

“Image and Text in Advertising –
An Intermedial Study of Figures of Speech and Ekphrasis”

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To my dear parents

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Introduction

A perceptible text-image plane has attracted various studies on intermediality ranging from comparison of literary texts with painting to linguistic analysis of puns and neologisms in advertising. The different media and means of communication indeed seem to share certain aspects that create the crossroad between the two poles so that they are treated more and more as an inseparable whole.

This study will concentrate on the common ground of literature and advertising. In literature it is the text that generates a strong visual allusion and in advertising it is mostly the visual aspect that guides the viewer's 'reading'. The intrinsic message of these two media is encoded on a plane where the visual and the textual elements meet. This plane can be analysed in various ways. The focus here will be on two literary phenomena that will prove to be widely exploited in new media: figures of speech and ekphrasis.

Figures of speech are foremost known as textual entities with a strong visual character in poetry, prose and other forms of literary texts. For example, metaphor, perhaps the best-known of figures, is a change of word sense achieved by rendering one thing in terms of another, normally incompatible things. Irony is a change of discourse sense (meaning the opposite of what is said); prosopopoeia – an absent person presented as speaking or a dead person as alive. Figures are able to establish an intimate link between objects or phenomena that could not be brought together otherwise. They enable the user to express with strong and sometimes exaggerated imagery ideas and experiences that might seem blunt in simple literal speech. The intrinsic function of figures is, as a matter of fact, to evoke notions and ideas that go beyond the factual denotation or description.

Advertising has little space for communication of the respective message and needs to work with means that enable it to express and achieve the wanted effect in several seconds or on merely one page of a magazine. The density of the encoded meaning is what makes this medium extraordinary. It works with carefully chosen colours, well designed graphical structure and meticulous text. The latter is often brought down to an efficient and influential essence. One of the particularities of advertising is the visual encoding. Analysis has shown that the medium employs several visually presented literary features in order to guide the viewer to the core of the message. The viewer seems

to be able to recognise and verbalise these features in his imagination in the form of e.g. a metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and other figures.

The *knot* between the textual and the visual element can be analysed with the help of ekphrasis. The definition of this literary phenomenon – textual presentation of visual presentation – brings forth a plane where the two features meet and interact. Ekphrasis establishes the link between, e.g. a title and a painting or the text in a comic and the respective panels. In works of art that encompass both a textual and visual dimension ekphrasis is ‘automatically’ at work. The features might complement one another, or one of them might be dominant. Whatever the case may be, ekphrasis is active at their very intersection and reveals their simultaneous and dynamic interaction.

The first part of the study will portray the visual encoding of figures of speech in advertising and daily communication with examples from Charles Forceville’s *Pictorial Metaphor*, and Gibbs’ *Poetics of Mind*. The second part will be dedicated to ekphrasis and additionally to the analysis of advertising a parallel will be drawn to other media, such as art, comics, as well as theatre, all of which rely on a textual and visual component. The attention will then turn to a figure of speech that has drawn little attention among literary scholars – prosopopoeia. Its straightforward definition – presentation of an absent or dead person as alive and present – has hardly incited any research. The particularity of this figure, however, is its need for a tangible visual reference. That is probably the reason why it is most common to media where it can take up concrete visual forms. Furthermore, the different media use the figure in diverse ways: apart from the presentation of an absent person, it is applied to objects and even abstract phenomena, as e.g. *desire*. The figure is able to reveal spheres that lie outside the presented foreground image. The third part of the study will thus suggest an extension of its basic definition in contexts of theatre, comics and advertising and show how far it can get in the presentation of the *absent*. The final chapter will work with both ekphrasis and prosopopoeia and show in what way the two phenomena interact with one another. A unifying theory will be suggested that reveals their dynamic interaction on the text-image plane.

The study will rely on recent magazine advertising. The medium has indeed existed for more than a century. However, its primary forms were characterised by long descriptive texts of the advertised product. As of the 1950s and 1960s advertising started to work

with more concise elements and in the past 20 to 30 years the latter were particularly reduced to a condensed story-telling-image and little text (mostly one sentence or merely the brand name). These new forms gave way to highly creative and inventive means of communication of the respective message. Our analysis will furthermore encompass 20th century theatre. Its realistic portrayal of political and social contexts, on the one hand, and existentialist, on the verge of surrealist, presentation of real-life situations on the other, show its ability to juggle with familiar literary features. We will especially see in what way the figure prosopopoeia is used and that it indeed goes beyond the mere presentation of an absent person. The medium encodes the figure in such a way that it reveals spheres that go beyond the staged reality and reach the plane of either collective subconsciousness or that of a particular character. Comics will be another art form analysed here. The particularity of the medium is that it works simultaneously with text and image. A specific dynamics is created between the two elements that exist as an inseparable whole. Moreover, a parallel will be drawn to art forms, such as Pop Art, Surrealism and Dadaism. The means used to encode reality have given way to new perceptions and redefinitions of familiar patterns, whether a language system (see Magritte) or daily life situations (see Segal).

All of the media analysed here share the common ground of being text-image entities. Throughout the study the emphasis will, however, be on advertising. Analysis should reveal that literary theory has found its way to the new media where literary elements have been given a new way of encoding. The shared features seem to create a new joint sphere for a dynamic interaction of probably the most important means of communication – text and image.

Chapter I

Studies & Research

The topic of visio-textual communication has attracted theoreticians from interdisciplinary fields. The intersection between the visual and textual elements in communication can indeed be treated in various ways. The focus here is on figures of speech that are widely exploited in the new media. Figures are known as foremost textual literary features. In the new media however they are for the most part given a visual form.

Several studies have already dealt with the visual encoding of figures. Charles Forceville, for example, focuses on metaphor and shows to what extent it is used in advertising. Raymond Gibbs treats several figures of speech and points to their use in daily communication. Guy Cook covers the linguistic and literary features and shows how widely exploited these are in advertisements.

The visually encoded figures can be verbalised, and the textually presented ones have a strong visual character. This kind of text-image plane evokes de Saussure's theory of *signifier* and *signified*. An analysis of the linguistic formula will follow in order to reveal its possible intersection with some of the figures.

This first chapter should lead to the upcoming research on the very *knot* between the visual and the textual elements in works of art that rely on both features. The focus here will be on recent advertisements.

* * *

Charles Forceville has widely exploited metaphor in his study *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*¹. He concentrates on the visual aspect of advertisements, and especially on what he calls 'pictorial metaphors'. According to Forceville pictorial metaphor can be divided into two distinctive parts: "[...] one the primary subject or tenor, the

¹ Charles Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, (London: Routledge, 1996)

other the secondary subject or vehicle [...]. [The] transfer or mapping of features is from secondary subject (on)to primary subject [...]"².

Figure 1.1 shows one of his first examples for pictorial metaphor: a shoe is presented in a place where the viewer would normally expect a tie. However, it is immediately understood that the advertisement is indeed one for shoes. The ‘mapping of features’ in this case is from ‘tie’ as the secondary subject to ‘shoe’ as the primary subject. The concept of ‘tie’ implies certain aesthetics, elegance and seriousness (e.g. in a business man’s outfit); these are thus projected onto the advertised product. Forceville qualifies this case as a MP1 – metaphor with one pictorially present term³.



Figure 1.1: Forceville, 1996:110

Forceville continues with metaphors with two pictorially present terms – MP2. These are advertisements that present both the primary and secondary subject visually. In figure 1.2 these would be ‘earth’ and ‘candle’. “The heading [...] (‘We extract energy from the earth as if it were inexhaustible’) and the information (in small print at the bottom) that the [...] advertisement [was released by] the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs suggest not only EARTH is the primary subject of the metaphor,

² Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, 65.

³ Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, 109 – 113.

but also supplies the feature mapped from the secondary subject CANDLE onto the primary subject EARTH: ‘providing an exhaustible amount of energy’”⁴.



Figure 1.2: Forceville, 1996: 128.

Forceville furthermore introduces pictorial similes which have to be distinguished from MP1s and MP2s. In the latter the primary and secondary subjects were in a way visually integrated in one another; in pictorial similes the two are clearly separated entities. Figure 1.3 shows a Lassale watch advertisement. The primary subject of this advertisement is obviously the watch and the secondary the butterfly. On first sight this juxtaposition might seem strange, but the visual image brings forth strong similarities between the two. The form of the wings, e.g. - a slightly inclined oval form - corresponds to the form of the straps. The viewer can furthermore assume that the wings of the butterfly are smooth and soft – characteristics implying that the watch is not rigid but adapts easily to the form of the wrist. The whole image

⁴ Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, 126.

indicates lightness, calmness and serenity. It does not impose, but on the contrary, ‘quietly’ invites the viewer into a world of elegance.

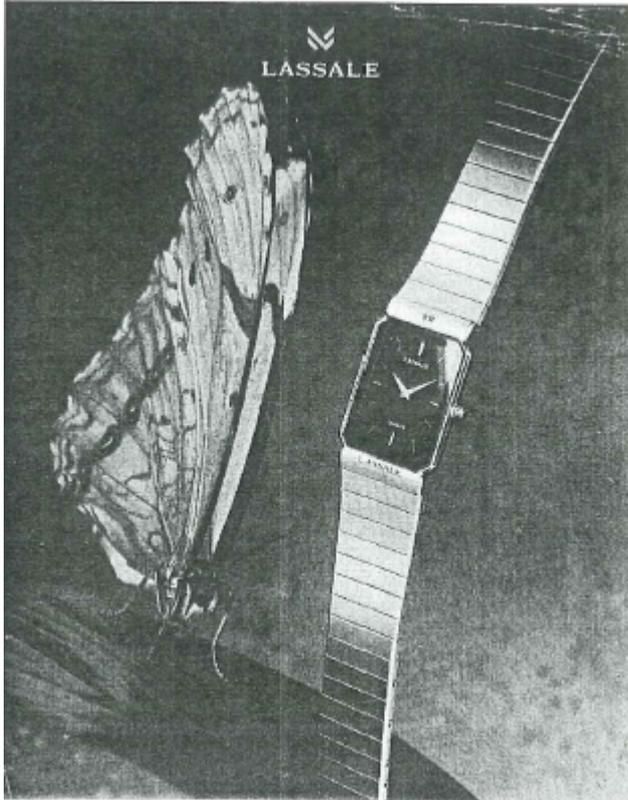


Figure 1.3: Forceville, 1996:139

Further on Forceville presents verbo-pictorial metaphors – VPM. In this case, as the term suggests, one part of the metaphor is visual and the other one is verbal, i.e. textual. Figure 1.4 shows a BMW motorbike. The heading reads ‘Instead of dating’ and the text underneath⁵:

“With a BMW motorbike you know what you’ve got. And with a date that remains to be seen. Of course dating someone [or: a date]⁶ can be very attractive. But so is a BMW motorbike.

⁵ The original advertisement is in Dutch. The analysis here will rely on the English translation as provided by Forceville.

⁶ Forceville’s brackets.

If, however, you are really looking for a long-lasting relationship, what could be more reliable than a BMW motorbike? A BMW motorbike is what you could call the very opposite of a dayfly.

For one of its strong points is its life expectancy. It lasts for years. Without aging quickly. And without high maintenance costs. They are machines of almost indestructible quality.

Moreover, they are comfortable. The rider controls his machine. And not the other way round. What is noticeable is the sense of peace when you are riding on a BMW. You will discover that you are not the only one who wants to ride on a BMW.

That becomes quickly apparent when you find out about the very high trade-in value if you sell it. But that won't happen until much later. First make a test-ride at your BMW dealer's. A date can wait. *BMW makes riding marvellous.*⁷



Figure 1.4: Forceville, 1996, 151

The direct comparison between a motorbike and a woman is striking in this example. Strictly linguistically speaking their semantic fields do not have anything in common. However, in the special context of the advertisement they are linked through the *relationship* a man can have with his ‘bike’ and/or a woman. It is on the plane of this *tertium comparationis* that the two aspects meet and interact. The metaphor ‘A BMW motorbike is a woman/wife/girlfriend’ is hence established. Arguments that link the ‘bike’ and the ‘woman’ in the sphere of *relationship* are

⁷ Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, 149-51.

based on most common notions, i.e. women age quickly, they like spending the man's money, they control the relationship, etc. All of these can apparently be avoided in a relationship with a motorbike.

The main metaphor 'A BMW motorbike is a woman/wife/girlfriend' implies several other 'sub-metaphors', such as 'A BMW motorbike is freedom'. In the context of the advertisement the viewer/reader understands that a relationship with a woman is an obvious loss of freedom, maybe even a form of physical and psychological imprisonment. The motorbike however provides 'peace' and 'control'.

A further 'sub-metaphor' could read 'Riding on a BMW motorbike is having sexual intercourse'. The verb 'to ride' is indeed used in a very ambiguous way: on the one hand it means simply 'to ride the motorbike', but on the other, in the given context, it hints at certain physical pleasures that are normally a special experience between two individuals. The advertisement implies that these pleasures can also be shared between a man and his 'machine': "Moreover, they [the BMW motorbikes] are comfortable. The rider controls his machine. And not the other way around. [...] You will discover that you are not the only one who wants to ride on a BMW. [...] *BMW makes riding marvellous.*" The advertiser suggests that this particular experience seems to be even more of a pleasure with a motorbike than with a woman. In addition there is a clear hint at promiscuity – a further emphasis of the sense of 'freedom' and 'control'.

The visual image 'simply' shows a BMW motorbike in front of a monotonously striped background. It is thus the text that guides the interpretation of the advertisement in a way the photograph alone would not have made it possible. The image seems to play a supplementary role in this example showing the 'indestructible quality' of the firm, powerful, machine one can apparently rely on for a whole lifetime. The numerous allusions to women and relationships, however, are possible only through the given text.

The following example is set of a rather strong visual image with scarce text. The advertisement consists of two parts, i.e. two images. In the top one Andre Agassi is in the centre of attention, portrayed in a close-up against a black background. The text is printed in blue letters and reads: “NEW. FOR MEN/ARAMIS/LIFE”. The second image shows the blue perfume bottle with a silver grey top and the name of the perfume: “ARAMIS/LIFE”. The text above the bottle reads “LIFE. IT’S A GREAT GAME.”; underneath this text in small print “ANDRE AGASSI”, and all the way at the bottom “aramis”.

Andre Agassi’s gesture of buttoning his shirt makes the viewer assume that he is getting ready to go out, and considering his smile it is probably a pleasant occasion. He could be going to a concert, a dinner, or a festivity. Whatever the case may be, the gesture is understood metonymically⁸, since it is considered to be part of the entire act of ‘going out’. A further eye-catching element is the wedding ring which gains symbolic meaning in the given context. Apart from its denotative meaning being ‘married’, its symbolism adds connotations such as family, i.e. parents, children, harmony, home, safety, protection, etc. Andre Agassi is furthermore a symbol himself. Being a very well known tennis player, he stands for success, wealth and fame. In addition, most viewers know that Steffi Graf – another famous and rich tennis player – is his wife.

With this information the brief text on the right hand side of the photograph becomes more concrete: the abstract noun “LIFE” acquires tangible meaning when it becomes clear that it is Andre Agassi’s kind of private and public life the viewer is supposed to imagine. Even the phrase “NEW.FOR MEN” gains obvious connotations. Apart from meaning that the fragrance is a new kind and that it is designed for men, it becomes clear that successful men from a certain social group are (supposed to be) associated with the perfume. In addition, the adjective “NEW” stands for something modern and contemporary. Agassi might not be considered as a representative of the

⁸ Detailed analysis of metonymy and metonymic gesture will be presented further on in the chapter.

young generation but he is still fairly young and manages to preserve his 'youth' by using modern up-to-date products.

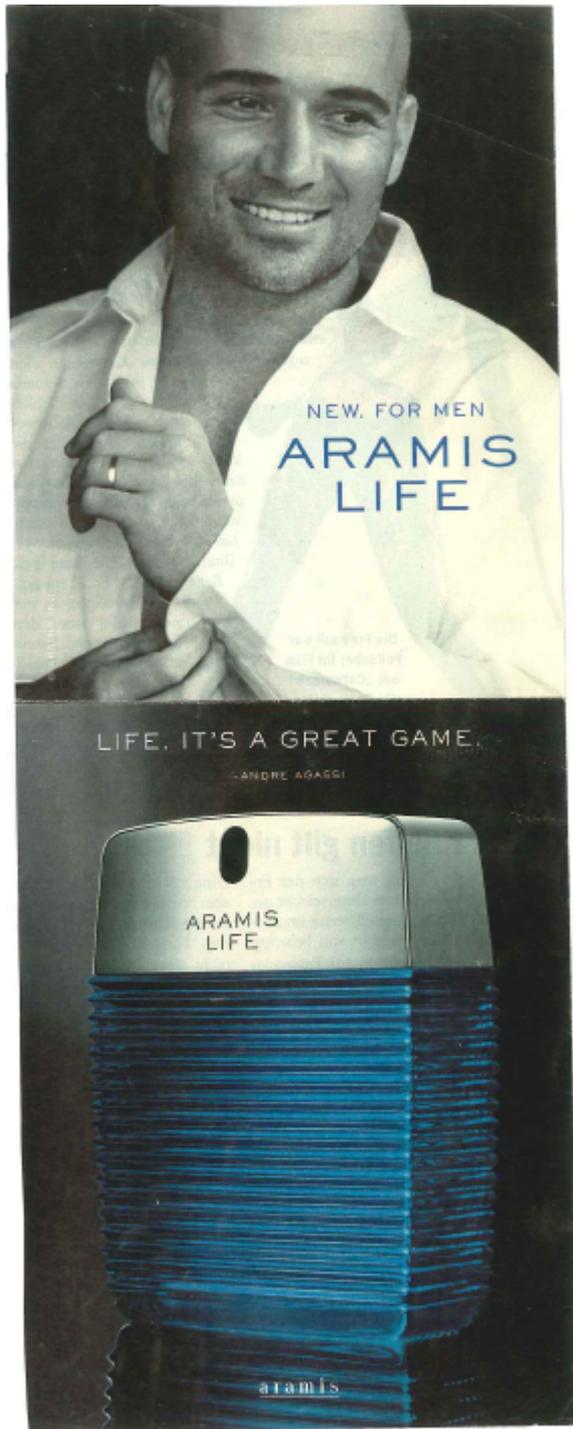


Figure 1.5: Stern, December 2003.

The second image shows the advertised product. The bottle (or its content) is blue and is presented against a black background with its own reflection. The image evokes a visual similarity with a lake, a light breeze, and moonlight. It extends the first photograph in that it indicates in what kind of nocturnal atmosphere Agassi (and the like) will find themselves. He does not seem to be going to a loud, uptight party; his festivity reflects style and elegance.

The textual element 'LIFE. IT'S A GREAT GAME.' is a clear metaphor. Although 'life' is an abstract noun it is in general associated with motion and constant struggle. These aspects are also characteristic of 'game', which in addition encompasses 'winning' and 'losing'. With this kind of tertium comparationis and with Andre Agassi's name printed just underneath the text it is apparent that the winning is emphasised: Agassi has won tennis matches (public life) and 'love matches' (private life).

In Forceville's terms the advertisement can be qualified as a pictorial simile. The juxtaposition between 'Andre Agassi' and 'aramis' is based on visually encoded figures metaphor and metonymy, and symbolism. The text in this example is dependent on the images since, on its own, it would not contain sufficient information for interpretation.

A further visual element that sets the juxtaposition between Agassi and the advertised product would be the dominating colours of blue, white and grey. The colours of the bottle top correspond to the colours of the shirt and the skin. Furthermore, the bottle top is shaped like Agassi's shoulders. The blue colour of the bottle corresponds to the blue letters in the first image and the white colour of Agassi's shirt corresponds to the white letters in the second image. These transcending colours seem to blur the existing border between the two images. The close and even intimate relationship between Agassi and the perfume brand is thus emphasized.

For the analysis of Agassi's metonymic gesture we can turn to Raymond Gibbs' *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*.⁹ Gibbs points to the use of figures of speech, such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, and hyperbole in daily communication.

One part of Gibbs' study focuses on several functions of metaphor that show why people use this particular figure of speech so often. The first function would be the *inexpressibility hypothesis*, meaning "metaphors enable people to express ideas that simply cannot be easily or clearly expressed with literal speech."¹⁰ The second function is the *compactness hypothesis*: by using metaphors people can communicate complex information better and with less effort; and the third the *vividness hypothesis*, meaning speakers can express certain experiences in a richer and more vivid manner.

Gibbs furthermore points to the frequent use of gestures in combination with verbal communication and introduces the term *movement metaphor technique*: "frequent use of bodily movement as a metaphorical way of describing, and sometimes acting out, sensations [and] emotional states".¹¹ All of these *functions* cannot always be clearly separated in a conversation – they often take place simultaneously.

A 'simple' sentence that could sum up these functions of metaphor as presented by Gibbs could read: "When he left me I felt as if someone stabbed me right into my heart". The experience was obviously very painful but a literal expression would not have been enough to convey the message. The woman can furthermore 'act out' the stabbing by drawing her fist aggressively and directly to her heart.

Gibbs continues with metonymy and shows that it is also often part of *visual communication*. Metonymy is a figure that establishes a relationship between a word and an activity, a state, an object or property. The semantic fields of the latter and the given word as such do not overlap. Their relationship is established on the plane of the special *context*. For example, "Paris decided not to participate in the war in Iraq."

⁹ Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁰ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 124-25.

¹¹ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 128.

‘Paris’ as a city and ‘war’ have semantically speaking nothing in common. However since ‘Paris’ is the capital of France where the French Parliament is situated the sentence is read metonymically and we understand that it is not the city that is meant with its buildings, streets and the river Seine but the French government. The relationship between ‘Paris’ and ‘war’ is established through a context that lies beyond their semantic fields, and which is in this case the political situation Europe and the Middle East are involved in.

The use of metonymy can apparently be extended. In the following example Gibbs shows that speakers use *metonymic gesture* when they are not able to find “an appropriate [word] or sentence structure. [In this case] the speaker was describing his summer vacation when at one point he stated:

And then we went off to go [...] fishing.

During the bracketed phrase, the speaker remained silent for [a moment] and started to flick his wrist back and forth [...].”¹² The speaker’s gesture as such ‘flicking of the wrist’ and his holiday ‘going on a trip’ have again strictly semantically speaking nothing in common. However the two are connected in the *context* of the speaker’s *holiday description*. The gesture is read metonymically and the simple flicking of the wrist understood as an indication of the entire event of going fishing.

In the Aramis example Andre Agassi’s shirt-buttoning gesture as the simple act of ‘taking the button between his fingers and putting it through the button hole’ and the perfume as a ‘liquid of a pleasant smell’ have purely linguistically nothing in common. But the viewer is able to decode the gesture as ‘preparation for a pleasant occasion’ in the specific *context* of the advertisement.

Gibbs furthermore introduces *synecdoche*, which is closely related to metonymy and often not clearly separable from the latter. Both figures establish a relationship between a part and a whole. However unlike metonymy, synecdoche has concrete terms of reference – the semantic fields of the two entities overlap to a certain extent,

¹² Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 331-32.

e.g. ‘We need ten more hands if we want to finish painting the house today’. Here a hand, i.e. a part of a human body, is taken for a worker, meaning an entire person. Metonymy on the other hand links entities that can only be brought together in a specific context. Thus Gibbs’ definition of synecdoche as a *part-whole relationship* and of metonymy as *token for type* relationship can be accepted. The latter implies that a “particular instance, property, or characteristic is taken for a general principle or function”, as shown in the ‘Paris’ example.¹³

Gibbs introduces a further term – *metonymic thought*. The ability to read a gesture metonymically comes from the knowledge called *scripts* – well-known scenarios describing everyday situations:

Mary went to a restaurant.

She was not satisfied with the soup.

She did not leave a tip for the waiter.

The reader can automatically fill in the ‘gaps’ in the text, i.e. actions that are not stated explicitly through his/her script-like knowledge of activities associated with ‘eating in a restaurant’. S/he knows that Mary first had to order the soup, then taste it in order to realise that she did not like it. Only then could she decide that the waiter did not deserve a tip. The phrases are read metonymically as part of the specific context ‘eating in a restaurant’ and are not regarded as isolated actions.

Gibbs continues his research with the analysis of irony, hyperbole and oxymora. These three figures are often used, in order to conceal or emphasise the true meaning of what one wants to express. Irony, for example, is mostly used in order to express exactly the opposite of what is meant. It is often through the tone of the voice or the intonation in a certain situation that irony is understood, e.g. when someone does something stupid and we say “Well done!”

¹³ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 322-23

Another figure that ‘misrepresents’ the truth would be *hyperbole*, i.e. overstatement. In the sentence “It took him five years to do the dishes.” the speaker wants to emphasise that the person was very slow. Hyperboles are obvious because they are often absurd. Some are even “idiomatic expressions [such as] *It makes my blood boil* ([which is] partly motivated by metaphor as well)”¹⁴

‘Misrepresentation’ of the truth goes on with *understatement*, e.g. ‘*He seems to be quite energetic*’ for someone who is hyperactive. *Litotes* is a further form of *understatement*. However, the speaker uses a negative expression rather than a positive one: ‘*She is not a bad driver*’. Unlike hyperboles, understatements and litotes are used when wanting to “suppress or conceal one’s true attitude [or opinion]”¹⁵.

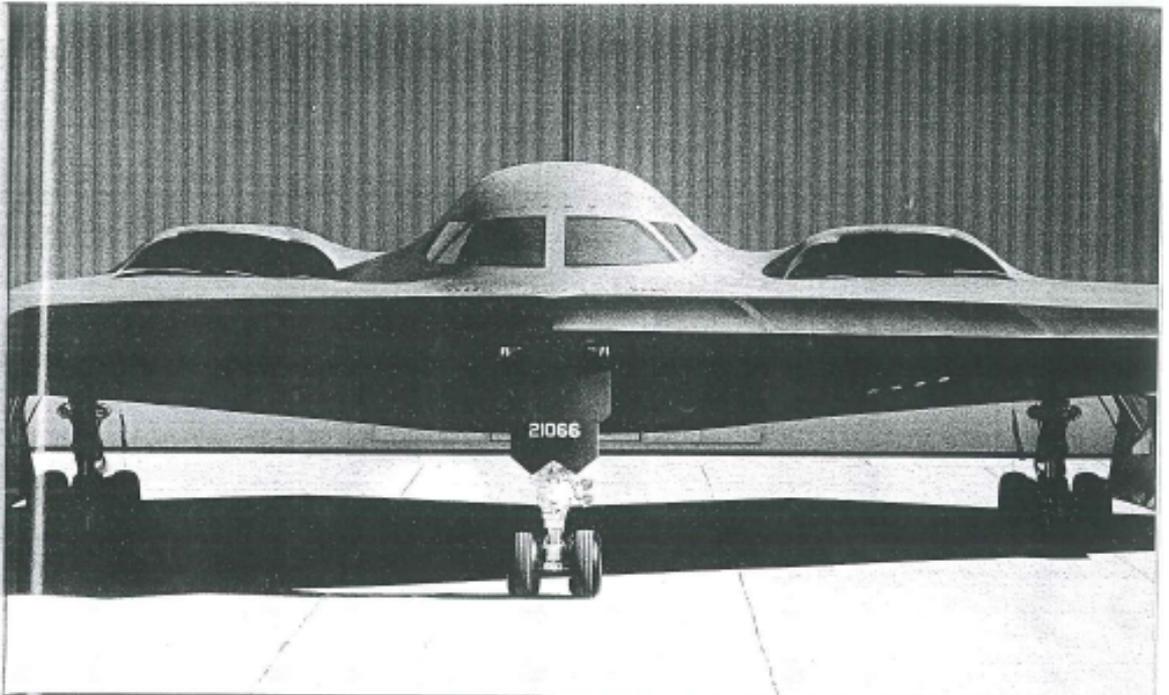
The following examples reveal a *visual* presentation of these figures of speech. Figure 1.6 is an advertisement for a York air conditioner. The visual overstatement, hyperbole, consists in the comparison of an air conditioner and a high-tech aeroplane. The imposing visual juxtaposition makes the viewer transfer the notion of power and modernity the plane represents onto the advertised product.¹⁶

The text between the two images at first blurs the borderline by referring to both objects simultaneously: “Both are named Stealth. Both are incredibly efficient. Both are amazing, technological marvels. But only one has earned the Good Housekeeping Seal.” The last sentence, however, clearly directs the focus to the advertised product. The textual overstatement is anchored in the juxtaposition between ‘incredibly efficient’, ‘amazing, technological marvels’ and ‘Good Housekeeping’.

¹⁴ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 391.

¹⁵ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 391.

¹⁶ Forceville’s mapping of features in pictorial similes and metaphors can also be applied in this example.



Both are named Stealth. Both are incredibly efficient. Both are amazing, technological marvels. But only one has earned the Good Housekeeping Seal.



No one brings the benefits of superior technology down to earth quite like York. Because only York gives your home the comfort and efficiency of innovative Stealth™ technology, now available in York's Stealth air conditioner. It's the first air conditioner with the revolutionary Twin-Single™ compressor that operates in two stages when it's really hot and just one when conditions are less demanding. So you get cool air and lower utility bills. The Stealth even has the Good Housekeeping Seal. But then it's from York, the company with 129 years worth of history-making design. Comforting, isn't it? Contact a York dealer today. In Ontario call 877-910-YORK or in Central/Western Canada, 800-663-9635. Or visit us at www.yorkupg.com.



Figure 1.6: Canadian Geographic n° 4, July/August 2003.

The images imply a further overstatement that is neither explicitly presented visually nor stated in the text below, but that is apparent in the presented context. It is clear that only the army can purchase such a plane, but that the advertisement is aimed at the average family. Thus this 'hidden' juxtaposition of 'army' and 'family' implies that the latter will be considered more modern and 'powerful' if they possess this particular product. The advertisement 'all in all' relies on the humorous effect of the hyperbole. It evokes a constant dynamic movement between the 'big' and the 'small', between entities (army plane – air conditioner) that would not be comparable elements outside the specific context.

Figure 1.7 is a further example of visual hyperbole. Women's (human) teeth are compared to horse's teeth. Dr. Kimberly Fulton and Dr. Edward Miller promise to "create the best smiles humanly possible" with "aesthetic dentistry". This comment seems self-reflexive stating that the horse-image is (obviously) not human and that the comparison is absurd. However, the two headings "BEFORE" and "AFTER" indicate that ugly teeth supposedly do resemble a horse's mouth wide open. Furthermore, these headings are probably well-known to most viewers from other beauty magazines and shows where the emphasis is on the physical and aesthetical transformation of a person. Although the setting might seem 'realistic' for a moment through these elements the viewer is aware of the wanted humorous effect achieved by the exaggerated comparison.

BEFORE AFTER




Presenting Aesthetic Dentistry of Scottsdale. Where Dr. Edward Miller and Dr. Kimberly Fulton offer the benefits of general dentistry with a beautiful emphasis on aesthetics. All to create the best smiles humanly possible.



AESTHETIC DENTISTRY
of Scottsdale

www.millerfulton.com

480 513-2620 • 9377 E. Bell Rd. • Ste. 301 • Scottsdale, AZ 85260 • In the McDowell Mountain Medical Plaza

Figure 1.7: 101 North, The Magazine of North Scottsdale, May 2004

Figure 1.8 can be ‘read’ as litotes. It shows an ant carrying a Pentax camera. The verbalisation of the image could be: ‘The camera does not seem to be very heavy’. But since the visual presentation is obviously exaggerated the viewer can assume that the point of the advertiser is rather the *extreme lightness* of the product. From this perspective the image can be seen as a hyperbole: ‘The camera is so light that even

an ant can carry it'. This idea is underlined once more in the text that reads: "Sure, the 98 gram Pentax Optio S is one of the smallest [...] cameras in the world".

One of the last figures Gibbs introduces in his study is oxymoron. It is a figure that combines two contradictory elements. Through this particular figure of speech Gibbs points to the ability of understanding contradictory attitudes towards people and situations.

Gibbs introduces two types of oxymora: the *direct oxymora* consist of two terms that are clear contradictions, i.e. antonyms such as 'cruel kindness'. *Indirect oxymora* have two terms that are not completely antonymous: one of the terms is the hyponym of the first term's antonym. For example in *dry tears* the antonym of dry is *wet*, which is also the hyponym of *tears*.¹⁷

The text in figure 1.8 consists of several verbal oxymora: "Small power", "little guy", "big boy". In Gibbs' terms all of these would be indirect oxymora: the antonym of small is big, which is a hyponym of power. The same can be said of "little guy": the antonym of little is big, which is a hyponym of guy; and in "big boy" the antonym of big is small, which is a hyponym of boy. "The smallest **megapixel**" can be regarded as a direct oxymoron, since 'small' and 'mega-' are direct opposites.

The first sentence stresses the smallness and lightness of the camera, whereas the second one enumerates all its 'big' aspects: "hefty zoom lens, major resolution, durable body". The two sentences form thus an overall direct oxymoron of 'small' and 'big' and create the link to the visual image.

¹⁷ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 396.

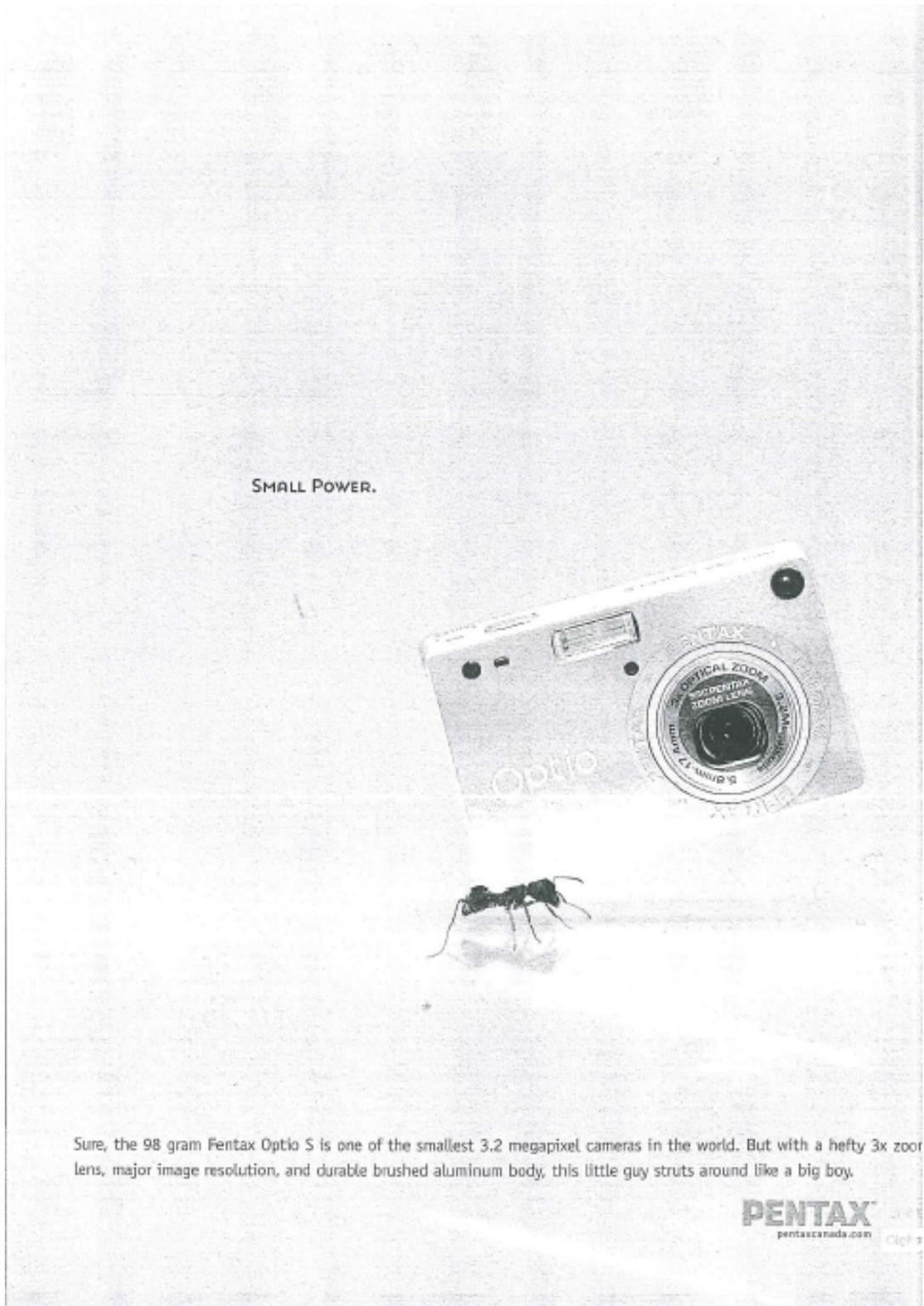


Figure 1.8: Canadian Geographic, July/August 2003

This example could also be interpreted in Forceville's terms as a MP2. The mapping of features would be from 'ant' onto 'camera'. The ant is a small insect believed to be very hard working and considered as *physically powerful*. The camera apparently has the same characteristics – it is small and light but of high technological performance. The advertiser makes even a direct comparison with the ant through a personification of the camera in the last sentence: “[...] this little guy struts around like a big boy.”

We can see here in what way several figures of speech can be visually and verbally interwoven in order to convey the message. A constant dynamic movement is established between the two intrinsic aspects of 'big' and 'small' through the encoding of metaphor, oxymora and to some extent even litotes.

An example for *irony* could be seen in figure 1.9. The advertisement is one for a weight losing product. The photographs of the models are eye catching and the text in the centre and the doctors' quotations sound convincing. Paradoxically, the comment marked with an asterisk in small print denies and contradicts the results shown in the photographs and the doctors' impressions. It indicates that “Julia's results [are] not typical”. Further down, under the photographs of the man we find the same comment and all the way below the entire advertisement a lengthy explanation indicating that simple consumption of this particular product is not enough for losing weight – as a matter of fact a special training and diet plan are necessary.

The comment might be understood as ironic since it dismantles the marketing effect of the advertisement revealing a nearly opposite image of the product than what is actually intended. However, the viewer understands that irony in this case is not a wanted effect by the advertiser. The comments in small print are, as a matter of fact, a legal obligation.

"I lost 63 pounds with Hydroxycut!"*

- Julia Teachout



Julia Teachout

BEFORE	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	AFTER
"Before Hydroxycut, I weighed an embarrassing 187 pounds, and hated the way I looked and felt. My weight was out of control!"	"I noticed Hydroxycut's effects immediately. In just 4 weeks, I lost an extraordinary 22 pounds! My body changed so much, I felt like a new woman!"	"By this point, I had lost a total of 36 pounds! My problem areas had improved so much, that people could hardly recognize me!"	"Here I am after the completion of my weight-loss plan. I've lost 63 pounds and feel more beautiful than ever!"

Julia's results not typical*

"Before I discovered Hydroxycut, I was really overweight and felt ashamed about my body. Just looking at myself made me want to cry. I tried virtually every fat burner available and nothing worked. Luckily, I discovered Hydroxycut - a fat burner that actually works! I lost an incredible 63 pounds and 12 dress sizes in only 19 weeks just by adding Hydroxycut to my weight-loss plan! My results were so extraordinary that I've already been featured on TV and radio commercials all across America! If you need a fat burner that really does work, Hydroxycut is the one. I'm living proof!"* - Julia Teachout, AZ



*"Julia Teachout's amazing transformation is a clear demonstration of the incredible fat-burning potential of Hydroxycut. Nothing works faster!"**
- Dr. Christine Lydon, MD



*"I highly recommend Hydroxycut for men and women who want to lose fat while increasing their energy. It's easily the best natural fat burner I've ever used."**
- Dr. Nick Evans, MD



BEFORE **AFTER**

"My husband John lost 92 pounds, with the help of the amazing fat-burning effects of Hydroxycut. This is one fat burner that really does work!" - Julia Teachout*
John's results not typical*



Advanced Weight Loss Formula
HYDROXYCUT
Lose Fat Fast!
Clinically Proven
Increase Energy!
100% Natural
MUSCLETECH
Research And Development
140 Capsules

www.hydroxycut.com

GNC LiveWell RITE AID
TollFree.com Albertsons CORKY'S

* Results Not Typical and depend on your diet and training program. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not for use by individuals under the age of 18. Julia and John Teachout have been remunerated for their appearance. Julia lost 63 lbs. and John lost 92 lbs. in 19 weeks by combining diet, exercise, and Hydroxycut. Average weight loss expected is 8.4 lbs. in 8 weeks. *This product contains ephedra and may cause serious adverse health effects if used improperly. IMPORTANT: Read the ENTIRE label before use and carefully follow the labeled directions for use. ©2002 Muscletech & Co., Inc. All rights reserved.

Figure 1.9: Cosmopolitan, August 2002

One of Gibbs' main points is the 'poetics of mind', i.e. conceptual knowledge he qualifies as figurative. It allows speakers to talk of "arguments as wars, [...] time as money, and love as a journey".¹⁸ A parallel can be drawn here to the 'basics' of linguistics through de Saussure's theory. The Swiss theoretician described language as a system of signs which create meaning through their relationships to each other. Each sign consists of a *signifier* (a word) and a *signified* (a concept) and has a place in the system that is formed by convention in a society and that is known and shared by its users.¹⁹

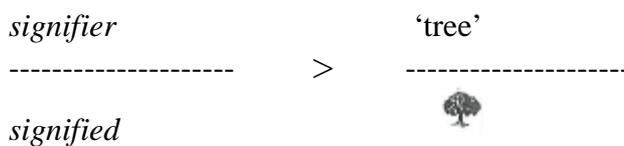


Figure 1.10

This essential theory of the signifier-signified dimension can be applied to certain figures of speech. In metaphor, for example, two signifiers would have one signified through a shared component. In the sentence 'Two roses are blooming in your cheeks' the signifiers would be 'cheeks' and 'roses' and the signified then the actual *metaphor* established through the tertium comparationis – the colour red. The interpretation of the metaphor, i.e. the concrete explanation and the *actual signified* of what the speaker has meant by making this comparison would depend on the context and the speakers' situation.

A further example of the extension of the linguistic formula could be found in synecdoche. The signified is created through the given hyponym, for example: *Come under my roof* in which *roof* is part of the whole house and is in this case its signifier.

A symbol implies that one signifier has many signifieds. However, the link between them is established more by convention than by any similarities as in metaphor. The 'ring' in the Aramis advertisement is a symbol of marriage and furthermore of

¹⁸ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 447.

¹⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Grundfragen der allgemeinen Sprachwissenschaft*, (frz: Orig. 1916; Üb. Hermann Lommel, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), 78-82.

family, harmony and stability. Even ‘Andre Agassi’ as a symbol can be seen as a signifier of wealth, success, happiness, etc. In this particular advertisement the signified, i.e. the final message, is a set of signifiers which consist of verbally and visually encoded metaphors, symbols and metonymies.

These examples show that de Saussure’s ‘formula’ can be applied to systems that work with other sets of signs (e.g. tertium comparationis in metaphor, connotations of symbol) and that go beyond the 1:1 relationship between a signifier and its ‘automatically’ evoked signified (e.g. in ‘tree’, ‘chair’ etc). These arguments support Gibbs’ theory of ‘poetics of mind’ – we are indeed able to grasp a sign system that evokes higher spheres and especially strong imagery.

The following is an advertisement of a highly complex structure. The message conveyed reaches the horizon of certain ideologies and social values. Figure 1.11 is a British Airways advertisement for the ‘new business class cradle seat’. Here already the ‘cradle seat’ stands metaphorically for the *comfort* on all British Airways’ flights and can be read at the same time as a synecdoche for the entire airline. The visual image is very eye-catching and reveals at once that time is no longer linear, i.e. the conventional order of past, present, and future has been broken, and that space is not clearly defined.

The black and white photograph shows a young mother cautiously holding a baby. Her maternal love reaches out to the viewer immediately. There is however a slightly disturbing element in the image – the head of the baby is in colour showing a very pleased elderly man, neatly dressed, and resting on an aeroplane. As a matter of fact, the viewer’s attention is first drawn to the coloured element. It becomes clear that the latter represents the present and that the black and white image stands for the man’s memories of his earliest days.

The most obvious juxtaposition can read ‘British Airways is a mother’ – a metaphor that is based on a tertium comparationis, such as care, gentleness, security, and love. Apparently, the airline is able to offer the same *feelings* and create the same *atmosphere* so that the passenger feels cuddled like a newborn. Moreover, the

mother's embrace, i.e. her arms could be read metaphorically for the seat since both imply the tertium comparationis *comfort*.

The new Club World cradle seat. Lullaby not included.

Introducing the unique new business class cradle seat. It doesn't simply recline but tilts as a whole raising your knees and relieving your body of stress and pressure. Pity you may not be awake to enjoy all the other changes on new Club World.

BRITISH AIRWAYS
The world's favourite airline

Introduced throughout the year. ©1996 British Airways

Figure 1.11: New Yorker, April 1996.

A further metaphor that can be decoded from the context of the advertisement could read 'British Airways is divinity' which implies a certain power and control of space and time. Indeed, when on a flight the passenger is headed to a future destination and sometimes crosses different time zones. The aspects added in the advertisement would be that the airline is able to reach and influence the notion of time and space and take the passengers on a special kind of journey from the present to the past in their *memories*. The airline is apparently able to reconcile certain longings and nostalgia by making them tangible as vivid memories.

The visual image seems to encode a further metaphor that implies the mother. Considering the fact that this is an advertisement for *British Airways* and considering Britain's history the interpretation can go so far as to claim that the young woman resembles Queen Elizabeth. The clothes (high class, (probably) cashmere jumper and pearls), the hair style and her age go hand in hand with the time when Prince Charles was born. The metaphor could thus read 'British Airways is royalty'. It in that case evokes ideologies, certain social values and tradition that are deeply anchored in (British) collective consciousness.

In Forceville's terms these metaphors could be qualified as MP2s since the primary and secondary subjects are visually integrated in one another. The primary subject – the airline is merely presented through a coloured patch showing an elderly man on a plane. The secondary subject is visually prevailing and transfers thus its features, i.e. the various metaphors it evokes onto the primary one. These *features* are abstract notions as shown in the divinity and royalty metaphors and are not 'directly' present in the dominant black-and-white image. Even the primary subject the *airline* is abstract. The word 'airline' as such implies rather tangible technical aspects, such as aeroplanes, mechanics, the crew on board, etc. The viewer however is supposed to relate to it first, through the recognition of the small aeroplane window in the coloured part of the image (technical aspect) and then through notions of 'mother', 'divinity' and 'royalty'. But however intangible these may seem here they are not alienating in any way. As a matter of fact, the mapping of these 'abstract' features is remarkably plausible in the strong visual context of the advertisement.

Another apparent figure would be prosopopoeia. It implies that an absent person is represented as speaking or a dead person as alive and present. The black and white photograph can thus be read as a mother prosopopoeia. Although the mother is not actually on the aeroplane she is present as a vivid memory.

In the Aramis advertisement we could distinguish tangible visual signs such as: the ring, the gesture and the colours. These signifiers indicated ‘clear’ signifieds: family, a comfortable life, etc. However the British Airways example is on another level as some metaphors are not clearly presented in the photograph but consist of the entire set of signs and are discernable only beyond the foreground image. Certain figures such as ‘British Airways is divinity’ then depend on a range of other figures of speech established beforehand. De Saussure’s formula of signifier and signified seems to echo here:

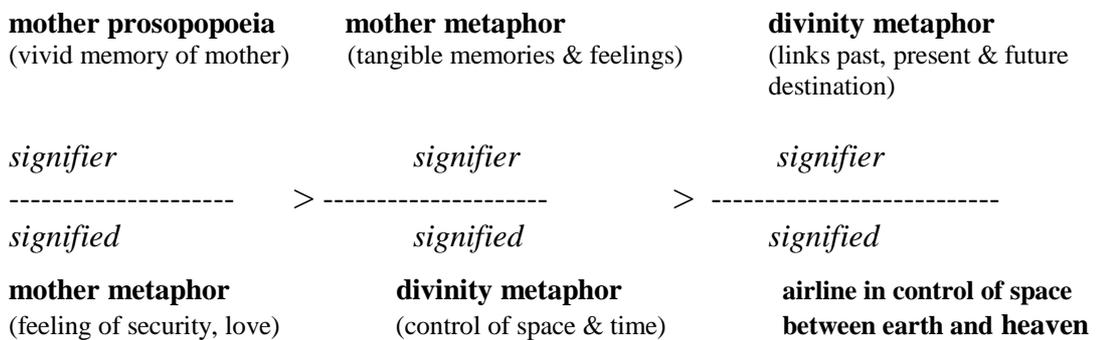


Figure 1.12

The scheme shown above illustrates one of the possible structure analyses.²⁰ The first ‘obvious’ figure would be the mother prosopopoeia that ‘automatically’ evokes the mother metaphor. The latter then on the next level encompasses the aspects of both preceding figures, i.e. the vivid memory of the mother and feelings her presence evokes reflecting the airline’s ability to control space and time. Once the divinity metaphor is established the viewer understands that the airline is able to link the past and the present in the passenger’s *memory* and in reality since when on the plane the passenger is headed to a future destination. Thus the final message comes through –

²⁰ We will indeed come back to this advertisement later on in the study.

the airline controls a space between earth and heaven, linking the two and guiding the passenger through a dimension where the past, present and future become one and where s/he can please his/her dreams and longings.

This example reveals the richness of the visual image and the structure complexity of a seemingly simple advertisement on first sight. The different figures employed are carefully interwoven in one another in order to lead the viewer to the final message. Furthermore, the figures are arranged in a climactic way: after the mother prosopopoeia, the mother and divinity metaphors are established. Each one of them is both a signifier and a signified, reaching spheres that go beyond the mere visual and textual presentation. Their effect is simultaneous and immediate.

The advertisement also consists of a textual element. The heading reads: “The new Club World cradle seat. Lullaby not included”; and the text below the photograph: “Introducing the unique new business class cradle seat. It doesn’t simply recline but tilts as a whole raising your knees and relieving your body of stress and pressure. Pity you may not be awake to enjoy all the other changes on new Club World.” The text seems secondary compared to the visual image. It does not add any new meaning or ideas. On the contrary it rather restricts interpretation to the mere physical comfort that is conveyed. Although the tone is friendly, it is rather informative, emphasising the technical features of the new seat.

Despite the unimaginative aspect of the text there is a *knot* between the heading “The new Club World cradle seat. Lullaby not included” and the image. The intersection between the two entities is created on the plane of the shared tertium comparationis ‘comfort’ and ‘wellbeing’ that is implied in both the textual “lullaby” and “cradle seat” and the visually encoded mother metaphor.

Guy Cook’s *The Discourse of Advertising*²¹ can provide a basis for a first attempt to analyse the text-image plane more closely. The gist of his study is the comparison of literary texts with advertisements. Cook qualifies *connotation* as a literary feature that implies that a word apart from having a denotational meaning evokes further

²¹ Guy Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge, 1992).

associations and meanings. The word then is not understood only as a phonetical representation but as a means of expression of ideas and notions that go beyond its semantic field. These ideas and notions, however, depend on the context and the culture in which the particular word is used. “Connotations are both variable and imprecise.”²² There is no linguistic rule that can explain why one and the same word can have a negative and a positive connotation depending on the context it is employed in. “Dog” for example might evoke “different qualities as loyalty, dirtiness, inferiority, sexual promiscuity, friendliness [...]”²³

The advertisement in figure 1.13 for the perfume ‘Opium’ by Yves Saint Laurent relies nearly entirely on connotation. The advertiser faces the challenge of conveying a smell. The name of the perfume is already of considerable help since it evokes several associations. In its pure semantic sense opium is a drug “obtained from the juice of a poppy.”²⁴ It is thus associated with other drugs such as heroin and morphine. The latter imply rather negative connotations such as “diseases, [...] organized crime, premature death, HIV infection, unwilling prostitution and urban poverty.”²⁵ Opium, on the other hand, is also associated with “nineteenth century, the Orient, dreams, Romantic poetry, and bohemian illegality [...]”²⁶

The model in the advertisement is shown in a cornered position between two mirrors behind her and a mirror underneath her. The viewer can see a part of her back, profile and legs on the left and right hand side as well as the reflection of her legs underneath her. An optic illusion of seeing a person (at least) triple is created and simulates thus the feeling of intoxication. The idea conveyed is that the future user of this particular perfume will be transported to another dimension that is beyond reach when in a sober state of mind.

This particular intoxicated state does not evoke the negative connotations mentioned above. Opium here is not associated with deadly disease or premature death. It, on the contrary, emphasises sexual excitement and lust. The dominant black evokes a

²² Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, 101.

²³ Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, 101.

²⁴ Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, 105.

²⁵ Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, 106.

²⁶ Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising*, 106.

certain degree of mystery concerning the woman. She indeed seems to be a *femme fatale* – trapped, but dominant. Her cornered position suggests moreover a touch of sadism and masochism: although merely in her underwear and apparently intoxicated as well she does not seem to be suffering but rather enjoying the state and situation she is in.



Figure 1.13: Cosmopolitan, January 2004.

The image could be read as a shifted visual presentation of 'opium'. A 1:1 presentation would have been an image of the drug as such. Here, however, the emphasis is on its physical and mental effects on an individual as portrayed in the visual image. The redefined de Saussurean formula seems to come into play: the denotative meaning of the *signifier* 'opium' is extended; the various 'positive' connotations of the effect of the drug evoked through the visual context are the *signified*.

The 'impossibility' to describe a smell gives the advertisers as a matter of fact more creative freedom. A smell does not have a denotation: it is entirely based on individual associations. The Opium advertisement however works in two dimensions: on the one hand, the viewer is supposed to *imagine* its scent through the specific *atmosphere* created in the visual image; on the other, s/he can have a tangible idea of the smell through the fact that opium really exists and is made from a plant known for its strong smell. There is even a visually encoded metaphor between the perfume bottle and the opium flower through their shared feature, the colour red. However, the advertiser relies rather on the effects of the drug and the visually encoded connotations in order to create the particular *mood* around the product than on conveying its actual scent. The example reveals a dynamic movement between the textual and visual elements: the connotations are first evoked through the word 'opium' as such and then *directed* according to the presented context and visual image.

* * *

This first chapter portrays several main features of figures of speech, one being their *visual* encoding. They can be an intrinsic element and play the leading role in the interpretation of a visual image. Another feature is the dynamic interaction between several different figures in one and the same image. They are often carefully interwoven in order to lead the viewer to the main message. A further aspect is the interaction with the textual elements. The visually encoded figures can guide the viewers' interpretation of the often scarce text. In some cases text can be the leading element and complement a seemingly blunt and straight forward image. All of these

features are simultaneous and dynamic and establish a direct and instant communication with the viewer.

A first closer look at the text-image plane was taken through metaphor and connotation. The following chapter will move to the very intersection between the textual and visual elements in works of art that rely on both features. The term *ekphrasis* will be introduced and an analysis of how its definition – textual presentation of visual presentation – can be applied to painting, comics, advertising and figures of speech.

Chapter II

Ekphrasis

*Ekphrasis*²⁷ originally meant description in the broadest sense and was an exercise in rhetoric in ancient Greece. In the course of time the term shifted to poetic and literary portrayals of works of art and moved thus from pure description to a literary form. Today it has regained a rather broad definition and is considered as the verbal representation (poems, short stories, critical essays,) of visual representation (images). But whatever the art historical and literary context the essential aspect of the term remains: the simultaneity of a visual and textual feature.

Ekphrasis is apparently a phenomenon that moves on a plane where the textual and the visual come together. These features can be related to one another in very different ways depending on the work of art they are embedded in. Advertising and comics, for example, make use of the visual and the textual in inventive ways. In these media both components play an equally important role and form together an inseparable whole. Recent studies tend to apply the rather broad definition of ekphrasis in the analysis of such text-image entities. The latter, however, call for a restriction of the term as there is a need to pinpoint the very intersection between the elements employed.

A further intrinsic aspect of the phenomenon is its *active* character – ekphrasis *takes place* while reading or contemplating a work of art. There is a constant oscillating between the two main features which complement and influence one another in the respective context.

The term remains rather complex and as it seems without a clear and generally applied definition: existing theories by Peter Wagner and Haiko Wandhoff will reveal its diversity. For the analysis of the very intersection of text and image an alternative perspective of the phenomenon with examples from literature, art, advertising, comics and figures of speech will be suggested.

²⁷ Etymologically *ekphrasis* can be divided into two parts: the Greek prefix ‘ek’ (out of, from) and the verb ‘phrazein’ (to speak, talk). This *verbal* aspect of the term indeed plays an important role in its definition. However, the etymology alone is of little help for a profound analysis of the phenomenon.

2.1. Ekphrasis by Peter Wagner and Haiko Wandhoff

Peter Wagner has dedicated several studies to ekphrasis. In this chapter we will look at *Reading Iconotexts – From Swift to the French Revolution* and *Icons – Texts – Iconotexts – Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*. A further point of view will be presented with Haiko Wandhoff's study *Ekphrasis – Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters*.

Wagner believes textual and visual elements work together through allusions to other texts and images and introduces the term *intertextuality*. "Meaning in the illustration [...] depends on the decoding of allusions in the picture and its legend. Such allusions are extremely important in what since the 70s has been known as *intertextuality*. This theory of interpretation insists that a text cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient entity, and hence cannot function as a closed system"²⁸ In order to support this idea, Wagner presents an example of a cartoon from *Private Eye* from February 1993. The cartoon shows Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette right before the execution. The text reads: "Things might have been worse, Marie – we might have been torn to pieces by the tabloids."



Figure 2.1²⁹

²⁸ Peter Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1995) 11.

²⁹ Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, 10.

Wagner argues the reader is able to understand the cartoon thanks to the *allusions* to French history; the parallel to the British Royal family, the fact that during the French Revolution the French people executed the Royals and that in modern times it is the tabloids that ‘destroy’ the lives of the British Royal family. “To convey its message, then, the cartoon relies on verbal and visual texts evoked by allusions. These references to what we have already seen and read are both implicit and explicit; they suggest that we juxtapose, and indeed bring into play, our knowledge of images and texts representing the execution of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette as well as the present-day reporting in British and Continental papers on the intra/extramarital affairs of Anne, Charles and Diana, Andrew and Sarah, and the sorrows of Queen Elizabeth and her husband.”³⁰

Further on in his study Wagner introduces *intermediality*. As the term already reveals, the respective work of art alludes to different media: “[...] images refer to novels and poems; poems and novels integrate paintings or prints; and pictures again might refer to musical pieces. ‘Intermediality’, then, is a particular form or area of intertextuality.”³¹

In *Reading Iconotexts* Wagner concentrates on 18th century prints and especially on William Hogarth’s engravings. He refers to these as *iconotexts* “because of the interpretation of texts and images they exhibit. [...] Iconotexts – [his] term for the mixture of verbal and visual signs”³²

In Hogarth’s *Masquerades and Operas* from 1724 the engraving shows ‘The Bad Taste of the Town’. In the centre of the engraving we see a man pushing a wheelbarrow with a heap of books of English drama by Shakespeare, Otway, Congreve, Dryden, Addison. On the left as well as on the right hand side the crowd is rushing into the opera house and theatre. They are led by a satyr and a fool to see the performances of a magician called Faux and pantomime by John Rich.

³⁰ Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, 11.

³¹ Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, 12.

³² Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, 12-39.



Figure 2.2: William Hogarth, *Masquerades and Operas* ('*The Bad Taste of the Town*'), 1724, etching and engraving (first state).

The textual as well as the visual elements work simultaneously. The man with the wheelbarrow and the heap of books is calling for 'waste paper for shops' – masterpieces are to be thrown away whereas mediocre plays attract the crowd. The name "Faux" inscribed over the entrance to the opera house indicates that not only the performance of magic is false and deluding, but especially that the artistic quality is questionable and that the audience is actually being fooled. Wagner argues "[t]he whole iconography of Hogarth's print suggests that some people must be held responsible for the evidently bad, perhaps even dangerous, taste of the general public. The culprits may be found in the background where, in front of Burlington Gate, three aristocrats adore the figure-topped structure. The rhetoric of the print argues that it is the aristocrats, with their preference for Italian and French art and ideas who have brought about the deplorable state of English culture depicted in this scene."³³

³³ Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, 103.

This example reveals intertextuality and intermediality. Intertextuality takes place in the allusion to masterpieces of English drama in comparison to entertaining performances on stage for the crowds; and intermediality in the allusions to different artistic genre, such as literature – more concretely to drama - and opera. The entire engraving then is an iconotext encompassing the intertextual and intermedial dimensions. The textual elements here and especially the title play an important role. The latter indeed directs the meaning of the engraving: Hogarth points directly to the main idea – the deterioration of art - and leaves thus little space for multiple interpretations.

Wagner's main argument is that images are helpless without text or at least without a title: "Language continues to occupy a strategic and dominant position among the arts. [...] The ambiguous and ambivalent image [...] is both powerful and helpless. [...] To a reader it will (initially) always be more attractive than a text, but in order to mean something it needs mendacious and distorting words: a title, an epigraph, a signature [...]. Pictures without legends or similar paratexts (titles, commentaries) may indeed prove frustrating for spectators and critics, the lacking words indicating the powerlessness of the unexplicated pictorial signs. [...] Images, then, should be approached as a mixed form – as iconotexts"³⁴

Wagner does not stand alone with this idea. Michel Butor, for example, states in his study *Die Wörter in der Malerei* paintings do not exist on their own. They are, as a matter of fact, surrounded by an entire verbal context: "Wir sehen Bilder nie für sich allein, unser Sehen ist nie reines Sehen. Wir hören von den Bildern, wir lesen Kunstkritiken, unser Blick ist umgeben und vorbereitet durch einen ganzen Hof von Kommentaren, selbst bei den neuesten Werken"³⁵

Mieke Bal would be another literary theoretician who supports the same idea. In her study *Reading Rembrandt* she states that text is needed so that the interpretation of images has a clear focus. "[...] *verbality* or 'wordiness' is indispensable in visual art, just as *visuality* or 'imageness' is intrinsic to verbal art. [R]eading the image without

³⁴ Wagner, *Reading Iconotexts, From Swift to the French Revolution*, 169-70.

³⁵ Michel Butor, *Die Wörter in der Malerei*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992) 9.

the words can lead to hilariously erroneous interpretations and vice versa.”³⁶ But in order to be able to read the image Bal rightly underlines that a certain *knowledge* is needed. As her study is on Rembrandt’s Biblical history paintings she points out the spectator should know the legends presented in the paintings beforehand in order to avoid erroneous interpretations and in order to be able to detect the special intersection of the (textual) legend and Rembrandt’s representation of it: “[...] paradoxically, this recognition of what is already known is an indispensable step in the communication of a new, alternative propositional content that is not yet known.”³⁷

These main ideas on inseparable text-image entities lead to *ekphrasis*. Wagner, for example, suggests a broad definition of the term. He sees it as any kind of verbal representation of any kind of visual representation - whether essays, poems or literary texts. “All such writing is essentially ekphrastic: the difference between the critical and the literary versions is one of degree, not one of mode or kind.”³⁸ He furthermore suggests an analysis of the common ground of “the image and the word [...]”³⁹. The common ground can be for example historical or cultural. This point can go hand in hand with Butor’s statement mentioned above: the visual and the verbal are brought together through a certain context. The context can be that of an essay, a poem, a story about a painting or the context the work was produced in (a collection of poems, paintings, etc.). Butor goes even so far as to underline a further verbal context – the audio guides in a museum. This ‘unheard voice’ as he calls it guides the museum visitor and gives him sight: “[...] vor allem aber sah ich [in der National Gallery in Washington] unabhängige einzelne, die alle den gleichen Weg zurücklegten [...], ihre Blicke verharren genau die gleiche Zeit vor jedem Bild, sie betrachteten es auf dieselbe Weise [...]. Alle hatten wie Schwerhörige einen kleinen Kopfhörer im Ohr [...]. Eine unhörbare Stimme ließ sie sehen.”⁴⁰

We can note here two dimensions of ekphrasis – one being the shift from the visual to the textual element (verbal representation of visual representation), and the other

³⁶ Mieke Bal, *Reading 'Rembrandt'*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 199) 27-34.

³⁷ Mieke Bal, *Reading 'Rembrandt'*, 35.

³⁸ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996) 14.

³⁹ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, 33.

⁴⁰ Michel Butor, *Die Wörter in der Malerei*, 10.

the encompassing of both features. The latter aspect would mean that the two elements meet in an elevated sphere that lies beyond the 1:1 text-image presentation.

The revelation of higher spheres, e.g. cultural or historical ones, can be achieved for example through a title. This textual component can indeed guide the viewer in the desired direction. Butor underlines its importance: “Wir betrachten ein Gesicht nicht auf die gleiche Weise, wenn man uns sagt, daß es sechs oder sechshundert Jahre alt ist [...]. Durch den Titel wird nicht nur die kulturelle Stellung des Werkes verändert, sondern auch der gesamte Kontext, indem es sich uns zeigt [...]”⁴¹ Paradoxically, the example with which Butor portrays this argument is Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* from the early 16th century and René Magritte’s *Mona Lisa* from the 1960s. The titles are exactly the same, but the visual presentations completely different.

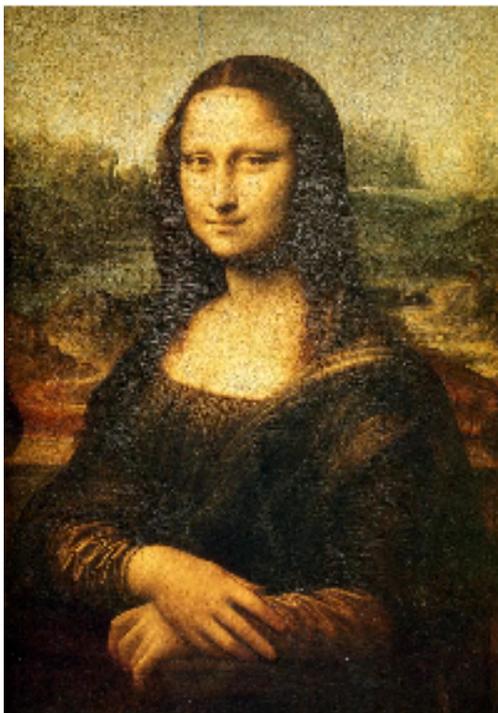


Figure 2.3: Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, 1503-1506.

Butor’s point is that the title establishes a link between the two works of art so that while looking at Magritte’s ‘version’ we instinctively search for and finally see the famous mysterious smile: “[...] wenn Magritte [den Titel] aufgreift und eines seiner

⁴¹ Michel Butor, *Die Wörter in der Malerei*, 13-15.

Bilder so nennt, [zeichnet sich] das berühmte Lächeln unverzüglich auf dem Himmelsvorhang mit den Schönheitswolken [ab, so daß] wir dessen Ausschnitt anders interpretieren und unsere Aufmerksamkeit auf den Schlitz der Schelle unten links gelenkt wird.”⁴² The interpretation of the two paintings cannot be the same since their form has shifted from Renaissance to Surrealism. However, although the two works belong to different time periods they are brought together on a plane outside the respective art historical contexts. The shared title transcends four centuries of art history and culture and thus detaches the two works of art from all boundaries of space and time. It is on this plane that ekphrasis comes into play: the two essentially different visual forms are associated with the same four-hundred-year-old smile. The crucial element for the establishment of this elevated plane is the shared textual component – the title *Mona Lisa*.

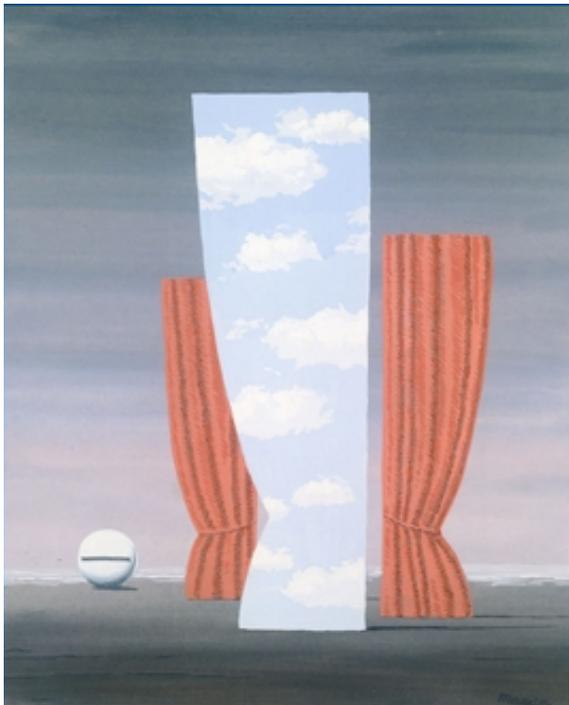


Figure 2.4: René Magritte, *Mona Lisa*, 1960.

⁴² Michel Butor, *Die Wörter in der Malerei*, 15.

Going back to Wagner and his study on ekphrasis we find that he points to the aspect of intertextuality and intermediality of literary texts. “[P]oetic texts in particular can be considered as networks [...] in which the most interesting points are the knots called allusions which integrate other texts. [They] contain not only numerous other discourses but actually open up an endless universe [...] by reminding us of the ‘déjà lu’ and the ‘déjà vu’. [Such] texts while they do not allow finite readings may be considered as archaeological material, as textual layers preserving the discursive strategies of an age.”⁴³ Wagner emphasises that the common ground of the visual and textual element should be taken into account in the search of the intersection between the two. Ekphrasis in the *Mona Lisa* example is indeed active on the plane of the déjà vu and déjà lu where Da Vinci’s and Magritte’s crucially different visual forms meet on the plane of the well-known mysterious smile that has troubled art critics and theoreticians for centuries.

As already mentioned above Bal also argues that text is indispensable for the image and vice versa. In the special context of her study *Reading Rembrandt* the *knowledge* of the text needed for the decoding of the image makes ekphrasis possible. We thus move to a plane where the decoding of Rembrandt’s visual *interpretation* of the legend takes place and not merely its visual *representation*. Like Wagner, Bal also suggests a study of “images and texts in interaction with each other and with each other’s modes of reading”⁴⁴.

In *Oscar Wilde’s ‘Impression du matin’ – an Intermedial Reading* Wagner first shows the historical and artistic context the poem was produced in. It was published in the *Poems* edition in 1881, which is divided into four *movements*, a term that evokes musical elements. Furthermore the French title of the poem suggests a preference for the French Impressionists of the second half of the nineteenth century. These aspects evoke intermediality “the mingling of music, painting, and writing [...]. [T]he most important aspect of the allusion contained in the title is the fact that the reader is immediately reminded of some major impressionist works in the poetry,

⁴³ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, 282.

⁴⁴ Mieke Bal, *Reading ‘Rembrandt’*, 59.

art and music [...].”⁴⁵ Wagner argues furthermore “The poem thus evokes Monet’s painting *Impression, soleil levant*, [because of] its title and related subject matter”⁴⁶.

Impression du Matin

The Thames nocturne of blue and gold
Changed to a harmony in gray; [*sic*]
A barge with ochre-coloured hay
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down
The bridges, till the houses’ walls
Seemed changed to shadows, and St. Paul’s
Loomed like a bubble o’er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang
Of waking life; the streets were stirred
With country wagons; and a bird
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman alone,
The daylight kissing her wan hair,
Loitered beneath the gas lamp’s flare,
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

⁴⁵ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, 284-85.

⁴⁶ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, 285.



Figure 2.5 : Monet, *Impression, soleil levant*, 1872-73

Ekphrasis here takes place on the plane that encompasses the intermedial nature of the poem. Wilde's choice of words and especially the colours he depicts have direct visual references. However, ekphrasis here does not stay at the level of the seemingly pure 1:1 relationship between the two works of art. Wagner points out once more terms such as "nocturne" and "harmony" "remind us of the fashionable intermedial use of musical elements in painting and poetry [...]"⁴⁷. We furthermore notice elements in the poem that cannot be found in the painting, as for example the 'pale woman'⁴⁸.

A further study on ekphrasis would be Haiko Wandhoff's *Ekphrasis, Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters*. One of Wandhoff's first points is that ekphrasis is a constant oscillating between the visual and the textual element and thus points to the dynamic character of the phenomenon.

Another aspect Wandhoff evokes is one of 'notional ekphrasis'. Earlier theories considered it necessary that verbal representation has a clear and tangible reference of visual representation in order for ekphrasis to be possible. New discussions

⁴⁷ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, 288.

⁴⁸ This aspect will be analysed in more detail further on in the chapter.

however have extended these theories indicating that ekphrasis can take place even with imagined visual references: “In der neueren Diskussion hat sich [...] die Einsicht weitgehend durchgesetzt, dass es sich bei der poetischen Kunstbeschreibung in der Regel [...] um [...] imaginierte *sprachliche* Bildkunstwerke [handelt].”⁴⁹ Wandhoff thus evokes ekphrasis in the context of narratology where it can be seen as a micro-narrative: “Da die sprachlich generierten Bildkunstwerke oftmals selbst schon narrative organisiert sind, kann die elaborierte Kunstbeschreibung auch als *Erzählung in der Erzählung* verstanden werden.”⁵⁰ He moreover points to the idea that we are capable of an ‘inner seeing’ which can create images of the unknown with the already existing visual memories.

Wandhoff furthermore suggests ekphrasis can be approached as a concept of intermediality, i.e. as a whole, encompassing both the visual and textual elements. He compares the phenomenon to illustrated inscriptions in the Middle Ages, film and even the computer screen.

Inscriptions in the Middle Ages were characterized by a certain iconicity because of the use of precious stones and material. Since these were tangible elements they represented a culture that was very much of a tactile nature. Furthermore, written texts were verbalised and presented in miniatures and orally transmitted stories were mostly based on a painting or writings. “Schon aufgrund der kostbaren Materialien, mit denen eine Inschrift [...] geformt ist – in der Regel handelt es sich um Gold oder Edelsteine -, bietet diese eine für den Gesichtssinn äußerst auffälligen und nicht selten auch plastisch vorzustellenden, taktil zu imaginierenden Gegenstand. [...] [Die] mittelalterliche Kultur [wird] als eine körpergebundene Memorialkultur wahrgenommen [...], in der verschiedene Medien und Körpertechniken bei der Arbeit am kulturellen Gedächtnis zusammenwirken [...]. Geschriebene Texte werden vokalisiert und von Miniaturen begleitet, gemalte oder gewebte Bilder sind von Schriftzügen durchsetzt und auf orale Erläuterungen angewiesen, das gesprochene

⁴⁹ Haiko Wandhoff, *Ekphrasis, Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003) 3.

⁵⁰ Haiko Wandhoff, *Ekphrasis, Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, 7.

Wort bezieht sich seinerseits auf gesehene Bilder und gehörte oder gelesene Schriften.”⁵¹.

Wandhoff furthermore links the multimedia memory-based culture of the Middle Ages with the new media, as for example cyberspace and the computer screen. Both are a set of visual icons, inviting the user to *navigate* in a space set of symbols. Wandhoff indeed argues ekphrasis enables literature to gain a spatial character. It takes place in a *space* that encompasses all the elements being textual, verbal or visual. Furthermore the latter are linked through *memory*. “[Man kann] als virtuellen Raum [...] nicht nur den computergestützten Cyberspace, sondern ganz allgemein jeden medial vermittelten [Raum], in dem der Benutzer sich navigierend durch symbolische Welten bewegen kann, sei es mit Hilfe einer Tastatur [...] oder seiner Imagination [fassen]. [...] Die räumlich-architektonische Darstellung von Information ist also keine Innovation der computergesteuerten Medien. [...] Man baut die alten mentalen Gedächtnisarchitekturen mit ihrer charakteristischen Mischung aus Schrift, Bild und Raum [...] nach. Die [...] Einsicht, dass die Sprache multisensorische Raumerfahrungen speichern sowie situationsunabhängig reproduzieren und übertragen kann, liefert heute die Fundierung für das, was die griechische Rhetorik bereits vor Jahrtausenden als eine Technik der forensischen und literarischen Rede unter dem Begriff der *ekphrasis* operationalisiert hat, nämlich das ‚Herumführen‘ [...] eines Hörers über imaginäre Schauplätze im Archi-Medium der Sprache.”⁵²

Wagner’s and Wandhoff’s theories on ekphrasis seem to overlap. Both provide an intermedial and intertextual dimension of the phenomenon and point to the plane of the *déjà vu* and the *déjà lu*, or in Wandhoff terms the ‘inner seeing’ set of memories and experiences.

⁵¹ Haiko Wandhoff, *Ekphrasis, Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, 18-19.

⁵² Haiko Wandhoff, *Ekphrasis, Kunstbeschreibungen und virtuelle Räume in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, 34-333.

Ekphrasis reveals to be active on a plane beyond the 1:1 textual representation of visual representation. It is a phenomenon that encompasses both verbal and visual elements and is inevitably present in any work of art containing the two. It is active on the plane of intermediality, collective and individual memory – a plane where the elements meet and act together.

In the following we will look at media that make use of the textual and visual elements in a specific way. In art, comics and advertising the two features are indeed equally present and complementary to one another. The definitions presented so far, however, might seem too broad and imprecise for this analysis. We would indeed need to explore the phenomenon on a more *direct*, not to say, tangible level in works of art that are inseparable text-image entities. Ekphrasis in such cases not only encompasses the visual and the verbal, but reveals to be the very *knot* between the two intrinsic features.

2.2. Ekphrasis in...

2.2.1. ...Comics

Visual and textual elements are intrinsic components of comics.⁵³ In most cases text and image play an equivalently important role. Ekphrasis in a comic takes place in the oscillation between the text and the image in every panel. It is the *very moment* when the text completes the image and vice versa. The phenomenon is also active in between the panels and therefore supports a logical sequence of the story.

⁵³ Although some comics might contain only visual elements, i.e. panels with no textual indication whatsoever, we can argue that even in such cases at least a title is present – a textual element that can direct the meaning of each one of the visual entities.



Figure 2.6: Jack Markow, *The Art of Cartooning*, 1990, 75.

The scarce textual indicators in this example are crucial for the understanding of the story. Without them it would not be clear that a psychiatrist recommended the main character to buy seatbelts in order to feel more secure while asleep. The comic would not be as funny if we could not read in the penultimate panel that the character went to an automobile supplies shop to get the belts for his bed.

The first part of the comic can be seen as an introduction to the story: Mr Mum goes to bed, falls asleep, dreams and wakes up. These five panels extend one single action: 'Mr Mum going to sleep'. As of the sixth panel the story is accelerated. However, the psychological and physical action that took place between the fifth and the sixth panel is not portrayed. We pass on directly from 'fear' to 'firm decision to look for help'. Although this is a rather big step at once for the psychological development of the character, the reader does not seem to mind the lacking transitory information.

The sign on the door that Mr Mum went to see a psychoanalyst is explanatory enough. This small textual detail summarises all the transitory action and brings it directly down to the point. The story accelerates from that moment on and the following four panels lead to the final point through three different actions: the

appointment with the psychoanalyst, Mr Mum's purchase in the shop and the final panel of Mr Mum in bed secured with a seatbelt for cars.

The scarce text is the main trigger for ekphrasis. The phenomenon takes place when the textual elements are related to the visually told story. As a matter of fact, the textual indicators have an impact on the entire set of panels: 'Psychoanalysts' brings the introductory part down to the point; and 'Automobile Supplies' leads the reader to the main message. The textual elements are the ones that reveal the absurdity of the psychiatrist's advice and are vital for the final joke. Thus ekphrasis here is not active only in the panels with text but actually moves on a plane that encompasses the entire comic.

In *Invisible People* by Will Eisner visual images have a double function: in the first part (figure 2.7) they are supplementary to the text in that they *extend* the idea in the text and present it visually. The narrator says: "As Pincus grew older he learned that hiding was not the only way to avoid danger." The panels then show the character in two different situations in which he tries to 'avoid danger': in the first one he avoids the cracks in the pavement and in the second one he gives a homeless person some change. The panels present visually the narrator's statement that Pincus did not hide any more from the outside-world but that he found comfort in superstition.

In the second part (figure 2.8) the visual images are self-sufficient and no text is needed to tell the story until the very end of the section. Only the first panel of the last row indicates that the reader will soon need some kind of textual explanation: Pincus obviously read something very disturbing in the newspaper and the author had the option of either showing the article to the reader or making the character speak.

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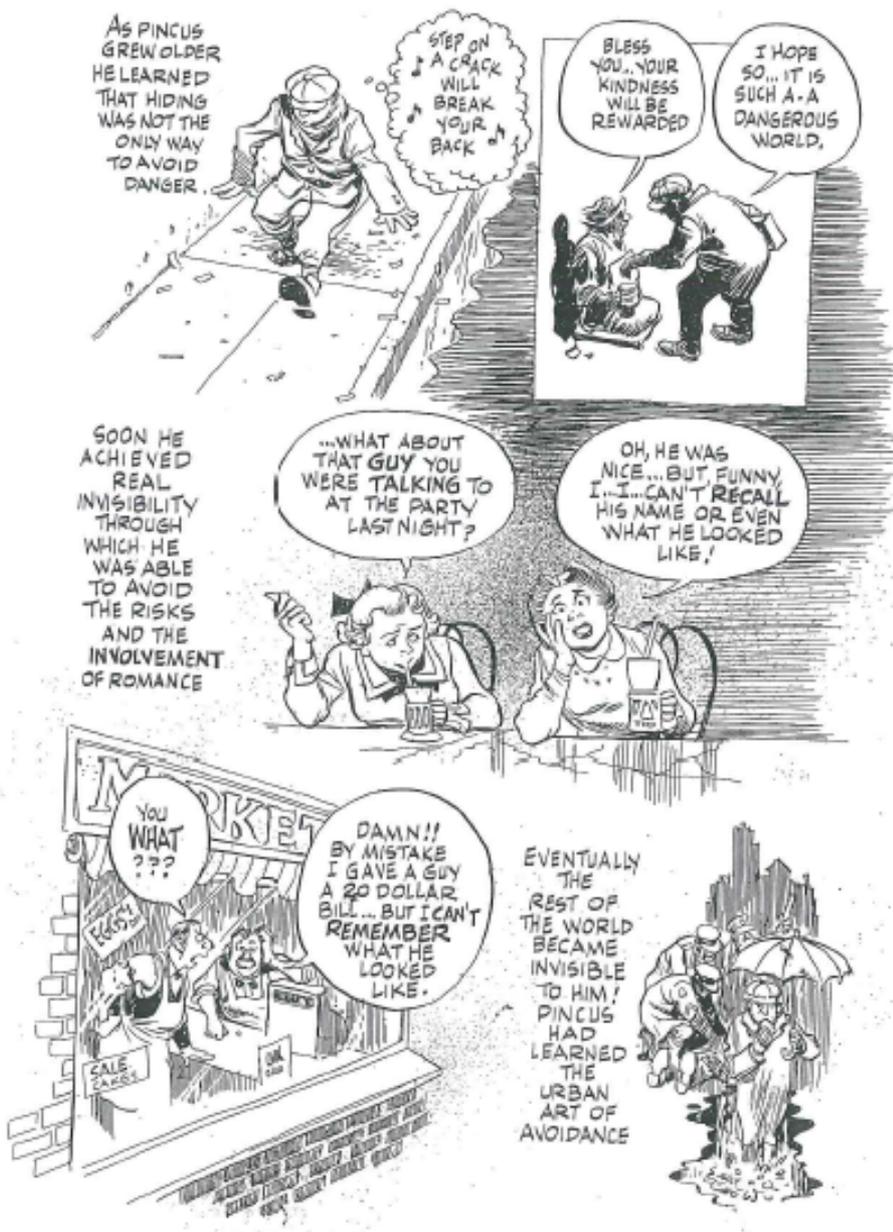


Figure 2.7: Will Eisner, *Invisible People*, 1992, 11.

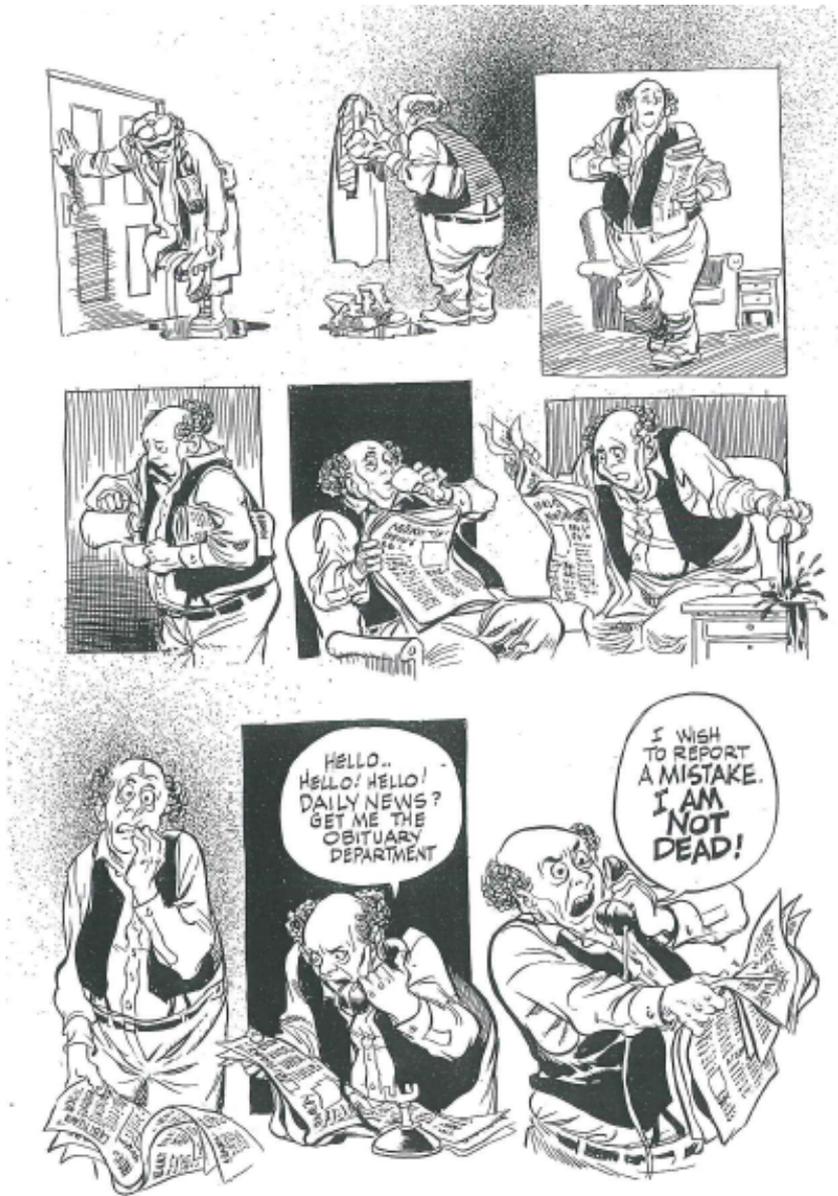


Figure 2.8: Will Eisner, *Invisible People*, 1992, 15.

In figure 2.7 the narrator leads the action. In the first row the reader is introduced to Pincus' superstition; in the second to his invisibility to other people and in the final row to the world that gradually becomes invisible to him. At the beginning of each row the narrator makes a general introduction of the main topic which is then followed by a specific visually presented example. However, if the following two

panels did not contain the respective dialogues it would not be quite clear what exactly Pincus is doing in order to avoid danger. The dialogues are thus a further crucial textual component.

In this example ekphrasis takes place on several levels – first between the general introduction and the panels to follow, and then within the panels between the dialogues and the visual image. Moreover, these two levels of ekphrasis are active simultaneously.

A further level of ekphrasis that could be qualified as the ‘supra-level’ takes place between the title and the entire comic. ‘Invisible People’ is the first textual component of the comic and therefore dominates the entire story. The ‘sub-levels’ of ekphrasis then take place in the respective sets of panels.

In the second example the last panel leads the title to the core of its meaning in a drastic way. Pincus after having isolated himself from society stopped existing for the outside world so that someone declared him dead. The comic goes on in this direction with Pincus trying in vain to prove that he is alive. Despite all his efforts no one believes him and he finally ends up getting killed. The sentence pronounced in the last panel “I AM NOT DEAD” echoes thus throughout the comic. This cry links the title, the moment Pincus learns he had been declared dead and the end of the comic when he actually dies. Ekphrasis in this case encompasses the entire comic. The title gives the first tone and the visual images and text that follow support the central leitmotif – the ‘invisibility’ of Pincus.

The specific function of the title can also be seen in *The Strange World of Mr Mum*. The ‘strange world’ is apparent already in the third panel when the reader is introduced to Mr. Mum’s dream. Not only is the dream in itself strange (Mr Mum is falling from an unidentifiable height into an even less identifiable deepness) but the author also plays on the fact that the reader associates the entire ‘dream world’ with surrealism and ‘strangeness’. Moreover, the most bizarre part which is supposed to be the most logical one is the psychoanalyst’s advice. The absurdity of the solution emphasises thus the ‘strangeness’ of Mr. Mum’s world.

In *Invisible People* ekphrasis is in movement and changes with the story. It adapts to the respective triggers as for example first the title, then the narrator, the dialogues, etc. The visual images seem to serve the text for the most part – contrary to the comic about Mr. Mum where the text served the dominating images. We could say ekphrasis in *Invisible People* takes place when the *images meet the text* as an explanatory aspect of the comic verses *Mr. Mum* where ekphrasis takes place when the *text meets the image* as a complementary, however, crucial element.

Comics reveal ekphrasis as the *knot* between the text and the image. The phenomenon establishes a specific plane where the text and image can interact with one another and thus direct the reader's understanding of the story.

In Wagner's terms a comic and each panel could be classified as an iconotext. However, his definition of ekphrasis being any kind of textual representation of any kind of visual representation is slightly too vast for our analysis. Text in comics can indeed have the function of verbal *representation*, as presented with the narrator who announces or describes a certain situation that is then presented visually. But for the more detailed, intra-panel analysis as well as the dialogue- and title-image plane this definition lacks precision. The issue is we are not dealing with a simple *representation* but with two equal and complementary elements.

2.2.2. ...Art

2.2.2.1 Monet – Wilde

In art the coexistence of both the visual as well as the textual aspect is crucial and has gone through various phases – from eloquent and detailed descriptions of sculptures in ancient Greece over 'simple' title – painting coexistence to highly complex forms in cubist or surrealist art. Before an attempt to decode ekphrasis in the latter where text was gradually integrated into the paintings, we should look at the crossroad of two media in the example of Monet's *Impression du soleil levant* and Oscar Wilde's poem *Impression du matin* that Wagner has analysed in the context of intermediality and intertextuality.

A comparison of the painting and the poem reveals intriguing similarities. Wilde has tried to grasp the overall atmosphere of the painting: the rising fog, the colours, the silence and the emerging sounds. In the painting as well as in the poem we *see* “the harmony in gray” [sic], the “yellow fog” and silhouettes that stand for the “waking life”. Wilde furthermore points to details, such as the “bird” and the “woman” that cannot be seen in the actual painting. The poem at first seemed to be a 1:1 recapitulation of Monet’s vision of reality, but with the introduction of these additional aspects Wilde detaches himself from it and introduces his own perception.

If we consider the poem as an *interpretation* of the painting we need to search for elements that Wilde evokes and that might have a visual reference in Monet’s work of art. The “woman”, for example has “lips of flame” and the reader might conclude that they are probably red because of the juxtaposition with ‘fire’. The red element in Monet’s painting is the sun. The two features ‘woman’ and ‘sun’ seem thus to be brought together through metaphor, concretely through their shared component – the *tertium comparationis* the colour red.

A further parallel can be found in the ‘coldness’ present both in the painting and the poem. This aspect is evoked through the colours: grey, yellow, light blue and white and words such as: “fog”, “chill”, “cold”, “shadows”, “wan hair”, “pale”, “creep down” and “heart of stone”. What Monet expresses in colours and shadowy shapes and forms, Wilde does with words. The crossroad established here between the two works is the sphere where ekphrasis takes place.

The phenomenon in this case seems to be active on three different levels: first in the clear similarities between the two works of art, second in the special relationship between the ‘differences’ (e.g. ‘woman’, ‘sun’ linked through metaphor), and third in the respective *interpretations* of a particular moment that form a double detachment from reality.

2.2.2.2. Pop Art

Pop Art is known as being *l'art pour l'art*. The titles often name exactly the object depicted, such as *Flag* (1954-1955) by Jasper Johns, *The Big Eight* (1968) by Robert Indiana or *Yellow and Green Brushstrokes* (1964) by Roy Lichtenstein. Pop Art mostly shows banal objects of everyday life in various compositions such as Tom Wesselmann's *Still Life No. 20* (1962) or Andy Warhol's *80 Two Dollar Bills (Front and Rear)* (1962) or *Campbell's Soup Can I* (1968)⁵⁴. Pop artists were fascinated by the consumerism that reigned in post war America. They exposed various 'objects' (including imitated food) that could be purchased and consumed revealing the nothingness and banality of everyday life. A further common technique in Pop Art was that of comic strips.



Figure 2.9: Roy Lichtenstein, *M-Maybe*, 1965.

Figure 2.9 shows a pretty young woman obviously waiting for a man who is late and probably will not be coming at all. The text, i.e. the thoughts we can read are crucial for the understanding of the painting. Everything seems to come down to the point in the one and only sentence. The hesitation of the 'm-maybe' shows how desperate the

⁵⁴ See appendix

young woman is and how desperate the situation in itself is. The repetition of the first letter 'm' emphasises the long waiting. The reason that the woman searches for the absence of her date is just as unlikely as the man's final appearing. The double 'm' is also an indication of the multiple excuses she has conjured.

If we imagined the painting without the text, we could see a desperate look in the woman's eyes as well as a breeze in her hair. She is wearing gloves that match her jacket, elements that indicate she was ready to go out. Even without the text and the title the viewer could guess that the woman is waiting for someone considering the position of her body (she does not seem to be in any kind of hurry). But without the textual indicators it would not be clear that she has been waiting for a very long time and the emphasis on the desperation would not have such an impact on the viewer.

The text in this example is once more an essential element. It complements the visual image and guides the viewer through the 'story'. The image is however dominant and works with strong visual signs. Ekphrasis seems to take place between the desperate look of the young woman and the "m-maybe"; between the position of her body indicating the long waiting and the explanation she searches for "he became ill and couldn't leave the studio". The phenomenon is thus dynamic on a plane where the text not only becomes the *explanatory* device for the image but especially when it actually *stresses* every visual detail.

In the context of Pop Art that was known for unmasking the superficial American image of happiness and beauty it might not be a coincidence that the woman in the painting resembles a Barbie doll and that the combination of colours, red, blue and white, remind of the American flag. Although Barbie is an artificial object she stands for eternal and universal beauty and happiness. In Lichtenstein's *m-maybe*, however, the notion of happiness is 'simply' inexistent. The image evokes rather negative feelings – the emphasis being on the wasted passing time. The notion of death is thus evoked and America's dream of eternal beauty seems to turn into a nightmare – no one wants the woman anymore, there is no one to admire her, she seems imprisoned in her loneliness and there is no hope for a Hollywood-like happy ending.

In George Segal's *Woman Washing Her Feet in a Sink* the sculpture shows a woman of an undeterminable age washing her left foot in a sink. She is in a very modest if not poorly furnished room with only one chair and a sink in the right hand corner.⁵⁵ The dominating white is just as cold as the dark green. The void of the room is emphasised by the completely bare walls. The woman being nearly just as white as the walls seems invisible against the cold background. The viewer gains the feeling that the whiteness will suck her in and that she will disappear in the emptiness of the room and the situation. Furthermore, there seems to be no window she could escape through. Another aspect is her exposed nudity: the clothes she has taken off cannot be seen and we gain the strange feeling that she is always unclad and therefore more vulnerable and unprotected against the white corner she is trapped in. The dark floor resembles a dark whole – a further trap she cannot escape. Klaus Honnef sums up the image with the following words: “[...] l’image d’une solitude angoissante se grave dans la mémoire visuelle. L’image d’une femme d’âge indéterminé dans un environnement minable, en train de faire quelque chose qui n’intéresse personne.”⁵⁶



Figure 2.10: George Segal, *Woman Washing Her Feet in a Sink*, 1964-65.

⁵⁵ Although only a part of the room can be seen, we can assume that the rest of it is probably just as poorly furnished since the artist does not give any indications of the contrary.

⁵⁶ Klaus Honnef, *Pop Art*, (Köln: Taschen, 2005) 76. Translation of the quotation: “[...] the image of frightening solitude is engraved in the visual memory. The image of a woman of an undeterminable age, in a deplorable environment doing something that does not interest anyone.”

The title sums up the only action of the work of art: ‘Woman washing her feet in a sink’. At first sight it is descriptive not seeming to reveal anything extraordinary. The title and the action in the sculpture have a 1:1 relationship and can be taken as signs by de Saussure. The *signifier* (the title) and the *signified* (the sculpture) here seem to have nearly purely linguistic features. However, the extraordinary in this example is the particular ‘nothingness’ and void of the situation. There seems to be nothing else left for the woman to do than wash her feet in a sink – a banal action she is condemned to. Ekphrasis thus takes place on two levels: in the linguistic formula and the 1:1 text-image reference; and on the plane where the Hemingwayesque and Hopperesque characteristics of banality, void, nothingness and coldness come together leaving the viewer with a cold shiver.

2.2.2.3. Surrealism

Surrealists explored the irrational, dreams and the unconsciousness of the mind. Their works of art did not search for logic or reason – the intention was to bring forth the hidden, normally incomprehensible elements of the human mind. Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró are two of the very well known surrealists with their paintings, such as Dalí’s *L’énigme du désir – ma mère, ma mère, ma mère*, 1929 and Miró’s *Etoiles en des sexes d’escargot*, 1925.⁵⁷ They furthermore believed that the world was a stage on which marionettes played a role in an absurd play.⁵⁸ Art was no longer imitating the external world: surrealism meant complete metamorphosis of all objects and forms placing them into new contexts and therefore creating new logics. In what forms does then ekphrasis exist in these extraordinary works of art?

In René Magritte’s *La clef des songes*, four objects are presented, three out of which were deliberately given a ‘wrong’ name: a bag is named ‘sky’, a pocket knife ‘bird’, a green leaf ‘table’ and a sponge ‘sponge’.

⁵⁷ See appendix.

⁵⁸ See appendix Paul Delvaux, “L’aube sur la ville”, 1940.



Figure 2.11: René Magritte, *La clef des songes*, 1927.

When looking at this painting the viewer questions his/her linguistic competences. There seems to be no relationship whatsoever between the objects painted and the objects cited, except for the last element. We seem to be learning a new language with Magritte like children in primary school who have just started learning to read and write. The painting indeed resembles a blackboard divided into four parts and the neat writing to that of a teacher's writing – all of which emphasise a strong didactic aspect of the painting.

While the first three parts seem 'incorrect', the viewer is taken aback by the last 'right' element. The latter, being the last word in the composition, has the strongest impact and thus gives all the former elements a new meaning. Magritte suggests this new system is not wrong after all because there is one element that can be considered as absolutely correct, since it corresponds to the conventional system. He thus incites the viewer to contemplate the first three elements with new eyes and realise that there is no reason not to call a bag 'sky', or a knife 'bird', and probably even vice versa.

Ekphrasis here takes place in a new system of signs.⁵⁹ The objects and words both gain a new dimension. Their intrinsic linguistic meaning is questioned. The

⁵⁹ See de Saussure's sign system shown previously.

intersection of the visual and textual element here takes place in a new system that still needs to be discovered. Furthermore, Magritte evokes the idea of the possible, simultaneous existence of uncounted, different systems. “Leur [des mots et des choses] signification ne sera dévoilée que par la manière dont ils sont utilisés et dont ils sont combinés.”⁶⁰ The title, however, gives an idea of *where* we could search for the sense of these new signs – namely in dreams. “La clef des songes” (The Key to Dreams) indicates that the new logic is that of dreams which seem to have substituted the system known as ‘reality’.

2.2.2.4. Dadaism

Dadaists also created new systems with so called “ready made” objects. These were already existing objects from everyday life that were placed into a new context and thus gained a new meaning. Marcel Duchamp, for example, ‘simply’ placed a urinal onto a pedestal, gave it a new name *Fontaine* (Fountain), signed it and sent it to an exhibition. He thus gave the object a new sense: it was not perceived anymore as a simple urinal from a men’s toilet, but as an object with a new logic.

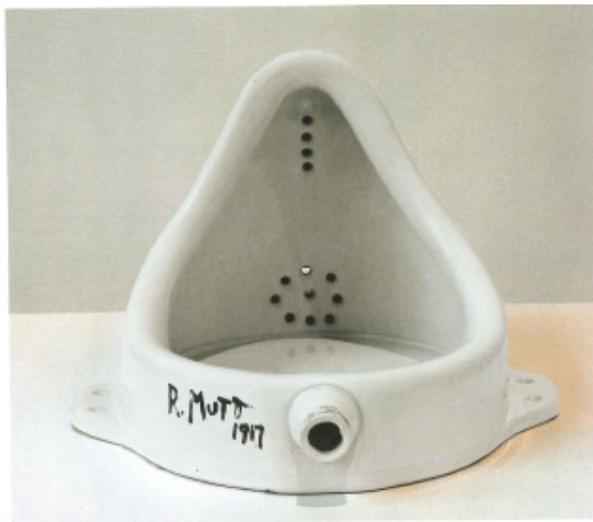


Figure 2.12: Marcel Duchamp, *Fontaine*, 1917.

⁶⁰ Cathrin Klingsöhr-Leroy, *Surréalisme*, (Bonn: Taschen, 2004) 62. Translation of the quotation: “Their [of the words and the things] meaning will only be revealed in the way they are used and combined”

Apart from the signature, the date and the pedestal which give the object a kind of magnitude, the title also adds to the aspect of 'work of art'. Everything that is 'nominated' consciously gains a kind of independence. The object becomes autonomous not needing a special context in order to exist. If Duchamp had called his work of art "Urinal", the object, having in that case a 1:1 relationship with its name, would hardly have any further connotation. The new name however takes it onto another level of meaning. The 1:1 relationship is broken and ekphrasis between the object and 'Fontaine' takes place on another plane.

The title Duchamp has given can indeed be taken as ironic. The irony and humour come forth in the fact that the liquids are rather different, being water for the fountain and urine for the urinal. The former can be consumed whereas the latter is the result of consumption. Furthermore, the objects were created for rather different purposes: the fountain obviously has a decorative purpose in a public place whereas the urinal is a simply useful invention for practical as well as hygienic reasons.

Ekphrasis here takes place on several levels – irony, metaphor and strong connotation link the two items 'urinal' and 'fountain'. A metaphor can be found in the tertium comparationis the 'sprinkling of the liquid'. Water sprinkles downwards in a fountain just as well as urine in a urinal. Furthermore, the 'sprinkling' as well as the shape of both objects evoke strong sexual connotations. Their form reminds of the erect male sexual organ, and the 'sprinkling', in that case, of ejaculation. These aspects also emphasise the irony in the work of art: a rather intimate action, such as urinating is juxtaposed to running water in a decorative public construction. This particular work of art seems blunt on first sight, but after a closer look ekphrasis reveals to be rather complex linking the intimate with the public, sexuality and secretion, artificial constructions and human organs.

2.2.3. ...Figures of Speech

Ekphrasis in a figure of speech takes place in the very moment when the particular image (evoked by a figure) is created and the link between the visual and verbal is

established. The 'link' between the two features comes forth through a special kind of logic established on the plane of the *mode* of the respective figure of speech.

In Monet's painting and Wilde's poem ekphrasis takes place on several levels one of which is the colour red as the tertium comparationis of the 'woman' – 'sun' metaphor. Further analysis of the colours that are important features in both the painting and the poem reveals another level of the established metaphor. The harmony of grey and blue seems in both works *disturbed* by the sudden intrusion of the rather strong colour red. Therefore the 'woman' as well as the 'sun' are again brought together through a tertium comparationis – this time as 'disturbing elements'.

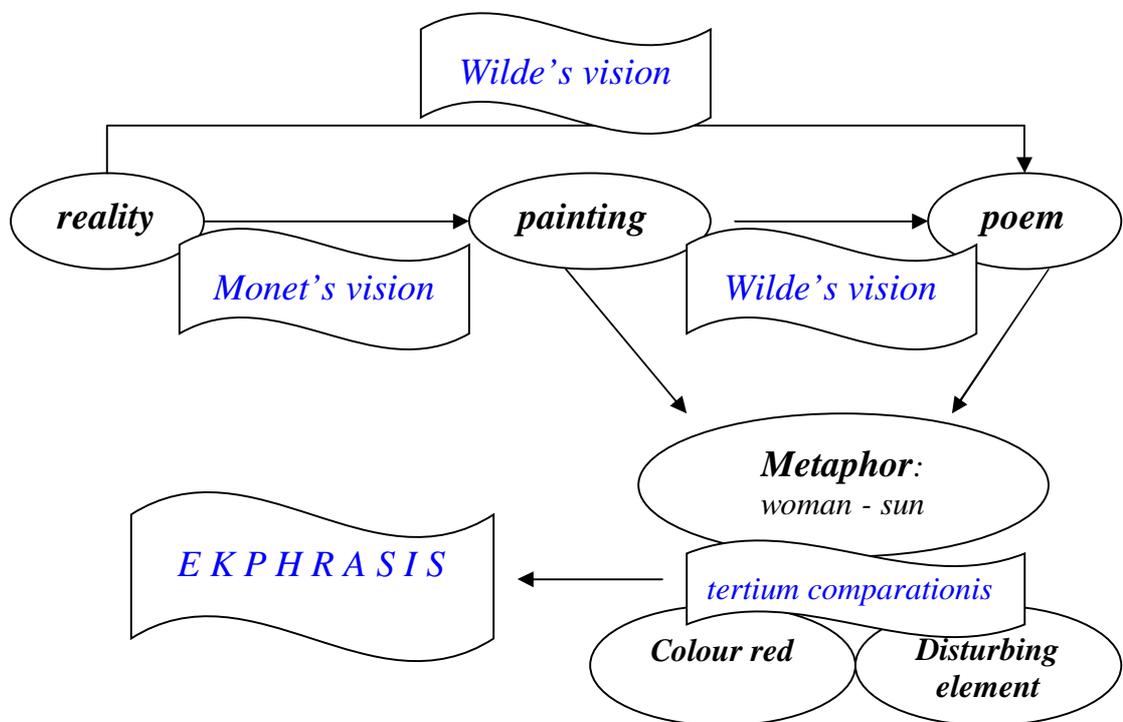


Figure 2.13

Figure 2.13 shows the different facets of the metaphor which takes place on an elevated plane from reality. The painting in itself is a detachment from the latter depicting Monet's vision of it. The poem is not only Wilde's vision of reality but

also and especially his vision of it *through* Monet's painting. The relationship between the painting and the poem then lies in Wilde's decoding and new encoding of the elements. The particularity of ekphrasis in this case is that it takes place when the painting and poem meet on a particular plane, i.e. when the metaphor that links the two becomes apparent. Unlike comics where the text is part of the visual image, and where ekphrasis takes place within the panel, the phenomenon is in this case active *outside* of each one of the works of art on the plane of the established tertium comparationis.

Metonymic gesture as a sub-form of the figure metonymy can also be analysed under the aspect of ekphrasis. People use gestures to replace expressions or words they cannot find immediately when speaking. In the sentence "We went [...] horse riding" the speaker makes a specific gesture during the pause indicated by the brackets and three dots. The gesture being fists pretending to hold reins and a slight up and down movement of the body is supposed to replace the verb "to ride". The gesture is immediately understood metonymically by the listener who is therefore able to replace the verb before hearing it. Here the visual aspect of metonymy surfaces. Ekphrasis does not only take place in the *context* between the gesture and the activity described, but is also active on the *visual* plane of the communication.

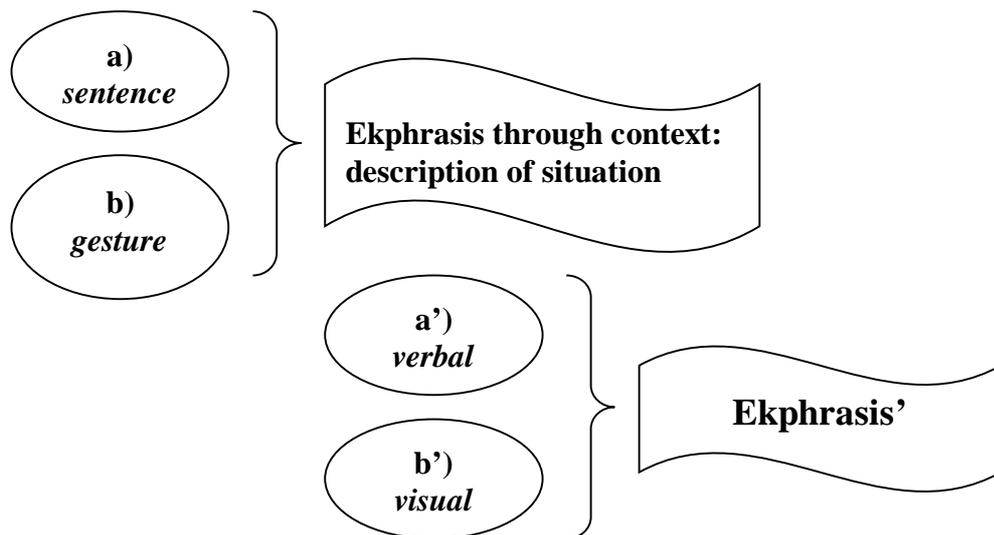


Figure 2.14

As the figure shows, for ekphrasis to gain another level, we need to move from the *context* that links the two elements to the intrinsic aspects of these being ‘verbal’ and ‘visual’. These two features complement one another in a way that is comparable to a panel in a comic. In the latter the text and the image are brought together through the context of the particular panel and through the context of the entire comic. The difference here however is that the visual element is the exact recapitulation of the verbal one. They thus not only complement one another in the context of ‘description of the situation’ but also have a 1:1 relationship – the gesture being the signifier and the verb ‘to ride’ the signified.

2.2.4 ...Advertising

In advertising ekphrasis can be active on various levels. Figure 2.15 shows an advertisement for the perfume brand Chanel and the perfume N°5. Ekphrasis here takes place in a triangle between the brand name in the top right hand corner, the bottle and the label on the bottle with the perfume name. There is a 1:1 relationship between the brand name and the name of the perfume: N°5 is Chanel and vice versa. Furthermore the word ‘parfum’ on the label has a 1:1 ‘signifier’ – ‘signified’ reference to the perfume advertised.

However, there are elements that exceed the 1:1 references. On the label we can also read ‘Paris’ which evokes various strong connotations. Apart from being the place where the Chanel company is situated and where the perfume is produced, it is a city known for fashion and elegance.

The brand is foremost known for haute couture for women and the advertised perfume thus emphasises this aspect of femininity.⁶¹ Furthermore, the strong yellow indicates that the object seems to be made out of gold, which is generally associated with women rather than with men. The same stands for the ‘diamond’ top – another expensive and luxurious jewel for women⁶². But the image of the woman who is likely to use this kind of perfume is not that of a delicate female. The woman here is

⁶¹ Although it is not indicated here explicitly, Chanel n°5 is indeed a perfume for women.

⁶² Neither gold nor diamonds are *exclusively* worn by women. However, they are associated more often with women than with men.

rather self-conscious and affirmed. She is dominant and seems even overwhelmingly powerful.



Figure 2.15: Magazine Air France nr. 79, November 2003.

The interpretation can go on with the image of the bottle. It is not a simple photograph of a perfume bottle. The red and blue colours as well as the extremely strong yellow indicate that the bottle was drawn or painted. The image resembles even a negative of a real photograph. Although we cannot say for sure which of the latter suppositions was intended by the advertising agency, the fact that a realistic photograph is not presented incites a certain detachment from reality. The perfume

(bottle) seems to be from a different time. Furthermore, its imposing stature gives the advertised product a monumental feature. It makes it appear as something with a long history and tradition⁶³. All these aspects detach the perfume from reality and give it another dimension. Its dominance is emphasised and the product seems intangible for a moment.⁶⁴

What seemed to be a rather straightforward advertisement turns out to be an extremely powerful image with connotations, such as dominance, power, richness, but also femininity, elegance, sophistication and tradition. Ekphrasis in this case gains another level – it takes place on the crossroad between, e.g. the word ‘Paris’ on the label and the respective connotations. The phenomenon is furthermore active on a plane established between the dominant *visual image* and the multiple interpretations it evokes.

The British Airways advertisement presented in Chapter I reveals several levels of ekphrasis. As already shown in the previous chapter, this particular advertisement consists of figures of speech that are carefully interwoven into the visual image. Although the rather informative text about the functionalities of the seat is quite blunt compared to the sophisticated image, the heading was however, interesting.

Figure 2.16 suggests a further possible structure analysis of the interaction of visual and textual elements in the advertisement. The first sentence in the heading reads “The new Club World cradle seat.” The “seat” is a direct indication to the position of the mother’s arms, emphasised by the image in colour in which part of the “seat” can be seen. In this special context there seems to be a 1:1 relationship between the “seat” and the “mother’s arms”: in de Saussure’s terms the signifier “seat” evokes the signified, visually presented “arms”. The two elements are furthermore brought together through the ‘mother metaphor’ being ‘we feel a mother’s embrace (when

⁶³ The first time when Chanel launched the perfume N°5 was in 1921!

⁶⁴ But the product is not intangible since it can be purchased and consumed. And the fact that it is accessible to any average citizen brings it back to reality. The advertising agency has all in all achieved its aim by inciting the viewer’s most basic desires (wealth and power) and by giving her the feeling that she can satisfy these easily.

lying) in the seat'. Ekphrasis in that case takes place in the tertium comparationis 'comfort' that is their common aspect⁶⁵.

The particular embrace brings forth further connotations and meaning. The tertium comparationis is extended and gains characteristics, such as 'warmth', 'care' and even 'love' which are thus directly applied to "seat". These additional aspects give way to a new plane for ekphrasis: the *connotations* evoked through 'mother's embrace' interact with the textual and visual elements present in the advertisement.

The second sentence "Lullaby not included" reveals a further specific interaction with the image. Unlike the first sentence that has a 1:1 visual reference, there seems to be no direct comparison with the second one: contrary to "seat" the "lullaby" cannot be *seen* in the image.

Nevertheless, "lullaby" has visual references on the plane of the mother metaphor and mother prosopopoeia. These two visually presented figures carry meaning based on the common knowledge of cultural traditions here being 'singing to a child in order to lull him/her to sleep'. These ideas recall Wandhoff's theory of a memory based culture as well as Wagner's terms of *déjà vu* and *déjà lu*. It is on this plane that ekphrasis brings these textual and visual elements together.

Furthermore, the mother prosopopoeia is a clear representation of the man's memories and moreover of a specific moment of his childhood – when he was lulled to sleep by his mother. In this context "lullaby" is also a direct element of the mother prosopopoeia as something non-existent in present life and reality but tangible in vivid memory.

In this complex setting ekphrasis takes place when the *modes* of the two figures come into play. The phenomenon is thus quasi visual since it is based on the visually encoded figures of speech in the advertisement.

⁶⁵ See also Chapter I.

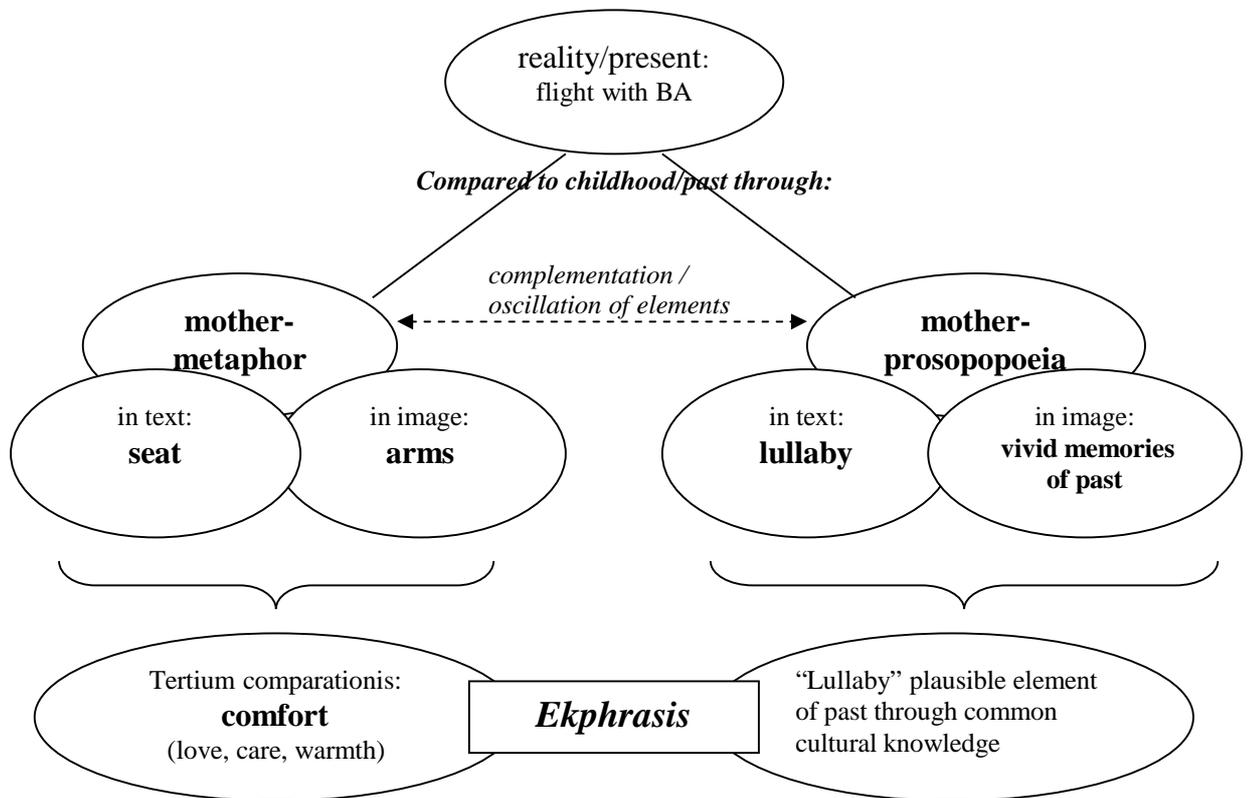


Figure 2.16

The BMW advertisement in figure 1.4 in Chapter I is a particular case. The text has a strong effect on the viewer making him/her 'see' all the allusions in the visual image which does not show anything else except for a motorbike and a striped background. The advertisement without the text would have little effect on the viewer except for certain admiration for the BMW machine itself. The text, however, gives way to several metaphors 'A BMW motorbike is a woman/wife/girlfriend', 'A BMW motorbike is freedom' and 'Riding a BMW motorbike is having sexual intercourse'. The 'gap' between the visual and textual entities here is thus filled by ekphrasis. The phenomenon is active on the plane of the specific tertium comparationis 'relationship' a man can have with a woman and his motorbike. The connotations evoked through this tertium comparationis: reliability, trust, maintenance costs, aging, satisfaction etc. give way to a further plane on which ekphrasis can act between the visual image and the given text.

Figure 2.17 is an advertisement for sugar free cookies. A big old, worn out shoe is served on a plate with a glass of milk. The text underneath the image reads “The sugar free cookie that actually tastes like a cookie. / Try the latest temptation. New sugar free pecan shortbread. / Murray / Sugar Free.” We also see $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cookie in the right hand bottom corner.

We notice that the actual product – the cookie – does not seem to be put in the foreground. The shoe and the milk occupy most of the visual space in the image. As a matter of fact, the image has a strong graphic structure with a clear aim. The dominating colour is the colour brown. The background with the plate and the shoe is dark brown. The plate is beige on a dark brown table. The shoe is also dark brown and stands out on the beige plate. The surrounding $\frac{1}{2}$ frame is light brown and the cookie is of a brown-beige colour matching the plate. It seems to contain small pieces of nuts (or other) that are nearly of the same brown colour as the frame and certain parts of the shoe. Finally, the glass of milk is white matching the text underneath the image next to the cookie. The table is round just like the plate, the tip of the shoe, the glass of milk and the cookie. The only squared, not to say, pointy, element is the corner of the $\frac{1}{2}$ frame. And it is probably no coincidence that it is pointing directly to the advertised product.

An element that slightly disturbs the harmony of colours and shapes would be the company logo. It is blue and red and in quite big writing. But since it probably is not meant as a disturbing but rather as an eye-catching element it serves its purpose. If we open our eyes in front of this advertisement we instinctively first look at the shoe and the milk since they are the biggest elements in the picture. The view is then drawn to the corner, then to the cookie and the logo, and only in the end to the text.

The visual image without the text and merely the logo as reference would not be clear. The shoe and the advertised cookie would be directly juxtaposed and thus imply a misinterpretation of the image. The effect would be the opposite of what was intended by the advertiser: the image could be read as a metaphor ‘Eating a Murray sugar free cookie is chewing on an old shoe’. Ekphrasis in this case would take place on the plane of the tertium comparationis ‘bad/awful taste’.

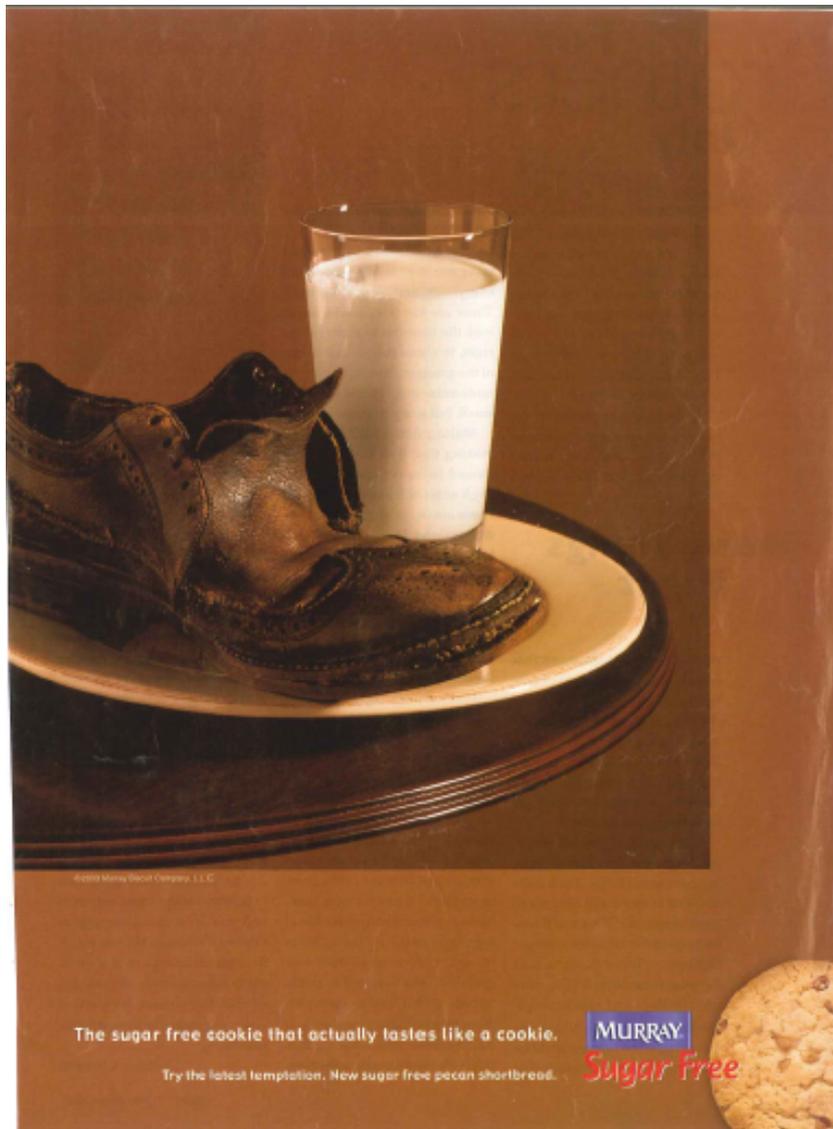


Figure 2.17: Ebony, November 2003.

The advertiser, however, provides clear text that immediately directs all interpretation: “The sugar free cookie that actually tastes like a cookie” allows no ambiguity and misinterpretation. The message is indeed obvious: any other sugar free cookie tastes like an old shoe except for Murray’s. The metaphor that juxtaposed the product and an old shoe is now applied to all other cookies except for the one advertised. Ekphrasis is maintained in the same tertium comparationis ‘bad/awful taste’ but now takes place on a plane outside the advertisement – in the viewer’s imagination. The ‘bad’ cookies are not explicitly shown in the image, but the viewer is supposed to relate to them through the portrayed shoe.

A further level of ekphrasis here takes place in Wagner's *déjà vu*. The shoe on the plate evokes memories of the famous scene in Charlie Chaplin's film *The Gold Rush* from 1925 where Chaplin cooks and eats a shoe. Just like in the advertisement, the absurdity of the scene is what makes it funny. The reasons are different though: Chaplin eats the shoe because he is poor and Murray shows the shoe in the context of the particular tertium comparationis. However, ekphrasis takes place between the advertisement and the film scene. Although the contexts are different, the same feeling of 'disgust' is evoked in the spectator. Again the plane of 'awful taste' gives way to ekphrasis, but this time not in the context of metaphor, but of intermediality.



Figure 2.18: Picture Press/Everett Collection, *The Gold Rush* 1925, Bubbles Inc SA 2003.

A further attractive aspect in this advertisement is the visual 'hide-and-seek' game the advertiser plays with the viewer. We are at first surprised to see the shoe on the plate, but immediately understand that it is (intentionally) out of place. The viewer thus instinctively seeks for the right element and finally detects the 'hidden' cookie.

In this context of absence-and-presence interpretation can go further and analyse the shoe as a form of prosopopoeia. If the latter means that a deceased person is presented as alive and present and if the definition is extended also to objects, then it would mean that all the other cookies seem to have 'come back from the dead' in the

form of a worn out shoe. Although this idea seems to be rather far fetched, it might be consistent in the specific context, especially considering the humorous aspect of the advertisement.

Ekphrasis in this example works on various levels being the *tertium comparationis* ‘awful taste’, Wagner’s *déjà vu*, and *prosopopoeia*. All three levels take place outside the text-image entity on the plane of the viewer’s imagination. Furthermore all forms of ekphrasis here contribute to and emphasise the wit of the advertisement.

* * *

Ekphrasis proves to be the very intersection between the visual and the textual and creates a plane where the employed elements interact with one another. It is an active phenomenon in entities that rely on both components, as e.g. in title-image and text-panel features in comics and art, and in entities that evoke strong imagery, such as figures of speech. Ekphrasis furthermore evokes higher spheres of e.g. connotations and special contexts that often lie outside the presented text-image entity. We were able to sharpen its broad definition and reveal that it is the very *knot* between the oscillating elements and not ‘merely’ any kind of textual presentation of any kind of visual presentation.

In the next chapter the *knot* and higher spheres of meaning will be analysed under the aspect of a particular figure of speech – *prosopopoeia*. The last chapter then will reveal in what way ekphrasis and *prosopopoeia* interact with one another in text-image entities.

Chapter III

Prosopopoeia

Prosopopoeia has a rather straightforward definition that does not seem to leave any room for further interpretation: an absent or dead person is presented as alive and present. This could be a reason why it has attracted little if any attention among literary theoreticians and the rare essays hardly incite to deeper analysis.

The previous two chapters have shown that literary phenomena, figures of speech and ekphrasis, play an important part in the decoding of text-image entities. The literary devices used in new media have foremost the function to point to spheres that go beyond the foreground image.

Prosopopoeia being a particularly visual figure is able to evoke the tangible presence of absent persons. It brings the deceased back to life and makes the absent tangible. The 'ghostly' persons and characters play an active part in the presented reality. Furthermore, the 'absent' are often absent for a reason. They are the lingering and often disturbing 'something-out-there'. Their presence thus brings forth spheres that go beyond the mere action or presentation of a person. A higher plane of feelings and sub-consciousness becomes apparent.

In certain visual arts, such as advertising and comics the viewer is indeed able to *visualise* abstract phenomena such as *desire* or *rising tension*. These could also be seen as forms of prosopopoeia. However, in order to establish this theory the definition of the figure would need to be extended to 'making anyone and anything intangible tangible'.

This chapter will thus suggest a redefined form of the figure and distinguish between 'concrete prosopopoeia' that indeed goes hand in hand with the basic definition; and 'abstract prosopopoeia' that evokes and makes concrete abstract phenomena. Analysis will show how far it can go and how far it can get within these newly established limits.

The focus will be on American and British theatre from the first half of the 20th century as well as contemporary comics - Japanese Manga⁶⁶, Western comics, and recent advertising.

Prosopopoeia might reveal itself as quite dynamic, incessantly moving on the border line between the *concrete* and the *abstract* in entities that rely on both visual and textual features.

3.1. Prosopopoeia in...

3.1.1. ...Theatre

A genre that is known for its use of prosopopoeia is theatre: ghosts of murdered kings, deceased mothers and lost brothers have appeared on stage - and with them feelings of guilt, fear of death and other deeply anchored anxieties. The latter aspects hint at the idea that the figure can be extended and applied to some of these abstract phenomena. The plays *Death of a Salesman* and *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller as well as *The Lover* by Harold Pinter should reveal what diverse forms prosopopoeia can take up in this genre.

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller works partly with what can be defined as *concrete prosopopoeia*. Throughout the play the main character Willy Loman is 'haunted' by his past. He not only remembers vividly certain moments of the past when his sons Biff and Happy were still boys but also sees and speaks with his deceased brother Ben.

Already in the first stage directions Miller explains how "*Whenever the action is in the present the actors observe the imaginary wall-lines [...]. But in the scenes of the past these boundaries are broken, and characters enter or leave a room by stepping 'through' a wall on to the forestage.*"⁶⁷ These indications hint at the importance of the parallel worlds in the play.

⁶⁶ A juxtaposition of Japanese Manga and a Western comic is interesting for the difference of their 'visual poetics'. We will see in what way the former works with rather abstract visual details in order to convey a situation, action and suspense of the moment.

⁶⁷ Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, (1949; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000) 7.

The first concrete prosopopoeia takes place on page 21 and ends on page 32⁶⁸.

“WILLY: [...] Then when you are all set, there’ll be plenty of girls for a boy like you. (*He smiles broadly at a kitchen chair*) That so? The girls pay for you? (*He laughs*) Boy, you must really be making a hit.

(*Willy is gradually addressing – physically – a point off-stage, speaking through the wall of the kitchen, and his voice has been rising in volume to that of a normal conversation*)

[...]

BIFF (offstage): Whatta ya got, Dad?

[...]

(*YOUNG BIFF and YOUNG HAPPY appear from the direction Willy was addressing. [...]*)”⁶⁹

Prosopopoeia is gradually created here. Willy is at first talking to himself, then voices of the people he imagines offstage can be heard and finally the characters appear onstage and Willy’s memories become vivid and tangible. The gradual creation of prosopopoeia is also a means to make the spectator live the same moment with Willy and enter in his psyche. The amazing length of the scene emphasises Willy’s psychological instability.

Throughout the play prosopopoeia intermingles with reality. In the following scene the borders between the present and the past are blurred in Willy’s mind. He is physically present in the present but mentally in both time periods.

“WILLY: A man who can’t handle tools is not a man. You’re disgusting.

CHARLEY: Don’t call me disgusting, Willy.

(*UNCLE BEN, carrying a valise and an umbrella, enters the forestage [...]*)

WILLY: I’m getting awfully tired, Ben.

[...]

CHARLEY: Good, keep playing; you’ll sleep better. Did you just call me Ben?

⁶⁸ Page indications of the 2000 Penguin edition

⁶⁹ Miller, *Death of Salesman*, 21-22

[...]

WILLY: That's funny. For a second there you reminded me of my brother Ben.

BEN: I only have a few minutes.

CHRALEY: You never heard from him again, heh? Since that time?

WILLY: Didn't Linda tell you? Couple of weeks ago we got a letter from his wife in Africa. He died.

CHRALEY: That so.

BEN [...]: So this is Brooklyn, eh?

[...]

WILLY: [...] If I'd gone to Alaska that time, everything would've been totally different.

CHARLEY: Go on, you'd froze to death up there.

WILLY: What are you talking about?

BEN: Opportunity is tremendous in Alaska, William. Surprised you're not up there.

WILLY: Sure tremendous.

CHARLEY: Heh?"⁷⁰

Willy continues playing cards and talking to Charley and at the same time communicates with Ben. The state of mind he is in is rather extraordinary at that very moment. The paradox of this particular scene is that he is neither fully present in the past nor the present.

The scene ends with Charley getting angry at Willy for not paying attention to the game and Willy not being able to control himself. Finally the memories prevail and as soon as Charley leaves, Willy becomes entirely immersed in his thoughts. From that moment on he communicates directly with Ben and other figures from the past appear e.g. his sons and Linda. Prosopopoeia here dominates reality to such an extent that it even makes physical contact between Willy and the 'ghosts' from the past possible.

A first attempt to extend the definition of prosopopoeia could be made: the figure is not only a representation of a deceased person as alive and present but can also be

⁷⁰ Miller, *Death of Salesman*, 34-35.

found in certain objects that evoke the presence of the respective characters⁷¹. These can be classified as *abstract prosopopoeias*.

Abstract prosopopoeia can be found for example in the music that characterises Ben. It is as a matter of fact the first instruction in the play: “A *melody is heard, played upon a flute. It is small and fine, telling of grass and trees and the horizon.*”⁷² Whenever Ben appears the same melody is heard. Furthermore as the play progresses the melody becomes Willy’s melody and every time he loses himself in reverie the tune can be heard as a kind of transition from reality to his imagination.

Prosopopoeia can be taken to a further level of abstraction and brought into relation with *death*. However abstract and intangible, it seems omnipresent in the play. Death that finally does result in real death takes up various shapes and forms: one of the first indicators could be the gas-stove-pipe Willy seems to have procured for his suicide.

At this point symbol, index and abstract prosopopoeia need to be distinguished from one another. Some may argue that the object is a symbol or index of death rather than an abstract prosopopoeia and these arguments can be accepted. Symbols have a double-layered- definition: an object can be called a symbol when it’s ‘meaning’ is known to every member of a community, culture or society. In the Aramis advertisement in Chapter I the wedding ring Andre Agassi is wearing is a clear symbol not only of marriage but also of stability, harmony, love, etc. These hidden messages could be detected since they have come to be part of the semantic field ‘wedding ring’ in the specific culture Andre Agassi represents. The ‘second’ definition of symbol is that objects can gain symbolic meaning in a specific context. This would mean that the gas-stove-pipe can indeed be classified as symbolic for death in the context of the play. Its semantic field is extended and the characters as well as the spectator (and reader) understand that the gas-stove-pipe is no longer a simple practical object but a deadly menace to the main character.

⁷¹ In the examples of prosopopoeia presented so far the figure is applied to persons who are still alive and present in the onstage reality. When Willy remembers certain moments of the past his sons appear as boys and Linda as a young woman. Thus the strict definition of prosopopoeia is already broken.

⁷² Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 7.

The definition of index could also be applied. An index is a visual sign that can be understood by any member of any community or culture. The play can indeed be staged in any country in the world and most likely all spectators will understand the special meaning of this particular object in the context of the play. Nevertheless, the gas-stove-pipe could furthermore be defined as an abstract prosopopoeia. The object evokes the tangible presence of death and in a way gives it shape and form. We should admit, however, that we seem to have reached the limits of the figure. At least in this example prosopopoeia does not seem to be able to reveal more than its 'rivals' symbol and index.

Further indicators of *death* are slightly more abstract, e.g. Willy's *death* in his professional life. In the course of the play he loses his position in the company. Moreover the spectator learns that he never got rich on his sales but merely earned just enough to support his family.

A further kind of *death* evoked in the play would be his private life. He betrayed his wife and deluded his son Biff. The latter found out about his father's mistress in a rather unexpected way and understood that Willy had been a "fake"⁷³. His 'fake' existence can in turn also be applied to his professional life: all along he portrayed an extremely successful image of himself whereas the truth was very different from his stories. The scene when young Biff realises that his father has been a liar all along is of great importance: Willy dies that day as a father, as an idol for his sons and as the man in the family.

Another kind of *death* could be seen in his physical life. Their house is run down, surrounded by buildings boxing in the characters living there. Willy also complains about the cars and the pollution, about the missing sun and light in his garden. These physical aspects evoke a claustrophobic and suffocating atmosphere for the characters. In the scenes of vivid memory the spectator understands that the area used be much more pleasant than it is now. All these elements evoke *physical death*.

⁷³ Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 95.

The aspects above reveal that *death* is omnipresent in the play and comes forth in Willy's professional, private and physical life. It can thus be classified as prosopopoeic: it is present and nearly tangible throughout the play in every aspect of Willy's existence and finally materialises in his suicide.

The recurring musical theme as already mentioned above is not only prosopopoeic for Ben, but also for Willy's *state of mind* when he is immersed in his thoughts. A closer look at Ben's speech when he is onstage reveals that it is not only part of a once real moment, but especially a kind of *voice of regret* that has been echoing in Willy ever since Ben's departure. Although Willy never explicitly says that he regrets never having followed his brother the spectator understands that he had wanted to go but was chained by the circumstances: his wife, his two sons, the mortgage on the house etc. Deep down he probably craved for the feeling of freedom in the far West and the opportunities offered there. The *voice of regret* that is presented onstage in the form of Ben's voice and more concretely his speech is summed up in the music – the flute tune that opens and closes the play. It is thus just as omnipresent as the various *deaths*.

A further play by Arthur Miller that reveals an important prosopopoeia structure would be *All My Sons*. The abstract prosopopoeia that is dominant throughout the play is Joe Keller's guilty conscience. During the war Joe Keller and his partner Deever had a factory where they produced cylinder heads for the Air Force. One day a problem with the process led to deficient cylinder heads which Keller decided to sell to the army anyway. He was also 'smart' enough to call in sick that day and leave his partner alone. He had already anticipated that the cylinder heads could not hold the planes in the sky and thus decided to protect himself in advance from all possible juridical pursuit. Deever was then the one imprisoned after the war.

As the play progresses it is more and more difficult to manipulate the truth that Joe Keller has been trying to suppress for years. The tension rises when Deever's son George who is a lawyer visits Keller with a clear aim: to prove his father's innocence. His figure encompasses various aspects and brings together the absence of his father, the carefree past, the disturbing present, the lie and the truth, the juridical justice and *injustice*. All Keller's fears become tangible through George.

Keller is conscious of the crime he committed and is living a 'fake' innocence. He was pronounced not guilty because he managed to manipulate the court with his lies. What is striking is that his lie had extremely tragic consequences. The deficient cylinder heads made every plane crash killing dozens of young soldiers. He is responsible for the death of all these *sons* and probably his own one who was also a pilot. He furthermore destroyed the life of his neighbour and partner Deever who went to prison for several years and lost his possessions and family. The most tragic consequence is when all the characters in the play realise that Larry, Keller's missing son, had committed suicide over his father's case.

The play works with several forms of prosopopoeia. The lost son, Larry, is present in various ways. There is the tree in the garden which was destroyed by a storm just the previous night. The play as a matter of fact starts on the day after the storm – as a prediction of a *stormy* ending. The missing son is furthermore presented in the horoscope Franck (a neighbour) establishes for him. Then Annie, his former girlfriend brings forth his presence through the love story they lived before and somewhat during the war and the mother who does not accept he is gone. She continuously evokes his presence in various objects: "MOTHER: [...] It's so funny...everything decides to happen at the same time. This month is his birthday; his tree blows down, Annie comes. Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I just went down the cellar, and what do I stumble over? His baseball glove. I haven't seen it in a century."⁷⁴

Furthermore, Larry even *materialises* in the letter that Ann shows: his words and thoughts are heard. The letter has an important function in two ways: it has a prosopopoeic function in that it evokes Larry's presence, and a structural function for it untangles the knot that has been tightening throughout the play – it becomes clear that Larry had committed suicide because of his father's crime.

⁷⁴ Arthur Miller, *A View from the Bridge / All My Sons*, (1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000) 104.

The two prosopopoeias that materialise through Larry and George would respectively be the *guilt prosopopoeia* and the *justice prosopopoeia*. As a matter of fact *justice* and *guilt* are present throughout the play. These two abstract prosopopoeias overlap since guilt is possible only when justice is not fully established and justice nourishes its existence in guilt:

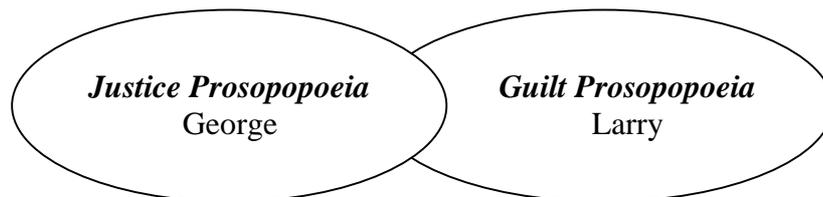


Figure 3.1

The *justice prosopopoeia* evokes more *material* aspects. It is about concrete law, proof, pursuit, condemnation, prison; whereas the *guilt prosopopoeia* is slightly more abstract and exists in Joe's conscience.

Larry is never physically on stage but is constantly present throughout the play as the core of the love story between Ann and Chris, the core of the justice story between the two fathers, the core of the business story, the family wealth, and on higher/larger level, of the entire capitalist structure of society. He is part of a prosopopoeia that stretches out over the entire play. Miller seems not only to question the guilty conscience and fragile minds of individuals but an entire system with its juridical and social structure. In the play the *system* is associated directly with lying, killing, murder, suicide, death (in every sense of the word, as in *Death of a Salesman*), destruction of the human physical and intellectual existence. It furthermore allows the creation of a paradoxical sub-system – war. The latter has two contradictory characteristics: on the one hand it nourishes the capitalist system allowing certain individuals to accumulate wealth; on the other it is clearly destructive for individuals and finally the entire system.

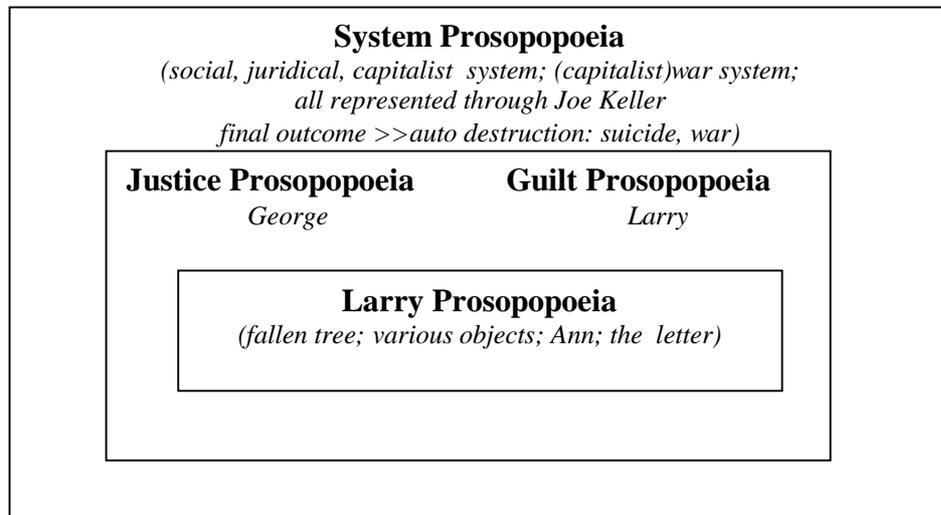


Figure 3.2

Figure 3.2 shows the different levels of prosopopoeia in the play all of which are abstract. At a first level the *Larry prosopopoeia* is set of various objects and a character, Ann, his former girlfriend; on the next one the *justice* and *guilt prosopopoeias* are presented through George and Larry; and on the final level the *system prosopopoeia* represented through Joe Keller. Miller gives a detailed description of this character: “KELLER is nearly sixty. A heavy man of stolid mind and build, a business man these many years, but with the imprint of the machine-shop worker and boss still upon him. When he reads, when he speaks, when he listens, it is with the terrible concentration of the uneducated man for whom there is still wonder in many commonly known things, a man whose judgements must be dredged out of experience and a peasant-like common sense. A man among men.”⁷⁵ With ‘man among men’ Miller indicates that the *system* is made of countless men such as Keller and thus points to the mass of mediocrities. Men like Keller do not seek for sophistication but pure survival. Their ability to adapt to any kind of system becomes clear in the fact that Keller although uneducated and rather ignorant, was able to become rich. What is even more striking is that he adapts with ease to the destructive system of war in order to survive and accumulate his wealth. The *system prosopopoeia* thus gains shape and form in the character of Joe Keller. He is its very personification.

⁷⁵ Miller, *A View from the Bridge / All My Sons*, 89-90.

Here we seem to have reached once more the limits of the figure. Joe Keller is the very personification, the symbol of the system. However, he is abstracted on a further level: as a present person he gives the abstract prosopopoeia *system* a concrete and clear reference. As a matter of fact, the entire complexity of the prosopopoeia structure in *All My Sons* lies in the abstract prosopopoeia, not only because the phenomena evoked are abstract per se (guilt, justice, system) but because paradoxically they are brought to the surface through present persons as well as deceased ones. The character of Joe Keller can indeed be qualified as a symbol and personification, but as ‘a present person’ he also enters the sphere of prosopopoeia.

System prosopopoeia is evoked in *Death of a Salesman* as well. Certain prosopopoeias here are concrete ones: *Uncle Ben* as a concrete prosopopoeia represents the deceased brother but as an abstract prosopopoeia his character evokes higher planes, one of them being the ‘typical success story in the *system*’. Those who are not able to keep up the pace of the *system* end up in a trap. This can be seen in Willy Loman’s case who suffers from various *deaths*. Thus the *Uncle Ben prosopopoeia* evokes two aspects of the *system prosopopoeia* – on the one hand it shows the ones who have ‘made it’ and on the other the ones who were crushed along the way. The *system prosopopoeia* is once more omnipresent throughout the play and interwoven into every bit of the characters’ existence.

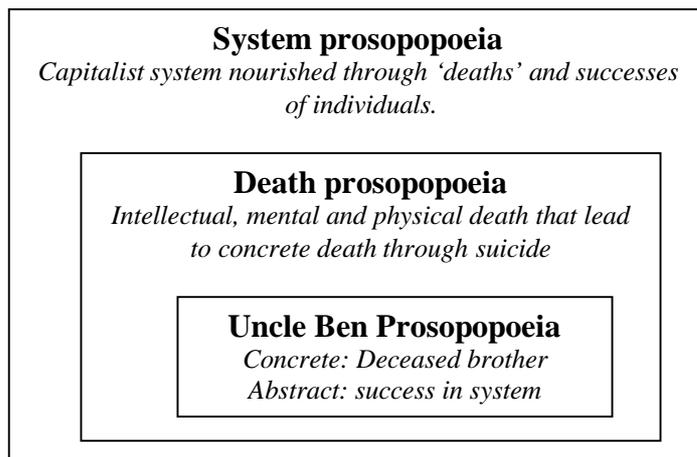


Figure 3.3

Force; the guy who made twenty-one P-40s crash in Australia. Kid, walkin' down the street that day I was guilty as hell. Except I wasn't, and there was a court paper in my pocket to prove I wasn't, and I walked.... past...the porches. Result? Fourteen months later I had one of the best shops in the state again, a respected man again; bigger than ever."⁷⁶

This quotation shows that Joe is trying to fight his guilty conscience. He actually even says that he is guilty but then tries to cleanse the fact with the juridical proof he obtained. With the arrival of George, his conscience is even more destabilised and he tries to fight it.

“GEORGE: He [Deever] hates your guts, Joe. Don't you know that?

[...]

KELLER: That's a sad thing to hear.

GEORGE [*with bitterness dominant*]: Why? What'd you expect him to think of you?

KELLER [*- the force of his nature rising, but under control*]: I'm sad to see he hasn't changed. As long as I know him, twenty-five years, the man never learned how to take the blame. You know that George

GEORGE [*- he does*]: Well, I –

KELLER: But you do know it. [...] I mean like in 1937 when we had the shop on Flood Street. And he damn near blew us all up with that heater he left burning for two days without water. He wouldn't admit that was his fault, either. I had to fire a mechanic to save his face. You remember that. [...] I'm just mentioning it, George. Because this is just another one of a lot of things. Like when he gave Frank that money to invest in oil stock. [...] But its good to remember those things, kid. The way he cursed Frank because the stock went down. Was that Frank's fault? To listen to him Frank was a swindler. And all the man did was give him a bad tip. [...] Then remember them [these things], remember them. [...] There are certain men in the world who rather see everybody hung before they'll take blame. You understand me, George?"⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Miller, *A View from the Bridge / All My Sons*, 116.

⁷⁷ Miller, *A View from the Bridge / All My Sons*, 151-52.

Joe Keller senses that George has actually found out the truth about the incident that took place during the war. Keller is thus in vain trying his best to persuade George of his father's guilt and thus keep his conscience clean. Paradoxically, when Joe is talking of men who are ready to "see everybody hung" rather than taking the blame on them he is actually portraying himself.

The parallel prosopopoeic sub-reality has thus a further level: it is a form of Joe Keller's sub consciousness in which *guilt* and *justice* are already established but vehemently denied by Joe until the very last moment. He subconsciously knows what the consequences can (are going to) be once the *truth* catches up with the *lie* in the onstage reality. The tension of the play escalates when Larry's letter comes into play. Although Larry is actually talking from the dead he is controlling reality of all the other characters. The letter is an echoing voice of truth that gains shape and form. It is thus a direct blow to Joe's guilty conscience and drives him to suicide. Through his act the two spheres finally collide and form from that moment on an inseparable whole.

Harold Pinter's play *The Lover* works with a form of *concrete prosopopoeia*. There are only three physical characters in the play - Sarah, Richard and John, but four other ones that are evoked through them.

Sarah and Richard are married and both have an affair with another person – Sarah with Max and Richard with a prostitute. They openly talk of their affairs to each other. When Sarah receives her lover Max, it is actually Richard who enters on stage only dressed differently from what he was wearing when he left the house as 'Richard'. Sarah, on her part, also changes clothes: for her role as a prostitute she wears very high heels and a tight dress. Thus the same people are seen on stage but playing different roles.

When Richard becomes Max, Sarah addresses him that way. Max however calls Sarah two other names: Dolores and Mary. She becomes replaceable by others and gains characteristics of a prostitute. Further on in the play Sarah confesses in anger to her husband that she has not only had one lover but many such as John, the milkman, and all the other strangers who pass by.

During the entire play the role switching is constant and dynamic to such an extent that it ends with a final role change on stage when they switch to the roles of their lovers – Richard to Max and Sarah to the prostitute.

“RICHARD. Is that what you [Sarah and her lover] do? [...] Like that ? [...] What fun.

He scratches the drum sharply and then places it on the chair.

[...]

Come on, don't be a spoilsport. Your husband won't mind [...].

She suddenly giggles.

Silence.

SARAH. I'm trapped.

[...]

It's a very late tea. Isn't it? But I think I like it. Aren't you sweet? I've never seen you before after sunset. My husband's at a late night conference. Yes, you look different. Why are you wearing this strange suit, and this tie? You usually wear something else, don't you? Take off your jacket. Mmmnn? Would you like me to change? Would you like me to change my clothes? I'll change for you, darling. Shall I? Would you like that?

Silence. She is very close to him.

RICHARD. Yes.

Pause.

Change.

Pause.

Change.

Pause.

Change your clothes.

Pause.

You lovely whore.”⁷⁸

The absent persons here are simultaneously evoked. When Sarah receives her lover Max a direct parallel is drawn to Richard and his prostitute. When they are on stage

⁷⁸ Harold Pinter, *Complete Works 2* (1977; New York: Grove Press, 1990) 194-96.

together the spectator knows that the other couple is in the same situation and is thus in a way watching both pairs at the same time: the ‘absent’ couple becomes tangible through the couple on stage since Sarah and Richard incessantly ‘change clothes’. At that very moment they are both playing a double role – that of the husband/wife and that of the lover/mistress.

At one point in the play Max decides to end the relationship with Sarah (after having called her two other different names (Dolores and Mary)) and evokes his wife. Later on in the play it is Richard who asks Sarah to end her affair. The spectator gains the feeling that the characters are constantly talking to (at least) two different people at once – the person on stage and the person s/he represents. There is thus a circular connection between them:

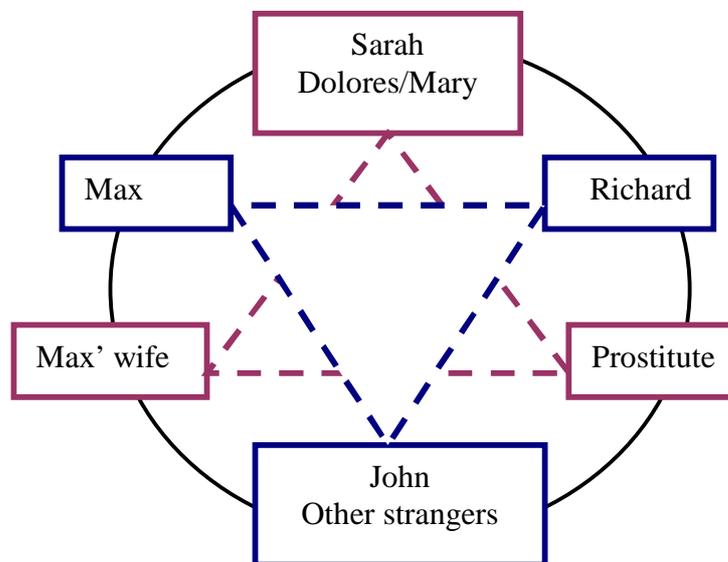


Figure 3.5⁷⁹

The female as well as the male characters are linked with one another in the sense that they are interchangeable. Richard is Max and Max is one of the lovers like John and the other strangers. Furthermore Richard is to his prostitute what he is to his wife. All the roles are confounded. It is through this simultaneity of roles that

⁷⁹ IMPORTANT NOTICE: no particular symbol is intended in this scheme. The characters are merely linked through geometric figures, i.e. a circle and triangles - the purple one for the female and the blue one for the male characters.

prosopopoeia is possible. The figure is in dynamic movement continuously constructed and deconstructed.

There is a further prosopopoeia present throughout the play. It evokes adultery, betrayal, lust, fragile marriages and relationships. Everything the characters do, everything they evoke, all their actions and thoughts are irrevocably linked to this particular abstract prosopopoeia. Their whole human existence seems to swirl around these aspects.

A further abstract prosopopoeia surfaces – that of *sexual fantasies*. We could say that the constant role switching actually takes place in the sub consciousness of the characters: on the one hand they take up the role of the person their partner desires them to be and at the same time they are all the different persons they would like to be for themselves and for their partner. The entire play seems to be a presentation of a ‘sub-reality’ that takes place in the minds of the characters. However, a deeper investigation of this complex structure would imply a profound study and comparison of psycho-sexual analysis that is not the focus here. Nevertheless this particular prosopopoeia indeed seems to be an important element throughout the play.

Pinter draws the spectator into the deepest pores of relationships and exposes their fragile character. They seem to be built on pure lust and seduction. Pinter denudes the overall idea that relationships and especially marriages are based on trust and faithfulness. “SARAH. You stupid...! (*She looks at him [Richard] coolly.*) Do you think he’s the only one who comes! Do you? Do you think he’s the only one I entertain? Mmmnn? Don’t be silly. I have other visitors, other visitors, all the time, I receive all the time. Other afternoons, all the time. When neither of you know, neither of you. I give them strawberries in season. With cream. Strangers, total strangers. But not to me, not while they’re here. They come to see the hollyhocks. And then they stay for tea. Always. Always.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Pinter, *Complete Works* 2, 193.

In theatre prosopopoeia reaches from *concrete* to *abstract* and its strict definition is often extended. Not only deceased persons can be presented but also ones still alive as ‘ghosts’ from the past or ‘ghosts’ from the present as in Pinter’s play.

The abstract aspect of the figure reaches spheres that go beyond the presented reality. It can be applied to objects or even music as well as to characters present onstage. The figure is thus able to make abstract phenomena tangible, such as ‘conscience’, ‘death’, ‘system’ or ‘fantasies’. It breaks the boundaries of space and time, links the past and the present, the consciousness and sub consciousness of the characters.

3.1.2. ...Comics

Comics constantly work with presence and absence of characters, parts of the story, parts of the action etc. In the following, argumentation will point to how the newly established theory of concrete and abstract prosopopoeia acts in the specific context; where it comes into play and in what way it fills out the space between the textual and visual elements.

The comic *Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Watterson is characterised by several levels of prosopopoeia. Calvin’s imaginary friend – a tiger – he talks to and plays with throughout the comic would be a first form of the figure. Hobbes, the tiger, is in reality a toy but throughout the comic he is presented as a ‘real’ tiger. The word *real* is slightly problematic since the tiger when presented as an animal and not as a toy, has characteristics of a human being – he can talk and think and has reactions that are rather human than those of a wild animal.



Figure 3.6: Bill Watterson, *The Calvin and Hobbes Tenth Anniversary Book* (Kansas City: Universal Press Syndicate Company, 1995).

Figure 3.6 shows Hobbes first as a toy. The first three panels show Calvin talking to his friend Susie and asking her to give him Hobbes back. As soon as he is alone with him Hobbes turns into a ‘real’ tiger and Calvin addresses him directly.

This prosopopoeia consists of two levels. The first one would be the prosopopoeia of Calvin’s imaginary friend and the second one that encompasses the first one, is the prosopopoeia for the imaginary world Calvin lives in. As a matter of fact the reader is exposed to Calvin’s imagination throughout the comic: s/he shares all his thoughts, feelings and views – Calvin’s perspective is dominant.

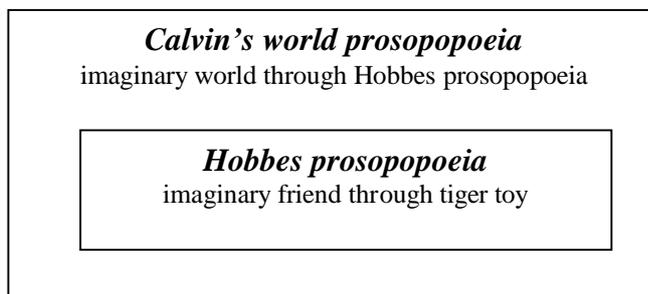


Figure 3.7

Paradoxically, both levels exist on a plane that could be qualified as ‘sub-reality’: the presented action takes place for the most part in a child’s imagination. However, its authenticity is never questioned since the ‘sub-reality’ is the presented ‘reality’ of the comic.

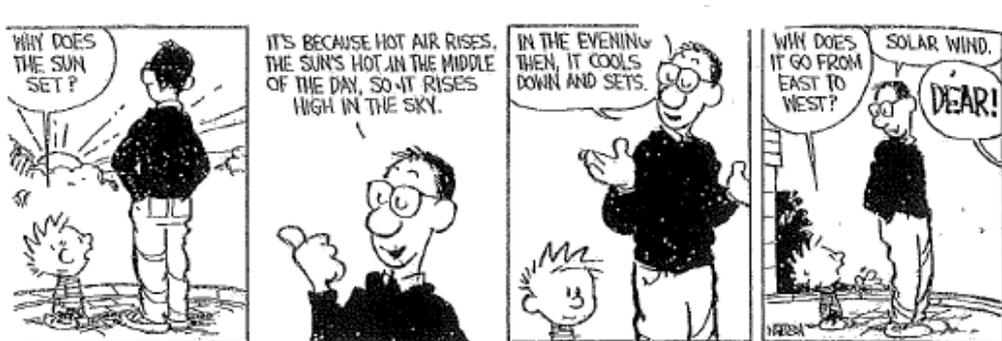


Figure 3.8: Bill Watterson, *The Authoritative Calvin and Hobbes* (Kansas City: Universal Press Syndicate Company, 1990) 152.

Figure 3.8 shows Calvin asking his father a ‘simple’ question why the sun sets. His father instead of telling him that earth turns around in one day and that it rotates around the sun in one year gives a completely absurd explanation about hot air. The father obviously thinks that the real explanation would be too complex for Calvin to understand so he makes up a more ‘simple’ answer. Funnily though, the explanation he gives is even more confusing and Calvin does not seem very convinced in the third panel. Calvin has indeed observed and understood that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. The question that he asks his father then emphasises the ridiculousness of the explanation. The father however pursues his ‘logic’ still convinced that Calvin would be unable to understand the real scientific reason and gives a further absurd answer that it is solar wind that blows the sun from east to west.

Calvin is conscious of the complexity of the adult world and would like to learn about it. The reader as an outside observer sees the portrayed absurdities of the latter and finally questions its logic and the set up rules. It loses its authenticity when penetrated by Calvin’s infantile naïveté. Everything adults do and say which is supposed to be always very thoughtful and logical turns out to be ridiculous and unnecessary. Especially the dullness of every day life and the lack of imagination become apparent. Watterson in a way shows the intellectual superiority of childish imagination. However, Calvin is in a rather strange situation: he is on the one hand still a child talking to and playing with his toys and on the other, he is growing up with adults in a rather rigid structure. He is trying his best to find his place in both of these. Paradoxically, he is not taken seriously when he tries to enter the adult world.

A closer look at Hobbes’ figure reveals its rather important function. He actually encompasses two planes in the comic. He is Calvin’s projection of himself into the tiger toy and at the same time a reflection of the adults (as perceived by Calvin). In figure 3.9 Calvin is alone with his tiger. He makes up a game and asks his friend to guess which number he is thinking of. At first Hobbes plays along, but soon finds it tiresome to guess a number between one and seven hundred billion and decides to leave.



Figure 3.9: Bill Watterson, *The Authoritative Calvin and Hobbes* (Kansas City: Universal Press Syndicate Company, 1990) 152.

Although presented realistically, the reader is conscious of the fact that the entire situation takes place in Calvin's imagination. In the first two panels Calvin projects himself into the tiger and in a way has a dialogue with himself – Hobbes gives answers that Calvin imagines for him. In the last two panels Hobbes takes up characteristics of an adult who gets annoyed and bored with the game and simply leaves. His reaction can be seen as a reflection of what Calvin might have observed so far from his parents and other adults around him.

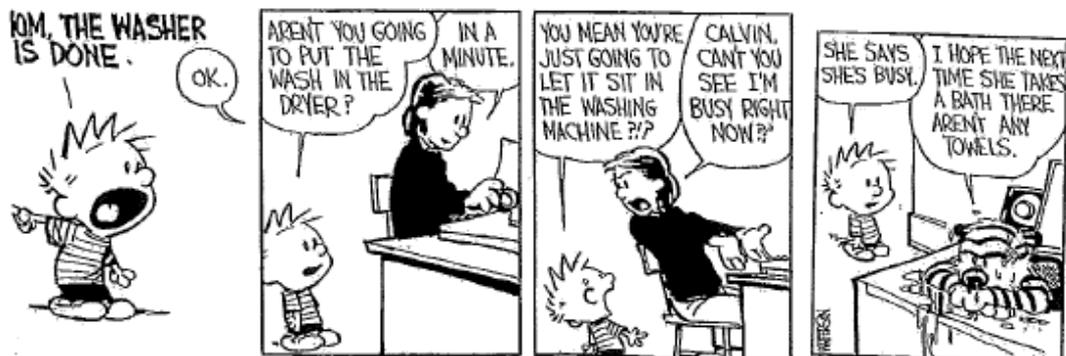


Figure 3.10: Bill Watterson, *The Authoritative Calvin and Hobbes* (Kansas City: Universal Press Syndicate Company, 1990) 113.

Figure 3.10 is a further example of Calvin being entirely immersed in his imagination. Hobbes was washed in the washing machine and is soaking wet. Calvin

is alarmed and calls his mother for help. His mother has no understanding for the urgency of the situation and yells back at Calvin that she is busy. In the last panel then Calvin is explaining to Hobbes in a nearly apologetic way that he will not be taken out of the washing machine right away. In these four panels Calvin identifies completely with his toy.

Hobbes' figure moves thus on the borderline between reality and imagination. He could be qualified as a kind of *abstracted concrete prosopopoeia*. He indeed represents 'the adult' and is in a way a reflection of reality. However, his incarnation of the absent persons is rather abstract and not only because he is in reality just a toy. He is a shifted image of 'the adult' since the perception is deeply anchored in Calvin's mind. Nevertheless, since the *Hobbes prosopopoeia* apart from representing Calvin's imaginary friend also stands for 'real' persons the reader is with one foot in the sphere of concrete prosopopoeia and with the other in the sphere of abstraction. However, the word 'concrete' remains problematic here since the comic takes place on the plane of imagination rather than realistic reflection.

The entire complexity of the prosopopoeia structure in this comic lies in constant movement between the 'imaginary' (the 'sub-real') and the 'real'. The two spheres constantly intermingle and the reader thus becomes an observer of both. With the dominant abstract prosopopoeia in this comic Watterson elevates the story to a higher plane. He detaches the reader from reality and immerses him/her into 'infantile' imagination. We mockingly scrutinize the adult world but remain conscious of the fact that we are 'moving in' Calvin's mind. The reader is thus on the borderline between the two planes, somewhat detached from and implied in both simultaneously.

Figure 3.11 is an example of a Japanese Manga⁸¹ and shows five panels. There is no text except for the explanatory "Collège Meisei" sign, which indicates that the building in question is a school. Mangas are read from the right to the left: first the

⁸¹ The choice to compare Western comics and Japanese Manga has been made on the basis of the rather different visual aesthetics. The latter might be somewhat difficult to grasp at first sight for a Western reader and not only because Manga are read from right to left. It is also the choice of detail and the setting of panels that differs from Western 'visual logic'. However, we will not go into deeper cultural and historical research of the graphical differences between the two kinds of comics. The focus of the study remains the analysis of forms prosopopoeia can take up in this medium.

school is presented, then the high fence that indicates the school yard for sports, then a close up of a basket with baseball balls, then a panel showing the school baseball team playing and a final panel with a close up of a thrown ball.

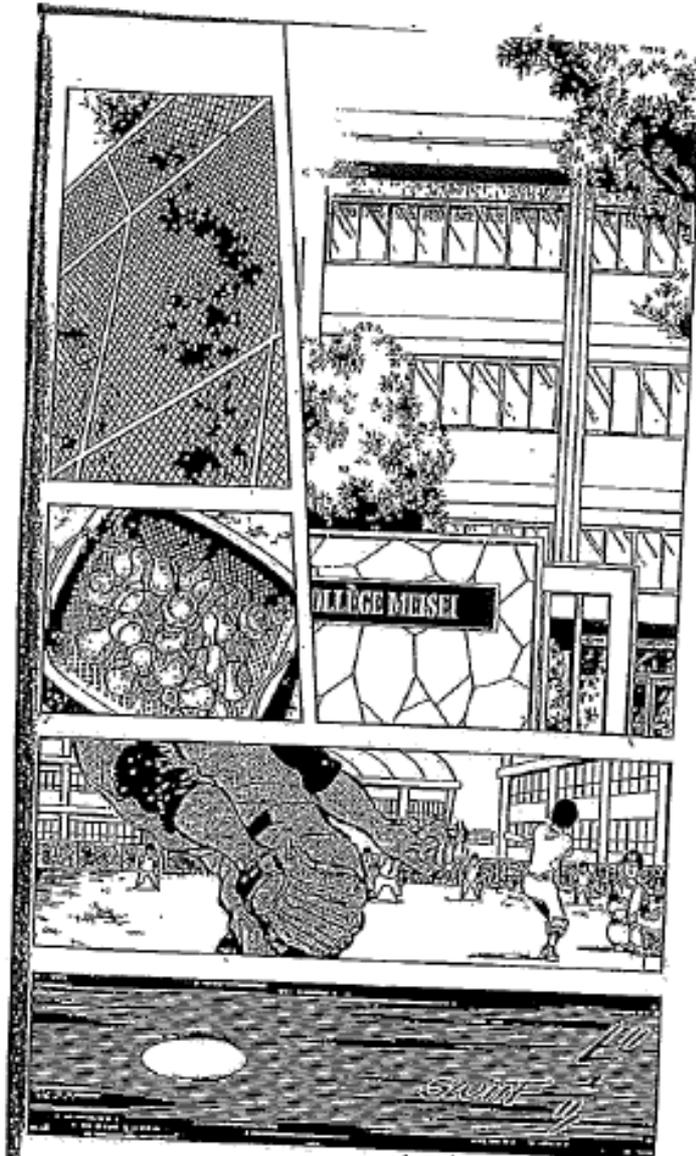


Figure 3.11 : Mitsuru Adachi, *Theo ou la batte de la victoire* (1981; Grenoble : Editions Glénat, 2005) 90.

These five panels serve as an introduction to the place and situation. The first panel is general introducing the set, whereas the third panel already indicates important details of the situation. Furthermore, the baseball balls are not only indicators of the sport but also that the main character is the thrower in the team and the reader is beginning to gain insight. The fourth panel is a close up behind the main character getting ready to throw the ball. Although his face cannot be seen the reader is aware of his importance. The last panel concentrates on the most intrinsic detail – the thrown ball. If we were to look only at the first panel and then at the last one their relationship would not be as clear as with the other three panels in between. The latter serve as transitory pieces of information so that the reader is gradually led into the setting and situation.

The last two panels in this example show details of an *action*: the main character getting ready to throw the ball and the thrown ball. Although the *act of throwing* is not shown in any way, the reader does not seem to be disturbed by the lack of that particular information. The two panels are part of a situation which reads ‘the school baseball team training in the school yard’. The reader is thus able to substitute the action in his/her imagination. This is possible through common knowledge and experience the author relies on. Will Eisner writes in his study *Comics and Sequential Art*: “[...] the recognition by the reader of real-life people portrayed in the art and the addition of “in-between” action are supplied by the reader out of his own experiences. [...] Another challenge to the sequential art medium is the matter of dealing with abstraction. [...] the comic artist selects a single posture out of a chain of motions by a body – or an arrested moment in the animation of objects in movement [...]”⁸²

The extended definition of prosopopoeia that makes *anything* intangible tangible could be applied here. The figure seems to have reached a further level of abstraction: we do not have absent persons evoked through objects or toys, or the representation of phenomena such as feelings, fantasies or systems, but a prosopopoeia that brings forth a concrete action, a tangible physical movement that takes place in between the panels. The reader is able to ‘see’ these in his imagination,

⁸² Will Eisner, *Comics & Sequential Art*, (Tamarac: Poorhouse Press, 1985) 140.

thanks to his/her common knowledge. Prosopopoeia enters here a new plane that is based on the reader's memory and experience of a similar situation. The figure is thus entirely dependent on the reader's reconstruction of the latter.

A further figure that seems to echo in this example is metonymic thought. The reader's script-like knowledge of a similar situation substitutes the lacking action in the special context. Metonymy reaches here the limits of prosopopoeia which does not seem to be able to reveal any further or higher spheres; both figures are of equal quality.

Figure 3.12 shows eight panels and each one a fragment of a situation. The reader is led from one detail to another: a close up of the ball catcher, then the thrower getting ready, a close up of the ball hitter and of one of the spectators, then a full view of a girl, the sun, a further close up of the feet of the hitter, and finally a close up of the entire team watching.

This example reveals a different kind of panel set up. The situation and place were already established beforehand. There is no lacking transitory action in between the panels. They are all part of one and the same whole – the particular *moment*. The reader gains the notion of simultaneity and ubiquity: we are at the same time at different parts of the space and with different characters.

Prosopopoeia here enters a further sphere. It takes place outside the presented 'action' on a plane that encompasses the entire set of panels. The *whole* here is rather abstract: it is the very *moment* of the action that is frozen and extended in time. Furthermore, the 'action' in this set of panels is not physical but is rather the *waiting* for the actual action to start. This is where prosopopoeia comes into play: it brings forth the psychological moment – the rising *tension* of the situation before the action.



Figure 3.12 : Adachi, *Theo ou la batte de la victoire*, 97.

Both comics analysed here work with rather abstract forms of prosopopoeia. The figure makes the intangible, i.e. the lacking action, the psychology of the characters, the tension, tangible, sometimes concretely (Hobbes figure), and sometimes purely abstracted as shown in figure 3.12.

In comics the reader moves on a plane that encompasses imagination and common knowledge. S/he perceives the characters as real life characters and the action as real life action but is at the same time conscious of the fact that the story is a fiction. It is at this moment that prosopopoeia comes into play. It establishes the link between the reader's reality and the 'sub-reality' of the comic. However, the figure relies entirely on the interaction between the medium and the reader, i.e. the reader's recognition of

the ‘fictional’ as the ‘real’. Only when the reader has reconstructed a familiar scene that s/he can identify with the one presented in the comic can prosopopoeia fulfil its function.

The abstraction of prosopopoeia in comics lies in the medium as such: the combination of static images and written text. Furthermore the images consist of some carefully chosen details and are not a 1:1 representation of reality. Scott McCloud writes in *Understanding Comics* “The idea that a picture can evoke an emotional or sensual response in the viewer is vital to the art of comics. [...] The invisible world of senses and emotions can also be portrayed either between or within panels. [...] ‘Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible.’”⁸³

3.1.3 ...Advertising

The British Airways advertisement in the previous chapters revealed a clear form of prosopopoeia – the mother prosopopoeia. The following examples will reveal what other forms of the figure can be found in advertising.

Figure 3.13 shows an advertisement for milk. A woman and a girl are shown with a drawn milk moustache above their lips. The latter could be qualified as a concrete prosopopoeia for milk⁸⁴. The moustache indicates that the two persons are in need of drinking milk. It also shows that they have as a matter of fact already in a way fulfilled their desire. The expression on their faces, however, gives way to their dissatisfaction that the fulfilment of their desire merely took place in their imagination.

This example gives way to two different forms of prosopopoeia. The first one would be the concrete prosopopoeia for milk and the second one, a more abstract prosopopoeia, the *desire* to drink milk. The advertisement gives a solution which is of course the purchase of a particular milk brand.

⁸³ Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, (1993; New York: HarperPerennial, 1994) 121-23.

⁸⁴ Previously in this chapter concrete prosopopoeia was referred only to persons. Although this example works with an object ‘milk’ its reference in the visual image can be seen as concrete prosopopoeia since there is a clear 1:1 relationship between the signifier and the signified. The drawn milk moustache does not evoke any other imagery but the milk.



Figure 3.13: Ladies' Home Journal, December 2002.

Another example of *desire prosopopoeia* would be in figure 3.14. A man is sweeping leaves and apparently the wind has blown the leaves to form the shape of a car. The text reads: "Visions of a 240 horsepower V-8 engine danced in his head...see the possibilities."



Figure 3.14: Black Enterprise, November 2002

The *car prosopopoeia* is achieved through the shape the leaves form. It furthermore gives way to the *desire prosopopoeia*; both are abstract. The viewer is aware that s/he is looking at ‘imagination’. The text also clearly states that “Visions [...] danced in his head”. As a matter of fact the advertising agency does not want the viewer to think that there is a real car, s/he is supposed to be directly exposed to the man’s *desires* in order to identify with them. The fact that a real car cannot be seen makes the urge for its materialisation even stronger. Prosopopoeia here does not make the object of desire visible, but *desire* itself.

The advertised product, the credit institute, has great power. It reaches out to the deepest longings and can make these come true. Furthermore the man in the advertisement is not dreaming of a particular car, a powerful one indeed but not a particular brand. This emphasises the fact that this particular credit institute is able to make any dream come true, whether it be a car or something else. Prosopopoeia here is used to incite imagination – awakening urges for the intangible to materialise.

Figure 3.15 shows a particular form of prosopopoeia. A female figure is holding a small boy; the woman is evoked through a white form. What is striking in this example is the emphasis of the *absence* of the person and not her *presence*. In this sense we can introduce *inverted prosopopoeia*. The text printed in the visual image supports this idea: “AIDS has left millions of children orphaned in Africa...” It becomes clear that the woman, like many others, has died of the disease leaving her child behind.

A further prosopopoeia that is interwoven in the image would be the *HIV prosopopoeia*. The HIV virus itself is not an abstract phenomenon – it is a biological cell that can be detected by a microscope but since the virus has reached nearly uncontrollable proportions affecting all social groups in all countries around the world and since it cannot be cured (so far) it has gained a kind of ‘divine’⁸⁵ status in collective consciousness. In this sense it can be qualified as abstract – it is the intangible, however present, menacing and killing ‘something-out-there’ that exists on a higher plane seemingly out of reach and out of control of any medicine.

A further aspect that should be pointed out is that prosopopoeia is again dynamic. It alternates between the presence and absence of a person. As soon as the one is established the other is deconstructed, i.e. as soon as the viewer is aware of the female form, s/he becomes aware of her absence and vice versa.

⁸⁵ ‘Divine’ here means ‘power’ people cannot attain nor control.



Figure 3.15: Christianity Today, February 2004⁸⁶.

A parallel can be drawn to theatre: a further example of *inverted prosopopoeia* can be found in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Dr Rank, a family friend of Mr and Mrs Helmer, decides to commit suicide. He announces his decision by leaving two visiting cards with a black cross over the name in Helmer's letter box.

⁸⁶ We will analyse the text underneath the advertisement in the next chapter in the context of a unifying theory between ekphrasis and prosopopoeia.

“RANK: At the next fancy-dress party, I shall be invisible.

HELMER: What an odd idea!

RANK: There’s a big black hat – you’ve heard of the Invisible Hat? – you put it on, and then no one can see you.

HELMER: [*hiding a smile*]: Well, perhaps you’re right.

RANK: But I’m quite forgetting what I came for. Give me a cigar, Helmer – one of the black Havanas.

HELMER: With the greatest pleasure [*offering him the case*].

RANK: [*taking one and cutting the end*]: Thanks.

[...]

RANK: And now – good-bye.

HELMER: Good-bye – good-bye, my dear fellow.

[...]

[*With a nod to them both, he goes.*]

[...]

HELMER: I must empty the letter-box, it’s almost full; there won’t be room for tomorrow’s paper. [...] Look – just look what a lot there are! [*Looking through them*] Whatever’s this?

[...]

HELMER: Two visiting-cards – from Rank.

NORA: From Dr Rank?

HELMER [*looking at them*]: ‘S. Rank, M.D.’ They were on top – he must have put them in as he left.

[...]

HELMER: There’s a black cross over the name...look. What a gruesome idea – it’s just as if he were announcing his own death.

[...]

NORA: Yes, when these cards came, it would be to say good-bye to us; he’s going to shut himself up to die.

HELMER: My poor old friend. Of course I knew that he wouldn’t be with me much longer – but so soon...! And to go away and hide, like a wounded animal...

[...]

HELMER [*pacing up and down*]: He'd come to be so much a part of our lives. I can't realize that he's gone. [...]"⁸⁷

The inverted prosopopoeia here takes place in the last quoted sentence. Helmer talks of Dr. Rank as if he were already dead, whereas he just left their house. Rank, indeed, announces his suicide, but it is also clear that it is going to be a slow death in solitude. Helmer, however, pronounces him as already dead since he knows that he will not see his friend anymore. The inverted prosopopoeia here brings forth the already established absence of Rank and his foreseeable ending.

A further figure that comes into play here is prolepsis. It implies that future events are referred to in anticipation. There is, however, a subtle difference between the two figures. Prolepsis is a figure that can exist in a pure textual context (e.g. the dramatic text) whereas prosopopoeia needs a tangible visual reference. In this example, the given dramatic text has gained visual form onstage. Thus Rank's physical presence offstage, and from that moment on, absence in the staged reality, gives way to the newly defined inverted prosopopoeia.

Figure 3.16 shows an advertisement for an Italian women's perfume: Carlo Colucci's Donna. There are four images in total showing the bottle and to the right in the top one a detail of typically Italian buildings by sunset; in the second one a rather sensual woman, presumably the 'Donna', and in the third one Italian countryside, probably Tuscany. The dominating colour is a mixture of a warm red, orange, and yellow. The latter evoke the notion of sunset, warmth, sensuality, a romantic moment and calmness. The essential question is however what scent is the perfume?

The advertiser creates a certain *mood* around the product. The viewer is supposed to gain the *feeling* when wearing this particular perfume she will dive into a romantic Italian world of warmth and sunset in which women become sensual 'Donnas' every man would desire.

⁸⁷ Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House and Other Plays*, (1879; London: Penguin, 1965) 217 – 19.

The *smell prosopopoeia* is abstract in two ways: first because smell is tangible only when certain chemical substances are present – nearly impossible in newspaper (or even television) advertisements⁸⁸; second because it is presented in an abstract way (buildings, countryside, certain colours, etc.). Prosopopoeia here does not seem to be able to fulfil its function entirely. It does not make the ‘smell’ tangible, it merely gives an *idea* of the *feeling* the viewer might have when wearing the perfume.



Figure 3.16: Cosmopolitan 2003.

⁸⁸ Some advertisers chose to add a sample of their product in the magazine so that the reader can indeed get a clear idea of the ‘smell’. However, the analysis here will work only on cases with no concrete samples.

A further perfume advertisement works also with abstraction of the smell. Figure 3.17 shows an advertisement for the Calvin Klein perfume CK One. A young couple is shown in a close up kissing. Furthermore they are kissing the bottle of the perfume at the same time. Although this is a rather absurd idea, it does not shock in any way. The point of the advertisement is quite simple – the perfume being for man and woman brings both sexes together, so that they become one. This, of course, is not achieved through the simple consumption of the perfume. The latter actually seems to drive the consumers to sexual ecstasy, and it is in that kind of mental and physical state that they can become one.

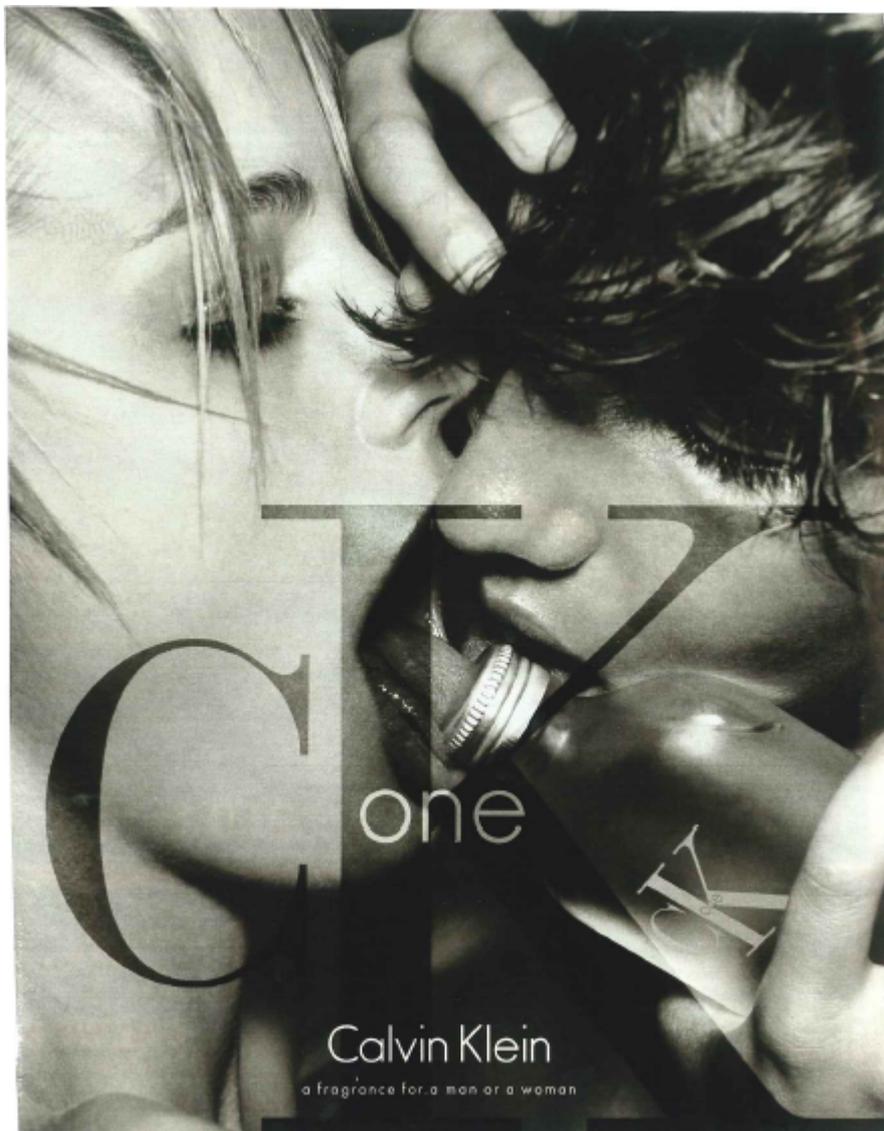


Figure 3.17: Cosmopolitan 2003

The *smell prosopopoeia* here is again evoked through a certain mood and a particular situation. The difference, however, to the advertisement in figure 3.16 is that the situation and atmosphere created here seem to make the smell more tangible. In the previous advertisement not all potential consumers have been to Tuscany and not all are necessarily interested in romantic sunsets. The Calvin Klein advertisement works with more familiar feelings – those of sexual desire – probably known to all potential consumers. Nevertheless, although the feeling evoked here is more familiar to a wider range of consumers, the *smell prosopopoeia* remains intangible.

Advertisements reveal new forms of prosopopoeia. There is concrete prosopopoeia just as well as abstract prosopopoeia. In addition, concrete prosopopoeia works with absent persons as well as objects. Advertisements seem to bring the figure to its limits. It is exploited to the extreme showing that it can be inverted emphasising the absence instead of the presence and that in certain cases it even does not and cannot fulfil its function.

Furthermore, advertisements work with rather abstract phenomena. They use their entire medial means to control and awaken certain strong feelings in the viewer and potential consumer of the product. They confront with *desire* (to drink, eat, want, have something), *sexual ecstasy*, *sensuality*, by creating images that incite imagination and remind of familiar moments.

Advertisements employ prosopopoeia making use of one of the figure's most intrinsic characteristics, to construct and deconstruct its 'object'. It incites the imagination of the viewer skilfully playing a kind of 'hide-and-seek' game making him/her decode the missing 'object' and then realise that it is actually not there. It is in that moment that the feeling of urge to have the so far intangible is awakened. Advertisements are ultimately based on the *desire prosopopoeia* making the viewer believe that the advertised product is able to appease these.

We should draw a parallel to the previous chapter on ekphrasis. One of Wagner's and Wandhoff's theories on ekphrasis is that it takes place on the plane of the *déjà vu*, the *déjà lu* and a memory based decoding. They thus bring forth 'common experience' and 'common knowledge' as the plane on which the understanding of a specific text-

image entity can take place. Both in advertisements and comics certain feelings and situations are evoked the viewer can refer to and identify with. It is at this level that prosopopoeia and ekphrasis intermingle: *smell prosopopoeia*, e.g., is evoked through an ekphrastic entity of visual and textual elements, all three then come together on the plane of 'common experience'.

* * *

Theatre, comics and advertising operate differently with prosopopoeia. In all three media the figure indeed goes beyond its basic definition. In theatre prosopopoeia is based on the given means in the medium and comes forth through the characters and objects on stage as well as through the spoken text. These given elements are sufficient for the existence of the figure. In comics and advertising however, the figure cannot operate without the direct interaction between the viewer/reader and the medium. It is entirely dependent on the 'dialogue' between these two poles since it is based on the recipient's recognition and reconstruction of a familiar situation.

The limits of the extended definition are reached when prosopopoeia operates on the same level as other figures or symbols and indices. In certain examples they are even interchangeable. However, in various other cases prosopopoeia can be used in a unique way. Especially advertising juggles with the figure inverting it and 'playing' with its intrinsic characteristic of the constant alternation between the *absent* and the *present*.

Prosopopoeia is furthermore abstracted on two levels. The first one would be in its presentation - it not only reveals itself through an absent person but also through present persons, objects and certain visual entities as in comics and advertising. The second level of abstraction is what the figure evokes. It consequently moves from the mere presentation of an absent person to spheres of abstract phenomena that are often anchored in individual and collective sub consciousness. Thus the richness of the figure lies in its ability to reach these and make them apparent.

A further critical aspect of prosopopoeia is its dynamic character. As soon as we are aware of the presence of a person or a phenomenon we immediately become aware

of their absence. Prosopopoeia is in continuous movement between these two poles and thus constructs and deconstructs itself incessantly.

The analysed text-image entities give prosopopoeia a new form of encoding. The figure is for the most part interwoven into the visual image and gives the absent shape and form. It is however entirely dependent on the imagination of the viewer and his/her decoding of the intended message.

Ekphrasis and prosopopoeia are both intrinsic elements of text-image entities. The upcoming chapter will suggest a unifying theory focusing on the crossroad between the two phenomena and show in what way they complement and interact with one another in the new media and theatre.

Chapter IV

Ekphrasis in Prosopopoeia and Prosopopoeia in Ekphrasis

The previous two chapters portray ekphrasis and prosopopoeia. In the course of the study their definitions were extended: ekphrasis is not mere textual representation of visual representation but actually establishes the special link, the knot between the textual and the visual in a work of art, whether between a title and a painting or between the text in a comic and the panels, etc. It thus brings forth a sphere in which the two elements interact with one another. Prosopopoeia, on its part, makes the invisible visible. It not only evokes the presence of a certain character, or person but is able to reach a higher plane of feelings, desires and sub consciousness. Both phenomena are thus able to evoke notions that go beyond the mere action or situation presented. What happens then when the two meet in the same work of art?

The following examples encompass both ekphrasis and prosopopoeia. We will analyse how they interact with one another, on what plane they meet and if they are complementary or if one of them is dominant. The focus will be on recent advertising and a parallel will be drawn to theatre.

* * *

Figure 4.1 is an advertisement, i.e. campaign against smoking. The image shows a basket ball field, a bench with a basket ball and two inscriptions: “When YOU are here / & your KID is here”; and underneath the image: “Talk to your kids about not smoking. They’ll listen. [...]” The presence of an adult with his/her child is evoked here only through textual elements. Would this be a form of prosopopoeia or ekphrasis or both?

The two textual elements could first be qualified as a form of *abstract prosopopoeia*. Although the two individuals cannot be seen in the advertisement, the evocation of their presence is very strong. The “you” and the “kid” are as a matter of fact more efficient than would have been the actual presence of two people. These genderless designations indeed have clear references and are at the same time completely

dissociated from race, gender, religion, etc. Thus the impact on a great number of potential viewers is great – any adult who has a child can identify with the advertisement.

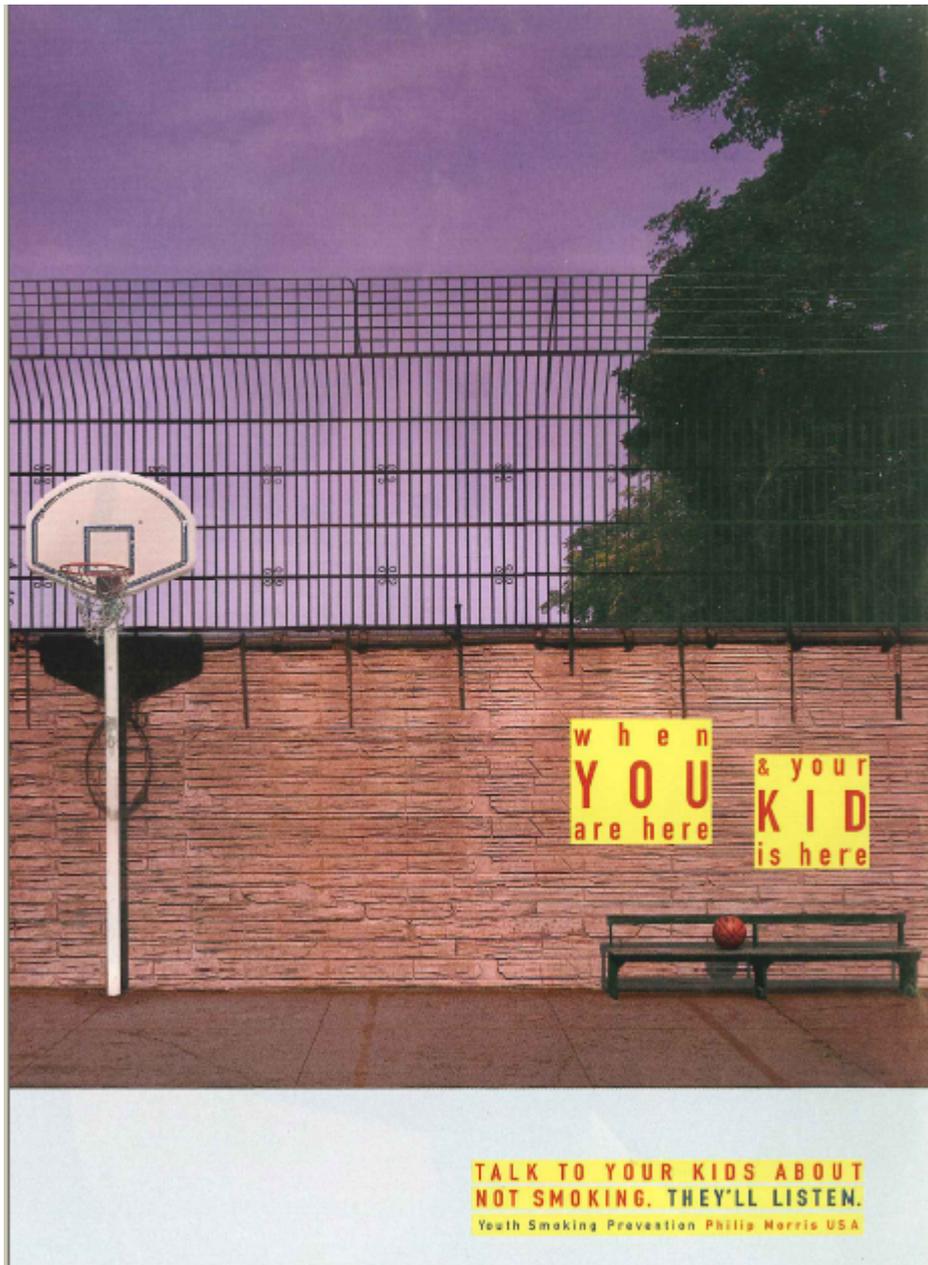


Figure 4.1: Essence, December 2002.

The “you” and the “kid” can also be seen as ekphrastic since they are purely textual elements embedded in a special visual context. There is even a 1:1 relationship between the textual presentation, the signifier (the words “you” and “kid”) and the ‘visual’ presentation, the signified (the actual individuals).

Ekphrasis furthermore creates the setting with the textual and the visual elements. It establishes the context in which the “you” and the “kid” and the basketball field can interact. The context is that of a ‘pal-like’ relationship a parent can, or rather should, have with his/her child when talking about such important issues.

However, when it comes to the actual *visualisation* of the signified ekphrasis is insufficient. It is with prosopopoeia that we are finally able to *see* the absent individuals. Each viewer of the advertisement is able to imagine concrete individuals and refer them to the “you” and the “kid” although s/he might not be the intended person. Prosopopoeia here takes place on the plane of common experience and common knowledge. It brings the absent, i.e. two textually presented individuals to life in the imagination of the viewer giving the words thus a clear reference.

In this example prosopopoeia and ekphrasis are interwoven and take place simultaneously. They are strongly interconnected and dependent on one another. The effect that they achieve is made possible in the dynamic movement between them: as soon as we read the text and become aware of the visual context (ekphrasis) the two individuals can be identified (prosopopoeia) and the message is complete.

A further level of abstract prosopopoeia in this example can be qualified as *education prosopopoeia*. It might seem far fetched on first sight but a closer look at the structure of the advertisement reveals a first level based on ekphrasis, the textual elements in the visual setting, and a second level with the prosopopoeic characteristics of the elements. It is then through the special context, a campaign against smoking, that the third level is established – the *right* education of the child.

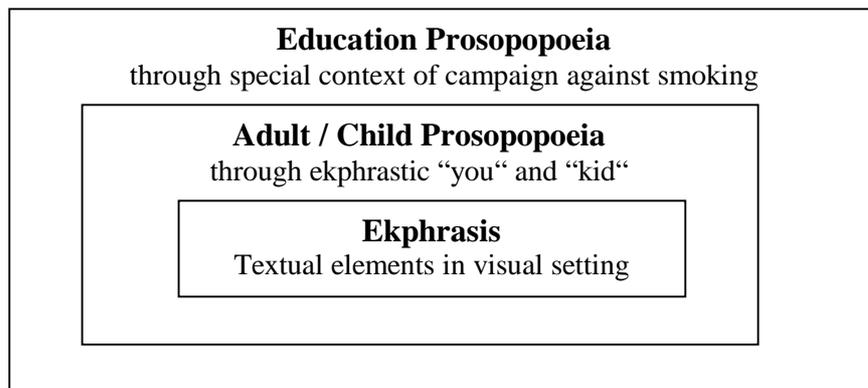


Figure 4.2

A further example of the dynamics between ekphrasis and prosopopoeia can be seen in the following advertisement for Nikon. Four black panels are shown with a single phrase. Each one evokes a clear image.

The first one reads “A three-year-old boy saluting at his father’s funeral” and evokes the image of John Kennedy saluting at his father’s, President Kennedy’s funeral.



Figure 4.3⁸⁹

The second one reads “A woman crying over the body of a student shot by the National Guard” and evokes the picture taken after the shooting that took place at

⁸⁹ Photograph by BBC 1963

Kent University in 1970 while students were protesting the American invasion of Cambodia.



Figure 4.4⁹⁰

The third one reads “An American President lifting his pet beagle by its ears” and evokes the image of President Johnson lifting “Him”, his pet beagle, by the ears.



Figure 4.5⁹¹

The fourth one reads “A lone student standing in front of four tanks” and evokes the image of students’ protests that took place in Peking in 1989.

⁹⁰ Photograph taken by John Filo in 1970.

⁹¹ Photograph taken by Yoichi R. Okamoto



Figure 4.6⁹²

In this example ekphrasis gives way to textual elements in the visual setting and prosopopoeia completes the ‘gap’ of the missing image. The difference to the previous non-smoking advertisement is that *entire images* with a *complete situation* are evoked and not merely absent persons.

Prosopopoeia, once more abstract, takes place on the plane of common knowledge. The situations evoked here are records of important historical events that have moved entire nations and which the viewer is able to reconstruct in his memory.

A further level of prosopopoeia would be the *emotion prosopopoeia*. The advertisement indeed plays with an individual’s strong feelings arising at the time of the various situations. The advertised camera gains thus incredible power – it is of historical value, has a direct impact on collective and individual memory and is even able to control the innermost feelings each individual links with the special event.

The ekphrastic setting and the prosopopoeic character of each one of the panels give way to an extremely influential advertisement. The dynamics between ekphrasis and prosopopoeia lies in the constant movement between the ‘big’ and the ‘small’: moments in the life of every man are compared to important historical (and often political) situations. The advertisement can indeed be considered as exaggerated since the camera sold is not intended for professional photographers but for the

⁹² Photograph by BBC 1989

average user. However, the advertisement fulfils its intrinsic function – it delights and subconsciously pleases the potential buyer making him feel just as important as the evoked historical events.

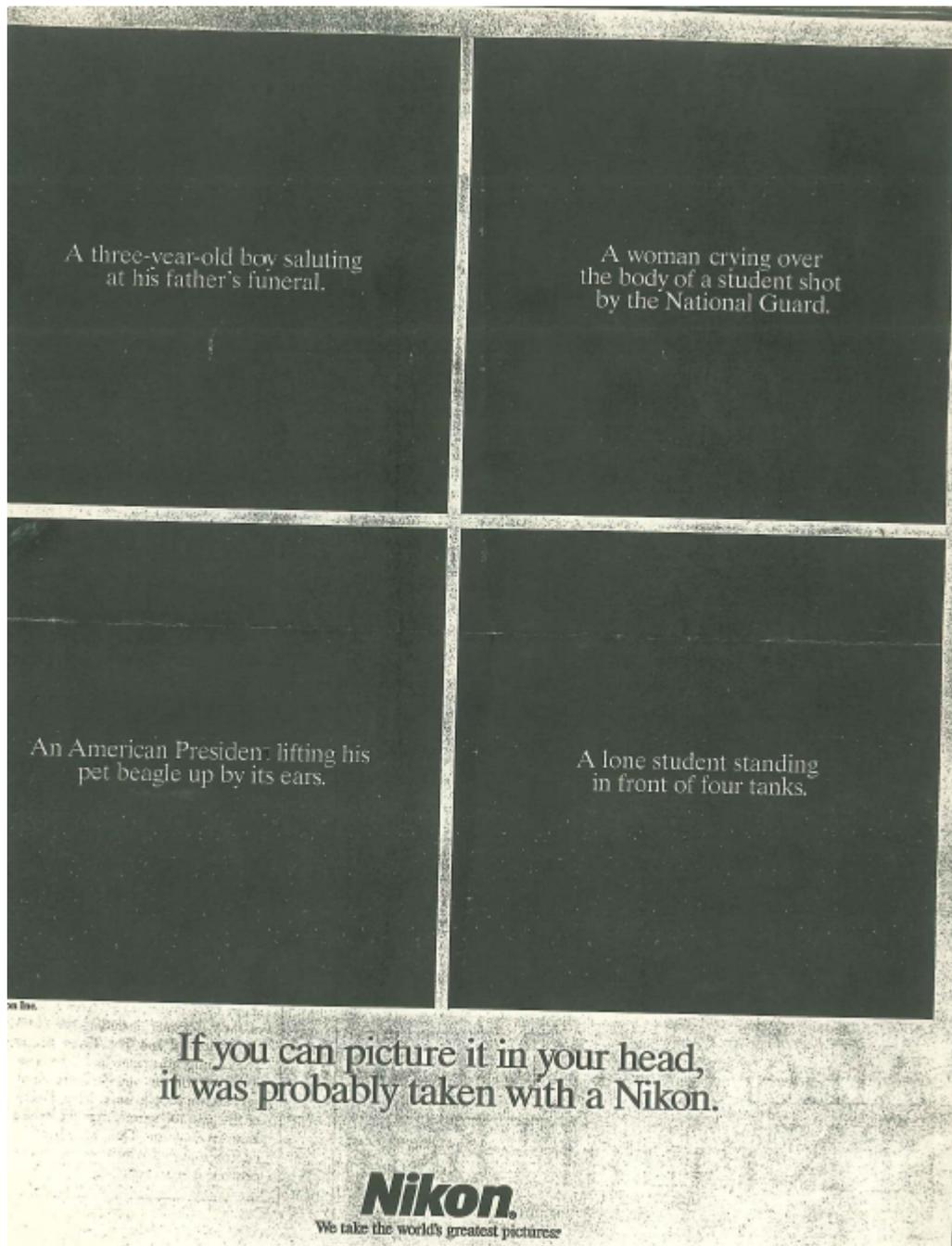


Figure 4.7: The New York Times Magazine, June 1999.

Figure 4.8 is an advertisement for the airline Lufthansa. The image shows the sky (at sunset) and a text that reads: “The fleet is one of the youngest in the sky. The mechanics train longer than some doctors. It’s nice to see an airline take such good care of itself. / Lufthansa / It’s even nicer to see them take such good care of you.”

In this advertisement prosopopoeia as well as ekphrasis take place on a different level than the ones in the former two examples. In figures 4.1 and 4.7 the text and the missing image have clear references. In this case the reference is abstract – the viewer is supposed to visualise the *security* and *comfort* the airline offers to its passengers.

The advertising agency chose not to show an aeroplane in all its technical complexity, or mechanics working, or a beautiful young stewardess serving a business class traveller. The image works ‘merely’ with the text. Furthermore, the visual perspective goes up to the sky: the viewer gains the feeling that s/he is at the ground looking up, searching for the airline.

There is quite a big gap between the first part of the text and the second that starts with ‘Lufthansa’. The gap and obvious downwards movement of the view indicate that the viewer seems to be searching for ‘something’. After the gap there is one single word – Lufthansa – apparently the answer to all questions. The latter is followed by the second part of the text that ends with ‘you’. Thus after an entire page of alienation and intangible ideas the viewer is given two clear references – ‘Lufthansa’ and ‘you’ - the only concrete elements we can hold on to.

The idea of an airline taking care of a passenger becomes clear that it is not just any airline but Lufthansa and that the passenger is not anyone but *the* viewer of the advertisement. Furthermore, the fact that there is a downwards movement of the view indicates that the intangible, nearly heavenly airline becomes tangible and concrete. In addition, in the second part of the text the advertiser evokes the presence of ‘them’. We understand that *they* are on the one hand the mechanics and on the other the entire crew on the airline.

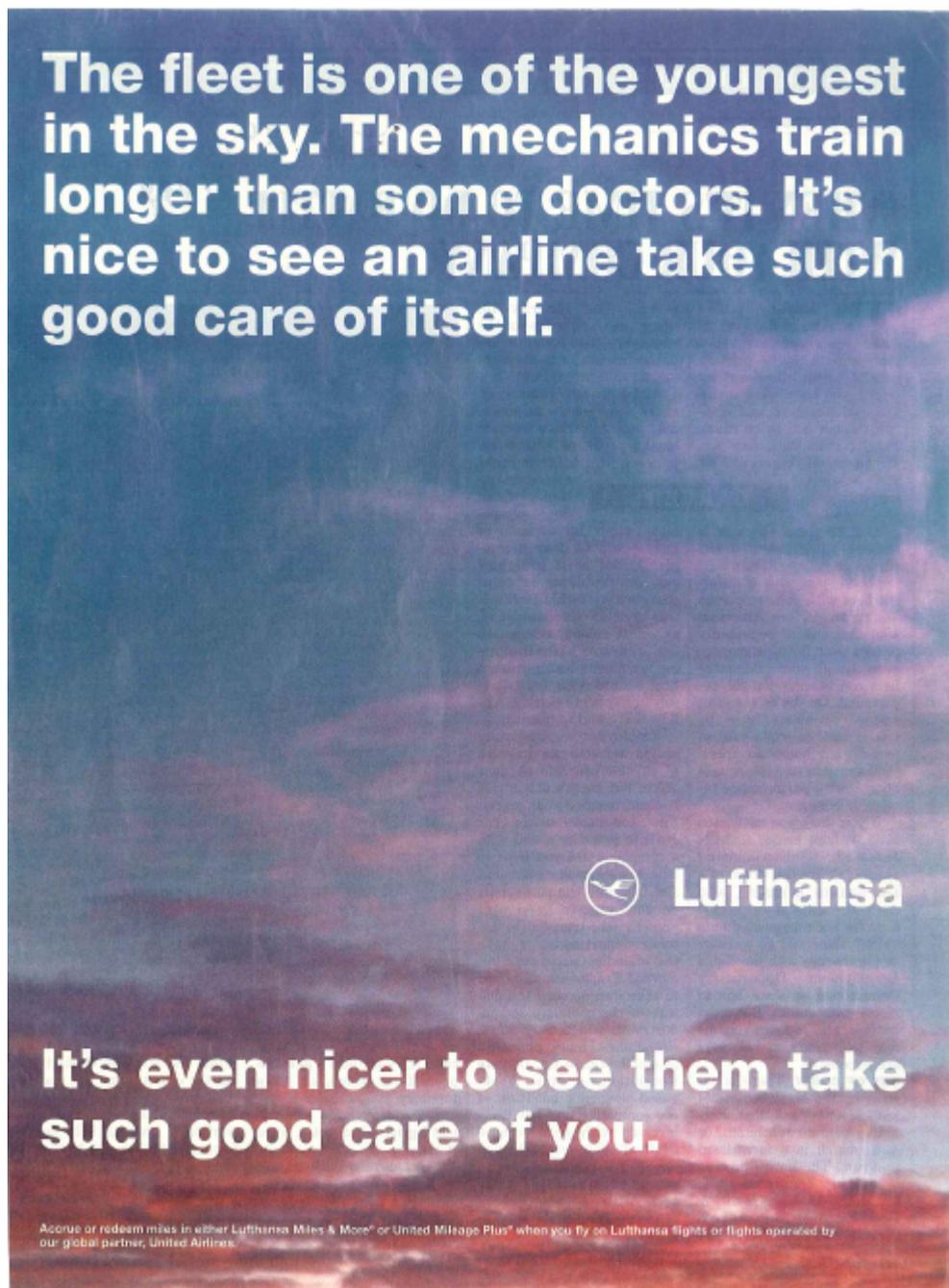


Figure 4.8: Business Week, February 1997.

In this example ekphrasis and prosopopoeia are entirely dependent on the imagination of the viewer and the direct and instant communication between the latter and the advertisement. A further level of abstraction is that no clear situation is presented that can be reconstructed in imagination. When the only concrete references are finally given the impact is great: all the abstract notions and ideas

accumulated throughout the advertisement become clear in only two words. In addition, one of them is a direct address to the viewer.

Ekphrasis here as the textual presentation of visual presentation, is entirely abstract; it stands for notions and ideas. Prosopopoeia then is slightly more concrete through 'Lufthansa' and 'you'. The two phenomena are again interwoven in a subtle way. Ekphrasis takes place in the first part of the text, in the *slot* between the text and the ideas of security and technical perfection it evokes. Prosopopoeia then makes these more concrete through the clear references. This example reveals the complexity of the two phenomena. Both are rather abstract and seem to be difficult to grasp at first. However, they finally do fulfil their function through their dynamic interaction and simultaneity.

In figure 3.15 of the previous chapter we presented an example of inverted prosopopoeia. The emphasis was rather on the *absence* than on the presence of the deceased mother. The sentence embedded in the visual image indicated that the advertisement was a campaign against AIDS. The special context gave way to the abstract *HIV prosopopoeia*.

The analysis had, however, left out the text underneath the image. A closer look shows that the campaign is an advertisement for a theological school. The text reads: "The twenty-first century presents huge challenges, like the AIDS pandemic, [...] extreme poverty [...]. At Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies, our focus is on equipping mature men and women [...] to become people who can integrate the truth of Scripture [...]. If you feel God's call to serve, come and join us [...]." There is furthermore a quotation of the school's dean: "Our purpose is clear – Fuller's School of Intercultural Studies will continue to be on the cutting edge of preparing people for the global mission of Christ."

By leaving out the text a full interpretation of the advertisement could not be established: the visual image with the embedded sentence 'merely' emphasised the campaign against AIDS. However, the text printed underneath the visual image reveals that the actual focus is on the theological school. There students are supposed

to be trained to go on special missions around the world and ‘help’ people in need by spreading the Holy Scripture.

The special context established here goes hand in hand with the *HIV prosopopoeia*: the disease that has spread throughout the world and cannot be cured so far has gained a kind of intangible and ‘divine’ power in collective consciousness. The advertisement uses this idea in order to establish its basic message which is ‘preaching the Bible’ and ‘spreading Christianity’. The viewer is thus supposed to draw the conclusion that phenomena such as epidemics, poverty etc can only be approached and ‘healed’⁹³ through religion and faith.

This example recalls Mieke Bal’s and Wagner’s statement that images need text in order to direct interpretation and that text needs images in order to give an idea a concrete reference. Prosopopoeia and ekphrasis are again interwoven in a highly complex structure. The image is obviously prosopopoeic playing with the absence and presence of the mother and the text rather straightforward advertising the theological school. Ekphrasis between the two is established already through the first sentence that evokes poverty, illness and orphaned children. The image is in a way an almost 1:1 representation of “The twenty-first century presents huge challenges, like the AIDS pandemic, the massive migration to urban areas, extreme poverty, and exploding populations of children at risk worldwide.” The image seems to sum up all of these statements visually.

However as the text continues the viewer understands that the image is not supposed to be a 1:1 visual representation of the contents. We move onto another plane where the “truth of Scripture” and the theological school come into play and thus enter a new *context* in which ekphrasis takes place.

As a matter of fact, another level of ekphrasis has already been created beforehand: the advertisement being published in a magazine called *Christianity Today* is already embedded in a special ‘overall’ context. The viewer thus ‘reads’ the advertisement from the start with this background knowledge.

⁹³ ‘Healed’ here means that the concerned individuals can supposedly hope for salvation through religion.

The specific context of the magazine here creates the plane where ‘epidemics’, ‘death’, ‘divinity’ and ‘humanity’ can be juxtaposed. The school is then the one that is able to restore the right balance between these poles by offering religious education. Furthermore the visually presented inverted prosopopoeia of death supports the intrinsic idea of the given context ‘salvation through Christianity’.

The dynamics of ekphrasis and prosopopoeia in this advertisement is once more highly complex. The two phenomena constantly oscillate between the intangible and tangible, divinity and humanity, life and death all of which are supposed to take up concrete forms through religion and the advertised institution.

A parallel *knot* between ekphrasis and prosopopoeia could be found in theatre. In *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller the ‘gas stove pipe’ had gained a special meaning in the context of the play: it became a menacing object Willy Loman could use for his suicide. It was thus qualified as symbolic and furthermore as prosopopoeic since it evoked the tangible presence of *death*.

The prosopopoeic and symbolic characteristics give way to a new plane. The first level of ekphrasis would be the 1:1 relationship between the signifier ‘gas stove pipe’ and the signified, the concrete object onstage. With the ‘new’ meaning ekphrasis enters the plane of the *extended semantic field*. It is thus dynamic in the very sphere of symbolism and prosopopoeia.

In Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House* Helmer speaks of his friend Dr. Rank as if he were already dead. But the spectator knows that Dr Rank although offstage is still alive. This paradox gave way to inverted prosopopoeia. Ekphrasis in this rather special combination of textual presentation (Helmer’s discourse) and visual presentation (offstage present character) takes place in the core of the established inverted prosopopoeia.

In *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller one of the most important elements in the play is Larry’s letter as an abstract prosopopoeia for the absent son. However, as a textual element in a visual setting the letter can also be qualified as ekphrastic. Prosopopoeia and ekphrasis intermingle here and take place simultaneously. They meet on the

plane of Larry's *voice* we seem to hear when the letter is read out loud. The *voice* is prosopopoeic in that it brings forth Larry's presence and ekphrastic in that it links the written text (the letter) with the visually presented play onstage. Furthermore, Larry's sudden tangible 'presence' evokes higher spheres and especially the tightening knot between the *lie* and the *truth*. It is the trigger for the inevitable: Larry's and Joe's suicides. Here, both ekphrasis and prosopopoeia contribute equally to the structural function of this central element.

In theatre, in general, ekphrasis takes place on a rather special plane: the medium works with visual presentation, the staged play, of textual presentation, the dramatic text. The very intersection would be the *spoken word* – the plane where ekphrasis is in dynamic movement linking the two poles.

* * *

The last two chapters of the study reveal that prosopopoeia is a particularly *visual* figure of speech. It is able to evoke concrete *images* of the missing information, whether of a person, a situation an idea, a notion or even certain feelings.

Ekphrasis works on a slightly different level since it relies more on the textual component. The latter is however embedded in or at least related to a visual context. Once this entity is established it gives way to the plane on which ekphrasis can then take place.

Advertisements have proved to be a rather powerful medium when it comes to conveying the respective message. They in general work with 'not-showing' in order to merely tickle the imagination and desire and sub-consciously draw the potential customer to the respective product. It is in this 'there-but-not-there' setting that ekphrasis and prosopopoeia are in constant dynamic movement, making the *desired* apparent and hiding it simultaneously. Although advertisements often make use of absurdities, exaggeration and abstraction the viewer is always able to refer to and even identify with them.

The combination of ekphrasis and prosopopoeia in theatre leads to important structural functions of the respective play. Their effect on the characters and on the situation is simultaneous and immediate. Furthermore, in the special context of the play both phenomena are able to bring forth *new meaning* of certain objects and attain higher spheres.

Both prosopopoeia and ekphrasis interact with visual and textual components. They are often tightly interwoven and dynamic on a plane that goes beyond the mere visual and verbal presentation. The combination of the two gives way to powerful and influential entities that incite the imagination of the viewer and reader.

Conclusion

The study portrays the crossing and intermingling of literary phenomena that have found new forms in extra-literary entities. The analysed features reveal interconnectedness of various fields ranging from literature, linguistics to visual media.

Highly complex structures set of a simultaneous visual and textual encoding of *literary* features can apparently be understood with ease by a wide public. As a matter of fact, what theory qualifies as *literary* here initially has its source in daily communication between individuals. The rise of literary texts has not 'invented' the analysed features but has given them a more sophisticated form. Their *form* then gained a new level of encoding in art, and in the past century a further quality in the new visual media.

The discussion thus gives way to the *intermedial* nature of communication. Literary theory and new media indeed seem to come closer in the treatment of text and image as an inseparable whole whether in the analysis of 'imageness' of texts or in the analysis of 'textuality' of images.

The discussion reveals the existing intersection between the various means of communication which meet on the plane of shared features. Future literary and linguistic analysis should work on the apparent *knot* between the given elements and recognise the text-image plane as a congruent entity.

Appendix



Robert Indiana (1968): The Big Eight



Jasper Johns (1954-55): The Flag



Roy Lichtenstein (1964): Yellow and Green Brushstrokes



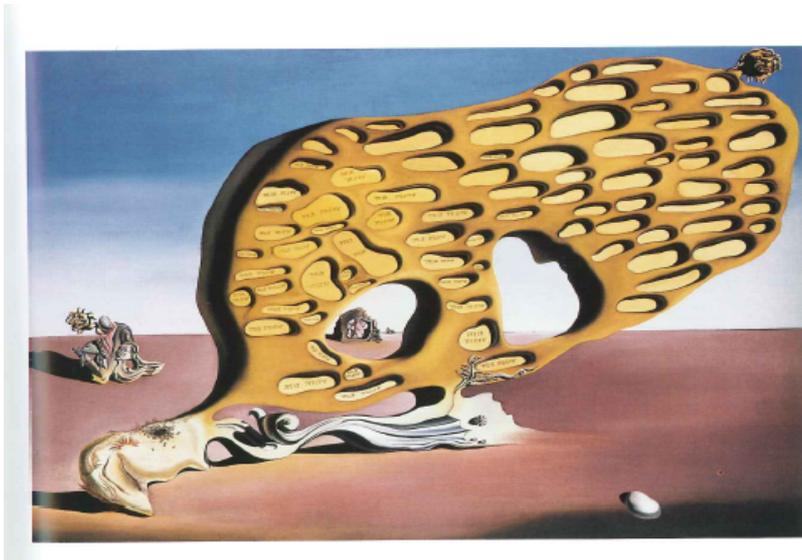
Tom Wesselmann (1962): Still Life No. 20



Andy Warhol 1962): 80 Two Dollar Bills (Front and Rear)



Andy Warhol (1968): Campbell's Soup Can I



Salvador Dalí (1929): L'énigme du désir – ma mere ma mère ma mère



Joan Miró (1925): Etoiles en des sexes d'escargot



Paul Delvaux (1940) : L'aube sur la ville

„Bild und Text in der Werbung - Eine intermediale Studie von
Stilfiguren und Ekphrasis“

Promotionsarbeit von Bojana Momirovic

- *Deutsche Zusammenfassung* -

Originaltitel

*“Image and Text in Advertising – An Intermedial Study of Figures of Speech and
Ekphrasis”*

Literaturwissenschaften und neue Medien scheinen sich näher zu kommen. Der visuelle Charakter literarischer Texte und das ‚Verbalisieren‘ visueller Einheiten weisen Kreuzpunkte zwischen den wesentlichen Elementen, Text und Bild, auf.

Diese hervorkommende Text-Bild Ebene kann mannigfaltig untersucht werden und hat schon intermediale Studien ins Leben gerufen, die vom Vergleich literarischer Texte mit der Malerei bis hin zu sprachwissenschaftlichen Analysen von Neologismen und Wortspielen in der Werbung, reichen. In dieser Studie wird sie unter dem Aspekt der Stilfiguren und Ekphrasis, in Medien, wie z.B. Theater, Kunst, Werbung, die sich auf beide Elemente beziehen, analysiert.

* * *

Stilfiguren sind vor allem sprachliche Einheiten in literarischen Werken und können Begriffe, die keine semantische Gleichheiten teilen, zusammenbringen. In neuen Medien, wie z.B. in der Werbung, nehmen sie neue, zumeist visuelle Formen an, und werden in das Bild inkodiert. Der Betrachter kann sie dann in seiner Vorstellung als Metapher, Metonymie, Ironie, usw. wieder ‚übersetzen‘.

Der eigentliche ‚Moment‘ der Text-Bild Kreuzung kann mit dem Phänomen der Ekphrasis belegt werden. Die Definition - sprachliche Darstellung einer bildlichen Darstellung – müsste jedoch neu aufgestellt werden. Sie ist in dieser Form zu breit, um einer genauen Analyse des *Knotens* zwischen Text und Bild, wie, z.B. auf der Text-Bild Ebene in der Werbung, dienen zu können.

Die visuelle Darstellung von Stilfiguren haben schon Charles Forceville in *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*⁹⁴ oder auch Raymond Gibbs in *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*⁹⁵ untersucht. Der Schwerpunkt der Studien liegt vor allem auf der visuellen Einkodierung von Metaphern in der Werbung, sowie der Benutzung von Stilfiguren in Gesten und täglicher Kommunikation zwischen Individuen.

⁹⁴ Charles Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁹⁵ Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language and Understanding*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Forceville unterscheidet, unter anderem, zwischen MP1 „metaphor with one pictorially present term“, in denen zwei Konzepte verbunden werden, wovon aber nur eines visuell dargestellt, und das andere dadurch impliziert, wird; MP2 „metaphor with two pictorially present terms“, in denen die beiden Konzepte bildlich in einander integriert sind; und „pictorial similes“, in denen die Konzepte zwei getrennte Einheiten sind.⁹⁶

Abbildung 1 wäre ein Beispiel einer MP1, in der die Krawatte durch den Schuh ersetzt wird. Die Charakteristiken bzw. die Konnotationen einer Krawatte werden so auf den Schuh übertragen, so dass dieser mit Eleganz und einem gewissen Styl assoziiert wird.



Abb. 1: Forceville, 1996: 110.

Abbildung 2 könnte als ‚pictorial simile‘ klassifiziert werden. Hier werden zwei getrennte Konzepte, ‚Andre Agassi‘ und das Parfum ‚Aramis‘, miteinander verbunden. Die Werbung bezieht sich auf recht starke visuelle Zeichen und eher wenig Text. Sie besteht aus zwei Teilen mit Andre Agassi in dem oberen Bild mit dem Text „NEW.FOR MEN/ARAMIS/LIFE“; und dem Produkt, dem Parfum Aramis, in dem unteren Bild mit dem Text „LIFE. IT’S A GREAT GAME/ ANDRE AGASSI/ARAMIS LIFE/ ARAMIS“.

⁹⁶ Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*, 109-39.

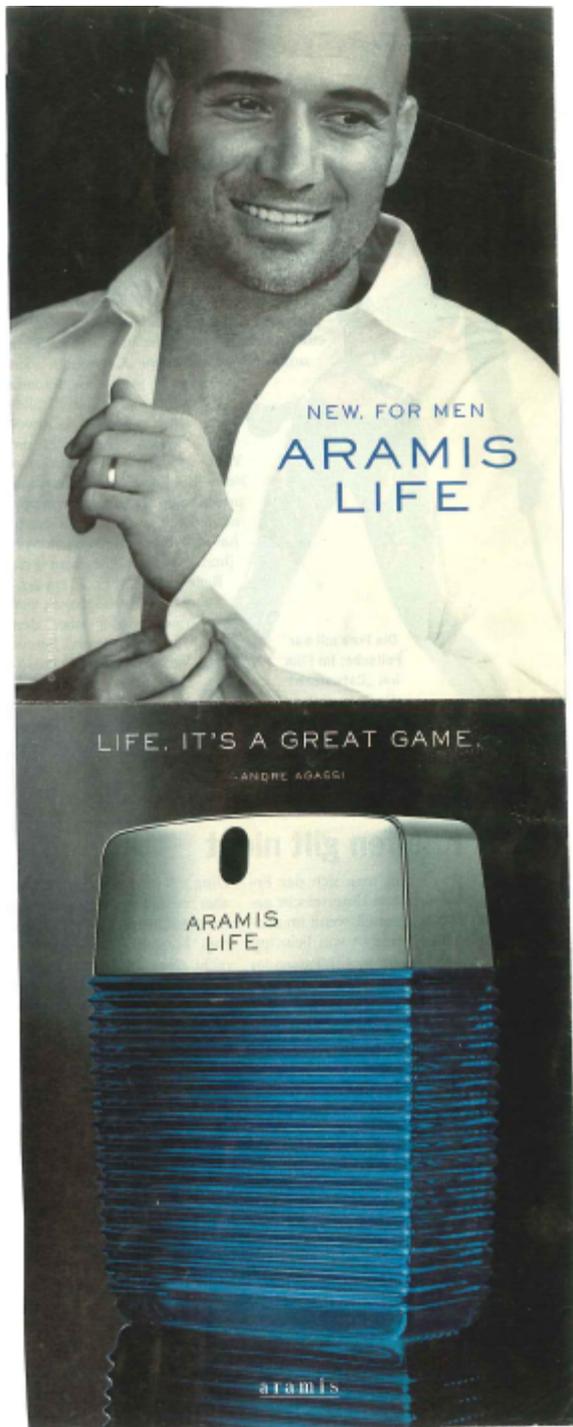


Abb. 2: Stern, Dezember 2003.

Andre Agassis Geste, das Zuköpfen des Hemdes, wird vom Betrachter der Werbung *metonymisch* verstanden – Gibbs nennt dies ‚metonymic gesture‘⁹⁷. Metonymie bringt zwei Elemente, deren semantische Felder keine Überschneidungen haben, in

⁹⁷ Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind – Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 331-32.

einem bestimmten Kontext zusammen. Agassis Geste ‚Zuknöpfen des Hemdes‘ und ‚Parfum‘ haben im strengen sprachwissenschaftlichen Sinne nichts gemeinsam. In der Werbung, jedoch, wird deutlich, dass sich Agassi für eine nächtliche Festlichkeit vorbereitet, da die Geste und das Produkt nicht als zwei isolierte Einheiten, sondern als ein Ganzes in dem gegebenen Kontext betrachtet werden.

Ein weiteres visuelles Zeichen ist der Ehering. Dieser ruft einige für die Interpretation wesentliche Konnotationen hervor. ‚Ehering‘ hat in diesem Beispiel nicht nur die denotative Bedeutung ‚Ehe‘, sondern bringt weitere Vorstellungen, wie Glück, Kinder, Sicherheit, Geborgenheit, usw. mit sich. Darüber hinaus ist Andre Agassi als weltberühmter Tennisspieler auch selbst zum Symbol geworden und deutet auf weitere Konnotationen, wie Erfolg, Ruhm, Reichtum hin.

Die Metapher in dem Satz ‚LIFE. IT’S A GREAT GAME‘ wird in diesem Zusammenhang klar. Eine Metapher bringt zwei Elemente, die semantisch getrennt sind, jedoch einen Vergleichspunkt (Tertium Comparationis) aufweisen, zusammen. ‚Leben‘ wird oft mit einer gewissen ‚Bewegung‘ und einem ständigem ‚Kampf‘ in Verbindung gesetzt – Aspekte, die auch mit ‚Spiel‘ assoziiert werden.

Die Werbung gibt den beiden Begriffen ‚Leben‘ und ‚Spiel‘ eine Richtung: es wird deutlich, dass nicht ‚irgendein‘ Leben gemeint ist, sondern das von Andre Agassi und anderen vergleichbaren Stars; und, dass das ‚Spiel‘ einen klaren Bezug zu Agassis erfolgreichem Tennisspiel hat. So wird das ‚Gewinnen‘ stark betont, und zwar sowohl im öffentlichen als auch im privaten Leben.

An dieser Stelle führt sich der Begriff der Ekphrasis ein. Das Phänomen ist in Einheiten, die sowohl auf einer textuellen als auch einer visuellen Komponente beruhen, aktiv. In diesem Beispiel wird der *Knoten* zwischen den beiden Polen auf der Ebene, auf der die Metapher und die bildliche Darstellung auf einander treffen, geschaffen, d.h. wo das abstrakte Substantiv ‚Life‘ eine klare Bedeutung durch ‚Andre Agassi‘ bekommt; und wo ‚Game‘ fast zum Synonym von ‚Gewinnen‘ wird.

Eine weitere Ebene, auf der Ekphrasis aktiv wirkt, ist die Ebene der Konnotationen, die das Bild evoziert. Wie schon oben erwähnt, kann der Betrachter ‚Andre Agassi‘

und ‚Ehering‘ als ‚Reichtum‘, ‚Familienglück‘, ‚Erfolg‘ usw. in seiner Vorstellung ‚übersetzten‘. Diese Aspekte erinnern auch an Peter Wagners Theorie des *déjà vu* und *déjà lu*⁹⁸. In seiner Studie deutet Wagner darauf hin, dass Ekphrasis vor allem ein intermediales Phänomen ist. Der Betrachter kann also die Werbung ‚richtig‘ interpretieren, da ihm schon andere Berichte, Fernsehshows, Zeitungsartikel usw. über Agassi bekannt sind. So wäre Ekphrasis auf der Ebene des *Wissens*, des schon Gesehenen und Gelesenen, des Betrachters tätig, indem es die verschiedenen Kommunikationsmedien zusammenbringt.

Der intermediale Aspekt der Ekphrasis kann auch im folgenden Beispiel von Monets *Impression, soleil levant* und Wildes Gedicht *Impression du Matin* gefunden werden.

Impression du Matin

The Thames nocturne of blue and gold
Changed to a harmony in gray; [*sic*]
A barge with ochre-coloured hay
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down
The bridges, till the houses' walls
Seemed changed to shadows, and St. Paul's
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang
Of waking life; the streets were stirred
With country wagons; and a bird
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman alone,
The daylight kissing her wan hair,
Loitered beneath the gas lamp's flare,

⁹⁸ Peter Wagner, *Icons-Texts-Iconotexts, Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996) 14.

With lips of flame and heart of stone.



Abb. 3: Monet, *Impression, soleil levant*, 1872-73

Die beiden Werke weisen zuerst Ähnlichkeiten auf. Die Farben, die Monet benutzt werden im Gedicht aufgegriffen und die Atmosphäre des Bildes wird durch „harmony in gray” [sic], „yellow fog”, „chill”, „cold”, „shadows”, ‚beschrieben’. Dies wäre eine erste Ebene der Ekphrasis, die zwischen den beiden Werken existiert.

Ein weiteres Niveau wird, wenn die Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Werken aufkommen, erreicht, und der Leser, z.B. die „lips of flame“ der Frau, die in Wildes Gedicht vorkommen, ‚vergebens’ in dem Bild sucht. Die Interpretation kann jedoch weitergeführt und die Lippen bzw. die Frau mit der Sonne bei Monet in Verbindung gebracht werden.

Diese zwei Elemente teilen ein Tertium Comparationis: der Leser kann annehmen, dass die „lips of flame“ der Frau wahrscheinlich rot sind und das einzige rote Element in Monets Bild ist die Sonne. Beide scheinen die Harmonie der Farben und Stimmung zu stören und deuten so auf ein weiteres Tertium Comparationis ‚störende Elemente’ hin.

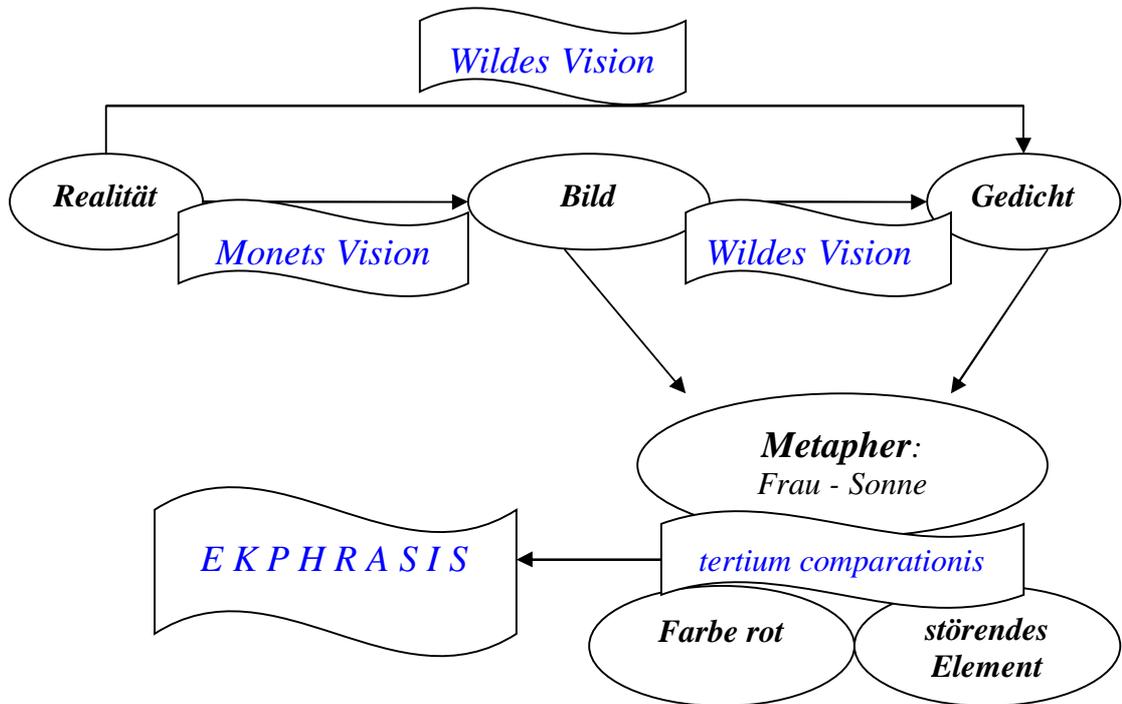


Abb. 4

Abbildung 4 zeigt, dass Ekphrasis außerhalb der beiden Werke tätig ist, und zwar auf der Ebene des Tertium Comparationis, die die beiden Elemente ‚Frau‘ und ‚Sonne‘, und so auch die beiden Werke, zusammenbringen. Das Phänomen zeigt sich in der Tat als intermedial, indem es eine greifbare Verbindung zwischen den beiden Medien herstellt. Darüber hinaus wird eine Doppelverschiebung der Realität deutlich: diese wird zuerst durch Monets Bild visuell interpretiert und dann ein weiteres Mal durch Wilde. Allerdings ist Wildes Vision der Realität zum einen durch Monets Darstellung und zum anderen durch seine eigene Vorstellung geprägt.

Das Aufeinandertreffen von Text und Bild konnte in diesen Beispielen mit den visuell einkodierten Stilfiguren, sowie der Dynamik der Ekphrasis zwischen den gegebenen Elementen, belegt werden. Der Fokus wird nun auf Prosopopoeia gelenkt - eine Stilfigur starken visuellen Charakters.

Die Basisdefinition der Prosopopoeia kann ausgeweitet werden, so dass sie nicht nur die Anwesenheit von verstorbenen und abwesenden Personen hervorbringt, sondern

auch auf Phänomene zeigt, die über die physische Darstellung hinausgehen. In bestimmten Kontexten kann die Figur in der Tat Bereiche des *Unterbewusstseins* und abstrakte Phänomene, wie *Tod*, *Wünsche* und *Lüste* hervorbringen.

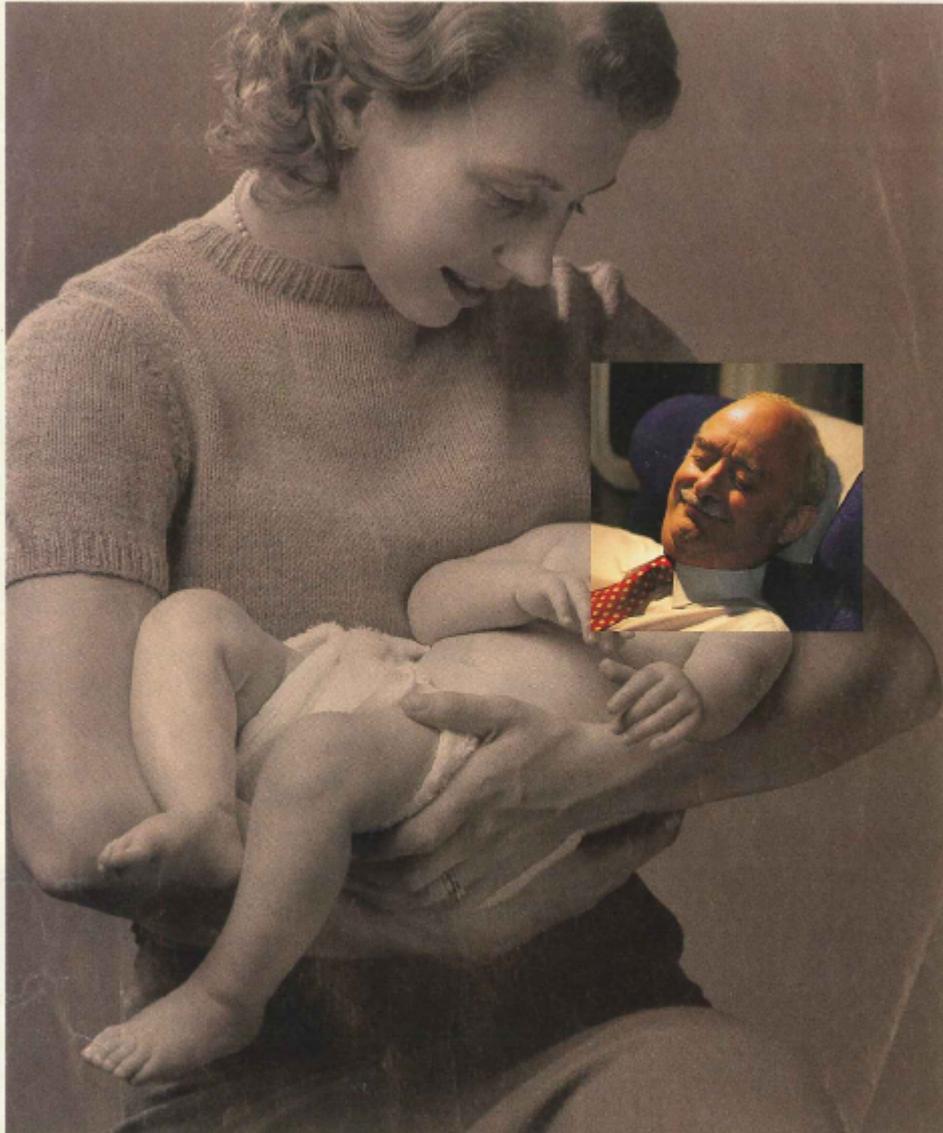
In der Werbung nimmt die Stilfigur mannigfaltige, und vor allem visuelle, Formen an. Abbildung 5 zeigt eine unverkennbare Darstellung der Prosopopoeia, in der die Mutter, von der der Herr im Flugzeug träumt, gezeigt wird. Die Mutter ist aber nicht nur als Traum abgebildet, sondern als eine greifbare und in dem Flugzeug fast anwesende Person, so dass ein direkter Vergleich zwischen ihr und der Fluggesellschaft hergestellt ist. Konnotationen, wie Geborgenheit, Sicherheit, Liebe, Sorge, die die Mutter hervorruft, werden somit direkt auf *British Airways* übertragen. Diese Art von Prosopopoeia kann als ‚konkrete Prosopopoeia‘ klassifiziert werden.

Die Werbung kann, des Weiteren, mit Forcevilles Begriff ‚MP2‘ verstanden werden. Die beiden Konzepte ‚Mutter‘ und ‚British Airways‘ sind visuell in einander integriert, so dass die Assoziationen, die ‚Mutter‘ mit sich trägt vom Konzept ‚Fluggesellschaft‘ übernommen werden.

Abbildung 6 ist schon eine andere Art von Prosopopoeia, in der der Schwerpunkt auf der *Abwesenheit* der Mutter liegt. Hier kann die Stilfigur als ‚umgedrehte Prosopopoeia‘ benannt werden. Sie hat darüber hinaus die Funktion, durch die weiße Form, sowie den in das Bild eingebetteten Satz „AIDS has left millions orphaned children in Africa...“ den *Tod*, als abstraktes Phänomen in Greifweite zu bringen.

In Abbildung 7 wird ein weiteres Niveau der Stilfigur erreicht, in dem die Träume des Mannes bildlich dargestellt werden. Die Form des Laubs deutet auf ein Auto hin. Der Betrachter der Werbung versteht, dass hier der *Wunsch* ein neues und modernes Auto zu besitzen, dargestellt wird. In diesem Kontext kann die Figur als ‚abstrakte Prosopopoeia‘ definiert werden, da abstrakte Phänomene, wie *Lüste* bildlich und greifbar präsentiert sind.

The new Club World cradle seat. Lullaby not included.



Introducing the unique new business class cradle seat. It doesn't simply recline but tilts as a whole raising your knees and relieving your body of stress and pressure. Pity you may not be awake to enjoy all the other changes on new Club World.

BRITISH AIRWAYS
The world's favourite airline

Introduced throughout this year. ©1996 British Airways

Abb. 5: New Yorker, April 1996.

AIDS has left millions of children orphaned in Africa....

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Abb. 6: Christianity Today, Februar 2004.



Abb. 7: Black Enterprise, November 2002.

Die strikte Definition der Prosopopoeia kann somit auch auf Phänomene angewandt werden, die über die direkte bildliche Darstellung einer in der Realität abwesenden Person hinausgehen, und Bereiche des Unbewussten, der Gefühle, und Träume erreichen.

Ekphrasis und Prosopopoeia ergeben zusammen einflussreiche Einheiten, in denen die wesentlichen Elemente, Text und Bild, zusammen agieren, einander beeinflussen und ergänzen. Abbildung 8 zeigt ein Basketballfeld mit den Inschriften „When YOU are here / & your KID is here“ und unter dem Bild den Text „Talk to your kids about not smoking. They’ll listen [...]“. Ekphrasis und Prosopopoeia sind hier eng miteinander verbunden. „YOU“ und „KID“ können als textuelle Elemente in einem visuellen Kontext als ekphrastisch qualifiziert werden. Die eigentliche *Visualisierung* der Individuen ist jedoch erst mit der Prosopopoeia möglich. Die beiden Phänomene sind in diesem Beispiel gleichzeitig durch ein dynamisches Oszillieren der Elemente aktiv: sobald der Betrachter den Text liest und sich des visuellen Kontexts bewusst

wird (Ekphrasis), kann er die beiden Individuen als ‚Eltern‘ und sein/ihr ‚Kind‘ identifizieren (Prosopopoeia) und die Botschaft ist vollendet.

Prosopopoeia ist hier trotz der deutlichen Referenz eher abstrakten Charakters: zum einen wird sie durch textuelle Einheiten ermöglicht und zum anderen hängt sie von der Vorstellung, die sich der jeweilige Betrachter von den Individuen macht, ab.

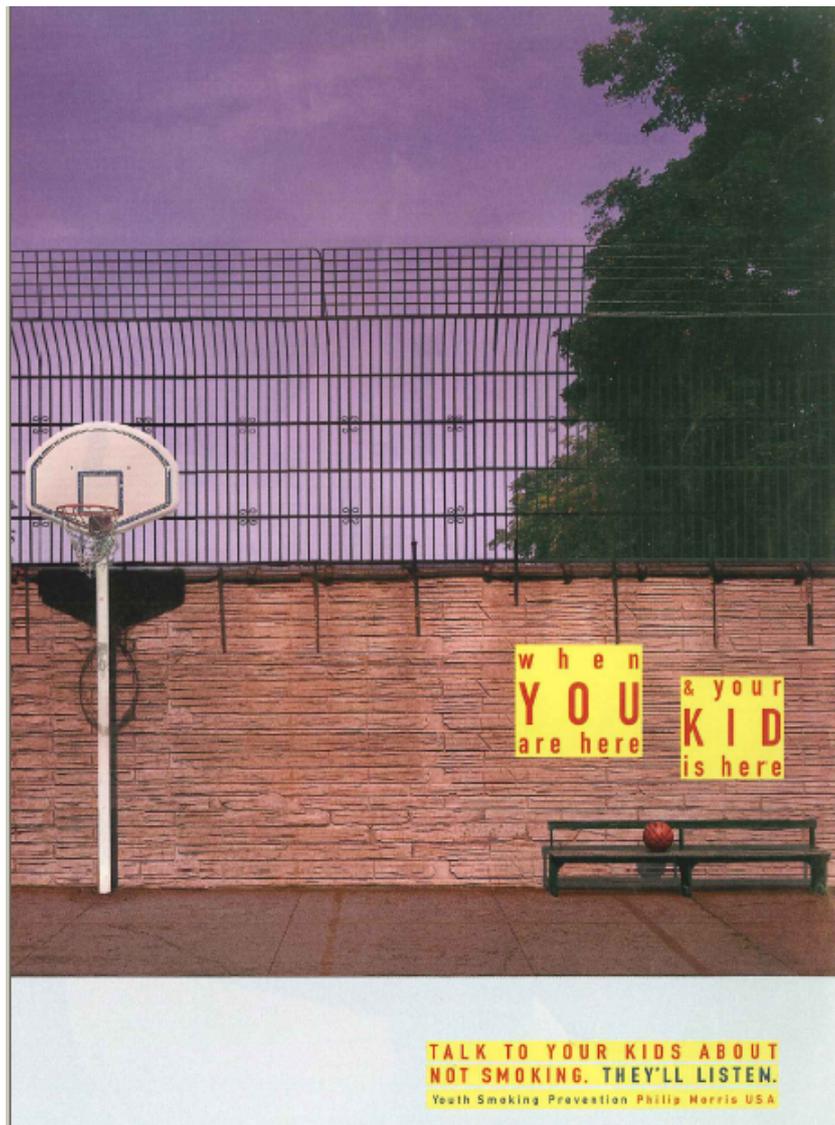


Abb. 8: Essence, Dezember 2002.

Im Theater könnten weitere Beispiele der Simultanität der beiden Phänomene gefunden werden. In *All My Sons* von Arthur Miller hat der Brief des vermissten Sohns Larry eine wesentliche Funktion.

Als textuelles Element in einem visuellen Kontext (Vorspiel auf der Bühne) ist der Brief ein ekphrastisches Element. Wenn er aber vorgelesen wird, rückt Larry durch seine Stimme, die wir dann hören, aus der Welt der Verschollenen und Toten in die, auf der Bühne dargestellte, Realität. Seine Präsenz evoziert darüber hinaus eine höhere Ebene – die steigende Spannung zwischen *Lüge* und *Wahrheit*, auf denen das Stück basiert. Durch diese Elemente kann der Brief auch als abstrakte Prosopopoeia interpretiert werden.

Sowohl Prosopopoeia als auch Ekphrasis haben hier eine wesentliche strukturelle Funktion: wenn der Brief ins Spiel kommt, ist der Höhepunkt des Stücks erreicht: *Lüge* und *Wahrheit* prallen auf einander und führen zu dem unvermeidlichen Selbstmord von Larry und seinem Vater, Joe Keller.

* * *

Visuelle Medien, wie Malerei, und Werbung, sowie literarische Texte scheinen zu den gleichen Elementen zu greifen, um die Verbindung zwischen Text und Bild zu schaffen. Diese unterschiedlichen Kommunikationsmedien greifen allerdings auch verschiedenartig die hier analysierten Phänomene auf: Stilfiguren und Ekphrasis, die vor allem als *literarisch* gegolten haben, werden nun durch neue Formen präsentiert.

Unabhängig vom Medium und der Art, wie die Phänomene benutzt werden, wird eine Text-Bild Ebene greifbar. Analyse zeigt, dass die gegebenen Elemente simultan und dynamisch miteinander agieren, um die entsprechende Botschaft hervorzubringen.

Zukünftige Forschung sollte sich der Verbindung zwischen dem ‚Textuellen‘ und dem ‚Bildlichen‘ bewusst werden, und die beiden Pole als eine untrennbare Einheit, ob in literarischer, visueller, oder täglicher Kommunikation, anerkennen.

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