CONFIGURATIVE RHETORIC:

THE ROLE OF AESTHETIC DESIGN IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

BY

AMY DOLORES DALZELL, MAIS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major Subject: RHETORIC AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

New Mexico State University

Las Cruces, New Mexico

August 2014

UMI Number: 3582401

UMI 3582401

"Configurative Rhetoric: The Role of Aesthetic Design in Professional Communication," a dissertation prepared by Amy Dolores Dalzell in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, has been approved by the following:

Loui Reyes
Dean *ad interim* Graduate School

Mónica Torres
Chair of Examining Committee

07/24/14

Date

Committee in Charge:

Dr. Mónica Torres, Chair

Dr. Christopher Burnham

Dr. Jennifer Sheppard

Dr. Stephanie Taylor

# DEDICATION

*To the memory of C. H. Imera, my mentor in both aesthetics and academics.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My first acknowledgement would be not so much of a 'whom' as a 'where.'

Growing up outside of New York City, beginning from the age of about three, I

commuted into the city with my father, and spent my formative years in screening

and editing rooms, surrounded by carpeted walls and six-foot projectors hidden

behind interior windows, in places like Magno Sound and Paul Killiam Studios. Thus,

I came away with a keen sense of culture as a collection of humanly generated, and

neatly arranged, multi-faceted micro-environments in a truly Olmsted-esque sense.

I rediscovered this early impression in college under the tutelage of painter Mark

Perlman (http://www.markperlman.net/) who had the magical Taoist 'knack' of

bringing out the best in whatever was already apparent in his students' work, as

opposed to imposing his own style. As a result, his students produced a wide variety

of visual approaches with an enthusiastic sense of themselves in their work.

The next acknowledgement would be the late Dr. David L. Hall, a Continental

philosopher steeped in Eastern aesthetic culture, who devoted much of his work to

using that familiarity as a lens to critique the cultural assumptions and priorities of the

West. His attempts to create a cross-cultural connection between the two

philosophical polarities are culturally significant in a global sense with particular

relevance to technical writing and Cultural Studies.

Others to be mentioned, who were also lowly graduate students at the time, are

Sana Shelton Clason, who more than once kept me from flying off the handle in a fit

of pique, as is sometimes my wont, and Sipai Klein, who has almost as oblique a take

on the cultural role of rhetoric as, some would say, I have – his involving various combinations of science and poetry.

My son, Christopher, also falls into this category, helping with the plebian tasks of proofreading and revision, but also stopping me from throwing the computer out the window on more than one occasion.

My dissertation committee has, as seems to be the norm, evolved over time. I thank Dr. Christine Eber for initially coming on board, and I also thank Dr. Stephanie Taylor for stepping in when Dr. Eber retired. I thank both Dr. Chris Burnham and Dr. Jennifer Sheppard for agreeing to escort into the academic world something of a maverick through the dissertation process.

I am most indebted to Dr. Mónica Torres who must have initially thought that I was spinning off into the middle of nowhere with my attempts to conjoin verbal forms of communication with visual/spatial concerns. My sincere hope is that this collaboration will provide direction for both professional communicators on the academic side of the campus as well as for conceptual artists seeking to create and present their own individual works to a wider audience.

# VITA

| 1989 | BFA in Painting, University of Texas at El Paso |
| 1993 | MAIS Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Texas at El Paso |
| 2004 - 2009 | Graduate Assistant, English Department, New Mexico State University |
| 2004 – 2006 | Writing Center Associate, New Mexico State University |
| 2008 – 2009 | Coordinator ENGL 211 Writing in the Humanities and Social Sciences |
| 2009 – 2014 | Adjunct Faculty, Department of English, New Mexico State University |

## SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Dalzell (2006). *Frameworks: Images of design.* In S. Brown & C. Nims (Eds.) *Paideia 9: Gateways to English 111 at New Mexico State University.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Clason, S.S. & Dalzell, A., Ford, C. & Klein, S. (Eds.) (2007). *Paideia 10: Gateways to English 111 at New Mexico State University.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Thatcher B., Barrantes, E., Dalzell, A., Dong, Q., Ford, C., Gallagher, R., *et al.* (2007) Web site analysis across cultures: An inquiry into Intercultural values and web site design. In K. Amant (Ed.) *Linguistic and cultural online communication issues in the global age* (pp. 124 – 142). Hershey: Information Science Reference.

Clason, S.S. & Dalzell, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Paideia 11: Gateways to English 111, Rhetoric & Communication at New Mexico State University.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co.

## FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Rhetoric and Professional Communication

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF AESTHETIC DESIGN IN RHETORIC & PROFESSIONAL

COMMUNICATION

This study involves conducting a rhetorically configurative analysis of an

architectural interior, where 'configurative' is defined as a set of visual/spatial

interrelations perceived within a given context or framework. Specifically, the

purpose of this project is to re-animate not only awareness of context, but also the

imagination in its role in the creation of human significance in designing spaces.

Technological changes in communication directly affect the relevance of rhetoric

to the development and continuation of culture. Shifts in rhetorical modalities,

therefore, may eventually constitute cross-cultural transitions in sharing experiences.

Thus, to maintain continuity of meaning, it becomes incumbent on professional

communicators to develop a working familiarity with contemporary socio-cultural

changes, particularly those changes that involve a transition from one form of

communicative form to another

According to rhetorician Ernest Grassi (1980, 1994) culture itself is rhetorical, i.e.,

a by-product of the human need for the psyche to achieve and, more importantly, to

*share* meaning. For Grassi, this adaptation of nature involves a metaphoric transfer of

meaning from inner understanding onto the physical world. To do this, however,

there must be some means, some venue, available to create a common connection

between the two realms.

Language has been such a venue, and, print, until recently in the West, has been the predominant communicative modality for the maintenance and transmission of culture. One cultural consequence of this adaptation is that written/printed communications deliberately hold form constant so as not to interfere with the transparent dissemination of information, as content. Electronic modalities, however, complicate this cultural communicative assumption in that: (1) virtual form can no longer be routinely subordinated to content, and (2) 'knowledge' when experienced as simultaneous pattern need not be distanced and 'provable' to be valid,

Grassi's understanding of metaphor as the link between rhetoric and culture (1980, 1994), in effect, characterizes metaphor as a hybrid communicative form that bridges the gap between rational/linguistic and aesthetic/configurative forms via human ingenuity. This approach has been explored on the linguistic/rhetorical side as generative criticism (Foss, 2004) where the researcher must create and/or design/construct a singular critical framework through which to interpret an unusual artifact. On the aesthetic/rhetorical side, however, Bauhaus artist Wassily Kandinsky's analytical drawing process and correspondence color theory practicably elucidate design as a communicative system (Poling 1986).

This proposed visual/spatial analysis of the interior the lobby of the rotunda of Skeen hall is intended to depict an architectural interior as schematized space that will illustrate the processing inherent to Grassi's imagistic first principles, i.e., the *archai*, remnants of a primordial language (Grassi, 1994) where deductive reasoning finds its source, but that cannot, in and of themselves, be discovered via deduction (Grassi,

1980). In this view, the *archai* represent the collective sources of *ingenium* which

allow humans to overcome their alienation from nature through the figurative

development of human meaning that the rawness of the natural world alone cannot

provide.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES

# LIST OF TABLES

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### The Problem of 'Meaning'

*...we don't know what we think until we see what we say...* (Geertz, 1973, p. 77).

Rhetoric, defined as discourse shaped as a requirement of the human psyche for the achievement and sharing of meaning (Grassi, 1980), must, like mythology, continually be adapted to changes in socio-cultural ordering. Technological changes in communication, therefore, as part of that ordering, directly affect the relevance of rhetoric to the development and continuation of culture. Furthermore, shifts in rhetorical modalities, may, over time, come to constitute cross-cultural transitions, from older to newer means for sharing experience that, in turn, generate significant changes in human understandings and behaviors. Thus, it is incumbent on professional communicators, as purveyors of communal meaning, to develop and maintain a working familiarity with the ramifications of technological change.

### Extra-Verbal Modalities

All modes of communication are comprised of form and content, and form is never neutral in its relation to the transmission of content. While this may be obvious when looking at a painted portrait or a photograph, it may be less so with other more commonly utilized, and therefore less scrutinized, arrangements of meaning. Cultures produce, and are reproduced by shared communicative practices (Ong, 2000). For example, in the post-Renaissance West, the written, then printed, word came to

1

replace the oral/visual world-view of the Medieval Church, eventually becoming the predominant transmitter of cultural meaning.

The written 'word.' however, as with any other communicative mode, is not a neutral medium (Derrida, 1976). It carries with it certain inherent assumptions, both as content and form. Some commonly acknowledged consequences of the transition from medieval to modern Western culture involve a wider dissemination of knowledge to greater numbers of people, the development of realism in the arts, and the Reformation of the Church.

While written traditions excel at storing recorded data for future generations, thus reducing reliance on individual memory and/or cultural ritual in the maintenance of communication, mechanized print, as a socially weighted form, in many ways fosters an *abstracted* culture (Grassi, 1994) wherein events are routinely experienced, or mentally processed, as being separate from their original contexts (Shlain, 1998). Linguistic 'meaning' need not rhyme, or correlate itself with the seasons of the year, nor be sought after in sacred places. In general, it could be said that oral traditions highlight communal participation in the creation of immanent meaning, while written cultures place greater emphasis on the individual assessment of transcendent (Hall & Ames, 1987) significance based on redacted and/or coded (Goss, 1989) communications.

Moreover, written composition as prose, i.e., communication organized into sentences and paragraphs, is designed to be an *ipso-facto* information-delivery system in which the structure of the language itself is held constant so as not to interfere with

2

the transmission of 'meaning,' tacitly denoted as *content*. As such, print obscures any conscious awareness of the *arrangement* of contributory signifiers within the communicative system (i.e., the elements of which, in the case of language, being words) in the construction of meaning. Thus, language, is not commonly recognized as a closed system of communication (Derrida, 1976), that, as such, tends to organize random experience according to the patterns of its own topography or syntax. As a weighted medium, it therefore, eliminates, or renders practicably invisible, those form(at)s that do not conform to its own implicit shape (Whorf, 1964). In most English composition classes, intrusion by the language into the delivery of content is considered 'bad' writing, i.e., 'unclear,' or making the reader 'work for' access to meaning.

Of course, language does not necessarily need to exclusively promote content, nor promote information at the expense of form. Poetry, in particular, as a lyrical medium (i.e., along with music), tends to equate form with, or even privilege form over content, but poetry has not been the central communicative modality in the development of modern Western culture. A few adventuresome souls, however, have endeavored to insert other, non-linguistic, meanings into the context of standard prose. Edward Soja in the introduction to *Thirdspace* (1996) characterizes Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (1991) as "arguably the most important book ever written about the social and historical significance of human spatiality and the particular powers of the spatial imagination," but also states that the work is difficult to understand

because of its "meandering, idiosyncratic, and wholesomely anarchic style" (p. 8).

Soja then goes on to comment:

> ,,,I realized that he [Lefebvre] may not have intended *the Production of Space* to read as a conventional academic text, with arguments developed in a neat linear sequence from beginning to middle to end. Taking a clue from Jorge Luis Borges, who in his short story, "The Aleph," expressed his despair in writing about the simultaneities of space in such a linear fashion...I began to think that perhaps Lefebvre was presenting *The Production of Space* as a musical composition, with a multiplicity of instruments and voices playing together at the same time. (pp. 8, 9)

Choosing a musical template to organize a text, while unorthodox within a conventional academic context, in a larger sense, may serve to open up possibilities for introducing different structural modalities into scholarly discourses, which will necessarily challenge the hegemony of linguistic syntax and rational argumentation as culturally weighted modes of communication. It could be argued that one consequence of the socio-cultural focus on content at the expense of the consideration of form has been to restrict the role of the "spatial or geographic imaginations" (Soja, 1996, p. 2) in actively shaping and sharing experience, something more commonly recognized in pre-alphabetic cultures (Shlain, 1998).

Similarly, the rational concerns of the Enlightenment emphasized the detachment of explanation based on scientific analysis and replicat-able evidence as means to ascertain universal knowledge, i.e., knowledge that remains 'true' under all circumstances, that, by definition, is insulated from cultural, ephemeral, fluctuations. As a result, there has been a post-Renaissance tendency to reify print as accurately portraying things in space in reference to an objective reality existing outside of any semiotic structure. Understood as having the ability to denote meaning beyond itself,

written language as transparent medium obscures any concurrent understanding of

information given as having been previously formatted to conform to any particular,

and necessarily limited, perspective. Hence, the relatively recent cultural focus on

print has reduced the significance of rhetoric as the originary (Grassi, 1994) medium

for shaping meaning because of the relative de-emphasis on participatory forms of

communication and the corresponding privileging of coded text targeted for absent

readers.

Such mechanistic sorts of thinking tend to validate deductive reasoning and

scientific methodologies as acceptable communicative strategies while

simultaneously discounting holistic performance and creativity as also representing

credible forms of human response. Causal analysis applied as ordering schema for

extracting meaning from experience has come to exemplify Western academic culture

(Shlain, 1998). The vision of the shaman, or even the pageantry of the medieval

clergy, has been largely replaced by replicate-able evidences as the predominant

means for apprehending meaning. From a structural perspective, this adaptation

involves two shaping processes: (1) cause leading to effect, which in time becomes a

new 'cause,' (etc.) and (2) analysis involving the dissection of wholes into parts for

causal analysis that limits the awareness of spontaneity as intuitive response.

Moreover, the process of decoding abstracted information (Goss, 1989) is a largely

a-contextual one, being relatively indifferent to changes of setting. As a result,

individuals socialized to a written tradition may tend to be less aware of, and

therefore less responsive to, the immediate physical presence of the environment they

5

inhabit than are those reared in cultures where communication systems are more

participatory (Ong 2000). Thus, modern-Western culture has come to be organized

around the belief in the 'transparency' of print as the predominant communicative

mode, i.e., the accepted experiential frame, to ascertain meaning. Anthropologist

Edward Hall (1981) quotes linguist Edward Sapir (19 31, p 578) in this regard.

> The relation between language and experience is often misunderstood...[it]
> actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and
> because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations onto the field of
> experience...[C]ategories such as number, gender, case, tense, mode,
> voice, "aspect" and a host of others...*are not so much discovered in experience as
> imposed upon it*...[italics added by Hall]. (2000, p. 15)

This application of a linguistic template as meaning-making has resulted in the

complementary belief that texts contain some sort of omnipresent 'Truth' (Haraway's

"god-trick," 1991, p. 189) excepted from humanly-constructed understandings of the

world. This notion is currently being challenged by more recent, and definitely more

muddied, assertions made by the acknowledgement of a post-Modernist multiplicity

of 'truths' and de-centered perspectives (Derrida, 1970).

The paradigmatic instance of this misconception, even if it has since been deemed

as largely mythical, and therefore rhetorical, is the popular images from Vietnam

aired on American television and popular magazines in the 1960s, television at the

time being a relatively new, "synchronized" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 36)

communicative medium. The general public response was one of shock, disbelief,

and, in many cases, instant political radicalization over the indicated moral infractions

against humanity. The operative question, however, is *why* anyone was shocked. The

same people who uncritically supported the war until then, presumably, had read the

daily newspaper accounts of the casualties. They must have known intellectually that

war is a horrific thing; but they also read and ascribed to the *rationales* that

accompanied the given information. Apparently, there was nothing significantly

compelling in the encoded and, therefore, distanced narrative to override the

accompanying ideological explanations also provided. The faculty of sight was

required to register the severity of the atrocity. In this instance, it could be argued that

reasoning, in the form of the imposition of such opaque linguistic categories as

'patriotism' 'force' and/or 'terrorism' upon experience *interfered* with understanding,

or at least with attuned awareness (Graham, 1985) of actual circumstance.

Objection to the linguistic application of generalized categories onto experiential

particulars is not new. Aldous Huxley, writing during the lead up to the Second

World War, observed that public discourse was being consciously manipulated to

mask the reality of, or, at least, how the public came to think about, war. As he

observes:

> Reality is a succession of concrete and particular situations. When we think
> about such situations we should use the particular and concrete words that apply to
> them. If we use abstract words which apply equally well (or equally badly) to
> other, quite dissimilar situations, it is certain that we will think incorrectly.
> Let us…translate the abstract word *force* into language that will render
> (however inadequately) the concrete and particular realities of contemporary
> warfare. "You cannot have international justice, unless you are prepared to impose
> it by force." Translated, this becomes: "You cannot have international justice
> unless you are prepared…to drop thermite, high explosives and vesicants upon
> inhabitants of foreign cities and to have thermite, high explosives, and vesicants
> dropped in return upon the inhabitants of your cities."…The Allies are reaping in
> Nazi Germany what they sowed at Versailles. (1985, p. 693)

In *The Greening of America* (1970), Charles Reich also discusses this seemingly

socio-cultural unresponsiveness to immediate experience:

> ... [L]et us borrow some thinking from Marshall McLuhan. A young boy asks his father, "What do you do, Daddy?" Here is how the father *might* answer: I struggle with crowds, traffic jams, and parking problems for about an hour. I talk a great deal on the telephone to people I hardly know...I eat lunch in a big hurry and can't taste or remember what I've eaten. I hurry, hurry, hurry...and I never look at the weather or sky or people passing by. I talk but I don't sing or dance or touch people...." Now this same father might also answer: "I am a lawyer. I help people and businesses to solve their problems. I help everybody to know the rules that we all have to live by, and to get along according to these rules. Both answers are "true." Why is the first truth less *recognized* [my emphasis] than the second?
>
> McLuhan's answer is that the medium itself tends to be overlooked because it has no *content*. A light bulb has no content. The *content* of the father's day is being a lawyer, the purpose of his activity. The medium, however, is the father's actual activities during the day. And...the medium is the message, although we don't know it. (p. 181)

Based on the two above examples, each taken from the mid-twentieth century

when rapid innovation in communication was creating heightened public awareness

of the accelerating pace of techno-cultural change, it would seem that the connection

between language as an effective medium for ascertaining meaning, and sharing the

qualitative significance of experiences is a rather tenuous one.

However, it should be noted that in terms of any cross-cultural transition from one

communicative modality to another, it is understandably difficult to recognize the

underpinnings of a learned and familiar medium in the absence of exposure to a

differently situated strategy supported by another set of assumptions (Thatcher, *et al*,

2007). Thus, if encoded texts carry their own implicit structure that is allowed,

through repetition, to tacitly determine experience (Whorf, 1964), then it could be

argued that the cultural weight of print, as a communicative system (Derrida, 1976),

necessarily, precludes other possible orderings from being considered. Other significant arrangements, such as those emphasized in the arts, are not generally included in linguistically dominated discourses. Images, non-linear designs and even practical constructs like graphs and charts are currently routinely read as separate modalities from, or as supplements to, texts and are structurally excluded from integration into print, thus inhibiting any significant, and potentially fruitful, cross-cultural overlap.

An alternative, however, is to read these differently ordered semiotic realms as *self-referential* in terms of their own discrete internal dynamics. If each were to be recognized as its own unique sample of ordering, in the absence of any requisite reference to explanation and/or chronology [See Grassi's discussion of Cassandra, 1980, Chapter Two.], then their structural similitude, via analogy, might be allowed to come forward and be recognized. If each of these originary (Grassi, 1994) patterns were then allowed to be interpreted as participating in a holistic arrangement with other similar, yet unique, forms the recognition of their shared interconnections might then allow for an imaginative cross-over of meaning, apart from any linguistic pre-structuring.

Like observing the reflective, self-contained, clarity of soap bubbles floating at random in air, each complete form reiterates the shape of the others, while simultaneously maintaining its own structural integrity as unique mirrored element in space. A slight shift in focus from anchored content to collective form and the internal dynamics among objects in space may facilitate increased flexibility in

9

communication, and may also flag, i.e., make visible, common linguistic traps, such

as arbitrary binaries (Soja, 1996) and labels (Goodman, 1976).

Apart from simply complicating the 'transparency' of print, current changes in

communication practices may also offer the possibility of restoring the original

creative, performative, or even theatrical aspects of rhetoric, i.e., as a form of

*designed* interaction for sharing experience. Certain aspects of Aristotle's five canons,

such as memory and delivery that have fallen into relative obscurity under the

hegemony of print may now receive new inspiration from the transition to

communicative modes.

Furthermore, these current changes in predominant media may lend renewed

credence to rhetorician Ernesto Grassi's claim (1980) that the *imaginative* aspects of

rhetoric as the tacit expression of human meaning have and will continue to provide

the basis for the generation and maintenance of culture.

*Form as Content*

As McLuhan & Fiore (1967) noted after the advent of television in mid–twentieth

century Western culture, forms of human communication necessarily affect, i.e.,

shape or format, the transmission of content; indicating that content cannot

legitimately be separated from form in the creation of meaning. As they observe:

> Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men
> communicate than by the content of that communication...print technology
> fostered and encouraged a fragmenting process, a process of specialism
> and detachment. Electric technology fosters and encourages unification and
> involvement. It is impossible to understand social and cultural changes without a
> knowledge of the workings of the media. (p. 8)

One consequence of the current transition from print to electronic media is that increased emphasis on "synchronized" (McLuhan & Fiore, p. 36) and/or participatory forms of communication, in which the audience is allowed to engage in the development of meaning, lessens the importance of the controlled (Barthes, 2004), sequential character of written information (Ong, 2000). Content becomes less of a concern relative to visual/spatial issues of formatting, proximity, and context; this shift in communication contrasts definitively with the linear structuring, and passive reception (Porter, 1972) characteristic of modern print-based culture.

However, the above appraisal of media's effects on communication was not universally accepted in 1967, and has not been since by rhetoricians who continue to privilege content over form in meaning-making. For instance, Kenneth Burke (1972) objects to the rejection of "content analysis" in favor of critique of form as an "oversimplification" (p. 169), claiming that it "lends itself readily to caricature" (p. 170), and offers the following case in point:

> Primus rushes up to his friend Secundus, shouting, and "I have a drastic message for you. It's about your worst enemy. He is armed and raging and is -"
> Whereupon Secundus interrupts: "Please! Let's get down to business. Who cares about the content of the message? My lad, hasn't McLuhan made it clear to you? The *medium* is the message. (p. 170)

Although, Burke (1966) himself identifies non-verbal forms of communication as legitimate forms of rhetoric and/or symbolic action, part of the challenge in equating form with meaning, especially for those concerned primarily with the textual analysis of print, may be that this proposed proximity represents an explicit acknowledgement of an implicit socio-cultural transition rooted in technological change that began over

11

a century ago – a transition into an electronic age moving away from verbal/written

texts as the weighted form of cultural discourse toward other more spatial/visual

and/or participatory formats which Ong (2000) designates as a "secondary orality"

(p. 3), in that it represents a combination of both orality and literacy. This

hybridization may be characterized as a post-print based culture, consisting of highly

imagistic forms of communication. This Ong distinguishes from primary oralities that

are "totally untouched by any knowledge of writing or print" (p. 11). As Leonard

Schlain (1996) points out, "Most involved in the debate are unwilling to consider that

in the age of the image, [print-based] literacy will inevitably decline" (p. 414), and

that, in times of cultural transition, it becomes necessary to master new

communication skills as well as recognizing the necessity of de-emphasizing the

assumptions underpinning the previously accepted normative formats (Cordell &

Plog, 1979).

*Text as Medium*

Technological change, however, may not be leading humanity into entirely

unfamiliar territory when it comes to meaning-making. As Ong (2000) has described,

the transition from an oral to a written- and then to a print-based culture involved a

perceptual shift in thinking from "magic to science" (p. 28), in which the arrangement

of oral components based primarily on associative memory came to be systemically

replaced by "analytic...linear sequences" (p. 57) imposed upon the immanent tumult

of experience through the repeated application of grammatical syntax. This change in

modality enabled the establishment of lineal sequencing as the primary means of

cultural ordering, eventually becoming the experiential frame, or spatial schema, that shapes the apprehension of meaning according to the structure (or the "'structurality' of structure," Derrida, 1970, pp. 223-224) of its own intrinsic form. Any format held constant by the medium that conveys it, such as, say, the current western architectural reliance on repeated rectangles as integral to organizing the immediate environment, essentially fades from consciousness through habituation and becomes a communicative 'given.'

Thus, within literate cultures, emphasis on conventional prose to convey information has come to organize lived experience according to its own shape, as cookie cutter to dough, largely negating the more lyrical, and intuitive associations common to the communicative practices characterizing pre-literate cultures. Moreover, the repetitiousness of print affects understanding *prior* to the conscious processing of specific content (Doumont, 2002), on a largely subliminal level, i.e., "as water to fish" (McLuhan & Fiore p. 22) and, therefore, may elude the conscious awareness of the reader.

Ong (2000) and Porter (1972) echo McLuhan and Fiore (1967) in claiming that reliance on written texts limits awareness of contextual proximity and distances the *rhetor* from the readers (and vice versa), as well as emphasizing an hyper-individualized, internally-constructed, 'reality' over any sense of inter-connectedness with the external community and/or habitable environment. "Writing and reading are solo activities...They engage the psyche in strenuous, interiorized, individual thought

13

of a type inaccessible to oral folk" (Ong, 2000, p. 150). For Ong and for Porter, it is

this isolated, internalized form of communication that exemplifies print culture.

Moreover, the encoding and decoding of printed texts is essentially a simplifying

process, an abstraction (Goss, 1989), wherein lived experiences are converted into

mental spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, the formatting specific to printed prose acts as

generalized filter to process specific circumstances, and through holding form

constant, minimizes awareness of the constructed character of the language, thus,

allowing the content to come through presumably undistorted (Derrida, 1976).

The abstract character of text is emphasized by Shlain (1998):

> An alphabet by definition consists of fewer than thirty meaningless symbols that
> do not represent the images of anything in particular; a feature that makes them
> *abstract*. Although some groupings of words can be grasped in an *all-at-once*
> manner, in the main, the comprehension of written words emerges in a *one-at-time*
> fashion. (p. 5)

.

This sequential modality of "human information processing" (Goss, 1989, p. 5) is

challenged by the current emphasis on the need to comprehend multi-modalities and

interconnections in media over and above the delivery of artificially de-

contextualized content. As MacLuhan & Fiore (1967) put it, "'[o]ur electronically

configured world has forced us to move from a habit of data collection to the mode of

pattern recognition." This "allatonceness" (p. 63), in which every element must be , to

be understood, read equally and simultaneously, not only changes communications

*per se* but also affects how the mind processes that information (Goss, 1989).

As linguist George Lakoff puts it: "I do mean changing brains. Because all

thought is physical, carried out by neural circuitry, every change in how we

understand anything is a brain change" (2013). Thus, technical changes in the macro-environment of culture initiate corresponding changes in the micro-environment of human consciousness.

Sequential processing in human perception is by no means a universal assumption. Perceptual psychologist Rudolph Arnheim (1974) notes that "a purely one-dimensional performance seems not to be realizable for the normal human mind…a single animated dot moving on an empty screen…is *perceived* [my emphasis] as acting in full space and in relation to that space" (p. 219). This inter-relativity of figure to ground thus allows for the construction of meaning via arrangement of meaningful patterns, thus creating significance within the overall structure. In other words, in visual/spatial terms, the mind does not separate the figure (visual) from the ground (spatial), but reads both as complementary parts of one complete whole.

A demonstrable consequence of a lack of this holistic awareness is the arbitrary separation of the figure from the ground integral to print as a low-context communicative strategy, in which the specific configuration of meaning becomes perceptibly invisible through coded reference to extrinsic experience, i.e., where meaning is thought to be located *outside* the lineal formatting. When the focus is entirely on the code (black 'positive' on white 'negative'), the ground (the *"empty space,"* McWade, 2003, p. 61) is more or less forgotten and loses its significance in contributing to meaning and is, therefore, left entirely out of the communicative process; hence, the ubiquitous (and extremely revealing in terms of understanding current academic notions of human perception) phrase 'white space,' commonly used

in texts on web page-design. (Although, recently, some manuals have begun including the phrase 'black space,' as well, to indicate the positive coded elements, McWade, 2003).

The problem here is that the potentially meaningful intersection among positive and negative elements, figure and ground, is lost, for, if the positive space happens to be printed on a brown paper bag, the *negative* space then becomes, *ipso facto*, 'brown space,' an immanent circumstance that may be significant to the relative arrangement of the constituent elements as a whole. Thus, within a low context, sequential-ized format, this change in the particularity of instance is precluded from participation in the overall meaning because the reader is structurally prevented from being aware of it.

The effects of print-based separation of form/content from context in perception can be observed in any beginning art class. Most beginning students given a basic line-problem, say the task of creating an effective design through both repetition and variation of elements using only vertical straight lines within a given space, will quickly recognize that they can create interest by varying the length and width of the lines themselves. Far fewer, unless the instructor specifically suggests it to them, will think of varying the *spaces-in-between* the lines as also being a design element [See Chapter Four.]. This lack of awareness of spatiality as meaning becomes problematic, and is often unaddressed, when those involved in creating hybrid forms of literacy attempt to incorporate extra-verbal elements into rhetorical practice. Consequently, the linear structure of written text and the presumably universalized, and/or de-

16

contextualized, content of reasoned argument are nearly always given precedence, consciously or unconsciously, over the multi-modality of significant configurations. Here, the weighted-ness of verbal sequential ordering and extrinsic reference conflict with any awareness of visual/spatial inter-connections that might be recognized in their absence.

Moreover, extra-verbal forms of literacy are both necessary for and necessitated by the creation of multiple self-contained structures that require no external referent to be meaningful. In visual/spatial literacy, meaning is achieved through physical arrangement, i.e., proximity, juxtaposition, and/or suggestion as a function of pattern recognition, which indicate through structure and need not involve denotation through objective reference. Here, meaning is contained *within* the rhetorically constructed spaces as well as in the inter-relationships existing among the structures themselves, i.e., are both self-referential and of high context. As Grassi (1980) puts it: "The indicative or allusive [*semeinein*] speech provides the framework within which the proof can come into existence" (p. 20). These types of meaning are themselves based on the recognition of similitude, i.e., are permutations of an original understanding – communicating figuratively, according to their own intrinsic topography - and, as such, do not require the addition of text to "*fix* the floating chain of signifiers" (Barthes , 2004, p. 156) in order to situate meaning.

The inherently creative practice of constructing inter-relationships among constituent elements, however, isn't entirely dissimilar from the standard composition process of clustering similar ideas in relation to each other that often takes place prior

17

to actual written composition, or the process described by Foss & Waters (2007) for recording bits of relevant information on separate pieces of paper and then coding them into separate piles which are then arranged *in relation to each other* prior to the application of linear writing process. The fact that this formatting practice takes place before that of argumentation reflects the relative complementarity of the two thought processes (Grassi, 1980).

The problem of mitigating the limitations of low-context, sequential processing on the effective communication of multi-faceted/multi-directional, and, perhaps, rationally chaotic experiences, however, has societal effects outside the composition classroom. For example, in discussing the inadequacies of history of journalism in accurately characterizing the early role of the press in the U.S., journalist John Nerone (1993) comments that:

> The common feature of all these weaknesses is a failure to recognize that, rather than being a thing unto itself, a medium is exactly what the word suggests: something in between other things. *A medium is a set of relationships within a social and cultural ecology* [my emphasis]. (p 39)

In other words, the failure to perceive spatial permutations created by the repetition of different, yet similar, things may, in and of itself, affect the accurate transmission of content; this possibility, that differing *modalities*, apart from affecting the neutral transmission of content in communication, can create inaccuracies in associational meaning, is not commonly recognized within predominantly written cultures (Ong, 2000) because extra-verbal forms are systemically precluded from intersecting in any meaningful way with the *a priori* structuring of prose, and are

instead read separately as supplements to written texts (Barthes, 2004).

*Content in context.*

However, recent technological changes in communication are currently

resuscitating non-linear spaces as components of human discourse and are also

encouraging communicators of all sorts to respond by creating hybrid approaches for

sharing meaning, many of which take into account factors of spatiality and

particularity more generally associated with aesthetic *design* than with composing

academic and/ or technical texts.

Conventional argumentation tends to privilege content over form, to be rational

and goal-oriented, to be based on the application of general principles onto particular

circumstance, and is intended to persuade a largely passive audience (Porter, 1972). It

also tends to follow a hierarchical format, usually from most to least important, and is

often directed outward onto experience in order to "counter the terror of uncertain

signs" (Barthes, 2004, p. 156). On the other hand, with visual/spatial, and/or aesthetic,

forms of communication, in many cases, form *is* content. As a holistic medium, this

particular form of suasion requires an intuitive awareness of context, and exhibits a

simultaneity of meaning, commonly recognized by both communicator and audience.

These two approaches start from very different sets of assumptions [See discussion of

Specific/Diffuse cultural forms Chapter Five.] as to what it means to present all "the

available means of persuasion" (Foss, Foss & Trapp, 1985, pp. 4-5). Thus, a

contradiction exists when any attempt is made to combine spatial holistic aspects of

rhetoric with sequential, stratified ones. The deductive process makes little allowance

for aspects of 'design' that fulfill an intrinsic human need for pattern recognition in lieu of any rational objective; e.g., the qualitative significance of a piece of music cannot be determined either through linguistic analysis or any exercise in fact-checking.

Foss (2004) provides an example of how these ostensibly opposed forms of meaning may be made to intersect in her discussion of the role of explanation in generative criticism, wherein she warns against the tendency to engage in "*cookie-cutter criticism*" (p. 417) i.e., the danger of applying previously established concepts or theories to analyze a given set of artifacts in such a way that "all artifacts studied through the lens of the same method or theory come out looking exactly the same" (pp. 417, 418). From a strictly academic perspective that generally emphasizes linguistic content over any consideration of aesthetic, and/or perceived, shape; this is a legitimate concern reminiscent of Burke's critique of medium as a matter of oversimplification (1972). This is especially so where the experiential frame is applied *ipso facto* as a matter of habit.

From a visual/spatial perspective, however, in which both form and content must be adapted to each other to discern the significance of any specific instance, it is less of a concern because the contingency of the frame is readily acknowledged, i.e., has already been taken into account. However, there is a further communicative process that is lost when the frame or template is either accepted without scrutiny or dismissed as a triviality too quickly – that of similitude. For the term 'cookie-cutter' as Foss is using it, and as it was previously mentioned as part of the cultural weight of

print as a means to organize human experience, implies that "the data are made to fit the theory" (p. 418). Where this takes place, the framing element remains largely invisible, i.e., unchanged by its association with specific content. Conversely, a flexible frame or schema adaptable to fit the particular experience, far from uncritically designating generic meaning, would allow for the recognition of significant patterns and variations among unique yet similar things.

Although the term 'design' is often used by those attempting to create hybridized approaches to communication, in practice, these discussions often seem to be restricted to intentional activities such as material production (Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. 2001), and/or engineering (Soja, 1996) [See Chapter Two], that on the surface have little in common with design as it is understood in aesthetic practice where the primary concern is the creation of interest, or "at-tention" (Grassi, 1994, p 6). Here, effective design may often be the end in itself. So, since written/verbal forms of communication tend to proceed from a certain set of assumptions about the appropriate relation of format to content, and visual/spatial forms from quite another (Wysocki, 1998); this suggests that nearly total emphasis on knowledge as the apprehension of *content* to achieve an extrinsic purpose often comes at the expense of awareness of *context* as intrinsic purpose – representing a cross-cultural conflict for anyone trying to broach the gap between two adaptations of meaning.

### *Ends versus means.*

Such rational assumptions about the nature of knowledge, of course, are not human universals and vary across cultures. In his discussion of the process of

21

decision making, sinologist A.C. Graham postulates "'Be aware' as first principle" (1985, p. 1). As an epistemological stance, this dictum, in true Taoist fashion, allows that a person is spontaneously moved either toward or away from a given experience and may use that intuitive indicator as a personal guide for making a choice.

Graham contrasts western Cartesian reasoning with eastern Taoist spontaneity and chooses to emphasize the Taoist notion of holistic awareness, i.e., the "knack (1989, p. 186) of the craftsman or artist, in the process of making choices. In other words, he deliberately highlights the credibility of the experience of immediate circumstance over reliance on the application of general-ized principles or reasoned analysis.

> People who really know what they are doing, such as cooks, carpenters, swimmers, boatmen, cicada catchers, do not go in much for analyzing, posing alternatives and reasoning...[T]hey no longer even bear in mind any rules they were taught as apprentices; they attend to the total situation and respond...(Graham, 1989, p. 186)

Graham derives a similar distinction between the intentional purposes of language distinguishing the scientific from the poetic. In doing so, he also contrasts objectivity as knowledge with subjectivity as awareness. He identifies the language of science as that of means that reaches toward an extrinsic goal or purpose, and the language of poetry as that of ends, in that a poem, or a painting, is an end unto itself. According to Graham, science, as means-language, analyzes data and abstracts from experience in order to create general-ized principles that transcend immediate experience, while poetry, as ends-language, synthesizes the complexities of that experience into discrete and particular wholes.

He further distinguishes between subjective and objective forms of verification in making appropriate choices:

As to whether what is said has to be taken into account in choices...in the case of

ends-language it is tested subjectively and privately, by experience or *imaginative simulation* [my emphasis], in the case of means-language, objectively and publicly by experimental replication... (p. 65)

Again, choices based on one sort of communication are verified by objective proof, the other by subjective affirmation – i.e., one set is affirmed through replicable verification, the other through tacit recognition.
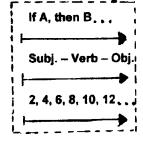
In his discussion of ends-language, Graham claims that, whether one object resembles another "sufficiently to be an instructive metaphor for it, is a question *outside the language* [my emphasis]" (p.64), through the implied spatial comparison. Like the similarity of soap bubbles, these visual/spatial comparisons represent permutations on a common theme. For two or more objects to be significantly relevant, they must be within proximate perceptual space for the recognition of said similitude to take place, i.e., for it to be *seen*. Thus if visual/spatial forms communicate meaning through metaphorical reference, and if this form of comparison is to be carried over into linguistic argumentation, then the question becomes how to address this perceptual shift, this time from science to art, to effectively integrate the two contradictory perspectives while maintaining the structural integrity of both. This conundrum, in effect, demands the creation of an entirely new order or communicative schema – a configurative one, originating outside language– in which it is the similarity of the individual components, which may be images, signs, or words, and the specifics of their arrangement within a given space that comprise the significance of the overall construct, even in the absence of any external referent.

23

Perceptual psychologist, Rudolf Arnheim, in asserting that "shapes are concepts"

(*Visual Thinkimg*, 1969, p. 27) [See Chapter Three.], illustrates this alternative.

Seen as a construct, language in the West is linear in form regardless of content, and

print is not only linear, but repetitively parallel in structure. Below are two highly

schematized representations of these two disparate communicative modalities. Both

are human creations, and both are abstractions, the difference being that rational

deduction, grammatical structure (whether or not it reflects the subject-verb-object

format) and numerical sequencing by tacitly assuming a linear format dictated by

internal constructions (Whorf, 1964), deny their contextual limitations, whereas

configurative meaning can only be developed *within a framework* that is explicitly

acknowledged from the outset.

The first image below is a diagrammatic representation of rational, sequential

communicative forms that implicitly suggest, through repetition, a rectangular format,

while that latter depicts abstracted elements as an aesthetic configuration presented

within a declared frame.

Figure 1.1:
*Rational vs. Aesthetic Forms of Ordering*

If A, then B...

Subj. — Verb — Obj.

2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12...
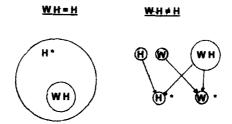
This example of schematized mental space, i.e., alternative examples of abstracted human-ordering [See discussion of Arnheim's notion of shapes as concepts, 1969, below.] represents an example of juxtaposed communicative modalities based on different sets of assumptions. The first sketch represents the imposition of deduction, visualized print, and Cartesian mathematics as experiential frame. The other is grounded in empirical observation plus intuitive perception, and, therefore, represents a more flexible schema – a *generated* structure from which to determine meaning. With the first space, the assumption is that the meaning lies *outside* the structure in an essentially foreign world; with the second, it is contained *within* as a matter of recognition.

Graham (1989) further provides an excellent illustration of aesthetic versus rational thought in the 'White Horse' paradox. Presented as a Q & A, the original question runs, thus: Q. "Is it admissible that a white horse is not a horse?" (p. 85). Clearly, according to western forms of rationalized stratigraphy (Cordell & Plog, 1979), i.e., of meaning structured as hierarchical categories and subcategories, the question represents a *non-sequitur*; the subset 'white horses, clearly belong to larger category of generic horses, but it is just this sort of generalization for which aesthetic thinking will not allow. This is readily apparent to an artist in the studio who knows *immediately* that there are no generic horses. Any representation, even a simple outline will possess specific characteristics. The categories of 'whiteness' and 'horseness' represent two separate and discrete classifications. The designation

Figure 1.2:
*White Horse Conundrum*

**WH = H**          **WH ≠ H**

'horse' participates in only one of these classifications, while 'white horse' participates in both. "Therefore I say, 'A white horse is not a horse'" (p. 85).

In a similar situation, dictated this time not by the purposes of language but by the constructiveness of technology, Anne Frances Wysocki (2001) compares the layout of two CDs that both visually present art collections. While noting that the language itself is similar in both, she suggests that the visual structure of each CD differs in relation to both the language and to the presentation of the art works, thereby encouraging different sorts of interactions by the viewer; e.g.: " The Barnes CD presents its art to me statically and from straight ahead. The Maeght CD gives me multiple and moving perspectives." (p. 147).

The difference in design goes to purpose. The intention of the Barnes CD, like Graham's means-language, is to accomplish the extrinsic goal of clearly displaying the monetary value of the collection for the viewer. The Maeght CD however, because it provides multiple, but partial, perspectives of the works, demands that the viewer exert some effort. i.e., must contribute, to develop a sense of each individual piece, an approach that requires both ingenuity and engagement with the work. In other words, the Maeght CD embodies an interest that extends beyond simple market value. In both cases, however, it is not the text that is being 'read' but the structural design, the particular intentioned configuration, of each

presentation.

Wysocki comments that she prefers the Maeght CD because its design encourages her "to consider how its structure contributes to my experience and understanding" (p. 159). Her students, however, perhaps representing a more goal-oriented audience, prefer the Barnes format as being more accessible for purposes of quick information retrieval.

Under these sets of shifting circumstances, rhetoric, originally adapted to orality, and then modified to accommodate written texts should now be weaned from the acquired habit of lineal processing alone, and be adapted to communication within significant semiotic configurations that, in and of themselves, define contextual spaces apart from the intentions or arrangements of language.

## Space as Medium

Arnheim's work *Visual Thinkimg* (1969) is an early attempt to reconcile multi-dimensional considerations with the linearity of linguistic thought processing, He begins by discussing perception, or meaning based on observation, as something commonly understood in the West as being separate from thinking, commenting that, at least since Plato, "the gathering of perceptual data" has been regarded as "unskilled labor" (p. 2); in the *Republic*, while Music, because of its mathematical associations, was considered appropriate as part of the education of heroes, the other fine arts were traditionally excluded from academic curricula as being mechanical and non-conceptual, i.e., not dealing primarily with language and mathematics.

As Arnheim notes in this regard:

> The arts are neglected because they are based on perception, and perception is disdained because it is not assumed to involve thought. In fact, educators and administrators cannot justify giving the arts an important position in the

curriculum unless they understand that the arts are the most powerful means of strengthening the perceptual component without which productive thinking is impossible in any field of endeavor. (p. 3)

Conversely, Aristotle as rhetorician recognized the importance of metaphorical visualization, in *actualizing* ideas before an audience, using the notion of "bringing before the eyes," (Newman, 2002) as a form of persuasion, in that visualization could be used to prepare the imagination of an audience for the reception of argumentation. He did not, however, recognize metaphor as thought, or cognition, only as recognition that allowed space for insight as an extension of sense perception.

Thus, Arnheim's assertion that shapes are a genre of thought inherently undermines a fundamental Western assumption that separates cognition from recognition, thinking from seeing (Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr (2001), the real from the apparent.

### Space as agency.

In asserting that shapes are concepts, Arnheim first refers to those "diagrammatic scribblings drawn on the blackboard by teachers and lecturers in order to describe constellations" of related ideas, and asks the question, since these usually are not intended to represent any recognizable object or event: "[W]hat exactly do they represent?" (p. 116). His implication is that they function as visual instantiations of intuitively-held spatial associations within the human mind.

In his follow-up work, *Art and Visual Perception* (1974), Arnheim continues his discussion of visual space in several dimensions. The first dimension is linear (i.e., characterized by the line), describing direction but not shape. The addition of a

28

second dimension allows for the creation of both size and shape, while "three-

dimensional space...offers complete freedom...unlimited arrangement of objects and

the total mobility of a swallow" (p. 218). If such three-dimensional constellations

exist as meaningful human mental structures, might they not, then, provide the

metaphorical templates necessary for creating order in the external environment

(Grassi, 1994).

Arnheim (1974) further comments on the relationship between visual/spatial

mental conceptions and the active ordering of the external world based on

visual/spatial perceptions of that world :

> We do not establish sizes, distances, directions, singly and then compare them
> piece by piece. Typically we see these characteristics as properties of the *total
> visual field* [my emphasis]. There is, however, another, equally important
> difference. The various qualities of the images are not static... *Visual experience is
> dynamic.* (p. 11)

In other words, mental spaces provide the means for the application of scientific

principles, but general-izable principles cannot adequately convey the significance of

qualitative experience as an end in itself (Graham, 1985). As with Wysocki's

discussion of the Maeght CD (2001), shape as thought encourages a more intimate

understanding of the qualitative dynamics of perception.

> Or as poet Walt Whitman (1968) put it:

> When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
> When the proofs, the figures were ranged in columns before me,
> When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add. divide, and measure them,
> When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause
>     in the lecture-room,
> How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
> Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars. (pp. 136, 137)

Similarly, in discussing aesthetic imitation in his *Languages of Art*, Nelson

Goodman (1976) is baffled by the notion of the faithful copying of a given object, or

art as imitation, saying because "the object before me is a man, a swarm of atoms, a

complex of cells, a fiddler, a friend, a fool, and much more" (p. 6); which aspect, he

asks, am I to copy? What is the figure and what is the ground? The answer, of course,

is how the object looks to the "free and innocent eye" (p. 7) of 'mechanical' sensory

perception, the problem being that, according to both Arnheim and Goodman, in

actual experience, such a disinterested process cannot exist. Just as the figure cannot

be legitimately extracted from the ground to discern meaning, human agency and

experience cannot be isolated from the experience of any particular, immediate

circumstance.

Goodman's understanding of experience as a holistic function of human agency

echoes Arnheim's assertion that perception is a dynamic process. As Goodman

characterizes perception:

> …an aspect is not just the object-from-a-given-distance-and-angle-and-in-a-given-
> light; it is the object as we look upon or conceive it, a version or construal of an
> object.. In representing an object, we do not copy such a construal or interpretation
> – we *achieve* it. (p. 9)

Here, the presumed "unskilled labor" (Arnheim 1969, p. 2) of mechanical sensory

reception undergoes a transformation into an actively constructed dynamic response,

a unique human perspective on meaning based on both the perceptual ordering of

30

form and re-cognition based on previous experience. That the perception of each experience is inherently unique does not, however, preclude the acknowledgement of significant wholes where similarities and differences are discovered. Awareness of similitude (Grassi, 1980), or lack thereof, within a given context invites associations of 'likes with likes' as an ordering process through metaphoric juxta-positioning in the creation of meaning.

Artists are, because they must be, aware of the organizing function of repetition and variation in creating configurative significance. Bauhaus painter, Wassily Kandinsky (1979), sums up space as medium in the following way: the Outer and the Inner. "Every phenomenon can be experienced in two ways. These two ways are not arbitrary, but are bound up with the phenomenon – developing out of its nature and characteristics: Externally – or – inwardly" (p. 17). As a concrete example, he offers the possibility of looking at a street through a windowpane as opposed to going out of the door and experiencing it first-hand, i.e., becoming immersed in it. One is experienced indirectly and in a relatively distanced fashion –the other directly through all the senses. The cognitive distancing learned through adaptation to print culture can, to whatever extent necessary to keep pace with accelerating technological change, be unlearned, or at least compensated for, through re-acquaintance with metaphoric re-cognition of similitude and structure among‛ the various and simultaneous processes of perception.

*Verbal adaptations*

Reversal of the experiential distancing established by print culture (Ong, 2000) has

been and will continue to be expedited by the addition of configurative components

into rhetorical practices. This change necessitates that professional communicators

develop a greater awareness of holistic and multi-faceted forms of meaning that, until

recently were seldom included in writing practices. As difficult as this transition

seems to be at the outset, the possibilities are already being explored. A few

introductory examples are given below.

In education, several attempts have been made to introduce configurative design

elements into composition pedagogy. Colin Lankshear & Michele Knobel, (2003)

have developed innovative approaches to teaching composition that encourage

students to become active composers of meaning through creatively arranging what

are, in essence, semiotic design factors such as "signs, signals, codes, and graphic

images" ( p. 15). Similarly, Sean D. Williams (2001) cites Arnheim (1969) in

discussing an "integrated design pedagogy" (p. 123) that allows students to actively

manage unfamiliar media in composition. This involves the creation of a composite

literacy combining verbal and extra-verbal elements. Similarly, the New London

Group (2000) has developed the notion of "pedagogy as Design" (p. 19), teaching

hybrid forms of composition that emphasize creating significant spaces through the

semiotic process of inter-relating signs and symbols into given contexts.

In technical communication, Richard Johnson-Sheehan & Craig Baehr (2001)

conjoin the disparate processes of 'thinking' and 'seeing, in order to *"think*

*differently"* (p. 22) about the creation of meaning (Lakoff, 2013). They suggest that

the design of a hypertext or Web site can be structured on the closure of a three-dimensional 'sphere' or a 'pyramid' to facilitate information retrieval.

Gunther Kress & Theo Van Leeuwen (2001) have also attempted to integrate configurative processes into communication practices using multimodal forms of representation. Their model schematizes an approach to communication that incorporates multiple perspectives and modalities with instantiation into media, with all that that entails concerning the limitations of dealing with physical matter in actual production.

All of the above approaches have had some success in integrating disparate sources for shared meaning, but also continue to subordinate configurative strategies to the overall concerns of linguistic content. The problem with introducing what amounts to 'shapes' into texts is that the idea of an imaginative arrangement of signifying elements within an explicitly chosen format, a primary concern in aesthetics, is essentially foreign to both print culture and the logic of deductive reasoning and necessarily creates contradictions in meaning where configurative forms conflict with both linguistic ones.

Lankshear & Knobel, (2003) & Williams (2001) attempt to bridge this contradiction by emphasizing agency and/or imagination in the process of composition. The New London Group (2000) designates semiotic elements (*not* necessarily words) as part of the design process in creating new resources for further development. Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr (2001) attempt to employ three-dimensional shapes as frameworks into Web design, and Kress &Van Leeuwen (2001) focus on

33

the instantiation of ideas into varied forms of physical media as a way of countering

the distancing of text. The question remains, however: do these options go far enough

in anticipating the changes in meaning necessitated by such hybridization. Is a

command of the skills and/or vocabulary of aesthetics found in successful works of

art such as music and architecture required on the part of professional communicators

to effectively complete this integration?

## Implications of Spatial Ordering

The foregoing discussion was an attempt to briefly identify some of the specific

ways that a transition from a lineal to a configurative culture might affect current

communication practices. As stated above, the term 'design' appears to be the most

favored in attempting to introduce "extra-verbal" (Stroupe, 2004, p. 13) practices into

verbal communications.

However, from an aesthetic perspective, the primary concern of design is the

significant arrangement of elements within a specified context using both repetition

and variation to create interest; in this latter sense many of attempts described above

feel unresolved. For example, if the insertion of grammatically complicating terms

like 'literacies' (Lankshear & Knobel,, 2003) is intended to break the reader of the

print-induced habit of thinking in generalized, i.e., non-situated, terms about issues

that are inter-relational and highly contextualized, then what do such terms reveal

about the *internal arrangement* among these different forms of understanding. What

means for comparison is provided to relate one form of literacy to another and/or

others? If students are asked to select materials from a variety of accessible multi-

media sources out of which to build an argument (Williams, 2001), with the

presumption that those materials were all originally chosen as being relevant to the

project at hand, then, again, what is the basis for further selection among them? If the

process of ordering is said to 'transform' (Williams, 2001; New London Group, 2000)

information, what criteria are given for this transformation, and on what basis does it

proceed? If the design of a CD or a Web site can be attributed to the closure of a

three-dimensional sphere or pyramid (Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr, 2001), from what

perspective is this form viewed, and does the information retrieved remain unaffected

by its particularly positioned stance? Does a radial design affect the arrangement of

content differently than a stratified one, and, if so, is this intentional on the part of the

designer?

Moreover, if the introduction of "three-dimensional space...[offering] complete

freedom...[and the] unlimited arrangement of objects" (Arnheim, 1974, p. 218) into

denotative mental constructs necessarily disrupts the syntactical repetition and fixed

perspective of printed language, even if it does facilitate the opening up of spaces to

allow for the acknowledgement of new associations (Soja, 1996), it does not, in and

of itself, guarantee greater understanding of the craft of design on the part of the

composer. This sort of skills-set or vocabulary has not been traditionally recognized

as necessary to the organization of written composition (that being left to the structure

of language, itself), but becomes much more significant in the designing of cyber

space. The quandary here, as stated above, is that it is difficult to recognize the

limitations of one's own communicative awareness in the absence of complications

originating from being juxtaposed with other forms based on different sets of assumptions (Thatcher, 2007). Hence, linguistically constructed understandings of the world, if not openly recognized as such through the explicit metaphorical overlap with 'literacies' existing outside of their original purview, will continue habitually to map referential assumptions and internalized semantic structures onto complex spaces, spaces that contain their own internal dynamics, thus masking the potential for new genuinely transformative communicative associations and understandings.

Moreover, when applied to written composition, understanding spatial considerations has been further complicated by the cultural trivialization (Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr, 2001) of visuals by traditional academic approaches to communication and education. While images or 'pictures' are common to elementary texts, they have tended, until very recently, to be limited in academic texts as one moves up in the educational hierarchy, making those arguing for the inclusion of such considerations something of a marginalized population in the field overall.

As Joshua Gunn (2003) comments, "positing the primacy of the imagination [etymology: to imitate or invent] is troublesome for many scholars. For some, beginning with the imagination seems to deny the real..." (p. 41), or as Shlain (1998) points out "[t]o perceive information in linear, sequential form seems to engender a scorn of images (p. 177). Just as a focus on actual physical spaces often complicates the redacted neatness of mental ones, so the addition of the imaginative aspects of configurative forms appears to inherently complicate the certainty of rationality (Graham, 1985).

36

As Bruno Latour (2002), in a none too subtle swipe at Enlightenment claims to

scientific objectivity, points out in the prologue to *Iconoclash*:

> ...we are digging for the origin of an absolute – not a relative – distinction
> between truth and falsity, between a pure world, absolutely emptied of human-
> made intermediaries and a disgusting world composed of impure but fascinating
> human-made mediators. "If only, some say, we could do *without* any images. How
> so much better, purer, faster our access to God, to Nature, to Truth, to Science
> could be." To which other voices (or sometimes the same) answer: "Alas (or
> unfortunately), we cannot do *without* images, intermediaries, mediators of all
> shapes and forms, because this is the only way to access God, Nature, Truth and
> Science. (p.14)

This critique of 'human intermediaries,' (a.k.a. culture) reflects the paradox of

configurative practices in rhetoric currently being left to function marginally as

illustrated texts (Doumont, 2001). If such practices are ever to be fully integrated into

the rhetorical process, communicators and theorists must develop an understanding of

the dynamics of aesthetic design beyond that of the denotative or referential aspects

of traditional texts. In other words, in order to adapt successfully to technological

changes in communication formatting, rhetoricians, as primary conveyors of cultural

meaning (Grassi, 1980), must see and effectively articulate aesthetic aspects of design

as alternative forms of practice, particularly where notions of multi-modal spaces are

concerned.

As stated previously, the process of designing multi-lateral uses of space, virtual

or otherwise may well imply unanticipated communicative changes that reach beyond

challenging the traditional linearity and of written texts. Ours has been largely a print-

dominated culture since the advent of printed texts some 500 years ago, and the

practice of rhetoric has had to adapt itself to dealing primarily with issues of textual

literacy over those of orality (Ong, 2000). In this particular context, it appears that the inter-relational significance of configurative communication needs more explicit clarification.

## Building-as-"Text"

This necessity is currently being recognized by those concerned with language as an evolving communicative form. Recent attempts to bridge the gap between text and context, word and image, have focused on architectural spaces for rhetorical analysis, and have attempted to determine what sorts of activities, interactions, and/or social discourses (in the form of discourse communities, for instance) take place within said spaces, and how the immediate environment helps to shape the articulation of these ideas and practices. In *Other Floors, Other Voices: A Textography of a Small University Building*, linguist John Swales (1998) provides a minutely detailed description of the social practices contained within the three floors of the North University Building at the University of Michigan and provides an equally detailed analysis of the sorts of discourses, activities and knowledges developed within each level.

By a *textography*, Swales says that he means "something more than a disembodied textual or discoursal analysis, but something less than a full ethnographic account" that "focuses …on particular individuals within the building…and builds its arguments through close analysis of individual *textual* artifacts" (1998, pp. 1-2). The significance of this particular approach, for Swales, is that it is site-based, as opposed

to being discipline- or genre-based, and therefore attempts to spatially situate, or contextualize, said artifact, and/or practices within a given context.

Based upon a similar premise, linguist and semiologist Michael O'Toole employs a "systemic-functional model" (2004, p. 27) for semiotic analysis of the Sydney Opera House in which he includes the following statement: "As in language, the Collocational potential of architectural elements – their Conjunction in rooms and floors and buildings, their Reference to each other and to their environment – is what makes them into coherent and usable 'texts'" (p. 11). O'Toole's model reduces the three-dimensional site into listed categories in the form of a Chart [See below], intended as a "non-sequential tool for exploring the hypertext of the building" (2004, p. 26). These categories are further subdivided under the headings 'Experiential,' 'Interpersonal,' and 'Texture," along with the Units/Functions of Building: Floor, Room and Element. By doing so, O'Toole places much more emphasis on the actual physical presence of the Opera House as a set of structural inter-relationships than does Swales [See Table 1.1 below.].

Swales, on the other hand, while dealing more directly with spaces, focuses on the discourse practices within said interiors, and less with the internal dynamics of designed human spatiality they represent. This lack of substantive interaction with spaces and/or the 'in between' aspects of a building as enclosed space characterizes both studies and may be considered a symptom of the 'distancing' function of printed text, and the failure to properly recognize the inter-connectedness among the "in between...things" (Nerone, 1993, p 39).

For a critique of an artifact to be configurative, it must take into account both

positive and negative aspects, the visual and the spatial characteristics that both

Table 1.1

*Functions and Systems in Architecture ...*

| Units/ Functions | Experiential | Interpersonal | | Texture |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| — | | | | |
| **Building** | Practical Functions: Public/Private Industrial/Commercial/Agricultural | Size Orientation to neighbors Verticality... | | Relation to city |
| | Working | Spaciousness | | Relation to outer world... |
| — | | | | |
| **Floor** | Sub-functions: Access | Height Sites of power | | Relation to other floors... |
| — | | | | |
| **Rooms** | Specific function Access     Study     Foyer | Comfort     Lighting Modernity     Sound | | Scale Lighting... |
| **Elements** | Light: windows, lamp, curtains, blinds Air: windows, fan, conditioner | Relevance Functionality: convention surprise... | | Texture |

Excerpt from O'Toole's "systemic-functional model" (2004 pp. 12, 13: reproduced

from O'Toole 1994: 86). [For entire, see Appendix]

comprise it and make it unique. Although O'Toole provides ample architectural

description of the positive space, i.e., the building as artifact, he does not adequately

present the spatiality of the building as negative space for examination - only its

coded categories – the *lists* of categories, that, if they are not sequential, they are

certainly still linguistic designations, arranged arbitrarily in expository fashion (*not*

according to the unique composition of the Opera House) from general category to specific features. Of this he says:

> Like the clause in a language, a building incorporates Types of Process and their Participants; its specific functions are Modified in terms of material, the size, colour, and texture; and its component elements are organized taxonomically like lexical items in the vocabulary of our language. (p. 15)

Thus, the reader is given the physical characteristics of the building as linguistic figure, its functions, and categorizations, but no sense of the dynamics of the spatial ground that it constitutes. Like the beginning design students, O'Toole sees the positive structure of the building but not the negative space within it. This is quite literally *building-as-text*.

The un-scrutinized typographic (Ong, 2000) temptation, of course, is to carry the analogy of 'building-as-text' still further, to approach any particular building (or any environment and/or circumstance) as being subject solely to encoded analysis, i.e., the imposition of either explanation or narrative as experiential frame to determine meaning. We hear the story, or the functions, or the reasons for the functions, or the rationalizations (Graham, 1985) that linguistically undergird the functions of the building, but do not get to live within it. (In the case of Swales, I, as the reader, came away with a better sense of how plants are packaged and classified in the Herbarium than of the actual experiential existence of the floor or building as occupied space). If these two buildings started out as an ensemble of three-dimensional spaces designed for human habitation, they were both rapidly 'distanced,' i.e., reduced, to two-dimensional texts by the imposition of the above forms of analysis.

41

Both Swales and O'Toole presumably intended to present a *non-textual* assessment of space as something to be 'read,' as an archeologist reads an artifact. This is an approach worth exploring as it makes people aware of the degree of discretion they have in sculpting their own environments and lives; *the value of this* proposed cross-disciplinary exercise is to discover meaningful rhetorical associations through juxtaposing disparate sorts of communication systems. For just as archeologists must beware of a "critique of concepts and approaches that emphasize normative patterns and fails to consider the patterned articulation of diversity" (Cordell & Plog, 1979, p 405), i.e., must resist the temptation to interpret an artifact based on their own socio-cultural experiences alone, so must communicators well versed in print culture beware of reading linguistic meanings into non-linguistic forms.

For if a building is to be characterized as a text, in any way approaching the conventional lexical understanding of the term, then what alphabet is being used? What are the discrete, encoded units, and/or the "fewer than thirty meaningless symbols" (Shlain, 1998, p. 5) being utilized that would allow for the North University Building at the University of Michigan to be disassembled and then reconstructed as the Opera House in Sydney, just as one rewrites or re-arranges sentences in a paragraph?

If, on the other hand, the argument is that these buildings are each constituted as a inter-related set of signifiers within which an analysis of social discourses may be conducted, then where are the referents - i.e., what is being signified? As philosopher

42

Nelson Goodman (1976) remarks on the relation of resemblance to representation and/or reference:

> An object resembles itself to the maximum degree but rarely represents itself: resemblance, unlike representation, is reflexive. Again, unlike representation, resemblance is symmetric: *B* is as much like *A* as *A* is like *B*, but while a painting may represent the Duke of Wellington, the Duke doesn't represent the painting. (p. 4)

In other words, under what given set of circumstances do the North University Building at the University of Michigan and the Opera House in Sydney signify anything other than themselves?

However, if Swales and O'Toole intend that the reader interpret their use of the term 'text' as *metaphorically* referring to architectural forms as instantiated spaces, then they should consider placing more explicit emphasis on the use of this (con)figurative analysis to clarify the point for the benefit of their audiences. Their readers may or may not be Web-designers; certainly they don't hail from a primary orality (Ong, 2000), but, unless they are currently in elementary school, they are, as are we all, the relatively finished products of a cultural tradition that de-emphasizes spatiality in communication. As anthropologist Edward Hall (1981) remarks, "Low-context cultures tend to resist self-examination" (p. 154) and great care must be taken to ensure that fledgling three-dimensional arenas of meaning are not, *ipso facto*, collapsed into the two-dimensional formatting practices of the printed world.

Consequently, if the building-as-text analogy is interpreted too literally, whether intentionally or simply as a matter of cultural habit, the unique experience of the

43

sculptural object as a spatial metaphor becomes obscured because, in fact, a building

is not a two-dimensional text, but a three-dimensional *context* – a *designed space*.

The potential limitation, here, is that instead of expanding or stretching our

understanding of 'text' to include the configurative aspects of cultural artifacts at

large in the world, an essentially post-typographic culture (Ong, 2000) runs the risk of

reducing, as philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991) puts it, "social

space...to mental space" (p. 106), of seeking linguistic categories in lieu of spatial

relationships, of ever-increasing generalities substituting for actual experiences, and

of reducing the tumultuous and perspectival world of lived space (Soja, 1996) into

prioritized sentences, paragraphs and lists. In order to achieve a command of

configurative rhetoric, professional communicators must begin to engage with the

probabilities of engaging the *structures of thought*, and recognizing the limitations of

grammatical syntax and distanced 'reasons,' or these will continue to construct the

quality of culture, even if the words used are changed.

*The Purpose Statement*

We are living in a transitional period, where the skills needed to compose meaning

according to the old interiorized rules of print as communication are no longer

adequate to meet the demands of newer, hybridized, exteriorized and rapidly

changing forms; but before we can identify these skills, we must re-learn to see the

'spaces' they comprise. What is needed is a re-awakening of awareness of the

relevance of contextual spaces and of the inherent human ability to construct or

design meaningful configurations through our own intuitive powers of perception.

44

What is required is the means to exteriorize and re-embody an encoded and interiorized understanding of a distanced world in order to help navigate the currently tentative spaces between the primacy of written language and its loss of monopoly on meaning. Where, then, do we look for such expertise?

The interior aspects of architectural spaces may serve as an excellent model for the reintroduction of spatial awareness. Aesthetic phrasing similar to 'inner directed tensions,' i.e., spatial inter-relationships perceived by both the human eye and psyche, is used by both Arnheim and painter, Wassily Kandinsky, to characterize the perceptual dynamics of configurative composition and may provide the basis for an empirical study of the innate human ability to create meaning outside of language as characterized by the arts.

Demonstrating the difference between linguistic categorization of essentials and configurative interaction of relationships within a given context, requires the development of a visual critique of the interior space of a particular building as a design "motif" (Poling, 1986, p 120), in order to visually document the *shape* of the space as defined by the closure of the building. Returning to the practices of the Bauhaus School of Design, Kandinsky's technique of analytical drawing, which deliberately crosses the boundary from analysis to synthesis, can be used to spatially delineate the perceptual forces that animate a given architectural, i.e., humanized, space, while his correspondence theory of color and form can, then, identify, refine, and interpret, the perceptual relationships within a given space. The interior of the

45

lobby of the rotunda of Skeen Hall, as an example of complex repetitions and variations, is an appropriate artifact for the analysis of those designed tensions.

The answer to the following question is essentially a primer in recognizing the process of socio-cultural design itself, which, much like the practices of the workshops at the Bauhaus (Wingler, 1969), seeks to develop and elucidate those forms of significance implicit to human awareness:. This proposed visual analysis of the interior the lobby of the rotunda of Skeen hall is intended to depict an architectural interior as schematized space and or expressive schema that will illustrate the processing inherent to Grassi's imagistic first principles, i.e., the *archai*, remnants of a primordial language (Grassi, 1994) where deductive reasoning finds its source, but that cannot, of themselves, be discovered via deduction (Grassi, 1980). In this view, the *archai* represent the collective sources of *ingenium* which allow humans to overcome their alienation from nature through the figurative development of human meaning that the rawness of the natural world alone cannot provide.

*Research question*: How can the experience of the first-floor lobby of the rotunda of Skeen Hall on the NMSU campus be aesthetically interpreted as humanized meaning through the application of configurative design?

*Overview*

The above chapter attempts to equate form with meaning in a way that is not usually recognized in print, so as to redress the current print-based imbalance between the relative significance of knowledge as content and awareness as context. This, it could be argued, is necessary for rhetoric to adapt to nascent configurative

46

forms of literacy which depend upon more indirect and intuitive communicative modalities than do traditional linguistic forms. Such a socio-cultural transition requires ingenuity and/or imagination on the part of professional communicators to be adequately understood by a rapidly changing audience and cultural field.

Chapter Two addresses the various appraisals of the appropriate role of configurative modalities in relation to that of traditional linguistic forms, the role of simulation in the creation of meaning, as well as current attempts to incorporate visual/spatial 'literacies' into the composition classroom, technical writing practices and cultural studies.

Chapter Three further discusses Ernesto Grassi's theory of rhetorical metaphor and spatial transfer of meaning as the basis for culture and philosophy as well as Kandinsky's analytical drawing process as a means for visual/spatial interpretation of the dynamics of perception manifested in adapting the environment to meet human needs. Foss's generative criticism (2004) is also addressed, and is juxtaposed with Kandinsky's teaching practices to both analyze and synthesize the dynamics of the interior of Skeen Hall.

Chapter Four discusses the resulting works of the aforementioned project in terms of: (1) aesthetic composition and (2) configurative meaning-making.

Chapter Five, attempts to summarize the significance of this project for professional communicators in opening up new areas of meaning outside the realm of linguistic practices. These meanings will be then related back to Grassi's discussion of the *archai* as the result of human imagination and the basis for creation of culture.

47

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## The Already Said

***Thinking is radically metaphoric.*** (Richards, 1938 p. 48)

Configurative rhetoric presents what appears to be a contradictory combination of the seen and the spoken, as vision is generally associated with spatial relationships in aesthetics and/or proxemics in communication, and rhetoric with persuasive oratory and linguistic representation. Although cultural historian and philosopher Walter Ong (2000) asserts that the written, then printed, word changes orality into visual, encoded, communication, the alphabetic code, as previously stated, is an arbitrary encoded form of reference (Shlain, 1998) that has little to offer toward facilitating a grasp of spatial design. In other words, configurative rhetoric entails experientially different modalities of thought, and, therefore, knowing how to negotiate a printed text is not necessarily indicative of an ability to navigate a-linguistic forms of communication.

Initially, the question seems to center around the role of representation in the field of semiotics, i.e., the relationship of signifier to referent within systems of related signs and symbols, of which language is but an example. Generally, in representation, the signifier need not resemble its referent in order to signify (Goodman, 1976). For instance, there is no structural or familial relationship between a red octagon and the act of stopping. If, however, as McLuhan & Fiore (1967) suggest, the meaning of content cannot be legitimately evaluated irrespective from that of form, then this

48

seeming contradiction should be of interest to professional communicators during this period of rapid technological change.

## Representation Revisited

The problem of representation comes to the fore when transitioning from linguistic modalities to configurative ones. Language, written and/or printed, language in particular, functions as a semiotic system of arbitrary, socially constructed, signs that reference objects and ideas according to conventional, internalized rules (Whorf, 1964). Non-verbal, or "extra-verbal" (Stroupe, 2004, p. 13 ) relationships, however, are often loosely constructed on less systemic cognitive levels involving an inherent recognition of similitude (Grassi, 1980) that must conflict with, and in current rhetorical practice are often subordinated to, the construction of grammatical meaning in conventional texts (Barthes, 2004).

Addressing this contradiction, Anne Frances Wysocki (2005) suggests that the 'word-image' binary, oft-times employed by rhetoricians in discussing various forms of representation, mischaracterizes "image-representations," (a phrase she borrows from Kress, 2005) that "must be governed by a 'spatial and simultaneous logic'" (p. 57) that inherently resists any implied linguistic trajectory.

As art historian Richard Leppert (1996) comments on language and representation:

> The function of language is to represent in repeatable, abstract signs (morphemes) and sounds (phonemes) what comes to us by means of our various senses, sight being principal among them...what we make of it depends *in part* on thought, just as thought depends on language: again, representation. We cannot escape the web of representational devices – they are what allows us to make our way in the world. (p. 5)

Thus, Leppert draws a connection between sensory data, humanly recognized and interpreted into representation as a prelude to thought, i.e., Aristotle's notion of metaphor as "bringing before the eyes" (Newman, 2002, p. 1). This does not, however, demonstrate how the imaginative, connotative, and/or "'polysemous'" function of images as a "floating chain' of signifiers" (Barthes, 2004, p. 156) may be seamlessly integrated into the denotative function of language.

*Three Instantiations*

Even a short discussion of different approaches to representation reveals how complex is the challenge of combining linguistically constructed formats with those of configurative concerns based on visual/spatial ordering. Moreover the traditional function of text has purportedly been to refer, in some manner, to referents outside of their system of signification (Derrida, 1970). In other words, texts have been assumed, *via* shared cultural experience and/or narrative (Barthes, 2004), to refer to things beyond themselves, an assumption that is necessarily predicated on the denotative function of language as communicative medium. The relevant signification, however, not only involves representation, but also exemplification and simulation, the contributory meaning of which is yet to be determined; for if we continue to emphasize language as means for negotiating the significance of imagistic relationships, we also continue to subordinate configurative formatting to linguistic structures as textual frame [See Chapter Four]. Then, to be even more difficult, there are those visual/spatial design elements that do not represent recognizable objects or

ideas, such as generic shapes and colors. Are they necessarily silent in the process of meaningful transmission?

*Representation as language*

In discussing this topic, Barthes (2004) analyzes the forms of communication found in an advertisement for Panzani pasta, identifying three messages: the linguistic, the coded iconic, and the uncoded iconic. The linguistic message includes the caption and the various labels contained in the photograph, that is, words, which are in French, except for the name of the company, whose assonance, Barthes claims, is intended to signify "Italianicity" (p. 153) for a French audience.

The coded iconic message, on the other hand, deals with "pure image" (p. 153), and concerns the items depicted in the photograph, which consist of a partly unpacked bag of groceries, suggesting a shopping narrative based on shared cultural knowledge. Also, the emphasis on red, yellow, and green presented by the vegetables and pasta packaging re-asserts the Italian theme. In addition, the images in the photograph suggest a suasive narrative indicating that, through the purchase of the Panzoni product, the consumer will actually receive, not just pasta, but a complete dining experience, courtesy of the company, while the photograph's visual composition, says Barthes, is reminiscent of that familiar aesthetic form: the still life.

The uncoded iconic message, however, is constituted by the nameable objects, "not merely shapes and colors" (p. 154), where the objects themselves are the non-arbitrary signifiers of what they represent and/or resemble. This Barthes describes as a *"message without a code,"* where "[t]he message corresponds...to the image" (p.

51

154). In other words, the image of a pepper represents a pepper because it *looks* like a pepper.

Nevertheless, Barthes considers the linguistic message to be the dominant one, in which the primary function of text to image is something called *anchorage*. Images contain multiple, and from a linguistic point of view, ambiguous i.e., "polysemous," meanings, and the text directs the reader as to which ones should be given attention, and which should not. The text therefore functions as a control over what Barthes describes as the "projective power of pictures" (p. 156). He characterizes this process of using language to pin down meaning as a form of cultural control that reflects societal interests (presumably from the unwieldy suggestive power of images).

### Spatial significance in the arts.

What Barthes (2004) refers to as anchorage, Nelson Goodman (1976) would refer to as labeling. This he distinguishes from sampling, or exemplification, in that labeling is generally arbitrary. The label does not necessarily have to possess any similarity to the labeled to function successfully as a sign for it (e.g. octagon to stopping). In sampling, however, the sample must possess familial qualities of the group it is intended to represent. In other words, a simulated pepper may be considered a sample of what it is to 'look' like a pepper, to the extent that it is recognizable as belonging to the pepper family; however, an actual pepper cannot be said to exemplify pictures of, or simulated, peppers.

As Goodman states, representation is often misinterpreted as being synonymous with resemblance:

The most naïve view of representation might perhaps be put something like this: "*A* represents *B* if and only if *A* resembles *B*", or "*A* represents *B* to the extent that *A* resembles *B*" Vestiges of this view, with assorted refinements, persist in most writing about representation. Yet more error could hardly be compressed into so short formula. (pp. 3-4).

Goodman, again: reference does not require resemblance; and "[a] picture that represents – like a passage that describes – an object refers to, and more importantly *denotes* it. Denotation is the core of representation and is independent of resemblance" (p. 5); and denotation, it would seem, is more a matter of arbitration than of simulation.

Goodman's definition of sampling seems to establish something of a parallel between figurative uses of language and spatial forms of reference, in the manner of Barthes' uncoded iconic message, where the objects in the photograph are the non-arbitrary signifiers of what they represent; i.e. they parallel each other via visual analogy through space. This, then, could be characterized as a matter of non-arbitrary spatial denotation, through metaphoric exemplification – i.e., sampling *as* labeling – where the transfer of meaning is from inner understanding to outer manifestation. Again, the contradiction between representation by arbitrary sign, as in language, against representation by image, which may involve either non-arbitrary resemblance or arbitrary denotation based on shared cultural knowledge, is highlighted.

For Baudrillard (1983), however, simulation, or representation via analogy, threatens the legitimacy of both reality and imagination. Using the example of a person who feigns illness, he claims that the very pretense preserves the real, whereas, if the sufferer produces actualized symptoms, there is no way to distinguish between a

53

simulated illness and a real one. The line between the real and the imaginary becomes

irrevocably blurred. By engaging in simulations, he claims, humans create an ongoing

cultural contagion in which the simulation, or "procession of simulacra" (p. 2),

overtakes, or subsumes the real.

He focuses his argument by citing a one-paragraph short story by Jorge Luis

Borges (1964), entitled *On Rigor in Science*, ostensibly written in the 17th century, in

which the cartographers of a fictitious empire intentionally draw up a map that

precisely imitates the actual spatiality of that territory.

> ...In that Empire, the Art of Cartography reached such Perfection that the map of
> one Province alone took up the whole of a City, and the map of the empire, the
> whole of a Province. In time, these Unconscionable Maps did not satisfy and the
> Colleges of Cartographers set up a Map of the Empire which had the size of the
> Empire itself and coincided with it point by point. Less addicted to the Study of
> Cartography, Succeeding Generations understood that this Widespread Map was
> Useless and not without Impiety they abandoned it to the Inclemencies of the Sun
> and of the Winters. In the deserts of the West some mangled Ruins of the Map
> lasted on, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in the whole Country there are no
> other relic of the Disciplines of Geography. (Borges, 1964, p. 90)

In addition, Baudrillard claims that "[s]imulation [today] is *no longer that of a*

*territory, a referential being or a substance* [my emphasis]. It is the generation by

models of a real *without origin* [my emphasis] or reality: a hyperreal" (p 2). Here,

there is no dissonance between real and imagined because there is no referent. Unlike

Barthes' uncoded iconic message, or Goodman's use of exemplification as means for

denotation, the message no longer corresponds to the image because there is no

message. The hyperreal cannot constitute a message without a code because the

simulated code is the message - the simulacrum.

As stated above, this short discussion of different approaches and implications of the issue of representation reveals how complex is the challenge of combining configurative and/or imagistic concerns with implicitly linguistic structures. Barthes insists that language is necessary to anchor meaning in images. Goodman challenges the notion of resemblance as a requisite means for representation. Baudrillard rejects simulation altogether as undermining the objective status of the 'real' in favor of the suspect imagined or constructed. In creating a meaningful combination of these multiple perspectives, the primary tension seems to be the habituated use of language to 'anchor' multiple references and the resulting subordination of image to text.

*Combining the Verbal with the Spatial*

Thus the introduction of configurative elements into linguistic communication practices seems to necessitate an awareness of the imaginative interplay of aesthetic tensions existing among constituent design elements, as in Barthes' *message[s] without a code*" (2004, p. 154), within any given composition.

In light of the above, Craig Stroupe (2004) acknowledges that "...English studies will find its stock-in-trade of verbal rhetorics and literacies increasingly in competition and combination with extra-verbal codes and languages" (p. 13). In attempting to navigate this paradigm shift from the simply linguistic to hybrid forms of literacy, he identifies four "points of friction" between what he designates as two "cultural orientations" (p.17): (1) history; (2) players; (3) difficulty, and (4) desires. In order to elaborate on these tensions, he offers a working example of each: first, Peter Elbow's *Writing without Teachers*, as "one of the most influential pencil-and-

paper composition texts of the 1970 and 1980s" (p. 17), and, next, Elizabeth Castro's

*Netscape 3 for Mackintosh*, a visual guide for Netscape's HTML Editor. Stroup

contrasts Elbow's emphasis on writing as a form of individual expression with

Castro's take on electronic communication as a *communal* social practice involving

many nearly simultaneous participants. This contrast in some ways parallels the

contrast affected by the transition from sequential analyses of texts to more

synchronous forms of critique.

Stroupe associates the category of history with a human need to achieve personal

empowerment through gaining a consummate command over various modalities of

communication. In Elbow's case, this involves the expressive use of written language

in order to find one's voice to then be shared with others as readers in order to,

presumably, achieve recognition. Castro, however, offers the option to grasp "a

moment of opportunity and change" (p. 18) through readily available electronic self-

publication in a multiplicity of forms/forums to connect with a varied number of

audiences, thus adding a more immediate social context or sense of community for

the perspective of the individual rhetor.

To the category of players Stroupe attributes the role of editor as "a personification

of the interface between writers and their social, rhetorical, and technological

contexts" (pp. 18-19) where the reciprocity between personal and social discourses

requires some form of mediation. Elbow's emphasis on individual creativity and self-

expression makes simultaneous writing and editing an impediment to the creative

process. The editor's role should come only at the end of the writing process to avoid

self-censorship. For Castro, however, on the Web, "everyone 'talks' at once," but this does not create confusion or impede effective discourse because "the Web's operational metaphors are spatial, iconic, and public" (p. 19), and so are simultaneously spatial/social and verbal/personal.

Stroupe then observes that the degree of difficulty is the common standard by which both Elbow and Castro measure the effectiveness of their respective approaches to literacy. "Only those…who master what is difficult will achieve personal empowerment" (p. 20) using either form of communication. Having acknowledged this commonality, Stroup then asserts that the two orientations demand very different skill-sets, and that "in practice [they] will constitute different tastes, values, and ideological standards" (p. 20), suggesting further potential areas of friction.

To represent the category of desires, Stroupe uses the "trope of travel": Elbow's processes of growing and cooking, in which the example of chili is given as a thoroughly combined mixture of ingredients making up the whole meal, are seen as creating "a homey place for self-transformation." This Stroupe contrasts with the iconic process of surfing the Web which he characterizes as reflecting "the restless user's thirst for constant novelty, variety and potential surprise" (p. 22). In effect, Stroupe is contrasting a benign form of rhetorical sedentism (Cordell & Plog, 1979), with a nomadic and contextual adaptation to recent changes in the landscape of communicative forms. Such contextual adaptations will become increasingly relevant as the shift from printed formats to configurative ones accelerates.

57

*Open spaces in pedagogy.*

Of course, Stroupe is not alone in his claim that these "historic mingling

dissonances ...will define writing for generations to come" (p. 23). The frictions, or

tensions, inherent to this transition are currently being explored by many educators,

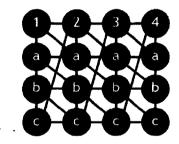technical writers and cultural theorists.

In education, these changes have centered on evolving notions of literacy, not

strictly as the ability to decode and encode formal texts, but as multiple 'literacies'

addressing differing perspectives and categories, including semiotic components such

as "signs, signals, codes, and graphic images" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003, p. 15), as

well as innovative approaches to teaching composition that encourage students to

become composers of their own meanings, where students actively "construct...their

own arguments" (Williams, 2001, p. 125) directly from a variety of resources.

Williams (2001) cites Arnheim's work, *Visual Thinking* (1969) as an early attempt

to reconcile spatial tensions with the inherent two-dimensional linearity of verbal text,

confessing that "[v]isual rhetoric [as] one of the most significant aspects of this

integration, is relatively new to us in English Departments" (p. 125). His own

"integrated composition pedagogy" (p. 125) is just such an attempt to introduce

spatial associations into the verbal composition process.

Williams' (2001) approach is to help students assemble a composite literacy via a

node-link design model (p. 129) in which "analysis and construction [i.e. synthesis]"

(p. 125) effectively combine verbal and spatial elements. This involves not only

breaking down previously constructed arguments and re-arranging the components

58

into new patterns of meaning, but also allowing for the incorporation of a variety of media. The key here is the application of a space-inducing, node-link design model [See below] that invites students to construct complex interactions that create "a space" to expand composition "beyond building print compositions" (p. 128) This "transformation" (p.130) involves students selecting appropriate materials from a variety of accumulated resources and then ordering them into assemblages of meaning in building effective arguments.

Figure 2.1:
*Williams' Node-Link Model*



1. "Marlboro Man" Image
2. "The Professional" Image
3. "Suburban Dad" Image
4. "Rap Musician" Image

a. photograph from magazine
b. screen shot from Web site
c. quotation from academic journal

For Williams, evidence organized as a collection of links representing multiple perspectives and media, where each link comprises a single perspective read in association with the others, allows for the construction of an issue that is "demonstrated – not argued for..." (p.129). Thereby, it is important that "[s]tudents see that information, by itself, does not create

arguments, but that *ordering information* [my emphasis] comprises arguments. (p. 128). This emphasis on the active construction of perspectives allows for a greater understanding of the complexity of human choice and the role of contingency in the creation of cultural meaning.

Figure 2.1 above illustrates four possible arguments as to the meaning of masculinity, where each column represents a different viewpoint on the topic and where the components A – C are forms of evidence gleaned from a variety of media. He chooses this format in lieu of a standard listing of elements according to category. He then, however, establishes, what is, in effect, a cluster of ideas by cross-linking each individual perspective, or column, to all the others by establishing parallel elements among them, i.e., linking unique but similar things. Rather than relying on observation and/or extra-verbal recognition of these relationships, Williams asks his students to be able to "articulate exactly how [the] links encourage them to make meaning" (p. 130) via explanatory narratives in the form of storyboards.

Williams then adds two new elements: an "I" for introduction, and "M," for metacommentary, each placed opposite the other within a circular orbit that drawn around the original node-link format – like electrons around a cell nucleus. Each of these new elements elaborates in its own way on the framing aspect of the original cluster in that each "circumscribes and contains" (p. 130). The introduction provides context for the theme being analyzed; the metacommentary considers the implications of the results. Thus Williams provides the means for combining verbal and extra-verbal elements in a way that also involves both analysis and synthetic construction.

In their exploration of literacies in the classroom, Lankshear & Knobel (2003) also conclude that "[l]earners need new operational and cultural 'knowledges' in order to acquire new languages that provide access to new forms of work, civic and private practices in their everyday lives" (p. 11). Like Stroup, they associate this expansion of literacy with a sense social empowerment. "The point is…whereas reading has traditionally been conceived in *psychological* terms, 'literacy' has always been much more of a *sociological* concept" (p. 8). A transition from the traditional understanding of literacy as an isolated skill of solitary information processing to 'literacies,' as part of a larger social process of acculturation, involving multiple participants and audiences, echoes Stroup's understanding of the transition from the personal to the social in communicative practices.

Similarly, members of the New London Group (2000) define learning as means for allowing students to participate fully in the larger social community, and an attempt to "account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies" (p. 9). In an attempt to address these issues, they have developed the notion of "pedagogy as *Design* [my emphasis] " (p. 19), an approach to teaching hybrid forms of composition that emphasizes designing spaces in order to allow for the expression of diverse cultural and technological perspectives.

In this process, available *resources* for meaning, not just words, are worked through the semiotic process of inter-relating signs and symbols into a given context. These resources are then transformed through the design process, and then themselves become available resources for further future transformations. The Group defines

61

design as an "active process of determining," in which combinations of conventions "are constantly in tension" (p. 20), tensions that, from an aesthetic perspective must then be balanced through some form of repetition for clarity..

*"Thinking differently" in technical writing.*

In the world of technical communication, the question of designing currently involves the interaction of writer to reader within a newly complicated understanding of the term 'text.' To answer the question: "What does it really mean to interact visually with a hypertext?" Richard Johnson-Sheehan & Craig Baehr (2001) conjoin the disparate processes of 'thinking' and 'seeing,' arguing that "[h]ypertexts are visual-spatial, requiring that the users *think differently*" (p. 22) from the cognitive processes developed through reading print (Lakoff, 2013).

As did Williams, Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr (2001) consult Arnheim's (1969) work in visual cognition in order to revise their understanding of perception in the furthering of website design. Noting, as does Arnheim, that in Western culture "seeing is presumed to be the antithesis of thinking" (p. 23) and that 'passively' collected sensual information is routinely subordinated to formulated numbers and logical proofs; they suggest that this might not be the natural state of affairs. In doing so, they question normative (Cordell & Plog, 1979) approaches to education that have in the past systematically replaced visual learning methods with linear-ized lists and encoded chronologies leaving little or no space for imaginative visual/spatial maneuvering, whereas, for Arnheim, understanding of *"[v]isual experience is dynamic..."* What a person experiences is not only a formless variety of objects, of

colors and shapes, of movements and sizes, "seeing involves... assigning...a place in

the whole: *a location in space* [my emphasis] ." Perception, for Arnheim, and

increasingly for professional communicators in general, must involve the inventive

arrangement of experience, as "...an interplay of directed tensions" (1974, p. 11),

rather than an encoded transcription of perceived space.

Moreover, Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr (2001) also re-affirm the notion that "shapes

are concepts" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 27) as being useful to web designers who can use

the observed human tendency to perceive fragmented configurations as wholes,

otherwise known as closure, to map-out, or design three-dimensionally structured

(e.g., pyramidal) cyber-spaces to facilitate ease of navigation to locate information.

"The concept of visual thinking denies that there is a simple division of labor between

seeing and thinking...perception determines *how* we see the world in addition to *what*

we see" (Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr, 2001, p. 23). Perception, then, as a form of

ordering, consists, in part, of "fitting the stimulus material with templates of relatively

simple shape" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 27) and "categorizing them according to generic

structural traits" (Johnson & Baehr, 2001, p. 26), indicating that this architectural

shaping process may help topographically determine what sorts of information,

and/or formations of meaning, are successfully found.

Not everyone, however, agrees with the notion of melding the verbal and the

spatial into meaning-making. For Doumont (2001), "[v]erbal and nonverbal processes

are complementary," but he worries that the "power of visual communication is

sometimes misunderstood" (p. 219). He notes that "[b]ecause they are powerful,

63

visual codings are dangerous" (p. 220) because they are processed by the brain

intuitively and globally and, therefore escape rational analyses normally applied to

verbal texts. By defining configurative codings in this way, Doumont highlights their

a-rational aspects which he then associates with intuition, or 'feeling,' and not with

the formatting aspects of applied aesthetic design . He does, however, take note of the

dynamism of visual codes that trump the rational in the form of production processes

by laying the spatial 'foundation' ahead of time, *prior* to the application of reasoned

responses.

In perhaps a practical compromise, Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) attempt to

integrate visual/spatial compositional processes into linguistic communication

practices via multimodal approaches to representation, sketching out four inter-

connected domains of practice or strata: discourse, design, production, and

distribution. Their model attempts to schematize an approach to communication that

incorporates multiple perspectives and modalities with instantiation into media. They

begin with the 'interpretive community' as context, i.e., the frame, within which

socially situated forms of knowledge and/or discourses are articulated or encoded as

communication plans, to then be discourses are articulated or encoded as

communication plans,. These instantiated designs are then distributed to and

interpreted, or decoded, as product, by the intended audience. Moreover, each stage in

the process has the potential for meaning-making that particularizes its significance as

part of the process from the 'virtual,' or imagined, to the instantiated or 'real.' This

transition exemplifies the power of human invention to articulate the world *a priori* in

substantive ways that pre-figure, or create spaces for, the application of reasoned

responses (Newman, 2002).

### Spatial design as cultural 'agency'

Spatial pre-figuring as being integral to the application of human ingenuity in the

creation of products for consumption reiterates the notion of agency in the creation of

culture via re-structuring of the natural world according to the dynamics of human

perceptions.

As previously noted by McLuhan & Fiore (1967), cultural notions of spatial

meaning have ever affected our understanding of how we as individuals maneuver in

space, physical or virtual. In what could be considered, from an aesthetic perspective,

an adaptation of Arnheim's notion that "[in] the perception of shape lies the

beginnings of concept formation" (1969, p. 27), Donna Haraway's often-cited phrase

"situated knowledges" (1991, p. 183) tacitly denotes concepts as configurative

perspectives that, in order to determine their individual meanings, must be considered

*in relation to each other* as opposed to being regarded as isolated, or universalized

stances. This understanding of multiple knowledges as both relative and finite,

reflects an awareness of the discrete interaction of structural elements within multiple,

but limited wholes ("lifeworlds" Soja, 1996, p. 1) that further undermines the

communicative efficacy of language, i.e., print, as an arbitrary system, to order ideas

based on the tacit acceptance of universal perspectives and/or generalized linguistic

categories. Haraway asserts that she is "arguing for politics and epistemologies of

location, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make

rational knowledge claims" (p. 195). This lack of universalization, i.e., the

repudiation of the "god-trick" (p. 189), as she puts it, allows for multiple

opportunities for both creative and rational human activity.

Technical writers Richard & Cynthia Selfe (1996) apply the notion of finite acts

of human invention by developing situated or particularized survival strategies in

virtual space. They start by asking the following question: "[C]an

writers...committed to [a]...changed sense of community hope to use these discursive

spaces effectively for individual and collective...action...?" (p. 346). In an effort to

formulate a workable answer, they draw on the idea of taking action within the

discrete electronic landscapes of the Internet, taking up virtual, yet temporary,

residences. In this scenario, the actors are simultaneously mobile, marginalized,

conflicted, and militant. In implementing these strategies within cyber-space, Selfe

and Selfe (1996) see mobility, marginalization, complicity, and resistance, i.e., the

sort of rhetorical interstices that would not necessarily be recognized if presented in

the form of the tendency toward absolutes indicated by linguistic categories, as

sources of agency and empowerment.

Urban planner Edward Soja (1996), however, has, in *Thirdspace*, thoroughly

delineated, the importance of human agency in *actual*, as opposed to virtual, space,

by defining it as existing in conflict with the constricting verbal binaries that

inevitably result from the application of syntactical linearity, narrative-based

constructs, and derivational reasoning onto human experience. He also encourages the

reader to "think differently about the meanings and significance ...inherent [to the]

*spatiality of human life,*" and to construct a "strategic awareness" of our

"contemporary lifeworlds at all scales, from the most intimate to the most global"

(p.1). He proposes an emphasis on spatiality as a means of creatively opening our

"geographical imaginations" (p. 1), that, in practice may parallel Wysocki's (2005)

understanding of image-representations as exhibiting 'spatial and simultaneous

logic'" (p. 57) that inherently resists both linguistic universals and arbitrary

dichotomies.

For instance, Soja adds 'spatiality' to the 'historicality/sociality' dyad that has

traditionally characterized interpretations of culture. The addition of spatiality to this

linguistic binary situates the reader in a specific, hence limited, context, allowing for

the acknowledgement of a particular perspective from which to interpret any given

historical and/or social experience.

He prefaces this argument with philosopher Henri Lefebvre's notion of a

transdisciplinary *un dialectique de triplicate* in which the "triple consciousness of the

complex linkages between space, time, and social being" are seen as being too inter-

connected to be confined to any one discipline alone, and, by what Soja describes as

Lefebvre's "deep critique of all forms of categorical, binary logic" (p.7). In

Lefebvre's critique, two terms in opposition are never enough to complete an idea

that could always be expanded upon by the introduction of a "third existential

dimension" (p. 3), or "an-Other" (p. 7), the third term necessarily intended to spatially

complicate the implied 'either-or' absolute structure of the binary.

This epistemological structuring of "thirding-as-Othering" (p. 5) thereby provides

a linguistic strategy for the creation of *configurative spaces* within which alternative

views, often closed off in the application of general-izable assumptions (Haraway's

"god-trick," 1991, p. 189) and 'either-or' logic, can be imaginatively articulated, in

the same way as the addition of a third compositional element in an artwork changes

the overall composition, as well as realigning the tensions among all constituent

elements. The addition of this third element, Soja (1996) claims, creates a "radical

openness" (p.5) that allows for meaningful communication and presumably

imaginative spatial design room to continue.

.   Soja (1996) then contrasts Thirdspace as a "distinct mode of critical spatial

awareness" with particular perspectives, the former dealing with the "concrete

materiality of spatial forms that can be empirically mapped," i.e. the 'real,' and the

latter with "thoughtful representations of human spatiality in mental, cognitive,

forms," (p. 10), i.e., the 'imagined,' describing Thirdspace as "journeys to 'real-and-

imagined'" (p. 6) (or "'realandimagined" p. 11) places, such as that "urban reality" (p.

21) known as Los Angeles.

Soja's conflation of the real with the imagined, while problematic for some

traditional rhetoricians and more so for Cartesian-based philosophers in search of

Certainty, sets the stage for Grassi's notion of ingenuity as the basis for the creation

of culture as human artifact.

*Rhetoric as Culture (and Back Again)*

According to Grassi (1980), rhetoric is not persuasion alone, but the original

metaphorical language that represents the separation of humanity from nature and

provides, not only the foundation for rational argument, but for the formation of

culture itself: "The origin of society, history, work, the arts, and metaphor...is the

*invention*, which overcomes man's difficult situation" (p. 14). The special

significance of metaphor, for Grassi, is that it allows for the human capacity to

reconnect with the objective world through the process of imaginative pattern

recognition, or "the discovery of relationships" (p. 95) among unique, yet similar

things.

It is this configurative, i.e., multi-faceted, yet spatially interconnected, power of

the imagination that provides for the perceptual arenas within which human activities,

or creative agency, may become manifest. For Grassi, the basis for the creative

imagination is the primordial allusive language of the *archai* – the imagistic first

principles - facets of a pictorial language where deductive reasoning finds its source,

but that cannot, of themselves, be discovered via deduction. In this view, the *archai*

collectively and metaphorically represent the primordial inventive sources (Grassi,

1994) from which the (con)figurative energy of human thought and culture have

evolved.

Grassi elucidates his distinction between indicative and deductive uses of language,

stating that it is "[t]he indicative or allusive (*semeinein*) speech, [that] provides the

framework within which the proof can come into existence" (1980, p. 20). This he

calls *ingenium*, or invention, which allows for the humanization of nature, i.e., that

69

allows humans to overcome their alienation from the natural world by *figuratively* constructing a social environment conducive to meeting human needs that the un-constructed natural world cannot provide.

As a means of illustrating his understanding of this original pictorial language, Grassi employs the myth of Cassandra as depicted in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. After agreeing to become Apollo's mistress in exchange for the gift of prophecy, Cassandra then rejects the god; in retaliation, he both blinds her and ensures that her prophecies will be unintelligible to the people, represented in the play by the Chorus. Whereas Cassandra's prophecies are characterized by a pictorial language on the indicative "semantic plane" (Grassi, 1980, p. 24) in which "the *simultaneous nature of the vision* [emphasis mine]…[and] the movements of time are fused," the Chorus engages in the temporal language of "expoundable rationality" (p. 22), an opposed existential dimension from which position the Chorus cannot grasp her allusive discourse *sans* explanation. Cassandra's discursive 'space' is not discernible to her audience until she enters the temporal, sequential world of causal, not figurative relationships; when she begins to ask "why?" instead of "where?" The transition from immanent observation to transcendent explanation "takes place from Cassandra's ecstatic, mantic condition to her human sphere; rational elements come to the foreground and thus provide the beginning of a dialectical relation between Cassandra and the Chorus." It should be noted here that the inter-realm shift that Cassandra must make is a spatial, if a figurative, one from "the world of allusion…into the [document-able]

70

historical framework..." (Grassi, 1980, p. 23); she must leave the configurative

spatial realm for that of chronological temporal sequencing to be heard.

In the play, Aeschylus depicts these functions of the mind as being in opposition to

one another, and essentially unable to communicate, the distinction being rooted in a

time of transition in ancient Greece where the written word began to supersede oral

traditions in the form of written laws and tragic theater (Shlain, 1998). This suggested

opposition, of orality versus literacy (Ong, 2000), and the implied communicative

strategies of each, given the current trend in cultural emphasis on communicative

modalities that are extra-verbal is becoming less well defined and needs to be re-

addressed. There is a need to integrate the two, to establish a means for combining

these significant realms, so that they can understand each other

*Rhetorical Representation (i.e., Making Things)*

Grassi's view of the problem of meaning and humanity's need to create it (1980)

and the above rhetorical attempts to reconcile the visual/spatial with the

sequential/verbal, i.e., to merge Cassandra's allusive world with the rational world of

the Chorus, resonates with some parallel instances of transition.

For example, an extension of the McLuhan & Fiore (1967) assertion that, for

humans, content cannot legitimately be separated from form, complements Soja's

assertion that the real can be combined via invention, with the imaginary – one

coming from the exterior world of nature as experience, and the other from the

interior world of creative inspiration as insight. These hybrid forms may actually

meet a burgeoning human need – a necessity to invent the necessary significant forms,

i.e. that these forms are not given or located in nature – and that this humanization process requires both human creativity and agency.

A similar instance occurs with Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) in that the *design* portion of their multimodal approach to production originates *within* the mind and changes the exterior world only as an end result. This change requires going through the process of physical instantiation based on interior form(at). Their external contribution to the transition from the mental concept to the constructed manifestation is the inclusion of physical materials as media in that instantiation, which automatically distances their final product from being solely about words.

A similar shift occurs along the lines of representation. Barthes' three messages (2004) – whether linguistic or visual/spatial - all are assumed to *reference* some aspect of the objective, exteriorized world, as often does the standard  use of language as a way to affix meaning. They do not attempt to address the issue of human perceptual dynamics in non-referential design where the interplay of non-objective elements is consciously organized within a given context so as to create a space that locates meaning *within* its structure and is not always applicable to outside references

Moreover, Arnheim's 'shapes are concepts' (1969, p. 27), when applied by Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr (2001) to web design in an attempt to generate three-dimensional cyber structures to facilitate greater ease in navigation, reiterates the tacit assumption that the human mind reads shapes, globally and intuitively, through the recognition of configurative phenomena like closure and proximity. If thinking 'differently' involves the application of certain spatial formats, then Doumont is

correct in his worries about visual design being a powerful instrument, especially if wielded by untrained hands or eyes.

Baudrillard (1983) claims that human simulations subsume real territories as in the case of the Borges' Unconscionable Maps, but does not consider that the substitute reality might function as a material instantiation of the architectonics of the human mind projected onto the natural world as a part of Arnheim's perceptual dynamics, and, as such, may be further read as a function of Grassi's metaphorical transfer of meaning from interior to exterior spaces. Disneyland, as a whole, may be an excellent sample of a simulacrum, but can the same truly be said about Los Angeles? The role of the imagination as means for adapting the natural world cannot legitimately be subsumed into the realm of illusion.

The tendency in a print/reasoning culture is to think of the imagination in terms of content rather than form. As stated above, one contribution made by Kress & Van Leeuwen is that their third stratum, that of production, forces readers to see ideas instantiated in actual materials on the physical plane, not simply as mental abstractions put down in print. Another is that their second stratum, that of design, is a function of imagination in the creation of the new, not a mere reflection of something already existing in the world. This human ability to instantiate the imaginary into the real exemplifies the power of invention to humanize the world in advance of, or prior to, or even separate from deductive reasoning or analysis.

*Conclusion*

This inclusion of an adapted form of Arnheim's (1969) visual cognition, as the deliberate correlation of sight with thought, which balances shapes and spaces, colors and forms against each other into meaningful compositions (1974) illustrates the difficulty of incorporating visual spaces into texts, the seen into the spoken. Just as with print, spaces can function as either form or content, but print as a medium is limited in its ability to create spatial constructs in the mind because of its repetitious linear structure and low-contextual modality. Like Williams' (2001) node-link design model, spatial constructs often consist of intersecting and multidirectional patterns of significance. These configurations represent a continuity of parts that yields meaning where the significant spatiality exists in *between* nodes, or within the designed structure as a whole, and is not exterior to it. It is just this sort of configurative understanding that is, at this moment, demanding to be recognized in today's fields of professional communication. This transition, being as fundamental as the transition from orality to literacy from word to print (Ong, 2000; Schlain, 1998), i.e., from science to art, will necessitate more than a cursory or cosmetic change in discussions of meaning.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## Configurative Thought -Theory and Practice

*It is clear...that Kandinsky conceived the color treatment of the room as a complex three-dimensional composition, in which the synaesthetic qualities of colors, as in paintings, had an effect on the viewer – cold, soft, light, heavy, etc. Indeed, color could play a part in the inherent relationships in an architectural interior, the "tensions" being the four walls, the ceiling and the floor, and even among various rooms.* (Poling, 1986, p. 44)

In literate cultures, where immediate experience tends to be overshadowed by the detachment of linguistic reasoning (Ong, 2000), any awareness of spatialized and/or immanent communication tends to be minimized. That is, in print, formatting of communication of any given experience is largely predetermined by the structure of the code (Goss, 1989), leaving little room for individual improvisation. However, our current transition into an electronic, post-print, age and its implied changes for the qualitative aspects of cultural discourse have the potential to allow for innovative forms of communication to restore, to a degree, some of this lost sense of spatially configured significance as exemplified by both the original function of rhetoric as oratory and the use of design in the fine arts.

In their introduction to *Contemporary Perspectives on Rhetoric*, Foss, Foss & Trapp (1985) provide their readers with the complete version of Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering *in the particular case* [emphasis mine] what are the available means of persuasion" (pp. 4-5). The extension is important because it reinforces not only the immediacy of oratory over text, but also the inherent

75

engagement in addressing an audience physically present, calling for the "fitting of traditional materials effectively into each individual, unique situation and/or audience" (Ong, 2000, p. 59). "Rhetoric was at root the art of public speaking, of oral address..." (p. 107). Still, Aristotle largely equates the purpose of rhetoric with the skill of the *rhetor* at metaphorically shaping, i.e., "bringing-before-the-eyes" (Newman, 2002, p. 1), rational argument, where, for the proto-literate audience, the use of visualization was intended to sway their belief systems via the proto-cognitive (Porter, 1992).

According to rhetorician Ernesto Grassi (1980), however, rhetoric, was and is the original language, whether situated in oratory or text, and is not limited to the *techne* of persuasion, but actually provides the foundation for rational argument and for the formation of culture itself: "The origin of society, history, work, the arts, and metaphor...is the *invention*, which overcomes man's difficult situation" (p. 14). For Grassi, the special significance of visual metaphor as *pro ommaton poiein* (i.e., "bringing before the eyes" Newman, 2002, p. 3), is that it is both linguistic *and* spatial, allowing for the human capacity for wonder at "the discovery of relationships" (p. 95) among unique, yet similar things. Functioning as such a communicative hybrid, metaphor provides the dual template for the instantiation of imagined ideas into substantive realities.

Grassi characterizes the human condition as the state of being separated from nature, emphasizing the use of rhetorical forms of speech in the creation of a modified worldview based on the fulfillment of human needs, i.e., the 'humanization'

76

of nature. Thus, for Grassi, the socio-cultural experience of humanity *per se* is contingent upon the adaptation of the natural environment to meet the human need for experiential meaning, and does not automatically coincide with the physical world as given. Hence, the human capacity for wonder and imagination allows for the successful engagement of the natural world and for the resolution of immanent tensions that exist between the human need for significance/purpose as well as for the survival demands of the physical environment.
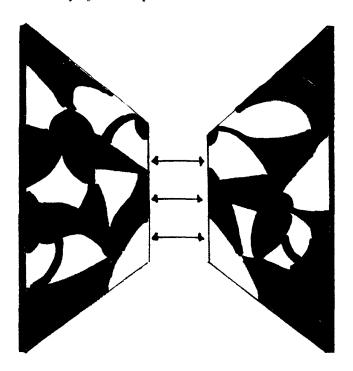
As Grassi puts it:

> The relation between wonder and the need to question emerges only if something presents itself to us as a problem: in fact no one will question what is unequivocal. It is rather what 'concerns us,' what awakens our interest, that becomes the object of question...we must find ourselves in the realm of an originary tension for our 'at-tension' to be awakened. (1994, pp. 5-6)

He further develops a distinction between deductive and indicative uses of language, claiming that rational thought is based on proofs deduced from first principles, whereas these first principles, the *archai*, are givens that cannot themselves be deduced. For Grassi, it is this "originary" (1994, p. 6) language i.e., "[t]he indicative or allusive (*semeinein*) speech [that] provides the framework within which the proof can come into existence" (1980, p. 20). This he claims is the *ingenium*, which allows humans to overcome their alienation from nature through figuratively constructing a social environment conducive to developing forms of human meaning that the rawness of the natural world alone cannot provide.

*Metaphor and the Anatomy of Meaning*

77

For Grassi, then, it is an allusive, or "pictorial" (1980, p. 22), language that best

exemplifies the understanding of rhetoric as the foundation of both philosophy and

culture. Far from representing rhetoric as a superficial skill in suasion meant to

convince a malleable audience (Porter, 1972) through the use of metaphor (Newman,

2002), rhetoric embodies a "notion of transfer and movement from inward personal

space to external domain" (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1985, p. 138). It is this process of

metaphorical transfer, then, that establishes culture, through the ability to discover

Figure 3.1:
*Anatomy of a Metaphor*



the relationships between unique, yet similar things existing both in interior, mental

space, and exterior, physical, space (Lefebvre, 1991). It is this recognition of

figurative similitude (Grassi, 1994), in which "[e]ach phenomenon is a metaphor of

the mystery of organic reality…in the underivedness of its expressions" (p. 28) that

78

allows for connection between sets of beings and the "being of beings" (p. 9), where

'being' functions as a known pattern, as an identifiable set of relationships, and not as

an internalized, metaphysical essence (Hall & Ames, 1987) contained within the

abstracted 'word.' (Shlain, 1998). Grassi claims that it is this innate ability to

recognize sets of similarities and variations that reconnects an estranged humanity

with the natural world.

The modern Cartesian emphasis on rational, deductive reasoning in the

determination of objective truth (Hall & Ames, 1987), coupled with the certainty of

mathematics and the linguistic rejection of both sensory data (Bordo, 1986) and

figurative constructions (Barthes, 2004) in making sense of the world, ensured that

Western philosophy would come to reject earlier philosophical forms (e.g. those of

the Italian Humanists and the ancient Greeks), embraced by Grassi, that tended not to

rely on logical or mechanical processes to evaluate human experience.

The pre-Socratic Greeks (c. 500-400 BCE), for example, characterized nature as

allegory based on the inter-relationships of the four worldly elements: air, earth, fire,

and water and "an 'older' secret wisdom in a figurative, imagistic form" (Grassi,

1980, p. 83). Grassi further cites the Roman philosopher Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) as

separating deductive proof from *invention*, claiming that the Greek saw the former as

having no power to generate truth. Renaissance Humanist Gianfrancesco Pico, says

Grassi, as well, indicates fantasy, and not reason, as reaching "the higher spheres of

the mind insofar as it can put at the disposal of the *ratio* [i.e., reason] and the intellect

the images it has acquired through the senses" (p. 61). Thus, for these pre-

Enlightenment philosophical approaches, there is no privileging of cognitive as existing in a purely mental space (Soja, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991) apart from perceptive, neither being the sole means for ascertaining 'truth' disconnected from 'being.'

However, this pre-modern, correlative approach to cognition was to be challenged and eventually dismissed as philosophy in the West. "Modern philosophy," states Grassi "begins with Descartes, who founded philosophy and thereby scientific thought on the *cogito* instead of the doctrine of being..." (1980, p 71) – i.e., being, defined by Grassi as an exercise in *re*-cognition of similitude - and by doing so modernism relegated these earlier forms understanding to be outside the realm of scientific certainty. In this view, logic yields truth; persuasion tends toward sophistry; the real and the figural inhabit different realms.

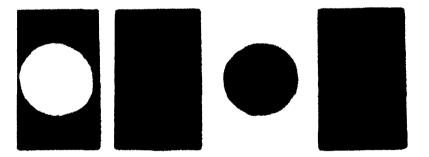Foss, Foss & Trapp (1985) reiterate this view:

The result is the belief that all reality is rational and what cannot be numerically verified is not real, knowable or worth studying...Any intuitive or precognitive feeling, according to the rational paradigm is to be dismissed and denied in favor of logical conclusions that can be observed, tested, and verified empirically. (pp. 128-9)

A good example of the western primacy of theory over experience, *"theoria"* over *"praxis"* (Hall & Ames, 1987, p 132), can be found in Deane B. Judd's introductory discussion of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Theory of Colours* (1982). Goethe's interest, as a "student of the arts..." (p. viii), was in conducting small, intimate experiments documenting the response of the human eye to effects of light and color focusing on what was perceived by the senses. For example, it is commonly known among students of color theory in aesthetics that if you stare at the image of a red

circle long enough and then stare at a white wall, the image of a green circle is produced, but this circumstance does little or nothing to confirm traditional scientific theories on reflected light. Thus, because of the prominence at the time (mid-nineteenth-century) in the West of the Newtonian theory of light waves in the creation of color, Goethe's experiments were dismissed as unscientific (and, therefore of no import); i.e., culturally speaking, the mental space, came to supersede the actual event, as if the explanation had itself become the experience.

Of course, in terms of qualitative experience, validation is largely empirical. For example, the circles in each of the figures below are exactly the same size, but may not be perceived as such because of color variations:

Figure 3.2:
*Contextual Permutations in Color and Form*



As Grassi (1994) states, "Rational thought no longer represents the originary approach to the understanding of the being of beings. In such a context being is enveloped in contradiction, in the abyss of what is rationally undefinable" (p. 9). Thus, a strictly rationalistic view of human activity cannot take into account the complexity of creative needs, such as psychic harmony (Ong, 2000) and/or the balancing of

repetition and contrast in design (Wingler, 1969), that Grassi sees as being necessitated by the human condition. Nor can the language of science (Graham, 1985), in its search for generalize-able and universally applicable principles, account for the particularities and "allatonceness" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p 63) associated with various figural relationships. Such a-rational elements are by definition eliminated from the process of deductive reasoning, and are by their very structure inherently irreducible to a purely cognitive understanding of the world (Lefebvre, 1991).

## Rhetoric as Evolution

Grassi's claim that the ingenuity invested in 'humanizing' the natural world is the basis for philosophy parallels the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz in that both emphasize human actualization, i.e., *energeia* (Newman, 2002, p. 22), in the creation of culture. Geertz (1973) defines culture as an "organized system of significant symbols" (p. 46) by which humans situate/orient themselves *within* experience. His contention is that, contrary to popular understanding, biological evolution into human form did not precede that of culture, but that human evolution itself is an outcome of the need for cultural formation. "By submitting himself to governance by symbolically mediated programs for producing artifacts, organizing social life, or expressing emotions, man determined, if unwittingly, the culminating stages of his own biological destiny. Quite literally, though quite inadvertently, he created himself" (p. 48). For Geertz, this sense of agency in the construction "lived spaces" (Soja, 1996, p. 10), is central to the development of humanity.

Conversely, any mental conception of the world, any abstracted understanding (Soja, 1996) based on the uncritical mapping of logical analyses, mathematics, and/or scientific method onto experience without specific regard for the spatially significant inter-relationships that might thus be created risks becoming an exercise in the 'blind' imposition of rationalized purposes, and/or mental space, onto the unplanned immediacy of experience , i.e., lived space(s) (Soja, 1996), denying a more reciprocal interaction with the natural irregularities of the world. "This *modus operandi* has...consequences inasmuch as the space of the mathematician, like any abstraction, is a powerful means of action, of domination over matter – and hence of destruction" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 299). Thus, to relegate the creation of culture to reasoning alone is to limit the significance of the inclusive character of humanity itself in meeting its need for self-definition. As Edward Hall (1981) observes: "Western man has created chaos by denying that part of his self that integrates while enshrining the parts that fragment" (p. 9), or that "[c]ulture is man's medium..." (p. 16), by which he defines and is defined.

If Geertz is correct, and the development of culture is a continuing by-product of human evolution, and not just its terminus, this seems to imply some form of innate transfer or projection of spatialized meaning from the structure of the human psyche itself onto the outside world, a largely subliminal but actualizing process, a 'transformation' affected through the interplay of human-generated dynamics onto a multiplicity of environmental data. As Grassi (1980) states, "The origin of human cognition is analogical knowledge whereby the soul transfers meaning to

83

appearances" (p. 98). This assumption of spatialized significance, i.e. meaning discovered by acknowledging the similitude and difference of juxtaposed internal and external structures, can neither be fully reconciled with nor summarily reduced to the purely cognitive nor emotive functions of the need for human psyche.

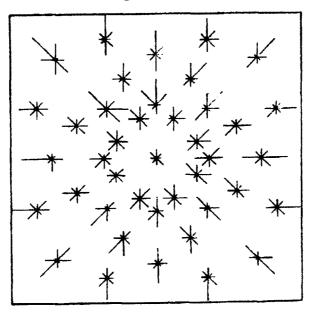As Henri Lefebvre (1991) defines the mathematic analysis of the cognitive:

The most pernicious of metaphors is the analogy between mental space and a blank sheet of paper...This is a metaphor used by a large number of authors...What can be clearly seen by reading such authors is the way in which technicizing, psychologizing, or phenomenologically oriented approaches displace the analysis of social space by immediately replacing it with a geometric – neutral, empty, blank – mental space.(pp. 297, 298)

The concern here is that Grassi's notion of invention (1980), like any pre-modern, correlative approach to cognition, may be rationalized and/or technocized into the realm of proto-philosophic probability by a predominantly abstracted and/or linearized worldview (Ong, 2000; Shlain, 1998), in the same way that Huxley decried the generality of the word 'force' with regard to characterizing the realities of war [See Chapter 1].

This concern, coupled with the Cartesian predilection for certainty, tacitly reduces lived experiences to distanced concepts (Bordo, 1986). For Grassi's understanding of rhetoric (1980) as experienced space to be adequately considered, the significance of spatial arrangement to human understanding must be acknowledged facet as part of the role of *ingenium* in all forms of human communication.

In terms of processing experience, Arnheim (1974) speaks of "perceptual forces" (p. 16), or the dynamic inter- relationships among constituent elements in aesthetics, as already influencing human experience within any given context prior to the introduction of representation. Figure 3.3, originally from Gunnar Goude and Inga Hjortzberg, *En Experimentell Prövning,* etc. Stockholm University, 1967, is an illustration of such perceptual dynamics. (In fact, it is interesting to note the parallel applications of perceptual psychology with the concrete concerns of the

Figure 3.3:
*Arnheim's "Roving Disk"*



physicist, in which 'forces,' i.e., intrinsic spatial relationships, must also be of primary interest). In reference to perceptual balance exemplified by a "roving disk" (p. 15), a pattern of black cross-hatched clusters arranged in radial symmetry upon a white ground.

Arnheim says of these forces:

They are assumed in both, as both psychological and physical forces. Psychologically, the pull of the disk exists in the *experience* [emphasis mine] of any person who looks at it. Since these pulls have a point of attack a direction, and an intensity, they meet the conditions established by physicists for physical forces. For this reason, psychologists speak of psychological forces, even though to date not many of them have applied the term, as I do here, to perception. (p. 16)

In summary, the intersection of Grassi's understanding of *ingenium* with Geertz's theory of evolving culture, and Arnheims's application of perceptual forces maps as a tripartite assemblage of parallel instances (or, to use Soja's term, an example of *trialectics,* 1996, p. 10) that would suggest that not only *do* humans actively construct their world, but *must* construct it in order to fulfill their needs for both meaning and survival. As does the study of configurative design, access to the 'virtuality' of electronic formatting simply highlights the rhetorical limits of print to successfully craft human response to contingent circumstance

*Searching for Spatial Significance*

Although Grassi (1980) continues to emphasize the primacy of the relation of 'language' to invention in rhetoric, there is ample reason to doubt that he intends to narrowly reduce the term to Shlain's (1998) alphabet. When discussing the existence of the *archai* in terms of Aeschylus's portrayal of Cassandra, the accursed prophetess, Grassi says that "[s]he speaks only in images and symbols" (1980, p. 23) suggesting that his use of the phrase 'indicative language' may include configurative aspects as well. Fellow rhetorician Kenneth Burke's definition of rhetoric expands on this notion. As Foss, Foss & Trapp (1985) note, from Burke's point of view "rhetoric includes...spoken and written discourse [but] it also includes...works of art such as

86

literature and painting" (p. 160). Similarly, in his discussion of the philosophy of Italian Humanist Giambattista Vico, Grassi notes Vico's defense of the *topoi* as "the grounds that the premises from which conclusions are drawn have to be 'perceived' to begin with...[T]hey come from the *ingenium* [invention] and not the *ratio* [reasoning]" (1980, p. 45). In other words, the *topoi* are themselves exemplary of the "originary" (Grassi, 1994, p. 6) *archaic* spaces from which deductive argument derives its source.

Grassi also claims that the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy determined in classical antiquity was to "establish a union between knowledge and passion...that can be reached neither through the external emotive disguise of rational 'content,' nor through pouring rational content into an emotive 'form'" (1980, pp. 27-8). Thus, over-emphasis on reasoning in the pursuit, or pinning down, of knowledge yields co-dependence on reified abstractions as a basis for understanding and, consequently, to the rejection of direct, holistic engagement with the world. "The logical process," he says, "...programmatically *abstracts* the here and now of beings, while we, in fact, passionately experience them in concrete situations" (Grassi, 1994, p. 16). For Grassi, then, the credibility of the reasoning process cannot be legitimately split from that of the pathos of experience, any more than content can be arbitrarily separated from form.

However, to read this assertion as an 'either-or' opposition of knowledge vs. passion, between cognitive and emotive human capacities in the creation of knowledge, is a mis-reading of Grassi's intent. By qualifying that neither can entirely

contain nor be fully expressed in terms of the other, Grassi seems to suggest the need

for conjuring a third element – that of *perceptual* ordering in "the discovery of

relationships" (1980, p. 95) among unique yet similar things. In this sense, he implies

the open-endedness of configurative design as experiential frame, where "the worn-

out words…, 'either-or,' will be replaced by the one word …, 'and.'" (Poling, 1986 p.

30, from Kandinsky's "Yesterday, Tomorrow, Today," April, 1923). This addition of

"an-Other alternative" (Soja, 1996. p. 7) tacitly designates knowledge as both the

creation and maintenance of awareness, as a metaphoric hybrid contextually related to

the two originally opposed terms, cognitive + emotive, but one that provides a unique

third perspective on each.

Goodman (1978) puts it this way "…[T]ruth of statements and rightness of

descriptions, representations, exemplifications, expressions - of design, drawing,

diction, rhythm – is primarily a matter of fit: fit to what is referred to in one way or

another…or to *modes and manners of organization* [emphasis mine] " (p. 126). Thus,

it is the arrangement of inter-relationships of particular elements within a given

format that determines the unique significance of any instance of experiential

meaning.

### Spatial significance in the arts.

Grassi's notion of *ingenium* as a spatial transfer of metaphoric meaning is

paralleled by the existence of significance, i.e., meaning, in the fine arts. Like rhetoric,

the arts are commonly categorized as existing outside the boundaries of the rational,

as mere ornamentation, not amenable to objective-ized verification. As such, they

may bear a structural relationship to Grassi's characterization of Cassandra's 'semantic speech' in that they also offer insight into the investigation of unique, yet similar things.

Art critic Harold Rosenberg (1972) puts it this way:

Pre-scientific knowledge is also knowledge, involving in incipient or inchoate

form most of the activities in which science is engaged, such as naming and classifying, numbering and measuring, describing and explaining. And all these aspects are but the humanistic yearning in man's nature to establish a *legitimate place* [my emphasis] for himself in some cosmic scheme from which he feels he has been estranged. (p. *xv*)

Drawing at least in part on the writings of Bauhaus designers, artist Robert Gillam Scott (1951), notes that, sometime during the preceding century, the term 'design' morphed from a noun, as in a description of patterned wallpaper, to a verb or an activity; this is also currently the case with written 'composition,' reflected in the shift in composition pedagogy from *product* to *process* (Trimbur, 2004). This transition in understanding creativity, says Scott, indicates a recognition that ""[d]esigning is a basic human act" (p. 1). In composition, either spatial or linguistic, the creative agency of the doer, or doing, is emphasized over the 'finality' of the outcome.

Similarly, Scott defines the process of design as follows: "Designing means creative action that fulfills its purpose" (p. 1) in which to 'create' means using the human faculty of the imagination to bring about something new in response to satisfying some human need. He suggests that the reader substitute the phrase "meaning in the form" (p. 3) for the somewhat ambiguous term 'expression.'

Unfortunately, catch-all terms like 'expression' and 'creation' in discussion of the arts continue to be often left loosely or ill-defined.

For Goodman (1976), however, 'expression' denotes precisely "that which is metaphorically exemplified" (p. 85) in which the requisite sampling is of sets of labels, or schemata, verbal or extra-verbal, stored in memory that are then subject to transfer to, or projection *on*-to, the outer realm of experience in order to construct meaning. This parallels Grassi's notion of the spatial transfer of metaphoric meaning onto experience as a means of ordering and is a common factor with Scott's definition of creation of something new, i.e., a hybrid, as essential to design. It should be emphasized that this transfer of meaning is both structural and spatial, in which the metaphorical meaning lies in the inter-relationships among the labels themselves perceived as a holistic shape, or gestalt (Arnheim, 1969).

The second condition of Scott's definition, i.e., determining whether the purpose has been fulfilled, involves the consideration of four causes. The First Cause is the recognition of the need itself, which is then followed by the Formal Cause, or mental picture and/or solution constructed in response to meeting that need. This is followed by the Material Cause, i.e., the material instantiation of the mental image as physical object or circumstance in the world, according to the limitations of the Technical Cause, and/or skills-set necessary to facilitate that instantiation. This definition successfully bridges the gap between human conception and adaptation of nature as designed context, thus connecting imagination in the mind with materialization in the world

In contrast, Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (1968), also discusses 'Four Causes' for acquiring knowledge of a thing that involve the combination of material (instantiation in the physical world) and form (or essence), agency (what force created it), and final result (what it brings about). The word 'form,' or Metaphysical Essence, here, however, varies from Scott's use of the term; for Scott, as for Grassi, the Formal Cause is not metaphysical Essence, but human-generated ingenuity, the agency being the result of applied imagination.

For both Scott (1951) and Grassi (1980), imagination and pattern recognition are the ordering factors that allow for drawing perceptual connections between related sets of things, as a function of the "primacy of 'topical' philosophy..." where "the theory of finding arguments" supersedes "'rational' philosophy" (Grassi, p. 8) and not as a metaphysical essence (Hall & Ames, 1987). Grassi claims that it is this innate ability to recognize sets of similarities and variations that reconnects an estranged humanity with the natural world.

For Bauhaus artist Wassily Kandinsky, *"form is the outward expression of inner meaning."* The limiting aspects of form are then of two kinds: material object, or external experience, and non-material abstraction, or inner vision, where "the task of limiting surfaces (the outer aspect) is well performed if the inner meaning is fully expressed" (1977, p. 29). This process of shaping artifacts in the material world according to the dictates of spatial understandings contained within the human imagination is inherent to the practice of design in the fine arts.

*A word about art history and means of expression.*

Pursuant with the above theme that changes in the relevance of aesthetic design in communication are linked with the transition away from written and/or print culture, it may be constructive to note the evolution of fine arts in the West from the nineteenth- to the early twentieth-centuries. The advent of typographic culture in Europe begins with the "invention of alphabetic letterpress print in fifteenth-century Europe" (Ong, 2000, p. 116) and continues into the latter part of the nineteenth-century when technological changes (e.g. the telegraph, etc.) began to make inroads into its dominance as a communicative form. It is curious to note that post-Renaissance art of roughly the same period was similarly dominated by representational, or 'realistic,' forms, as opposed to the spectral stylization of souls in heaven that characterized earlier medieval works (Bordo, 1986) [See below.]. The 'Renaissance Window' provided the viewer with an *imitation* of the natural world depicted from a fixed perspective and received passively by the eye as a "pattern of light rays" (Goodman, 1976, p. 6) complete with the constructed depth of scientific perspective. This approach to the arts nicely parallels the fixed modern, rationalistic perspective of the Enlightenment from which reasoning was assumed to emanate, and experience to be witnessed. The thinker/viewer was characterized as a fixed central locus situated outside the world of flux, "freeplay" (Derrida,1970 p. 224). and/or innovation that characterizes the subjective rearrangements of human ordering.

The images below illustrate the process of realism in the arts. *A* represents a late medieval approach to depiction of human culture where the forms are encased in architectural structures (i.e., the macrocosm) and the emphasis is on surface pattern

(https://www.pinterest.com/barttrje/art-medieval-500-1500/) as part of St. Albens

Psalter. St Godehard's church, Hildesheim (c. 1120-1145) *B*, however, painted by the

early Renaissance artist Giotto (c. 1267 - 1337) (wikipaintings.org/en/giotto/the-

marriage-of-thevirgin) demonstrates the increased realism and greater freedom from

architectural, i.e., psychological, restrictions as well as a more naturalized depiction

of the human form.

Figure 3.4:
*Medieval vs. Proto-Renaissance Images*



https://www.pinterest.com/barttrje/art-medieval-500-1500/
www.wikipaintings.org/en/giotto/the-marriage-of-the-virgin#
supersized-artistPaintings-192826

However, just as technological change has come to challenge the power of print,

so did it eventually challenge the hegemony of the representational image in the fine

arts. The camera made portraiture a more democratic process, and the Impressionists

found themselves freed to experiment with color, light, and composition.

As Williams (1986) puts it:

Scientific discoveries paralleled the social upheavals affecting nineteenth-
century art. In 1839, for example, Louis Daguerre in Paris and William Henry
Fox Talbot in London demonstrated their separate inventions of photographic

cameras. Photography soon freed painters and printmakers from the necessity of making mere records of people, places, and events. No longer having to copy nature, some artists ventured into the realm of personal expression. Photography also introduced a fresh vision into European art. The camera lens produced cropped compositions and oblique sight lines, novel designs which were studied and replicated by artists. (p. 10).

These experiments with the *interpretation* of nature, in turn, unleashed a veritable flood of imaginative innovations in the arts. For example, Rosenberg (1970) in discussing the role of primitivism in twentieth-century quotes Picasso as having said, "When I was a child, I drew like Michelangelo. It took me years to learn to draw like a child"; or in the case of Jean Dubuffet: "In acquiring his 'crudeness,' he has as models not only Picasso, but Expressionists, Dadaists, Surrealist 'Exquisite Corpse' drawings, aspects of Miró and Ernst, and – above all – [Bauhaus painter] Klee" (p. 81).

The rapid transition from Expressionism to Surrealism to Cubism challenged Western assumptions about notions such as representation and depiction (Goodman, 1976) which eventually produced an attempt to marry technical materials with "'graphic' basic elements" (Kandinsky, 1979, p. 21) that became the basis for the Bauhaus.

For Kandinsky and the other artists and architects of the Bauhaus, however, this new freedom to *interpret* nature from a uniquely human perspective was only a step in the process of the metaphorical transfer of meaning from the inner psyche of imagination to the outer world of matter. 'Design' itself reflected the meaningful arrangement of non-objective, non-representational elements to affect this transfer

94

from inner realization to public eye. For the designers of the Bauhaus, "[t]he content of a work of art finds its expression in the composition, that is, in the sum of the tensions inwardly organized in the work" (Kandinsky, 1979. p. 33), in which the balance between repetition and contrast is created through the interaction with and arrangement of constituent elements within a given format. Such an understanding of shared constructions of meaning is contrary to what Ong refers to as the "unreflective chirographic [written] mentality" (2000, p. 27), its fondness for uncomplicated categories and its inherent distancing from immediate context.

To clarify, the Bauhaus was a school of art dedicated to both design and function. As such, it represented a fundamental break (that may in some ways parallel Derrida's "event" in elucidating the "structurality of structure"1970, p. 223-224) from the understanding of art as portraiture and/or imitation that had characterized the previous period of representational-ism that originated with the 'fixed' perspective of the 'Renaissance Window.' Largely because of technological changes in available materials such as steel and glass developed in the machine age, the members of the Bauhaus rejected the imitative forms implicit to this earlier perspective in favor of the utility and beauty of *intrinsic* design. According to its precepts, the principles of design and composition are at work in every representational work of art, as they are in any abstract or nonobjective one, and may be applied as well to human interactions with nature. They set about to design an environment that would provide both greater social equity and an increase in aesthetic awareness on the part of the public (Wingler, 1969). Design as it is being used here implies that in order to achieve a given purpose,

applicable resources for meaning (elements) are spatially configured (arranged) in relation to each other within a given context (canvas, building, culture) is such a way as to transform both content and form into a unified composition that is cognitively, emotionally and socially meaningful.

## Culture as "Lived" Space

The major points of the above discussion include the assumption that culture may be characterized as 'lived' space, to use Soja's term (1996), based on the common practico-sensory experience (Lefebvre, 1991) of its members, in response to specific material and cultural contexts. In this sense, the 'humanization' of nature, described by Grassi (1980) and echoed by Geertz (1973) and Arnheim (1969), involves both functional and rhetorical processes in order to meet both physical and perceptual needs. As part of these processes, the visual/spatial elements contained in the arts run parallel to the verbal elements found in traditional persuasive forms of rhetoric, in that neither rhetoric nor art makes any claims to capturing objective truth, thereby introducing Soja's 'third' element – that of Arnheim's non-objective perceptual ordering – to the mix. Rhetoricians and artists both construct worldviews and/or perspectives whose meanings are self-contained, i.e., existing, as with Cassandra's skewed prophecies, outside of the goal-oriented, temporal realm, as are Grassi's *archai*. These "originary" (1994, p. 6) metaphoric sites may be made to serve either as lenses for critiquing the socio-cultural worldview of a given time or as launch pads for critical articulation of the undefined space of a given environment, so that culture itself may come to be understood as a human-generated art form. As Lefebvre puts it,

96

"the moment of emergence of an awareness of space and its production" (1991, p. 123) was the 'modern' movement in the arts  known as the Bauhaus, in which the human need for the creation of culture from nature was made manifest as design (Wingler, 1969).

## Instantiation of Configurative Dynamics

Based on the above ideas, the following project is predicated on imaginative engagement with a humanized portion of the environment, e.g. the interior of a building on campus, and is intended to illustrate the potential contributions to rhetoric of a shift in focus from linguistic content to configurative form(atting). The lobby of Skeen Hall will serve as such a model for an interpretation The purpose is to demonstrate the effect of designed spatiality on the qualitative experience of the viewer or inhabitant of the immediate environment. This shift in focus from mental to physical space (Lefebvre, 1991) allows for greater inclusion of configurative elements into newly available technological formats.

In an effort to connect traditional literary criticism with configurative modes of critique, this study will methodologically rely on two general frameworks: (1) Foss's (2004) generative criticism, and (2) Kandinsky's analytical drawing process as it relates to his correspondence theory of color and form (Poling, 1986). Comparison of these two frameworks will effectively demonstrate the inherently parallel but metaphorically inverse nature of verbal and extra-verbal forms of creating significance in communication.

### Foss: Generating the frame

97

To return for a moment to Goodman (1978), "...[T]ruth of statements and rightness of descriptions, representations, exemplifications, expressions - of design, drawing, diction, rhythm – is primarily a matter of *fit* [my emphasis] " (p. 126). Any instance, then, of application of the 'fit-ness' of frame-work to content, would presumably be relevant to those forms of rhetorical criticism that attempt to apply formally established templates or recognized scenarios for analysis of various sorts of artifacts and/or pieces of experience in the search for significant correlations.

Foss (2004) defines rhetorical criticism as the human attempt to glean significance from symbolic systems through conjoining selected formats to specific content. For example, she discusses several critical frames meant to assess the significance of a text or artifact. One is neo-Aristotelian, involving the application of the five canons of classical rhetoric, originally developed to critique oratory, but now used primarily as lenses to analyze 'texts.' Other examples include fantasy theme, where aspects of literary analysis, such as settings, characters and actions are utilized for the same purpose; another is narrative criticism that applies events, time order, and causal relationships to evaluate meaning. However, it should be noted that Foss in no way claims that the frame dictates the critique; for each combination, the appropriateness of the frame is determined by the *accuracy of fit* to the data, i.e., the given text and/or artifact, where meaning is determined by whatever significant correlations may then be discovered.

However, Foss's critical frame that most closely resembles Kandinsky's analytical drawing process is generative criticism. According to Foss (2004), generative

criticism allows researchers to "generate units of analysis from encountering a particular 'rhetorical artifact' that...seems unusual in some way" (p. 412), i.e., an artifact that would engage the imagination in the developing a unique rhetorical frame for effective critique, thus allowing for new perspectives to be developed based on an hybridized experience. This approach is particularly effective when artifacts do not consist of nameable objects, but can also be non-representational, i.e., "shapes and colors" (Barthes, 2004, p. 154) that become meaningful solely based on immanent experience of them.

As stated above, generative criticism begins with encountering an unusual artifact. This approach, as was the case with Wysocki's Maeght CD (2001), encourages what amounts to an act of reconnaissance, exploring the given piece - in this particular case, the lobby of the rotunda of Skeen Hall - focusing not on the building as positive (i.e., the 'black' space) but on the dynamics of the negative space enclosed within it (i.e., the 'white' space), seen as a design element in and of itself..

The next step involves coding the artifact by identifying the intensity and frequency (Foss, 2004, p. 414) of the major features, where the former refers to those aspects of the artifact that seem dominant or significant, and the latter to repeated patterns or motifs that further characterize it. Again, identifying these two aspects allows the interpreter to develop an overall understanding of the artifact based primarily on observation of, and personal response to, its unique character as the basis for developing an appropriate critical frame. This step, in effect, allows for the

distinguishing of real and perceived relationships that are integral to the particular artifact

Foss (2004) then suggests "search[ing] for an already existing way or conventional to explain the artifact" (p. 417). This step is intended to examine already existing critical frames based on traditional theories that might be amenable to interpreting the particular aspects of the artifact. This process both excludes the possibility that any of these could adequately account for the given curiosity, as well as helping elucidate the extent of its uniqueness. As previously discussed, Swales (1998) and O'Toole (2004) have provided means for interpreting architectural spaces as communicative modalities in terms of positive space and cultural functions; Kandinsky's methods of creatively interpreting the inter-relationships of objects in space offers an alternative approach.

In order to generate a working frame or schema, Foss recommends revisiting the initial codes and sorting through them to find further categories in common. The purpose of this step is to develop a "framework for organizing...insights about the artifact" (2004, p. 419). In a traditional textual analysis this would involve sorting out similarities in verbal content, placing likes with likes, and labeling related coherent categories as sources of meaning. In the case of this project, however, the same process would include classifying dominant visual/spatial characteristics and inter-related patterns or motifs. The ultimate goal of the above processes is to develop a research question that conjoins a working schema with the artifact itself in order to identify significant correlations.

According to Foss (2004), it then becomes necessary to recode the artifact in the context of the schematic framework in order to "enter conversations in the communications field about the ideas covered by the schema" (p. 427). In this instance, however, the key concepts would be the configurative relationships contained within the overall composition yet to be identified through Kandinsky's analytical drawing process (Poling, 1986).

*Kandinsky: Meaning in shapes and colors.*

Foss's approach to generating an original frame based on observation and coding of the unique composition of an artifact parallels Kandinsky's delineation of the aesthetic process as being both analytic and synthetic (Poling, 1986), both conceptual and creative. As part of his approach to aesthetic critique, analytical drawing becomes "an investigation of the structural relationships among objects," in order to demonstrate the "analytical design process in a clear, step-by-step manner" (Poling, 1986, p. 107). As part of the process, still lifes are interpreted "not [only as] the external, material forms, but [by] their [perceived] inner forces or tensions" (Poling, 1986, p. 31) In other words, it is the perceived interplay of the internal tensions created by the arrangement of content within any given contextual frame that determines the significance of the experience. Just as Foss's generative frame is intended to categorize and contextualize the characteristic aspects of a text or artifact, so Kandinsky's exercises are intended to identify and delineate both the dominant intensity and repetitive frequency of motifs observed in a given still-life.

The analytical drawing process itself involves three stages: (1) simplification, (2) analysis, and (3) transformation, that represent a progressive transition from analysis of content to creative interpretation, or generative synthesis, of tensions inherent within that form.

The first stage is to create a simplified but realistic depiction of the object or objects in space based on "simple repetitive forms depicted as flat outline drawings...consisting of a few lines representing the axes of the forms and demonstrating the relations between the horizontals, the verticals, and the diagonals" (Poling, 1986, p. 114). The second is the development of a "tension diagram" (Poling p. 118) identifying the real and perceived interrelationships of the simplified elements in linear forms, solid lines for the actual objects and dotted lines for those perceptual forces existing as "implicit connections between key points in the representation" (Poling, p. 115). The third stage is that of imaginative synthesis, or genesis, characterized by the transformation of the perceived inner tensions into "freer abstract solutions" (Poling, 1986, p. 120), including color, to identify and enhance the major visual themes. This last stage provides the imaginative and/or generative aspects in interpreting a given artifact.

As Poling describes Kandinsky's process: "Generally speaking, the analytical drawings are geometrical simplifications and abstractions from the motif...But their distinctive characteristics are the translation of the analytical observations into dynamic graphic elements and their synthesis of these features into the schema" (pp. 125-126).

After selecting the interior of the lobby of Skeen Hall as the curious artifact, the

initial coding process is addressed by its conventional rendering, i.e., realistic, yet

simplified. Developing a conceptual schema is addressed by Kandinsky's second step

in the process, that of analysis, in which the interplay of perceptual tensions (Poling,

1986), is used to create schematized designs reflecting the inner tensions created by

the interrelationships among the architectural features.

For coding in detail, Kandinsky's third step, that of transformation, or

"translation" (Poling, 1986. p. 120), builds on the previous visual/spatial analysis. It

will create, or synthesize, complete designs as independent works based on the

imaginative interpretation of the original designed space in order to materialize the

"*main tension*" (Poling. p. 25) or most intensely perceived element as well as motifs

within said design.  At this point, Kandinsky's correspondence theory – perceptual

forces existing between color and form – "colors and angles, curves, and basic

geometric shapes" (Poling, p. 23), i.e., the correspondence of colors and lines,

becomes relevant to the instantiation process in that it provides both a substantive and

theoretical basis for purposes of interpretation.

Kandinsky's interest in color is both complex and three-dimensional (Poling, 1986,

p. 44). Color, for Kandinsky (1979) is a dynamic principle, and/or a perceptual force

(Arnheim, 1974), as interpreted by the human eye and is directly connected to lines

and, in particular, angles. His correspondence theory combining both shapes and

colors is as follows:

Kandinsky identifies an acute (i.e., sharp-pointed) angle, associated with the shape

of an equilateral triangle, with the color yellow. Conversely, an obtuse (i.e., blunt or

rounded) angle, he identifies with blue. This yellow-blue opposition is the basis for

the remander of the theory.

Yellow he characterizes as 'eccentric,' in that it is perceived by the human eye as

moving away from the center of the form and toward the viewer, expanding beyond

the boundaries of the shape. Blue he characterizes as 'concentric,' shrinking toward

the center of the form and away from the viewer, leaving the boundaries of the shape

unchallenged:

> ...If two circles are drawn and painted respectively yellow and blue, brief
> concentration will reveal in the yellow a spreading movement out from the centre,
> and a noticeable approach to the spectator. The blue, on the other hand, moves in
> upon itself, like a snail retreating into its shell, and draws away from the spectator.
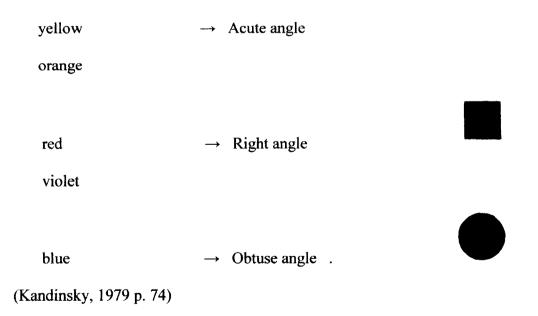> (Kandinsky, 1977, pp. 36-37).

He then provides a third element to complicate the initial pairing. A right, or 90

degree angle is perceived as neutral, and moves neither forward nor back. Kandinsky

classifies the right angle as red, and associates it with the shape of a square. Red, as

do gray and green, represents the neutral buffer between the fundamental color

opposition (eccentric-concentric) of yellow-blue. "Kandinsky designated this as the

greatest opposition, comparable only to the opposition of white [vertical] and black

[horizontal]" (Poling, 1986, p. 47). Thus, through his correspondence theory,

Kandinsky incorporates the dual ideas of space and movement into his two-

dimensional works

From there, he develops his three primary perceptual forms: the yellow triangle,

the blue circle, and the red square (Kandinsky, 1979). Note that Kandinsky is *not*

saying that these forms *must* be presented in these colors to be valid examples of

design, but that if the color-forms relationship is changed, so will the inner tensions of

the design be changed.

It is also true, however, that as an acute angle is widened toward the 90 degree

angle, it combines with the red to produce orange, or when a right angle is widened

toward the obtuse blue, it becomes purple.

Thus it follows:

Figure 3.5:
*Related Theory of Shape and Color*


yellow                    →  Acute angle

orange



red                       →  Right angle

violet



blue                      →  Obtuse angle   .

(Kandinsky, 1979 p. 74)

It further follows, then, that combining the analytical drawing process with

correspondence color theory generates as experiential frame a three-dimensional

105

and/or architectural interaction among constituent elements within a two-dimensional format. This combination will help to reveal the design process as consisting of the arrangement of a series of perceptual forces (Arnheim, 1974) within a given format, such as a building interior, based on human imagination in order to create significance.

## The Project

The following research question is intended to provide the opportunity to engage Kandinky's exercises as a rhetorical, and therefore a significant process by critiquing an architectural space as an example of human meaning-making.

*Research question*: How can the experience of the first-floor lobby of the rotunda of Skeen Hall on the NMSU campus be aesthetically interpreted as humanized meaning through the application of configurative design?

The entire process will be as follows:

- Photograph the interior lobby of Skeen Hall from several different angles.

- Select three of the most successful photographs representing different viewpoints of the interior space.

- Convert these to black and white.

- Create three simplified line drawings using opaque media on 11"x 14"Bristol board.

- Use a tracing paper overlay and transparent medium for the analysis of real and imagined spatial tensions so that the original drawing can still be seen.

- Use a tracing paper overlay and transparent media for the third stage using Kandinsky's analytical drawing technique to identify the main tension and his theory of the correspondence of color and form to determine what colors are appropriate to that tension.

- Reproduce all three stages in 8.5"x 11" format that may be included in the text as examples of materialized space.

As previously stated, the process outlined above involves a deliberate transition from analysis to synthesis in the interpretation of objects in space and may provide insight into the workings of the human imagination in humanizing natural space (Grassi, 1980). It does this through the application of aesthetic design principles in the development of significant composition, based on the abstraction of tensions in nature coupled with the dynamics of human perception. The resulting works will correspond to the interplay of spatial dynamics operating within the interior of the lobby of Skeen Hall as a humanized space.

This proposal, however, does deviate from Kandinsky's work at the Bauhaus, in that his application of analytical drawing, although engaging the intervening 'in-between' spaces, was predominately directed toward the dynamics of positive objects in space (i.e. still life/black space), as opposed to interiorized spaces (i.e., areas sculpted by human intent/white space), albeit while engaging the positive structuring elements enclosing it, that is being proposed here.

Just as Foss recommends re-sorting through the initial verbal codes in order to find common categories to generate a working schema, in this instance, the key concepts

would be the configurative relationships contained within the overall composition to be identified through Kandinsky's analytical drawing process (Poling, 1986). Since these relationships of negative space may be as easily recognized through the identification of similarities and differences as those of positive space, this shift in focus doesn't significantly affect the process of analysis and synthesis.

Similarly, 'space' itself, when treated as a curious artifact, represents a shift in practice from its accepted cultural function, as an area for directed activity (Swales,1998)., toward a more intuitive and/or non-inferential apprehension of the meaning of any 'lived' or inhabitable place (Soja, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991). The natural human tendency of any general researcher to apply his or her own cultural assumptions as working frames or lenses to ascertain the meaning of an artifact-de-contextualized-from-its-site-of-origin is a hazard freely acknowledged by archaeologists (Cordell & Plog, 1979), one that must be conscientiously countered by careful observation and assessment of the *specifics* of the given artifact *in situ* (Scott, 1951), the fundamental significance of which may only be revealed by stripping away any surface understanding. These same considerations come into play, not just to conclusions derived by the researcher, but also to the media chosen to convey those conclusions to a wider audience. So, within the context of this project, space itself serves as both subject and medium through which to convey experiential humanized meaning.

Within the context of rhetoric, this exercise is intended to facilitate cultural awareness of all forms of human-generated meaning including the designed spatiality

of the immediate environment. This awareness may then facilitate an increased

participation of configurative forms within various forms of the geography of human

communication.

## Significance of Configurative Rhetoric

This study is intended to expand upon and/or re-hydrate current notions of

communication to include configurative design elements that are already

spontaneously appearing, although not necessarily with the requisite consciousness,

within composition pedagogy, technical writing, rhetoric, and cultural theory. It is

further intended to complicate the popular understanding of 'rhetoric' as the *techne* of

persuasion rather than as a full experiential engagement with the creation of culture,

as Grassi (1980) asserts, and to characterize perception + agency as the basis for both

aesthetics and culture as designers and artists such as Kandinsky (1979) have

understood them:

> Disturbances originating from within are of a different character; they are brought
> about by the human being himself and, therefore, find in him their appropriate
> foundation. This foundation is not the capacity to observe the street through the
> fragile..."pane of glass," but consists of being able to enter the street. There, the
> receptive eye and the receptive ear transform the slightest vibrations into
> impressive experiences. Voices arise from all sides, and the world rings. (p. 28)

The assertion that culture is a constructed reality generated by the human need for

meaning and existing separately from nature (i.e., *rhetorical* culture conceived as a

first principle from which to deduce inferences) creates a curious parallel between

rhetoric and cultural studies, on the one hand, and art (or visual philosophy) and art

criticism, on the other This parallel may provide primary communicators with access

109

to the sort of configurative critique presented by the design principles of the Bauhaus as an alternative to the relying solely on rational and/or literary forms.

Beyond this, to the extent that notions of configurative design continue to be introduced into traditional communicative practices, the customary subordination of form to content will become, not only harder to sustain, but more and more difficult to justify, as the continued emphasis on content as de-contextualized data, in effect, greatly accelerates the fragmenting of experience (Hall, 1981).The great advantage of the notion that "[s]hapes are concepts" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 27) is that, as Doumont (2002) correctly noted, they are processed intuitively and holistically and may provide the organizational principles allowing for the *re*-cognition of simultaneously present multiple 'realities' (as in a Cubist painting) accessible to cultural critique.

The organizing efficacy of visuals has already been widely acknowledged, but their expressive qualities run counter to the distancing of the printed word, deductive reasoning and goal-oriented cognitive processes. This tension between established modes of experiential organization and nascent ones can only become greater in the future. The "allatonceness" (McLuhan & Fiore 1967, p. 63) of post-literate culture demands a new approach to gleaning experiential meaning from raw data. Information alone does not satisfy the human need for understanding; it must be effectively adapted and contextualized, just as humanized nature is shaped into society; it needs to be modified into spatially significant patterns based on the fulfillment of inherent human needs; i.e., it needs to be *designed.*
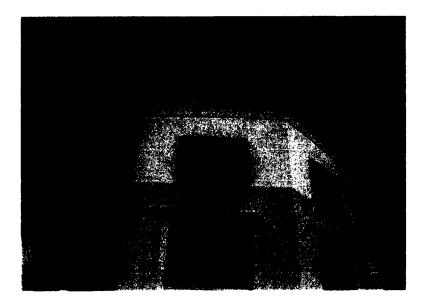
110

# CHAPTER FOUR

## INTERPRETATION

### Instantiations of Lived Space

*"Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web, of the finest silken threads, suspended in the chamber of consciousness and catching every air-bourne particle in its tissue."* (James, p. 194)

*The Project*

Figure 4.1:
*Façade of the Rotund of Skeen Hall*



Since the trajectories, i.e., the "synchronized" formatting (McLuhan & Fiore, p. 36), of configurative codings, run counter to the sequential nature of linguistic forms of communication, a truly 'hybrid-ized' rhetoric requires some third element, a transitional one, to bridge the consequent topographical gap. In order for the two theoretically oppositional modalities to successfully coincide, a working knowledge

of both is required; that is, familiarity with the syntax of one communicative mode does not guarantee the ability to effectively navigate the other - an adaptation increasingly necessitated by the direction of technological change. Thus, the goal of this project is to suggest a possible means for integrating visual/spatial concerns into traditional academic discourse by way of juxtaposing traditional linguistic forms with those of a nascent "secondary orality" (Ong, 2000. p. 3) - a configurative one - currently being constrained from expression by continued emphasis on 'stratified,' sequential thinking

The face-to-face, communitarian interactions that characterize oral cultures are necessarily offset by the technology of writing that structurally encourages the distancing of people from people, as well as from context (Ong, 2000), but emphasis on immanent community is currently being reintroduced by the dynamics of electronic media. The related conundrum of how to bridge this rhetorical gap is the requisite acknowledgement of *simultaneity* as intrinsic to electronic modes of media (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967) that, in effect, demands the creation of a neo-order of syntactic schemata – one capable of recognizing and constructing *patterns*, or repetitive permutations, of synchronous forms in the creation and conveyance of meaning that directly challenges the tenets of sequential thought..

This immediate circumstance calls for the socio-cultural acquisition of a new skills-set and/or vocabulary involving not only awareness of the limitations of distanced labeling, i.e., encoding and decoding (Goss, 1989) of meaning, but also of the full ramifications of aesthetic design as a *communicative* mode, and the potential

for its contribution to a post-print discourse. In other words, the successful transition from a print-based, abstracted culture to a configurative, immanent one will require mastery of the basics and awareness of the potential of aesthetic design *per se*, if only to successfully navigate the multi-faceted topography of a technologically transformed environment.

This project offers Bauhaus artist Wassily Kandinsky's analytical drawing process as a practical model, i.e., an imaginative 'third-space' (Soja, 1996) in between actuality and possibility, for the transitioning of encoded data of space into an architectonic awareness of humanized meaning, an awareness that re-introduces a sense of craftsmanship in 'real' space into a world that is currently predominated by distanced linear codes.

As a form of communication, Kandinsky's drawing process begins with direct observation and documentation of objects in the immediate environment, but then goes on to develop a progression from conventional analysis, i.e., the 'real', to depicting the intersections of *perceived* tensions, i.e., the 'imagined,' then to generative synthesis (Foss, 2004), i.e., the 'transformation,' creating a new whole, determined by the fundamentals aspects of human perception.

This process delineates both actual and perceived inter-relationships among simplified elements, and then allows for the genesis of new forms of experiential arrangement through emphasizing major visual/spatial themes, i.e., tensions (Poling, 1986). The results are a depiction, not of the surface features of objects, but of the perceptual dynamics (Arnheim, 1974) of the spaces contained within them. This, in

turn, may serve to facilitate a spatial/syntactic consciousness on the part of professional communicators that will allow for more effective understanding and use of extra-verbal forms by allowing line, shape and color their potential *communicative* roles, thus greatly enhancing awareness of form and context as significant modalities. The resulting compositions, or instantiations, convey a transition from a relatively passive recording of sensory experiences to an active acknowledgement of perceptual arrangements in space created by the human assimilation, i.e., signifying, of the natural environment (Geertz, 1973; Hall, 1981),
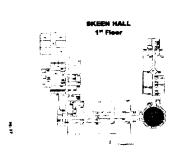
*Artifact: Skeen Hall*

The subject is the first floor lobby of the rotunda of Skeen Hall at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Skeen Hall houses the College of Agriculture and Home Economics and is located on the corner of the streets of University and Espina across from the Center for the Arts. The agrarian theme is visually represented by both a windmill and an antique tractor on the exterior grounds; the building itself functions routinely as an 'Aggie' emblem for the university on the local PBS television station, KRWG.

Skeen consists of two primary wings which intersect at the rotunda. The building contains classrooms and teaching labs including the Biology Lab, the Weed Insect Biology Lab, the Plant Pathology Lab, the Integrated Pest Management Lab, as well as the offices for Extension Plant Sciences, the Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science Department, and Plant Environmental Science. The first-floor lobby (Figure 4.2: http://aces.nmsu.edu/directory/images/floor%20plan.pdf) is a

114

circular space about thirty feet in diameter, the outer dimensions of which are

delineated by obtuse angles repeated in four foot segments. This space, in turn,

is within the octagonal form of the rotunda's exterior. The interior has large

windows extending slightly over half of its area. Benches are placed along the

Figure 4.2:
*1st Floor Skeen Hall*



http://aces.nmsu.edu/directory/images

perimeter. There is a large spiral staircase at the center of the lobby that rises up

through the open ceiling to access the second and third floors. At the base of the stair

is a glass display case dedicated to Congressman Joe R. Skeen who represented the

state of New Mexico from 1980 to 2003, indicating that the lobby is, in part, a space

representing a public service narrative. For the purposes of the current project,

however, the portion of the building being studied, may be considered as a cultural

artifact and/or an interiorized still-life.

*Still-life Reconfigured*

Kandinsky's approach to still life is itself a departure from the arts' conventional

treatment of objects in space. Until the latter half of the nineteenth-century, with the

115

emergence of Impressionism in Europe (Williams, 1986), the still life continued in

the tradition of the 'Renaissance window' and dealt primarily with the imitative

depiction of objects in space from a fixed perspective. Common subjects were

flowers, fruits, food, and sometimes furniture, depicted within the chiaroscuro of light

and shadow as part of conventional space.

Art historian Richard Leppert's explanation (1996) as to why still life artists, even

during the heyday of representation in academic arts, were seldom accorded the same

status as their brethren who painted people and narratives, involves emphasis on the

material: "The 'trouble'…with still life was its…privileging of *mere objects* [my

Figure 4.3:
*Traditional Still Life*



(hamsterflydeviantart.deviantart.com)

emphasis]. Still life eschewed text: history, scripture, epic myth, biography. It did not

teach but only dazzled" ( p. 41). Thus, representations of 'stuff,' popularly associated

with material wealth and status, were deemed less worthy in academic circles than the

didactic purposes of narrative and myth in the fine arts. However, the Bauhaus, by

adding the dimension of non-objective design to such materialistic works, made the

still life over into an instantiation of the human imagination, creating dynamic models

of human perception (Arnheim, 1974), over and above the simulation of possessions.

For example, despite the inclusion of the curious, but still conventionally

representational, hand grenades, the painting above [See Figure 4.3.] is a recent, but

typical example of the traditional *form* of still life, even if there has been an attempt,

through selection of *content*, to connect the trappings of privilege with organized

carnage.

Kandinsky's students, however, were asked to arrange "[e]ssentially *abstract* [my

emphasis] elements [that would not necessarily indicate any privileged societal

echelon, or political perspective]...[such as] cylindrical tubes...canisters, hoops,

simple frames..." (Poling, 1986, p. 111) deliberately abridging three-dimensional

representation into a two-dimensional wheels or disks, spheres, rectangular boxes or

bases, i.e., configurations of directional lines, or vectors, for purposes of perceptual

clarity, i.e., finding the "meaning in the form" (Scott, 1951, p. 3). As such, these

works represent primary examples of the perception of objects in space as "perceptual

forces" (Arnheim, 1974, p. 16), in effect, instantiating the aesthetic inter-

relationships among constituent elements within any given context existing prior to the introduction of representation.

Thus, for Kandinsky, as both artist and instructor, there was at the outset an intent to simplify, or rather to 'de-representational-ize,' the conventional significance of the forms, i.e., by virtue of *arrangement*, the objects were consciously stripped of some of their culturally assimilated semiotic content even before any drawing took place. Figure *4.4* below is an example of student work by Hannes Beckman (Poling, 1986, p. 112) at the Bauhaus.
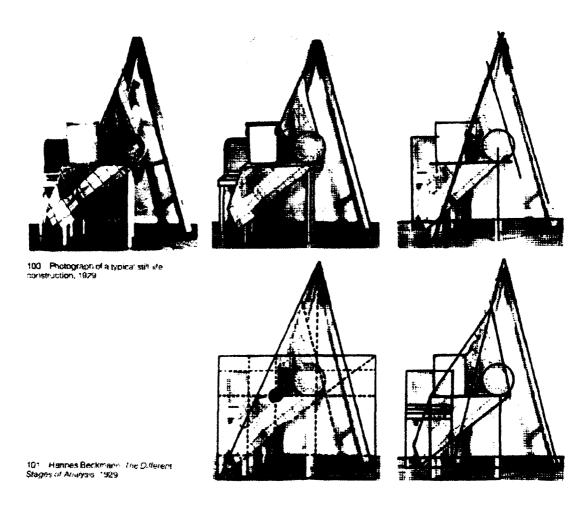
This question of the intentional minimization of reference and the highlighting of visual/spatial trajectories, and/or the de-emphasis on labeling (Goodman, 1980) in favor of the recognition of structural similitudes (Grassi. 1980; Derrida, 1970) and perceptual dynamics (Arnheim, 1974), is central to the Bauhaus project of initiating a break from the cultural understanding of art as simulation (Baudrillard, 1983) and/or decoration (Wingler, 1969) in favor of the indicative qualities of the *forms* themselves, i.e., the inherent *logic in shape* (Arnheim, 1969). Here, the tendency of the human mind to interpret rounds as circles, lines as directions and shapes as enclosures is depicted as means for ordering the immediate environment according to human interpretation.

The artists of the Bauhaus wanted to use new technologies and modern materials to create an environment that would build on this innate perceptual process through an increase in aesthetic awareness (Wingler, 1969). This de-emphasis on the cognitively referential in favor of the re-cognitively intuitive tacitly acknowledges

and seeks to publicly demonstrate the connotative influence of the human psyche

(Arnheim, 1969, 1974) on shaping the cultural environment (Grassi, 1980; Geertz,

1973). What the apprentice learns through instruction, the master 'knows' through

experience (Graham, 1989). The act of composing, in words, in dance, or in paint,

marble or mud, necessarily involves human agency (*energia*, Newman, 2002, p. 3) in

the invention of the *requisite* order. In this view, it is the metaphorical projection of

Figure 4.4:
*Hannes Beckman* (student work)



100  Photograph of a typical still life
     construction, 1929

10¹  Hannes Beckman  *The Different
     Stages of Analysis*  1929

Originally published in *The Different Stages of Analysis*, 1929.

an interior sense of ordering onto the exterior context that lays the groundwork for developing nature into culture (Grassi, 1980, 1994; Hall, 1981; Geertz, 1973). Such humanized ordering can be expressed as either rational or aesthetic, utilizing either means-language and/or ends-language (Graham, 1989) [See Chapter One.] depending on the purpose.

In aesthetic practice, there are three general types of ordering: (1) random, in which the constituent elements are allowed to fall wherever they may within the given frame, a good starting point for the development of imaginative meaning in design; (2) imposed, in which each and every element is placed 'just and so' according to a predetermined pattern, and (3) emergent, where both random and imposed elements are utilized to *create relationships* that may then be further crafted by the artist (Dalzell, 2006) to create significant compositions. These distinctions are important because they open up avenues for decision-making as a function of human agency in the generation of cultural meaning. Given, however, that the following project proposes to introduce a new interpretation onto a previously designed space it is, therefore, based primarily on consideration of emergent forms,

*Designing Space*

Humanity is continually exposed to spatial design decisions as part of the common experience of living within a constructed environment, a.k.a., society. Many of these decisions, however, are not interpreted as such because they are generally subordinated to some extrinsic purpose. The drawing exercise in perspective based on receding telephone poles or the parallel walls of a hallway are not generally

120

experienced as being an aspect of human perception because poles and walls are seen as being *about* other things. Be that as it may, design elements have meaning in their own right and function by their own logic.

Space as an intentional form of human communication is easy to misinterpret and/or ignore, within the context of a written tradition, wherein form is held constant to facilitate the transmission of content (Derrida, 1976). In configurative modes of communication, however, to whatever extent any set of inter-related elements is meant to reflect or imitate forms existing outside a given framework, this extrinsic reference is necessarily secondary to the recognition of the intrinsic ordering found within it. If configurative significance is to be found within the interconnection of internal understandings as means for shaping the external environment, then the originary (Grassi, 1994) meaning is to be found primarily within that internalized + immediate context and secondarily in its outward manifestations. To effectively actualize such dual ordering, designing humanized significance requires some effective combination of repetition, to achieve recognizable cohesiveness, and variation to command attention. Creative balancing of these linguistically 'opposed' approaches to the arrangement of space is a basic design principle.

Non-objective design elements are forms of human abstraction that *do not exist in nature* (Ocvirk. O. G., Bone, R. O., Stinson, R., E., & Wigg, P. R., 1981). Simplified Line and Shape are two such elements, along with, for example, the complete absence of light commonly known as the color black. One common practice in beginning painting classes is to cut out a rectangular frame, as negative space, usually about one

121

and a half by two inches, from a somewhat larger bit of Bristol board and then using

this delineated *space* to isolate a smaller composition from an already-existing

representational art work, the extracted section then being reproduced in its own right.

This is done in order to disengage design elements from the task of representation and

to recognize and evaluate their unique perceptual significance as non-referential

signifiers. The consequent piece then becomes the basis for creating a non-objective

work based on the human-generated elements of design. An example of one of these

constituent elements, e.g. Line, as a non-objective design form appears below [See

Figure 4.5].

Line, as a design element, indicates direction; the human eye will automatically

follow its trajectory as a means of making sense (Kandinsky, 1979). Line functions as

a vector and designates direction but not space. Within a rectangular format, vertical

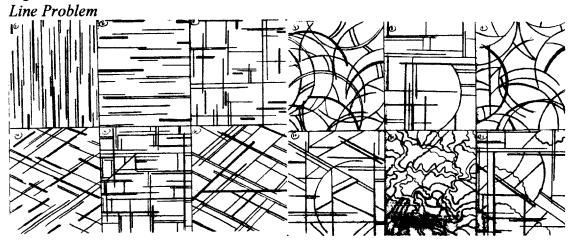and horizontal lines create stability, as they reiterate the framework or context.

Diagonal, curved or freeform lines create interest as they challenge the given context

or format. Shape, on the other hand, generally represents the intersection of

previously designated spaces, i.e., flat surfaces or planes, especially when punctuated

by the inclusion of Value, i.e., variations of light and dark [See Figure 4.6].

The Line-problem below represents twelve attempts to resolve a question of

design where each successive rectangle builds on the preceding one in terms of

complexity. The instructions for the assignment are as follows:

Using a regular piece of 8.5"x 11" copy paper, fold it in thirds, as you would to

mail a letter; then fold it in half horizontally. This should result in twelve boxes, six

on one side and six on the other. Using pencil (preferably #2 or HB), lightly number

the upper left corner of each box (1-6 on the front, 7-12 on the back). Following the

directions below create twelve line designs in pencil using a protractor for straight
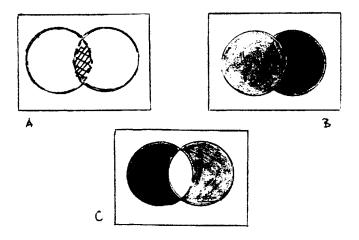
lines and curves.

Figure 4.5:
*Line Problem*



For each box create a design using

1. repeated vertical lines, vary the length, width, and space between
2. repeated horizontal lines, vary length, width and space between
3. repeated vertical and horizontal lines (maintaining variation)
4. repeated diagonal lines, vary length width and space between
5. repeated horizontals and verticals, add one diagonal
6. repeated diagonals, add one vertical *or* horizontal
7. repeated curves
8. repeated verticals and horizontals, add one curve
9. repeated curves, add one straight line
10. repeated straight lines, add one curve
11. repeated wavy lines
12. any combination of the above. (Dalzell, 2006)

The result of this exercise in repetition and variation yields a series of patterns of

varying degrees of complexity. This contradicts the common experience of line as

perceived in actual space. What the human mind often cursorily interprets as line in

nature generally consists of intersecting planes, as where two right-angled walls

come together to create a corner. Upon closer examination, however, there is often a

difference in value, i.e., lights and darks, between the two segments. It is this

juxtaposition of variations in value that produces the perception of line. A similar

Shape-Value problem would seek to eliminate line altogether from the design process

by juxtaposing variations in value i.e., lights and darks, in order to create the

perception of line as a function of significant pattern as well as ambiguity, in terms of

positive/negative space. By juxtaposing various shapes characterized by different

degrees of value, as well as opacity of form, by using the white of the

paper for highlights, a graphite pencil for grays and a black marker or a soft-lead

Prismacolor pencil for black. The areas that are created through repeated shapes

A = Overlap; B = Opacity, & C = Transparency and values allow for *no lines* to be

left showing.

Figure 4.6:
*Shape-Value Problem*

This problem creates significant patterns based on the repetition of shape and value, not line, but also defines an ambiguous space, where there is no clear delineation between figure and ground i.e., black space & white space. The previous line-problem does something similar using the repetition and variation of abstracted line to create a pattern and/or texture that denies a sense of spatial depth as it appears in nature. This schematizing of space, as part of the "investigation of structural relationships" (Poling, 1986, p. 107) in the objective world, represents a function of human perception that is similar to the process of de-representation exemplified by Kandinsky's analytical drawing process in creating instances of human-generated ordering as design.

*Analysis: Drawing Space.*

The following project is intended to focus on and elucidate humanized-ordering processes in the form of architectural spaces as a possible means for introducing configurative elements into traditional discourse. The project was completed as follows: three photographs were selected from a collection of shots taken from different angles of the interior of the lobby of the rotunda in Skeen Hall creating (1) three simplified line drawings based on a representational linear depiction of these photographs, i.e., the 'real' ; (2) then, dotted line was introduced into these drawings to visually indicate the *perceived* spatial tensions inherent within the enclosed format, i.e., the contour or 'imagined'; and, then, (3) the main tension(s) were identified by the use addition of color to instantiate the dominant spatial relationships for the viewer, i.e., .the 'transformation.'
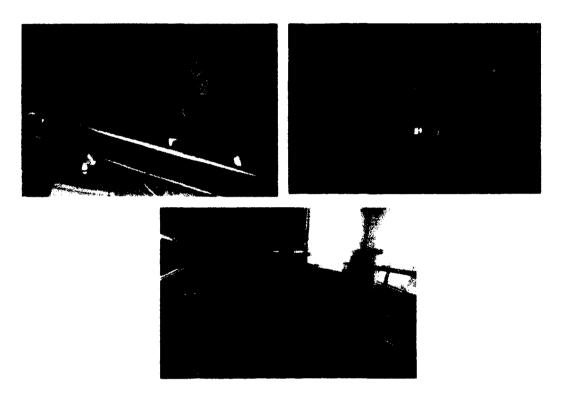
It should be noted that, according to Kandinsky's correspondence color theory, the choice of color is not necessarily *determined* by the angles presented. Although he associates yellow with acute angles, blue with obtuse angles and red with right angles, [See Chapter Three.], he does *not* state that these colors *must* be determined by these angles within any given composition. Any contradictions between color choice and represented angles simply complicate the essentially synaesthetic qualities of the constituent elements Poling, 1986).

Moreover, just as Goethe's *Theory of Colours* (1982) based on the immanent response of the human eye to effects of light [See Chapter Three.] was largely dismissed at the time because of the cultural predominance of the scientific theory of light waves in the creation of reflected color, Kandinsky's theory deviates from traditional color theory of combinations of primary, secondary, tertiary and complementary colors in that it particularly includes spatiality in the form of internal tensions of design. By characterizing yellow as eccentric (de-centered), blue as concentric (centered) and red as neutral (not either), Kandinsky is not anthropomorphizing colors (e.g. red $\neq$ anger; yellow $\neq$ fear, nor does blue = serenity); instead, he is describing perceptual characteristics of the internal tensions of design, color choices being determined by whether that part of the composition should compositionally move toward or away from the viewer.

The three photographs below [See Figure 4.7] were selected from a larger collection of photos taken of the interior space of the first floor lobby of the rotunda

of Skeen Hall. They were chosen because they (1) offer the prospect of effective

compositions in both repetition and variation, and (2) are significantly different

Figure 4.7:
*Original Photographs of Three Views*



The first is taken from the position of looking up the spiral staircase toward the
second floor.
The second is looking across the room from approximately the southern side to the
northern side of the room.
The third is taken from halfway up the stair looking downward into the lobby.
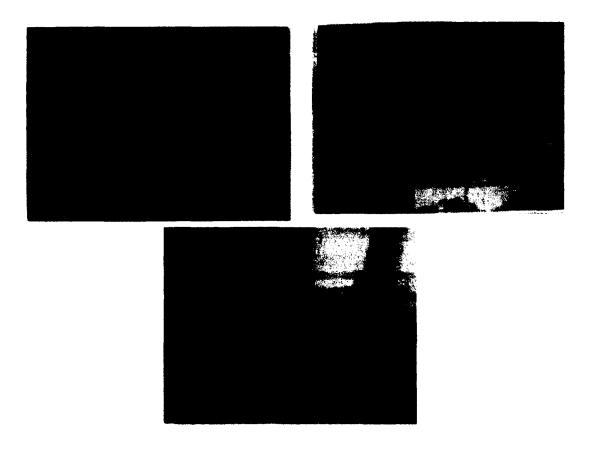
enough from each other to create interest and/or "at-tension" (Grassi, 1995, p 6) [See

Chapter Three.].

Because first-hand experience is generally helpful for the representational

interpretation of nature in painting, the use of photographs as subjects is often

discouraged in traditional art works because, as a medium, photography

mechanically reduces three-dimensional spaces/objects to a two-dimensional format,

allowing, in effect, for a mechanical short-cut in the interpretation of experience. At

the Bauhaus, however, where art works were deemed as generative rather than

imitative, the camera was routinely used, if only for the purposes of documenting the

*origin* of the analytical process [See Figure 4.4 above.]. For this given project, the

camera is merely a convenient method for establishing several *frameworks* as

contexts for the re-ordering of content.

In order to begin the interpretive process, the first step is to convert the color

photos to a black and white format [See Figure 4.8 below.], as the retention of the
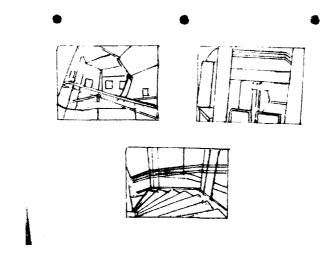
Figure 4.8:
*Black & White Photographs of the Three Views*

original color field tends to reiterate a sense of imitated natural space, (in the

sense of the Renaissance window), both through the naturally depicted colors of the

building and through the function of aerial perspective in which objects farther away

tend to lose intensity, tending toward the blue end of the color spectrum because of

distance (Ocvirk, O. G., Bone, R. O., Stinson, R., E., & Wigg, P. R., 1981).

Parenthetically, one of the differences between physically engaging with

experience as opposed to reducing and/or encoding it is that often initial plans

must be changed in light of the execution of the physical properties of the project.

Notice that the initial steps for this project as described in Chapter Three have been

modified in the actual execution of the project. Having chosen three        photographic

views of the subject, the initial line drawings, although based on familiarity with the

three chosen photographs, were drawn on site in pencil on notebook paper

[See Figure 4.9], a step not included in the original methodology, but that was helpful
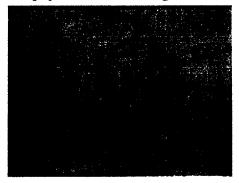
Figure 4.9:
*Initial Sketches*

in accurately interpreting the photographs as representations of actual space.
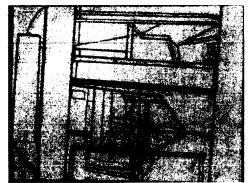
As stated above, the analytical drawing process itself involves three stages: (1) simplification, (2) analysis, and (3) transformation that represent a progressive content to creative interpretation, or generative synthesis, of tensions inherent within that form. The original color photographs were first reproduced in black-and-white, and were then simplified into contour drawings, followed by the addition of perceived spatial relationships and the final transformation into configurations of shape and color.

Figure 4.10 shows the final versions of the first stage of simplified line drawings. As stated above, line represents direction as a vector to induce the human eye to

Figure 4.10:
*Simplified Line Drawings: i.e., the 'Real'*

follow its trajectory. Line may be either descriptive or decorative depending on

whether or not it indicates depth or surface pattern (Ocvirk. O. G., Bone, R. O.,

Stinson, R., E., & Wigg, P. R., 1981). Here the two are combined according to the

dynamics of human perception.

Figure 4.11 [See below.]depicts the analysis of perceived or 'imagined' tensions of

the second stage, where dotted lines indicate perceived inter-relationships within the

defined space open for analysis. These tensions are a matter of human perception

involving sensory interpretations of experience, such as closure, proximity as part of

repetition, and variation in form (Ocvirk, O. G., Bone, R. O., Stinson, R., E., & Wigg,

P. R.,(1981).

Figure 4.12 [See below.] presents synthesized and/or generated space created by

the third stage of transformation achieved through the re-attribution of color to

emphasize the main tensions of the compositions. Here color is used to reiterate the

experience of the space as opposed to describing the building as object or narrating its

functions. The use of yellow blue and red and combinations thereof are intended to

share in a unique, yet similar, way the immanent experience of an enclosed,

humanized space in a manner much closer to the ends-language of poetry than to the

means-language of science (Graham, 1985). When all these processes are applied to

the original photographs, they provide an illustration of the analytical drawing

process in the creation of three unique yet related compositions.

*Findings: Three Instantiations*

The first composition (Figure 4.14), looking up the stairwell toward the second

Figure 4.11:

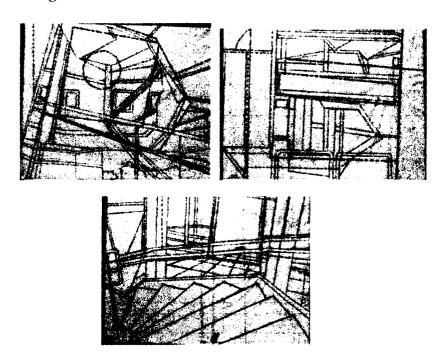*Line drawing with Added Perceived Relationships in Dotted Lines: i.e. the 'Imagined"*



Figure 4.12:
*Prismacolor Drawings: i.e., the 'Transformation'*
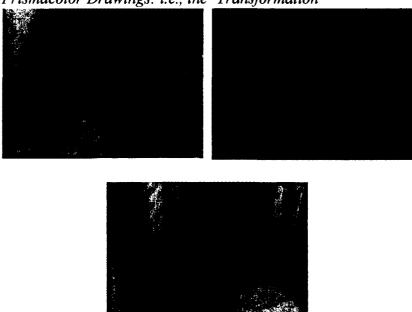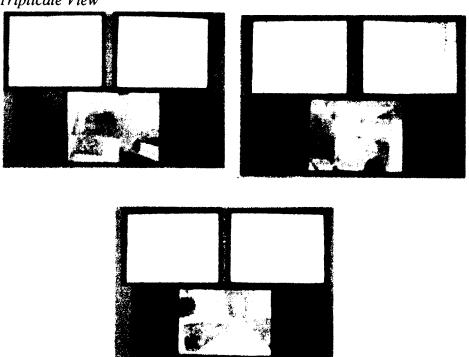
Figure 4.13:
*Triplicate View*
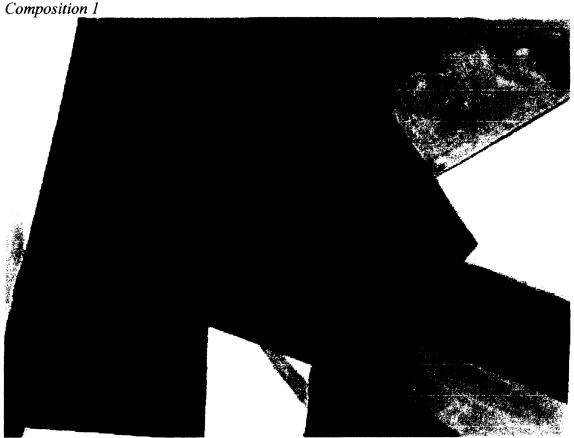


floor resolved at its core to a blue circle, which, according to Kandinsky's color

theory, retreats from the viewer both in terms of color and angularity, but does so

within the context of the rest of the building creating a perceived space that radiates

outward, as does Arnheim's "roving disk" (p. 84) [See Chapter Three.], extending

toward the viewer. This expansive movement is limited by the stability of the

rectangular format, creating tension necessary for effective design. Here the dominant

design element is the blue and purple formation that characterizes the ascent to the

second and third floors.

The second composition [See Figure 4.15 below] looking directly across from one

side of the lobby to the other, is much more static than the first in that the primary

tensions are vertical and horizontal and, as such, reiterate the shape of the rectangular

frame as opposed to contrasting with it. This repetition lends stability to the

Figure 4.14:
*Composition 1*
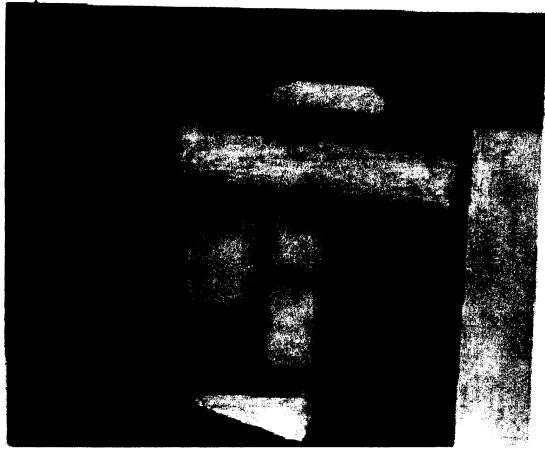


composition and allows more leeway in the application of color – particularly

Kandinsky's 'eccentric' colors such as yellows and oranges. The active center is

tempered by red and green neutrals. Here the dominant element is the yellow slanted

horizontal in the upper third of the composition that plays against the surrounding

verticals and neutralizes the strong diagonal directly below it.

The third composition [See Figure 4.16 below.], looking down the spiral staircase

toward the Exit, is essentially a compositional conundrum in that the upper half to the

upper third is dominated by the repetition of verticals that reiterate those of the frame

while the lower third is characterized by the dynamic diagonals of the staircase that

contrast with the given context. The problem is the inherent visual/spatial division
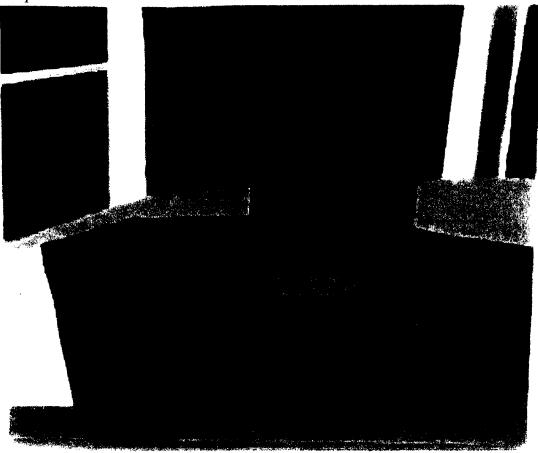
Figure 4.15:
*Composition 2*



between the lower half and the upper half of the composition in that it would be easy

to divide the main tensions horizontally straight across the middle, thus creating two

separate compositions – one characterized by verticals and horizontals that repeat the

spatial frame and the other by the repetition of diagonals in the foreground that

contradict it, i.e., two non-related compositions. Here the conflict is resolved through

the use of the central blue-gray area, horizontals being characterized as 'black'

135

according to Kandinsky, and the compositional emphasis on the large green

Figure 4.16:
*Composition 3*



half of the composition, but, green being neutral, establishes a connection with the

equally neutral gray horizontal. The rectangle itself represents the main tension in the

composition whose lower edge is exactly at the transition from the lower half to the

upper composition in its relationship to the repetition of the contrasting red/orange

diagonals in the foreground.

*Conclusion: Perceived Spaces as First Principles*

Design, as a communicative form, imaginatively brings about something new in

response to satisfying some human need. Thus, it could be said that the rhetorical

humanization of nature in the instantiation and maintenance of culture is the

"basic...act" (Scott, 1951, p. 1) that defines humanity.

Design as a means for making human culture aware of its own self-structuring as

a function of perceived experience was central to the philosophy of the Bauhaus as

well as to Grassi's understanding of rhetoric. As part of this general approach to

reform, Kandinsky's analytical drawing process and correspondence color theory are

both intended to reveal humanized (Grassi, 1980) structural spaces underlying the

dynamics of perception by shrinking them into schematized and stylized

configurations that call upon intuitive and/or non-referential forces (Arnheim, 1974)

to successfully navigate within them.

This project demonstrates the potential communicative significance of human

spatial ordering, i.e., Soja's geographic imagination (1996), in the absence of recourse

to other, more culturally normative (Cordell & Plog, 1979), i.e., print-based and or

transcendent (Hall & Ames, 1987) means of communication, i.e., Haraway's "god-

trick," (1991, p. 189). Thus, the instantiation of spatial perception may be said to

demonstrate the ability of the human imagination to fundamentally shape living space,

and thereby culture, as an aspect of Grassi's rhetorical humanization of nature (1980).

Unlike Barthes's coded iconic message (2004), i.e., the depiction of vegetables and

pasta in order to evoke a shared cultural narrative [See Chapter Two.], the above

works metaphorically exemplify and/or 'express' (Goodman, 1976) the origins of

*ingenium*, i.e., the *archai* (Grassi, 1980) as the first principles, existing outside the

choral (Grassi, 1980), objective-ized world of explanation and time. The basis for the

creation and affirmation of this humanly-generated space is pattern(ed) recognition

(McLuhan & Fiore, 1967), i.e., in the re-cognition of similitude - the inherent ability

to draw connections among unique, yet similar things (Grassi, 1980).

Rhetoric, through metaphoric juxtaposition, has the potential to exemplify the

originary (Grassi, 1994) language that is"[t]he origin of society" (1980, p. 14), i.e.,

a "pictorial" (1980, p. 22), language that characterizes rhetoric as the foundation of

both philosophy and culture. Far from being represented as a superficial skill meant to

convince a malleable audience (Porter, 1972), in this sense rhetoric embodies a

metaphorical "notion of transfer and movement from inward personal space to

external domain" (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1985, p. 138), so that humanity, through the

ongoing creation of culture (Geertz, 1973; Hall, 1981), may continue to evoke its own

template for the instantiation of imagined ideas into substantive realities. This specific

project was designed to offer a connection between traditional rhetoric, as oratory,

with the potentialities of a post-modern, secondary-orality (Ong, 2000), to instantiate

imagined ideas that include all the implied configurative aspects of a complete

communicative repertoire.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Perspectives Constructed & Re-structured

*[W]e are attempting to provide an assessment of...thought that openly accepts as inevitable that one always begins to think where one is.* (Hall & Ames, 1987, p. 12)

Since the formatting of human communication is determined by the necessity to adapt to socio-cultural change, new forms of literacy, like mythic knowledge, are continually needed in order to meet the requirements of an ever-evolving human-ized context. The current conundrum is that the simultaneity (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967) of electronic media, in effect, demands the creation of a neo-order of communication, and/or a configurative vocabulary – one capable of recognizing, i.e., constructing and sharing synchronous forms of meaning.

In this discussion, Chapter One defines rhetoric as discourse shaped by the need for the human psyche to actively engage in the generation of meaning, and then asserts that changes in rhetorical modalities may themselves constitute cultural transitions in communications, similar to a cross-over between different cultural assumptions that may be juxtaposed as a result of technological change. From such communicative combinations come shared semiotic systems through which cultures are produced, and reproduced. We are currently experiencing such a communicative transition based on advent of extra-verbal (Stroupe, 2004), synchronous (McLuhan& Fiore, 1967) forms of communication), from anchored print to the challenge of de-centered design (Derrida, 1970), and it is, therefore, incumbent upon professional communicators to develop a working familiarity and/or

vocabulary with the designated demands of unfamiliar, and therefore, uncomfortable, modes of communication.

In light of the contradiction inherent in the current co-incidence of modern, Cartesian, understanding of knowledge, as track-able rationality emanating from a fixed or centered perspective (Derrida, 1970), with the post-modern emphasis on multiple perspectives, and/or observable experiences supported by subjective validation (Graham, 1985), mastery of the dynamics of configurative formats becomes integral to effective communication within a secondary orality.

The first chapter closes by offering two examples of such an adaptation where architecture is being re-interpreted, not just as a space, but as a form of communication: e.g., the North University Building at the University of Michigan (Swales, 1998) and the Sydney Opera House (O'Toole, 2004). In both cases, the purpose is to distance language from its conventional denotative function, as rather an indicative signifier investigating, and/or articulating, humanized space.

Chapter Two explores other recent attempts on the part of the professional communicators to adapt to the increasing emphasis on visual/spatial concerns in rhetoric, composition, and cultural studies. These include Stroupe's acknowledgement of the inherent frictions in navigating the alternating currents of "verbal rhetorics and literacies increasingly in competition and combination with extra-verbal codes and languages" (p. 13). as representing two "cultural orientations" (2004, p.17), as well as attempts to expand conventional notions of literacy to include wider semiotic systems of meaning into composition pedagogy (Lankshear & Knobel,

2003; Williams, 2001; New London Group 2000), technical writing (Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr,2001; Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001; Selfe & Selfe, 1996), as well as cultural studies (Soja, 1996).

Chapter Three draws a theoretical correlation between Grassi's understanding of metaphor as the link between rhetoric and culture (1980, 1994) and Kandinsky's practice of analytical drawing and correspondence color theory in elucidating aesthetic design as a communicative system (Poling 1986), and, then lays out a practical methodology for demonstrating that correlation based in part on Foss's generative criticism (2004).

Chapter Four presents the results of all the steps involved in this project from analysis to synthesis, leading up to three visual instantiations of the interior of the lobby of the rotunda of Skeen Hall on the NMSU main campus.

## Metaphor as Hybrid

The contrast of archaic approaches to discourse, such as Cassandra's mantic prophecies that ask 'where' instead of 'why.' [See Chapter Two.] with the rationalized (Graham. 1985) discourses of modern culture (Grassi,1980, 1994) [See Chapter Three.] represented by Cartesian thought, is essentially designating metaphor as being both a spatial and linguistic form, i.e., the common factor in human meaning-making capable of bridging the gap between configurative and sequential communicative modalities. In addition, according to Grassi (1980), it must be considered that the origin of human *ingenuity* lies in "*the outward expression of inner meaning*" (Kandinsky, 1977, p. 29) and not within the attenuated inferences of

rational after-thought. The modern concern with certainty over probability has

inevitably minimalized any conscious cultural access to a-rational and/or *imaginative*

understandings of the world and/or of nature (Bordo, 1986), and has resulted in the

isolation of human participatory processes, also commonly referred to as 'subjective

response' (Shlain, 1998), and the consequent trivialization of imagery within

academic discourses (Johnson-Sheehan & Baehr, 2001).

As Hall (1981) notes:

> Anthropologists have studied only those things people could or would talk
> about, with the result that many of the important things – culture patterns that
> make life meaningful and really differentiate one group from another – have gone
> unnoticed or have been unreported and brushed aside as trivial. (p. 14)

Art, it has been assumed in the modern world, deals with ornamentation,

verisimilitudes, or even with outright deception (Baudrillard, 1983). Nonetheless,

according to Bauhaus precepts (Poling, 1986), the compositional *principles* of

aesthetic design are at work in every representational work, as they are in any

abstracted or nonobjective one (Wingler, 1969), and may be applied as well to human

behavioral interpretations of the natural environment (Grassi. 1980; Geertz, 1973).

Hence, this application of Kandinsky's analytical drawing and color correspondence

theory to a given space demonstrates the empirical function of human perception

(Arnheim, 1969, 1974) in actively shaping/sculpting the cultural environments within

which we all live.

As previously stated, the meaning of aesthetic forms relies not on any connection

with representation but on unique combinations of non-objective unity and variety

that generate compositional integrity, or recognition/projection of an ordered human

psyche (Arnheim, 1969). Unity is easily achieved through repetition; variety,

however, requires some contrasting element that interrupts or *complicates* that

reciprocity. The semiotic function of contrast is to "awaken our interest' allowing the

human capacity for wonder to temporarily command "our 'at-tension'" because "no

one will question what is unequivocal" (Grassi, 1994, pp 5-6). This tentative balance

need not be limited to the arts as such, but may also be applied to culture as designed

artifact.

There have, of course, been many imaginative instances of combining literary

genres with extra-verbal forms, such as concrete poetry [See Figure 5.1.], the

essentially musical use of meter in poetry, the verbal rhythms established by the use

of alliteration, assonance and consonance, and the use of metaphor as descriptive

explanation that treat language and, more particularly, the printed alphabet, in

essentially spatial ways, either by playing with the arrangement of letters and/or by

juxtaposing unique yet similar things.

Figure 5.1:
*Sample of Concrete Poetry*

I d e
n t I
I k e
t e l
e p h
e n e
b e e
t h s

(Tannenbaum, 1984, p 419)

Virginia Woolf in the novel *Orlando* metaphorically characterizes

societal change in meteorological terms:

> ...Orlando then for the first time noticed a small cloud gathered behind the dome
> of St. Paul's. As the stroke
> sounded, the cloud increased , and she saw it darken and spread with extraordinary
> speed...by the time the sixth stroke of midnight had struck the whole of the
> eastern sky was covered with an irregular darkness, though the sky to the north
> and west stayed clear as ever. Then the cloud spread north. Height upon height
> above the city was engulfed in it. Only Mayfair, with all its lights, burnt more
> brilliantly than ever by contrast. With the eighth stroke, some hurrying tatters of
> cloud sprawled over Piccadilly. They seemed to mass themselves and to advance
> with extraordinary rapidity toward the west end. As the ninth, tenth and eleventh
> strokes struck, a huge blackness over the whole of London. With the twelfth stroke
> of midnight, the darkness was complete. A turbulent welter of cloud covered the
> city. All was dark; all was confusion. The Eighteenth century was over; the
> Nineteenth century had begun. (Woolf, pp. 225, 226).

Neither poetry nor fiction, however, makes any realistic claim on actual

circumstance, but like rhetoric, allows that they are human interpretations that

enhance experience.

Grassi characterizes the human condition as the state of being separated from

nature [See Chapter Two.] requiring the 'humanization' of the given world through

rhetorical forms of engagement. Thus, the socio-cultural experience of humanity *per

se* is contingent upon the adaptation of the natural environment to meet the peculiarly

human need for experiential meaning. Hence, comes the human capacity for wonder

and imagination, i.e., *ingenium* (Grassi, 1980) that allows for successful adaptation to

the natural world. The immediate circumstance calls for the socio-cultural acquisition

of a new skills-set and/or vocabulary involving not only an awareness of the

limitations of abstracted encoding and decoding (Goss, 1989), but also of the full

ramifications of aesthetic design as a *communicative mode*, and its potential

contribution to the development of a "secondary-orality" (Ong, 2000, p. 3) as a neo-

ordering in the process of shared meaning.

Rhetoric, as a communicative strategy, must be allowed to adapt to changes in

socio-cultural ordering [See Chapter One.]. However, there is a legitimate problem

with integrating linguistic and configurative formats. Barthes (2004), for example,

suggests that the amorphousness of images requires the inclusion of a linguistic

message in order to direct the viewers' attention. He suggests that," In order to find

images given without words, it is doubtless necessary to go back to partially illiterate

societies, to a sort of pictographic state of the images" (p. 155). In other words, he

contends that text is necessary for *anchoring* meaning, so that everyone encountering

an image will come away with precisely the same message, *sans* individual

interpretation.

Figure 5.2
*The Obama Logo*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obama_logo

A current case in point is the logo [See Figure 5.2 above] from the 2008 Obama

presidential campaign; it is a pictogram with no accompanying text, not even a Web

address, yet it was, and is intended to promote the interests of the candidate, and to

communicate a particular political position. If, for the sake of argument, this artifact

can be said to indicate that Western culture is becoming a "secondary orality" (Ong,

2000, p. 3) based on a   transition away from printed text as the predominant

communicative form then what are the socio-cultural consequences of this transition,

and what sort of skills set is required for the successful navigation of an altered

techno-scape?

Again, as Lakoff (2013) puts it, "[E]very change in how we understand anything is a

brain change,' i.e., a *geographical* change (Soja, 1996). Thus, technical changes in the

micro-environment of human consciousness initiate corresponding changes in the macro-

environment of culture. Thus, when one form of literacy declines, another must take its

place (Shlain, 1998; Ong, 2000), sometimes with disastrous socio-cultural

consequences. Schlain characterizes Europe's transition from a largely oral culture to

an alphabetic one as causing a radical reduction in awareness, i.e., an abstraction of

*experience*, and describes it as follows:

> The rise of literacy rates in the latter part of the High Middle Ages stimulated the
> rapid enlargement of Western culture's left hemisphere. At the same time a
> mindless rage despoiled the fourteenth century. The years between 1300 and 1400
> bubbled and brimmed with death and calamity. (p. 309)

Schlain's account seems in some ways to be the inverse of Doumont's concerns

(2002) about the immediacy of visual communicative forms: "Because they are

powerful, visual codings are dangerous" (p. 220) because they are globally processed

by the brain and, therefore escape rational analyses. However, for Schlain, the reverse

may be just as true: limiting holistic responses to cultural change and promoting the

tacit subordination of the emotive and the perceptive to the cognitive and stratified

has its own consequences.

As previously discussed [See Chapter Two.], in attempting to navigate the

paradigm shift from the strictly linguistic to "extra-verbal" (2004, p. 13) forms of

literacy, Stroupe characterizes these two communicative strategies as different

"cultural orientations" (p.17) and postulates various points of conflict between them.

Consequently, since Ong's designated transition from "magic to science" (p. 28)

[See Chapter One.] appears to have engendered significant cultural incidence (Schlain,

1998), a current transition in which "researchers *simply* do not know how and what is

happening" (Thatcher, *et al* , p. 125) begs the question of how to address the current

perceptual shift, this time from science to art [See Chapter One.], to effectively integrate

print-based linguistic patterns into the dynamics of a nascent "secondary orality" (Ong, 2000,

p. 3). Are there available resources, i.e., parallels from which comparisons can be

drawn?

*Other Cross-Cultural Intersections*

As previously noted, any cross-cultural transition is understandably difficult to

achieve in the absence of exposure to a differently situated communicative strategy

based on another set of assumptions (Thatcher, *et al*, 2007), but this process need not

be a calamitous one. Three such juxtapositions are described below: the first two sociological the third, philosophical.

Various approaches to human experiential ordering stem from very different sets of assumptions, and, therefore, tend to generate disparate results. This insight is particularly relevant to the immediate context of the transition from $20^{th-}$ to $21^{st}$-century commerce where reliance on cross-cultural communications is continually generating greater juxtapositions among a variety of cultures (Thatcher, *et al*, 2007). This set of circumstances, other than offering myriad possibilities for miscommunications, also provides a unique opportunity for the blending of interpretive fields and the establishment of new bases for inter-cultural exchanges – a potentially fruitful challenge for professional communicators in general, and for re-engaged rhetoricians in the neo-role of cultural sculptors, in particular.

Today's significant increase in cross-cultural contact must be influencing the rhetorical and cultural patterns at the local, national, and international level, but "researchers *simply* do not know how and what is happening" (Thatcher, *et al* , p. 125). Such rapid cross-cultural fluctuations call for new approaches that reach beyond the confines of any pre-determined, localized frames, and/or sets of cultural understandings, including consideration of meanings that are to be found "outside the language" (Graham, 1985. p 64).

Cultural differences, of course, extend well beyond variations in language into shared cultural understandings, practices and behaviors. As an example, Hall (1981) discusses the conceptualization of time as a factor in shaping human behavior. He

identifies monochronic time (M-time) and polychronic time (P-time) as two cultural

variants addressing the specific use of time and space as frames for organizing

experience. M-time, exemplified primarily by western industrialized cultures,

"emphasizes schedules, segmentation and promptness. P-time systems [Hall mentions

Latin America and the Middle East] are characterized by *things happening at once*

[my emphasis]; they stress the involvement of people and completion of transactions

rather than adherence to preset schedules" (p. 17). Hall further notes that travelers

from one of these culturally-designated spaces arriving in another characterized by a

different assessment of time and space often experience a sense of psychological

stress suggesting disorientation from the immediate environment.

One recent cross-cultural comparative study conducted at NMSU (Thatcher, *et al*,

2007) involved the visual analysis of university Web sites both inside and outside the

United States, using the following sets of paired criteria as lenses: Individual-

Collective; Universal-Particular; Ascription-Achievement; Specific-Diffuse, and

Power Distance. The student researchers themselves came from a variety of geo-

cultural backgrounds: e.g., Costa Rice, USA, China, Israel, Nepal, and Belize. Each

student was asked to observe and analyze three university Web sites from a chosen

country or region.

Web sites that exemplified the 'individual' pole were primarily either those in the

industrialized West or those countries or regions influenced by western popular

culture. These sites were characterized by designations of both ethnic diversity and

individual autonomy, often including photographs that depicted various sorts of

people happily on their own as opposed to images of any collective or ethnic sub-category depicted as a group. "These characteristics noticeably set the individual...as the lens, displaying self-reliance or even self-interest" (p. 131); whereas photographs from Central and South America showed more collective characteristics in that "individuals are portrayed...as sharing space in communal settings or activities" (p. 131); the design of these sites emphasize "maintaining social stability" (p. 131) over and above individual autonomy.

Web sites representing 'universal' aspects were characterized by "parallel, uniform, linear, and stable design" in order to facilitate easy access to necessary information for an undifferentiated audience, i.e., "[t]here is no 'in' or 'out' group..." (p. 133). In those representing the 'particular' category, however, "individual achievement is superseded by social or communitarian achievement," in that "particularistic tendencies...link...individuals to the body of society (individuals are but a cell of a larger being)" (p. 133). In other words, the professed purpose of the university is to generate citizens who will both reflect and maintain the overall cultural pattern of the society that fostered them.

Of the above sets of dual assignations, however, the one that seems to be the most relevant to the present discussion of rational versus aesthetic approaches to human experiential ordering is that of 'Specific/Diffuse,' in that this opposition deals not only with access to information, i.e., who gets it and why, but also with how this relates to a cultural assessment of those living within a particular cultural

150

environment, i.e., not just who is heard, but who is *invited*, i.e., who *knows*, and who doesn't.

In 'specific' cultures, "...the focus is on the individual" (p. 137) in efficiently fulfilling a purpose. The intention is to tailor information so that it will be available to a targeted, and potentially interested, audience, while not necessarily, or at least not deliberately, excluding that access to anyone else. This goes right along with the individual and universal orderings of culture, wherein everyone has equal access to the available societal wares, whatever those might be.

In diffuse cultures however, greater attention is paid to the intricacies of form, i.e., to aesthetic relationships rather than to the uncomplicated, i.e., 'transparent,' delivery of content and/or information, for example, through the emphasis on color. For example, Web sites from Mexico:

> ...are in stark contrast to the less obvious color scheme that defines the NMSU
>
> Web site. Even the overall design...is more elaborate, not simply because of the bold color schemes, but because of the *creativity involved in the presentation of the information* [my emphasis]. (Thatcher, *et al*, 2007, p. 137).

Creativity, it should be noted here, does not always yield clarity in the dissemination of information, as equal access may not be the primary concern. In other words, here at-tention-getting (Grassi, 1994, p. 5) trumps transparency, and what might, from a modern Enlightenment western perspective, be considered non-content, and therefore without meaning, is culturally weighted as significant.

The above NMSU study, however, makes no essential claim for the categories used to construct its continua. The designations simply serve as frameworks for

cultural comparison, and there are exceptions. The Web sites from Ireland exhibited

no "clear preference for either individualism or collectivism" (p. 131), while the

universities in Costa Rica, Colombia, Chile "displayed both universal and particular

patterns (p. 133). In China, Zhengzhou and Hebei fall into the diffuse pattern, while

some aspects of Hunan University tend to specify more detailed information toward

targeted audiences.

Be that as it may, in this brief discussion of inter-cultural communications, there is

a relatively clear parallel between rational approaches to cultural ordering (e.g.,

individual, universal, specific) and aesthetic ones (collective, particular, and diffuse)

in that cultures based on rational concerns, at least in their current form, seem to be

more about dissemination of de-contextualized information for individual edification

and advantage, while those based on aesthetic concerns seem to be more about

communal deference and reciprocity toward established norms as context, and which

may, of course, advance unstated cultural norms as by-product.

*Continua/Polarities and (an)Others*

Miscommunication among disparate realms of human assumptions is not limited

to communications between countries or even regions, but can apply to meta-

constructs, as well. In philosophy, it has been commonly assumed that meaningful

discourse between the traditions of the Occident (West) and the Orient (East) is

precluded by insurmountable differences in their underlying assumptions about how

the world is organized, and especially how language works [See "White Horse

Conundrum, Chapter One.], assumptions that interfere with the pragmatic function of

152

language itself. 'Assumptions,' Hall & Ames (1987) claim, may be defined as "those usually unannounced premises held by the members of an intellectual culture or tradition that make communication possible by *constituting a ground* [my emphasis] from which philosophic discourse proceeds" (p. 11). The question of establishing a basic communal vocabulary for meaning-making is at the heart of the possibility of traversing the gap between linguistic and configurative forms of meaning-making.

In their discussion of comparative philosophy, Hall and Ames address some of those cultural assumptions that could be said to actually function contextually "outside" (Graham, 1989, p. 64) of language.

The word "deference" (*shu*) is an appropriate instance. In the West, to defer to another is often associated with submission to a greater power; to allow someone else's judgment or opinion precedence over one's own, while courteous, or even politic, is not often seen as a means for enhancing either individual status or self-esteem. Whereas, in the Confucian tradition, to defer is a matter of recognizing excellence in another, and is a necessary step to, or even an affirmation of, the process of 'person-making' (Hall & Ames, 1987) in the eastern communal sense of selfhood. It is a social skill to be acquired and even admired.

Such connotative differences have, of course, complicated any meaningful philosophic exchange between the East and the West, in particular the relationship of *shu* {deference} to *jen** [i.e., loving others]. This distinction has posed difficulties for Christian interpreters of Confucian thought because of the western tendency to equate the "'un-self-ish' implications of *jen** ...with agapé. For *jen**cannot be agapé..."

153

Agapé in the Christian sense, is a metaphysical experience, stemming from God. "Persons…can only approximate it…to the extent that they are vehicles for God's love. Jen*, by contrast, originates with personal judgment (yi)" (Hall & Ames, 1987, p. 120), as part of the "ritual action" (p. 289) required to become an exemplary person within a social context. Thus the process of becoming exemplary requires no access to any metaphysical essence, but is more of a matter of immanent awareness.

This cross-cultural mistranslation of social love in some ways parallels the distinction drawn in Chapter Three between contrasting definitions of knowledge. First, there is the Scott's requirement to recognize the need itself, followed by the mental picture created to meet it, followed by the material instantiation of an imagined solution in the physical world, based on the necessary skills. For Aristotle (1968), however, the acquisition of knowledge involves a combination of material, form, agency and final result where the use of the word 'form' varies from Scott's in that it indicates participation in a transcendent metaphysical essence existing outside the realm of human agency.

The example of social love serves to demonstrate a greater contradiction between these two fundamentally different philosophical traditions. The western assumption of transcendence, as a formative paradigm, stands in opposition to the eastern assumption of an immanent cosmos and relates directly to the issue of context. Hall and Ames (1987) define transcendence in this way: "a principle, A, is transcendent with respect to that, B, which it serves as principle if the meaning or import of B cannot be fully analyzed and explained without recourse to A, but the reverse is not

true"(p. 13). Lack of recourse to transcendent thought indicates a self-contained, human-determined universe.

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is the fundamental example of western transcendence anthropomorphically embodying the "primary substance which, as the eternal, immutable, immaterial source of all other things"(p. 13), exists both outside the experiential world and, simultaneously, is independent from, any of its referents (that need it for meaning).

For Hall & Ames, this definitive notion of transcendence has littered western conceptions of the world with "a host of disjunctive concepts - God and the world, being and not being, subject and object, mind and body, reality and appearance, good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, and so forth..." (1987 p. 17) - disjunctive because they represent themselves as essential dualities based on the culturally presumed transcendence of one element as opposed to the other.

> Dualistic explanations of relationships encourage an essentialistic interpretation in which the elements of the world are characterized by discreteness and independence. By contrast, a polar explanation of relationships requires a
>
> *contextualist interpretation of the world in which events are strictly interdependent.* (Hall & Ames, 1987, p. 19)

Bordo (1986) discusses this western penchant for unequal, yet purportedly equal, dualities as part of modern Cartesian thought. For Bordo, Descartes' suspicion of the subjective distortion of the senses resulted in anxiety and an insupportable doubt about the meaning of experience. Hence, comes his conclusion: humanity cannot know the outer world directly, but only through the unquestionable, i.e., the

unequivocal *abstraction* of verifiable mathematics, or, conversely, in a personal

connection with the mind of God - only *unprofaned* Certainty (Latour, 2002) can

reveal any circumstance about the objective world. For Bordo, crucial to this modern,

i.e., scientific, rejection of sensory experiences as empirical evidence was the creation

and maintenance of rigorous sets of oppositions separating the subject from the object,

the active from the passive (i.e., the "knower from the known" p. 450), and the mind

from the body. Inherent to this maintenance was the rejection by the intellect (the 'I')

of the 'other.' the natural world perceived as existing outside the mind.

By way of philosophic contrast, Graham (1989), offers his own list of eastern

*correlative* oppositions based on the doctrine of reversal by Taoist *Lao-tzu* [See

Figure 5.3 below.].

The difference between Bordo's take on Enlightenment binaries and Graham's

Figure 5.3:
*Correlative Oppositions*

| A | B |
|---|---|
| Something | Nothing |
| Doing something | Doing nothing |
| Knowledge | Ignorance |
| Male | Female |
| Full | Empty |
| Above | Below |
| Before | Behind |
| Moving | Still |
| Big | Small |
| Strong | Weak |
| Hard | Soft |
| Straight | Bent |

(Graham, 1989 p. 223)

Confucian one is that the former is portending to deal with true oppositions, i.e., absolute categories, which, pragmatically, they cannot be because one side of the equation is, *ipso facto*, given cultural precedence over the other, and thus presents a false symmetry. An equal sign cannot legitimately exist between two unequal categories; $A$ cannot appear to be in true opposition to $B$ if $B \neq A$ in cultural weight, and vice versa.

The latter, on the other hand, is essentially dealing with geographical antipodes and/or associational polarities, each defined by its relation to the other.

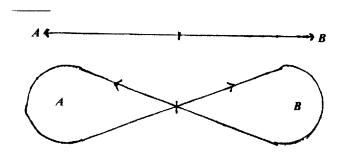As art historian David Hopkins (2000) puts it:

> Theorists such as Barthes, and later Derrida, [have] demonstrated that verbal structures in occidental cultures are built around binary oppositions positive/negative, presence/absence' 'masculine/feminine' black/white. Since, in each case, one term is privileged in contrast to its negatively tinged 'other', difference becomes something inscribed both linguistically and ideologically...,.(p. 219)

Whereas, within a Confucian-oriented cosmos, recourse to transcendent thought is culturally disallowed in the ordering of things; thus, the language of abstracted distancing is excluded from the consideration of experience, as are ideologically driven dualistic contrasts. Just as the constituent elements of a painting are constrained within the given format, i.e., cannot escape the frame, and must find their relevance *within* their inter-arrangement, so must the significances of a given artifact depend on its familial recognition by the viewer. As stated above, in Graham's set of oppositions, each pole is definitively determined by its relationship to its other.

form of access to information, and where no contextual element, aesthetic or

otherwise, is allowed to interfere with its clear dissemination. In the collective,

particular, and diffuse models, however, the individual is *contextual-ized* by

definition, determined, at least in part, by the overall structure of the community,

social status being determined by relationship with an "'in' or 'out' group" and,

generally, an 'insider' command of cultural knowledge.

As previously stated, in addressing visual thought, Arnheim (1969) first refers to

Figure 5.4:
*Western Dichotomy vs. Eastern Polarity*

A ←———————————|—————————→ B

A          B

those "diagrammatic scribblings drawn on the blackboard by teachers and lecturers

in order to describe constellations" (p. 116) of related ideas. Figure 5.3 illustrates the

contradictory ordering of opposition as represented in the Occidental and Oriental

philosophic traditions by diagramming two contrasting versions of experiential binary

as continuous line. While the western version continues into infinity and

diagrammatically depicts linguistic absolutes, a mathematical ratio that cannot exist

in nature, the eastern version is self-contained and relative, wherein the line, while

continuous, intersects and crosses-over itself, each pole necessarily becoming the

other, diagrammatically representing experiential fluctuation and change. This

transition in meaning could be said to represent Soja's "thirding-as-Othering" (p. 5)

based upon Lefebvre's *un dialectique de triplicate* as a "deep critique of all forms of

categorical, binary logic" (p. 7) and represents a fundamental difference in shared

cultural meaning.

Figure 5.5:
*Sample of Schematized "Thirding-as-Othering"*


**Awareness**                          **Knowledge**


**(blue)    Inner    Metaphor    Outer    (yellow)**


**Form**                               **Content**


Soja (1996) designates experiential categories as a matter of human agency.

Spatiality, says Soja, is the means for opening imaginative spaces that, in practice,

resist dualistic constrictions on imaginative thought. "[T]hirding-as-Othering" (p. 5)

provides a communicative strategy for the creation of neutral, or undesignated, spaces

for creative activity in the form of alternative views, in the same way as the addition

of a third compositional element in an artwork changes the overall composition.

**Recommendations**

160

Meaning in design, like a pattern of soap bubbles floating in the air, is both self-referential, limited, and repetitive in the form of various permutations on a common theme. The term 'design' is, in this transitional period in rhetoric, often used by those attempting to create hybridized approaches to communication in order to establish and recognize extra-verbal associations, but in practice, this often seems to be restricted to goal-oriented activities such as material production (Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, 2001), engineering (Soja, 1996), and/or argumentation (Williams,, 2001) that have little in common with design as it is understood in aesthetic practice. In pursuit of intentional purpose, the use of design is necessarily subordinated to linguistic definitions of purpose, as images often are to text; in the case of aesthetics, however, effective design is often an imaginative end in itself. As architect Kostas Terzidis (2007), puts it:

> Design is a term that differs from, but is often confused with, planning.
> While planning is the act of devising a scheme, program, or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment of an objective, design is a conceptual activity involving formulating an idea intended to be expressed in a visible form or carried into action. Design is about conceptualization, imagination, and interpretation. In contrast, planning is about realization, organization, and execution. Rather than indicating a course of action that is specific for the accomplishment of a task, design is a vague, ambiguous, and indefinite process of genesis, emergence, or formation of something to be executed, but whose starting point, origin, or process often are uncertain. Design provides the spark of an idea and the formation of a mental image. It is about the primordial of capturing, conceiving, and outlining the main features of a plan and, as such, it always precedes the planning stage. (p. 69)

Of the current attempts to combine the linguistic with the configurative in communication, all incorporate some version of the following: (1) the recognition of context as a set or *system* of semiotic signifiers, i.e., a self-referential frame; (2) the incorporation of extra-verbal, visual/spatial and/or semiotic elements into conventional texts, and (3) inclusion of the active and/or imaginative dynamism,

161

acknowledged, if only indirectly, as human agency, that characterizes the process of design.

For example [See Chapter Two.]:

Williams enjoins the phrase *composite literacy,* in which "analysis and construction" (p. 125) of verbal and spatial elements create *"a space...*beyond building print compositions" (p. 128), while Lankshear & Knobel (2003) encourage students to become active composers of meaning, incorporating semiotic factors into written composition.

The New London Group confers to design the status of *social arena* where applicable (though unspecified) resources are spatially configured within a given context in such a way as to transform both content and form into a unified composition that is cognitively, emotionally and socially meaningful, a concern shared with the artists and architects of the Bauhaus.

What each of the above approaches would gain from a working acquaintance with configurative literacy, i.e., aesthetic design applied outside the strict, and to some extent academically marginalized, realm of the fine arts, is a holistic comprehension of composition as a multi-dimensional communicative system that addresses the human need for constructed significance based, not on predetermined syntax, but on an intuitive and associative understanding of the inter-relations of things in humanizing the immediate environment.

For Ernesto Grassi (1980) rhetoric, was and is the original language that provides for the formation of culture itself: "The origin of society, history, work, the arts, and

metaphor...which overcomes man's difficult situation" (p. 14), as being separated

from nature. For Grassi, the special significance of visual metaphor as *pro ommaton*

*poiein* (i.e., "bringing before the eyes" Newman, 2002, p. 3), is that it is both verbal

*and* spatial, allowing for the human capacity for wonder at "the discovery of

relationships" (p. 95) among unique, yet similar things, thus providing the template

for the instantiation of imagined ideas into substantive realities.

The encoding and decoding of experience as print is a recent by-product of

evolving human existence. While written traditions excel at storing recorded data, as

a socially weighted form, print tends to foster an *abstracted* culture (Grassi, 1994)

wherein events are routinely experienced as being separate from their original

contexts (Shlain, 1998), thus limiting the importance of that context in the process of

shared meaning. For artists like Kandinsky, however, *"form is the outward*

*expression of inner meaning"* (1977, p. 29) and for humanistic rhetoricians like Grassi,

the process of shaping artifacts in the material world according to the dictates of

spatial understandings contained within the human imagination is inherent to the

creation of culture. As art historian Joe Gregory puts it:

> From a philosophical point of view, the central difficulty is that "man" has
>
> become a victim of his own discourse. And...if discourse (signification) has come
> to eclipse Being (presence), then the shadow cast must fall back on the signifying
>
> "I." For if it is true that all concepts arise within and therefore belong to some
> *system of signification* [emphasis mine], then the independent ontological status
> of all signifies...must be obliterated...must appear as little more than a creature of
> language, a mere grammatical figment. (1985, p. 52)

Closed systems of signification in which meaning is both limited and self-referential, necessarily establish arenas for human agency in the absence of transcendent and/or metaphysical rules. Swales (1998) and O'Toole (2004), in attempting to interpret buildings as significant (i.e.,'meaning'-ful) artifacts, tried something inspirational, even visionary in rhetorical terms, in that they deliberately tried to distance themselves from decades of dependence on the structure of printed syntax as the weighted communicative mode; but their dependence on language as arbitrary signifier, and their lack of familiarity with, and possible distrust of, imaginative aesthetics as methodology interfered with their articulation of spaces as human-generated contexts. Until human agency via *ingenuim* is recognized as originary (Grassi, 1994) meaning, existing prior to, and as the source of, systems of signification, then humanity will continue to live amid and believe its own reified and/or objective-ized fabrications (Baudrillard, 1983) as opposed to actively acknowledging and/or celebrating its self-generated handiwork in the creation of culture.

# APPENDIX

## O'TOOLE'S "SYSTEMIC-FUNCTIONAL MODEL

**Table 1.1** Functions and systems in architecture (reproduced from O'Toole 1994: 86)

| Units/ Functions | Experiential | | | Interpersonal | | Texture |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Building** | Practical function: Public/Private; Industrial/Commercial/Agricultural/ Governmental/Educational/Medical/ Cultural/Religious/Residential; Domestic / Utility<br><br>Orientation to light<br>Orientation to wind<br>Orientation to earth<br>Orientation to service water/sewage/ power | | | Size<br>Verticality<br>Chthonicity<br>Façade<br>Cladding<br>Colour<br>Modernity<br>Exoticism | Orientation to neighbours<br>Orientation to road<br>Orientation to entrant<br>Intertextuality<br>reference<br>mimicry<br>contrast | Relation to city<br>Relation to road<br>Relation to adjacent buildings<br>Proportions<br>Rhythms: contrasting shapes, angles<br>Textures: rough/smooth<br>Roof/wall relation<br>Reflectivity<br>Opacity |
| **Floor** | Sub-functions: | Access:<br>Working<br>Selling<br>Administration<br>Storing<br>Waking<br>Sleeping<br>Parking | | Height<br>Spaciousness<br>Accessibility<br>Openness of vista<br>View<br>Hard/soft texture<br>Colour | Sites of power<br>Separation of groups | Relation to other floors<br>Relation to outer world<br>Relation to connectors: stairs/lift escalator; external cohesion<br>Relation of landing/corridor/ foyer/room: internal cohesion<br>Degree of partition<br>Permanence of partition |
| **Room** | Specific functions:<br>Access<br>Entry<br>Living room<br>Family room<br>Kitchen<br>Bathroom<br>Bedroom | Study<br>Toilet<br>Laundry<br>Gamesroom<br>Retreat | Foyer<br>Restaurant<br>Kitchen<br>Bar<br>Bedroom<br>Ensuite<br>Servery | Comfort<br>Modernity<br>Opulence<br>Style: rustic, pioneer, colonial, suburban<br>'Dallas', working class, tenement, slum<br>Foregrounding of function | Lighting<br>Sound<br>Welcome | Scale<br>Lighting<br>Sound<br>Relation to outside<br>Relation to other rooms<br>Connectors: doors/windows/ hatches/interroom<br>Focus e.g. hearth, dais, altar, desk |
| **Element** | Light: window, lamp, curtains, blinds<br>Air: window, fan, conditioner<br>Heating: central, fire, stove<br>Sound: carpet, rugs, partitions acoustic, treatment<br>Seating { function / comfort | | { dining / coffee / occasional<br>{ desk / computer / drawing | Relevance<br>Functionality: convention/surprise<br>Texture: rough/smooth<br>Newness<br>Decorativeness<br>'Stance'<br>Stylistic coherence<br>Projection e.g. TV | | Texture<br>Positioning: to light/heat/other elements<br>Finish |

(2004 pp. 12, 13: reproduced from O'Toole 1994: 86).

165

# REFERENCES

Aristotle (1968). *Metaphysics.* (R. Hope, Trans). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Arnheim, R. (1969). *Visual thinking.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Arnheim, R. (1974). *Art and visual perception: A psychology for the creative eye.* Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Bart. (2014, April). *Art: Medieval (500-1500).* Retrieved from https://www.pinterest.com/barttrje/art-medieval-500-1500/

Barthes, R. (2004). Rhetoric of the Image. In C. Handa (Ed.) *Visual rhetoric in a digital world: A critical source boo k.* (pp. 152 – 163). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Baudrillard, J. (1983). *Simulations.* USA: Semiotext(e) & Jean Baudrillard.

Bordo, L. (Spring 1986). The Cartesian masculinization of thought. In *Signs* 11, no. 3 (pp. 439-456).

Borges, J. L. (1964) *Dream tigers.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action: Essays on life, literature, and method.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Burke, K. (1972). Medium as message: Some thoughts on Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding media: The extensions of man.* In R. Rosenthal (Ed.) *McLujan: Pro & con* (pp. 165 – 177). Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books.

Cordell, L. S. & Plog, F. (1979). Escaping the confines of normative thought: A reevaluation of Puebloan prehistory. *American Antiquity,* Vol. 44, No. 3, 405 – 427.

Dalzell (2006). *Frameworks: Images of design.* In S. Brown & C. Nims (Eds.) *Paideia 9: Gateways to English 111.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Derrida, J. (1970). Structure, sign, and play in the discourse of the human sciences. In R. Baltimore, MD: Macksey & E. Donato (Eds.), *The languages of criticism and the sciences of man: The structuralist controversy* (pp. 223- 242) John Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of grammatology*. (G.C. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

Doumont, J. (2002). Verbal vs. visual: A word is worth a thousand pictures, too. *Technical Communication*, 49.2, 219-224.

Foss, S. K., Foss, K. A., & Trapp, R. (1985). *Contemporary perspectives on rhetoric*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Foss, S. K. (2004) *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration & practice* (3rd Ed.). Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc.

Foss, S. K., & Waters, W. (2007). *Destination dissertation: A traveler's guide to a done dissertation*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of culture*: New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Goodman, N. (1976). *Languages of art: An approach to a theory of symbols*. Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Goodman, N. (1978). *Ways of worldmaking*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co.

Goss, B. (1989). *The psychology of human communication*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Graham, A.C. (1985). *Reason and spontaneity: A new solution to the problem of fact and value*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books.

Graham, A.C. (1989). *Disputers of the Tao*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court.

Grassi, E. (1980). *Rhetoric as philosophy: The Humanist tradition*. (J. M. Krois & A. Azodi, Trans.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Grassi, E. (1994). *The primordial metaphor*. (L. Pietropaolo & M. Scarci, Trans). Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, State University of New York.

Gregory, J. (Fall, 1985). Mark Perlman: Postmodern selfhood. In *Artspace* 9, No. 4 pp. 32-33.

Gunn, J. (February, 2003). Refiguring fantasy: Imagination and its decline in U.S. rhetorical studies. *Quarterly journal of English. 89*(1) pp. 41-59.

167

Hall, D. L. & Ames R. T (1987). *Thinking through Confucius.* New York: SUNY Press.

Hall, E. T. (1981). *Beyond culture.* New York: Random House.

Hamsterfly [painting] (2008). Retrieved from DeviantArt website: http://hamsterfly.deviantart.com/art/pomegranate-still-life-89214445

Haraway, D. (1991*). Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature.* New York: Routledge.

Hopkins, D. (2000). *After modern art: 1945-2000.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Huxley, A (1985). The language of war. In Ganner, R. C. & Stern, M. E. (Eds.) *English literature* (pp. 690 – 695). Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell & Company.

James, H. (1948) The Art of fiction. In *The art of fiction and other essays* (pp. 3-23). New York: Oxford University Press.

Johnson-Sheehan, R. & Baehr, C. (2001, February). Visual-spatial thinking in hypertext. *Technical communication.* Vol. 48, Number 1. 22-30.

Judd, D. B. (1982). Introduction. In J.W. von Goethe's *Theory of Colours* (p.p. *xvi*). 6$^{th}$ ed. Cambridge, MA: *The M.I.T. Press.*

Kandinsky, W. (1977). *Concerning the spiritual in art.* (M.T.H. Sadler Trans). New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Kandinsky, W. (1979). *Point and line to plane.* (M.T.H Sadler, Trans). New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourses: The modes and media of contemporary communication.* London: Oxford University Press.

Kress, G. (2005). Gains and losses: New forms of texts, knowledge, and learning. In *Computers and composition* 22 (1).

Lakoff, G. (2013). NY Times exposes propaganda but still spreads it. Retrieved from http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/276-74/20630-focus-ny-times-exposes-propaganda-but-still-spreads-it.

Lankshear C. & Knobel, M. (2003). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and*

*classroom learning.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Latour, B. (2002). What is Iconoclash? or is there a world beyond the image wars? In B. Latour & P. Weibel, (Eds.). *Iconoclash: Beyond the image wars in science, religion, and art* (pp. 14-37). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space.* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.) Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Leppert, R. (1996). *Art and the committed eye: The cultural functions of imagery.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

McLuhan, M.& Fiore, Q. (1967). *The medium is the massage.* New York: Random House.

McWade, J. (2003). *Before & after page design: Design principles made visible from Before & After, the premier design magazine.* Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press.

New London Group. (2000). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), Literacy *learning and the design for social futures* (pp.9-37). New York: Routledge.

Nerone, J.C. (1993). A local history of the early U.S. press: Cincinnati, 1793-1848. In *Ruthless criticism: Newer perspectives in U.S. communication history* (pp. 38-65). W.S Soloman & R.W. McChesney (Eds.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Newman, S. (2002, Winter). Aristotle's notion of 'bringing-before-the-eyes': Its contributions to Aristotelian and contemporary conceptualizations of metaphor, style, and audience. *Rhetorica: A journal of the history of rhetoric.* Volume 20, Number 1, 1 – 23.

New Mexico State University Board of Regents. (2013). *New Mexico State University: All About Discovery.* Retrieved from http://aces.nmsu.edu/directory/images

Ocvirk, O. G, Bone, R. O., Stinson, R., E., & Wigg, P., R., (1981). *Art fundamentals: Theory and Practice.* Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company, Publishers.

Ong, W. J. (2000) *Orality and literacy.* New York: Routledge.

O'Toole, M. (2004). Opera Ludentes: the Sidney opera house at work and play. In K. L. O'Halloran (Ed..), *Multi-modal discourse analysis: Systemic-functional*

*perspectives,* (pp. 11-27). New York: Continuum.

Poling, C. V., (1986). *Kandinsky's teaching at the Bauhaus: Color theory and analytical drawing.* New York: Rizzoli International Publications.

Porter, J. E. (1972). *Audience and rhetoric.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Regents of New Mexico State University. (2004, January). *New Mexico State University: General Maps.* Retrieved from http://www.nmsu.edu/General/Maps/1a.html

Reich, C. A. (1970). *The greening of America.* New York: Random House.

Richards, I. A., (1938). *Interpretation in teaching.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Rosenberg, H. (1970). *Act and the actor: Making the self.* USA: World Publishing-Times Mirror.

Sapir, E (1931). Conceptual Categories in Primitive Languages, *Science*, Vol. 74).

Scott, R. G., (1951). *Design fundamentals.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

Selfe C. L. & Selfe, R., Jr. (1996). Writing as democratic social action in a technological world: Politicizing and inhabiting virtual landscapes. In A. H. Duin & C. J. Hansen (Eds.), *Nonacademic writing: Social theory and technology* (pp. 325- 358). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Shlain, L. (1998). *The alphabet versus the goddess: The conflict between word and image.* New York: Viking.

Soja, E.W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined- places.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Inc.

Stroupe, C. (2004). Visualizing English: Recognizing the hybrid literacy of visual and verbal authorship on the Web. In C. Handa (Ed.) *Visual rhetoric in a digital world: A critical source book.* (pp. 13 – 37). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Swales, J. M. (1998). *Other floors, other voices A textography of a small university building.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Tannenbaum, P. G. ((1984) Poem. In Foote, W. D. & Perkins B. P. (Eds.) *Literature*

(*p.* 419). Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell & Company.

Terzidis, K. (Autumn, 2007). The Etymology of Design: Pre-Socratic Perspective. In *Design Issues* Vol. 23, # 4. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (pp. 69-78). Retrieved from http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/ desi.2007.2 3.4.69.

Thatcher B., Barrantes, E., Dalzell, A., Dong, Q., Ford, C., Gallagher, R., *et al.* (2007) Web site analysis across cultures: An inquiry into Intercultural values and web site design. In K. Amant (Ed.) *Linguistic and cultural online communication issues in the global age* (pp. 124 – 142). Hershey: Information Science Reference.

Trimbur, J. (2004). Delivering the message: Typography and the materiality of writing. In C. Handa (Ed.), *Visual rhetoric in a digital world: Critical source book* (pp. 260-271). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Whitman, W. (1968). When I heard the learn'd astronomer. In D. Hall (Ed.) *A choice of Whitman's verse* (pp. 136, 137). London: Faber & Faber.

Whorf, B. L. (1964). *Language, thought & reality.* Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Wikipaintings: Visual Art Encyclopedia. (2014, April). *The Marriage of the Virgin, 1035.* Retrieved from www.wikipaintings.org/en/giotto/the-marriage-of-the-virgin# supersized-artistPaintings-192826

Wikipedia: Obama Logo. (2014, June). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obama_logo

Williams, S.D. (2001). Toward an integrated composition pedagogy in hypertext (Part 2). *Computers and composition* 18. Elsevier Science, Inc., 123-125.

Williams, W. J. (1986). Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. In *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: The Hermitage, Leningrad, the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington* (pp. 9-15). New York: PARK LANE.

Wingler, H. M. (1969). *The Bauhaus.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Woolf, V. (1956). *Orlando.* New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Wysocki, A. F. (1998) Monitoring order. In *Kairos* 3.2. Retrieved from http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/3.2/features/wysocki/mOrder.html 04/07/12.

Wysocki, A. F. (2001). Impossibly distinct' on form/content and word/image in two

pieces of computer-based interactive media. In *Computers and composition* 18. 137-162.

Wysocki, A. F, (2005). awaywithwords: On the possibilities in unavailable designs. *Computers and composition* 22, 55-62.