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Crossing New Frontiers? Investigating style from a multimodal perspective

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In the publication of the proceedings of the 2006 PALA conference entitled “The State of Stylistics”, Mick Short underlines that stylistics as a discipline has gained ground because of a “concentration on detailed and systematic textual analysis related to stylistics-based theories of textual understanding”. He adds that although stylistics should continue to be a ‘broad church’, it should not be driven “by all the agendas and rapidly-changing fashions of nearby areas” and that new areas of analysis should be subjected to “the same level of scrutiny and care” that have always been used (2010, 1). Interestingly enough, although this was written just eight years ago, the “new approaches and analytical methodologies” that are referred to do not include the latest buzzword: multimodality. Yet, the last two decades have witnessed a growing interest in multimodal stylistics, an interest that is reflected in the various calls for papers¹ at recent conferences. So what is multimodal stylistics and why are people saying such wonderful things about it? Does it really present a new frontier for stylistics and should stylisticians boldly go where no stylistician went before?

In order to try to answer these questions, I will start by examining what is understood by the term, before investigating some of the methodological frameworks available and what they might offer the stylistician, and finally I will suggest some of the areas that need further exploration.

¹ Cf. the calls for papers for PALA 2014 and IALS 2014

What do we mean by multimodal stylistics?

Generally speaking, multimodal texts are those which integrate more than one semiotic mode in their communicative functions (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996, 183). Thus, multimodality refers to “approaches that understand communication and representation to be more than about language, and which attend to the full range of communicational forms people use – image, gesture, gaze, posture and so on – and the relationships between them” (Jewitt 2009, 14). Multimodality therefore “steps away from the notion that language always plays the central role in interaction, without denying that it often does” (Norris 2004, 3). In other words, all modes can potentially play a role in creating meaning, and the term mode refers to “semiotic resources for making meaning that are employed in a culture – such as image, writing, gesture, gaze, speech, posture”(Jewitt 2009,1).

Multimodal stylistics therefore aims to use literary stylistics with multimodal theory to analyse texts. Within the printed text, this implies paying attention to the visual elements: the choice of typeface, colour, layout, illustrations and so on. These visual elements are considered to be as important as the linguistic text and the role of multimodal stylistics is to demonstrate how the different semiotic resources interact to produce meaning.

Of course texts that use verbal and visual means to create meaning are nothing new. Tristram Shandy (1767) immediately springs to mind, as do the illustrations in Thackeray’s work (Fisher 1995), or Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794). But these are illustrations of what Drucker (1994, 97) would call a marked text, a text that “aggressively situates the reader in relation to the various levels of enunciation in the text (...) with manipulative utilization of the strategies of graphic design”. It is indeed these marked texts that have tended – for obvious reasons - to be analysed by multimodal stylisticians. But what of unmarked texts? What of the book we pick up to read on a train journey? Even the most conventional work of prose will have its specific typography, layout, and possibly illustrations, so that there are grounds for arguing that any text is multimodal, and in recent years publishers have indeed begun to experiment more freely with different typefaces and illustrations. Texts that twenty or so years ago would have been presented in a uniform typeface, now contain varied typefaces, often linked to the kind of text they are supposed to be representing. In *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee*, a written letter is indicated by indentation, aligned “flush left” and in

a smaller typeface than the rest of the text, while the text of an email is justified and given a totally different typeface. One illustration of the change that has occurred in recent years is to be found in *Doctor Sleep* the sequel to Stephen King's *The Shining*. In *The Shining* the famous message – *redrum* – is written on the mirror and given no specific typeface; it simply appears in capital letters. Some 37 years later, in the sequel *Doctor Sleep*, the same message appears again on the mirror, but this time it is given its own specific typeface:

in his mind, but the Overlook was still not done with him. Written on the mirror, not in lipstick but in blood, was a single word:

REDRUM

Multimodal Stylistics – the methodological framework

One of the problems that multimodal stylistics faces is the need for a methodological framework. In so far as multimodality implies many modes, each mode already has its own theoretical framework whether it be visual design, semiotics, or narratology. The theoretical framework that has been used most often in multimodal stylistics is Halliday's social semiotics/systemic functional grammar (SFG) as elaborated and practised by Kress and Van Leeuwen. This approach is based on the theory that language, spoken and written, is structured in such a way that it produces simultaneously three different but interwoven types of meaning or metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual.

Ideational meaning is concerned with how people represent what they experience in the world. In language, this can be found in grammatical choices and the different kinds of processes used to describe experience, or in the lexicon. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) suggest that this function is realized in image by certain features of composition and systems of vectoriality. Interpersonal meaning refers to social interaction, how a writer or speaker positions themselves with regard to a subject or to the reader/addressee. Modality is one example of interpersonal meaning in language. In images the interpersonal metafunction is achieved by the systems of the gaze, size of frame, and angle. Finally, textual meaning is concerned with how meaning is organized into a coherent text, and how the text relates to its context. Cohesion, thematic structure are some of the linguistic expressions of this metafunction, while images use composition, framing and salience.

The initial research in this domain focussed on the relationship between image and text. However, in an issue of *Visual Communication* (2005), Van Leeuwen argues that typography can also be analysed in terms of these three metafunctions. The ideational metafunction is fulfilled when typography represents meanings or actions. A word that is presented as a question or an order through typography illustrates typography being used ideationally, and when typography frames various elements in a text, making them salient, then it is realising textual meaning. In this theoretical approach, image and typography are broken down into constituent parts in a manner reminiscent of the way phonologists describe language as having a limited number of discrete phonemes that are bundles of features. For typography, for example, Van Leeuwen outlines the following distinctive features: weight, expansion, slope, curvature, connectivity, orientation, regularity. Yet while these distinctive features may play an important role in “marked” texts such as advertisements, brochures and the like, one cannot help wondering whether such distinctions are so helpful when we examine how typography, illustrations and lay-out contribute to meaning in a mass market paperback. Moreover, if we focus too narrowly on the specific features of any particular mode we are in danger of neglecting how the various modes may actually form a single entity.

How do verbal and non-verbal features interact?

If we adopt the point of view that “the body of the text is not exclusively linguistic” (McGann 1991, 13), then how exactly do the linguistic and the non-linguistic features interconnect? Following Royce, I shall adopt the premise that “visual and verbal modes co-occurring in page-based multimodal text complement each other semantically to produce a single textual phenomenon in a relationship which can be referred to as intersemiotic complementarity” (2007,103). In other words, one mode provides further information about the other to realize a coherent unified text. As Van Leeuwen points out, “much of the cohesive work that used to be done by language is now realised, not through linguistic resources, but through layout, colour and typography” (2006, 139).

In order to have a clearer idea of what any specific visual element may or may not contribute to the meaning of a text, I will, as far as possible, be comparing different editions of novels published in the last fifteen years or so, and more precisely American English (AmE) and

British English (BrE) editions of the same novel. The advantage of this is that the two editions – in so far as they differ – offer instantaneous examples of the role played by editorial choice in the presentation of text. If such changes are made, it seems fair to assume that the editors – and perhaps authors – (though how far they are consulted is a matter of debate) consider these changes to be meaningful, and in so far as publishing is an important economic exercise, then it is also fair to assume that such changes are made because the editors believe that they will make a book more sellable.

The comparison between AmE and BrE editions will lead us to also consider sociocultural elements based on the principle that “all modes have, like language, been shaped through their cultural, historical and social uses to realize social functions as required by different communities” (Jewitt 2013, 251). The sociocultural approach to modes is sometimes neglected in multimodal stylistics.

When visual and verbal modes converge ...

There are various models that seek to account for how visual and verbal modes may complement each other, such as Royce (2007), Martinec and Salway (2005) and Kong (2006), but they tend to focus on one specific form of the visual mode, especially text-image relations. Given that many of these approaches are concerned with texts other than novels, and that they rarely look at different kinds of visual elements, I shall broadly focus on the rhetorical organisation of the text to see how illustrations layout and typography may all elaborate the text and vice versa.

Lay-out and linguistic text converge most obviously when a new paragraph is used to present new information, but a new paragraph can also provide a way to foreground information. In the following example from Jean-Christophe Grangé's *L'Empire des Loups* (translated into *Empire of the Wolves* in the UK and republished under a slightly different title in the United States *The Empire of the Wolves*) the first simple sentence creates suspense:

Mais elle avait trouvé beaucoup mieux ici.
Un refuge. (*L'empire des Loups*, 34)

But she had in fact found far more.
A refuge. (*Empire of the Wolves*, 17)

Something of a higher quality is being referred to through the use of the comparative: *beaucoup mieux* / *far more*. But the referent itself is not immediately given. That new information is introduced in the form of a truncated sentence in the next paragraph. The layout therefore foregrounds the new information visually just as the syntax foregrounds it linguistically. Interestingly enough, the US edition has chosen a more conventional means to present the new information, opting not for a new paragraph but the use of a hyphen:

But she had in fact found far more – a refuge.
(*The Empire of the Wolves*, 17)

Illustrations can, in similar fashion, be just as iconic. The following is taken from the children's book *Demon Dentist* by David Walliams:

With the ordeal finally over, Mr Erstwhile and all his helpers were lying in a tangled heap on the surgery floor.

In the illustration, the visual aspects of the text are represented in the illustration, although the illustration elaborates the linguistic text, providing more physical detail about the helpers, for example. Both text and illustration can be understood independently, so that both play an equally important role (Martinec and Salway 2005, 343).

With regard to typeface, size can be used to compliment the message conveyed by the text. In *Demon Dentist* by David Walliams, the words pronounced by the woman in the following extract are in larger size font and in capitals which both convey the idea of shouting and thus mirror the meaning of the verb “exclaimed” and the use of the

exclamation mark. The final word “explode” is given extra emphasis by the use of bold type, a different typeface, and its position in relation to the rest of the text.

“I TOLD YOU COFFEE
GOES RIGHT THROUGH
ME!” exclaimed the woman. “MY
BOTTOM IS ABOUT
TO **EXPLODE!**”

The AmE edition of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* shows just how innovative and creative typeface can be. The various characters are all given their own unique signature or style of handwriting, and when Harry Potter receives a letter from Hagrid, we learn that the letter is “covered in large blotches where the ink had run”. These blotches are visually reproduced on the page in the US edition. The BrE edition, on the other hand, is uniform throughout.

Dear Harry, Ron, and Hermione,

Aragog died last night. Harry and Ron, you met him, and you know how special he was. Hermione, I know you'd have liked him. It would mean a lot to me if you'd nip down for the burial later this evening. I'm planning on doing it round dusk, that was his favorite time of day. I know you're not supposed to be out that late, but you can use the cloak. Wouldn't ask, but I can't face it alone.

Hagrid

For Bringhurst the complementarity of typeface and text is of utmost importance, and in his seminal work *Elements of Typographic Style*, he actively encourages using typefaces “whose individual spirit and character is in keeping with the text” (1993, 99). The publishers HarperCollins seem to have given some thought to the choice of typeface for *The Professor and the Madman*, the AmE edition of Simon Winchester’s tale of the making of the Oxford English Dictionary. The publishers explain in the colophon that

Monotype Bell, as cut by Richard Austin in 1788 for English printer John Bell, is used for the main text of this book. Clarendon, named for the Clarendon Press at Oxford, printing site of the great dictionary, is used for the extracts within the chapters. The dictionary entry opening is set in Times Roman, designed for the Times of London, and historically attributed to Stanley Morrison.

The choice of typefaces thus reveals a desire to select those with historical associations corresponding to the subject of the book, and in keeping with a text dealing with a British institution.

However, the idea that a network is formed simply by the verbal and visual modes converging doesn’t take us very far, nor does it account for all the possible relations between the two modes. If we are thinking of how cohesive ties are formed between image and text then another possible approach is to look at whether the cohesive ties that exist in the linguistic text, can also function between the material and linguistic text. Halliday and Hasan (1976) examine a number of ways in which lexicogrammatical relations contribute to cohesion, one of which I propose to examine here: the system of reference.

Exophoric and endophoric reference

If in order to interpret an element of the material text or the visual elements, we need to look at the linguistic text, or vice versa, then we arguably have a case of what Halliday and Hasan refer to as endophoric reference. This can be backward pointing (anaphoric) or forward pointing (cataphoric). Identification of a referent may also come from exophoric or situational reference, “a term used by some linguists to refer to the process or result of a linguistic unit referring directly to the extralinguistic situation accompanying an utterance (Crystal 2003, 170). Since exophoric reference cannot be interpreted in terms of what is in the text itself then

Halliday and Hasan consider that it is not cohesive. This needs further investigation.

If we turn now to look at some examples of how this may help us be more precise about the relationship between the visual and verbal modes, the illustration from David Walliams' *Demon Dentist*, commented upon previously, functions cohesively because it refers back to the preceding text. It is an example of endoanaphoric reference. Similarly, typeface can also function cohesively, with anaphoric reference. In order to illustrate this point I want to turn to examine the use of italics in Jean Chirstophe Grangé's *l'Empire des loups*. One of the features of the narrative style of this novel is the way the various characters recall the words spoken to them on previous occasions, thus creating a network of associations - and these remembered words appear in italics in the original text and in the BrE edition:

For a few seconds, he tried to think his way under the skin of that Turk. On the night of 13 November 2001, when she saw the hooded Wolves arrive, she had thought that it was all over for her. But the killers had grabbed the girl next to her. A red-head who looked like her previous self. *That woman had suffered enormous stress*. It was putting it mildly. (*Empire of the Wolves*, 236)

In this extract, the policeman Schiffer is remembering a doctor's words spoken earlier:

"That woman had suffered enormous stress. So much so, you could say she had been traumatized." (*Empire of the Wolves*, 235)

This use of italics seeks here to remind the reader that the words have already been spoken by another character; the text doesn't actually say Schiffer remembered what the doctor had said - it is the italics that point back to the preceding text. The omnipresent use of italics in the novel creates a network of echoes that demonstrates it is possible for multimodal cohesive relations to operate over several pages.

Where an illustration is placed in relation to the text is also important. In *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, the BrE edition uses illustrations to anticipate the forthcoming action - each illustration refers to a keypoint in the ensuing narrative. Thus the picture of the burger at the beginning of Chapter Two, which at first sight has no connection with the title of the chapter,

2

Harold and the Garage Girl and a Question of Faith

points forward to the meal Harold eats at the service station and the fact that he learns how to heat a burger in a microwave - an event that he proudly relates to his surprised wife who thinks that he cannot even slice bread without making a mess. As with anaphoric reference, cataphoric reference also relies on the reader's interpretation, on the reader making the connection. However, the relations that are being created with these illustrations are more complex than simply pointing forward to the forthcoming text. The very first chapter heading, *Harold and the Letter* followed by the illustration, can be read two ways: it can refer both to the letter that Harold receives and which sets events in motion and to his written reply that he goes to post and which starts him on his pilgrimage to Berwick upon Tweed.

1

Harold and the Letter

In this chapter, the word “post box” is used four times, without including the related lexical items such as post a letter etc. So the reader is prompted to understand the importance of the pillar box, which appears

as the opening illustration. It therefore becomes difficult to decide whether the text elaborates upon the illustration or vice versa. Moreover, I would suggest that the tight link between text and illustration in this first chapter encourages the reader to look for further cohesive ties between the illustrations at the start of subsequent chapters and the text that follows. In other words, in Chapter 1 the image is salient not only through its position on the page but also through the use of lexical repetition, and because of this the reader is encouraged to view the following illustrations as being equally salient.

In fact without that initial foregrounding, we might well take the illustrations at the beginning of each chapter as being merely decorative, especially as some of them depict plants or seemingly minor events that occur during Harold's journey. The AmE edition has removed these illustrations, the chapter headings are all uniform, but the illustrations do appear on a map at the beginning of the novel, and are placed on the map at the corresponding stages of Harold's journey.

Although Halliday and Hasan exclude exophoric reference from their definition of cohesion, the distinction between exophoric and endophoric reference is often less clear-cut and, as Cornish (2010) has argued, we need also to see anaphora as more than a simply grammatical text-based phenomenon. In fact, the socio-cultural context that the text – both verbal and visual – presupposes, cannot be excluded from the equation. This becomes apparent when we compare BrE and AmE editions of the same novel: the choice of certain illustrations for one or the other edition underlines the role played by the material text in appealing to shared knowledge.

One such example of the use of exophoric reference that builds on shared knowledge is the use of the Hogwarts' school emblem and Latin motto, which features in the British edition of the *Harry Potter* series. This reminds the British reader of the blazer badges to be found on British school uniform. So s/he is immediately situated within the British cultural framework of stories based on public schools. We could argue this mirrors the way in which Rowling combines reality and fantasy within the fiction. As such it is part of the overall background and the network of references to the everyday life of a British schoolchild, but it is omitted in the AmE edition presumably because it does not carry the same cultural references.

The map to be found in the AmE edition of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* is another case in point. The elements that feature on the map are not necessarily the same elements that are to be

found at the beginning of the chapters in the BrE edition. The primrose, for example is missing as is the horse chestnut – both are native species to the British Isles, but less identifiable for an AmE reader. More importantly, the pillar box, instead of displaying the royal cipher as in the British edition, has the first word “post” written on it. One might surmise that this choice of design has been made to guarantee that the pillar box is correctly identified as such by non-British readers. Similarly landmarks such as the Isle of Man, the Isle of Wight and France are all identified on the map in the AmE edition, but not in the BrE edition.

Illustrations and typography can also be used to evoke a specific genre, thus influencing the reader’s interpretation of a text, based on his or her sociocultural knowledge of what constitutes a particular genre. The inclusion of black and white photographs in *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee* suggests that the text is more factual, a biography rather than a novel. The photographs are omitted from the AmE edition which does not seek to focus so much on the biographical aspect of the book as to emphasise the film tie-in (it features a preface by Dame Judi Dench who plays the title role in the film). *Schindler’s List*, on the other hand, which is the AmE edition of *Schindler’s Ark*, contains a number of photographs used as a background for the chapter headings. They lend a note of authenticity to the work which is classed by Simon and Schuster not just as fiction but also as Judaica. The back cover emphasises this aspect of the novel: it is based on a “true story” and in this “milestone of Holocaust literature, Thomas Keneally uses the actual testimony of the *Schindlerjuden*”. The blurb on the back cover of the BrE edition talks of “the extraordinary story of Oskar Schindler” but does not seek to focus on any link between the story and real events.

Analyzing the material text in terms of Halliday and Hasan’s system of reference does not however provide all the answers, even if it does enable to be more specific about some of the cohesive ties. Considering visual and verbal modes in relation to each other does not address the question as to whether the visual elements have no role of their own – nor does it really consider whether the two modes may actually diverge. Moreover, by concentrating on the verbal and visual elements as forming a whole, there is the danger of neglecting the individual role that can potentially be played by the visual elements.

When the visual mode provides meaning not in the written mode

The visual elements can actually convey meaning not found in the linguistic text. Quentin Blake's illustrations for David Walliams' fiction are a case in point. In *Demon Dentist*, characters are not introduced with a lengthy description but with a drawing.

Meet the characters in this story:

Alfie, a boy with rotten teeth

Typeface can also supply meaning not clearly given by the linguistic text. Italics are traditionally used today to foreground individual words or passages, to appeal to the reader, to signal that what follows is different from the roman type of the surrounding text. Not only are italics a visible sign of difference, but as reading studies have pointed out, italics literally slow down the reading process, inviting the reader to linger over the passage that is marked out in this fashion. For Dubois (1977), italics epitomise Jakobson's conative function. He compares the use of italics to the use of the second person pronoun or the imperative that seeks to influence the reader in some way, to engage him or her. However, if italics immediately call out to the reader, attract his/her attention, their exact meaning is left to the reader to interpret.

One writer who makes frequent use of italics is Reginald Hill in his Dalziel and Pascoe detective novels. In these novels, italics serve to introduce a different narrative voice, one which recounts events outside

the main narrative, often serving to introduce a flashback. In *The Death of Dalziel* italics are used at one point to refer to events in which Dalziel himself did not take part, events which Pascoe is keen to keep to himself: “None of this did he care to reveal to Dalziel” (2007, 8). Similarly, at the beginning of Alexandra Darcy’s *Me and Mr Darcy*, italics are also used to introduce a different voice, this time the narrator commenting on the text itself and the events that are happening:

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single girl in possession of her right mind must be in want of a decent man.

There’s just one problem ...

‘...so we had a drink each and shared a pizza, but you asked for two extra toppings on your half, which means you owe ... Hang on a minute, I’ve got a calculator on my BlackBerry ...’

Sitting in a little Italian restaurant in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, I stare across the checked tablecloth and watch, dumbfounded, as my date pulls out his CrackBerry and proceeds to cheerfully divvy up the bill.

... where on earth do you find a decent man these days?

I’m having dinner with John, a thirty-something architect I met briefly at a friend’s birthday party last weekend. (2007, 1)

When the visual mode and the verbal mode diverge:

It is perhaps inevitable that when different editions of a work exist, some divergences may occur between visual elements and the linguistic text, so that far from being cohesive the two may even contradict each other. This occurs notably when various visual aspects of the text have been modified in the AmE edition of a novel to accommodate the U.S. reader.

Changes in layout can influence how we interpret a text. In the introductory chapter to Reginald Hill’s *The Death of Dalziel*, entitled “Mill Street”, we find a series of truncated sentences without punctuation or use of capital letters to indicate the start of new sentence. In the UK edition the text is justified, whereas in the US edition *Death comes for the Fat Man* the text is centred. The change in layout results in a different reading experience. The text now resembles a poem and could be read so accordingly.

Similarly in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*, the BrE edition has opted to present Hasina’s letters in italics and aligned the text flush left. As such it could be argued that the printed text represents Hasina’s handwritten letters, which at one point are described as being “written in a scrawl” (BLa: 47). In the AmE edition the letters are also presented in italic type,

but the justified lines give a neatness to the text, that is not in keeping with the idea of it being carelessly handwritten. By normalizing the layout the individualism of Hasina, her rebelliousness, is lost.

The decision to mark the first word of each chapter in bold capital letters in the AmE edition of *The Lost Child of Philomena Lee* can also affect the reading experience. Chapter Fourteen begins with direct speech and the use of an imperative: '**DON'T** you tell me what to do ... and *don't* tell me how to feel!' The common use of capitals in emails to express shouting encourages the reader here to interpret the first "don't" as being pronounced more loudly, as loudly as the second "don't" which is in italics. In the BrE edition, the first "don't" is not in italics, indicating that it is only the second which is to be emphasised. The change in typeface in the AmE edition has introduced a potentially different reading.

So just how innovative is multimodal stylistics and what are its advantages?

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, multimodal texts are not new; what is new is their proliferation. Nor is the interest in multimodality totally new either. Research in bibliography and editorial theory, for example, has long underlined the need to examine what Jerome McGann calls bibliographic (*sic*) codes « typefaces, bindings, book prices, page format, and all those textual phenomena usually regarded as (at best) peripheral to 'poetry' or 'the text as such' » (1991,13) From theories on multiple authorship (Stillinger 1991) to a sociology of texts (McKenzie 1999) or a socialization of texts (McGann 1991). Similarly, Genette's study of the paratext also points to those aspects of a work that serve « to *present* it, in the usual sense of the verb but also in the strongest sense: *to make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption » (1997,1) and Shillingsburg has also underlined the importance of text as matter, as a combination of the linguistic text and its physical form.

One of the advantages of multimodal stylistics is that it underlines the relationship between the linguistic text and the bibliographical codes. While Genette's term paratext suggests something to be found on the margins, multimodal stylistics seeks to demonstrate that the relationship between paratextual elements and the linguistic text is far more central to the reading experience. McGann's term "a laced network" is therefore

more accurate to describe the relationship between visual and verbal elements, in so far as it underlines the difficulty of trying to separate one from the other.

By focussing our attention on textual elements that may well lay outside the author's control, multimodal stylistics invites us to consider the different agents in the production process working together, and thus brings back into the limelight the shadowy figure of the editorial team, underlining the fact that between the author's manuscript and the book we pick up at the local store, various people have interpreted the text before offering the text for interpretation to others. The cover designer has focused on a theme or aspect that s/he feels will attract the reader. The proof-reader has added a comma, the copyeditor may have changed the use of italics. This shift towards the text as material object has repercussions on how we consider the author: no longer a romantic figure locked away in some ivory tower, s/he is just one player, albeit an important one, in the production and processes involved in editing texts. As McGann argues in *Black Riders* the 'composition' of poetry is not completed – indeed, it has scarcely begun – when the writer scripts words on a page; and even at this initial moment of the imagination's work the scene is a social one. What kind of instrument is the writer using, what kind of paper? And in what social or institutional context is the writing being carried out? (1993, 112).

Perhaps one aspect of multimodal stylistics that needs developing is the interdisciplinary approach. When van Leeuwen comments that “most research on typography has concerned itself only with legibility” (2006, 141), this does not represent the whole picture. A great deal of research has been carried out by those most qualified in the field, but as so often, what has not happened is an interdisciplinary approach. Many of the stylisticians interested in multimodality understandably focus on a particular aspect of a text such as image or typography, understandably given that each visual mode works differently. Finally from our brief study, it has emerged that sociocultural factors play an integral part in the visual mode and also need to be included in any multimodal analysis. The editor adapts the visual mode to suit the cultural requirements of the readership, but also to respond to economic constraints in the choice of paper, spacing typeface etc.

So if we're talking of a 'laced network' when examining the verbal and visual modes – it is a complicated set of relationships - a set of

relationships that cannot simply be examined through the interaction between the verbal and visual modes but which needs also to include the reader, the editors, how they modify and interpret the text.

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