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# Perspective from a semiotical perspective

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As compared to the more traditional divisions of the humanities and the social sciences, semiotics is often considered to be an “interdisciplinary” endeavour. Where other sciences start out from the specificity of their object of study, semiotics is concerned to scrutinise the differences and similarities of these different objects. Since it is involved with differences and similarities between different means for conveying information about something — different “perspectives” on this “something” —, semiotics is always located on the meta-level. As applied to perspective, then, semiotics immediately presents itself as a “meta-perspective”: a perspective on perspective. When turning its attention to the discourses of different sciences, the first task of semiotics must be to ascertain that these sciences really are concerned with the same “thing”.

The justification for the following considerations is, more specifically, my feeling — perhaps only partially substantiated here — that when literary historians, linguists, film theorists, art historians, and so on, discuss perspective, they are concerned with different things, yet with phenomena which may not entirely lack overlapping features.

Naturally, we should expect linguists and literary historians to be referring, at least some of the time, to the same thing, since both are involved with language — but, as we shall see, not even this is obvious. There have been attempts to compare perspective in film and literature (cf. Currie 1995), but they do not seem to take much heed of the terminological differences. The most famous case of a systematic attempt to compare (or rather equate)

literary and art historical concepts of perspectives is found in Boris Uspenskij's classic book *A poetics of composition* (1973 in English).<sup>1</sup> It seems to me that, from Uspenskij onwards, there has been too much a tendency to find similarities between the arts – and the semiotical systems which lie at their foundation – rather than attending to the differences.

The difficulties in discussing perspective, as it appears in different semiotical systems, and as it is construed by different scholarly specialities, is compounded by the host of near-synonymies which immediately offers itself in any languages: instead of perspective, we could almost as well talk about “view”, “point of view”, “viewpoint”, “standpoint”, “outlook”, “approach”, “angle (of vision)”, “attitude”, “aspect”, etc. Indeed, a partial overlap is even to be found with some more “technical terms” such as “seeing-as”, “seeing-in” (as the terms are just by Hermerén and Wollheim), “intention”, “propositional attitude” and so on (as commonly used in philosophy and some parts of linguistics), “form” as opposed to “substance” (as used in semiotics following Saussure and, in particular, Hjelmslev), and indeed “aspect” (as used by Wittgenstein). We shall have occasion to return to some of these terms in the course of this essay.

### ***Wittgenstein's rabbit as a Saussurean “form”***

It could be argued that semiotics is *the* science of perspective — or at least of point of view. We have Saussure's (1968: 26) word for it : he talks about the difficulty of “linguistics and all the other semiological sciences” stemming from the fact that they are not involved with something material, but only with “the point of view taken on something material”. This is parallel to a more famous saying, which appears in the *Cours de linguistique générale*, put together by Saussure's pupils, according to which “it is the point of view which creates the object”. As Luis Prieto (1975a: 114; 1975b: 225f) has convincingly demonstrated, this is not, as so often have been thought, a positivistic *profession de foi* : rather, it is another way of expressing the famous figure in Saussure's *Cours* of the double cut, isolating some portion out of the two amorphous masses of sounds and meaning. But it adds

something : the relation to a subject.

Today most linguists and psychologists would probably not want to talk about any amorphous mass, neither on the side of the signifier nor on that of the signified : at least in the case of verbal language, the most fundamental categories through which we perceive the world appear to by part of the universal make-up of the human species, in the form of “prototype categories” preferentially grasped at the “basic level” (cf. Rosch 1975; et alia 1976). And even if these categories are found in perception and cognition before they appear in language, it is probable that they will appear also in those semiotic systems which make use of the visual modality, such as, in the cases considered here, the cinema and static pictures.

This very general concept of perspective (or, literally, point of view) in no way pertains to any particular (spatial) position, incarnation, opinion, or mode of expression ; it amounts to the suggestions that we are involved with something (“a meaning”?) which is, as Husserl said about the Lifeworld (i.e. the world or everyday experience) *subjective-relative*. The subject in question does not necessarily have to be a solitary individual but could just as well be a group subject or even an anthropologically (or perhaps zoologically) universal subject. What Saussure seems to mean, in the end, is that *something which appears to be identical* (something “material”) *is presented as being different from the point of view of different subjects*, where the canonical case is taken to be the speaker of a particular language — or, as suggested in the unpublished remarks, the user of any other semiotic system.

The most obvious example of this thesis is of course the different ways in which sounds are used by different languages, some positing a difference where other do not. For those who are not familiar with phonological issues, the case is more easily illustrated by the different ways in which writing systems interprets the visual figure which looks as follows: “H”. In the Latin script, it is of course the letter “H” (though in some language, it is really not pronounced at all, and in some cases it merely represents aspiration), but in the Russian alphabet, it corresponds to the sound which we render by the letter

“n”, whereas in the Greek alphabet, it now represent the sound /i/ (as in the word “be”), while the Ancient Greeks used it to designate the sound /e/ (as in the word “egg”). In a terminology made familiar by Saussure and his followers (and which has had a long history within semiotics), it may be said that the shape “H” remains the same *substance*, but is given varying *forms* by these different writing systems.

As a first approximation, it may seem that this is similar to Wittgenstein’s (1971: 227ff) famous picture (taken over from the psychologist Jastrow; cf. Gombrich 1960) which may be seen as either a duck or a rabbit: physically, it might be suggested, what is present on the page of Wittgenstein’s book is the same ink blot, but as the perceiving subjects adopts different stands on the blot, a duck or a rabbit is seen (Fig. 1a. roughly corresponds to Wittgenstein’s version). Again, the ink blot could be considered to be a single *substance* which is given different *forms*. Wittgenstein, of course, talked about different “aspects”.

Wittgenstein’s description gave rise to a discussion among some aesthetically interested philosophers. Thus, both Hermerén and Wollheim at one time thought what Wittgenstein calls aspect could more properly be described as a kind of “seeing-as”. Wollheim (1980) later argued against this position, pointing out that there were really two different phenomena involved here : seeing the blot as something other than a blot (“seeing-in”) and seeing it as either a rabbit or a duck or even some third thing (“seeing-as”). The first phenomenon could be instantiated also by a completely unambiguous picture. Wollheim also rightly points out that “seeing-as” is not restricted to pictures — it also applies to humidity marks, clouds, bushes, etc. Indeed, I have argued that “seeing-in” is a variety of the semiotic function, the sign function, as it appears in pictures (cf. Sonesson 1989: 263ff).

Well before Wittgenstein, Hermerén, and Wollheim, Husserl (1980) discussed a phenomenon apparently identical to “seeing-in” describing it as being “perzeptiv imaginert”. In our time, the psychologist James Gibson (1980) used the term “indirect perception”. Husserl went on to distinguish the

*picture thing* (the material object which may be suspended obliquely), the *picture object* (that which you “see into” a photograph, in spite of the “photographic colours” present in the material thing, etc.) and the *picture subject* (the real thing we think we see but which is actually somewhere else, with correct colours, etc.). When Husserl here talked about “photographic colours”, he was no doubt thinking about black and white photography. But it is still true of colour photography – and of any other kind of picture — that it conveys a reduced colour scale as compared to perceptual reality (cf. Hochberg 1979: 25: cf. Sonesson 1989: 270ff).

Both “seeing-in” and “seeing-as” could be considered to be some kind of “perspectives”, in the most general sense : they are different ways of talking about something which, from another point of view, is identical. It should be noted that, in cases like these, “seeing-as” is dependant, for its possibility, on the “seeing-in” : pictures may contain information which is minimal to the point of making it possible to reduce the real-world difference between a rabbit and a duck, etc. It would be very difficult to confuse a real rabbit and a real duck. Nor are combinations of a cat and a coffee pot feasible in the actual perceptual world (cf. Fig. 1e.) Thus, the similarity is at the level of expression — in the picture object, not the picture subject. Also in the case of clouds, bushes, or damp spots is the sign function a prerequisite for “seeing-as” — at least if we take these equivalencies to be simple musings, as they clearly were to Leonard da Vince, and not errors of judgement, which may occur in the dark, or during some special mental states. The box which the child, in Wittgenstein’s example, pretends to be a house, is an example of “symbolic play”, as thus of the semiotic function.

Elsewhere, I have tried to make explicit the presuppositions of the notion of sign which are taken for granted both by Saussure and by Peirce (cf. Sonesson 1992a, b). Following Husserl, I suggested that that which we call expression should be *directly perceived* while not making up the *focus* of our attention. The content, on the other hand, should be only *indirectly perceived* (by means of the object called expression) and yet constitute the *focus* of

attention. Taking my lead from Piaget, I further suggested that the two objects involved must be *differentiated from the point of view of the subject*. The very concept of differentiation is not altogether clear in Piaget's work, but I proposed that it should be taken in a double sense: expression and content do not go continuously over into each other in space and/or time (unlike the branch of the tree which we see before we go round the wall and discover the stem); and they are conceived to be objects of different categories (sounds or contours on papers are felt to be physical objects, but they stand for mental phenomena, such as ideas). Some of the examples Piaget gives of the semiotic function (to which the child accedes, in his view, around 18 months of age) is verbal language, drawing, and symbolic play.

Clearly, it is only in a very loose way that the semiotic function may be identified with perspective. It would then simply mean that some object is not perceived for its own sake, but merely as a "stand-in" for something else: our attention "goes through" the expression but does not stop there: it is focused on the content.<sup>2</sup> This is also true of Wittgenstein's "aspect" to the extent that it can be identified with "seeing-in", that is, when we take it to involve the ink blot as opposed to the rabbit and the duck.

Moreover, it also seems to me that neither Saussure's "point of view" (that is, the "form", which is instantiated in pictures as "seeing-as") nor Wittgenstein's "aspect" (here reduced to "seeing-as" as in the choice between the rabbit and the duck) are central instances of what we ordinarily mean by the term "perspective". It might be useful to consider some of the other examples mentioned by Wittgenstein: the Necker cube, where either end may be perceived as being closer to the observer (Fig. 1b), actually seems to be more akin to the central idea of perspective. Then there is the shift between figure and ground, which Wittgenstein exemplifies with the black cross on a white background, which could also be seen as the reverse (Fig. 1c), but which may be more familiar as the two profiles facing each other which can also be seen as a vase. These instances may be compared to so-called "impossible figures" (for example, "the devil's turning fork"; Fig. 1d), which to ordinary



vision seems to form wholes, but which do not go together if we attend to the details. As is well-known, Escher and Reutersvård have used such figures in their paintings; but also some of Klee's works, in which for instance a mother and a child share a contour line, are "impossible" in a similar (though less geometrical) way. In fact, none of these figures are impossible as figures, that is, as constellations of lines. They simply do not correspond to any conceivable (and perceivable) real-world object. Nor is the Necker cube or the cross ambiguous as objects, but only as lines on a surface. Thus, the alternatives as well as the impossibilities are only given thanks to the sign function.

As far as I understand, Wittgenstein did not mean to argue that one "aspect" necessarily precludes the perception of the other; but this is exactly the use to which Gombrich (1960) puts Wittgenstein's example. It may be true that we cannot see the rabbit and the duck at the same time, nor, perhaps, the two orientations of the Necker cube; but in other cases, as in the cat which is a coffee pot (Fig. 1e), as well as in Arcimboldo's paintings, we have no trouble seeing the contradictory aspects. Here again, as I noted earlier, the doubling of the aspect is only possible once the sign function is given.

It seems obvious that both Saussure's notion of "form" and Wittgenstein's conception of "aspect" involves something which is conceived as being different from what it "really" is (that is, immediately, in "direct perception"), in such a way that *there are different (though sometimes concurrent) alternatives for what this other thing is*. In contrast, a perspective does in no way represent any "indirect perception" (unless combined with "form"): it *offers one of several possible modes of access to a single identical object*. In fact, as I observed above, the Necker cube may actually be construed as representing alternative perspectives, but only if we suppose that it is the same cube that we are seeing from different angles. This possibility does not exist for the cross, let alone the duck-rabbit.

In order to talk about things being the same or different, and something being merely a different mode of access to an identical object, we need to

make some assumptions about how the world is made up. It is, of course, not our business to construct an ontology. The most we can do it to *describe* a “folk ontology”, that is, the common sense world as it is reflected in verbal language and other semiotic systems. Basically, I am referring to Husserl’s proposal for a “science of the Lifeworld”, which was given some more empirical substance by James Gibson under the name of “ecological physics”, and, in a parallel line of development, received some rudiments of semiotical trappings from A.J. Greimas in the form of the “natural world”, at the same time as it is re-emerged in cognitive psychology under the title “naïve physics” (cf. Sonesson 1992a, b; 1996a, 1997, 2001a, b, c). Elsewhere, I have suggested that such a *semiotic ecology* could be derived in a more indirect way, by attending to the assumptions necessary to explain, for instance, the possibility of iconic signs or rhetorical operations (cf. Sonesson 2001c).

Starting out from a traditional Aristotelian stance, Smith (1995c) suggests that we should retain the opposition between “substances”, defined roughly as that which can exist on its own, and which admit contrary accidents at different moments in time; and “accidents”, which corresponds to qualities, actions, etc., and which are said to “inhere” in substances.<sup>3</sup> The former would then correspond to what Gibson (1980) also sometimes calls “substances” and describes as “independent” or “detachable objects”. It should be mentioned right away that Smith makes an important addition to traditional Aristotelian ontology: he allows for relational accidents, which are, so to speak, attached to several carriers, i.e. substances. But whatever the intrinsic merits of these terms, at least the first one is not very convenient to use in semiotics, since the same word has there been employed (as we have seen above) in quite a different sense: i.e. to signify that which is not relevant (notably, in a sign, in relation to the other plane), as opposed to “form”.<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere, however, Smith (1999) uses other terms to express his “bicategorical ontology”: “continuants”, which, in addition to Aristotelian substances, include media such as air and water; and “occurrents”, which correspond to Aristotelian accidents but also to events and processes (which

Smith 1995c already assimilated to the accidents). Unfortunately, I still find this terminology somewhat misleading. After all, it makes perfectly good sense to speak about continuity in space as well as in time (cf. Sonesson 1988), and in fact, we will have to do precisely this in a little while. On the other hand, spatial occurrents certainly sounds like pure nonsense (or magic?). But my misgivings go further: I do not think folk ontology would generally accept the postulated equivalence between events and processes, on one hand, and qualities of things, on the other. If we take the view that things are in some sense carriers of both properties and events, then the general feeling would no doubt be that the connection between the former and *its* carrier is closer to being intrinsic than that between the latter and *its* carrier. Of course, properties may change, but precisely as a result of a process: and the result, as opposed to the process, is intrinsic to the thing.<sup>5</sup>

In the last paragraph, we reverted to a more common sense terminology, which opposes *things* (or objects) to *events*. Actually, it may be more convenient at times to talk about spatial and temporal objects, respectively (while still allowing the term “objects”, without qualification, to be equivalent to spatial objects). This, I would take to be the basic common sense opposition: objects which are (prominently) in space, as distinct from objects which are (prominently) in time. As for the properties of things (and of events, which I will not discuss further here), I think it would be more proper to derive them *mereologically*, that is, as parts of the whole making up the object.

While this piece of folk ontology is introduced here only as stemming from my intuition as a member of the universal Lifeworld, it could have been derived as a requirement from my work of visual rhetoric (cf. Sonesson 1989a; 1996a, b, c; 1997; 2001b). There, I have suggested that there are three ways of dividing any particular object: into its *proper parts* (e.g. the head in the whole making up a human body); into its *properties* (being male as opposed to being female, or being an adult as opposed to being a child, with reference to the same whole); and into its *perspectives* or adumbrations (the

body seen from the back, the head seen in a three quarter view, etc.). In my earlier writings, I talked about three kinds of *factorality* (which, along with contiguity, makes up indexicality, not as a kind of sign, but as a ground). A more well-known term for what I was there talking about, I have since learnt, is *mereology*, which is the theory of parts and wholes, derived from Husserl's early work, but apparently given this name by the logician Lesniewski (cf. Smith 1994; 1995c). It should be noted that, within this repertory of three kinds of mereological principles of division, the third kind would, if it was described as an Aristotelian accident, be relational, in the sense of Smith: it would inhere in two objects. The particular thing about it, however, is that one of these objects is a subject: someone "having" this point of view.<sup>6</sup>

### ***On the background of "background" in pictures and language***

Before discussing the differences in which perspective, in the sense of a particular, subjective-relative, division of an object, is rendered by means of such semiotic resources as verbal language and pictures, it will be necessary to attend briefly to the general differences between these types of semiotic mediation. Curiously, the most enlightening observations on "literature" (that is, most of the time, verbal language in general) and "painting" (pictures and, to some extent, other visual modes of mediation) are still those made by Gottfried Ephraim Lessing, in his book *Laokoon*, first published in 1766 — at least if we take into account the comments offered on this book more recently by Wellbery, Bayer and the present author.

Wellbery (1984) has reformulated Lessing's analysis in terms taken over from Hjelmslev, unfortunately abusing this terminology (cf. Sonesson 1988; in press a, b). Thus, the terms content and expression are correctly used, but instead of "material", "substance" and "form" we should talk about "resources", "units", and "constraints". *Resources* is what is at hand. *Units* are the principles of individuation, corresponding to actions in time, and to bodies in space. The *constraints*, finally, are rules, principles, and regularities of the respective sign systems.

The content resources seem to be equivalent to what Benveniste (1969) has called the *domain of validity* of a sign system, and the expression resources are his *mode of operation*. Verbal language apparently can talk about everything, (it is “pass-key language”, as Hjelmslev said), while pictures must make do with everything visible, or everything having visible homologues. The expression resources are Lessing’s articulate tones, now called phonemes, etc., again opposed to anything visible (limited to static and bi-dimensional visuality in prototypical pictures).

Since time is not well rendered in pictures, visual art should ideally pick up one single moment, and, in a parallel fashion, literature, which is not very conversant with space, should be content to describe a unique attribute. Then, according to Lessing, an extension to the whole will take place in the imagination, spatially in language and temporally in pictures, that is, in the domain which the system cannot adequately render.<sup>7</sup> The property which most easily allows such an extension to the whole of the (spatial) object is called the “sensate quality”; and the phase which best permits the anticipation of the complete temporal succession is called the “pregnant moment”.

If we are to believe Lessing (and, in fact, many others who have written about pictures since then, including Goodman 1968), visual art is not only able to describe the whole of space, but it cannot avoid doing so: pictures have to show “fully determinate entities”. Taken literally, this must mean that pictures are unable to pick up “sensate qualities”. Even if we limit this claim, as is no doubt intended, to *sensate* qualities in the *visual* modality, this is certainly not true: as I have shown elsewhere (in Sonesson 1989; 1994a), notably against Goodman, the “density” of pictures is only relative, and all kinds of abstraction are found in them.<sup>8</sup> This applies to the expression plane, in the case of more or less schematic pictures: but it also applies to the content plane of some pictures the expression plane of which is fully “dense”. Thus, for all practical purposes, many pictures are not about a particular person in one or other disguise, but about more or less abstract roles in relatively generic situations.

Deriving his inspiration from Peirce, Bayer (1975; 1984) formulates Lessing's problem differently: it concerns the relation between the scheme of distribution for the expressions and the scheme of extensions for the referents. Bodies are carriers of actions, i.e. they are presupposed by them. Actions are continuous, but can only be rendered iconically as discrete states. The distribution scheme of pictures does not allow for succession, only for actions rendered indirectly by means of bodies and collective actions where several persons act together.<sup>9</sup> It will be noted that Bayer supposes all continuous objects to be temporal. But, clearly, space is also continuous from the point of view of our perception, so there should also be *spatial continua*. Pictures actually render certain spatial continua better than language — in fact, this is the other side of what was called “fully determinate objects” above.

However, since spatial objects are (potential) carriers of actions, all spatial details serve to suggest potential stories, in particular if they are sufficiently familiar to fit with many action schemes. Thus, it seems to me that, everything else being equal, a picture containing more spatial details will evoke more virtual courses of action. In terms of contemporary narratology, pictures actually contains a larger amount of “disnarrated elements”, that is, alternative courses of actions starting out from the given moment — and in this respect (though of course not in many others), they actually are better than verbal language at telling a story (cf. Sonesson 1996b, in press a, b).

The difficulty posed by narrativity in pictures, as Bayer reads Lessing, is that the picture is unable to abstract: Homer may show the gods drinking and discussing at the same time, but that is too much information to put into a single picture. Actually, it is not the amount of information which is crucial (the picture may easily carry more) but the possibility to organise it: verbal language has fixed means for conveying relative importance, newness, focus, etc. The picture, however, in the prototypical sense of the term, may possess some corresponding mechanisms which are not sufficiently known, but hardly any systematic and content-neutral means for organising such information: that is, in Halliday's (1967-68) terms, there are no fixed devices for separating

that which is *given* from that which is *new*, and that which is the *theme* (what we talk about) form the *rheme* (what is said about it). Indeed, although “background”, as applied to language, is originally a visual metaphor, just as is “perspective”, that which the picture places in front is not always the most weighty element, with importance decreasing according to increasing apparent distance; nor is necessarily the central figure the most semantically prominent one.<sup>10</sup> One of the principal difficulties is that, in the ordinary picture, the space of representation is, at the same time, a representation of the space of ordinary human perception, which impedes an organisation by other systems. In the history of art, these difficulties were at least partially overcome by Cubism, Matisse, as well as some forms of collages and synthetic pictures, and it has been even more radically modified by visual systems of information, logotypes, Blissymbolics, traffic signs, etc.. (cf. Sonesson 1988; 1996b; in press a, b). Yet it remains true that pictorial representations lack systematic means for rendering what Halliday has termed “information structure”.

In the present context, it will be sufficient to spell out two conclusions: although pictures do not render the world in the form of “fully determinate entities”, they have to divide up the world in bigger chunks in order to convey information about it than is the case with verbal language, and they lack any general means for imposing an internal structuring on these chunks, apart from the one given in perception. In terms of more modern cognitive linguistics, the same two points might be driven home by saying that pictures cannot pick one image scheme without also having to choose several others, and they are unable to organise these schemes in order of relative importance.<sup>11</sup>

A further observation pertaining to the ability of language to render temporal objects must also be made. Lessing’s claim, upheld by Bayer and Wellbery, that language is somehow more capable of rendering temporal continuity than pictures, depends on the idea that linguistic expression, unlike pictures, is itself an action (where of course oral expression is taken as the prototypical case): however, except for a small set of particular cases such as onomatopoeic words, performatives, quotations, and some cases of preferred

word order, the action accomplished by the linguistic expression very rarely is the same as the one rendered by its content. This means that, as a general case, language is no better at rendering temporal continuity than pictures are.<sup>12</sup> Thus, language does not only have to isolate the “sensate” quality, but must also, just like pictures, pick up the “pregnant” moment. And this brings us directly to the issue of perspective, in the most general sense, as it is imparted by means of languages and pictures.

### ***The specificity of perceptual perspective***

In order to compare the possibilities of different semiotic modalities for using perspective, I will start from what is obviously the original domain of the metaphor: perceptual perspective. And my first claim will be that it is only in pictures (and to some extent in the cinema) that perceptual perspective can be rendered as such, that is, as it appears in the world of our direct perception. As far as I understand, it is only here that it can be given the form of *perceptual adumbration* that it has in reality. My second claim, however, to which I will turn in a moment, is that there is another sense in which pictorial perspectives, in spite of being at the origin of the metaphor, are further removed from perceptual perspective than others.

Pictorial perspective may show *how* something is perceived, not just *that* it is perceived: that is, it can, and in as sense must, show all the details of the perceptual relation connecting the perceiver to the main object of perception. In Husserl’s terms, it shows the world in “perzeptuelle Abschattungen”. Nothing similar exists, for instance, in language (and thus not in literature). Turning Lessing against himself, we could say that there is no such “sensate property “ which, once being made explicit by language, could give us an impression of experiencing the whole of perceptual perspective. By means of other semiotic resources, we may fix the relation of the positions of the observer and that which is observed, whereas pictorial perspective, like true perceptual perspective, takes into account all the phases connecting those two positions. Thus, the true *perceptual perspective* of pictures could be contrasted with the mere *positional perspective* of other semiotics means.



Linguistic “perceptual” perspective is about relative position of the viewer and the thing seen, not about the “how”, the nature of the link between the perceiver and the perceived. We must grant, however, that true perceptual perspective appears to imply something about the relative positions of subject and object. In fact, there are some very schematic pictures, exemplified by traffic signs, which are similar to the kind of perspective we find in language and literature. This could be exemplified by the traffic signs for bus stop (in Europe seen from the side, but in Mexico from the front), the car (from the front), the air plain (from above), and that for a street with restricted circulation, which mixes the perspectives (Cf. Fig. 3). Similar examples could of course be found in Egyptian frescoes and pictures from many other alien cultures, in space and time. So the picture (at least the schematic variety) may render mere positional perspective; but it is the only type of semiotic resource which allows for another possibility.

There is, however, a second peculiarity of pictures which makes them more different from real-world perception than other semiotics means: they are two-layered perspectives. A picture is immediately a perspective on a perspective. This is not what happens in the perceptual world : as Husserl argued and Gibson after him, we “see through” the perspective to the thing as such. This is not so in pictures. Even the best linear perspective will not permit us to see “through” this surface to the thing depicted: instead, the perspective is part of what is depicted. In terms of Husserlean phenomenology, the perspective (which, as I suggested above, is one way of dividing objects into parts) becomes an object in its own right.<sup>13</sup> As perceptual psychologists such as Gibson, Pirenne, and others never tires of pointing out, it is only when we look at a picture through a loophole, using one, immobile eye (“cyclopean vision”) that there is any possibility of confusing the picture with reality. In fact, the surface is always perceived *as* a surface. Although not part of any of these traditions, Perez Tornero (1975) gives a nice illustration of this two-layered perspective (Fig. 4).

Strictly speaking, perceptual perspective does not imply any particular

positional perspective. In general, it cannot be supposed that depicted perspective is the perspective from which the perceiver “sees” the message. This is certainly not true about ordinary lineal perspective, for although the “right” position may be geometrically determined, it is never the one exclusively used by the observer (as shown by Pirenne; cf. Sonesson 1989:255ff). Anamorphic perspective may actually force the observer to adopt a particular position; but this is a very peculiar device. In the second place, perceptual perspective is not necessarily the perspective from which the sender of the message created it – although he has not doubt looked at the thing depicted from the perspective depicted, among many others. The latter points obviously does not apply to photography – only the camera has to “look” from that perspective. The photographer may in fact be in front of the camera, as in Cindy Sherman’s well-known photographs. Moreover, in the case of computer-generated images, in particular those using an algorithm, the perspective rendered is not even necessarily one among those experienced by the creator.

Perhaps we should say, then, that perceptual perspective implies positional perspective, but only an unspecified version of it. In other words, no particular subject or person occupying such a position is posited. If we take *positional perspective* to be the most abstract form of perspective (since it only describes relative positions), then it may be said that *perceptual perspective* adds information about that which is perceived, while *personal perspective* contributes information about the perceiver. In order to illustrate these relationships (Fig. 5-7), I have adapted some schematic figures from Langacker (2001, in press). However, the emphases placed on different parts and the development of the subject pole are my own contributions.

In his discussion of Lessing’s theory, Bayer submits that the cinema should be able to synthesise the advantages of language and pictures: it has access to the whole of the visual world, and to temporal succession at the same time. This is probably an all too simple conception of film as it is experienced, as may be illustrated by the case of perspective. The film picture

is of course similar to the static picture in being able to render perspectival adumbrations. However, it is probable that these adumbrations have less of a part to play in film perception, since they change all the time as the film develops. Thus, they are probably less in focus — except in the experience of the film analyst who may play the film over and over again, look at it in slow motion, and even investigate each picture separately.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, unlike the static picture, the film picture *does* permit us to “see through” the perspective to the thing given through the perspective, as in the ordinary perceptual world. This is not surprising, since the film picture, like the perceptual world, is in perpetual movement. On the other hand, because of the construction of the camera lens, it is still a case of cyclopean vision.<sup>15</sup>

We have seen that it is not the relative position as such which is important in pictorial perspective, but the properties of the very process of viewing. In a film, however, it is precisely this relative position which seems to be important (somewhat like in language) : as-seen-from-above, as-seen-from-the-right, etc.<sup>16</sup> In some contexts, films seems to emphasise the *spatial perspective* (the position), in others the *personal perspective* (the identity of person doing the seeing). For instance, a perspective from above does not necessarily involve positing somebody looking down from above (God or the angels — except in some recent films by Wim Wenders). But if we are first shown a person looking and then some view, we tend to think that what we are seeing is the perspective of that person, in particular if the film then cut back to the same person, or another one, looking. These are elementary viewing habits which are learnt very early by children (and emulated by some recent robots). It is because of the temporal succession – and the possibility of cutting it up in discontinuous chunks (the “montage” of film theory) — that this is possible in the cinema, but hardly in static pictures.

Here, as if often the case, we are of course concerned with *ascribed perspective*. What we see is ascribed to a person different both from the creator of the pictures and the observer. You must be at least a little of a film connoisseur to identify the low-standing camera as the gaze of Ozu, and the

like. If anything, however, it is the perspective of the creator, in this peculiar sense, which may be identified in static pictures: the gaze of Matisse, of van Gogh, etc. On the contrary, ascribed perspective here seems impossible. There have been arguments claiming that some donor figure appearing in mediaeval paintings, and even some other marginal person, is the one whose perspective is shown, but this seem to me a contrived parallel. These persons are part of the (perspectival) picture, even if they are painted on the border of the pictorial space. What is lacking in the picture is the shift from the space of the perceiver to the thing perceived which we have in the perceptual world as well as in the film. We could of course have a picture where we “look over the shoulder” of some person, as we have in the cinema, but it is only in some wider context that such shots will identify the perspective of what is seen at the other side of the subject’s body as being *his* perspective.

There is of course another way of embedding one person’s perspective within another, and that is by “quoting” it, which is obviously possible in static pictures and also, though perhaps less naturally, in films. But since this seems to be a case in which the perspectival metaphor, projected onto language, is returned to pictorial media, it may be better to discuss first the nature of perspective in language and literature.

### ***The limits of the perspective metaphor in language***

The most elementary fact of linguistic perspective (in the limited perceptual sense) is that it is opposed to non-perspectival devices : some words and phrases do not seem to embody any (perceptual) perspective at all. This is of course impossible in pictures as well as in film (even though some abstract pictures may lack perceptual adumbrations, as in traffic signs). So there is an initial choice between perspective and non-perspective which does not appear within other semiotic resources, at least not within visual ones. An exception to this may well be those kinds of abstract renditions of objects (e.g. the cube identified as closure plus angles) which are produced by small children and brain-damaged persons. But this case is of course perspectival in the wider non-perceptual sense of singling out some properties – another of the three

modes in which the object may be divided, which were discussed above. More to the point, traffic sign, Bliss, logotypes, and many other schematic visual figures only have positional perspective. But all these are at the limit of being pictures. Cubist paintings, and “icons” in the religious sense of the term (as described by Uspenskij 1976a) contain several (more or less) perceptual perspectives. But choosing several perspectives is also a way of following the obligation of realising perspective.

In linguistics, perspective most immediately involve positional perspective : the difference between the speaker’s perspective and that of some person mentioned or implied (including the listener’s perspective, notably in some pronouns and verb forms). Such linguistic perspective, as codified in language, normally involves a relationship to the body of a person, which means that *positional perspective* and *personal perspective* are hard to distinguish. Thus, perspective presupposes embodiment, egocentric space, or, as linguists have earlier said, the *origo* of the *I-here-now*. A rather curious example is the sentence “The sun is right above the cabin”, pronounced by someone standing on his head (Langacker 2001: 37). In written language (the most common material of literature today, in spite of Lessing) the connection to the body of the speaker and hearer is of course much looser. As we have seen, there are only very indirect ways of embodying the listener’s or some third person’s perspective in static pictures, while there is much more leeway in the cinema. However, two phenomena to which we will now turn characterise linguistic perspective but are hardly conceivable outside of verbal language.

A notion of perspective which is linguistically very relevant involves some other object or person functioning as a kind of “landmark” or, as I will say in the following, a point of reference : something or somebody is in front of the house, behind the hill, etc. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that it is only in language that something distinct from one’s own body may be used as a point of reference. Someone who says that somebody else “came up onto the stage” may himself be on the stage, but it is also possible that he uses

the announcer as a point of reference (Cf. Langacker 2001: 29ff). The sentence “Dick is to the left of Tom” may be true at the same time as “Dick is to the right of Tom”, if Dick and Tom face you, and you invoke either egocentric space or Tom as a point of reference (Cf. Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976: 275ff).

Perspectives, in this sense, seem to be completely impossible in pictures (and the cinema) : there are of course objects in the picture which can be described, linguistically, and perhaps even, in a sense, perceived, as being in front of and behind others, but the picture is never structured according to such a perspective. There is no point of reference apart from the implied observer of the pictured scene. In his book about Russian icon paintings, Uspenskij (1976a, b) argued that these paintings, in their central, religiously laden parts, were structured according to what he calls an “inner perspective”, that is, a view from the other side of the painted scene ; but, even so, this would not involve any independent point of reference used by the perceiver, but God as some kind of super-subject — it would simply mean that the “point of view of the picture” were even further from coinciding with the “point of view of the perceiver” than in other pictures.

Another peculiarity of linguistic perspective is when we identify with the object, that is, we put our self in its position: we speak, for instance, of “the front of the house”. Linguists call this phenomenon “intrinsic front” and define it as being the side containing the main perceptual apparatus, which is in the direction of motion and/or which is characteristically oriented to the observer (Miller & Johnson-Laird 1976: 400ff: Cf. Vandeloise 1986). The first two criteria involves some kind of identification with the object, the third one rather with a second person, an Alter. Thus, it supposes some kind of dialogical projection which is probably only possible in verbal language. Once again, descriptions such as these can of course be applied to pictures, both as objects and as depictions, but they have no consequences for the organisation of the pictures. It could be said that intrinsic front is a property also only described by language but actually forming part of our knowledge of the

world. However, it seems to be transferable to novel objects within language.

A more general conclusion might be drawn at this point. Only in verbal language is it possible to use something different from the subject itself as a point of reference. A more complete analysis would certainly reveal that what characterises language is the capacity to use an additional point of reference, concurrently with one's own body. Something is "behind the hill" in relation not only to the hill but also to the speaking subject. Or, more precisely, something is "behind the hill" *in relation to the relationship* between the subject and the hill. The subject is primarily relevant as a body. Both referential points and intrinsic fronts involve a *bodily positional perspective*, or a *bodily perspective*, for short. No other semiotic resource than language seems to be able to make use of this kind of perspective.

### ***Perspective in the extended sense in language and pictures***

The term "perspective" is readily used by linguists and philosophers in a much more extended sense: it comprises all the different ways of "dividing up the object" which we discussed earlier, thus, in addition to perceptual parts, proper parts and thematic hierarchies of properties. This often involves using perception as a metaphor for cognition. Even though he does not use the term "perspective" (but "construal"), Langacker (1991; 2001) clearly conceives the difference between active and passive forms of the verbal construction in this way. Analogously, differences of tense and aspect (for instance *passé simple/pasado* vs *imperfait/imperfecto* in French and Spanish) may be readily construed in this way. I will call this a *conceptual perspective*.

Literature may obviously employ conceptual perspective, since it is a resource contained in verbal language (also in less codified forms than those considered above). It applies not only to the real subject of the situation of communication (or at least to the creator) but also to a number of ascribed subjects (the "hero" but also the narrator). The only problem concerns the possibility of distinguishing this perspective from the other types. In static pictures as well as in the cinema, the situation is somewhat different (although

even there “pure” cases may be difficult to find). Our idea of the style of a particular painter or photographer depends at least partly on conceptual perspective: this is the case with van Gogh’s strokes (now even as features in graphics software) as well as with Cartier-Bresson’s incomplete scenes. However, even in this case is it difficult to conceive the possibility of imputing the perspective shown to depicted or otherwise fictive persons. In the cinema, on the other hand, it can be done, because of the ongoing pictorial flow. The difference involving perceptual perspectives thus seems to be reproduced.

A more commonly discussed interface of perspective studies in language and literature is the phenomenon often termed “erlebte Rede” or, more generally, the possibility of reproducing (or only partly reproducing) the speech (or thought) of others within your own speech. For the present purpose, we need to begin by considering the general possibility of reproducing “the other’s speech”, in Bakhtin’s parlance, without confusing it with our own, by means of different semiotic resources. The question whether this operation uses direct speech, reported speech, or something in between will have to wait. Obviously literature, as all other uses of language, is capable of such reproduction. Even static pictures and the cinema can do this, but it only happens under very peculiar circumstances. It is not a straightforward way of using these semiotics resources as might be said about literature and other kinds of language use.

Elsewhere, I have distinguished *generic* and *specific picture depictions* (Sonesson 1994). A picture may “quote” another picture, but if the picture in question cannot be identified from other sources, it is simply generic, and there is no way we can know whether it is similar to “direct speech”, “reported speech” or something intermediate. The case is different with specific picture depictions. In Velázquez’s painting “Las Meninas”, several paintings by Rubens and Jordaens may be identified as hanging on the walls. In fact, it has even been argued that what we see are the copies of these paintings made by Martínez del Mazo. Here, we encounter the closest equivalent of “direct



speech”. If anything, Picasso’s version of “Las Meninas” is comparable to “reported speech”, because while we can recognise some elements of Velázquez’s painting, they are all filtered through the style of Picasso. Hamilton’s version of Picasso’s “Las Meninas”, however, may contain some elements of “erlebte Rede”, with reference to both Picasso and Velázquez. This is at least true in relation to Picasso, since Hamilton borrows the latter’s “way of speaking” (style, typical themes, etc.) even when it is not realised in this particular work.

In order to have something more directly similar to “direct speech” in pictures, we would need to include a reproduction of some earlier picture in our picture. Since paintings are traditionally conceived to be unique, the only way of doing this would be to use a reproduction, as Duchamp’s did with Mona Lisa in “L.H.O.O.Q.”. This is of course more naturally done in the cinema, where there is not supposed to be a unique copy of the work. Photographs, digital pictures, and in fact all pictures whose copies are given the same value as the original (the “first copy”), that is, which are not considered to be works of art, are of course equivalent to film here. Yet in all these cases quotation will only function as such when we recognise the work from other sources (even when it is only the pictorial genre which is quoted, as in Cindy Sherman’s “Film Stills”). To construct “the language of the other” quite independently within one’s own language, as happens in a novel, seems to be impossible in the picture.

It is of course impossible to fully discuss here the relevance of something as complex as “erlebte Rede” to other semiotics resources than language, but I would like to add a few considerations. The analogies suggested above suppose that “erlebte Rede” consists in incorporating parts of the expressive resources of “the other’s language” within one’s own speech: this is the way in which Hamilton “quotes” Picasso. This could be called in stylistic perspective. In the case of both language and pictures, it is not clear whether such a *stylistic perspective* can be – or even should be – distinguished from conceptual perspective.

However, as the term is used in the study of language and literature, “erlebte Rede” also involves other phenomena. Thus, for instance, when Hellberg (1984) talks about “empathy markers”, it seems that it is not so much the other’s expressive means, but his or her emotions which are involved. Perhaps the case is comparable to Jakobson’s (1963) “emotive function”, which is defined to concern everything which involves the “sender” of the message, but which is then (in part) exemplified (as the choice of work also suggests) by reference to the emotions of this “sender”. It could be argued that *emotional perspective* necessarily implies stylistic perspective, even though the opposite does not hold. But even this does not seem to me to be true. If I write, for instance, “He exclaimed that Damn! he would kill me”, some much stronger word than “damn” may really be used, but the emotional tone may still be that of the other speaker.

Again, nothing similar seems to be possible in pictures. Like any human artefacts, pictures may of course express the emotions and sentiments of their creators. And they may convey emotions to the observer in a way which is not completely arbitrary. But a picture cannot express the sentiments of the persons depicted. Of course, it may depict the facial expressions and gestures of the persons involved in the scene – but then it simply conveys the emotions available to the observer of the perceptual world. Nor can a picture render the emotions of the creator of a picture which it quotes. If we include values in emotional perspective, we might argue that Egyptian frescoes expresses the values of the Pharaoh, but depicting him much bigger than everybody else (something comparable to “subjective maps”). But in fact, Egyptian frescoes no doubt expresses the value of the society at the time. Something similar applies to the mediaeval donor who had himself painted much smaller than the saints: this value relation is really part of his society, and is expressed more clearly in the contract with the painter. Even the “inner perspective” attributed to God in Orthodox icons does not really express God’s values or emotions. It simply embodies a way of conceiving the world which would be well-known to the contemporary observer from many other sources.

In the cinema, on the other hand, it seems quite possible to express emotional perspective attributed to others. Because it is made up of a sequence of pictures, a film may show us some scene in which an emotion is given expression (using for instance special effects) followed or preceded by a scene in which this emotion is assigned to a depicted person.

The meaning of perspective in literature is of course predetermined by the resources offered by language. And yet it is perhaps no accident that literary scholars tend to conceive perspective in a rather different way from linguists. They are concerned with the one who does the observing and/or who detains the knowledge, much less the one who has feelings with respect to something and/or who gives of expression to such feelings. A verbal text as a whole no doubt may contain viewpoints which are not given any particular linguistic expression. Genette (1983: 48ff) describes focalisation using a drawing with a head “observing “ (or otherwise having access to) a bubble containing a head “observing” another head in a bubble, etc. This should not be confused with Perez-Tornero’s picture of the viewpoint of the picture – the latter does not contain any little head doing the observing. It is a static reproduction standing for itself. Something similar to what Genette describes can only be found in specific picture depictions.

Against other literary scholars who have taken the perception metaphor rather literally, Genette insists that focalisation does not involve perception but only the amount of knowledge shared — or, more exactly, the restrictions imposed on knowledge as compared to the omniscient narrator. That which then characterises other kinds of narrators is whether they have access to any consciousness or only to the outside world, and whether they have access to a single consciousness only (which may or may not correspond to the person described as “I”) or to several ones. In such cases, we will talk about *information* or *knowledge perspective*.

Even though knowledge perspective does not have the same systematic importance outside of literature, it may still be relevant to other uses of language (even though the omniscient narrator then is revealed as a rather

utopic personage). In pictorial media, on the other hand, knowledge perspective is hard to isolate, since knowledge here must of necessity be translated into seeing (even in the cinema, if we abstract from the verbal part of the message). But this does not in any way mean that we are barred from entering the consciousness of all persons involved (apart from the director), contrary to what is suggested when Hemingway's style is described as being derived from the cinema: in fact, other minds are given to us in a film as well as in any other pictorial media in exactly the same sense as in reality, that is, indirectly through perception.

The amount of information conveyed about other minds thus depends on the aptness and willingness of the persons depicted for sharing this information with us. In some cinematic genres, such as "action films", information about other minds is largely irrelevant; and there are certain directors (such as Bresson) who intentionally try to eliminate the kind of access we have to other minds in the real world. On the other hand, the cinema (and, to some extent, other pictorial media) has the possibility seldom present in reality to convey some particular types of contents of a person's consciousness, by means of such devices as close shots of faces and extended shots (which, are comparable, in this respect, to static pictures).

As such, however, the knowledge perspective only seems to become relevant in the cinema (as well as in a series of pictures, for instance a comic strip; cf. Sonesson 1988; 1992a) when a clear dissociation is perceived between the knowledge of the creator (and/or the corresponding ascribed subject) as it is translated into something which may be seen, and the knowledge of the spectator. This happens, for instance, in Hitchcock's "Stage fright" where we are shown what the narrator (which, at this point, is the suspected assassin) wants us to know, which is not identical to what he *does* know, that is, what actually happened. But this can only be discovered retroactively, when we are shown the real sequence of events towards the end of the picture.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have described a kind of relationship to the subject which may aptly be called a perspective while distinguishing it from other similar phenomena (such as “aspect”): it is a case in which an object is conceived as being constant, while the modes of access which a subject may have to it varies. I have also singled out some different kinds of perspective: positional perspective, which only focuses on the respective spatial positions of the subject and the object; perceptual perspective, which is concerned with the exact perceptual adumbration in which the subject has access to the object; and personal perspective, which is involved with the way in which the subject itself is modified in presence of the object. In addition, I have distinguished different components within the consciousness of the subject, such as his body, his feelings, his conception, his thought and his means of expression. Against the background of a distinction between the resources of verbal and visual media, revised from Lessing’s classic discussion, I have also tried to determine to which extent ordinary language, literature, pictures and the cinema, respectively, offer the resources capable of expressing these different kinds of perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> It was my dissatisfaction with this book that first prompted the present investigation (although on the way it happened to crossbreed with some other themes of mine), but, in the end, I have found it more convenient to state my conception in a positive way, rather than criticising Uspenskij.

<sup>2</sup> As Husserl would have said, the “intention” (conceived as an arrow from consciousness to the object) goes through the expression to attain the content. Or, as both Peirce and Vygotsky would have said, the expression mediates between the observer and the object.

<sup>3</sup> This is of course only a small part of the properties Smith casually attributes to substances, and it is quite different from his formal definition, which is expressed in terms of boundaries.

<sup>4</sup> This confusion between the Aristotelian and the Saussurean sense of “substance” has actually taken place, in an otherwise excellent book about Lessing’s semiotics written by Wellbery (1984; cf. criticism in Sonesson 1988 and below).

<sup>5</sup> In this respect, my analysis seems to be more in line that that of the cognitive linguist Ronald Langacker (1991)

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the peculiarities of the subject, that is, the ego, cf. Sonesson 2001c.

<sup>7</sup> This is Wellbery’s conclusion, but in actual fact, the extension in time is the one most important to Lessing, as shown by his negative view of the possibilities of pictures. Cf. Sonesson, in press b.

<sup>8</sup> Simply put, “density” to Goodman means that, no matter how fine the analysis of something (e.g. a picture) into meaningful units, it will always be possible to posit another unit between each two of those already given, and so on indefinitely.

<sup>9</sup> It is strange that Lessing as well as Bayer claim that collective actions are different in this respect from individual ones: the former are made up of individual ones, which simply are distributed in space, and they therefore cannot be rendered if the latter cannot.

<sup>10</sup> Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) makes a lot of unsubstantiated claims of this kind (also as applied to the left and right side). Curiously, although they declare Halliday to be one of their principal sources of inspiration, they do not even differentiate between given and new, on one hand, and theme and rheme, on the other.

<sup>11</sup> The term “image scheme” is used by such linguists as Lakoff, Langacker, Talmy, and many others, but I have nowhere seen any clear definition of what it means. It clearly implies that linguistic meaning is different from what logicians call propositions but is in some way more similar to pictures. The visual representations used, in particular, by Langacker and Talmy, suggests that images schemes are some very abstract kinds of pictures corresponding to a single or a very limit number of objects or events.

<sup>12</sup> In the semiotical sense, linguistic actions are not iconic of the actions they talk about. Of course, film, and even theatre, as Lessing himself recognised, are able to render temporality in an iconic way: they are “moving pictures”. At some very high and abstract level, the words, sentence or at least the paragraphs used by the radio journalist describing a horse race at the same time as it occurs also uses linguistic actions iconically for the actions accomplished by the horses. But this is of course a fairly marginal case, even though it may be more common now than at Lessing’s time.

<sup>13</sup> Actually, Husserl identifies “aesthetic perception” with phenomenological reduction in his discussion of the “Bildbewusstsein”.

<sup>14</sup> In fact, with the generalisation of the video library, not to mention the DVD, this possibility becomes more easily available. Contrary to what film analysts like Metz, Banagan, etc, always seem to suppose, the cinema is no longer necessarily the typical channel of circulation for film pictures.

<sup>15</sup> It is possible to imagine a different kind of film. Some robots being built nowadays seem to be able to integrate different camera views, just as the human eye does, but so far, only the robot can “see” this.

<sup>16</sup> I am of course referring to the simulation of perceptual perspective here : there are other devices in films for rendering some qualities of the viewing process, most obviously blur.

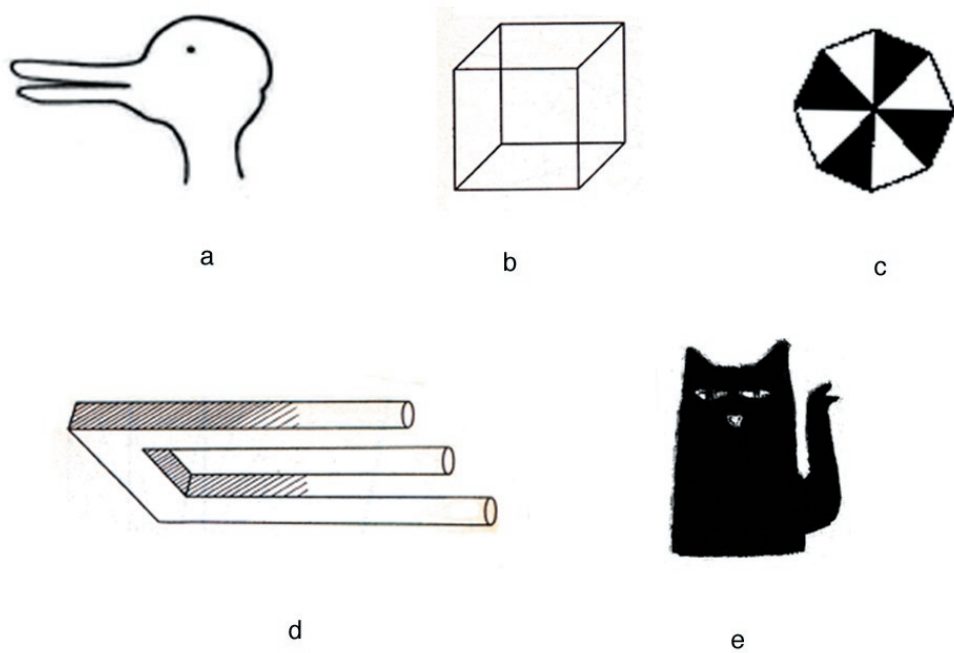


Figure 1. Ambiguous figures: a) Wittgeinstein's duck/ rabbit; b) the Necker cube; c) Black cross and white background, or the reverse; d) "the devil's turning fork"; e) cat which is also a coffee pot



Figure 3. Traffic signs with different kinds of "positional perspectives".

	<i>Expression</i>		<i>Content</i>	
	<b>Pictures</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Pictures</b>	<b>Language</b>
<i>Resources</i>	Static visibility	Linguistic system	Everything visual (In prototypical pictures from one point of view)	Everything which can be thought about (as construed by verbal language)
<i>Units</i>	All resources	Whole texts	“ <i>Bodies</i> ” (spatial continua) directly rendered, that is, as relatively determinate entities; and “ <i>events</i> ” (temporal continua) rendered indirectly by traces left on bodies (spatial continua)	All units, but only rendered as a limited number of properties abstracted from the wholes of the Lifeworld; “ <i>events</i> ” (temporal continua) and “ <i>bodies</i> ” (spatial continua) but only indirectly rendered as <i>pregnant moment</i> and <i>sensate qualities</i> , in different combinations
<i>Constraints</i>	Spatial deployment, relatively impermeable and overlapping organisation of signs (iconic relation to the content), only a limited communication structure (in the case of prototypical pictures)	Temporal deployment (or quasi-spatial in written form), successive organisation of signs (independence of content, except at very high levels of organisation or in special cases), developed communication structure	Big, continuous chunks picked up from the Lifeworld, containing irreducible connection to the rest of the Lifeworld.  A single ontological region (reality on the same level as possibility, imagination, etc.)	Minimal chunks, abstracted properties Many ontological regions (reality distinct from possibility, imagination, etc.)

Figure 2. Revised version of Lessing's system opposing pictures (“pictorial art”) to language (“literature”)

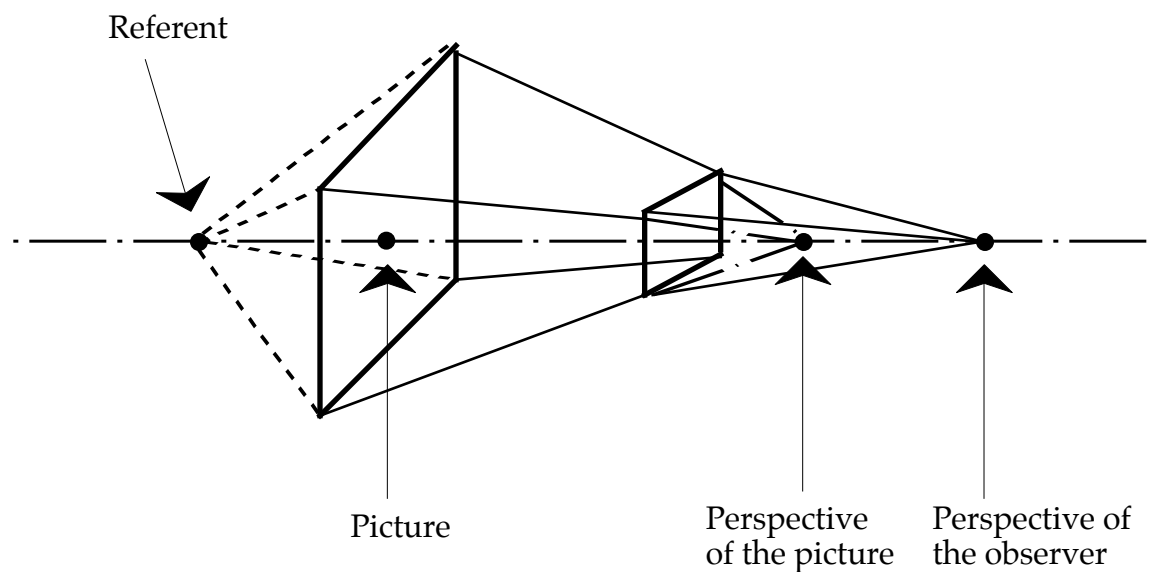


Figure 4. The perspectives of the picture and the observer, respectively (from Sonesson 1989, inspired by Pérez Tornero 1982)

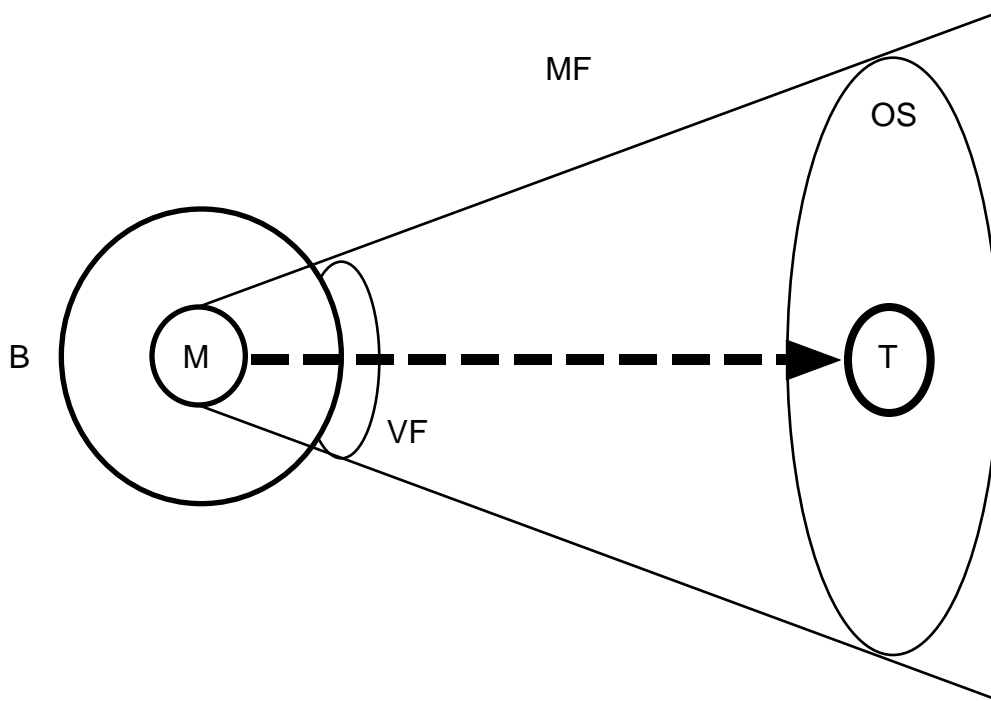


Fig. 5. Perspective construction (inspired in Langacker 2001, in press). B = Observer; M = consciousness; VF = visual field; MF = maximal field of vision; OS = immediate field of vision; T = theme. This is essentially a translation of Langacker's scheme: what makes it into a *positional perspective* however is the fact that it is the relative position of M (or B generally) and T which is emphasized (thick line)

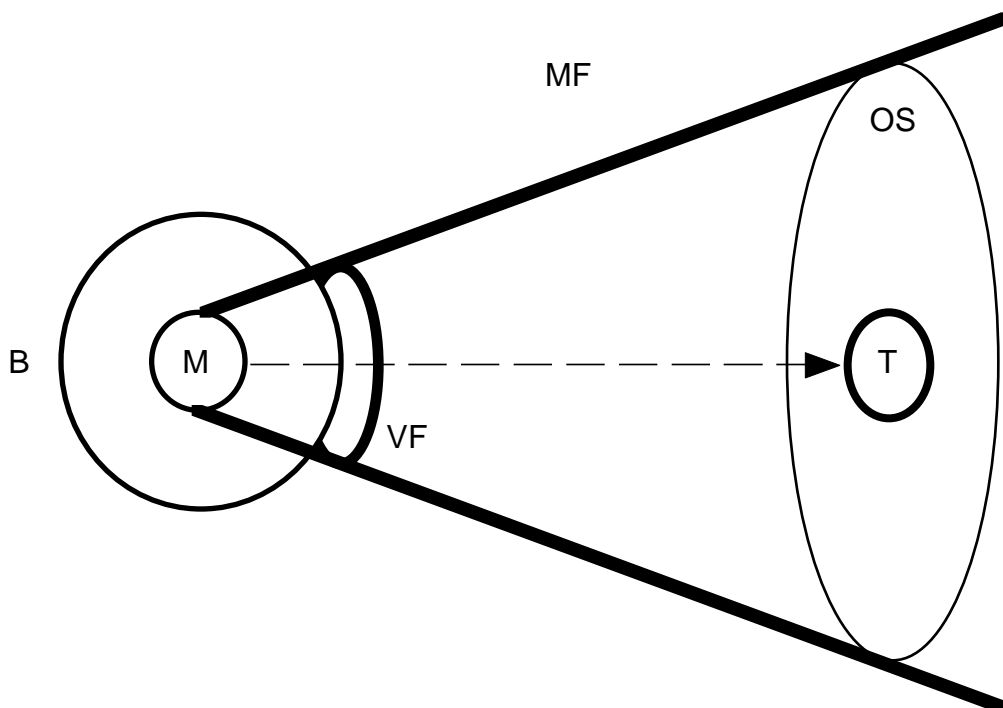


Fig. 6. *Perceptual perspective* (same conventions as in fig. 4.). Here it is not the relative position but its forms of transitions (thick line) which are emphasised, and, at least in the static picture, the visual field rather than the immediate field of vision

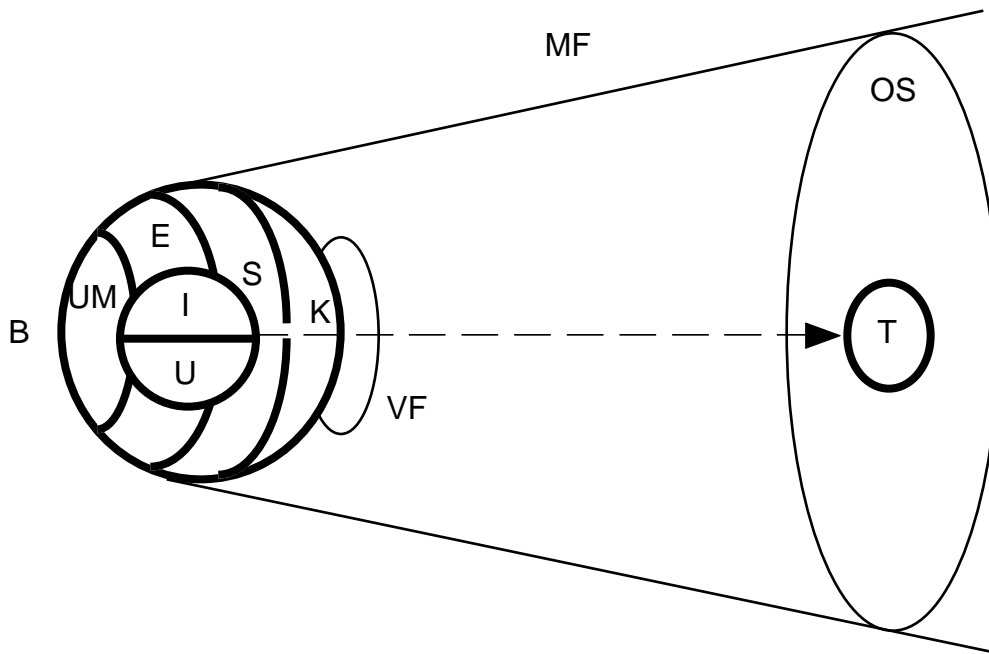


Fig. 7. *Personal perspective*. Same conventions as in fig. 4 and 5, with the following additions: S = sight; K = body; U = conception; E = emotion; = information, knowledge; UM = forms of expression.