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Embodiment of Creative Thought and Visual Logic in Bookmaking: An Example of Intermediality in Word-Picture Adaptation

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in Comparative Literature

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary study discusses word-picture translation for book illustrations and brings together visual art, book/illustration history, the materiality of the book, literature, and library science. The focus is on communication between the creator, the work of literary and visual art, and the receiver. Theories that observe verbal-visual relations appear typically disconnected from the practical aspects of bookmaking and publishing. In bridging practice and theory, I have developed my own method of word-picture interpretation that can be applied to *any* adult fiction text.

The thesis discusses the outside and the inside of illustration-making, presents the methodology and theoretical framework, explores such issues as the physicality of expression and perception, mind-hand connections in artistic expression, the concept of the simultaneity of reading and visualizing, as well the relations between creative impression, art, and the market, i.e. the impact of cultural trends, the publishing industry and target audience on the way books are created and perceived. This thesis also discusses the interaction of two media, presenting the indispensability of dialogue between the style of a text and the style of corresponding pictures — these concepts are combined with concrete examples of books and pictures in order to make palpable the practical implementation of bookmaking. My conclusions make possible the transition to a comparative discussion of pictorial and fantastic elements in Nikolai Gogol's and Italo Calvino's writings which are taken as examples concurrently with visual adaptations of their literary features. The result of comparative analysis of their poetics reveals the vision-based nature of Gogol's and Calvino's abstract pictures in verbal form, which suggest their non-translatability into illustrations despite the paradoxically large number of artists who have continuously attempted to illustrate Gogol's works. Since the most important aspect of *any* adaptation is the re-creation of the style of verbal narration by means of visual language, the majority of these images are likely to appear disconnected stylistically from the text and can cause confusion or distortion of the verbal poetics.

Summary for a Lay Audience

This study discusses the way the books are illustrated. This includes the development of literary descriptions through pictures, which does not mean the explanation or repetition of the plot with drawings but rather the re-creation of a new visual story that corresponds to a given narrative by a variety of stylistic characteristics which are derived from the close study of the literary work. The stylistic correspondence between the verbal and the visual domain can often be challenged by many factors, such as misunderstanding by the artist of the main stylistic features of the text being illustrated, the demands of the publishing industry and a focus on making sellable products, as well as the aesthetics of the specific temporal context of the artist's life and work. Gogol's and Calvino's literary works are taken as an example in order to present, through their comparative analysis, the way specific verbal characteristics become embodied in illustrations.

Keywords

Book illustration, intermedial adaptation, physicality of expression, materiality of book, handwriting, visual logic, Gogol, Calvino, vision-based narrative, thinking with pictures, Gogol and Calvino comparison, publishing industry, art and market.

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I would like to give many thanks to the following people from the department of Languages and Cultures (formerly: Modern Languages and Literatures) at Western University: Călin Mihăilescu, Cristina Caracchini, Laura Mosco, and Sylvia Kontra, who offered their administrative, academic and friendly support all the time.

Outside the program, my sincere thanks go to the University Archivist Emeritus at Western Libraries, Robin Keirstead, who supervised my different projects at the Archives and Research Collections Centre, and also read some parts of my thesis with extraordinary attention to detail and professional acumen, encouraging me to incorporate in my work studies from the field of library science, which significantly broadened my arguments. The lectures of other teachers who taught courses in Library Science — particularly Rachel Melis, Joyce Garnett, Robert Craig, Angela Pollak, and Melissa Adler — and the range of reading materials they suggested, completely changed my perspective on the research work and greatly raised my ability to take an interdisciplinary approach in combination with practical implementation of theoretical knowledge. This significantly influenced the way my thesis was developed.

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Embodiment of Creative Thought and Visual Logic in Bookmaking

An example of intermediality in word-picture adaptation

Introduction

The tradition of creating *adult fiction illustration*, despite being as old as the history of letters, has passed through its rapid decline in the course of the 20th century, and almost complete disappearance on the Western map of bookmaking at the present. This interdisciplinary study is based in part on the literary-visual analysis of book items with the purpose of providing the historical and contemporary approaches to making a visual counterpart to the verbal. Also under consideration are analogies with different media that make the verbal visible (including illustration-making practices in the age of electronic pages) and the methods of word-picture translation as a generator of new meanings. Such practical and theoretical conclusions will make possible the transition to a comparative discussion of pictorial and fantastic elements in Gogol's and Calvino writings which are taken as examples concurrently with visual adaptations of their literary features. The aim of this comparative study is to provide evidence of how and why the meanings of a given narrative grow from the simultaneity of perception of the verbal-and-visual elements of a book. Thus, the chapters will explore diverse kinds of relations between words and pictures: semantic, stylistic, pictorial, fantastic, emotional, temporal. Cultural trends and target audiences will also be considered.

Thesis

It is well known that, in the physical book-object in its concrete entirety, the semantic textual flavor cannot be viewed separately from its visual sequence which gives a new meaning to the verbal.¹ Verbal ideas can be expressed orally or electronically and thus remain non-tangible

¹ For instance, numerous studies on medieval book history have approached the reading culture through interaction of verbal and visual meanings. One such study is Elena Boeck's *Imagining the Byzantine Past* (2015) which examines Constantine Manasses's 12th-century *Chronicle* and the miniatures depicted in the 15th-century copy of this text, written in Bulgaria and translated into Old Slavonic (Codex Vat.Slav.2 held at the Vatican Library). The latter version appears to distort the truth and presents the Bulgarian king as a central figure in Byzantium. This

until written or printed and became attached to the physical item. The book, therefore, renders verbal-virtual ideas present in the world. This is why, as Tanselle suggests (see: I.1. *Theory in practice, and practice in theory*), a literary work cannot be studied separately from the material and visual features of the object that delivers to us the verbal domain.

However, taking this approach as a starting point, I will develop further arguments and suggest that a non-verbal story in the form of illustrations, placed alongside a given text, is developed in *dialogue* with the primary source and stands up as an independent work,² becoming a partner source which interprets a given text in a specific way. A set of Illustrations can be considered as a narrative inside a narrative or a visual story inside a verbal story. The connection of these two parallel stories, verbal and visual, and their placement under a single book cover, creates a third meaning, which will inevitably be different with each new visual adaptation of the same text. When it comes to the word-picture relations, my conceptualization of intermedial adaptation zeroes in on why and how the stylistics of pictures are developed from the stylistics of a text, rather than merely representing the individual style of an artist.

impression is reached thanks to the incorporation of specific illustrations that depict something that is not included in the text and reconstruct the past in a new way. Other studies include those on the physicality of reading and on the simultaneity of reading and visualizing (see below).

² Even though a book illustration develops out of a specific text, i.e. there would not be any illustration without that text and therefore the picture seems to be always dependent on text, this is the proverbial dilemma of the chicken and the egg. It seems obvious that a chicken-text makes eggs-pictures, and in this sense, illustrations can be viewed as semi-independent. However, there are many examples in book art where an image can go beyond and overcome the primary source and disconnect from it, creating its own visual story and provoking another verbal narrative based on the picture — so, then eggs come first (see I.3. *Perception through simultaneity of reading and visualizing*). This is particularly relevant when fantastic pictorial writing merely gives an impulse for the artist's imagination, so the picture continues the text, expands it until the visual story acquires its own narrative significance. There can be an infinite variety of sources that make possible the visual imaginative act. However, if a picture is inspired by a piece of music, or a beautiful tree, or an object, or an artwork seen in a museum, etc. this does not mean that the picture depends on that source of inspiration (music or tree). A text is in a way a source of inspiration that provides the brain with an impulse to reinterpret the text visually. In this sense, an illustration is both *dependent* on the text (mainly because it must respect the principles of intermediality and correspond to the text) and *independent* of the text (because it can become an artwork on its own). Sometimes, an illustration is created first, and then a verbal accompaniment is added to reinforce or complicate the visual message, as in the genre of cartoons, for example by the American cartoonist-soldier Bill Mauldin whose pictures about the WWII years won a Pulitzer Prize. In this case, the juxtaposition of image and text often makes the argument. The illustration starts to debate with the text and becomes the leading part of the story. Besides, as will be presented in the case of Gogol's and Calvino's narratives, their verbal images are vision-based and therefore a visual image has generated the verbalization. Thus, illustrations for their stories can potentially absorb both those primary visual images and those presented then verbally.

Approach and significance

Even though originally the word ‘to illustrate’ means ‘to explain a text, or to clarify with examples’³, it acquires the meaning of ‘interpreting a text’ when a picture accompanies a story. In such a context, a picture passes through a complex process of decoding the text in order to translate it into another medium, another artistic language. Such a process of word-picture adaptation conflicts with the primary definition of merely *explaining the text* because a book illustration, in its essence, implies the act of creative interpretation, in which the stylistics of pictures derives from the stylistics of a text.

Thus, when referring to an illustration, it is necessary to make clear a distinction between two basic definitions. A *text-supporting* illustration is meant in its primary meaning as something that *explains a text*. *Interpretative* refers to the conceptualization of the stylistics of a given text by means of visual art and according to an artist’s understanding or sensitivity. The analogy inherent in the term *interpretation* that can be grasped from the meaning given to a process whereby a composer puts a sonnet to music, i.e. interprets one medium via another. Therefore, *to illustrate* a text implies a series of *relations* between the narrative and a set of pictures rather than “explanation” or “representation” of the verbal. Moreover, the description of a picture as *too illustrative* with respect to a given text is often used as an evaluation mark in the professional field and is equal to saying in a polite way that the author of this picture does not have enough individual creativity and just repeats or explains the text with his drawing.

Consequently, the term *space of the book* implies a combined meaning: it describes the space within a book as a physical object, which includes the literary work itself (space within the literary work); elements that are meant as paratexts (typography, format, size, proportions of folio and textual space, typesetting, printing, titles, etc. — i.e. what creates relationships between text and reader); materiality (type of paper, book block, kind of cover); artistic features (style of pictures and design); and intermediality (word-image relations, associative and stylistic relations).

The theories that observe verbal-visual relations appear typically disconnected from the practical aspects of bookmaking and publishing. When bridging practice and theory, I have

³ *Collins English Dictionary* suggests that the word originates from Latin *illustrāre* - to make light, explain, from *lustrāre* to purify; 1520s: “light up, shed light on”, from which the term illuminate derives, e.g. illuminated manuscripts; 1610s: “educate by means of examples”, 1630s: “provide pictures to explain or decorate”.

developed my own *method* of word-picture interpretation that can be applied to *any* adult fiction text.

While the role of verbal translations is to adapt the language of departure to the linguistic, stylistic, ideological and cultural features of the language of arrival, the role of text-picture translation is to process a given story through non-verbal techniques of adaptation. However, the basic principle in both cases is the same: to adapt one thing to another. What makes the pictorial adaptation unique is the *artistic interpretation* of each given fact, action, verbal image; i.e. the written word should be seen through the refraction of artistic perception in order to build a *visual correspondence* to the poetics of a given narrative: stylistically, emotionally, symbolically, associatively, etc., rather than merely reproducing or explaining the verbal with visual signs. As in the case of the principles of linguistic translation, the rules of intermedial adaptation must satisfy the following condition: whether the text is fantastic, grotesque, pictorial, or futuristic in style, the pictures will represent that style first (Favorsky, 1988:276), and then fill such stylistics with the semantics proposed by the plot. Such stylistic correspondence is the key concept and can be explored in many ways, including *conceptual* and *structural* aspects simultaneously. The *conceptual* aspects of word-picture adaptation imply the analysis of a literary work through recognizing, selecting and extracting key images, metaphors, and formal features from a given narrative, and transforming them into a visual counterpart. The verbal and visual aspects are correlated on different levels: time categories, rhythmical organization, symbolism, various levels of narration within a given novel or short story, range of details, genre, and dominant stylistic feature. The *structural* aspects are related to the materialization and implementation of these creative ideas by means of book design and technical features of the visual language. Such illustrations affect the reader's perception on an associative level and open his imagination. On the other hand, the failure to develop such stylistic verbal-visual conformity can lead to an impoverishment of a given text. The latter occurs as a result of a superficial representation or "explanation" of the plot with pictures and the artist's stylistic self-repetition from book to book whereby pictures may appear stylistically disconnected from the style of the narrative. I find it appropriate, thus, to borrow some of the principles of language-to-language translation in order to apply these principles to the intermedial translation.

In the cultural realm of Russian literature, book illustration has for the most part followed the principle of text-image *translation* and, as in the case of any linguistic translation, has not been able to ignore, distort or misrepresent the primary source in the original language. Thus, it would be illogical to lose a clear connection between a text and a picture that illustrates that text. However, such an approach supports also the possibility of *creative interpretations* of literary metaphor and its *adaptation* to the logic of visual language. In Eastern European culture, the illustration of literary fiction for adults has passed through several stages of development and continues this tradition into the present.

In the Western literary context, linguistic discourse has dominated the image, which may explain why books for adults don't tend to be illustrated. When books are accompanied by illustrations, particularly starting from the mid-20th century, pictures in books for adults acquired the function of a kind of free incarnation of an artist's fantasy, a sort of abstract reflection on the literary work, which inspired the artist to implement new creative ideas. The results of such inspirations have frequently turned out to be disjointed from the verbal story, and even if they are published along with the text, they look like independent artworks. So, book illustrations for adults have mutated to another genre of art — the so-called *stankovy*⁴ drawing (a drawing that can be based on a literary work but is perceived as standing on its own regardless of the text). As a result, this way of pictorializing a literary work no longer belongs to the genre of book illustration. In a way, we can relate such images to a type of illustration which is based on literary texts, but which is not intended directly to be inserted in books: Dali's works based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, V. Serov's drawings based on Krylov's fables, and many others.

Such *unpublished illustrations* have constituted interpretations of Calvino's narratives, opening an interesting branch in art, as these pictures initially were not intended to be published but were created as independent works *based on* Calvino's stories.

Therefore, given the opposite illustration-making approaches to Gogol's and Calvino's works, I must follow different ways in studying them. The materials of Gogol's narrative are analyzed concurrently with in-book illustrations that *translate* his works, while the pictures

⁴ From word 'stanok' that means a 'machine', as a tool for work, like lathe, but with respect to arts it means easel or etching/xylography press, i.e. a work created at the stanok (easel or press). As the English equivalent, it is called 'panel painting' [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panel_painting], the term which means slightly different thing and does not include stankovy graphic arts, drawings and original prints.

inspired by Calvino's narrative are viewed as its abstract accompaniment. This implies a totally different approach toward studying the verbal realm from which the pictures were developed: Gogol's work needs to be considered through historical research in conjunction with the semiotics of visual signs and *realistic-pictorial writing* in order to contextualize the emergence of the verbal images inherent in his discourse; Calvino's work needs to be examined through conceptual meanings underlying the *abstract-pictorial narrative* that has stimulated the emergence of the corresponding pictures.

Level of details

The present study is addressed to those professionals and students who deal with all possible types of visual adaptation of literary discourse, i.e. an audience that already has a formal education in the visual arts and will be able to grasp the meaning of what will be discussed here. I do not intend to explain the basic principles of drawing, visual composition, graphic techniques, how lines function, or differences between styles, such as decorative or realistic. It is assumed that one is already familiar with the general history of the arts and culture and has well-developed skills in relation to pictures in a variety of traditional techniques.

As we live in the age of electronic editions, online resources — such as encyclopaedias, catalogues, official websites, journals, etc. — form an integral part of academic communication and present a wide range of useful information considered to be relevant and reliable⁵ despite biases and widely held assumptions about their “unreliability”⁶, the latest being a consequence of a lack of knowledge about certain information systems. For instance, Wikipedia, in most cases, is edited by librarians, teachers and other professionals affiliated to their respective institutions,⁷ and therefore can provide reliable basic references. Open Access journals are

⁵ Cf. Eve, M. P. “Digital economics”, *Open access and the humanities: Contexts, controversies and the future* (pp. 43-85), Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316161012>; Hommrich, D. “Open Science in the Making”, *JCOM*, vol. 17, 2018, issue 02, <https://doi.org/10.22323/2.17020304>

⁶ Cf.; Frankland, J., & Ray, M. A. “Traditional versus open access scholarly journal publishing: An economic perspective”, *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 2017:49(1), 5-25. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jsp.49.1.5>

⁷ In fact, some libraries take the model of *Wikipedia* to make their official pages editable by anyone, since a single person who is responsible for the maintenance of a website of encyclopedic nature cannot be an expert in everything, so the other people from different fields can add their input with specialized information and appropriate references. The studies on the accuracy, errors, misleading statements of *Wikipedia* have revealed that they are more or less the same as in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. “What Wikipedia can do, unlike *Encyclopedia Britannica*, is offer a very detailed record of the controversies over certain pieces of knowledge. And it does so

peer-reviewed scholarly editions with an academic infrastructure,⁸ the reliability of which is sometimes questioned by institutions, as the professors' promotion and tenure process is based on the publications in for-pay journals,⁹ and by scholars who wish to publish in journals of prestige,¹⁰ — a reliable image of for-pay academic journals is needed to resist on the market.¹¹ The content of websites hosting encyclopaedias, archival data, online newspapers and journals, or specialised web pages is usually preserved through national archiving systems¹² in order to allow access to the information despite technological changes.

Since my study is interdisciplinary in nature, I include permalinks to appropriate pages which are “permanent” online resources, or are at least believed to be so at present, in light of the trend toward “digital preservation”. This allows me to address my discussion to a well-prepared reader versed in the visual arts, and avoiding long explanations or definitions of one or another term or some certain basic concepts, while concurrently providing additional resources for readers from other fields.

Some examples of editions with pictures, mentioned in the present study, appear with the following abbreviations, e.g. [ARCC: DC317. D67], meaning that a copy of a book is held at the Archives and Research Collection Center, at Western University, and can be found by that call number.

exceptionally well. A quick glance at any *Wikipedia* entry reveals not only what the current, ephemeral, status of a given piece of knowledge is; it also discloses the history of any discussions, resolutions, and subsequent alterations to the entry that have given rise to its current form [...]. *Wikipedia* allows us to read across time.” [Thomas, D., Brown, J.S., *A New Culture of Learning*, 2011, pp.45-47]. For example, such terms as [book illustration](#), [woodcut](#), [old master print](#), and so forth, can provide with basic understanding of the principles of these techniques, their historical background, and further references.

⁸ Cf.: Smith, Kevin L., and Katherine A. Dickson. *Open Access and the Future of Scholarly Communication: Policy and Infrastructure*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

⁹ Odell, J., H. Coates, and K. Palmer “Rewarding open access scholarship in promotion and tenure: Driving institutional change”, *CRLN-College & Research Libraries News*, vol 77, no 7 (2016): 322-325. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.77.7.9518>

¹⁰ Cf. Xia, Jingfeng. “A Longitudinal Study of Scholars Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Open-Access Journal Publishing”, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(3):615–624, 2010

¹¹ Cf. Tennant, J. P., et al. “The academic, economic and societal impacts of open access: An evidence-based review”, *F1000Research*, 2016: 5, 632. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.8460.3>; Suber, P. “What is open access?”, *Open access*, 2012 (1-28). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Retrieved from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/5cxsyzs58a5yx5q/9286.pdf?dl=0>; Tennant, J. P., et al. “A multi-disciplinary perspective on emergent and future innovations in peer review”, *F1000Research*, 2017: 6, 1151, <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.12037.3>

¹² Cf. *Digital Preservation*: <https://www.canada.ca/en/heritage-information-network/services/digital-preservation.html>

A note on copyright requirements and gender-neutral language

The [graduate program demands](#) that one must obtain permissions for any picture/photo included in a thesis, or provide references where the material can be accessed if permission was not obtained. I have included many visual materials in my work. In most cases, it is simply impossible to obtain permissions, when the reference is made to editions of the 20th century, since those publishing houses do not exist anymore, or artists of those illustrations died some time ago, or there is no contact information available. However, all the pictures were retrieved from online resources. Therefore, I have created PDFs with pictures and descriptions, included sources/links, and created shared files on my drive, so that they can always be accessed (I could not merely insert non-permanent links in my text, because the links stop working in the course of time, websites close or pictures disappear, etc.)

With respect to the requirements of using gender-neutral language in academic writing, and given the fact that English does not have a single word for both genders, a kind of *s-he*, I find it inconvenient to use every time (sometimes several times in a single sentence) such collocations of pronouns as “he or she”, “he/she”, “her/him”, “one”, “they”, etc. While not having any bias about genders, I prefer to use in my work a gender opposite to mine, so the reader will see “he” every time when I mean an unclear gender.

Terminology

Some terms used throughout the present study might be unclear or ambiguous because of their usage in such fields as literary studies, linguistics, and visual art. As for terminology used between disciplines, Bal and Bryson articulate the issue as follows:

Interdisciplinary research poses specific problems of methodology, which have to do with the status of the objects and the applicability of concepts designed to account for objects with a different status. Thus, a concept mainly discussed in literary theory—for example, metaphor—is relevant to the analysis of visual art, and refusing to use it amounts to an unwarranted decision to take all images as literal expressions. But such use requires a thinking-through of the status of signs and meaning in visual art [...]. Rather than borrowing the concept of metaphor from literary theory, then, an art historian will take it out of its unwarranted confinement within that specific discipline and first examine the extent to which metaphor, as a phenomenon of transfer of meaning from one sign onto another, should be generalized [...]. Rhythm and rhyme, for

example, although often used apropos visual images, are more medium-specific and their use for images is therefore more obviously metaphorical (Bal and Bryson, 176).

Following this principle, I use some terms that are interchangeable/applicable and have the same functions and features in connection to either literary or visual works. For instance, a variety of theories discuss the word *metaphor* in different ways but, in the end, in its simple form, I will use it according to its most common definition: the metaphor does not describe a possible world but rather has a figurative meaning that needs an interpretation, whereby the context and the interpretation make the metaphoric meaning; if a metaphoric description is understood literally, it appears false (Eco, 2005:257-259). Whatever theory is added, both the verbal and visual metaphor have that meaning as their basis. The word *stylistics* — as in linguistics, literary criticism and in connection to visual images — implies a range of aspects related to the tonal nuances, stylistic types of expression, choices and methods of linguistic organization resulting in an integral work of art. The understanding of stylistics of a given work relates meaning to the method or technique used to express that meaning: literature and verbal language, the visual arts and visual language. Or, for instance, the word *to read* has a quite simple and univocal meaning in linguistics as it does with regard to visual art. We say often, for example that a given object in a picture *is read* clearly/ impressively/ indistinctly/ hazily/ illegibly and so on. This refers to the degree of its visibility and the way it is presented in the picture, i.e. how clearly or weakly it is seen against the entire background of a sheet of paper in comparison to the other elements of the same picture. Therefore, many of the terms used in the present study do not require the support of definitions but can be understood as such, when one term from the linguistic realm can transfer its known meaning to the visual arts.

Furthermore, I am including in the notes some Russian or Ukrainian terms that are untranslatable literally into English and need the explanations of the ethnographic, cultural or linguistic nature.

Composition of chapters

This thesis consists of three parts. Part I discusses the outside and the inside of illustration-making. Part II analyses specific examples of relationships between literary and visual elements. Part III presents the method of intermedial adaptation in practice.

Part I includes 7 sections which present the methodology and theoretical framework of illustration studies. Here, I will explore such issues as the physicality of expression and perception, mind-hand connections in artistic expression, the balance of invested-received energy in a work of art, and the power of pictures. Some sections of this part examine the concept of simultaneity of reading and visualizing as this pertains to a book with pictures, as well the relations between creative impression, art, and the market, i.e. the impact of the industry and target audience on the way books are created and perceived. This part also discusses the interaction of two media, presenting the indispensability of dialogue between the style of a text and the style of corresponding pictures — a concept that I will develop into a clarification of the *method* of word-picture adaptation. This will require the study of both literary and visual aspects and the steps that follow. I will also consider how verbal-visual relations occur and function, where they originate, and what happens to the reader's perception. These concepts will be combined with concrete examples from books and pictures in order to make palpable the practical implementation of bookmaking.

Part II includes 5 sections. Some of the sections deal with specific examples of word-picture translations of some parts from Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*, and Calvino's *The Invisible Cities*. My study of literary principles and features will concentrate on fantastic elements, relations between the real and the fantastic, levels of abstraction, pictorial writing, the correspondences between the literary and visual planes, types of expression and styles, and the principle of montage. These aspects of artistic communication undergo a process of transformation in illustrations and therefore are subject to the study of visual images. When it comes to pictures, the focus will be on their origins, historical and aesthetic aspects of bookmaking, physical tokens, styles and artistic techniques of expression. Such aspects are viewed as essential components of making the verbal tangible, i.e. types of illustration-making and intermedial relations between a given text and a picture.

This part will provide a comparative analysis of Gogol's and Calvino's respective narratives, the symbolism inherent in their visual-verbal images, as well as relations among elements of Gogol's poetics — a phantasmagoria of the reality of life (cf. M. Gus) — and Calvino's "paintings with words" (cf. F. Ricci). The overarching principle underlying my approach is that pictorial expression – both verbal and visual – is an integral part of books that embody these authors' works.

Part III includes 8 short sections. Against the theoretical background established in Part I, the second part deals with the types and steps of the *practical implementation* of word-picture adaptations. The sections are based on the opinions of certain professionals in the field, Vitaly Mitchenko¹³ and Oleg Prihodko,¹⁴ and proceed with my explanations of how the style of a given text can be transformed into its visual counterpart, which is shown with the examples of stylistically different works.

Research Questions

The present study will address the following questions. Why are books perceived through the simultaneity of reading and visualizing? What is the role of the visual for the verbal? The secondary questions or sub-questions will include the following considerations. What are the implications of making pictures? What is the role of the illustrator in a book project? And how is the illustration perceived when it stands along a fiction text? What does the reading process imply when it comes to interacting with illustrated books? How does the reading process relate to human body?

Concrete examples of words and pictures, as well as the methodology used for verbal-visual adaptation, will illustrate the comprehensive method of intermedial translation.

The comparative part aims to answer the following question: in what ways do the works of authors so different as Gogol and Calvino find a common denominator in their “painted words”? The discussion moves on to some more practical questions and includes such considerations as what can be done beyond a mere comparison. Does the purpose of comparing Gogol’s and Calvino’s narratives consist in generating a theoretical conclusion? How could such research be used in practice? Therefore, the purpose of my comparative analysis consists in developing a descriptive model that shows how an illustrator can create visual interpretations of the verbal narratives. The point here is to explain how literary analysis can find its visual counterpart on different levels: pictorial narration, fantastic images, and models of visibility vs invisibility in created images.

¹³ [Vitaly Mitchenko](#) is a professor of historical types of calligraphy at the National Academy of Arts in Kyiv, font designer, calligrapher, and illustrator. In the interview that I conducted for the present study, he explains his approach for word-picture adaptation with the example of his illustrations for Gogol’s *Viy*.

¹⁴ Oleg Prihodko is a recognized screenwriter with 40 years of work experience, and an external teacher of dramaturgy at the Theater and Cinema Institute in Kyiv. In the interview that I conducted for the present study, he expresses his reflections on the relations between art and industry, which is also the discussion of one of my chapters in Part I.

Literature Review

Primary sources

N. Gogol: *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka* (1831 – 1832)

I. Calvino: *Invisible Cities* (1972)

A note on texts in the original language and translation

Unless otherwise specified, for Gogol's texts in Russian, I use *Full Collection of Works* (PSS) in 14 vol., Moscow-Leningrad, 1937-1952; vol.1, *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*, 1940. I refer to the following translated edition: *The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, in 2 vol., transl. by C. Garnett, edited by L.J. Kent, Chicago-London, 1985. For Calvino's texts in Italian, I use *Le città invisibili*, Torino: Einaudi, 1972; and I refer to the edition in translation *Invisible Cities*, transl. by W. Weaver, New York-London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974.

Many translations have been used from published sources. Russian-language or Italian-language sources pertaining to various artistic theories, which do not exist in English and the related quotations which are included in this study, are translated by me.

Secondary Sources

Critical literature on Gogol's and Calvino's poetics is wide and diverse, covers many aspects and follows different approaches: from sociological analysis to psychology, from structuralism to symbolism, from the comparison of styles and influences of their literary predecessors to linguistic nuances. For example, an abundant number of studies discusses Gogol's influence on the emergence and development of the "natural" school style and his impact on writers of subsequent generations — in particular Dostoevsky and then later the Russian symbolists with their extreme emphasis on physiological details.¹⁵ The other critical studies deal with the detailed analysis of the plot, the incorporation of national characteristics and costumes, determine the forms of relations between Gogol's style and his literary environment in different periods of his life, and messages that stand behind one or another motif.

¹⁵ The major studies are summarized, and further stylistic comparisons are developed in: Vinogradov, V.V. *Evoluzija ruskogo naturalizma. Gogol i Dostoevsky*, in: Vinogradov, *Poetika russkoy literaturi*, Moscow: Nauka, 1976, pp.3-187.

In the present study, I focus on a very specific aspect of Gogol's and Calvino's art, namely, the visual characteristics of their written images and pictures that interpret visually their narratives. From here, the range of critical studies has been narrowed down to the following authors.

Andrei Belyi, *Masterstvo Gogolja*, Gos. Izdat.: Moscow – Leningrad, 1934; English translation: *Gogol's Artistry*, transl. by Christopher Lee Colbath, a doctoral dissertation, University of California, 2005.

Belyi himself says that this book was written not for readers but for writers. The particular beauty and value of this work is that it is written by a writer about another writer — both are artists of unique vision and mastery of the word. Belyi re-discovers the inner regularities and relations in those features of Gogol's writing that, on first glance, seem to be disorganized. Belyi deconstructs the nature of written words and reveals the mechanisms of how sounds, rhythms and the visual are linked, which effect they make, and why they are perceived by the reader who does not entirely (consciously) realize what exactly is being perceived. These attentive analyses rediscover in a way those elements of literary works that the reader might have known for a long time but has been unable to ponder as profoundly is done by Belyi. The latter analyzes Gogol's vision-based descriptions, symbolic elements, and the mytho-poetic nuances that constitute Gogol's artistic imagery and craft of writing.

Maguire, R.A., *Exploring Gogol*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994. This study approaches Gogol's art of writing from many angles, but the most relevant for my work are the chapters "The Art of Seeing" and "From Eye to Word", both exploring the nature of Gogol's writing and thinking in visual terms, the way the writer constructs his verbal images through seeing, the representation of the verbal in terms of visual pictures, the descriptions of some characters as "visual" beings who inhabit a scrupulously described physical world, and the incorporation of an invisible (non-represented) but "seeing" narrator. The book also discusses the creation of scenes on counterpoints of the visual and the verbal, where the pictorial often becomes more powerful than the verbal, which is viewed as Gogol's main stylistic method.

The theoretical account of Yuri Mann, whose works focus on Gogol's different stylistic and structural particularities, form the core source for those parts of my thesis that discuss Gogol's theater performances, his poetics and include: *Komediya Gogoly Revizor*, Moscow, 1966

(Gogol's comedy *Government Inspector*); and *Poetika Gogolj*, Moscow: Hudozestvennaja literatura, 1978 (Poetics of Gogol)

Nemirovich-Danchenko wrote an extensive theoretical account of theater and the experience of staging; the development of adaptations of Gogol's works is described in: Nemirovich-Danchenko, *Rozdenie Teatra* (The birth of theater) Moscow: Pravda, 1989; as well as discussed in some parts of his correspondence with Stanislavsky in: Nemirovich-Danchenko, *Tvorcheskoe nasledie* (Creative heritage), tom 1-4, published by the Moscow Art Theater (MHAT).

The historical study, bibliographical systematization and stylistic periodization of the visual adaptations of Gogol's works began long ago and include not only published books with illustrations but also paintings and drawings based on Gogol's works, pieces of handwritten calligraphy or single artworks (a list of major studies is incorporated in Part II, note 274).

Todorov, T. *The Fantastic*, transl. by R. Howard, London: Cleveland, 1973. This book is fundamental for the discussion of the fantastic in Gogol's and Calvino's narrative. It covers stylistic aspects of the genre, main characteristics, and includes structural concepts, matters of aesthetics, methods according to which the fantastic is formed in different literary works, the application of those categories to other artistic languages. Todorov provides the definition of the fantastic along with an exploration of the principles of creating illusions or the marvelous.

Ricci, F., *Painting with Words, Writing with Pictures: Word and Image in the Work of Italo Calvino*, Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

When it comes to studying Calvino's pictorial writing and in comparing his poetics with Gogol's narrative, Ricci's book is my main source of reference. It discusses a variety of aspects related to the way verbal images are generated: the perception of things through seeing (or imagism), the transformation of mental images into visual texts, the boundaries between two expressive languages (word and image), visual patterns and ways of seeing, writing as the act of describing and converting visual images, and so-called painted stories or writing like painting.

Grundtvig, B., M. McLaughlin, L.W. Petersen, ed. *Image, Eye and Art in Calvino*, Oxford: Legenda, 2007. This collection of essays opens a wide discussion of Calvino's works and considers such aspects of verbal-visual relations as colours and landscapes in visual narrative, the visibility of written images, the brain's "mental cinema" as a formative tool of narrative, signs of visuality and writing with paintings of absence.

Barenghi, M., G. Canova, B. Falcetto. *La visione dell'invisibile*, Milano: Mondadori, 2002. This collection of essays approached Calvino's *Invisible Cities* from the point of view of their invisibility, i.e., the creation of verbal images that are addressed to our vision but at the same time escape from our vision because they are presented with absence and silence. Some essays discuss the concept of cancelled cities created through the logic of creative imagination, or the fantasy involved in deleting the real cities and constructing the imaginary ones.

These last two books — *Image, Eye and Art in Calvino*, and *La visione dell'invisibile* — are fundamental for my study because of their development and investigation of the vision-based method of writing that was inherent to both Gogol's and Calvino's narratives.

The only existing study that compares Gogol's and Calvino's narrative is a short essay "Calvino e Gogol" in: Mario, A., *Italo Calvino: quale autore laggiù attende la fine?* Florence: Firenze University Press, 2015.

This essay describes the editions of Gogol's works in translation that might had been available to Calvino, and presents brief correspondences between Gogol's sentences in Italian translation and some of Calvino's phrases, as well some of the characters presented in their works, while the systems of stylistic methods and visuality are not discussed.

The review of sources that discuss intermediality and approach word-picture translation is incorporated in Part I.1. *Theory in practice, and practice in theory*.

Part I

Inside and Outside of Illustration Making

Introduction

- I.1. Theory in practice, and practice in theory
 - I.2. Creative impression, physicality of expression and perception in book art
 - I.3. Perception through simultaneity of reading and visualizing
 - I.4. What does a realistic illustration imply?
 - I.5. Between art and market
 - I.6. Style of text – style of pictures
 - I.7. Approaches to illustrating fiction
- Conclusion: the definition of illustration

Introduction

To those who are outsiders to the field of professional bookmaking — in particular, those without a formal education in illustration — and those within various theoretical disciplines, including literary criticism, many parts of the discussion that follows may seem superfluous or affected by a subjective viewpoint (“subjective” in this case implies a viewpoint of a “practitioner” in the field). However, such an opinion would contradict the basic principles of word-picture adaptation for publishing, the complexity of which involves the understanding of artistic decision-making that absorbs both theoretical and practical perspectives simultaneously and includes many phenomena that remain largely overlooked or ignored.

An illustrator is someone who makes pictures – at least so the majority would think. Still, what does it imply, to make pictures for books? One may assume that an illustrator does not have any background in literary studies. However, the work of a bookmaker is very much engaged with literature. An analogy here would be the fact that an illustrator's lack of professional medical knowledge does not have to prevent a trained and thorough artist from drawing the human body, skeleton, muscles and movement in meticulous detail. Many fields can be approached from different directions, offering fresh perspectives on the familiar.

A professionally made word-picture adaptation always begins with a slow and attentive reading and an analysis of a literary work, which consists of disassembling the text into parts in order to identify and extract from it: 1) style and genre of the narrative, 2) possible pictorial images and metaphors that would stimulate a creative reaction, 3) various literary planes that would be presented differently in pictures, 4) the type and range of associations and details that would find a correspondence in pictures, 5) the rhythmical organization of the narrative which would establish the rhythms of each single illustration and the entire book, and 6) the main literary concept(s), i.e., a central level of meaning constituting the core idea of the entire series of illustrations. Besides, the work of an illustrator is associated with preliminary research so that before (seriously) approaching a literary work, the illustrator studies the historical and social background of a given writer, critique of his work, all the existing visual adaptations of that work, including cinematic or theatrical productions if any. In this manner, a new creative interpretation can come into being.

Therefore, given the role of the artist in the production of an illustrated book or, broadly speaking, the role of the visual in converting the verbal, it is important to explore numerous, often hidden aspects of word-picture adaptation. The following will help to map a preparatory background in order to yield a more direct analysis of specific examples.

I.1. Theory in practice, and practice in theory

In contrast to what happens in the field of literary criticism, works of visual art (painting, sculpture, decorative art, etc.) are studied through the materiality of their media since their final product is always subordinated to what the material allows to implement. In this sense, the book-object is a hybrid form of art that merges two expressive languages — verbal and visual — and binds them both to a common material artifact. When rendering intangible ideas visible and making them present in our world of physical items, the book-object generates verbal-visual relations which become essential and change the primary meaning that has emerged as an intangible substance. Therefore, “the study of such [verbal] works cannot be separated from the study of artifacts” (Tanselle, 1998, xiii). This is true with respect to any physical book but even more so with regard to items containing elements of visual art, and in particular the originals — such as ink drawings, miniatures, etchings and engravings, handwritten parts and bindings — since they are created by means of human interaction which implies “artistic decisions that affect the finished picture” (Tanselle, 1998, xi). Therefore, each book — when it merges these two forms of communication — can be considered as a unique artwork.

An exclusively theoretical approach (in its pure sense, like criticism in literature) does not work for the study of verbal-visual interpretations when applied to book illustrations. The critical analysis of a work of visual art, as J. Elkins suggests, resembles a distorted translation where a creator and a critic “speak in different languages.” Here, understanding can occur only on the level of certain general terms, but the language of art is untranslatable into the language of terminology and definitions (Elkins, 122-127).

The artist is the creator of beautiful things. ... The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things. ... The highest as the lowest form of criticism is a mode of autobiography. (Oscar Wilde’s preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

Thus, visual art criticism is often reduced to descriptions or evaluations, while “even the most naked and seemingly objective verbal description of a picture is an interpretation. [Since] two observers do not read a picture in exactly the same way, they emphasize different pictorial elements, they give priorities to different syntagms and relate the picture to different codes” (Lund, 33). As Arnheim explains,

the description of the scene becomes an interpretation. The writer uses the idiosyncrasies of his medium to guide the reader through a scene, just as a film can move the spectator from detail to detail and thereby reveal a situation by a controlled sequence (Arnheim, 1969:248; quoted in Lund, 33).

The study of illustration can be developed in several streams.

Theoretical works on pictures — by such authors as Arnheim (*Art and Visual Perception*, 1974), Mitchell (*Picture Theory*, 1994; *Iconology*, 1986; *The Language of Images*, 1980), Gombrich (*Art and Illusion*, 1961), Eco (*La Definizione dell'Arte*, 1984), Bryson (*Vision and Painting*, 1983), Lotman (*About Art*, 1998), Barthes, Bal, and other studies on the image, vision and visual perception — do not deal with book illustrations as a specific category of visual art. Some ideas produced by these theories, can on rare occasions be useful for the discussion of illustrated books, but in most cases, they cannot be applied to the concept of illustration because of a fundamental difference: this theoretical discourse deals with the symbols or concepts of pictorial representation in artworks which depict objects or humans, but not a fictional narrative. (This key difference — as is also pointed out in Lund's *Text as Picture* — i.e. the concept of realistic fiction illustration vs the concept of pictorial representation from nature, is discussed later in I.4. *What does a realistic illustration imply?*)

One form of illustration studies exists within the field of semiotics and views the principles of linguistic creation, either verbal or visual, and visual representation. There are many examples of analyses applicable to book illustration practice, focusing on meaning (or extra meanings) and the relations of the visual form and verbal content. In this case, the bibliography is wide and includes such authors as J. Lotman (*Inside the thinking worlds*, 1996; *Collection of works. Language, Semiotics, Culture*, 1994), M. Bal (*See Signs: The Use of Semiotics for the Understanding of Visual Art*, 1998; *Semiotics and Art History*, with N. Bryson), N. Bryson (*Vision and Painting. The Logic of the Gaze*, 1983), U. Eco (*La Struttura Assente; Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, 1986; *The Limits of Interpretation*, 1994), E. Gombrich (*The image and the eye*, 1982; *Art, Perception, and Reality*, 1970), R. Barthes (*Image, music, text*, 1977), and others. The difficulty of applying this approach consists in the necessity to adapt these generic theories to the nuances and principles of a very specific artistic language – adult fiction illustration – whose work occurs through materiality and applied art techniques. Thus, the consideration of practical questions and materiality is indispensable. Some of the most recent publications present collections of essays that attempt to bridge semiotics and book

illustration: *New Directions in Picturebook Research* (ed. T. Colomber, B. Kummerling-Meibauer, C. Silva-Diaz, New York and London: Routledge, 2010), and *More Words about Pictures* (ed. Hamer, N., P. Nodelman, and M. Reimer, New York and London: Routledge, 2017). However, their entire discussion is about children's books that are created and function according to different principles than adult verbal-visual codes: in terms of stylistics, visual logic, development of intermedial relations, narrative structure of the visual story, and finally the explanatory, rather than interpretative, approach, oriented toward a different target audience and age group. This is like comparing cartoons for children with films for adults. [Travel of an Ant](#) (1984), a masterpiece of animation art, is well-drawn and includes an instructive story about an ant's return to his home and about friendship. However, a theory that studies such an animation could not be taken as a reference to comment on adult films. Nevertheless, even though the references to studies of children's picture books can be only occasional, some aspects of such investigations offer important observations about the synergy between words and pictures which are seen as a union of meanings providing the readers with a more enhanced aesthetical experience than in the case of texts or pictures perceived separately. Such a concept is appropriate for all books that contain images.

The next research stream that attempts to theorize on the question of illustration falls into a very restricted area of bookmaking that may not always be applicable to illustrating texts. For instance, E. Goldsmith's *Research into Illustration: An Approach and a Review* (1984) approaches pictures through psychology and discusses only the illustrations that are supportive of a text and needed for educational purposes, as well as the comprehensibility of the verbal. This type of illustration, meant to explain certain passages taken from a given text, is used either for non-fiction or children's literature and has nothing to do with creative interpretations and intermediality, the latter two being a fundamental feature of illustration as a medium of art.

Another stream studies illustration from a historical perspective, concentrating on the lives of artists,¹⁶ works of book art, the styles of book illustrators, exhibitions and catalogues of

¹⁶ "The roots of the 19th-century monograph can be traced back to [The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects](#) by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). This is because [...] *The Lives* was the first and most esteemed model in the West for writing about an artist's life and work", — Gabriele Guercio writes in his study on the artist's

graphic art, the history of methods and bookmaking in general. For example, A. Sidorov's *Russian Book of the 19th century* (1926), and Y. Gerchuk's *Soviet Book Graphics* (1986) present a detailed overview of works by major illustrators of the 19th and 20th centuries. Many monographs do nothing else but describe or analyze existing works of literary or visual art when discussing a book with pictures. This, of course, is an important part of academic work that forms the basis of future research. Even though historical research is meant to discover and describe the past, it goes beyond merely descriptive practice as it interprets and gives meaning to certain artistic facts within their context. The purpose of historical research, as summarized by Connaway, is to provide a clear understanding of the item being described, identify general tendencies and "historical awareness" which includes three basic principles: difference, context, and process:

Difference is the 'recognition of the gulf which separates our own age from all previous ages'. Context means that the setting for the subject of the enquiry must be retained. Process is 'the relationship between events over time,' which makes the events more relevant 'than if they were viewed in isolation'. (Connaway, et al., 324).

In this sense, in the study of a particular writer and the existing visual accompaniments to his work, each given book-item stands on its own. According to certain ideas from receptive aesthetics, a text is not changeable but its meanings are since the reception of that text is constantly adjusting itself to the historical and aesthetic changes of a given epoch and an individual reader's perception (Borev, 22). Therefore, a book with text and pictures represents a physical object created in a particular time and location and viewed through contextual interactions, on the one hand and, on the other, it embodies a literary component that remains constant on its own, until it is visually re-interpreted by a new reader-artist.

When applied to the analysis of book illustration, historical research, apart from describing a given item, explores the context in which it was created (historical time, geographic location, possible influences of social and artistic trends, techniques/tools/materials available in that particular time and place, etc.). Chronology "represents the first step in the process of historical research", helps to understand the long-term development of illustration and bridges these discoveries with current theories/principles of reception and practices of bookmaking in order to "provide material or data for the steps to follow. [...] It is the process by which a researcher

monographs, which includes the history of the evolution of this model of writing about art. Such monographs discuss the artistic proficiency/ styles in a given epoch (Guercio, 24).

is able to reach a conclusion about the probable truth of an event in the past by studying objects available for observation in the present” (Connaway, et al., 325). When used to analyze books with pictures, therefore, historical research can contribute to our understanding and appreciation of past models of bookmaking in conjunction with contemporary aesthetics.

The explanation of the next stream that studies illustration can be borrowed from the approach of studying architecture. This functional approach examines artifacts from the point of view of their form and the functionality of this form. In other words, it studies how the functionality of buildings dictates their shape and materials used. Even though art historians have proven that “function and form do not necessary go hand in hand” (Mango, 1974, p.10) and many other factors influence the formation of an item, the functional approach can be applied when one is studying books as artifacts. For instance, one can study how the practical usage of specific materials available in a certain time and place formed the style of handwriting, drawing, printing or reproduction of pictures, etc. This approach correlates with applied research and provides practical analyses or information that can be immediately used to solve practical problems, rather than merely describing the events or items from the past for knowledge’s sake (Berkeley National Lab). Therefore, both functional and applied approaches study the materiality of graphic techniques, methods of visual expression, their implementation and functionality through typography or printing, including manuals on different aspects of book production. The latter works are written, in many cases, by practicing graphic artists who attempt to comment on their methods and on general issues of word-picture adaptations. Such studies can be put under a common umbrella entitled “How books with pictures work”. The bibliography on the subject is wide, but the fundamentals include the works of most influential authors, such as Eric Gill (*An Essay on Typography*), Jan Tschichold (*The Form of the Book*, 1995), Gyorgy Kepes (*Language of Vision*, 1944), Paul Rand (*Thoughts on Design*, 1947), Albert Kapr (*The Art of Lettering*, 1983). The theory and practice of Eastern-European illustration, which have continued the tradition of adult fiction illustration into the present, include the works of such leading graphic artists as V. Favorsky (*Literary-theoretical heritage*, 1988, and *About arts, book, and engraving*, 1986, on the issues of visual composition and main aspects of book illustration); Alexandre Benois (he introduced the term “art of book” as relations of all the elements, and his articles have significantly contributed to the development

of critical analysis¹⁷); E. Kibrik, who wrote on the work of the illustrator; and V. Mitchenko who wrote on calligraphy and book fonts.

One more stream of approaching book illustration is related to publication, or more broadly the publishing industry, which includes the book market and book reception. This approach is exemplified by such authors as W. Benjamin, Johanna Drucker, Lev Manovich, and others. In my view, this is a fundamental (and very practical) method of studying illustration-making, without which we would overlook both the means by which books are made and the target audience to which the books are addressed.

Nevertheless, a wide gap exists between theory and practice. Theoreticians, literary critics and art historians strive to oppose themselves to the practicing artists and to question the reliability of written accounts by those who practice the arts in different media. On the other hand, artists tend to think that theoreticians understand little about the whole creative process and their theories are not always applicable in practice.¹⁸ The difficulty of finding a common language has to do with the fact that theoreticians apply rational approaches to the conceptualization of art, despite the fundamentally pre-rational and pre-semantic aspects of art in its early evolving stage.¹⁹ Art starts to be rational only at the point when it comes to implementing technically those initial irrational impulses.

¹⁷ One of these articles is on the goals of graphic art within a book, “Zadachi grafiki”, *Iskusstvo i pechatnoe delo*, 1910, n.2-3, p.41-48.

¹⁸ The studies on philosophy of art tend to view the artistic experience as a key to understanding arts, as for example Susanne K. Langer suggests in *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*, New York: Charles Scribner’s sons, 1953. “In the first place, philosophy of art should, I believe, begin in the studio, not the gallery, auditorium, or library. Just as the philosophy of science required for its proper development the standpoint of the scientist, not of men [...] who saw ‘science’ as a whole, but without any conception of its real problems and working concepts, so the philosophy of art requires the standpoint of the artist to test the power of its concepts and prevent empty or naive generalizations. The philosopher must know the arts, so to speak, ‘from the inside’.” (Langer, ix). This viewpoint is also summarized in Jelinek’s book *This Is Not Art*: “It can only be artists who are responsible for defining art, as it is scientists who are responsible for defining science, not commentators, philosophers or historians” (Jelinek, 2014:160).

¹⁹ Some may question whether, and to what degree, art is pre-rational. In order to address this doubt, I should begin with a question: where does a creative idea come from? I support the viewpoint that the creative process is combinatorial in the sense that it includes both emotional unpredictability and self-control simultaneously (p.154, Tokarchuk’s method). I will summarize the examples spread over different parts of the present study, which illustrate what happens in the stage of digestion of the initial mental images and their conversion into any kind of concrete verbal or visual representations. A creative idea that generates further concepts can frequently be formless and inexplicable with words. The examples of such include: untranslatability of art into the terminology (p.18); the analysis of Dostoevsky’s manuscripts; the discourse on the relations between language and thinking process through chaotic signs, movements or sounds; the characteristics of a creative idea that

The endeavor to legitimate criticism, when judging the arts, and to distinguish the respective competencies of artists and theoreticians, giving more weight to the latter, has generated tension between both groups. What Don Norman articulates with respect to the general field of design can be observed in many other fields as well: the same work could be evaluated and criticized from two totally different perspectives when viewed by an academic and by a professional in the field — the former considering theories that underlie the field and stopping there, the latter seeing the applicability of research findings at the work-place.²⁰ This is the fundamental concern that tends to convince either side in this “confrontation” that the theory of book art develops one way while the practice of art goes another. The theory presents a glance from the outside and speaks about outer problematics of aesthetics and cultures, fitting existing works of art into concepts or stylistic trends, and claiming that without their input the artists

consists of semantic unclarity; the necessity of passage to verbalize or visualize these ideas (p.39, and further notes); the example of Calvinian image-creation act that provides an explanation of the transition from original/abstract thought to a concrete description (part II.3). Another point in this respect has to do with creative improvisation (p.155-157, Tokarchuk’s method) and comes as a result of an artistic surprise from the text being illustrated (Part III, *A visual commentary on one Gogol’s phrase*), when the initial mental image does not have yet a precise explanation or shape. It becomes precise during the process of conversion and materialization of those first impressions. In fact, I put this practice as step 1 in making illustrations and call it “artistic surprise” (p.307, *Stages of word-picture adaptation*), without which any creativity turns out to be an artisan execution. Besides, the entire act of creating an artwork, from beginning to end, involves one’s body, mind, and emotions (part I.2.), which is also related to self-destruction when destroying one’s own artwork (p.48) and necessitates “to like” the story in a specific way with emotional involvement (p.49, Fellini). To conclude, I should remind that art affects our rational and emotional receptors (e.g. p.58, 145-6, pictures that are grasped on the level of mood, like a poem). But in order to provoke any emotions at all, an artwork requires the artist’s emotional investment: this leads back to the discussion of the reciprocity of action and reaction (p.44-5, Stanislavski), resonating with Brodsky’s words (p.89). However, what comes next after this intuitive step is very structure-based (parts I.6 and I.7)

²⁰ “[T]he term ‘research’ has two very different meanings in design. One is the way it is interpreted by practitioners: design research is the early studies of the needs and characteristics of the people for whom the product or service is being produced [...]. The other is the interpretation by the university academic community [...], where research is an activity aimed at increasing our fundamental knowledge in a field or of producing new concepts, ideas, and realizations [...]. Both have gaps. [...] [T]he relationship between the knowledge gained and the design of the product is often forgotten. Those who do design studies are often applied social scientists—not designers—and they often fail to frame either their studies or their results in ways that are meaningful to the design team. Many design teams simply ignore their reports. [...] in many design firms, the design studies are done jointly with the design team, so this gap does not exist. But I find this to be the exception, not the rule. [...] Research, on the other hand, is aimed at the development of new knowledge and concepts [...]. But they are seldom practical. Here the gap between research and practice is fundamental: I do not believe it can be bridged easily. This is because the goals, motives, and even personalities of the research teams differ from those of the practitioners. One wants deep understanding, the other wants to know what to do next. One is happy as soon as an idea has been demonstrated, [the other] wants something complete, robust, and reliable. Researchers are incapable of delivering this; they are too curious, too driven to learn new knowledge. The practitioner is too practical. [...] The research-practice gap can only be overcome by an intermediary: a translation team that translates the research knowledge into practical realizations that the product teams can develop and deploy.” // Don Norman, inventor of the term “User Experience”, interview “Design Research and Innovation”, *Johnny Holland*, Jan 11, 2011, retrieved on Oct 2, 2019 <<http://johnnyholland.org/2011/01/design-research-and-innovation-an-interview-with-don-norman/>>

would remain unknown and unstudied. However, critics would not have the material for their claims without artists and their artworks, so both seem to be in need of each other. Though “genius is the talent that gives art its rules,” as Kant suggests when referring to the fine arts in his *Critique of Judgement*. Creative thought is unpredictable, and there are other things that happen beyond theoretical discussions. And yet, if we contemplate the fruitful collaboration between theory and practice, we should leave their deep-rooted prejudices aside, even though it is always hard to break traditions.

Given that an academic work needs to describe existing works of art rather than prescribing how a given book could/should be illustrated, I am proposing an alternative way which consists in commenting on literary works both verbally and visually. “Visual commentary” is not the making of pictures themselves, but rather commentary on the practical methods and techniques of how to transform a given text into pictures. I would like to demonstrate that even in research work, there is space to design something new. To an even greater extent, this concerns studies of illustration — the field that synthesises both theoretical knowledge of the visual arts and the practical skills inherent in making art books. If one of these skills is missing, art does not happen: without enough craftsmanship preparation, the work remains on the level of concepts (or “conceptual art”, as is called today), but if one has developed craft skills and yet lacks the knowledge of the variety of artistic approaches, the work remains on a well-executed artisan level that is missing creative thought and artistic taste since great works of art educate us on how to generate new ideas. An artist can just continue multiplying his works, making one picture book after another, but artistic practice without understanding how and why one works can be harmful (Arnheim, 3), since the search for practical ways of materializing different ideas is closely associated with the theoretical problems of art.²¹ As Mitchenko, too, explains: when an artist is simply trying to write a calligraphic composition without understanding the formation of historical types, their structural features, and an in-depth knowledge of visual

²¹ Figuratively speaking, one could not write a book about the profession of a seaman, if one has never smelled the sea. As Arnheim confirms, “true” art (which is made with the purpose of a creative search and personal development) presumes “full immersion” and devotion to one’s work with every part of one’s body, mind and soul. One cannot become an artist (neither in one’s mind nor through the work of one’s hands) after attending a few workshops. And when one does become a professional artist, one cannot just stop artistic practice since this is not a mere “occupation” or “employment” but rather the physiological and psychological necessity of expressing oneself in artistic language, i.e., a vocation. Thus, an art theory or theoretical concept can benefit from personal artistic experience, and vice versa (Arnheim, 4).

theory, he simply cannot find the way to follow in his artwork and to master an aesthetic and harmonious notion.²² In other words, new creative works are always developed from the earlier ones.²³ Without such knowledge of historical types (which necessarily includes the theory of visual sign) new creations might appear to be lacking substance, poor in taste and weak in artistic power, i.e., they would be missing the fundamental structure, which is the basis of an artistic work. Furthermore, since we are speaking here about adaptations, or word-picture translation, what can the theory of translation exist for, if not for practical application?

There has been a long tradition of art education, starting from the early Renaissance, which has always united art theory and history with artistic practice.²⁴ Students had to balance theory/history lectures *and* in-studio classes in order to implement that knowledge in creative works. Both kinds of classes were compulsory, and without them, a degree could not be completed. Such a tradition has continued to be part of the formal art education until present in some parts of the world.²⁵ The absence of knowledge by some later theoreticians of such a

²² An interview with V.Mitchenko, led by K.Korchagina, a designer at the publishing house Laurus in Kyiv, "About Researches on Handwriting", Oct 2019, *IDEALIST media*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XV6yY1aTb2Y>

²³ For example, in contemporary aesthetics, medieval Cyrillic manuscripts, and Byzantine tradition in general have been widely used by artists to create new design through the elaboration and adaptation of these ancient styles. There are many artist-calligraphers who take old titles in *vayz* script and re-develop them, creating [new decorative works of art](#) that appear contemporary and respond to the modern design of logotypes.// One of the main features of the script *vayz*, used for titles, was that single letters in the row were made small to be inserted in the spaces of other letters, creating a kind of ornament from letters. Examples of the *vayz* script for titles, used from the 11th century and up to the first printed books are: the [manuscripts](#) held in the National Library of Serbia; *Irmologija*, 16th century (surely a copy from an earlier ms); one held in the Matica Srpska Library, COBISS.SR-ID – 7121159, e.g. [folio 6](#), [folio 13](#); another example *Sihologija Kiprijana Rachanina*, 18th century (a copy from a medieval original), COBISS.SR-ID – 7413255, [folio 3](#); the manuscripts held in the National Library of Russia: [РНБ. Кир.-Бел. 64/69](#); [РНБ. Кир.-Бел. 37/42](#); [РНБ. Сол. 128/128](#); in the Library of Serbia [Prizrenski rukopis Dusanovog zakonika](#) (RS 688); [Ivan Fyodorov's first printed books](#), created by the model of manuscripts.

²⁴ None other than Leonardo Da Vinci himself exemplifies the balanced Renaissance tradition by associating the making of art with theoretical knowledge: "Those who are in love with practice without knowledge are like the sailor who gets into a ship without rudder or compass and who never can be certain whether he is going. Practice must always be founded on sound theory [...]. The painter who draws merely by practice and by eye, without any reason, is like a mirror which copies every thing placed in front of it without being conscious of their existence." ([The Complete Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci, 1888: 19-20](#))

²⁵ For example, the educational system of the National Academy of Art and Architecture in Kyiv is built by the model of classical Italian academy (the latter has simplified its program at the present). The undergraduate program in visual arts lasts 6 full-time years (because 4 years — the common length of contemporary programs all over the Western world — are not enough to comprehend such a complex training), where students have compulsory classes every day from 9 am to 6 pm. Every single morning there are 3-hour classes in theory and history of art: systematic and consistent, from ancient, to medieval, to Renaissance, to modern, and covering geographic regions from the Far and Near East to the West, and from the North to the South (for some reason, the art of North America is not studied at all, maybe because it derived from the principles of European school and did not influence much backwards, the European art, except of what is meant by [Americanization](#)). Then, every afternoon is divided between classes in studio: academic drawing and painting (regardless of the faculty), and

system²⁶ (or, in some cases, their desire to establish their opinion as more reliable — “Some people try to be tall by cutting off the heads of others”, — P. Yogananda), has produced a discrepancy and opposition between historians and artists.

Art cannot be limited either by theory or by practice only and requires a bridge between the two as practical issues are put on paper and theorised in order to see their embodiment in further artistic works. Consequently, we need to look at the artistic process itself from inside and to understand the mechanisms of extracting an image from a verbal text and building its visual counterpart. We need to see the discrepancy between the image and the text. Artistic practice, in its turn, challenges the inner problems of aesthetics and creativity through self-expression that happens in conjunction with the materiality of a chosen artistic language which addresses the pragmatic reality surrounding an individual in a specific time and place.

Umberto Eco — who embodies very well the bridge I have been discussing — begins his collection of theoretical essays *Sulla letteratura* with an introduction, saying that some of the parts are autobiographical or auto-critical. He tells about his activity not so much as a theorist but rather as a writer since “it is indispensable, in order to explain what is meant by literature, to resort also to one’s own experience” (Eco, 2002:5). Brodsky extensively wrote about literature and writers, drawing on his experience as a writer. Andrei Tarkovsky wrote his brilliant lessons on film-making in *Sculpting in Time*. Stanislavski and Meyerhold wrote on the theory behind their eminent acting methodologies. Practicing conservators of artworks/books write on the historical methods of making books and on the stylistic influences among cultures, comparing one approach with another. Examples of critical works based on one’s personal experience

more specialized disciplines, depending on the faculty, e.g. for bookmaking such as engraving (one year), etching (one year), lithography (one year), illustration (one year for each type), calligraphy (two years), etc. Even there as well, history is always merged with practice: studies of the historical types of handwriting (taught by [Mitchenko](#)) include their history plus practice by hand to re-create those types; classes on the history of Byzantine art and iconography (taught by the art historian [Milajeva L.S.](#)) required, apart from written course works, also to go to the [Saint Sophia Cathedral](#), or the [Kyiv Pechersk Lavra](#), or museums, in order to make copies of frescos, icons, miniatures from books, etc., according to the methods and techniques of their production. Or, classes *in studio* on bookbinding (taught by [Chebanik, V.Y.](#)) are subdivided by time periods: when studying Byzantine binding, the students are required both to study the history and to make the bindings according to the old techniques. And so forth. After such afternoon classes, there are theoretical classes in aesthetics every evening, or perspective, or anatomy, etc. Then, since there are many course works, students often remain in studio until 10-11 pm to practice and to create their works which should be presented at the end-term exhibit, for all 5 disciplines in one day. The sixth year is entirely devoted to the thesis project which requires both to produce a short research and to create a book with illustrations, layout and binding, i.e. an item ready to be published.

²⁶ For example, when I attempted to enter some PhD programs in art history and was not accepted, at NA universities, the reason was that I do not have a formal degree in art history. Apparently, the committee decided that the total of 3,000 hours in art history and aesthetics, as on my transcripts from BFA and MA programs, were not enough.

within a given profession are an almost infinite set. As examples thereof I should mention J. Tschichold's and V. Favorsky's theoretical heritage on the art of bookmaking. Both of them were graphic designers and book artists. Finally, an academic monograph on the policy and challenges of inclusive education²⁷ begins with a foreword by a British professor: "One of the qualities of this book is the authors' engagement with personal experience. This is part of the contextualizing of issues within particular cultural, historical and social contexts." Yet, some theoreticians tend to persist that the inclusion of one's professional experience or personal glance at the matter under discussion in an academic work would significantly reduce its weight and credibility. Nevertheless, only a work that has passed through one's individual view and perception can hope to merit some attention, including a dissertation, which "is a piece of original research, in which one must not only know the work of other scholars but also 'discover' something that other scholars have not yet said. In the humanities, this 'discovery' [can be related to] a new way to interpret and understand [things]" (Eco, 2015:2).

The above-mentioned tendency of writing critical works by practicing professionals legitimates my attempt to write some parts of the present study in the form of a practical implementation of a theoretical account, drawing on my own experience as a bookmaker (even if I am not, of course, the Tarkovsky of the book arts). This is an essential component of my work, which I need to make use of to explain what is meant by an illustration, what the process of making a book implies, and to criticize practical aspects of word-picture interpretation in the light of methods and techniques of contemporary art.

Examples of how to approach visually a given text will present my main concept that explains the necessity of building the stylistic parallelisms between the verbal and the visual. Such an exercise will allow me to connect the analysis of great works of book art with contemporary aesthetics and methods of bookmaking, with tendencies in publishing, as well as readers' attitudes, and the perspectives of where we are going with such tendencies. This will allow me to explain current methods of illustrating a writer from the past, as in the case of Gogol's and Calvino's works.

²⁷ L. Barton, F. Armstrong, ed. Policy, *Experience and Change: Cross-Cultural Reflections on Inclusive Education*, Springer, 2007

To outline the specific type of visual art which the present study is focused on, I refer to the hierarchy suggested by the standardized *Dewey Decimal Classification* (DDC) system. This classification clearly presents the concept that I would like to convey.

The General Arts section is subdivided (conceptually and technically) into architecture, painting, sculpture, graphic and decorative arts, etc. The hierarchy that leads to book illustration is highlighted in red.

700 Standard subdivision for the arts			
720 Architecture	730 Sculpture and related arts	740 Graphic arts & decorative arts	(and so forth)

Each of these categories has further subdivisions; the branch of *Graphic arts & decorative arts* is subdivided as follows:

740 Graphic arts & decorative arts			
741 Drawings/ 741.5-741.7 Special applications	742 Perspective in drawing	745 Decorative arts	(and so forth)

The category of Special application is further subdivided:

741.5-741.7 Special applications		
741.5 Comic books, graphic novels, photonovels, cartoons, caricatures	741.6 Graphic design, illustration, commercial art/ 741.6092 Illustrators 741.6/4 Books and book jackets 741.6/4092 Books--illustrators 741.6/42 Children's books 741.6/5 Magazines and newspapers (and so forth)	(and so forth)

This means that, for instance, book illustration belongs to the graphic arts and has something from the general arts (the use of color in book pictures comes from painting while book structure correlates with architecture), but is based on its own principles. The DDC system stops here. Following this, however, we should recognize further specifications for book illustration, which are fundamental to understanding this type of art. In fact, many manuals for artists explore book illustration as a genre of applied graphic arts or decorative arts, but very few authors attempt to explain the differences between types of illustration. One such author is Favorsky, a founder of the critical and practical analyses of adult book illustration in the Eastern European context.

Book illustration is further subdivided to:	
Children's book illustration	Adult book illustration

Each of these categories functions differently and has its own principles of formation and visual logic.

The focus of the present study is limited to a very specific type of visual art: illustration for adult literature. This type is further subdivided into fiction and non-fiction. Furthermore, adult fiction illustration is subdivided into more specific types, such as illustration for a novel, for a short story, for comics, for a fairy tale, for a theater play, for a poetry, for epigrams, and so on.

Adult book illustration	
Fiction illustration: short story, comics, novel , fairy tale, theater play, poetry, epigrams, and so on	Non-fiction illustration: architecture, cartography, botanic, anatomy, history/ documentary, technical, educational, travelogue, reportage, diary pictures, and so on

As many of the arts (music, theater, literature, film) have their genres which work according to their specific structural and conceptual principles, approaches, forms and other features, so too the art of book illustration works according to its types and features inherent in specific genres.

I am arguing that the genres of illustration are tied to literary genres which are going to be presented visually. As in literature, so in illustration, genres can be intentionally mixed up. For example, a detective story can be written in the language of a fairy tale (e.g. the book *Silence*, presented in Part III) when the illustrations follow fairy tale-like structural and expressive features. Moreover, each of these genres can be expressed with many different styles. For instance, illustrations for a novel can be fantastic, symbolic, realistic, and even photographic or documentary if they rely on photography or manuscripts as part of fiction pictures (e.g. the book *The Master and Margarita*, presented in Part III).

When considering concepts expressed by different art critics, practicing artists, historians and publishers, we discern the following features in the illustrations for children's books. Such artwork is conceptualized and built according to the qualities of children's perceptual capacities but usually does not imitate the methods/styles of children's own drawings. Illustration for

children is normally meant to clearly explain and bolster the verbal content and stimulate fantasy, affecting the mind of the child in order to form and educate his aesthetic taste.

Clear and univocal definitions applicable to various types of adult fiction illustration do not exist at the present. For instance, as Favorsky writes about his approaches to illustrating books, he provides explanations and great examples of how word-image translation occurs in his creative works, but we still do not have a concrete clarification of different genres in adult illustration. Why does this occur? The reasons can be many, but I can highlight two main ones. First, adult fiction illustration is not recognized as an independent type with its unique principles. The university programs that train students in bookmaking usually offer general courses on illustration without these subdivisions and typically focus either on books for children or the general graphic arts for publishing, because this is what the market demands from future illustrators. Secondly, in the art education system, there is no tradition aimed at illustrating texts on the basis of an in-depth study of a given literary work, its structural analysis, concepts, extratextual and artistic features.²⁸ As a result, the work of an illustrator is often reduced to representing his own artistic style, rather than the stylistic features of the narrative, and forgetting about what Favorsky taught almost a century ago.²⁹ For him, merely to illustrate the plot does not make any artistic sense. However, the fundamental principle resides in the creative interpretation of the style inherent in a particular literary work [as is explored in detail in I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*]. A visual representation of the method used by a writer, i.e. the interpretation of his unique style, can be achieved as a result of the exploration of literary form.

Therefore, the principles according to which the illustration of poetry is built will in most cases not be suitable to the creation of pictures for a novel, or for a play, or for comics, and vice versa (except cases where such rules are intentionally broken in order to reach specific results). Consequently, when studying pictures, we can, of course, refer to certain theories on the

²⁸ This fundamental aspect of word-picture translation was taught at art institutions by the masters of the old school educated in the previous century in the Eastern-European context, e.g. in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kyiv. However, this approach became less relevant in later times and is considered to be passé at the present because of the focus on technological changes and, more importantly, the lack of requirements in the workforce to approach the task of illustrating fiction as an interpretation of a literary text. Instead, priority is given to publishing and market demands and/or the artists' promotion.

²⁹ It is worth mentioning that "forgotten" not always means "obsolete", and the artistic *methods* that were in use a century ago or earlier, can be applied today to develop new works in contemporary styles, while rejection of such fundamental methods can easily lead to a superficial approach in one's work, producing weightless concepts deprived of any basis.

general visual arts, or comic books, or children's books, but such theories are not at all applicable to adult fiction illustration. The latter, because it is underrepresented as a genre, requires a more nuanced study. Thus, in many cases, I find it appropriate to merge both the literary theory that analyses the novel and general picture theories, and to apply such crossing points in the discussion of pictures meant to illustrate novels. In other words, I intend to start a dialogue between two fields: literature and the book arts.

I.2. Creative Impression, Physicality of Expression and Perception in Book Art

“Everything has a personality: everything sends an emotional signal. Even where this was not the intention of the designer, the people who view the website infer personalities and experience emotions. Bad websites have horrible personalities and instill horrid emotional states in their users, usually unwittingly.” – Don Norman³⁰

The interaction of the arts and science has been developing in many ways. For example, Horst Bredekamp, an art historian, supports the idea of importance of thinking with pictures, and of the hand that acts as an organ of thought when drawing pictures. This was investigated with the example of Galileo Galilei’s drawings (in *Galileo the Artist*) in terms of “the connection between scientific thinking and image production” (Bach, 41), relating the excellence of drawing technique to the process of learning and documenting scientific ideas (de Padova, 289). Even though the examined volume turned out to be fake,³¹ this fact does not diminish the merit of research on the book-object as such, from the perspective of materiality, offering the core element of the study of such brain-creativity and hand-materiality relations. Therefore, with regard to the present study on the process of converting words into pictures, I would like to open my discussion of the formation of creative thought and its incarnation through the fingers in the physical item.

In the visual arts, the term “penmanship” means not only the art of writing by hand, but also implies the individual style of making drawings, sometimes termed as “one’s hand.” This definition is associated with connections between the brain and the hand that are constantly occurring during the process of writing or drawing. As has been known for a century, fine

³⁰ Don Norman, inventor of the term “User Experience”, interview “Design Research and Innovation”, *Johnny Holland*, Jan 11, 2011, retrieved on Oct 2, 2019 <<http://johnnyholland.org/2011/01/design-research-and-innovation-an-interview-with-don-norman/>>

³¹ Later it was proven that the copy of the book, studied by Bredekamp and his research team, is a forgery, when “all participants had used the method of negating the possibility of forgery, instead of attempting to confirm the opposite” (Brückle, et al., 9). Even more, it was established that this was the “masterpiece” of one of the most effective forgers in book-history, an Italian collector and falsifier of antique books, involved also in the corrupted political games, Marino Massimo de Caro, who has stolen more than 500 volumes from [the oldest library of Naples](#), when being its director, and attempted to sell at the international auctions in 2013 [[“Italian Library Ransacked by Its Own Director”](#), *Hyperallergic*; [“A Very Rare Book”](#), *The New Yorker*]. Further on Bredekamp’s research: Brückle, I., Bredekamp, H., and Needham, P. *A Galileo Forgery. Unmasking the New York Sidereus Nuncius*. De Gruyter, 2014. Web. <https://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/416084>

motor skills develop the brain.³² Penmanship technique or, more generally, calligraphy practice activates those parts of the brain which remain inoperative if only the keyboard is used as a tool to reproduce letters. Why do some people choose not to write by hand, and why are the skills of calligraphy so essential? Evidently, technology facilitates and speeds up writing, so a dip pen and ink are seen as archaic tools. Broadly speaking, handwriting is viewed today as *passé*³³: romantic, old-fashioned, still used by the generations of the previous century, a historical type that scholars use to examine written documents from the past and, most importantly, a casual necessity rather than a valuable opportunity for developing and expressing oneself. However, let us examine what happens with writing and how it is related to the formation of one's creative thought when it comes to making pictures.

A quill was used before a dip pen, and both have the same features: 1) an elastic double-point that allows one to create lines of different thickness and delicacy without taking the pen off the sheet, applying some pressure on the pen while writing, and 2) the necessity to dip frequently the pen into ink given the absence of an ink reservoir. In the process of writing, micro-motions occur in the fingers, the hand and the entire arm. A normal regime of work for muscles is the alternation of phases involving the tension and relaxation of the hand.³⁴ Because the ink in a dip pen is enough for a few letters, one needs to take the hand off the leaf and dip the pen in ink again and again, which allows short breaks for the eye and hand muscles. Such seemingly repetitive and mechanical actions may even appear annoying for some, but with extended practice, they develop a confident, well-ordered style of handwriting,³⁵

³² Cf. A historical classification of the brain, *Brodman's Localisation in the Cerebral Cortex* (1909); Oskar and Cecile Vogt (1920, works in German).

³³ A conference "The Future of Handwriting", held at the University of Louisville in April 2019, presented a broad discussion on the issue, emphasizing the importance of handwriting for humans and the perspectives in the digital age, <https://louisville.edu/cchs/the-futures-of-handwriting/paper-abstracts>

³⁴ The double point of the pen forces one to assume a correct hand position where both points touch paper, ensuring that the ink will not leak out of the pen, and preventing the pen from scratching the paper. An elastic and flexible pen encourages the writer to regulate the force of pressure, so one intuitively starts to relax and to press the pen when necessary. Thanks to this alternation, the letters naturally combine thick vertical lines with thin horizontal ones. Thus, beauty is produced in a natural way. The lack of a ballpoint allows the pen's point to split in two so that it functions like tweezers and contributes to the formation of proper penmanship. In contrast, a ballpoint pen has an inelastic point that slips on the paper in any direction, which leads to the making of letters of different slopes and shapes. The ball does not allow for the combination of thick and thin lines, and therefore does not educate the hand to alternate different degrees of pressure. One just needs to press down the pen constantly with equal force; otherwise it will not write. (*The Russian Classical School*).

³⁵ The main requirement of calligraphy is the development of both free and confident movements (*Kalligrafia*, 1915, p.7)

concentration³⁶ and attention (a lapse in attention may cause the ink to splatter or dry), discipline and a correct body posture (Bogolubov, 21-29). Further benefits include the reduction of neuropsychiatric symptoms (Chu, et al.) and a significant increase in the function of the cognitive areas of the brain (Kwok, et al.), as well as the concurrent development of abstract and logical thinking, and a sense of rhythm and aesthetic taste in general.³⁷ Writing with a dip pen, for those who use it daily, can become a sort of meditation that involves processes of the body and the mind, which balance emotions and open space for creative thought.³⁸

Sergey Savelyev³⁹ begins his lecture at the Museum of Calligraphy in Moscow with a sarcastic introduction:

The future generations will not be capable to write, they will produce signs, transmit them and get back through computer; and therefore, humanity will get rid of the obsolete past, of the world cultural traditions, literature, of the letters in a wide sense, and finally, people will stop recognizing letters; everything will be comfortable and everyone will be happy about the speed performed by technology.⁴⁰

As with many instances of sarcasm, this is exaggerated but is in possession of a grain of truth. Savelyev's intensive one-hour talk is about what we lose when we stop writing by hand. He deals with the mechanisms that are responsible for the creation and perception of letters and, therefore, the thinking process. I find it appropriate and important to summarise

³⁶ Per Yuan Pu, a calligrapher and professor in Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication, says that the practicing of calligraphy allows total concentration, and can adjust one's breathing, psychological and physiological health // Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy in Moscow, http://calligraphy-expo.com/en/participants/Yuan_Pu/calligraphy-and-health

³⁷ The reforms of the 20th century demanded speed as the main feature of writing, which provoked the simplification of letters. This compromised their beauty and decorative shape. However, this did not simplify but rather complicated the act of writing, since the ballpoint pen technically produces uninterrupted writing which creates hand strain and irritates the writer. As a result, handwriting in most cases remains unshapely forever (*The Russian Classical School*), or until one decides to develop his calligraphy consciously. Therefore, a smart reform would involve making calligraphy classes mandatory at least for children from 5 to 13 years old. If these children are trained in standards of beautiful writing, this skill can become a gauge for the development of a harmonious psyche in youngsters.

³⁸ The term "creative thinking" is very blurred, as it may refer to different levels of access to creativity, the degree of skills etc., depending on the concrete context, role and field: from general skills used on a daily basis, such as memory or planning, to the skills developed because of creative field of professional work. Nevertheless, there are some relevant observations about the creative industries and creativity theory: L. Kong and J. O'Connor (eds.), *Creative Economies, Creative Cities: Asian-European Perspectives*, GeoJournal Library 98, doi: 10.1007/978-1-4020-9949-6_9; Baer, J., "Domain Specificity and the Limits of Creativity Theory", *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 2012, Vol. 46, iss. 1, pp. 16–29, doi: 10.1002/jocb.002

³⁹ Sergey Savelyev is a professor of biological science, brain morphology and evolution expert at the Institute of Human Morphology in Moscow https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergey_Vyacheslavovich_Savelyev

⁴⁰ S. Savelyev, *Calligraphy and brain*; Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy, Moscow; <https://www.calligraphy-museum.com/en/news/news/sergey-savelyevs-calligraphy-and-brain-lecture-caused-a-sensation>

Savelyev's talk, with cross-references to other related studies, as they reveal the *sources of formation* of creative thought and visual logic in general, which is directly associated with how books with pictures are created and comprehended.

The German neurologist K. Brodmann was the first to develop a map of the human brain with [cytoarchitecture and localization of certain areas in human cortex](#), showing these areas in relation to specific functions. Savelyev relates cortical changes to the skills involved in (at least) copying letters. He talks about overlaying a page with a transparent sheet of paper and copying the text in beautiful handwriting. A variety of cortical areas are involved in this process: those responsible for the coordination of finger movement, as well as those that coordinate eye movement, motoric speech activity and the visual area. In connection to the latter, it must be noted that even when performing silent writing, one articulates and visualizes letters to oneself, so the micro movements are a given.⁴¹ In order to write a text by hand, one needs to know how it forms visually, how it is articulated, how the letters connect with each other, and then one can render the words visible, combining such a process with fine motor skills and hand-tool manipulation (Cornhill, Case-Smith, 734), consciousness, prediction of results, personal memory about spelling and meaning of words as abstract symbols, speech memory, along with reading and the comprehension of written words.⁴² A recent study entitled *The impact of spelling regularity on handwriting production*⁴³ summarizes the results of neurological research, scientific discoveries and fMRI tests, suggesting that attention deficit disorder, dysgraphia and hyperactivity⁴⁴ in children are related to the total absence of biomechanical exercises provided by the formation of handwriting. This is because many

⁴¹ Brodmann showed that the individual variability of such cortex areas can diverge up to millions of neurons in different people's brain; this is why one can be a calligrapher, while another can only scratch single letters similar to typed font despite their efforts and training.

⁴² Savelyev's point is that, in order to learn how to think with words (the only way of thinking that is used in literate cultures), one needs to learn how to create connections between the different cortex areas and to coordinate the entire performance, which is reached by developing and increasing the neuronal connections through handwriting.

⁴³ Palmis, S., et al., "The impact of spelling regularity on handwriting production", *Cortex*, vol. 113, April 2019, pp. 111-127, Open Access: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2018.11.024>

⁴⁴ Today, such diseases have been constantly recording among children/students of electronic generation (who prefer the digital to the analog world), i.e. all forms of inability to write and read, while being well-developed intellectually. So-called speech blindness, when people do not understand written words, occurs in two cases: head injury of the areas of writing, and lack of handwriting exercises. The first case is clear. The second can progressively develop on different stages, starting from one's inability to concentrate on reading long texts, and to a partial or total loss of perception of single words, when words stop to be related to their visual symbols and verbal meanings. (Saveliev).

neurons are involved in the process of pen writing where one's brain acts on many levels: instinctive and rational, emotional and physical.

Pyotr Chobitko⁴⁵ compares calligraphy with the cardiogram of a given time period. In his view, today's attitudes about handwriting resemble arrhythmic cardiac amplitudes with interrupting lines and testify to a severe illness characterizing our time. Chobitko suggests that handwriting, personality and creativity are reciprocally connected,⁴⁶ i.e., not only does a person train the hand to write beautifully, but also the letters modify one's character and skills.⁴⁷ But the most relevant for the present topic is perhaps the scientific approach to how the human mind creates works of art and responds to or perceives arts of different types (Kandel, 2016:17). Perceptual and motor skills imply an implicit type of learning. Because reciprocal work happens as impulses go from the brain to the hands and back, the relationship between the plasticity of one's hands and the responsiveness of the brain suggests the possibility of mutual changes.

Coming back to the hand-vision-creativity relations, pen writing develops one's spatial perception. A white sheet of paper is a space which should be arranged in time, and on the surface of which the emptiness (the space between words, as well as the margins) should be balanced with the filled-in areas (letters). When writing with pen and ink, we need to *visualise in advance* the structure of the entire word, line and even paragraph in order to fit them into sheet. Thus, a so-called "anticipated reflection" is formed when the visual picture of a given text stays ahead of our hand movements, which is a very important exercise that develops the ability to *think visually*, or, to use Calvino's expression, *to think with pictures*.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the hand should constantly coordinate its movements with the work of advanced vision in order

⁴⁵ Pyotr Chobitko is a calligrapher and professor in St. Petersburg and member of the Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy, Moscow, http://calligraphy-expo.com/en/participants/Petr_Chobitko

⁴⁶ Cf. "Cognitive and useful calligraphy", Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy, Moscow, http://calligraphy-expo.com/en/participants/Petr_Chobitko/cognitive-and-useful-calligraphy-

⁴⁷ In fact, grapho-therapy combines neuroscience and handwriting, recognizing the act of handwriting as a therapy. By correcting the deformed handwriting styles associated with individual letters and the visual look of written pages, we also make corrections to our personality, skills, behaviour, emotions and mental health. This is due to certain neurological mechanisms and the law of reversibility, as has been revealed and viewed from many angles by Eric Richard Kandel in his early studies: *Cellular basis of behavior: an introduction to behavioral neurobiology* (1976); *Principles of neural science* (1986); *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of Mind* (2007).

⁴⁸ This Calvinian and Gogolian principle of writing, as discussed in Part II.3, originates from the principles of visual art, including the method of mental seeing as the fundamental skill and major feature of their poetics. This also refers, as is presented with concrete examples, to the neurological studies that prove that the initial and very physiological way of thinking can occur with pictures or sounds, not words (see Part II.3).

to move rhythmically, faster or more slowly, to be steady and to form lines in accordance with one's inner gaze. Such vision-hand coordination is demonstrated in one of [Artem Lebedev's videos](#),⁴⁹ where we perceive a feeling of space, as well as the alternation of thick (press pen) and thin (relax pen) lines with the process of building a well-balanced composition of intersecting lines. All this has been visualized and kept in the inner gaze before writing. Take away at least one element, or move differently one line, and the harmony of the entire composition will be broken.⁵⁰ The aesthetical look of one's writing also stimulates one to write with great enthusiasm.

Handwriting is formed along with a person's character, and the nervous system develops psychomotor skills. Brain impulses respond in the act of writing, and handwriting can sometimes act as a window on the personality, features of character and psychological state of the writer.⁵¹ We can view, for instance, Dostoevsky's manuscripts as possible reflections of the author's mental states and character embodied in his style of writing. Each of his novels has its own "written" face, and one might even say that Dostoevsky had his own special handwriting for number of different ideas. Drawings on the margins or exercises of calligraphy were not just a simple passion for him. The verbalizing and visualizing of his novels, and different styles of his handwriting reflected not only his own but also his character's emotional states, as well as stages of plot development and the literary path leadings to his future novels. In the case of certain notebooks, he is training his hand in the visual stylistics of some letters and words. Some of his novels are written in a highly illegible calligraphy. There are pages where the text and pictures seem to grow out of paper, acquiring a kind of Gothic shape. Some of Dostoevsky's texts resemble barbed wire; while other manuscripts present a sample of artistic calligraphy with elements brought to perfection. In certain cases, Dostoevsky's hand expresses a chaotic regularity, so to speak, that arranges entire blocks of text and gives them their own spirit⁵² ([Barsht, p.3](#)), meaning the entire range of linguistic and artistic nuances that go beyond

⁴⁹ Artem Lebedev is a teacher at the National School of Calligraphy in Moscow, <https://www.calligraphy-museum.com/en/calligraphyschool/kursy-po-kalligrafii-i-letteringu-dla-vzroslyh>; the video was retrieved from the artist's personal FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/artem.lebedev.14/videos/2134924359905869/?t=2>

⁵⁰ Another example of the same technique of writing with the quill can be viewed in *Les écritures expédiées* by Huet de Tostes, 1820, held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France; <https://www.numistral.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9400946w>. When examining these pages, one can trace the movements of hand and understand the principle of alternation.

⁵¹ Graphology studies the characteristics of handwriting to determine one's character and identity.

⁵² Some examples of Dostoevsky's manuscripts see in: *Fyodor Dostoevsky's Drawings*, Im Werden Verlag, Munich, 2007; retrieved from https://imwerden.de/pdf/dostoevsky_risunki.pdf

words (see I.7.6. *Genre and “spirit” of the text*). In fact, the preservation of the author’s manuscript means the preservation of the energy of a given text (Mandelstam, 27). The verbal materials in manuscripts are often accompanied by graphic materials: small drawings, calligraphic elements, and symbols. When seen together, such elements form the verbal-visual work, as we have in front of us a sheet in which all details are equally important and have a meaning (semantic, visual, associative, chronological, spatial, etc.)⁵³: as this can be distilled from the abovementioned examples of [Dostoevsky’s manuscripts](#).

From the psychological viewpoint, the text of a future work is formed in the writer’s mind within two opposed and interconnected codes — subject-pictorial (inner/silent speech) and speech-moving (expressive speech) (Zinkin, 31). Language and thinking processes are very abstract⁵⁴ and diverse: we think verbally, visually, in sounds, in signs, in numbers, in abstract terms. This thinking includes emotions, moral concepts, aesthetics⁵⁵; furthermore, we think in movement as some people need to walk to think. Others need to take a pen and start scratching/drawing/writing to materialize their thoughts. Mayakovsky admitted that he started to write poems by “mooring” (Borev, 68).

An embryonic creative idea is characterised by the following features: initial semantic unclarity, expressive methods other than verbal, lack of form, and a potential possibility of expression in abstract signs which will eventually take shape in a future image (Borev, 108). This process of passage from the abstract realm to a physical text is naturally accompanied by sketches or other visual signs as attempts are made to write certain words or phrases in different way. A constant search is occurring for the appropriate incarnation of those abstract thoughts and inner speech, which represents the early stages of the creative process. Such an act of passage also accumulates the genetic origins of the creative methods of a given writer⁵⁶ since the mechanism of thinking (the impulse-idea of a creative work) consists in passing from the facts of ideation to the concrete elements that will be decoded and put on paper (the

⁵³ Extensive semiotic studies (as mentioned in I.1. *Theory on practice, and practice in theory*) have explored the non-semantic meanings made by pictures and signs, which compose a message accessible on the levels other than linguistic.

⁵⁴ Cf.: Lupyan G., B. Winter, “Language is more abstract than you think, or, why aren't languages more iconic?”, *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B* 373: 20170137. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2017.0137>

⁵⁵ Cf.: The vol. 373, issue 1752 of *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, discusses the “varieties of abstract concepts: development, use and representation in the brain”, thinking capacities and abilities to form and use those abstract concepts, <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/toc/rstb/2018/373/1752>

⁵⁶ See more about this in: E.D. Hirsch, *The Philosophy of Composition*, The University of Chicago Press, 1977, p.23; quoted in Barsht and Torop, p.149.

visualization of impulses in a manuscript). Therefore, a manuscript is not just verbal plus graphic elements, but an integral and complex creative-cognitive process expressed through visual signs, the structure of which could be described only after the extra-textual interconnections have been decoded. What constitutes the most important task for the reader-researcher is not to attribute a definitive meaning to a given work, which would be impossible because the process of creating and using communicative codes will inevitably differ from the perception or decoding an idea by a receiver (Lotman, 1977). Instead, this task is to “describe the logic according to which meanings are engendered”, as Barthes suggests when applying the semiotic approach (Bal, Bryson, 184).

“Verbal texts and visual pictures convey messages with totally different meanings” (Lund, 37) and, consequently, a beautiful calligraphic sheet is not the same as a writer’s emotional autograph (original manuscript) and not the same as typed text: even if each of these three kinds can contain the same words, they offer different inner, non-verbal connections between elements which allow to reveal stages of work, levels of the author’s individual creative methods, his preferences that are emphasized in handwriting, the architecture of a given page and an entire work, and the writer’s artistic path in general. Such non-verbal elements build new messages along with the semantic layer and form extra meaning (or a meta-text or, to use library science terminology, metadata, or paratext) that describes a given text and provides a psychosomatic analysis which leads to the comprehension of those creative processes that occur when a creator is building an integral work.⁵⁷

An example of such verbal-visual relations is constituted by the [calligraphic portraits of Gogol](#) — hand-written by V. Mitchenko. The capital letter *Г* [G], being Gogol’s initial, becomes the central element in each of three pictures, forming a part of Gogol’s head to which his profile is attached. Even more, this is not just a profile, but the letters and words form the parts of the face. In picture 1, the title *Виѹ* [Viy] is the central visual element where the round parts of the letter *В* shape Gogol’s forehead and cheek; the dot over *і* is his eye; the diacritic check over the *ѹ* is his eyelash, the upper element of the letter *Г* begins as the back of the head and, proceeding from left to right, becomes a part of his hat over which the titles of Gogol’s stories are written in small fonts, becoming at the same time a background that emphasizes the

⁵⁷ Cf. Lotman, J. M. "The Discrete Text and the Iconic Text: Some Remarks on the Structure of Narrative." *New Literary History* 6.2 (1975): 333. *ProQuest*. Web. 9 Nov. 2019.

portrait. In picture 2, the word *Гоголь* [Gogol] is the entire portrait, where the letter *Г* forms his head, and the rest of the word is a kind of moustache. The physical shape of the short story *Шинель* (*The Overcoat*) is an actual overcoat, where the capital letter *Ш* is read as Gogol's body, while the rest of the word ends up on his arm and becomes a sleeve. The titles of Gogol's other works from the Petersburg stories are written in small letters, so that they look like shades on the pleats formed by the letter *Ш*. In picture 3, a mix of different titles is arranged in such a way that *Гоголь* [Gogol] is, again, the portrait, where the letter *Г* is his head and the two *о* are his eyes with pupils, while the title *Нос* (*The Nose*) is put under his nose, becoming also his moustache. Other titles of Gogol's works and many different phrases taken from his stories form a movement which looks like a landscape with hills: shades and passages from one hill to another are created thanks to different shapes and sizes of calligraphic elements. At the same time, each of these compositions is well-structured and can be read as a completed sign, a message that is communicated via both verbal and visual languages simultaneously. When following Barthes' suggestion, and "putting aside the linguistic message, we are left with the pure image [even if the words are integral part of the visual, paradoxically]; this image straightaway provides a series of discontinuous signs" (Barthes, 1977:34).

This being said, a text remains an intangible substance until it is written on paper and, at the same time, when is written, it becomes a sort of a background on which the other elements are concurrently revealed (Barsht, Torop, 143), creating many other parallel meanings and changing the primary ones since "the words themselves are not necessary the intended [meanings]" (Tanselle, 1998:ix). What happens to a text (verbal-plus-visual representation of abstract thought) when it is accompanied by illustrations (visual adaptation of that representation), is a more complex discussion intended for the parts that follow.

People who start to practice calligraphy are often surprised at how little the meaning of the words matters in calligraphic rendering (Kyuyoh, xv) since they discover the infinity of other meanings that appear to them. However, the electronic revolution has encouraged many people to overlook important connections with the *physicality of representation* of a given text. This happens for many reasons but two main ones stand out. First, the brain does not need to make any effort to visualise the text that is going to be typed since everything is done by a computer, and thus, those parts of the brain responsible for the ability to anticipate words visually remain

unused (Saveliev). Second, even though typed texts can be fascinating when represented through the art of typography, they open a totally different perceptual perspective at the word level and, in comparison with handwriting, eliminate those non-verbal extra meanings that visual elements can build in addition to the semantic layer. Such meanings can become possible through brain-hand connections. At this point, the words split into two perceptual branches: handwriting leads one way, typography — another. They could not be compared because these are two different media with different principles of creation, function, and reader reception.

As to the texts that are typed on a daily basis (i.e. not containing artistic elements), the verbal-visual connections are lost completely and permanently, as well as the understanding of a given book as a system⁵⁸ through which the intangible becomes tangible and involves many physical details that are impossible in electronic format. In the last decade, studies have been appearing on the different ways of comprehending screen learning and print; the latter includes physicality and additional sensory involvement.⁵⁹ Consequently, the contemporary tendency to perceive books only through verbal meaning — where pictures or other visual elements are seen separately from the verbal rather than in dialogue with it — has created a number of concerns.

Such a discussion is not meant to argue the total loss of visual thinking, but rather to view these contemporary trends as something completely new in perceptual terms. For instance, design that is incorporated today practically in all products, objects and actions of everyday life — from labels to learning materials to online newspapers and blogs to advertising that bombards us through smartphones and computers — suggests the construction of abstract thought and specific word-image-meaning relations which are conceptually and logically different from what people used in the past, or at least before screen-mediated communication. The new visual formats require a new visual organization of meanings (Cf. Drucker, 2014). The fact remains, however, that when acquiring new abilities people inevitably lose some others, a good example of which is the replacement of handwriting with typing and, consequently, the

⁵⁸ Cf. on extra-textual constructions: J. Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, the University of Michigan, 1977; and on verbal-visual constructions and extra meanings in a book: L. Kendrick, *Animating the Letter: The Figurative Embodiment of Writing from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 1999.

⁵⁹ Cf.: Picton, Irene, “The Impact of eBooks on the Reading Motivation and Reading Skills of Children and Young People: A Rapid Literature Review”, *National Literacy Trust*, Sept 2014, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED560635.pdf> ; Kraft, A. Books vs. e-books: The science behind the best way to read, CBC News, Dec 14, 2015, <https://www.cbcnews.com/news/kindle-nook-e-reader-books-the-best-way-to-read/>

exchange of two modes of visual logic. Which of these two visual logics is better for cortical, conceptual, personality and artistic development is hard to say, but, as Drucker suggests, visual interfaces shape the ways we process information, our behaviour and even identity.

When it comes to the sensory and perceptual aspects of a book in its entirety, verbal or pictorial self-expression always presupposes a receiver, even not necessarily an existing one. There can be either a specific target audience, or the writer goes on writing sometimes for an audience that may not actually exist (a friend or loved one who has died), or perhaps for the author himself in the future (like diaries or letters). As the writer creates a text for potential readers (be they known or unknown), so too the illustrator is addressing his own self and his life experience to the outer world through pictures. An author (either writer or artist) has in mind some sort of creative impact on the reader and the latter's post-reception activity. The meaning of an artwork (verbal and/or visual) is formed from the results of interaction between the receiver's experience and that of the author. The perception of that work occurs in the regime of a dialogue and depends on the type of audience, its individual capacities, as well as its collective and historical characteristics. The latter define not only the meaning of the artwork but its ontological status (social status, rating, historical and cultural significance). The historical changeability of meanings and the ontological status of an artwork — is a regular feature of the creative process (Borev, 22). Therefore, a creative idea and the process of creativity are permeated with opposing force lines. On the one hand, there are lines that pass through the prism of the author's creative concept (his perception of life's phenomena), manifest themselves in a work of art and then reach the reader (his perceptual capacity). The opposite force lines come from another direction — from that of the reader, his receptive horizons, and travel toward the author and his creative concept (Borev, 107). The meaning of each work of art includes three factors of the communicative process: the sender, the artwork, and the receiver (the effect of the artwork on an audience) (Hermerén, 15).

The amount of force needed to break an object corresponds to the degree of damage done to this object. "The human equivalent assists understanding of energy flows in physical and biological systems by expressing energy units in human terms: it provides a 'feel' for the use of

a given amount of energy.”⁶⁰ This purely [biological energy](#), inherent to any human being when the brain regulates the balance of [generated-expended energy](#), can be re-directed internally for the purpose of mental productivity and creativity. This can be termed as *re-directed energy*. When such physical/biological energy is re-directed into creativity, the following occurs. A combination of three factors — a creative idea (a creative impulse), skills/experience (which allow the implementation of that idea), and a certain degree of talent (without which the work will remain at the level of craft) — forms what is meant by the *creative energy*. For instance, [Jan Parandowski](#), in his perhaps most significant study, *Alchemia słowa* (The Alchemy of Words),⁶¹ writes on the history of literature, the writer’s craft and self-organization, viewing such re-directed energy in a writer's activity as a core element in any creative expression. The factor that generates an artistic concept rests in one’s deep creative layer, in the core of one’s personality and determines the invariable potential of all creative decisions. Anything created by the artist is accumulated around such a creative core ([Rosanov, 1990:39](#); [Borev, 108](#)). The force of impact of this creative energy, therefore, determines the personal distinctiveness of all artworks created by a given writer or artist. Such principles leave an individual imprint on every work. “The amount of energy invested into a work is proportional to the amount of energy received by a spectator”⁶². Stanislavski is referring here to acting on the stage, i.e. the amount of creative energy an actor invests in his role corresponds to the impact on the spectator. The same principle works in relation to any creative process and any work of art which implies a direct interaction between a creator and his work — a process that ensures the invested-received balance of such creative energy. One may want to exercise calligraphy on a daily basis for several consecutive months in order to bring to one's awareness the circulation of re-directed creative energy from mind to hands to the artwork. This leads to a reciprocal reaction: a creator has the feeling of receiving the same creative energy back from his own work, which is the result of physiological processes, bodily reactions, tactility and the embodiment of thoughts.

⁶⁰ “Bike Calculator – speed, weight, wattage, etc.” Archived from the original on 2009-05-13, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090513091201/http://bikecalculator.com/>;

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Energy#Biology>

⁶¹ Transl. in Russian: *Alhimija slova*, 1972; <https://4screenwriter.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/parandovsky.pdf>; <https://dshorin.com/liter/parand.html>

⁶² From lectures on dramaturgy taught by Oleg Prohodko at the University of Theater and Cinema in Kyiv, 1999.

Every action that the calligrapher undertakes vis-à-vis the medium — every contact between the brush and the paper — elicits an opposite and equal reaction. The calligrapher is continuously parrying the energy that rebounds from the medium even as he or she continues to pour energy into the medium through the brush. That continuing reciprocity of action and reaction animates the drama that unfolds as a work of calligraphy (Kyuyoh, 1).

This kind of reciprocity and simultaneity are inherent not only in handwriting but also in pen/ink drawing, etching on metallic plates and hand-printing from such plates, as well the other techniques of original printing, painting, sculpting etc. “The reciprocity of action and reaction — whether in carving with a chisel or in drawing with a brush — unfolds through the sense of touch [which is just a half of the action]. The other half consists of the tactile sensations that the calligrapher [or artist in general] receives back from the medium” (Kyuyoh, 2), termed also as “taction”.

However, how much sensation can be invested through taction into a computer screen if the book/artwork is digitally born, and how much does a creator receive back from such a medium? Perhaps, a small episode from my personal experience could serve as an example, which of course is not a universal condition but might be recognized by those individuals who have developed the *physicality of creative expression* through handwork before passing on electronic devices.⁶³ When I graduated from university in 2002 and started to make a living by coloring pictures on a computer screen, I had behind me 18 years during which I had constantly used my hands to express visually my creative thoughts. Such constrained passage from ink and paper to a computer and mouse provoked a kind of depression at the end of each workday because of the strong physiological feeling that I was creating something from morning to evening, but nothing was happening — nothing was coming out of my fingers. I was investing a great deal of energy in each work, but I got back an emptiness that was devastating for my mind and body. Such effects were interpreted by my colleagues as the unwillingness to work, which was unfair because I had always worked a lot. Besides, the internet had just emerged a few years ago, and the video game industry (for which I worked) saw significant advancements in related technology, so it was rapidly developing, and studies investigating problems of mind-hand-computer relations still did not exist. Somatic theories, for instance, indicate that physical responses of the body cause an emotional reaction (Tomkins, 1984; Plutchik, 1980; Ekman, 1984), and

⁶³ A similar notion of the physicality in creative process has been expressed by Richard Kirk in an interview, see Part III.

the componential theory of emotions explores the synchronization between emotions, bodily processes, as well as cognitive and perceptual capacities (Scherer, 2005)⁶⁴. Sensory features, in relation to artistic work, are grounded in emotional responses which, in turn, are experienced in bodily perceptions (Fingerhut, Prinz, 1). This can explain the connections between the cognitive process of generating visual images, the physical syndrome inherent in expressing those ideas through one's hands, and the emotional outcome resulting in depression if such connections do not occur. I left that job after 6 months, and only 17 years later did I have a chance to learn about the studies that investigated mind-hand connection and problems in relation to typing vs. writing, as for example explored by Kandel (2016).

This story is meant to illustrate how strong the physical aspect of creative thought expression can be. In other words, the circulation of invested-received energy occurs through touch. Work on the computer does not offer any reciprocity of action and reaction because it makes impossible the act of touch with one's artwork, and therefore an artist just gives away that re-directed energy, while the work itself remains deprived of that investment, and the artist receives back nothing from the medium. My seemingly simple and inexplicable desire to work by hand rather than on the computer, in 2002, was nothing more than a physiological necessity to touch my artwork. Few people outside the field of traditional visual arts know much about the importance of the physical medium. I have heard often even from young artists an assumption that a computer is just a tool, and it makes no difference what tool to use to create artworks. I would suggest that it does make a huge difference, the only question is which parts of the cortex remain inactive when an artist does not recognize such a difference.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, there are many examples of great digitally born artworks that look like sculptures, appearing very detailed and well-developed in each part — a result that would perhaps be impossible to achieve in traditional sculpture like marble carving (or, if possible,

⁶⁴ The theories of emotions have been summarised by Lopatovska and Arapakis, 2010.

⁶⁵ Overreliance on a computer mouse or pad leads to the underutilization of the fine motor skills. And if we ask someone used to creating digital images to recreate them by hand, nothing good is likely happen, since such a person's brain has not been trained to create connections with their hands. Besides, the possibility to correct everything, to redo what has been created, completely destroys the biological and physical reality of irreversible acts, i.e., one has a kind of "reality insurance." The imitation of life that comes to us in such arts as the cinema, literature and paintings is fine but not if we do not take any risks. The brain activates certain resources when it must take a risk, when it knows that it has only one attempt (Saveliev). This is not to be confused with mistakes that derive from a conscious creative search. "Being wrong is not the same as to be creative, but if you are not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original. [...] And we are now running national education systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make. The result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities" (Robinson, 2006).

then the expenses of studio space, materials, and the investments of time and physical effort would be much higher compared to the virtual studio in a computer). Examples of sophisticated computer-generated art include [Denis Korystin](#)'s works that win one over with their professional craft execution; Jon Troy Nickel's [sculpture of Durotan](#) taken from the Warcraft universe and executed for the love of art, developing each single detail to reach perfection (his [commercial projects](#) are of course very different); and [Bruno Camera](#)'s digital sculptures, each presenting an artistic piece and perfect craft, (the [Undead Knight](#) is outstanding in every sense, but from the descriptions it seems that the artist gets "inspired" by [the work of other artists](#) and just copies the images, when the software and the artist's craft allow to convert images to 3D sculptures). I could not say that the subject of these works connects them to "high" fantasy and aesthetics — mainly because they stop at the level of excellent copying of existing works, but still the level of their execution presents a totally new stream in contemporary arts. Besides, a notion of "not being present" is somehow attached to any digital work since its ephemeral existence in the virtual format prevents them from being part of our real world of physical items. The dematerialization of artworks and writing produced in pixels thanks to the computer revolution creates merely the illusion of presence, as has been explored, for instance, by Laura Kendrick in her *Animating the Letter*. The latter focuses on medieval codices and embodiments of writing and attempts to answer the question: "Why do I find it unsatisfying that the text expressing my ideas should become virtually intangible, invisible, weightless, and infinitely small, a speck on a hard disk that no longer takes up 'real' space in the world? Why should I want my text to have a 'body'?" (Kendrick, 2)

The foregoing does not suggest that people should stop using technology, as it does make easier many work-related processes, but it does suggest the need to balance computer-based and manual activities.

Whether one understands such the unwritten law that creative process happens through taction, i.e. through fine motor skills that ensure mind-hand connections and the flow of invested-received energy, or whether one dismisses such a claim as inappropriate in research, this does not eliminate the fact that the creative process is not just about a series of mechanical actions that build down to moving a pencil on paper (or mouse on the screen) in a way that has

been taught at art school. The point is that many other unseen phenomena underlie the creative process.

This explains the main difference, from the aesthetical point of view, between an original manuscript or handmade etching or other art on the one hand and its reproduction, either printed or digital, on the other. The former transmits energy to the spectator, the second shows the outer appearance of a picture that transmits only semantics.⁶⁶ This also explains why the destruction of one's own artwork or manuscript can function as self-destruction: the artwork incarnates a part of the artist's body and sensuality, and the creative process results in the generation of a physical artistic object born in the depths of the mind. Creative thought can be accompanied by a process in which all sensory organs are involved, as well as the mind and the emotions. Therefore, an author is sometimes connected to his artwork on a physiological level. The destruction of his own pictures by an artist or manuscripts by a writer is akin to attempted suicide. The creator can feel a physical impact — as if something is broken inside. He feels devastation and exhaustion. The history of art and literature knows many examples of such self-destruction, and Gogol is perhaps the most famous example in Russian literature. His entire creative path — from the burning of an entire edition of his first book to the destruction of the only existing copy of the second volume of the most important work in his life (*Dead Souls*) — can be viewed as a path of self-destruction reflecting his inner drama and psychological deterioration. By destroying his creation one week before his death, in a way Gogol perished himself.

Therefore, the conclusion that comes out of all this is, indeed, the beginning. At issue is not only penmanship and written words,⁶⁷ but rather the entire spectrum of facts, aspects and capacities that make up the constructive part of an artwork: anticipated visualization, the ability to think with pictures, the physicality of artistic expression through taction, the balance of invested-received energy, and perceptual competence.

⁶⁶ This is one of the reasons why people still continue to go to the museums despite the circulation of art collections (their reproductions) through internet. The second reason is less aesthetical and is related to the culture of tourism.

⁶⁷ One may want to consider what people are progressively losing when they replace handwriting with typing, when kids at schools use laptops to take notes, when handwriting is dismissed as an uncomfortable way of reproducing thoughts, and when creativity is seen more as a hobby (since it does not promise a living income) than an individual necessity needed to help us function well in any field of human activity.

One more question that should be addressed in relation to the physicality of expression is why an artist should like the text he is illustrating. Fellini once said: “How could I film an actress if I don’t like her?” An artist should like the story that is supposed to be illustrated, not merely in the way the ordinary reader likes a novel that he reads at night before going to sleep. To like a story, for an illustrator, means to let it pass through his feelings, emotions, thoughts, interpretations, reflections, and to get immersed in the story so deeply that it can provoke surprise, a creative reaction, which correlates with the understanding of *how to read a text*, as discussed in I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*. This process of sketching on paper something like the model of surprise generated by the written word makes it clear whether the story provokes any visual reaction in the artist.

Artistic creativity begins with sharpened attention directed toward life in the world and presupposes “rare impressions” (Goethe), as well as the ability to recollect them in memory and to comprehend them (Borev, 110). A creative and original word-image interpretation cannot occur without that “impression”. “The domain to which painting is said to belong is that of *perception*. The painter [or illustrator in our case] who perceives the world [or a fiction text] insensitively or inaccurately falls below the standards of his craft” (Bryson, 6) — i.e. impression, surprise and sensibility are integral features without which art will not happen.⁶⁸ For Tolstoy, “to evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colors, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling – this is the activity of art.”⁶⁹

To summarise the discussion above and to transition to the way the words are adapted to pictures — as is also exemplified by great artists of different professions (see below) — I came to the following conclusion that derives from my own work within the profession as well. I suggest that a text should be “experienced” through pictures rather than “represented”, and an artist should “live through” that experience, provoked by a given text. The next step is to give such an experience visual form. Stanislavski defines this as “the truth of the experience” and suggests that an actor, when playing his part, experiences a genuine involvement in a

⁶⁸ This also explains why artists are generally more vulnerable in social life situations than the other persons who may remain thick-skinned: because they have developed, by the virtue of profession, this perceptual capacity to be highly sensitive and let everything pass through their feelings and emotions, and made it a natural reaction to any life phenomena.

⁶⁹ Tolstoy, L. *What is Art?* trans. Aylmer Maude, New York, 1899, <https://web.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/361r14.html>

character's emotions.⁷⁰ This gives birth to an image on the stage and thus makes the spectator *believe* in the "truth" played by the actor. The audience can then experience the same emotions.⁷¹ This concept of truthful acting mirrors the notion of the truth in pictures as Favorsky explains when discussing the arrangement of time and rhythm in illustrations (considered later in I.7.2. *Rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures*). What is meant by the truth in pictures that illustrate a work of fiction is measured by the artist's own belief in *his* created reality, i.e. the credibility of his images which may not necessary be realistic in the common understanding of realism. How an artist makes the reader *believe* in the "reality" of a bonfire at the bottom of a sea, with what graphic technique and methods his ship starts to "sail" on the surface of book pages, or how Gogol's devil can be "animated" in a picture — all this is established by the degree of the artist's emotional involvement and the surprise he derives from a given text.

More than a half-century before Stanislavski had formulated his method, the actor Mikhail Shchepkin, who was part of the first staging of Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, distinguished the knowledge of the actor's own nature from the observation of life:

It is so much easier to play mechanically — for that you only need your reason. Reason will approximate to joy and sorrow just as an imitation approximates to nature. But an actor of feeling — that's quite different. He just begins by wiping out his own self ... and becomes the character which the author intended him to be. He must walk, talk, think, feel, cry, laugh as the author wants him to. You see how the actor's task becomes more meaningful. In the first case, you need only to pretend to live, in the second you really have to live.⁷²

Because of the necessity of emotional involvement and the sense of sincerity that goes with visual interpretation, an illustrator should like the text *that* way and live through it; otherwise no impression is made, and the making of pictures remains on the artisan level, framed by the publisher's deadlines [see *Between Art and Market* below]. Anything other than this type of "liking" and this type of impression, as well as the wish to communicate such an impression and the inner drive of the artist will provide him with the creative energy and allow its

⁷⁰ I find it relevant and appropriate to apply Stanislavski's method of intermedial translation from word to theater stage to the intermedial translation from word to picture, since many basic principles of creative act are transitional and can be appropriate for different artistic types.

⁷¹ Stanislavski, Konstantin. 1938. *An Actor's Work: A Student's Diary*. Trans. and ed. Jean Benedetti. London and New York: Routledge, 2008, pp.16—36; Benedetti, Jean. *Stanislavski: His Life and Art*. London: Methuen, 1999, p.201; Carnicke, Sharon M. "Stanislavsky's System: Pathways for the Actor", in *Hodge* (2000, 11–36).

⁷² Quoted in: Latham, Edward D. *Tonality as Drama*, Denton, Texas: Univ. of North Texas Press, 2008, p.21

circulation. The path is movement from the artist (he makes an effort, invests and expends a certain amount of mental and creative energy) – to the artwork – to the receiver – and back to the artist in the form of new impressions resulting from his work in form of both emotional satisfaction of implementing the work, i.e. expressing a creative idea, and spectators' acceptance (Tokarchuk, 35). This way one can maintain the necessary balance.

I.3. Perception through simultaneity of reading and visualizing

What is the role of the illustrator in a book project? And how is the illustration perceived when it stands along a fiction text?

According to the rules of the [LCC](#) (Library of Congress Classification system), which are used for descriptive cataloguing, only the writer of a given book is considered to be a “work-creator”, while illustrators, along with editors and translators, fall under the category of “contributors”, as if they were not creating anything new. Even more striking is that in a new book record for the LCC, the name of the illustrator is considered to be an “added entry” which is almost never included “unless the pictures are by Matisse”.⁷³ In other words, it is assumed that we should attribute his work to an illustrator only when his name is well-promoted and can be searched by someone, but when an illustrator is unknown, at the beginning of his career or simply does not care about promotion, nobody would search his name in a catalogue system, and therefore he has no chances to be considered as an authorized and recognized co-creator of a given book-item. He is simply not mentioned anywhere (maybe just on the copyright page of a physical book).

The recognition of visual accompaniment for a book as a creation of extra meaning, and the relevance of making pictures for a narrative, have often been questioned, and this is rooted in the culture of domination of the image by the word.

The debates about the superiority of word over picture and vice versa have a long history, starting from at least ancient Greece of the 6th and 5th centuries BCE where the verb *graphein* meant both ‘to write’ and ‘to draw.’ In the Far East, Chinese pictograms and ideograms did not facilitate the contrast between word and image — all the more so because calligraphy involved a brush and a long-standing tradition in philosophy of visualizing thoughts through writing. “Calligraphy is a kind of music not for the ears, but for the eyes.”⁷⁴ The calligrapher experienced spiritual and creative tension, which is expressed by visually arranging the relationship between space and signs. Words were images and, even if words and images acted differently (verbally and visually), they still remained inseparable rather than opposite to each

⁷³ So has been taught in the library course of *Information Organization, Curation and Access*, the MLIS program at Western University, Fall 2018

⁷⁴ V. Lazursky, “The Aesthetic Unity of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting”, Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy, Moscow, <https://www.calligraphy-museum.com/en/news/news/the-aesthetic-unity-of-chinese-calligraphy-and-painting-talk-by-vera-belozerova>

other. And then there was Horace's famous "ut pictura poesis," meaning that the imaginative text parallels the poetry of painting. In other words, poetry, like painting, is able to generate visual images in the mind's eye of a reader, and painting is able to evoke poetry since the two arts are being formed through the illusion, interaction and recognition of reality. It is inevitable to take into consideration the relation of word and image since pictures are discussed and explained using words (Pinotti, Somaini, 17). Leonardo da Vinci develops this idea, saying that "painting is mute poetry, and poetry is blind painting". The term 'image' is tightly bound to visual representation, but it is also applicable to verbal representation: verbal and visual images are specular even if they have different origins and are diverse in character and expressive languages, as they involve different experiences — of verbalization through voice and of visualization through the eye.⁷⁵ During the Renaissance, images had the same weight as the verbal domain and occupied equal places within a book, as is evident from the following examples. An edition of the Book of Revelation with Durer's woodcuts (1498) [ARCC: NE1205.D9S7 1968 facsimile], presents frequent alternation of pages with pictures and pages with text. In the *Prayer Book of Emperor Maximilian I* [ARCC: NC1055.D84 1922 facsimile] which contains drawings by several artists, including Durer, pictures are placed in the wide margins and occupy almost as much space as the handwritten text, balancing the relationship between the visual and verbal narratives. In a way these narratives engage in dialogue. In 1481 in Florence, the edition of the *Divine Comedy* was published with Baldini's woodcuts made after drawings by Botticelli⁷⁶ [ARCC: NC257.B68A44 1976]. The typography of this incunabula is designed with various typesettings correlating with prints from wood — the entire book should be considered as a continuous visual and verbal unity. The same harmonic relationship applies to A. Manutius' 1499 edition reproducing F. Colonna's novel *The Dream of Poliphilus*,⁷⁷ where the structure of the book's pages embodies the architectural notion that merges the visual logic of both letters and images, as is evident from its two-page design.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Cf. Wunenburger, J-J. *Filosofia delle immagini*, Torino: Einaudi, 1999; quoted in a presentation "Parola e immagine" by F. Malvezzi

⁷⁶ Cf.: Dunlop, Anne. "'El Vostro Poeta: The First Florentine Printing of Dante's 'Commedia.'" *RACAR: Revue D'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, vol. 20, no. 1/2, 1993, pp. 29-42. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42630517.

⁷⁷ A copy of the book is held at the Special Collection, University of Glasgow Library, and is partly presented online: <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/feb2004.html>

⁷⁸ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hypne2pg.jpg>

The relations between a verbal and visual story, or between a work of visual art and its caption, have been broadly studied and understood differently depending on changes in the history of art, but only in the 20th century were they problematized.⁷⁹ Kamilla Elliott in her *Novels, Films, and the Word/Image Wars*,⁸⁰ articulates the modern standpoints on the opposition between “words” and “images”, as well as the opposition between leading critics in the field who express either the possibility or not of adapting words to pictures:

Belief in an essential opposition of words and images holds strongly, even as most other oppositions have been broken down by poststructuralism. Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, J. Hillis Miller, and W. J. T. Mitchell all support a basic word and image opposition. Barthes concludes that ‘there is never a real incorporation since the substances of the two structures (graphic and iconic) are irreducible.’ Foucault presents ‘statements’ and ‘visibilities,’ as pure, a priori elements. Hillis Miller argues that ‘Neither the meaning of a picture nor the meaning of a sentence is by any means translatable. The picture means itself. The sentence means itself. The two can never meet.’ Mitchell claims that words and images ‘are not merely *different* kinds of creatures, but *antithetical* kinds.’ Mitchell has also argued that ‘The history of culture is in part the story of a protracted struggle for dominance between pictorial and linguistic signs’. (Elliott, 1)

Nevertheless, I would suggest that we should look at the way in between these two positions in order to find a balance.

In a book illustration, the depiction of a character by means of visual artistic language enriches that character both at the visual and verbal levels. In Leonardo's work, for instance, text and drawing interact and demonstrate the interpretation of nature by generating in the mind both pictures and prose. This can be observed in his scientific and technical manuscripts, sketches of landscapes from nature, verbal text related to the image, his anatomical studies and so forth. Thus, in most cases, drawing acquires an autonomic function and is capable of producing meaning in relation to text, i.e. becomes something more than a simple illustration (in the sense of a clarification) of the text.⁸¹ Therefore, Leonardo’s writing performs the function of describing an image but simultaneously creates a verbal message on its own insofar

⁷⁹ Cf. Gombrich, E.H. “Image and word in twentieth-century art”, *Word & Image. A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, Vol.1, issue 3 (1985): 213-141

⁸⁰ Elliott, Kamilla. “Novels, Films, and the Word/Image Wars”, *A Companion to Literature and Film*, ed. by Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p.1-22

⁸¹ Cf. Vecce, Carlo. “Parola e immagine nei manoscritti di Leonardo”, *Percorsi tra parole e immagini (1400-1600)*, a cura di A. Guidotti, M. Rossi, Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 2000, p.19-35.

as the lack of one of the components will prevent the complex verbal-visual image from being composed. Mieke Bal observes such an experience of simultaneity — reading and visualizing — with a simple post card; it shows a reciprocal exchange of meanings between text and image when a third sense is produced — one absent from either the verbal or the visual plane alone (Bal, 209-240). The thought emerging in mind could not be fully transmitted by only words or by only pictures but needs to make them enter into dialogue. Through dialoguing with each other, these two media create new meanings and new interpretations according to the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, as is supported by the example of the simultaneity from Bal’s semiotics above.

Even if the history of art uses many words to discuss pictures, works of visual art cannot be entirely and unequivocally represented by verbal language. Rembrandt’s painting — its particular qualities and the spectator’s perceptual experience — can only be partly reducible to description since a full recreation of a work by means of another medium is impossible (Arnheim, 2). Visual art is “visual” because the sense organ on which it is based is vision. In an illustrated text — addressed to our emotions, rational and visual abilities — we have the rare possibility to see both linguistic discourse and pictures dialoguing within a single context. The value of illustration is lost if we start to examine it as a piece of another type to which it does not belong.

According to the basic rules of the Western [traditional painting](#) and [color theory](#),⁸² when an object in possession of its own color is depicted, this color will always consist of a *combination of influences* on that object. If a black cap is in front of a window on a white windowsill, this cap will include all of the following colors: pale-cerulean from the sky, green-ochre from the trees behind the window, cold-pale-yellow from the reflection on the light side (because this is natural rather than electric lighting), ultramarine on the semitone, warm-green-brown on the shadow side, reflection from the windowsill etc. – but never pure black color. Yet, the combination of all these colors, when put close to each other, will create the impression that

⁸² The principles of seeing the colors and the methods of representing them through painting in European world remained unchanged from the early Renaissance to the radical revolution of Cubists; what changed was the technique for manifesting that principle (M. A. Hagen, *Varieties of Realism*, Cambridge University Press, 1986). One of the first comprehensive explanations on the principles of painting is: *The Complete Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci*, particularly “Six books on light and shade”, and “Theory of colours”, <https://archive.org/details/noteboo00leon/page/n7>

this cap is black. According to the principles of modern design,⁸³ such features as balance, emphasis, movement, pattern, contrast, repetition, variety, proportion, rhythm, and unity create a composition as a whole, but empty spots between visual elements or letters *influence* each single object and the entire picture. This principle of *influences*, as is exemplified by the theories of painting and design, is the basis of visual art in general and is fundamental to creating/receiving a book. When comparing objects with each other (or rather graphic images and words), we can judge about their similarity or dissimilarity and, accordingly, draw conclusions from this. But in order to understand which objects we are invited to compare, we must identify the connections between the compared objects. Thus, it is precisely comparisons and influences that make an artwork worthwhile. Moreover, the way these comparisons are built, they offer one or another visual message which aims to lead the viewer to certain conclusions. Therefore, this principle explains what is happening in a book as an object of design, when we are going to build or try to understand the relations between paratextual elements and words.

In illustrating the range of capacities and purposes of book as an art object, I suggest that, in general terms of design, the art of bookmaking is a battle for the unity of word and image that aims to make them engage with one another and to build the entire body of an artistic object.

The book-object, apart from being an “information carrier”, includes also such aspects as: aesthetics of reproduction and perception of a given text through the two-page layout that we see simultaneously when we have an open book in our hands;⁸⁴ the visual story that runs parallel to the verbal and their conceptual and visual relationships when pictures are surrounded by certain words; components defined as paratexts (see below); and the materiality and aesthetics of typography. Each of these aspects has its own functions and builds an object that exists in the space (Favorsky, 1988: 258). The expressive language of the book-making art inevitably includes all these elements which are not isolated (see I.7.2. *Rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures*).

⁸³ Cf. The J. Paul Getty Trust, the world’s largest cultural and philanthropic organization dedicated to the visual arts, <https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building_lessons/principles_design.pdf>

⁸⁴ “The success of the picturebook ‘as an art form [. . .] hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning of the page’ (Barbara Bader, 1976: 1)”, quoted in: Lambert, M. D., “Picturebooks and page layout”, B. Kummerling-Meibauer, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*, 2018, p.28

Even though the reader can take away from prose many images that appear to his inner gaze but do not have any representation on a book's physical pages, the existing visual elements and their connections become part of the book's content and build associative meanings as a counterpart story to the verbal. This, in interaction with the meaning of the text and its extra-textual constructions, is perceived as a visual-verbal unity — the same way as a song is perceived both according to its verbal meaning and musical tonality, or a film according to its story and the actual moving pictures. Such insight occurs simultaneously regardless of the reader's perceptual capacity, personal taste, and likes or dislikes with respect to a given visual series. It is, therefore, worth exploring the relationship between verbal and visual representation.

Therefore, to contrapose words and images that are placed under a single book cover is as illogical as contraposing or separating words and sounds in an opera where each contributes to the specificity of a hybrid form, i.e. the opera itself. Some creators of such verbal-visual unity build their work according to the principles of melody and improvisation⁸⁵ (for the latter see I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*). Hans Lund determines three sectors of such word-picture relations: 1) *Combination*, meaning a coexistence, cooperation or bi-media communication, “where the media are intended to add to and comment on each other”, 2) *Integration*, where “a pictorial element [...] cannot be removed without destroying the verbal structure, [meaning that] verbal and visual elements constitute an overall unity which is not reducible to the sum of the constituting elements”, 3) *Transformation*, where “the text refers to an element or a combination of elements in pictures not presented before the reader's eyes. The information to the reader about the picture is given exclusively by the verbal language” (Lund, 8-9).

This specific feature of book art contrasts with the discussion of domination of the word over the picture or vice versa because illustration occupies its own niche among forms of visual arts. It grows out of the text and serves the text (in this sense, illustration can be considered as a secondary product which is dependent on the verbal), but it sometimes can become an independent or even primary story when an amazing illustration overcomes the original text, so

⁸⁵ For example, Nathalie op de Beeck explains the compound term picturebook as presumption that both components, verbal and visual, are interdependent, which was explored on many levels by artists who create such relations of form and content as a musical performance. // “Picture-Text Relationships in Picturebooks”, *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*, 2018, pp.19-27

much so that the original is lost or no longer known. Therefore, the adaptability of one medium to other functions according to the following principle.

Not every text can be illustrated or, rather, even if it is illustrated, not every picture can be inserted into book pages. If inserted, a picture should be re-worked in order to start dialoguing with the text and be consistent with the principles of book design and the medium of illustration. For example, paintings by [Olga Kvasha](#), even though not intended for book pages, can perfectly become illustrations. Their stylized and conditional style in combination with creativity, transmission of mood, poetry, structure of compositions suitable for a page-frame, and decorativeness of colors all correspond to the principles of the book-making art. Moreover, even if not illustrating any concrete text, they can generate certain associative relations and additional images in the reader's mind if they are placed alongside a fiction text. Thanks to their metaphorical poetry and the variety of visual meanings grasped subconsciously on the level of mood, they would allow the reader to understand a given text through the simultaneity of reading and visualization. However, if the same landscapes were painted in a realistic style (intended by *academic* painting to be "from life", as defined in I.4. *What does a realistic illustration imply?*), such pictures would be inappropriate for book pages since they would not meet the requirements of the genre and intermedial adaptation.

At the same time, a well-developed illustration for a concrete text can become a parallel narrative to the text, which adds something new to it. In a literary work, sometimes, a character grows beyond the story, as in the case of Gogol's *Taras Bulba* who became a national character. Or the figure of Chichikov from *Dead Souls* who, from time to time, speaks of something that has universal meaning, and his speech turns out to be about the relations between a dream and reality. On the one hand, the credibility and realism are increasing, on the other, the level of conditionality and symbolism build another reality. A stage monologue becomes a lyrical part that does not depend anymore on our perception of the entire stage situation because this speech is generalized: it is about man, life, an ideal or a dream. Such a monologue can be extracted from the text and it will not lose its meaning, but rather it will become an independent piece. Such a purely literary principle parallels illustration. A picture acquires a particular power and poetry when it grows beyond the story and can be extracted

from the context of a book, not to be confronted anymore with the text but to continue to live its own life.⁸⁶

Although the argument being made is that a book illustration can only reach its fullest potential when it can be perceived also as an independent artwork, a new non-verbal story able to tell the viewer something more than he reads in the text. The term “independent”, probably, is not completely appropriate in this case. An illustration is almost always dependent on its primary source, but in considering the meaning of the oxymoron “independent illustration,” one can conduct an experiment: take any illustration for any adult fiction text and imagine it framed on a wall. The assumption would be that one does not know of any primary source. Would this work of art be *readable*? Would it create its own non-verbal story that stimulates one to write a new verbal story based on it? If so, the illustration can be deemed successful, as it has accomplished the primary task of the genre: to create a story that does not repeat literally the semantics of text but rather creates a parallel narrative. This final purpose of illustration is preceded by a range of other tasks which are primarily aimed, on the contrary, at achieving correspondences with the text (see I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*).

Thus, the reversed way also takes place and occupies a large area in literary and art history. Written works inspired by visual art — ekphrasis — suggest the relevance of word-image-word adaptations, rather than the opposition of words and pictures.

Illustration is developed on the verge between stylistic conformity to a primary source and linguistic independence from it. This can give an illustration an advantage over the other forms of visual art. Such duality — stemming the written word, corresponding to it on additional levels without repeating its semantics, growing into an independent work and providing an impulse for a new verbal story — can increase the aesthetic impact on the reader several times and surpass the category of a book picture (in its common understanding as something that ‘explains’ text).

Consequently, there appears what we call a narrative inside a narrative or a visual story inside a verbal story, if this is applied to the book-object. The connection of these two parallel stories, verbal and visual, and their placement under a single book cover, creates a third meaning, which will inevitably be different with each new visual adaptation of the same text.

⁸⁶ A similar approach of illustrating books has been expressed by V. Mitchenko, when he discussed his pictures for Gogol’s *Viy*: see Part III.

Not every literary text, as not every visual adaptation of a text, attracts readers to come back again and again to the same book. Some books awaken one's curiosity, provoke an aesthetic surprise, and stimulate a creative experience, as well as new discoveries with each new re-reading. Such magic — an experience and surprise produced by a book — would remain inexplicable if one adheres to the view of illustration as a supplementary accompaniment to the text, following the principle “and pictures are pretty nice, too”. “The habit of resorting to an image just to enhance the meaning of words does not allow one to recognize an independent orchestration of visual components which in fact a book with pictures makes. The rules of such a game consist not in connecting the meanings of a picture with a text, but in creating new meanings, relying on those types that are proposed by an illustrator-designer. Reviewers should learn this nonverbal language [...] and must realize that a book with pictures is an object of art that is not only being read but is also being experienced” (Marantz, 180).

As I am discussing a very specific form of art that requires to reconcile the different semiotic characteristics of words and pictures, I find it appropriate to address the following issue. When speaking with my colleagues, I realized that not only graduate students but also scholars from visual arts and from literature cannot find a common language: split into two separate disciplines, their opposition and struggle for the greater significance of one or the other is, in part, the consequence of the history of culture, and 20th century critical trends in particular, of a struggle for priority between the visual and the linguistic. This led me to form a new idea and to merge the two within the study of book art, which cannot consider their separation or opposition from a physical or material point of view, as well as from the perspective of verbal and visual signs, associations, extra verbal and textual meanings, and creative processes as a whole.

There are texts that can be not only freely interpreted but also generated, co-created in cooperation with the addressee; the ‘original’ text (i.e. text of departure) constitutes an elastic, flexible *type* which allows fulfillment in the form of many different *tokens* (Eco, 1979:3). The exploration of such a flexible system of significations is equally appropriate for both generated texts and generated pictures from the ‘original’ source-text, but to a greater extent it concerns the extra significations which are generated simultaneously by texts and pictures and go beyond their semantics.

The way we experience books, therefore, necessitates also the awareness of the perception of a given book through the physicality of reading, and how different reading/viewing physical book-objects is when compared to processing their electronic counterparts. In relation to Bal's observation on the experience of simultaneity, medieval codices with miniatures and bindings, incunabules, or 16th-17th century books with original prints were created to be read, perceived through vision and taction synchronously. The same thing should be recognized in relation to modern books with pictures. Whether we realize it or not, modern illustrated books impact our rational and visual faculties, sense of touch and emotions. In addition to sensory receptor perception, the shape of books, their materials, the texture of their binding and paper — all convey a “sense of time” which is, as Tanselle suggests, “the importance of primary evidence”. For him, debates on the importance of interaction with physical items bring into dispute the role of both originals and reproductions. In his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin argues that “even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.” The physical characteristics, which are inevitably lost in a reproduction (either printed facsimile or digital copy), are represented through a feature that Benjamin calls “the aura of the work of art”.⁸⁷ The concern of authenticity is derived from the “presence of the original” and proof that a given manuscript stems from an archive of a certain epoch. Without such proof, original turns into fake.

The book artifact, therefore, accumulates many aspects: what is produced as a result of human invested energy, e.g., handwriting or the “aura of the work” to use Benjamin's terms; the authenticity and uniqueness of an original work of art vs a reproduction; verbal-visual interpretations expressed in pictures; “primary evidence” reflected in physical details; the “memory of a text” or history that the item conveys in connection with the past; the impact produced by the simultaneity of reading, visualizing, and touching a physical item; and then the relation of such components to the verbal content, authorship, provenance, ownership and general cultural significance of an artwork.

What does the reading process imply when it comes to interacting with such items? Or, broadly speaking, what is reading and how does it relate to human body? Research on embodied cognition — the idea that our body image is involved in the process of representation

⁸⁷ Described also in: Tanselle, 1998:xi

as we make sense of the world — suggests that any human reciprocal action, including collecting and processing information, occurs through bodily interaction and necessarily involves cognition through the hands, eyes, and ears. The analyses on “embodiment” by Cox, Griffin, and Hartel (2017) and Olsson and Lloyd (2017) provide an overview of previous studies (Lueg, Twidale, 410). Benjamin K. Bergen argues that processing linguistic information, even abstract words, involves some sort of embodiment in the representation that arises in our minds (2012). Physicality and embodiment effect the information seeking and absorbing process, when the arrangement of the physical setting of one’s environment and the design of printed or digital pages, consciously or subconsciously, become integral elements of that information and a kind of a reminder.

People’s perceptual experience with a book as an object of art and their behavior change when they read electronic instead of printed books since these two different forms of transmitting/receiving information imply different perceptual modes. “Some researchers have found that these discrepancies create enough ‘haptic dissonance’ to dissuade some people from using e-readers. People expect books to look, feel and even smell a certain way; when they do not, reading sometimes becomes less enjoyable or even unpleasant. For others, the confidence of a slim portable e-reader outweighs any attachment they might have to the feel of paper books” (Jabr, 2013). Those who claim to have the information of the entire world on their cell phone may be missing out a large part of the aesthetics of perception which, in the case of interaction with book-objects, occurs on different levels simultaneously as described above. The system of such form-related phenomena is inevitably integrated into the meaning of a given narrative (Alaca, 59). Essentially, no matter how dualist or Cartesian we may imagine ourselves to be, the mind and the body may never part company.

The scholarship on the materiality, reading, perception, visual-verbal relations and physicality is wide-ranging but the most influential are the following works: Kendrick, *Animating the Letter*; Saenger, *Space Between Words*; Sherman, *Used Books*; Noakes, *Timely Reading*; Baker, *Double Fold*; Nell, *Lost in a Book*; Porter, *Books and Reading*; Tanselle, *Literature and Artifacts*.

When bringing together all the questions discussed above, we get a summary of notions under the umbrella of *paratexts*, i.e., “the literary and printerly conventions that mediate between the

world of publishing and the world of the text” (Genette, xvii), enabling “a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers” (Genette, 1). This includes a whole series of notions that function as follows.

Intertextuality, which is characterized by the intermedial functions of a narrative including both verbal and visual images (Lotman, 1975: 333) and relations between two or more texts when one is present within another (Genette, xviii).

Paratextuality, to which Genette devotes an entire book, includes those intertextual relations that are presented by the narrative itself and those “that mediate the book to the reader: titles and subtitles, pseudonyms, forewords, dedications, epigraphs, preface, intertitles, notes, epilogues, and afterwards” (Genette, xviii). Such elements make the verbal realm tangible through the *physicality of representation* and extra meanings (alluded to above: Barsht, Torop; Tanselle; Kyuyoh; Saveliev) given that “text is rarely represented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions [...]; although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, [...] but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its reception [...] in the form of book” (Genette, 1).

In terms of formation, extratextual, non-verbal interconnections and meanings are created because of the complex creative-cognitive process that generates relations of verbal and graphic elements (as from the example of difference between Dostoevsky’s manuscripts and a typed text, as well as Mitchenko’s calligraphic portraits of Gogol). In terms of reception, paratexts affect the reading process because of the simultaneity of verbal-plus-visual messages (as from many examples above). Furthermore, such meanings, “ways and means of the paratext [are not static but] change constantly, depending on the period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition” (Genette, 3), and depending on the perceptual capacity of the reader. What Genette suggests about the characteristics of paratexts explores the variety of *influences* that stand within the reading experience: illocutionary force, intention or interpretation (of a piece of information), advice to the reader, permission (when the preface allows to skip parts, etc.), performance, functional aspects etc.

Metatextuality — the term that Genette applies to all the literary critics that for centuries have been producing texts about texts (metatexts) — can be applied with the same meaning to

visual commentaries, i.e., series of illustrations that interpret a given literary work visually since its appearance, changes in style and approach according to current styles. In this sense, illustration can be understood as both *paratext* (representing the verbal) and *metatext* (creating visual narration meant to interact with the verbal).

Hypertextuality is literature that superimposes “a later text on an earlier one that includes all forms of imitation, pastiche, and parody as well as less obvious superimpositions” (Genette, xix) and, as above, this concept is applicable for the function of illustration where each subsequent interpretation of a given text is superimposed on previous artworks and styles of the arts.

Architextuality explores those meanings and ambiguities that are generated by the *relations* of all the components by means of which a literary work is presented to the reader, including paratexts, visual interpretations, critiques and reception of both literary and visual works.

Even though Genette considers only those characteristics of paratexts that are *textual* themselves, their functions may be considered equally in relation to visual components representing the textual domain.

I.4. What does a realistic illustration imply?

Approaches to illustrating texts are not static but have been changing over time. Such changes depend on the current trends in the general arts, bookmaking needs, typographic preferences and, most importantly, perceptual expectations of the reader.

Some terms used in the general history of visual art are not applicable or have a different meaning with respect to book art which is a category apart with its own rules of visual logic.

The term *realistic art* has had diverse definitions in different periods given the variability of the way reality can be perceived. In order to avoid misunderstandings when discussing the pictures, we will need more specific definition of how the term *realistic illustration* can be understood. The necessity of such an explanation has to do with the common opinion — that emerged in the 19th century, being based on the purposes of illustration of the period, and penetrated into our time — that any given illustration, just by virtue of being concrete and specific, achieves a single interpretation, thereby limiting the semantic range of any author's fictional world. This sort of story enrichment turns into a kind of impoverishment. Once an illustration has been added to a given text, it becomes difficult for the reader to imagine a given character or location differently or less precisely and therefore in a manner endowed with polysemic potential.⁸⁸

One of the aspects of picturing the verbal image is that “literary imagery cannot be visualized in its entity. If it could, the result would be pictorial chaos” (Kayser; quoted in Lund, 6). I think this is associated with a few phenomena. It is true that a literary image can often be broader and more abstract than its visual depiction. When creating word-image interpretations, an artist should inevitably make choices (to avoid chaos in pictures) and pick up from his inner gaze certain fragments that a literary image has generated. This means the impossibility of transmitting literally and entirely a verbal image in pictures. Nevertheless, the effect of limiting the reader's imagination can be provoked by the lazy perceptual capacity of the human mind that automatically prefers to stop, when possible, rather than to continue working — regardless of the brilliance of the pictures in question. For example, Kuzminsky, in his book *Artist-illustrator Boklevsky, his Life and Art* (1910), provides a quotation from a letter that he received from a friend: “I already cannot imagine Chichikov differently than he is presented in

⁸⁸ I owe my ‘thanks’ to Vlad Tumanov for such an important observation, which provoked some thoughts and debates.

the image created by Boklevsky” (Boklevsky engraved Agin’s illustrations for Gogol’s *Dead Souls*). Besides, the perception of the same verbal image will be unique for every mind: “Words do not present special and unique visual factors, but concepts, a fact that forces the reader to make his private mental images, usually different from those of other readers” (Lund, 25), which leads back to Lotman’s statement about the difference between creating and decoding meanings. In his essay *Rhetoric of the Image*, Barthes suggests that “the image is in a certain manner the *limit* of meaning, it permits the consideration of a veritable ontology of the process of signification” and raises the following questions: “How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there *beyond!*” (Barthes, 1977:33). Furthermore, the perception of a verbal image implies one kind of experience, while its transformation through another medium (visual) is a different kind of practice. The lack of complex word-picture relations — in terms of stylistic correspondences that are supposed to be created by the artist — can limit literary splendor. This happens often in the field of illustration. Some examples of the “why” and the “how” of such effects will be examined later in I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*.

However, despite such a widespread opinion, which suggests that a picture overshadows text and restricts the reader’s perception, does the art of illustrating books in fact have the effect of blocking the reader’s imaginative process? The art of illustration has accompanied the art of letters on its many-millennium path⁸⁹: from ancient Egyptian papyri of the 14th century BCE; to the first illustrated codices of Greek and Roman classics in the first centuries CE; to Byzantine books that survived political and cultural changes, adapting features of late antiquity to Christian texts and perfecting stylization and decorative style; to Western-European illuminated manuscripts⁹⁰ that passed through the Middle Ages and reached their highest point in the Renaissance, 15th-century book paintings, transitioning then to incunabula and woodcuts, the outstanding quality of which has not been exceeded to this day; and to the emergence of metal engravings and the development of printing techniques — from Durer to the artists of the 18th century who illustrated a variety of literary works, fables, historical chronicles, architectural

⁸⁹ Cf. Harthan, John. *The History of the Illustrated Book. The Western Tradition*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1981 [ARCC: Z1023.H387]

⁹⁰ Cf. Brown, Michelle. *The British Library guide to writing and scripts: history and techniques*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998; Brown, Michelle. *Understanding illuminated manuscripts: a guide to technical terms*, Malibu, Calif.: J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the British Library, 1994 [ARCC: ND2889.B76 1994].

and anatomical books, reaching the maximum of what the etched sign could allow. Then we have the stylistic diversity of the 19th-century illustrations, Romanticism, caricatures, expressive forms, Doré's dynamism of compositions and ambiguity of meanings, Blake's drawn poetry, aesthetic limited editions, as well as modern illustration influenced by futurism and by new media, such as films and industrial design. All manifestations of such stylistic evolution include artistic imagery, fantasy, elaboration of characters, associative thinking, and the completeness of technical execution.

Such trajectory of illustration development means that the art of the book satisfies one of the fundamental needs of culture: striving for a many-sided and ambivalent representation of reality (Gerchuk, 2009). But, at this point, the definition of "reality" or its derivative "realism" or, broadly-speaking, the perception of reality is also variable. "In connection with the image, realism may be defined as the expression of the idea of the *vraisemblable* [possible] which any society chooses as the vehicle through which to express its existence to itself in visual form" (Bryson, 1983:14). Be that as it may, in order to move closer to the meaning of a "realistic" picture intended for a fiction text, we should jump back in time and adopt a historical perspective on illustrating texts and the provenance of certain contemporary observations.

Literary critics and writers of the 19th and partly 20th centuries have often rejected the necessity of illustrations.⁹¹ Writers did not want to see any pictures for their works because they failed to recognize the possibility of any dialogue (rather than a simple repetition) between word and picture. "I am against any poly-types and fashionable artifices; the product must be presented by its face, without sweetening it with some confectionery,"⁹² wrote Gogol in a letter. Ironically, he turned out to be one of the most illustrated Russian writers after his lifetime.

The term "poly-type" (from French *polytypage*) is derived from the function of woodcuts that were used to print the same image multiple times, i.e. poly-types. Such wood clichés or plates cast out of metal were reused not only to print several copies of the same book, but also to print the same image within one single book or to reproduce the same image for books on different subjects and authors, e.g., decorations at the beginning of chapters. In the 19th century, the art of bookmaking appeared to have declined — at least it was thought so by 19th century

⁹¹ For instance, Yury Tynyanov, an influential literary critic of the time from the Formalist school, had actively questioned in a number of his works the value of illustration, positioning the visual accompaniment as unnecessary "explanation" imposed by the artist; cf.: Tynyanov, Y., *Poetika. Istoriya literatury*. Kino, M., 1977, pp.310-318

⁹² "Я враг всяких политипажей и модных выдумок, товар должен подаваться лицом, и нечего его подслащивать этим кондитерством", *Letters of Gogol*, т.3, p. 157, from Rome, 20th March 1846

reviewers — but in effect it was transitioning from the stage of old printed books with original engravings to the modern approach to bookmaking with mechanized printing that would greatly expand at the beginning of the 20th century. In Eastern Europe, the art of typography had developed less and progressed more slowly as compared to Western Europe. Printed books were produced only in big cities and were not available to the majority of the population because of their cost. It was a common practice to re-write by hand books of different genres until the end of the 18th century. Besides, in this period, Old Believers began to open schools and renew the tradition of handwritten books, using 14-15th-century *semi-ustav* as the style of fonts, rather than 18th-century *skoropis*. This was a wonderful trend for keeping traditions alive, but it prevented the book arts from taking a step forward in terms of stylistic changes. Secular handwritten books were completely replaced by printed ones only at the end of the 18th century⁹³. One more feature that made manuscripts attractive was the possibility of inserting coloured miniatures which were lacking in printed books until the mid-19th century.

Thus, the meaning of the term *polytypage* was broadened in the 19th century and the word came to be used in relation to any printed pictures in books because such a “decline of style” (Gerchuk, 1982: 112) was characterized by multiple decorations and vignettes not related stylistically to the text that they accompanied. If a book illustration followed the technique of butt-xylography — with a second wood plate that added tonality to the picture, it was also named *polytypage* (Murtazina, Hammatova, 54).

Therefore, a negative attitude toward the role and necessity of illustrations, and the inference that illustration is an impractical element that restricts the reader’s perception emerged along with early 19th-century publications, passed to the beginning of the 20th century, and penetrated some books as a tradition of attaching more significance to the verbal than to the visual. It derives from purely stylistic trends, the level of book development of the period and critical views on illustration as a type of art.

The conviction regarding the decline of the 19th-century book art derives from several factors.

⁹³ On the history of books and libraries, see a collection of articles in: Luppov, S., red. *Russkie knigi i biblioteki v XVI – pervoj polovine XIX v.*, Leningrad: Bibl.Akad.Nauk, 1983.

1) When viewed from the historical perspective, before the end of the 19th century, the major (but not the only one) approach to illustration was to support rather than interpret texts, the latter implying the act of *creative adaptation*. If illustrations appeared on the pages of fiction books, they embodied mostly the physical level of the story. In other words, these were pictures aimed to merely retell the plot of a written story rather than interpret it.⁹⁴ Such an understanding of the purposes of illustration was common for many European artists of the 19th century.

2) To take few examples, one may consider the entire range of pictures for Mark Twain's stories.⁹⁵ This author "was deeply involved in the process of commissioning directly, and approving the illustration of his works, drawings that were not mere decoration but often commentaries on, and explanations of, the text" (David)⁹⁶, [ARCC: PS1326.D38 1986]. Interestingly, different illustrators were involved in illustrating a single literary work, *Roughing It*,⁹⁷ which is an unacceptable practice from the point of view of the artistic and stylistic conformity of a book. And of course, numerous visual "explanations" of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*⁹⁸ are part of the same stylistic stream. Some more examples include illustrations for Charles Dickens' books, as discussed in J. Rabb's *Charles Dickens and his Original Illustrators* [ARCC: PR4586.C62], decorations for Oscar Wilde's books, and so forth.⁹⁹ And finally, the illustrated magazines of the period, published all over Europe and including full-page drawings, as well as numerous small and living sketches placed within the text that aimed to "represent" everyday life seen through the light of a satirical atmosphere. This approach of representing and describing visually exactly what the text tells mean neither the decline of illustration nor does it suggest bad taste or a wrong method, as there were brilliant artists of the genre whose pictures brought infinite aesthetic pleasure and joy. Instead, this means that we are looking at the stylistic preferences and demands of the period. The rejection

⁹⁴ A detailed theoretical account on the history and stylistic trends of the art of book in the 19th-century Russia see: Adarukov, V., Sidorov, A., red. *Russkaja kniga 19 veka*, Moskva: Gos.izdat, 1925

⁹⁵ A series of pictures for his *Innocents Abroad* is accessible on the Library of "Mark Twain in His Times", University of Virginia, <http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/innocent/innoillus.html>

⁹⁶ Quoted in a book review on Beverly R. David's *Mark Twain and his Illustrators* (1986), CHOICE: Publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries, t.24, issue 5-8, Feb. 1987, p.878

⁹⁷ Library of "Mark Twain in His Times", University of Virginia, <http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/roughingit/illus/rjillhp.html>

⁹⁸ Same source: <http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/tomsawye/tomillhp.html>; <http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/huckfinn/hucillhp.html>

⁹⁹ Cf.: Golden, Catherine, *Book illustrated: text, image, and culture, 1770-1930*, New Castle, Del: Oak Knoll Press, 2000.

of all illustrations by certain writers is related to this type of pictures which are viewed as “too illustrative”.

Yet, there is another reason for not publishing any kind of pictures along with texts, as for example Flaubert’s request to this effect in the case of his *Salamambo* and other texts.¹⁰⁰ Subsequently, this novel became the subject of pictures “based on” the text by many artists, e.g., [A. Mucha](#)’s decorative depictions and paintings by Victorian artists.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, some customers who bought Flaubert’s book and a portfolio with separate pictures, ordered their volume to be rebound incorporating the illustrations, as for example in a copy from 1863 containing original etchings that were not published in this (first) edition.¹⁰²

This says something important about numerous writers’ common belief that the word is supreme and provides more space for the imagination than pictures do. They did not want the reader to be “distracted” or “mislead” by the “mediation” of an artist with the aim “of keeping the connotative richness of the literary work” (Lund, 25). Therefore, series of creative pictures that attempted to interpret narratives of the most famous writers were often published in folders without texts. Then, in contrast, there are such illustrators of the 19th century as E. Delacroix, O. Redon, A. Beardsley, A. Benois, and others. Their outstanding works affect the reader's perception of literary texts and can be characterized in many ways but never as something that restricts the reader’s imagination. For example, an edition of *Faust* (first published in 1816 by Cotta Publishing) represents a kind of picture book in miniature format. It features Moritz Retzsch’s 26 pictures engraved by Henry Moses, and printed as originals in this edition [[French edition, ARCC: PT1923.R44](#)]. Goethe liked this edition which “was in demand all over Western Europe” and “had a decisive influence on the reception of Goethe’s drama in England and France” (Vilain, 97). These pictures, in combination with a theater staging of *Faust* in London, inspired and influenced a new series of 17 dramatic pictures created by Delacroix (Vilain, 101)¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Bart’s study examines the relations between Flaubert’s narrative and the works of visual art inspired by his texts, as well as the role of prints for some further illustrations: Bart, B. F. "Flaubert and the Graphic Arts: A Model for His Sources, His Texts, and His Illustrators." *Symposium* 40.4 (1986): 259. *ProQuest*. Web. 11 Feb. 2020.

¹⁰¹ Some further editions of Flaubert’s works with pictures can be consulted on *Artunderwraps: A Treasure Trove of Art Inside Books*, <http://artunderwraps.com/Gustave-Flaubert.html>

¹⁰² On sale at the auction of rare books Biblio, [Carteret 1:266; Vicaire III:724-25], Seller: Alcuin Books, ABAA-ILAB, price \$USD 2,750.00, accessed on Oct 17, 2019 <https://www.biblio.com/salamambo-by-flaubert-gustave/work/15818>

¹⁰³ A detailed comparative study on the translations of *Faust* and pictures by Retzsch and Delacroix presents controversies on the meanings and logic of illustrations: Vilain, Robert, “Faust, Part One and France:

in black and white lithographs. “Delacroix has surpassed my own vision,” as Goethe commented on these pictures — interestingly enough when considering his own *Theory of Colours*. The edition of 1828 of *Faust* with Delacroix’s lithographs “is considered by most historians to be one of the finest publications of the nineteenth century”¹⁰⁴ [ARCC: NC248.D4J65 1995¹⁰⁵].

2) An explanation of the second factor in the apparent decline of the illustrated book in the 19th century can be found in the technical features, the state of printing of the period, and the initial (and not always successful) stage of using new technology for unlimited reproductions of any image: the emergence of [photolithography](#), [zincography](#), [autotype](#), and other techniques of mechanical reproduction for book illustrations, including color pictures. At the same time, the *stankovy* nature of illustrations led to the frequent loss of unity between text and image. For example, William Morris was one of the few artists who strived to reach an aesthetic and stylistic unity among pictures, typography, and ornamental elements.¹⁰⁶

In the mid-19th century, the manufacturing of paper took a great step forward, along with fabrics, metallurgy, mechanics, and furniture, which were produced in specialized workshops. However, the high cost of good paper still did not allow its use for every-day editorial purposes. And so books continued to be printed on paper of poor quality that, therefore, reduced the quality of the pictures immensely. This becomes a greater problem when such techniques as pencil drawing or etching or lithography are printed with the abovementioned techniques of mechanical reproduction: they are mainly made up of various tones and semitones of gray, which can barely be seen in poor-quality printing (the equivalent of this can be found in modern Print-On-Demand editions, the printing quality of which resembles newspapers and renders the artist’s work useless). For example, one can grasp the difference of visual rendering when looking at some of Milton’s editions [held at the ARCC]: those with original etchings of the 17th-18th centuries, and those with reproduced photolithography of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The former creates a feeling of aesthetic pleasure and artistic

Stapfer's Translation, Delacroix's Lithographs, Goethe's Responses”, *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, June 2012 Volume, 81(2) pp.73-135

¹⁰⁴ A copy of this edition is held at the Princeton University Library and posted/commented on their site:

https://www.princeton.edu/~graphicarts/2009/11/delacroixs_faust.html

¹⁰⁵ This volume gathers together all existing plates by Delacroix – a rare possibility to see the whole oeuvre of the artist in one book: Johnson, Lee, *Delacroix plates*, New York: George Braziller, 1995

¹⁰⁶ Cf.: William Morris, *The Art and Craft of Printing*, 1902, Project Gutenberg:

www.gutenberg.org/files/31596/31596-h/31596-h.htm; *The Collected Works of William Morris*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139343152>; *Art and its Producers*, 1888

surprise while the latter may often leave an impression of alien images or even images conflicting with the text — even though they seem to be creative in their original version.

A totally different phenomenon, in terms of aesthetics and the art of typography, is the tradition of limited editions — a concept that had emerged in the same period in opposition to mechanical reproduction in the course of the 19th century and manifested itself in the editions of books containing original etchings or woodcuts, etc.¹⁰⁷ Such books continue to be printed today by individual artists or artisan print shops.

3) A more conceptual factor is the use of engraving on metal or wood plates merely as a technique that allowed the reproduction of a drawing made earlier. Only in the 20th century did artists begin to explore the individual artistic features of a given material and started to adapt the material (wood or metal or lino) to the needs of their creative ideas, attempting to get the most out of a chosen technique (such as linocut, aquatint, mezzotint, dry-point, xylography, and so on). These two approaches represent two opposite views of the role of original prints as illustrations: reproduction of an existing drawing vs. creation of a new work through such technique.

4) The opinion that book art is expressed only by illustrations was a common one. In fact, it is a complex art that also includes typography and design which influence the way we perceive and read a given book. Thus, in the 19th century, bookmaking was not understood as a category of art per se, and pictures were often disconnected stylistically from ornaments and typography.

As a kind of counterbalance to this attitude, in the 1900s, a movement developed that denied the appropriateness of illustration. The purpose of creating a book as an integral system moved to a privileged position where the verbal-visual content would be expressed by typographic features only, e.g., Russian constructivism and avant-garde work by such artists as El Lissitzky, M. Chagall and others who brought new artistic directions into the 20th-century book art.

Therefore, the viewpoints about the principles of making pictures in the 19th century often ignored the presence of other artistic planes in an illustration which are present or not in the verbal story. The illustration is a multi-semantic work, which presupposes ambivalence, ambiguity and transmission of numerous possibilities of interpretation [as explored in *Approaches to Illustrating...*]. This means that a picture almost always leaves a space for the

¹⁰⁷ A brief explanation about the concept and purpose of limited editions can be found here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edition_\(printmaking\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edition_(printmaking))

reader's thoughts, even if this picture "translates" only one of the aspects presented within the text.

Moreover, those types of illustration should be considered, which are meant to go against the "explanatory" method. For example, one happens very rarely and is due to both the writer's and artist's creative potential. When a literary character outgrows his own boundaries, he may end up teasing the artist so to speak, i.e., he goes beyond the authorial vision. Then a drawn character can grow out of the verbal description and become recognizable, even if seen without text, because a so-called "full match" occurs between the verbal and non-verbal images. When looking at Laptev's drawing that portrays Pliushkin surrounded by all his hoarded possessions, we are sure that this is Pliushkin and not someone else because we recognize this character as such, as an individual that exists outside of Gogol's text. Pliushkin became a common noun thanks to both Gogol's pictorial description and the artist's incarnation of that description. Something similar happened with the illustrations by Agin, created in Gogol's time; as Tynyanov noticed, half of the Russian readers knew Agin rather than Gogol (Tynyanov, 1977:310). The same occurred with Gogol's image of Taras Bulba and its visual incarnation in Ilya Repin's painting [Fig. [Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to the Sultan](#)]. Such a verbal-plus-visual image of the Cossack is so powerful that it stands on its own, becoming later the prototype for further representations of all the Ukrainian Cossacks in different media, from paintings to films.

Another type of illustration can follow the principle of montage (connecting different and often incompatible elements in one picture) or the principle of symbolism (adding some interpretations to well-known objects). In these cases, an illustration can enrich the primary source by creating a parallel "story in pictures" that generates emotional and symbolic correspondences with the text without repeating its semantics.

The recognition of the role of an illustrator as a mediator who "explains" a given text with pictures was, therefore, a common attitude inherent in the methods of bookmaking. Another observation in this connection has to do with what happens to the theater, cinema or books when the receiver's focus is shifted to other dimensions.

In the 1884 issue of the journal *Russkaia Mysl*, an article appeared that discusses a photographic series made by Konstantine Shapiro during the theatrical performance of Gogol's

Diary of a Madman. The photos then illustrated Gogol's story in Shapiro's print edition of the same work. This article, which is the author's polemic against illegitimate performances of Gogol's story, positions the illustrator as a mediator between the text and the reader:

Before this edition, we saw many illustrations for dramatic and non-dramatic works; but all the pictures were made by the artists and, consequently, were the fruit of the artist's own fantasy, inspired by the content of the written story [...] or by the performance on the stage. In the latest case, there was less space for artist's fantasy and personal choices, as a great portion of creativity belonged to the actor, but a highly uncertain, which was subordinated to the subjective illustrator's impression [...] All this, i.e. the illustrations with ink, pencil or photo, have not had serious significance. Shapiro's idea is innovative because the entire series of an actor's movements in a given role is reproduced by means of photo [...], moreover, it is reproduced without the participation of a mediator — artist.¹⁰⁸

And later, the author of this article proceeds by analyzing the fact that, when looking at the stage, we can experience a certain effect because of the entire range of quick movements, as well as the actors' live voices and facial expressions, which the motionless and mute photos do not offer. Failing to consider the difference between a theater performance and photography which imply different means of representation, as well as different approaches to the expression of movement, when what is static in a performance can be perceived as moving in a picture, this author still continues to discuss the technical process by which the photos were made and concludes that "illustrations leave much to be desired". However, the editions that include photos taken during the theatrical performances represent the high art of photography characterized by a unique approach, namely, constructing visual composition and motion in pictures as featured for that particular epoch and theater director. The frames of conditionality in the theater and in pictures are different. This principle can be illustrated by a comparison of a theater performance with certain static scenes on the one hand, and on the other hand — monochrome photos representing performances, for instance, taken from a facsimile edition of the Moscow Art Academic Theater in 1904 [ARCC: PN2726.M62M6665].¹⁰⁹

A more detailed analysis of a theater episode and a photo will further make it possible to explain the difference between static compositions on the stage and moving/static principles used in building a book illustration.

¹⁰⁸ "Illustrazii k 'Zapiskam sumashedshego' N.V. Gogolj", *Russkaj Misl*, No. 2, Moskva: 1884, p. 106-110

¹⁰⁹ *Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi akademicheskii teatr*, Moskva: ed. Lepkovskago, 1904. [Some pictures](#).

http://www.kirshin.ru/about/arsii/06_04.html

Gogol's most famous play, the *Government Inspector* (also known as the *Inspector-General*) is about a small Russian town full of corrupt officials who abuse their office in the most outrageous manner. This, like Gogol's other great work, *Dead Souls*, is meant to satirize the general problem of corruption in imperial Russia. A rumor runs through the town that an inspector from the capital is about to descend incognito on the town and audit the mayor, chief of police, postmaster and various others. Meanwhile, a penniless young man called Khlestakov arrives in the town with his valet and is taken for the secret inspector. Having realized what is happening, Khlestakov proceeds to take full advantage of his awe-inspiring position and milks the townspeople for all they are worth. Only at the very end, when the truth is revealed, do Khlestakov's dupes realize what has happened. In his staging instructions for the actors who perform in *The Government Inspector*, Gogol required three minutes of complete immobility and silence at the end of the performance when a gendarme comes and announces the arrival of the real inspector. Such an ending would contrast immensely with the rhythmical movements and noise throughout the entire performance. Three minutes of absolute inactivity on a theater stage is too much. Nemirovich-Danchenko, who directed the theatre production with Stanislavsky, researched how long silent scenes usually lasted and discovered that the longest one was 40 seconds. Such a long pause is meant to provide passage into another artistic dimension.¹¹⁰ Gogol precisely described and drew for each actor their postures, facial expressions, gestures and the compositional structure of the mise-en-scene, along with explanations for such a symbolic finale the meaning of which should be found in your (spectator's) own soul and represents “an image of all-seeing power that sees the evil and comes to destroy it” i.e., as if some higher power interferes in our lives and performs retribution. An analogy is also drawn to Michelangelo's fresco *Last Judgment*. Since we are weak morally, we need some power that could put everything in order, so everything is involved in such a global performance with a utopian finale.

In this work, apart from Gogol's usual striving to make an intensive impact on the reader (from mirth to shock to agitation), an extra goal is added that constitutes another literary level. The question arises: how does the spectator perceive such a stunt?

¹¹⁰ Nemirovich-Danchenko wrote an extensive theoretical account of theater and the experience of staging; the development of this Gogol's silent ending is described in: Nemirovich-Danchenko, *Rozdenie Teatra* [The birth of the theater] Moscow: Pravda, 1989, p.205-209; as well as discussed in some parts of his correspondence with Stanislavsky in: Nemirovich-Danchenko, *Tvorcheskoe nasledie* [Creative heritage], tom 1-4, published by the Moscow Art Theater (MHAT) and available online at the Library of MHAT: <http://library.mxat.ru/books/>

The play has ended, and the characters have stopped dead in their tracks with traces of expressions on their faces. The audience is paralyzed as well, waiting for something and, naturally, having forgotten about the epigraph that preceded the play: “Don’t blame the mirror if you have a distorted face.” This is a call to look at ourselves because in the course of the entire play we are the only ones who know that Khlestakov is not the true inspector. As is typical of such dramatic irony, we laugh at all the characters in the play who lack this privileged knowledge. Only at the end, when the actors and the spectators end up immobilized in front of each other, and such a scene lasts for three minutes, does it become gradually clear that the stage is a mirror for us. The joke is on us, and another level of dramatic irony has been playing itself out above our heads. The sense of superiority that we experienced with respect to the uninitiated (and corrupt) characters in the play has turned out to be groundless, and we are not the author's accomplices after all — but rather the targets of his satire. This is one of the most brilliant coups in Russian theater.

In the production directed by Meyerhold, a kind of metaphoric reification occurs in this silent scene (Mann, 2003) through the language of theater performance. The actors stand immobile in the prescribed postures for one minute, and the spectators applaud. Then the curtain closes and reopens, but the actors are still immobile with their faces frozen in the emotions they had while they were moving. The audience applauds and shouts, starts to whistle and throws flowers at the stage for another minute. Then the curtain closes and reopens again, and the spectators see yet again the immobile actors in unchanged primary postures with the same expressive faces. At this point, the audience becomes confused, falls into silence, and then, to everyone's dumbfounding surprise, the real actors come out. It turns out that the audience has been looking at wax clones of the actors — placed on stage after the first curtain fall. The actors take away their respective clones, and the play is over. At this point, the whole experience requires a completely new assessment. The audience leaves the theater — hopefully without its initial smugness and inclined to reconsider a number of big questions, including the self-image of each spectator.

Therefore, realism is replaced here by symbolism. As V. Markovich emphasizes, it is important that the pause lasts for an uncomfortably long period of time since only this way can the above-mentioned reassessment take place. At the same time, the highest expression of meaning is achieved. The important point here is that living people solidify and petrify (Mann,

2003). The suggestion is that people can become hollow in the sense of playing empty roles, as do corrupt government officials, bereft of genuine humanity and sociality. The denouement of the play with still-life scene and the mirror effect, where the spectator is supposed to recognize himself in the actors, has the purpose of implementing a utopian idea. The spectator has to live through a deep, stressful experience (Mann, 1966:74) which may then transition into purifying laughter: not at the characters of the comedy but at one's own vices. Presumably, this would transform the audience and influence others. An analogy can be drawn to Aristophanes' comedies, e.g., *Lysistrata*, where the character comes to the front of the stage and starts to ridicule the audience. The ancient spectator was meant to laugh at himself, going through a magical purification. This evokes Bakhtin's theory of carnival where laughter is the basis (and beginning) of self-liberation.¹¹¹

The playwright has reached the effect that “the crowd, totally diverse and motley among them, had laughed with one common laugh, and at the end, was surprised by one common shock” (Nemirovich-Danchenko, 1953:595-600).

What happens to a picture in a book when it reproduces such a significant static episode from the theater stage? Or, is it appropriate at all to put into a picture exactly what has happened on the stage? There is no simple answer, but one can consider a number of different issues involved in the formation of a two-dimensional picture that represents either statics or motion.¹¹² Keeping in mind Arnheim's all-inclusive explanations of motion, balance, weight and direction in pictures, it is worth outlining certain features specific to the composition of book illustration. The effect of movement is based on several factors, including physical, optical, perceptual and kinesthetic movements that can produce an *impression of motion* because “physical movement does not necessarily correspond to what happens in the eyes or in perception” (Arnheim, 379). According to the rule of relations, every object is dependent on the space around it but not vice versa, e.g. “The dancer is a part of the stage setting, not the stage setting the outer rim of the dancer” (Arnheim, 380). So, the frame and background of an artwork are the fields which are perceived as immobile parts against which an image is seen as moving (except cases where such dependence is broken). Such object-space relations within a book-

¹¹¹ Cf. The position of Tartu school on Bakhtin.

¹¹² What makes motion, and what makes statics in a picture — are basic principles of visual composition that are not designed to be part of this study but can be grasped from Arnheim's comprehensive book *Art and Visual Perception*.

object and/or a single book illustration are constructed, therefore, with the following principle of visual logic: the white space on a page is perceived as a static background while the format of the book is a kind of static frame inside which *any* object is perceived to be moving (letters, words, graphic signs or entire illustrations). (This rule functions according to the principle of rhythms and pauses in book design, as discussed later in I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*). In fact, in order to stop this movement, one needs to intentionally create a visual composition in a way that yields a contra-movement or a symmetrical balance.

A photo representing a scene in a theater performance (and placed in a book with text) can be considered as a something between a theater stage and a book illustration. On the one hand, such a photo involves the conversions to a two-dimensional medium that presupposes the notion of movement in the book format. On the other hand, this photo still preserves the content of the image, which implies the memory of the movement that occurred on stage. This is because a photo constitutes a kind of a reminder or memory of what has happened in the past, to be precise — what occurred only once and cannot be repeated (Barthes, 1981:4). Therefore, the photo in question would illustrate the performance that happened on the stage rather than the verbal story underlying that theatrical performance. (An example of a specific perceptual effect created by a photo, when it becomes a part of fiction illustration, is presented in Part III).

Should an illustration for the silent ending of Gogol's play be a kind of echo of Michelangelo's fresco? Maybe, but not literally. Instead, the effect would operate on the level of an artistic idea: as Gogol adapted the idea of the Last Judgement to the silent ending of his story, so too can an artist adapt the same idea to the concept of a book illustration. Yet, such a depiction would miss the intended symbolism and would not constitute a shift in the artistic dimensions. Literal or physical movement within a book is perceived as a sequence of pages viewed in the course of time — from page to picture to another page (as is explained later in *Rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures*). This effect of physical sequence and shift to another dimension can be transposed within an illustration in such a way that a segment of the story involves the condensing of several episodes into one picture and passages among them — from the real to the symbolic, from general meaning to concrete detail, and back to general episode. (Some examples of verbal passages and corresponding pictures, with such shifts, are presented in Part III).

In fact, a book with illustrations based on a literary work is often compared to a film staged from the same literary work, as they imply the creation of a sequence of visual compositions with a certain rhythm of perception. A reader flipping book pages is in a way like a viewer watching film shots.¹¹³ This is an important principle to keep in mind when approaching the construction of book design as a whole. These two media, however, still speak different languages. Apart from other artistic and technical features, theatre or film adaptation requires the creation of details which are missing in the text. A character on the stage cannot wear only a jacket of unknown color, if the other details are not provided by the text, the film or theatre director has to invent them, as well as the other elements, such as types of faces, furniture and so on.¹¹⁴ Thus, the details and characters become necessarily more concrete and specific than they are within the text in order to be adapted to the stage or the screen. Consequently, cinema and (to somewhat lesser extent) theater require from the spectator less cognitive effort than a text does from the reader. Fiction created on a page by words remains more abstract because it has not been visualized as a series of finished physical objects. That work has to be completed by the reader, and even there the reader can never fill in all the physical detail. When it comes to film or theater, on the other hand, the physical appearance of actors can play a significant or more important role than the emotional and dramatic presentation of a character. And this can in fact act as a diversion from the plot, themes and ideas behind a given story.¹¹⁵

Another type of artistic shift of dimensions can be traced, for instance, from the text-film relations developed from the text of knight's monologue addressed to his valuable coins, in *The Covetous Knight*¹¹⁶ from Pushkin's *Little Tragedies*. If we pay attention to how the realistic details, descriptions of the environment or character's emotions are presented in Pushkin's text, we will notice that they are simply missing. The author's digression from the knight's speech are also missing. In this entire monologue, the knight expresses how he is involved in

¹¹³ Georgiy Yakutovich (1930-2000), for instance, was one of the first graphic artists who developed such an approach to designing books through the principle of film shots and the movement of pages. Yakutovich created a series of pictures and did an artist for the film *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, based on M. Kotsiubynsky's novel of the same name. During the filming, Yakutovich collaborated with such figures as Sergei Paradjanov (the director of *Shadows*) and Yuri Ilyenko (the cameraman). The artistry and creative power of the latter two influenced Yakutovich's art also in his further works on book illustration. He developed his approach to illustration, connecting certain aspects of cinema and book art, and taught it for a decade at the Kiev National Academy of Art and Architecture.

¹¹⁴ Vladimir Tumanov, from a lecture on text-film adaptations, 13 Sept 2017

¹¹⁵ Cf. On the idea of schematic: Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art* (1973a); the *Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1973b).

¹¹⁶ First published in Pushkin's almanac *Sovremennik*, T.1, 1836, p.111-130

collecting coins, how he is happy about adding some more, what history is related to each coin, and how he is afraid of leaving his collection to someone else. [[See text here.](#)]

However, we can see a shifting to the other artistic dimension in [Smoktunovsky](#)'s¹¹⁷ adaptation of the aforementioned monologue, when he plays the knight.¹¹⁸

[Little Tragedies, episode in full movie 1:44:10-1:57:09](#)¹¹⁹

Thanks to the range of personal characteristics of the actor, all our attention is focused on his psychological and nervous tension, and we notice nothing but his powerful inner drama and his acting. Consequently, the realistic details of his clothes and dark surroundings, the tonality of shots in the style of 16th-century Flemish paintings — none of which is described in Pushkin's text but rather invented by the filmmakers — have a supporting function and are subordinate to the dramatic idea. This allows us to gaze into the abyss of the human mind and to feel the greatness of the knight's tragedy: "greed for him is not simply physiological passion but a principle, a goal per se, following which he comes to perform monstrous deeds" ([Lotman, 1995: 308](#)). The psychological reconstruction of the mise-en-scenes and the invention of character's facial expressions and gestures lie in the dimension of the actor's creative interpretation — his body, eyes and gestures are used as a constructive material with which he is modeling his complex image. In this case, the details cannot be perceived as a superfluous element that prevents the spectator from an active thought process. The argument being made is that if Pushkin had included in his text all the details that describe the exact facial expressions of the knight, after he pronounces each phrase, his body posture and movements, then the actor would not have the space left for his acting and for his artistic interpretation of the entire range of emotions of the present character. An actor on the stage, as well as an illustrator on the book pages, can perform his part only when a given text leaves something unspecified, not fully expressed, so the verbal description can be developed and extended by means of another medium.

¹¹⁷ Innokenty Smoktunovsky (1925-1994) is considered as one of the most important actors of Soviet cinema and theater; he gained the fame thanks to his play of the characters of classical Russian writers (in adaptations of Dostoevsky's, Chekhov's, Pushkin's novels). Smoktunovsky was named as an actor of intellectual style, as he was able to play the complex state of mind and soul through gestures, postures and facial expressions of his characters.

¹¹⁸ *Little Tragedies*, a television miniseries directed by M. Shveytser, Mosfilm: USSR, 1979, (1:44:10-1:57:09)

¹¹⁹ I am not adding the English subtitles to this piece of film, as the monologue repeats Pushkin's text from the link above, besides, when reading subtitles one can get distracted from the perception and admiration of such a great acting.

When illustrating a masterpiece of literature (masterpiece – means there is nothing that could be added or taken away), one cannot even explain in words what is missing in text, because everything has been said by means of verbal medium, and every small detail has reached perfection. Thus, one needs to continue to search for an appropriate representation of those missing impressions, feelings or elements through drawing.

We can see one of the examples of how such a scene is converted into a visual composition in a xylography by Favorsky¹²⁰ [Fig. [The Knight](#)], who illustrated the poem and then theorized on his artistic approach (Favorsky, 1988: 348). In this illustration, the knight turned his back to the spectators (we are not supposed to see his face, so his image remains abstract). He is lighting candles, all at once, to celebrate his power. He is really a ruler here, in the darkness of this room, he enjoys the peace of his gold, the shine of coins, and wants to do nothing but to dream about his power and might. The knight seems to be conducting an orchestra of coins with his hands. Such an association and tension are reached by the stylization of objects and the contrast between the silhouette of knight and the light around him.

Another type of artistic shift that comes to mind is an allegorical interpretation, as for example in Serge Gainsbourg's biography, in the film *Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life*, directed by Joann Sfar (2010). This presentation of the musician's life does not stop at a simple illustration of his biography, but rather the spectator enters a surrealist world of images, allusions, and associations that reflect the inner world of the protagonist. In my view, such methods give us more food for thought than answers to specific questions. The protagonist's alternate conscience — a comic character with a gigantic nose who appears from time to time — discloses both his self-irony and the drama of having two identities. For E. Pashanov, the author of the book *Serge Gainsbourg: the Phenomena of the Century*, the stylistics of the film with the aesthetics of comedy parallels perfectly Gainsbourg's life and his creative mood. Early in his life, Gainsbourg was an artist and hesitated between painting and music. Following the suggestion of his father, he abandoned painting and devoted himself to music. He says that something broke inside him at this moment, and he burned all his canvas. This became an act of spiritual suicide (resonating with Gogol's burning the only existing copy of the second volume of *Dead Souls*) that afterward recurred repeatedly in different displays of self-

¹²⁰ The illustration was published in: A. Pushkin, *Dramaticheskie proizvedeniy*, M: Hudoz.lit., 1970, p.91; Before that, it appeared in the catalogue of an exhibition Illustrations for 'Little Tragedies' of Pushkin, M: Akademiy hudozestv, 1961, illustrations by Favorsky: p.327-332.

destruction until the end of his life. Such an episode in Sfar's film is presented as an allegory: in the bonfire of paintings, Gainsbourg's alternate identity also burns but not entirely, and it disappears at the end of film because it is no longer needed as Gainsbourg himself merges with his other self.

[Film: [Gainsbourg: A Heroic Life](#), 36:40 – 38:42]

In this case as well, the realistic details become incorporated as an integral part of the allegoric context and, therefore, impact the viewer's imagination on different levels. A kind of a middle way between film and book illustration can be observed in such hand-drawn Armenian cartoons as [Wow! A Talking Fish](#) (1983) and (a little less) [In the Blue Sea with Foam](#) (1984). Here, shifts among different spatial dimensions and the alternation of spaces occur almost every minute as one space passes into another which then transforms into an object which becomes another space with another perspective and goes on to the next dimension etc. If we decompose the cartoon into a series of snapshots, selecting those most expressive ones (in the sense of distorted perspectives and disjointed scales), we would have a series of book illustrations that present simultaneously abstract concepts and realistic detail, i.e. one type is expressed through another. Even though this example presents a children's cartoon/book, the same principle is valid for adult illustration. The difference would be in creating another (adult) content, semantics, style of drawing, extra meanings or another type of shifts, etc.

Acting in the same way, an illustrator can shift the reader's attention from realistic details to the emotional impact of the picture, so that additional elements in this case come to play a supporting role in the service of an idea. This need not disturb the reader's perception but can instead enhance it or move in a new direction. To do this, of course, it helps to be to drawing what Smoktunovsky was to acting.

The diversity of book illustration techniques allows the avoidance of always having to be precise and represent entirely or realistically every small detail. If the writer does not delineate the image entirely, does not complete it, but leaves some space for the reader's imagination, the illustrator can follow the same principle (as discussed later in I.7.5. *Range and level of details*). If this word-picture correspondence happens to succeed, then discourse about excessively concrete and specific illustrations is no longer relevant.

With reference to the features and approaches of 19th-century bookmaking, even though there were many questionable aspects that not always followed the principles of intermedial adaptation, 19th - early 20th - century illustrations¹²¹ are characterized by outstanding elaboration and attention to detail, refined and decorative stylizations with thin feeling of the space balance, as is inherent for example to the style Liberty. The feature that would be simplified in the next century and even more in our own time. Such a decrease suggests two phenomena at the level of the illustrator's craft and general cultural trends.

First, the elaboration of detail (i.e. the artist's ability to observe, to be attentive and to wish to narrate through details) is replaced with futuristic, symbolic or conceptual directions in art, i.e., narration through other features of visual language, such as the meanings that go beyond the represented object while the resulting object itself is less important. For example, in A. Blok's poem *Twelve*, the verbal scenes work as illustrations themselves, and Christ's image is blurred and unclear, so the artist's task would be to convey the poetic and musical arrangement of the poem, avoiding any concreteness, as Y. Annenkov did in [his pictures](#).

The second phenomenon has to do with the increasing speed of life and manifests itself in the artist's impatience when it comes to learning, searching for and working on details (it is meant a general tendency in art, even though single artists have continued to support the elaboration of creative detail). Thus, one strives to work fast (time is money), and such a habit prevents him from expending enough creative energy and worktime for the further improvement of an image. This parallels the reader's loss of ability to read slowly, to contemplate and perceive complex verbal and non-verbal images with many details that convey some extra message. How many people spend hours in front of one painting or carving or etching in a museum? The public passes through the museum hall, like a tourist walking the streets of a new city. The reader takes a book with elaborated pictures, where the fullness of detail and the metaphoric images can be examined and savored for hours, and just ends up flipping through the pages while looking at a friend and talking to him about shopping. The depth of thought in an artwork, as well as in reading, comes from the slowness of perception in relation with cognitive effort (which refers back to handwriting). This habit can appear if it is cultivated, but the modern system of education in some parts of the world promotes a diagonal

¹²¹ Cf. Lewis John, *The 20th Century Book. Its Illustration and Design*, 2nd ed., London: The Herbert Press, 1984 [ARCC: Z1023.L68 1984]

reading instead,¹²² as well as multiple choice tests, for which the required speed of answering increases every year,¹²³ along with the increasing speed of producing new intellectual works.¹²⁴ This is mirrored in cinema by the decline in the duration of film shots throughout the 20th century and into the 21st — another indication of shrinking attention spans and tolerance for a slower pace of sensory stimulation.

“Too many persons visit museums and collect picture books without getting access to art” (Arnheim, 1). Some, when they come to a museum, look at the “realistic” plot of Surikov’s

¹²² For instance, major universities across North America offer classes in improving student’s reading speed, such as University of Chicago <<http://csu.readingprograms.org/ad/>> and others. However, the controversies in comprehension vs speed reading are continuing to arise, some of which promote skimming and increasing of speed, but this, in my view, is addressed to the commercial purposes and has nothing to do with deep learning. The others claim that to master a subject one should learn slowly, as the level of comprehension and long-memory effect decrease for more than 50% when doing so well-promoted diagonal reading. Among the latter: Carver, R.P. "Reading rate: Theory, research and practical implications". *Journal of Reading*. 36: 84–95; Vanderlinde, William (2018). "Speed Reading: Fact or Fiction?". *Skeptical Inquirer*. 42 (4): 47–49; Cf. Wallot, S., Beth A., Haussmann, A., Kloos, H., Lyby, M., “The Role of Reading Time Complexity and Reading Speed in Text Comprehension”, in: *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 2014, Vol. 40, No. 6, 1745–1765.

¹²³ For example, we all attended, at least once, a presentation where a speaker showed PowerPoint slides with too much text, and we experienced difficulty in simultaneously listening to the speaker and reading the text on the screen. Our mind was concentrated on reading, and the speech was perceived as a monotonous sound the meaning of which escaped our attention. Or, conversely, if the speech was very emotional and attracted our attention, we did not follow the written text. The human brain is not capable of multitasking when similar or related cognitive areas are engaged. We are, however, able to carry out certain tasks concurrently if they are cognitively unrelated, e.g., drive and talk at the same time. On average, in the process of ‘context switching’, it takes 15 minutes to come back to a previous task after a simple distraction. This is demonstrated by the last half-century of research all over the world. Such a preamble means that the modern system of exams, e.g., the main tests of the English language (IELTS or TOEFL), requires students to multitask within cognitively related domains: to listen to an audio recording of a lecture on an unknown subject, read simultaneously a paraphrased text with similar content, and fill in missing words on the basis of the audio. Once the audio is ended, one cannot remember its details, as the mind was busy reading and writing. What is more, since this sort of tests is designed for people whose native tongue is other than English, they are also forced to carry out a fourth cognitive task: to think about the meaning and spelling of English words. This unnatural split of the brain occurs in the framework of the associated stress-inducing time constraint for each question and the overload produced by the overall 3-hour time limit for the whole test. Even if you go to the washroom, the timer does not stop, so you lose some parts of the test. Such stress, as medical research suggests, is associated with a wide range of physical symptoms: elevated blood pressure, cardiac problems, digestive issues and other bodily reactions. As a result of such requirements, students invest up to 6 months of effort in order to adapt to the test format and to train their brains in multitasking, aiming to increase the speed with which their brain processes information and jumps from one task to another. Such training, paradoxically, has nothing to do with improving the level of English, which is what the test is supposedly about. In this sense, the result is a waste of the time needed just to satisfy the system because such exams do not test the students’ ability to speak and write in English, but only the ability to perform simultaneously 4 different tasks in the framework of a complex thinking process. Even more paradoxically, exactly the result of this exam is the number-one reason for rejecting university applicants who may be otherwise successful in their potential studies.

¹²⁴ For example, we can find numerous and very popular workshops today which teach “how to write a book in 90 days by working just 30 minutes per day”. Such system, of course, does not require one’s full immersion into subject, has nothing to do with creativity and deepness of thought, but rather presents the intentional commercialization of art. <<https://selfpublishingschool.lpages.co/pt-sps-vip-eg-webinar>>

canvas, while others look at the depth of his multi-vocal painting, which speaks to the competence of the viewer and not of the level of painting. When children learn to read the books with pictures, “it is a common prejudice that visual literacy comes natural and does not have to be taught and trained, [since young readers usually respond to images]; however, response and understanding are not quite identical. Neither do adults automatically acquire visual reading skills, [suggesting sometimes] rather naïve and primitive discussion of picturebooks” (Nikolajeva, 27). The same applies to the perception of an adult illustration — the reader may not understand its principles, but a competent reader/viewer can be educated by the artistic appearance of the book. After a few pages, hopefully, such a “learning” reader could come to see illustrations in a more profound way.

However, the history of reception is not so optimistic. How to make the reader smarter or, rather, how to make him start thinking? An author invests a creative thought into his elaborated image, attempting to transmit his idea to the reader; but not every reader wants to make some efforts and to perceive the complexity of an artwork. As Bal and Bryson put it, “analysis of reception must... distinguish between degree of access to those codes” of viewing/understanding an artwork, while the acquisition of those codes and the ability to operate them is a long process which is not a given. Thus, different degree of competence usually leaves the opinion of a “general” viewer outside of the historical record of the perception of a given work, but “what has entered it are highly specialized responses... that promoted... particular artists and schools.... Such traces of criticism do not speak of viewing in a straightforward manner” (Bal, Bryson, 186), and therefore imply a qualified receiver. This is related to the question of the target audience when comes to books and adaptation of artistic features to the expectations of a particular group of readers (as is addressed in *Between Art and Market*).

Coming back to the understanding of the illustration as an “impoverishment” of a given text, it received a wide resonance in theoretical works in the beginning of the 20th century¹²⁵ but stopped being relevant in relation to later visual interpretations of literary texts when an artist followed the principles of artistic *interpretation*. This is attributable to the fact that the

¹²⁵ Gerchuk wrote a detailed article on such studies, “Illustracija i literatura”, in: Gerchuk, Y. *Hudozestvennie miri knigi*, M., 1989. [Artistic worlds of book]

intermedial approach, the different ways of seeing and interpreting reality, and the style of bookmaking changed as the century progressed — mainly because the 20th century began to speak in the language of symbolism in literature as well as in visual arts. This language explored the plurality of new forms of expression, including those hybrid methods that broke with tradition and built a new philosophy. So, the artist's individual interpretation of a given text becomes a leading method. Therefore, creative *correspondence* between one and another medium is not the same as semantic *repetition* (discussed at length in I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*).

Such discourse leads me to the specification of the fundamental difference — which is generally accepted in art history and comes from the nature of illustration — between a *stankovy* or *academic* drawing or painting made from nature and a *realistic illustration*.

To draw a parallel between visual arts and literature: a landscape, a still-life or a portrait corresponds to a non-fiction text, as they depict, each with its own tools and languages, the person or the object as it is in nature. But even there, it is not simply repetition: “Behind the images there stands the culture of artefacts, with its own, independent history” (Bryson, 1990: 13). When thinking, for instance, of the landscapists of the 18th century, such as Giambattista Piranesi [ARCC: *Vedute di Roma*, NE2052.5.P5A59 1974 Bd.1-2], it would be hard to name his works as non-fiction pictures. Series such as his topographical maps of Rome, *Views (Vedute) of Rome*, *Antiquities of Rome*, and *Prisons (Carceri)* give meaning to a historical moment in which humans are both visitors and spectators, while some unexpected details (figures inserted into landscapes, a small dog, sleeping in the shadow of a tree, bushes and a blade of grass at the foot of the Roman columns or moving clouds in the sky with different grays) and the dynamism of the entire composition animate the historical context of “dead” objects ruined by time. In addition, the technique of his etched sign itself, when considering the original copper plates,¹²⁶ makes one realize how much energy, almost aggressiveness, is in each small part of Piranesi’s work. However, at the same time the delicacy and extreme precision of details reveal artistic satisfaction, provide the spectator with an incredible aesthetic surprise, and produce an experience that may change the course of one’s creative life. Another example

¹²⁶ The original plates along with prints were presented at the exhibition “La Roma di Piranesi” with his original copper plates and imprints; the exhibition was held at the Museo del Corso in Rome, which I visited in Feb. 2007

of such historical representation that merges with creativity and imagination is 18th c. cartography, a perfect example of which is Alexander Dalrymple's *Memoir Chart from St. John's on the coast of India to Cape Arubah on the coast of Persia*, published by Dalrymple, printed by George Bigg, London, 1787. 2nd ed. [ARCC: GA1133.6.M46 1784]¹²⁷. The entire book consists of large maps, engraved on metallic plates and hand printed for this edition.¹²⁸ The absence of Dalrymple's name as the engraver (who he actually was¹²⁹) suggests that this was too obvious skill for him to mention. However, when looking closely at his charts, we realize that he was a genius of engraving — a kind of Piranesi, but in cartography. We witness a transition from a piece of map to a castle on a mountain, from a forest on the horizon to some single pines placed on the waves of a hill which then again becomes a part of the map that, in turn, also represents a part of a sea, a ship, and another fortress. The shore of a river continues and becomes a hill; the river remains as a linear drawing, a part of the map, but at the same time, when it is perceived as a hill, a village stands on it surrounded by the forest. The stone constructions and walls in the village are incorporated into the typographic plan of a city, and the towns and castles with fields and forests grow out of the linear silhouette of the coastline. Altogether, such transitions between different spatial dimensions create a particular fantastic world with documentary tonality. Besides, the technique of the etched sign is impressive: one could examine infinitely long how the waves of the sea are depicted at the foot of the castle, the shades of clouds, and then the precise plan of that castle right out there.

Such an effect — a poem in a non-fiction picture — emerges partly thanks to the combination of historical accuracy of the representation of ancient monuments with an imaginary composition that creates an architectural (or cartographic) fantasy. Despite the imagery, Piranesi's and Dalrymple's engravings preserve monuments and their decorations, including meticulous inscriptions, which later disappeared. We can see a correspondence with

¹²⁷ Both publisher and printer are important to be mentioned since this edition consists of original etchings, hand printed for each exemplar of the edition, and therefore the printer becomes a co-author, as the quality of the edition is in his hands, in contrast to the editions of mechanical reproduction.

¹²⁸ Neither title page nor colophon mention the name of the artist-engraver. A short preface discusses the exactness of one or another map, latitudes and meridians, and mentions the names of some geographers to whose manuscripts the author frequently referred. Some phrases taken from the preface mention the following observations: "I have therefore thought it proper to engrave no. 8 in a different plate" (p.7), or "I have engraved this Chart on a separate plate" (p.9); and the engraved signatures under each map state that it was published according to Act of Parliament by A. Dalrymple, (different dates), 1784.

¹²⁹ Cf.: PhD thesis by Cook, Andrew Stanley, *Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808), hydrographer to the East India Company and the Admiralty, as publisher: a catalogue of books and charts*, University of St Andrews, 1993, <http://hdl.handle.net/10023/2634>

this characteristic in Gogol's stories — the perfection of realistic detail, ethnography, and traditions along with fantastic characters — the main feature of his narrative that will be approached in detail later. When comparing their *artistic approaches*, Gogol — like Piranesi in Roman architecture, as I already exemplified — rebuilt, preserved and created the monument of Ukrainian folk culture, approaching such a task through legends and fantastic stories. The discourse of landscape image vs. historical image allows the exploration of history through the simple representation of nature¹³⁰. But the incorporation of both in a fictional work (verbal or visual) increases its artistic and cultural significance.

A *stankovy* drawing (see note 4) or work of graphic art in general is a work that has an independent meaning, is not connected to a literary work (in contrast to an illustration) and does not have a practical use (e.g., in applied design). It is characterized by a wide spectrum of thematic works and techniques, including the decorative arts, drawings, graphic print techniques, etc. In order to develop a single theme, artists often create a series of *stankovy* works. All the sheets of the series are united by their common theme, technique, artistic method, style, and size (dic.academic.ru). Piranesi's and Dalrymple's works, as discussed above, or Durer's woodcuts are good examples of a *stankovy* series of prints.

An *academic*¹³¹ drawing/painting or, broadly speaking, academism follows a natural attitude according to which the represented object or person is determined by physical appearance rather than meaning (Bryson, 1983: 3). It is done “from life” with the purpose of studying the human body, creating a still life or producing a landscape etc. and therefore has the goal of rendering the object as close as possible to the model, savoring the opportunity of seeing and representing shades, as well as textures and colors, tasting the beauty of a withered leaf or transparent grapes in a still-life lit by morning sunshine flowing in through an open window. Sometimes, when an artwork is perfect in execution but lacks a notion of invention or creativity, it is said that the work is too academic, which is meant as a negative critique. The point is that one learns the techniques and methods of *academic* drawing in order to use the approach as a tool in many different ways: to create thematic series of *stankovy* etchings, or paintings, or book illustrations, or any other creative outcomes.

¹³⁰ For more details on the argument see: John Dixon Hunt, “Ut Pictura Poesis, Ut Pictura Hortus, and the Picturesque”, *Word & Image*, vol.1, 1985-issue 1, p.87-107, published online: 29 May 2012

¹³¹ Academic Art https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_art

Meanwhile, according to reflection theory, art does not repeat life but creates its own reality that may be parallel to the actual world but never its copy (Borev, 108). According to the best hypothesis, art correlates with reality since the former's mode of existence is defined as the creation of a new aesthetic reality every next time (Brodsky, 1991:9). Such an artistic reality is casual since improvisation is its main tool which, at the same time, is controlled by the material and technique (as from examples in: I.6. *Style of Text — Style of Pictures*) or, broadly speaking, the constant alternation of the conscious and subconscious which are the two key components in the process of an artwork's creation. Artistic creativity means the creation of an unpredictable reality because every poet (artist, writer, etc.) differs according to his vision of reality manifested in any element of his work. The mechanisms of art include the psychology of both creation and perception. When discussing the creative process, Borev summarizes in his *Aesthetics* (pp.69-70) the following core components of creativity.

1. *Memory*. It is the psychological factor of creativity which is not all-inclusive but selective. An example is the exercises that the painter [Falk](#) gave to his students: first to capture and remember an impression from nature and then to paint pictures from memory. This is because it is believed that artistic reality is formed in memory, i.e. we remember the past and reproduce it in the artwork.
2. *Imagination*. It reproduces impressions and images saved in memory, combines them and depicts living pictures in the artist's mind. The pictures are generated in the artist's mind thanks to the imagination which is unique for each artist. The result can be phantasmagoric, romantic, hypertrophic, mystic, realistic, gothic, etc.
3. *Associations*. Thoughts or images appear when one is looking at an object or reading a phrase because of the generation of correspondences or analogies which are not necessarily common. The search for associations occurs with the help of the subconscious overlap of images remembered and extracted from memory. Associative thinking occurs on the basis of past experiences and the ability to jump deep into subconscious associations which may be related to another semantic field, as in Chekhov's cloud, similar to a grand piano. All the rhetorical figures appear because of associations and the imagination. Thus, the fundamental issue is the ability to think associatively.

4. *Inspiration*. This is a specific creative state of the clarity of thought, its intensity, richness of associations, penetration into life and art experiences, and their inclusion into the elements of art. Inspiration produces creative energy.
5. *Inner liberation*. This is an element of a psychological mechanism that leads to the necessity to share one's deep troubles or impressions received from a text and expressed through artistic language (if we speak about illustration), i.e., it is a kind of a public confession.

Thanks to memory, imagination, associations, inspiration, and inner liberation, many images are created in the artist's inner gaze. Aesthetic taste helps the artist to select the best image from a variety of options. The creative process is that of constant selection which is addressed to the reader with the purpose of conveying to him a certain artistic information (Borev, 70) — the process that corresponds to the visualization of images described verbally within a book.

So, what does the term “realistic” imply in connection with the representation of “reality” postulated by fiction? When it comes to book illustrations, i.e. a picture based on a written plot, a double illusion occurs: the writer creates an illusion of life in words, and the illustrator creates an imitation of that illusion in pictures that, in turn, correspond to a fictional text and depict a story. The illustration has the purpose of *interpreting* the elements originally communicated by words, i.e. to savor virtual metaphors and images that do not exist in nature, and to “give us the appearance [of absent things] as the reality” (Lessing, viii), using as a tool the knowledge and principles of academic drawing.

Word-picture adaptation passes through a long and complex process: from perception of a given text, to recognition, which is an act of remembering (Gombrich, 1982:12), to representation by giving a physical shape and visual description to that recognized object which exists only in verbal form, and to addition of an interpretative element.

Thus, even if it is realistic or documentary in style, an illustration for a fictional text is not a duplicate of reality in the context of “the natural attitude” but can refer only to a realistic representation of the verbal. It cannot be compared to a realistic painting that represents a landscape or a figure since these are two different genres — in literature as well as in the visual arts. A work of art that depicts an object or a man without illustrating a text (Hermerén, 56)

follows totally different concepts and belongs to a type different from that of illustration.¹³² The latter will never be defined as a realistic drawing on its own because the process of making an illustration is mostly the process of forming creative word-picture interpretations and associations, searching for stylistic correspondences, and making choices: what to depict, what not, and how.

¹³² The difference between these two concepts – representation and illustration – has been discussed, for example, in a number of works by a scholar of Byzantine studies. Kurt Weitzmann examines the manuscript miniatures and frescos both illustrating the same biblical stories, and compares those with icons as a form of representation. The difference between such concepts as depict, portray, represent (which cannot be defined as ‘resemble’), and illustrate – has been discussed in Goran Hermerén’s study *Representation and Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Lund, 1969

I.5. Between Art and Market

The discussion that follows is based on the following observations that I have heard: 1) the concerns of intermediality, word-picture interpretations, approaches to illustrating books, the level of development of one's creative ideas – are all tied to personal artistic choices or styles and have nothing to do with the publishing industry or art market relations; 2) it is difficult to determine whether we have lost attention to detail in contemporary bookmaking, as a general tendency, because there is no time for it (i.e., the modern, hyperconnected, technologically super-saturated world does not allow us to slow down) or because attention to detail isn't in style right now; and 3) it would be an odd thing to require an illustrator not to repeat the same style of pictures from book to book since so many jobs come to any commercial artist because of their style rather than in spite of it.

Some may agree that there are great illustrators who make a living with their art, such as Mattias Adolfsson and Geoff Darrow. And there are illustrations that have been done for the love of it, such as Bernie Wrightson's *Frankenstein*, the book which took some seven years to complete and is considered to be his masterpiece by many. Whether such statements are accurate or not, I have learned much through a dialogic process that occurs through the interaction of art and the market. In this context, we should distinguish two things: books that are made for the sake of art, and products containing images that are made for the publishing industry by commercial artists. When making such a distinction, I do not imply the well-known manifestos that suggest the uselessness of items that follow the principle of art for art's sake. For example, here is what Gautier says in his preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin*: "There is nothing truly beautiful but that which can never be of any use whatsoever; everything useful is ugly." And in the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde asserts something similar: "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all. ... All art is quite useless" (quoted in: [Genette, 228-229](#)). On the contrary, I would contend that a book *is* an item meant to be used and, in fact, one that can be compared with architecture because it embodies the eminent Vitruvian characteristics — utility, strength, beauty, aesthetics, order, proportion, arrangement, and appropriateness for intended purposes.

The questions that should be addressed are: what type of illustrations is going to be considered, and to what extent we are aware of their relations to the target audience and market.

This is the key point that determines the way books are designed, conceptualized in the artistic sense, executed technically and, consequently, perceived and criticized.

The aim of this discussion is, therefore, to determine what happens to the art of bookmaking or, broadly speaking, what is the definition and value of a book with pictures, in light of the dominant trends in contemporary art. This will provide a social and cultural background in order to articulate the *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction* (in section I.7.) and the definition of illustration (in conclusion of section I.7.).

I will conditionally define the three streams in the creation of pictures meant for books:

Type A – the publishing of high art or artistic limited editions — mostly with original prints

Type B – the publishing of large typographic editions with reproduced artistic pictures

Type C – the publishing of commercial editions which requiring pictures.

(One could easily find similarities in this case with corresponding types of literature, film, or music).

Traditionally, “the history of literary texts and their authors, of publishing and printing, [of bookselling and reading], of libraries and of the teaching of literature in schools have generally been studied separately, and there have been few attempts to examine the social roles of writer, publisher, bookseller and reader (not to mention the literary critic, the censor and the librarian) as part of one whole process” (Reitblat, Thomas, 191), to which also the creative process itself and the history of graphic art should be added.

Some may argue that the realities of the publishing industry, the relations between an illustrator and a publisher or, broadly speaking, between art and the market, have nothing to do with the topic of the present study which is about intermediality. On the contrary, publishing as a communicative system deals directly with word-picture adaptations since it allows a given book with pictures to reach its readers, producing a final product, i.e. a published book addressed to the market. In other words, a book-item is meant to be used by readers and is not something that remains as a theoretical object. In this sense, the demands of the market and the desires of a client (publisher, writer, i.e., someone who is always right) dictate the direction of how the making of pictures will go. Thus, bookmaking is subordinated to market demands, being part of a larger picture. The traditions and current tendencies in literature, pictorial representation, the visual arts in general, and the contemporary art market play an important

role in the directions taken by the creation of books. This also applies to preferences for types of illustrations, “the selection of scenes or moments in a story to be illustrated, the choice of compositional formulas, and the way particular motifs are rendered” (Hermerén, 74). At this point the collision of art and market often occurs. These two sides of bookmaking – commercial and creative – need to be explored and analyzed critically with attention in order to grasp the fundamental differences of these two types of products and their purposes.

As has been discussed in *Creative Impression...*, pictorial self-expression in the form of illustrations is never done for an artist himself. Thus, potential readers become a part of the entire communicative process through the expression and reception of art. How the creator’s inner world and the outer world get to understand each other, if they indeed do, depends on a number of factors and forms the artist’s individuality. The relationship of these two worlds, and consequently their study, is built on different levels. “In examining a copy of a book, it is necessary to keep conceptually separated two aspects: the book as a typographic product [or an object of art within the context of this work] and the book as an object of material [or commercial] value. In describing books, attempts which do not recognize these two aspects and simply follow a linear trajectory (from outside to inside of the book) are inadequately functional and generate irreconcilable confusion” (Barbieri, 15). This explanation of the method of examining the early printed books of the 15th-16th centuries, is also legitimate in relation to modern bookmaking in the sense that the study of the product should, in principle, follow two different lines of inquiry.

The first line views the book as an object of artistic creation and includes such aspects as problems/ mechanisms of word-picture adaptation; technical methods and obstacles of creating an image; aesthetics; artistic value, the language of graphics and typography; ways of reading such visual language; and the possibilities of development of this field.

The second line views the book as a commercial object with all the associated issues, and includes such aspects as the collision of art and market, the targets of the publishing industry, the book as an object of material value, historical and cultural trends, as well as the tendency towards decline in the aesthetics of bookmaking, the latter being consequences of the commercialization of art. Since the book, once a hand-made object of art, has become a commercial object put on the level of rapidly increasing industrial production, artistic creation in this sector is close to disappearance today — which is also one of the concerns expressed by

Calvino when he opposes, in general terms, creativity to technological progress and industrialisation. The latter two phenomena, as Calvino says, make him feel lost, and such self-loss in the modern city is seen by him as the end of individuality and creativity.¹³³ (Cf.: Benjamin)

The place of book art within contemporary traditions can be determined when the principles of word-picture interpretation are subdivided and incorporated into the three types of publishing outlined above: Type A, B, C.

An editor and one of the administrators at the publishing house Zanichelli in Bologna, Lorenzo Enriques, addresses the concern about different types of editions in his article *The Publishing of Culture: a Phrase with no Meaning*. High culture and commercial publishing, or art and the market, constitute a dichotomy with a dilemma because a publisher's job is multifaceted: to *select*, to *develop*, to *publish* and to *sell*. A book has to be sold because the publisher needs to survive, first and foremost, and second, the book must reach a potential audience (Enriques, 113). The writer and artist who create that book also need to survive.

¹³³ This fundamental concern of Calvino's narrative passes through his major works of different periods (and this makes the background for my discussions in Part II). Calvino approaches, with an increasing progression, the contrasts between the expansion of urban life and the human inability to imagine and to think with pictures. In *I Giovani del Po* (1950-51), the city is presented as a factory that gives us the materials which we have to work out, piece after piece, without interruptions, and to think out things that never end, one problem after another. First, such an image of human integration presents a positive look, but at the end, the protagonist realizes the falsity of that image. In the following Calvino's narratives, the contrast between gray urban routine and colors of nature increases, for instance, in the first version of *Marcovaldo*, written in 1952-56. In the second version, written ten years later, in 1963, such a contrast is transformed into a battle between the technological world and human's ability to fantasize, as noted in M. Corti's *Testi o macrotesto? I racconti di "Marcovaldo"* (in: "Strumenti critici", no.27, 1975, pp. 182-197). In the preface to the edition of *Marcovaldo* (1966), Calvino emphasizes that the city in his story meant as any industrial metropolis, typical and abstract, in which the capitalistic values are imposed and which presents the world where everything is measured in terms of production and consumption, and not individual qualities. Great frustrations of life and work in a city is presented also in the story *L'avventura di due sposi*, in which husband works at nights and wife during the days, and they meet only for a while when each of them comes back from work, husband in the morning or wife in the evening, going then to sleep by turns, in a bed left still warm by one of the spouses. And yet, in the city replete with absurd, poverty, bureaucracy and lack of meaning, people speak about the beauty, arts, fashion, and design. The protagonist's silence and incapacity of describing such a beauty, in *Amori difficili*, emphasizes its unreality and deficiency. (Cf. Martin L. McLaughlin, "Le città visibili di Calvino", in: *La visione dell'invisibile*, ed. by M. Barenghi, G. Canova, B. Falcetto. Milano: Mondadori, 2002, pp. 42-61). And, finally, in the chapter "Visibility" from his book *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Cambridge, 1988, p.92), Calvino puts *visibility* as one of human values to be saved, and warns that people are losing the power of using their own inner vision, of generating and interpreting images, and of *thinking* in terms of images in the age of industrialization, when we are daily bombarded by pictures. The fundamental is also the reference to the fact that *Invisible Cities* is the text in which Calvino puts into play *thinking through images* (the two protagonists think through images). Here imagination acquires the almost literal meaning of image production. These are verbal images of cities, often only iconic sketches, but they suggest an intimate, even if problematic, connection between word and vision.

Whether the dialogue will be possible between the creator and the receiver of a book is determined by both the type of publishing and the target audience. In other words, in order to reach his readers, the publisher adapts his editions to the relevant sector of the market. Artistic word-picture interpretations stand on this way and do not harmonize neatly with these practical goals which are far away from any theoretical discussion and yet cannot be disregarded when discussing illustrations. After all, theory has to be part of the solution of practical problems.

When adopting the publisher's perspective, one is restricted by the frame of the publication system and its overarching need to keep his business alive. A publisher invests several months in completing a book project; pays the costs of paper, printing, binding, transportation, an editor, writer's and artist's royalties, a translator (if needed), services of other co-workers or freelancers who have to be involved in the project, distributors (they usually charge 60% of the editorial cost of a book) or selling through bookstores (they usually charge 40% of the editorial cost, but most of the book shops do not work directly with publishers, rather through distributors, so a small publisher does not have chances to survive, at least not from making only books), advertising, office rent, and taxes. If something remains at this point, it is invested in the next book project. Thus, one can do nothing but to accelerate the process of work — this makes it possible to minimize costs in the hope of increasing purchasing power — which also means a great reduction in quality. It happens quite often that a part of a given edition remains unsold in stores. Book sellers need to free up shelf space since new publications are coming. Such unsold books come back damaged to the publisher because customers, distributors and stockroom workers are not always delicate with the handling process since nobody is responsible. What the publisher does with unsold books is a question of storage space, transportation, further expenses etc. Finally, these books are sold at great discounts just to cover some of the costs.¹³⁴ As Enriques confirms, on average, one published book out of four can cover the expenses of its edition. It also happens often that, when attempting to publish beautiful books, or editions with sophisticated cultural content, one ends up publishing something sellable: cookbooks, children's books with sugary pictures, Christmas postcards or calendars. In attempting to formulate a definition of the high culture publisher, Enriques

¹³⁴ I mean here those publishers who are attempting to conquer the market and reach their readers, not those who print books for the authors' expenses or the publishers of academic texts, when the authors are unpaid for their intellectual works but the books are sold for exaggerated costs.

interviewed 20 different publishers. Some suggest that a high culture publisher is one who makes books that are not sellable, or at least books that are difficult to sell as they are addressed to a very narrow market niche. Thus, the difference between the two types of publisher is this: one makes books because he believes in what he publishes and *then* looks at the economic outcomes; the other one first considers if an edition is sellable and probably does not care too much about the quality (Enriques, 115). The same reasoning occurs with those artists who are going to decide what kind of books to illustrate. The panel discussion “The Future of Art Book Publishing”, held at the New York Public Library in 2013, brought up several questions relevant to book publishers, distributors and libraries regarding the fine arts publishing industry and the bookselling crisis in the age of digital editions, along with the publishers’ approaches to keep their visibility in the commercial market.¹³⁵

Of course, the above considerations do not determine the thematic direction of an edition but rather merely constitute the approach to making a given book, i.e., a cookbook can also become a product of high culture. For example, several years ago, I took part in an editorial project designed for the Four Seasons hotel chain, a branch of which was going to be opened in Florence. Giorgio Upiglio, with whom I worked on limited editions, was one of the leading specialists of the old-school masters (who worked before the digital influence) in printing, typography and bookmaking, in Milan. We ideated together a cookbook for the Four Seasons, and I had to create a series of etchings — one artistic composition for each recipe. Giorgio had to print a limited edition with original prints.¹³⁶ Of course, a book like this is not sellable, and it would not even enter the market in any competitive way, but it still occupies its own niche within the traffic of book culture.

What happens to illustration when it engages with one or the other type of publishing: i.e. high culture or commercial mass publication? Obviously, the approaches and outcomes will be

¹³⁵ More details: Ian McDermott and Erin C. Dunigan, “Art Book Publishing: Past, Present, Future”, *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (September 2013), pp. 239-252, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/673515>

¹³⁶ Giorgio Upiglio (†) explains the essence of such projects in an interview directed by Alberto Nacci: <https://vimeo.com/78272723>; G. U’s biography: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giorgio_Upiglio; Giorgio was a great master of the crafts and a man of artistic personality, powerful and attractive, a hunchbacked gentleman, always smiling and concerned about the quality of each printed copy, which he printed with the accompaniment of Tchaikovsky’s or Wagner’s music. He had a recognizable relief blind-stamp for all his editions: “GU”.

different, both in terms of the aesthetics of a book and of the possibility of making a living with such work.

At this point, an explanation of the term *rare/art book* is required. I am referring to cases where an edition becomes an artwork (or publishing of Type A). The age of a rare/art book and the name/title on the cover are certainly key attributes but not the only ones since many other features are also important. What matters is the methods of book production that have been changing over centuries. When thinking in terms of investments, if a library with contemporary typographic editions were to burn in a fire, the damage would be estimated in monetary terms. Thus, identical replacements can presumably be found since books are printed and bound by means of reproduction technology so a new edition should not be different from the lost one. But if a medieval collection were to burn, or a modern collection of limited hand-printed editions, the damage would be estimated in dozens and hundreds of years of human manual labour which occurred in a particular place and time and can never be repeated. Thus, such items are priceless in the cultural sense, and even if a monetary equivalent were to be determined, it would be reduced to current market trends in the field of rare books. The result would be a gross equivalent at best rather than true replacement. With respect to Tanselle's suggestion about "the importance of primary evidence", rare/art books, therefore, along with carrying traces of their own manufacture (Tanselle, 2005-6:2), tell us about the trajectory through which they have passed in time and space. The so-called "patina of time" is a collection of implicit stories embodied in a given book which are accumulated and delivered to the present and are individual in each case. Lotman defines such memory as one of the text's functions: the text is not just a generator of ideas but also a condenser of cultural memory since it has the capacity to preserve memory about its previous contexts. Without such contexts, i.e. if we were to perceive the text as it is (in its superficial or "visible" form), the past would appear to us as a mosaic of unrelated fragments. Thus, the sum of contexts that are incorporated in a given book amounts to a potential for cultural comprehension and can be termed the "memory of a text". Semantic space that is created by text correlates with cultural memory and tradition which are laid down in the minds of readers (Lotman, 1996:21). In this respect, collecting and examining readers' notes (comments on the margins, readers' names and corresponding dates and places etc.) is an essential tool for the study of book culture (Liebrenz, 2014:4). In a way, such input can be seen as part of a book's paratext.

Coming back to the uniqueness of hand-made books, questions arise as to why the original is important, and how it differs from a copy (printed or digital). “Some media, by their nature, result in single artifacts and others in multiple exemplars (not necessary identical)” (Tanselle, 1998, xii) and therefore an explanation of what the term “original” means should be articulated, given frequent instances of misunderstanding even among book professions (publishers, printers, book collectors or sellers, librarians). The Oxford Dictionary defines the word “original” as referring to something created directly and personally by a particular artist — not a copy or imitation. But in relation to the art of bookmaking, this understanding of the concept may be confusing. For instance, products of the original graphic arts¹³⁷ (etching, linocut, xylography, etc.) are printed in a limited number of copies, and each copy is considered to be an original.¹³⁸

First, each original picture is printed with an individual approach, which requires craft skills and implies a complex process of rubbing ink on a plate before each single exemplar can be printed. In other words, what results in printing depends on one’s hand and on how the plate is cleaned. This means that, even if printed in series, all the exemplars of the same picture differ in small details, such as the contrast of signs, intensity or clarity of the background, slight gradations of relief on paper, and so forth — those elements that amount to unique artistic beauty. Such details, obviously, can be recognized only when one is examining an original print (or miniature, or handwriting, or whatever created by hand).

Second, an etched metallic cliché is gradually crushed when under heavy pressure between two rollers, and, depending on the type of etching, a plate allows for printing of 25 to 200/300 copies. After this, the plate becomes unusable, i.e. prints cannot be repeated. In fact, etching is considered to be the only technique of visual art that cannot be falsified because every etched

¹³⁷ Cf. The comprehensive studies on how to define and read the original prints of art: Griffiths, Antony, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques*, British Museum Publications, 1980; Bellini, Paolo, *Dizionario della stampa d’arte*, A.Vallardi, 1995; Salamon, L., *Saper vedere la stampa d’arte. Storia, evoluzione, finalità e tecniche artistiche*, Milano: Mondadori Arti, 2010.

¹³⁸ It worth mentioning that, in relation to original graphic arts, the fundamental difference is between a *copy* and an *exemplar*. A copy is part of a mechanically reproduced multitude resembling an item in print run of a book, i.e., it is identical to all other copies. When it comes to original art prints, each picture is printed individually rather than copied, and this is normally done in limited numbers, as well as under the artist’s supervision and with his approval or by the artist himself. When people often say that a given etching has been printed in a number of copies, the terminology can cause confusion. Thus, in relation to original prints, even when the word “copy” is used, the meaning should be considered in a very specific context: it means one of the variants, or an *exemplar* (i.e. an example of a picture hand-printed from a cliché).

plate is unique.¹³⁹ Every time a plate is in acid, an artist intuitively counts how many seconds or minutes are needed to amount to one or another sign depth. Such a diversity of sign depths will result in different gradations, shadows and lights in the printed product. For instance, Piranesi's series *Views of Rome* shows an infinite amount of gradations reached by immersing the plate in acid dozens of times for a few seconds at a time. This magic of communication between an artist and his etched plate generates invaluable impulses of creative energy and satisfaction — as he takes slowly a sheet of paper out of the press, discovering the fruit of his thoughts which have passed through his hands and are now embodied in the print.

Furthermore, books with etchings are particularly valuable compared to other original prints because of the difficulty of the printing process.¹⁴⁰ However, this artistic technique allows one to obtain the finest detail impossible in other methods and is therefore ideal for such visual materials as architectural drawings and highly detailed illustrations.

Books with original prints are also of a great value because after a limited edition has been published (normally from 25 to 100 copies, and up to 300 copies in larger editions), the plates-clichés are destroyed in order to guarantee the value of each copy and to ensure that only 25 original copies of the work exist in the world.¹⁴¹ Sometimes, a book can be printed mechanically but contains glued original prints and therefore also has a certain value, compared to the same pictures if they were reproduced mechanically or digitally.

Some books exist in one copy, such as personal memories, notes of lectures, travelogue writings, family histories, artistic sketch books, i.e., they are not intended to be published and therefore are accessible only in the place where they are held until someone decides to research

¹³⁹ It is impossible technically to repeat signs as they appear in the original since the process of etching metal implies several layers of work required to reach different depths and represent the nature of signs. Such nature of signs depends on the behaviour and percentage of acid and on the etching times of layers, measured in seconds. For instance, one copper plate may be immersed in acid 30 or 40 times. Some parts of the plate are covered with varnish after each immersion to stop the corrosion of metal in those parts, thereby allowing to etch deeper the parts that have remained uncovered.

¹⁴⁰ Etching (or, broadly speaking, the family of intaglio printing) features in rubbing ink inside the etched lines while wiping the surface of a plate; i.e. we see on the printed picture these deeply incised lines that show in black. But the textual part is made with the relief printing technique which implies the contrary process, like in xylography, when the printed parts are on the surface. This requires “two entirely independent printings to impress text and picture on a single sheet, [which also carries ulterior] difficulty of inserting the picture in proper position with respect to the text” (McMurtrie, p.264), apart from a relatively long and scrupulous printing process of each single copy of the picture.

¹⁴¹ This is stated in the colophon, and each printed copy is signed by the authors and numbered as 1/25, 2/25, etc. Therefore, the lesser number of copies is printed, the higher value is of each copy, because the total cost of materials and time invested in the entire project (to ideate/sketch/engrave plates, to arrange the textual space, typography, bindings, etc.) is going to be divided by the number of copies.

and transform them into a publication. This transition makes it possible to bring such a private book to a wider audience, but the original still remains unique. The same can happen to a series of book illustration: they may be reproduced mechanically in a large edition, but the originals still have great value on their own as a series of artworks. Some visual interpretations of verbal stories are never published as books with pictures but discovered in private or artists' collections (and presented on an artist's personal web pages). The latter are in most cases important examples of non-distributed production because such works are created by professional artists and, therefore, are part of the entire body of artistic interpretations of a given writer. Secondly, exactly because they are not published, these visual interpretations represent pure artistic work, not restricted yet by the typographic standards and current tastes of the publishing industry.¹⁴² The pictures can be made for the purpose of being exhibited and sold as unique pieces existing in one exemplar or as part of folders of limited edition in the case of traditional printing techniques.

This kind of artistic editions can be termed Type A publishing. Such pictures or art books cannot be compared to the products of the book industry mainly because each copy is an original artwork, and not a reproduction. Besides, they are not directed to the market and commerce, but rather have purely artistic purposes as their basis, i.e., they are not a mean to an end but an end in themselves. They, therefore, remain an important category in the field of book illustration. Thus, the fact that they are not published but only exhibited does not diminish the value and merit of such works and does not constitute a valid reason for excluding them from the focus of examination.

With the emergence of photography and mechanical reproduction, certain artisans, such as highly qualified specialists of original printing and typography, have disappeared as a professional class. However, as they demonstrated with their work, human manual work is capable of achieving the kind of refined results that are impossible in photography, and

¹⁴² I have sometimes heard from my colleagues that since a series of pictures was not published in a book, it cannot be taken into consideration in an academic monograph. In light of this viewpoint, I would like to clarify the difference between on the one hand an academic work, which is not considered reliable until it is published in a peer-reviewed edition, or the publication of a novel, and on the other hand book illustrations or other artistic word-picture adaptations. The creation of the latter can cause an artist to invest a great deal of creativity and meticulous labour, but without any intention to propose them for a publication. Not of least importance, would be to consider who decides whether an artwork is significant enough, how and by whom the opinion is generated and made reliable (see later the example of art promotions).

therefore, it can be argued that such activity should be fostered in order to develop new forms of artistic expression.

Examples of Type A publishing involving limited editions of high artistic refinement are many in the world of contemporary book art. In this connection, I would like to mention a couple of people with whom I directly cooperated.¹⁴³

One of the examples of such publishing is the 55-year-long activity (1958-2013) of Giorgio Upiglio (atelier “Grafica Uno”, and later “[Impressioni Originali](#)”, Milan) who produced and published dozens of limited editions of books containing poems and original prints by major authors, as well texts printed with movable type, and creative book bindings. This kind of cooperation represented an interesting form of circulation of artistic ideas in combination with multiple possibilities. 1) G.U. was commissioned with the publication of editions by authors/artists who made a living with some other jobs and could afford artistic editions from time to time. In this case, G.U. was able to make a living from such artisan activity. 2) G.U. figured in such projects as a printer of original graphics and as a publisher of limited editions when it is stated in the colophons that “this edition has been printed on the etching press of G.U. (meaning with his hands or by his employees), on Hahnemuhle paper, in 30 numbered exemplars signed by the writer and the artist,” etc. 3) Both the author-artist of a given book and the printer-publisher cooperated to present the edition through international exhibits at galleries, museums and libraries. 4) An artist was satisfied with being exhibited and reaching an audience and could also hope to sell some pieces over time. 5) G.U. benefited from promotion this way because of the artisan quality of his editions and could hope to attract other artists who would commission him future editions.

Of course, the creation of one such edition — from the artist’s work on the engravings, to the preparation of typographic parts with words composed according to the mirror method, to the preparation of paper and layout, to the hand-printing of each single page, to the artisan bindings, and to the destination, i.e. searching, waiting and arranging an exhibit — can take

¹⁴³ One can, of course, call it like a sort of “a memoir of artistic experience”, but this is meant to serve as an example from practice. I think the assumptions would be very superficial if I used instead the examples retrieved from official websites of any publisher to which I have no relation, i.e. sources that *never* show how that concrete publisher functions or builds his activity. I rather prefer to provide examples of companies whose work I know from inside.

from one to five years depending on the complexity of the project and the luck involved in finding the right means.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, several projects usually proceed simultaneously.

Another example of such publishing, but of a significantly smaller dimension, is the [Pulcinoelefante](#), editions curated by Alberto Casiraghy. He has been publishing art brochures since 1982 on a regular basis. Each “book” is 13.5x19.5 cm, contains 4 leaves, one poem or aphorism, and one etching or woodcut,¹⁴⁵ and it is printed in a limited number: 25 – 40 exemplars. The collections of single poets have sometimes reached up to 700 such brochures, each one being well-curated, printed with movable type on appropriate paper, and numbered in chronological order — starting from Casiraghy’s very first edition.¹⁴⁶ Such editions were presented and distributed at affordable gift-like prices through exhibits at book fairs, museums, cultural centres, etc.

The economic reality of this kind of “old-fashioned” print ateliers is such that they sustain their business thanks to income from other sources or volunteers’ activity, but not from selling books. Other examples of this in the West are the [Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild](#) (it offers workshops, etc.), [L’imprimerie centre d’artistes](#) in Montreal (it offers printing services and rentals of studio space) or the numerous art-craft ateliers all over European countries, as well as cultural institutions, such as the [Museum of Printing](#) in Italy, and many others. They can survive by offering artisan printing services for artists or galleries, by teaching courses in traditional bookmaking or by offering workshops taught by the artists themselves. As for the books, they are made for the love of art and for the purpose of being exhibited, which can also generate a certain amount of income from time to time.

¹⁴⁴ G.U. exhibited his editions in Italy, France, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Mexico, and other places, distributing the books through art collectors and attracting new artists to take part in such activities. One of the last exhibits that covered almost all the existing G.U.’s publications, was held at the [National Institute for the Graphics](#) in Rome, in 2007. In the course of the last few years of the activity, the entire archives of the editions, which remained unsold, was catalogued and moved to the [Archives of Mendrisio](#) in Switzerland. Cf. Tedeschi, L., Francioli M., ed. *Incidere ad arte. Giorgio Upiglio stampatore a Milano 1958-2005*, Archivio del Moderno-Museo Cantonale d’Arte, 2005, <https://www.usi.ch/en/comunicati-stampa/3103>

¹⁴⁵ One of the major xylographers of Pulcinoelefante editions was Adriano Porazzi (1914-2006), who created circa 9000 woodcuts for this series. He almost never created new works but rather copied the works of old masters or transferred drawings to woodcuts; but he carved them with an incredible refinement and delicacy. His precision was of Durer’s level. Such capacity has been almost completely lost in the artworks of modern artists in whose case technical execution lags behind the artistic concepts. Porazzi described his decades of activity in an interview in 1997: <https://youtu.be/9hSzjNlfOI>

¹⁴⁶ For example, the edition that contained my etching and was published in 2010, was number 7944 in Pulcinoelefante’s series. Interestingly, when people who are outsiders to the original printing and receive such an edition as a gift, they usually perceive it as a typographic reproduction, or a photocopy, disregarding the fact of original printing and uniqueness.

The situation is little different among Russian publishers, such as Vita Nova (Sankt Petersburg), Terra, and Pan Press (Moscow). They publish mostly Russian fiction classics with a focus on typographic and artistic aesthetics. Their hybrid editions contain a mechanically printed textual part, but the illustrations inserted on the book pages are original prints (individually glued in each copy). The leather bindings are often ordered in craft shops. Such an approach to producing books on a large editorial scale corresponds to the demand of today's market. This is due to the continuous tradition of illustrating adult fiction, which disappeared in the West a century ago.

In the European context, such hybrid editions are the exception rather than a tradition. For example, Fermo Editore from Parma, Italy, states on their website that “fermoeditore is an experiment”, and that their publications present “a contra-revolution that departs from materiality.” They say they create books that are “palpable and real in opposition to virtual books and the civilization of algorithms. [Theirs are] books of artisanal fabrication [...]. The final result is always a thought-sentiment that takes a shape.”¹⁴⁷ The creative director curates every single book project as a work of art, publishing limited editions up to 300 copies. However, even there, adult fiction is not illustrated — in the common sense of the term — but merely designed with careful attention to typography and contains photo-materials. Illustrations made by artists are found in children books and on certain book covers. These publications become possible thanks to the personal involvement of an art director, which is more an activity for pleasure than for income as the books of high artistic taste do not sell fast; actually a great part of such editions usually remains unsold and is rather distributed through book fairs or elsewhere.¹⁴⁸ Because of their hybrid nature and the combination of high artistic taste and materials of quality with mechanical reproduction and affordable costs, the editions of Fermo Editore could be considered an example of Type B.

¹⁴⁷ Fermo Editore, <http://www.fermoeditore.it/en/fermoeditore/>

¹⁴⁸ This is from a private conversation with Fermo Tanzi, art director of the publishing house, at an exhibit in the historical book shop Libreria Pecorini. The latter was directed and curated by Loredana Pecorini (†) since 1955 and closed in 2012, along with other 50 independent book shops in the region of Lombardy, because of the inability to attract any more readers/buyers to cultural editions. *Il Giornale* published an article entitled “[The Pecorini is forced to close](#)” (9th Dec. 2012), which explains the collapse of values in the art market along with the preference for low-cost Amazon editions as a replacement of highly curated books of medium cost where 80% of books remain unsold. This, in turn, was followed by requests from publishers (addressed to bookshops) to sign contracts and to buy a certain number of books in advance, which of course independent book shops could not afford. As Loredana says, the readers frequenting her bookshop knew how to appreciate the smell of good books - <https://youtu.be/AVjddnUazDI> - an ability that the modern reader has lost almost entirely.

In the *apparently* large market, as publishers confirm, more people *are* interested in the arts, but it appears to be very hard to sell three to four thousand copies of a well-illustrated book (at a low-average book price) over a three-year period ([The Burlington Magazine](#), 143).

What comes under publishing of culture, as defined by Enriques, and implies large editions with reproduced pictures of high aesthetic value, can be provisionally classified within Type B.

The publishing reality in this sector is such that an illustrator, as any other creator of arts and letters, has to choose one of two options. 1) He can illustrate books that *he* loves and thereby foster a creative impulse. In this case, illustration embodies the artist's own interpretation and ideas representing his artistic self. After completing a given book project, the illustrator would *then* look for opportunities to be published. 2) The illustrator can develop a (market-oriented or not?) style of pictures, make a portfolio consisting of several examples of illustrated books, and look for jobs with publishers who would want to have *their* books illustrated in this style. In other words, the artist can step on a path that leads to the implementation of ideas of others, adjusting his creative work to existing requirements.

Which option is correct appears hard to say. The issues that come along the way are obvious. Someone who follows his artistic self can assert his presence in the artistic world through exhibitions or art publications. Illustrations that are done for the love of art and that may take three-five-seven years to complete are considered then to be masterpieces by many. However, having chosen this path, the artist realizes that he should have some other source of income during the three-to-seven years of work on a single book. Besides, when such a book project is completed, the time to find connections and publish the work may take much longer: on average, it takes four-five years from the time of searching for a publisher to having a book published and distributed. Even more passes before any royalties from sales start coming in.¹⁴⁹ When an artist finds a publisher, who wants their books illustrated in a given artist's style, it also usually takes from 3 to 9 months before the project begins, plus months to implement that work. The waiting/searching time in no way depends on the artistic qualities of the book but

¹⁴⁹ Normally, the author's rights are not paid out in one day but split into percentages and paid out as the portions of the edition are sold. "A common payout would be something like 25% [of the entire royalty amount] upon contract signing; 25% upon manuscript delivery and acceptance (which means the book has gone through the editorial process and put into production); 25% upon publication; 25% a year after publication. Depending on the date span between contract signing and publication it could be as long as two years or more before an author receives the full advance." <http://www.taylorstevensbooks.com/writing/rights.php>

only on the way the industry works. The artistic path of the 20th-century Ukrainian artist, Sofiya Karaffa-Korbut (1924-1996), comes to mind. She was the artist of about 60 illustrated books, including literary classics and contemporary writers. She created masterpieces that can be viewed as poetry of graphic arts; however, her most significant series were not published during her lifetime, e.g., the stylistically well-developed illustrations for Ivan Franko's psychological, philosophic poem *Ivan Vyshenskyi*. Korbut worked on it from 1971 to 1983, but the book was published almost two decades later, in 2001, second ed. in 2006. She also produced 36 pictures for Lesya Ukrainka's drama *The Forest Song* which were created in 1990-1994 and published in 2000).

The modern history of art knows very rare cases when a talented illustrator made a living *only* with his art.¹⁵⁰ A couple of famous German illustrators of Russian origin, Olga Dugina and Andrej Dugin,¹⁵¹ have gained the fame thanks to the style of their illustrations characterized by fantastic elements and meticulous detail in each part of a picture. Since 1989, they have illustrated 6 books, working together (four hands) on every project. Andrej's illustrations for Gogol's *Evenings Near Dikanka* have not been published. Their other books were published in 1991, 1993, 1999, 2004, 2006, and 2013. This frequency does not allow the Dugin duo to make a living. What helps them survive as artists and to continue to illustrate books is their teaching activity at the Stuttgart Art School, while the illustrations are made in their spare time, after work or on weekends.¹⁵² They have also conducted a few short workshops at MiMaster in Milan in 2011-2013, which is more a way to keep one's presence in the world of art than a source of income.

Richard A. Kirk¹⁵³ is a professional illustrator from London ON whose fantastic pictures are regularly published in art editions, and yet, to make a living he works as a full-time department manager at Weldon Library.

¹⁵⁰ At least if one is lucky to live from rentals of a house remained after grandparents, then he can claim that he lives from doing only art; or, for example, when one's parents are already famous artists with their own studio and established reputation of university professors, so they can introduce their kid to such circle, offering a ready path to the world of art. We never know what or who stands behind each artist; but what I am speaking about here is a hypothetical case when an individual does not have any economical or promotional support and tries to survive from *only* his artistic profession. Some more observations with this respect have been expressed in Prihodko's interview, see Part III.

¹⁵¹ <http://duginart.com/gallery.html>

¹⁵² From a private conversation with the artists at MiMaster Illustrazione in Milan, May 2011

¹⁵³ <https://www.richardakirkart.com/>

Mattias Adolfsson worked for 2 decades as a graphic designer in different commercial companies and as a 3D artist in the computer game industry, but only at the age of 42 did he start his second life, so to speak, when he gained world recognition thanks to his sketches that have given him freelance work from all over the world. When asked the question “What have you learned so far in your life that you can pass on to the artists”, he admits: “It all comes down to putting in the hours”.¹⁵⁴

Gregory Yakubovich, Vasil Chebanik, Vitaly Mitchenko – just to mention a few names of great book artists who illustrated Gogol and gained recognition in the field – had to make a living by doing all sorts of jobs of the craft type at a film studio in Kyiv, creating artisan bindings produced in series, making editorial promotional materials and taking on full-time positions at publishing houses as makers of educational editions. They have also taught.

Some artists move their career towards other media in which they can implement their talents, for example, animations and movies as was done by [Jean-Baptiste Monge](#).¹⁵⁵ However, the film industry works differently than publishing. We should also not ignore the illustration genre, for example, comic books are usually created and published in large series. Once an artist has found a publisher, he can continuously produce one book after another for the same series as long as the reader’s interest is alive.

Therefore, when working for the love of art this way, one ends up taken all sorts of commercial jobs that require, if is lucky, an ability more or less similar to making pictures.¹⁵⁶ Artists (as well as writers) who work as teachers, librarians, 3D designers, or printers of series of etchings for limited editions can still cite such jobs in their artistic resumé. However, plenty of gifted artists would not even mention the results of commercial jobs in their portfolio that take up most of their productive time and energy; even though this does not mean that they are unable to make a living with their profession. After all, they do use their craft and are able to meet deadlines, but this has little to do with arts. The reason for such a situation is that books involving high artistic taste are not addressed for the mass buyer and therefore can generate

¹⁵⁴ <https://nonsensesociety.com/2013/04/mattias-adolfsson/>

¹⁵⁵ A larger gallery of pictures is presented here: <https://www.artstation.com/jeanbaptistemonge>

¹⁵⁶ This is not a generalization or subjective viewpoint, but rather the reality of the industry with its demands. Related works may include: texturing for video games, when an artist uses his hands to color brick walls or stupid faces on the computer screen, 7 hours per day and 5 days per week; or produces almost mechanically business cards or web pages or promotional posters or brochures for companies, dozens of which should be made on a daily basis; or hand-written calligraphy for 500 identical certificates; the others can perform what is called with a seemingly professional term “decoration of interiors” but turns out to be a simple wall painting, just with a good taste to color balance, and so forth.

only occasional and very low income compared to the cost of living. This explains why it may take up to six years to complete one book, rather than six months if one were to work full-time on the project. Haruki Murakami, who writes a 1,000-page book in three years, said in an interview question that he loves money because “the best thing you can buy with money is freedom, and time”¹⁵⁷ which allows him to work creatively (even though Murakami is an exceptional genius). Great book artists and writers of our time, including Brodsky, have always done other jobs for living: from teaching to editing, to translations, to work in newspapers in order to buy time for creative work.

Such a combination of “other” full-time jobs and creative projects in their spare time is probably the only way to survive as an artist and to continue to create books with illustrations. This is how artists can pursue projects as detailed as they want, investing as much time as they need, which may often take years of their life, and ignoring the demands of the publishing industry. This balancing act between art and the market has nothing to do with the professional skills or quality of their work. This all has to do with the creative limitations and short timeframe imposed by the industry. However, if one is unable to make a living with his profession, the artistic work is called a hobby. In contractual terms, a “balancing” artist usually stipulates a long-term agreement with a publisher who agrees to promote the high art if the artist continues to illustrate books in his artistic style. Working in this way, one has the chance to become recognizable in the world of art – a phenomenon which leads me to some further observations with respect to the relationship between the style of a text and the style of pictures (see below).

I have been discussing the type B path which is halfway between (unsellable) artistic limited editions and the wide range of trade in commercial publishing, i.e., this also is a kind of mass production, but it also involves the publishing of high culture products, and at least those critics/readers from the realm of high culture still consider this to be art. [Eldar Ryazanov](#)’s cinematic masterworks happened to be also part of mass culture, and [Alphonse Mucha](#)’s posters were also commercial, but sometimes high art does coincide with commercial success.

¹⁵⁷ Interviewed by Emma Brockes, 14 Oct., 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/oct/14/haruki-murakami-1q84>

The history of publishing suggests that book artists were in demand and well paid up to the beginning of the 20th century: such a timeframe is related both to the industrialization of art (which influenced the book art), and the rapid decline of the tradition of illustrating adult fiction, the latest being associated with the development of other visual media, such as cartoons and films and then everything available through internet which supplanted the culture of the book in its wide sense.

What comes under publishing provisionally defined as Type C (in which I worked for 12 years concurrently with Type A on limited editions), applies to those who have attempted to make a living with their artistic profession. Examples of Type C are presented on a website widely used by artists for promotional and job-searching purposes: www.artstation.com. This site presents professional portfolios of hundreds of artists of all media and genres — from handmade watercolors, to digital-born illustrations, to 2D drawings for cell phone apps, and to complex 3D modeling for the game or animation industry. When looking at their works, descriptions and comments, we realize that the vast majority of truly artistic works are created not for commissioned projects but rather for the love of art, i.e., for artists themselves who are moved by their passion and invest their spare time in such work in the hope of finding potential clients. Pictures of a more superficial kind (kitsch images in content and style¹⁵⁸ or those that appear technically undeveloped or rushed) can sometimes represent the commercial angle that reflects an artist's capacity to work on request. For example, it happens often that a publisher is unable to "co-work" with artist.¹⁵⁹ Professional ability in creative fields and the artistic work of word-image interpretation often turn out to be a technical support for those who need to use an artist's hands and craft skills in order to implement their ideas regardless of their aesthetics and visual logic. Therefore, the artist refuses to use his name as an illustrator because this type of pictures presents him as someone with limited imagination and a lack of creativity even though

¹⁵⁸ The difference between 'high' and 'low' fantasy is discussed with the example of Gogol's fantastic elements and the illustrations: included in Mitchenko's interview, in Part III.

¹⁵⁹ To "co-work" means to give one some artistic freedom, to let him interpret a given text into pictures, to trust his professionalism, to discuss the wishes of each-other, to adjust the final product in such a way that both are satisfied with the result. However, publishers often send to the artist, along with the text being illustrated, also a list of their indications, like these: the protagonist in picture 1 should stand in front of a mirror and keep a book in his hands; in picture 2, he walks into forest, he should wear square pants, raise his left hand, and have a dog with him; in picture 3, we need a city placed in the lower right-hand corner of the page (photo attached), and so forth. The same attitude is a common tendency also with respect to concept-artists, animators, etc., because the client "knows better" how the book/film/cartoon should be made. When facing such an attitude, one wonders: "Don't I have my own head on my shoulders?"

this is still work within the profession. A common example of artist-publisher and, consequently, text-picture relations can be summarized in the following episode which also involves purely ethical issues in terms of the artist's professional responsibility for the work he is entrusted to produce. Even though the following case is derived from my practice, it can be taken as a generalized and abstract picture that has been experienced by many in the publishing sector Type C. The logic of social subordination leads to the belief that "the client is always right", which gives the client the right to require the sort of pictures that often goes against any law of visual composition or meaning of visual signs.

Some time ago, I was commissioned to create a book cover for a British author who travelled by bicycle to Saint Petersburg in Russia and wrote his book on the road: a wonderful personal experience, even if weakly expressed in words, when compared to great travelogue literature.

I should open the brackets in order to provide a few examples. We know Brodsky's *Watermark*, an autobiographical essay dedicated to Venice, and his *A Journey to Istanbul* where the author's remarkable view of Byzantium links the city with Russian history and is mixed with modern Muslim reality. I can also cite the most recent example of the genre represented by a German political correspondent and writer of Ukrainian origin, Irina Birna, in her book *Zizn za Oknom* [Life Behind the Window] — a collection of essays about her trips to different cities. The book is written creatively, wittily and with confidence. It is based on her personal experience. She notices details that others pass by without seeing. She writes about Verona, *Romeo and Juliet* and the Italians' attitude toward these characters from Shakespeare's play. Then she writes about hypertrophic tourism manifested in the need to touch Juliet's stone statue, her left breast, in order to make dreams come true. As a result, her breast is polished, and the crowd of people line up to carry this ritual. This creates an almost Gogolian phantasmagoria. When Birna arrives in Budapest,¹⁶⁰ she says: "I have a special attitude toward Budapest. Personal. My father ended the war here — he 'took' Budapest." Then she tells of how her father was in a Stalinist camp and from there was sent "voluntarily" to fight in a penal

¹⁶⁰ A small part from Birna's book *Life Behind the Window* (in Russian) that describes her trip to Budapest, is presented on her blog <https://ibirna.com/будапешт> but the entire book is not available yet on sales; it has been read aloud among friends on an online meeting, reminding those times when the books circulated in *Samizdat* versions. Some other parts have been published in *Megalit* http://promegalit.ru/personals/3619_birna_irina.html. Her letters addressed to Putin (who is named with a criminal tone Vovan, derivative from Vladimir), are presented on her blog, as well as her reflections called "In the brackets of the Ukrainian war" are particularly acute and scathing: <https://ibirna.com/>

battalion in order to “wash away with his blood his crimes invented by his good homeland.” He was wounded several times and sent to the vanguard again, and then received one little medal “For the Capture of Budapest”. “He burned it right away, upon arrival at home in Odessa in his native Sailor's Descent in front of the whole family” because this medal would be a reminder to him what he had witnessed when “the population of Budapest suffered the same fate as the inhabitants of East Prussia, Germany, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia — all the countries where the Soviet ‘liberators’ set foot: robbery, looting, mass rape of girls, women, old women...”. And then the writer tells about the streets of Budapest — overgrown with grass, with homeless people here and there, the stench of urine, concluding: “The unforgettable, beautiful city Budapest”. Irina Birna often uses historical facts, literary works, artworks, personal memories, other people's stories. Her approach is wide-ranging, and I would even say interdisciplinary. It is very different from a typical overview for tourists with facile statements like: “Here you see an interesting statue in front of the cathedral. So and so lived in this house”, etc.

In contrast, what the reader can find in descriptions of the bike trip to St. Petersburg by the above-mentioned author presents a linear retelling¹⁶¹ where the main value of an artwork (a personal glance at common things) was left beyond the author's vision.

All this brings me to two key points. The first point consists in building individual pathways by a given writer: these include different innovations discovered through the creative process, i.e. one's personal glance at the nature of things (with humor, irony, cynicism, drama, utopia, and so forth). One is able to discover such individual pathways which others may miss because that was not their area of interest. A story about a tourist who arrives in a hotel and then walks the city streets lit up by the moon is not interesting because it lacks such individual discoveries. The second key point, which is built on the first, consists in developing the visual counterpart of those particular creative pathways expressed in the text to be illustrated. When one approaches the task of visual adaptation, texts by such authors as Brodsky and Birna can provoke in an artist the necessary creative surprise which is then visually interpreted because of the writers' individual creative pathways. On the other hand, a text about the trip to St.

¹⁶¹ This style reminds the method of songs used by Turkic people (Mongols, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, etc.), when they sing literally what they see and put words as they come along the songs. Consequently, the content of their texts is quite primitive. Such method is called “I sing what I see” and is often used with irony with respect to artworks that have such a flat meaning. An English equivalent could be: as you go along/ improvise on the go/ about everything and nothing.

Petersburg can provoke only a feeling of the necessity to implement technical order, resulting in a correspondent level of pictures. In other words, if a text says: "the dog is running, and the bird is singing", will this give you any inspiration for a creative word-picture interpretation? Or, will you rather depict these statements as such, repeating them literally, with no creative insight?

Given the necessity of emotional involvement in creative word-picture interpretations, we should keep in mind that this involvement comes from the text. For example, if a filmscript is poor, neither technological 3D effects nor famous actors can make the film work. In the same way, a story meant to be illustrated can be too flat and characterized by primitive storytelling and a language of simple actions and statements (it was winter outside..., they suddenly decided..., she enjoyed...). Such a story may be lacking in any subtle meanings, metaphors or poetic images. In this case, there is nothing here that could provoke a creative response from an illustrator. On the other hand, the biographical facts determining a character — if refracted through the writer's *artistic interpretation* and expressed with his constructive material, i.e., verbal language — can provide the illustrator with his own constructive material. Complex, many-layered, metaphorically dense texts full of *imagery* may provide a true source of creativity for an artist, stimulating artistic surprise and emotional involvement¹⁶² — as is presented in the key points above as well as exemplified in the discussion about the reciprocity of action and reaction involved in creative act (see part I.2.). Sometimes, it is hoped by the author or publisher that they can make a book sellable thanks to pictures, but the desired creative impact does not occur, and the artist's work turns out to be again on the level of crafts. It is thus executed as required from the academic point of view, i.e. it respects the laws of composition and drawing technique, but it is missing "something else" — a central core that makes it an object of *artistic interpretation*. Therefore, one should look also at the primary source which, if mediocre, makes it impossible to create any sort of "inspired" pictures.

In this last case, the making of pictures proceeds almost mechanically, being framed by the publisher's deadlines (usually unrealistic, requiring to originate, sketch, color, scan, correct and send out 5-7 pictures per day) which are explained by the publisher's low budget and the

¹⁶² By "difficult", it is meant here not only the stories that have many planes and metaphors, of course, but first of all *associations, pictorial writing, imagery* and *poetic images*: for instance, short stories or poems that can have no plot or they may have a plot without logical meaning but provoke a reader-illustrator's "surprise" by other features, such as sound and play of words, rhythmical organization, shifting of reality, illusion, paradox, individual writer's methods, linguistic features, the way the words are put together, kinds of adjectives and so on.

artist's necessity of monetizing his skills and time.¹⁶³ Or, if the deadlines are flexible, the artist begins to invest ten-twenty times more of his energy, creativity and worktime compared with the reward, which turns out to be disproportionately low to meet the basic cost of living. This is because the publisher's budget is always the same — he simply cannot invest more than that, otherwise the final price of a book will be disproportionate to the purchasing power of buyers within the market system.¹⁶⁴

To return to the above-mentioned book about the St. Petersburg trip, the author, as often happens, sent me his indications: to draw the city of his destination on the cover in sepia color and with emphasis on classical architecture, to insert a black silhouette of his vehicle, to write “dream big” around the wheel, to put somewhere his name in gold color, e.g., like on a dome, in classical print typesetting, to hand-write in English the calligraphy for the book title, to make the title script falling as a shadow underneath but in typed font and in Russian. In addition to all the other visual contradictions and stylistic unconformity, it is counterintuitive to imagine a shadow that, instead of repeating the silhouette of an object, has nothing in common with it. This would be impossible even in Dali's surrealistic pictures. In other words, this cover was like eating salted fish with milk and melon and seeing what happens next. In the end, I could not produce this mix of incompatible ingredients. After a long back-and-forth discussion, I created something in-between the client's wishes and the visual logic of cover-making, doing my best to balance each single detail [Fig. [a](#), [b](#), [c](#)]. Surprisingly, the internal layout-designers of Print-On-Demand Editions made certain changes to my cover [Fig. [d](#)], wishing to establish their authority over a freelancer. In their version, however, many things appear jarring to the eye. My vertical title became horizontal, appearing banal and made with excessively large type in comparison with the book proportions and picture. The distance between two lines is equal to three heights of a lower-case letter while according to typographic principles and font design, the space between lines should not exceed one height of a lower-case letter in a line of

¹⁶³ It becomes usually impossible to convey to a publisher — who has a goal “to sell” rather than “to create” books — that the quality is proportional to the time invested in a work.

¹⁶⁴ For example, a director of a publishing house specializing in scholastic literature in Milan, admitted that they must keep producing five-six books every three months in order to remain in the market, as their buyers are elementary and middle schools that require this frequency. If they pause their business or slow down production, their books will be quickly replaced with the products of another publisher, and clients will be lost. [From private conversations with Elio D'Aniello (†) and Gisella Moroni, two great co-publishers with whom I worked as an illustrator from 2004 to 2009, until they retired]. In light of market demands, I was ordered to produce up to 300 small pictures per month (for example, for journals on language learning or mathematics or history for elementary and secondary schools). This was a great publisher because they gave me total artistic freedom, which is very rare.

text. The bicycle is now moved down although my original version produced the feeling of something romantic: a bicycle in the sky meant to give the picture another dimension. I represented a real trip with the real city below while the bicycle in the sky symbolized a dream (as required by the author). So, now the bicycle's silhouette cannot be easily "read" against the background of the city, it looks inappropriate in terms of scale, and it merges with the small details of buildings. The writer's name is placed now exactly on the top of the cathedral, which is a very serious visual mistake. I do not claim, of course, that my cover is the best choice for this book, but such basic visual and typographic mistakes in the last version have ruined everything. Later, the book appeared online with further changes which I have not followed anymore.

This is not — as some may assume — a subjective artist's complaint, but the explanation of how the industry works. This example is not about this particular client and his cover but represents a typical picture: such tensions happen on a daily basis to those involved in the industry which functions according to the principle "my way or the highway," i.e., when the artists (writers, screenwriters, photographers, other art-professionals) are often told: "If you don't want to do this way, I will find someone else." In such instances there is no way to convey to the person over you the basic principles of visual composition. The question that should be asked is why people learn the grammar of a language and what would happen if we didn't. Would we understand each other? Visual language has also its own grammar, which surprises many people. If we ignore it, then we will start to communicate on the level of the above-mentioned book cover.

From this, we realize that the art of bookmaking in modern times has declined in various areas and is not considered anymore as a serious profession: everyone claims to be an expert. This unfortunate trend leads to a very sad outcome: it kills any notion of creativity and leaves only the technical execution of requirements. Even when working 20 hours per day for the industry, one could not reach the quality of one's full potential. The aesthetic level of such superficial illustrations, creative invention, range of details and general quality of the edition cannot be compared with a book created in the course of three years. Thus, artistic choices do not matter in this case; what does matter is only the ability to craft quick images and meet deadlines. What we see is a complex relationship between the freedom of artistic thought (if it is allowed) and incredibly short timeframes of implementation, as well as the low standards

inherent in the market.¹⁶⁵ I should come back to my earlier point and reiterate that this is not what may seem a protest against the whole publishing industry, but it is rather a consideration about the publishing of Type C, which prioritizes speed of work and market demands at the expenses of artistic quality. The result is a compromise whereby regular income generated by quickly made and frequently produced pictures appears as the only realistic option for making a living.

This semi-artistic work, however, degrades one's creative potential very fast: because the purpose of "true" art¹⁶⁶ stands in the *process* of creative search and growth through making, while the purpose of the industry is focused only on the *result* which, in its turn, is far from the artistic excellence. The discrepancy between high art and the demands of the market occurs because *to create* (to write, to draw, etc.) implies a method of thinking, i.e. such a cognitive process is inseparable from the process of writing or drawing and from the way such creative thoughts materialise in pictures or words. In other words, the demands of the industry may conflict with the basic principles of creativity when these principles do not tolerate speed if an artwork aspires to be deep and meaningful.

This is comparable with the situation in the film industry and television where the predominant focus is on the 'product' ([The Burlington Magazine](#), 143). For example, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (2003, directed by Peter Webber) is made like one continuous still-life painted in the Netherlandish style. After starring in this film, Scarlett Johansson moved on to roles in

¹⁶⁵ The level of commercial works is very low, because the industry's purpose is business, and therefore an employee is required to perform his tasks fast without thinking twice about the quality or high art. After all, this is what he is paid for – for products countable in terms of paid hours. A friend of mine, a sculptor and carver, had worked at an Italian art-artisan company, creating and restoring for them high-quality items (such as walking sticks with complex miniatures carved from ivory, table sculptures from amber and blackwood, with incrustations from silver and corral, etc.) that were meant for art collectors. It happened on a daily basis that a client (a mediator-merchant) came with a complex project and said: "I am willing to pay for this work 120", and therefore the boos turned in the direction of his employee and said: "You (i.e. my friend) must do this work in 4 hours". It didn't matter that such a project required two days to be done well. What mattered was only the need to satisfy the system within the market (if one works slower and, consequently, earns less, he simply cannot justify the costs of rent, insurance, distributors, etc.). But the quality had still to be acceptable and therefore required a great deal of creative investment condensed into short timeframes. So, the inevitable haste at the workplace started at 9 am and ended at 7 pm, 5 days per week, and lasted for 7 years. This still meant to be artistic work, but created within the industry, i.e. with the commercial purposes, which destroyed any notion of "true" art. To produce artistic works this way is very exhausting physically and drains one mentally. After such a "valuable" experience, one needs *years* to regenerate his creative potential. Besides, to live in a running regime, to be always busy, mostly occupied by meaningless things, is dangerous not only in terms of the loss of the horizons in one's own life and health status close to *karoshi* [Japanese term for overwork death], but the tragedy of an unrealized, un-lived life is also a possible consequence.

¹⁶⁶ See the definition of "true" art and the rules on how to recognize "false" art below.

blockbusters, as many other great actors have done as well. Such a shift from the cinema of high culture to that of commercial mass culture does not suggest that the actress stopped her work within the profession, but rather that she started to make a living with her craft skills rather than with the art of complex interpretations through the language of acting. Another example of a recent film project comes from the screenwriter Oleg Prihodko who has over 40 years of experience within the industry and world recognition for many of his film scripts. When working on his new screenplay for a film company in Kyiv, he commented the process of his work as follows:

I recently signed a new contract to adapt to the screen one of my novels which I wrote many years ago and which remains unpublished. A producer had suddenly reached out to me and proposed to write a four-part script based on my novel, which made me happy. But if I had known what was waiting for me, I would never have accepted the offer. The producer (an absurd and narcissistic person) began to write her own script with my hands, based on my novel. Page after page, I was asked to change the main characters, eliminate nuances which make a vital contribution to my work, replace the most poetic and elaborated monologues with flat and primitive ones — ‘because the spectator will turn off the film if he sees aspects of philosophy that are too smart or abstruse’. They destroyed completely everything that was dear to me, in the artistic sense. This is a very hard and devastating experience. I tried to reject this job, but they persuaded me to start all over again. I rejected payment until they accept at least half of what I want. I argued with them, but I still need to pay the bills, so the work continued. In the end, I asked them not to mention anywhere my name as a writer. This all is very hard. When your work is destroyed, again and again, during years spent within the industry, a sort of chronic tiredness overtakes you – not from a specific job but from life in general. One should avoid this by all means (I realized that too late)¹⁶⁷

This trend is very similar, in part, to what in literature is called a ghost writer. Such an exercise is similar to what V. Uspensky described in his *A Secret Council of the Leader*,¹⁶⁸ regarding what happened when he received from a character named Lukashov some documents, notes about facts, photos and other materials and then wrote down his own ‘memories’. As to the illustrated books, even if the content and formal composition of pictures is proposed by a client, an illustrator still uses his hands: i.e. the style, tonality of pictures (like tonality in music), details (like the choice of words in literature), features that stand beyond a simple plot, colors and visual associations all come through in the individual approach of the artist.

¹⁶⁷ From private correspondence, August 2019; quoted with the permission of the author. His broader observations on the art-market relations are presented in an interview and included in Part III.

¹⁶⁸ V. Uspensky, *Tajnij sovetnik vozdj*, S.-Petersburg: Pravda, 2001.

In other words, “true” art and creativity are incompatible with the industry and commercially-oriented products.¹⁶⁹ Of course, many great films/artworks continue to come out around the world, but their percentage is very low compared to mass products, while the latter can allow the income earning ability of art professionals. The commercial field is a service: like laundry, real estate, gas stations, snack bars, car saloons, print shops, and promotional or publishing design (posters, advertising, tickets, business cards, print products). It is obviously not surprising that books have joined the list of such services the aim of which is to be sold and to meet the expectations of the market. In this context, the prevalent tendency among publishers, writers and artists is to “produce” books with astonishing frequency. “It seems, the times of the works that processed slowly, were written and rewritten for decades now definitively concluded: in today’s industrial logic, the iron must be beaten until it is hot and then thrown away” (Leonelli, 721). Some attempts to reconcile art and industry, for example, were made by the late 19th-century clothing industry in France which re-adapted the language of art to reproducibility (preserving the aura of a work in Benjamin’s terms) and mass production. However, the competition for the modernization has resumed the issue in the 20th century.¹⁷⁰

Consequently, the necessity to sell art products (books with pictures) and to reach the buyer, pushes the publisher to make the artist decrease immensely the quality of work in order to descend to the level of the target audience that does not wish to make any mental effort to understand the language of visual associations.¹⁷¹ This becomes an immeasurable problem when we realize the dimensions of such the industrialization and commercialization of art.

A few examples from literary works are relevant here since art and literature usually reflect and interpret what is happening in the “real” world¹⁷² and represent topical issues of current life

¹⁶⁹ Cf. The Romantic idea of the television producers as artists pursuing ‘art for art’s sake’ is discussed in the light of discrepancy between art and sales of their companies: *Simon Faulkner, Adam Leaver, Farida Vis and Karel Williams, “Art for Art’s Sake or Selling Up?”*, *European Journal of Communication* Copyright © 2008 SAGE Publications (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi and Singapore) www.sagepublications.com, Vol 23(3): 295–317. [10.1177/0267323108092537]

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Green, Nancy L. “The Language of Modernization in the Production of Fashion”, *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring, 1994), pp. 722-748, Duke University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/286690>

¹⁷¹ With reference to Prihodko’s interview, included in Part III.

¹⁷² “seeing is never a passive response to appearances [...]. Instead, it engenders an image of the whole, in both the natural and the cultural domains. [...] the artist’s works not only become dialectical elements within a whole but elicit responses that overcome, at least imaginatively, the very disjunction between the reality of the artwork and the reality itself. The artist’s works, that is, exist beyond the supposedly distinct terrains of inside and outside,

(Lotman, t.3, 1993:91). The mixing of artistic creation and industry and attempts to subordinate aesthetic values to the demands of the market are reflected in the experience of the protagonist of Gogol's *Portrait*. The protagonist disperses very rapidly his innate talent and developed abilities, sells himself out and disappears as an artist. This parallels Calvino's *Marcovaldo* where society is presented as an industrial metropolis, typical and abstract, in which capitalist values are imposed and where everything is measured in terms of production and consumption rather than individual qualities.

Such a picture evokes a more recent example from D. Danilov's novel *Horizontal Position*,¹⁷³ which provokes a feeling of disgust. We are given the absurdity of the routine work of a journalist who writes down short notes about his life in the form of a social media blog. His blog looks like an infinite report to a boss who constantly requires reports about the actions performed during the day. This report is written in the nominative case and consists of nouns or noun phrases: "the awakening", "the side scratching", "the state of vivacity", "thinking about future", "eating food", "leaving for work", "bus number 232", "work", "discussing with colleagues the next issue of the magazine which is useless to anyone", "deleting all files from the desktop", etc..... Such a flow of speech presents the totally horizontal and single-celled life of a social man. As Bykov¹⁷⁴ observes: many phrases end with the words "to lie down in a horizontal position and fall asleep", and this is in fact the desire experienced by the reader.

Bykov argues that this totally flat text became a bestseller and is widely read for two reasons. First, the blog-style has an advantage of a live stream, and to pry into the lives of others is a fundamental feature of human nature. Second, the reader realizes that his own life, when compared with such descriptions, is flourishing, and whatever you do or happens to you will be perceived as happiness. I would add a third reason: the product of mass culture is much easier to digest than something less linear and cognitively demanding.

The foregoing suggests that the job of a journalist consists 90% in completing this sort of useless official reports, corrections and mediocre texts. Money earned this way depreciate fast, and one is left with a disgusting, empty feeling. This is not about a single man but about a

genetic and personal, human and art historical. They reify a life in the immanence of the multiple states it attracts and generates." (Guercio, 110-111)

¹⁷³ Published in a journal *Noviy Mir*, n.9, 2010 https://magazines.gorky.media/novy_mi/2010/9/gorizontalnoe-polozhenie.html

¹⁷⁴ Dmitry Bykov, a writer, journalist and literary critique; conducts the author's program Short-List about literature in social media <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4kgZXQHY1WoBM3s514O8iv2cgwacjA4q>

society deprived of spiritual and intellectual values and therefore obsessed with everyone else's business. It is a picture of limitless boredom.

The end of creativity occurs because a sense of surprise and the circulation of invested-received energy is no longer a part of an artwork. This phenomenon causes the arts to degenerate and wither away because art is “a way of resisting the lack of meaning” (A. Tarkovsky; Amalia Pica¹⁷⁵). The industrialization of art is the opposite of meaning because it strives to make art a servant of an absurd world that keeps going around in pointless circles. In the latter case, a potential mode of growth is replaced by a mode of survival — economically, mentally, creatively, psychologically, morally and physically. This capturing cycle is very difficult to break because people become totally dependent on the system in each single moment of their activity and often addicted to shallow stimulation and turn into automatons hungry for more and more bytes. This loss of fundamental values is summed up very well by Stephen R. Covey's image: a person keeps climbing up a ladder without noticing that the ladder is leaning up against the wrong wall (Covey, 54). In a different way, with the ironic eye and great artistic taste, the social life is presented on Valentin Gubarev's¹⁷⁶ paintings, such as *Modest Charm of Undeveloped Socialism*, *Titanic*, *Dacha*, *Fate of Socks*, *Rest on the Reservoir*, *Grand Enter*, and many others.

To summarise the discussion, one can probably survive physically with such crafts but not creatively. The results of such work will never end up in one's artistic portfolio, and therefore an artist continues to invest years of active, potentially creative life without any personal growth in the field, using his hands only to help others earn money. The resources of creative capacity are not unlimited.¹⁷⁷ Since the natural way of making pictures is about the full involvement of one's mind and emotions, the artist finds it difficult to adapt to commercial

¹⁷⁵ Tarkovsky suggests that art exists only because the world is unperfect and in some cases meaningless, and the artist needs to resist this lack of meaning by creating something worthwhile, by searching for a harmony and meaning. This is one of the concepts of the film *Andrei Rublev*. (Cf. a documentary film *A Poet of the Cinema: Andrei Tarkovsky*, directed by Donatella Baglivo, 1984).

An interview with Amalia Pica, “Art in the Shadow of Art Market Industrialization”, SFAQ – International Art and Culture, Nov. 10, 2014 <<http://sfaq.us/2014/11/art-in-the-shadow-of-art-market-industrialization-moving-toward-a-sustainable-ecosystem/>>

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.liveinternet.ru/community/1726655/post422584979/>;
<https://www.facebook.com/valentingubarevartist/>

¹⁷⁷ Everything has its limits in human nature, as physical potential allowed for one's life circle, so mental and creative capacity to generate new works. Cf.: Zunshine, Lisa, ed. *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010; Mok, P. “Asian cities and limits to creative capital theory”, *Kong and O'Connor*, 2009, 135–50.

work and stop investing all of himself in each project. When this creative investment is dispersed over projects that do not deserve it, there is a real danger of creative burnout.

There are two paradoxical and regularly occurring phenomena that can explain the way the books are illustrated for the publishing industry of Type B (i.e. large commercial editions with artistic pictures).

An artist invests his full potential in the creation of a few works or a series of pictures for 1-3 books. This work, carried out for the sake of art, is done in the hope of using the images to represent one's best capacities and attracting further potential projects that would be as creative and complex as these examples. The artist wishes to continue creating and surprising people but with the possibility of making a decent living. This requires a long search for professional connections, self-promotion, correspondence, journeys to book fairs, recognition received at exhibitions thanks to awards, publications in art catalogues, the mailing of various projects and long wait times for replies from publishers. All the while the artist has to survive on the basis of commercial works of Type C. Finally, the artist is commissioned to perform, it seems, a truly creative series of illustrations for a large publishing house. He is told: "We want our texts to be illustrated with the style of your pictures". Eureka! This seems like a turning point promising to bring growth in a creative career. But in reality, this is the end. The period of creative growth ends when the artist finishes the above-mentioned 1-3 books in which he implemented what is called *artistic word-image interpretation* (see I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*).

As it will become clear from the analysis, the following scenarios serve as concrete examples of why books are made in that particular way since — as mentioned above — the demands of the market dictate the direction of how the making of pictures will go, not vice versa. Without such considerations, many conclusions remain detached from what stands behind the books themselves.

I have frequently presented 4-6 book projects of my own to publishers. The images were executed in totally different styles because different literary works were involved. Here is a typical exchange with a publisher following such a presentation.

Scenario 1: which can lead to a job contract:

“The pictures are wonderful, so detailed, but your style is too complex, it does not fit our publishing line.” Do I now have to adapt to the publisher's style.

“But don't you see that I work in different styles? I don't have a single style since each of these projects is aimed to interpret the style of the narrative”.

“Then let's try this story, but I want you to make the cover first — in the style of our publishing line, and then we will see how many pictures to include”.

One could in theory adapt to such a scenario even though the typographic standards dictate many aspects of future creative work.¹⁷⁸

Scenario 2: also a very common version of a conversation that can lead to a job contract:

“Your pictures are amazing! But we don't want to publish your books. Are you capable of making pictures in the style of your books but for our text?” The publisher asks me this even without showing me their text — as if it does not matter at all what to illustrate.

“How can I?” I wonder. “Your text is different from mine, isn't it?”

I am vainly trying to convey that “my” style of pictures comes from the style of the narrative being illustrated. What remains for me is to agree to perform artisan work. This is because the moment the publisher says: “We want the *same* style of pictures for *our* texts”, the artist is trapped in the process of self-repetition.

It is puzzling that publishers keep their “lines” of illustrated books instead of trying something new, unexpected and different. Requests to illustrate different books in the same style are shaped by market demands: to be recognizable by the consumer in order to be sellable. Once an artist's reputation is built on the basis of a particular illustration style, he will be forced to repeat the same thing over and over — if he wants to remain within the industry. This is the equivalent of typecasting in film. Otherwise, when creating totally different (new) works, he will have to build a new promotional circle with new connections, which usually takes years.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Favorsky, 1986 and 1988; Tschichold. 1995: First, one needs to know/determine the book size and page/text proportions, make the layout, come up with the total number of pages and pictures, their whole rhythmical movement inside the book and so on — these are the integral parts of visual meanings. And then one begins working on pictures and inserting them in well-thought spaces. The cover is a summary of a book and appears when the inside is well-developed and completed. So, when working in such an opposite way, after completing the cover and then the pictures, I would need to redo completely the cover, and maybe the entire design and layout. But to start to explain such basic things to a publisher would mean beginning the relationship with a disagreement and probably to creating the impression of someone difficult to work with. This leads back to the lack of the boss' trust with respect to the professionals under them.

Thus, such jobs tie the artist's hands and preclude any possibility of working creatively. In order not to lose an important publisher and further (seeming) possibilities, the artist must apply a style developed for one book-project and stemming from one literary work to a new illustration project totally unsuited for this style. This means ignoring questions of genre, the writer's individual features, artistic language, mood, rhythmical organization, etc. This upside-down approach is the opposite of interpreting the verbal realm (see I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*), since it is the individual stylistics of a given text that provide the artist with a material for creative interpretation.

What effect does this have?

First, stylistic nonconformity occurs between text and pictures. Second, the forced repetition of existing methods/styles is inevitable, rather than the creation of new ones. Third, the artist's incomprehension of this problem, i.e., the flawed assumption that he is working on a creative project, motivates him to invest a great deal of potential which, at the end, does not produce the expected fruits in the inner-creative sense and can lead to the creative collapse. The latter might not happen after the first project, of course, but after 5-7 books such collapse is very likely. The exception would be a situation where the artist is unable to adapt his creativity and craft to stylistically different texts, and intentionally prefers to work in his unique/same style regardless of the kind of texts are being illustrated (see examples in I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*). Such exceptions, however, are not considered to be a form of intermedial word-picture adaptation, as the term is used in the present study, but rather the artist's self-presentation. As we can see, even in the case of an apparently creative project, the artist does not have much freedom and, therefore, the final product again turns out to be dependent on what is being request by the publisher, i.e. focused on the commercial result, which prevents such artworks from being considered as creative word-image adaptation.

As has been mentioned, the purpose of art consists, in very general terms, in getting experience through the *process* of making art, which leads to a creative result. "*Processes* are the creative thoughts, materials, and techniques artists combine to create products — the artworks. *Experiences* are the human interactions and responses that occur when people encounter the vision of the artist in the artwork" (Sporre, 13). Such *process* of making art can

develop the artist's knowledge, make changes to his creativity through the search for new images, broaden or re-direct different viewpoints and produce enrichment through spiritual values. Only then, when the work is fulfilled, can one look for possibilities to exhibit, to sell or be published. Otherwise, the commissioned work can move one away from the creative process, causing creativity to pass into the category of crafts, and the result is a work of commerce, i.e. a sellable thing made "for a client". When one creates an artwork with the aim of getting fame or recognition at an exhibit or making a profitable sale, nothing good will happen.¹⁷⁹ "Una mostra è un mostro" (an exhibit is a monster), as my teacher often said. Such misguided undertakings can even absorb the artist, if their purposes are wrongly understood. This does not imply the inevitable necessity to create artworks for free. Every work has its costs of materials, training, professional labor, capacity, space of studio, investments of creative resources, time (one who works professionally in the field often devotes most of his time to implementing someone else's, and not his own, wishes), etc. In the end, therefore, one still has to be paid.¹⁸⁰ It is in some way true, as Manet suggests, that the possibility of exhibiting pictures is essential for producing art (Batschmann, 136), but not (or not only) in terms of financial necessity, rather in terms of reaching the audience, which becomes part of the artistic communicative experience.

Among all the baggage that an artist collects throughout his life and carries along for decades, such inner-artistic experience weighs the least, does not require space, but brings the greatest benefit which is not always immediately materially convertible. The zeal for exterior achievements stands against inner changes which may have no outer expression or be

¹⁷⁹ Vanity and desire of promotion have a deadly power. One of the first Soviet cosmonauts, [Valery Bykovsky](#), has mentioned in a TV interview (Jan 2019) that if one begins to think about fame and money before the departure, the flight will fail: either the plane will light up, or a disaster or an unsuccessful landing will occur, and the cosmonaut will die. If a soldier goes to a war in order to become famous and get a medal, he will certainly die. As weird as it may sound, the same principle is true for the arts.

¹⁸⁰ An episode comes to mind, when an Italian merchant and publisher (i.e. one who knows well the process of bookmaking) has reached me out to commission a book, limited edition, as he wanted to make Christmas gifts to his employees. He wanted 200 copies of this book; he requested 6 linocuts, which had to be created, drawn, and engraved by me, and then hand-printed on each book, on an etching paper (6 linocuts x 200 copies = 1,200 hand made prints); he wanted the phrases written in calligraphy; and at the end he needed "a sort of binding made by hand and a cover". Rather than asking *me* the total cost of *my* work, he offered for this project... ten euro for each book, including the materials and taxes, because this was his budget, and because he "ordered a great amount of work, which can be made in series" (btw, ten euro was the cost of the materials for two books, OR two hand-printed pictures from already existing clichés). Simple mathematics suggested that, with such so-called "opportunity", I would invest two-month work which would not even allow to cover the cost of rent of my studio. Since I had many other ideas about how to spend my free time, I did not accept that offer; and he went to buy the bonsai for Christmas gifts. (2009, Milan)

expressed with complete inaction with respect to the outer world. But this inner artistic development is relevant to artistic practice and also relates to one of the differences between Western and Eastern Christian theology: while the former aims for self-presentation, the latter looks inside the self. This is manifested through religious art: while Catholic art is based on theatrical gestures and outer demonstration of beauty (Medieval and Renaissance sculpture and painting, e.g. Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel), i.e. a truthful external form is reached at the expenses of an inner truth; Orthodox art is based on intentional outer simplicity and the stylization of images in order to focus on inner beauty (Byzantine art). This may seem like apologetics with theology, but this core value goes beyond the mere religious dogmas because represents the pivot that stands in the principles of artistic creation.

Karl Philipp Moritz writes the following in an essay of 1785 on the purpose of art:

“The true artist will seek to incorporate in his work supreme inner purpose or perfection; if this finds approval, he will be glad, but his true purpose has already been achieved with the completion of the work”. If an artist aims to give pleasure or win applause, he fails to achieve the supreme purpose of his art and shows himself to be a “false” artist. The “true” artist justifies himself through his art, while the “false” artist is satisfied with public applause. (Batschmann, 66)

This can explain the (seemingly romanticized) saying suggesting that art cannot be made for money or recognition. Thus, artistic word-picture interpretation is possible outside of any commissioned projects — when it happens only for the sake of art, moved by the artist's personal passion and artistic search of images, without considerations of the market. Of course, *Requiem* was commissioned to Mozart, as well as the *Carceri* series to Piranesi, or the majority of his works to Michelangelo. However, these are rare cases in art history when a work “by request” was highly creative and brought out the artist's passion, involved him emotionally, and motivated his creativity, which then led to the world recognition of the artists' works (perhaps, if not commissioned, they would not have created such works). We should not forget also a fundamental difference: up to the early 20th century, the artist was paid for the quality of his work no matter how much time he invested.¹⁸¹ Today the artist is paid by the hour, which

¹⁸¹ Cf. The bibliography on the history of arts is too wide to be included here, but one example of one artist whose work has already been mentioned: the key moment in Moritz Retzsch's artistic life, who illustrated Faust, is that such a series of pictures made him financially independent (SNAC: <https://snaccooperative.org/ark:/99166/w6cn9hvm>), the scenario which would be impossible in today's book market.

requires the acceleration of work no matter what the quality is. From here, the conflict between the quality of work and the time invested seems to be the natural outcome.

The question is whether the contemporary book market can demand this level of creativity and offer a living income with certain regularity, i.e., more often than royalties from one publication in three-five years so that an artist can avoid “other” jobs?

Since the development of most of the arts runs in the same direction (Gombrich, 2002:7), some further observations on contemporary art and its general tendency should be considered in order to understand the art of bookmaking within the above-mentioned streams.

With reference to Batschmann’s above-cited discussion of the “true artist” and “false artist” — where the former tends to be satisfied with public applause, and the latter needs to justify himself through his art — and with respect to the terms “true” and “false” art, I would like to explain how these concepts can be understood in the present study. Such terms might seem to some as vague or banal, but we know (or heard from general education) about the *standards of the visual arts* (see also the definition offered by *The Art Story*, note 198 below) which have been developed throughout many centuries and accepted worldwide in various schools of formal and traditional training in the arts. The terms “true” and “false” art, therefore, do not evaluate artworks but refer to two opposite directions: the former supports the centuries-old fundamentals of traditional mastery-based art that pursues primarily artistic goals; the latter, non mastery-based (conceptual) art is based on the rejection of the first, on discrediting any notion of professionalism in art (as exemplified below) and often pursues primarily commercial goals veiled under the label of “progress” in art.

I would like now to provide the basic criteria of how to identify and recognize a work of art — as for example has been discussed by a group of Italian art historians and then presented at the University UTE San Daniele in Friuli for courses on the history of modern art. I find such criteria particularly relevant and important to be promoted in the context of contemporary “alternative” and “progressive” art, as discussed later in this section. The group of scholars who support the fundamentals of traditional art, i.e. mastery-based execution and depth of artistic search, have produced at least 7 main criteria which determine *l’arte vera*, (“true” work of art), and which I am reproducing here:

- 1) *The work must be intelligible*, that is, it must be understandable to anyone without the need for assistance from exegetes. It must be able *to communicate directly with the viewer*, i.e. a miraculous can dialogue and take place between the author and the viewer even thousands of years after the creation of the work. If the work does not communicate anything, the author has failed in his purpose. Critical texts, historical notations, stylistic contextualization, anthropological or sociological explanations etc. are welcome but come afterwards and do so without attempting to influence or, which would be even worse, to indoctrinate the beholder.¹⁸²
- 2) The work must *arouse emotion* — an effect that cannot be induced by third parties, but arises spontaneously and immediately at the mere sight of a masterpiece. Emotion is neither taught nor learned: it is either experienced or not. The resulting *judgment* therefore can only be substantially subjective, related to our taste, our culture, our personal experiences.
- 3) The work must precisely *please* the audience, transmit a gratifying sensation of joy, *intellectual well-being* and admiration resulting from the recognition of a brilliant representation and *superlative technical perfection*. But it can also have dramatic, provocative, tragic, grotesque or even comic content.
- 4) The work must be *original* (or reproduced in a limited and numbered set of copies and signed in the cases of intaglio printing and sculpture) and *made by the artist* who would not merely sign a work executed by third parties (e.g. artisans). Otherwise, we would speak at most only about buyers' publicists (the so-called *conceptualists*).
- 5) The work would not be easily reproducible by non-professionals. Even the most ignorant of men has ideas but cannot express them in a brilliant way. Anyone is able to make meaningless spots and scribbles, to exhibit such items in the showcase of a Gallery or a Museum. On the other hand, relatively few are those who know how to transform an idea, a feeling into a magnificent image or a splendid sculpture.
- 6) The work must be *well done*, that is, its realization must demonstrate *excellent technical mastery*, and not merely reveal amateurism or improvisation. Art implies study, training, tenacity, passion, effort, constant dedication.
- 7) It must be endowed with *form and content*. There is no formless content, nor can there be form without content, for the simple reason that the human being is endowed with *rationality* and *memory* and proceeds on the basis of parameters based on reasoning. What remains would be vain, often ridiculous discourse attempting to validate nothing.

¹⁸² This does not suggest a Formalistic approach — as might seem — but this rather refers to the semiotic approach that suggests the impossibility to decode what exactly was intended by the author, and therefore any opinion about an artwork will be subjective and based on the viewer's personal ability to access and to interpret things (see I.7.1. *Time Categories*, as well the end of section I.7. on p.190-1 and notes 268-9).

I have often been asked by friends of mine: “Well, drawing pictures does not require much thought so what else do you do in life in addition to just making books?” Such a restricted viewpoint about “just” making pictures is not uncommon these days and is rooted partly in the understanding of the artistic profession as a hobby. It derives from the commercialization and promotion of “false” art, where the outcomes of creativity viewed as something resulting from uncontrolled coincidences or pure intuition. But this is the illusion of originality, and it has no relation to “true” art or “professional art”¹⁸³ because uncontrolled artistic expressions bring only depraved results and moral degradation (Tokarchuk, 22). Self-control and conscious choices in artmaking — as a tool of creativity — will be discussed later with many examples. Some may paint scribbles at the level of a three-year-old child, make exhibits, engage in self-promotion or pay those who promote them and become popular. Many of these people flourish, speak loudly of themselves, adore their own genius, raise their so-called creativity to the level of commerce, all the while preserving their reserve of dilettantism.

Two questions should be answered in this connection. How did society arrive at this state and what is the impact of the situation on “true” aesthetics?

In his presentation *Why is Modern Art so Bad*, Robert Florczak explains that the masters of the past, from the Renaissance up to the late 19th century, produced works that continue to inspire us today, “and they did this by demanding of themselves the highest standards of excellence, improving upon the work of each previous generation of masters”. I am not sure why Florczak does not include in his range of excellence the ancient Greco-Roman style that introduced the canons of beauty to the West and the art of Middle Ages that brought creative invention to its heights. However, as Florczak rightly notes, “something happened on the way

¹⁸³ Some may, of course, interpret my statements as deeply conservative, however, I should articulate the two totally different definitions: “conservatism” and “quality of work”. My arguments have nothing to do with conservatism, my arguments have to do with the professional approach to making art vs the totally dishonest conceptualism based on promotions. There are many wonderful contemporary artists that are not considered to be conservatists but rather professionals of their craft. Even though their works can be realistic (or symbolic, or fantastic) in nature, they have their own manner, technique, creative thought, theme, search for and development of images. Their works are very different in style from those created a half century ago or earlier, which means that they *are* contemporary. They all are very different, and I have provided many examples of such artists throughout the present study. Yet, this does not exclude their professional approach and aesthetic quality of work. On the other hand, conceptualists continue to aggressively impose their idea about the uselessness of developing the creative thought through the mastery of execution, and continue to claim that the professionals in art (those who invested years to gain the formal education and to master their performance) understand nothing about abstract expressions and empty concepts.

to the 20th century”, when a group of Impressionists protested against the rules of academic painting and promoted a new style in which colours stood in first place, leaving perfection and classical standards beyond their scope. However, “the first generation produced work of genuine merit. Monet, Renoir, and Degas still maintained elements of disciplined design and execution, but with each new generation standards declined until there were no standards” (Florczak). The well-known axiom that suggests that the new can be built only on the solid basis and knowledge of the past was forgotten — in part, thanks to Marinetti’s *Manifesto* and other futurists who claimed that in order to build something new we have to reject and forget everything old and celebrate speed and the rejuvenation of culture through industrialization so that literature and the other arts can absorb progress. “With whom are you, the ‘masters of culture’?”¹⁸⁴ Gorky’s famous question reflects the essence of the 20th century and reminds artists of their responsibility in the context of a rapidly growing threat of cultural destruction.

Aside from that, there is a wide, often contradictory but well-established and progressively developing discussion in art history focused around the primitivist revolution. This is explored in Gombrich’s comprehensive and all-inclusive study *The Preference of the Primitive* (2002) which covers movements in artistic taste from Plato, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and up to the turning point of taste during our time when the notion of *perception* was replaced with *conceptualization*, resonating with the observation that “the profound, the inspiring and the beautiful were replaced by the new, the different, and the ugly. Today the silly, the pointless, and the purely offensive are held up as best of modern art” (Florczak). It is worth mentioning that ugly images can also be highly aesthetical, e.g., Gogol’s characters in *Dead Souls* or Goya’s etchings for *The Disasters of War* — both representing human ugliness brought out through refined taste and mastery of execution. Thus, the notion of ugliness in artworks can be presented through two opposite extremes: one creates high art and grotesque images reached by the synergy of meaningful content and masterly developed form; the other produces pointless and empty content hidden behind ugly form and executed often in a way that provokes anger when it pretends to be art. And, of course, there are many gradations in between.

¹⁸⁴ Горький, «С кем вы, мастера культуры?», в: Л. Андреев, ред. *Называть вещи своими именами*, М: Прогресс, 1986, с.19

Nevertheless, not artistic but purely mercantile reasons stand behind the pointless and ugly aesthetics of contemporaneity. Robert Protherough, in his “Is Culture an Industry?” raises the question that naturally comes to mind to those professionally involved in the arts: whether it makes any sense to collocate two words that were traditionally separated for centuries, namely, “culture” and “industry” which have recently fused into “cultural industry”. In 1944, the Marxist theorists Adorno and Horkheimer described in these terms the prevalence of mass production and industrialized culture that aimed at profit.¹⁸⁵ “By distinguishing between ‘mass’ and ‘authentic’, their argument was that culture becomes an industry only by ceasing to be ‘authentic’, [when] cultural industry builds on ‘monopoly’ power, cynically produces ‘rubbish’ for profit and eventually gives up any presence to be art” (Protherough, 136).

With respect to manipulations that aim to expand the standards of “false” art, Oskar Batschmann’s book *The Artist in the Modern World: A Conflict Between Market and Self-Expression*, explores the unsolvable conflict that remains actual in the present or, perhaps, that has increased even more, even though the book was published more than two decades ago. Batschmann refers to the conflict that requires artists to balance on a very thin line between their inner necessity of self-expression through art on the one hand and, on the other hand, market requirements that exhaust entirely one’s creative potential in a very short period of time through emotional labor. This happens because their primary focus is to get a promotion (through exhibits, presentations, galleries, publications, networking etc.) rather than create the actual work, its aesthetic quality or the related creative search. A painter (graphic artist, sculptor, etc.) who wishes to exhibit/promote his artworks, signs a contract with a gallery. Such a contract obligates him to produce 23-30 artworks per year in his unique style.¹⁸⁶ The artist is paid half of the usual cost of their work in light of promotional expenses (Batschmann, 40). Thus, “true” art is not produced anymore because artworks are put on a conveyor belt and churned out for the purpose of making a living.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Adorno, T. W. and Rafael Cook. “The Culture Industry”, *Cinéaste*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (winter 1971-72), pp. 8-11, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42707539>

¹⁸⁶ From the experiences of *dozens* of my colleagues, with whom I attended the universities or with whom I worked there after (both in Ukraine and in Italy), and who decided to step on the way of exhibiting their art in attempt to become recognized artists and make a living from their profession.

¹⁸⁷ After a dozen of years (usually the most productive years) of such a devastating life, in creative sense, spent for the illusory idea of getting promotion and recognition, an artist disappears — often just changes his profession because of inability to continue this way (it’s better to make laminate flooring, without creative investments, to get the same money, and to create highly artistic works in one’s spare time, rather than to invest entirely one’s creative potential in such meaningless works). But sometimes one even dies because of illnesses caused by continuing

Batschmann's overall historical overview presents exhibitions as a vehicle for displaying the current types of art, raising the artist to the level of a cult figure and manipulating public opinion in order to direct taste (p.14). Art galleries as a business, along with the opinion of critics, push artists to step over their original instincts and adapt their creative works to the expectations of the public. In order to achieve freedom from such service and not to bury the talents given to them, artists begin to accept inevitable poverty as protection against artistic slavery imposed by contracts (p.64). This phenomenon was present already in the 18th century among Western European academies, and it has expanded to the rest of the world as a recognised norm of the art market.

With the industrialization of art, the conflict has increased. The "true" artist can legitimate himself only through his art, eliminating or ignoring any rules and judgements, but at the same time legitimation can be obtained only from market-oriented vendors on whom artists have always depended. The former causes artists to live in a state of insecurity, self-doubt and melancholy (p.66) while the acceptance of the latter results in "false" art.

Batschmann's book — which discusses such issues as the business of exhibitions vs artists' freedom, legitimation through art itself vs the cult of the artist, politics of artistic careers and art as capital, etc. — has received a great opposition in art criticism circles.¹⁸⁸ Of course this makes sense since gallerists need to protect their established importance when it comes to judgements about art and artists. In the contemporary world of art — whatever brilliant, elaborate and creative artwork one may accomplish — one would not be able to exhibit/sell at a gallery of a certain level and prestige (i.e. which has an established reputation among art

stress and understanding of emptiness of such life: after the age of 35-40, one normally begins to get sick in different ways because of inability of the body to self-rebuild after each stress (the regenerative resources stop to work properly). [Neuropsychology, D. Shamenkov, *Stress and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome*]. While the technology rapidly develops, allowing to have now in our pockets the smartphones that, apparently, improve our social life, and the health care progresses significantly, extending lifetime, yet, the depression (anxiety disorder, mental distress, behavioral challenges, lacking a sense of purpose, etc.) is rated number one among leading causes of mental diseases worldwide in 2017 (the World Health Organization). Steven C. Hayes, a psychologist and originator of acceptance and commitment theory, in his book *A Liberated Mind*, 2019, explains the principles of how to manage psychological traumas and bad experiences that cause mental and behavioral issues which, as he confirms, have become the major illness of the society at the present. With respect to the arts, the collapse of priorities with focus on the "consumer" rather than art itself, stands in the core of artists' psychological disorders. It is said then with an admiration in the artist's CV that his artworks are exhibited in a number of important galleries and sold to 'private collections' or museums, but nobody reveals what stands behind this apparently successful path. And who does know or care about tragedies in their lives?

¹⁸⁸ D. Carrier, "Modernist Art and Its Market", *Art Journal*, vol. 57, no.4 (Winter 1998):102-105, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/777935>; Anonymous, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, tom 74, no.3 (Summer 1998): 88.

collectors) if the work has not been published in a number of specialized catalogues, the latter being entirely controlled by their political line of promotions. The same gallery or museum can often exhibit works of frankly bad taste that do not have any notion of creativity and professionalism since any object can be mistaken for an artistic piece — even a fan or a radiator.¹⁸⁹ Such institutions can finally suffer greatly from a significant drop in visitor numbers. “We are the disconsolate (and even a little masochistic) veterans of the increasingly painful and inconsistent Venetian Biennale” — says Serafini at one of his presentations, — “which continues, with scandalous waste of public money, to bundle comic-tragic absurdities in an orgy of decadence and nonsense. Sigfrido Bartolini described this 20 years ago (and nothing has changed at the present): ‘the large dump’, ‘the quintessence of international dementia’ with ‘total aesthetic unconsciousness’, exhibits a concentration of the intellectual void, neurosis, megalomania and collective insanity that characterize the environment of alleged ‘contemporary’ artists.”¹⁹⁰

Giovanni Serafini, an art critic and supporter of “true” art, has presented the following ideas in his opening speech for an exhibition:

Nothing tells so much nonsense as a work of art. Still, thousands of volumes and entire walls of bookshelves have been filled with nonsense in an attempt to elevate the nothingness of a sterile and sick modernity to the status of art. It would be curious to place a voice recorder behind many artworks exhibited at museums, galleries, fairs, especially behind certain painful and ridicules works of so-called ‘modern art’. This way, one could listen to the florilegium of comments expressed by pseudo-intellectuals, visitors and critics, obsequiously prone to the ‘politically correct’ and lucrative market, which has become a perverse dominant system. Fashion-conscious gallerists report that their customers no longer ask for a specific kind of work, but rather a prestigious ‘signature’, considering the subject and the executive quality of

¹⁸⁹ The New York Times published an interesting example of the collapse of aesthetics, when the eyeglasses left on the floor were taken by the public as an installation and attracted the attention of visitors who even took the photos of such an artwork! <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/31/arts/sfmoma-glasses-prank.html>

¹⁹⁰ Giovanni Serafini’s speech at an exhibit, at the historic book shop Bocca in Milan, 3th Oct 2013; reproduced by the permission of the author. Serafini had presented the excellence of [Guido Cadini’s works](#) by contrasting his art to what we normally see at the Venetian Biennale. Another example that couples with the Biennale is the [Affordable Art Fair Milano](#), or the AGO, where 5-7 contemporary exhibits out of 10 present this sort of “false” art, synthetically elevated to what has been traditionally meant by high culture: [childish drawings of bodies](#), [exercises-like color segments](#), [the meaningfully moving figure](#), [exclamations written on fabrics](#), [figures with chip bags and without heads](#). I totally agree that, when using brush and colors, one can enjoy and relax, and such activities may be important for wellbeing. The only question is: why is this presented at the galleries? The answer can be found in the desire to erase the boundary between “false” and “true” art, i.e. between such relaxations and what is taught at formal institutions.

the painting to be negligible. Often without understanding anything about the abstruse and overvalued work they have purchased, it is not uncommon for them to find themselves supporting resounding falsity.¹⁹¹

In fact, more and more often, such conceptual nonsense is studied and promoted in art journals and exhibit catalogues. “Painters! Do not fear perfection. You will never achieve it! If you are mediocrities, you may try as you will to paint terribly badly, but people will still see that you are mediocre” (Salvador Dali, *Diary of a Genius*).

As to how contemporary art can be objectively measured, and who would determine its quality, Florczak suggests that “not only has the quality of art diminished, but also the subject matter has gone from the transcendent to the trashy. Where once artists applied their talents to scenes of substance and integrity from history, literature, religion, mythology, etc., many of today’s artists merely use their art to make statements, often for nothing more than shock value. Artists of the past also made statements at times, but never at the expense of the visual excellence of their work” (Florczak). This absolutely does not mean — as some interpret — that contemporary artists should depict scenes of the same content and style as presented by masters of the previous centuries. Visual excellence and the knowledge of traditions and aesthetics do not prevent one from being contemporary or generating conceptual thought. It is doubtless possible to support the development of new streams. Finally, “Art cannot be modern. Art is primordially eternal” (Egon Schiele¹⁹²).

The serious and gifted artist will not look at ephemeral fashions but will try to get at the heart of his art form and will look for the best instruments available to realize his vision. It will be clear that all this has nothing to do with the intention to be “progressive” or “modern.” The artist is already and always necessarily contemporary, whatever he tries to do. Artists who *try* to be “progressive” or “modern” — i.e., who try to be consciously and intentionally “of their time” — betray their superficiality and lack of substance, and they betray their artistic efforts as attempts to cover-up an empty space (Borstlap).

Borstlap’s brilliant explanation also suggests that freedom in artistic thought, in the process of making art, comes only to those indifferent to what others think or say about them and their artworks. When answering the question of how to be original in art, Favorsky replied: “In the

¹⁹¹ Giovanni Serafini, *Arte oggi, tra classicità e impostura*, presented at the historical library Bocca in Milan, May 2011. Reproduced by the permission of the author.

¹⁹² Google Art & Culture: <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/egon-schiele/m0df65?hl=en>

first instance, don't think about this. Pretentious originality impoverishes art, steals from it — as this goes along with emasculation of thought, feeling, truth.” (Favorsky, 1988:500)

Therefore, due to the distorted aesthetics of contemporaneity, the visual art is not perceived as a profession that requires years of training and consistent study of the fundamentals.¹⁹³ As a result of skipping this stage, everybody feels capable of making and exhibiting whatever they want while the public readily swallows what a promoter or gallerist applauds. People continue to go to museums to see Matisse not because they understand or admire such facile primitivism, but rather because of the cult of his name.

One can of course embrace such art, but it has nothing to do with “true” art, even if we can see hundreds of pieces of it in galleries, e.g., copper disks by Arnaldo Pomodoro, cuts on canvas by Lucio Fontana, cancellations by Emilio Isgrò, ropes coiled around trees or copper pipes by Remo Salvadori, colored plates by Roberto Ciaccio — just to mention a few Italian figures. Their equivalents are found in every county: dozens of other artists and their pupils, less known or more known, and their followers who have fallen prey to the idea of self-repetition whereby one can become recognizable by doing the same thing over and over and expecting from viewer to say: “Oh! I know this artist, I saw his cuts on canvas many times.” This is what makes such artists famous and sellable. Perhaps one expresses his creativity this way when doing such “conceptual” artwork once, and, indeed, there are great pieces of abstract or conceptual art which are in a class of their own. But when an artist repeats the same concept for 40 years (as did the above-mentioned famous figures), just with little variations of shape or color, this becomes commerce. The artist's creativity, in its pure sense — i.e. imagination,

¹⁹³ As da Vinci suggests, “It is indispensable to a painter [...] to know the anatomy of the sinews, bones, muscles and tendons so that, in their various movements and exertions, he may know which nerve or muscle is the cause of each movement and show those only as prominent and thickened, and not the others all over [the limb], as many do who, to seem great draughtsmen, draw their nude figures looking like wood, devoid of grace; so that you would think you were looking at a sack of walnuts rather than the human form, or a bundle of radishes rather than the muscles of figures.” (da Vinci, 1888:171-2). The knowledge of an art technique or method has nothing to do with “obsolete” style. For example, anatomy for artists — by such authors as Ene Barchai, [Gottfried Bammes](#), [Bruno Lucchesi](#) and others — is “just” a necessary tool that provides an artist with freedom in the hands, allowing him to create whatever he wants on a professional level, concurrently with the study of artistic techniques and methods, history of the arts, objects made with such techniques, long-time practices of making copies in museums intended to learn how great masters used such methods, and hundreds of one's own pieces made to learn artistic language through practice. This is reminiscent of the way an actor needs to develop his plasticity and coordination, and to have the use of his voice as a tool for acting. The point is that one necessarily needs to learn the fundamentals, and *then* can consciously break the rules, deform bodies, etc. in order to reach a specific artistic goal. However, when acting in the opposite way — i.e. drawing concepts or deformations without having a solid basis behind such activities — one gets casual effects that occur because the artist is simply unable to work differently. Such a result is always seen and well-perceived in pictures, as these are two opposite things: the intentional breaking of the rules vs. casualness of unprofessionalism.

improvisation, elaboration of ideas and artistic development — is denied as an unnecessary element since the primary purpose of such art is not to communicate through one's artwork but to conquer the market.

What Serafini tells about nonsense and falsity can, therefore, be taken as a description applicable to hundreds of artworks exhibited at prestigious galleries all over the world. Even more dramatic is the fact that such falsity in art is supported by the educational system.¹⁹⁴ For example, the main direction of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan is to promote courses of conceptual art — fashionably termed “contemporaneity” — against which I had the misfortune to struggle for two years. Every kind of artistic expression that still preserves in-depth thought, meaningful content and mastery of execution is considered to be “obsolete” and “worthless”. In order to be “contemporary”, I was required to cut and enlarge a quarter of the moon taken out of my detailed and complex etching that represented an entire visual story and in which weeks of work had been invested. Such streams lay claim to innovation and progress — a concept that measures the quality of an artwork in terms of “progressive art”. However, “while progress in science is a fundamental notion, in the arts it is meaningless because the nature of art has nothing to do with progress” (Borstlap).

In modern aesthetics, aggressively imposed by such movements, the more you are “strange” and “unpredictable” the better it is, which often boils down to unprofessionalism and poor taste. Conceptual art means inventing a concept no matter how foolish it is. In order to express such a concept, one does not necessarily need to have a formal education in the arts and know how to draw: it is enough to pour anything on any supporting material. There is a variety of possibilities to express ideas in a progressive way: a large metallic plate for etching scratched with a nail, a casual imprint of a palette, a collage of unknown content, a sculpture made from any sort of materials found along the way. The latter can be anything from a piece of dry tree trunk with a wire around it, to a piece of half-eaten pizza pasted on terracotta with dry macaroni, to a 2x3-meter aluminum plate colored with a large paint roller in violet and blue colors which allegedly means something, etc. Sometimes, a large sheet of paper is spread on the floor and someone lies down on the sheet while someone else draws around the body: the result is something like a dead body outline made by police at a murder scene.

¹⁹⁴ “Concept art [...] became the established form of ‘new art’ in the Western world — in Europe supported by the state and the educational institutions, while in America private funding took on the role of Maecenas. And in the 20th century, it has been the myth of ‘progress’ that has propelled these developments.” (Borstlap)

This incomplete list describes the tasks that were *required* from students at an Italian academy of the arts in the first decade of the 2000s — no doubt before and after that time too. This must have quashed any stirrings of a professional attitude toward the arts.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, the desire not to be “obsolete” turns people into fabricators of distorted aesthetics whereby the chosen medium is destroyed as a language through which an artist can communicate. The goal is to put on a show. However, being at the service of such a show makes one hostage to many conventions in art which are not noticeable at first glance but lead to the death of creativity.

The harm done by such “conceptual” artists, their gallerists, and those who teach in the profession consists in their disparagement of high art. This is needed because they must protect their kind and raise unprofessionalism to the level of an important artistic direction (as can be seen from the above-cited examples in museums). Thus, what ends up erased is the boundary between “false” and “true” art. Because of the myth of progress, it may seem at first glance that such trends have developed from people’s innovative movements (futurism, modernism, etc.) or from a lack of patience required in the investment of years of life in one’s professional development, i.e., artists hurry to “create” with minimal investment of time and effort as the complexity of visual communication is replaced with ugly and empty images.¹⁹⁶ But the problem lies much deeper in the fabric of our culture. Brera-type courses are very popular today. They promote the “alternative” arts and resemble amateur studios of the do-it-yourself or workshop kind. Anyone interested in the arts can learn how to become a painter in one week even if the potential candidate has never held a brush in his hands. This attitude can be seen as a tool meant to destroy and even eradicate aesthetic taste, cultural education, the development of knowledge and professionalism in the arts. All this is wiped out in the embryonic stage. This represents a sort of iconoclasm with respect to high art, but it is less evident and therefore more dangerous. “Modernism and conceptualism in the arts never strove after artistic greatness; this explains the gradual disappearance of greatness from both the visual arts and music.” (Borstlap)

¹⁹⁵ The main idea rooted in the students’ heads can be summarized as follows: one needs to invent a concept, a kind of something unique and strange, unlike anyone has ever done, and then, when repeating the same concept during two-three-four decades, one has chances to become famous.

¹⁹⁶ Cf.: Drucker, Johanna. *Figuring the word: essays on books, writing, and visual poetics*, New York: Granary Books, 1998; Drucker, Johanna. *Graphesis: visual forms of knowledge production*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.

We all are good at creative ideas, but can all of us really express them technically and create objects of art? Those are two different but equally important aspects of what goes into incarnation of a complex work of art.

The creative process is enjoyable and painful simultaneously. A creator (either a writer or an artist) usually experiences only distress, as any work implies creation from nothing or, according to the best hypothesis, from meaningless material that should be worked out. Creativity is the constant transition from one failure to another. The general state of a creator can be described as uncertainty, obscurity, lack of self-confidence. The more serious and meaningful the task being taken on, the more agonize one feels. (Rozanov, 1990:33; quoted in Borev, 67)

The truthfulness of art becomes dubious when its creator is too self-confident and applauds his own work at exhibits.

The passage from an idea (virtual thought) to a work of art (physical object) requires the well-known process of “overcoming the material” or technical limitations which stimulates one’s original search since “the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium.”¹⁹⁷ The *how* of art is more important than the *what* because nothing else but the above-mentioned passage leads to creativity and the expression of an original thought through an artist's craft capacity. This process is based on a direct link to the physicality of expression through the mind-hand connection. This is why, when a creative idea is expressed through an artist’s personal language (words, pictures, music etc.), this language becomes a constructive part of an artistic work: as in literature so too in visual art (see I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*). According to Wittgenstein, “the language overcomes the thought”, and “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (TLP 2.1—2.225). When the artist does not force himself to pass through this complex transformation, a kind of a *rite de passage*, and skips the actual purpose of art, i.e. the path of artistic search, the work remains on the level of a concept but the result is empty and deprived of any creative investment. Only this process of elaborating and materializing a creative idea allows the circulation of creative energy: from the sender to his work, to the receiver and back to the sender. Moreover, any kind of artwork usually unites the abstract and the figurative since during the making of a work, an abstract thought is transformed into a concrete object while the concrete object has in its basis an

¹⁹⁷ Oscar Wilde’s preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/174/174-h/174-h.htm>

abstract notion (Favorsky, 1986:64). Thus, a constant tension may occur between these two extremes, allowing the artwork to be complex and interesting. This is why pure realism, pure naturalism or purely abstract art lacks such a complexity of dialectical dynamism and cannot aspire to the status of great art.

Conceptual art aspires to have a contextual concept that supersedes visual excellence and therefore the process of *making* art is not relevant.¹⁹⁸ For example, at one of many exhibits that I visited in Milan, a 2x4-meter canvas was presented that looked as follows: blue, yellow, red, white, black, green, orange colours were squeezed out of tubes in a chaotic way. The creator of this work was sitting at a table with meters of wasted colours in front of him and telling for an entire hour about his contextual concept: “The different colours represent the foreigners of different nations who came to Italy from all over the world; they overcrowded our homeland; they started to integrate with our friends; but we still recognize our difference from them, and so, we cannot be drowned out by them completely”. Apart from the clearly racist idea in this message, the work itself was nothing but colours squeezed out of tubes on the large canvas, telling nothing to the spectator and suggesting that this artist was unable to communicate through his chosen medium — visual art. Instead, he needed to clarify what was meant by means of another medium, talk, because the abstract was not supported by the concrete object. Conceptual works are always accompanied by many words and explanations, but this only misleads the audience.

In contrast, when one comes up with a contextual/ symbolic/associative idea *and* develops it through concrete objects, the result provides the spectator with further associative thoughts which normally do not require the artist’s explanations because of the completeness of the image on many levels.

¹⁹⁸ In fact, the aforementioned artists of conceptual art hire “artisans” — in reality, the professional artists with a good craft preparation and aesthetic taste — to have their ideas made by the other hands (the example from another portion of my work experience). This is another type of what in literature is called ‘ghost writer’. If their works are still considered by some as “art”, then there is something wrong with this society: we have entered the epoch of rapid decrease and devaluation of aesthetics. The definition offered by *The Art Story* suggests that “conceptual art is a movement that prizes ideas over the formal or visual components of artworks. An amalgam of various tendencies rather than a tightly cohesive movement, Conceptualism took myriad forms, such as performances, happenings, and ephemera. From the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s Conceptual artists produced works and writings that completely rejected standard ideas of art. Their chief claim - that the articulation of an artistic idea suffices as a work of art - implied that concerns such as aesthetics, expression, skill and marketability were all irrelevant standards by which art was usually judged.” <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/conceptual-art/>

Thus, in light of these dominant trends in contemporary art, what happens to the art of bookmaking or, broadly speaking, what is the definition and value of a book with pictures?

If a bookmaker is trained to work with “difficult” texts of literature that stimulate one’s creativity, then he strives to avoid non-productive projects (from the artistic point of view), not to run at half-speed but rather to invest the maximum of his potential in each given work. The question is how to deal with publishers when it comes to offer to publish great texts by little-known and insufficiently promoted writers and illustrated by unknown artists. And, consequently, how would publishers deal with potential readers who, on the one hand, automatically prefer kitsch pictures to high artistic taste (in case of mass buyers — a target audience of Type C) and, on the other hand, choose the name on the cover rather than the quality of a book (in the case of collectors of art books — a target audience of Type A).¹⁹⁹ To create a book of Type B, one needs to invest years of effort and adapt to the publisher’s stylistic line, repeating the same thing over and over.

Based upon the understanding of illustration as a mimetic translation of the stylistics of a text, the approach practiced by Matisse, for instance, is incompatible with my view of the intermedial adaptation. When illustrating Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the artist did not even bother reading the text,²⁰⁰ even though an attentive reading and an in-depth study of the literary work are supposed to be the key tasks of an illustrator, but he rather “based” his pictures on themes from Homer’s the *Odyssey*. Evidently, these 26 primitive drawings, the execution of which had probably taken no more than a few hours, have nothing in common with the stylistics of either Joyce or Homer. This way of illustration-making recalls Matisse’s exercise of painting circles on a wall with a two-meter brush (from a well-known photo where the artist is in his sickbed). However, this type of falsity paraded as “true” art, cost to publisher \$5,000 and each copy of

¹⁹⁹ Who knows P.O.? Nobody would buy his books. “The aesthetic level and quality do not matter” — I was told, — “the level of elaboration and mastery of 20 etchings (three years of work) is not in demand today” — and then I was showed a book with 4 prints, representing a primitive linear drawing that remotely resembles a human figure, or maybe a horse, in which neither depth of thought, nor creative interpretation or professional execution can be found, and I was told that “what matters today in the world of art is this name on the cover, which allows this book to be sold for a couple of thousand.” From a private conversation with Rosalba Tabanelli, a gallerist from a family of art-sellers who have been important for several generations, and a European-level merchant of antique and modern prints and limited editions of graphic art, with a shop situated close to the Piccolo Teatro in Milan (March, 2009)

²⁰⁰ “According to Matisse, art was to function as a comfortable easy chair. Everything problematic, challenging and frustrating was excluded from his art” (Lund, 42 and note 156); H. Matisse, “Notes d’une peinture” [Notes from a Painting], in *La Grande Revue*, 1908-12-25.

the resulting book sold for \$37,500.²⁰¹ Because of the cult of his figure in the company of well-promoted and expensive artists, Matisse could illustrate anything on a superficial level and did not need to think about the quality of his work because he was already famous and recognisable.

Hundreds of monographs on the history and theory of modernism see the movement as a new type of consciousness in the context of a global crisis of values. The unwritten law of contemporaneity in art is about the value of a well-promoted name, recognition, job opportunities, reliability and other social prejudices which appear to mean more than the quality of an artwork itself. The associated collapse of values stems from the idea of equivalency between the “spiritual” and the “material”, the “soul” and the “body”, or “high” and “low”, i.e. the erosion of boundaries between intellectual and mass culture.²⁰² The modern culture of bookmaking, which makes part of the current trends of the art market, has absorbed this type of thinking.

Books of adult fiction literature are almost always without pictures in recent Western publishing tradition.²⁰³ Comic books, graphic novels and caricatures are not considered here since they belong to a different category, as outlined in the DDC system. Or, if a book for adults is illustrated on an exceptional basis, there are several publishing issues in the case of large-scale editions. If a book is known as modern limited editions or artists’ books, they often follow the “contemporary-zed” stream, i.e., they are entirely created by an artist and the visual side weights more than the verbal. The result is objects that are not necessarily functional and readable like common books but rather meant to be exhibited as “sculptures” which have no relation to the medium of book art considered in Vitruvian terms.²⁰⁴ While they may occupy

²⁰¹ “Henri Matisse Illustrates 1935 Edition of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*”, in: *Open Culture*, April 10th, 2012, http://www.openculture.com/2012/04/henri_matisse_illustrates_1935_edition_of_james_joyces_ulyssesi.html

²⁰² Cf. Alana Jelinek’s book *This Is Not Art* [London: I.B. Tauris, 2013] presents art as knowledge-forming discipline, and uncovers the “artworld obsessed with profit ... from which diversity, individuality and freedom have been erased”

²⁰³ As in any rule, there are some exceptions. For example, the Scandinavian publishing presents a new trend of literary picturebooks for adults, considered to be “a new kind of literature” despite its many-century tradition, which needed to be completely lost and forgotten in order to re-appear again as something new. However, regardless the variety of their types, “all of them borrow their visual expression from advanced picturebooks for children” rather than approach the verbal through the principles of intermedial adaptation [as explored in the next sections]. Such picturebooks for adults differ from children’s books by the only thematical discussions, being addressed to a specific age group (Ommundsen, 32).

²⁰⁴ Without Vitruvian principles, we would not have anything functional — from the architecture to the furniture, to the clothes, books, cars, and any other item that includes any notion of design, aesthetics, and art in general.

their own niche in the artistic streams, I am not considering such artworks to be actual books because of a fundamental contradiction: they are created *in the form* of books, i.e. they look like books, but are a kind of fake books.²⁰⁵ Real books with art illustrations certainly include both the reading experience and the complex development of intermedial adaptation.

Thus, when approaching an item called a (modern) artist's book or a rare book, we should clearly distinguish two kinds of values: 1) market value which depends on the level of an artist's promotion but may result in poor taste and childish execution, and 2) aesthetical value which is determined by artistic imagery, depth of creative thought, professional quality of prints and so forth.

This discussion does not reject innovation, changes in styles, new trends, and so forth. Methods of representation and perceptual expectations in visual art change in the course of time. The point here is the rejection of "false" art and the need to understand the impact of the current market system on the way books are made. To develop the art of bookmaking, we need:

the development of creative thought and aesthetic taste in combination with the mastery execution and perfection according to high standards accepted worldwide and improved in the course of the many-century history of the arts. This approach does not exclude modern art either in content or in form but does exclude prize-winning absurdities, such as a sculpture of a urinating policewoman or ugly plastic cows placed on the streets of major cities.

The existing small islands of high culture are barely surviving on the entire world map of artistic contemporary ugliness and distortion. The distance between such islands and the absurd demands of our time is the major issue that makes communication impossible and increases immensely the gap between the sender and the receiver of art.

Despite being conceptualized 2000 years ago, these principles still continue to be accepted, and I refer to them when speaking about books in relation to architecture, since books *are* items meant to be used (see p.92 above).

²⁰⁵ For instance, Carole Scott, in her "Artists' Books, Altered Books, and Picturebooks", and Sandra L. Beckett in her "The Art of Visual Storytelling" [chapters in; *Picturebooks, Representation and Narration*, ed. B. Kummerling-Meibauer, New York and London: Routledge, 2014], as well as some further chapters of the book, present a bunch of different viewpoints about possible definitions, viewpoints, goals, approaches to making, and aesthetics of the contemporary artists' books. Altogether, they can be described as non-functional, wordless (or almost non-readable) objects of art rather than books; even though they are claimed to be "books" because of their shape.

I.6. Style of Text – Style of Pictures

I share the view that all forms of art, including literature and visual images, imply always the inseparability of form and content – the art has always been defined as such. For instance, Gogol devoted great attention to the form, commented on the extra meanings of his works and, in light of the poetic nature of his narrative, he has been called “Pushkin in prose.” To read Gogol in translation is the same as to read a poem in translation: one can grasp the plot of the story, but it is not the plot that makes Gogol’s novel. One can have the same feeling when looking at Calvino’s *Le città invisibili* in translation, the Italian version of which provokes an effect of magic or enchantment. However, this is not necessarily a matter of a given translation’s quality, but rather the fact that a translation may lose the poetic and linguistic elegance of the original narrative — as artistic harmonious whole — but can acquire a new one in a new language. When creating his artistic world, “any writer differs from the others in his vision of reality, which is incorporated in each small square of his text” (Borev, 108). A writer uses his own tongue as construction material, the way a sculptor uses clay, or a graphic artist uses all types of original prints to build his ideas. Thus, all the linguistic components — the sounds of single letters and words, the frequency of their repetitions, the equilibrium of vowels and consonants, the rhythmic organization of sentences and their length, the alternation of certain parts of speech, structural and grammar features, intonation, and even the visual look of the text — create “strong connections between our physicality, emotions and mental impressions” (Roney, 41), and simultaneously build form and content.

The form of pictures that illustrate a given text, therefore, embodies such linguistic and stylistic features. This means that form as a system of relations (form in content) is an integral quality of an artwork.

As Favorsky suggests, any realistic depiction has in its base an object-space understanding of the real, i.e. each artistic interpretation of the real encounters with an object and space, and the relations between them. Consequently, we can say that the style of an artwork is defined by the way the relations of an object to the space around it are depicted.²⁰⁶ When approaching a literary text, an illustrator understands it as a form, which implies the materiality of space

²⁰⁶ Quoted in: Khalaminskiy, Y. V. *Favorsky*, M.: Iskusstvo, 1964, p. 101, 105, 106

(paper, ink, sign). The material determines the structure of visual composition, its main features, and is an integral part of artistic interpretations of verbal into visual.

The relation of form and content has been broadly discussed since Plato, with the preferences of one over another in different critical theories, up to the Russian formalists and futurists who promoted the idea of “pure” form. In that latter one may not even understand the meaning of a poem but can nonetheless admire its visual shape and sounds. Thus, form is what appeals to the depths of the psyche. Alternately, analysis of a given work has been carried out through the psychoanalytic approach. This can be an examination of the author’s or characters’ psychology concentrating on subconscious motivations and influences. Additionally, the cultural and historical landscape which forms the “why” of a work can be examined.

However, the above are atomistic approaches which miss the forest for the trees. The artistic whole cannot be understood in light of only one of these approaches because a work of art constitutes “a particular model of the universe; a message in the language of art simply cannot exist apart from that language [...]; it has no meaning whatsoever for the man who would like to deal with the text totally apart from all its extra-textual relations [which are related to] the entire sum of historically determined artistic codes which make a text meaningful” (Lotman, 1977: 50). These considerations are particularly relevant to the challenges of translation which cannot help but look at the whole.

Consequently, in any translation, regardless of how brilliant it is, something from the original's linguistic form and extra-textual structure have to be adopted and superimposed on the content. This is similar to trying to convert a Rembrandt painting into an engraving — the formal composition, the characters and their outer appearance would remain the same, but we will still have a work that speaks a completely different language of expression. As Bassnett suggests, in translation, “stylistic aspects necessarily fall by the wayside [...], while thematic comparison (thematic in terms of plot and character study) comes to the forefront. This has nothing to do with the quality of a translation; it has everything to do with the way in which readers read [...]. Inevitably, whether we like it or not, texts come to be seen as ‘belonging’ to the language into which they are translated.” (Bassnett, 1993:45)

Since form also builds meaning, we will have new models with each new verbal translation. Although we still say that authorship belongs to the primary author, paradoxically, we must take for granted that we will read another story, re-created and in a way re-authored by a

translator. In reference to Bassnett's concern about what happens to a text when it is translated from one language to another, I am applying this to what happens with word-picture (intermedial) translation: an illustration speaks an artistic language different from the verbal original and, consequently, re-creates a new form for the existing content, adding to it some new meaning.

When discussing the way readers make sense of alphabet books where every sign acquires arbitrary signification, N. Beeck suggests that a picture book constitutes a system of cultural meanings which exceed merely verbal information and include the awareness of the reader's presence in a particular moment and place within a social, cultural, historical and ideological context (Beeck, 20). This ensures the inseparability of form and content as the main feature of a book on two levels: 1) constructive — whereby creating stylistic relations between the verbal and visual components, and 2) perceptual — occurring through reading-visualizing experience (see I.3. *Perception through simultaneity of reading and visualizing*).

Illustration-making is actually a translation and interpretation, in every sense, for which many concepts can be applied.²⁰⁷ These concepts have to do, for instance, with stylistic conformity in language-to-language translations and novel-to-film/theater adaptations. Such a basic formula, which implies the adaptation of styles – verbal to visual – has not always been understood adequately among those who criticize the art of bookmaking. Art historians, in most cases, discuss illustrations from the perspective of the general visual arts, which is disconnected from the study of intermedial relations.²⁰⁸ And the same mistake is made by publishers who commission pictures and make books. The consequences of commissioning pictures of the

²⁰⁷ The etymology of the word *to translate* comes from Latin *traducere* and means *to transport, to transfer above* (treccani.it), which is why this term is the only correct one when referring to the act of transferring words into pictures.

²⁰⁸ When one considers the scholarship that presents the art of great artists who illustrated books, one can see that such studies usually focus on various features of visual works, attempt to systematize and analyze the stages and changes in the development of a given artist, or describe the series of their works, leaving in the background the analysis of the literary works from which such pictures were generated. Therefore, literature and visual art continue to be two disconnected fields (in those cases where the verbal domain is included, instruction is often limited to quotations of passages corresponding to the pictures). However, when one is discussing book illustrations, the consideration of such verbal-visual relations is essential, i.e., in-depth study of a literary work, its extra-meanings and stylistics in conjunction with the stylistics of the visual counterpart.

This general tendency constitutes a wide account of studies. An exception to this tendency is constituted by comparative or interdisciplinary studies. For example, Schmidt, Rachel. *Critical images: the canonization of Don Quixote through illustrated editions of the eighteenth century* (explores the variety of illustrations for this text through the reader's experience, and presents book illustrations as a form of critical interpretation of the text); Esterhammer's *Creating states: studies in the performative language of John Milton and William Blake* (explores both literary and visual aspects through "visionary poetry", word creation, language of inspiration, the "poetry of creation", and the artistic visualization of the poetic).

same style for totally different texts can lead to the artist's self-repetition rather than the promotion of intermedial adaptation (see I.5. *Between Art and Market* above).

When it comes to the common understanding of high culture in the literary realm, a "true" writer's books are not supposed to be similar to each other. In the same way, the "true" artist (as opposed to an artisan) creates different works, i.e., every subsequent artwork/ film/ illustrated book will be different from the previous ones. Along this line of reasoning, illustrating different works by the same writer in the same style would also be inappropriate — all the more so in light of the above argument about the uniqueness of literary creations in the realm of high culture. Thus, Gogol's Ukrainian series are one thing while his Petersburg stories are a completely different thing, and these two cannot be compared with *Dead Souls* which is yet again a totally different work.

Despite these considerations, we still perceive each work as belonging to the same writer and analyse them in terms of his artistic language and personality. The same diversity (coupled with a personal signature) can be seen in Tarkovsky's films: *Andrei Rublev* is as unique as *Solaris*, *Stalker* or *Nostalgia*. The same applies to the great graphic artists. The characters of Doré's pictures made for *Versailles et Paris en 1871*²⁰⁹ [ARCC: DC317. D67] are represented with remarkable elasticity, dynamism and line delicacy, such living expressions and lightness of figures that almost fly over the surface of the paper. His illustrations for Milton's *Paradise Lost*²¹⁰ are very weighty and static in the engraved signs but dynamic in composition, filled with dramatic tension achieved predominantly by dark shadows, semi-shadows and contrasting lights, concurrently with the symbolism that stands behind each picture, while the level of elaboration and fullness of each image are extraordinary. Doré's illustrations for *Fairy Realm: A Collection of the Favorite Old Tales*²¹¹ are also unique in style, mood and the nature of signs. The pictures for *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*²¹², for *The Works of Rabelais*²¹³, for *Don Quichotte*, and for *Baron Munchausen* are all different yet again.

²⁰⁹ Archive: <https://archive.org/details/versaillesetpari00dor>; This digitized version can give a very general understanding of the style of pictures but the quality of scans and the fact of viewing the reproduction on the computer screen do not give the impression that one can experience when viewing the originals.

²¹⁰ Milton, John, *Paradise Lost*, London and New York: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, 1866; *Digital Collections - University at Buffalo Libraries*, accessed Sept 19, 2019 <https://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/items/browse/tag/Paradise+Lost>

²¹¹ *Fairy Realm: A Collection of the Favorite Old Tales*, London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1865; *Digital Collections - University at Buffalo Libraries*, accessed Sept 19, 2019, <https://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/items/browse/tag/Fairy+Realm>.

²¹² London, New York: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1860

The same approach to elaborating stylistic diversity can be found in the pictures of many other great artists. Why are the works of the same artist so diverse? First of all, because for a creative mind it is very hard *to repeat* rather than *to create*. When a sculptor has to carve from wood a table with figures of humans or animals, he will expend most of his creative energy on the first leg of the table while the need to make the other legs as copies of the first will cause the suppression of creativity because now mere reproduction will be required. Secondly, when it comes to book illustration, we have to consider the rules of intermediality and word-picture adaptation (see below).

So why is it commonly believed with respect to contemporary book art that the illustrator should make pictures in *his* unique and same style when approaching totally different writers and their different literary works? Starting approximately from the 1980s (in the Slavic context, but in the West much earlier), we can see an increasing tendency towards artists' self-repetition in styles, whatever book they illustrate. This says a great deal about the changes in approaching the task of illustrating fiction.

The explanation that I can offer is in the discussion above, but to sum up: 1) a focus on market expectations instead of purely artistic goals; 2) an art education system oriented to preparing future artists for "industrial" work²¹⁴ (for a discussion of the latter, see I.5. *Between Art and Market* above); 3) a misunderstanding of artistic freedom (cf. Lotman) whereby *to create* has in many cases become synonymous with some sort of uncontrolled impulses; 4) personality cults (promotion and recognition) that have developed around successful figures not only in the arts but in the educational environment as well.

The major artists who have illustrated Gogol – such as Agin and others up to the 1970s, Favorsky and G. Yakutovich – represent evidence of elaboration of the writer's style in their pictures. The artists attempted very successfully to adapt their creative language to the style of the narrative. And beyond Gogol, Favorsky approaches each book as a unique stylistic project, echoing a given writer's particular artistic nature, e.g., the [Book of Ruth](#),²¹⁵ the *Jangar* epic,

²¹³ The Bibliophilist Society, 1900

²¹⁴ Cf. The conflict between the aesthetics and art education: Stankiewicz, Mary Ann. "Drawing Book Wars", *Visual Arts Research*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 1986), pp. 59-72, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20715628>

²¹⁵ In his critical essays on book illustration, Favorsky expresses his views about the visual features, and his work on *Book of Ruth* as an example of the synthesis of a life story and high biblical symbolism, which was reached by inserting the night, sky, clouds and stars into a circle, and relating such a composition to the fonts of title, and the entire book design (Favorsky, 1986:151-152).

Mérimée's *The Double Mistake*, the epic poem [The Tale of Igor's Campaign](#),²¹⁶ [S. Marshak's poems for children](#), [B. Pilnyak's novel](#), Balzac, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Dante, and many others. It is unimaginable to transfer a woodcut from one book to another since at issue are totally different illustrations in terms of plasticity, as well as graphic and visual implementation. In all of the above-mentioned illustrations by Favorsky, the style of every literary work receives its own plastic-flexible interpretation: the reading of each text defines the structure and form chosen for the pictures, which gives rise to the artistic characteristics of each of the artist's series. This is inevitably linked with the nature of thinking through woodcuts ([Favorsky, 1986:14-15, preface by E. Levitin](#)). The same principle of working on word-image interpretations can be seen in book illustrations by Georgiy Yakutovich who illustrated mostly Ukrainian writers — all in different artistic techniques and styles.²¹⁷

In contrast to this approach we find linear illustrations depicting only the plot of a given narrative, e.g., in Jules Verne's series *Extraordinary Voyages* where the texts are themselves very descriptive and linear. But when a literary work offers a certain complexity and depth of narration, should the artist limit his task by depicting only the plot?

Here are a few examples of contemporary book illustrations which are considered to be great artworks by many and which come under Type B publishing category. There is a series of pictures by [Gennady Spirin](#)²¹⁸ – children books, the *Christmas Story*, Gogol's *The Fair at*

²¹⁶ The poem was written in the 12th century in the Old Slavic language, when Kyiv was the center of Rus — the latter being divided into small principalities that frequently battled each other. The historical background, the nature different for each place, and the poetical sounds of the old language were re-created in Favorsky's illustrations. The edition of this poem with Favorsky's woodcuts contains both texts: the original old version and its contemporary translation, placed in parallel in a two-page design. Such poetic features are reflected in the arrangement of the book space, symmetric placement of pictures on two-page openings, and the narrative style. "When one undertakes to illustrate such a complex text, its artistic perfection makes the work very difficult, on the one hand, but on the other, makes it easier because the artist has in front of him an example with a clearly expressed artistic style. The understanding of the style of a given text, and its transfer to the medium of pictures are one of the most difficult tasks for a bookmaker" ([Favorsky, 1986:162-164](#)). Furthermore, such a transformation of verbal-visual styles is necessarily accompanied by the *artistic incorporation* of the features inherent in medieval book ornaments, images of warriors, and so forth. *Artistic incorporation* and *interpretation* are terms referring to the re-elaboration of each given historic element and its adaptation to contemporary book design, rather than a simple re-drawing of such elements from an encyclopedia [as will be broadened in I.7.1. *Time described in the novel*]. How Favorsky implemented such features can be traced by means of attentive analysis of each picture, which shows that the stylization of figures, details and environment imbue the pictures with a decorative style. The latter resonates well with medieval decorations and the tradition of illuminated manuscripts but, at the same time, reflects the aesthetics of the 20th century, thereby connecting the temporal setting of the poem with the time when the book with pictures was created.

²¹⁷ The pictures are discussed and incorporated in Part III, Mitchenko's interview.

²¹⁸ The video representing Spirin's gallery of different illustrated books: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nu_knD_TqY

Sorochyntsi and *The Nose*, Hofmann's *The Nutcracker*, Chekhov's stories, Swift's *Gulliver* and many others. These illustrations are extremely detailed, executed with a great artistic taste and hand craft; however, they are all exactly the same in terms of the artistic language of visual narration, which stands in glaring contrast with the stylistic diversity of the verbal narration of these literary works. In other words, even though one cannot help but appreciate the artist's work, Spirin's gallery of images represents the style of Spirin rather than illustrating the diverse literary works in question. The same tendency toward self-presentation and reproduction is seen in the illustrations of Andrej and Olga Dugin: every single picture is fantastic, very detailed, well-balanced in colors and composition and a true masterpiece. Yet, when looking at pictures created for such works as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Madonna's *The Adventures of Abdi*, *The Three Oranges*, along with *Harry Potter* and Gogol's *The Fair at Sorochyntsi*, we realize that they all are executed in the same style. This also applies to the funny and creative illustrations of [Mattias Adolfsson](#): a large gallery filled with examples of the artist's ingenious capacity in combination with his aesthetic taste, imagination and humor.

Even though these pictures are considered to represent a great artistic contribution to contemporary book trends, this judgement is problematic when these images are viewed as the fruit of intermedial translation since what they illustrate is only the plots of stories. In other words, a given plot is presented through a given personal artistic style which is very repetitive from book to book while the artist totally ignores the style and form of a given writer. Can one really apply the same style and form to Gogol's *The Nose* and the folk tale *The Frog Princess*? Given the importance of the *how* in the arts,²¹⁹ a writer's story is not only about the plot but (often) to an even greater extent also the genre and individual style – the argument that leads back to the inseparability of form and content. However, when a translation

intends to perform a transmitting function, [it] cannot transmit anything but information [...]. This is the hallmark of bad translation. But do we not generally regard as the essential substance of a literary work what it contains in addition to information [...] the unfathomable, the mysterious, the 'poetic,' something that a translator can reproduce only if he is also a poet? This, actually, is the cause of another characteristic of inferior translation ([Benjamin, 1999:70](#)).

²¹⁹ The concepts of "what" vs. "how" in arts have been often discussed by different minds and in different languages, the few of which could be mentioned: V. Shklovsky, *Full collection of works*, in 3v., 1926 v.3., essay "Form and material in art"; V. Brusov, *Full collection of works*, in 7 v., Moscow, 2014, v.6, p.405; K. Chukovsky, *Full collection of works*, v.11, p.489.

Therefore, the style and form of pictures are also related to the style and form of the text being converted into a system of visual signs. This is the essence of any adaptation because “our ability to adapt, appropriate, and alter forms of discourse is key to our progress as creators of art and knowledge” (Parker, 179).

The author of a literary work, when considering a particular situation to be included in the plot, magnifies it several times in the artistic sense, opens a higher rhythmical discussion within it and, finally, brings his verbal constructions to the quality of the whole artistic work, in which not only the plot presents the content, but each particular detail of the form is permeated through content and creates the author’s style. Then, an illustrator who extracts only the plot, and focuses on it in his pictures, can do the writer a bad turn. Such a picture would hang a weight to the literary work, pulling it back to the initial undeveloped situation. This is why, when interpreting fiction, the artist must respond not only to the plot but equally to the style and theme of the narrative [...]. In many cases the latter is more important than the former, if the book aspires to be an artwork [...]. Therefore, an illustrator must study in depth the verbal work and consider the question of its analogy with visual art [...] since these two things [form and content] are inseparable, as in literature so too in pictures. (Favorsky, 1986:116-118)

A creative illustration, which follows the principles of intermediality, even if it is very concrete and detailed, neither stops the reader’s imagination nor restricts his perception. Instead, it proposes an alternative way of seeing a certain character or environment. Literature and visual art use different materials (words and signs), components and methods of building an image.²²⁰ When two different media — word and picture — encounter each other within a single book, it would be illegitimate to claim that the picture is supposed to merely repeat the text or makes it too concrete. We can find emotional and stylistic correspondences between verbal and visual representations, but we can hardly hope to see an illustration as an exact repetition of textual content. “Images have limited potential in conveying literal inward characterization, they have vast possibilities in depicting non-verbal and subverbal states, using complex symbols and other figurative language” (Nikolajeva, 37). This is possible because both verbal and non-verbal stories are expressed not only through their semantic level or physical shape, respectively, but are also built from the accumulation of different materiality of each of the artistic languages, mentality and time, writer’s/artist’s education and social experience,

²²⁰ “...painting employs wholly different signs or means of imitation from poetry, — the one using forms and colors in space, the other articulate sounds in time” (Lessing, 91).

moral norms, cultural background and so on. In my view, a literal, semantic transfer of words onto a picture or movie leads to slavish dependence on the verbal. It is an unnatural and almost impossible practice. Moreover, the question arises whether there is any necessity for an artist to become a mediator between a writer and a reader. There is no need or reason to clone what already exists (Arnheim, 2), to repeat or “explain” a picture with words or a text with illustrations, since the value of each new adaptation consists in the variety of perceptions, in conveying an individual glance and discovering in a text something that others have not noticed.²²¹ “A work of art is one person’s vision of human reality, our hopes, desires, fears, and experiences which is expressed in a particular artistic medium, and shared with other people” (Sporre, 13). The interest for the reader or spectator, therefore, lies in the artist’s individual impressions received from his encounter with a given literary work. To create an illustration is like lending the artist’s glasses to the reader so that the latter can temporarily look at the text with a new gaze. The result is that the text can now shine with new colours. One can find similar approaches in new readings and new adaptations of famous literary works for the cinema or theater. In any medium, new artistic forms are not supposed to reproduce already existing content, but rather make possible new discoveries and further development.

V. Mitchenko expresses in his interview (see Part III) an observation about two types of artists: 1) those who create through creative search, developing new approaches and stylistic choices for each subsequent artwork, and 2) those who have developed their unique style of drawing and hold onto it as if to a lifejacket, repeating themselves from work to work.

The first type represents the elaboration of what is meant by intermedial adaptation, i.e., the correspondence between the style of a text and the style of the pictures illustrating that text.

The second type includes the above-mentioned artists Spirin, Dugins, Adolfsson and many others. Some of them take any literary text and illustrate it in their own style that, in most cases, has nothing to do with the style of the corresponding narrative. Others attempt to be selective and choose only those literary works to be illustrated that seem to be stylistically in line with their drawing style. An example of the latter approach is expressed by Richard A. Kirk in an interview (see Part III). His works are creative, fantastic in nature and highly professional in all

²²¹ This meaning that I give to approaching the verbal with pictures, resonates with Favorsky’s approach for general arts: “the individuality of an artist manifests itself through the ability to see and to discover [...]. Each new work should be presented as revelation, which makes them to look at the common, familiar things with a new glance.” (Favorsky, 1988:500); and V. Mitchenko’s opinion, as he explains in the interview: see Part III.

senses but all executed in the same style.²²² All that changes from work to work is the plot of the pictures, i.e., their semantics, but not the narrative/visual language, style and form. In this case, as the artist himself confirms, he does not aim to adapt stylistically to a given text and sells his work well thanks to his *own* style.

Such observations do not diminish in any way the artistic qualities of these artists' work which can be viewed as creations "based on" or "inspired by" a literary work. This parallels certain examples of novel-film adaptations where the film itself may be a great artwork but has nothing to do with the novel on which is based (see I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*).

Thus, type 2 artists ignore basic book illustration principles that set a limit on the range of interpretation and the development of *intermedial adaptation*. As a result, a given text ends up being presented through a series of an artist's pictures which are attached to the text but do not interpret it.

The fundamental point is worth being repeated: the primary task for the illustration is to achieve correspondences with the poetics of a given narrative: stylistically, emotionally, symbolically, associatively, etc. Whether the text is fantastic, grotesque, pictorial, or futuristic in style, the pictures will represent that style first (Favorsky, 1988:276), and then fill such stylistics with the semantics proposed by the plot. This method, consequently, requires the artist's ability to adapt his crafts and creative thought to stylistically diverse narratives.

Illustration as a medium cannot tolerate an artist's self-repetition from book to book, requiring a complex process of intermedial translation. When such a translation does not occur, we get the examples of the artist's own style — the case when it would be legitimate to claim that this sort of story enrichment can sometimes turn into a kind of impoverishment, since such an approach of illustrating fiction steps on the way of semantic repetition of the verbal rather than a creative interpretation (except cases when pictures grow beyond the text and create their own visual narrative, as in Kirk's fantastic pictures). As a result, the reader cannot perceive a text differently, but rather the way it is represented by pictures. This is because a creative word-picture interpretation changes the reader's way of processing a given text and opens his imagination. On the other hand, visual repetition or explanation of the verbal renders the reader's thought limited by excessively concrete or "literal" pictures which do not provide with

²²² <https://richardakirk.bigcartel.com/>

any creative impact — even if they can be implemented on an outstanding academic level in purely technical terms or represent the artist's own gallery of creative images that have no relation (except that of the plot) to the text they illustrate.

I.7. Approaches to Illustrating Fiction²²³

What to represent, what not to represent, and then how to depict things and with what artistic language, style, technique, etc. — an illustrator makes such decisions throughout his entire work and concerning each picture as well as every little detail within the pictures. The entire process, from taking a text in hand to making out of it a book with pictures, passes through a complex process of constant selections: this works well, this is a platitude or in bad taste, this is too much and should be erased, this needs more details and so forth. Hard work is happening where not only creativity and imagination are involved but also the aesthetics of the time period in which a specific artist is living and working on a text. The artist's relation to his time and the relation of cultural context to the artist compose an integral part of his work. Should the artist argue with his time, going 'against the current' and not accepting contemporary trends, or should he ride the wave and to go along with current tendencies in art? What goals does an artist set for himself? What exactly does he attempt to express? What thought does he seek to convey to the reader when illustrating a writer from the past?

His goals might vary and this aspect of the work in no way depends on the text being illustrated. This is a matter of each artist's individual choice, his taste, artistic philosophy and personality which are in part influenced by his schooling and educational system. Also, important here is the artist's sense of visual rhythm in a composition, practice and craft skills through which he is planning to convey his creative ideas. From this, the chosen elements for representation come out. Particularly worthy of attention are the *principles* according to which the artist's selections occur and the *consequences* of these choices, i.e. their impact on the reader.

What Benjamin means by translatability, in his *The Task of the Translator*, is a feature which may not be present in every literary work and, even more so, if it is present, its gradations vary from work to work. "It means that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability" (Benjamin, 71). As in verbal translatability, so in the

²²³ The method of intermedial adaptation, which I am developing in this part, is expected to be presented at the conference *Research in the Arts, the Arts in Research*, 14 – 15 May 2020 at the University of Łódź, Poland, <http://cleurope.eu/>, and will be transformed in an article for the publication, following the conference.

visual adaptability of a given literary work, the gradations of translatability will vary, determining therefore the range and proximity of *relations* involved in intermedial adaptation.

Every adaptation has its own specific nuances. In the case of certain texts, it would be advisable to refrain from illustrating them because they are simply not translatable into pictures (the same way as some texts cannot be translated into another language), e.g., texts that present invisible images as is the case with Calvino who created ekphrasis with verbal images existing only in the imagination but are invisible, impossible, very abstract pictures that can exist only in verbal language.²²⁴ Thus, the images that illustrate his stories are all abstract and very disconnected from the text. And therefore, in some cases, “translation” becomes “conversion” into a visual accompaniment, like in poetry, or rather a transition from the primary source to a completely new form. Still, such conversions or adaptations always depart from the style of the primary source.

Integrity in the sense of completeness underlies the process of perception: any part acquires its meaning depending on the whole, and the whole cannot be understood without its parts. We are dealing here with the so-called hermeneutic circle. The parts of the whole in book illustration and the correspondences between the style of narrative and the style of pictures can be explored in many ways and include conceptual and structural aspects simultaneously. Thus, pictures are conceptualized on different levels, and one must take into consideration specific conceptual aspects. Such concepts/ ideas are executed technically according to different structural possibilities.

What follows will focus on the art of bookmaking on the basis of the understanding of rules and aspects according to which a method of word-picture interpretation is applied. It appears to be impossible to analyze works of the bookmaking art without such considerations. Drawing

²²⁴ According to the Oxford Dictionary Lexico, the term abstract describes something “existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence; dealing with ideas rather than events or objects; not based on a particular instance; theoretical. Relating to or denoting art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but rather seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, colours, and textures.” (<https://www.lexico.com/definition/abstract>) In philosophic terms, “it is widely agreed that the [abstract/concrete] distinction is of fundamental importance. And yet there is no standard account of how it should be drawn... Thus, it is universally acknowledged that numbers, concepts and the other objects of pure mathematics are abstract (if they exist), whereas rocks and trees and human beings are concrete.... The challenge is to say what underlies this dichotomy, either by defining the terms explicitly, or by embedding them in a theory that makes their connections to other important categories more explicit. In the absence of such an account, the philosophical significance of the contrast remains uncertain. We may know how to classify things as abstract or concrete by appeal to intuition. But in the absence of theoretical articulation, it will be hard to know what (if anything) hangs on the classification. It should be stressed that there need not be one single “correct” way of explaining the abstract/concrete distinction.” See further classifications in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/abstract-objects/>

from theories and practical considerations previously discussed, I propose a method (and a set of rules) that works for *all* adult fiction texts that I can think of, as it suggests the artist's ability to take a text and to adapt his creative capacity and craft to the task of making a verbal-visual adaptation.²²⁵ I am tempted to draw a comparison with actors and their ability to adapt their craft to a given part on the stage, i.e., they are able to change their personality, which, in combination with talent, allows them to play whoever in whatever scenario. They use a method or a system of acting; but of course, there is also a type of actors who repeat themselves from film to film, play always the same way, or do not play at all, instead, they just say their lines and do certain movements, but this is not a creative adaptation.

My method of verbal-visual translation is not addressed to commercial artists. It rather focuses on the aesthetics, art, and creation without predictable recipes as opposed to the repetition of one's own style. This, as paradoxical as it may sound, can become possible only within the clear structure of a planned work and control over one's visual expression. This concept of self-control conducive to creativity parallels, for example, an interesting but little-known (or rather totally unknown in the West) acting method on the theater stage developed by Oleksandr Tokarchuk.²²⁶ His method is based on a model borrowed from psychology and summed by the phrase "conducting your self" (written separately). It means carrying your self, so to speak, as you distance your behaviour from a given situation in order not to stick to your own emotions but rather to lead them in a specific direction in a controlled manner. In other words, the purpose is to identify yourself with altered types of behaviour (prescribed by the play), which are different from your own, and to separate two domains consciously: this is me

²²⁵ My approach to illustration in no way claims to be a universal method of interpreting the verbal, but rather offers an interdisciplinary synthesis of many approaches. I have provided evidence for and developed the main aspects of illustrating a text, which are based on the combination of my work in the field within a multicultural and contemporary environment between Western and Eastern publishing (2002-2014), in conjunction with skills which I gained during my formal education at an art academy (1996-2003) and in particular from lectures by leading specialists and great teachers of the past century who still remain an important reference point in the art of book-making: Georgiy Yakutovich (1930-2000, cinema and book artist), [Vasil Chebanik](#) (1933-, calligrapher, bookmaker), [Vitaly Mitchenko](#) (1948-, font designer, calligrapher, illustrator). I have also benefited from brief but valuable training obtained at a theater and cinema institute (1999-2000), particularly, lessons by [Yuriy Illienko](#) (1936-2010, cameraman and film director), Oleg Prihodko (1954-, screenwriter, playwright), and Oleksandr Tokarchuk (teacher of acting with his methodology). I have applied this fundamental knowledge through my 12-year experience of illustrating literary works of diverse genres and levels within the Italian publishing industry with its contemporary glance at artistic principles and market requirements. Such a combination allowed me to develop, over many years, my particular method of approaching the verbal.

²²⁶ Oleksandr Tokarchuk is a theater actor and founder of the Kyiv's theater school of creative acting. He has developed a system of acting, which is based on the interdisciplinary approach that bridges theater of old masters, psychology, sociology, behavioral studies, and which can be used in any circumstances, from a theater stage to public presentations and to daily conversations. <https://shkobr.com.ua>

on the one hand, and this is my behaviour or role in the present moment of acting on the other hand. So, a complex role with emotive dialogue is "conducted" or led in its entirety by the actor so that he *controls* and *creates* it simultaneously without being captured by any emotional/uncontrolled involvement. "Self-control and trained technique are, in fact, the tools of creativity, as no one has ever been able to become a great artist without controlling the technique of his language [language – in the sense of creative expression, such as acting, painting, writing, reciting, etc.]; great works of art are made by means of hard labor and not through the chaotic impulses of intuition or inspiration" (Tokarchuk, 21-22). Such training is based on both aspects of creativity, self-control and chance, allowing one to "change masks" as fast and often as needed — spontaneously.

In contrast to this principle, the concept of false masks is suggested in *Ervin Goffman and the Performed Self*.²²⁷ A gap between the outer face (a fake mask that one shows) and the inside (the true one) generates a discrepancy and disagreement with self. We all know people who may think badly about us but keep their polite mask on. One can also act as if everything were fine while experiencing physical or mental anguish. And still others can hide their anger, joy, passion, weakness. People often tend to wear masks that hide real emotions, feelings, thoughts. Such masks can eat one from inside, deprive him of living through real experience and being open and spontaneous. Some are led by their desire to make people think differently about themselves. For them, to *seem* is more important than to *be*, as exemplified by Gogol's Khlestakov in *The Government Inspector*. There are also people who fear losing something (social status or respect, for example).²²⁸ In reality, this is the fear of losing an illusion: the illusion of how people see us, the illusion of good relations, and the illusion of the true self. It's difficult to take such a mask off but someone who is able to do this has a chance to become alive with all the accompanying pains and joys and to get out of the prison of falsity. The result is genuine integrity in sense of morality and wholeness whereby no false masks are needed in any circumstances. This is the core tool of creativity.

²²⁷ BBC Radio 4, *Ervin Goffman and the Performed Self*, Narrated by Stephen Fry, <https://youtu.be/6Z0XS-QLDWM>

²²⁸ Stephen Fry, for example, in one of his brilliant talks expresses a belief that so-called political correctness does not work and says that he rather believes in humanity and in the sanctity of human relations, and suggests that "one of the greatest human failings is to prefer to be right than to be effective", *Best Argument Ever Against Political Correctness* by Stephen Fry, Agatan Foundation, <https://youtu.be/tPEHbJgomgA>

In case of Tokarchuk's above-mentioned concept of “conducting your self”, every such mask is not false but rather entails a true artistic experience supported by the imagination, as it is based on the diversity of people’s real behaviours and therefore encourages improvisation. “Creative behavior stimulates you to be sincere and is the key skill that helps you to be charismatic in acting; this is because self-control builds creative behaviour which, in turn, generates energy that is transmitted from you to the public” (Tokarchuk, 21-22). Even though it is not easy at all to train oneself in such behavioral technique, I find this example to be relevant to the discussion of self-control and diversity in picture-making practice. It must be made clear that to be different does not mean the lack of an artist’s individuality or his own “hand” in a work. On the contrary, this sort of “masks”, or the elasticity and adaptability of one’s creative language, develops the diversity of one’s artistic styles and can become a positive and energising experience. An artist X, let’s say, has his own method, hand and taste. How he will manage to transform and adapt his style to the stylistics of a text being illustrated is the basis of a creative interpretation and allows him to be different in each new work.

In his essay *On Chance in Artistic Creation*,²²⁹ August Strindberg formulates a theory of “automatic art” which outlines both the artist’s conscious efforts and his unconscious actions simultaneously. Chance plays an important role in art; however, when artistic creation is limited *only* to spontaneous representation, it results in half-art which is missing the second component – intentional self-control.

Stanislavsky’s system suggests the necessity *to experience* rather than just represent emotion in acting; Tokarchuk’s principle of “conducting your self” suggests the necessity to act spontaneously while simultaneously creating and controlling the acting process. This is correlated, in some way, with the psychological theory developed by Steven C. Hayes in his *Liberated Mind*, suggesting that an individual necessarily needs to accept and live through an experience rather than try to struggle or avoid thinking. When combining such approaches and making them applicable to the creative practice of word-image interpretation, the following principle can be formulated.

An ideal image of the final/future result (formed as a mental image) prevents one from being open to improvisation and from immersing oneself in the *process* of creating. This occurs

²²⁹ Strindberg, August, “On Chance in Artistic Creation”, *Cabinet Magazine*, issue 3, 2001, first published in French in 1894 in *Revue des Revues*, http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/3/i_strindberg.php

because the new emotions generated during the improvisation do not fit that idealized mental image of the final work. The moment one begins to resist his own mental state while making art, a block is generated that prevents one from being spontaneous. Once one is focused on this resistance, he tries to struggle with his own emotions and feelings, which prevents the fluency of the creative process. In this situation, the mechanism of reversibility and circulation of creative energy and thought is also blocked. However, the skill to react spontaneously and to “be present” in a given moment of acting, of creating, of life in general — determines not the result but the ability to perform, i.e. to live through the creative process, as in Hayes’s acceptance theory. The ability to totally accept both losses and victories (while making art) provides one with the possibility to move forward in his creative work and to be in a state of evolution. Therefore, to openly react to a feeling or an emotion is the key tool of creativity.

Creative improvisation, therefore, is not like plucking thoughts out of thin air, but rather a tool which should be mastered and which can help the artist to create new meanings. This is also the key tool that, while involving imagination,²³⁰ allows one to re-interpret or “paraphrase” literary content visually in order to present it with a new visual metaphor, i.e. to represent primary verbal meaning as a poetic or figurative picture. Therefore, improvisation is the brightest and freshest form of thinking, in the process of which the most unexpected decisions can come.

An image (both verbal and visual) is usually analyzed *after* it has been created, but never at the moment of its creation.²³¹ The process of ideating an image, when seen in the present time of the creative process, is fundamental to understanding how to create without recipes and ready clichés, how to subordinate a technique to a creative idea, not being led by established principles or getting stuck in one’s own “artistic style.” It is a way of not copying one’s own manner or technique of drawing which was developed in a previous work. “One can tell the same joke many times in real life and provoke laughter every time; but in the arts a similar formula is called a cliché. The development of art is determined by the dynamics of the logic of the material which requires finding every time a new aesthetic solution” (Brodsky, 1991:9).

²³⁰ Cf. Elisabeth Camp discusses the role of imagination in “Two Varieties of Literary Imagination: Metaphor, Fiction, and Thought Experiments”, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 33(1): 107–130. doi:10.1111/j.1475-4975.2009.00186.x

²³¹ “Life in the process of creation implies both the idea of nature as the prime generative force of art and its corollary that artworks have qualities in common with what we find in nature, namely some kind of power, energy, life, or vitality.” (Guercio, 107)

Surprise generated by a new glance at the text should stimulate unexpected visual interpretations.

To stimulate diverse results, regardless of their market capacity, does not mean that books created with this method are unsellable. They will go beyond the stratum of the modern publishing market and therefore can find their way into another niche, such as high-quality limited editions, exhibitions, private or other collections. The target audience of such books is the type of reader endowed with sophisticated taste, i.e., aesthetes and collectors of pieces of art rather than pieces of profitable investment. This is not quantitative production (even though such works can sometimes be published in large numbers of copies), and this is not about making a living or becoming famous and a well-promoted brand of oneself. This method of intermedial translation, consequently, has to do with the type of art that necessitates the *process* of artistic search and an artist's growth through making art. The result is immaterial enrichment which one can still monetize by proposing the fruits of his brilliance to a specific sector within the art market.

Therefore, keeping in mind that in order to illustrate books, it is not enough to develop an artistic style or manner and to repeat this same manner from book to book, the following principles can be articulated. One must select and elaborate appropriate graphic language that would allow one to implement a creative idea without multiplying one's own previous discoveries. Therefore, one must keep changing one's "behavioral masks" in order to reflect the structure, mood, style, melody, etc. of a given text. This means not just telling one's story by means of a drawing, but becoming *oneself* one's own story that is generated in every single moment of the creative process and remains behind in a form of the artist's work, i.e. a visual story narrated in the course of time. We can draw a parallel between Tokarchuk's method of acting – which is based in part on Stanislavski method – and the method of illustrating books, when the illustrator can be compared to the actor; the former changes his "behavioral masks" when improvises on the book pages. This stands in contrast to what is practiced by many commercial artists who use a single visual language to implement all possible ideas that come along the way.

To return to the conceptual and structural aspects of word-picture interpretation, many things will obviously remain abbreviated or embryonic in this text, but I will attempt to formulate the main steps and principles.

Step zero comes before the beginning of work on intermedial translation. It is the necessity to understand what the *reading* of a text means.

Kelcey Parker, in *Reading Like a Writer*, summarizes various theoretical studies on creative writing as follows: “Writers learned by reading the work of their predecessors” (*Prose, Reading Like a Writer*, 2–3). Related to this is the history of how such an approach entered the education system over a century ago. Walter Besant’s 1884 essay *The Art of Fiction* explains the difference between a common reading for pleasure and an intentionally slow and careful reading aimed at discovering the structure and concept of a given novel, as well as the nature of characters and minute details (Parker, 194): “How did the author create a fictional world in the reader’s mind? Why did she deviate from standard syntax and punctuation? Why did the narrative present events out of chronological order? To read with these questions in mind is to ‘read like a writer’.” (Parker, 183). These are all questions that should animate the careful reader and even more so — an aspiring writer who reads the texts of good, experienced writers as if working as an assistant in the laboratory of a great scientist. Parker outlines cross-questions with which students of creative writing can approach a text: form, content, structure, point of view (narrator’s and character’s), the implied reader (and who values the work), the market, and aesthetics — all aspects of the aspiring writer’s reading style. In the same way, an artist/painter follows concrete principles and is educated to *see like a painter*, to notice and recognize those types of colors in nature that persons of other professions usually do not see. Similarly, a musician knows how to listen and recognize sounds in a very particular way. So too an illustrator learns *how to read a text like an illustrator*, absorbing it slowly sentence by sentence and visualizing verbal metaphors in his inner gaze. “The eye functions for Goethe as a kind of thinking organ [when approaching objects or words] by means of *Anschauung* (meaning “view”, but also “idea” and “ability to visualize things”), knowing it

morphologically.²³² [...] This active viewing allows a unity of form to become manifest through all the metamorphoses of [one's] work.” (Guercio, 110)

Thus, the very first reading of a literary work, not being influenced by someone else's opinions or pictures, allows one to generate and sketch (while reading) a creative response that is fresh and individual²³³ and that will become the backbone of the entire book project. This response will determine the other features of the work — from the development of the writer's style in pictures, to cultural aspects, etc.

The conceptual aspects of word-picture adaptation are all about a method of recognizing, selecting and extracting the key images, metaphors and formal features from a given narrative and converting them into a visual image.

These conceptual aspects include: 1) the correlation of different time categories in pictures, 2) the rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures, 3) the symbolism of both verbal and visual narrative, 4) the different levels of narration within a given narrative, 5) the range and level of details, 6) the genre or what I would call the “spirit” of a text. All these aspects presume the most fundamental artistic skill which is the ability to perceive the verbal associatively. The way these aspects function will be demonstrated with specific examples in Part II, as well as in Part III.

It is worth mentioning an important principle: within the present methodology, the two media are not mirrored but juxtaposed to create new meanings with complex relations among them, as will be presented with the examples of Gogol's and Calvino's respective narratives and pictures created to illustrate their stories.

²³² How the eye functions for Goethe correlates with what I mean by *to read a text like an illustrator*, the process that necessarily includes the attention to words and their relations to other words in connection to the visualizing the verbal.

²³³ Before or during this stage of work, it is highly recommended not to look at any other pictures, not to read anything about the writer, and so forth. Otherwise, one can be prevented from thinking on one's own, because the mind subconsciously clings to the images that already exist and begins to imitate them. In other words, one should create intentionally an isolated situation where the artist encounters the narrative as such, in order not to be influenced by any other opinions or ideas. This is particularly important for students or artists in their early career, who have not grown yet in their creative confidence and have not developed yet skills of artistic improvisation. In this sense, the observation is true that any visual image influences the reader's perception: his mind subconsciously clings to the image presented by a picture and stops to generate its own images. On the other hand, the range of effects on the reading process depends also on the kind of illustration one is dealing with: some pictures can stop creative thinking, while the others can stimulate instead.

1. Correlation of different time categories in pictures.

Three time categories²³⁴ are absorbed by the illustrations and embodied within a single book:

- The *time* described in the novel (and represented in the style of a given period: architecture, costumes, general social and cultural environment);
- The *time* of the writer who creates through the perception of his time period;
- The *time* of the illustrator who interprets both the writer's stylistics and the historical events according to the design and general artistic trends of his own time; he can live several centuries after the time of the literary work, and this influences the way the book is designed.
- The fourth time category would be added by the reader, which can be manifested by the notes/reflections left on margins during the reading process. The authorship of such comments can be determined by the reader's *ex libris*, for example, or other signs if they are preserved. So the same literary work, accompanied by one or another series of pictures, is going to be perceived and interpreted following the reader's contemporary knowledge of literature and art.

Such a visual principle of representing different time categories can be found in literary form as well, for example, in Calvino's narrative where a city is presented in the past, in the present, and in the future simultaneously.

Time described in the novel is, perhaps, one of the first and very basic studies that an illustrator has undertaken as an approach to a literary work. The cultural study of the time in which a given novel is set constitutes the expected knowledge underlying the artist's visual images. For example, Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and Eco's *The Name of the Rose* have different contextual-historical backgrounds, on the basis of which the stories are developed. However, when illustrations omit the representation of specific costumes, architecture etc., or when they do contain the historical elements that make the style of the period — in either case they serve as additional elements that aim to reinforce the perception of the entire plot rather than merely reproducing encyclopedic information (for examples see following chapters). The

²³⁴ Cf. Seymour Chatman, in *Story and Discourse*, discusses the different ways the temporal-chronologic relationships function in the verbal texts and in pictures.

task of letting particular historical materials pass through the creative transformation carried out by the artist is not easy, but this makes the resulting images complex and interesting. It would not be enough to merely reproduce period-appropriate architectural or documentary items in the illustrations; instead, one needs to re-create them in a new way in order to make them harmonize with a given text. Similarly, events or figures from history find their creative interpretation in the text of a novel.

Time of the writer.

An editor and translator of the publishing house Adelphy, Ena Marchi, suggests that “a good editor and translator is (or should be) a person who (by chance or by choice) has lived for a quite long period in the country into the language of which he is translating. He should be someone who knows in-depth the culture of that country, in the wide sense of the term (not only literature, but also history, music, cinema, songs, religious customs, social structure, food habits, the educational system, poems that are learnt at school, characters of comics or folk tales, etc.)” (Marchi, 100). Such in-depth knowledge of cultural background in linguistic translations is necessary in order to be able to intervene in details of cultural and idiomatic nuances so that they are adequately presented in translation (see examples in *Genre and “spirit” of the text* below).

Illustration, being an intermedial translation, has as one of its goals the representation of the time period of the writer's life and his cultural background, because “the author is essentially transparent, like a window through which we look to see causal factors that helped produce the work,” (Bal, Bryson, 183) and he inevitably lets his own location in times and history pass through his creative interpretations and be embodied in his works. This representation of writer's time must occur in connection to the relationship between the author's intentions, cultural trends of the period, the literary and critical mood, theatre adaptations of the writer's texts, critical reaction, readership, the national and social situation, etc. In other words, we are talking about everything that influenced, one way or another, the formation of the writer's poetics and, therefore, found its interpretation in the corresponding visual works. Ideally, and to a greater extent, when approaching a “difficult” author, the illustrator must begin with a meticulous study of the author's historical context, the entire heritage of the author, the trajectory of his creative biography and inner artistic drama, the other literary or historical

materials which the writer used when creating his works — even if only one work is going to be illustrated. If we keep in mind Meyerhold’s idea that the actors should play not only the literary work itself but also the entire oeuvre of the author, then translation from language to language or from word to image should do the same.

One may wonder how all these materials could be represented in the illustrations of a specific text. With respect to both concepts, *Time described in the novel* and *Time of the writer*, the presence of “cultural knowledge” in a work remains often hidden but is perceived by the subconscious mind.

Artists rarely take into consideration what Ena Marchi means by a good verbal translation when they approach the task of intermedial translation. Sometimes when foreign artists attempt to illustrate Russian folk tales, their pictures look somewhat strange because they appear to be missing that cultural background which includes the knowledge of traditions and the accepted symbols that represent the national features. Or, for instance, the American screen version of Gogol’s *Taras Bulba* (directed by J. Lee Thompson, 1962) representing not Gogol's story as is presented by the author and known in his cultural environment, but its Americanized alternative.²³⁵ The significant deviation from Gogol’s original text would not be a problem²³⁶ if it reflected the author's rich narrative style whose preservation is, of course, a key aspect of intermedial adaptation. Even if we leave aside that the significant ending of the story is simply missing in the film, many details are simply wrong: the landscape with mountains in place of the Ukrainian steppe; certain strange aspects of costumes and décor which look new and far too perfect — as if recently acquired at a tailor shop rather than something used in battle; and in general, the excessively American style of the acting. In other words, such filming and perception of Ukrainian history appear farcical. After all, Ukrainian history is what Gogol's story is about, and yet at the end of the film we hear the Russian song [Kalinka-malinka](#) which has nothing to do with the Ukrainian Cossacks, was written long after the time of the events (at the end of the 19th century) and became a popular folksong in the mid-20th century. One has the impression that if the Cossacks were replaced with Spartans, Vikings, Indians, there would not

²³⁵ This parallels with the film director’s necessity to adapt his work to the target audience, which would accept and perceive the film.

²³⁶ As from the principles of intermedial interpretation, it requires, in fact, the avoidance of literal transferring from one medium into another, but implies the creation of a new artistic reality which absorbs the artist’s time and his own interpretation [as later in: *Time of the illustrator*].

be much difference since historicity is not conveyed to begin with.²³⁷ Neither the expensive effects nor the actors, nor the wonderful camera work and panoramic battle scenes can elicit a serious reaction to this pseudo-historical film.

The same historical context with large-scale battle scenes is presented, for example, in the Polish film *With Fire and Sword*, directed by Jerzy Hoffman, starring the legendary [Bohdan Stupka](#) in the role of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. I am not discussing now the political background of this film and the distortion of actual historical facts, but what makes this film great is its stylistic correspondence to the sources and artistic truthfulness. This takes us back to the concept of artistic truth in pictures. [N. Kompanež](#), a book artist, when giving an interview, admitted that

it's very important for an artist to feel the writer's inner world: if he succeeds to achieve that, his artworks come to be convincing. It happened to me that I met [M. Stelmakh](#), who was pleasantly surprised by my pictures for his autobiographic novel *Geese-Swans Fly*. He asked how I had managed to feel his prose so well, since the pictures 'breathed the truth', as he said. Such resonance between the literary work and illustrations was reached thanks to the fact that we both survived poverty in the post-war years, became participants of the reconstruction of destroyed Ukrainian towns. That painful memory has remained in our souls, which was reflected in our words and pictures, colored with dramatism and black-and-white shades.²³⁸

National character is a compound image, and it cannot be conveyed merely by costumes in a given style. The cultural layers underlying authentic outer appearance are supposed to be understood and developed by creators even though not all these elements are necessarily

²³⁷ For example, as in any other cultural environment, *shinok* or *hata* are not simply *tavern* or *cottage*, respectively. These two words imply specific construction materials, how/why/where such structures were built, what people traditionally did in them, what food they ate or drank in a *shinok*, what customs/ symbols/ folk songs are related to these places, or what they cultivated around a *hata* etc. The word *hata* is usually translated into English as *cottage* or *house*, but it is not exactly that meaning. *Hata* means a specific type of peasant house, common in Southern Slavic territories, that was used approx. until the mid-1960s and now is becoming again very popular. A simple peasant *hata* was not just an object for living, but also a significant sign that performed aesthetic and cultural functions related to national traditions. The decorations of *hata* (outside paintings around doors and windows, specific objects on the walls inside, and ornaments on those objects, the making of which implied a symbolic ritual) played the important role in customs. *Hata* always had at least 0,5-meter-thick walls made of a mix of earth, clay and straw, to ensure the preservation of heat during winter and freshness in summer. *Hata* necessarily had a clay floor (it is imagined, then, a medieval house and unwashed people, however, the technology of making a clay floor allowed to build a quite neat, smooth, elegant, durable and ecological surface). *Hata* had a straw roof, a stone oven, and was white-colored inside and outside, which well contrasted with the garden – another necessary attribute of *hata*. Russian analogue of *hata* is *izba*, i.e. a log house. Such a typical image of *hata* is envisioned when reading Gogol. [e.g. [Ilya Repin's painting, Ukrainian hata](#)].

²³⁸ The interview led by T. Golovko for the newspaper *Den*, day.kyiv.ua, №227 (Dec. 2014), <https://day.kyiv.ua/ru/article/kultura/oshchushchayu-obrazy-takimi-kak-videli-ih-klassiki>

included in the final work.

This parallels with what is elucidated by Chekhov's following suggestion: one should write an entire page and then reduce by means of poetic brevity, so that the intended fullness and the energy invested in a work can be perceived by the reader.²³⁹ Such a study is a necessary basis so that an artist can begin developing his own interpretations. Without such a preparation, many artistic preferences and dilemmas of a given writer will remain unclear or unnoticed, and the pictures will, most likely, represent a superficial knowledge of the writer's stylistics which, in turn, can render a mere linear repetition of the plot without extra structures or symbolism that stand beyond the simple physical level of the narrative.

If we view the writer, as any creator who performs as a link of communicative system — from a source behind a creative impulse, to the interpretations, to the author, to his work in which a given idea acquires a new form, to the receiver, and back to the writer — then one of the questions that should be asked is *how* to determine the source of the emergence of the writer's idea. The following key questions arise: What did exactly lead that writer to generate his ideas? How does an illustrator extract such sources and ideas from a given text to convert them into pictures and, consequently, how does the reader recognize, perceive and merge texts and images presented in a book? Following the ontological and semiotic approaches, I would suggest that, on the one hand, the analysis of book as a whole work of verbal-and-visual art explores the structural features of the book-object (sources of its creation, history of its production, materiality, physical and creative space, time and so on) and, on the other, it describes the ways of perception and generation of meanings by the reader. Moreover, reading — either silently or aloud — can sometimes become a kind of performance when the reader “acts out” both words and pictures. In a sense the text is articulated, and pictures are explored

²³⁹ Chekhov's famous phrase “brevity is the sister of talent” (written in a letter to his brother Alexander, from 11th April, 1889), later became one of the main concepts in his work. For instance, in all cases when critics discuss Chekhov's brevity, they mention Stanislavsky's story about one rehearsal of the play *Three Sisters*, performed in January 1901, when Chekhov decided to remove Andrey's long and emotional monologue, describing how women before marriage possess traces of poetry and how they transform after marriage when they start wearing tasteless and rich clothes that hide their soul. Chekhov replaced this complex monologue with the words “a wife is a wife” (K. Stanislavsky, *Sobranie Sochineniy*, t.1, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1954, pp. 236-237). Some historians consider Stanislavsky's story as a legend that never occurred, because the evidence of the first version of this monologue is not preserved (*Literaturnoe Nasledie*, tom 68, p.14). However, this does not diminish the concept itself: the tension and the intended meaning, the author's energy and the creative process invested into his work is not removed but remains in the reader's or spectator's perception. Stanislavsky, in his *Rabota aktera nad soboy*, 1938, (translated into English as *An Actor Prepares*), explains in detail his eminent system of acting and, as one of several possible approaches mentions also Chekhov's concept of reaching artistic power in a work through working out details that will later be abbreviated.

in a process where the visual experience (paratext) produces an emotional dialogue. Here, the reader's imagination develops simultaneously through bodily movements, tone of voice, the cadence of words, page-turning and engagement with the pictures (Winters, et al.).

Time of the illustrator.

As is clearly understandable, if two artists draw the same landscape with the same trees *en plein air*, their pictures will inevitably be different because “no single Essential Copy can ever be made” (Bryson, 1983: 15), because everyone sees and interprets “reality” differently, and because the author (whether writer or artist) uses an object from life or history as a reference point which he passes through his creative thought and transforms into an artistic image using his own work/life experience, style and technique. The same applies to word-picture adaptation, where an illustrator uses a given text, as well as additional materials about the text, writer and epoch, as a reference in order to elaborate on their basis a parallel ‘story in pictures’. As Bal and Bryson suggest, the process of creation cannot mirror the process of perception: creation implies work in several stages with a concrete concept and a final goal, while perception is work with signs and an attempt to decode what we see or read or what remains hidden. From this, the following question derives: “From where, from what position, is the reconstruction [of reception] being made?” (Bal, Bryson, 187).

The decision to create an adaptation emerges, in the first place, from an impression elicited by a given literary work. This is a form of creative and aesthetic surprise (see *Why an artist should like the text being illustrated*). However, surprise and impressions must then be actualized and supported through an in-depth study of available articles, monographs, theater or film adaptations of the literary work. First, such a study allows the artist to grasp the contemporary reception of the work and to build a more complex and integral *image* of the work which can then be approached from many different angles. Second, the artist's awareness of already existing illustrations in previous editions of the story and his understanding of the limitations that they represent create the impulse to re-adapt the same text in a new way, to propose a new glance at the text. Another *method* of approaching a text and another *artistic language* appear to be more appropriate for interpreting the primary source. This means that developing a new artistic interpretation is the key goal of illustration.

Unfortunately, the habit of doing research before approaching any creative project was a natural part of an artist's training and professional work up to the early-mid 20th century, but then it rapidly declined and disappeared as something odd or even inappropriate for visual art (see I.5. *Between Art and Market*). As for contemporary trends of book illustration, this step is (almost) always skipped, being considered too serious, difficult, or superfluous — as if it had nothing to do with drawing pictures. Besides, if a book is produced for the publishing industry, the latter does not require such “unnecessary” and “impractical” expenditure of time and money, which results in a superficial approach. Nevertheless, this invisible (non-visualizable) stage of work provides the artist with some responsiveness to contemporary aesthetics and allows him to increase his own impressions of a given literary work through the study of many artistic interpretations by the other creative minds and in different media. This process renders illustrations deep, well-rounded and meaningful.

An example of the embodiment of the writer's and artist's temporal contexts in pictures can be identified in the publications of Milton's poetic works which saw many different visual adaptations — from the first edition up to the 20th century.

The 1691 edition of *Paradise Lost*, containing the original etchings developed by B. Lens and engraved by P.P. Bouche [[ARCC: Milton C17](#)], is executed in the baroque style. The frontispiece contains a frame with baroque architectural elements. The individual illustrations represent figures with spectacular curvaceous forms and are characterized by the technique of etched signs. All the compositions with panoramic scenes are executed according to the norms of the period — with ceremonial solemnity that produces a large-scale effect.

In the 1794 edition [[ARCC: Milton C25](#)], the technique of chiaroscuro featuring playful shades and lights is used to give a smooth, romanticized mood to the pictures designed by H. Richter and engraved by I. Richter. The more you peer at the passages of grey and pale elements, separated by planes of landscapes and sky, the more nuanced details of the narrative come to the fore.

John Martin's illustrations reproduced in several 19th-century editions [[ARCC: PR3560.1827.v.1-2. copy 2](#); [ARCC: PR3560.1866a](#)] catch the eye with their powerful compositions and whole motion within pictures which is possible because of the less detailed figures and environment. The result is that the reader's attention is not dispersed in small things but absorbed by a more global dramatic mood.

The example of Doré's illustrations for *Paradise Lost*²⁴⁰ has already been mentioned.

Then, there are illustrations by William Blake, reprinted in several editions: 13 plates reproduced from the original in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery [ARCC: Milton C75]; the 1906 edition printed at the Lyceum Press [ARCC: Milton C28]; the 1940 edition with 9 leaves of plates [ARCC: PR3560 1940]; a more recent edition of the Folio Society with 12 leaves of plates [ARCC: PR3560 2003]. Many studies on Blake's pictures,²⁴¹ which appeared in the last century, make up an entire field of scholarship that explores visual allusions and allegories. This is a new approach of interpreting the verbal, as compared with previous interpretations of *Paradise Lost*.

It is worth mentioning once again that the book, as an object of art, is the fruit of collective work: not only the writer's text, and not only the artist's individual pictures play a role to shape the reader's perception, but so do the typography, the layout design, and the type of binding. For example, the editions of the late 19th – early 20th centuries are particularly attentive to the print and design qualities. Milton's *L'allegro and il pensieroso*, published in London by David Bogue and illustrated with etchings by Birket Foster [ARCC: PR3555.A1.1855], is designed with the alternation of red typographic fonts and black pictures placed on wide margins. The pictures themselves, even though they depict mainly landscapes and countryside scenes, add a particular mood to the reading process and seem to match naturally the white space of the pages thanks to their free borders: the white space of the sky becomes a part of the margins, and some dark elements go beyond this space in visual dialogue with the textual part. This allows passages between different dimensions and unites the verbal and the visual. The pictures attract the reader's eye: it is a great pleasure to observe the fine details that generates meanings related to people and nature. This is a good example of how a "realistic" illustration is capable of providing the reader with a mood rather than blocking perception. This becomes possible because the pictures do not repeat the semantics of the text but create their own visual narrative which, however, corresponds to the verbal on other levels. The design of the cover with blind stamping on leather, ornaments in the Liberty style, the texture and format of the book all

²⁴⁰ Milton, John, *Paradise Lost*, London and New York: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, 1866; *Digital Collections - University at Buffalo Libraries*, accessed Sept 19, 2019

<https://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/items/browse/tag/Paradise+Lost>

²⁴¹ E.g. A. Blunt, *The Art of William Blake*, New York, 1959 – discusses Blake's illustrations of Milton.

provide the edition with additional touch perception which combines well with the visual aesthetic of the black-and-red design inside the book.

The same aesthetic pleasure applies also to the edition of *The Shorter Poems of J. Milton* [ARCC: PR3552.P25.1889] published by Seely E Company and illustrated by Samuel Palmer. Realistic in style but allegoric in content, the pictures create a mood and interpret the verbal realm on a level that goes beyond the semantic:

the imagery quickens; and as [the artist] reads his favorite passages over and over, the scenes described, perhaps only in a few inimitable words, expand into a mental picture, so real, so full, so exquisite, that he is forced into action [...]. The passage he has chosen for “illustration” (to use the inevitable term), seems, when he begins, to gather new beauty, to wear new aspects, to unfold before him as the moon unfolded “her mysterious landscape in the Tuscan’s glass.”²⁴²

Interestingly, the introduction to this 19th-century edition emphasizes that “illustration” is the inevitable term but this word acquires another meaning with respect to these pictures: less literal, more poetic and artistic. This, in combination with the black-and-red design of the typography, creates an art book, regardless of the fact that the pictures are reproductions rather than originals.

Such a brief and incomplete overview of the pictures illustrating Milton’s works represents the incorporation of the artist’s time and style into the images which, at the same time, are characterized also by the style of the writer and his time period. One more example of this fundamental feature of illustration is found in R. Schmidt’s essay *Picturing Don Quixote*,²⁴³ which considers the 400-year tradition of interpreting Cervantes’ story. The variety of approaches — from early 17th-century illustrations in the form of stylized woodcuts, to Gothic architectural elements, to late 17th-century etchings, to Doré’s 19th-century detailed and “living” pictures — reflects the illustrator-as-reader interpretation process and its impact on reading through centuries.

Therefore, the virtuous relationships of all these time categories in pictures — *time described in the novel*, *the writer time period*, and *the artist time period* — amount to contemporary adaptations of a text written in the past.

²⁴² The introduction to this edition narrates about the artist, his poetical style, influences of other artists on his art, and his attitudes to illustrating poetry.

²⁴³ Schmidt, R. “Picturing Don Quixote”, *The Public Domain Review*, accessed 18 Sept. 2019, <https://publicdomainreview.org/2016/04/06/picturing-don-quixote/>

It ought to be pointed that historical detail and the cultural knowledge (see my discussion of the screen adaptation of *Taras Bulba*), although important, are not necessarily transferred directly to pictures but rather *interpreted* and *adapted* by means of artistic language. One can find some similarities in various approaches to a modern theater adaptation of Shakespeare's plays where the text is taken as a leading element but presented through the interpreter's personal glance, e.g., the hero of *Hamlet* played by [Vladimir Vysotsky](#), and directed by [Yuri Lyubimov](#). This production was staged 220 times starting in 1971 and went on for almost 9 years. It is considered to be one of the best adaptations performed on the Taganka Theater stage.²⁴⁴ Thanks to its conditional style (influenced by Meyerhold), the moving curtain made of natural wool turned out a major story-telling tool because it divided the stage in two. The result was parallel, simultaneous scenes. The constant search for new improvisation possibilities provided this production with dynamic development. The actors were dressed in-everyday sweaters while the decor of Shakespeare's England was simply missing, and yet these performances conveyed the Shakespearean spirit through the sheer power of outstanding, honest acting.²⁴⁵

This mix of diverse examples (Milton, *Taras Bulba*, Shakespeare) presents how the historical details described in one or another literary work were developed through adaptations: following or not the historical representations. However, there are many contrary examples where artistic innovation has received terrible criticism. This includes cinema adaptations of novels, such as the brilliant film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975). Forman's *artistic interpretation* of the allegoric meaning (instead of a precise repetition of the plot), the development of each single detail, the scintillating acting and image of each character, and the range of creative nuances amounting to aesthetic absoluteness — all these artistic achievements

²⁴⁴ I. Smoktunovsky played *Hamlet* in 1964 in Kozintsev's film, and his Hamlet was considered as the example of classic method of acting. However, when Smoktunovsky saw the premiere with Vysotsky, he expressed the opinion that one can agree or disagree with such interpretation, but from now, it would be impossible to play differently. The fragments of video registrations that reproduce that theater performance then won several awards of documentary film [A. Orekh, "Vysotsky. Glava 94. Gamlet. 5 minut", in *Radio Echo Moskvi*, 20 Jan 2018, https://echo.msk.ru/blog/odin_vv/2130012-echo/]

²⁴⁵ Even though there are dozens of books written about Vysotsky, A. Orekh's series (published from 2016-present, now exist over 160), gather together rare or totally unknown materials and audio records about Vysotsky's art, breaking down established clichés and presenting the depth and variety of his acting in theater and film, poetry, archival materials, public talks, memories of friends, videos registered by foreign studios during his concerts, etc. *Radio Echo Moskvi*, https://echo.msk.ru/blog/odin_vv/

were not understood by some critics and rejected by the novel's author Ken Kesey²⁴⁶ because they had expected the film to be the exact copy of the novel which would have robbed the film of any artistic significance. However, the film has grown much beyond the novel. Similarly, V. Nijinsky's choreography for the ballet *Rite of Spring* to music by I. Stravinsky (1912), which riled the rigid expectations of the audience and the critics by refusing to conform to traditional standards. And yet, Nijinsky's production is considered to be a masterpiece today. (Sporre, 25)

Such a diversity of judgements opens the question of what the criteria of interpretation and, consequently, of evaluation of works of art might be (see summary at the end of this section).

2. Rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures

Time, rhythm, and frequency in narrative²⁴⁷ (whether the narrator tells about the past, future or current events), as well as the speed with which the narration progresses (slow, with many digressions and descriptions, or fast actions that change one after another), the amount of time covered by the narrative (one day, during which the protagonist presents his life, as in Solzhenitsyn's *One Day of Ivan Denisovich*, where the notion of time is stretched and condensed at the same time, or an epic novel covering a few decades, like *War and Peace*, and requiring a corresponding number of pages), or shifts in time which carry the reader back and forth (as in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*²⁴⁸) – all this is modeled by the rhythmical organization of pictures which aim to illustrate a given story. Book design usually works with rhythm, time, and pauses, and yet, when it comes to illustrated books, it is all too easy to ignore the interaction of two temporal plains: the verbal and the pictorial. “The most essential code in reading a picture book is its sequential nature. This is something that art critiques often ignore in their analyses when they examine each illustration separately, as an individual work of art, which [...] somewhat diminishes the overall understanding” (Nikolajeva, 29). As Nikolajeva suggests, and I can confirm from my experience as well, not only readers

²⁴⁶ Some references on the critical reaction of the film are provided on the Wiki page: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Flew_Over_the_Cuckoo%27s_Nest_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Flew_Over_the_Cuckoo%27s_Nest_(film))

²⁴⁷ Cf. Bakhtin, M. “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”, in: *The Dialogical Imagination: Four Essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp.87-258; Bal, M., Boheemen, C., *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, University of Toronto Press, 2017, pp. 89-104

²⁴⁸ Cf.: Amerian M., Ahmadian M., Jorfi L. “Shifts of time in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A narratological perspective”, *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 1, 2016, <http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.17507/tpls.0605.18>

and critics but also trained book illustrators are not always aware of the sequential features of books with pictures. This happens, mainly, because in the publishing field the tasks are usually divided between different people: the illustrator makes single pictures, the graphic designer creates the layout and inserts the pictures, which often results in a random placement of images (where space allows) and casual sequence of visual narration, the best scenario, but sometimes leads to verbal-visual disagreement caused by the designer's misunderstanding of the illustrator's intentions, or by the publisher's desire to reduce space.

Artistic space in a narrative is built through the arrangement of time,²⁴⁹ since movement occurs in time and things exist in space and in time. The perception of a literary work also occurs in time. How can the passing of time be actualized in a literary work and, consequently, transmitted in pictures? What exactly does help to produce visually the necessary flow of time in every single picture and in the entire book?

Thought can go slowly or fast. Narration can be linear and continuous so that the reader's mind divides the story into consecutive segments with boundaries whereby each segment has different duration, proceeding one after another without overlaps or cross-points.²⁵⁰ The representation of continuous or even chronological narrative in pictures does not preclude the possibility of depicting within a single picture a number of scenes which involve the same characters but occur in diverse times²⁵¹ This principle is known from medieval book miniatures illustrating chronicles and has gone through diverse conceptual transformations up to the contemporary illustration "suggesting parallel plots that take place simultaneously or successively" (Nikolajeva, 30). In such instances, pictures sometimes acquire a kind of symbolic notion with extra meanings and passages between temporal dimensions.

Narrative can jump back and forth between different times or can be cyclical. The juxtaposition of times in pictures is very unique for each specific case and is led by both the time of narrative and the artist's decision-making process regarding how and why time is to be presented. Then comes the question of how to arrange time in pictures when a circular narrative includes episodes from different centuries in which each temporal line has its own social and

²⁴⁹ Cf. Lotman, Y., "Semiotics of the space", (Lotman, v.1, 1992).

²⁵⁰ The following study presents a theory of how the temporal structure of narrative is experienced and divided into events in the reader's cortex, stored in long-term memory to be later retrieved, and how affects perception: Baldassano, Christopher, et al. "Discovering Event Structure in Continuous Narrative Perception and Memory." *Neuron* 95.3 (2017): 709,721.e5. Web. 6 Nov. 2019

²⁵¹ Cf. Lessing, Gotthold. *Laocoon*; Andrews, Lew. *Story and Space in Renaissance Art: The Rebirth of Continuous Narrative*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [England], New York, 1995.

cultural characteristics, ending in a carnivalesque finale (as in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*). Even more important would be the question of how one or other artistic decision will affect the reader's perception.

Unlike a verbal narrative text, images are disjunctive, and the reader must understand that there is a temporal and causal relationship between them, that an event in one image takes place before or after an event in another image and usually is connected to it by some form of cause-and-effect. The reader must bridge the temporal ellipses between images (Nikolajeva, 29-30).

Time in narrative can coincide with time embodied in the entire graphical arrangement of a book, the two times engaging each other in a kind of temporal dialogue. But one can build everything on contrasts. For example, we read about turbulent events where passions are running high, but the visual narrative in this part may slow down, become calm or almost static, transform into a sign or a symbol. Or, on the contrary, a given verbal phrase may be very laconic and succinct, but it can contain a powerful image, so the illustrator can extend the life of this image by enriching it with pictorial detail and extending its time frame. In this way, a short verbal image can find its relation with a corresponding visual image in a large two-page illustration. This principle of contrasts between inner and outer elements, mood and rhythm, everyday life and symbols, comedy and drama, irony and human souls, in other words, contrasts of form and content — can be borrowed from the world of theatre as conceptualized by Chekhov.²⁵² The Russian dramatist has characters on stage speaking a long, serious and dramatic monologue with heated emotions while doing with their hands something opposite in mood, like sitting on a chair, taking off a boot and shaking the sand out of it. In any event, whatever choice is made — either to follow the time and rhythm of the narrative in pictures or to build contrasts — this is done consciously and with the concrete goal of affecting the reading process.

The aesthetic power of the book is built on continuing movement — from page to page, from word to image, from image to another page with words and other graphic elements, from one title to another — and on the relations that grow within such movement, alternating with

²⁵² Cf. Shah-Azizova, T. *Polveka v teatre Chehova (A half century in Chekhov's theater)*, Progress: Moskva, 2011

fonts and margins.²⁵³ Every visual element becomes a constructive part “that can literally set the plot in a certain surrounding, but also convey narrative time,” when

page layout contributes to plot progression, through a sequence of individual panels, through a balance of verso and recto, and through a dynamic organization of a single image on a doublespread. [...] Words and images can enhance and complement each other in terms of plot [...]. The visual plot can start on the cover; it can also be developed on the title page and the endpapers; it can conclude on the back cover, which can also direct the reader back to the beginning of the story. In other words, the proairatic visual and multimodal code offers considerable further potential as compared to purely verbal (Nikolajeva, 31).

A book can be called a spatial and temporal representation of a verbal narrative which is perceived in time as we move through the pages. This movement is not mechanical but rather subordinated to a certain rhythm arranged by visual execution which builds our perception of the narrative (Favorsky, 1986:93). For Favorsky, in order to be truthful in pictures, the illustration needs to reflect the time of the narrative: not necessarily repeat the exact rhythmical organization of the verbal, but build consciously its counterpart by means of visual language. Casual placement of visual elements within the book leads to dissonance between the verbal and visual narratives and provokes the reader’s distraction or confusion.

The principle by which such movement of time can be built includes a variety of possibilities which are based on the logic of visual composition, explicitly presented in Favorsky’s lessons (1986, 1988). (examples of such relationships of verbal-visual time will be developed in detail in subsequent sections).

3. Symbolism of verbal and visual narration

As we read a text, our attention is constantly shifting in two directions: outward which leads outside of reading to our memory and associations, and inward which invites us to make sense of the verbal patterns formed out of words. “In both cases we deal with symbols, but when we attach an external meaning to a word we have, in addition to the verbal symbol, the thing represented or symbolized by it” (Northrop, 73). The symbols and associations created in reader’s

²⁵³ Favorsky (1988), for instance, refers often to the concept of movement in book design, when discussing its different aspects: a single letter and typography, illustrations, the space of pages, the relation of graphic elements, the shape and space, and so on.

mind are not only those intended by the writer but also constitute a series of signs that stand beyond the narrative. Such motifs of verbal structure, when transformed into visual signs, can also go in two directions: the symbolic signs that stand for a specific verbal passage, and the moving signs that are developed as we move through the book. We read the book, and therefore we move through physical visual space. Thus, the structure, shape, proportions, “weight” of pictures and “emptiness” of paper space, vertical and horizontal arrangement of that space – help to build the outer or moving symbolism that comes as associations from the outer direction of reading. But in the moment when we need to fix our attention on the inner direction, pause and reflect, here the static elements stand out — a vertical structure that stops the movement, and a picture opens up in our mind, containing its own details and symbols. So, “complex images compel the reader to stop and browse, creating a narrative pause. Here, young children show extreme competence, studying the images carefully, while adults, focusing on verbal codes, feel an urge to go further onto the next doublespread” (Nikolajeva, 31). When it comes to the symbolism of narration, it is here that the simultaneity of verbal-plus-visual perception occurs. This is the skill of readers to grasp meanings produced by the relations between words and pictures. “To extract meaning from the verbal text alone, which unfortunately is not unusual in educational and scholarly practice, is pointless” (Nikolajeva, 32). However, we should not forget that many contemporary books offer meaningless content accompanied by unimaginative pictures, so any attempt to find meaning beyond such representations is likely to fail. Then, “also seemingly realistic stories are open to symbolic interpretations, not least in the visual component of the narrative. [...] Imbalanced composition, color scheme, distorted perspective and other purely visual features amplify symbolic decoding. [...] To understand all these aspects, non-mimetic codes must be employed” (Nikolajeva, 37).

As in reading, so in visualizing, such two directions of understanding develop simultaneously. Since the notion of symbolism is individual for each literary work and each picture, I intend to deconstruct both concrete verbal passages and images so that these correspondences can be traced and grasped with nuances — as presented in the next chapters.

4. Levels of narration

A literary work generally contains different levels of narration and internal mechanisms of text composition. For example, the composition of Dostoevsky's novels is based on two or more contrasting stories that are merged by the principle of musical tonality – polyphony.²⁵⁴ The passages between different tonalities allow passages between different planes if we were to construct them in pictures. Or, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* has the main plot that narrates the story of Onegin and Tatiana, Lensky and Olga. Then come the descriptions of St. Petersburg, the parallel descriptions of county life and nature in different seasons which create moods and rhythmical organization. Then we have Pushkin's narrator, his thoughts, digressions. Then, in terms of extra themes, there is the relationship between fiction and real life, as well as the discourse about the high and low human personalities and social issues, as for example Tatiana's vulnerability and openness or Onegin's selfishness and vanity. These qualities extend beyond the characters, turning into a more generalized theme. The construction of different levels of narration, or plot lines, change the relationship between text and reality²⁵⁵; and the exchange of single elements in the novel can change the genre. For instance, in Bulgakov's *Theatrical Novel*, the conflict between the theater director (who suggests that the protagonist should kill himself with a dagger) and the author (who believes that he should shoot himself) leads to the creation of different plots and changes the level of conditionality: the dagger creates a theatrical-fake situation while the gun puts the same scene in the context of reality (Lotman, t.3, 1993:92). The change of a single detail can lead the plot lines in many directions.

Therefore, each of these lines or themes can be illustrated in a particular way involving specific methods appropriate for the logic of book illustration, which would lead to their concurrent unification into a single visual narrative paralleling the verbal domain. For example, Favorsky explains the construction of different levels of visual narrative by decomposing Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and finding ways of presenting the verbal planes differently in illustrations, but at the same time making them sound as an integral work (Favorsky, 1986: 108-115). The artist follows the same approach when illustrating Pushkin's *The Little House in Kolomna* where digressions become more important than the narration itself, the narration is reduced to an anecdote, on first glance, and a model of the novel's creation becomes the core

²⁵⁴ C.f. Bakhtin, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, chapter I.

²⁵⁵ Cf. Lotman, Y. "Sugetnoe prostranstvo russkogo romana 19 stoletija" [The plot space of the Russian novel of the 19th c], in (Lotman, t.3, 1993)

element of the work. Favorsky puts the plot line of the novel in full-page illustrations, but the episodes in pictures are intentionally casual, chosen by chance, as if debating with the constructive meaning expressed through the precise technique of woodcuts. This creates a tone of sly ambiguity. At the same time, the light linear drawings on the margins (as if in dialogue with Pushkin's own drawings on the margins of his manuscripts) meticulously, almost literally, translate the poetical metaphors onto a visual language — as if forgetting about their different nature — which represents the ironic, almost ridiculing intonation of Pushkin's style (Favorsky, 1986: 13-14, preface by E. Levitin).

Not every (contemporary) illustrator cares about levels of narration, even though this is as important as it is to know to read the text being illustrated. Such elaboration of additional layers/planes of visualizing the verbal, of course, slows down the artist's work but makes it complex. Those who do explore literary planes visually, are able to raise their work to the level of intermedial translation. In order to provide examples of how this method works and what effect it has on reading, I will proceed to a detailed analysis of both literary works and pictures, which will be developed in the next chapters.

5. Range and level of details

When it comes to the interpretation of texts by means of illustrations, the question is to what extent deviation from the plot is permitted, and to what extent there is an agreement between the style of text and style of images. There is probably no definitive answer to this question because the freedom of art has no limits. Given the dynamism of the artist's imagination, it is likely that during the passage from word to picture a new state is achieved. Visual harmony and the way it is linked to verbal harmony is possible because of the artistic violation of the order proposed by the text. Thus, if a given text does not mention a bird, an artist should still be able to create a bird in his illustration. This is because extra details are necessary for the creation of visual associations and the visual completion of the story.

At the same time, one of the main goals of an illustration is to conform to the level of accuracy, detail or abstraction given by the text: a drawing must not be precise if the text does not presuppose precision. In this connection, it is worth considering the diversity between the levels of abstraction in Gogol's and Calvino's texts. Gogol provides us with an immense

number of details and adjectives that describe the general setting, landscapes, people, their costumes, attributes. On the other hand, Calvino's concise descriptions, the sparing and selective usage of adjectives, as well as the order and connections of words, create impalpable images. Even if both Gogol and Calvino use the pictorial style of writing and both create impalpable images, their levels of *abstraction* stand on two opposite ends of such a continuum – the literary method that will find reflection in the illustrations.

In order to represent the notion of concreteness or abstractness inherent to the narrative, one may follow a variety of principles of picturing the verbal: to lengthen or to condense the verbal story, to simplify or to make the story more detailed and complex, to aim for abstraction or symbolism, to dramatize the visual effects, and so forth. Whatever approach is taken, it should always reach an equilibrium and harmony with the arrangement of time as discussed above. “The artist often simplifies the story by omitting various parts of it. He eliminates many of the details and concentrates on what he takes to be the essential feature of the story” (Hermerén, 59). As Hermerén explains, “it is difficult for an artist to avoid supplementing and specifying the text he is illustrating; the text almost always leaves a great deal up to the imagination”. I would add that an artist, in fact, should not avoid this since the development of a verbal story by means of another medium *always* implies the creation of a new artistic reality — as is discussed in different parts of this thesis — a parallel story, sometimes more detailed and extended, or sometimes abbreviated to a visual sign. Such an approach suggests two simultaneous but opposite actions with respect to the text:

On one hand, the artist simplifies the text and omits part of it. He does not try to represent everything that is mentioned in the text, and in this sense his picture ‘says’ less than the text.

On the other hand, he always adds to the text, and in that respect his picture ‘says’ more than the text. (Hermerén, 59)

What is meant by “simplifying” or “adding” visual elements to the text, should not be understood as a mechanical selection of things being represented, but an artistic interpretation of those verbal elements in relation to the time, rhythm, concreteness or abstraction of the verbal (for examples of such text-image relations see Part III). For instance, if one wants to avoid too many specifications and thought-out details, and instead leave a certain degree of conditionality or stylization, there are many ways to do so. The characters or other objects can be presented only as silhouettes or half-silhouettes, as in some [pictures by Heorhiy Narbut](#), i.e. the reader sees their contours which express a certain mood but not specific details. Drawn

characters can also turn their back upon the reader or stay in three-quarter profile from the back so that their portrait is always as if hidden from the reader, existing only in verbal description. Even when making frontal figures, illustrators can present them in a decorative or stylized way. Such characters remain non-concrete and unspecified with the help of style, technique of drawing, shadows, deformations, and so on. At the same time, the details of the environment or purely creative and interpretative elements, which do not exist in the verbal story but are born in the reader-artist's imagination, can take centre stage in pictures. This way, the picture acquires its own voice but still develops in dialogue with the verbal domain.

6. *Genre and "spirit" of the text*

Apart from the plot, rhythmical organization and levels of narration, how would we determine the "spirit" of Gogol's text? When using the term "spirit" of the text, I refer to the entire range of features, linguistic matters, arrangement of space and time, emotional impact on the reader, and many other nuances that go beyond words and, thus, cannot be expressed with words. The language, or *linguaggio* in Italian, means also style and tone of expressions and is also referred to the works of art as "the grammar" (e.g. the grammar of Caravaggio) that means capturing the core elements of author's individual characteristics – "spirit" – which distinct him from other artists or writers.

These trans-verbal nuances would account for key differences between the spirit of Gogol's and Dostoevsky's or Mayakovsky's texts. Neither realistic characters, nor the plot ensure the correspondence between text and illustration, but the depiction of a particular writer's spirit through the language of drawing makes possible the communication of a certain artistic value. This is why an illustrator is obliged to perform the job of a true translator, being flexible in styles and able to adapt his creative thought and craft to a particular writer. In this connection, the illustrator can have the ability to identify the key stylistic concept constituting the backbone or the main feature of a given narrative.

For instance, [M. Rylsky](#) explains this identification of a text's main feature by means of an example from poetry. When translating a poem into another language (or into illustrations in our case), whose main artistic-communicative tools are rhythms, sounds and so on, we need to care first of all about the main feature even if at the expense of certain images or logical

structure. On the other hand, when translating a logical poet, we need to reveal first of all his logical line, ignoring, if necessary, his rhythmical tonality and other formal aspects (Rylsky, 333). Any translation requires the conveying of the genre peculiarity of the original so important for a given work. Such genre features include: 1) the material covered (life material, ideological, etc.), 2) the author's position, 3) the arrangement and structure of words, 4) the form of the narration (Novikova et al., 5). Some texts in translation follow such features more accurately while others take advantage of more freedom. However, the structural characteristics of any genre function according to their own laws which will find their representation in pictures. Genre is always related with the *rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures* and with chronotopes, but the conformity occurs in different ways. For example, in lyrical poetry, a single episode or a mood can be described; in a novel there might be an account of the entire life of a man; in an epic the life of an entire nation is presented. The point is not a specific time period because time can be condensed, expanded, paused, moved to the future or to the past. An epigram can be linked to a particular time and a specific topic or case. In drama we have a cloistered space and limited timeframe where the speech of characters parallels their actions, and so forth. Thus, genre features include the chronology of the plot, the composition with its changes of time and place, grammatical and lexical structures — each of them having its particular functions and forms.

As is outlined in many materials dealing with the difficulties of literary translation, the key goal is to adapt the stylistics of a given writer to the nuances of another language into which the text is translated. Both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects are related to and reflect the genre-stylistic nature of a given text.²⁵⁶ In other words, these are the filters that establish one or another choice when translating. A wonderful example of such a key stylistic idea and the associated cultural knowledge underlying translated work is the Russian translation of the French film *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* (2008). Since the key comic feature of this film is based on the dialectal nuances of the northern region of France, the adaptation of such linguistic and cultural features is fundamental. I could not judge the English translation of this film (the subtitles that exist seem to add just some lisp effect: 'shtop' in place of 'stop', 'she' in place of 'see', etc.). But the Russian literary translation of the film, performed by Andrey Bocharov,

²⁵⁶ Cf. Venuti, Lawrence. *Translation Changes Everything: Theory and Practice*, Routledge, 2013.

Among the other aspects of translation, this book discusses such concepts as equivalence and reader reception, when translation is meant as an interpretation that has broad social effects.

represents what is really meant by linguistic and cultural adaptation: he merged modern Russian phrases with dialectal intonations, taking some words from other Slavic languages (Slovakian or Bulgarian or Old Slavonic). These words are still recognizable by modern Russians but create a comic effect because of their endings or seemingly diminutive form. So, without Bocharov's adaptation, if the translation had stuck as close to the original as possible, the entire meaning and beauty of the film would have been lost for the Russian-speaking audience.

This brings us back to Favorsky's articulation of the main goals of word-image interpretation. The discovery and identification of such a key generic and stylistic concept makes it possible to explore the boundaries of its stable/flexible features when an illustrator transforms them into a visual sign. Both word-to-word and word-to-picture translations are transmitted not only by transferring literal meaning "from one dictionary to another" but also "from one context to another" (Novikova et al., 38). When it comes to illustrating a given plot, a narrow approach to discourse as a carrier of information can lead to the loss of associative relationships which give the context different nuances. In other words, what is untranslatable on the level of words can be translated on the level of traditions, national and cultural features, structural and rhythmical characteristics, chronotopes, and so on. Altogether, this makes it possible for word-picture adaptation to become an act of creative interpretation.

Some artists have come close in their interpretations to the spirit of Gogol's narrative but ended up moving away from the plots, which is also one of the possible ways of word-picture interpretation. For example, the pictures by I. Prynishnikov, V. Makovsky, M. Mikeshin black-and-white illustrations, I. Kramskoy.

Six conceptual aspects can be applied to the process of pencil sketching — as part of slow and attentive re-readings — in order to reveal and determine creative ideas for an intermedial adaptation. This is meant to allowing the artist to materialize verbal images and build stylistically corresponding visual concepts. Even though this stage of work does not yet produce noticeable results (and, since this is unpaid within the industry, it is usually skipped), it prepares an important basis on which the final illustrations can be developed.

The next level of approaching the verbal is to determine the structural aspects of illustrating fiction which are related to the implementation of creative ideas, developed from the above-mentioned conceptual word-image relationships, by means of the technical features of visual language. This is the crucial point: the structural aspects of a book — from deciding what to depict and how, to developing the entire book design and to choosing the appropriate graphic-artistic techniques for illustrations — are all subordinated to the primary artistic ideas derived from conceptual elaboration, not vice versa. If one fails to do this, which could happen when the artist applies a favorite drawing technique and style without thinking much about the in-depth study of the primary source, the danger is the repetition of one's “unique” style — disconnected from the stylistics of a given narrative.

In terms of the structure of the entire book-object and the visual functionality of each element, I suggest drawing parallels with architecture whose aesthetic, conceptual, and functional aspects can be compared to the elements of a book-item and their conceptual functionality.²⁵⁷ In fact, architectural elements are sometimes “borrowed” from book design, e.g., certain reliefs on the surface of Saint Mark’s basilica in Venice, [Pluteo matronei](#) and [two peacocks](#) (Italy), [scenes on the doorway](#) of the Abbey Church of Sainte-Foy in Conques (France), the [tympanum of the Ely Cathedral](#) (England), and a variety of other architectural sculptures and carved ornaments²⁵⁸ featuring compositions framed with inscriptions and

²⁵⁷ Vitruvian characteristics include utility, strength, beauty, aesthetics, order, proportion, arrangement, and appropriateness for intended purposes. This can translate into principles of book formation, as taught by Vasil Chebanik at the Academy of Arts in Kyiv, 1996. Namely, when we are in front of a building façade with gates, we can already imagine what kind of decorations can be inside the building. The façade and the gates tell us whether we are in front of a medieval church, a renaissance palace, a castle, a wooden chapel or a county house, etc. The binding of a book is like the façade and gates of a building: both separate two spaces and two worlds — a big real, outer world and a small imaginary inner world. Once we are inside, in the entrance hall of a building, we get closer to its inner world, as it has some entourage: a hanger with clothes, an overcoat on it, mountain boots or ladies' shoes, bags, a chair, a doormat etc. This is like the title page of a book with its font design, some graphic elements and words that anticipate what will be on the next pages. In the same way we can compare the rooms of a house with book chapters and their content, and the windows with the illustrations of a book. The placement of the latter is carefully chosen, as such illustrations form the rhythmical movement of light (through a window) or images (alternating small and large illustrations) within the whole building or book structure. We can also draw an analogy between such elements as the back door (colophon of the book), a garden around a house (book jacket), a living room for meetings (frontispiece), and doors in front of each room (illustrations at the beginning of each chapter).

²⁵⁸ Cf. André Grabar, *Sculptures Byzantines de Constantinople*, Paris, v. I-II, 1963, 1976; Kirk Ambrose, Robert Maxwell, *Current directions in eleventh- and twelfth-century sculpture studies*, Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010

following the principles of book design. In this case, figures are different in scale,²⁵⁹ scenes are inserted one into another, and ornaments surrounding scenes are too large with respect to the figures and so seem to be heavy visually. Such features reflect the decorativeness and arrangement characterizing the layout of book pages, as for example in the case of *The Queen Mary Psalter*²⁶⁰ (e.g. folio 22v, 23r) where the structural arrangement of miniatures and ornaments are harmoniously balanced with texts and images and framed as on architectural reliefs.

This principle of stylization, images framed with ornaments, different scales of compositions, and decorativeness have passed through many centuries and mutated, reaching contemporary book design. One of such examples is new design developed from the *vayz* script, when the insertion of one letter into the space of other letter has become the main principle of logotypes and titles. Other features too have migrated from books to architecture or vice versa and have found their development in contemporary aesthetics.

The technical and visual principles of such structural elements (frontispiece, title page, pictures within a text, or two-page pictures and two-page design, endings, and so on) are not part of the present study.

These structural aspects of single illustrations, then, can be subdivided into: 1) portrait, 2) fragments and/or environment, and 3) mood.

1. Portrait

The visual sequence within the entire *space of a book* can be formed only out of a series of portraits. For instance, a kind of gallery was created by Agin for Gogol's characters, and engraved on wood by Boklevsky. The first D. Fedotov's edition is reproduced in a facsimile *One Hundred Four Drawings for the Poem of N.V. Gogol*, 1892 [ARCC: PG3332.M43.A32 1985].²⁶¹ The gallery of portraits includes pictures only with faces or only figures on a par with

²⁵⁹ The disproportion of figures with respect to each other within a single composition is related to their social status or hierarchy suggested by the biblical stories.

²⁶⁰ *The Queen Mary Psalter*, 1310-1320, London, British Library, MS Royal 2 B VII, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_2_B_VII

²⁶¹ Boklevsky, against Gogol's desire, had started to publish Agin's illustrations for *Dead Souls* without text; which later appeared as a folder with pictures in Fedotov's edition (a copy of which is now held at the ARCC).

the author's verbal portraits. They materialize from the text one after another, as if emerging from the pages, and flood the book with people who become recognizable and suddenly “alive.” The process of creating portraits for a novel is close to the practice of casting in the performing arts: before a final version of a portrait comes out, the artist-illustrator makes dozens of drawings in order to identify the closest match with the character — not only in terms of his physical appearance, but also mood, behaviour, choreography, and a whole emotional portrait. Such a character is going to be “animated” on the book pages. Thus, a good “casting” of the drawn characters, based on visual conformity with their verbal analogues, can ensure much of the book’s success. Also contributing to the success of such an illustration project is psychology and craft, i.e. the degree of accuracy and credibility of representation which is similar to an actor’s ability to play his part.

The verbal-visual interpretation of a character is analogous to what we see in the brilliant episode of Baricco’s theater monologue *Novecento*.²⁶² While playing the piano, he looks at the people who were entering a restaurant and improvises, as if describing their personalities with his music, because he knows how to “read people.” He pays attention to “the signs that people wear places, noises, smells, their land, their history ...”²⁶³ and then he plays the entire world with his piano. This theater monologue by Baricco becomes Tornatore’s film adaptation with Morricone’s music.²⁶⁴ In the film episode, which reflects the monologue section, *Novecento* re-invents all those strange passengers of the ship who are passing by his piano.

[Film: *The Legend of 1900*, episode in the film 1:13:05 — 1:16:00]

Novecento plays piano, rendering the character’s behavior in musical notes. The language that he uses is music, but it is so expressive and clear that we can write the entire biography of those people as another story based on his playing which becomes a little world in its own

The edition became very popular, was reprinted many times, increasing the influence of pictures on the reader’s reception of the novel. Later, K. Kuzminsky’s two books were published: *Artist-illustrator Boklevsky, his life and art* (1910), and *Agin, his life and art* (1913) // Tynyanov, Y. *Poetika. Istorij literaturi. Kino*, M., 1977, notes on pp.545-548.

²⁶² The protagonist, *Novecento*, is born on a ship and spends his entire life there, “The world, perhaps, he has never seen. But there were 27 years that the world has been passing by in this ship: and there were 27 years that he, on this ship, has been spying on it, and stealing its soul.” (The translation here and later is mine. “Il mondo, magari, non l’aveva visto mai. Ma erano ventisette anni che il mondo passava su quella nave: ed erano ventisette anni che lui, su quella nave, lo spiava. E gli rubava l’anima,” Baricco, 1994, p.33)

²⁶³ “i segni che la gente si porta addosso: posti, rumori, odori, la loro terra, la loro storia... Tutta scritta, addosso. Lui leggeva, e con cura infinita, catalogava, sistemava, ordinava... Ogni giorno aggiungeva un piccolo pezzo a quella immensa mappa che stava disegnandosi nella testa [...] la mappa del mondo intero,” same.

²⁶⁴ *La leggenda del pianista sull’oceano*, Medusa Film Fine Line Features: 1998, story by Alessandro Baricco, film by Giuseppe Tornatore, time frame of the episode: 1:13:05 — 1:16:00

right. This ingenious combination of moving picture and the musical depiction of the characters opens the spectator's imagination.

Not everything can be said in words, but one can play music or make a drawing instead. An emotion, an abstract idea, a desire, a creative impulse — these things, if converted into words, become too specific, too outlined and precise. So the word can stop an emotion from happening and interrupt it as soon as it becomes defined and labeled with a name, but sometimes there is no way to represent an experience verbally because each word and sign stands also for something else than itself. However, “signs [in a semiotic sense] take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects” (Chandler, 2). We are approaching here an opposite viewpoint in relation to the belief that a picture is more concrete than a verbal image. One may argue that music is not drawing, but one can superimpose one medium over another and see what happens. If we view an illustration as a melody that expresses emotion, such an emotion would resonate with the emotion expressed in the text. A good exercise to try this would be to listen to a melody and then draw it. The resulting picture would have the wide spectrum of emotions grasped from the music. But once you attempt to describe this picture in words, it immediately becomes flat and monosemantic.

[...] the frame of meaning in a visual depiction is restricted, when a verbal comment is tied to the picture. [...] as soon as it has been interpreted and given a name, a picture's associative qualities are no longer a faithful rendering of the artist's express will. [...] if the artist wants to direct the reading of his picture, he often has to use verbal means, i.e. to attach a title to his work or to include words in the very picture. The verbal language is thus essentially different from the visual language. [...] Pictorial art expresses something that is difficult to express verbally; it transmits knowledge existing on a non-verbal level.²⁶⁵ (Lund, 26)

In some cases, an illustrator can do the same experiment by taking verbal metaphors as a melody that gives him a creative impulse and representing them with his own language.

In order to create a gallery of portraits in the course of an entire novel, one needs to be a portraitist, banal as it may sound, like Novecento in music. “A good writer is always a people watcher,”²⁶⁶ says Judy Blume, and so is a good illustrator-portraitist. Not every artist has the ability, apart from being extremely attentive to details and noticing person types, also to

²⁶⁵ Interestingly, this has been repeatedly expressed by scholars in arts (H. Lund, pp.25-30 provides a brief overview of such studies) but opposed by scholars in literature who stand for the dependence on the verbal.

²⁶⁶ Judy Blume, Interview with Scholastic, Online: <<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/judy-blume-interview-transcript>>

express this through facial shape, expression, look, gait, body posture, hairstyle, gesture, etc. The gifted artist must be able to “play” the entire melody on a book's pages, using pen and ink instead of words or notes. This is subtle psychological work in combination with the skills of a master draftsman. An example of such a genius portraitist is the Danish cartoonist and illustrator [Herluf Bidstrup](#). Just a couple of lines of his drawing produce striking impressions and present a wide range of emotionally based facial expressions that cannot be described in words — at least not as succinctly as he does with lines. This is a reversed version of the foregoing: just as not every text can be illustrated, not every illustration can be described verbally, even if Bidstrup is a genius of a very specific subcategory of illustration, the caricature, when expression happens through the overload of exaggeration. The artist takes the most expressive details of a character and increases them several times. When a writer (such as Gogol) uses the grotesque style as the main principle in presenting his characters, a series of visual portraits drawn on the basis of Gogol’s verbal descriptions cannot be seen as their “realistic” representation, but should rather be *read* as a particular artistic way of seeing and thinking, which involves the combination of the verisimilitude and the fantastic.

This genre of illustration, for instance, was extensively used by one of the most influential 19th-century periodicals,²⁶⁷ the British magazine *Punch* [ARCC: AP4.P8 V.1-27 1841-1854], in which the works of the greatest cartoonists were published. The drawings — by their unpredictable scenes, comic physiognomy, precision of detail and the level of “fantastic realism” so to speak — represent a leading style of the 19th-century illustration.

The decision whether to represent characters or not, and if so, then to what extent they would be detailed or recognizable, is a matter of the personal preferences of an artist. When making such a decision, however, one should clearly understand the consequences – the principle that leads back to the relations of time and range of details.

2. *Fragments and/or environment*

The book artist shows the reader some fragments taken from the narrative — short pieces that he is illuminating on the surface of the textual space, leaving unseen the other elements

²⁶⁷ For the history of the journal see: “How Punch Magazine Changed Everything” in *Illustration Chronicles*, online < <http://illustrationchronicles.com/How-Punch-Magazine-Changed-Everything>>; *Punch* magazine volumes online: <<https://sites.google.com/site/punchvolumes>>

which will be perceived only in verbal form. The other way of illustrating a story is to represent the environment described by the text: household attributes, fragments of furniture, decorations or types of clothes, countryside landscape, street lamps, cobblestone paths and so forth. The characters inhabiting such a world are not described visually but only verbally. What happens then is that the reader from the first pages is immersed in the atmosphere created by the artist, so all the events and characters will now be perceived against such a background. Of course, a text also has detailed descriptions of the environment, but they elude the reader — especially if the reading process is relatively quick — the descriptive passages do not remain in the reader's inner gaze for long. As the reader moves through the pages, the gaze is focusing on those details that are being read at the present moment while the descriptions from previous pages remain in the past. Consequently, illustrations of this type help the reader to stay constantly within the atmosphere even when verbal descriptions yield to action sequences and details temporarily disappear from the narration.

Such a type of illustration allows the characters to exist, to perform, to move as if they were in 'free flight'. Their postures, faces and general appearance are not fixed by the drawing, i.e., they are not immobile, and therefore can freely move in the reader's gaze. But they are still imagined on a detailed background provided in the pictures.

3. Mood

The illustrations can represent a "mood" transmitted from text and correspond to the text on an emotional level rather than a semantic one. For example, if a text narrates an argument or disagreement between characters, and the picture along with such an episode depicts a landscape with gusty wind, inclined trees, rain, lighting..., what happens at the junction of such a text and picture is that the 'storm' in the character's relations, conveyed by the text, is increased doubly or triply thanks to the 'tempest' on the picture. Such illustrations affect the reader on an associative level. This method is particularly relevant, for example, when an artist is illustrating poems or texts based on paradoxes — it can turn out that there is nothing to represent except mood.

But what will happen if there are actually things to portray, i.e., if the text has a plot, realistic details and concrete figures, but the accompanying picture is still a mood-transmitting

one? Or, alternately, the picture combines both concreteness, following the text, and associative thought? Then the illustration gains several levels and affects different categories of perception. The reader then would seek the understanding of visual sign systems, as the work of emotions and feelings opens the perception of mood. Furthermore, it can be mobilized indirectly because the text can produce sounds in the mind during the reading process. Thus, an illustration is not silent, too, and has its own rhythmicity, tonality, melody and verbal meaning.

From these three basic principles — portrait (or figure), environment, and mood — all the other variations and types can be developed, built on one another, combined, growing into branches similar to a family tree. These are in a sense visual, semantic, emotional and symbolic extra constructions implemented by means of specific techniques and artistic methods. All this amounts to the meaning behind the intentional construction aimed to present the text in a certain way.

These are, therefore, rules of interpretation applicable to numerous texts.

When both conceptual and structural aspects of future illustrations are developed, one may think about personal artistic choices, superimposing them over the well-constructed basis of intermedial translation. There could be a number of possibilities representing an artist's hand and style and merging with the stylistics of a narrative. This is the moment in which the artist's voice stands out, adding to the pictures some of his personality. Examples therefore include but are not limited to:

1. *Fidelity*: the illustrator uses a realistic style.
2. *Imaginativeness*: the illustrator freely interprets scenes in his own way.
3. *Accuracy*: the illustrator aims for the most literal, narrow interpretation of the a given scene.
4. *Freeform*: the illustrator takes at times wild liberties with the text in order to capture the heart of the text's meaning (cf. Ralph Steadman's illustrations of Hunter Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*).
5. *Historicity*: the illustrator pays close attention to the original setting of the text, even if it's fantastic (if illustrating a medieval fairy tale, the illustrator alludes to or replicates the medieval style of illustration based on German folklore [if it's Germanic])

6. *Anachronism*: the illustrator deliberately rejects the author's time period in representing the story and shifts the narrative to a different period, country, ethnicity, culture.
7. *Cultural or Ethnic likeness*: the illustrator adheres to the author's cultural matrix; etc.

At this point, the circle closes: these personal artistic choices are meant to integrate the time period of the illustrator into the entire book project, the latter being thereby completed.

From the above discussion of the conceptual aspects of illustrating fiction, it should be clear that a professional illustrator is (or should be) trained in recognizing such nuances in a literary work in order to be able to transform them into their visual counterparts. Failure to do so leads to the impoverishment of a given text which occurs as a result of a superficial representation of the plot and an artist's stylistic self-repetition. Therefore, neither the range of details in pictures, nor the professional execution of drawings is the factor that makes a book illustration resonate with a given narrative, but only the development of such complex word-image correspondences.

These structural aspects, as well as personal artistic choices form the basis of ways of arranging visually and implementing technically such word-image correspondences.

Nevertheless, the evaluation criteria, or artistic value, of an artwork have always been very blurred.

The assessment of an artwork can be influenced by originality, functional excellence, exemplarity for its category, art historical significance, distinguished authorship, difficult execution and timely content. Even if one could ground each of these individual dimensions of aesthetic merit in the senses, it is far from clear how they get unified into a coherent category. What makes a certain piece a good work of art? The concept that we apply these cases might be termed 'artistic goodness'. Here, the sensory element seems even less suitable to capture the intension of the evaluative concept and any unification outside the realm of the abstract hardly achievable. Such considerations point to the conclusion that the discussed aesthetic concepts are at least, in part, abstract. (Fingerhut, Prinz, 2)

The question about the correct or incorrect interpretation of a fiction text is always risky and inappropriate, since each interpretation implies the emphasis of some elements at the expense of others, and such decisions are made by a particular artist and therefore present *his*, not

someone else's, range of creative thought.²⁶⁸ The involvement (in the process of artistic interpretation) of one's creative individuality with his unique "physical and spiritual existence" (Benjamin, 1999:70) and artistic approach suggests that each given text can be visualized, interpreted and represented in many different ways. Moreover, we should keep in mind that *any* analysis or critical study of pictures — and to a greater extent pictures that illustrate fiction narratives — will always remain on the level of either descriptions of what one sees, personal assumptions/conclusions made from the perspective of a particular viewer-critic,²⁶⁹ or, comparisons between verbal and visual images. The latter also offers the possibility of interpreting images but does not amount, of course, to the revelation of the artist's intentions.²⁷⁰ This is due, as has been mentioned, to the impossibility of decoding exactly what an artist means in his pictures, i.e., to create and to perceive are two opposite, non-mirrored processes, and both are affected by current critical trends in conjunction with one's logic and individual capacities as one applies "a set of standards developed essentially from personal experience" (Sporre, 24).

"In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful. Not only is any reference to a certain public [...] misleading, but even the concept of an 'ideal' receiver is detrimental in the consideration of art" (Benjamin, 1999:70). On the other hand, in reference to literary texts, Wolfgang Iser and the critical stream of Reader Response Theory, propose the idea that every literary text tends to create the image of an implicit reader, to whom "implicitly" the text itself addresses, in order to exist semantically as "that" text and not another.

At this point, I would like to discuss the correspondence between various given/new visual interpretations and a writer's poetics. This approach is suggested by certain literary critics with

²⁶⁸ "It would be dangerous to underestimate the freedom of the artist and the role of creative invention, [since a story] always leaves a certain amount of freedom for the imagination of the artist. The text does not specify all characteristics of the acting persons, nor all their gestures or facial expressions, nor the details of their dresses. Moreover, an artist can choose between representing different moments of an action, or a situation from various angles, and so forth" (Hermerén, 75).

²⁶⁹ Cf. Dewey suggests that "a) appreciation [of art] is an active process on the part of the viewer, and b) each individual responds uniquely to art" // Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: Minton, Balch (quoted also in Seabolt, 47)

²⁷⁰ Eco, for example, makes a distinction between "intentio auctoris" or the author's intention, and "intentio operis" or the intention of the text. Eco gives value to the latter because talking about the intention of the author evokes a somewhat indistinct dimension, suggesting that the will or psychic life of an author is a certifiable and legible reality. But how can we have access to the mental states (therefore to the intention) of an author, if not through what the text tells us, or through what Eco calls "intentio operis"?

respect to theater adaptations (Mann, 2003), as well as by the art critics with respect to word-image adaptations in the case of books (Favorsky, 1988). However, this does not involve explicit criteria since pictures normally have more than one meaning and can be understood in several ways. “It may then be difficult to determine exactly the similarities between the picture and the text” (Hermerén, 72). In response to Hermerén’s solution regarding determining such criteria — those which make a distinction between the pictures that illustrate a text and the pictures that are inspired by the text but do not illustrate it — I would suggest that the conceptual aspects of approaching illustration-making could help us come closer to the analysis of pictures and see whether and in what way they *interpret* the text or *correspond* to its verbal stylistics. The hope is that, when attempting to look at an illustration in the light of such aspects, we can understand something about its creation that we did not know before. A merely descriptive analysis, in most cases, is not sufficient and needs “the final step — making value judgments, [when two characteristics] apply to all artworks: they are crafted, and they communicate something to us about our experience as humans. Making a judgment about the quality of an artwork should address each of these” (Sporre, 27). While art history is a body of knowledge, “*appreciation of art*, both affective and cognitive, engages emotions and feelings about art while [enjoying art], knowing and understanding how it develops”; and therefore aesthetics and art history aim to record the visual arts, “incorporating information, interpretations, and judgements about art objects, artists, and conceptual influences on developments in the visual arts” (the National Committee for Standards in the Arts, 1994, quoted in Seabolt, 45).

Thus, keeping in mind that criticism can sometimes be frustrating, “because there may not be any ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answer [...], and because the process itself is often more important than the result” (Sporre, 24), we can attempt to approach pictures with the following considerations:

- 1) Tracing and reconstructing such verbal-visual correspondences, as above.
- 2) Considering the range of visual associations and possible meanings that they create, following Goethe’s approach and answering three questions: What is the artist trying to say? Does he/she succeed? Was the artwork worth the effort? (quoted in: Sporre, 27), and therefore focusing on the artist’s communication.
- 3) Analyzing artistic excellence, invention and originality.

- 4) Looking at the artist's expressive language, including visual logic, balance of the compositions and technical/craft execution of the ideas. To make this judgment, we need to understand the artistic technique that was chosen by a given artist.
- 5) Examining the artwork through contextual events and circumstances in which the work was created.
- 6) Looking at the book-item in terms of its functionality and typographic qualities.
- 7) Seeking to understand what effect this has on the way we perceive the illustrated text.

Conclusion: The Definition of Illustration

Given the above discussion, it is now time to articulate a definition of book illustration and to establish what the role of the illustrator is in terms of word-picture adaptation (for the common dictionary definition see note 3).

Illustration-making is the ability to adapt one's creativity and craft²⁷¹ to *any* sort of text whereby the latter is "translated" into the language of pictures. This implies precision and method in the process of intermedial adaptation, i.e., a logical system that has its rules to which creativity, associations, imagination and improvisation are subordinated.

Not all illustrators who take on the task of illustrating a literary text are aware of and follow the fundamental principle: to build a creative and stylistic *correspondence* to the text rather than a simple explanation of the plot with pictures. Ideally, each successive book project with pictures implemented by the same artist would follow different approaches suggested by different texts.

It is also important to consider the degree of deviation from the verbal and the range of creative word-picture transformations. To what extent is digression permissible without the loss of connection with a text? Where is the limit which, once overstepped, prevents a picture from being an illustration?²⁷² The boundary between an illustration and a "based on" picture is very

²⁷¹ The word-picture interpretation is a skill that can be learnt, including the capacity to think visually, to improvise, i.e. to create spontaneously and without repetitions, and to implement the ideas using one's craft training. It takes a lot of time to learn, this is true, but this is a possibility for everyone which would remain in one's mind and can be applied in many fields regardless the current styles, market trends or employment.

²⁷² Hermerén provides some examples of both options: when the illustration becomes a physical part of the text, as from examples of medieval codex reproducing a bestiary, and when the pictures are not parts of what they intend to illustrate, as in case of Odilon Redon's art (Hermerén, 59-65), and then the literary and scientific texts that inspired many artists who created their visual transformations which cannot be defined as book illustrations. From here, Hermerén distinguishes two different tasks: one is the variety of possibilities to illustrate texts, and another is

thin and could not be drawn specifically and univocally. This is due to both the unpredictable nature of creativity on the one hand (as above), and to the variety of perceptual capacities with respect to a creative work, on the other. The unpredictability of creative thought guiding the artist's hand is a feature of illustration that takes us back to the example of Pushkin's *Little Tragedies*, its interpretation by Smoktunovsky, and the idea that an artist can perform his part only when a given text, meant to be illustrated, leaves something unspecified. Still, we can recognize many pictures inspired by a literary work (where a text served as a starting point), but without the *intention* to illustrate it. This is the case because such pictures clearly do not follow the rules of intermedial adaptation and interpretation. Therefore, they are created without the intention to affect the reader's perception and to make him think of that text in a specific way.

For this reason, to illustrate also means to respect the boundary of intermedial adaptation and not to overstep the permissible limits of interpretation. Thus, the aim is to create in the spirit of artistic interpretation and, simultaneously, to follow the rules as described in *conceptual aspects* in order to reach those verbal-visual relationships.

The role of the illustrator working on adult fiction, consequently, is not to explain a given text with pictures, nor to distract or limit the reader's perception, nor to present one's own style in a manner that is totally disconnected from the literary features of the text, but rather to offer an alternative way of reading and perceiving the narrative by building creative word-picture relations and stylistic conformity between the two media.

the way or ways how art historians make those distinctions (p. 70), i.e. the different processes of creation and perception. Hermerén suggests a number of possible explanations of why a picture deviates from the text it illustrates: the influence of contemporary pictorial traditions, changes of fashion, misunderstanding of the text by the artist, or the desire to add the elements not presented in the text (p. 75).

Part II

Gogol's and Calvino's Pictorial Writing

Introduction

II.1. The fantastic

II.2. Structure

II.3. Visualization that precedes "painted" writing

II.4. The levels of visibility vs invisibility

II.5. Illustrations

Conclusion

Introduction

I would now like to return to the observations expressed in the beginning: the same work in any field would be received from two totally different perspectives when viewed by an academic researcher and by a professional who works in the field – the former might consider the work from a theoretical standpoint and stop there while the latter will see the applicability of conclusions in practice. Even though I use different theories to discuss pictures and books, I would position myself more as a professional than a theoretician. In this respect, when approaching the task of comparing Gogol's and Calvino's pictorial style of writing, I have been constantly asking myself what can be done beyond a mere comparison. Does the purpose of comparing their respective narratives consist in generating a theoretical conclusion? How could such research be used in practice? In other words, in order to make this work meaningful (for myself) and somehow applicable, I have had to find a reason why at all I should compare anything that for now does not lead to any practical implementation. Therefore, the purpose of this part is to develop a theoretical study that would turn a comparison of the narrative styles of these two writers into a background against which an artist could create visual interpretations. The point here is to explain how literary analysis can find its visual counterpart on different levels: pictorial narration, fantastic images, and models of visibility vs invisibility in created

images. The hope is that the outcomes of such elaboration would lead to a revelation about the logic of intermedial adaptation and constructive features of both verbal and graphic components of a book-object.

In scholarship, a comparative study on the relationships of pictorial writing and the fantastic in Gogol's and Calvino's poetics does not exist yet (except for A. Mario's short essay²⁷³). Moreover, we do not know of any research on intermediality dealing in detail with text-picture translations based on Gogol's narratives and pictures that illustrate his works.²⁷⁴ Intermediality (mostly book illustrations, but also film and theater adaptations) presents an important paratextual context that integrates with Gogol's poetics, as dozens of artists have interpreted visually his stories for almost two centuries. There are some studies on the book covers of Calvino's works.²⁷⁵

Even though these two writers are completely different in terms of their thematic concerns, periods, social and cultural backgrounds and, first and foremost, artistic styles, I find their similarity in the fundamental nature of their poetics: both Gogol and, at least in part, Calvino

²⁷³ Anna Mario, in her *Italo Calvino: Quale autore laggiù attende la fine?*, 2015, devotes a short chapter to reconstructing a historical sketch on various Gogolian publications in the Italian language, and proposes a brief but important analysis of conformity between Gogol's *Evenings* and Calvino's *Se una notte*, in terms of their narrative elements.

²⁷⁴ The existing studies follow the historical approach and focus on the technical/artistic descriptions of visual series that illustrate Gogol's stories, but they do not come to the analysis of mechanisms of word-picture relations. The historical studies, bibliographical systematization and stylistic periodization of the visual adaptations on Gogol's works have begun long ago and include not only published books with illustrations but also *stankoviy* paintings and drawings based on Gogol's works, pieces of handwritten calligraphy or single illustrations. The most recent studies include: G. Holodnih, "Bibliographirovanie ilustrazij", *Bibliografij i knigovedenie*, n.1 (2015): 34-41; G. Holodnih, "Bibliografirovanie ilustrativnih materialov gogoliani", *Bibliografij*, n.2 (2014): 112-119; I. Sergeeva, *Ukazatel ilustrirovannih proizvedenij Gogolj 1846-1952*, in addition to L. Melnikova's dissertation (LGU, Leningrad, 1955); Sin He Cho *Interpretazii proizvedenij N.V. Gogolj v rossijskoj kniznoj ilustrazii XIX-XX vv.*, a dissertation, Moskva: Russ. Gosud. Gumanit. Univ., 2011. Sources that appeared before 1952 are listed in note 1, in: Korostin, Sternin, p.884-5: The earliest overview of visual materials belongs to P. Efremov, "Portreti Gogolja i risunki k ego sochinenijm", *Russkaj starina*, n.5 (1878): 157-158; and the additions by the same author in *Russkaj starina*, no.9 (1879): 172-176; N. Sobko, *Drevnja i novaja Rossija*, n.7 (1878): 259-260. In 1882, S. Ponomarev's review appeared, "Pamjati Gogolja. Materialy dlja bibliografii o nem", that described the materials for bibliography, in: *Izvestija istor.-filol. instituta v Nezine*, t.VII, and as a separate edition, Kiev: 1882; F. Vitberg wrote the fullest for the period reference list "Ukazatel ilustrazij k sochinenijam Gogolja", *Literaturnij Vestnik*, 1902, t.III, kn.1, p.92-103. A brief article "Gogol v zhivopisi" by K. Kuzmiskiy, in: *Gogol. Sochinenija*, St.Pet., 1915, p.11. A more extended study *Illustratory Gogolja*, Kiev: 1927, written by A. Ivanova-Artyuhova, but with some errors of names. L. Dintses's article about the illustrations in: *Gogol. Materialy i issledovanija*, t.II, M.-L., 1936, p. 592-596; as well as Dintses's article on the pre-revolution illustrations in *Geroi Gogolja v isobrazitelnom iskusstve*, L., 1937. And, finally, a meticulous list of illustrations in *Opisanie rukopisej i izobrazitelnih materialov Pushkinskogo Doma*, vip.1, Gogol, M.-L. 1951, p.88-128.

²⁷⁵ Letizia Modena, *Italo Calvino's Architecture of Lightness*, Routledge: 2011; M. Barenghi, G. Canova, B. Falcetto, ed., *La visione dell'invisibile*, Mondadori, Milano: 2002

are writers of fantastic literature grounded in *pictorial writing* with strong emphasis on the visual. Not all fantastic fictional worlds are saturated with the visual as much as the creations of these two authors. I am not considering such aspects of their creative realms as the function of each pictorial image within the whole structure of a given work, but rather looking to discover the nature of their creativity, their ways of pictorial thinking, and when and how a visual mental image emerges and transforms into a verbal story. This is particularly interesting for the understanding of the genesis of an actual illustration, whereby a verbal description derived from a vision-based image goes through a kind of reversed process and becomes a picture. In a way, we are dealing with the embodiment of the abstract where the abstract already provides the template for this phenomenon. The artist appears to be given certain guidelines a priori and, even though free in his creativity, collaborates with the author more closely than would otherwise be the case. The result is a perfect "marriage" of the verbal and the visual domains.

The illustrations taken as the examples of intermedial adaptation of Gogol's and Calvino's narratives were created many decades after the writers' lifetime and represent the contemporary glance on interpreting the author from the past.

II.1. The fantastic

Let us begin by establishing the theoretical parameters of the fantastic as an artistic method: both the possible structure of the fantastic in a literary work and methods of its perceptual recognition. Todorov provides us with different definitions stated by different authors, the sum of which suggests that the fantastic in literature implies a certain type of artistic imagery based on the shifts or combinations of the "possible" and the "impossible", where by the latter goes beyond the acceptable norms of the "subjective" picture of the real world. These notions are visually present in the reader's receptive gaze, i.e., the fantastic implies a creative-receptive experience of the borders between possible and impossible worlds which are created by means of deforming the conditions of the real world. "[T]he fantastic is always linked to both fictional and literal meaning. They are therefore necessary conditions for the existence of the fantastic" (Todorov, 75).

The weirdness of fantastic images and sounds in a work might constitute the strongest final chord of an image (Mann, 1966:94), which provides a reason to seek in real life those patterns that underlie the comparison of the real and the fantastic. The mixture of real and fantastic elements — as a starting point of creative action — can lead to different results, exemplified by Gogol’s and Calvino’s respective narratives which at the same time have comparable features. Gogol is inspired by a very palpable reality which turns out to be non-representable realistically while Calvino’s fictional world elements come from an immaterial and abstract imagination and are also non-representable in visual terms.

Gogol’s real-fantastic transformations lead, in many cases, to grotesque images and form what is broadly discussed in literary critique under the umbrella term “the fantastic in grotesque images”. In this sense, the grotesque can be defined as one of the motifs of the fantastic represented through hyperbolized reality, i.e. where the narrative creates the so-called realistic grotesque. Nevertheless, the grotesque is not limited to hyperbolized or distorted images or caricatures but also implies the creation of strange, unnatural forms verging on the fantastic.²⁷⁶ Thus, the medieval representations of beasts with fantastic heads, transformations of animals into humans and into decorative motifs²⁷⁷ can be considered as the cradle of what is recognized as grotesque art today. The definition of the grotesque that I will rely on is broadly — the combination of elements that are not normally combined in real life. And in more narrow terms, the grotesque usually features the violation of the integrity of the body, e.g., body parts are removed or attached to places where they are not supposed to be. Or the body is penetrated, turned inside out, opened up and generally distorted in ways which often produce an unsettling emotion in the observer. Gogol’s iconic tale *The Nose*, where a civil servant’s nose is detached from his face and goes on an adventure, is perhaps the most striking example of the grotesque in Russian literature.

In Gogol’s narratives, strange events occur, but the reader has difficulty distinguishing what he sees in reality from what his imagination sees in the text: the level of credibility of fantastic images is extraordinary. Todorov views the *marvelous* as a genre in which the laws of reality must be broken without a naturalistic explanation (Todorov, 41). Following his observations on

²⁷⁶ This is because the term derives from *le grotte* (of a cave), and initially, since the end of the 15th century, meant mysterious and fantastic paintings of ancient Roman decorative art rediscovered in Rome on the walls of caves; *Online Etymology Dictionary* <https://www.etymonline.com/>.

²⁷⁷ Cf. A detailed and comprehensive study on all possible types of beasts in medieval fantastic art: Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Il Medioevo fantastico. Antichità ed esotismi nell’arte gotica*, Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 2006

the relations between the real and the illusory, Todorov suggests that Gogol's *The Nose* is situated both within the marvelous and allegory. The former notion finds its representation through the story of a nose that detaches itself from its owner's face, becomes a person, lives an independent life, and then returns to its place. The latter notion, that of allegory, is presented through the placement of the word "nose" in a context where it acquires a proper name, Mr. Nosov (in Russian something like "Mr. McNose"), while its noseless owner is surrounded by detailed descriptions of St Petersburg's life. "The reader is thus given some reason to wonder if, elsewhere too, the *nose* might not have a different meaning from its literal one [...]. Since the supernatural elements [do not] evoke a universe different from our own, we are tempted to search [for] an allegorical interpretation for them" (Todorov, 72). However, there are factors that contradict the qualities of allegorical meaning, where "the author addresses the reader directly, rendering explicit the reader's function, which is inherent in the text, and thereby even facilitating the appearance of an allegorical meaning. But at the same time, what he asserts is that this meaning cannot be found" (p.73).

This becomes clear when Gogol's narrator discusses the advantages and disadvantages of being without nose, rendering it impossible to find an allegoric meaning and attributing the literal meaning to the supernatural elements. "On this level, *The Nose* becomes a pure incarnation of the absurd, of the impossible [...]. What Gogol asserts is, precisely, non-meaning" (Todorov, 73), when the only impression of an allegoric meaning is created. As is noted in Todorov's and Mann's studies, Gogol's *The Nose* anticipated the 20th-century literature of the supernatural and of the absurd. Researchers particularly like to compare Gogol's and Kafka's mysticism and absurd realms. In the first drafts of *The Nose* everything strange is justified by a dream, but in the final version, Gogol removed this explanation. The result is a completely autonomous fantastic domain where the impossible just "is." The coup made by Gogol consists in imbuing every-day, mundane reality with the fantastic with no explanation or motivation, whereby the fantastic is expressed through a particularly Gogolian, chatty style of narration, as well as the actions and the manner of the characters' speech. The narrator of *The Nose* sounds on the one hand as he were relating an ordinary story and yet introduces impossible elements as if they were matter-of-fact details, occasionally admitting that the events are indeed very strange. This is very important for Kafka's works too where his fantastic is dissolved in the everyday life (Mann, 2009). If we recall the above-mentioned broad

definition of the grotesque as the combination of elements that are normally not combined, the narrative style in Gogol's work is in itself grotesque.

Vinogradov's chapter entitled "The Naturalistic Grotesque" (Vinogradov, 1976:5-44) discusses Gogol's *The Nose* from many angles: plot structure, the genre of the fantastic grotesque, psychological motivation, the development of literary motifs on "nosology" in the periodicals of 1820s-30s, widely spread anecdotes and epigrams about surgical operations and cut-off or baked noses, i.e. the elements that formed the background of Gogol's story. Nasal motifs are also present implicitly in certain characters from Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanika* (henceforth *Evenings*) where their portraits and habits appear to be related to their attitude towards their noses. However, the world of fantastic nonsense derives from the semantic and syntactic relations of words, rather than from people's actions or things. In other words, the writer departs from his language and constructs a new logic of things: the result is not the construction of words, but the adaptation of meaning to linguistic features (L. Spitzer's "Motiv und Wort", quoted in: Vinogradov, 1976:23) where the illogical part itself becomes the creative method. The common associations and connections between facts and words that express these facts are intentionally broken. This is exemplified by "impossible" detail of the Nose's means of locomotion in *The Nose*. When the nose detaches itself from its owner's face and flees, he takes carriages, walks into a cathedral and talks. But the question of whether the nose has legs or a mouth to achieve these actions is left unanswered. Thus, the Nose appears to exist, in a sense, on a purely linguistic level — with no visualizable counterpart in (fictional) reality.

Therefore, Gogol's fantastic images emerge and function as a result of deforming and hyperbolizing reality and inverting accepted associations between the real and the fantastic. This allows the author to implement the idea that reality is "turned inside out", and the fictional characters who lead society are a natural result of this "inversion". The presence of the unrealistic opens the floodgates and allows chaos into the fictional world and the narrative, which results in the absurd grotesque — a subgenre of the grotesque. Moreover, apart from such inversions, Gogol's creative approach in portraying characters is often conceived on the basis of contrasts between real images and the grotesque, on the transmutations of living characters into dead ones, and vice versa, on the 'shifting' of temporal dimensions, and on the connections of incompatible things, resonating with Eisenstein's principle of montage. Thanks to such connections and shifts, a third meaning is born, resulting in symbolic visual pictures

constructed by the verbal and then transitioning into a possible visual interpretation. I would like to explore in detail such real-fantastic shifts using the example of Gogol's Ukrainian tales in which fantastic-gothic images are fused with national customs and legends, creating therefore a kind of softened gothic anomalies with emphasis on a "fantastic reality". More precisely, my interest lies not in the depicted objects themselves, but rather in the method Gogol uses to present the fantastic and his pictorial style of writing. The systematic analysis of his styles will then be viewed in comparison with Calvino's methods of representing the fantastic.

II.2. Structure

On the level of structure, Gogol's *Evenings* and Calvino's *The Invisible Cities* follow the principle of a series: a compositional method in which the outline itself allows to create a situation that can continue infinitely. Such an outline is exemplified in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, where people gather in a specific place and can remain there as long as they need, which allows to add an infinite number of stories. Pushkin creates a story collection entitled *The Belkin Tales*, in which a composition is built in such a way that a narrator tells us at the beginning that he has gathered and written the oral tales, so his relation to literature is ostensibly minimal as the stories present life as is. Thus, this structure allows for the addition of an infinite number of stories. Gogol (in the same year as that of the publication of *The Belkin Tales* and without knowing about Pushkin's work²⁷⁸) uses in his *Evenings* the same principle: Rudy Panko says at the beginning that he is retelling someone else's stories and introduces 4 narrators for different stories. Even though there is a central episode, and all the stories are located in a specific place and represent a specific time period, the structure as a whole leaves the possibility of an infinity as the stories can continue ad infinitum.²⁷⁹ The structure of Calvino's novel, even though the work has a symmetrical pattern, also creates a situation of

²⁷⁸ Pushkin's novel *The Belkin Tales* is written in the autumn 1830, published in 1831 (Tomashevsky's commentary for ПСС), Gogol's series *Evenings* is written in 1829-1832, the first part is published in 1831.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Vinogradov, V.V., "Etudi o stile Gogolj" (Sketches about Gogol's style), in: Vinogradov. *Poetica russkoy literaturi*, Moscow: Nauka, 1976, pp.228-366. <http://febweb.ru/feb/gogol/critics/v76/v762228.Htm>

potential infinity as the traveler Marco Polo describes the cities he has visited, even though his report becomes a series of fantastic descriptions of “invisible” cities, a kind of “efficient symbols for creating a kind of mental topography” (Carter, 109).

Therefore, the illusion of contact with reality is created: the stories are true and retold by concrete people; there could not be any invention here so that life is presented as is. However, Gogol uses this method with the aim of immersing the reader into a fantastic, imaginary world. Calvino’s structure, too, “is very rigid, as if to create an abstract, spatial organization for the great conceptual freedom of the fantasy” (Carter, 109). In this way, two intersections are formed: 1) the situation is re-created in which true stories are presented by a narrator, i.e. the goal is to present oral stories to the reader; 2) they are presented by another mind, from someone else’s viewpoint (a mediator between the author and the reader), different from that of the author. Thus, the oral story and the otherness of viewpoints are linked. When allowing another consciousness and mentality to enter their narration, the writers can develop a diverse tonality, style of speech and phraseology, appropriate for that other point of view. According to Vinogradov, an entire novel is not necessarily stylized in this manner, but the structure itself allows for the development of a new logic, new “non-literary” language, stylistic patterns and, therefore, new “artistic reality” which is related to real life by the principles of “nonconformity” (Vinogradov, 1976:44). Therefore, the diversity of viewpoints is presented through both the stylistic conformity of the whole narrative and the stylistic individuality of each narrator (Cf. Vinogradov, Bakhtin).

The oral style of the narrative in *Evenings* is evident only in some parts where the author needs to make the reader pay attention to the fact that this is the representation of an oral story. In other cases, e.g. descriptions or digressions, the narrative acquires a written literary style.²⁸⁰ Even though the latter takes up perhaps 80% of the narration, the reader perceives the whole as oral speech because of those small episodes that introduce the entire novel as a collection of oral stories: such are the perceptual rules.

²⁸⁰ “We must of course beware of anachronism as well. The topic of “orality and literacy” is really an achievement of the 20th century (cf. Havelock, *Muse*, p.24). We cannot assume that Gogol was aware of it in the same way we are. [...] Gogol uses three different words for “literature”: *literatura* (borrowed from French), *pis'mennost'* (derived from *pisat'*, “to write”), and *slovesnost'* (comes from *slovo*, “word”) [...]. He makes them all interchangeable, and even goes on to equate the oral and the written.” (Maguire, 192)

II.3. Visualization that precedes “painted” writing

Vision can be viewed as the creative comprehension of reality through the imagination, invention and the intellect. “All perceiving is also thinking, all reasoning is also intuition, all observation is also invention” (Arnheim, 5). The everyday activity of seeing is not a mechanical storing of information but becomes a tool that helps to shape the meaning in artistic creation and therefore generates a totally subjective reality.

The formation of thought can begin with images, so a literary image is formed by the author's visual capacity before being converted into words. However, verbal description will inevitably differ from the visual: an author must encode reality into a visual image that consequently will be transcoded into words and will need to be decoded by the reader — the beginning and the end of such a path of transformation will have different images (Cf. Barthes, Lotman). As has been discussed, one medium cannot entirely be represented by another because they are addressed to different receptors — cognition and vision — and because the transformation of one into the other occurs through the process of adaptation that implies the adoption of techniques and materiality inherent to that specific language, verbal or visual. Such intermediality, inherent to Gogol's and Calvino's narratives (a sort of innate inclination to visualize things in order to write), can be explained by their interest in theater and drawing.

In his chapter “The Art of Seeing”, Maguire explores the nature of Gogol's writing and thinking in visual terms and provides a study of the writer's correspondence and some parts of *Arabesques* that reveal Gogol's keen interests in the plastic arts, particularly drawing and painting — from his early exercises at the gymnasium, then his continuing attendance of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, his esteem for major Russian and Italian painters, and then his watercolours made on a regular basis when he was living in Rome, the place that particularly inspires him to use colours. “These early interests extended to his perceptions and practices of literature as well” (Maguire, 97), where Gogol transforms the vocabulary of visual art into verbal representations of the way people see things, i.e. the emphasis on seeing is achieved by using the expressive language of one art in order to present things through another art. “Throughout his life, painting consistently stood for literature” (99).

Calvino, too, “actively engaged his creative talents with a variety of arts in an attempt to derive personal pleasure and enhance artistic plenitude. [...] While it is indeed arguable whether seeing is an appropriate metaphor for writing, the central self-conscious theme of most of his works is the visualization of space through words” (Ricci, 11). Calvino’s engagement with *thinking through pictures* is penetrated most of his works, as described above (see note 133).

The nature of the emergence of a creative image and the writing experience is articulated by Francois Wahl:

The shock of reality provokes the apparition of an image: it is still reality and it is already something else; the image translates an experience, but it signifies more and on another plane. And so this symbol comes to live; develops its own logic; carries with it a series of events, characters; imposes its own tone, its own logic.²⁸¹

This example of the image-creation act provides an explanation of the transition from original/abstract thought to a concept description, then to subsequent development through visual logic, and finally to verbalization, i.e., those mental images that belong to the domain of perception are turned into a logical pattern, put in order, and materialized through the medium of writing. With respect to the discussion about mind-hand connections in the transformation of creative thought into words or pictures (in I.2. *Creative impression, physicality of expression and perception in book art*), and the necessity of anticipated visualisation, Calvino associates language-imagination relations with vision and terms them “mental cinema”. In his *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Calvino describes the way his mental images are developed from the experience of visualising images:

In devising a story, therefore, the first thing that comes to my mind is an image that for some reason strikes me as charged with meaning, even if I cannot formulate this meaning in discursive or conceptual terms. As soon as the image has become sufficiently clear in my mind, I set about developing it into a story; or better yet, it is the images themselves that develop their own implicit potentials [...]. Into the origination of this material, which is no longer purely visual but also conceptual, there now [...] what I do is try to establish which meaning might be compatible with the overall design [...]. [W]hat really matters is the written word, first as a search for an equivalent of the visual image, then as a coherent development of the initial stylistic direction. (Calvino, 1996:83)

²⁸¹ Quoted by Calvino in the introduction to *Gli amori difficili*, Milan: Mondadori, 1970, xv; quoted in and transl. by: Ricci, 15

It can be said with certainty that the process of writing, for both Gogol and Calvino, is based on “two principal cognitive mechanisms: the generation of ‘images’, and the ‘translation’ of these images into words” (Skov, et al, 186). The writers depart from a vision-based image of each figure, landscape, or city that is translated then from a spatial into temporal progression. In other words, a visual image becomes a narrative and develops in a logic that stands within the image itself generating associative thinking. Since verbal language does not have spatial shape but is an abstract medium, the resulting visual images must turn into words in order to be represented. As Ricci suggests, the two media — as signs of reality — are not compared or mirrored but rather juxtaposed in order to create new meanings and new sign systems in their own rights (Ricci, 16).

Coming back to the neurological studies of the creative zones of the cortex that are responsible for the visualisation of the thinking process through words and the understanding of language through micromotor hand movements bridging the brain and the rest of the body, — the brain’s vision-language system suggests the following: “Language travels from brain to brain in the form of either sound waver or photons. Language, thus, enters the brain through either the ear or the eye.” (Skov, et al, 187) It can therefore be suggested that the primary and very physiological way of thinking can occur with pictures or sounds, not words, since visual information reaches the visual cortex in order to be then re-worked and processed in order to build speech and semantic comprehension. “Both language comprehension and language production rest upon a large number of sub-processes” (p.191) resulting in the necessity to encode those initial/abstract pictures and give them a grammatical and morphological structure.

However, the two actions that are involved in the creative process — the formation of a mental image and the translation of this image into verbal language — do not necessarily guarantee creativity since such processes are involved in everyday communication. “What sets some types of visual imagery and linguistic representations apart as ‘imaginative’ or ‘creative’ must be a qualitative difference: some visual images are more ‘meaningful’, ‘difficult’, or ‘exciting’ than others, and some linguistic representations are more ‘successful’ or ‘poignant’ than others” (Skov et al.,192). I would like to connect this explanation of qualitative factors with works of visual art, where a creative thought is visualised and then translated into a visual structure in order to be represented with an image more meaningful and difficult than everyday communication in the form of casual discourse. A neurocognitive study on language confirms

the dependence of image-formation on memory, i.e., the association of an image with a recognisable object related to a semantic concept.²⁸²

Bringing to mind any particular type of semantic information about an object evokes a pattern of neural activity involved in the processing of that object's form, movement, colours, qualitative features, and so on. The word 'swan', for instance, brings to mind an association of properties such as 'has wings', 'can fly', 'lives on a lake', etc., which are each processed by individual cell assemblies. (Skov, et al., 193)

Based on Miyashita's pattern of how conceptual knowledge is arranged in networks of perceptual features in the brain, Skov's study suggests that perception, memory and semantics are linked modules of the brain's sensory-motor system as a whole, the purpose of which is to categorize and memorize sensory inputs (p.194).

Since the creative models of Gogol and Calvino are vision-based — i.e., their visual-mental images give meaning to verbal form and arrange a coherent structure — such creative models can be viewed as the simultaneity of the exploration of an existing reality (when images are described) and the creation of a new reality (when these images acquire new shape and meaning). The act of writing consists not in perceiving the surrounding world as such, but rather in generating new meanings through perception (Ricci, 13) and through the extraction from reality of the abstract images by means of mental imagery. This is because before putting new words or pictures into action, one must adopt the ability of seeing which is, in fact, fundamental in visual art education but is also masterly adopted by these two writers.

At this point, "writing would become an active sense [that generates new meanings through perception], not merely recording reality but creating it through the act of *regard*" (Ricci, 23). i.e. description and creation occur simultaneously, as in Tokarchuk's concept of "conducting your self" where an actor both presents his role and creates it at the same time by means of artistic control.

Although well-known for his absurd, pure abstractions, Gogol is also particularly reliant on vision-based verbal images in his writings, and he says so himself in a letter. Belinsky confirms: "Gogol does not write but draws, his images breathe with the living colors of reality.

²⁸² In Skov et al., references: Ullman, M. (2001). A neurocognitive perspective on language: The declarative/procedural model. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 2(10), 717–726; Pulvermüller, F. (2001). Brain reflections of words and their meaning. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 5(12), 517–524; Tyler, L., & Moss, H. (2001). [Review of *Towards a distributed account of conceptual knowledge*]. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 5(6), 244–252.

One can see and hear them. Every word, every phrase expresses sharply and accurately his thought, carved as a relief.”²⁸³ The characterization of Gogol’s writing as “painting on canvas” was given for the first time by Vengrov,²⁸⁴ when he studied Gogol’s letters and diaries and discovered the writer’s attitude to realism and descriptions of inexistent things. Gogol never visited the homes of landlords and owners of peasants, but still described Sobakevich and other characters of *Dead Souls* as if painting their portraits from real life. “Life in the form of life itself” – this determines those aspects of Gogol’s narrative where he creates in the technique of so-called “pasty painting” by using words instead of brush (Mann, 1966:7). Since art does not copy life but creates an independent artistic equivalent in relation to reality, Chernishevsky suggests that mimesis is not imitation but rather re-creation.

In his chapter “From Eye to Word”, Maguire (pp.181-213) explores the way Gogol constructs his verbal images through seeing, the representation of the verbal in terms of visual pictures, the descriptions of some characters as “visual” beings who inhabit a scrupulously described physical world, and the incorporation of an invisible (non-represented) but “seeing” narrator. The creation of scenes on counterpoints of the visual and the verbal, where the pictorial often becomes more powerful than the verbal — appears to be Gogol’s main stylistic method. This has parallels both in terms of the critical viewpoint and the terminology used, with Ricci’s chapter “From Image to Word” (pp.69-122), in which the perception of things through seeing (or imagism) is regarded as the main method of transferring mental images into visual texts in Calvino’s poetics. Andrei Belyi’s book *Gogol’s Artistry*, which appeared as early as in 1934, examines what contemporary studies only have recently attempted to unite in the fields of neuroscience and aesthetics, namely, the role of perceptual capacities through pictures in the process of creating the verbal domain.

I am referring here to the discussion of form and content (as approached in different sections of Part I), where an initial abstract thought goes through the process of materialization. This is a process of thinking through pictures, sounds, handwriting and scratches. The ensuing creative transformation becomes an integral part of a future artistic form expressed through 1) associations, and 2) realistic/ recognizable objects. This is because there is no formless content

²⁸³ «Гоголь не пишет, а рисует, его изображения дышат живыми красками действительности. Видишь и слышишь их. Каждое слово, каждая фраза резко, определённо, рельефно выражает у него мысль...»; Belinsky, Full collection of works, Moscow: 1955, p. 355

²⁸⁴ S.A. Vengrov, “Gogol”, in: *Sobranie sichinenij*, t.2, 1913

or contentless form — as can be deduced from the above-mentioned 7 criteria of how to recognize a “true” work of art. When applying this principle to understanding Gogol’s work, Belyi develops the following analogy.

In a primary abstract melody or image, there is no concrete visual model or style, but its further transformation adds a logical pattern, comparisons, hyperboles, metaphors, etc. In acquiring such figures, the author’s individual style is formed through chosen syllables and words. In building the meaning of a plot, a tendency is formed. The tendency in the combination of syllable results in a final product. Style, as a process, is analogous to creative thinking which intersects with the influence of the social and cultural environment and is addressed to a potential audience (Belyi, 10). Belyi suggests that in Gogol’s early works (Ukrainian tales) such a path — from an initial abstract image, through the formation of rhythm, syllable, theme, tendency and to the creation of meaning, which is imprinted in the material — is most evident and disappears in his later works. In these tales, if the plot is extracted from the entire corpus and is understood merely as a realistic or fantastic story, it loses its meaning because the plot is composed of vision-based metaphors, tunes, images, syllables, the music of words, and from the mixing of incompatible elements. Each tale is a song plus a painting expressed with words. The interpretation of Gogol’s work is hidden in the melodicality of composition (which he develops according to the principles of folk songs) and in the visuality of representation (where his descriptive passages are built according to the principles of painting). Without details (which are usually related to form), the core of Gogol’s plot cannot be understood: he intentionally puts at the foreground the retelling of anecdotal scenes, i.e., not those elements that are important to him. This method confuses the reader and leads him away from the main clues (Belyi, 45). Therefore, there are two parallel lines of narration. One is composed of retold oral stories that seem to be merely anecdotes or fantastic fables at first glance but develop a very complex social significance based on issues of rootlessness, strong relations with the land of one's birth and the ancestors’ traditions which, if betrayed, open the possibility for “devilry” in people’s lives — even in a simple earthly sense. Such factors become evident from small detail-symbols anchored in the plot (as discussed in detail by Belyi, 47-54). The second line creates a “plot without a plot” and builds a parallel narration made of illusory paintings that cover a wide range of themes through mythopoetic

rhetoric. “You will not get anywhere without dealing with the device; the imagery’s brilliance will only blind you” (Belyi, 54; transl. by Colbath, 159).

For example, here is the beginning of *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* with a picturesque description of Ukrainian summer:

... томительно-жарки те часы, когда полдень блещет в тишине и зное, и голубой, неизмеримый океан, сладострастным куполом нагнувшийся над землею, кажется, заснул, весь потонувши в неге [...] На нем ни облака. В поле ни речи. Всё как будто умерло; вверху только, в небесной глубине дрожит жаворонок, и серебряные песни летят по воздушным ступеням на влюбленную землю, да изредка крик чайки или звонкий голос перепела отдается в степи. (p.111)

... luxuriously warm the hours when midday glitters in stillness and sultry heat and the blue fathomless ocean covering the plain like a dome seems to be slumbering, bathed in languor [...] Upon it, not a cloud; in the plain, not a sound. Everything might be dead; only above in the heavenly depths a lark is trilling, and from the airy heights the slivery notes drop down upon adoring earth, and from time to time the cry of a gull or the ringing note of a quail sounds in the steppe. (p.8)

In this short *description of a state*, the three elements are united — the sky (air), the ocean (water), and the field (ground) — where the sky is compared with the ocean. The image of the earth as the mirror of the sky will appear in many other passages from *Evenings*. Furthermore, such an image is not casual but rather constitutes a rhythmical movement created between the two points, earth and sky: from up-down to down-up. The harmonious wholeness of the image is built on such a movement. Maguire refers to this passage as to “a revel for the eye, a portrait of a luxuriant summer landscape and its picturesque inhabitants. The scene is static and timeless” (Maguire, 181)

“fathomless ocean covering the plain”

“Upon it, not a cloud; in the plain, not a sound”

“from the airy heights the slivery notes drop down upon adoring earth”

The landscape is depicted with words, but the principles of painting are used:

Лениво и бездумно, будто гуляющие без цели, стоят подоблачные дубы, и ослепительные удары солнечных лучей зажигают целые живописные массы листьев,

накидывая на другие темную, как ночь, тень, по которой только при сильном ветре прыщит золото. Изумруды, топазы, яхонты эфирных насекомых сыплются над пестрыми огородами, осеняемыми статными подсолнечниками. Серые стога сена и золотые снопы хлеба станом располагаются в поле и кочуют по его неизмеримости. [...] небо, его чистое зеркало — река в зеленых, гордо поднятых рамах... (p.111)

The towering oak stand, idle and apathetic, like aimless wayfarers, and the dazzling gleams of sunshine light up picturesque masses of leaves, casting onto others a shadow black as night, only flecked with gold when the wind blows. The insects of the air flit like sparks of emerald, topaz, and ruby about the gay vegetable gardens, topped by stately sunflowers. Gray haystacks and golden sheaves of wheat, like tents, stray over the plain. [...] the sky with its pure mirror, the river in its green, proudly erect frame... (p.9)

An entire painting on canvas is materialized in front of our eyes against the background of a field with haystacks, emeralds and richness of colours. The atmosphere is built on contrasts of dazzling sun and dark shadow, of colorful landscape and motionless silence. And then, against the background of this prepared canvas, the other elements are gradually added:

...тянулись нескончаемую вереницею чумаки с солью и рыбою. Горы горшков, закутанных в сено, медленно двигались, кажется, скучая своим заключением и темнотою... (p.112)

... wagons full of fish and salt had trailed in an endless chain along the road. Mountains of pots wrapped in hay moved along slowly, as through weary of being shut up in the dark... (p.9)

Any painter knows that, in order to depict gold without using the pure gold color, contrasts should be created. If we put a deep dark stroke with umbra and cold ultramarine shade close to a warm yellow stroke with pale-blue reflection, then this yellow will shine like a golden piece, as for example the jewelry on the [woman depicted by Repin](#).²⁸⁵ When we look closely at the details, we can see that the artist does not use the gold color, but rather an impression of gold is

²⁸⁵ Ilya Repin (1844-1930), was one of the most significant Russian painters of Ukrainian origin of the late 19th – early 20th century, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilya_Repin; further on his works <http://ilya-repin.ru/>

created through contrasts. In the same manner, white clothes are not white but only seem white, and so forth. Gogol uses in his descriptions the method of painting, i.e., he creates an impression of certain colors and scenes, and this makes his verbal pictures “painted” and pasty like the strokes of oil colors. The impression of shining jewelry in a black-and-white drawing is reached in a similar way — through the creation of contrasts, for example, in Beardsley’s [portrait of Ali Baba](#).

The example above of Repin’s painting was not casually chosen because the individual artistic manner and the powerful effect of his works can be compared with Gogol’s method of pictorial writing. This is particularly the case in terms of style, color choices, the creation of resulting moods, the aesthetic pleasure of observing the transitions from one mood to another, and what is meant by the central artistic feature of the work. Born a few years before Gogol’s death, Repin often devoted his works to motifs taken from Gogol’s stories,²⁸⁶ admired the expressive language and literary style of the great author and attempted to convey this in his paintings. Repin also created stankovy canvases based on literary works. In such works, Gogol was his favorite writer — perhaps because of the same duality of their national identity: they had both grown up in Ukraine and implemented their talents in Russia. This provided their works with a similar approach resulting in an incredible impressiveness and colorfulness, as if they existed and created on the same wavelength. For example, Repin’s [portrait of Poprishchin](#) from Gogol’s *Diary of a Madman* (1882) represents a figure with somehow mad eyes. Repin’s large (2 x 3.5 meters) painting entitled [Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to Sultan Mehmed IV of the Ottoman Empire](#), one of the most significant works in the artist’s heritage, took 13 years to complete (1878-1891). During this time, the artist lived within Gogol’s stories, reread them often along with the history of the Cossacks to his family and friends, traveled to Ukraine to paint sketches of some of the characters²⁸⁷ which look saturated with Gogol’s “painted” descriptions. There are also Repin’s 4 drawings for *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (1870), a picture for *A Terrible Vengeance* (1890), and other sketches. Repin’s other paintings include [Gogol’s self-burning](#) (1909). The Cossacks theme continued in several sketches and paintings of [Black Sea outlaws](#) (1844-1930). Even though these are paintings meant to be viewed at an exhibit

²⁸⁶ An article that studies Repin’s drawings and paintings based on Gogol’s stories: L. I. Andruschenko, “Nikolai Gogol’s literary characters in the Ilya Repin’s graphic and pictorial works”, *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta*, ser.15, vip.3, 2016, DOI: 10.21638/11701/spbu15.2016.301

²⁸⁷ Cf. The history of Repin’s painting:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070708083850/http://culture.mincult.ru/formp.asp?ID=60&full>

rather than book illustrations, they still correspond to Gogol's artistic style and colours perceptible in his narratives.

One more example that connects Repin with the musicality and painting of Gogol's narrative is [Mussorgsky's opera for musical theater](#) based on Gogol's *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (1874-1880), and Repin's [portrait of Mussorgsky](#) (1881).²⁸⁸ As Gogol strove to elaborate folk motifs and to magnify them several times in order to create a work of literary art, so Mussorgsky too used folk tunes and developed them in order to create an opera. This effect of folk motifs plus traditions of classical music is particularly evident, for example, in the [closing dance Hopak](#).²⁸⁹ The semiotic interpretation of the term *the tuning of the world* (after Schafer, 1977) is related to the description of a sounding world (or the description of the world through sounds). The "possession of sound" in literal and figurative meanings (the possibility to produce and perceive sound) is related to the perception of the world by perceptual organs, primarily through sight and hearing. The world ceases to be "unseen" and, therefore, a visual landscape appears. The world ceases to be "silent" and, therefore, a sound landscape appears.²⁹⁰ The discourse of silence vs sound and the silent landscape and sound are particularly relevant for Calvino's cities that are sometimes described through images that suggest silence, and for Gogol's mytho-poetic landscapes that appear to be nonexistent and created by a mood (see below).

In Gogol's poetics, the juxtaposition of two media — music and painting — is sewn into his verbal representations. In his chapter entitled "The Pictorial Aspects of Gogol's writing," Belyi develops in great detail the relations between sound-melody, visual-pictorial, and word-narrative features of *Evenings*. He discusses sound metaphors and colours of descriptive passages, the rhythm-tempo-syllables of sentences, musical and visual tonality, tone and light, the balance of pictorial elements, and suggests that

²⁸⁸ Mussorgsky's portrait is one of the pinnacles of Repin's work and all Russian portrait painting of the 1880s. It was created just few days before the composer's death, in a hospital, in four sittings, during which the artist depicted with extraordinary delicacy the deadly ill person.

²⁸⁹ For comparison, the original folk dance is like this one performed by the State Academic Folk Dance Ensemble named after Igor Moiseyev: https://youtu.be/4Mn_VFQNaI0

²⁹⁰ Cf. Tsivjan, T. "Reflection of the Sound Landscape in the Language and Text", in *World of Sounds and Silence: Semiotics of Sound and Speech in the Traditional Culture of the Slavs*, Moscow: Indrik, 1999, pp. 149-178

The technical expression, “*warm colors, cool colors,*” itself evokes the theory of correspondences. Intersection lies in the ear’s hemispherical canals, in the organs of equilibrium which interpret “*sounding*’ or flowing space. Equilibrium is rooted in muscle tone and in the perception of space, which is the result of the gymnastics performed by the eye muscles (otherwise we would see “planes”). [...] Aural metaphor posits color beyond the spectrum. We perceive aural metaphor at the threshold of consciousness. Colored hearing exists; but as it is usually perceived it is covered in shadow, so to speak. Both *shadow* and darkness are produced by dimmed luminaries of color. For the impressionist, painting is the “*logical development of light.*” Goethe’s piece, “Sensory and Moral Apprehension of Color,” remarks on the phenomenon of analogous sensations. For the artist, perceptions of this type constitute “raw material”; and once work on this material has commenced, the “*science of seeing*” (Petrov-Vodkin’s term) begins. [...]

For verbal and visual artists alike the absence of colored hearing constitutes a defect. Aural metaphor as it exists in us reflects an ancient language. Its manifestation within verbal plots represents a synthesis of linguistic abstraction, which is precise, but does not possess the will to action or the will unequipped with consciousness. (Belyi, 116; transl. by Colbath, 282-4).

What results in Gogol is a kind of sound-painting, with which an abundant number of descriptions is saturated:

eyes “penetrate the soul with singing” (The Terrible Vengeance);
 the sky “sonorously opened up”; “virtues seethe” (The Sorochintsy Fair);
 “bright shout”; “sharp singing”; “lips burned against...” (Viy);
 “dense word”; “silver-bright cry of the swan”; “sharp stars” (Taras Bulba);
 the “thick bass of the bumble bee” (Old World Landowners);
 “visible silence”; “sickly day” (The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikif.);
 a “brilliant song” (A May Night);
 “shot in the eyes” (The Lost Dispatch).

(Belyi counted approximately 763 adjectives in different Gogol’s works that describe colours)

The eye functions for Gogol as a thinking organ; his world of colours and lights builds the stylistic background for his stories. For him, as for the Expressionists, air and colour contribute to his narrative form and plots. Given this vision-based feature of Gogol's writing, his

landscapes end up painted with words — the term that Ricci uses with respect to Calvino’s writing.

Gogol’s pictorial writing can be compared to what appears in *Invisible Sites*, where Calvino strives to paint his verbal images and creates vision-based descriptions. In his *Lezioni americane* and in the other essays, Calvino sets the art of looking as the central feature of his poetics and as the main purpose of his writing and teaching:

... my aim, the only thing that I would wish to teach is a way of seeing, a way, that is, to be in the world. In essence, literature cannot teach anything else. (Calvino, *I. I libri degli altri: lettere 1947-1981*, Turin, 1991, p.350; quoted in and transl. by Ricci, p.3)

Calvino worries that man is losing the capacity of thinking with images: in a time when pictures are flooding us and our life is dominated by simulations and images, we have become passive observers of these pictures and no longer think actively with images. We remember also Shklovsky’s seminal article *Art as Technique*, in which he develops the definition of art as thinking with images. To learn *how to see* things is the very first and primary task with which education in art schools begins and continues for many years. Visual thinking begins from that and develops in what Favorsky outlines as the artist’s constant striving to see the surrounding world and visually interpret every single object in its integrity. This echoes Calvino’s visual tendency to “think with his eyes” (Belpoliti, quoted in Ricci, 7) and Gogol’s predilection for colour-writing and conceiving his verbal images in terms of painting.

Words expressed through images, or the visualisation of the world through words, perhaps, merges both media for Calvino and Gogol, when

from the semantic point of view, from the standpoint of referring, expressing intentions and producing effects in a viewer/listener, there is no essential difference between texts and images. [...] And thus no gap between the media to be overcome by any special ekphrastic strategies. Language can stand in for depiction and depiction can stand in for language because communicative, expressive acts, narration, argument, description, exposition and other so-called ‘speech acts’ are not medium-specific, are not ‘proper’ to some medium or other (Mitchell, 1994:160, quoted in Ricci, 293).

Gogol admitted that he drew his linguistic images (Belinsky, 1955:355); Calvino stated that he wanted to write the way painters create their canvases (Ricci, 12-13). *To write like to paint* — is the key definition that presents the nature of their art.

II.4. The levels of visibility vs invisibility

Despite Gogol's colourful and picturesque descriptions from the above-cited *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (as well as from many other pictorial descriptions that appear in the entire series of *Evenings*), we are, of course, not dealing with an actual painting. A painting is something that we can see literally, but in the case of Gogol's picture of the summer landscape, the concept of "vision" is of a different kind:

полдень блещет в тишине и зное // midday glitters in stillness and sultry heat;
 неизмеримый океан куполом нагнулся над землей // fathomless ocean covering the plain;
 лениво и бездумно, будто гуляющие без цели, стоят дубы // the towering oak stand, idle
 and apathetic, like aimless wayfarers;
 серые стога сена кочуют по полю // gray haystacks and golden sheaves of wheat ... stray
 over the plain

There is nothing here that could create a visual image, and there is no movement of the gaze that would actually observe the landscape. Instead, we have an illusion that makes us believe as if it were possible to perceive such picture (and I use the word "perceive" instead of "see" deliberately). This picture could not exist at a particular moment and in a particular location, but it is still described with a language that is usually used for realistic representation. The result is an intensively metaphoric world presented by means of romantic literary language. And so, this turns out to be something impossible to visualise, but such images can be thought, felt and imagined at the abstract level of associations. Such recreations of visual associations are based on mytho-poetic relationships. The pictures imagined by the reader exposed to Gogol's unique language, existing as visual metaphors, are impossible in the real world and might perhaps find their equivalents in dreams. Since creative interpretation or association is a re-worked impulse received from verbal metaphors, the exact rendering of these literary images in illustrations would be unthinkable. The same *non-representability* is inherent also in Calvino's images, as will be discussed later.

Therefore, in descriptions, Gogol creates mytho-poetic illusory reality that acquires the integrity of a reader and an object, where the former is both creator and observer of the latter. However, once he passes to the plot line of the stories, everything changes. In scenes similar to

Vertep puppet theater²⁹¹ (Markovich, 2005), Gogol's narrator entertains himself and the reader, but from a distance, without being part of the story. The conjunction between illusory and real parts occurs on another level. Unexpected transitions between the real and the fantastic sometimes provoke a feeling of aesthetical confusion: as if on the canvas of an impossible painting, every described fact or figure is perceived as real. There are two factors that motivate us to believe in the “truth” of Gogol’s fantastic elements.

The first factor consists in the structure and the manner in which the stories are presented. Despite the highly metaphoric images, the illusion of reality is emphasised by the claim that these are true stories, written down and retold by Rudy Panko. Furthermore, apart from introducing concrete figures whose stories are being re-told, Gogol includes in two titles out of eight interesting wording added to the title. The original and full title of one of the stories (translated into English as “St. John’s Eve”²⁹²) is “The Eve of the Night of Ivan Kupala: *быль* narrated by a diak of ***skoi church”. The same wording is added after the title “The Lost Letter”. The word *быль* [byl’] means a true story, literally: “the thing that was”, as opposed to *небыль* [nebyl’], a non-true story, literally: “the thing that wasn’t”. The result, on the one hand, is that the word *byl’* reminds us of its etymology and hence an important association: *bylina*, i.e. an oral epic narrative, sometimes a supernatural story about some unusual event. Such tales are often about an encounter with powers on the other side of the real world, e.g., evil spirits. Unlike fairy tales, which do not necessarily require the audience to believe in the reality of their content, *byl’* presupposes the audience's belief, and Gogol makes this a feature of the chapters with supernatural characters. When encountering such a story, we are supposedly asked to believe its veracity because it is narrated by a trustworthy figure: a *diak* is a low-ranking clergyman. ***skoi is the ending of an adjective, and it is attached to the name of a town after which the church is named, e.g., the *diak* of the Mirgorodskoi church, where Mirgorod is the name of the town serving as the poetic setting of Gogol's tales. Gogol provides us only with the ending of that name (***skoi), which suggests that this can be any church in any town, which is similar to the common beginning of a fairy tale: “Once upon a time, in a

²⁹¹ Wiki: “The Ukrainian Vertep, or puppet theatre, first appeared in the latter half of the 16th century, beginning of the 17th century from a popular Western European mystery play. It is believed that it was introduced by a student of the Kiev-Mohyla Academy. The Vertep puppet theatre was made familiar to Ukrainian rural communities by wandering deacons and students of the above-mentioned Academy. The Vertep theatre had numerous regional variants. The performance was divided into two separate sections, sacred and secular, with the latter taking the form of either a tragedy or a comedy.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vertep>

²⁹² Source of this Gogol’s text in English: <http://www.ebooksgratuits.com>

galaxy far away...”. The contradiction resides in the connection of such a fairy-tale beginning with the assertion that this is *byl'*, a true story told by a certain clergyman. So, this phrase invites us to believe in what will be happening in the story, no matter how fantastic it may sound. Then, the narrator of the story is introduced — the *diak*'s grandfather — who in olden times, as the narrator recalls, loved to tell to children horror stories about all kinds of devilry “on a long winter evening when frost cracked outside and sealed up the narrow window of our hut.” The narrator totally believes that the events in the story happened in reality: everything told by grandfather is the truth:

Но главное в рассказах деда было то, что в жизнь свою он никогда не лгал, и что, бывало, ни скажет, то именно так и было. (p.138)

But the main thing about grandad's stories was that he never in his life told a lie and everything he told us had really happened. (p.35)

In a wider sense, this is a deeper trust in traditions (Belyi, 48) that transcends the rational, the modern, the analytic and the critical. However, anticipating the modern reader's skepticism, the narrator says:

Знаю, что много наберется таких умников, пописывающих по судам и читающих даже гражданскую грамоту, которые если дать им в руки простой часослов, не разобрали бы ни аза в нем [...]. Им всё, что ни расскажешь, в смех. Эдакое неверье разошлось по свету! (p.139)

I know there are lots of smart fellows who scribble in law courts and read even modern print, though if you put in their hands a simple prayer book they could not read a letter of it [...]. Whatever you tell them, they turn into ridicule. (p.35)

Thus, the position of the narrator is that faith rather than mere belief is required, i.e., acceptance without any need of evidence.

The second factor that invites us to believe in the veracity of the events in this fantastic story consists in the way the realistic and fantastic events are intertwined and how the transitions between the real and fantastic worlds are modeled. For example, *The Night Before Christmas* is

the central episode in the series (central in the compositional sense) and it begins with the following description:

Последний день перед Рождеством прошел. Зимняя, ясная ночь наступила. Глянули звезды. Месяц величаво поднялся на небо посветить добрым людям и всему миру, чтобы всем было весело колядовать и славить Христа. Морозило сильнее, чем с утра; но зато так было тихо, что скрип мороза под сапогом слышался за полверсты. Еще ни одна толпа парубков не показывалась под окнами хат; месяц один только заглядывал в них украдкой, как бы вызывая принаряживавшихся девушек выбежать скорее на скрипучий снег. Тут через трубу одной хаты клубами повалился дым и пошел тучею по небу, и вместе с дымом поднялась ведьма верхом на метле. (p.201)

The last day before Christmas had passed. A clear winter night had come; the stars peeped out; the moon rose majestically in the sky to light good people and all the world so that all might enjoy signing *kolydki*²⁹³ and praising the Lord. It was freezing harder than in the morning; but it was so still that the crunch of the snow under the boot could be heard half a mile away. Not one group of boys had appeared under the hut windows yet; only the moon peeped in at them stealthily as though calling to the girls who were dressing up in their best to make haste and run on the crunching snow. At that moment the smoke rose in puffs from a hut chimney and passed like a cloud over the sky, and a witch on a broomstick rose up in the air with the smoke. (p.92)

Gogol creates the illusion of reality, and then incorporates in this description a fantastic element: first “a clear winter night had come; the stars peeped out; the moon rose in the sky,” and then “a witch on a broomstick rose up in the air with the smoke.” Thereafter, this effect is going to be repeated in the following episodes, and it is assumed that

если бы в это время проезжал сорочинский заседатель на тройке обывательских лошадей, в шапке [...], в синем тулупе, подбитом черными смушками [...], то он бы, верно, заметил ее, потому что от сорочинского заседателя ни одна ведьма на свете не ускользнет. Он знает наперечет, сколько у каждой бабы свинья мечет поросят и сколько в сундуке лежит полотна [...]. Но сорочинский заседатель не проезжал, да и

²⁹³ It is a custom to sing under the window on Christmas Eve carols that are called *kolyadki* (the beekeeper’s note)

какое ему дело до чужих, у него своя волость. А ведьма, между тем, поднялась так высоко, что одним только черным пятнышком мелькала вверху. (p.202)

If the assessor of Sorochintsy [...] in his dark blue overcoat lined with black astrakhan, had driven by at that moment [...], he would certainly have noticed her, for there is not a witch in the world who could elude the eyes of the Sorochintsy assessor. He can count on his fingers how many suckling pigs every peasant woman's sow has farrowed and how much linen is lying in her chest [...]. But the Sorochintsy assessor did not drive by, and, indeed, what business is it for his? He has his own district. Meanwhile, the witch rose so high in the air that she was only a little black patch gleaming aloft. (p.92-93)

Thus, the boundary between earthy and supernatural powers is totally absent so that different ontological entities end up occupying the same space and sharing a common reality. Then, the description of a *chort*²⁹⁴ is presented where any possible border between the real and the supernatural is absent:

Спереди совершенно немец: узенькая, беспрестанно вертевшаяся и нюхавшая всё, что ни попадалось, мордочка, оканчивалась, как и у наших свиней, кругленьким пяточком, ноги были так тонки [...]. Но зато сзади он был настоящий губернский стряпчий в мундире, потому что у него висел хвост, такой острый и длинный, как теперешние мундирные фалды; только разве по козлиной бороде под мордой, по небольшим рожкам, торчавшим на голове, и что весь был не белее трубочиста, можно было догадаться, что он не немец и не губернский стряпчий, а просто чорт, которому последняя ночь осталась шататься по белому свету и выучивать грехам добрых людей [...]. Между тем чорт крался потихоньку к месяцу, и уже протянул было руку, схватить его; но вдруг отдернул ее назад, как бы обжегшись, пососал пальцы [...]. Однако ж, несмотря на все неудачи, хитрый чорт не оставил своих проказ... (p.202-203)

²⁹⁴ Wiki: “*Chort* — in Slavic folk Christianity, methodology and folk tales — is the same as *bes*, and is considered to be an anthropomorphic demon of total evil of doom, with horns, hooves, a skinny tail, and a pig snout. He is the son of the Slavic god Chernobog and the goddess Mara and is considered a minion of Satan. In Slavic tales, the outer appearance of the chort or devil was not described. But this was done for the first time by Gogol in *The Night Before Christmas*.”

Following Gogol's description, *chort* was represented this way in paintings, films, illustrations for other stories, etc.

At first it looked like a regular German:²⁹⁵ the narrow little face, continually twisting and turning and sniffing at everything, ended in a little round heel, like our pigs' snouts; the legs were so thin [...]. But from behind he was for all the world a district attorney in uniform, for he had a tail as long and pointed as the uniform coattails are nowadays. It was only from the goat-beard under his chin, from the little horns sticking from his forehead, and from his being no whiter than a chimney sweep, that one could tell that he was not a German or a district attorney, but simply the devil, who had one last night left him to wander about the wide world and teach good folk to sin. [...] Meanwhile the devil stole silently up to the moon and stretched his hand out to seize it, but drew it back quickly as though he were scorched [...]. But in spite of all his failures the sly devil did not give up his tricks. (p.93-94)

We then learn how the chort stole the moon, visited Soloha, and disturbed a painter. The marvelous and the real are by now so intertwined that the reader is invited to recalibrate his view of the world: a place where common constraints no longer apply, and wonder is the norm.

В то время, когда живописец трудился над этою картиною и писал ее на большой деревянной доске, чорт всеми силами старался мешать ему: толкал невидимо под руку, подымал из горнила в кузнице золу и обсыпал ею картину; но, несмотря на всё, работа была кончена, доска внесена в церковь и вделана в стену притвора, и с той поры чорт поклялся мстить кузнецу. (p.203)

While the artists was working at this picture and painting it on a big wooden board, the devil did all he could to hinder him; he gave him a nudge on the arm, unseen, blew some ashes from the forge in the smithy, and scattered them on the picture; but, in spite of it all, the work was finished, the picture was brought into the church and put on the wall of the side chapel, and from that day the devil had sworn to revenge himself on the blacksmith. (p.94-95)

As a result, fairy-tale discourse is violated because fairy-tale motifs appear without the expected fairy-tale form. This happens through the introduction of folkloric tall-tale elements, as well as humor where vertep-like scenes lead the reader away from a common narrative-descriptive style. Transitions from such dynamic scenes to slow illusory-poetic descriptions and

²⁹⁵ “Among us everyone is called a German who comes from a foreign country; even if he is a Frenchman, a Hungarian, or a Swede – he is still a German.” (the beekeeper’s note)

back to the same kind of scenes create the main rhythmical organization of the stories which, when interpreted through illustrations, will be presented with the corresponding passages (as discussed below). All of this fits into the bigger phenomenon of Gogol's narrative and compositional style where incongruity reigns supreme: nothing is as expected, conventions are there to be violated and the power of artistic creativity transcends the expected.

For Calvino, too, the process of writing becomes part of communicating visual images, i.e., artistic verbal entities where priority is given to cognition through vision. Ricci interprets Calvino's inclination toward descriptions in line with Barthes' idea that the exploration and visualization of lightness and of what is on the surface and is available for the eyes stand out as more important than depth. "While genre theory has given preference to active narratives, that is, the narratives that assert action rather than description, in his work Calvino subverted this traditional power structure in favour of a discourse that privileges vision, description, and contemplation as a means of active intellectual involvement" (Ricci, 8). However, where does the border pass between the narration of action and description? At what point do they overlap or fuse together? "Action" stories (often manifested as films), for instance, are constructed mainly as a breath-taking sequence of frenetic activities, where descriptions are minimal or missing. Thus, the amount of descriptions and digressions from main plot lines can build the rhythm of an entire narrative. But then what if descriptions cease to be additions to the main plot line but rather develop into the main corpus of a given novel where the action line may be less evident, secondary, or missing altogether. Instead, what we find is the replacement of the plot with discourse consisting almost entirely of descriptions and reflections. In this case, the term "plot" loses most of its connections with its common dramaturgical meaning. I am referring to the model introduced by Aristotle, then adopted by Gustav Freytag, and used in contemporary fiction writing and films. The traditional plot includes a narrative exposition or prologue, an opening or beginning of a conflict known as rising action, the development of action, a climax or turning point, falling action, and a denouement with an epilogue. The avoidance of such a structure makes it possible to place symbolic comparisons, metaphors, and visual descriptions in the foreground and to form a narrative plot line in which the creator occupies a role similar to that of a passive spectator who never participates in his created world but merely perceives this world and represents it through his imagination. In other words, the

image itself becomes a kind of plot. “While writers continued to look for a story that created a possible reality, Calvino gripped reality itself.” When approaching closer his ability “to shift focus from his audience to the thing itself [and] to connect, visually, with the specific objects of his gaze we may better understand the intimate nature of his narrative [and] to eventually uncover the visual sources, the art, that inspired Calvino’s creative writing” (Ricci, 10). The variety of Calvino's essays (as Ricci has examined, p.18) represents examples of his attitude to literature as an investigative activity that encourages iconic thinking, in the sense that “the descriptive process causes the author to create icons (be they literary images, verbal diagrams, or visual metaphors) that tend to generate textual resemblance [...]. Thus, if the patterns and symmetries generated in the text correspond to or imitate elemental relations, their iconicity as an image or diagram of reality is intensified” (Ricci, 19). A particular feature of an icon is that “by direct observation of it other truths concerning its object can be discovered than those which suffice to determine its construction. [This implies the necessity to develop an image in a way] to replace a sign by an icon.”²⁹⁶

As in the case of Gogol’s “painted” descriptive passages, Calvino’s verbal representations of visual representations are purely abstract and *non-representable* in nature.

Quel mattino lo sveglia il silenzio [...]. Aperse la finestra: la città non c’è più, era stata sostituita da un foglio bianco [...] lo guardo, distinse in mezzo al bianco, alcune linee quasi cancellate, che corrispondevano a ... le finestre e i tetti..., ma perdute sotto la neve che c’era calcata sopra nella notte. (*Marcivaldo*, “La città smarrita nella neve”, Mondadori: Milan, 2002, p.55)

That morning the silence woke him [...]. He opened the window: the city was gone; it had been replaced by a white sheet of paper. Narrowing his eyes, he could make out, in the whiteness, some almost-erased lines, which corresponded to [...] the windows and the roofs [...], but they were lost under all the snow that had settled over them during the night.

(*Marcivaldo*, “The city lost in the snow”, transl. by W. Weaver, HBJ: San Diego-NY-London, 1983, p.16)

Calvino draws here a delicate linear picture with roofs covered by snow, but then transforms this picture into a sign, a poetic symbol, which then is cancelled, becomes impossible and disappears from our vision. In his *Gli dèi della città* (1975, S, 346) he explains that it is not

²⁹⁶ Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers 2* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), p.158; quoted in Ricci, 19

enough to keep one's eyes open in order to see a city; one needs also to delete everything that can disturb the perception of an image, all the preexisting ideas or images. What remains is an image so fresh that, although it exists, ends up escaping from direct vision; *we can rather think it* or listen to it like a melody. Melodicity, in fact, is fundamental to Gogol's *Evenings*: as can be concluded from the above-explored features, his method consists in making us "imagine that we are actually hearing the stories narrated by a speaking voice, mainly by using dictions that we have long associated with oral storytelling" (Maguire, 189). The same approach to reading applies to Calvino's *Invisible Cities*.

We perceive differently texts that are read in our own tongue and those read in a foreign language, even more so if we do not understand that foreign language but only detect its sounds as a kind of melody. Such an exercise affects our imagination on a totally different level and helps to generate associative pictures — related to sounds rather than meanings of words. This is the ultimate form of Victor Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization where an outsider can view something from a completely fresh and "naïve" perspective. The ability to perceive a language only in terms of melodic (rather than semantic) content diminishes and gradually evaporates as we improve our mastery of the language. At this point it stops to be perceived as foreign and purely sound-based — their semantic content automatically comes first. Of course, when we read in our own language, we are largely deprived of purely melodic perception although, with an effort of will (as in the reading of poetry) a reader can divert his attention to melodic form and away from semantic content. But normally, this diversion from meaning to melody does not happen, all the more so because we read texts to ourselves and do it silently. This can result in the loss of images potentially stemming from pure sound. Yet, even if a foreign language has already been mastered at an advanced level, listening to the melody of *Le città invisibili* is a true rediscovery of the beauty of the Italian speech: it refines our sensory perception. The melodicity of a given narrative is completely lost if we read a text in translation — the phenomenon that changes the perceptual experience and also the meaning of the novel.

Book illustration making is, in part, the process of listening to verbal language and catching its melody. One screenwriting technique is based on the description of a given place with sounds only. For example, one can walk through the streets of a city without looking. Listening to each small sound with extreme attentiveness, one latches on to it as the only source of information about the environment and produces the following (model) description: the

knocking of heels, different kinds of footwear make different sounds, rustling of all sorts, snippets of phrases or words, a variety of old and young voices, timbres and accents, sounds of vehicles, pieces of street music, the wind and whirling of leaves, and so on. When the image of a city is represented in this manner,²⁹⁷ one can develop the ability to be attentive and to pay attention selectively to a specific type of details whereby sound is isolated from other stimuli. Thus, an entire script can be affected in this manner of perception so that the pictorial effect is reinforced.

This technique of screenwriting can be applied to the reading process so that one reads only the sounds and leaves the rest aside. We listen carefully to certain phrases, collocations or single words, as if catching with our ear the notes and rhythms of the text, which would be similar to listening to an audiobook in a foreign language, i.e. we are pretending that we do not understand the conventional referential aspects of the text. This exercise would allow us to hear how Calvino builds a linguistic melody and to see how it can be converted into visual associations. The result of such an experiment suggests that Calvino's stories include two opposite amplitudes. First, the language itself (the constructive material underlying the images) creates a charming and magical melody. And second, the associations provoked by words are made of silence, of emptiness, of something distant or missing or forgotten, like the descriptions of a thought. And thus, he writes not with words but with silence. The description of "Le città e la memoria 2" presents the city as a desire and ends with "I desideri sono già ricordi" ("Desires are already memories"). And so the city is presented as a recollection of a desire from the past. Another city is described with one long sentence, in the middle of which we read:

...fare calcoli in base a questi dati fino a sapere tutto quello che si vuole della città nel passato nel presente e nel futuro... (p.17)

...you can then work from these facts until you learn everything you wish about the city in the past, present, and future. (p.9)

²⁹⁷ Taught by Yuriy Illienko at the Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Kary Theatre, Cinema and Television University, 1999.

In one image, this description evokes the past, the present, and the future, creating an abstract formula. The next city seems to have a shape, is presented with real objects, but results again in an image-sign, as if we were given the representation of the inside of the city:

...sono le vie fatte di scale, di che sesto gli archi dei porticati, di lamine di zinco sono ricoperti i tetti; ma so già che sarebbe come non dirti nulla. Non di questo è fatta la città, ma di relazioni tra le misure del suo spazio e gli avvenimenti del suo passato ... la città non dice il suo passato, lo contiene come le linee d'una mano, scritto negli spigoli delle vie, nelle griglie delle finestre ... ogni segmento rigato a sua volta di graffi, seghettature, intagli, svirgole. (p.18-19)

... the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades' curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing. The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows ..., every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentation, scrolls. (p.10-11)

The image of the city that has buildings, streets and windows turns into lines on the palm of hand, These lines are streets. The idea that the city does not merely speak about the past but in fact contains it — all on the palm — adds many planes or, rather, moves from the realistic plane to the surrealistic, or to a reflection, as in the case of Gogol's images. The next image, too, begins with apparently realistic objects but results to be conclusive nonetheless. Whole images suggest abstract signs, reinforced by associative details and increasing the sense of invisibility:

...città bagnata da canali concentrici e sorvolata da aquiloni [...], a chi si trova un mattino in mezzo ad Anastasia i desideri si risvegliano tutti insieme e ti circondano. La città ti appare come un tutto in cui nessun desiderio va perduto e di cui tu fai parte [...], la tua fatica che dà forma al desiderio prende dal desiderio la sua forma... (p.20)

...a city with concentric canals watering it and kites flying over it. [...] when you are in the heart of Anastasia one morning your desires waken all at once and surround you. The city appears to you as a whole where no desire is lost and of which you are a part... (p.12)

L'uomo cammina per giornate tra gli alberi e le pietre. Raramente l'occhio si ferma su una cosa, ed è quando l'ha riconosciuta per il segno d'un'altra cosa [...]. Tutto il resto è muto e intercambiabile [...]. L'occhio non vede cose ma figure di cose che significano altre cose [...]. Lo sguardo percorre le vie come pagine scritte: la città dice tutto quello che devi pensare, ti fa ripetere il suo discorso, e mentre credi di visitare Tamara non fai che registrare i nomi con cui essa definisce se stessa e tutte le sue parti (p.21-22)

You walk for days among trees and among stones. Rarely does the eye light on a thing, and then only when it has recognized that thing as the sign of another thing [...]. All the rest is silent and interchangeable [...]. The eye does not see things but images of things that mean other things [...]. Your gaze scans the streets as if they were written pages: the city says everything you must think, makes repeat her discourse, and while you believe you are visiting Tamara you are only recording the names with which she defines herself and all her parts... (p.13-14)

In *Invisible Cities*, there is a general tendency toward abstract images within environments that are sometimes intentionally fantastic and sometimes interpreted as fantastic dimensions. “There is no environment at all and the characters create just about everything” (Carter, 83).

The mental topography, like the variety of the mind, is multiform; Calvino has manipulated many kinds of desire, many kinds of space, mixing them in the individual cities [...]. The cities have [...] a procession of images, moods, effects that, in spite of their brevity, begin to take on an epic quality. Cities represent and shape desire, cities can change before our eyes, cities have mysterious resonances to metaphysical patterns that seem to come and go like mirages. (Carter, 117).

Imagined cities or dream cities create expressive visual images, i.e., drawings with words that appear impossible. This is supported by Calvino's own explanation on how to describe a space that has a shape and a meaning: one needs to represent it through different dimensions of time (Savona: *storia e natura*, 1974, S, 2390). The simultaneity of the past, present, and future determines his model of space, evoking perhaps Einstein's space-time continuum. But all spaces are ultimately equally indescribable. Thus, a city that we believe we recognize turns out to be another one. Another city ends up being the opposite of what is described. What seems to be just one city becomes many cities. And all this produces deliberate, infinite confusion. “To speak about these places, it is always necessary to speak also about their opposites, of the

reverse of impossibility that they maintain together with their ephemeral possibility” (Celati, 108). Reality consists of objects, but objects appear ephemeral, and the entire narration turns into a world of impossibility. The only true reality is a journey that represents a mental space.

II.5. Illustrations

The process of illustrating allows an artist to explore from the inside the visual possibilities of narrative from the perspective of someone who is modeling the literary world in pictures through its development and conversion into another medium. In this sense, an illustration is the representation of the interiority of literature because it aims to depict the invisible by presenting it in a text-image. This can be done by using different techniques and approaches, such as symbolism, or montage, or through parallel images — a parallel to the textual storyline, where pictures recreate the written pattern through their own language (method of expression).

As discussed above (I.4. *What does a realistic illustration imply?*), art does not repeat life but creates its own reality that may be parallel to the actual world but never its copy (Borev, 108). In this connection, illustration can be considered in a way as Aristotelian mimesis: it does not copy the text being illustrated but rather imitates it, i.e., creates a new world which becomes an analogy to the one presented verbally. The result is the possibility for infinite variants and infinite development of forms based on a given literary work. As in the case of any work of art in general, when the imitation of life allows for the possibility of acquiring a new quality, an illustration, when imitating a text under discussion, has the creative potential for infinite development of new forms. At the same time, when creating new forms, the illustration cannot stop imitating the text. This assures the integrity of the book-item with its verbal and visual components; however, such integrity is conditional and is manifested through the reinforcement of an artistic and aesthetic truth (as discussed above, cf. Favorsky, Stanislavski, Tokarchuk).

This in a way is related to what Mann (Mann, 1966:94) suggests about the search in real life for those patterns that underlie the comparison of the real and the fantastic, as well as what Potebnja says about the possibility of re-adaptation being inherent in any literary work. It is meant the variety of new re-adaptations or re-interpretations of concrete figures, events,

phenomena, etc. in the reader's mind, which occur by constant comparisons with the real world.²⁹⁸ The effect of an "aesthetic hypnosis" stemming from a fantastic text can be disrupted by a false or insincere tune. In this case, the reader will lose faith in the work of art because he is unable to apply certain descriptions to what he feels to be the truth. Any new work is impossible without such comparisons or relations to the materials that exist outside the narrative (Mann, 1966:13). An artwork, and a work of book art in particular, is a micro-world with its population, landscapes and atmosphere; but it exists only in relation to the big, outer, world. The artistic development of a work includes both, the contradiction of two worlds and their mutual applicability.

Gogol creates a pictorial canvas of abstract and metaphorical images as a background of his "paintings with words" and *then* overlays this background with highly realistic stories, characters, incorporating fantastic scenes (but depicted realistically) into such a multivocal narrative. Calvino, too, creates a pictorial canvas consisting of abstract and metaphorical images but stops there and does not incorporate realistic scenes. Real-fantastic transformations that are presented in Gogol's and Calvino's narratives lead to motifs manifested in *illusory* images, i.e. "the fantastic in which the hesitation occurs between the real and the imaginary" (Todorov, 36), focusing more on the impossibility of images than on their real-life nature.

Therefore, it can be argued that the stylistic core feature of the respective narratives of the two authors (see I.7.6. *Genre and "spirit" of the text*) follows the same pattern and creates the main artistic feature which appears in metaphoric paintings. Consequently, the conveying of this core feature becomes (or should be) the primary concern of an illustrator since this is what determines the form of the narration and its structural characteristics. In the case of illustrations for Gogol's stories, the realistic scenes and folkloric elements can be superimposed on the illusory-metaphoric ones. In the case of the visual accompaniment for Calvino's novel, the images will remain purely metaphoric. Furthermore, as discussed in I.7.2. *Rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures*, how time/rhythm/frequency are presented in pictures determines the "truthfulness" of illustrations and their stylistic resonance with the narrative. It is worth repeating that whatever artistic choice is made — either to follow the time and rhythm of the narrative in pictures or to build contrasts — this is done consciously and with the

²⁹⁸ Cf. A. Potebnja, *Iz lektzij po istorii slovesnosti*, Kharkov, 1894

concrete goal of affecting the reading process. The casual placement of visual elements can lead to dissonance between the verbal and visual narratives and provoke the reader's distraction or confusion.

In examining illustrations for *Evenings*, it is important to keep in mind that the main rhythmical feature of these stories is based on transitions from slow illusory-poetic descriptions to dynamic realistic-fantastic scenes and back to the descriptions. Therefore, the two parallel constructions — different in stylistic representations, mood and rhythm — are constructed and intertwined with each other in order to create a complex wholeness of the narrative. As discussed in I.7.4. *Levels of narration* and explained with the example of pictures in II.5. *The Master and Margarita*, different levels of narration must be presented differently in illustrations in order to build stylistic verbal-visual correspondences. Such diversity can be expressed with a variety of methods. For example, one narrative line can be presented through stylised-decorative images and another by means of detailed-realistic drawings. Or linear light drawings can be used for descriptions and semi-silhouettes that accompany certain scenes. Furthermore, one can use the arrangement of compositions and layout where in-text pictures can reflect descriptive illusions while drawings on the margins can represent items from realistic scenes.

I would now like to take as an example some of S. Yakutovich's pictures since he is considered to be the leading figure in the national graphic arts in Ukraine and one of the major artists who interpreted Gogol's works. While temporal/rhythmical passages — from the illusory to real worlds — occur frequently throughout the entire collection of the tales, I would like to exemplify this effect with the episodes or descriptions that constitute such passages in *The Fair at Sorochyntsi*.²⁹⁹ Then I would like to compare Gogol's verbal pictures with [Yakutovich's visual representations](#) of this story and see what effect they might have on the reading process.

Episode 1 of this story begins with the creation of a pictorial landscape-mood that cannot be visualized because of its metaphorical nature, as discussed above. These are the elements that go into the picture:

²⁹⁹ Primary source: <http://feb-web.ru/feb/gogol/texts/ps0/ps1/ps1-111-.htm>

- ...томительно-жарки те часы, когда полдень блещет в тишине и зное // luxuriously warm the hours when midday glitters in stillness;
- голубой, неизмеримый океан, сладострастным куполом нагнувшийся над землею, кажется, заснул, весь потонувши в неге // sultry heat and the blue fathomless ocean covering the plain like a dome seems to be slumbering, bathed in languor;
- на нем ни облака. В поле ни речи. Всё как будто умерло // Upon it, not a cloud; in the plain, not a sound. Everything might be dead;
- вверху только, в небесной глубине дрожит жаворонок // only above in the heavenly depths a lark is trilling;
- серебряные песни летят по воздушным ступеням на влюбленную землю // the silvery notes drop down upon adoring earth;
- изредка крик чайки или звонкий голос перепела отдается в степи // from time to time the cry of a gull or the ringing note of a quail sounds in the steppe;
- небо, его чистое зеркало — река в зеленых, гордо поднятых рамах // the sky with its pure mirror, the river in its green, proudly erect frame

Each of these phrases taken from the first paragraph already sets up the important visual background. The field is like the ocean, the sky is on the earth and the river is a mirror — as if representing two realities that reflect each other. These are two worlds, or perhaps two faces of the same world: real, earthy and fantastic-supernatural that goes beyond the surface, into reflection or into sky. In order to increase the effect of different worlds in a drawing, they can be depicted differently. Such an approach can guarantee the impression (perhaps subconscious) that these objects belong to different worlds. For example, the elements of a real-life landscape can appear in realistic style (trees, their crowns and roots), but the roots can go into water, i.e., they would be connected with another reality, a mirror. That another reality will transition to a decorative style, i.e. this would become a contingent world. A diversity of technical methods and styles used for such representations, when they are joined and mixed in the same composition, can create the necessary rhythmical arrangement, as suggested by the text. A pictorial image can then be added:

- лениво и бездумно, будто гуляющие без цели, стоят подоблачные дубы // the towering oak stand, idle and apathetic, like aimless wayfarers

- ослепительные удары солнечных лучей зажигают целые живописные массы листьев // the dazzling gleams of sunshine light up picturesque masses of leaves;
- тень, по которой только при сильном ветре прыщет золото // a shadow black as night, only flecked with gold when the wind blows;
- серые стога сена и золотые снопы хлеба станом располагаются в поле и кочуют по его неизмеримости // gray haystacks and golden sheaves of wheat ... stray over the plain

Similarly to what we see in Repin's above-mentioned portrait of a woman, this picture is painted using contrasts between bright and dark colors, sun rays and shadows, grey and gold strokes. When such metaphors are converted into the visual medium, the latter can only remain on the level of associations and create *an impression* of a similar mood in drawings. Excessive concreteness in pictures can ruin the style and poetry conveyed verbally. Therefore, first the atmosphere is created in this passage. Then, on the canvas of such an illusory-poetic painting describing the mood and creating up-down movement, the scenes from life can be added which will now be perceived with this mood.

- тянулись нескончаемую вереницею чумаки с солью и рыбою // wagons full of fish and salt had trailed in an endless chain along the road;
- горы горшков, закутанных в сено, медленно двигались, кажется, скучая своим заключением // mountains of pots wrapped in hay moved along slowly, as through weary of being shut up in the dark;
- местами какая-нибудь расписанная ярко миска // only here and there a brightly painted tureen;
- высокий гончар, который медленными шагами шел за своим товаром // the tall potter, who walked slowly behind his goods;
- тащился на истомленных волах воз, наваленный мешками // a team of wearry oxen dragged a wagon piled up with sacks;
- шла привязанная к возу кобыла, смиранный вид которой обличал преклонные лета ее // tied to the wagon, walked a mare, whose meek air betrayed her advancing years;
- на возу сидела хорошенькая дочка с круглым личиком, с черными бровями..., с розовыми губками, с повязанными на голове красными и синими лентами // on the wagon was sitting his pretty daughter, with a round face, black eyebrows..., carelessly smiling rosy lips, and with red and blue ribbons twisted in the long braids...

Despite the creation of crowded scenes, the approaching fair, carts with goods and many colors used in painting such scenes, there is a feeling of the measured and smooth rhythm of the entire procession. This is reached by the selection of words that convey a monotonous mood, as underlined above. This measured and monotonous tone echoes the picture at the beginning (“luxuriously warm the hours when” ... “in stillness and sultry heat” ... “the towering oak stand, idle and apathetic”). As in the case of the picture of oaks, in the episode with the fair procession, Gogol works with contrasts and principles of painting. He first establishes the background of a future picture and then intersperses bright accents here and there (“only here and there a brightly painted tureen” ... “pretty daughter with carelessly smiling rosy lips and with red and blue ribbons”).

Therefore, the descriptive parts represent poetic and metaphoric images that create the appearance of a colorful painting but result in mood-based abstract images existing only in one's mind. Such images are mixed with fragments of real-life details which then transition again to metaphorical paintings:

...издали уже веяло прохладой, которая казалась ощутительнее после томительного, разрушающего жара. Сквозь темно- и светло-зеленые листья небрежно раскиданных по лугу осокоров, берез и тополей засверкали огненные, одетые холодом искры, и река-красавица блистательно обнажила серебряную грудь свою, на которую роскошно падали зеленые кудри дерев. [...] в те упоительные часы, когда верное зеркало так завидно заключает в себе... (p.113)

...they felt cool freshness, the more welcome after the exhausting, wearisome heat. Through the dark and light green foliage of the birches and poplars, carelessly scattered over the plain, there were glimpses of the cold glitter of the water, and the lovely river unveiled her shining silvery bosom, over which the green tresses of the trees drooped luxuriantly. Willful as a beauty in those enchanting hours when her faithful mirror so jealously frames her... (p.10)

The parts of the river are then compared to a girl and her beauty and then to a landscape — the metaphor becomes a powerful image that includes both poetic picture and the symbolism of the elements described. The image of this river as a mirror is again presented. But such an

artistic-symbolic image suddenly includes real people and scenes and then again proceeds by means of the following pictorial-metaphoric image.

Ряды мельниц подымали на тяжелые колеса свои широкие волны и мощно кидали их, разбивая в брызги, обсыпая пылью и обдавая шумом окрестность. Воз с знакомыми нам пассажирами въехал в это время на мост, и река во всей красоте и величии, как цельное стекло, раскинулась перед ними. (p.113)

Rows of watermills tossed up great waves with their heavy wheels and flung them violently down again, churning them into foam, scattering froth and making a great clatter. At that moment the wagon with the persons we have described reached the bridge, and the river lay before them in all her beauty and grandeur like a sheet of glass. (p.10-11)

Everything ends up connected as one thing passes into another: symbols, metaphors and the real items are all the same reality. The image of a mill has symbolic meaning.³⁰⁰ Gogol introduces this powerful symbol and then, suddenly, everything is turned over: the earthly reality goes down into another plane on the other side of the world — in beautiful underwater abyss:

Небо, зеленые и синие леса, люди, возы с горшками, мельницы, — всё опрокинулось, стояло и ходило вверх ногами, не падая в голубую, прекрасную бездну. (p.113)

Sky, green and dark blue forest, men, wagons of pots, watermills – all were standing or walking upside down, and not sinking into the lovely blue depths. (p.11)

The image of a mirror (earth-sky and water-sky) keeps the metamorphoses going along with the realistic scenes. Such mirror-images, as Belyi demonstrates, have very specific significance in Gogol's poetics:

³⁰⁰ Since ancient times, a mill was perceived in some systems as the rotation of stars around the sky, which is connected with the axle of the world. The cyclical epochs, therefore, are symbolically related to the rotation of the mill. The help of wind or water is also not casual, as well as the fact of grinding the grains which is the symbol of fate that is smoothing everything in life. // Hans Biedermann, *Encyclopedia of symbolism*, New York: Facts on File, 1994

In *Evenings* the earth and sky mirror one another: “the groves are not groves: that green belt girding... the round sky; and in the upper half, and in the lower half... the moon” (*The Terrible Vengeance*). So even the earth is an equatorial line—of the sky, which is set within the earth. When the normal (in our sense) earth breaks into the empty sphere, it creates a fissure. The earth, as we understand it, is, in the context of Gogol’s romantic worldview, *nothing*. It is a fissure of “all-sky,” the home of the overthrown. In Gogol there are two skies and two earths. At one point sky embraces earth, and the clan’s life results on the earth’s surface. At another point the sky is embraced by the center of the earth. “How... the elder held” the pond “in... the embraces... the sky” (*A May Night, or The Drowned Maiden*)—this is one representation. Another is “the immeasurable ocean of air... [he] fell asleep, embracing” the earth (*The Sorochintsy Fair*). At one point a man walks with his head in the air. At another “deep blue forests, people, carts... everything overturned... feet in the air, not falling, into... the abyss” (*The Sorochintsy Fair*). Earth and sky flip over, now above, now below. Under “everything” is “nothing”; under “nothing” is “everything”: naturalism and symbolism are fused in Gogol’s plots. The explosion into an all-“nothing” is the consequence of severance from the clan. Such is the primordeial plot: “I,” as the center of “nothing,” inflates into “everything there is” (Belyi, 77-78; transl. by Colbath, 205-206).

Here, again, the rhythmical movement, the imbalance of the composition, and the diversity generated by representing the two worlds — when this is transformed into a visual image — becomes the main stylistic feature. As above, the different linguistic methods inherent in the artistic language of expression³⁰¹ and styles can be used to separate these two artistic planes, following this way Gogol’s concrete artistic language. The technique of “leading the spectator through the composition” — when constructing a visual image — as well as the feeling of the rhythm of a visual composition, like the feeling of a rhythm in music, can help to achieve *correspondences* between verbal and visual narration and create an integral work of book art.

Such metamorphoses stand out, create the whole background, then gradually increase, become more intense, and transition to a real-life scandalous scene reminiscent of a short humorous story on its own — involving a young girl on a cart, her angry stepmother, guys who flatter the former and call the latter a devil. Then comes a quarrel where each character is depicted in realistic style:

³⁰¹ *Artistic method*, or *artistic language of expression*, is a chosen technique that is used to create an artwork (e.g. graphic techniques, painting, decorative stylization, etc.); *artistic hand* or style is an individual manner of a particular artist when he uses one or another language of expression.

А вот впереди и дьявол сидит!” Хохот поднялся со всех сторон [...]: красные щеки ее превратились в огненные, и треск отборных слов посыпался дождем на голову разгульного парубка [...] хохот разгульных повес удвоился с новой силой... (p.114)

And there’s a devil sitting in front!” There were peals of laughter all around [...]: her red cheeks (of stepmother) blazed and a torrent of choice language fell like rain on the head of the unruly youth. [...] the laughter of the rowdy pranksters was louder than ever... (p.11)

This first episode of the tale creates perhaps the most powerful poetic illusion that constitutes the artistic core of the entire tale, stimulates visual imagination and sets up a certain perceptual attitude toward the rest of the story. What we see on S.Y.’s illustration for this episode is a realistic humorous scene where the main object of the quarrel, the stepmother, is not depicted. Instead the moment is presented when the cart is abandoned and the guys shouting something behind, as if addressing someone beyond the space of the picture. So, no central scene is presented, but what remains is a group of agitated guys. The characters’ expressions, their movements and arrangement of empty spaces between figures, the rhythmicity of composition, as well as various amusing details — everything is presented with the confident line of a drawing.

If we explore Gogol’s tale this way, we find the alternation of pictorial-illusory descriptions with real-life scenes in the next 12 episodes. I will briefly summarize their main artistic features and S.Y.’s illustrations.

In **episode II**, Gogol presents a trade fair as a waterfall, the noise of animals and human conversation where everything makes different sounds in a cacophonous whirlwind:

...когда весь народ срастается в одно огромное чудовище и шевелится всем своим туловищем на площади и по тесным улицам, кричит, гогочет, гремит (p.115).

... when all the people become one huge monster that moves its massive body through the square and the narrow streets, with shouting, laughing, and clatter (p.12)

Against this background, the items presented at the fair are described, and a short dialogue follows. S.Y.'s symbolic illustration presents a crowd in the foreground which spreads and fills in the entire space, but then we see that this mass of people and items is inside a cow, becoming its body. At the same time, the cow's back becomes the line of the horizon, on which a village with houses and a church are situated. It is truly an integral organism: the fair is like a monster. It is perceived like a sign with an outline and a story.

Episode III is purely realistic, consisting of dialogues from which we get to know about the devilry that is wandering around at the fair, as well as a guy who is trying to make a marriage proposal to Paraska. The technical part of S.Y.'s drawing is, as always, excellent: from the development of characters and composition to the execution itself. Gogol's text does not imply any symbolism here, and the drawing in this case matches the text perfectly even though the exact transfer of the story into picture seems to have little sense. The same comment applies to **Episode IV** where one more realistic scene is represented with amusing figures and dialogues. The choice of realistic scenes for pictures says much about the artist's individual preferences, and his style entirely suits such representations. What can be of interest for the reader is the pleasure of observing the excellent drawings. The result of such scenes is sometimes the explanation of the text with pictures but can also be reminiscent of a still from a film or a photo of a moment in a play on the theater stage.

In the following **episodes, V – XII**, Gogol again alternates pictorial-metaphoric descriptions with realistic scenes incorporated in them where the plot develops. The selection of adjectives and their combination create illusory pictures, reminiscences of which will be found in the works of Russian symbolists a century later.³⁰² The symbolism comes through many of Gogol's descriptive passages. S.Y. focuses in his illustrations on the realistic scenes at the fair or in a house, expressive dialogues, the appearance of a chort, and so forth. Altogether, this creates a dynamic series of pictures (one for episode V is particularly interesting in terms of the development of the composition and passages between planes), but what is missing is the second stylistic line of the narrative, that of mood-transmitting poetry.

³⁰² A. Belyi in chapter 5, "Gogol in the 19th-20th centuries", in: *Gogol's Artistry*, provides the stylistic background that Gogol laid down and that received its application in natural school, in works of Dostoevsky, Sologub, Blok, Belyi himself, Mayakovski, and Meyerhold.

The final episode, XIII, begins with a wedding and great joy but then the mood turns to deep sadness.

[Paraska] начала притопывать ногами всё чем далее, смелее; наконец левая рука ее опустилась и уперлась в бок, и она пошла танцевать, побрякивая подковами, держа перед собою зеркало и напевая любимую свою песню (p.134)

[Paraska] began tapping with her feet, growing bolder as she went on; at last she laid her left hand on her hip and went off into a dance, holding the mirror before her, and singing her favorite song (p.31)

A song is introduced as noisy and dancing people are described in bright colours:

Странное неизъяснимое чувство овладело бы зрителем, при виде, как от одного удара смычком музыканта в сермяжной свитке [...] всё обратилось, волею и неволею, к единству и перешло в согласие. Люди, на угрюмых лицах которых, кажется, век не проскальзывала улыбка, притопывали ногами и вздрагивали плечами. Всё несло. Всё танцовало. Но еще страннее, еще неразгаданнее чувство пробудилось бы в глубине души при взгляде на старушек, на ветхих лицах которых веяло равнодушие могилы, толкавшихся между новым, смеющимся, живым человеком. (p.135)

A strange feeling, hard to put into words, would have overcome anyone watching how the whole crowd was transformed into a scene of unity and harmony [...]. Men whose sullen faces seemed to have known no gleam of a smile for years were tapping with their feet and wriggling their shoulders; everything was heaving, everything was dancing. But an even stranger and more disturbing feeling would have been stirred in the heart at the sight of old women, whose ancient faces breathed the indifference of the tomb, shoving their way between the young, laughing, living human beings. (p.32)

After such rapid, loud dancing and carnivalesque happiness, a group of old ladies appear: “на ветхих лицах которых веяло равнодушие могилы” (“whose ancient faces breathed the indifference of the tomb”). Then, in the final paragraph, the mood gradually changes becoming

melancholic and hopelessly sad. This transition from a realistic scene to a poetic-metaphoric picture creates a very important stylistic and rhythmical conclusion:

Гром, хохот, песни слышались тише и тише. Смычок умирал, слабея и теряя неясные звуки в пустоте воздуха. Еще слышалось где-то топанье, что-то похожее на ропот отдаленного моря, и скоро всё стало пусто и глухо. Не так ли и радость, прекрасная и непостоянная гостя, улетает от нас, и напрасно одинокий звук думает выразить веселье? В собственном эхе слышит уже он грусть и пустыню и дико внемлет ему. Не так ли резвые друзья бурной и вольной юности, по одиночке, один за другим, теряются по свету и оставляют наконец одного старинного брата их? Скучно оставленному! И тяжело и грустно становится сердцу, и нечем помочь ему. (p.136)

The sounds of laughter, song, and uproar grew fainter and fainter. The strains of the fiddle were lost in vague and feeble notes, and died away in the wind. In the distance there was still the sound of dancing feet, something like the faraway murmur of the sea, and soon all was stillness and emptiness again. Is it not thus that joy, lovely and fleeting guest, flies from us? In vain the last solitary note tries to express gaiety. In its own echo it hears melancholy and emptiness and listens to it; bewildered. Is it not thus that those who have been playful friends in free and stormy youth, one by one stray, lost, about the world and leave their old comrade lonely and forlorn at last? Sad is the lot of one left behind! Heavy and sorrowful is his heart and nothing can help him! (p.32-33)

The spectator is no longer a participant in this picture: “A strange feeling, hard to put into words, would have overcome anyone watching how the whole crowd was transformed into a scene of unity and harmony,” and becomes an observer instead. Distance is created between the carnival, (“everything was heaving, everything was dancing”); and the observer transitions to a state of analytical observation (“Is it not thus that”). And then there are those who observe this episode despite themselves (“неволею”): casual old ladies, indifferent and bored. The unity of worlds, of earth and sky, of happiness and carnival breaks up and then disappears (“the strains of the fiddle were lost in vague and feeble notes, and died away in the wind”). This leads to unhappiness and loneliness. At this point, it is not clear whether the wedding is moving away or ceasing to be perceived. The conclusive mood of this episode suggests the absence of the spectator (who remains beyond the story) and total loneliness.

Such a powerful poetic picture, with its significant transition of mood from total joy to total sadness, is overlooked in S.Y.'s illustration: his visual story ends with noisy and cheerful carnival. Because of this non-correspondence of mood and rhythm, the drawing seems to be like something from another story — despite its accuracy, details, well-developed composition and interesting characters.

Gogol's representation of single characters, their precise and almost hyper-realistic descriptions, including diabolic and fantastic figures, and the palpability of diabolic humorous scenes provide the artist with a wide spectrum of working material for their realistic illustrations. The adventures of the chort are so concrete that nobody would doubt that he really walks through the fair and grunts. On the other hand, such descriptions can sometimes create confusion in those who attempt to visually interpret Gogol's stories where such realistic elements occupy first place and become the main focus of the majority of illustrators.³⁰³ Instances of viewing the main artistic feature in apparently realistic terms are associated with many cases where fantastic, abstract and metaphoric pictures remain beyond the artist's vision. The gallery of portraits in the entire series of illustrations (one of the structural aspects, see I.7. *Approaches to illustrating fiction*), as it is developed by S.Y., is fine when the text itself does not offer any other aspect of narration but scenes with dialogues, like for example in short humorous stories rooted in folklore. In this case the development of characters, their postures, facial expressions, elements of their environment become the main focus of illustrations. But this is not the case with Gogol's tales.

Belyi and then Nabokov³⁰⁴ notice that Gogol's game consists in bombarding the reader with apparently insignificant detail — which is part of the above-mentioned chatty narrative style characterizing virtually all of the author's writing — but the symbolism of this detail becomes apparent only after several re-readings. One can read the text without understanding the sense of it if this particular feature of Gogol's plot is not taken into consideration, i.e., this is the

³⁰³ An overview of artists and their pictures for Gogol's works presents the predominant tendency of realistic style of illustrations, starting from the 19th century, but which also continued until present; e.g. Korostin, A., Sternin, G. "Geroi Gogolja v ruskom izobrazitelnom iskusstve XIX veka" in: *Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol*, Moscow, 1952, pp.837-892 (Literaturnoe nasledstvo, tom 58), <http://feb-web.ru/feb/litnas/texts/158/158-837-.htm>. The contemporary illustrations of Gogol's works can be divided into two directions. The first one represents the realistic depiction of characters and scenes (e.g. S.Yakutovich, G.Spirin); the second direction inclines toward the style of "low fantasy" or kitsch in the case of Gogol's horror-fantastic scenes. But an exception to such trends is found in the work of artists who developed stylistic word-picture transformations individually for each text (G.Yakutovich, V.Mitchenko)

³⁰⁴ Belyi's book *Gogol's Artistry*; Nabokov's *Nikolai Gogol*

double notion where “content” is modeled from metaphoric-illusory form, and this form becomes often more meaningful than the plot line presented in realistic scenes. Silent or rapid reading represents Gogol’s main stylistic feature in a reversed way, hiding his purposes. “He wants us to read slowly, even word by word. He would probably be pleased if we moved our lips and whispered out the syllables. Otherwise we are likely to miss much” (Maguire, 189). Gogol’s plot, when understood in its literal sense, is deprived of originality, replaced by realism, and exhausted (Belyi, 46). As discussed above, if the plot based on realistic scenes is extracted from the entire corpus of the work, it loses its meaning since each tale is constructed primarily out of other elements, such as vision-based metaphors, tunes, abstract images, melodicity and so on. This means that such seemingly extraneous elements are the plot itself where the main stylistic feature consists of complex and multivocal relations between visual illusion and realistic scenes incorporated into pictorial writing. For this reason, the representation in drawings of realistic scenes only results (unintentionally for the artist) in the distortion of the poetics, stylistics and semantics of Gogol’s work. Such a claim does not mean that S.Y.’s pictures are bad (and neither are those by other artists who used a realistic style and represented only the physical/earthy plot line). This simply means that they can be considered as “based on” or inspired by the text but do not illustrating it in the sense of intermedial adaptation.

No less important is the visual representation of time and the rhythmical arrangement of the entire tale (see I.7.2. *Rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures*) which in the case of *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* has a particular musical tonality: from slow illusory paintings, to increasing movement at the fair, then descriptions, humor scenes, then again alternation with slow melody, and so forth, reaching a dynamic peak in the wedding scene at the end that concludes with slow and quiet melancholy. In this respect, as we can see on [S.Y.’s frontispiece](#) to the tale, the absence of rhythmical conformity to the narrative creates a great deal of confusion. Such visualization of the story may be the first reaction of many readers, including myself: everything is spinning in a whirlpool of people, items, animals, carts, houses, everyday-life elements, and any other thing included there by Gogol, involving the realism of detail, symbolism, mood, horror, and laughter.

It is not easy for adults to take in the story afresh when they had first encountered it as adolescents and were unable to appreciate the device through which the action is presented. But

we recall the vividness of our first impression, taking in the plot we have carried with us over the years the way parched earth sucks up moisture. Having matured, we are not struck by the flow of scenes, which are lapidary, saturated with color and resound to such an unusual degree. Not one superfluous word! Costume, gesture, placement of objects are not incidental. The digressions into lyricism, into panoramas of nature deliberately divert our attention, which is strained and overburdened with trifles. (Belyi, 72; transl. by Colbath, 194)

However, to imagine such a mix of everything when reading the story is one thing, while to actually see a picture reproducing that mental image is another thing altogether. In the latter case, we understand how an illustration should not be made. This is because Gogol's mix of things, when transferred into a drawing, acquires stylistic nonconformity, compositional overload, congestion of detail and the absence of measure. This happens because not everything can and should be represented visually, i.e., this is an example of verbal-visual non-translatability. The depiction of half-figures of people and animals on S.Y.'s frontispiece, the insertion of at least four different scales in the same image, and the technique of collage in general are not justified by word-image relations proposed by Gogol's text. Thus, the complex melody of the narrative ends up buried under this mass of things despite the development of detail and the excellence of the drawing technique. At the same time, if this picture were presented as a stankovy work in large format, framed and exhibited, then it would acquire its own meaning and develop in its own complex narrative. The spectator could then surely recognize Gogol's motifs in such a picture, but the perception of the verbal narrative would not be disturbed since the story and the drawing would be seen separately, and therefore would have their independence from each other.

Calvino in his "Un romanzo dentro un quadro" (in *Collezione di sabbia*), expresses an interesting observation about the historical events represented in Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People*. His point is that a picture with many characters is like a novel in which different events occur. This is true also with respect to an illustration, or a series of illustrations, and in particular something as complex and fascinating as S.Y.'s frontispiece. This is a good example of a reversed effect (see note 2): while it can be assumed that an illustration is a secondary product dependent on the text from which it originated, it still creates its own story that can be correlated with the text because of the presence of some of the aspects taken from the narrative. At the same time, such an illustration can become an independent work — either

because of lacking verbal-visual correspondence on all the levels, or in light of the development of a new visual story that transcends the verbal. Besides, a text and a picture speak two different languages — through words and through images respectively. And so, by their very nature, texts and pictures communicate different messages and are addressed to different receptors. The question is only the degree of their correspondence to each other. W.J.T. Mitchell, for example, considers so-called photo-essays as “dialectic of exchange and resistance between photography and language, the things that make it possible (and sometimes impossible) to ‘read’ the picture, or to ‘see’ the text illustrated in them” and views the relationship between writing and photography as something closer to perception by a reader or spectator (Mitchell, 289).

The series of S.Y.’s pictures for *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* (as well for the other tales from *Evenings*) exemplifies the fundamental difference between book illustration, which must respect the boundaries of intermediality, including correspondence to the verbal (see I.7. *Conclusion: The Definition of Illustration*), and all the other visual interpretations of the verbal that do not follow such principles and become unsuitable for the medium of book art. Otherwise, if placed on book pages, illustrations can distort the poetics and semantics offered by the narrative.

It is crucial, therefore, when it comes to word-picture adaptation, to grasp and follow the literary and linguistic principles and artistic features — in their wide sense, including all the nuances discussed in the above-mentioned six conceptual aspects — of a particular writer and his particular work, i.e., Gogol in this case. Such an approach gives an illustrator the possibility not merely to retell the plot of a given narrative in illustrations and represent all the details taken from the text, but also to convey the individual stylistic features of Gogol’s narrative (see I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*).

The examples of non-translatibility of Calvino’s stories into pictures indicate that his texts adhere to virtual imagery, creating a kind of verbal pictures where many of the invisible cities challenge the laws of logic. He creates images that exist, but they are invisible, and impossible to represent in pictures. They are described in very abstract terms and remain on a verbal or virtual level. Thus, the pictures for his stories are all abstract and very disconnected from the text. In fact, the artists who, to my mind, came closest to Calvino’s stylistics are Rebecca Chappell, Eda Akaltun and Kate Weatherly. But even they, on their profiles, write that their

pictures are “based on” or “inspired by” Calvino's novel, rather than illustrate it. This supports the above-mentioned impossibility of drawing Calvino's cities. And therefore, in some cases “translation” becomes “conversion”, as in poetry, or rather a transition from the primary source to a completely new form.

Some artists have been inspired by Calvino’s narrative and created a series of pictures. Some of these pictures became a part of the collection of Calvino’s book covers, but not all these images were intended for existing stories. For example, Calvino mentions delicate and thin sculptures of Fausto Melotti who inspired Calvino to create thin and almost invisible cities similar to Melotti’s sculptures. In fact, a photo of these sculptures appears on the book cover of *Le città invisibili*. Letizia Modena, for instance, wrote on the dialogue between the text and what this text represents on a book or cover. However, such examples lead us away from the principles of word-image adaptation and are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Conclusion

As we have seen through this part, the narrative stylistics of both Gogol and Calvino suggest the impossibility of converting their writing into pictures, at least not in the form of illustrations that are meant *to fully correspond* to the narrative on *all* the levels and include conceptual and structural aspects (see: I.6. *Style of text – style of pictures*; I.7. *Approaches to illustrating fiction*). The pictures can rather correlate with some of the aspects of the verbal but then extend the narrative by creating a new visual narrative that would go beyond those literary aspects that are not translatable into concrete visual images. This new visual story, however, can perfectly correlate with the verbal on the level of mood, rhythm, genre and “spirit” of the text (see: I.6.2-6) — which are the fundamental criteria of the intermedial translation. This is what is meant by a parallel visual story termed as a narrative inside a narrative or a visual story inside a verbal story (p.59), the connection of which creates a third meaning that will be different with each new visual adaptation of the same text.

With respect to Calvino's stories everything seems to be clear: the only possibility of converting them into visual counterparts results in pictures "based on" his narrative but not book illustrations. This occurs mainly because the stylistic nature of the verbal determines the invisibility of Calvino's pictorial images.

When I read Gogol's stories many years ago, to be honest, I imagined pictures very similar in their approach to what S.Y. created: the active movement of items and people, scenes full of detail (as described by Gogol), well-developed national features, excellent drawing technique (elevated to Gogol's verbal excellence), realism in depicting each character (as presented by the text), symbolism in the compositions and in the way transitions occur between different planes, and so forth. However, when I reread these tales more closely (as an illustrator), I realized that such an approach is lacking in the artistic core of Gogol's texts: the invisible and illusory nature of most of the descriptive parts that constitute the author's style. Gogol's works can be interpreted as visual images on the level of historical accuracy and national costumes; different time categories can be correlated; the rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures can be reconstructed; symbolism and levels of narration can be developed; and a corresponding level of detail can be achieved. And in fact, these aspects of Gogol's works are frequently illustrated, with greater or lesser success, by different artists. But the most important aspect of *any* adaptation is the re-creation of the style of verbal narration by means of visual language, and that remains at the level of impossibility or, to put it in Benjamin's terms, non-translatability, is *always* avoided by the artists. The result is that such pictures can entertain the reader who may admire them — if amusing characters are represented and the artistic execution is excellent. However, these images are likely to appear disconnected stylistically from the text and can cause confusion if all they do is illustrate the plot. The paradox consists in the fact that Gogol has been the most illustrated Russian-language writer.

Part III. Appendixes

Word-Picture Adaptation in Practice

Introduction

III.1. Interview with V. Mitchenko on his illustration-making for Gogol's *Viy*.

III.2. Interview with O. Prihodko about his role and 40-year experience within the art industry

III.3. A visual commentary on one Gogol's phrase

II.4. An example of word-picture translation: *Silence*, the fairy tale for adults

III.5. *The Master and Margarita*: the documentary-artistic approach

III.6. *Princess and the Sea Beast*: a reversed way of illustration-making

III.7. Interview with Richard Kirk, a visual artist and book illustrator

III.8. Stages of the word-picture adaptation

Introduction

One of the central methods of qualitative research is the one-on-one interview³⁰⁵ which may include a surprising variety of purposes. Some of these goals include the following:³⁰⁶

- Understanding the experiences, perceptions, opinions, and perspectives via stories, accounts, and explanations of members of a given industry;
- Gathering information about things or processes that cannot be observed easily;
- Obtaining first-hand information that can vividly illustrate one's professional experience, otherwise hypothetical, and bringing the data to life rather than just listing the theoreticians' conclusions;
- Not seeking to generalize the opinions that circulate within a given field, but rather to create a kaleidoscope of ways things work or could be performed. (Connaway et al., 239-241)

³⁰⁵ Cf. Connaway, Lynn Silipigni, et al. "Research Methods in Library and Information Science", 6th Edition, *ABC-CLIO, LLC*, 2016, pp.239-262, ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/lib/west/detail.action?docID=4740673>

³⁰⁶ In order to obtain valuable and all-round results, I would need to interview a few dozens of people working within the art-industry, particularly bookmaking. However, due to the necessity of completing the present work in a very short space of time, while it takes much longer to carefully select participants and get back from them, I will leave the broader investigations for the future step. At the moment, I limit the interviews by three participants, well-recognized persons involved professionally in the arts.

Therefore, interviews with three persons, involved professionally in the arts, are included in the present study: Vitaly Mitchenko, who tells specifically about the principles of word-picture adaptations of Gogol's story; Oleg Prichodko, who shares some general principles of how the art industry functions; and Richard Kirk, who explains his approach to illustrating fantastic texts.

Following this, I include examples of some of my own book-projects, explaining in detail and with specific particularities how, in which cases, by means of what techniques and principles the creative word-picture interpretations are developed. The reason for including such materials (see above: I.1. *Theory on practice, and practice in theory*) is the necessity to clarify what book illustration means and how my method of intermedial translation is implemented in practice. These examples should be taken neither as an act of self-advertising, nor as the best artistic choices for the texts they illustrate, but only as the explanation of the method which implies stylistic correspondences between the verbal and visual components of a given book and leads to what is included in *The Definition of illustration*. Besides, the analysis of my own works, seen from a 6-17-year distance, can provide a more nuanced understanding of artistic intentions and results, compared to attempts to merely describe someone else's work. Since creation of meaning cannot mirror perception of that meaning, no one could enter the minds of others and describe the creative ideas or path of illustration-making, except the artist himself. Therefore, an accurate commentary about what the visual message aims to transmit (and backward conversion of pictures into words) can be obtained only from a direct interview with the artist himself, or the artist's self-critique about his works.

As someone studying practical ways of taking a text and making pictures out of it, my own position has a critical outcome since most of my arguments come from my, and not someone else's, practice. Things have not fallen by chance, but rather specific paths have led things fall in that particular way. The practical side of my research has served as a tool that allowed me to develop and articulate a new method of intermedial adaptation which is based on a complex approach (see note 225). I began experimenting with how to draw on my own position as an auto-critical tool of my analysis. Besides, if I am describing the works of others, it would be prejudicial not to consider examples of my own work.

III.1. Interview with Vitaly S. Mitchenko

and further considerations about the stylistic conformity of the verbal and the visual.

A member of the Union of Artists of Ukraine (since 1982), an artist-calligrapher, and associate professor at the Department of Graphic Arts, the National Academy of Fine Arts in Kyiv.

V. Mitchenko graduated from the Saratov Art College in 1969, and the Moscow Polygraphic Institute in 1976, Faculty of Book Art (his teachers were the recognized graphic artists and art historians of the 20th century, founders of the Soviet book-design theory: [P.G. Zakharov](#), [A.D. Goncharov](#), [V.N. Lyakhov](#), E.B. Adamov, M.V. Bolshakov).

From 1976 to 1986, he worked as an art editor, and from 1999 to 2004 chief artist at the publishing house “Dnepr” in Kyiv. In 1986 – 1999, he was a lecturer/teacher of graphic art and calligraphy, at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture in Kyiv, where he came back after a 9-year interruption, in 2008, in the capacity of associate professor. He is a constant participant of national and international book exhibitions (Kyiv, Lviv, Moscow, Minsk, Frankfurt-am-Main). Throughout his years of work, he has received more than 20 prizes at book exhibits, including first place in the Georgiy Yakutovich competition “for design, illustrations, and handwritten text of Gogol’s *Viy*” (2004).³⁰⁷

V. Mitchenko wrote, curated, and edited two monographs that have become major handbooks on the aesthetics of Cyrillic historical handwriting:

The Esthetics of Ukrainian Handwritten Script, Kyiv: Gramota, 2007 (in Ukrainian);
Calligraphy — the Influences of Fonts: Theory and Practice, Cyrillic and Latin scripts, History and Contemporaneity, Kyiv: Laurus, 2018 (in Ukrainian).

His creative works include book illustrations for major literary texts of Ukrainian writers, as well as book design, stankovy graphic art, the development of calligraphy, and the publication of limited editions. Further links: [The Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy](#), [World for Ukraine](#).

Conducted in Sept 2019, the interview has the purpose of exploring the artistic methods of verbal-visual translations with the example of Gogol’s *Viy* and Mitchenko’s illustrations.

When asking questions and following the answers,³⁰⁸ I will include also some additional materials, references, when needed, and my comments on various illustrations mentioned by the artist. The analysis of word-picture relations will be developed in the chapter on Gogol.

³⁰⁷ Booklet *Mandri* [Voyages], V. Mitchenko, 48p, Kyiv: Gramota, 2007.

³⁰⁸ The translation of V. Mitchenko’s answers is mine.

Q.1: The necessity to take on Gogol's work does not come spontaneously. Where did the impulse come from? How did the idea arise? And why *Viy*?

A.1: My annual trips to Ukraine for summer vacation were a sort of impulse to illustrate *Viy*. I grew up in Russia, but frequently visited a picturesque Ukrainian village called Ostapovka, in the Poltava region — my father's hometown. Here, I read for the first time Gogol's *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*, saw the reproductions of [Kuindzhi](#)'s paintings, and started to make copies of his landscapes. After I moved to Kyiv, I began to visit all of Gogol's places, walked through many villages around Kyiv, where the old wooden churches were still preserved. The story *Viy* attracted my attention when I was waiting for a bus at a bus stop, after one of such trips. I heard by chance a conversation between two old ladies, who were discussing the recent death of a priest from their local church. They were saying that he had died from the evil caused by a famous local witch. So, I realized that Gogol is, indeed, our contemporary.

Q.2: Gogol can be considered as the most illustrated writer (among Russian-language authors). Before you created your book, there had been dozens of other series of pictures on Gogol's stories, all of them very different in style, graphic techniques, creativity. Did some of them influence your work? Or, did you want to make intentionally something different? Or, were your creative ideas coming purely from Gogol's text?

A.2: Among the artists who have illustrated Gogol, I think the ones that stand out are the works of [S. Alimiy](#) (even though some can define them as too pretentious), and [Y. Tcharyshnikov](#) who lives in his own world, as Gogol did. But the closest to Gogol's spirit, to my mind, are [N. Kompanež's](#) works on *Evenings* for which I made book layout and book design. . There are many great artists who have interpreted Gogol, including Favorsky. But I think that I've made (at least attempted) to create pictures in my own way.

[N. Kompanež](#), a book artist, tells in an interview about his work on Gogol's series: "I worked on this project, with some interruptions, for ten years. Any graphic artist who

undertakes to illustrate a famous literary work [...], should familiarize himself with the works of his predecessors who have already illustrated different editions of Gogol's works. Therefore, I had before me the task to offer my own, original interpretation of Gogol's literary characters. For example, [E. Kibrik](#), an eminent painter and graphic artist (originally from Ukraine, even though he worked in Moscow), achieved fame thanks to his illustrations for Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* and, among the other works, also Gogol's *Taras Bulba*. [Kibrik's pictures](#) for this text were so successful (for that period of Soviet realism) that a stereotype of only such depictions of *Taras Bulba* became entrenched. And therefore, I had to break with that stereotype, trying not to be influenced by Kibrik's work, and to find a totally new representation of Gogol's character."³⁰⁹

Q.3: Favorsky suggests a complex approach to illustration-making, including the stylistic correspondences between the verbal and the visual, the arrangement of time and space, etc. Did you follow such principles, when illustrating *Viy*, or do you have your own approach? In other words, how exactly did you manage to reflect Gogol's spirit in your pictures?

A.3: The most attractive, for me, is Favorsky's discussion about the space and time in narratives and pictures, as well as the relations between the space of a white sheet and black graphic signs. My involvement in the art of calligraphy and [lettering](#) has opened to me an entire world of infinite visual possibilities created through the construction of letters. Each letter preserves in its graphic sign the memory of those times when it was a drawing. Therefore, I attempted to make the text of *Viy* look like the core illustration of the book. I decided to "write" the novel with calligraphy and developed my own authorial handwriting which, stylistically, constituted a transition from the [semi-ustav](#) font to the Ukrainian Baroque [skoropis](#) [cursive]. Y. Tynyanov's novel [Lieutenant Kizhe](#), with [V. Vagin's art and font design](#), served for me as a great example of such a verbal-visual communication. I loved the idea of a person materializing from scribe's "lapse of the pen". By the way, both Tynyanov and Gogol did not want to have their stories illustrated: the former wrote articles about

³⁰⁹ The interview led by T. Golovko for the newspaper *Den*, day.kyiv.ua, №227 (Dec. 2014), <https://day.kyiv.ua/ru/article/kultura/oshchushchayu-obrazy-takimi-kak-videli-ih-klassiki>

this issue while the latter did not accept Agin's series. Yet, we are still speaking about visualization.

Q.4: When decomposing *Viy* into literary components, we can find elements of a tale, of a legend, some elements of the grotesque, fantastic, symbolism, and at the same time Gogol's descriptions are incredibly realistic. Which of these literary types/styles did you choose for visual interpretation? Which graphic methods did you use to create such phrase-picture correspondences?

A.4: In the illustrations, I attempted to avoid a kind of synthetic devilry. The only image where I was perhaps not successful in this was that of *Viy*.

The "synthetic devilry," which V.M. attempted to avoid, is inherent to many contemporary interpretations of Gogol, including the recent Russian film [Viy \(2014\)](#). As literary critic Dmitry Bykov complains, the creators of the film overstepped a boundary of interpretation, deviated too far from both Gogol's plot and his stylistics, added a new storyline and a number of characters that do not exist in Gogol's story, emasculated the original's artistic and metaphysical complexity. In other words, they twisted entirely the meaning and just attached the name of Gogol to their own piece of work. Besides, rather than building the story on the basis of ethnic Ukrainian materials, which would have produced a more influential result (as in the case of Paradjanov's brilliant film [Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors](#), or the film [Viy of the 1967](#), which had smaller budgets but which still now look more stylish and powerful in the artistic sense), they resorted to an eclectic style, mixed everything up and added purely Western methods and fashionable technologies. In fact, the film has been compared with Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit*³¹⁰ and with many other Hollywood-style films as well.³¹¹ "A great adaptation would be one that embodies the national imprint meant by Gogol." Bykov's statement takes us back to what has been discussed in I.7.1. *Time described in the novel* and *Time of the writer*. For Bykov, the film-makers should not have mentioned Gogol's name and the title of his work at all, since they rewrote and re-fibbed completely the original. Instead, they could have presented the film as a contemporary horror story with sugary mysticism, pathos and demons

³¹⁰ "Viy against Hobbit", *Nezavisimaja Gazeta*, Jan.27, 2014 http://www.ng.ru/tv/2014-01-27/100_viy.html

³¹¹ "What does *Viy* look like?", *Russian Pioneer*, Feb.1, 2014 <http://ruspioneer.ru/honest/m/single/4007>

that (we don't know why) come out of one's mouth. "This is a wonderful rubbish that has no relation to Gogol and *Viy*. This can be beautiful, funny, post-modernized, contemporary, whatever, but this is a depravity with respect to the classic writer."³¹² In Gogol, the horror was reached with minimal artistic effects, as would be done by any great artist, without resorting to colorful and excessive techniques (but this is a broader topic worthy of its own discussion).

Such sugary fantasy can appear mainly because the fantastic style can easily lead to kitsch which has nothing to do with Gogol's style or high culture. The border between 'high' and 'low' fantasy is very thin, but the two are different things: the former stands for a nuanced and sophisticated form of the fantastic in art and is characterized by intricate imagination and creativity. The latter can be schmaltzy and is addressed to mass culture aimed primarily at commercial success. Such definitions (high and low fantasy) are usually related to the artistic quality of a literary or visual work and the delicate balance between fantastic and realistic elements, as well as the manner (technique) of representation.³¹³

A.4: (continues) The fantastic elements in my illustrations come out of the hyperonization of certain objects, and from the relationships of different spatial planes. (For example, pages 16-17, 26-27, 56-57, 64-65, and so forth). I see in the novel a legend, in which the elements of the grotesque and symbolism are interwoven. I try to synchronize such stylistic types and to transfer them from the verbal to the visual story. The clearest example is the frontispiece that serves as the head illustration for the entire novel. The relation of different spaces plays the main role of visual composition: when the space of the cosmos is surrounded by the space of a sunflower, we get a closed circle, which is an independent world on its own. I think the reader can "read" the picture this way.

The [frontispiece](#) illustration, to which V.M. refers, presents a good example of what has been mentioned several times regarding the passage from one artistic dimension to another — as in theater performances so too in pictures. The picture is developed in chiaroscuro technique and is built in a way that leads the reading process: the pale leaves of a sunflower on the

³¹² TV Dozd, <https://tvrain.ru/>, the program led by A. Mongajit, Jan. 21, 2014

³¹³ Cf. Kathleen Buss, Lee Karnowski. *Reading and Writing Literary Genres*. International Reading Association, 2000, pp.114-212.

forefront are emphasized by the dark background behind them, as if inviting the reader to begin observing the picture from there. Then the gaze follows white path and proceeds to a tree, then a house, then the entire landscape, which, as we come to see later, is comprised within a circle formed by the silhouettes of leaves on the background.

Such passages from the real to the symbolic and back provide the entire work with multi-dimensional and multi-vocal meanings of the visual message which cannot be communicated in words only, since we perceive many things here visually and emotionally. Besides, this whole and complex composition is put on a large white sheet, which plays the role of one more dimension: empty and infinite, an abstract universe. Then, the words, written on such an infinite-seeming space, arrange everything visually and suggest that we have in front of our eyes a two-dimensional book page.

In a similar way, the small images on the two-page layout create spatial dimensions thanks to the hyperonization of its single elements. The picture on [pp.26-27](#) is developed thanks to the contrast of scales and black-and-white passages. On [pp.16-17](#), a still life invites us to a window in the back but is also a part of the still life. Then we see a black raven, and all this is surrounded by forest. On [pp.56-57 and 64-65](#), one can follow such transformations from one state to another. At the same time, each such composition has a structure, is well thought-out, with no accidental elements, i.e., everything has a meaning.

Q.5: The language of expression is inseparable from the content it expresses. What to depict and how is the individual decision of each artist. What principles did you follow when making choices, and which are the expected effects on the reader? Were your choices related more to the purely formal principles of visual composition, or did they rather have some semantic fullness or word-image relations? In the novel, there are several literary planes, several plot lines. How are they arranged in your pictures?

A.5: The thematic choice for pictures occurred simultaneously with the development of the entire maquette of the edition. Such a work begins with the selection of the book format (it is the horizontal, album format), then color and texture of the case, of the binding and end-papers. I relate the issues of outer arrangement to the inner space of the book-unit, as a whole artistic measurement, which is a kind of container for

illustrations. The visual space of the novel is designed in a way that rhythmically assembles the handwritten text, placed on the horizontal pages, and three types of illustrations: 1) small symbolic compositions within the text, that pass through the entire novel; 2) four two-page pictures that go beyond the book space (without margins); 3) in the upper space of the each two-page design, there are head-pieces representing the symbolic characters that “lead” the protagonist through life. This is my own choice and method of arranging book space. Those four large, two-page illustrations conditionally divide the book into several temporal segments: 1) Kyiv, a college, Podol (a part of the city), a witch; 2) the return of Khoma Brut to Kyiv, a trip, a village; 3) the attack of “evil spirits” on the church (represented as fragments of birds and animals), and the tragic finale of the novel; 4) the final illustration brings the reader back to the tranquil life of one of the characters. All the elements of pictures are drawn from life, except for the bell-ringer Khalyava.

Q.6: How do you deal with dialogue in pictures? Do you replace the characters' respective lines with “descriptive” or “mood” visual details? How about inner monologue, where there is a mood, but not necessarily outward verbal communication?

A.6: In my illustrations (for any book), I intentionally avoid the representation of concrete scenes/dialogues taken from the text. Instead, I try to create complex images of the characters by placing them into certain circumstances — so, on such interactions, the dialogues occur with trees, grasses, birds, etc., i.e. with the environment. For example, the small symbolic compositions within the text represent a kind of single-standing fragments where the characters communicate with the reader backwards, as in the case of icons with reverse perspective. The four large two-page pictures represent a kind of silent chorus, in which space joins the process of communication. For instance, in [pp.66-67](#), each character is placed in his/her own space, so a visual story is constructed for each of them: a tree in a form of a boar's head, a young girl on the tree, an old man with a pipe, an angel on a derelict nest guarding a church (Gogol's story does not have such an episode, but there is a passage to the effect that in the church, there have not been any Christian rituals for a

long time).³¹⁴ All this is placed on the background of infinite space, a two-level space with two horizon lines. As for the question about inner communication, such large illustrations do not contain any text, but they narrate their visual stories, so the reader is free to search for those episodes in the novel, or to create his own stories. Thus, a triad occurs: writer — artist — reader/viewer. An artist creates his own visual “reading” of the story.

Q.7: So, is illustration a part of the artist’s inner communicative process, i.e., between the writer and the artist, and then between the artist and the reader? The language of art necessarily includes elements of self-reflection and self-communication through pictures. In other words, the technique of drawing becomes the technique of self-expression. In this sense, how would you describe drawing as a language, and the process of illustration-making as a process of creative communication?

A.7: Yes, that is correct, each illustration in this book is a part of the communicative process, first of all between the writer and the artist, making possible the development of the manner and style of pictures. The reflection that brought me to Gogol was that childhood can be brought closer to us and seem brighter with the passage of time: a kind of a reversed perspective. There are writers and artists who create on the edge of national cultures.³¹⁵ In a conversation with me, [S. Yakutovich](#) positioned himself this way, while [G. Yakutovich](#) and [N. Kompanez](#) had a hundred per cent Ukrainian identity. I am probably on that edge, too – which is why Gogol is close to me. The technique and style of drawing, in my view, depends on the goal an artist sets for himself; yet, each mature artist, over the years, develops his own set of styles. It is very important that, in a work on a given theme, the artist’s goals and his developed styles “make friends” rather than lead to the subordination of goals to a given style. For example, when working on *Viy*, my favorite graphite pencil had to keep the drawings within the white space of a sheet, dialoging with the handwritten text made with my favorite ink and style. When it comes to such dialogue,

³¹⁴ This is a great example of building associative images that affect the reader on non-semantic levels — as has been mentioned throughout Part I, almost in each section.

³¹⁵ It is meant on the verge of Russian and Ukrainian cultures — such an inner conflict and the personality split is evident in Gogol’s creative path and is inherent to many writers/artists of Ukrainian origins.

everything is done by abstract lines and dots on a plane (as the Ukrainian futurist [A. Bogomazov](#) explains in his *Painting and Elements*).

Q.8: During the process of illustration-making, we witness the inevitable appearance of picture details that are not present in the corresponding text, or details on which the text is silent. Or, for example, a mood appears in the text, and therefore it will be embodied in pictures with some additional details. How do you approach elements that exist “outside of the plot”?

A.8: In the process of creative interpretation, in my view, over 50% of illustrations work in parallel with the text. A direct transfer into pictures of what is conveyed by the text³¹⁶ is the heritage of the 1950s (in Soviet Union), as for example [Shmarinov’s illustrations](#). In the case of *Viy*, those additional elements (costumes, items of everyday life, architecture, etc.) do not aim to represent encyclopedic information about costumes etc., but rather to interpret or increase the main plotline, as described in A.4.

Q.9: Do you consider your picture series for *Viy* to be book illustrations or pictures “based on” Gogol’s story? How far do you distance the visual from the verbal? At which moment, in your opinion, does a picture cease to belong to a given text and begins its own life?

A.9: I consider my drawings to be book illustrations. At the same time, I think that any large or small picture (when we speak about illustration in general) can be extracted from a book and begin its independent life if it transmits a complete idea and powerful emotional meaning. Then, in order to turn it back into a book illustration, one needs to creatively work on the book layout, to design the inner space of the book, to arrange the rhythmical movement and the temporal reading of the book.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Such a point has been discussed in detail in I.6. *Style of Text – Style of Pictures*.

³¹⁷ This principle of re-working a picture in a way to make it a book illustration, has been developed in I.3. *Perception through simultaneity of reading and visualizing*: “not every picture can be inserted into book pages. If inserted, a picture should be re-worked in order to start dialoguing with the text and be consistent with the principles of book design and the media of illustration”.

Q.10: A picture placed next to text builds its own narration. Some critics assume that an illustration can hinder the reader's imagination by doing the work of representation for him. Do you agree with that?

A.10: The formation of a parallel visual narrative should increase the work of the reader's imagination by interpreting a given text. In the end, everything depends on the kind of literature being illustrated and the artist's goals. One can easily illustrate Jules Verne, but perhaps it would be better not to touch Marquez.³¹⁸ Not every text can and should be illustrated: pictures can provoke that reaction if a text is illustrated which cannot be converted into images.

Q.11: The goal of artistic communication is to reach a potential target audience. Who is your reader?

A.11: I consider my *Viy* to be an art book, addressed to a reader who knows the text well but would buy the book in order to encounter a new meaning, not yet discovered, which could be found in single sentences and related visual images, or in the mood of the visual environment — a familiar and at the same time a mysterious and fantastic world.

Q.12: Associative thinking is an important part of illustration. Those elements that would be perceived by the reader on a subconscious level, recall certain emotions without concrete definitions (for example, Gogol builds many things on associations and symbols). How do you incorporate such elements into your pictures?

A.12: This was exactly the principle of associative thinking or, more precisely, the associative selection of visual signs, on the basis of which I developed the illustrations (see A.4, A.6). I will provide you with one more example: the large [illustration on pp.42-43](#). The central figure of a young witch is surrounded by an old witch, a black raven, a goat, baths, full moon, mermaids. The picture symbolizes a transformation in time — from a young witch to an old one — which is reached with

³¹⁸ What is meant here is the translatability, which relates to what has been discussed in I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*, with reference to Benjamin discussion.

the help of these symbolic elements. Such illustration can be interpreted as the mystery of transformation per se.

Q.13: The complexity of “overcoming the material” allows the artist to determine and comment on one own’s limitations — as at the level of technical execution, so too at the level of creative interpretation. This is all the more relevant to work on Gogol, where the level of the text itself forces one to perform incredible things beyond his capacities. How did you manage the subordination of the material to such powerful Gogolian images?

A.13: If we understand the material as a tool to materialize and embody a given creative theme, thought or image, then I do not overcome it but rather choose an appropriate graphic technique. In my view, there are two common, and most prevalent, types of artist-illustrators. First, there are those who develop their own style and technique of drawing and adhere to it like as if it were a lifejacket, selecting appropriate literary works to be illustrated which would fit into their technique, or simply repeating the same style of pictures over and over again for any text they illustrate (and we know many examples of such). Second, there are those who develop new approaches and new styles for each given text, selecting the appropriate graphic techniques and methods from their craft skills in order to implement diverse creative ideas. A great example of such a direction is G. Yakutovich's series of [linocuts](#), different methods of [etching](#), pen and ink drawings, etc.

The diversity of chosen techniques and methods to which Mitchenko refers derives from the necessity to implement stylistically different creative ideas and images suggested by a given text. The examples that have been mentioned deserve some more specification since Georgy Yakutovich’s [Georgy Y.] art presents a great example of what is meant by stylistic word-picture adaptation (as in I.6. *Style of Text — Style of Pictures*). A master of the past century in book and stankovy graphic art, Georgy Y. is considered to have brought a new logic to the principles of bookmaking, which in part developed from Favorsky’s teaching (relations of temporal dimensions and spaces), in part from the development of word-picture translation of Ukrainian literature characterized by the fantastic and symbolism (Gogol’s and Kvitka-

Osnovianenko's tradition of creating on the border between the real and the fantastic), and in part from his work in cinema, the principles of which (time-movement relations) Georgy Y. merged with the principles of the visual logic of book design.

M. [Kotsiubynsky](#)'s novel *Fata Morgana* is devoted to the theme of social and political change in the Ukrainian countryside, the revolution of 1905-1907, the people's dream of national independence, which remains only a dream because of historical circumstances. The dynamism of verbal narration stands as a key generic and stylistic idea ([Rylsky, 333](#)) (see I.7.6. *Genre and "spirit" of the text*). The excessive details pertaining to the characters and extended descriptions of scenes are left beyond the text, but at the same time these are bright and powerful pictures, lit up by their inner potential and determination. Such emotional and psychological conflicts, tensions and dynamism are presented in [Georgy Y.'s linocuts](#) through the expressive compositional structure and black-and-white contrasts which the chosen technique allows to achieve. Thanks to Yakutovich's great artistry, his personal study of Ukrainian ethnography and countryside life, and the elaboration of the spirit of the text ([Belichko, 10-14](#)), the illustrations construct the book's extended space. This makes possible verbal-visual communication through lights and shadows that play a core role in constructing the artistic narrative.

[Yakutovich's work on the Ukrainian folk tale *About a poor guy and rich Mark*](#) takes a totally different direction. I have occasionally heard some people say that such pictures are primitive or childish in execution, and this needs further clarification. These pictures are *decorative*, not *primitive*: these two types imply totally different features, notions, different approaches of elaboration, goals, and perceptual effect. Georgy Y. used the stylistics of national folk ornaments (those from decorations of clothes or houses, normally created by amateurs, countryside people who made any kind of handmade craft) and re-worked them, adapted them artistically, in order to raise them to the level of decorative signs, completed in each single detail. Even more so, the title page is also made in linocut, and its structure and style recall the titles of Slavic medieval manuscripts of the period when the tale probably emerged. The title page normally had a 'header picture' placed above the title. In Georgy Y.'s version, the title uses old motifs but looks contemporary because it was adapted to modern

design.³¹⁹ Such method includes what is meant by artistic stylization and development of folklore — the way Gogol did it when taking folk motifs and legends and raising them to the level of high literature. The same approach of artistic elaboration was used, for example, in [Malkovizky's illustrations](#). The artist adapted national ornaments in order to create highly developed pictures, where each image looks like a visual definition, or a sign, a formula, and concurrently illustrates folk tales. These motifs of decorative stylization can be found in [an animation](#) of the same period and presenting the same folk material.

A few other examples of Georgy Y.'s work, totally different from each other in terms of artistic language and style, include the series of pictures that [illustrate Kotsiubynsky's novel *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*](#). Even though he had illustrated this writer before (*Fata Morgana*), the artist changed his approach completely in the case of *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*. As has been mentioned (see note 113), first, Georgy Y. had approached this work as a cinema artist while working on the eponymous film based on this novel directed by Paradjanov. This experience prompted the artist to conduct an in-depth study of ethnography and undertake a full immersion into novel as he made dozens of sketches and colour panels. After that, he created the book illustrations in the form of woodcuts. This reworking of the same story material in different media required the development of different methods since the goals were different. The medium of film required, literally, the expansion and visual representation of the text while the book medium required the artistic elaboration of the verbal domain and a certain abstraction of images. The structure of the entire series of illustration is divided into four sections and consists of four types of pictures. The formal choices for each picture establish the basis, for the creative interpretations. The development of characters proceeds through the intentional avoidance of concrete portraits, in contrast to the artist's work on the film, which helps to focus on their inner image through stylization, mood, 'silvery' lights and shadows that seem to glimmer on the pictures. Thanks to such stylistics, the real world is presented as too chimeric, leading into the fantastic. "Visual concretization of fantastic characters often leads to paradoxes: when representing them, the artist thereby destroys them. They are more credible only when remain in the imagination" ([Belichko, 82](#)). By avoiding the representation of fantastic characters, Georgy Y. leaves for the reader the possibility of creating

³¹⁹ This leads back to what V.Mitchenko meant when saying about the necessity to understand the formation of historical types and their structural features in order to create contemporary works of art, as the example of the modern pictures developed from *Vayz*.

a harmonious balance between real images in pictures and the fantastic images at the verbal level. The simplicity of the form of visual signs and the discarding of all excess results in striking expressiveness.³²⁰

Finally, Georgy Y.'s illustrations for [Gogol's *Viy*](#) result in a flash effect, i.e., a symbolic collage involving the movement of objects and figures which appear and disappear throughout the book. Highly realistic elements (as in Gogol's narrative) become metaphoric when included in such compositions, evoking the notion of the fantastic thanks to the combination of different proportions, shifts of planes and temporal dimensions. This is exactly what Gogol does when making the fantastic sound like realism and vice versa. Despite this sort of visual paronomasia — where two contrasting and incompatible objects, placed together, create a third meaning or a variety of meanings — each picture has a logical structure. The principle of one third is strongly followed. The dynamism of movement is an integral part of the metaphoric meanings in the illustrations, and the balance of white space and black signs achieves visual integrity.

This very rapid overview of Georgy Y.'s works (and there are other series of illustrations) has allowed me to provide an accurate example of how the adaptation of verbal-visual styles can be developed thanks to the artist's ability to be always different when illustrating literary works. "Georgy Y. had created each series of pictures, each book for 6-8, sometimes 10 years: this was not a source of income for him, but he attempted to reach artistic absoluteness and his full potential, so this is why he illustrated relatively little number of books throughout his life."³²¹ Each one of his books presents the artist's constant search for artistic methods, languages of expression, techniques, conceptual and structural features that respond to the stylistics of a given literary work and the aesthetics of a given time period contextualizing a particular text.

The illustrations of Sergey Yakutovich (Georgy Y.'s son) affect the reader's perception differently. His series of illustrations for [Gogol's *Evenings*](#)³²² contains dozens of very elaborate scenes and full-page pictures where every single character is creatively developed and the compositions are complex and multidimensional. One can observe each picture for a long time, discovering something new every time. Evidently, the principle of film montage and

³²⁰ The interesting fact is that the first edition of 1966 contains the original woodcuts, hand-printed by G.Y.

³²¹ An interview with Sergey Yakutovich, *Bulvar Gordona*, n.2 (298) 2011, 11 Jan, https://bulvar.com.ua/gazeta/archive/s2_64410/6629.html

³²² A more detailed analysis of S.Y.'s illustrations for "The Fair at Sorochyntsi" (the first tale from *Evenings*) is developed in Part II, along with the exploration of Gogol's narrative and word-image relations.

Paradjanov's collage-like style influenced the art of both of these artists. However, while in Georgy Y.'s works each picture has a metaphoric connection of elements, and the visual structure of pictures becomes a graphic sign on its own respecting the principles of book design, Sergey Y.'s pictures provoke contradictory impressions. Sergey Y's work achieves a high artistic level whereby all the characters and objects are drawn to perfection, and everything moves energetically, as if transformed from movie shots. Despite all my respect for the artist's art,³²³ sometimes, the excess of details and chaos of the formal structure of compositions create the impression that there is a lot of work, but all the efforts are somehow in vain. Although, if we consider such pictures as a series of stankovy graphic art (perhaps, based on Gogol's story but still independent), they acquire artistic significance and present a "heraldic" style of visual expression, which amounts to a highly detailed and elaborate world on its own — phantasmagorical and precise.

In other words, the purpose of such pictures is lost if they are placed on book pages.³²⁴ This is, first of all, caused by verbal-visual nonconformity in conceptual terms and in connection to their inter-relations (see I.7. *Approaches to Illustrating Fiction*). This opinion can be justified if one considers other series of pictures by Sergey Y., for example, the illustrations for [Lina Kostenko's novel *Berestechko*](#), or the stankovy series [The Zaporozhians](#). These series are fully interchangeable in a stylistic sense: by viewing them, we cannot understand where Gogol is and where Kostenko is, and any of the pictures from the *Zaporozhian* series could easily stand as a frontispiece for Gogol's *Evenings*, as they are all made the same way. The boundary of intermedial adaptation sometimes disappears, the pictures end up in a position where they are

³²³ Both Georgy Y. (father) and Sergey Y. (son) are important figures on the national book and film scene in Ukraine. Representatives of the five-generation Yakutovich dynasty are all connected to the arts in one way or another. A kind of mystery is that not only this concentration of talent is characteristic of this family, but also an incredible concentration of grief. In the 90s, Sergey created a large series of 150 stankovy works, which were unpaid and confiscated because of debts of the boss who had ordered the artworks. Such a loss, of two years of life and of the creative investments, does not go by easily. Soon afterwards, in 2000, his father Georgy died. Sergey's wife (a children book illustrator) also died a few years after. Sergey's only son, Anton Y. (a painter and graphic artist as well), lived in Paris for 12 years, where he worked for a gallery on a kind of contract that required him to produce 24-30 paintings annually, depending on size. Anton came back to Kyiv for the anniversary of his mother's death and suddenly died from an unknown illness at the age of 38. Strangely, Anton's death, in January 2014, coincided with the days of the [revolution in Kyiv](#), when over 100 protesters were killed. These people are known also as The Heavenly Hundred. A couple of years after that, Sergey died as well at the age of 64; he did not recover from all these tragedies. When such things happen, art appears from a different perspective.

³²⁴ In order to explain why such effects occur, I have analyzed in detail the word-picture relations, the rhythmical structure of both, the message meant by the verbal, and the message that is created by the visual, as well as the excessive use of details and flash effects (see Part II).

no longer related to the verbal, and therefore are perceived as works “based on” the source text rather than book illustrations.

At this point, I would like to come back to V. Mitchenko’s interview.

Q.14: This series was created for the sake of art, as is clear from the pictures. But what next? Did you have the intention, from the very beginning, of publishing this as a typographic book, as a limited edition, or as a work meant to be exhibited? How was the final project planned?

A.14: While working on this project, I viewed it as art for the sake of art, and for the sake of communication with the genius of Gogol. After the completion of the entire project in 2002, I wanted to publish it for the readers. The work on the pictures lasted for approximately one year, but then I looked for a publisher for five years. Some publishers were confused about the handwritten text, thinking that people would not read it. Some did not want to publish it because the text is written in Russian, which seemed controversial in the light of the political situation of the period. Others were delighted, even paid me an advance, but then disappeared. Finally, in 2007, a young publisher, for whom I had designed a few children’s albums, took on the task of publishing this work as an art book.

Q.15: I would like to address the question of the art market. How do you balance creative projects and the need to make a living?

A.15: In the course of the last seven years, I have realized that the publication of creative projects sometimes is more profitable than work on commercial projects. This applies to cases where I have worked for private publishing houses as an art editor and designer of editions. I have curated the design of two handbooks on the history and theory of fonts; a three-volume edition of the early works of P. Kulish with reproductions of ancient maps and historical paintings; albums of artworks of contemporary Ukrainian artists working on historical themes; 19-th century lithographs with views of Ukraine; calligraphy for a list of important figures — three volumes in cases; and a four-volume *Ukrainian Alphabet*, featuring a “History of

letters”, “Capital letters”, “Baroque skoropis”, and “Contemporary handwriting for school-children”. The illustrations were of course created in my spare time.

Q.16: Could you please elaborate on your role as an art editor.

A.16:³²⁵ I became an art editor at the publishing house Dnipro in 1976. Dnipro was the leading publishing house at the time, employing seven art-editors who would curate 9-15 editions every trimester. These editions consisted of 10 thousand copies (in the case of poems and critiques) and 100-200 thousand copies (in the case of prose fiction). Back then — this was still in midst of the Soviet period — only Dnipro had the authorities' permission to publish books in foreign languages. Today we can say that the profession of art editor is obsolete. But back in the 60s-70s, the work of an art editor was as essential as photo enlargers or sharp medical scalpels and glue needed to compose books pages. In 1987, a famous national graphic-artist wrote: “If we wanted to put a hypothetical list of rare professions, then the figure of an art-editor would be close to a carver of diamonds”. Of course, an art editor played a key role in the “illustrator cut” and the aesthetic curation of editions, along with a chief artist. One of the main tasks of an art-editor was to put together a creative staff for each edition. Such a staff included an illustrator, a layout designer (i.e. the author of the book maquette), a font designer, a photographer, and a corrector of images. An art editor had to be able to replace, when necessary, any member of this group. Besides, an art editor curated the entire printing process: preparing the materials to be sent to print, approving samples, and signing all the administrative documents. I was entrusted with work with young graduates from the Kyiv Academy of Art, including O. Ivakhnenko, S. Yakutovich and others, who later have become eminent artists. Today, the role of an art editor has become very blurred. Everything depends

³²⁵ This answer has been summarized from a booklet *Mandri* [Voyages], V. Mitchenko, 48p, Kyiv: Gramota, 2007. I find this interesting because this material provides a historical overview of the tendencies in the publishing industry and supplements the process of bookmaking, which does not end with texts and picture-making but includes a complex publishing process which brings a book to its final form: a physical object that unites verbal and visual elements, design, typesetting, format, printing, etc. The aesthetic curation of an edition is totally disregarded, for example, in the self-publishing stream of contemporary editions, where some authors wrongly believe that a publisher is a needless mediator who does nothing but make money from sales. The latter process also requires investments in promotion (time, money, presentations at book fairs, publications in catalogues, etc.) in order to conquer the book market and attract readers that a single author is unable to reach.

on the relationship with a director (owner of the publishing house), a chief editor (who selects the texts for publication), and a designer (but the latter is rarely hired on a permanent basis). Normally, only children's books are illustrated. When it comes to adult books, those designers are welcomed who can think creatively in terms of typography and design in relation to postmodern aesthetics.

III.2. Interview with Oleg Prihodko about his role and 40-year experience within the art industry

This interview was conducted in November of 2019 with the purpose of exploring art market relations on the basis of first-hand professional experience. The art industry includes a variety of professions related to the creative process. The latter includes the investment of artistic thought, creative energy, and formal skills into a work addressed to the market. Even though Oleg Prihodko has worked for the film industry, his experience is a valuable example of such relations which are mirrored in many other creative professions. Moreover, the variety of media and genres of his works — film scripts, novels (including biographical novels), series of detective stories, theater plays, fairy tales, essays on dramaturgy — presents a wide network of involvements and illustrates the principles of the communicative process between the creator and the receiver of art, as well as the work of the agents that stand in between.

One can find perfect parallels with types A, B, and C of publishing:

Oleg Prichodko is a member of The Ukrainian Association of Cinematographers and the Ukrainian Writers Guild and a writer who graduated from the National Institute of Cinematography in Moscow (1985). Currently, he is working as a screenwriter for film and television, as well as an artistic director at the script-writing school at the cinema studio "Prima-film" in Kyiv. More than 100 TV series and films have featured his scripts. The most famous of them are: "Meltdown" (Raspad, 1990, Soviet-American film); 20-series TV movie "How the Steel Was Tempered" (Kak zakalilas stal, 1999, China-Ukraine); "Cops" (Menti, 2003, Russia); "Ukrainian vendetta" (Ukrainskaya vendetta, 1990, Ukraine); and many others. He was awarded several prizes at international film festivals: "Gold Medal of the Jury" at the Venice International Film Festival (1990); the main prize at the International Film Festival, Santander (1990, Spain); Bronze Award at the World Fest Houston International Film Festival (1991, USA); Honorary Diplomas at the International Film Festivals in Toronto (Canada); the main prize of the festival "Golden Fairy" in Beijing (China) "For the best television series of the year"; San-Sebastian (Spain), San-Francisco (USA), Dallas (USA),

Teheran (Iran), etc. Prichodko is also the author of detective novels published by the Moscow's publishing house Eksmo.

Oleg Prichodko never appears on social media or at public presentation,³²⁶ believing that a “true” artist should not worry about self-advertising. He feels that others should evaluate and appreciate his work. He usually presents himself as follows:

I graduated from the National Institute of Cinematography in Moscow; I served in the Soviet army, was laborer, coal miner, locksmith, electrician, builder, actor, editor, university instructor, film director, watchman at a storage facility; I have written a few dozen film scripts and novels.

Q.1: What limitations does the industry impose on creative ideas?

A.1:

1. Financial. Creative people have to take into consideration the production capabilities of a given studio.
2. Creative. Every studio hopes for profit when investing money into a project. If a project, according to the opinion of the studio (editorial board, producer, publisher, owner, etc.) is not likely to make a profit, the studio will not finance it. So, not every project liked by the author will necessarily be fulfilled.
3. Political. [Mosfilm](#) will not film Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Hollywood will not film a story that glorifies the Soviet political system.³²⁷
4. Moral and ethical. You never know: maybe an author is a pervert. A private studio probably could finance anything; the industry hardly can.

³²⁶ Except a very few websites when the producers or publishers wanted to present their collective work: https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Приходько,_Олег_Игоревич; <https://www.livelib.ru/author/174769/top-oleg-prihodko>; <https://www.kino-teatr.ru/kino/screenwriter/post/14964/bio/> His series of books are freely downloadable online: <http://flibusta.site/a/61288> and <https://avidreaders.ru/author/prihodko-oleg-igorevich/>. All the other people of the same name, who appear online as political figures, activists, realtors, etc. have no relation to this writer. Recently, a very interesting review has appeared on Prichodko's autobiographic novel: Anatoly Liberman's literature review “Prodomosua”, in *Mosti*, n.60, 2018, http://promegalit.ru/public/21311_anatolij_liberman_literaturnyj_obzor.html, in which Liberman presents the novel as the biography of the entire generation.

³²⁷ Oleg Prichodko's novel, *The Game of Havens*, is truly a work of literary art. There is a complicated and lyrical story, difficult to perceive and simple in reading, awful and with careless simplicity at the same time. It is a philosophical look at the Chechen war, a glance from the heavens, and it is based on documentary materials by a journalist Anna Politkovskaya. The novel was published in the Journal of the Union of Russian Writers in Germany *Literaturnij Evropeez*, series *Mosti*, n.25-26, <https://www.le-online.org/>. Then, it was published as a book for the author's expenses, by the publishing house Raduga in Kyiv in 2010, but the edition was not distributed for political reasons. Many-year work and the monetary investments has resulted destroyed.

In other words, He who pays the piper calls the tune. And then, there are different types of actors in the industry. A small studio has one kind of possibilities and resulting limitations. A large studio has others. Today we are dealing with producers' cinema, and the limitations depend on the characteristics of a given producer: his financial situation, his culture, intellect, work requirements, and range of interests and topics.

Q.2: Why is the artistic level of most projects intentionally lowered by producers (publishers)?

A.2:

1. Everything depends on the intellectual level of the person who commissions a given work. Sometimes, a client (producer, editor, publisher) wanted to become a writer (film director, artist) but was not able to for lack of talent. So now, when occupying the position of publisher or producer (i.e. a position of power), one may, consciously or not, try to take revenge against the truly talented people. Envy sounds like this: "You created a brilliant scene, and I will delete it!"
2. Popularity ratings. Producers tend to think that the high cultural level of a product might harm the ratings. David Wark Griffith wrote as early as in 1924: "If you wish to gain success with the spectator, you should orientate towards the level of an 11-year child."³²⁸ The average spectator does not like it when an author or protagonist is smarter than him, starts to quote poems, provide scientific examples, refer to authoritative sources, and so forth. Such a spectator will change channels. This is reflected in counters that trace ratings. To make "true" art, in spite of ratings, a producer or publisher needs to be very rich ("Amazon"), or to be devoted to "true" art. Both cases are rare.
3. The requirements of a given sector and type of product. It is a well-known fact that any film is designed either to generate income (high-grossing films) or to be presented at a film festival. In order to make a festival-level film, one needs to attract and involve the best powers, invest money. Getting money is easy: film a dozen action movies, porn movies, melodramas, blockbusters, and so on, i.e. make products addressed to the basest of people's tastes. These should be cheap films, without any pretensions to

³²⁸ 'The Movies 100 Years from Now' by David Wark Griffith, 1924

sophistication and high taste. The profits from them should be enough to make one “festival” film. The thinking here is simple: the film that won an Oscar will bring fame and money from sales, so the next cycle of a dozen films can be created at a higher level. Now, let’s imagine that a film, which is made as a low-quality piece, is flourishing thanks to brilliant inventiveness, stunning scenes, extraordinary characters developed in each detail, and quotable dialogue. People could say: “This film is even better than that one presented for the Oscar”. This is called the *excess quality*, like an aluminum saucepan with golden handles. Some time ago, I wrote a good novel (*Requiem for a Witness*)³²⁹, and a publisher told me: “I have ordered to you to make felt boots from sheep wool — i.e. to write a novel that could be opened on any page, without remembering what was before, and then to get out of the tram and throw it in the bin. But, what did you do? You have sewed the elegant and soft leather shoes — you have written a novel to be read in the library. This is not our politics: we address our books to the people who do not attend libraries and reading rooms. Don’t waste your efforts in vain; in Eastern Siberia, people have nothing to read during their shifts at oil derricks, so we will send the books there and everything will be paid off. We need the more and the cheaper, rather than the less and the better.”

4. There is gradation. You might be a local author who has been invited to submit a manuscript, promoted and then cast out. And then there are “brilliant authors” — “fame-during-his-lifetime” authors. So far more money is invested in their promotion ([Marinina](#), [Dontsova](#), [Koretskij](#)), when publishers need to buy recognition by advertising their mediocrities. And you, with your high quality come across their reader. To say in a polite way, Dontsova and Marinina feel badly if the reader prefers “one Prihodko”.

³²⁹ *Rekvjem dlja svidetelya*, the novel was published by the Eksmo, in series Black Kat, 1996, and is available online: <https://avidreaders.ru/author/prihodko-oleg-igorevich/>. Later, Prihodko was commissioned to write TV series based on this novel, which were filmed in 2008 and re-named as *Symphony for a Witness*, <https://www.kino-teatr.ru/kino/movie/ros/15927/annot/>

Q.3: What is the danger, in a creative sense, of such work?

A.3:

1. When they grow tired of fighting for their creative and human dignity, creators can end up accepting the rules of the market game in order to earn a living from meaningless jobs, often hiding themselves behind a pseudonym.
2. There are many examples of people who took to drink, lost their minds, committed suicide, fell into deep depressions or got sick physically.
3. Quite often, creators who fail to succeed in one country, leave for another place. From this, society loses, literature loses, and the culture of the creator's country of origin loses. But, normally, nobody regrets it. Brodsky, Solzhenitsyn, Voinovich, Nekrasov, Bunin left the USSR — and to hell with them! Or such national figures as V. Shukshin, A. Surikova, M. Khutsiev, G. Chukhray worked at the Dovzhenko Film Studios, but did not find their true place and were not accepted. And they themselves were not able to accept such a pseudo-culture. They later became winners of the Lenin Prize and other important awards. So what? Nobody regrets that Ukraine has lost such talents.
4. Often, humiliated, exhausted and offended creators simply move to another profession. Or, they become the aforementioned editors or producers, and start oppressing the talents of others.

Q.4: Then, how about cinema at a high artistic level? How does it manage to find its audience when pursuing creative projects, and to keep their business afloat in the industry?

A.4:

1. There is only one way: to gain independence from money, from producers, from publishers, etc. To achieve that, one should be very pragmatic.
2. One can become a producer or publisher himself by finding money and investing it in a project. Some can win, others can lose. We usually do not hear about the latter, but they make up the majority. We know only about the successful stories and say about them: “Such a talent!”

3. One can marry the son of an oligarch³³⁰ or a talented film director or a successful producer (for a woman), or marry the daughter of an oligarch and ask the father-in-law for money in order to make a film (for a man). This can work well if talent, ambition, expectations of the audience (or the weather...) are on the artist's side.
4. One can put on dinners for journalists, hire promoters, promise 50% to a producer, become his wife's lover, and so forth.

These considerations apply not only to mediocrities and ambitious climbers, but to talented people as well. Vasily Shukshin was a talented individual; however, in order to work his way up in Moscow, he abandoned his wife in Altai and, not yet divorced, married another woman in Moscow. Then he married the daughter of [A. Sofronov](#), chief editor of [Ogoniok](#) magazine and a very influential figure. When courting Sofronov's daughter, Shukshin went on dates with her and took along Lida Chashchina, his second wife, introducing her as his sister. Then he abandoned them both and married [Fedoseyeva](#)... I could easily name a dozen like him.

In short, you have to give up your own principles, or not have them at all. This is the rule.

There are probably exceptions where a talented person succeeds without violating moral and ethical principles. But in such cases, everything has to come together. A talented artist has to suddenly become rich. A group of like-minded people has to gather around him. An honest producer or publisher or film director has to appear and so on. Unfortunately, I can't name examples of such improbable cases, as this is from the genre of the fantastic. If you are not capable of stepping on toes, then do something else, maybe another profession, and leave the arts for a hobby.

³³⁰ In Russia, it means a very rich business leader with a great deal of political influence (Oxford dictionary).

III.3. A visual commentary on one Gogol's phrase

An example of a visual composition will be developed from a phrase taken from the introduction to *Evenings at a Farmhouse near Dikanka*:

Это что за невидаль: *Вечера на хуторе близ Диканьки*? Что это за вечера? [...] еще мало ободрали гусей на перья и извели тряпья на бумагу! Еще мало народу, всякого звания и сброду, вымарали пальцы в чернилах! Дернула же охота и пасичника потащиться вслед за другими! Право, печатной бумаги развелось столько, что не придумаешь скоро, что бы такое завернуть в нее. (ППС, 1940:103)

What unheard-of thing is this? *Evenings at a Farmhouse near Dikanka*? What sort of evenings are these? [...] have not geese enough already had courage to take to quills, and bring forth scrappy nonsense on paper? [literally: to fritter away the materials for paper] Have not plenty of people of every calling, and even the rabble, already smeared their fingers with ink? And now the bee-farmer has been seized with a freak to follow the others! Truth to tell, there's so much printed paper about, that you can't very readily find things to wrap up in it.³³¹

Geese stripped for quills. There is no necessity to depict literally the stripped geese or a pile of quills, dipped in ink, and a crowd of people with smeared fingers. Something that is written to convey a mood or, as in this case, to outline a certain phenomenon, could not be portrayed literally. It is meant generally: a good few people of all kinds, anyone who feels like it, write words and attach themselves to letters (fingers with ink). But the words 'to fritter away' precede, i.e. they do not succeed in writing. A drawing is placed on the plane of a two-dimensional sheet of paper (as opposed, for example, to what happens on the theater stage), which makes it possible not to be literal but to leave some unspecified statement, a not-fully-explained description, or to create a new one. Such unfinished or fragmentary meaning in drawing is normally reached with the help of selection. As a writer constantly makes decisions on how to phrase his thoughts, what to make concrete and what to leave unfixed, what adjectives or comparisons to use, so too an artist, when searching for each next detail in drawing, makes decisions about what to depict and what to leave unspecified or abstract, and thus, to emphasize one element and generalize others, to make more detailed one thing and to

³³¹ Gogol, *St. John's Eve and Other Stories*, transl. by I.F. Hapgood, N.Y.: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1886, p.5

just give the reader a hint with a few lines about another thing. A fully completed illustration with all the smallest details could not exist (otherwise, that would be a photo, or a genre of hyperrealism).

With the example of Gogol's above-cited phrase, how could one depict the geese and wasted paper, without drawing either geese or a quill in ink (that would be a banality)? What is needed for such verbal-visual interpretation is *associative thinking* — the process that will surely include elements of improvisation and, therefore, will be unique for each artist. An example of associative thinking would have the consequences outlined below.

[[A small and very quick sketch](#)] The text says that many geese have been stripped for quills and, therefore, the quills are flying in the air like in a chicken coop. They were stripped to write on paper, and thus, in the drawing, they should fly over blank paper intended for writing. Some scraps of used-up sheets with words are scattered around. But it says that they “bring forth scrappy nonsense on paper”. The results of their writing are not worth any attention, and therefore, in the picture, I draw an appearance of text, a conditional image of some handwritten lines that could not be read. The blame for this belongs to ink. If there was no ink, they would not have the material for writing, and the world wouldn't see so many books. Therefore, in the picture, the ink — Oh! Sorrow! — is running down from paper and dripping like tears into the abyss of eternity. Surely, to write books is a hard labour that involves the torments of creativity; thus, the tears are dripping into eternity because writers have been continuing to write words forever. The time has no end and proceeds to the infinity. But, simultaneously, when the ink is dripping, it becomes a solid basis, a backbone that keeps the entire edifice of the writers' creativity, with their scraps of papers and quills stripped for nothing. Meantime, in the distance, in another dimension, a landscape is opening up with meadows, fields, forests, and a town: “Plenty of people of every calling, and even the rabble”, and who knows who else may live there. So, the image is generalized. Then, over the landscape, a flock of geese is flying away: not all geese have been stripped for quills yet, so still many books will be written. The cycle and eternity — this is the main visual message of the picture.

This is what I, as a reader and illustrator, have extracted from Gogol's phrase in order to transform it into a symbolic drawing which requires from the reader certain thinking effort in order to grasp what stands behind such symbols and associations where the verbal has been transformed into a linear graphic sign.

The question is whether the reader would see and recognize the range of meanings that I meant in the picture. If so, to what extent? Or, does this depend on each individual reader's perceptual capacity and understanding of symbols and associations? Or, would the same symbols be interpreted differently by every reader?

First, as we can see from the above discussion of the evaluation of an artwork, it is not needed and is impossible for the readers or critics of visual art to decode exactly the same meaning as I put in this picture (unless they read my verbal commentary). However, such a drawing aims to affect the reader's perception on the associative level and produce another story with other meaning that, when related to the verbal passage, could build a broader and more extended imaginative experience.

The second observation has to do with the genre and stylistics of the text. If I were proceeding with making pictures this way, I could complete a gallery of Diana Bychkova's personal impressions that have nothing to do with Gogol's stylistics, even though such images were initially inspired by Gogol's text. This is because 1) I have overstepped or even ignored the limits of intermedial adaptation, and 2) I have not developed the necessary complex verbal-visual relations on many levels. Therefore, such a picture-making approach can be called associative interpretation based on a given literary work but not book illustration in all its complexity. This, of course, is also a possible way of approaching the verbal, but let's not switch concepts and call things by their proper names.

However, such creative improvisation is, in fact, the first step in making book illustrations. In order to transform this picture into a proper and valuable accompaniment to the verbal domain, I would need to go through several stages, developing the process of verbal-visual translation (see below: *Stages of the word-picture adaptation*).

III.4. An example of word-picture translation, or

how I illustrated a fairy tale for adults entitled *Silence* and written by Oleg Prichodko.³³²

I am offering below an analysis of the mechanisms of word-picture translation: how I recognized and extracted from the text those verbal images which provided an impulse for creative interpretation; how I found verbal-visual correspondences, and then, how this visual adaptation provoked a new verbal interpretation which was later expressed in the writer's letters.

Details are the fundamental elements which build additional layers and add pathways through which one can move between different dimensions, allowing the visual perception of images on the associative and symbolic levels [the pictures can be zoomed].

A brief summary of the plot:

The protagonist Mark is a respectable and very rich businessman who owns a recycling company. His character is built out of contrasts. Mark is presented as both a vulnerable person who loves his daughter, Anna-Maria, more than life itself, and as a cruel killer who is capable of terrible deeds when faced with challenges. When his daughter is bitten by a serpent and loses her gift of speech, Mark starts an investigation to figure out who, of his enemies, could have planted the serpent in his car. The case involves a detective who, willing to earn money, brings to Mark "irrefutable evidence" about potential culprits, each

³³² I have the rights for publication of both the text and the pictures. The fairy tale and one of my first sketches was published in the oldest Ukrainian literary journal *Raduga* (founded in 1927), Jan. 2006. Later, I entirely developed the book, from taking a text to making out of it a physical object of book art. This included: a series of 19 etchings, book layout, hand-written calligraphy for the entire book (in Russian), cover design, binding, a brochure with translation (two versions: into Italian and into English). This book was published in 2008, as a limited edition of 10 hand-printed and bound exemplars, in cooperation with the atelier of original graphic art by Giorgio Upiglio. Publications and awards: 2008 – won an etching award "Sandro e Marialuisa Angelini - 2008", Bergamo, Italy. A copy of the etching joins the collection at the Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art Academy of Carrara in Bergamo. 2008 – publication in the journal "Illustrator", London, United Kingdom. 2009 – a copy of the art book has been displayed in the Museum of Printing in Lodi, Italy. 2009 – publication in the historical journal of graphics and art *Grafica d'Arte*, edited by Paolo Bellini, supplement n.78, June 2009, p.6-7, Milan, Italy. 2010 – awarded with a diploma at the International Festival of Calligraphy, Velikiy Novgorod, Russia. 2010 – won First Prix at the International Competition Book of Art Robert Beltz - le 9^e Festival du Livre Illustré, Soultz, France. 2010 – won a gold medal and personal exhibition at the Graphic Competition "Cesare Frigerio", Corsico, Italy.

Book n. II/X joins the collection of the Biblioteca Civica Antonio Arduino in Moncalieri, Italy. Book n. VI/X is in a private collection in Milan. Book n. VII/X is displayed in the permanent exhibition at the Contemporary Museum of Calligraphy in Moscow, Russia. Book n. IX/X is in the collection of the Library in Soultz (France). Book n. 1/3 out-of-commerce is in a private collection in Kiev, Ukraine.

of whom Mark orders to be killed one by one, but each of whom turns out to be the wrong target. Despair has led Mark to a sorceress who plays an important role in Mark's fate.

The fairy tale *Silence* brings together two genres: this is a detective story by all means, with the customary structure and the usual groups of protagonist/antagonist characters, but written in a pictorial, fabulous style. Such a collision allowed both the writer and me, the illustrator, to reach the symbolism of tension and darkness in the content, depicting such dramatism with easy transitions: from real to fantastic worlds, from a character's psychological problems to the help that he receives from a forest witch, from crime and murders committed by the protagonist to his vulnerable personality and love for his daughter, where his path is supported by meetings with a deceitful detective or a helpful forest gnome. The palpability of descriptions makes the reader believe in the credibility of the fantastic elements, which is comparable to what Gogol does in his supernatural and grotesque tales where, for example, a devil is both a realistic human being and a mystic power.

The illustrations in this book combine the fairy tale style with the principle of symbolism (i.e. through the addition of certain symbolic interpretations to well-known objects). Thus, the illustrations are aimed at extending the primary source by creating a parallel "story in pictures" that generates emotional and symbolic correspondences with the text.

I would like to develop my explanation of working on this book as follows:

- Brief analyses of the literary features of the story, which will be reflected in the illustrations.
- Quotations from the story (put in quotation marks) and their adaptations into pictures.
- The writer's reaction to these pictures.

The epigraph to the tale says: "A stone staircase, with few steps carved by variety of perpetrators, who in diverse times climbed on them, the walls with faded frescoes, empty corridors, and the room of justice with the decrepit statue of justice" (from Dürrenmatt's play *The Double*).

The introduction to the tale tells us about an old snake called Zuhra, who lives high up in the mountains, hiding between rocks, but then, despite her prudence and experience, it is caught by a snake catcher. "The serpent wriggled like the wind, hiding out in the silence of the rocks, but

the man was too strong. He threw Zuhra into a sack and began to descend the mountains, already feeling the weight of golden coins in his pocket that had been promised to him by the job's commissioners." Just like Chekhov's gun, the boots of the snake catcher appear at the beginning of the fairy tale and again at the end, playing a symbolic role. Therefore, a drawing of a pair of mountain boots is placed on the title page, while several thin snakes, drawn like calligraphy, create a corresponding mood: a feeling of cold and silence emanates from under the rocks, from the ground.

[\[Title page, etching\]](#)

The protagonist, a millionaire called Mark, is known as the King of Rubbish since the main source of his fortune is a network of factories for recycling rubbish. Mark is introduced to the reader as a hard worker who also takes care of his small town: "Anything he did was for his 12-year old daughter, Anna Maria, she was the center of his universe. [...] She was growing up to be independent, calm, sensible, extremely polite; she liked 'adult' poetry and was already able to express herself in several languages. [...] With Mark's efforts Anna Maria's world was full of beauty and harmony. And one day this idyll ended..."

Mark is presented, therefore, as a positive hero, a loving father, as any fairy tale hero should be. And, as any hero, Mark has to go through a certain range of trials and choose a path to follow.

One day, Mark is bringing Anna-Maria in his car to school, when suddenly Anna Maria's sharp scream is heard, and then comes the sound of a shot: "A half-dead snake was hanging out of the car, slithering, hatefully hissing, its blood dripping onto the asphalt. Anna Maria was unconscious [...]. Zuhra was very angry at the people, and a lot of deadly poison had accumulated on her sharp teeth." Anna Maria survived, but when she opened her eyes, "they were dark like a whirlpool, and Mark recognized in them neither fear, nor soul [...]. She was silent, and it was impossible to know if she understood what everyone was saying to her." Mark starts to sell off his expensive cars, one after another, in order to have the money to take the girl to the most important doctors around the country and abroad, but Anna Maria remains like a doll with glass eyes. A long period of silence begins.

[\[The snake Zuhra\]](#)

Zuhra, as the character who has caused the girl's silence and who will play a fatal role later, becomes a higher power that punishes people for their evil. Therefore, an image of Zuhra on

the frontispiece represents an all-consuming circle that surrounds the world, at least that part of it which the King of Rubbish inhabits. Such placement allows the passage to another dimension: from the symbolic meaning created by the circle of a serpent to the real world enclosed in that circle.

Mark hires a private detective, promising him one thousand coins in exchange for the exposure of all his enemies, even those whom he never knew. The empire Mark has built over many years collapses at the same time, but this is nothing compared with the withering away of Anna Maria. In matters related to the rescue of his daughter, Mark becomes helpless. He depends on the detective's advice. He neglects his work, becomes thinner, seems to fall into lethargy, smokes and drinks to forget his grief, but alcohol leads him into a trance whereby he can no longer distinguish a dream from reality. Insomnia is wearing him out. "When he finally did fall asleep, the snake would creep up to him and spitefully hissssss... reminding him that he ssssshouldn't sleep, that he ssssshould be doing ssssssomething." (The use of sibilants naturally flows through the narrative). He is engulfed by fear, and fear — in the form of a serpent — hisses, causing him to wake up. He is now animated by suggestions coming from the dream.

These suggestions cause him to make impulsive decisions and direct him towards the wrong path. The constant, monotonous, drawling hissing of the snake provokes (in both the protagonist and the reader) psychedelic effects. When reading, one wants to look behind one's back and see whether a serpent is crawling around somewhere nearby.

Horror, despair, and fear, expressed in the hissing sound which he thinks he hears everywhere, absorb him entirely. The drama is amplified by the hopeless situation. He must immediately begin to act to find a solution. The tension and drama on the illustration is achieved by both allegoric composition (the moon and the entire world is encircled by the snake, who looks like a queen and absorbs Mark's life at the end) and contrasts (the white-transparent disk of the moon on a deep-dark background of empty sky). Silence, emptiness and wind are embodied in the landscape with rocks.

The author commented on the picture as follows:

"...the picture arouses fantasy and is filled with a philosophic meaning and mood. I would look and look for a long while at it – there, on the cracked earth, in the Kingdom of Zuhra, there is our sublunary world. The moon just captivates me, leading me into that loop created by the snake. A strange and terrifying world, a parallel one and at the same time a real one, the

other side of the Moon [...]. ‘The earth was invisible and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hanging over it’ (from the monolog by Irina Zarechnay in Treplev’s play). If this picture were not born of my fairy tale, I would write a tale based on it...”

[\[The Residence of Silence\]](#)

This idyllic picture with the Rubbish Kingdom on the hill shows a sad idyll with an old gate through which nobody enters anymore, and the tree’s roots, like hands, are entwined at the entrance. Only birds are circling over the residence that once was colorful and happy. Here is a comment from the author's letter: “With your pictures, you made me discover another world, stimulated me to think about the matter as about an impulse for creating my own space [...] It would have never occurred to me to depict Mark’s residency this way – there, at a distance, on the hill, as a castle; and the gates with branches-roots in the role of watchmen, ready to capture uninvited guests...”

“A snake expert was brought into the investigation. He was a dried-up and stooped man with long knotted fingers, a hairstyle that recalled Einstein and a demonic look. He was unable to clarify anything, and only sighed upon seeing the frozen body of the killed viper. He wailed in a falsetto: ‘What a beautiful specimen! What colour! Look how long it is! And size? No, she definitely looks like Zuhra, the one I recently saw in the mountains of a certain warlike country... My God, just look! How could you! How could you kill such a charming creation of nature?’ The detectives simply concluded that he was a mad man”.

While the text provides the reader with a detailed enough description, I intentionally avoid these details in pictures but rather convert them into a kind of a mood-portrait that creates an indirect image of a snake enthusiast from a fairy tale, the same way as for the image of the private detective.

“A Private Detective visited [Mark] in the middle of the night in a big black car. He was a man of few words, with a big face, carefully carved out of fumed oak, and a stinking cigar hanging out from between his yellowed teeth, similar to the keys of an old piano”.

[\[Page layout, a snake expert, and a Private Detective\]](#)

“Despair had already knocked on Mark’s door when [...] there appeared a small, grey breaded man, a Pilgrim [and when informed of the family’s grief, revealed information about the sorceress Arhuz who] lived in the northern forests where rapid rivers took their source; she

spoke to the powers of the other world [and could cure the girl]." Mark, at this instance, has nothing left to lose. Together with Anna Maria, they travel far away to see Arhuz.

"It wasn't easy to find the sorceress, but money does many things and even buys out witches. Arhuz invited them into her hut on the marshes [...]. She was a tall and skinny woman with slanting, green and un-winking eyes, and wore a scaly, shiny dress which let out rattlesnake crackles. The sorceress's movements were rounded and flowing; it seemed as if she wasn't moving, but floating or even crawling around her little hut which was filled out with phials and covered in bundles of dried roots."

The mysterious sorceress is presented as a beautiful woman, but her beauty is frightening and venomous. An important feature to highlight is the palindrome of the mirror-written name: the snake's name is Zuhra, and the sorceress, who resembles a snake with her appearance and movements, is Arhuz. Her hissing speech is like an incantation or an evil prediction, which one cannot get rid of. She does not give a direct answer and responds metaphorically, suggesting to Mark that only he can give the girl back the gift of speech, by breaking off the connection between him and the one who put the snake in his car.

[\[The sorceress Arhuz\]](#)

Arhuz is depicted as a gothic-shaped character whose effect is similar to the atmosphere produced by cold Gothic cathedrals. However, she still does one useful thing – she gives advice to Mark, although the advice is cruel and ruinous. Arhuz plays the part of "the decrepit statue of justice" as in the epigraph, as subsequently she will turn out to be right.

The detective brings Mark documents about one of Mark's possible enemies: the fired chief of security. His boots, which were mentioned at the beginning of the fairy tale, serve as evidence that indicates his guilt. Mark then decides to organize a hunt for the animals, as he promised to the girl earlier. "There was constant shooting in the surrounding forests for three days and three nights [...] The bullet of a powerful shot hit the chief of security straight in the heart.[...] Mark took Anna Maria aside, went down to his knees, adjusted her camisole, and began to ask her: 'Did you like the hunting trip?..' But the little girl was still silent." "The next victim was Mark's lover [...], then his competitor [...], but Anna Maria was silent as before. Mark understood that he had been wrong once again [...]. Within a month, Mark had eliminated all of his enemies, one by one. And each time, he checked Anna Maria like a piece of litmus paper, whether or not this was the one, but none of them were. The girl continued her silence."

One day, when the detective brings Mark files on his former business partner, Mark understands that the detective has rearranged the facts, and asks him to disappear forever.

Why are such mysterious and unfair murders presented in the fairy tale? Is this a trial of Mark's love for his daughter? Or does he act so because of despair? Or perhaps the murders are his circles of hell in the Dantean way — a mechanism through which he must pass to be cleansed of his wickedness? And, consequently, how will such literary features be reflected in the illustrations?

Even though the structure of the plot is built according to the rules of a detective story, this is not a standard detective outline. The writer uses a simplified outline of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, where the reader knows from the beginning who and with what purpose committed the murderous acts. There is no detective investigation in this fairy tale, and all the main events occur outside of the plot. The writer searches for a justification of the murders, solves moral problems, and raises the main question, the same as it is for Dostoevsky: not who has committed a murder, but rather why it is forbidden to murder (Bykov, 2015). The writer ignores the genre arrangement and intertwines the detective plot with a classic 'folk' style (Once upon a time... in a small warlike country... there lived old snake...), in order to reach Eisenstein's principle which suggests that in the arts, where there is a montage, one plus one makes more than two because the interaction of two different effects generates a third meaning. For example, in his Analysis of Mise-en-scène³³³ in a theater production of N. Leskov's novel *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Eisenstein discusses the 'stylistic focus' which is achieved by means of montage and influences the audience due to the relations between Shostakovich's music, the actors' performance, the composition and rhythmical arrangement of the mise-en-scene, and the semantics derived from the novel.

The verbal and then visual form of such a new meaning is addressed to the emotions and, therefore, the reader's 'impression' is reached by means of combining the following elements: two chapters or even paragraphs in prose, the figures or details in a picture, and the alternation of pictures and texts within a whole book design.

Mark, together with Anna Maria, then go back to his birthplace and visit his aged parents. "He'd run away from them when he was a little boy." Such a scene refers to Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, when "Mark asked them if they could give him some water [...].

³³³ Cf. Eisenstein, S. *Izbrannije proizvedenija*, Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1964-1971, t.4, p.537

Once he drank water from his native well [...], he fell to the ground on his knees. It was then that they understood who he was, and they began to cry with joy.”

The biblical parable represents the idea of repentance and forgiveness of a sinful man. By this time, Mark realizes his sin and confesses, and he is thus forgiven. He gives his parents what he has left of his money and asks if he can leave Anna Maria with them. Mark travels back to the town, “stayed at a motel, The Pilgrim, which had once belonged to him.” He meets his ex-partner and is eventually satisfied that the man holds nothing against him. “And yet Anna Maria was still silent. [...] In the night, Mark dreamt of the sorceress Arhuz, in her scaly green dress, with big slanting eyes, and movements like a snake. ‘Make hasssssste, Mark,’ she whispered.” The next day he finds the killer and commissions him to commit a murder, explaining: “He will come to the motel to collect something at midnight. [...] I will try to make him come up to the window so that you will be able to clearly see his silhouette.”

As it approaches the ending, the narrative splits into two lines: externally, around the protagonist, the events become heated and the rhythm increases, but Mark’s inner mood is static and calm. Such a complex psychological situation leads to an unexpected turning point:

“Somebody tipped off the inspector with indisputable proof of Mark’s guilt in the murders. [...] In the meantime, the killer had set himself up on the roof of the house opposite the motel, and patiently kept aim at Mark’s window. At midnight, the lights came on in the room, [...] a shadow resembled a motionless black appliqué. [...] A shot sounded, glass shattered into tiny pieces, and the silhouette disappeared. The inspector arrived just one minute later. [...] Mark was lying, arms outstretched, on the floor covered in shattered glass.”

Such a significant rhythmic pause is reflected in the rhythms of page design. The protagonist realizes that he was sleeping, and he had to wake up because he had been falling deeper and deeper... but he could not wake up. This is reminiscent of St. Augustine’s *Confessions* where a man tries to wake up for a long time, but, overwhelmed by deep sleep, ends up again immersed in it. “There is so much power in these deceptive images that hold my soul and my body...The power and force of habit, which attracts and holds the soul even against its will [...] You teach a man for his injustice and make his soul to be consumed like a spider web.”³³⁴ Mark’s soul disappears like a spider web, and the illustration depicts this last scene symbolically, as a window frame and a small spider that hangs between the panes, broken a second ago. This

³³⁴ St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, book 7, 10; quoted in: (Bykov, 2015)

creative impulse emerged on an invisible level, somewhere between the tale's hidden meaning and my subconscious improvisation.

[[“The inspector arrived just one minute later”](#)]

Suicide turns out to be the only a means to sober him up. Mark, like Raskolnikov, is able to “overstep” the moral line. One who oversteps, for Dostoevsky, perishes. This concept finds its representation in Mark's physical death. But someone who overcomes himself to save another, he rescues himself. After this self-destruction, the path to regeneration begins, because “truth cannot be without falling” (Bykov, 2015). Here begins regeneration and the return to life: “In a village far away, Anna-Maria suddenly awoke, as if the shot and falling glass had woken her up [...]; as if in a trance, she got up and went to the garden. ‘Daaad...’ [...] Walking barefoot on the dewy grass, [...] she walked onto a field and ran with outstretched arms ‘Daaad! Daaaaaddy’...”

A few years later, in a beach-front restaurant, a certain man tells a group of ladies how his friend once caught a huge snake called Zuhra and took it to a zoo. However, Zuhra escaped and the friend, being afraid of punishment, got into the car and left. “We don't know what happened next. It's possible that Zuhra is still creeping about somewhere. The ladies cautiously glanced under the table. But they saw nothing there apart from the man's high mountain boots on thick, grooved soles”.

The boots, therefore, having travelled a long way, from one page to another throughout the entire tale, appear again at the end as a symbol of Mark's delusion. On the physical level, there was no villain who had left the snake in Mark's car or intended to commit any harm. Evil was only within the protagonist's inner conflict. Does Mark's source of income mean anything in the story? “There is something magical about transforming rubbish into gold.” The irony of his death perhaps suggests that someone who has enriched himself through rubbish turns to ash.

Thus, the fairy tale has three levels of meaning: outer-physical, inner-psychological, and metaphysical.

On the physical level, we have the development of the theme of silence and Mark's deeds. The image of the protagonist consists of contrasts: he is a merciless murderer, who carries out reprisals against everyone, without caring about their families and especially orphaned children. Interestingly, despite Mark's criminal nature, the reader is likely to love him,

sympathize with him and take his side, justifying his actions on the basis of Mark's love for his daughter. At least this appears to be the author's intention. An additional situation is created, in which the relation between text and context, as well as the knowledge of the protagonist's context (Bal, 2017:113-124) influence the reader and contribute significantly to his perception: we 'see' Mark's crime in the light of the knowledge of his inner world.

If an author wants intense sympathy for characters who do not have strong virtues to recommend them, then the psychic vividness of prolonged and deep inside views will help him. If an author wants to earn the reader's confusion, the unreliable narration may help him. (Booth, 378)

We already love him at the beginning of the story, where he is a hard-working and sentimental father which he remains until the end, but with a layer of crime. The latter is perceived as a desperate step he has to take.

The physical level of the plot, the most tangible, is determined in pictures by the physical/formal construction of the book which is meant as a shape in space: the shape of the entire book, the space arrangement of each two-page opening, the structure of each picture, the exlibris and title pages, the size and shape of the text-body, the proportions and placement of pictures, the relations of the white and the black, and the functionality of these elements. This is analogous to what Brodsky suggests about the conflict-plus-relation between a thing and space: "The matter is the space, without which the matter does not exist", when "a chair consists of the feeling of emptiness around it", so "the space strives to absorb things, while things force the space out" (Lotman, 1992, t.3:295). This is, to use the language of graphics, the relationship between meaning, an artistic goal and the final result,³³⁵ where such book components help to build a logical construction that follows the storyline's rhythm. The selection of a visual technique (etchings with fine details) is subordinated to the main concept of the genre in a tale (detailed descriptions with accurately chosen metaphoric comparisons). This becomes a kind of visualization of the verbal construction.

Such word-picture constructions and rhythmical arrangement of time and space can be traced throughout the book layout. For example, the title page with boots and calligraphy-snakes is coupled with the exlibris, and they aim to introduce the story, so this page stands isolated (p.2-3). The next page is empty, and the beginning of the tale with descriptions of the

³³⁵ In reference to Aristotle's potentiality and actuality, when form plus matter includes the aim and the final result.

mountain landscape, wind and the capture of the snake is placed on a separate page, giving the text-block the form of a conclusion (p.5).

[[Page layout with the prelude to the story and frontispiece](#)] So, this excerpt becomes an independent story that anticipates the entire tale. A pause follows where the white page intensifies the feeling of the wind and silence (p.6), with only the following text: “But this is just the prelude. The tale is ahead” (a common expression from Russian folk tales). After that we see a symbolic image of a stone landscape, lit up by the moon (p.7), and then silence again (p.8). [[Page layout](#)] Then the story about happy Anna Maria’s childhood is narrated. The idyll is handwritten in two columns (p.10) – the letters, like small raindrops, come down through the page and distribute consistently. The illustration with the residence of the Rubbish King (p.11), with multiple gray gradations, gives constancy to such a confident life. Suddenly, the snake bites Anna Maria, there is an emotional outburst and next to it silence comes. This double page (p.12-13) is practically empty, without words, silent. The only small but substantial text-column stands in the wide space – as if it was in the middle of emptiness. Then, later, there is the encounter with Arhuz [[Page layout and etching](#)].

Proceeding this way, it’s possible to trace the whole book construction, where no chance elements are to be found. These may first seem to be casual motifs, but later they will assemble to become a whole picture. As in Chekhov, they will constitute the poetic necessity.³³⁶ Therefore, the proportions between the ‘load’ and ‘pause’ of book pages, polysemantic illustrations and ‘speaking’ text with large ‘silent’ margins construct the physical ‘basis’ of the book.

The whole book-object is divided into formal ‘focuses’ that emphasize the key episodes of the story, attaining outer constructiveness, rhythm, and smooth flow from page to page. In this way, the exact placement of objects and text is established in the entire rhythmical construction of the book, and then the symbolic meaning of each illustration is developed.

The next step in illustration-making, therefore, is to draw all the pictures from beginning to end. From here, the development of the second narrative level begins — the inner-psychological. The associative principle and the relation between verbal and visual images can create different semantic shades. The main and secondary meanings of both verbal and visual messages begin to interact, which leads to the increase of stylistic expression. When following

³³⁶ Cf. Chudakova A.P., *Mir Chekhova (World of Chekhov)*, M., 1986. p. 192-193

literary metaphors, I find their symbolic and associative implementation in visual images. For example, when trying to answer the question of what Mark's inner psychological portrait looks like, I find it in the image of a lost man with tied hands (figuratively), and he is entangled in the long sleeves of his shirt (indeed, he is completely helpless). But when we look at the details, we can see that these sleeves are covered with the texture of snake skin, because it was the snake Zuhra who paralyzed his life.

On this psychological level, we are getting close to the struggle between good and evil inside one person: Mark is fighting with his own inner devil, and not with his outer enemies who could have put the snake into his car. He eventually falls so low that during the decline he reaches true goodness through self-sacrifice in the name of salvation of a person close to him. The sorceress Arhuz embodies a higher meaning. The snake bites Mark at the end, but in a very complicated way: the protector of snakes Arhuz, as if she was the reincarnated Zuhra, gives him a piece of advice which brings him to his death.

There is something of Dürrenmatt in it: evil will be punished, and even if nobody takes revenge on anybody, the coincidence is the punishment in itself. In Pushkin's *Song of Wise Oleg*, a sorcerer predicts prince Oleg's death from his horse. Oleg begins to ponder (and the reader with him) what form this death might take: whether the horse will kick and kill him, or will he be killed on horseback in battle, or will the horse fall and squash Oleg... He replaces his horse whom he puts out to pasture, but he never stops thinking about this animal. One day the sorcerer brings Oleg the news that the horse has died and Oleg mocks the old man for having been wrong in his prophecy. Oleg goes to where the remains of the horse are supposed to be and see the animal's skull. He bemoans the noble steed and gently places his foot on the animal's skull. A snake crawls out of the skull, bites the prince and thereby makes the original prophecy come true. This follows the self-fulfilling, circular logic of the Oedipus myth.

The additional layer of meaning proposed by the narrative and its style are multiplied by the meaning of the pictures and their style. Such a delicate level requires more brainwork from the reader and is developed in the pictures through the following principle. A series of figurative-symbolic compositions interact associatively with the literary images. When it comes to darkness, black comes interacts with white, and each small element is developed in the gradations of chiaroscuro. Such relations correspond to the same amplitudes of mood within the text. Such problems are going to be solved in pictures as 'how' with the available graphic

techniques to “breathe” the wind or the state of “silence” into an illustration, or to force the snake to “hiss” on the surface of the picture.

The writer commented in his letter to me on the search for a literary metaphor: “I hold up for a week or more, because I cannot figure out what the sun was like. White? (It’s not a desert). Fiery red? (It’s a cliché). Burning hot? (No, in the sunset it is already cooled, or if in the sunrise, still not warmed up). I am leafing through Fersman’s book *Reminiscences about minerals* with color pictures and find a shade that I need, and write: The sun is similar to chalcedony... This is also not that one I need!.. And then I suddenly find it in a remnant of a cake of soap, when washing my hands in the morning, and write: ...similar to a thin, until transparency, like the remnant of a cake of soap, the sun...”

In the same way, I searched for each detail in my pictures. The saturation of the tale with such a ‘word pattern’ made it possible for me to shift to another dimension that goes beyond the simple plot. An artist-illustrator receives a creative impulse from such metaphorical language which passes through the logic, provides with an “emotional reaction” and manifests itself in a visual image. In the language of graphics, the snake should become a symbol of inevitability, a sign of fate. This image is everywhere and nowhere. This is where the symbolic ring comes from, created by the snake, which in the picture surrounds such a small world.

The technique of aquatint allows the achievement of more than 20-25 gradations of gray shades (this is the number of etched passages on a zinc plate). Such transitions – from light to dark, from stone cracks to snake scales – fill an image with depth. The background of white paper, for example, looks less bright than the moon. The moon placed against the background of the deep black sky seems to shine because of the different degree of contrasts between objects. For Propp, one of the most important aspects of a fairy tale's *fabula* (the story line as opposed to *siuzhet* — the actual implementation of the story line through a narrative) is not each element presented separately, but the relationship among them. It is so in the pictures as well: the way the elements are connected, and the manner in which their contrasts or visual relations work out, can represent “the wind lost in the silence of the rocks.”

On the metaphysical level, the narrative and the pictures implement the meaning of time and space. Months are passing, and the seasons are changing. The actions of the tale begin as follows: “One bright September morning,” which is when the tragedy occurs. The leaves fall, nature goes to sleep, and Anna Marie becomes a “silent doll with glass eyes” that do not

express any emotion. This is also reflected in the town's landscape. At the beginning it "looked just like she wanted to see it. Houses, with tiled roofs, resembled playing cubes with the letters of the alphabet..." Then, "the silence had begun; and long, dark days dragged on. The town became gray in its ordinariness." The series of detective events happen in the autumn and winter. "Days and weeks went by. In the mornings, the grass would be covered with white frost. Birds started to migrate south." The depressive weather alternates with murders and with the downfall of the Rubbish Kingdom. The scenes of nature become a reflection of the characters' mood: the episodes where the protagonist remains alone with his fears, or the stone earth in the mountains, and "the wind lost in the silence of the rocks," which has something in common with Anna Maria's silence, or the river behind the marshes, which swirls around differently shaped stones, foaming and whispering "Agreeeeeeee!" [with the sorceress' advice]. There is also an image of forests, where "a nightjar's wings made noise when it was freed from the roof of Arhuz's little hut and flew towards the dark castellated horizon, where the crimson sun was setting." This is associated with life's sunset and the ending of one's path. Or the image of the town that becomes empty, "the streets were covered in rubbish" when Mark was coming back, and he was empty and broken as well; and "dark and starless nights", so cold that "even the wolves wouldn't howl so as to avoid a sore throat." Then later, "It was the start of spring, it became warmer and the birds came back to their native land. Mark, too, came back to his birth place," to his parents. "A village on a knoll, through which a blue river ran" becomes a symbol of Mark's insights and forgiveness. The transformation of his soul occurs together with the 'awakening' of Anna Maria, and her way out of silence occurs in the spring, when nature wakes up.

Literary images overlap, like a matrix net, with their graphic interpretation. When they coincide precisely, a book can develop into a work of art, in which each element (similarly to notes) forms an integral part of an entire orchestra. As the psychology of a man cannot be separated from his physiology (Mark's physical death is determined by his motives and behavior), so too in the book-object, the notional fullness of pictures derives from the textual motifs.³³⁷

³³⁷ As has been discussed earlier: J. Tschichold presents such verbal-visual relations through the construction of book layout, typography, and text-margin relations; V. Favorsky opens a wide discussion about the space, rhythm, and time in book-object; as well L. Kendrick studies this notion with the examples of medieval manuscripts; the

Therefore, such visual elements correspond to the metaphysical level of literature: the image of the moon, surrounded by the ring-snake, small lights far in the town, stone earth (p.7). The spider web, which was in the scene of Mark's suicide (p.41), now appears on the title page (p.3) in order to connect the end with the beginning and to emphasize that life is cyclical. The web hangs down like a drapery between the snake and the boots (p.3). There are also the roots-hands of trees, tattered clouds and dark birds in the illustration with Mark's residence (p.11). All the aforementioned elements build the mood, state, inner fullness, and assonance with the fairy tale's mood. The image of 'silence' is represented through emptiness, through the page space that meaningfully remains blank: absence has a stronger feeling than presence and stimulates the possibilities of other meanings, unforeseen in a fully filled page.

The pale ivory color of the paper, used for the book, reduces visual contrast and, therefore, also the conceptual distance between the background of pages, on which the events get underway, and words with etchings, which provide us with the content of all the actions. The character's mood, the environment, the modulation of passages in pictures are reached by acceleration or slowing down of the rhythmical arrangement of space, where story-time can go slower or stop while discourse continues in the descriptions (Chatman, 1986:74; 1990:45). This contributes to the diversity of time levels.

Lotman (1988) compared the reading of fiction with the ability of a musician who, looking at a sheet music, is able to 'hear' melody written down in the form of notes. This reminds Dostoevsky's analogy between the constructive system of a novel and the musical modulation of counterpoints (as discussed in I.7.4. *Levels of narration*). When carrying musical principles over to the literary map of a fairy tale, we can think about the relation between the literary and visual levels as we think about the associations and their figurative meanings. In the graphic structure, for example, it's expressed with thin, flowery snakes on the title page (p.3), which repeat the rhythm of calligraphic inscriptions. They look like a handwritten stroke and aim to impact the reader associatively, by creating another dimension, or another reality.

The trajectory of the writer's thought, which is left outside the words, between the lines, is embodied in the calligraphy of visual images, and then smoothly flows over to form the trajectory of the reader's thoughts. Furthermore, conflict between the fantastic and the real

film studies approached it closer, when examining the page-screen-motion relations, for example, S. Chatman, A. Tarkovsky, Eisenstein, Paradjanov.

increases both in the narrative, where the protagonist is balancing on the verge of reality and dream, and in the relations between reader and the book as a transition to another reality. Different voices surround the same theme. And therefore, the polyphony of images creates an art form, which does not explain already existing verbal content, but rather makes possible the discovery and exploration of something new.³³⁸

Calligraphy in book decoration has a particular function in forming rhythmical amplitudes and connections in text-picture-space relations. As in film, “even a pure black or gray or white backdrop will suggest night, or a fogged-in-area, or heaven... but rarely nowhere” (Chatman, 1986:106), so too in book space, empty pages and margins do play a role in the formation of associative meanings. As the text-margin relation regulates the rhythmical balance of reading, so too does each single text block, within which the emphases of vertical and horizontal elements create a perceptual pattern.³³⁹

The creative interpretation of the fairy tale, which is saturated with unfinished or open literary images, is complemented with visual detail that exists beyond the text. And so, the relationship of both verbal and visual patterns creates not their sum but a new complex system.

³³⁸ As analogy to what Bakhtin suggests with respect to literary work, when saying that “an art form, when correctly understood, does not explain already existing content, but allows to find and see it for the first time” (Bakhtin, *Problemi poetiki Dostoevskogo*, ПСС in 7 vol, v.6, p.53).

³³⁹ For instance, [Villu Toots](#), in his different works, such as *The modern calligraphy*, *Calligraphical studies*, and others, introduces the logics of the font formation and its impact on the process of reading.

III.5. Illustrations for Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*:
a documentary-artistic approach.

This part will be quite straightforward since I created this series of illustrations, book design and binding, concurrently with a short thesis in 2001-2002 as the final project for my BFA degree at the National Academy of Arts and Architecture in Kyiv. The research on the writer's aesthetics and the word-image relationships, therefore, was part of the thesis. However, the project was reworked several times over the following 10 years. What I am going to present here is a brief summary of the main concepts of my approach to a visual interpretation of the novel.

The search for the appropriate style in pictures.

In order to interpret such a complex literary text in the form of pictures, I needed to study Bulgakov's narrative style, his time period, ideology and what was not explicitly written by the author but rather remained between the lines. These features are embodied in the novel and had to appear in the illustrations.

Bulgakov's manuscripts and memoirs had been inaccessible to researchers for a long time. So, the works of the literary critic Lidij Yanovskaya (5 books and almost 60 articles about Bulgakov's art and life) were my most reliable source.³⁴⁰ Then the author's manuscripts, having been passed on to the archives of Lenin Library in Moscow (now the Russian State Library), were classified and inaccessible. When working on my thesis, I managed to get a referral from my university to the Lenin Library, where I traveled to meet the director of the archives and to experience the reading of the primary source — the manuscripts — which, as is known, tell the reader more than the typed text. He brought Bulgakov's handwritten notebooks to the reading room, sat down in front of me, leafed through the pages for 15 minutes in such a way that I could not read anything, then kindly agreed to make for me a few photocopies of some of the pages, which I used in my illustrations as visual materials. More than that was not allowed.

³⁴⁰ Yanovskaya had the opportunity to study the writer's life, works and manuscripts only in a short period of time, a few years before the death of the writer's wife, the friendship with whom brought Yanovskaya to writing important books with little-known facts and discoveries.

The following are other resources, available in that period and used by me to work on the book.

- Some ideas, embodied in the illustrations, were inspired when I visited the “bad apartment” no. 50, on Sadovaya Street in Moscow, where Bulgakov lived for many years and where much of the story of *The Master and Margarita* is set. Experiencing the impressions that “this damned apartment” made, I wandered through the streets of old Moscow described in the novel, and this immersion into the environment of the author and the novel helped me in working on the story's atmosphere in my pictures.

- A collection of photographic materials and other documentary information, taken in Moscow's streets, museums and libraries. These materials reproduced the architecture of Moscow and included old newspapers and photos, as well as images of the author's contemporaries, who were the prototypes of Bulgakov's characters.

- Archival materials from the [Bulgakov Museum in Kyiv](#).

- Film adaptations of the novel and theater performances were viewed with the following question in mind: how were Bulgakov's literary features presented on the stage?

- Illustrations from different periods by various artists were collected: as many as illustrations dedicated to Gogol even though very few of them were published.

- Bulgakov's short stories “The Capital in a Notebook”, based on autobiographical materials and the author's life in Moscow: from the journal *Poligrafia*, 1987; this material was published as a book in 2002.

- Bulgakova, Elena (the writer's third wife), *Literary Diaries*, Moscow: Kniznaja palata, 1990.

- Losev, V. (at the time, director of the manuscript archives at the Lenin Library), *Dnevnik Mastera i Margariti* [Diaries of the Master and Margarita], Moscow: Vagrius, 2001.

- Losev, V. *Fantastichesky roman o diavole* [A fantastic novel about devil], Moscow: Gudjal-Press, 2002.

- Smeljansky, A.M., *Mikhail Bulgakov v hudozestvennom teatre* [Bulgakov at the Art Theater], Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1986.

- Zemskaja, E.A. (the writer's sister), *Mikhail Bulgakov i ego rodnice: semejniy portret* [Bulgakov and his relatives: a family portrait], Studia Philologica, 2004.

Consequently, in light of what I had studied, the book design and pictures acquired a documentary-artistic tonality, which merged the archival materials, photos and manuscripts with the fictional storyline. Such documentary materials reflected the visual incarnation of the novel.

The effect of authenticity in connection to imaginary events operates at the border between reality and fiction. It is achieved by mingling real facts, realistic descriptions of places, figures from history and monuments with episodes that present magic and diabolic events. The mix of these two levels of meaning — the historical and the fantastic — is meant to help the reader suspend his disbelief (so to speak) in the existence of imaginary figures, which are realistically depicted along with well documented ones.

Novel Synopsis

Bulgakov's novel, written from 1928 to 1940 (the year of the author's death), is about a one-week visit by Satan and his entourage in Moscow at the height of Stalinism. This modern narrative strand alternates with a story known as the Jerusalem chapters which presents an alternative account of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion — a kind of fifth Gospel (according to Bulgakov). The two strands are intertwined and echo each other symbolically, thematically and in terms of the novel's overall story line. The protagonist of the novel is a man referred to as the Master. He writes a novel about the life of Jesus, and the reader of Bulgakov's novel is presented with the Master's story in the form of the aforementioned Jerusalem chapters. The Master's novel, being completely out of place in the virulently atheistic and demonic Stalinist system, ends up rejected while the Master is institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital. It is at this point that Satan intervenes, as he arrives in Moscow in order to save the Master and the novel about Jesus. At the same time, Satan reunites the Master with the latter's lover — Margarita. *The Master and Margarita* is considered to be the greatest Russian novel of the 20th century.

The main constructive line of the novel and pictures.

The narrative construction suggests the principle of “a novel inside a novel”. So, I followed the same principle and created two parallel constructions in the illustrations that interact with each other and create a complex visual message on several levels.

The main or “leading” line is composed of a sequence of still lifes (black and white photos), which I ideated, arranged in symbolic compositions, developed in terms of light and reflections, photographed on film negatives, and hand-printed on enlarger in a darkroom.

Such compositions are based on the intuitive combination of objects and their position and lighting. They are not designed to represent the plot literally but rather its associative-symbolic meaning and mood. The objects in the still lifes *correspond* to the inner world (psychology, emotions) and mood of the characters that they represent, without making concrete statements.

For example:

In the still life for the chapter entitled “[Never talk to strangers](#)” (where Satan meets two Soviet writers, Ivan Bezdomny and Mikhail Berlioz, in a Moscow park), a small, pale vase in the forefront represents the young and unconfident poet Ivan Bezdomny while a lemon represents Berlioz’s head that ends up severed by a tram as a result of Satan’s machinations. Koroviev, a member of Satan’s entourage who appears as a transparent figure and is seen by the two writers during this encounter, is made of clouded glass.

In the still life for the chapter entitled “[Pontius Pilate](#)” (one of the Jerusalem chapters), an ancient book, a spent candle, and a semi-transparent clock symbolize eternity, timelessness.

In the still life for the chapter entitled “[The incident at Griboyedov](#)” (where Satan’s assistants visit the building housing the Soviet Writers’ Union and end up burning it down [for being a tool of Stalinist propaganda and for rejecting the Master’s novel]), burning manuscripts in a cup represent the fire at the writers’ union.

For the chapter entitled “[Ivan is split in two](#)” (where the aforementioned poet Ivan Bezdomny finds himself at the same psychiatric institution as the Master after having been driven mad by the encounter with Satan), the absurd situation at the hospital is placed on a plate of food: mixed salad, onions, cellophane reflections, potions, and two lemons are the symbols of the poet’s personality which has split in two as a result of his madness.

In the still life for the chapter entitled “[Praise be to the Rooster!](#)” (where Satan’s female assistant almost kills the director of the Moscow Variety Theater, Satan and his entourage having put on a magic show at this theater just before this incident), bread caught in a spider’s web — old and covered with dust — symbolizes the theater in the shade of Satan’s black magic. A rotten apple refers to the director’s aching head. A brightly lit onion represents the

cockerel that saves the director at the last moment from Satan's emissaries by crowing and signaling the beginning of dawn.

The key point is that it is not necessary (and impossible) that the reader grasp the meanings that I gave to these compositions. Their purpose is to create a certain emotional impact on the reader which, in correlation with the text, will generate new meanings and additional levels of perception — simultaneously through verbal and visual associations.

Large illustrations.

I designed a series of 13 double-page illustrations which precede certain chapters. I also created 230 small ink drawings spread throughout the book which aim to function as linking elements between the large illustrations and to create a certain atmosphere by means of certain small ambient elements, e.g., aspects of historical buildings, bits and pieces of everyday life, signs or fragments.

The 13 large pictures are created in the technique of collage: photos of still lifes (as above) plus my ink drawings and the writer's manuscripts. The formal compositions (the initial stage of sketching the concepts) looked like abstract pictures composed of grey, less dark, more dark, white and black spots; this was a necessary step meant to arrange the "weights" and to balance future content with form. Already at this stage, I knew what would be inserted in such spots, e.g., a piece of manuscript would be placed into a white spot; a burning cap that symbolizes a bonfire would end up in a black spot, the two being related to each other (conceptually) through the figure that would go in a grey stripe, and so forth.

With reference to what has been discussed about the transition from abstract thought to physical items (see *Physicality of Expression*), and the necessity of joining both abstract and concrete features in pictures (Favorsky, in I.5. *Between Art and Market*), I am suggesting that any abstract image represents only an initial concept (as a formal sketch of the composition) but is missing the concrete elements that would create dialectical complexity. Therefore, such formal/abstract compositions are filled with concrete items that relate associatively to each other.

The first thing that will catch the reader's eye in the presence of an illustration, will be a still life (associative photo-compositions as above) surrounded by ink drawings and

manuscripts. Thus, all objects around the still life will be perceived under the influence of the mood proposed by the photo.

The [frontispiece](#) reproduces some ripped pages of Bulgakov's manuscript, a picture representing *Mephistopheles*³⁴¹ which reflects a certain mood, and the writer's photo with the following handwritten inscription over it: "This is what one looks like after dealing for several years with Aloziy Mogarych, Nikonor Ivanich, and others" (negative the characters from *The Master and Margarita*).

The illustration that introduces the chapter entitled "[Execution](#)" (a Jerusalem chapter detailing the crucifixion of Jesus), for example, recreates the atmosphere of ancient Rome and the mood of the scenes in the story: antique books, architectural elements, the moon, parts of manuscripts with certain relevant phrases and so forth for each picture, [1](#), [2](#), etc.

To separate the two plot lines in the illustrations — the time of Pontius Pilate and the 1930s in Moscow — I presented ancient world via silhouettes and the modern world in form of linear drawings.

Furthermore, the still lifes within the whole book construction aim to add a rhythmical organization to the whole. They appear at the right moments and add a certain rhythm, while the [230 small drawings](#) interspersed among them throughout the text do not interrupt the reading process. Their role is to recreate the environment through the representation of details of everyday life, architecture, streets, landscapes, etc. Figuratively – this is like a pendulum clock ticking: it can be heard as long as you listen to it, but if you are distracted, then you forget about it. The moment your thoughts pause, the clock's ticking captures again your attention. But the clock has not stopped, and nothing has interrupted the rhythm and time of the story and, regardless of whether you listen to it or not, it continues its journey.

I developed this way the rhythm and mood of the entire movement within the book's structure. Apart from that, the photos and manuscripts, as a medium per se, are the archival/documentary materials. Thus, even if the fiction photo-compositions are entirely created by me, they make the reader's subconscious mind believe in the 'truth' that they represent.

³⁴¹ The sculpture was created by [Mark Antokolsky](#) in 1883, based on Goethe's *Faust*. Some critics (Losev, and then others) draw many relations between Bulgakov's Voland and Margarita and Goethe's Mephistopheles and Margarita; thus, the figure of Mephistopheles seems to be relevant to this illustration.

“Manuscripts do not burn”. This key phrase from the novel (uttered by the devil as he reconstitutes the Master's lost novel) has become a pithy saying known throughout the Russian cultural realm. It carries such a powerful philosophical meaning that it has taken on a life of its own — all the more so in a society which has always had a problem with freedom of expression. This is why I placed a printed fragment of still life with burning manuscripts on [the book cover](#). The bookbinding is made from natural black leather with a relief print of fire. Images of manuscripts are also reproduced on the edges of the book.

Never deal with the author's rights (reminiscent of Bulgakov's first chapters entitled “Never talk to strangers”), or *The artistic and editorial path of the book*.

The following short excerpt is about the relations between creativity and copyright, and my struggle with both Bulgakov's devilry and his heirs. This section presents a part of the creative process and supports the idea that without an in-depth study of the writer's cultural background and his art, my creative involvement as an illustrator would be impossible.

Completed in 2002, the illustrations passed through a process of competitive selection and were accepted to participate in the National Guild of Artists Exhibition in Kyiv. This gave me the right to become a member of the National Guild of Artists. But I decided not to use this right.

One week before the thesis defence and the presentation of the entire project with a visual series at the Academy exhibit, my work has, which had taken a year to complete, suddenly disappeared from my computer. When working on the documentary materials and then my pictures, I had become completely immersed in the world of the novel, and this process was echoed in the "diablerie" that followed me at each step. It's strange that even the title of the first handwritten version of *The Master ...*, “A novel about the devil” did not alarm me. Several times Mikhail Bulgakov himself came to me in a dream — with a cigar in his teeth as he appears on one photo, in a bow tie and in a pince-nez. We discussed the book for a long time, then he disappeared ... and the text disappeared from the computer as well. Then the text reappeared, but all my drawings disappeared, leaving an empty folder with zero megabytes... And when my nerves were in the state of an active volcano, when hope was dying, the drawings suddenly returned by themselves. I swore to abandon urgently the devilry novel and

to begin another literary work by another author, but could not do this for some inexplicable reason.

The work on the pictures and book structure continued thereafter for a couple of years. When I attempted to propose this book project for publication at various publishing houses whom I approached at book fairs in Moscow in 2002-2006, the response was always the same: they were interested in the pictures, but when they heard the name Bulgakov, they did not want to deal with this. Some were afraid of Bulgakov's devilry and misfortune that may come along it, others had more pragmatic reasons and did not want to go through issues with copyright holders. Both types of publishers turned out to be right. Bulgakov's artistic power had captured and kept my attention for a decade. In 2009, the art-photos from the series were exhibited in Milan and published as folders in a limited edition. I returned to this project again in Italy in 2007 and then in 2011, when trips to Rome evoked the Jerusalem chapters of Bulgakov's novel. At this point, I completely reworked the rhythmical structure of the book, layout, some of the small drawings, rearranged the large illustrations, polished certain details... and got immersed again in the writer's manuscripts, transferring their fragments to the pictures and to the book edges. In the same year, accidentally, when I traveled back to my native town in Ukraine and went to a dentist who had to extract my wisdom tooth, I found out that his last name was Bulgakov, and that he was born in the same day, month and year as my husband ("Oh! He does not leave you even there!" – my teacher from art school said). Even more ironically, upon my return to Milan, I met accidentally a publisher of limited editions from Parma, Fermo Editore: he had come to the Pecorini bookshop with a presentation, and I had come to the same shop and at the same time to deliver some copies of my children's books. Fermo got interested in my books, asked me to show him my other projects, and my Bulgakov attracted his attention. He decided to publish a limited edition of 300 copies. In order to obtain the permission of Bulgakov's heir (a grandson who has no direct relation either to the writer or to his works, being the son of Bulgakov's third wife's son by her other husband) and to publish the novel in a foreign language, one needs to contact that grandson's representative in England, who negotiates on the heir's behalf. Both the heir and the representative wanted to receive some of the royalties and tried to get more money while offering the fewest possible rights. They requested that the publisher pay an amount for the author's rights, the entire sum at the moment of signing the agreement (i.e. an advance rather than royalties after sales), while normally the

author's rights are not paid that way even to living writers. Considering the fact that this had to be an edition in the realm of high culture (i.e. the kind that sells very badly but has other/artistic purposes), and given the costs and time of the translation of the entire novel, editorial production, expensive materials, potential distribution, etc., the project did not turn out to be worthwhile for the publisher.

According to the law of the Russian Federation, *The Master and Margarita* will be in the public domain 70 years after the first publication (1967) which occurred 27 years after the author's death. Who knows, maybe in 2037 the publication of my pictures and Bulgakov's novel under a common book cover will become possible.

In the same year, in 2011, Lidij Yanovskaya, the [literary critic and biographer of Bulgakov](#) died. I had an intimate knowledge of her work and almost seemed to know her personally. At that point, my work on the book ended.

III.6. *The Princess and the Sea Beast*: a reversed way of illustration-making.³⁴²

I would now like to provide the following example because it presents a reversed way of illustration-making, compared to what is normally considered to be an intermedial adaptation. This way of approaching the verbal domain represents what is meant when a work is based on a literary work but does not necessarily illustrate it.

Italian folk fairy tales, in an adaptation by Italo Calvino, served as inspiration for this project. Having read many fairy tales, I started to comment visually on the characters or scenes, one by one, without connecting the drawings to any specific text, but adhering to a general fantastic style. In order to immerse myself in the topic, I also did some research. I studied fairy tale elements and their graphical representation in medieval European books, the fantastic elements of the architecture in question, page ornamentation and its intersection with handwritten text, and how a text intertwines with and transforms into vegetable elements to become the heads and tails of fantastic beasts, and so forth. Thus, this project developed simultaneously from both the creative word-picture interpretation of fairy tales and the historical study of medieval arts. The result was thirteen large sheets which were entirely filled with fairy tale characters, stylistically developed through the refraction of the medieval spirit. My artistic purpose was to create passages between different temporal and spatial dimensions.

For example, in picture [No. 1/13](#) [illustr. and fragments can be zoomed], the figure of a king is placed into an empty town square. The town is moved away from him, so the emptiness emphasizes his tragedy: he knows that his little daughter has been stolen by a sea monster. At this point, his (and the reader's) imagination sees everything in the town like something transformed into sea objects. The houses bob up and down like waves and have elements of sea beasts, and even the square is surrounded by seaweed. It seems that the sea together with the monster has absorbed and dragged the entire town to the bottom (the tentacles have surrounded some houses and become parts of the city walls). But at the same time, something common is happening beyond this: the birds are in the sky, and the boats are at the pier — because the sea beasts are only born out of the king's imagination.

³⁴² Publications and awards: Winner of the gold-silver medal Cesare Frigerio, “for a great imagination and the execution of drawings in the technique of chiaroscuro” (2005, Corsico, Italy); Publication in the historical journal of graphics and art *Grafica d'Arte*, edited by Paolo Bellini (2006, Milan, Italy); Winner of the personal exhibition at the competition “Polar Expo” (2009, Bergamo, Italy); Participation in the exhibition “Fabularia” (2009, Milan, Italy); Diploma at the competition “Book Image” at the International Book Fair (2010, Moscow, Russia)

In the foreground of the picture [No. 3/13](#), a storyline is developing: the protagonist is sitting on a barrel, which is on a sailing ship, etc. But the sail's canvas has a hole, which opens a passage to something that is happening simultaneously in another world: a battle at night, under the moon. At the same time, on the bottom, the sea continues its life, full of fictionalized fishes that live in that faraway city.

Sometimes, the imagination is more important than reality. Thus, such transitions between the real and the fantastic, between this world and another one create the effect of simultaneity of the past-present-future and of the presence of real and imagined dimensions.

Proceeding this way, one can find such temporal-dimensional transitions in each drawing — [1](#), [2](#), etc. — where they create additional levels of the non-verbal story.

Of course, all this is my own interpretation, and the reader will not necessarily find such elements in the story. Such characters and objects are the fruit of my fantasy. Italo Calvino's fairy tales served for me only as inspiration.

I tried to achieve the maximum expressivity of image in these pencil drawings by using simple tools: I intentionally limited myself to a B2 pencil in order to resist the temptation to use colors or other bright accents. I wanted to achieve vivacity and a picturesque quality in the images through the representation of the inner strength of a given character, without giving this character an external mask but rather playing with the thin gradations of black-gray-white shades.

The drawings were initially planned to be illustrations for a book. However, rather than illustrating a text, as usually occurs, I had to write a story to fit the completed illustrations, as they were not related to a particular text by Calvino. It's a fantastic story, with good and evil, and with a thorough description of the characters and all their details.

Work on this project continued for more than three years (2003-2006). The work has not been published yet as a book, but the series of pictures has appeared in art journals. I imagine the book as a limited edition with high-quality printing and binding; otherwise, the amount of creativity, accuracy, and labor that I invested in this series can be lost. One year after its completion, I wrote an MA thesis based on my study of the fantastic elements in medieval art at the Academy of Brera in Milan. It is a contradicting and inexplicable phenomenon that, while promoting “false” art in studio classes, this academy offers a very serious theoretical and historical approach.

III.7. Interview with Richard Kirk, a visual artist and book illustrator.

Conducted in Dec 2019, the interview has the purpose of exploring the artistic methods of verbal-visual interpretation, the creative process as such, and the art-market relations that may influence the way the books are illustrated.

Kirk's approach presents an alternative (or even opposite) approach to what I suggest with my method of developing verbal-visual stylistic correspondences. This does not mean that Kirk is wrong or right, but rather that his approach is different from mine, and therefore contradicts my views in many ways. This is helpful to know for comparison's sake.

Richard's work stems an interest in the forms and processes of the natural world. He explores these themes through the creation of meticulous drawings in ink, graphite and silverpoint, which often depict chimerical creatures and protean landscapes. Metamorphosis is an underlying theme in all of Richard's work.

Richard exhibits internationally. He has illustrated works by Clive Barker, Christopher Golden, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Thomas Ligotti, China Mieville, the rock band Korn and others.

Richard is the author of the novella *The Lost Machine* (Radiolaria Studios, 2010), the novel *Necessary Monsters* (Resurrection House, Arche Press, 2017), and an illustrated short story collection entitled *Magpie's Ladder* (PS Publications, 2019).

Richard is currently working on a new novel. <https://www.richardakirk.com/>

Q.1: When you begin a new book, where does the impulse come from? How does the idea arise? From a fantastic or pictorial narrative or from your own visual images?

A.1: When I am working on my own books, the text and illustrations usually begin with a strong visual image or images which I'm compelled to explore.³⁴³ For example, my novella, *The Lost Machine* began with the image of a man, surrounded by floating stones, standing in front of an old prison in a wintery landscape. Everything that followed was an effort to interrogate that initial image. I was interested in a certain aesthetic tone; postindustrial, magical, technology subsumed by nature, which itself was a product my upbringing in an industrial town.

Upon reflection on this answer, I would like to point out the important difference between illustrating one's own text and a text by another author. In the former case, the artist has exactly

³⁴³ Interestingly, Calvino says a similar thing in describing how he builds a story; he does it in the chapter on the visibility of the *Lezioni Americane*.

the same images in mind when developing both verbal and visual parts of the book. Even more importantly, he tries (consciously or not) to adjust one to the other: to write a text in such a way that it will convey the primary visual images and adapt the narrative to what he wants to represent visually. At the same time, when making pictures, the creator can follow a ready pathway generated by the ideas communicated verbally. This may be a tricky experience. On the one hand, this situation facilitates or even eliminates the task of intermedial interpretation: every image *is* in the artist's mental gaze from the beginning; what he needs is to match the verbal and the visual domains. It may even seem beneficial when verbal and visual images perfectly match each other. On the other hand, a visual image might then lack the complexity of additional layers of meaning and associations. In other words, the verbal and visual components of a book are diverse in their initial code but, simultaneously, they correspond to each other on many levels (see six *Conceptual* aspects). Such intermedial adaptation can become possible when it is based on a relationship of diversity between the verbal and visual parts. This can happen when a text is created by another mind (a writer), who means to communicate a series of his own images. An illustrator who comes on the scene after the text's creation must now *convert* one medium into another, rather than *represent* his own images by means of narrative and then by means of pictures.

Q.2: What does the *fantastic* mean for you?

A.2: Something of this world but not, something *weird*, liminal or uncanny. It might be a zone where the laws of physics, scale and senses are allowed to be malleable in pursuit of storytelling or image making. I love Symbolist and Surrealist art, and more recently Pop Surrealism, and so-called dark art. In my work I play with scale and protean/chimerical forms. I often allow the more design related elements to interact with the subject.

Such an approach presents an example of the contemporary tendency in book illustration, where artists borrow styles or manners from a particular artistic movement and appropriate them to illustrate texts. Some illustrators “use the style of a particular artist to illustrate a fictional work [...]. This includes the new genre of art books [referred] to as ‘art fantasy’.”

Sandra L. Beckett's chapter "Artistic Allusions in Picturebooks" explores such trends of visual allusions in great detail.

Q.3: How do you develop those initial creative impulses (abstract and undefined) into a series of concrete images? Please comment on the process/steps involved in the materialization of an abstract/virtual idea in the physical item, and on what stands behind the creative process when you are generating fantastic images. What steps do you usually follow to develop a book project in its entirety? (e.g. research on the text or writer, kinds of sketches, relations)

A.3: For illustration work I begin with the text and try not to do too much behind the scenes research. Effectively, I like to work with what the reader has. Scenes are selected and I begin to formulate ideas based on those. I avoid literal interpretations, which risk being a restatement of the writer's words and try to find something that captures what I see as the essence of a scene. Part of the reason for doing this is aesthetic, and part of it is practical. When the book is being designed, it is sometimes challenging to set the illustration in a specific place due to typography or spacing. Having an illustration that isn't locked to a particular, literal interpretation allows the designer greater latitude.

There are several important points here. First, the artist's avoidance of the literal transfer of words into pictures allows him to create visual images that would provoke associative relations and, therefore, grow beyond the narrative. Second, the creation of general (or broader) images inspired by a given novel but that are not necessarily related to specific parts of the text confirms the first intention. However, the third point is a tricky one, as an illustration that is not intended to adapt a particular episode from the story (in this case, *to adapt* does not mean a "literal" transfer), and therefore does not aim to correspond to the rhythmical/emotional/stylistic arrangement of the verbal, can become disconnected from the story because it oversteps the boundary of intermediality. A confirmation of this possibility can be found in the artist's statement that he prefers to read a story in a way as *any* reader does, rather than to approach the verbal in a more profound way that can come from the stages of work on conceptual aspects.

Q.4: You have illustrated many books of different authors. How do you approach the tasks of intermediality: e.g. stylistic correspondences between the verbal and the visual domains, the arrangement of time and space, etc. Do you follow the goal of making your pictures reflect the writer's spirit/genre/literary planes/style? Or conversely, are you looking for texts to illustrate, the style of which would correspond to your artistic style? Or, perhaps, such verbal-visual correspondences are not a priority for your artistic philosophy?

A.4: I've been fortunate to work with editors that know my work fairly well, so the relationship you are talking about is to an extent preexisting. There have been cases where I didn't feel there was a good fit and refused the work. There has to be a good match or I can't produce my best work. In negotiating work I have always requested, and been granted, artistic autonomy. Early in my career, I took some for hire work for a gaming company and it was a bad experience: repeated insistence by an overzealous art director for a degree of historical accuracy in the drawing of a tommy gun that was not necessary. I think that it's critical to have a stylistic point of connection between the image and text.

This basically suggests that the process of intermedial adaptation is intentionally avoided: the artist does not try to adapt his creative language to totally different literary works, searching for different stylistic ways in pictures, but on the contrary, selects and fits texts to his own preexisting style of picture-making. This is also a possible way of approaching the verbal but, in my view, this is a very restrictive approach that prevents one from experiencing improvisation — evocative of Tokarchuk's idea of changing masks. Thus, new artistic approaches that could be stimulated by diverse verbal stylists are excluded.

Q.5: A large number of works is presented on your website; all are highly creative, with great artistic fantasy and perfect craft execution. They all are executed in your unique style. Is it your own choice to create artworks this way? Or, is this the requirement of the market (and/or gallery), necessary for promotional needs?

A.5: Yes, it is my choice. My illustration work comes out of my personal work. It's not market driven. My early influences came from book illustrators and European comic artists such as Jean Giraud. So, the style I work is rooted in the kind of work that excited me in the beginning. I'm not an artistic chameleon in any sense, which is why I have to take jobs that are a good match with skills.

Being "an artistic chameleon", with respect to the method of intermedial adaptation — the philosophical standpoint that I put forward — offers the capability to open one's perceptual ability toward different textual styles, to improvise visually, to change one's masks in a positive Tokarchukian sense and, finally, to create new styles, not being cemented to a single style of pictures. Either way, of course, is the personal preference of each artist.

Q.6: Do you illustrate whatever you like, and then look for publishing possibilities or do you look for a publisher who would want to have their books illustrated in your style? In either case, what consequences does your approach have?

A.6: For my personal projects I work independently and then shop around to a few different publishers I have relationships with. I had a literary agent, but she recently retired. For other projects, the editors tend to contact me with projects they think will be a good fit.

Q.7: If we are considering the latter, to what extent are you satisfied (in the creative sense) with such projects? Do you find them totally creative? Are there any restrictions imposed by the publishing industry?

A.7: As noted above, I have been fortunate enough to have artistic freedom, so the projects are creatively satisfying to me. I prefer to work on my personal project vs working on other author's projects, but the latter can provide a broader audience and help to build a greater community. Many fans of well know authors I've worked with have become collectors of my personal work and book projects as a result, for which I'm grateful.

Q.8: What is your artistic philosophy, in general?

A.8: My philosophy is quite simple; to find and reveal the hidden qualities in my subject. Sometimes it is through the expression of technique, how I use line or composition to highlight aspects that thwart assumptions or expectations in the viewer. This is especially important when rendering things that convention might find unaesthetic (monsters being the obvious example). I try to keep the notion that my art production is at its heart, the creation of objects. Even a two dimensional image created from reproduction in a book is, in the original, an object, a piece of paper covered in ink which shows the hand of the artist. This is why I'm unable to create art digitally. It doesn't have the same resonance with me as handmade work.

This attitude brings us back to the long discussion on the physicality of expression through taction and the balance of invested-received energy.

Q.9: What to depict and how is the individual decision of each artist. What principles do you follow when making your thematic choice for pictures when including some elements at the expense of others?

A.9: I select to challenge myself artistically, where possible. Usually there are certain beats in a story where the illustrations must fall, like water settling in a low area. It just makes sense, its gravity and I try to avoid fighting that because the reader derives a certain satisfaction from this. Occasionally it can be fun to subvert this expectation and create a little dissonance, but for the most part I try to work with the flow of a text.

This is an interesting example of creation on the border between dissonance and resonance, or independence and conformity, between text and image.

Q.10: Some critics assume that illustration, because of being concrete, achieves a single interpretation and can stop the reader's imagination so that the intended story enrichment (illustration) turns into a kind of impoverishment. Once an illustration has been added to a given text, it becomes difficult for the reader to imagine a given character or location differently or less precisely and therefore in a manner endowed

with polysemic potential. Would you comment on why/whether you agree/disagree with this statement?

A.10: I disagree. I think the serious reader forms an internal sense of book characters and aesthetics that are apart from any visual interpretation. Think of Pauline Baynes' illustrations for *Lord of the Rings* compared with John Howe or Alan Lee, or Tolkien's own illustrations for that matter. They are all wonderful, all very different and give a varied interpretation that enhances rather than impoverishes. My own work seeks to capture the spirit of the text, not to cement a notion in the reader's mind to the exclusion of other interpretations.

Interestingly, the artist considers one of my six conceptual aspects: the need to capture and convey the spirit of the text. I am not sure whether the artist's approach includes such considerations, but most probably, from what has been said until now, we can assume that Richard Kirk does not undertake the study of a given literary work in order to identify the genre and the stylistically dominant idea, but rather follows his feeling as a common reader, from which he derives the spirit of the text.

Q.11: The goal of artistic communication is to reach a potential target audience. Who is your reader?

A.11: Those that enjoy a certain kind of visual writing that explores the *weird*, and the natural world. Readers of Mervyn Peake, Brian Catling, Jeff VanderMeer etc.

Q.12: What kind of works have you created and for what type of publishing? Why did you decide to work full-time at Western Libraries and move your art in that specific direction?

A.12: I have never worked full time as an illustrator. My style of work and process is too time consuming to make that practical. I would have had to make compromises, which I feel would have defeated the purpose. The freelance market in Canada does not typically pay well. Most of the work I take comes from US or UK publishers. I've noted elsewhere that the production time on books is very slow. All of these factors

result in a financial uncertainty that for me personally would undermine the creative process.

Q.13: How many books with complex-fantastic pictures have you illustrated and with what frequency? How long does it take you to create a series of such fantastic images for one book? Hypothetically, would you be able to make a living from art if you worked full-time on your pictures?

A.13: I tend to do 1 or 2 books a year, which would be insufficient to earn a living. I have illustrated maybe 16-20 books, some with many illustration, others with only a few. It usually takes several months to complete the drawings as my style tends to be labor intensive stippling or fine ink work with a brush.

Q.14: As for the question of art-market relations, how do you balance the possibility of undertaking creative projects and meeting market demands?

A.14: To a large extent, I block market demands and work independently.

Q.15: How are your relations with galleries? Do you have a long-term agreement that requires you to produce a number of works per year, or something like that?

A.15: The relationships are casual. I have a few galleries that I tend to work with. Exhibiting is expensive and labor intensive. At this point I am content to do a handful of group shows per year. At some point I will do something more extensive but at the moment I tend to work more directly with collectors.

Q.16: What advice would you give to young artists who are planning to on becoming professional artists and trying to make a living with their craft/art skills?

A.16: Be patient. Publishing is an industry that moves at a glacial pace, except when it doesn't. Books can take years. Value your work, but do not be afraid to negotiate. Above all, be professional: provide updates, meet deadlines. Promise low and delivery high. Work on maintaining your relationships. Publishing is built on relationships and editors remember who was easy to work with and who wasn't.

III.8. Stages of word-picture adaptation

When approaching the method of intermedial adaptation, the steps to pursue can be summarised as follows:

- 1) *Artistic surprise*. Attentive reading with a pencil in hand — explained in *how to read a text like an illustrator* — can develop the necessary *artistic truth* in visual images. This would allow an illustrator to improvise on paper and sketch a few short reflections and first impressions (as in the case of the above-cited example of the sketch based on one phrase by Gogol). This is a kind of a continuous flow of visual images and the generation of fresh, unrestricted and unpredictable concepts. In other words, it is fruitful to perceive the verbal associatively, and reproduce such visual associations. Such “short reflections”, being fresher, lead one through improvisation (Tokarchuk’s concept “conduct your self” with the simultaneity of creating and controlling) and are capable of building the artistic core of a future book. These reflections present the most valuable material of an illustrator, as they can grow into a large series that would go beyond the text and book illustrations. This stage is perhaps the most creative part of work associated with the conceptualization of images. What follows would mostly be craft: i.e. to take these impressions and materialize them technically.

At this stage of sketches, it is too early to think about style (that can be developed later).

What is important now can be defined as the creation of a mood proposed by the verbal domain. Mood, impression, imagery — these are abstract notions which can be approached in different ways:

- general composition of pictures: static or in movement, with massive or elegant elements, realistic or stylized, formal or informal choices, rhythms, degree of contrasts, placement and connection of elements, etc.;
- symbolism (or the degree of being symbolic), i.e. thinking associatively, but not going too far from the text;
- the general style of the future visual series; and so forth.

Whatever method or way is followed, every choice or decision should be justified and logically explained (for the artist himself, not for others, while the readers will find their own associations and interpretations).

- 2) *Preparatory stage*. Re-readings should be undertaken as many times as needed in order to develop the conceptual aspects of the work and create piles of sketches that would prepare the necessary basis in the process of accumulating knowledge about the text, the writer's creative context, historical features, the literary methods used to reach one or other effect that has provoked the visualization of the verbal and, therefore, the connections of purely literary features with those sketched "first impressions". In order to do this, one needs to go through the above-cited six conceptual aspects of interpretation. This stage of work, therefore, implies the following tasks:
- an in-depth study of the writer's cultural and social context and history,
 - the study of the environment created by the narrative,
 - the gathering of references,
 - the making of another set of sketches that document such studies (architectural elements, costumes, characters, etc.) — not just copying them but rather adapting to the illustration style.

The final purpose of this step is to combine the knowledge developed from the conceptual aspects with the creative improvisation developed in step 1, and to adjust one to the other.

- 3) *Composition*. The artist must decide which of the above-cited structural aspects should be taken in order to construct the creative/conceptual interpretations, along with projecting the entire book [maquette](#) with the rhythmical structure, layout, number/size of pictures, their content and relations to textual parts, proportions and cover.
- 4) *Formal choices*. The illustrator sketches the formal compositions for each illustration. He decides what to depict, what not to, and how (choosing from the materials developed in the previous steps), how to balance the masses and accents, how to correlate their content and form. My formal sketches are usually full of notes and short descriptions, since this stage of work aims to make decision about what and how will be done.
- 5) *Originals*. The artist sits down and draws the series of illustrations in their final form following a chosen technique and style, one after another, connecting the artistic

impressions from step 1 with the background discovered during step 2, and with the formal compositions developed in step 4.

- 6) *Conclusive*. It is now time to put everything together. The artist inserts the final illustrations into the maquette developed in step 3, sees how all the elements (paratexts) connect with each other, finds a linking element if necessary (for example, a running title or a series of small graphic elements on the margins can function as visual linking elements, so the book looks like an integral object of art). And, finally, the illustrator creates the cover that will summarize the book and give to it the final conclusive look.

Therefore, retracing the steps of word-picture adaptation, and taking apart the existing work according to such steps, can help to analyse a given series of book illustrations and the degree of their relations to the literary work in question.

Conclusion

A general umbrella-question that stands over the present study is about the relation between the verbal and visual narratives within an illustrated book. It has been discussed in detail and presented with concrete examples how and why the reception occurs through the simultaneity of reading and visualizing. These simultaneous acts create a reciprocal exchange of meanings between text and image that produces a third meaning — one which is absent from either the verbal or the visual planes alone (p.55). Sometimes, an idea cannot be fully expressed by only words or by only pictures but requires that the work be verbalized through one's voice and visualized through one's eye at the same time (as in Leonardo's works that include texts and drawings, and in which writing describes an image but simultaneously creates a verbal message on its own, p.55).

Therefore, when arguing about the inseparability of words and pictures within a common book cover, I compare a book to an opera. In an opera, it would be illogical to separate or contrast words and sounds as, taken separately, words and sounds would create 'their own meanings', which would differ from the meaning of the opera as whole.

I, then, move to consider questions such as what the role of the illustrator in a book project is, what the approaches of intermedial interpretation are, and how the implications of making pictures for books are. My argument is developed and supported by an analysis of existing book illustrations, concurrently with an overview of the contemporary market trends and their influence on the way books are created. The result of such investigation has allowed me to build an explanation about the fundamental issue of the nature of an intermedial adaptation. In this sense, illustration as a genre is seen as a kind of language-to-language translation based on stylistic conformity between the work of departure and the work in translation. Therefore word-to-picture translation necessitates the transferring of stylistic features of a given text to the style of pictures that illustrate that text (p.148). This is also related to the discussion of form and content, when the artistic technique itself (used for illustrations) re-builds the style of a text by means of visual language, and therefore shapes new models and meanings which go beyond the verbal narrative. This argument is exemplified by existing works of literary, film, and visual art — when the cultural heritage of a single writer or artist composes diverse works in terms of style and method, requiring the corresponding approach to intermedial interpretations (p.144-

145). In contrast to such stylistic developments, what is normally accepted in the contemporary trends is a focus on market expectations that demand the repetition of a given artist's style regardless of the stylistic features of a text being illustrated (p.139-141). As a result of such trends, the illustrator tends to translate into images only the plot but stylistic nonconformity between text and pictures remains.

In order to develop such stylistic verbal-visual conformity in book illustrations, I suggest the elaboration of relations on six levels: 1) the correlation of different time categories in pictures, 2) the rhythmical organization of narrative and pictures, 3) the symbolism of both verbal and visual narrative, 4) the different levels of narration within a given narrative, 5) the range and level of details, 6) the genre or what I would call the "spirit of a text" (p.160-181).

The problematics of creating such relations between the verbal and visual realms make half of the purpose in bookmaking practice. The second half concerns the issue of how the illustration is perceived when it accompanies a fictional text, and what the reading process implies when it comes to interacting with illustrated books.

Although post-structuralists have challenged the opposition between the verbal and the visual, and while this opposition still remains (see quotation on p. 54, from Elliott's *Novels, Films, and the Word/Image Wars*), I argue that the relationship between the verbal and the visual is essentially not one of contrast but one of alterity. It is my contention that, if we put these two "others" in opposition, we betray the essence of an illustrated book.

When images are seen as semiotic system, we can think of two analogies: numbers vs words (when each letter of the alphabet corresponds to a number), and images vs words. If we replace numbers with images (when images have meaning, but numbers don't), then we realize that what links images and words is invisible and not verbalizable. If we verbalize an image, the alterity between the verbal and the visual pulls towards the words. If we visualize words, the alterity between them pulls towards the pictures. In both cases one is prioritized at the expense of the other. When trying to understand what exactly happens in the adaptation of one medium into another, the question that needs to be raised is how do we keep avoiding prioritizing the verbal over the visual or vice versa?

Going back to the observation that an illustration can sometimes turn into a kind of impoverishment of the verbal text because it becomes difficult for the reader to imagine a given character in ways that differ from its visual depiction (see p.65) — this is true to a certain

extent, when we have to identify words by pictures. One of the best examples is Doré's pictures for *Don Quixote*, a character that could not be imagined differently from how it is presented by Doré. This happens because, in the process of reading, we are stuck with identifying the verbal descriptions with the images which tend to replace the verbal: because the etchings by Doré are so powerful, all the illustrated verbal contents are "seen" exclusively and automatically through the visual translation of this eminent illustrator. And, of course, in this case, the reader expects pictures to be animated and faithful to the verbal source. But this kind of reading may cause a block to the reader's imagination. On the other hand, when processing illustrations professionally, we grant, for example, that Gogol's characters may not look like their visual representations in Yakutovich's pictures. Otherwise, if we did not raise this doubt, the processing of both verbal text and pictures would be very limited: readers would assume the truth and accuracy of an illustration through an act of faith similar to that which causes one to believe in the icon of a saint. Book illustrations are not icons; we are not necessarily going to believe literally in what they represent, but we can rather compare them with their verbal source in order to take something more out of them. Through this comparison the meaning of the verbal source is augmented and expanded. In the case of illustrations for *Le città invisibili*, we can see how they cross this boundary of comparison at least by representing the invisible through iconic images which do not translate visually the verbal descriptions but create new visual descriptions. Because such illustrations do not aim at corresponding faithfully to the verbal (in contrast to Yakutovich's approach to creating pictures for Gogol's text), the reader has the opportunity to process these images through stylistic parallelism rather than identification.

Therefore, the fundamental concept view that I have developed is that, when reading a book with pictures, we are not identifying one through another, images with words, but rather comparing their stylistic aspects on several levels (six conceptual aspects).

When analyzing culture industry (or popular culture), Adorno³⁴⁴ contends that the purpose of such culture (literature, films, books, etc.) encourage reader's identification (with a hero, with a beautiful character, etc.). Defamiliarization or *ostranenie* (after Shklovsky) disappears, since it contradicts the principle of identification. This means that in modernity, there is a very

³⁴⁴ [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/)

clear opposition between popular culture, which aims at eliciting identification, and high art that strives to produce defamiliarization.

In Gogol and Calvino, defamiliarization is clearly central, as they are both striving to achieve originality rather than to write conventional or formulaic literature, despite the presence of realistic characters or descriptions, at least in Gogol's work. Here, my contention is that in reading illustrations for the works by Gogol and Calvino under examination by identifying these illustrations with the text, or by identifying the text with the illustrations themselves, we run the risk of normalizing the defamiliarizing aspects of these two authors' writing style. Thus, I would suggest that in case like this a reader is supposed to process the illustrations against the text rather than through identification with it.

Benjamin says that an image is the end of imagination but, in my view, an image at the same time can also initiate an imaginative process. Illustrations can go against what they illustrate since they may fix a certain verbal content, thereby ignoring or denying areas of ambiguity created by/through words. At the same time, though, illustrations create their own forms of visual ambiguity. The case of ekphrasis should be mentioned as a verbal description of a visual object always brings to the surface the constitutive difference and the different semiotic potential of words and images, respectively.

This does not contradict my entire thesis, as it may seem, but in fact supports my arguments. In order to deal with the verbal story, the illustrations have to create their own visual narrative, one that goes beyond the verbal; verbal and visual narratives alternate, creating an interplay characterized by the co-existence of two seemingly contrasting phenomena, dependence (of the visual narrative in reference to the verbal narrative) and reciprocal autonomy. The question is what are we readers supposed to do? Children books create a familiarity with the images (e.g. John Tenniel's illustrations for *Alice's Adventures*, which became canonical), when such books with illustrations pass from generation to generation of kids.

Calvino calls his cities invisible, which means that illustrations would miss the point when applied to them. Calvino's cities are constructed in such a way as to suggest that they are conceivable (i.e., they are possible) but not fully imageable through illustrations. In other words, Calvino's cities posit a gap between that which is conceivable and that which is imageable.

Only by recognizing the struggle between the verbal and the visual, will we be able to imagine a new theory of illustration, in which pictures bring to life something that was invisible in the verbal text. So, an illustration has a double nature: on the one hand, it is a form of visual art that presents the verbal story through concrete images, but on the other hand, it strives to represent the invisible or which is only verbally representable. Both Gogol's abstract-pictorial descriptions and Calvino's invisible cities provide examples of non-translatibility of the verbal into visual images. This, however, does not prevent them from being illustrated through stylistic verbal-visual conformity. It brings us back to the argument that "verbal texts and visual pictures convey messages with totally different meanings" (Lund, 37) when their relations are built according to three principles: combination, integration, and transformation (p.57).

It is important to take into consideration such relationships, otherwise an illustrated book would be read through comparison and identification between verbal and visual images rather than through the complex correspondence between visualising the verbal and then verbalising the resulting visual illustration. Simultaneity of seeing and reading occurs, when the mind is capable of following two perceptual streams at the same time, thus building an image of the illustrated book as one whole. This way of reading allows to avoid mere comparison and analogical thinking.

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