

WriTing
with
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mErcè
TORRES



Writing with Photography

Language performativity and photography's capacity for semiotics

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MAI NO ARRIBARÀ LA FI DEL MÓN
SI ET RECORDO LA VEU
I SIGUI RECORDADA
LA MEVA VEU DESPRÉS, I MOLT MÉS TARD
ENCARA, LA MEMÒRIA FIDEL,
CONJURANT LA TENEBRA I ELS ENTERRAMORTS,
ARRENQUI DEL SILENCI LES IMPERCEPTIBLES
PREGUNTES DELS ULLS CECS: ON ETS? ON ETS?,
ON ETS?, I CAP RESPOSTA
NO S'ALCI DE LA TERRA LLEVAT D'UNA FLOR.¹

THE END OF THE WORLD WILL NEVER COME
IF I REMEMBER YOUR VOICE
AND BE REMEMBERED
MY VOICE AFTERWARDS, AND MUCH LATER
STILL, THE FAITHFUL MEMORY,
CONJURING THE DARKNESS AND THE UNDERGROUND,
UPROOT FROM THE SILENCE THE IMPERCEPTIBLE
QUESTIONS OF THE BLINDED EYES: WHERE ARE YOU? WERE
ARE YOU?,
WHERE ARE YOU ?, AND NO ANSWER
DO NOT RISE FROM THE EARTH BUT A FLOWER.

1. Sampere, M. (2002). 'Mai No Arribarà La Fi Del Món'. Mirall De Glaç. Retrieved December 7, 2020, from <<http://www.xn--miraldegla-w9a.cat/mai-no-arribara-la-fi-del-mon-de-marius-sampere-amb-acompanyament-coral-de-joan-magrane-figuera/>>

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abstract

This essay started with the negative of writing a written essay. By so, I wanted to understand how photography operates as a language and what it means when one says “to read” a photograph. Can photography be the substitute for an essayistic idea? Is more than one image needed to develop and present a trustworthy idea? The reading of images and the reading of text share some qualities, they also share the same structural space: the essay, here, both will perform letting one influence the other.

key words ·writing ·photography ·semiotics ·performativity ·codes ·structure

1 introduction

Usually, when one doesn't fully understand a word, one looks it up to the dictionary in that language. So when searching "essay" on the Dictionary of Cambridge² one finds:

1. *A short piece of writing on a particular subject, especially one done by students as part of the work for a course (noun)*
2. *To try to do something (verb)*

Number 1 refers to what I'm doing here, physically, pushing letters, words and, sentences into the blank paper. Number 2 is (and will be) my state of being in front of the computer while writing. As Perejaume³ says "there is a first agrarianism that is the first start of any act, like this one right now. The state of expectation, of latency before beginning an act [...] I enjoy this kind of semantic seed, a seed with an extraordinary indeterminacy, stay in there, let it pass by." But since there are some expectations to accomplish I need to keep trying to write, to make sense. If this "trying" is something that actualizes itself, and one is trapped continuously witting and re-writing, can we consider this act of writing as a performative act?

When one studies its noun etymology, it can be found that it comes from the Latin verb *exigere-exagium* (to weight) to weight if the gold is good, therefore to try, to attempt. Later on, adapted into English from the old French "*essai/assai*". *Assai*, adapted to Catalan (my native language) into *assaig*, in this case, the meaning of the verb remained. And this is how I first encountered the word and its meaning, as a verb: something to be tried out, a rehearsal. Sometimes it is hard to change the meaning attached to a word when changing languages.

Here it's searched *assaig* on DIEC⁴, and some differences worth mentioning.

- 1.2. *Operació de prova per a veure si una cosa respon al seu objecte, a la seva destinació.*
 - 1.1. *Representació d'una obra, execució d'un concert, etc., abans de la seva presentació pública.*
 - 1.2. *Assaig general. Assaig que es fa just abans de l'estrena d'una obra o d'un espectacle, en el qual es reproduïxen al màxim les condicions de la representació en públic.*
 - 3.1. *Gènere en prosa, generalment breu, que aborda d'una manera lliure i no especialitzada els problemes més diversos amb voluntat de creació literària.*
 - 3.2 *Obra d'aquest gènere.*⁵

2. Dictionary, C. (n.d.). 'ESSAY | Meaning In The Cambridge English Dictionary'. Retrieved January 7, 2020, from <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/essay>>

3. Perejaume. (2013). 'En Comú. L'agrarietat.' CCCB. Retrieved December 7, 2020, from <<https://www.cccb.org/ca/multimedia/videos/en-comu-lagrarietat/211162>>

4. 'Diccionari De La Llengua Catalana'. (n.d.). Retrieved January 7, 2020, from <<https://dlc.iec.cat/results.asp?txtEntrada=assaig&operEntrada=0>>

5. Trad from Catalan to English: 1.2. *Test operation to see if something responds to its object, to its destination.*

1.1. *Performance of a work, performance of a concert, etc., before its public presentation.*

1.2. *General rehearsal. A rehearsal that takes place just before the premiere of a play or show, in which the conditions of public performance are reproduced as much as possible.*

3.1. *A genre of prose, usually short, that addresses in a free and non-specialized way the most diverse problems with a desire for literary creation.*

3.2 *Work of this genre.*

If we are referring to point 1-2; I already pointed out that it was important for this essay to become a test. Is it a test for something that has to come? Like a rehearsal before the final act. Like that for it to be fulfilled, it has to be presented in front of an audience and into a public sphere. I would rather prefer to consider it as a rehearsal that has no “final state” and that this version you are reading now, it’s just a momentary form, as in theatre, every performance is slightly different from the one before, or the one after. An example of this every-time-different visual essay is El Trigo Alimentación Colectiva⁶, a collective project managed by Julián Barón where I participated. By summiting a quiz displayed on the webpage and depending on the answer to the questions, an algorithm selects randomly pages of each topic. Within each theme, there is a random variable. The result is a downloadable PDF book created with the jspdf javascript library with about 80 pages out of the 900 available.

If we are referring to point 3; in my native language, it’s pointed out that essay is “prose” the genre most similar to the spoken one, “usually short”: something that here I cannot choose, “that addresses in a free”: institutions expectations don’t look so free to me, it seems there are too many boxes to fill: length, references, structure, etc. And “non-specialized way the most diverse problems with a desire for literary creation”: can literary creation be based in images? it’s this desire the fuel for writing a text?

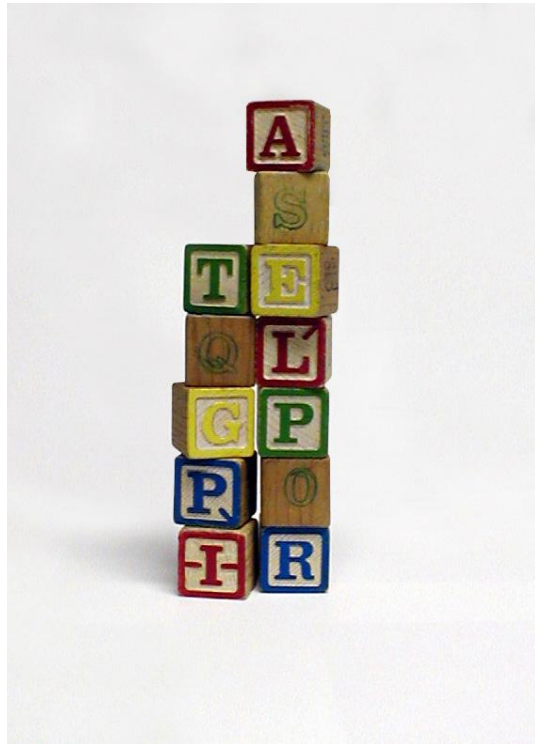
els mots

*que ens diem sense dir-los no són pas
escuma sinó aigua, i el desig
és un vast horitzó. Si tanco els ulls
te’m fas present i esclaten els colors.⁷*

6. ‘El trigo alimentación colectiva’. (2018). Julián Barón. Retrieved December 7, 2020, from <<http://eltrigoalimentacioncolectiva.org/en.html>>

7. Miquel Martí i Pol. (n.d.). ‘Dotze. Poesia catana d’avui’. Llibre d’absències. Retrieved December 7, 2020, from <<https://lletra.uoc.edu/especials/folch/martipol.htm>>

Trad from Catalan to English: *the words
that we tell ourselves without telling them are not
foam but water, and desire
it is a vast horizon. If I close my eyes
you appear present to me and the colours explode*



2 structure of the essay, to a performative understanding of the text

To be able to write this essay both with photography and language, I've created an archive that serves as a dictionary or font that goes hand in hand with the writing itself. It has been made extracting from online open archives, image-based social media such as Instagram, and searching servers like Google, Qwant, etc. These searches had been done under the roof of the following concepts: trial, rehearsal, something that is building, non-finito, repetition, mold, moment, to look, to read, essay. These ideas relate to, how the text/image flow in this essay has been assembled, and to the concepts discussed along the essay.

This mixed way of constructing ideas, aims to put in practice a sort of performativity: on one hand, my action, to actually produce this essay, could be categorized as performative: this essay has a stage and therefore it becomes a play. On the other hand, some ideas about the performative language (extended language?) that Barad, Austin, Kierkegaard, and others had written about and that we will take a look hereafter. Maybe, and as well as to blink an eye to the use of language and photography related to performance and happenings in the arts, where words were instructions and photography a recording of those instructions.

The philologist John Langshaw Austin, arguments that language is not just descriptive and reflective, but can actually perform an action,⁸ for instance when giving an order. Austin divides this effect into three: the locutionary meaning, the illocutionary force, and the perlocutionary effect. The locutionary meaning is the sense and reference of an utterance; phrasing something orally. The illocutionary force is the function that the utterance performs when it is being said. For example, the phrase "I break up with you" constitutes reality as such; it does not refer to a pre-existing reality, it creates these states of affairs, it is self-referential. The perlocutionary effect is the response of the listener/reader as a consequence of what is said to him or her: anger or fear in response to a threat.⁹ This way of tackling performativity in linguistics, reminds me Kierkegaard's writing, a writing that follows some sort of performativity: by aiming towards the reader, allowing the writing to continue on the readers own thinking, activating the imagination and forcing the recipient to produce a creative response.¹⁰ Following this line of thinking, Umberto Eco, exposes: "the more open the work, the more it depends on readers to fill in the blanks."¹¹

The feminist theorist, Karen Barad, in the opposite spectrum, aims to a destitution of language through/and by the use of a performative power. "Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural

8. Boven, M. (2015). 'A Theater of Ideas: Performance and Performativity in Kierkegaard's Repetition', 4. DOI: 10.2307/j.ctv3znxrg.12 Cf. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) and idem, *Philosophical Papers*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

9. Ibid. p. 4

10. Ibid. p.1

11. Magilow, D. H. (2013). *On Writing with Photography*. (K. Beckman & L. Weissberg, Eds), p. 110. U of Minnesota Press. [Photography's Linguistic Turn. On Werner Graef's Here comes the new photographer!]



turn ... – even materiality – is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation ... How did language become more trustworthy than matter?”¹²

She, later on, aims a performative understanding, as a practice that challenges the power of words to represent pre-existing things. Thus, performativity is a reply on this “excessive” power. In this essay, by adding images, it breaks language narrative, it forces the reader to interpret meaning, it challenges pre-established definitions and structures.

*però hem viscut per salvar-vos els mots,
per retornar-vos el nom de cada cosa,
perquè seguíssiu el recte camí
d'accés al ple domini de la terra.*¹³

Following Barad, the linguistic and cultural anthropologists Jillian R. Cavanaugh and Shalini Shankar, propose to analyse language and materiality within the same analytic frame. They describe the material qualities: “When linguistic forms are pressed into new modes of objectification, circulation and recontextualization”¹⁴

They distinguish between: Value of language: How material conditions shape ideologies and uses of language. And meaning of language: How words and objects work together within semiotic systems and how embodiment, aesthetics and style illustrate this intersection.



12. Barad, K. (2003). ‘Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28/3: 801. DOI: 10.1086/345321

Matter Comes to Matter. *S I G N S* (Spring 2003)

13. Espriu, S. (1965). ‘Raimon Vida i obra Raimon. Lletres de les cançons. Inici de càntic en el temple’. Retrieved December 7, 2020, from <<https://www.upv.es/contenidos/RAIMON/info/751538normalv.html>>

Trad from Catalan to English: *But we have lived to save your words,*

to give you back the name of each thing,

so that you follow the straight path

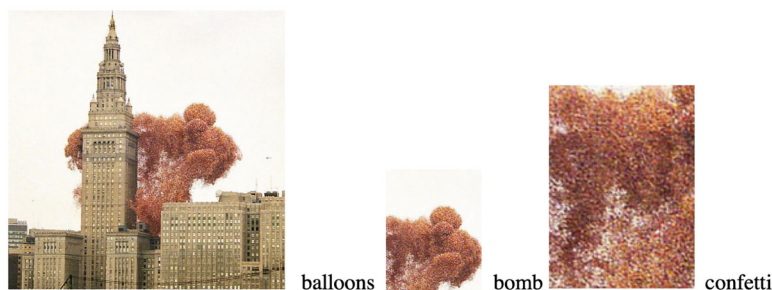
of access to the full dominion of the earth

14. Shankar, S., & Cavanaugh, J. R. (2012). ‘Language and Materiality in Global Capitalism’, *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.*, Annual Review of Anthropology. Vo. 41/1: 356 DOI: 10.1146/annurev-anthro-092611-145811

This essay aims to put in practice the ideas exposed above, both to challenge language itself and its performative aspect; how the essayistic text is interrupted by images and poems, changing the reading rhythm, having to think those images based on what has been written before them or vice versa. And also, by allowing images to have the same space as words, understanding that in this specific context: the essay, words usually lead the baggage of meaning and trust, whereas images support it, and by letting images occupy some weight of the ideas exposed. It also allows them to perform as a language, embracing the characteristics of image capacity for semiotics/meaning carriers. The images appear next to or instead of the text, neither to illustrate it nor supplement it. Its willingness is to merge with the text, in a way that the reader goes through the images and the text with the same intentionality. “The most important rule about photography is that it does something, not that it is something.”¹⁵

The writing of the writer and theorist Winfried Georg Sebald influenced this essay in the way he establishes a method in which images interact with text in the novel form. In an interview in 1998, Sebald addressed the role of photographs in his “fictional” technique.¹⁶ Sebald speaks about his use of photography within his novels, that sometimes the image is replacing a paragraph of text with one picture. He also claims that the photographs “are documents of found objects.”¹⁷

The first claim seems quite complicated and we will go more in-depth in the upcoming chapter of this essay, the second one, and referring to photography’s indexicality, one example can be found in the third section of *The Emigrants* that thematises and puts to work aesthetically the tension that exists and the desire that circulates, between description and verification in photographic indexicality.¹⁸ The text is not a description of the images above but it becomes influential in the way one reads them.



But what does indexical mean and how does it differentiate from the icon? To understand that, one has to think of the image as it is always linked to a sort of “reality” or happening but also linked to a symbolically based knowledge. The indexical belongs to the sign-system, it is the sign in which the relationship between sign an object, or signifier and signified, is one of casual, sequential or spatial contiguity. Just as the fin-

15. Magilow, D. H. (2013). *On Writing with Photography*. (K. Beckman & L. Weissberg, Eds), p. 110. U of Minnesota Press. *Photography’s Linguistic Turn*. [On Werner Graef’s Here comes the new photographer!]

16. Radio interview with Christian Scholz, in the air on February 16, 1999, as a part of a radio feature titled “Der Schriftsteller und die Fotografie” on Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); excerpts from the interview were later published in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*

17. Ibid. Sebald’s radio interview with Christian Scholz, 1999

18. Daub, Adrian. *On Writing with Photography*. (K. Beckman & L. Weissberg, Eds), p. 258. U of Minnesota Press. [Sphinxes without Secrets (W.G. Sebald’s Albums and the Aesthetics of Photographic Exchange).] CF. W Sebald & M Hulse, *The emigrants*, in , New York, New Directions, 1997.

ger actually, physically, point to its object. The photograph is related to its subject or referent by physical contiguity; the camera must be present to its subject; one cannot exist without the other . Indexical means: Past reality, non-paintery, uncoded, instant, punctum, prelinguistic.¹⁹

The iconic point of view of photography moves its essential being from the image produced (second version of the photographic art “this happened”) to the art of taking the photograph (first version: pragmatic rather than semantic “this means”). The iconic presents a relationship of resemblance or imitation, not a record; the icon need not be present to what it represents, it can be imaginative, imaginary and reconstruction.²⁰ The iconic means: Present use, paintery, coded, moment, stadium, linguistic.

19. Scott, C. (1999). *The spoken image: photography and language.*, p. 27. London: Reaktion Books.

20. *Ibid.* p. 27



6 - LA PENSEE
Glyptothek, Munich. J. E. Balfour, Edinburg.





3 reading photographs. semiotics, codes of recognition and codes of connotation/denotation.

When speaking about semiotics (or semiology) one refers to the study of signs, its purpose is to identify common regularities from which meaning is constructed.²¹ Semiology studies began in the early 60s, such studies looked for the first time at other linguistically structures outside language itself. In the early phase of “structuralist” semiology²² the differences between “natural” language: written language, spoken language, etc. with the visual languages, (including photography) was first looked into.

Barthes understanding of it focused on the codes of comparison and analogy where photographs denote objects and connotation/denotation is seen as a meaning making system. At *The Photographic Message*, analysing how the how photography could be perceived as a message, he points out that photography doesn't have a code, it's rather, full of the codes of its subject matter, but without a code as a medium.²³

On the other hand, Sontag describes the photography as “a message which totally exhausts its mode of existence. In front of a photograph, the feeling of “denotation” or, if one prefers, of analogical plenitude, is so great that the description of a photograph is literally impossible.”²⁴ When one tries to describe a photograph, this “denotation” (According to Sartre,²⁵ an equivalent of perception -such as a painting or a mental image- that is necessary for the process of imagination to take place) becomes a connoted message: that one descriptive, constituted by an universal symbolic order.²⁶

“Here (in the text) the substance of the message is made up of words; there (in the photograph) of lines, surfaces, shades.”²⁷ I would rather say that the text is made of lines, and the image of surfaces, shades. The image of a text (omitting its meaning reading) is usually presented as black lines that can shape in different ways and that they can be repeated continuously on top of any off-white colour. We can also read the text as a construction of bricks of words, the text only becomes an image in the calligram, in the rebus, in the hieroglyph, in the emogi, in the morse, etc. The image, on the other hand, is built with objects and scenes.

Sontag describes the text as units and signs that relay in a code between the object and its image, in the opposite, the photographic message²⁸ is a continuous message, but what does she mean by continuous? That is read without a structure? That it's a bunch of symbols in a space? And can't we think that the image also relays in a code, some sort of symbol-code that needs also (as linguistic means) learning and understanding to be able to “read” the image and tackle its meaning? Barthes agrees, and explains that there is no code in the photographic message, therefore, continuous “to shift from reality to its photograph, it is not at all necessary to break down this reality into units and to const-

21. Brugin, V. (1982). *Thinking Photography*. (V. Burgin, Ed.), pp. 143, 144. London: Macmillan International Higher Education.

22. Barthes, R. (1973). *Elements of semiology.*, pp. 143, 144. New York: Hill and Wang.

23. Scott, C. (1999). *The spoken image: photography and language.*, p. 23. London: Reaktion Books.

24. Sontag, S. (Ed.). (1982). *A Barthes reader. Roland Barthes.*, p. 197. London: Hill and Wang New York. DOI: https://monoskop.org/images/5/59/Barthes_Photographic_Message.pdf

25. Barthes, R. (1981). *Camera lucida.*, p. 20. New York: Hill and Wang. (Quoting Satre)

26. Ibid. p.194 Sontag, S. (Ed.). (1982)

27. Barthes, R. (1991). *The responsibility of forms.*, p. 4. Berkeley: Univ of California Press.

28. Ibid. p.196 Sontag, S. (Ed.). (1982)

in-between these words there
is a space for you and me
to understand each other better.
there is distance, but there is also
an opportunity for togetherness.
should we expand these spaces
or should we try to close
them? should we learn how to
kern, or perhaps should we focus
on learning how to read them?

-itute these units into signs substantially different from the object they represent; between this object and its image, it is not all necessary to arrange a relay, i.e., a code; of course the image is not the reality, but at least it is its perfect analogon, and it is just this analogical perfection which to common sense, defines the photograph.”²⁹

Both recollecting the perception of things and the recognition of known objects can be understood as “codes of recognition”. These codes are useful for further communication and recollection, seeing a chair from far away and being able to tell what it is, thanks to that one sees four legs and two perpendicular surfaces, not seeing the entire object but being able to understand it. These same codes of recognition preside over the selection of the conditions of perception which we decide to transcribe into an iconic sign.³⁰ No everywhere in the world a chair would look the same, neither there are chairs everywhere. Given the conditions of reproduction, transcribing is done according to the rules of a graphic code; an iconic code.³¹

This codes rely on a structure, that is constructed through agreements and choice of cooperative conventions. Iconic codes are more transitory,³² continuous,³³ specific to certain groups or to the specificity of the individual.

Contrary to the ideas state above, Burgin states that work in semiotics showed that there is no ‘language’ of photography, no single signifying system, upon which all photographs depend (in the sense in which all texts in English depend upon the English language);³⁴ he displays a more heterogeneous and complex system of codes. “Each photograph signifies on the basis of a plurality of these codes, the number and type of which varies from one image to another”³⁵, he states. Some codes are exclusive of the photographic medium like focus and blur, other are not, codes of body gesture, codes of composition. It is also remarkable that photography was born after the written language and therefore photography has always been close to it; captions, titles, articles that accompany them...- ‘language, of photography’ is never free from the determinations of language itself.-³⁶ Paradoxically, that photograph that has absolutely no text around it, is anyway traversed by language when the viewer sees it. A photograph of a *kristallkrona*,³⁷ carries significations of darkness and light, religion and power. Seeing *kristall*³⁸ as a symbol of creative forces in the mineral kingdom and *krona*³⁹ as loyal verdict, infinite circle, suns rays, patriarchal-solar-centred worldview. Many of its interpretations will therefore be linguistic, as when we speak metaphorically of one that is easily touched by feelings as *figaflor*.⁴⁰

29. Ibid. p. 5 Barthes, R. (1991)

30. Brugin, V. (1982). Thinking Photography. (V. Burgin, Ed.), p. 33. London: Macmillan International Higher Education.

31. Ibid. p.33 Brugin, V. (1982).

32. Ibid. p.34 Brugin, V. (1982).

33. Ibid p. 5 Barthes, R. (1991)

34. Ibid. pp. 143, 144 Brugin, V. (1982).

35. Ibid. pp. 143, 144 Brugin, V. (1982).

36. Ibid. pp. 143, 144 Brugin, V. (1982).

37. Trad from Swedish to English: *chandelier*

38. Biedermann, H. (1993). Symbol Lexikonet., p. 237. Bokförlaget Forum.

39. Ibid. p.239 Biedermann, H. (1993).

40. Trad from Catalan to English: *fig-flower*



But how do we read the photograph? What do we perceive? In what order, according to what progression? There is no perception without immediate categorization, then the photograph is verbalized in the very moment it is perceived; better, it is only perceived verbalized.⁴¹

Also, to read a photograph one really needs to get back to its own imaginary, or to its own comprehension, it can maybe be compared to the learning of a language, to be able to read in English, one has to know its signs and rules, as in image reading, one also has to know its signs, its context and also its tricks (the specifics of image making). The reading of an image is strictly socio-personal, as if each individual would demand an individual-dictionary to understand their specific way of viewing.

*Però el bon caçador que es lleva
a l'hora greu entre la nit i l'alba,
sent la crida en el bosc,
ple de secretes aigües vives,
i pren el camí que duu
cap a la veu intacta.*^{41.1}

41. Sontag, S. (Ed.). (1982). A Barthes reader. Roland Barthes., p. 204. London: Hill and Wang New York. DOI: https://monoskop.org/images/5/59/Barthes_Photographic_Message.pdf

41.1. Vinyoli, J. "Les hores retrobades" Gall. (1954) <<https://lletra.uoc.edu/especials/folch/vinyoli.htm>>

Trad from Catalan to English: *But the good hunter who gets up
in the grave hour between night and dawn,
hears the call in the woods,
full of secret living waters,
and takes the path it leads
towards the intact voice.*



4 text and images next to each other.

There's a historical reversal that Susan Sontag speaks about in *The Photographic Message*⁴², referring to late 20s photography or interwar photography, a period where photographs become more than just a tool to illustrate or supplement a text.⁴³ After and through the following century, photography becomes the protagonist and the words become secondary to it. Where the images worked as sporadic moment of contextualization, a moment of denotation, now it's vice versa, the texts serve as a mere annotation, usually either, those details that scape the framework of the image or a descriptive emphasis. In an ocularcentrist contemporary period of time, where looking and being looked at and where surveillance and mass media are a day-to-day reality, one could state that photography has gained its way; newspapers that were merely written events, now they are filled with images that serve as a hook for one to actually start reading the article, to the extent of TV screening 24/7 or large image-based platforms with continuous offer to new shows, movies etc, to face recognition software's. The text cannot longer live without the image, but can images live without the text? In social media, the image appears first, and under the description is attached, it serves as the place for discussion and conversation, a discussion that from the beginning of social media happened in text format, seems that nowadays we are leaning towards a discussion that will happen with images as well (Snapchat, Instagram stories, Facebook, Tik Tok...) one is easily driven to answer (due to the new layout of the platform) either with another image or an emoji, also a form of image (an image that can be produced without an immediate referent).

How can a space full with both images and language operate? Is there such on-going fight for reader's attention or they can cohabitate peacefully building some sort of understanding together? In this line of thinking, it's interesting to look into Foucault's similitude and resemblance.⁴⁴ He understands similitude, as the one based on repetition a plurality. And resemblance, as a descriptive representation, one object that communicates with another, usually through some sort of hierarchy. Plastic representation (photography, art) includes resemblance, whereas linguistic reference excludes it. Since one excludes the other, Michael Foucault postulates that the two systems can neither merge nor intersect. In one way or another, subordination is required. Either the text is ruled by the image [...] or else the image is ruled by the text.

Maybe there's room for linguistics to portray some sort of resemblance, not so clearly but to resemble a general idea/image, at least nouns, verbs and adjectives. It's competent to think that a lot of letters and words doesn't resemble but help to build the resemblance. But of course, when both are together inevitably the separation happen.

The academic Adrian Daub, for example, and contradicting Foucault's states, refuses as a false dichotomy the binary of full interpretation of photography and text or the domination of one medium over the other; as he portrays Sebalds witting, there are other,

42. Sontag, S. (Ed.). (1982). *A Barthes reader*. Roland Barthes., p. 197. London: Hill and Wang New York. DOI: https://monoskop.org/images/5/59/Barthes_Photographic_Message.pdf

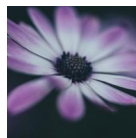
43. Ibid. p. 204 Sontag, S. (Ed.). (1982).

44. Foucault, M. (1983). *This is not a pipe.*, p. 54. Berkeley, CA [etc.]: Univ of California Press.

subtle and queerer, ways to understand the ranges of possibilities implied by the word “and”. Images are not subservient to texts, nor texts -to images. Rather, each illustrates and describes the other. Images often interrupt words mid-sentence.⁴⁵

Let’s try to perform some sort of trial by exposing the two systems. Magritte states “sometimes the name of an object takes the place of an image. A word can take the place of an object in reality. An image can take the place of a word in a proposition.”⁴⁶In a similar line of thinking than Sebald.⁴⁷

Flower
*margarita*⁴⁸
we have

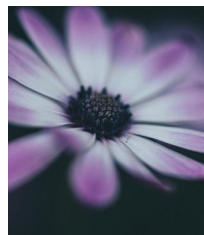


but flower can have many shapes
maybe we get closer to
we can’t help but think 8 petals



so saying
but still since
purple.

I’m pushing you to some specifics both with the image and both with *margarita*, with the photograph there is no doubt of recognition because of the attachment to the object, but when the images lose its clarity, if the *margarita* becomes recognisable just because we read *margarita* before or because we’ve seen so many, that even when the photography isn’t clear, one sees the *margarita* undoubtedly.



The Photograph is never anything but an anticipation of “Look,” “See,” “Here it is”; points a finger to this face to face encounter, and cannot escape this deictic language,⁴⁹dexis meaning that it refers to a linguistic phenomenon where the meaning of certain element changes depending on the communicative situation. There’s a communicative centre (reference point). “Tomorrow” means a different day if I say it on a Monday or in a Tuesday. It also contains some sort of tautology, as if caring its referent (here, a pipe it’s always indubitably a pipe)⁵⁰, also as it both referent and image express the same meaning, in a language fort it would be “I saw it with my own eyes”.

45. K. Beckman , L. Weissberg. On Writing with Photography. (K. Beckman & L. Weissberg, Eds), p. 10. U of Minnesota Press. [Introduction]

46. Foucault, M. (1983). This is not a pipe., p. 38. Berkeley, CA [etc.]: Univ of California Press. CF. Waldberg/Waldberg. (1983). Magritte/ peintures. L’autre musée.

47. Ibid. Sebald ‘s radio interview with Christian Scholz, 1999


48. Trad from Catalan to English: *daisy*

49. Barthes, R. (1981). Camera lucida., pp. 5, 6. New York: Hill and Wang. [Quoting Satre]

But what we look at it's the photograph, does it matter its referent when one has forgotten about it, when it's so far away its unreachable? Doesn't this referent become something else? We also see and experience the sheet of paper or the negative where the photograph lies, can we call for the materiality of the image? It's materiality it's not the photography but its support?

Photography is unclassifiable in light of the fact that there is no motivation to stamp either of its events; it aims, maybe, to become as sure as a sign, which would carry it closer to language: "but for there to be a sign there must be a mark; deprived of a principle of marking, photographs are signs which don't *take*, which *turn*, as milk does."⁵¹ If images aspire to become a sign, I can produce an alphabet/dictionary of image-signs. To be able to write properly one would need the same exact referent or it would be sufficient with a enough similar referent?

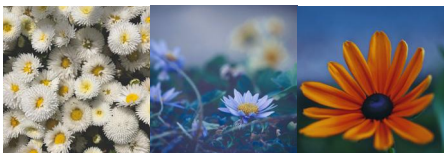
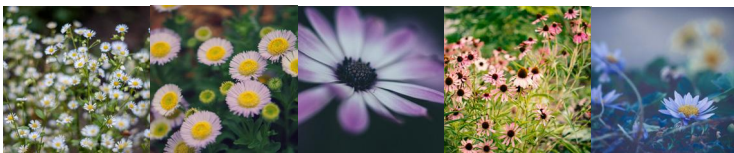
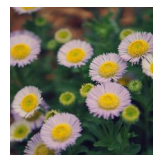
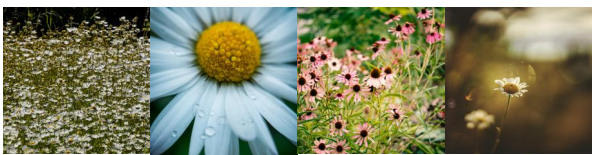
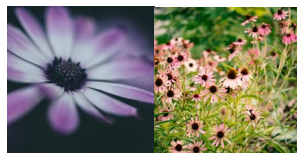
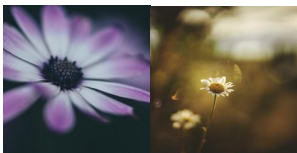
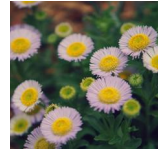
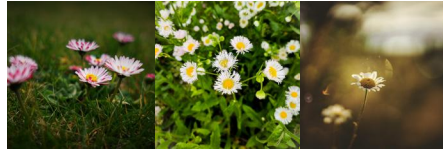
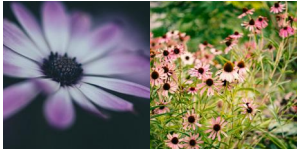
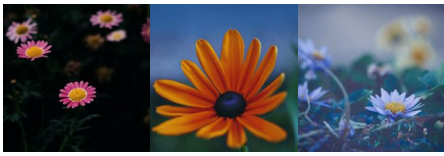
If  means A

This  still means A or means something else?

But then the image would need to be read with a linguistic referent (under my rules, or western alphabetization rules, or English linguistic rules) and not by itself.

In one hand it would be too tedious to write anything because one would need to find the referents in reality and maybe one is not near to flowers, in the case above. But on the other hand, there's so much production of images online that it's so easy to find any type of image there.

We could have a computer keyboard with images/emojis instead of letters that is programmed to find online any type of image referent to that image (related to the referent that's on the key) and language would be reduced to operate only as a composition base, the keyboard.

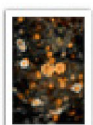




a-.jpg



b-.jpg



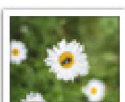
c-.jpg



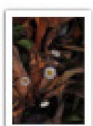
d-.jpg



e-.jpg



f-.jpg



g-.jpg



h-.jpg



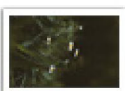
i-.jpg



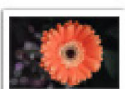
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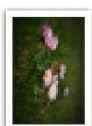
k-.jpg



l-.jpg



m-.jpg



n-.jpg



o-.jpg



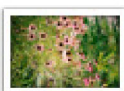
p-.jpg



q-.jpg



r-.jpg



s-.jpg



t-.jpg



u-.jpg



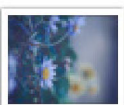
v-.jpg



w-.jpg



x-.jpg



y-.jpg



z-.jpg

5 conclusions

Writing with photographs constitutes not a minor subset of literary practice, but rather a foundational aspect of the modern reading experience.⁵² I find crucial to understand this experience, I have (and I guess, others of my generation) been communicating with images constantly during at least the last decade. How can images encapsulate meaning and how do they co-habit with words? There are possibly different ways to approach this, in this essay we've gone through one strategy: Moving forward from the apparent rigidness of linguistics to a performative understanding, allowing language to interact outside its own structure. Next in order, to understand how photography is capable to contain some characteristics as well found in language, and accounting photography's own ways of operating.

There are some questions that still remain, hence this is a trial, and every trial needs its own time to process results, in this case, to examine how it is read and seen. What images add? When one is forced to have to read in-between, is it then easier to visualize a complicated theory? When theory is put to operate together with photography, does one help the other to build the article or do they clash? Does the adding of images constitute the written part more performative? Or does it influence it in another way? Poems are also found along the way, they are thought to operate as a bridge in-between the two realms, moving the reading from theoretical demands to an image-setup where words describe scenes.

At the end, it's really difficult to set up this deployment without an audience, without seeing a reaction. A popular saying comes to mind "an image is worth a thousand words", but I have my doubts now, could we say "an image needs a thousand words"?

52. K. Beckman , L. Weissberg. On Writing with Photography. (K. Beckman & L. Weissberg, Eds), p. 10. U of Minnesota Press. [Introduction]

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*This “dictionary” it is also used in page 53, 55

