Illustrative Strategies**

Chapter Eleven .....	147
“As a Kind of Picture-Writing”: Walter Crane, Drawing, and the Creation of a New Symbolic System	
FRANCESCA TANCINI	
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SIENA, ITALY	
Chapter Twelve .....	163
“Not Waving”: Miscommunication between Stevie Smith’s Poems and Drawings	
KRISTEN MARANGONI	
BOB JONES UNIVERSITY, USA	
Chapter Thirteen .....	177
Photo-graphic Devices in Jonathan Safran Foer’s <i>Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close</i>	
ZOË SADOKIERSKI	
THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, AUSTRALIA	
Chapter Fourteen .....	199
The Shape of Trauma: Two 9/11 Novels	
ELIZABETH ROSEN	
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE, USA	

**Part V: Text and Image in Visual Art**

Chapter Fifteen .....	217
Body, Text, and Image in Tatana Kellner’s <i>Fifty Years of Silence</i>	
CHRISTA BAIADA	
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, USA	
Chapter Sixteen .....	229
Disrupting the Visual: The Dialogical Relation of Text and Image in Lorna Simpson’s Photographs	
CLAUDINE ARMAND	
UNIVERSITÉ NANCY II, FRANCE	
Chapter Seventeen .....	241
Parergon, Paratext, and Title in the Context of Visual Art	
MIKKO PIRINEN	
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ, FINLAND	

Chapter Eighteen .....	251
<i>The Interartistic Phenomenon in the “Catalonian Garden”</i>	
VASSILENA KOLAROVA	
INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR	

## **Part VI: Photography in Fiction**

Chapter Nineteen .....	273
Archeology of the Image: Photographic Traces and the Postmodern Archival Text	
KAREN JACOBS	
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER, USA	

Chapter Twenty .....	297
No Reality Here: Sensation Novels and Photography	
ELIZABETH ANDERMAN	
UNIVERSITY COLORADO AT BOULDER, USA	

Chapter Twenty-One .....	313
Nonnarrative Structure and Photographic Images in W. G. Sebald's <i>The Emigrants</i>	
J'LYN CHAPMAN	
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, USA	

Chapter Twenty-Two.....	327
Mute Images: The Photography of Melancholy in W. G. Sebald's <i>The Rings of Saturn</i>	
ISABELLE GADOIN	
UNIVERSITÉ DE POITIERS, FRANCE	

## **Part VII: Poetry and / of the Visual**

Chapter Twenty-Three.....	345
“A Charming Picture”: Photographic Images of Holocaust Perpetrators	
AIMEE POZORSKI	
CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, USA	

Chapter Twenty-Four .....	355
The “Magical Bishop” of Dada: Hugo Ball and “The Inner Alchemy of the Word”	
TAHIA THADDEUS KAMP	
YALE UNIVERSITY, USA	



Chapter Twenty-Five.....	367
Re-reading Blake's "London"	

G. A. ROSSO

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, USA

Chapter Twenty-Six.....	381
"Shut from View": Pre-Raphaelite Painting and the Invisible in Keats's <i>Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil</i>	

FANNY GILLET

UNIVERSITÉ TOULOUSE II-LE MIRAIL, FRANCE

## Part VIII: The Language of Film

Chapter Twenty-Seven.....	395
Diegetic Frames and Photo-Cinematographic Seduction: Filming through Text in Harold Frederic's <i>Illumination</i> (1896)	

ROBERT MACHADO

CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, USA

Chapter Twenty-Eight.....	419
From Remake to Remote: Tex Avery's Fairy Tales	

PIERRE FLOQUET

UNIVERSITÉ DE BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Chapter Twenty-Nine.....	433
The Fading Art of Video and Loss of Memory: Michael Haneke's <i>Caché</i> and <i>Amour</i>	

KAREN A. RITZENHOFF

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, USA

## Part IX: The Language of Comics

Chapter Thirty.....	455
Rendering the Familiar Unfamiliar: Art Spiegelman's <i>Maus</i>	

NANCY PEDRI

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

Chapter Thirty-One.....	471
All About 9/11, All But 9/11: The Shifting Epistemological Paradigm of Art Spiegelman's <i>In the Shadow of No Towers</i>	

MARTÍN URDIALES SHAW

UNIVERSITY OF VIGO, SPAIN

Chapter Thirty-Two.....	483
FONK! HONK! WHAM! OOF! Representation of Events in Carl Barks – And in the Aesthetics of Comics in General	
FREDERIK STJERNFELT AND SVEND ØSTERGAARD	
AARHUS UNIVERSITY, DENMARK	
Chapter Thirty-Three.....	509
The Silence of Images: Traces and Effacement in the French Graphic Novel Adaptation of Bohumil Hrabal's <i>Too Loud a Solitude</i>	
PASCAL BATAILLARD	
UNIVERSITÉ LUMIÈRE-LYON II, FRANCE	
Contributors.....	529
Index.....	539

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 2-1. Perspective Theory
- Fig. 2-2. Hogarth Image
- Fig. 3-1. Cover
- Fig. 3-2. Radio Coucou
- Fig. 3-3. Perspective, Aranjuez (14)
- Fig. 5-1. Joseph Goupy (designer), Gérard Jean Baptiste Scotin II (engraver), *Date Obolum Belisario*. Engraving and etching, 507 x 577 mm. © The Trustees of the British Museum.
- Fig. 5-2. Johan Georg Wille, *Paternal Instruction* (after Terborch), 1765. Engraving. 454 x 371.4 mm. © Albright-Knox Art Gallery / Art Resource, NY
- Fig. 11-1. *Puss in Boots*: chromo-xylography engraved and printed by Evans, drawn by Crane (1874)
- Fig. 11-2. *The House that Jack Built*: chromo-xylography engraved and printed by Evans, drawn by Crane (1871)
- Fig. 11-3. *The Frog Prince*: chromo-xylography engraved and printed by Evans, drawn by Crane (1874)
- Fig. 11-4. *King Gab's Story Bag*: xylography engraved by Anderson, drawn by Crane (1869)
- Fig. 11-5. *The Golden Age*: chromo-xylography engraved after a drawing by Crane (1886)
- Fig. 12-1. Image paired with "Ceux qui luttent". Used with permission by the estate of James MacGibbon
- Fig. 12-2. "Not Waving but Drowning". Used with permission by the estate of James MacGibbon
- Fig. 12-3. "The Photograph". Used by permission of the estate of James MacGibbon
- Fig. 13-1. Photographic frontispiece, across three double page spreads between the cover and dedication page of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. Doorknob photograph © Debra Melzer; Birds photograph © Marianne Müller; building photograph uncredited.
- Fig. 13-2. Pages 167-168. Photograph © Marianne Müller
- Fig. 13-3. Pages 102-103 showing what is implied to be "Grandma's apartment". Photograph uncredited

- Fig. 13-4. photographs from the first meeting with Abby Black, page 92 © Alan Schein Photography/Corbis; Page 95 © Kevin Fleming/Corbis; Page 98 uncredited
- Fig. 13-5. some of the 15-page section of “Stuff That Happened To Me” images. Page 54 © The Scotsman/Corbis Sygma; Page 55 © Underwood & Underwood/Corbis; Page 64 © Chang W. Lee/New York Times; Page 65 Randy Faris/Corbis.
- Fig. 13-6. Pages 60-61 credited on imprint page as “photo illustration based on a photograph by Lyle Owerko © 2001 / Polaris”
- Fig. 13-7. A series of double page spreads showing the final “flipbook” sequence. Images on right hand pages © Alison Wright / Corbis
- Fig. 13-8. Pages 260-261, the photographs of Thomas Senior’s hands. Photographs uncredited
- Fig. 14-1. “Image break-out in Frederic Beigbeder’s *Windows on the World*”
- Fig. 15-1. Tatana Kellner, wooden case and front cover, 71125. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 15-2. Tatana Kellner, 71125, central arm and hand sculpture on right; page cut-out on left. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 15-3. Tatana Kellner, family photographs against Memorial Wall of the Pinkasova Synagogue on right; silkscreened concentration camp photos on left, B-11226. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-1. Painting 4. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-2. Painting 3. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-3. Painting 5. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-4. Painting 6. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-5. Painting 1. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-6. Painting 7. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 18-7. Painting 8. Courtesy of the artist
- Fig. 19-1. Cha’s *Dictee*, unpaginated, facing title page
- Fig. 19-2. Cha’s *Dictee*, page 74
- Fig. 19-3. Cha’s *Dictee*, page 119
- Fig. 19-4. Cha’s *Dictee*, pages 112-113
- Fig. 19-5. Cha’s *Dictee*, page 134
- Fig. 19-6. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, pages 56-57
- Fig. 19-7. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, page 118
- Fig. 19-8. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, page 293
- Fig. 19-9. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, page 15
- Fig. 19-10. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, page 151
- Fig. 19-11. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, page 187
- Fig. 19-12. W. G. Sebald’s *Austerlitz*, page 116

- Fig. 19-13. W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, pages 106-107
- Fig. 24-1. Umberto Boccioni. *Le forze di una strada*. 1911. Oil on canvas, 99.5x80.5 cm
- Fig. 24-2. 1912, Marcel Duchamp: © Succession Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York 2013
- Fig. 24-3. ca. 1920, Raoul Hausmann: © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris
- Fig. 24-4. Ball at the Cabaret Voltaire performing as the Magical Bishop
- Fig. 24-5. *Untitled (Forest)*. ca. 1917, Hans (Jean) Arp, © 2013 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn
- Fig. 25-1. "London" Songs of Innocence and of Experience, copy Z, plate 46. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress. Copyright © 2012 William Blake Archive. Used with permission
- Fig. 32-1. Donald Duck. *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 126, 1951. © Disney
- Fig. 32-2. "Luck of the North." *Donald Duck Four Color* 256. 1949. © Disney
- Fig. 32-3. "Donald Duck." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 105, 1949. © Disney
- Fig. 32-4. "Donald Duck." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 95. 1948. © Disney
- Fig. 32-5. "The Seven Cities of Cibola." *Uncle Scrooge* 7. 1954. © Disney
- Fig. 32-6. "Donald Duck." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 146. 1952. © Disney
- Fig. 32-7. "Mystery of the Swamp." *Four Color* 62. 1945. © Disney
- Fig. 32-8. "Mystery of the Swamp." *Donald Duck Four Color* 62. 1945. © Disney
- Fig. 32-9. "The Golden Helmet." *Donald Duck Four Color* 408. 1952. © Disney
- Fig. 32-10. "The Golden Helmet." *Donald Duck Four Color* 408. 1952. © Disney
- Fig. 32-11. "Donald Duck." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 32. 1943. © Disney
- Fig. 32-12. "The Golden Helmet." *Donald Duck Four Color* 408. 1952. © Disney
- Fig. 32-13. "The Wax Museum." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 231. 1959. © Disney
- Fig. 32-14. "The Status Seeker." *Uncle Scrooge* 41. 1963. © Disney
- Fig. 32-15. Donald Duck. *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 95. 1948. © Disney

- Fig. 32-16. "The Dog-Sitter." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 238. 1960. © Disney
- Fig. 32-17. "The Dog-Sitter." *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 238. 1960. © Disney
- Fig. 33-1. *Too Loud a Solitude*, page 34
- Fig. 33-2. Valérie Berge. *Une trop bruyante solitude*. (*Příliš hlučná samota*), page 26
- Fig. 33-3. *Une trop bruyante solitude*, page 54
- Fig. 33-4. *Une trop bruyante solitude*, page 45
- Fig. 33-5. *Une trop bruyante solitude*, page 13
- Fig. 33-6. *Une trop bruyante solitude*, page 5
- Fig. 33-7. From *Fall* by Ambre (detail), page 71
- Fig. 33-8. *Une trop bruyante solitude*, page 76

## INTRODUCTION

### PICTURING THE LANGUAGE OF IMAGES

NANCY PEDRI AND LAURENCE PETIT

In his 1980 collection of essays entitled *The Language of Images*, W. J. T. Mitchell hailed the increased collaboration between “practitioners of the word” (*Language of Images* 1), or literary critics, and “practitioners of the image” (*Language of Images* 1), or art historians, that made the “no man’s land” “between the realms of word and image” “[begin] to look like a field in its own right” (*Language of Images* 2). More than thirty years later, “text and image”—as the field is now most frequently called—has indeed become a well-established discipline in the humanities, and the collaboration between literary scholars and art theorists—thanks to critics like Mitchell, among others—is intense and fruitful.

If this field of study has indeed expanded so much during this period of time, removing the image “from the custody of art history” (*Language of Images* 7) and opening it up to areas of investigation as diverse as painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, cartography, typography, graphic design, architecture, film, and comics, the boundaries of this “new iconology”, which were “not yet defined” in 1980 (*Language of Images* 7), still remain hazy precisely because of its interdisciplinary nature. For the same reason, so does its methodology. As Mitchell himself makes clear in his famous 1986 book *Picture Theory*, despite an obvious “pictorial turn” (*Picture Theory* 11) or gradual proliferation of images in postmodern culture, there is still “no general theory of the image” (*Language of Images* 7). Contrary to what the title may suggest, *Picture Theory* does not claim to be a theory of pictures, but rather an “applied iconology” concerned with “investigat[ing] the interactions of visual and verbal representations in a variety of media, principally literature and the visual arts” (*Picture Theory* 4-5).

In the wake of Mitchell’s influential work, the present collection of essays, *Picturing the Language of Images*, likewise does not pretend to offer a homogeneous approach to the ever-expanding field of text-image

relations, and is in no way limited to one topic or one methodology. Instead, it brings together established and emerging scholars from around the world to provide a broad exploration of the complex interaction between the verbal and the visual in a variety of media (such as literature, painting, photography, film, and comics, to name but a few) and across time (from the 18th century to the 21st century). These critics—coming from backgrounds as diverse as literature, art history, book design, and the visual arts—draw on different methodologies and reading practices to inform their applied analysis of the interplay of words and images in multimodal texts and artefacts. Within these various semiological, cultural, and historical perspectives concerned with matters of perception, representation, and cognition, the “language of images” is alternately construed, as in Mitchell’s original collection of essays, as the language *about* images—the interpretive discourse about images—or as images *as* language—the semiotic view of images as texts to be deciphered—or as images *in* language—that is to say “verbal language as a system *informed by* images”, as Mitchell puts it (*Language of Images* 3). Let us specify that by “images” we mean a particular type of image within the “family of images”, as Mitchell calls it in his book *Iconology* (*Iconology* 9), images that refer to a special kind of visual representation, either as concrete, visual objects or as the virtual, phenomenological appearance that those objects provide for the beholder. Such images are then to be understood as graphic images, and thus designate mostly paintings, drawings, and photographs, but also maps, tableaux, calligraphy, and cinematic images.

In the present collection of essays, contributors examine and challenge the relationships between texts and images from a historical, cultural, theoretical, and generic perspective, while emphasizing the illuminating or destabilizing effects of this interaction for the reader / viewer. By analyzing texts that incorporate visual images or visual images that incorporate text, the authors consider the forms and modalities that the debate on texts and images and their relation has taken over time and space from its origins in the Sister Arts tradition to the more recent discussions of the proliferation of images in today’s visual culture. Essays highlight how the old historical tradition of comparing the sister arts, painting and poetry, on the basis of how they resemble each other (Horace’s famous doctrine of “*Ut Pictura Poesis*”, “as in painting, so in poetry” ), compete with each other (the just as famous rivalry, or “*paragone*” between the arts), or “illuminate” each other (Lessing)<sup>1</sup> has increasingly been challenged by structuralist and post-structuralist

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed analysis of this tradition, see, in particular, Praz and Hagstrum.



theorists concerned with the status of both image and text as signs to be read and interpreted, as well as with the ability of images to resist interpretation.<sup>2</sup> Emphasis is placed on the textual components of images and the graphical elements of texts according to the tradition of *Ut Pictura Poesis*, their joint nature as signs according to semiotic tenets, or the fundamental resistance of images to interpretation and verbalization according to poststructuralist theories, whose antisemiotic statements foreground the instability and opacity of the image.<sup>3</sup> Issues of history, memory, trauma, and nostalgia are also addressed, while formal issues are raised through discussions of innovative iconotextual strategies that attempt to break the boundaries between the verbal and the visual. Whatever the focus, but particularly in cases of ekphrasis—the verbal

---

<sup>2</sup> The semiotic approach carried out by such seminal critics in the field as Wendy Steiner, Marianna Torgovnick, Norman Bryson, and W. J. T. Mitchell, to name but a few, does not, however, fundamentally question the tenets of the sister arts tradition. Text and image, working together in a relationship of “analogy,” as Liliane Louvel emphasizes in *L’Œil du texte* (87), are still considered as emulating each other, or competing with each other, but the difference resides in that the focus of semiotics is no longer their parallel history, but their parallel status as signs. Only recently, in *“Reading Rembrandt”: Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*, has Mieke Bal tried to contest the tradition of comparing the arts by saying that critics should refrain from analyzing the parallels between verbal and visual arts to consider instead the effects produced by the two codes as they function together within hybrid narratives. Radically questioning the value of the preposition “and” that “emphasizes the difference, and perhaps the incompatibility, of the two concepts” (27) in such phrases as “Word and Image”, “Text and Image”, or “Literature and the Visual Arts”, and showing how “and” can equally, and just as usefully, be interpreted as meaning “in”, “on”, and “as”, Bal advocates an approach that would show how “the visual and verbal arts interpenetrate, influence, and inform each other” (19). She is echoed in that by Louvel who, in *Texte/Image*, sees the need for the relation between text and image to be re-thought “not in the agonistic mode, but in a complementary and cooperative mode” (12). For Louvel, the relation between text and image can be compared to a “dialogue” functioning “in the manner of an oscillation, a translation, or a transaction” (Louvel, *Texte / Image* 12).

<sup>3</sup> See, in particular, Elkins for whom images resist interpretation and verbalization if only because, as he points out in the case of paintings, large portions of pictures are made up of material, “graphic marks” (xii) that are “sub-semiotic” (xviii), “merely formal” (xviii), “irrational” (xiii), “incoherent” (xviii), and ultimately “opaque” (xiii). See also other postmodern critics such as Geoffrey Batchen, John Tagg, Louis Althusser, Allan Sekula, and Victor Burgin, who emphasize the inherent lack of essence of the image, particularly the photographic image, which they see as indistinguishable from the very discourse that produces it.

representation of a visual representation (Heffernan 3)—essays use the interplay between texts and images to provide a reflection on the limits of representation, as well as to rethink the very acts of reading and viewing.

Divided into nine sections, *Picturing the Language of Images*, with its thirty-three essays, covers a wide range of traditional as well as newer subfields or points of interest in the study of word-and-image relations, while consistently emphasizing the subversive and transgressive nature of the image.

The first section, entitled “Verbal and Visual Literacy”, is comprised of three essays concerned with visual aesthetics and its relation with language. In the opening essay, Liliane Louvel rethinks Foucault’s notion of the “infinite dialogue” between the arts in terms of a transaction, an “ex-change” akin to a financial exchange, which takes the form of an interartistic or intermedial transposition. Through her historical survey of the modalities of this transposition, Louvel stresses the importance of the notion of iconotextuality and introduces the concept of “pictorial third”, which she develops at length in *Le Tiers pictural* (2010), as a more appropriate concept to describe the personal, intimate negotiation at stake for the reader / viewer in the interplay between text and image. Interestingly, the second essay, by Jacob Bodway, which also tackles problems of aesthetics but from a totally different perspective—the debate on a so-called “universal”, “true” language of painting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century—, places a similar emphasis on the personal in its relation to vision by highlighting William Hogarth’s assertion of the uniqueness of each individual’s viewing experience. Finally, Jean-Pierre Montier, who also addresses aesthetic and political issues in their relation to subjectivity and truth in his discussion of Elsa Triolet’s novel *Ecoutez-voir*, highlights the paradoxical nature of this iconotext whose profusion of images, in an apparent demand or quest for authenticity, reveals in fact the highest degree of unreality, thus placing the competition between text and image on the side of semantic drift and lack of meaning.

The second section, entitled “Iconotextuality and the Limits of Representation”, brings together three essays concerned with the fascination, power, and ultimate impossibility of representation. All three essays examine texts that strive to transcend their own nature as texts by blurring the limits between the verbal and the visual, thus destabilizing the reader and defamiliarizing reading practices. In her discussion of Angela Carter’s “A Story in Geometric Shapes”, Pascale Tollance shows how this hybrid text—which befits Louvel’s notion of iconotext—attempts to prompt vision just as much as it bars it, resulting in a celebration of the power of the invisible. Likewise, Joana Konova’s study of Goethe’s

*Elective Affinities* reveals how the text, through the staging of *tableaux* in an intricate chain of textual and pictorial representations, re-enacts the infinite dialogue between art and life and interrogates the very nature of representation in its destabilizing play with artificiality and illusion. Finally, Emile Bourdarot examines how A. S. Byatt, in her novel *Still Life*, explores the limits of representation by endeavouring to depict “the thing itself” and to infuse her novel with the qualities of still life paintings, a genre whose oxymoronic nature provides a perfect metaphor for the illusory nature and ultimate impossibility of representation.

Concerns with the nature of representation as inherently misrepresentative of what it sets out to represent are also at the heart of the third section, entitled “Ekphrastic Strategies”. The four essays that make up this section provide a reflection on ekphrastic moments or gestures as fraught with political and ethical significance, as well as powerful tools of resistance and instability. In her analysis of Walter Scott’s *Waverley*, Anne-Laure Fortin-Tournès argues that the ekphrasis presented in the penultimate chapter is anything but a lull in the narrative or a moment of stillness and contemplation, but works instead as a catalyst for the political contents of the novel. Kim Gorus, for her part, contends that Peter Verhelst’s creation, through the use of ekphrasis or “textual pictures” in his novel *Tonguecat* partakes of a work-in-progress strategy similar to Duchamp’s that aims at unsettling the reader and giving him or her agency over the artwork. Sarah Gardam also addresses issues of power, as well as gender, in her discussion of ekphrasis in A. S. Byatt’s *The Matisse Stories*. She shows how the ekphrastic gesture in these stories enables a many-levelled interrogation of visual and verbal (mis)representations of women, thus going beyond the power of the artwork itself. Finally, using Robert Mueller’s concept of mnemesthetics, Sean McGlade brings together the ekphrastic gesture and the recording of memory as two creative interpretations of representative visual images to discuss how both John Banville’s and W. G. Sebald’s uses of ekphrasis in *The Sea* and *The Emigrants* lend intentionally destabilizing authority to their texts.

The fourth section, entitled “Graphic and Illustrative Strategies”, explores further the unsettling power of images in their interplay with texts by showing that illustrations, in their various graphic or photo-graphic forms, serve purposes other than merely decorative, referential, or documentary. Together, the essays collected in this section purport that illustrations often mask or obscure the texts they are associated with and exert a strong subversive or transgressive power. Such is the case in Walter Crane’s Victorian illustrated albums which, as Francesca Tancini explains in her essay, revolutionized graphical and editorial formats by

providing a new, hidden symbolic system in the utopian hope of transforming society. Such is the case also of the drawings illustrating Stevie Smith's poetry, whose deliberately ambiguous and incongruous nature far supplants the aesthetic value for which they have been praised, as Kristen Marangoni shows in her essay. Whereas Zoë Sadokierski demonstrates how increasingly common hybrid novels that make use of graphic and / or photo-graphic devices, such as Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*, push back the limits of genre and present a reading experience that demands visual as well as verbal literacy, Elizabeth Rosen in her essay explores how the author's pictographic and typographic strategies give form to the traumatic experience of September 11<sup>th</sup> by urging readers to take on an active role in the meaning-making process.

Section five, entitled "Text and Image in Visual Art", examines the radical ways in which writers and artists make use of textual and visual material to rethink the very acts of reading and viewing, transcend boundaries, and explore the elusive nature of representation. Christa Baiada analyzes the way in which Tatana Kellner, in her artist book *Fifty Years of Silence*, uses, like Foer, various interactive modes of telling, including photographs and sculpture, in different print and languages to confront the unspeakable story of trauma. Claudine Armand, for her part, explores the dynamic interplay and the tension created by the collision between the verbal and the iconographic in Lorna Simpson's enigmatic conceptual art within the larger context of postmodern fragmentation, disjunction, loss, and isolation. In a similar manner, frames, borders, and supplements are the focus of Mikko Pirinen's discussion of Derrida's and Genette's concept of parergon and paratext, while Vassilena Kolarova examines the ever-changing interartistic nature of painter Georges Badin and writer Michel Butor's artist book, "The Catalan Garden".

"Photography in Fiction", the book's sixth section, focuses on the use of photographic images in verbal texts. Going against the traditional view of photography as a reliable, transparent, and natural medium, this section highlights the subversive, ambiguous, and destabilizing power of photographs which, far from being tokens of authenticity, foreground rupture and absence. In her discussion of two postmodern archival texts, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée* and W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, Karen Jacobs examines how photographs emerge as both the privileged mechanism of archival reconstruction and one of the main factors generating scepticism toward that very project. Elizabeth Anderman, likewise, stresses the unstable and malleable nature of photography in the novels of Wilkie Collins, emblematic of the Victorians's view of

photography as both a “pencil of nature” (Talbot) and a visual fiction. And while Lynn Chapman’s essay on Sebald’s *The Emigrants* insists on the foregrounding of rupture that is at stake in his use of photographs, Isabelle Gadoin’s essay on Sebald’s *The Rings of Saturn* views its photographs as enhancing the melancholic nature of a text that eludes the possibility of a fixed meaning.

Section seven, “Poetry and / of the Visual”, considers the consequences of the inclusion of visual images in poetic texts in a diachronic perspective ranging from Blake’s poetry to the 1980s via Pre-Raphaelitism and Dadaism. Here, too, what comes out of the various analyses presented in these essays is the subversive, unrestrained nature of the visual images, whether they be the incomplete, misleading, and mocking photographs of war perpetrators contained in the two Holocaust poems discussed by Aimee Pozorski or the illuminations of Blake’s poem “London” that supplement or even contradict the text and provide an alternative, less violent vision of London. While Dadaist Hugo Ball through his Cabaret Voltaire was trying to restore power to the image and attain the “Innermost Alchemy of the Word”, as Tahia Thaddeus Kamp explains, the visual image in Keats’s poem “Isabella, or the Pot of Basil” acquires its subversive dimension by forcing the reader who is “shut from view” to challenge the medium’s limits and try to approach the realm of the implied and the invisible.

The eighth section, “The Language of Film”, considers the changes brought forward by a new type of image, the cinematic image, both in the realm of literature and in the realm of moving pictures. Robert Machado discusses Harold Frederic’s 1896 novel *The Damnation of the Theron Ware*, which was deprived of its original title, “Illumination”, due to a publishing error, and proceeds to restore to the text its ground-breaking cinematic dimension by highlighting its use of framed visual depictions and illuminated “word-pictures”. Pierre Floquet, for his part, views Tex Avery’s cartoons over time as a gradual and increased liberation from the traditional narrative codes of popular culture up to his last rendering of the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, the socially and politically incorrect 1949 *Little Rural Riding Hood*. Conversely, Karen Ritzenhoff, in her discussion of Michael Haneke’s *Caché*, deals with the notions of surveillance, scopophilia, and violence that spectatorship can induce in a film about video-taping and coded messages that makes us rethink the very acts of reading and viewing.

Finally, section nine, “The Language of Comics”, brings to the fore issues of perception and cognition in relation to a medium, the comic book, which eludes straightforward categorization and whose multifarious

postmodern structure seems to hinder, or perhaps annihilate altogether, individual interpretation, both on the part of the author and the reader. Nancy Pedri's analysis of repetitive seeing in relation to cognition in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* examines cartoon renderings of familiar Holocaust images and warns of the dangers of semantic simplification on the part of the author, as well as metaphorical blindness on the part of the reader. Martín Urdiales Shaw's discussion of Art Spiegelman's post 9/11 graphic-textual testimony *In the Shadow of No Towers* highlights how this hybrid, unclassifiable book or volume addresses—or fails to address—the artist's personal experience of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, and actually points to the powerlessness of the visual image in relation to the unknowability of the impact of this event. Frederik Stjernfelt and Svend Østergaard's essay, also concerned with issues of aesthetics and cognition, similarly tackles the problem of the representation of events, in Carl Barks's *Donald Duck* this time, in terms of Lessing's "pregnant moment". They discuss the various strategies at stake for cartoonists to render a whole series of moments in sequential order. Finally, Pascal Bataillard takes the debate on perception and representation in post-Holocaust comic books one step further by addressing the actual and metaphorical silence of visual images, in its relation with the unspeakable horror of the Shoah, through the ambivalent figure of the destruction and effacement of books in the French graphic novel adaptation of Bohumil Hrabal's 1976 novel *Too Loud a Solitude*.

With this irreducible silence of images, presented by antisemioticians as a guarantee against the excesses of structuralist analyses, we reach the limits of a so-called "language of images", unless we prefer to believe that images indeed do speak, but a silent language, that images are indeed, according to the famous sixth-century B. C. E. aphorism attributed by Plutarch to Simonides de Ceos, "mute poetry" (Plutarch 346f-347c).

## Works Cited

- Bal, Mieke. *Reading Rembrandt: Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2006.
- Elkins, James. *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Hagstrum, Jean H. *The Sister Arts*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1958.
- Heffernan, James A. W. *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993.
- Horace: Epistles Book II and Ars Poetica*. Ed. Niall Rudd. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.
- Lessing, Gotthold E. *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. 1766. Trans. Edward A. McCormick. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1984.
- Louvel, Liliane. *L'Œil du texte*. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1998.
- . *Texte / Image: Images à lire, textes à voir*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002.
- . *Le Tiers pictural*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. *Iconology*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986.
- . *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- , Ed. *The Language of Images*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Plutarch. *De Gloria Atheniensium*, III.
- Praz, Mario. *Mnemosyne: The Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970.





# **PART I**

## **VERBAL AND VISUAL LITERACY**



# CHAPTER ONE

## FROM INTERSEMIOTIC TO INTERMEDIAL TRANSPOSITION: “EX-CHANGING IMAGE INTO WORD / WORD INTO IMAGE”

LILIANE LOUVEL

In front of a painting, we tend to become verbose and start commenting on it. And so does literature. The infinite dialogue or the “infinite relation” Foucault evoked sets word and image side by side. The famous formula he coined a propos *Las Meninas*—“However hard one may try to say what one sees, what one sees never fully coincides with what one says” (25, translation mine)—expresses the difficulty of “rendering” an image with words. Since Simonides’s aphorism and Horace’s *ut pictura poesis*, painting and poetry have been constantly pitted one against the other. Transposing image into word may be one way of expressing what takes place in the operation, a fact already acknowledged by Claus Clüver in his article for *Poetics Today*.

To evoke the process, the following terms are commonly used: translation, illustration, equivalence, transmutation, transfusion, commerce, dialogue, and conversion. To change one currency into another one entails a rest, the commission due. What we may term “a rest” is the part left to imagination dangling in-between word and image, the part of fantasy which endlessly tears at the text caught up in the “infinite relation”. And Foucault’s voice insists on the irreducibility of word and image:

But the relation of language to painting is an infinite one [...]. However hard one may try to say what one sees, what one sees never fully inhabits what one says. But if one wants to maintain open the relation between language and the visible, if one wants to speak not against but from their incompatibility, so as to stay as close as possible one to the other, then one must erase the nouns and stay in the infinity of the task. It is perhaps thanks to the medium of this grey anonymous language, which is always

finicky and repetitive because it is too wide that painting, little by little, will be able to gleam and glitter. (25)<sup>4</sup>

If, on the one hand, the irreducibility, the incompatibility, the dissemblance between the two media is acknowledged by critics, still, on the other hand, the relentless presence of image in literary texts cannot be ignored. The transmuting process reflects what Philippe Hamon calls “diehard *ut pictura poesis*”. What I propose is another figure of the writer, that of the writer as changer, in the manner of Quentin Metsys’s changers in *The Money Lender and his Wife* who are weighing and exchanging the currencies lying on the table, without forgetting the small convex mirror which reflects the scene outside and converts the invisible into the visible. Currency itself is only the representation of an absent value, this *a fortiori*, since the invention of banknotes. The semiotic transaction is an artistic negotiation which works on the oscillating mode, when image bargains its inscription with / in the text and resorts to transposition. Then, the changer-writer of the text screens the image, thanks to the riddle of language. This is what Marcel Broodthaers cunningly represented with his Diptych: *Gedicht / Poem / Poème-Change-Exchange-Wechsel* visually figuring what I am trying to express: the poetic ex-change between image and language.

In the Museum of Modern Art in Barcelona, I was arrested by the two framed “pictures” presented as traditional easel-painting but with a post- Duchampian twist to them (<http://www.macba.cat/en/gedicht-poem-poeme-change-exchange-wechsel-3932>). The work is a “montage” visually representing what takes place when words as signs become image and vice-versa, according to an ex-change operation, an operation of conversion, of transposition. Both painter and poet are presented as potential changers. Looking at the framed “pictures”, one may notice symmetrical effects: in each frame there are three columns, the titles of which point to an inversion on a chiasmus-like pattern according to the languages used: German, English, French, and vice-versa. Thus “poème” folds onto “change” pointing to the visual rendering of the transposition.

---

<sup>4</sup> Mais le rapport du langage à la peinture est un rapport infini [...]. [O]n a beau dire ce qu’on voit, ce qu’on voit ne loge jamais dans ce qu’on dit [...]. Mais si l’on veut maintenir ouvert le rapport du langage et du visible, si on veut parler non pas à l’encontre mais à partir de leur incompatibilité, de manière à rester au plus proche de l’un et de l’autre, alors il faut effacer les noms propres et se maintenir dans l’infini de la tâche. C’est peut-être par l’intermédiaire de ce langage gris, anonyme, toujours méticuleux et répétitif parce que trop large, que la peinture, petit à petit, allumera ses clartés. (25)

Furthermore, numbers are converted into letters for spontaneously the visitor, lured by the sum-like appearance of the columns suggested by the inscriptions, the black underline, the red ink as in an account-book, thinks s/he is looking at sums. But what s/he is looking at are as many letters, initials, those of the artist himself, M.B., his signature. And count as s/he may, s/he will realize that the numbers and the sums, which do not correspond from frame to frame, seem to signify that 258 M.B. in English correspond to  $28+10+12$  M.B. in German and to  $6+25+45$  M.B. in French, once the converting operation has been done. The symmetrical effect of the chiasmus operates a visual conversion from term to term. The chiasmus presents a mirror-image of the two panels on the mode of a diptych, thus quoting its pictorial heritage, that of Flemish and Italian painting. The device shows the passage from numbers to letters, corresponding to the conversion of the visual into language, of the symbol into image, the visual here not being rendered by a sign system, but signified by visual obviousness. For what the spectator has to do first and foremost is to stop to read and consider the two panels: two simple black frames and three columns of scribbles. But, they linger in one's mind for a long time: to wit.

Benveniste, evoking music and literature both sharing “the production of sounds”, insists on the irreducibility of two semiotic systems which, for him, cannot be “mutually convertible”. Once more, the lexical field of exchange is put to use:

This amounts to saying that two distinct semiotic systems cannot be mutually convertible [because there is a] difference of nature between their respective units and between their *modus vivendi* [...]. For this reason, the non-convertibility between systems with distinct bases is the reason for their non-redundancy in the world of sign systems. Men do not possess several systems to express the same meaning. (53)<sup>5</sup>

And of course, for Benveniste, language is “the interpretant of all semiotic systems” (53, translation mine). But the conversion of one currency into another one renders transactions possible. And there lies the whole issue, that of the relation between language, discourse, and the

---

<sup>5</sup> This and other translations by Laurence Petit. Cela revient à dire que deux systèmes sémiotiques de type différent ne peuvent être mutuellement convertibles [car il y a une] différence de nature entre leurs unités respectives et entre leurs types de fonctionnement [...]. Ainsi la non-convertibilité entre systèmes à bases différentes est la raison de la non-redondance dans l'univers des systèmes de signes. L'homme ne dispose pas de plusieurs systèmes distincts pour le même rapport de signification. (53)

visual, between the readable and the visible: “To transpose a painting into a verbal text is to reconstitute its meaning by creating a sign that draws on the codes and conventions of a literary (and not merely a linguistic) system equivalent to the pictorial system operative in the painting” (Clüver 61).

Let us start from the term itself: transposition implies a passage (suggested by translation) from one medium into / by another one. It entails a change in position on a chiasmic pattern. “Transposition” is borrowed from music, games, mathematics, grammar, and translation. It belongs to worlds ruled by strong principles which may nevertheless be imported into other systems of thought and fields of study. Let it be said, also, that if transposition means transformation or transmutation, for what concerns word / image it does not mean the replacement of one by the other. Transposition does not mean translation, but rather adaptation and the careful use of analogy. Let us recall Kant’s definition of analogy: “Analogy: a word which does not signify as is commonly accepted, an imperfect resemblance between two things, but the perfect resemblance of two ratios between two very dissimilar things” (58).

Beyond “the language(s) of art”, to quote Nelson Goodman, will loom the question of language *and* art within an artistic form, that of the literary text. The double bind being that this will be difficult because the text is literary, but, conversely, this is why we can envisage the operation for both artistic image and text as belonging to the realm of art.

Transposition implies a see-saw movement between text and image and image and text. It works both ways. Of course, literary-minded people will be more conversant with the second operation without ignoring the first one. The transposing operation is of utmost significance for intersemiotic studies. The underlying metaphor figures the passage from one system of signs to another one, if we accept that “painting [...] is a semiotic system...” (Clüver 60). We move on from the *locus* of the image to the other *locus* constituted by the text.

I offer to start by examining the conditions of possibility of the intersemiotic operation, before describing some of the modalities of the transfer, and ending with the issues at stake concerning the literary text.

## **Conditions of Possibility of Intersemiotic Transposition**

To evoke an intersemiotic transposition first implies that the interplay between the two semiotic systems is possible, for some, simply because we are faced with two “texts”.