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**Analyzing The Visual grammar of selected abstract Egyptian
Paintings**

Salma Ayman Gad Allah

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Abstract:

Images are texts which hold meanings in their depth. According to the theory of the grammar of visual images, language performs ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions all at once. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) expanded the same metafunction to include visual social semiotic resources and renamed it as A.

Representational, B. Interactive, and C. Compositional. According to them, in order for the visual to serve as a full system of communication, it must fulfill a number of communicational (and representational) requirements. (2006). This research is based up on my thesis, under the title “ Multimodality and Selected Egyptian Paintings: A Cognitive Analytical Study”

Keywords: Semiotics, visual Grammar, Representational metafunction, Interactive metafunction, Compositional metafunction

1. Objective of the research

Spreading the culture of reading image and analyzing it the same as we deal with the written texts, is the main goal for this thesis. This destination requires the researcher to exert effort to make the matter less complicated than it is, and it is another aim.

2. Problem of the research

Visual Grammar is neither transparent nor universally understood, it is a culture specific; the matter which makes analyzing image- at least- not an easy task for all people. In the same time representation requires that sign-makers choose forms for the expression of what they have in mind and see as most apt and plausible in the given context, so the trail to grasp the meaning of paintings in which the signs are intended according to the mind of its painter, is not a piece of cake; and that's why the researcher here decides to use the color as a guide in addition to applying the theory of " the grammar of visual image"; to make the general suggestions for reading as much as could specific. Visual Grammar is neither transparent nor universally understood, it is a culture specific; the matter which makes analyzing image- at least- not an easy task for all people. In the same time representation requires that sign-makers choose forms for the expression of what they have in mind and see as most apt and

plausible in the given context, so the trail to grasp the meaning of paintings in which the signs are intended according to the mind of its painter, is not a piece of cake; and that's why the researcher here decides to use the color as a guide in addition to applying the theory of "the grammar of visual image"; to make the general suggestions for reading as much as could specific.

We still don't fully understand what pictures are, how they relate to language, how they affect observers and the outside world, how to understand their history, or what to do with or about them, according to W.J.T. Michell (cited in Rose, 2001). This study holds that reading images is a brave and helpful attempt to understand something that is very difficult and elusive.

3. Questions of the Research:

Pictures, or image texts as a more scientific term is now available, are frequently regarded as being equivalent to a thousand words. They can be interpreted in a variety of ways by various individuals. How can we arrive at a justified and based interpretation of the image when there are so many different ways it could be interpreted? How do we

comprehend an image text's fundamental composition? In order for people to make meaningful and justified meanings of image texts, there should be some sort of underlying structure that they can rely on. This is because there doesn't seem to be anything, not even in things that people find abstract or absurd, that lacks pattern and, therefore, structure. How to use color as a tool for meaning-making When we connect the meanings

Till what extent can the researcher reach to the nearest apt and plausible choices which express the meaning of the selected paintings by applying both of “ the grammar of visual design” and the “ color semiotics” ’ .

4. Methodology:

Nowadays human beings make meaning in a variety of ways, so the traditional notion of ‘literacy’ should be extended beyond the confines of just being able to read and write. This thesis aims to play a role in the matter of dealing with the ‘visual literacy’ as a more familiar behavior rather than just passing by.

The researcher will depend on investigating paintings to fulfil the thought she wants to deliver. Applying the theory of “ Grammar of visual design” on the selected paintings, will be the main theme, and

this will be accompanied with indulging in “ color semiotics” as a mean for making the results of explanation more related to the real idea of the picture. A very important step will proceed; the researcher will use the painter’s thoughts and experience about her sensations and the reasons why she paints those paintings using such specific components and colors, the matter that dispose the actual message beyond the painting.

5. Theoretical Framework:

5.1. Theory of The Grammar of Visual Design

viewing pictures, According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), The Grammar of Visual Design provides "a usable description of major compositional structures which have become established over the course of Western visual semiotics history, and to analyze how they are used to produce meaning by contemporary image-makers." They discuss Barthes' contention that there are too many different ways that images could be understood. They disprove Barthes' contention that an image's meanings are always connected to and reliant (my italics) on verbal text. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, the visual element of a text (image) is a message that is independently structured and organized, connected to verbal text, but not reliant upon it.

3.3. Sample of analysis:



The semiotic metafiction:

A) The representational Metafiction:

1- Rps

Denotations (signifiers)	Connotations (Signified)
Man with strange clothes with a dollar sign	Men who want to make illegitimate relationships
Woman with a big ring	Women who do illegitimate relationships for money
Bag of dollars	Reasons why illegitimate relationships happen

2- Representational Process:

2.1. The Narrative Process: Here the story is about a man who leave his family and go to make illegitimate relationship with bad woman. This is depicted through a reactional unidirectional process in which

the man forwarding his gaze to the woman without receiving another gaze from her. The man's gaze is the vector that connects the reactor to the phenomenon. This is a transactional process because the participant's goal is inside the picture frame. There is also an Eye-line vector that emanates from the woman's eyes towards the viewer in a non- transactional action process expressing the woman thoughts to gain more money from the man. The man's hand – a circumstance of means- is waving to the woman and in addition to his gesture this is a clear circumstance process showing man's attitude. A speech/mental process also is clear through the signs which is depicted at the background, it is connected to the participants by a special kind of vector such as dialogue balloon that connects drawings of the speakers to their speech. Geometrical symbolism appears as well by the arrow that is portrayed at the background as a kind of vector which indicates action and relation between the two RPS.

2.2 The conceptual process: The Big ring and the bag as possessive attributes (parts) are connected to the woman (the carrier) in an analytical process showing woman's interest in gaining much dollars and to be catchy and stupendous for men. A Symbolic process also is represented by the rings in the ears of the man which are symbolic attributes about his identity and how scoundrel he is.

B) The Interpersonal Metafiction:

1- Image Act and Gaze: The both participant at this portrait looking elsewhere, not to the viewer, so this is a kind of image of an offer, it offers the RPs. To the viewer as item of information.

2- Interaction and social distance (Intimacy): Edward hall (1966, p.110-20) says ‘’ we carry with us a set of individual boundaries beyond which we allow only certain kinds of people to come’’ the location of unseen boundaries is decided by how much we can see of the other person with our eyes. Here the RPS are whole figures shown at a distance at a long shot, so there is unseen problem between them and the viewer, which is destroying the family and community by illegitimate relationships, and this makes the Rps. Detached from us, they are strangers and away from us. The tiny space between the Rps. Reflects their close relation even it is not close enough and this kind of relation is built upon bad desires represented by the space thd the bag of money between them.

3- Angle and perception: As for the vertical point of view, this portrait is depicted from a low position in which the viewer looks up to the Rps. This means that someone has asymbolic power over the viewer. Thus the low angle reflects triumph of the Evil power over the viewer, as if the painter wants to deliver that such dirty relations sometimes win and overcome the stability of the society. Horizontal Angle also plays a role at conveying the message of the producer, the frontal

angle shows involvement, as if the image producer and the RPs were interacting, and this what Gehan Fawzy stated through her voice record to the researcher, that she hates such relations and consider any man like she depicted as a Monkey.

C) Textual Metafiction- spatial composition:

1- Placement-Information value: the left side of the image shows the familiar information, which is that there is a man who own money.

Rps on the right side represents the new and the unfamiliar to the viewer, which is that there are some women who destroy the families and steal the husbands from their families and wives in order to gain money. This new knowledge what makes it problematic and contestable. The bag of the woman also is conveying a meaning by being depicted at the center of the portrait as a major information which tells that this relation is built upon greed and desire to gain money. The other two Rps- the man and the woman- are depicted around the center at the margins as subservient.

2- Framing: The absence of framing here indicates that the man and the woman are seen as one kind of people or from one group, which here is betrayers.

3- Saliency= eye- catching: the size of the represented man and woman is the catchiest elements at the portrait, they are big and attracting any viewer to look at them at the first look. They are also

foregrounded to be the focus of the picture. Contrast in tonal value such as black and white, blue and yellow also highlights salience.

5. Conclusion

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) have provided a grammar of visual design, they have extended Halliday's metafunctions to visual communication and called them representational, interactive and compositional. The types of structure, process, participant and circumstance; the types of image act, social distance, perspective, point of view, modality; and the types of information value, salience and framing can indicate the reality encoded; the interaction and relation established between participants; and the meaning composed, all of them visually. These meaning-making metafunctions and visual resources can, not only be described and observed, but also interpreted. Readers need to familiarize themselves with a variety of ways to make sense and read visual images. This paper presents a framework for analyzing the visual images by investigating selected Egyptian portraits according to the theory of 'The grammar of visual design' and 'color semiotics'.



(Fig. 1) Jehan Fawzy, *Queen of the birds*

From the first Look at this portrait the viewer feels relaxed, this is because the girl and the birds who are the main Components of it.

The semiotic metafiction:

A) The representational Metafiction:

1- Rps.

Denotations (signifiers)	Connotations (Signified)
The girl	Those who love birds
The birds	All birds and animals

2.1- The narrative process: It is illustrated by the action process. The gaze from the represented girl - the actor-is directed outside the picture, so the vector's goal is not inside the frame of the pic, this means that the action process is non-transactive which makes the viewers feels that girl is addressing any one sees the picture. there is also an eye-line vector that emanates from the birds, which stands on the girl's shoulder Towards the viewer. There is a circumstance process. Although there is no vector within the image to relate the two participants, the image represents a clear emotional and Love relation among represented participants (RPs); this relation is interpreted as a circumstance of accompaniment or friendship.

2.2- the conceptual process: If we look at the participants in a more general, stable, and Timeless way, we will find that they don't have vectors among them, but they are presented as members of the same class. In this picture we will touch a classificational process which relates the participants to each other in Term of "a kind of relation, a taxonomy ' at least one set of participants will play the role of subordinates" (K.&V.L., 2006, p79). In overt taxonomies, one participant, (the birds). There is also a symbolic process depicted through this portrait, the two birds which shape a crown form are considered the symbolic attributes for the participants (the girl) or we can call the ("queen of birds") said Gehan Fawzy. Which give her

her identity that lies in her love and desire of protection for all birds and animals.

B) the Inter personal metafiction-position of the viewer:

1- Image Act and Gaze: At our portrait the girl Looks directly at the viewer's eyes, the matter that creates a visual form of direct eye contact with the viewer. We notice here that the painter wants to do / deliver something to the viewer, so this is called a demand picture which makes the viewer enters an Imaginary relation with the image producer.

2- Interaction and social distance (Intimacy): According To van Leeuwen (2006 , p . 124) " the choice of distance can suggest different relations between RPs . and viewers " the painter depicted the queen of birds till her shoulders, so we can see the participant's head and shoulders. Thus it is a close-up picture frame, which reveals a close personal relationship, which makes the viewer feels involved with the picture. The space between the RPs. Also reveals a social and near reconciliation because there is no distance between them and this gives general impression to our minds because of distance (van leeuwen, 2008, p.138). That the RPs. Are very near and have intimacy.

3- Angle and perception: The Vertical angle of the picture reflects how powerful relation are between represented and interactive

participants. At this portrait we find ‘eye-level angle which shows equality between both sides’ (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001, p. 135). This makes the girl as if she is talking to us, this is why we feel more engaged with her because she is at the same level with us.

As for the Horizontal angle, the viewer and the Rps. are sharing one eye-line, this makes the viewer part of the same world of the picture. As a consequence, the frontal angle makes us feel involved with the girl and her emotions with birds, and this results in a kind of interacting among the painter, RPs. and the viewer.

C) Textual meta function - spatial composition

1- placement = information value, the vertical sides of the image may shed Light on meaning. We find at this portrait, the Two birds shaping a crown on the head of the queen, this reflect the emotions of her towards birds and animals, this depicted crown is eye - catching because of its place in the picture, that's why the Top is related to the ideal and gratification. The bottom gives proofs and details about the real part, which here is the girl accompanying the bird at her shoulder. Putting the girl on the center of the portrait also offers major information, which is loving birds and real desire to protect them. And putting birds at the margins shows that they are subservient and the takes care of them.

C.3 . Saliency = eye - catching .. the size of the girl is very larger than the birds this reflects that the producer wants . To the girl and her interest . the viewer attention pay Love and protection . color contrast also plays a role in birds and animal . To pay concentrate on the face of the girl , the Light soft white withs pink reflect the innocence of the queen , and the kindness of her desire .

D: Modality

D.1 : color saturation : the most dominant color is orange that reflects fun , energy because of Living withs birds and animals . black also reflects paver and this represents the painter's protect birds and animals , she told the researcher Peeling To at a voice record that she wants to be like la razan , live with animals and protect them . Blue color also reflects purity and freedom . which Living with birds and animals .

D.2 . Iconic Relation . Wearing a crown of birds reflects that the girl dedicated her winteren By Sun e birds and she is feeling relaxed for that.



(Fig. 3) Jehan Fawzy, *Stop the war*

The semiotic metafiction:

A) The representational Metafiction:

1- Rps

Denotations (signifiers)	Connotations (Signified)
Cutting imager of buildings	The cities destroyed by war
Overlapping colors at the background	The loss and destruction of war

2- Representational Process:

2.1. The Narrative Process: This portrait represents the fatal results of war; this could raise from the culture of the sign producer since she is an Arab artist who witnessed lots of struggles among the countries. The cut pieces of buildings give a sense of direction which make it the source of vector to a goal which is outside the picture frame in a non-transactional action process. The word "Stop" at the center of the paint refers to another vector which connect the Viewer to the content in a speech/mental process. The way of painting gives us a feeling that these cut pieces will move and hit one another in a conversion process at which each piece of city acts as both actor (towards the participant at its right) and a goal (to the participant on its left). This chain evokes what happens at real world at war.

2.2 The conceptual process: RPs. Could be different countries, but doing the same action (all countries are fighting each other and they are also destroyed), so it is a classificatory process. Another conceptual process here is the symbolic. The most apparent symbols are the cut pieces of countries images that is the carrier which symbolizes consequences of war.

B) The Interpersonal Metafiction:

1- Image Act and Gaze: At this picture, there is no direct eye contact between the Rp and the viewer, so the image is called offer because it offers the Rp to the viewer as a piece of information and at this image specifically; the Rps. Are specimens in displaying war

2- Interaction and social distance (Intimacy): Objects are portrayed to the viewer in order to reveal social relations. The distances in images signifies social relation. Here we can touch spaces among the different countries, the matter that reflects being strangers for each other's. The viewer also can see all the figures of the countries from a long shot, this confirms the public distance the painter wants to deliver.

3- Angle and perception: Depending on that vertical angle of pictures indicates the power relations between the interactive and represented participants, the High angle which is taken from above the countries makes the viewer looks down to them as a passive object, and this asserts till how extend the war is destroying. The horizontal angle is oblique angle Therefore, the meaning is detached and the Rps. Are not identifies with one another. This plays a vital role in conveying the erasing identity as a consequence of war.

C) Textual Metafiction- spatial composition:

1- Placement-Information value: The word Stop is written at the center of the image and surrounding by the destroyed countries at the margins. This means that the painter wants us to concentrate on what

is important which is stopping the war because it is the nucleus information which other elements are in some scene subservient.

2- framing: all the depicted Rps. At this image are framed with a black frame. The firmer the element is framed; the it is a separated unit of information. This tells that all the depicted countries are isolated from each other, have no relations. Even the word stop is framed in a trial to express that no one listens to the advice of the producer.

3- salience= eye-catching: The cut pieces of destroyed countries are the biggest elements of the image, that's because the painter wants to attract attention to what happens to them. The word stop is written in a pale way the same as dealing with the matter of stopping war. Color saturation also is dominated by the yellow color which reflects the antagonism and war.

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