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From Faces to Floods: A Phenomenological Approach to Imagetext

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in German Studies

by

Steven Michael Nave

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Kai Evers, Chair

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2022

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VITA

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FIELD OF STUDY

Hermeneutics of image and text

ABSTRACT

From Faces to Floods: A Phenomenological Approach to Imagetext

by

Steven Michael Nave

Doctor of Philosophy in German Studies

University of California, Irvine, 2022

Professor Kai Evers, Chair

This dissertation investigates works which combine image and text and proposes methods of interpreting such works. Working off of W.J.T. Mitchell's theory of imagetext, this dissertation concretizes his approach to imagetext by analyzing and interpreting hybrid works while paying attention to the visual and verbal process of building up the meaning of a work. In three case studies of building complexity, this dissertation examines the possibilities of interpretations that integrate visual and verbal elements by taking a phenomenological approach informed by the work of Wolfgang Iser. The first chapter examines Johann Caspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, focusing on a passage in which the author attempts to make a physiognomic examination of Judas Iscariot, while contrasting that examination against a drawing of that figure. The second chapter focuses on the covers of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and draws out the ambiguities in the text based on those overlooked elements. Finally, the third chapter deals with Klaus Theweleit's enigmatic *Männerphantasien*, which has an anti-hermeneutic ethos that makes interpretation difficult; the chapter therefore builds up a phenomenological approach to interpreting that work.

Steven Nave

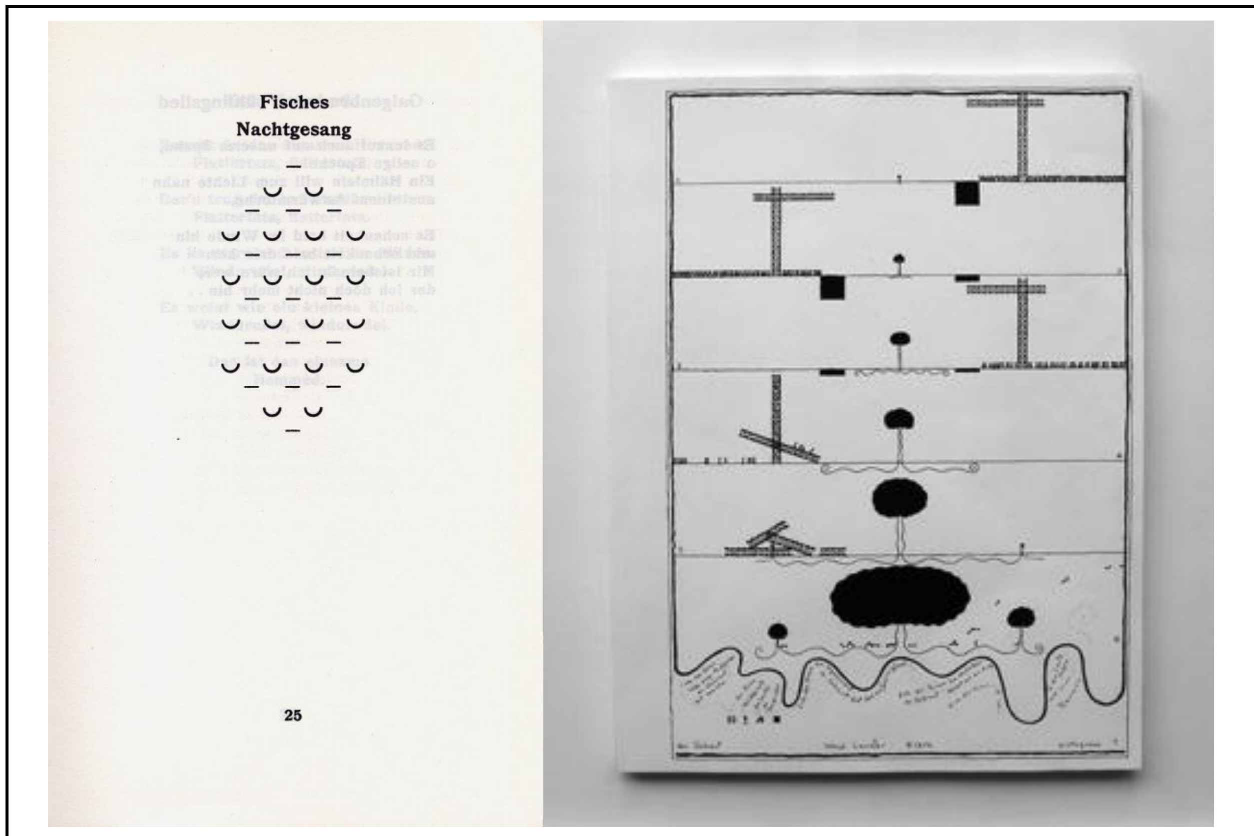
From Faces to Floods: A Phenomenological Approach to Imagetext

Introduction

I. What is Imagetext?

In his 1994 book *Picture Theory,* W.J.T. Mitchell defines imagetext as “composite, synthetic works that combine image and text.”[1] With this simple definition, it’s easy to think of a variety of examples which fall under this category. Some of the examples would be predominantly image or word; a calligram like Christian Morgenstern’s *Fisches Nachtgesang*[2] is an image made up of lexical signs, which has a title but otherwise bears little resemblance to a poem. Similarly, the Artist’s books of the Swiss Warja Lavater[3] are image oriented, with lexical elements that occupy a small part of the image.

[1] *Picture Theory*, 89n
[2] Image from Wikipedia: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galgenlieder#/media/Datei:Galgenlieder_025.jpg
[3] Scan from https://web.archive.org/web/20160811144922/http://nieves.ch/catalogue/warjaabout.html



"Imagetext", "image/text", and "image-text" denote three different concepts in Mitchell; image/text refers to division, rupture, or hierarchy between image and text as they are conceived. Image-text refers to relations between the visual and the verbal, such as between an image and a paragraph or even word. This dissertation concerns itself with imagetext and image-text, but not much with the image/text divide; many scholars have and still do argue the terms of that divide and moving past that is part of the point of thinking in terms of imagetext. Of the three terms, "imagetext" is the richest, denoting both works like Lavater's and the Mitchell's general concept and ethos of imagetext hybridity.

This dissertation develops a methodology around W.J.T. Mitchell's concept of imagetext and demonstrates the insights which such a method can produce. The imagetext concept emphasizes the way in which meaning in image and text flows into one another, which the reader

experiences differently from when they engage with image or text separately. However, Mitchell's theory has not previously been applied in a way which demonstrated the advantages of that theory over traditional forms of interpretation; even later scholars who have applied the theory haven't provided a solid foundation for a methodology. In methodizing imagetext, this dissertation will show how it can function both hermeneutically and non-hermeneutically; the concept of imagetext yields interesting results whether used for interpretation or phenomenologically. This dissertation investigates varieties of imagetexts that require different kinds of hermeneutic investigation, from the simpler instances of ekphrasis to more ambiguous image-text relations and finally the issue of reading imagetext flows.

[4]

[4] Magritte, *La Trahison des Images*, scan from https://collections.lacma.org/node/239578

II. Working with Imagetext: Alternatives and Theories

In the original presentation of his theory of imagetext in 1994, Mitchell hadn't yet laid out the theoretical and thereby methodological implications of his concept. In a March 2000 interview with Christine Wiesenthal and Brad Bucknell, Mitchell put the concept in more suggestive terms: "The concept of the imagetext is a way of trying to capture the sense that even the 'atomic unit' of semiotics - the sign - is a heterogeneous structure of representation, a mixed medium. What this exercise shows, I think, is that the very idea of a single master key to semiosis, aesthetics, or representation, an indivisible unit of all meaningful symbolization, is an illusion projected by the hope for a master theory. Meaning is relational all the way down, and the imagetext is just one way of making that fact visible."[5] There are many implications of this statement, but the most important one for this dissertation is that imagetext thinks image and text together as a way of making things visible. The relational nature of meaning in imagetext is one of those things, and the internal heterogeneity of the sign is another crucial thing which imagetext must make visible.

The phrase "internal heterogeneity of the sign" is somewhat obscure, so it's necessary to expound upon what it does and does not refer to. The phrase does not refer to a semiotic theory which claims that the sign consists of such and such elements; this is not a discussion of the semiotics of Pierce or Saussure, with their ways of thinking through different functions and aspects of signs. Instead, it refers to the idea that there is no "smallest unit" of meaning, and each

[5] Wiesenthal, Christine, and Brad Bucknell. *Essays into the Imagetext: An Interview with W. J. T. Mitchell.* p. 17

level of analysis is heterogeneous. In the case of meaning, infinite divisibility is not a paradox. Mitchell's use of the term "mixed-media" is also provocative, implying that image has a place in the relationship that forms the sign, no matter how much one divides it and analyzes it. It's a claim about what a sign is which characterizes the sign but rejects full theorization; the Saussurian division of signified and signified might still be useful but is far from a full account of what a sign is and does. Slicing a cake into pieces is useful and worth doing, but it doesn't reveal the cake's ingredients; in the same way, Michell's claim about the internal heterogeneity of the sign tells us that the sign isn't something that's fully grasped by one singular characterization or concept. Of course, what Mitchell particularly wants to stress here has to do with words as signs, and how they themselves are already images in part. The importance of founding imagetext analysis on this sort of characterization of the sign is that imagetext is committed to seeing how word and image blend into and participate in one another.

How does imagetext make the internal heterogeneity of the sign visible? There are a number of ways. Firstly, an imagetext analysis shows how the visual elements of text come to be significant to the meaning of an imagetext. By taking a place in an imagetext, verbal elements reveal their spatiality and develop complex visual relationships. This demonstrates how the "text" portion of the imagetext is also an image in a way, since it takes up visual space and has visual content. Secondly, an imagetext analysis demonstrates how the reader brings with themselves a visual as well as a verbal *Vorverständnis*, which has an impact on their engagement with the imagetext from the very first moment. The reader approaches the imagetext with previous discourses informing their expectations and interpretations, and this includes visual discourses. Thirdly, imagetext analysis makes the internal heterogeneity of the sign visible by attending to a text relationally, looking at connections between elements rather than claiming to

examine those elements in total isolation. This is why imagetext analysis thinks in terms of image-text relations, both individually and in the relational gestalts of more complex imagetexts. Finally, imagetext analysis pays close attention to the flow of reading on an experiential level, and the way that a reader builds up meaning by putting together elements; the flow is sometimes interrupted by the image or even suspended. In other cases, an image can form a kind of eddy in the reading process, building up connections with many of the words around it and causing the reader to linger with it. In paying attention to the flow of a text, imagetext analysis shows how each element of the imagetext derives its meaning from its place within that flow.

The method of imagetext analysis used in this dissertation is an expansion of Mitchell's own ideas, which have not otherwise been fully developed into a method within his own work or that of his students. Mitchell's own imagetext analyses are interesting and revealing, but they don't succeed in showing what makes imagetext a particularly useful method: they do not demonstrate and reveal the internal heterogeneity of the sign. Instead, Mitchell's own case studies, such as his analysis of Oliver Stone's film *JFK* in *Picture Theory*[6], follow too closely to the conventions of film and multimedia interpretation to really demonstrate what is interesting in the imagetext theory. In fact, the only real indication that Mitchell is doing an imagetext analysis in his discussion of *JFK* is that the book's index lists the discussion as such; Mitchell doesn't use the word imagetext and his analysis doesn't reveal anything about what it is to look at an object as an imagetext. Mitchell's analysis is instead a discussion of the film's political implications, without a specifically imagetext analysis. At best, Mitchell's discussion shows how difficult it would be to do an imagetext analysis of the film: in addition to being a long, complex, moving imagetext, one would have to take into account its mixture of documentary footage and fiction.

[6] *Picture Theory*, 411-418

Students of Mitchell's theory such as Matthew Kendrick[7] and Sally Bushell[8] have applied the imagetext concept but haven't fully methodized and utilized its most interesting features: the heterogeneity of the sign and the relational approach to meaning. They focus instead upon its dissolution of the image/text binary, which is an important feature of the concept but not its most profound. Any imagetext analysis which fulfills the promise of the concept must demonstrate the internal heterogeneity of the sign and make it visible in the imagetext itself; thus far, scholars have not yet accomplished this in other imagetext analyses. The concept of imagetext is rich with potential, but it's also very difficult to develop an imagetext approach which taps into any of this potential, rather than simply following a course of analysis which would have been possible anyway without the imagetext idea; this is what previous scholars have struggled with, and it is a large part of the challenge which this dissertation reckons with.

Of course, there are many other approaches to image and word, which have been methodized and applied by scholars in other fields, particularly art history and media studies. These methods are valuable and produce revealing results in a variety of applications. Therefore, I'll briefly discuss some of imagetext's closest methodological neighbors.

Philosopher and art historian Georges Didi-Huberman has a similar view regarding the issue of word and image to my own, insisting in his work on the importance of image, on resisting hierarchical approaches to the word-image relationship, and on the inseparability of word and image[9]. For example, in his discussion of image/word hierarchy in science, he says the following: "...the argument of "popularized" images reveals its own limits when it is used to

[7] Kendrick, Matthew. "Imagetext in *The Winter's Tale*." *Textual Practice*, vol. 29, no. 4, June 2015, pp. 697–716. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.1080/0950236X.2014.987691.

[8] Bushell, Sally. "Paratext or Imagetext? Interpreting the Fictional Map." *Word & Image*, vol. 32, no. 2, Apr. 2016, pp. 181–94. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.1080/02666286.2016.1146513.

[9] Larsson, Chari. *Didi-Huberman and the Image*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021. Print.

maintain, more or less explicitly, the secular hierarchy—which is idealistic—of intelligible knowledge and of its sensible "illustrations." By opening up a photographic laboratory at the Salpêtrière, Charcot must have thought that he would "illustrate" his clinical concept of hysteria, which had been formulated beforehand; we see, on the contrary, that the concept itself was formed and transformed—constructed and reconstructed, rigged, staged—in the very production of the images."[10] Like Mitchell, Didi-Huberman was strongly influenced by the work of Aby Warburg to rethink image-word relationships. Didi-Huberman's work on word and image is often focused on renegotiating the way that art history is practiced, and how art is written about. In service of that goal, Didi-Huberman addresses ancient ideas about hierarchy between image and word, attempting to move away from old platonic idealism and towards a new conception of representation which recognizes images as knowledge – as Didi-Huberman discusses in his *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science*. Part of resisting idealism for Didi-Huberman is pushing back against the concept of mimesis, since the concept of mimesis tends to create a hierarchy of representation by relegating images to a matter of mere imitation. Since idealism regards the visible as expressly different from the actual truth of the world, images are thereby made unimportant if not actively demonized. Didi-Huberman's work also emphasizes impurity in representation, pushing back against the idea found in both Plato and Lessing that purity of word and thought (purity from image or from representation) are achievable and desirable in written work. Didi-Huberman's work is vital and very much sympathetic to the goals of this dissertation, but it doesn't address exactly the same things. In the first case, Didi-Huberman is concerned primarily with how art history is done, rather than with imagetexts or with methods that can apply to a large variety of different forms of art. Secondly, Didi-Huberman is not primarily

[10] *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science*, 169.

concerned with finding continuity and connection between word and image; he's concerned with dismantling the hierarchy between them, but not with melding the two together and finding the one in the other. He's therefore a thinker whose work follows a similar path to my own but pursues different goals than my own.

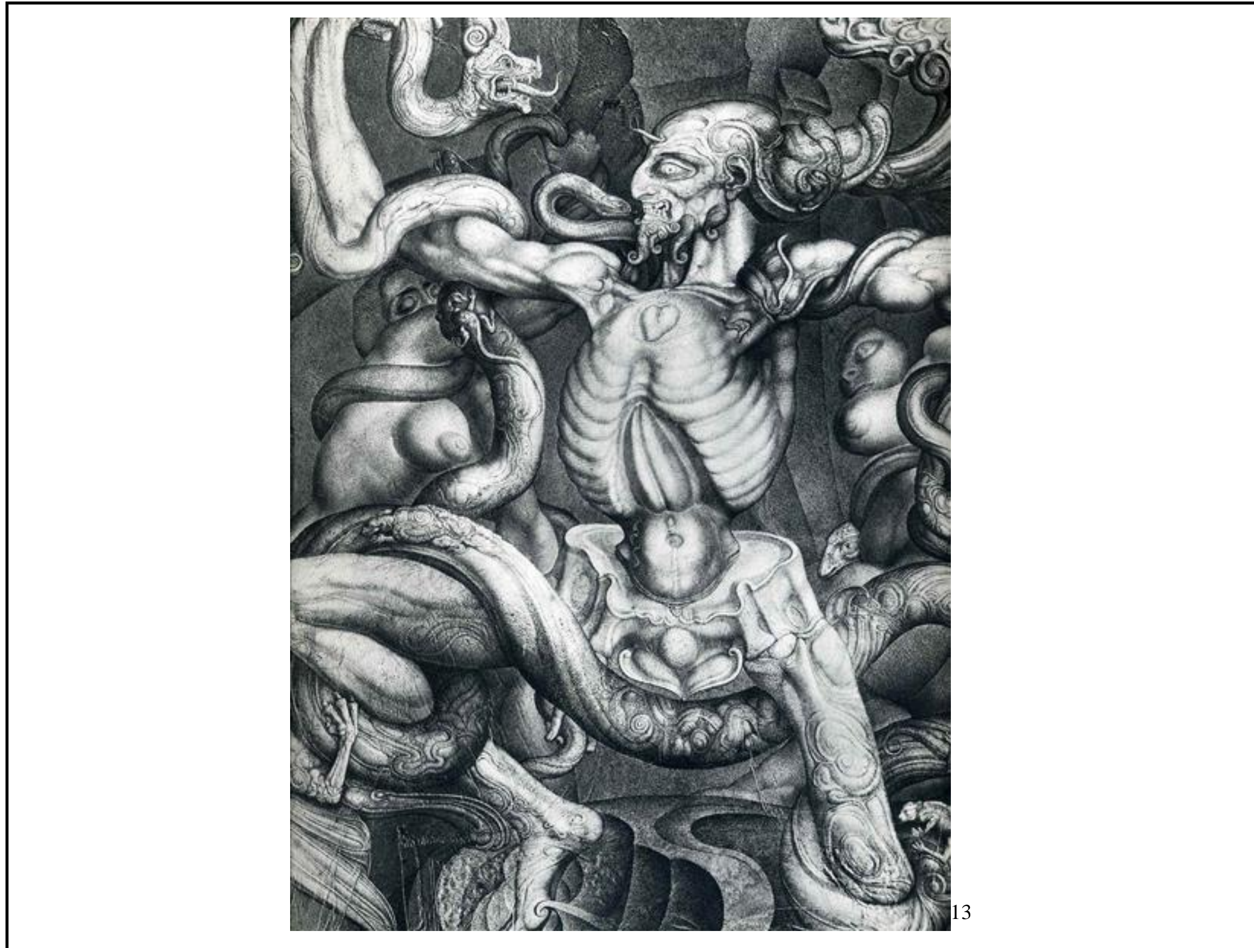
Another scholar whose work relates to my own project is James Elkins, an art historian and visual studies specialist. Elkins is concerned with widening academia's interest in and understanding of visual phenomena outside of what is considered art. His book *Visual Practices across the University* discussed the necessity and utility of applying visual analysis techniques to a fuller range of images, from the scientific to the bureaucratic. Elkins is himself influenced by Didi-Huberman and Mitchell, but also by Barthes and Foucault; he positions himself as a post-structuralist art historian. In his 1998 book *Pictures and the Words That Fail Them,* Elkins discusses the issue of interpretability and non-interpretability in images, arguing that while any image or aspect of an image can be interpreted, there still remains an uninterpretable remainder in any image. Of course, Elkins doesn't commit to the kind of radical reconciliation between image and word that my dissertation proposes, but he's very much concerned in questioning the relationship between images and words, especially with regard to semiotics and interpretability. Interestingly, he does discuss image and word in fluvial metaphors in that book – words can be a flood for him, yet the image is "insoluble"[11], whereas I discuss words and images as participating in the same flood of significances in my chapter on Theweleit.

Lessing, Imagetext, and the Spatial-Temporal Dichotomy

[11] *Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*, 337

One of the most influential thinkers on the subject of image and text has been Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, whose 1767 book *Laokoön oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* is an enduring entry in the millennia-old debate about the relation between word and image. *Laokoön* argues against Horace's dictum of *ut pictura poesis* (as is painting, so is poetry) by claiming that the two media ought to be considered differently and subjected to different approaches and forms of interpretation. Since Horace's view was widely accepted, Lessing's persuasive emphasis on medium changed the way that people thought about images and texts. The key difference for Lessing is in the way text and images are perceived: text must be read through gradually, thus functioning temporally, whereas image presents itself fully to the viewer at an instant, thus functioning spatially. Reading is a process which takes place in time, whereas perception of an image is in some sense immediate, according to Lessing. Lessing's argument is persuasive to the degree that one agrees that temporality is the primary mode of engagement for reading whereas spatiality is the primary mode of engagement for viewing images. Lessing therefore develops a spatial/temporal dichotomy which forms the basis for a strict division between word and image. This division is not only descriptive for Lessing but – crucially – it is also normative. Lessing extrapolates from his formal division between picture and painting that the two media should not approach the *Grenzen* between them and should avoid imitating one another in any way. The painting is therefore compromised when it tries to have allegorical content which makes some sort of claim, and the poem is compromised when its appeal strays into the realm of the visual: "In poetry, a fondness for description, and in painting, a fancy for allegory, has arisen from the desire to make the one a speaking picture without really knowing what it can and ought to paint, and the other a dumb poem, without having considered in how far

painting can express universal ideas without abandoning its proper sphere and degenerating into an arbitrary method of writing."[12]



[13]

I have a response to Lessing's views, but first I'd like to discuss W.J.T. Mitchell's own response, which I found quite influential when I began writing on image and word and which I now think doesn't quite go far enough. In an early essay, W.J.T. Mitchell discusses Lessing's views and responds to them. The normative aspect of Lessing's theory is the most troubling one for Mitchell, who was already thinking images and words together. Mitchell's essay, "Lessing's

[12] Lessing, Gotthold E. Trans. Frothingham, Ellen. *Laocoon: An Essay Upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry. with Remarks Illustrative of Various Points in the History of Ancient Art.*, 2017. Internet resource.
[13] Ernst Fuchs, *Anti-Laokoon*, 1965: https://www.wikiart.org/en/ernst-fuchs/anti-laokoon-1965

Laocoon and the Politics of Genre", responds to two main points: Lessing's spatial/temporal dichotomy, which argues that image and word are fundamentally different, and Lessing's normative approach to the visual/verbal divide. Mitchell's response to the spatial/temporal dichotomy is easy to understand: although literature generally portrays sequences of events or observations and painting generally portrays a spatial arrangement at a particular moment, both media are actually concerned with things which are both spatial and temporal.

the difference to surface. Once we have glimpsed the link between genre and gender, however, it seems to make itself felt throughout all the oppositions that regulate Lessing's discourse, as the following table will show at a glance:

Painting	Poetry
Space	Time
Natural signs	Arbitrary (man-made) signs
Narrow sphere	Infinite range
Imitation	Expression
Body	Mind
External	Internal
Silent	Eloquent
Beauty	Sublimity
Eye	Ear
Feminine	Masculine

Paintings, like women, are ideally silent, beautiful creatures designed for the gratification of the eye, in contrast to the sublime eloquence proper to the manly art of poetry. Paintings are confined to the narrow sphere of external display of their bodies and of the space which they ornament, while poems are free to range over an infinite realm of potential action and expression, the domain of time, discourse, and history.

Lessing's sense of the threatened violation of these natural laws of gender and genre may be seen by setting these generic terms against a table of evaluative terms:

Blurred genres	Distinct genres
Moderns	Ancients
Adultery	Honesty
Monsters	Beautiful bodies
Mothers	Fathers
French "refinement"	English and German "manliness"

From W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology*, p. 110

Although it might seem at first glance that one medium is spatial and the other temporal, these terms actually don't make much sense when isolated from one another. The forms of representation and consumption of verbal media may appear to be more temporal than spatial, but they are nonetheless spatial and temporal as written words which appear in a space on a page. Furthermore, the subject matter which literature treats is in almost all cases spatial as well as

temporal: what happens in a temporal sequence of events happens in some sort of spatial context, after all. In the same way, the painting may appear from a naive perspective to be fully digested in a single glance, but artists and art critics have long recognized that the eye almost always makes a journey through the painting, following lines of action and being guided by the design principles behind the image. Furthermore, paintings generally do not portray events which are non-temporal; the still life and the portrait are both insistent on placing their subject in a certain time, and political or religious paintings are even more explicit in placing their works into a narrative and portraying some of the action of that narrative. Thus, Mitchell argues that Lessing's spatial/temporal dichotomy isn't useful either as a literal claim about the media or as a figurative claim regarding the essential character of word and image.

The most obvious cases which demonstrate that the verbal and visual are not exclusively temporal or spatial are ekphrastic literature and comics. Comics are relatively new as a widespread media and have received almost no serious consideration from literary scholars and theorists. Ekphrastic literature is therefore the only case which Lessing and his supporters have dealt with. Lessing makes a claim about ekphrastic writing, namely that it's difficult to read:

> "The details, which the eye takes in at a glance, he [the poet] enumerates slowly one by one, and it often happens that, by the time he has brought us to the last, we have forgotten the first. Yet from these details we are to form a picture. When we look at an object the various parts are always present to the eye. It can run over them again and again. The ear, however, loses the details it has heard, unless memory retain them. And if they be so retained, what pains and effort [*welche Mühe, welche Anstrengung*] it costs to recall their

> impressions in the proper order and with even the moderate degree of rapidity necessary to the obtaining of a tolerable idea of the whole.[14]"

Mitchell points out that the ease with which one absorbs a text is by no means correlative with its value, and in fact a difficult text is often considered superior to one which is easy to absorb. The response to ekphrastic literature in Lessing is a weak dismissal, which also applies to the objections to it by Wendy Steiner and Rensselaer Lee; these dismissals are not made on strong theoretical grounds but are rather motivated by normative judgements about what great painting or writing ought to be – but what is the basis for these normative judgements?

The short version of Mitchell's response is simply iconophobia – the general anxiety regarding image and its power in the European tradition of literary criticism and philosophy. Mitchell discusses how various political and social boundaries are tied up in the image-word divide for Lessing, including the perceived femininity of image and the association of ekphrastic work with the French tradition. For Lessing, image was the inferior mode of art which needed to maintain a respectful distance from word, lest it contaminate or compromise the power of written work. The spatial/temporal dichotomy therefore, according to Mitchell, ultimately gains its power not from its persuasiveness as theory but from its ability to exploit common prejudices:

> "Lessing's attempt to pronounce the rational laws that govern this "family romance" of the genres helps us to understand the work of artists who set out deliberately to violate those laws, artists like William Blake, for instance, who insist on blurring the genres in a mixed art of poetry and painting. It is no accident that Blake's mixed art prophesies a revolution in which "Sexes must vanish & cease to be," along with the "Vanities of Time & Space." Blake, the great personifier of abstractions, saw very clearly what lay beneath

[14] Lessing 102-3, 110-111

> Lessing's "first principles": "Time & Space are Real Beings Time is a Man Space is a Woman." Lessing's wanderings from his first principles into subjects like idolatry and fetishism help us to see, finally, the source of the curious power his text has had over all subsequent attempts to comprehend the difference between poetry and painting. This power does not stem only from the surface rhetoric of reason and necessity, but more deeply from Lessing's cunning exploitation of the iconophobic and iconoclastic rhetoric that pervades the discourse we call "criticism" in Western culture."[15]

The iconophobic is therefore also the misogynistic. Mitchell's criticism of Lessing's normative dichotomy is intense; as a Blake scholar, he's highly invested in the artistic value of works which combine image and word – as am I. Throughout *Iconology,* Mitchell's concern is with seeing the ideological commitments behind various formulations of the image-word relationship, and in Lessing's case the commitments appear to Mitchell to be misogynistic and gallophobic, among other things. Lessing's argument on this subject is ultimately weak; it straddles the line between the descriptive and prescriptive and appeals to the commonness of impressions regarding media and time/space while simultaneously rejecting common impressions regarding the value of works of art.

However, I do find that Mitchell's critique of Lessing – although certainly forceful – does not go as far as I would like on a theoretical level. Mitchell didn't fully develop his imagetext concept until the early 2000s. My own response to Lessing would be that not only is it not necessary or desirable to maintain borders between image and word but that no such borders are possible on a theoretical level. That is, that the visual and the verbal are divided by convention but are different from each other in degree, and not in kind. The fact that word and image exist

[15] Mitchell, *Iconology*, 112

on a continuum has become more and more clear in the internet age; emojis are commonly used in internet communication alongside words in ways that have complex significance. Emojis also have names, which the user must type to use them, making them hybrid image-word elements on the most fundamental level. Some emojis are exclusive to particular platforms, and outside of those platforms they are simply known by their names, thus not actually appearing as an image but denoting and functioning as that image. Of course, in many languages which have retained their pictographical elements, such as Japanese and Chinese, the visual component of the written word is by no means made invisible by abstraction, as is often the case with the Latin alphabet. On the level of the sign, at least, the continuity between image and word can be made visible.

Of course, Lessing's claims about an image-word divide are not restricted to the level of the sign; he claims that the temporal mode of engaging with text and its properly temporal subject matter is a convenient relation, but ultimately his concern is with what literature and painting properly ought to treat, and not with naturally imposed boundaries on their powers of representation. I agree with Mitchell's rebuttal on the normative point, but I'd further emphasize that it's impossible to have a purely verbal text with no visual element – unless it were written in invisible ink. The verbal part of a text must also be visual; the sign is internally heterogeneous and has no "purity" to preserve by keeping it away from "corruptive" elements like ekphrasis.

Murray Krieger has also addressed Lessing's highly influential views on dividing image and word, calling it the "natural sign aesthetic" in his 1991 book *Ekphrasis*; as a defender of ekphrasis, Krieger advocates for the value of ekphrastic literature and looks to reveal its foundation in classical literature, thereby pushing back against Lessing's Neoplatonism. Krieger refers to Mitchell in various places and his argument proceeds on similar lines, although in much greater detail, particularly on the issue of whether natural signs are a persuasive concept. In

response to Plato's claim that ekphrasis is an "illusion", Krieger develops the view that the natural sign itself is an illusion. Krieger also shares a number of positive examples from canonical literature, focusing on Homer's shield of Achilles, Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn", and Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar." Where Krieger differs from Mitchell is in his focus on ekphrasis specifically and the phenomenon of *enargeia*, which he defines as description which brings forth a vivid image in the mind.[16] Murray Krieger's book is itself an imagetext, with some images provided by his partner, Joan Krieger. The evocation of images through text is an interesting portion of the relationship between image and text, and Krieger's ideas play an important role in my discussion of Lavater. However, Krieger's work doesn't deal with actual images integrated into text, which is the point where the image and text simultaneously contrast from and blend into one another. Without fully thinking through how images and text function together, we cannot even fully interpret an imagetext like Krieger's *Ekphrasis*.

I arrive now at a discussion of my own method and theory in this dissertation. In the simplest terms, my dissertation radicalizes W.J.T. Mitchell's approach to imagetext and develops a method out of this radicalization, with influence from Wolfgang Iser's phenomenological approach to reading.

Iser's contribution is threefold: first, my approach to imagetext is informed by his phenomenological view of reading in *Der Akt des Lesens*, and especially his emphasis on literary gaps. This concept of gaps – that is, openings or ambiguities created by a text – becomes important in the discussions of *Maus* and of Theweleit. Second, I borrow from him the terms "passive syntheses" and *Minusverfahren*. Passive syntheses is a term which frames image-text relations phenomenologically, referring to the way in which reading builds up connections

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[16] *Ekphrasis*, 14

between signs, which thereby become meaningful. When a reader engages with an imagetext, it is these passive syntheses, either individually or collectively, which are the object of observation and analysis. An imagetext reading is therefore a highly individualized reading, which nonetheless is founded upon concrete connections in the imagetext. The *Minusverfahren* concept is used in the discussion of Theweleit; one can speak of the functions of a text, that is, the moves which the text makes. For example, describing a character's appearance would be a function, and the result would be to give the reader an idea of how that character might look. A *Minusverfahren* is an instance in which the text does something by *not* serving a particular function; many literary texts today hesitate to give physical details for characters, and in not doing so they also have an effect on the reader. The lack of the expected function is experienced by the reader as an absence; a *Minusverfahren* is therefore a function which an imagetext fulfills by not performing an expected function.

Thirdly, and most importantly, I take from Iser a phenomenological foundation for the pursuit of imagetext readings. In *Akt des Lesens*, Iser is concerned with thinking about reading on a phenomenological level – that is, in terms of experience. Bracketing out other concerns, Iser focuses on what one experiences when reading and engaging with a text, down to the level of processing individual words or lines and building up understanding of sentences or paragraphs from small, initially indeterminate elements of meaning. My intention in focusing on word-image relations is to mirror this approach when looking at imagetext, and to center the reader's experience of the imagetext as the foundation for any interpretation. Especially in the case of Theweleit, where interpretation of the traditional kind is prevented, understanding the text is a matter of returning to and remaining with the process of reading itself. When I deal with matters of imagetext flow, as I do with Theweleit, I resist the move to interpretation and instead try to

characterize the experience of reading a particular imagetext – how images pull one's attention backwards and forwards through a text, call attention to its spatiality, and open up possibilities by creating ambiguities and tensions. This process of attention to the process of reading imagetext is necessary in all imagetext analysis, but it becomes most visible when dealing with complex, anti-hermeneutic, and effortful imagetexts like Theweleit's.

The image-word relation as the fundamental element of an imagetext-based interpretative method

W.J.T. Mitchell's goal in putting forth the concept of imagetext was to promote a heterogeneous approach to media and literature. Mitchell rejected semiotics' totalizing approach to media in that he sought to subvert the idea of "the sign" as an "atomic unit" of meaning. This embrace of heterogeneity and rejection of irreducible atomicity is the raison d'être of imagetext, but also what makes it difficult to use as a method of reading texts. Mitchell's rejection of an uncomplex foundational element for engaging with images and texts puts those who want to apply his concept on difficult footing. It is the reason that Mitchell's concept is not often applied and why, even when the imagetext concept is applied, the application rarely shows the concept in its best light or justifies it by yielding more interesting perspectives than other approaches. This dissertation aims to apply Mitchell's imagetext concept in a way that is meant to demonstrate both that concept's best qualities and the new results which it can yield when felicitously applied. Therefore, image-word relations will be used as a fundamental element of imagetext analysis, allowing for an interpretive approach that rejects the idea of an irreducible fundamental element but nevertheless affirms that imagetext can be used as a more concrete method than it has been so far.

III. A Dissertation in Three Case Studies

In order to demonstrate my method and the value of what it reveals in imagetexts, I've written this dissertation in three case studies, each of different genres and periods. In proceeding from one case study to the next, the case studies grow more complex and the possibilities of imagetext analysis are demonstrated, eventually showing how extremely complex imagetexts can be handled by shifting to a more phenomenological approach which nevertheless includes an analysis of image-word relations.

The first case study is of Johann Caspar Lavater's influential *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkentniss und Menschenliebe*, a book published in 1775 which claims to lay out a science of physiognomy; that is, it claims to describe a scientific connection between an individual's facial features and their character. In this case study, I focus on discussing a number of passive syntheses surrounding one particular image in one of the chapters of the work: an image of Judas Iscariot, whose character Lavater claims to analyze. The result yields connections between image and text, referred to as image-text relations, and from these many connections the reader can make conclusions about how the text's argument works and how persuasive it might be. The discussion of Lavater also treats the most significant and lengthy instance of ekphrasis in the dissertation, and deals with tensions between ekphrastic writing and images in an imagetext. Lavater's imagetext furthermore is made without deep consideration of how integration of image would affect the meaning of his text, which leads the imagetext to undermine its own arguments.

The second case study is of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a comic book and work of creative nonfiction which deals with conversations between a younger version of the author and his father about surviving the Shoah. Since the work is a comic, there are far more potential image-word relations to consider and they are no longer anchored in a single image (as in Lavater). Furthermore, Spiegelman is far more conscious of the way images and words will interact in his work, and generates tensions between them deliberately in ways which deepen the complexity and ambiguity of his work rather than undermining it. From the first chapter's discussion of a single image nexus, the second chapter proceeds to describe and interpret a network of image-text relations.

The third case study is of Klaus Theweleit's *Männerphantasien*, particularly his chapter on *Ströme*, which demonstrates the complexity of his approach to imagetext. Theweleit's approach to imagetext is explicitly anti-hermeneutic, and his imagetext is written to prevent readers from reducing his text to a particular interpretation; the work digresses in various directions in the service of a number of arguments and the images which Theweleit includes do the same, often even more wildly. Because the imagetext is so complex, it's impossible to summarize this chapter of *Männerphantasien* in a way that captures its main points, since digression and disorder in the service of anti-fascism are among its guiding principles.

Between the three case studies, the dissertation plots the possibilities of imagetext analysis, depicting an arc aimed towards ever more complex objects. Future implementations of this method could include analysis of web pages and phone applications, and this dissertation demonstrates how such objects could be analyzed in further research. The issue of dynamism, for example, appears in multiple chapters but especially in Theweleit; the images in Theweleit are not in fixed locations but rather change position based upon which edition one is reading. Just as

with the shifting layouts of digital imagetexts, the result is a work in which spatial relationships between images and words are important to interpretation, yet these relationships are not immutable but rather flexible.

Dynamism, Individualization, and the Issue of Relevant Image-Word Relations

One of the issues which this dissertation deals with is the problem of choosing relevant image-word relations to analyze. In most imagetexts, there will be too many possible combinations of words/sentences and images to consider each and every one, so choosing only a few and examining those is necessary. These combinations then become the focus of analysis, and are considered the relevant image-word relations for one's particular interpretation. There are a number of criteria to consider when thinking about relevant image-word relations, and these are based upon a phenomenological approach to understanding imagetexts. In the first chapter, I develop the concept of relevance in image-word relations and demonstrate how it can function in the simpler cases. In the second chapter, the work on *Maus* makes it necessary to dig deeper into the issue of what makes one particular image-word relation more relevant than another, and what sort of connections there might be which need consideration. Finally, the third chapter shows how to deal with a text which defies the normal criteria used to determine relevance, as Theweleit's work pushes against forms analysis which seek unity; the discussion therefore turns to how to deal with image and word when relevancy cannot be determined. The general strategy is twofold. First, one must more explicitly acknowledge the individualization of one's own path through a text, which gives rise to certain image-word relations that stand out as a product of one's own experience of engaging with the imagetext. Of course, any reading is

based upon one's own individual experience with a text, but a complex imagetext often pushes this aspect of the reading to extremes, as images can be ambiguous and often provoke very different interpretations. Second, rather than considering only individual image-word relations, it's necessary to consider the imagetext holistically, and attempt to grasp how the image-word connections collectively function as a gestalt.

Floating Images: Dynamism in Analog Imagetexts

One of the ongoing themes in my analysis of imagetexts is the way that even analog imagetexts, such as the ones I deal with in this dissertation, function with a dynamism similar to the way that digital imagetexts transform themselves. When I speak of dynamism in this case, I mean the way in which different readers will actually experience the imagetexts in this chapter in a different order than one another. Two people engaging with an imagetext aren't merely taking different paths through the same territory; the territory shifts around them in unique ways. In my discussion of Lavater, I deal with a chapter which centers around one particular image: a reproduction of a painting of Judas. The image itself precedes the beginning of the chapter and is given its own page with a blank page opposite. The result is that any time one wishes to reference the image which Lavater is speaking about (and against), it's necessary to turn the page back to the image itself and refresh one's memory of it. The consequence of this is that all of the text in the chapter is equidistant to the image: a page turn is always required. This also means that depending upon when and how often one turns back, the influence which the image exerts on the imagetext's meaning will change; turning back to the image of Judas as Lavater decries the man's wretchedness will be a different experience than turning back to it when Lavater praises his virtues and potential for goodness. Imagetext analysis, being founded in the reader's

actual experience in engaging with the imagetext, pays attention to the way that experience may cause the imagetext itself to take different forms.

A similar phenomenon occurs with *Maus* and *Männerphantasien*, which exist in multiple editions that differ from one another and have a variety of different covers and formats which affect the experience of engaging with them as imagetexts. Different editions of a work are much more distinct from one another as imagetexts than they are as texts, since they involve spatial rearrangement of the images and paragraphs which the work consists of; a different reading experience results in which different juxtapositions between word and image present themselves. Even in otherwise identical editions, different covers can have an effect on the experience of the work, as is discussed in the case of *Maus*'s variant covers.

Through-lines: This path through Imagetext

Many possible case studies could have been used to think through imagetext in the way that I have in this dissertation, and I acknowledge that there are countless other works which would be interesting to look at from this perspective; indeed, that's one of the strengths of the approach itself. However, I would like to discuss in closing the reasons for my choices of case studies. Before launching into the ways in which my case studies speak to one another and deal with similar issues, I would like to claim that one of my case studies, *Maus*, is really irreplaceable in the context of this dissertation. No form embodies the intermingling of image and word as explicitly as the graphic novel; the proof of this is in how reviled graphic novels have been, and how the form itself has long been kept out of libraries and classrooms as a corruptive force of the kind which education ought to fight against. *Maus* is, at present, the only graphic novel or comic which one can reliably expect to find in most libraries and in college

classrooms. Even today, some school boards still ban the book.[17] Stores in Russia do not sell it.[18] Its very existence as a graphic novel with serious subject matter and literary qualities makes it threatening. And yet, *Maus* has survived and been analyzed by countless scholars; to omit it from a dissertation on imagetext would be to ignore one of the most impactful imagetexts of the last century, and certainly the one which most explicitly embodies relations between words and images.

That being said, Lavater and Theweleit merit their inclusion for different reasons and connect with the subject matter of the dissertation as a whole in different ways. Certain subjects repeat from chapter to chapter and are revealed from different angles. The issue of antisemitic stereotypes appears in each chapter; Lavater plays on antisemitic stereotypes, as does Spiegelman in a very different way. Although my focus in Theweleit is not on antisemitic stereotypes but on misogynistic ones, the fascist fears and anxieties he discusses were directed against Jews as well as against those women which the fascists despised. In these various examples, the dissertation suggests how cultural stereotypes are also hybrid forms of image and word, and thus subject to analysis through an imagetext method. Together, the three chapters contribute to an account of the history of antisemitic imagetexts, and it would certainly be possible to expand the work in that direction in the future.

Discussing Lavater when applying an imagetext approach to German Studies is a natural choice; W.J.T. Mitchell's work was founded to a great degree in the works of William Blake, and Lavater's imagetext is a sort of predecessor to the imagetexts of Blake; Blake even worked

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[17] https://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/art-spiegelman-on-the-school-ban-of-his-book-maus-a-58938085-2115-4e6b-bf20-d31ae323e80e

[18] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/27/russian-stores-pull-holocaust-graphic-novel-maus-over-swastika-on-cover

on a translation of Lavater's *Fragmente*.[19] The chapter on Lavater is also important as a very early example of a mass-produced imagetext; Lavater's extremely expensive books of physiognomy were nevertheless published and purchased widely, and were highly valued for their integration of image and text. Lavater's books of physiognomy also prefigure the interactivity of imagetexts found on the internet and in mobile phone apps; the books were designed to be interactive, with several sections devoted to allowing the reader to test their understanding of and talent for physiognomy and practice with examples. Just as young people today are stereotypically obsessed with the interactive imagetexts on their phones, young people in the 1770s were commonly considered to be obsessed with silhouettes and portraits, the predecessors to the *carte de visite* that were commonly left behind by visitors and which could be used for physiognomic practice. Given his belief that silhouettes made an ideal object for physiognomic analysis, Lavater has been credited with their popularization[20]. Lavater's work is also interesting as a kind of naive imagetext, which lacks the understanding of the form which Spiegelman and Theweleit had, and therefore shows how an imagetext can turn against itself.

Theweleit's imagetext is very different from Lavater's, and is valuable for its complexity and radical application of the imagetext form. Theweleit's work in *Männerphantasien* and his later books makes very deliberate use of imagetext; his style makes use of images in ambiguous ways which are difficult to analyze even with an imagetext approach and are utterly confounding without it. The discussion of Theweleit is particularly important because it poses a challenge to the imagetext methodology: that is, what to do when image-text relations become too many and too ambiguous to analyze? This necessitates a more explicitly phenomenological approach to

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[19] The connections between Blake and Lavater are discussed in great detail in Sibylle Erle's *Blake, Lavater, and Physiognomy*.

[20] Stafford, Barbara Maria. "Beauty of the Invisible: Winckelmann and the Aesthetics of Imperceptibility." *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1980, pp. 65–78. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1482069.

imagetext in the third chapter, resulting in a method that can be used even for overwhelming combinations of image and text.

This is an important step, since modern imagetexts consist of complex flows of images and words which influence one another. Thanks to the ease with which images are now reproduced, a large portion of the media we consume today falls into this category of imagetext. The most obvious example would be webpages, almost all of which contain a mix of visual and verbal elements. Since webpages use HTML to arrange images and words in ways that are appropriate for the resolution and shape of the web browser used to load them, the spatial relationships of images and words on webpages are not fixed but rather "float", prepared to shift their location and relations based upon the shape of the device they load on. As discussed earlier, this "floating" aspect is not exclusive to webpages but is present in various ways in other works. Mobile phone applications almost always mix the visual and verbal, as do the online and paper news media. Digital media are almost always individualized and personalized to the tastes of the user, and this sort of individualization is also an aspect inherent to complex imagetext, as we shall see in the third chapter. Beyond the two-dimensional world, a building with writing on it also presents an imagetext when viewed from a single perspective.[21] The discussion of Theweleit and the phenomenological turn which it applies to my imagetext approach leads very naturally to further case studies, particularly of digital media.

Paths not Travelled: Alternatives and Possibilities

[21] This dissertation doesn't deal in depth with imagetexts in motion, which would include things like online videos, films, and three-dimensional objects. However, the method described could likely be applied to those contexts, since it is already spatio-temporal in its approach; the complexity of such imagetexts would likely be exponentially greater than static imagetexts, therefore demanding a more flow and function-oriented approach as seen in the Theweleit chapter.

Beyond the justifications for my choices of case studies, there are of course many other works which I could have chosen and which I might want to discuss in the future. I'd like to discuss a few of these concretely, explain why I didn't write about them in this dissertation and how I might do so in the future.

The obvious absence in this dissertation for many readers will be W.G. Sebald, whose work includes imagetext and is widely taught. One reason I didn't choose to write about Sebald is that his use of images has been widely written about, while Theweleit's has not.[22] The choice of Theweleit was therefore a step into a bigger gap in the discourse, and one which posed similar challenges as those which Sebald did. Like Theweleit, Sebald makes enigmatic and disruptive use of images, which in Sebald's case has provoked much discussion. Of course, that's not to say that imagetext analysis would have nothing to contribute to the scholarly discourse on Sebald, nor that such a contribution would be a repetition of the chapter on Theweleit. Sebald's approach to image in his text has a very different relationship with Lessing's theory, for example; he describes his use of image in the terms of instantaneous comprehension and anti-temporality, very much in the spirit of Lessing. He described it this way in a 2001 interview: "A picture, being visual information, can be contemplated, it does not have to be decoded in time. You can just sit and see it, and the ideal reader for me would be a reader who does not just read the text but sees, who lifts out the perennial wasting which occurs in time."[23] In other words, Sebald

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[22] For example: Horstkotte, Silke. "Pictorial and Verbal Discourse in W. G. Sebald's *The Emigrants*." Iowa journal of cultural studies 2.1 (2002): 33–50.
Crownshaw, Richard. "On Reading Sebald Criticism: Witnessing the Text." Journal of romance studies 9.3 (2009): 10–22.
McGonagill, Doris. Crisis and Collection : German Visual Memory Archives of the Twentieth Century / Doris McGonagill. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015. Print.

[23] Bigbsy, Christopher (2001) 'In conversation with WG. Sebald', in Writers in Conversation (University of East Anglia, Norwich: Arthur Miller Centre for American Studies), 156.

himself seems to embrace the idea of distinguishing between spatial and temporal arts, and it would be interesting to see how this view bears out in his work; in Sebald, it seems likely that disruptions or changes in the temporal flow of reading would be an important factor which would require thorough analysis.

Another absence from this dissertation is film, which W.J.T. Mitchell himself used as an example of imagetext. As I've said elsewhere in this introduction, I think that films could be analyzed through an imagetext lens, but I would hesitate to do so in this context because of their complexity. Although it would be possible to think about image-word relations in films, I'm not convinced that this would often be an improvement over conventional approaches to film that take a more conventional, holistic approach to the medium. One of the motivations for imagetext analysis is the fact that it doesn't overlook the visual elements of imagetexts, and therefore applying it to films and overlooking their auditory elements and special temporal qualities would require a strong justification. Even in the case of silent film, my imagetext approach does not appear on its face to be the most suitable means of analysis. I think that the spirit of imagetext – that is, imagetext as a concept and not a work or a method of analysis – could be applied to film, but my own approach is not well-suited to doing so in the way that it would be well-suited to analysis of digital imagetexts.

Chapter 1: Lavater, Judas, and Imagetext

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"Je ruhiger der Stand des Körpers ist, desto geschickter ist er, den wahren Charakter der Seele zu schildern."
Johann Joachim Winkelmann[25]

[24] Apoll von Belvedere, image from https://nat.museum-digital.de/object/635020?navlang=de

[25] From "Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst", Zeno.org Digital Archive, http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Winckelmann,+Johann+Joachim/Gedanken+%C3%BCber+die+Nachahmung+der+griechischen+Werke+in+der+Malerei+und+Bildhauerkunst

Preface

In this chapter, I'll be using the *Judas nach Holbein* passage from Johann Caspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkentniss und Menschenliebe* as a case study that demonstrates the different kinds of image-word interactions that an imagetext can generate as well as how the tensions that these various image-word interactions can have with each other. This text is particularly well suited to discussion as an imagetext because any physiognomy is already an imagetext in W.J.T. Mitchell's terms, since a physiognomy needs to map "a composite, synthetic form" by both visual and verbal means. Furthermore, the argument of the passage and of the book more generally succeeds or fails based upon its effectiveness as an imagetext. I'll demonstrate how the argument of Lavater's *Judas nach Holbein* chapter relies on its imagetext form and how this imagetext form also results in the collapse of his argument when the imagetext he creates becomes too complex to support his physiognomic theory.

I'll begin by offering a short introduction to Lavater and the *Fragmente* which outlines their historical significance and briefly contextualizes the work in the intellectual sphere of the late 18th century. I will outline the critical reception of the *Fragmente* and of the *Judas nach Holbein* chapter specifically. I'll then make my argument, which begins by establishing the theological foundations for Lavater's belief in physiognomy. I'll discuss the *Judas nach Holbein* passage itself as an imagetext and the complexities of image-word interactions in the text. Finally, I'll show how these complexities of imagetext cause Lavater's argument to fall apart.

The historical significance of Lavater and the *Fragmente*

Johann Caspar Lavater is rightly regarded as the central figure of the revitalization of physiognomy in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In Lavater's own words, physiognomy is defined thusly: "Nämlich — die Fertigkeit durch das Aeußerliche eines Menschen sein Innres zu erkennen; das, was nicht unmittelbar in die Sinne fällt, vermittelst irgend eines natürlichen Ausdrucks wahrzunehmen. In so fern ich von der Physiognomik als einer Wissenschaft rede — begreif' ich unter Physiognomie alle unmittelbaren Aeußerungen des Menschen. Alle Züge, Umrisse, alle passive und active Bewegungen, alle Lagen und Stellungen des menschlichen Körpers; alles, wodurch der leidende oder handelnde Mensch unmittelbar bemerkt werden kann, wodurch er seine Person zeigt — ist der Gegenstand der Phsſiognomik."[26] His *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkentniss und Menschenliebe* had a tremendous influence across Europe. The first volume, published in 1775, was edited by Goethe, who also contributed a poem and large portions of the volume's second half in the form of an extensive series of tests for determining the reader's physiognomic talent. The two were friends and traveling companions in the time leading up to the publication of the *Fragmente*. Goethe's editorial duties included deciding, along with Lavater, which images to include and turn to instructive purposes and which to leave out. It was not only Goethe who was interested in the project; Emperor Joseph II came to visit Lavater to discuss physiognomy after the publication of the *Fragmente*, and the *Teutsche Merkur* hailed the book as one of the most important works of the century.[27] Lavater was already well-known for his blackmail of a corrupt *Landesvogt* in 1764 (the incident known as the *Grebelhandel*) and his 1770 demand of Moses Mendelssohn to either refute Christianity or convert to it (the infamous *Lavateraffäre*). With the publication of the *Fragmente* from 1775 to 1779, the Swiss Pietist preacher was made a celebrity. This was due to

[26] *Fragmente*, vol.1, 13
[27] See Frey, 84.

both the popularity of his book and the relentless campaigning and promotion of his physiognomic genius by Johann Georg Ritter von Zimmerman, personal physician to King George III of Great Britain. Although Lavater always downplayed his own abilities as a reader of faces and scientist, Ritter von Zimmerman proclaimed them with the same zeal for sensation that led him to write five volumes about the conversation he had with Frederick the Great at the monarch's deathbed. Lavater therefore became known throughout Europe as the face of the "new science" which was believed to be nascent.

As the name ought to suggest, the *Fragmente* is not a guide or practical handbook to physiognomic practice. It insists upon the truth of physiognomy and that reading a subject's character from their facial features is possible, but does not make methodical, scientific or comprehensive claims about which features correspond to which character traits. Individual faces are judged and even individual facial features are characterized -- the nose and brow are often called noble or ignoble -- but what precise aspect of the feature, i.e. width or length or placement, indicates that character is not revealed. Lavater himself doubted that he had the ability to make such judgements with precision, claiming that future physiognomists would need to be trained in every possible biological science such as to extract the hidden vice or virtue to be found in the bone, the hair, the vein, and so forth. The physiognomy of the *Fragmente* is made out to be a bearer of truth but not yet a science, and has more in common with a hermeneutic than a set of scientific criteria.

In this chapter, I'm going to focus on a single portion of the first volume of the *Fragmente*. The first eighty pages of the first volume are a defense which Lavater makes against the possible opposition of physiognomy as a science. Anticipating various objections and attacks, Lavater sketches out the way that physiognomy as a science could or should function.

Throughout this defense, Lavater is very hesitant to provide concrete examples of physiognomy in practice or even to describe how it would be practiced. However, the rest of the work consists of a large number of case studies in which Lavater analyzes faces with varying levels of precision and comments upon the qualities that these faces imply. My focus is on his first actual example of physiognomic analysis, which is focused on a reproduction of Hans Holbein the Younger's figure of Judas in his 1527 *Letztes Abendmal*. I'll be examining Lavater's use of image and word, and how these elements bleed into and undermine one another. Goethe noted[28] himself that none of the images in the book seemed to illustrate what they were meant to but instead needed to be modified, explained away, and so forth. The tension between image and word flows throughout Lavater's *Fragmente* -- it is perhaps the only constant in a work which constantly undermines and contradicts itself -- as Lavater combines ekphrasis with the usage of remixed, recontextualized and sometimes distorted versions of popular paintings and private silhouettes.

Critical reception of Lavater's *Fragmente* was almost universally positive when it was first published; voices of critique did not grow strong until later volumes were published and it became apparent that Lavater's physiognomic system would never be so scientific or even so concrete as he claimed it to be. This happened most rapidly in Germany, where the physicist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, another of Zimmerman's mentees, published a hastily written but

[28] The discussion occurs in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* book 18. Some have claimed that Goethe lost respect for Lavater as his physiognomic quest continued, and it is true that the frequency of their correspondences decreased over time. Goethe seemed to tire of Lavater's attempts to proselytize to him but thought fondly of Lavater later on in his life. Goethe had a thorough understanding of Lavater's ideas, having read and reread not only his physiognomic but also his theological works. He defends Lavater's writings, claiming that they are very difficult to understand as he intended them and are easily mischaracterized. This much I have found to be true. He even quotes Lavater's description of the Stolberg brothers right out of the second volume of the Fragmente, since at the time it was difficult to get one's hands on.

nonetheless devastating critique of Lavater's method, against which none of Lavater's allies were able and few willing to defend him. By 1797, Georg Gustav Fülleborn published his *Abriss einer Geschichte und Litteratur der Physiognomik* and lamented that his postmortem of the field would have been more timely twenty years earlier. Of course, this was far from the end of Lavater's influence in Germany or elsewhere, but Lichtenberg's work banished Lavater from serious discussion in high society during Lavater's lifetime.

Outside of Germany, the success of the *Fragmente* was much longer lasting, building from the early 1780s. The *Fragmente* were translated into a large number of languages and were Lavater's only international success as an author; the most popular English translation, begun by Mary Wollstonecraft and finished by Thomas Holcroft, exerted influence on British science and popular culture for decades.

The *Fragmente* is without a doubt Lavater's most well-known and influential work, although its high price and many illustrations made it difficult to obtain from the moment it was published. In the introduction to the first volume, Lavater memorably suggests that groups of people form to purchase the volumes and own them in common -- and such groups did form -- and shares his hope that the highly expensive books would not lead people to stop giving to the church and to charity.

It is very unfortunate therefore that no historical-critical edition of the *Fragmente* has ever been published. There is currently a team of researchers at the University of Zurich who began in 1997 to issue a historical-critical edition of all of Lavater's works *except* the *Fragmente*, on the grounds that it was too complex and had illustrations that would make it more costly to print. To date, no researchers have issued a historical-critical edition of the *Fragmente* or even a commentated version. It's a work which has been under-researched, partially due to the

way Lavater was largely forgotten outside of German academia from the end of the 19th century until the end of the 20th.

Critical responses to the *Fragmente* and the *Judas nach Holbein* chapter

Lavater's *Fragmente* have been translated many times in many editions, inspiring worldwide scholarship that extends to the present day. This also means that many different versions of the text are worked on and discussed. The popular English language edition is Thomas Holcroft's 1794 *Essays on Physiognomy*, which is an abridged version of the four-volume German original. This is the version which most often appears cited in English language scholarship, especially since it was the English version which exercised such influence on Great Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Of the English editions I have seen, none of them include the *Judas nach Holbein* image, and the discussion of Judas himself is reorganized and abridged. Richard Gray's *About Face* contains the only English discussion I have seen of the *Judas nach Holbein*; Gray's focus is not so much on the image or chapter itself but on a particular trend in Lavater's work -- his tendency to use artistic imaginings of legendary or historical figures whose features are unknown as scientific evidence.

Lavater's theological foundations and method for physiognomy

Lavater was a Lutheran and is considered to have been part of the Pietist movement in Switzerland[29]. The foundations of Lavater's physiognomic project lie in the core tenets of protestant hermeneutics: that the Bible is fundamentally perspicacious. The word of God, in the protestant position, is easy to understand and only personal wickedness can prevent one from understanding it properly or at all. This is an extension of the protestant interpretation of the

[29] 542 in Strom, Jonathan. "Problems and Promises of Pietism Research." *Church History*, vol. 71, no. 3, [American Society of Church History, Cambridge University Press], 2002, pp. 536–54.

character of God as a being who does not deceive and whose expressions in the Bible also don't deceive, even in the accidental sense of facilitating or allowing misunderstanding. Lavater pushes this idea further, insisting that the universe is the creation of an honest divine being and therefore is not deceptive. As a result, the internal nature of things and their outer appearances must be in harmony.[30] He claims that physiognomy shares this presumption of a harmony between the inner and outer with all other sciences; to the extent that scientific theories assume the observable elements of their objects to be consequences of actual qualities of those objects, Lavater is correct in this characterization of science[31]. The difference lies in what Lavater believes the "internal" causes of external qualities are like: for science each cause, when discovered, generates a new object for scientific inquiry in a cycle that appears endless. For Lavater, the internal cause takes the form of a moral and spiritual element which possesses spiritual qualities sufficient to cause the external, physical manifestations and terminate recursive inquiry by relating everything to the Alpha and more importantly the Omega, God. Of course, the interminability of scientific inquiry can never be demonstrated but it can be expected or unexpected, and the establishment of a connection between the soul, the divine imprint upon the human, and the human body's appearance would have put an end to questions of nature/nurture and to the uncertainty of human character -- physiognomy would build a window into the human heart that made it concrete and visible. This tension between the supposedly scientific methods of the text and its clearly religious goals of improving Christian love among mankind is one of the few consistent elements of the *Fragmente*.

[30] This is said many times and in many ways in the ninth fragment, "Von der Harmonie".

[31] Although physiognomy is rightfully not taken seriously in modern science, its claim to scientificity was very important at the time of its popularity, and especially important for Lavater's own role in popularizing it. John Graham pointed out that one of Lavater's attractive features was that he was a man of God who found a way to subordinate science to religion during the culturally tumultuous enlightenment (see Graham, John. "Lavater's Physiognomy in England." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 22, no. 4, Oct. 1961, p. 561. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.2307/2708032.)

Lavater's method has been criticized as too subjective to be scientific, but what Lavater is appealing to when he makes his judgments is far from unique or idiosyncratic, or else it could never have the power and influence that it has had. Instead, Lavater's method appeals to cultural undercurrents that the reader may not endorse consciously but would recognize, such as stereotypes.

This method is demonstrated on page 82, as Lavater asks the reader to observe their own feelings in regarding the image. Would they not find it impossible for the face described to be called masculine, sublime, or the ideal face of an apostle? These questions tap into the reader's cultural knowledge -- not knowledge in the sense of propositions about culture but rather visual knowledge about how character and mien are communicated in other paintings, in prints, and in other social spaces. The reader is asked to see, to read, and to feel the image and the text all at once and compare it with their own knowledge. Lavater expects his reader to hear him out, but also to be feeling out his text to decide whether or not he might be right. When he asks the reader to do this and determine whether Lavater's judgments resonate with the image provided, the expectation is that the reader's own cultural knowledge will lead them to conclude that Lavater is correct in his assessment. To ask what exactly this cultural knowledge is and where it comes from is not the question at stake; the question at stake is how the text draws the reader into a way of thinking visually and verbally together -- the way in which the reader's visual and verbal knowledge are appealed to is part of this, but the visual and verbal knowledge itself and where it comes from is not the primary question. To answer the other question would be a vast project of its own -- the issue of how image and word work together to form visually encoded stereotypes such as the Jewish stereotype (among others) which Lavater's work capitalizes on.

The question of visual culture and Jewish stereotypes is already addressed in works like Sander Gilman's *The Jew's Body*, which discusses the visual aspects of Jewish stereotypes, including the nose and nostrils, as seen in Holbein's Judas image: "It is the relationship between character and physiognomy which led Jewish social scientists, such as Joseph Jacobs, to confront the question of the 'nostrility' of the Jews. He (and other Jewish scientists of the fin de siècle) saw that 'the nose does contribute much toward producing the Jewish expression.' But how can one alter the 'nostrility' of the Jewish nose, a sign which, unlike the skin color of the Jew, does not seem to vanish when the Jew is acculturated."[32] The Jewish nose was seen as a synecdoche of an entire constellation of stereotypically Jewish qualities, including miserliness and neuroticism. More than anything else, the nose has been the marker of Jewishness in visual stereotypes. The "physiognomy" which Gilman cites is the very tradition which Lavater revived, later carried on by psychologists and sociologists like Carl Gustav Carus and Cesare Lombroso. As Richard Gray discusses in his *About Face: German Physiognomic Thought from Lavater to Auschwitz,* this, this pseudo-scientific approach to visual stereotyping played a significant role in the development of antisemitism from racial hatred to outright pathologization and genocide. Yet Lavater does not here make a move towards pathologizing or singling out Judas' nose, and his assessment of Judas' character is not grounded in an assessment of the nose seen in the drawing. The image itself, in giving the wicked disciple stereotypically Jewish features that aren't present in the other (also Jewish) disciples and savior, is more explicitly antisemitic than Lavater himself.[33]

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[32] Gilman, 180

[33] To be clear, there is no question that Lavater harbored antisemitic sentiments, mostly famously seen in his very public attempt to force Moses Mendelssohn to convert. However, Lavater doesn't articulate these sentiments here in physiognomic language. In fact, he rejects the antisemitic visual language of the image as implausible.

One of the persistent issues of Lavater's physiognomy -- perhaps a consequence of Lavater's avowed lack of confidence in his own abilities of physiognomic interpretation[34] -- is the lack of specificity about how exactly a physiognomic reading is supposed to be performed. Lavater makes judgments about the character of the *Judas nach Holbein* -- mainly that it would be a bad and greedy one -- but does not name any particular features which necessitate this judgment. Lavater judges that the *Judas nach Holbein* looks like an evil man and assumes that the reader will have a similar impression, but it is this impression and not any particular feature which leads him to that conclusion. Unsurprisingly, Lavater was aware of this element of his physiognomic analyses and provided a defense for it in his discussion of the scientificity of physiognomy. When he declares physiognomy to be the daughter and mother of the science of painting, he makes it clear that although certain basic observations, generalizations, and laws can be established about the correspondence between facial features and character, the finer points of scientific and physiognomic observation are so subtle that they cannot be put into words.[35] Instead, they must be drawn. The master physiognomist is therefore, of course, a *Zeichner* themselves. Lavater names Dürer as the master of facial measurement and Raphael as the master of instinctive apprehension of facial features. These two, in Lavater's account, are the actual masters of physiognomy. The fact that physiognomic conclusions and arguments are substantially visual and not just verbal in nature also introduces a new complexity to Lavater's work as an imagetext. To a certain extent, the idea that a painter is the true physiognomist seems to be a necessary consequence of Lavater's views about natural signs. If a set of facial features truly can speak for itself -- and speak divinely guaranteed truth that is unambiguous to the

[34] Lavater expresses his doubts that any individual could possibly write a physiognomy by themselves on page 14 of volume 1. In his mind, experts on all types of biology would be necessary, as one's character affects all elements of the body, including hair, bones, blood vessels, etc.
[35] Lavater, V.1, p.55

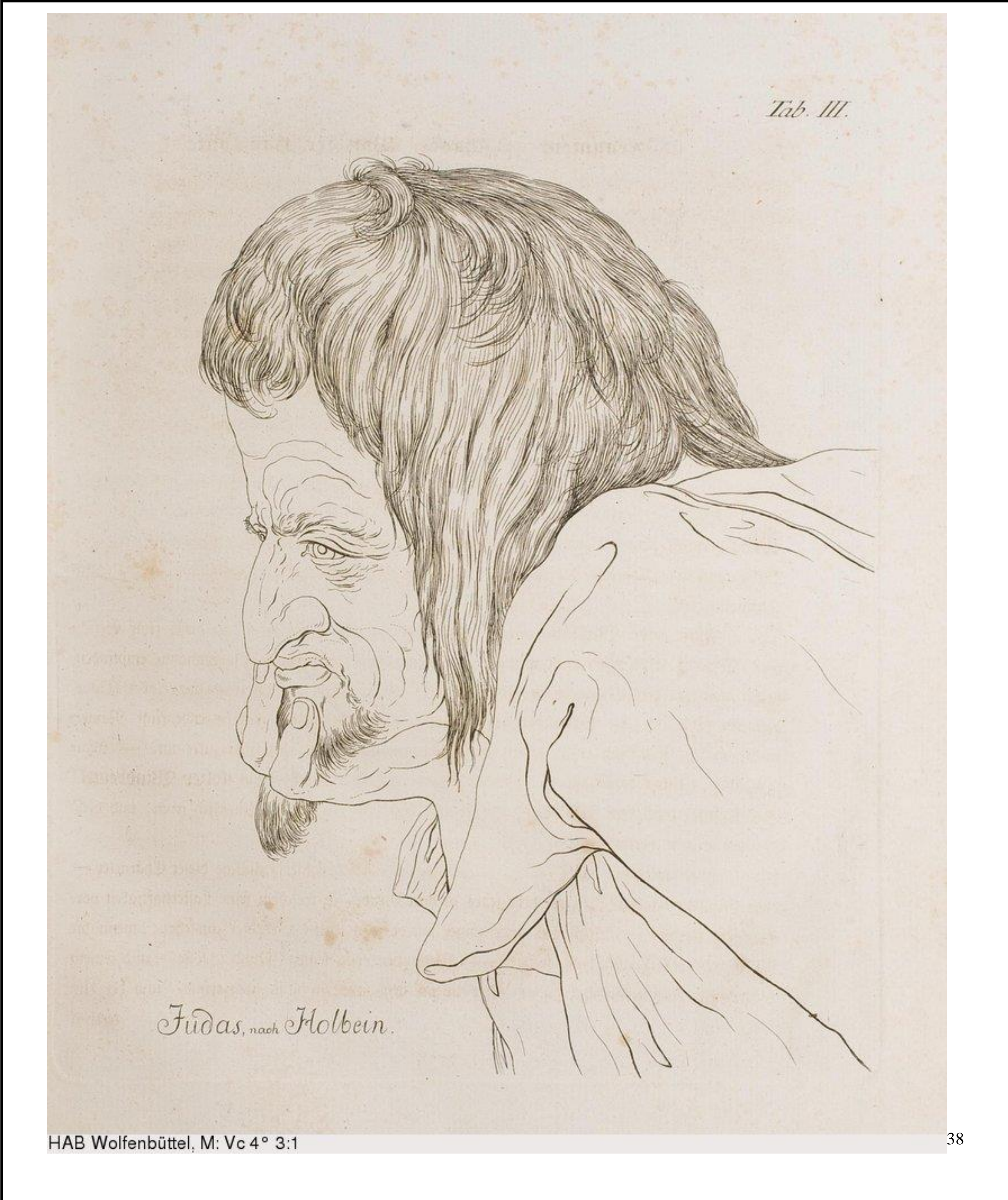
recipient who is unclouded by sin -- then textual examination of a good image is unnecessary. Perhaps it is therefore the inaccurate image -- such as the *Judas nach Holbein* -- which actually needs to be spoken about, whereas the well-judged and truthful image should only provoke silence. Lavater is not of that opinion, since he later discusses images that he likes better, but it would seem to be a possible consequence of his way of viewing things. It is a good practice for imagetexts from the artistic point of view that they do not repeat themselves too much, so Lavater's lack of concrete analysis could even be viewed as an artistic boon which makes the work interesting.[36]

What then can physiognomy be for Lavater? One thing which it must be is a hermeneutic. As a hermeneutic, Lavater's does not depart from the typical interpretational practices of natural theology; it inherits its concept of signs and their legibility from Augustine and from the Greeks through him. Neither is it particularly unusual in comparison with other hermeneutic practices in its reliance on the personal goodness of the physiognomic reader; many hermeneutic practices rely upon such vague and immeasurable personal qualities to distinguish those who can read correctly and those who cannot -- Augustine similarly points to the importance of virtue in interpretation in his *De Doctrina Christiana.* The question of whether hermeneutics ought to depend upon practice of a certain technique or expression of a certain personal quality (or both) dates back to the Greeks and Plato's *Gorgias*. For Lavater, personal qualities are clearly tantamount. Marina Reuter even claims that Lavater always speaks of the personal qualities of

[36] Of course, the opposite is also true. To say that rules and generalizations of the relationship between character and facial features are crass and unreliable may be accurate, but to admit as much is fatal to the project of physiognomy. A physiognomy which cannot or will not propose any actual criteria for evaluating one's character from one's facial features is no physiognomy at all -- and indeed Lavater's future examples do dig into what sorts of lips and noses indicate which character qualities. Lavater's analysis of *Judas nach Holbein* is therefore really just a moment in his development as a physiognomist -- a moment in which the image is undermined by the text so that it cannot spread untruth.

the physiognomist whenever he wishes to avoid the subject of physiognomic methodology.[37] Put a bit more generously, Lavater's hermeneutical approach to physiognomy is an extension of pietist hermeneutics generally; what matters is not a technique of reading, which is held to be a simple and transparent activity in itself, but rather the practice of self-critique and moral improvement such that the reader is not does not deceive themselves. The physiognomist -- provided that they study biology, physiology, and every possible other medical science -- will be able to read the face as long as they are not subject to personal, moral impediments and prejudices. What the study of medical sciences is meant to accomplish is unclear -- Lavater himself had little such knowledge, but claims that all such knowledge would be necessary for physiognomic sciences to be perfected. It has a role to play, for Lavater, although he as a more spiritual kind of physiognomist cannot specify what that role is.

[37] P.168 in Heinämaa, Sara, and Martina Reuter, editors. *Psychology and Philosophy: Inquiries into the Soul from Late Scholasticism to Contemporary Thought*. Springer Netherlands, 2009. *www.springer.com*, doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-8582-6.



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[38] *Fragmente,* p. 107

Judas nach Holbein, from the Deutsches Textarchiv Deutsches Textarchiv – Lavater, Johann Caspar: Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniß und Menschenliebe. Bd. 1. Leipzig u. a., 1775.

The Last Supper by Hans Holbein, scan by Wikimedia
The_Last_Supper,_by_Hans_Holbein_the_Younger.jpg (2550×3132) (wikimedia.org)

Overview of the *Judas nach Holbein* chapter

The first issue that Lavater's attention focuses on is an assessment of the quality of the Holbein Judas as a piece of art, with physiognomic inflections. Lavater discusses Holbein generally, praising him as a renderer but comparing him unfavorably to Raphael: "Als großen Mahler und trefflichen Zeichner, wer kennt Holbeinen nicht? Aber diese Wahrheit des Ausdrucks in erdichteten Personen hab' ich ihm nie zugetraut. Ich will ihn Raphaeln nicht vergleichen — noch weniger an die Seite setzen, so nah' er ihm auch bisweilen in der Zeichnung und im Colorite gekommen seyn mag." His first substantial critique of the Judas image is that it doesn't succeed in conveying fully the character of Judas; as a physiognomist, Lavater expects that the character of a person can be read in their face and that the same should be required of an artistic likeness of them. He criticizes the image of Judas for retaining truthfulness but lacking sublimity: "Es ist erstaunlich viel Wahrheit darinn, aber keine Erhabenheit. Die wahre Physiognomie eines Geizigen; aber nicht eines geizigen Apostels; eines Niederträchtigen — aber nicht einer großen Seele, die von einer Leidenſchaft mächtig ergriffen — zwar ein Satan wird, aber immer noch große Seele bleibt."[39] Judas' character as a miser is conveyed, but he doesn't appear as a miserly apostle; he appears to be an evil man rather than a man with a great soul who has been overcome by a terrible passion. In this initial critique, we see Lavater demonstrating one of the core tenets of physiognomy that Lavater describes in the first few fragments: that physiognomy is to be used to find good qualities in people rather than bad ones[40]. Lavater chooses Judas, an infamously immoral figure, as his example partly in order to demonstrate the way that physiognomy can or should seek goodness in any face.

[39] Lavater v. 1 p. 80
[40] Lavater v. 1 p. 64

This effort is seemingly undermined by the fact that Lavater rejects the face that Holbein gives Judas as wrong, claiming that Jesus would not have accepted an apostle who looked as Holbein renders Judas, since such a person would be evil and therefore an inappropriate companion for Jesus. This assessment is in tension with statements that Lavater makes in other fragments, when he is defending physiognomy against the many objections that he has faced or anticipated. Lavater addressed the objection that facial features are inherited physical traits and not moral traits by claiming that moral habits also tend to be inherited by children, such that being born ugly also means being born with a predilection towards evil which might be overcome. If it could be overcome, one's unattractive features would take on a pleasantness of some sort which would give an impression of goodness and attractiveness.[41] This attractiveness would be identifiable on an instinctual level, leaving a positive impression on physiognomists and untrained children alike.[42] As a result, a face's features themselves aren't sufficient to judge the character of a person in Lavaterian physiognomy; instead, a Lavaterian face is a face which bears a particular expression and makes particular movements. On these grounds, it is important to remember that Lavater's discussion of Judas's face is not a clinical assessment that consists solely of bone measurements and cliches about facial features, but an assessment of a character as expressed in a certain moment: a *Miene* or mien is his object of study. Physiognomy, as Lavater practiced it, was not limited to only features but also included things which we would now consider "body language" or facial expressions -- even "microexpressions" would have counted for Lavater, had he known about those modern-day descendants of his physiognomic practice. Nothing bodily was to be excluded from the general physiognomic rule, which was that appearance and essence ought to reflect each other.

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[41] Lavater v.1 p. 71-73
[42] Lavater v.1 p. 65

The fact that the image Lavater chooses is too negative and too uncomplicated undermines Lavater's efforts to depict physiognomy as a process which will advance human love as well as human understanding; when his insistence on the principle that physiognomy must seek out the good is betrayed in his first example by a face too wicked to find good in, the tension between images and words in Lavater's imagetext begins to build. His text claims that goodness of some sort can be found in any face -- indeed that this is the purpose of physiognomy -- and yet his first image betrays him by depicting a stereotype of a Jewish miser which cannot serve his argumentative purpose. Later in the chapter he turns his own rejection of the image -- as well as the reader's -- into a new argument for the truth of physiognomy, but initially it is only a problem: "Wenn Judas so ausgesehen hätte, wie Holbein ihn zeichnet, so hätte Christus ihn gewiß nicht zum Apostel gewählt. — So ein Gesicht kann's keine Woche in Christus Gesellschaft aushalten."[43]

Lavater then emphasizes about Judas the "*ehrwürdigen Größe seiner Seele"* and its elasticity which can in "*einen Augenblicke*" both contemplate the gates of hell and float above the clouds.[44] The aspect of Judas, Lavater claims, is not depicted in Holbein's image. How exactly Holbein's Judas fails to exemplify this quality is not made clear. When one considers an *Augenblick* in literal terms, it's a matter of vision. The face of Holbein's stereotypical Judas is concave, so perhaps Lavater was pointing to the fact that his imposing forehead and chin actually would block his view above and below; the so-called elasticity of soul that Lavater looks for is impossible for someone who can't see the highest highs and lowest lows. This possibility might seem funny, but for Lavater the forehead was one of the most physiognomically significant parts of the body. Many of the physiognomic images in later chapters of the *Fragmente* are outlines or

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[43] Lavater v. 1 p. 80
[44] Lavater v. 1 p. 81

silhouettes, since despite his discussion of the importance of facial expressions, bodily movements, and deep anatomical knowledge for a physiognomist, Lavater was certainly prepared to read deeply into the soul of a silhouette in profile.

The next moment in Lavater's argument is the most important one, since it is here that he makes his argument into an imagetext argument, which is only possible through the combination of words and images. Having rejected his *Judas nach Holbein* image and fantasized a bit about what Raphael's take on Judas might have been, Lavater moves to persuading the audience to reject the *Judas nach Holbein* image along with him, and in doing so to embrace the truth of physiognomy: "Was würdest du sagen, wenn man unter dieß Bild, ich will nicht sagen, den Namen Christus, sondern — Petrus, Paulus, Johannes — schreiben würde? wie würde dir des Mahlers Seele vorkommen, dessen Apostelsideal so ein Gesicht wär'! Käm's dir nicht lächerlich vor, wenn ich dies Gesicht also commentiren wollte: 'Schau! welch ein offenes, edles, großmüthiges Herz! Hat die Stirn nicht das entscheidende Gepräge von einer reinen sich mittheilenden Seele, die ihr Glück in dem Glück anderer sucht! welch ein offenes, menschenfreundliches Aug'! welch eine männliche hohe Augenbraune! Ist nicht diese Nase die Nase eines Erhabenen! wer erblickt nicht in der Mittellinie der Lefze, eine liebliche Güte, die nur bey unmittelbaren Schülern Jesus zu suchen ist! Stellung, Bart, Haare, alles ist edel, gefällig — alles spricht von Größe und Würde des Characters.' Was würdest du sagen, wenn ich nun so über dieß Gesicht urtheilte? — Weiter will ich nun nichts sagen. Hast du Augen zu sehen, so wirst du sehen. Hast du keine, so kann dir mein Wink keine geben."[45] Lavater guesses correctly that the reader will also look upon the *Judas nach Holbein* with a degree of skepticism, since they can recognize that it doesn't exhibit to them the positive qualities of Judas that Lavater outlined. Of

[45] Lavater v. 1 p. 82

course, it doesn't exhibit these qualities because it's an image of a Jewish stereotype that the reader will recognize and associate only with negative qualities, but Lavater uses this tension and the clear feeling that the image is wrong to impress upon the reader that they too are capable of judging people by their faces -- and that therefore there must be a truth to physiognomy. This shift in Lavater's argument has the effect of making the tension between image and word persuasive. Lavater's rejection of his own example image becomes a way of demonstrating to the reader their own capacity for physiognomic judgment. I'll discuss how this works in greater detail when dealing with the issue of word-image interactions and tensions later in this chapter.

Lavater ends his chapter by anticipating objections, which he often does. In this case, however, his defense against these objections begins effectively but ends in an admission which defeats his entire physiognomic project:

> "Aber nun noch eine entſetzliche Frage: — „Wenn der Mensch mit dieser Stirn, dieser Bildung geboren wird, so wäre ihm ja besser, daß er nie geboren wäre?" — „und daß er so geboren wird, ist es seine Schuld?" — Nein, mein Freund! Er ist nicht seine Schuld, wenn er so geboren würde; aber er wird nicht so geboren — Diese Falten der Stirn, dieser Blick des rechnenden Geizes ist nicht Natur, so wenig der Geiz eine natürliche Anlage ist. Der Geiz und sein Ausdruck sind — Folgen der Angewöhnung. „Aber dieſe Stirn? dieſer Umriß des Oberhauptes?" — auch dieß kommt so nicht unmittelbar aus der Hand der Natur — und Stirnen, die zu dieser Form die Grundlage mit auf die Welt zu bringen scheinen, haben sich, durch das ganze Maaß äußerlicher Eindrücke, zu den Edelsten, oder doch zu den Heldenhaftesten geformt. Doch — wenn's auch möglich wäre, daß Judas so ausgesehen hätte, als Holbein ihn zeichnet; ja wenn's möglich wäre, daß er schon bey seiner Geburt, den Hauptzügen nach so ausgesehen hätte; — auch alsdann wär's dem, der die große Hoffnung giebt: Siehe ich mache alles neu; auch dann noch möglich, aus diesem Gefäße seines Zorns ein Gefäß der Ehre zuzubereiten. Denn, o Tiefe des Reichthums der Weisheit! wie unergründlich sind seine Wege!

wie unerforschlich seine Gerichte! — denn, — er hat alle unter den Ungehorsam beschlossen — daß er sich aller erbarmte."[46]

This quote demonstrates several of Lavater's key views, such as the idea that changes in physical features over time are an expression of the development of character. The most important part is his final move, which ends the chapter by admitting that the *Judas nach Holbein* actually could be correct, supposing that God mercifully chose a wicked person to be an instrument and had compassion on them by redeeming them enough to be useful. This is a reasonable admission on theological grounds, given that Lavater as a pietist was committed to the idea of redemption and the mysteriousness of the Christian God. It was necessary to admit that even such a Judas could potentially be internally transformed and made useful for a mysterious divine purpose. As I will later explore, this theologically necessary concession is fatal to Lavater's argument for physiognomy because of the consequences it has on the functioning of Lavater's imagetext-as-argument.

A closer look at the peculiarities of the *Judas nach Holbein* image

The discussion of Judas begins on page 79 of the first volume of the 1775 edition of the *Fragmente*. It is preceded by two unnumbered pages which consist of a print which partially reproduces Holbein's rendering of Judas and a page intentionally left blank. The print itself is not an exact reproduction of the painting's Judas but makes a number of adjustments.. It is a reverse of the original painting's Judas, looking to the left rather than to the right as the original did. This seems likely to have been a consequence of the printing process rather than an intentional choice, as the artist must have copied the image as it was onto the printing plates, resulting in a reversed image in the actual book. However, there are other changes as well that are more important to the

[46] Lavater v. 1 p. 82-83

book's argument. Certain features are exaggerated; the reproduction exaggerates the ala nasi in size and deepens Judas' sneer. Judas's hair is reproduced without attention to detail and the shape of his bangs doesn't approximate the original. The number of wrinkles around Judas' eyes are also exaggerated in the reproduction, the wrinkles on the forehead are diminished, and the artist entirely neglected to provide any shading that would hint at the depth of features. These aspects will be important when considering Lavater's discussion, especially given his ideas about the ability of art to transmit truth and his critique of Holbein's admittedly unsubtle rendering of Judas. Lavater's image of Judas is thereby an artistically and certainly physiognomically distinct work from the original.

The Austrian National Library is in possession of a variety of Lavater's personal images and books, including an chalcograph of Holbein's *Letztes Abendmal*, as copied by Johann Heinrich Lips under the direction of Swiss master engraver Christian von Mechel. It is tempting to conclude that his 1775 reproduction might be the source for the *Judas nach Holbein* in the *Fragmente* itself. The physiognomic distortions which occur in the *Fragmente*'s reproduction do not yet appear in this version. However, it seems likely that this was the version which Lavater had the head of Judas copied. This means that the *Judas nach Holbein* is likely a mirrored printed version of a copy (the head sketch) of a copy (the full reproduction) of the Holbein original. Goethe reports that Johann Lips was the sketcher and engraver of many of the illustrations -- and that Lips' expertise with rendering faces was partially a result of the physiognomic convictions of his engraving master, Christian von Mechel.

It is clear that Lavater had qualms about the Judas nach Holbein image that he used. He criticizes it as physiognomically inaccurate -- since as a theologian he knows Judas's character and as a physiognomist therefore knows his face -- and praises the physiognomy in the works of

Raphael as better judged. The strange thing is that Lavater would choose to have reproduced an image that he doesn't seem to want and struggles to make work in his argument. What he argues about the image is mostly in critique of it as incompatible with the Judas that he describes. There is also the fact that a Last Supper scene by Raphael exists, as a fresco in the Vatican. Why would Lavater, who clearly produced the book at great expense, have chosen an image that he didn't like, which didn't represent the congruity of features and character that he wished to demonstrate, and which he would disavow on physiognomic grounds? Why choose it as his first[47] in-depth example, when there are other possible figures and even other renderings of Judas which would seem to be preferable?

One might initially suspect that the Raphael Last Supper was rejected because of its presence in the Vatican and association therefore with Catholicism. However, Lavater was not antagonistic towards Catholics, as he maintained a friendly correspondence with Johann Michael Sailer, Bishop of Regensburg. Clearly Lavater had access to works by Raphael, since he has a large number of them reproduced in part to use as examples later in the first volume. It's possible that Lavater was not aware that Raphael had a Last Supper painting. He discusses how Raphael would have depicted Judas differently, with the implication that Raphael in fact didn't depict Judas -- despite Judas' presence with the other apostles on the far left in the *Transfiguration*, which was by far Raphael's most famous painting. It is possible that Lavater didn't realize that the *Transfiguration* depicted Judas or didn't know Raphael's most famous work or perhaps hadn't examined it closely, but this would be strange for such a devoted aficionado of the works

[47] The *Judas nach Holbein* is not technically his first example, since he also has a set of 5 small caricatures which he analyzes in a single paragraph. His point with these caricatures is that they are recognizable types, which he names and expects the reader to recognize. However, he does not analyze them beyond showing and naming them. They do not represent actual persons, fictional or otherwise, and no physiognomic analysis of any of their features is put forth. The *Judas nach Holbein* is therefore the first substantial example Lavater uses.

of Raphael; Lavater had such enthusiasm for Raphael that he analyzes Raphael's own face in detail later in the first volume of the *Fragmente*. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Lavater's use of the Holbein Judas was neither a coincidence nor a concession but a choice made by Lavater and Goethe as they sifted together through Lavater's collection of images and reproductions. Some portions of Lavater's collection of images have been digitized and are available to peruse online and some have not, so it isn't possible for me to be certain which options Lavater was working with and which he was not.

Another possible theory would be that Lavater chose the image as a clear-cut example, since it does represent a Jewish stereotype that the reader could instantly identify. Since the stereotypical set of features would be strongly associated with a particular character in the reader's mind, they would feel that the two corresponded necessarily and naturally and would thereby be convinced of the truth of physiognomy. However, Lavater actually rejects the image as physiognomically inaccurate to the person of Judas. The image portrays, of course, a culturally reviled stereotype which is meant to be the face of the similarly reviled Judas. Yet Lavater doesn't engage in wholesale condemnation of Judas but rather notes the character's moral complexity and rejects the image as being too simple and unsubtle a portrayal. He even claims that nobody could be born with the features Judas is depicted as having but would have to develop them through habitual evil. As a result, the image does not function at all as a clear cut example. As a depiction of a religious figure whose actual features are unknown, Holbein's Judas is unambiguously rejected.

***Judas nach Holbein* as an imagetext: image-word interactions and tensions**

When W.J.T. Mitchell describes the imagetext as a composite, synthetic form, the most obvious significance of that description is that an imagetext combines visual and verbal elements heterogeneously. However, the complexity of imagetext goes deeper when the reader acknowledges that an imagetext consists not of one core relationship between image and text that can be theorized and examined but rather of countless interactions and tensions between image and word. When understanding a text, it's necessary to understand the individual parts in relation to each other and in relation to the whole, and furthermore to develop this understanding by continuing to read, moving forward or back or rereading when necessary. When an image is introduced into a text, it becomes a part of the whole of that text and therefore influences the meaning of every other part. The images in an imagetext can be considered in relation to each individual word, to particular phrases and clauses, and to other images. Of course, many of these interactions would not be interesting or revealing of the meaning of the text, just as choosing any pair of sentences in a text and examining their relation with one another could be insignificant or revealing, depending upon whether they relate in an interesting way. Furthermore, the various image-word interactions can also be in tension with one another, as is the case in this chapter of the *Fragmente*. This is all to say that discussing imagetext rigorously is a matter of discussing image-word interactions and tensions, of which any imagetext will necessarily have many different kinds.

I'll begin by discussing the most simple kind of image-word relation in the text: the relation between the printed image, the copied *Judas nach Holbein*, and the relevant portions of the text. I will then discuss the ekphrastic image that Lavater paints of the "real" Judas, which is a kind of image-word relation in itself. I'll briefly discuss the relation between the text and an imaginary image, such as Lavater's imaginary *Judas nach Raphael* -- a painting which Lavater

seemingly didn't think existed but which he brought into the discussion anyway. I'll discuss how the tensions between the actual image and the ekphrastic image make Lavater's argument for physiognomy persuasive in a way which is only possible for an imagetext. Finally, I'll show how the introduction of divine redemption makes the argument fall apart.

Image-word interactions: The *Judas nach Holbein* and the Lavater's description of Judas' character

One of the factors when thinking about which image-word interactions are relevant is the spatial relationship between the visual and verbal elements on the page. In an illustrated book, it's often a reasonable assumption that an illustration pertains to the content of the page opposite it. However, the pages in the *Fragmente* don't afford this convenient connection. Although some pages admix small images with the text, full page images are always opposite a blank page, presumably for the purpose of preserving them. The illustrations sometimes precede the chapter in which they are discussed and are sometimes mixed into the middle of the chapter. In the case of the *Judas nach Holbein*, the image and its corresponding blank page appear before the chapter begins. As a result, examining the image of Judas will always require the reader to turn the page. It's likely that readers would keep a bookmark or a finger in the illustration page and use it to return to that page again and again, as is necessary for thorough engagement with the text. This means that there is no particular part of the text that the image explicitly applies to; the image instead remains an explicit reference and anchor for meaning for a number of pages. Furthermore, as an exemplar of physiognomic analysis, it is potentially relevant to the content of any other page of the book. By being isolated opposite a blank page, the image is cut off from the most direct hermeneutic context that might lend it meaning. But this isolation also makes it a

nexus for connections with other parts of the text. The fact that the image page and the blank page are unnumbered reinforces the isolation of those two pages.

Many word-image interactions are therefore possible and relevant. However, the most obvious word-image interactions to take into account would be those in which the text specifically refers to the image. By necessity, the text refers to the image when Lavater is critiquing it on artistic grounds. When Lavater comments upon the artistic qualities of the Holbein image, he forms a very familiar word-image relation: art criticism. When Lavater discusses Judas's supposed character qualities to demonstrate how wrong Holbein's depiction must be, he is calling attention to a word-image relation that we will call physiognomic criticism. Finally, when Lavater asks his readers near the end of the chapter to look at the image and ask themselves whether they find it credible, he is putting his physiognomic criticism of this image into tension with his own ekphrastic description of Judas's character and therefore appearance. This instance is more complex, since it involves multiple word-image interactions as well as multiple images of different kinds. These three interactions are the most relevant for Lavater's argument and for this chapter. The first two are discussed here, and the third after the discussion of ekphrasis is complete.

When Lavater assumes the position of an art critic, the relevance of the verbal critique to the printed image is obvious if not particularly significant to his argument or my own. For Lavater, the goal of good art was to reproduce the image as it was in nature. Nature could not be enhanced but could be reproduced faithfully. As long as that reproduction was accomplished skillfully, it was not a problem for Lavater that the images which he hopes to physiognomically analyze are not photographs or actual persons that stand before him but rather illustrations. It is clear that for Lavater, rendered images are perfectly capable of preserving the relevant natural

signs of an actual human face -- it is for this reason that Holbein is criticized and Raphael is praised. The natural sign, *Zeichen* or *Kennzeichen* in Lavater's German, can be replicated on the page by the process of *Zeichnen* (drawing). Lavater goes so far as to call the art of painting the mother and daughter of the art of physiognomy[48]. Lavater's art critique is clearly very much influenced by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, from whom Lavater often quotes extensively. It seems likely that Lavater's enthusiasm for harmony in images and his interest in outlines are influences of Winckelmann's works. Although Winckelmann was not a physiognomist himself, he did believe that the soul was visible in some form in art – or at least, in good art – and discussed this as one of the criteria for good art: "Je ruhiger der Stand des Körpers ist, desto geschickter ist er, den wahren Charakter der Seele zu schildern."[49] Interestingly, Winckelmann said this as a critique of *Laocoön and His Sons*, a work which he criticized for only communicating the pain of its figure and not his soul[50]. Lavater goes one step further, evaluating art not only based on whether it seems to communicate the soul or character of a subject, but even whether this soul or character is matched with a physiognomically appropriate face. Furthermore, in Winckelmann there's an important theme of invisibility: a *je ne sais qoui* in art which is among its most important features, whereas for Lavater, everything is visible to the well-trained eye, including the soul.[51] The most important aspect of Lavater's art critique for this chapter is the fact that it reflects his attitudes toward images generally and their purposes. When

[48] Lavater v.1 p.54
[49] From "Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst", Zeno.org Digital Archive, http://www.zeno.org/Philosophie/M/Winckelmann,+Johann+Joachim/Gedanken+%C3%BCber+die+Nachahmung+der+griechischen+Werke+in+der+Malerei+und+Bildhauerkunst
[50] This assessment of *Laocoön and His Sons* became the subject of a serious disagreement between Winckelmann and Lessing, who wrote his *Laocoon* partially in response to the Winckelmann. His argument was that the sculpture, as a different medium from the poetry upon which the sculpture was based, had different expressive capacities and needed to be evaluated with different criteria. See Victor Anthony Rudowski, "Lessing Contra Winckelmann."
[51] Stafford, Barbara Maria. "Beauty of the Invisible: Winckelmann and the Aesthetics of Imperceptibility.", p. 70.

Lavater critiques the *Judas nach Holbein* as art, he makes a few comments about the quality of Holbein's technical skill but his greater concern is in its fidelity to nature or lack thereof. What Lavater really wants from a portrait is that it communicate physiognomic truth, as it will do when it faithfully reproduces the physiognomic signs that he expects to see in the subject.

The second relevant image-word interaction involving the *Judas nach Holbein* image is Lavater's physiognomic critique of that image. When making his critique, Lavater uses certain words that already express physiognomic judgments which he can easily work into his discussion. He repeatedly describes the Judas face as that of "eines Niederträchtigen" -- which is both a moral and physical judgment, showing that physiognomic logic is already embedded in the German language. Lavater uses the word *niederträchtig* four times to describe the *Judas nach Holbein* -- the word sums up his attitude towards the image perfectly. For Lavater, this Judas' harsh features and downcast, discontented expression are harmonious expressions of his moral baseness, all of which is captured in the word *niederträchtig*. In this case, the image-word interaction is not necessarily reductive; Lavater wants to persuade the reader that the Judas which Holbein depicts is one-dimensional and fully evil on physiognomic grounds and this judgment is made easier for the reader by the image's use of the Jewish stereotype. Holbein's original rendering of Judas already used features that refer to stereotypes of the Jewish miser, and Lavater's *Judas nach Holbein* exaggerates these features. The image itself is meant to communicate its subject's lack of redeeming features and close off positive or neutral interpretations. Far from taking a neutral work of art and putting it to a physiognomic purpose, Lavater's imagetext instead points out and exaggerates the physiognomic argument that the image already expressed.

Image-word Interactions: Ekphrasis

Besides the actual, printed image discussed above, there are two more images that play a role in the *Judas nach Holbein* chapter, and both are ekphrastic. These two ekphrastic images are the physiognomic description of Judas and the imaginary *Holbein nach Raphael*. The first consists of Lavater's description of the way that Judas's character should actually be, which from a physiognomic perspective is not just a description of character but also a visual description of the corresponding facial features. The second appears briefly, when Lavater spends a few paragraphs talking about how Raphael's rendering of Judas would have been better.

Lavater's ekphrastic description of the "real" Judas is important for his argument, but can be summed up fairly easily because of its repetitiveness. As previously mentioned, Lavater claims that Judas ought to be a person capable of both the highest and lowest moral acts; a great soul who is nevertheless capable of becoming satanic when gripped by passion. Lavater's description is negative as well as positive -- the "real" Judas would not be just a miser; the "real" Judas would not be so one-dimensional. There's nothing like a detailed physical description of what Judas ought to have looked like, although perhaps something of the kind could be guessed at based on Lavater's more concrete analyses of facial features later in the book; inevitably he would have had a different forehead in mind for Judas, but beyond that the details are not immediately obvious. The description is therefore only so visual and ekphrastic as it is concretely physiognomic for the reader, who must have at least some physiognomic ideas to put the description into visual terms.

Similarly, Lavater describes the imaginary *Judas nach Raphael* in terms that contrast with his description of the *Judas nach Holbein* but which don't paint a very detailed picture of what it ought to look like; he claims that Raphael would have shown us both the betrayer and the

apostle in one[52] and that Holbein ought to have been Raphael's apprentice, which would have allowed him to show a fully accurate and not just well-rendered image of Judas.

It may seem that the ekphrastic images described above are not actually ekphrastic images, because they do not include a detailed visual description. Any classic example of ekphrasis involves description -- the shield of Achilles would not be an ekphrastic image had Homer simply said that the shield looked good or looked like the shield of Achilles ought to look. The reader will likely have an image of what Judas really ought to look like in their mind, but it is an image which Lavater has not generated or modified at all through visually oriented description. It seems strange to call Lavater's physiognomic description ekphrastic, but this is why it is effective. Murray Krieger described ekphrasis as "the illusionary representation of the unrepresentable, even while that representation is allowed to masquerade as a natural sign, as if it could be an adequate substitute for its object."[53] To the extent that the reader believes that facial features correspond to character qualities -- even if they only believe this on a subconscious level -- they will find Lavater's description of Judas' character qualities to be ekphrastic. In other words, Lavater's description is ekphrastic only to the (closeted) physiognomist reader. The appearance of the ekphrastic image to the reader becomes proof of physiognomy's efficacy. In this way, Lavater's text performatively shows the reader that they do believe in physiognomy and have not admitted it, which is exactly what Lavater claims is true of his audience and which its sudden popularity between 1775 and 1778 seems to evidence.

In *Picture Theory*, W.J.T. Mitchell discusses the different kinds of ekphrastic images and their relationship to the text. Mitchell applies a framework of conceptualizing otherness in European literature and theory onto the phenomenon of ekphrasis as an "other" in the

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[52] *Fragmente*, s.82
[53] Kreiger, Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign, xv

verbocentric disciplines: “Perhaps ekphrasis as ‘literary principle’ does the same thing, thematizing ‘the visual’ as other to language, ‘a threat to be reduced’ (ekphrastic fear), ‘a potential same-to-be’ (ekphrastic hope), ‘a yet-not-the-same’ (ekphrastic indifference).”[54] In these terms, Lavater’s ekphrasis is perhaps the most hopeful possible; his physiognomic account of the world hopes for a total harmony between the visual and the verbal, such that not only can an artistic rendering of Judas can reduced to a verbal description of moral turpitude but a verbal description of Judas’s character can become visual enough to overpower and correct an actual image against which it stands in contrast.

Image-word interactions and tensions: Lavater’s imagetext argument

Physiognomy at its most persuasive needs to grow out of the prejudged associations between character and features in the imagination of the physiognomist. In order to “masquerade as a natural sign”, as Krieger puts it, the ekphrastic image grows out of the imagination of the reader and assumes the form which seems to them to be natural and necessary. Using and assessing an actual printed image -- as Lavater will later do several times -- leads to the problem that counterexamples can be made, arguments can be levied against the image and interpretation, and the facade of naturalness is damaged by the reader’s uncertainty as to the necessity of correspondence between features and character. The ekphrastic image has no such issue. It does, however, produce a strong tension in the text. The printed image and the ekphrastic image are meant to oppose one another in Lavater’s text, as the reader is meant to examine the visual argument being made by *Judas nach Holbein* and judge that argument against their own idea of

[54] Mitchell, *Picture Theory*, 163

who Judas was. The *Judas nach Holbein* is concrete, and the reader can examine it themselves. The ekphrastic image is not concrete but will likely shift as the reader imagines it. The *Judas nach Holbein* appeals to culturally established stereotypes to be persuasive, whereas the ekphrastic image appeals to the reader's own inclinations and associations. Furthermore, the ekphrastic image that Lavater encourages is intentionally more generous and positive than the *Judas nach Holbein*, as Lavater is convinced of the importance of emphasizing the positive aspects identified through physiognomic processes, because it is this identification of positive aspects (or at least potentially positive aspects) is meant to improve the brotherly love that Christians can extend to one another. The tension between these two images is not a flaw of Lavater's work as an imagetext but rather a strength of it, since it not only makes the text more interesting but addresses a core tension in the practice of physiognomy itself: Lavaterian physiognomy claims to work with divinely placed and fundamentally perspicuous natural signs, but these natural signs also require sound personal judgment and scientific pursuit in order to be understood.

When this tension works in the favor of the imagetext argument, it does so by compelling the reader to reject the *Judas nach Holbein* as an ungenerous and oversimplified depiction of a negative but complex figure. By looking at the *Judas nach Holbein* and agreeing that it couldn't possibly depict the great man in Lavater's ekphrastic, the reader engages with the central tension of the text and rejects either the printed image or the ekphrastic one. Regardless of whether the reader is persuaded by Lavater's argument about how Judas really ought to have looked, as long as they acknowledge that the two images are incompatible they have demonstrated for themselves that they believe in physiognomy. This performative persuasion is only possible in

the context of an imagetext, since it relies on the reader making judgements in a logical space which is both visual and verbal.

Natural Signs and Divine Mystery: Lavater's theological imagetext collapses

The tensions between the ekphrastic image and the printed image are what makes Lavater's text persuasive, but Lavater himself breaks that tension at the end of his analysis. Because the ekphrastic image of Judas is defined in opposition to the *Judas nach Holbein*, the two images can never be reconciled, except in the case of the divine miracle discussed at the end of Lavater's discussion. Lavater argues that the ekphrastic Judas he describes and the *Judas nach Holbein* could be the same, if God in his mysterious ways chose to use someone with the features of the *Judas nach Holbein*. Lavater means to thereby resolve the tension between the two images and to defend himself from the objections which he constantly anticipates -- such as might come from those who knew people who were pious and unattractive, for example. However, in resolving this tension he unearths a deeper tension which lies at the foundation of his entire worldview. On the one hand, he claims that natural signs exist and function reliably because the universe is a divine creation and an expression of the divine nature, which does not deceive and which expresses itself clearly to those who want to listen and who aren't deceived by their own sinfulness. On the other hand, he claims that God works in mysterious ways and is capable of anything, including changing the meaning of natural signs and using them in ways which are contrary to what they ought to signify. A *Judas nach Holbein* being an apostle ought to be impossible -- and yet Lavater admits that it is. In this way, Lavater's resolution of the tension

between the ekphrastic image and the actual image reveals that his own understanding of the world is more complex and less clear cut than his theory ought to allow it to be. The natural signs, Lavater claims, are guaranteed by God to be clear and comprehensible -- and yet admits that God himself is not always clear and comprehensible. As a result, the natural sign no longer functions.

The tension between the scientific project, which seeks explicability interminably, and the religious project, which can explain but must give conclusive explanations and leave room for the inexplicable, is brought to the forefront. It's not so simple as to claim that *Judas nach Holbein* being an apostle would be a miracle and therefore a temporary suspension of the laws of nature. The divine power to use and to redeem any person is at the core of Christian doctrine -- it cannot be an exceptional case. Lavater might like to claim that in such cases of redemption the person's facial features would develop to be more attractive, as he describes in other chapters[55], but he has already lost that position when he claimed that the *Judas nach Holbein* could conceivably be an accurate image. If divine intervention makes any combination of features and character possible, and divine intervention in the form of redemption through Christ is a regular occurrence affecting a large portion of Europe at the very least, then the project of physiognomy is impossible. The Christian worldview demands that divine redemption be a regular occurrence, so if divine redemption disrupts the legibility of physiognomy, then physiognomy can never be legible.

The breakdown of Lavater's argument is also particularly interesting because of the dynamics of its image-word interactions. Lavater's imagetext breaks down when it entertains the possibility of an invisible divine influence behind the face of the *Judas nach Holbein*. When

[55] Fragmente v.1 p.74 for example

Lavater entertains this possibility for theological reasons, the tension between printed image and the ekphrastic image collapses. As mentioned previously, Krieger defined ekphrasis as "the illusionary representation of the unrepresentable, even while that representation is allowed to masquerade as a natural sign, as if it could be an adequate substitute for its object."[56] In allowing the *Judas nach Holbein* image to represent not just the physiognomic fallenness of Judas but also his potential nobility and the divine power that could redeem him, Lavater makes the image itself ekphrastic. The image here is not just emblematic -- in Krieger's terms, it is not just a visual representation of the unrepresentable. Instead, it is a representation of the ostensibly verbally representable -- Judas' soul or physiognomic character -- which itself illuminates or reveals something even more mysterious and invisible: a divine redemptive power. When Lavater allows that *Judas nach Holbein* might possibly be a faithful representation of Judas, he makes it a verbal emblem as well as a visual one.

[56] Kreiger, Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign, xv

Chapter 2: The Covers of *Maus*: A Conflict of Identification

Maus is a "comix[57]" work by Art Spiegelman. It was published in two parts, with the first part appearing in 1986 and the second in 1991. *Maus* is a nonfiction work of comix which is divided between a present-day narrative in which the narrator and protagonist, Artie, solicits his father's stories of the holocaust and tries to understand him better and the embedded narrative of Artie's father, Vladek, experiencing and surviving the Holocaust. In the background of both stories is Artie's mother, Anja, whose suicide in the late 1960s casts a long shadow over Artie's attempt to reconcile with his father and understand what his parents went through. *Maus* is remarkably self-referential, with Artie explicitly referencing his project to write a comic version of the stories his father tells him; this is especially true in the second part of the story, created when the first volume of *Maus* had already been published.

Maus has predominantly been viewed in terms of a "transmission", meaning that the work is Art Spiegelman's way of passing on the words and experiences of his father to a future generation, including his own children. Graphic novel scholar and *Maus* specialist Hilary Chute discusses the work in these terms, focusing on *Maus* as a work which gives literary order and

[57] The form of art usually called comics also has a number of other names. In the US, the term "comics" usually refers to newspaper comics or serialized publications by one of the few large comics publishing houses. The terms "graphic novel" and "sequential art" come from the late 70s and 80s, when Will Eisner's efforts to make comics literary and to theorize them were gaining recognition. Art Spiegelman himself tends to oscillate between the term "comix", which emerged out of the alternative comics tradition of the 60s and 70s, and the standard "comics".

form to an inherited historical narrative.[58] Chute's focus on *Maus* as mediated history has been highly productive for scholars and shaped the work's reception in the past decade, which has to a great extent focused on aspects of mediation in *Maus*, especially the issue of translation.[59][60][61] Chute's prominence as a Spiegelman scholar and *Maus* specialist grew even greater in 2011 when *Metamaus*, a book of interviews, drafts, and sketches from Spiegelman which Chute collected and edited, was published. Her transmission-based approach to the work thereby grew even more influential. Framing *Maus* in terms of transmission is a valid and interesting approach, but there's another side of the work which this framing obscures: *Maus* as a negotiation of the relationship between Artie and Vladek. Some scholars, such as James Young, have emphasized the relationship between Artie and Vladek as the core of the work, and have demonstrated that Spiegelman also has reflected upon the work in those terms:

> As becomes clear, then, especially to the author himself, Maus is not about the Holocaust so much as about the survivor's tale itself and the artist-son's recovery of it. In Spiegelman's own words, "Maus is not what happened in the past, but rather what the son understands of the father's story... [It is] an autobiographical history of my relationship with my father, a survivor of the Nazi death camps, cast with cartoon animals." As his father recalled what happened to him at the hands of the Nazis, his son Art recalls what happened to him at the hands of his father

[58] Chute, Hillary. "'The Shadow of a Past Time': History and Graphic Representation in 'Maus.'" *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 52, no. 2, [Duke University Press, Hofstra University], 2006, pp. 199–230. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20479765.

[59] Urdiales-Shaw, Martín. "Between Transmission and Translation: The Rearticulation of Vladek Spiegelman's Languages in Maus." *Translation and Literature*, vol. 24, no. 1, Edinburgh University Press, Mar. 2015, pp. 23–41. *Edinburgh University Press Journals*, https://doi.org/10.3366/tal.2015.0182.

[60] Curran, Beverley. "Maus: A Translational Comics Text." *Translation Review*, vol. 95, no. 1, Routledge, May 2016, pp. 67–77. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, https://doi.org/10.1080/07374836.2016.1174500.

[61] Urdiales-Shaw, Martín. "Voicing the Survivor of Those Unspeakable Sites: Translating Vladek Spiegelman." *Word and Text, A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*, vol. II, no. 02, Universitatea Petrol-Gaze din Ploieşti, 2012, pp. 26–42. *www.ceeol.com*, https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=181748.

> and his father's stories. As his father told his experiences to Art, in all their painful immediacy, Art tells his experiences of the storytelling sessions themselves-in all of their somewhat less painful mediacy.[62]

This chapter will extend the analysis of *Maus* which focuses on the work as a negotiation of a relationship, and will do so by examining the previously overlooked chapter and book covers with an imagetext approach.

More specifically, I'll be examining the covers of two chapters of *Maus* and the cover of its most recent edition. I'll show how an imagetext approach can use these covers, which previously have received very little scholarly attention, to reveal aspects of *Maus* which otherwise would be difficult to notice and articulate. In particular, the imagetext approach shows how Artie's engagement with his father is not just an attempt to understand and identify with him, but also *not* to identify with him; Spiegelman uses visual means, some of which are very subtle, to represent this conflict within Artie and complicate the relationship between Artie and his father.

***Maus* and Genre**

Maus is creative nonfiction, having emerged from interviews and encounters between Art Spiegelman and his father. The non-fictional aspect of the story is complicated by the fact that *Maus* figures all of its characters as animals, with Jews being represented by the titular mice. Although that particular aspect is the most obvious departure from a realistic depiction of events,

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[62] Young, James E. "The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman's 'Maus' and the Afterimages of History." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 3, The University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 666–99. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1344086.
Art Spiegelman quoted from "Comix: An Idiosyncratic Historical and Aesthetic Overview," *Print* 42 (Nov.-Dec 1988): 196

I don’t consider it to be problematic from an imagetext point of view. The use of animals to represent the characters is a form of visual rhetoric which would not be shocking in written text; a written text which describes a person as a pig or a dog or catlike would not be considered fictional on those grounds. Animal comparisons are common, with phrases like “catlike reflexes” having become cliches; similarly, calling someone a pig can have a number of meanings and almost never implies that the person is literally a pig. In a similar way, *Maus* actually doesn’t depict animal characters but rather characters figured as animals. Far from using animal figuration to depict different ethnic groups as meaningfully distinct, the use of animal figuration shows how the German is not meaningfully different from the Pole or the Jew in a physical way. If *Maus* truly depicted animal characters, then the German cats would have night vision and the Polish pigs would have a strong sense of smell and so forth. Nothing of the kind applies; the reader understands that the animal figuration is a visual metaphor because its logic doesn’t extend beyond the physical appearance of the characters.

Spiegelman also had limited resources at his disposal in drawing and researching *Maus*, with his most important source being the imperfect memory of his own survivor father. This results in discrepancies which *Maus* itself addresses, such as the issue of whether there was a band in Auschwitz or not -- Vladek doesn’t remember anything of the kind being in Auschwitz, and yet historical research confirms that there was indeed a band there. Spiegelman draws a band, but partially conceals it with marching prisoners. It’s a moment of tension between memory and historical evidence which *Maus* develops itself, but it gestures towards the fact that *Maus* itself is the product of two narrators, each with their own individual views and forms of knowledge about the events they narrate.

The difficulty of categorizing *Maus* as non-fiction (or fiction) is not solely because the work is so heavily based on the imperfect memory of Vladek, Spiegelman's father, but also because the artistic process of making *Maus* into a literary work involved some departures from exact imitation of the information which Spiegelman had access to. Furthermore, the story can't be considered an accurate portrayal of scenes which actually occurred, words which were actually said, or images that represent actual viewpoints. In some cases, Spiegelman has characters say things that the individuals represented would never actually say, for the purpose of getting at what sort of people they are. This is especially true of his depiction of Vladek, who he admits in *Metamaus* was not the kind of person who expressed his own feelings and attitudes with the directness of the Vladek character. Artie himself is also affected by this predilection for directness in *Maus*. For that reason, I will make a distinction between "Artie", as a character in the work, and Art Spiegelman, the author of that work.

Art Spiegelman also appears as a character in the work, but in a form which rhetorical narratologist James Phelan[63] refers to as "mask narration": Spiegelman expresses himself in terms which seem to carry authorial weight and be his own thoughts and attitudes, but does so wearing the "mask" of a character -- in this case, an older version of himself. Interestingly, when this takes place in *Maus*, we see Art Spiegelman as a human wearing a *Maus* mask -- the mask of Artie. This occurs primarily in the "Time Flies" chapter, where Spiegelman reflects on the impact of the publication of the first volume of *Maus* on his own life and artistic process.

Artie, on the other hand, is not the narrator but a younger, fictionalized version of Art Spiegelman. This distinction becomes important when *Maus*' themes become self-critical; the "Artie" in the story is often represented negatively, and the work doesn't limit itself to

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[63] Phelan, James. "Reliable, Unreliable, and Deficient Narration: A Rhetorical Account." *Narrative Culture*, vol. 4, no. 1, Wayne State University Press, 2017, pp. 89–103. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.13110/narrcult.4.1.0089.

representing that character's way of thinking, except as a point-of-view character. Artie's open antipathy towards his father seems to be a sort of heightened expression of Art Spiegelman's own feelings towards his father, some of which he would not (or could not) express in the way he does in *Maus.* The work as a whole is clearly critical of this younger version of Spiegelman, whose complicated feelings towards his father lead to outbursts and misunderstandings.

Despite all these caveats, *Maus* cannot be considered fictional either; the historical events represented do correspond to events which Vladek remembered, even if the form that they take in a literary work has transformed them into "scenes" rather than reports of events. *Maus* is also largely a story about a relationship between father and son and of the actual dynamic between the two of them. Spiegelman has insisted that the work is not fictional, and this claim makes sense on the grounds that *Maus* is the product of his conversations with his father and is faithful to the content of those conversations, as well as his historical research. The terms "fictional" and "non-fictional", therefore, turn out to be too broad to apply appropriately to a work like *Maus*. Either term would be misleading in its own way; the term "creative nonfiction"[64] is applicable, but only the vagueness of that term makes it an acceptable description of *Maus*'s mix of dramatization, research, and memory. *Maus* can be thought of as a kind of first and second-hand memoir which stands between fiction and non-fiction, asserting in a paraphrase of Goya: "He saw it and I saw him."

The application of an imagetext approach to a work of comics introduces a new complication. Any approach to comics must take image-word relations into account, so it may

[64] One of the more recent terms for *Maus* is "graphic memoir"; Since *Maus* popularized the graphic novel form in academic and literary circles, similar works that mix autobiographical content with literary form have made up the majority of the canon for graphic novels. Examples include Alison Bechdel's *Sweet Home* and Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, both of which are widely taught along with *Maus* as the main texts in the graphic novel format.

appear that an imagetext approach has nothing to contribute to a form of media which takes a significant part of imagetext's intervention as a core assumption. However, imagetext goes further than its emphasis on image-word relations. In an interview about the concept of imagetext, W.J.T. Mitchell characterized his concept in this way: "The concept of the imagetext is a way of trying to capture the sense that even the "atomic unit" of semiotics - the sign - is a heterogeneous structure of representation, a mixed medium. What this exercise shows, I think, is that the very idea of a single master key to semiosis, aesthetics, or representation, an indivisible unit of all meaningful symbolization, is an illusion projected by the hope for a master theory. Meaning is relational all the way down, and the imagetext is just one way of making that fact visible"[65]. Mitchell's emphasis on the internal heterogeneity of the sign (and of the imagetext itself) can be used to examine the images and words of comics more carefully; in particular, it breaks down the assumed distinction between the two, which opens up the possibility of considering image-word relations that would have previously been overlooked.

It isn't the case that the comic book format assumes this sort of breakdown in the barrier between image and text; on the contrary, it makes that barrier concrete and reinforces it visually by enclosing and separating visual and verbal elements. The one exception to this is sound effects, which often are as visual and as compositionally important as other visual elements, while remaining verbal -- if only in an onomatopoeic way. What's crucial in an imagetext approach is that it recognizes that both image and text are internally heterogeneous and thus un-identical to themselves; this allows the imagetext to function not as a pairing of image *with* text but as a more complex form which relates to itself in ways which traditional approaches don't notice. Finding such relations is the task of an imagetext reading. In this instance, the covers of

[65] Wiesenthal, Christine, and Brad Bucknell. *Essays into the Imagetext: An Interview with W. J. T. Mitchell*. p. 17.

Maus are an example of an overlooked nexus of meaning in the text, having been ignored by traditional approaches because they fall outside of the standard flow of the comic book format.

Types of word-image relations

Given that image-word relations are the stuff which imagetext is made of, an interpretation of an imagetext needs to begin by examining these image-word relations, determining which are most important and what those image-word relations convey about the imagetext. As seen in the discussion of Lavater's *Judas nach Holbein*, the important and interesting image-word relations are not always the directly spatial ones; sometimes the most relevant image-word relations are stretched across pages. Some images relate to a few words in a paragraph, while others relate meaningfully to an entire chapter or an entire work. The chapter covers in *Maus* fall into the latter category. *Maus*, as a comic, is full of image-word relations that are immediately obvious and have been identified by many readers and scholars in the past. New perspectives are therefore most likely to come from non-obvious image-word relations, such as might not be noticed by those who are reading without explicit attention to image-word relations as the fundamental elements of an imagetext.

The issue of determining which image-word relations might be relevant or useful is complex, and the relevant factors vary from imagetext to imagetext. Typically, some image-word relations make themselves obvious to the reader; this is especially true of comics or illustrated works, in which image and word connect through narrative cues. In other works, the relevant image-word relations are less clear or are meant to frustrate the typical ways of reading images and words together. Any work which includes images necessarily creates a vast number of image-word relations, only some of which will be relevant or interesting; when the image-word

relations present themselves according to convention, by arranging relevant words and images near one another and making them mirror one another in content, they fall easily into the category of illustration.

Illustration is the most familiar kind of image-word relation, and requires little explanation. A correspondence in content of a word and image is easily identifiable and highly popular; it is the form of image-word relation which is most often condemned as interfering with the reader's imagination by supplying what that faculty is allegedly meant to generate itself. In the case of comic works, illustrations take the place of a large amount of description, which would otherwise likely specify the location and action of the scene.

When words and images work against or subvert each other, they become what Sonya Petersson calls "counteractive illustrations".[66] In the case of counteractive illustrations, the image-word relations are clear, but are antagonistic. The image of the Auschwitz orchestra on page 214, for example, shows a mismatch between the image and narration of life in Auschwitz; Vladek has no memory of an orchestra and denies that there was one, whereas the reader sees the orchestra in the panel to the left. A counteractive illustration like this one can complicate the reading process and express tensions between the visual and verbal forms of expression. Just below the panel which shows the orchestra, there's another in which the orchestra is concealed behind a line of prisoners marching. Jeanne Ewert identifies this passage as exemplifying the importance of an approach to *Maus* that examines both image and word, although her visual narrative approach is more focused on local harmony/disharmony between word and image than imagetext's approach.[67]

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[66] Petersson, Sonya. "The Counteractive Illustration and Its Metalanguage." *Word & Image*, vol. 34, no. 4, Routledge, Oct. 2018, pp. 349–62. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, doi:10.1080/02666286.2018.1495382.
[67] Ewert, Jeanne C. "Reading Visual Narrative: Art Spiegelman's 'Maus.'" *Narrative*, vol. 8, no. 1, Ohio State University Press, 2000, pp. 87–103. *JSTOR*, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20107202.

The Complete Maus, 214 (detail)

When word-image relations are made unclear, either by defying spatial conventions in some way or by defying the expected correspondence of content between words and images, they move away from the concept of illustration itself; such defiance of the illustrative mode of reading image and text complicates the reader's interpretive process by calling attention to the possibilities of imagetext and the vast number of possible image-word relations. An approach in which the image and word don't seem to speak to one another can be called counter-illustrative. A counter-illustrative relation is the opposite of the most easily identifiable illustrative case, in

which image makes word visible, strengthening and concretizing it; the counter-illustration has image and word isolated from one another, without a clear harmonious or disharmonious interaction. The use of images in W.G. Sebald's works, for example, is often considered counter-illustrative because of the non-obvious connection between image and word.

Similar to the counter-illustrative relation is another image-word relation most recently associated with Sebald: the grangerized relation. Grangerization is the addition of "extra illustrations" to books which were not originally illustrated; Sebald's use of images has been compared to a kind of self-grangerization.[68] The grangerized relation generally requires that the work is modified after its original publication, with extra illustrations added by a later editor. The seeming lack of unified intent between image and word in some of Sebald's image uses results in a pseudo-grangerized work, in which image and word can appear to flow separately or constitute parallel narratives in a single work.

Another form of image-word relation is the misdirecting or subversive relation. This refers to cases in which the juxtaposition of word and image misdirects or leads to misinterpretation of one of those elements. An example would be the *Sheik* image on page 15 in *Maus*, which is discussed more thoroughly later in chapter 2. The use of the *Sheik* label on a poster of *Son of the Sheik* causes that poster to appear to be a different cultural reference than it actually is. I also argue that the cover images of the *Maus* books are misdirective in relation to the narrative of the book as a whole, since they highlight elements which aren't emphasized in the story or are even entirely absent.

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[68] See Bere, Carol. "The Book of Memory: W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants* and Austerlitz." *Literary Review*, vol. 46, no. 1, Fairleigh Dickinson University, 2002, pp. 184–92. *ProQuest*, https://www.proquest.com/docview/222105492/abstract/5F3B6DDE3E0E4C0EPQ/1.

Perhaps the most important image-word relation in the context of covers is the meta-image relation, in which one image is meant to represent a story as a whole. This is a function which a cover, poster, or other advertisement for a narrative is often meant to fulfill, and which cannot generally be fulfilled by the title of that narrative.[69] This is different from covers which function as a visual synecdoche; the visual synecdoche cover takes one single moment and makes it represent the entirety of the narrative, whereas the meta-image cover uses visual language to show something which doesn't occur in the narrative but represents the narrative itself.

However, a vast number of possible image-word relations is present even in texts which don't strictly defy illustrativeness. Indirect possible relations, including many relevant and interesting ones, are often overlooked when the illustrative mode of reading image and text offers easy and obvious correspondences in meaning.

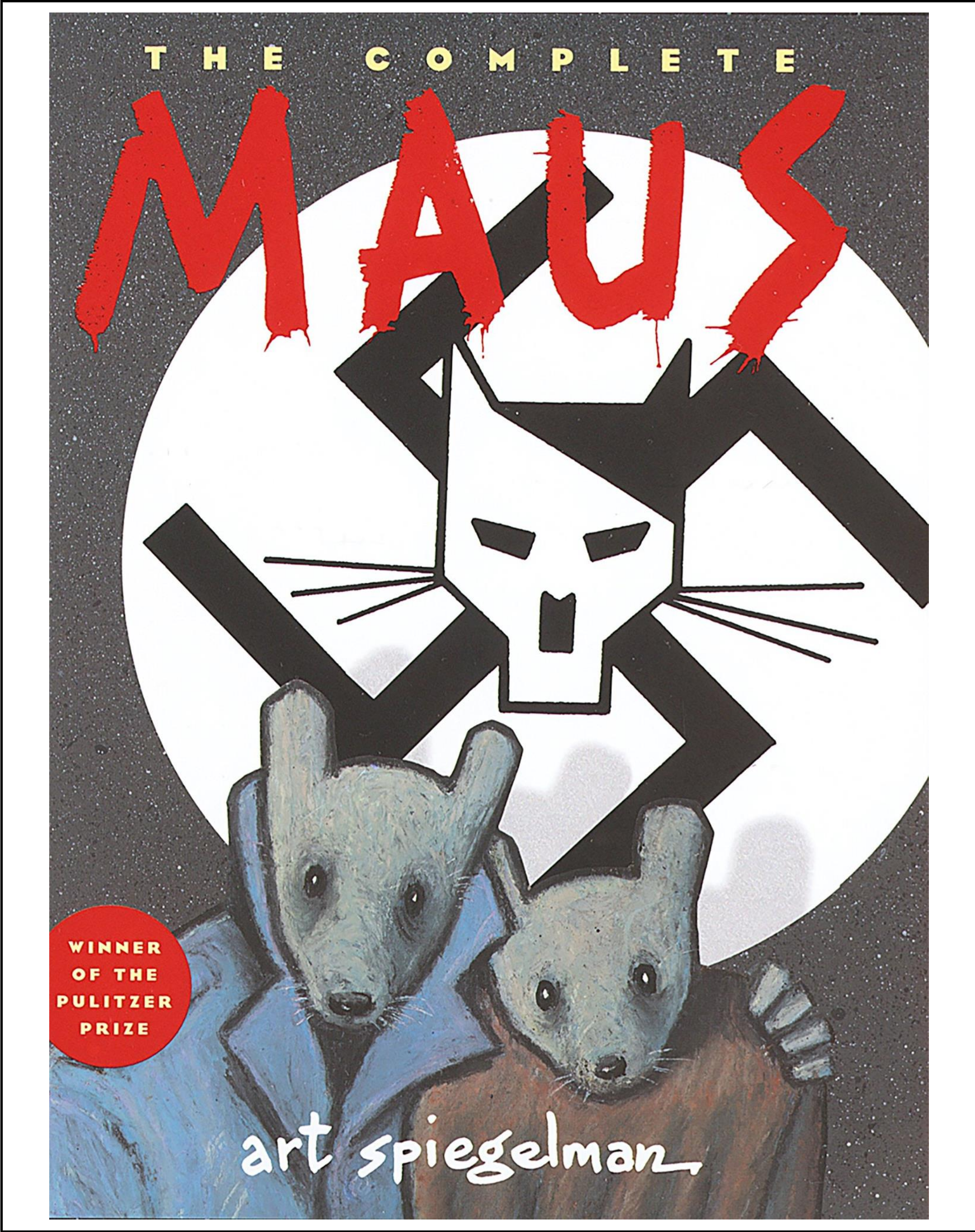
All of this is not to say that the illustrative mode of reading is worthless or needs to be avoided -- it seems inevitable that the most obvious correspondences between image and word will always be present and often meaningful to readers -- but rather that a deeper reading of imagetexts will take what is useful in the illustrative mode and set aside what is not. Any imagetext will involve a limitless number of possibly relevant image-word relations, and any reading of that imagetext will choose some of them and leave others aside.

In most cases, image-word relations within comics can be considered in two basic categories: intrapanel relations and interpanel relations. The panel is traditionally the fundamental structural unit in comics, delineating the points of focus in a comic. In most comics,

[69] One unusual exception would be Japanese popular fiction, which in the past 15 years has trended towards extremely long titles which summarize the premise and sometimes the entire narrative of the book.

including *Maus*, panels generally delineate moments in time[70], creating a sequence of moments to be read in a particular order. Intrapanel relations would refer to relationships between words and images that occupy the same panel, whereas interpanel relations would deal with relations across panels.

[70] The issue of time in what is often called "sequential art" is complex. When Will Eisner first pushed towards producing graphic novels that would be taken seriously as art, he began using the term to distance himself from terms like "comics" which were highly stigmatized. It's true that comics are broadly sequential, using images to depict successive moments in time and flowing from one to the next. However, comics are not merely temporal from panel to panel but also within panels; comics have a variety of strategies for communicating motion within a panel, including drawing elements multiple times to show their progress through a space and using speed lines to emphasize a line of action. In contrast with Lessing's idea of image as dealing with spatial but not temporal subject matter, many images in comics are actually impossible to identify as singular moments.


THE COMPLETE
MAUS
WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE
art spiegelman

The *Maus* cover: image-word networks and abstraction

Understanding any work requires that the subject experience a number of facets of that work in successive moments, and each moment builds up a context through which the reader understands the next moment. This is true when one views a painting, first from a distance and then more closely, examining one particular aspect or another, and allowing one's eye to be guided by the lines of the painting. It is also true when reading a verbal text and allowing concatenations of words to build into meaningful expressions. However, a book is not just a verbal text but also a physical object, and so the physical form of that object plays a role in building up the context in which the meaning of the work is understood; it is for this reason that *Maus*'s cover cannot be ignored when discussing *Maus* as an imagetext. The reader will often glance at the cover, if only to identify the book. This results in the cover of the book being seen more frequently than almost any other part[71], and can result in any images and words it bears becoming linked with whatever part of the book is subsequently read.

The cover of a book also has a unique position as an imagetext; it is not often considered as part of a book's content, and yet it is undeniably part of the way in which the book is interpreted. It embeds itself in the reader's memory as their first encounter with it, and thereby becomes an important part of the background which steers the reader's hermeneutic process. Just as the reader is influenced by recognizing the name of a book's author and generates certain

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[71] This network of image-word relations is simply a consequence of the physical process of picking up and reading a book, which can be disrupted or bypassed in the case of a digital book that can immediately return the reader to the page they were reading without flipping through pages or even viewing the cover. Because digital books are so dramatically different in how one navigates and views them (especially significant is their tendency to show only one page at a time rather than the two-page spread of an open book), they have to be considered as entirely separate imagetexts from their printed counterparts. *Maus*'s digital incarnations are not the focus of this chapter, but there is certainly much that could be said about them and the predominantly digital companion piece, *Metamaus*. Ironically, *Metamaus*' initially futuristic use of a DVD-R has made it very difficult to access on modern computers, which are no longer manufactured with DVD drives.

expectations by interpreting its title, the cover image also leads the reader to certain expectations. *Maus* is an example of this, and one which becomes interesting because of its tendency to mislead the reader regarding its content.

The cover of *Maus* is the reader's introduction to the work's most well-known aspect: its use of animal cartoons to depict its characters. In each of the covers of *Maus*[72], one can see the swastika with "cat Hitler" superimposed upon it, as well as some mouse figures. There are therefore three animal figures on the cover: Vladek, Anja, and Hitler. In addition to being an introduction to the work, the cover of *Maus* is also a sort of battleground; a site where one of the central conflicts of the work manifests itself in a variety of ways. The cover of *Maus* shows the tension between Artie's desire to identify with his father and his desire *not* to identify with him, which plays out on multiple levels in the imagetext. The cover of *Maus* both demonstrates and conceals this conflict in the work's central relationship, complicating the reader's understanding of that dynamic even before they read the first page.

The use of animal figures -- and specifically highly stylized cartoon animal figures -- is introduced on the cover, typically providing the reader's first exposure to the cartooning style which Spiegelman employs and the kind of abstraction which he utilizes to render his metaphor. Cartooning styles are characterized by use of simpler forms to construct figures and by prominent, economical outlines of form. Spiegelman's is no exception; the mouse figures are mainly defined by strong black outlines. The figures are also painted in color and are given a

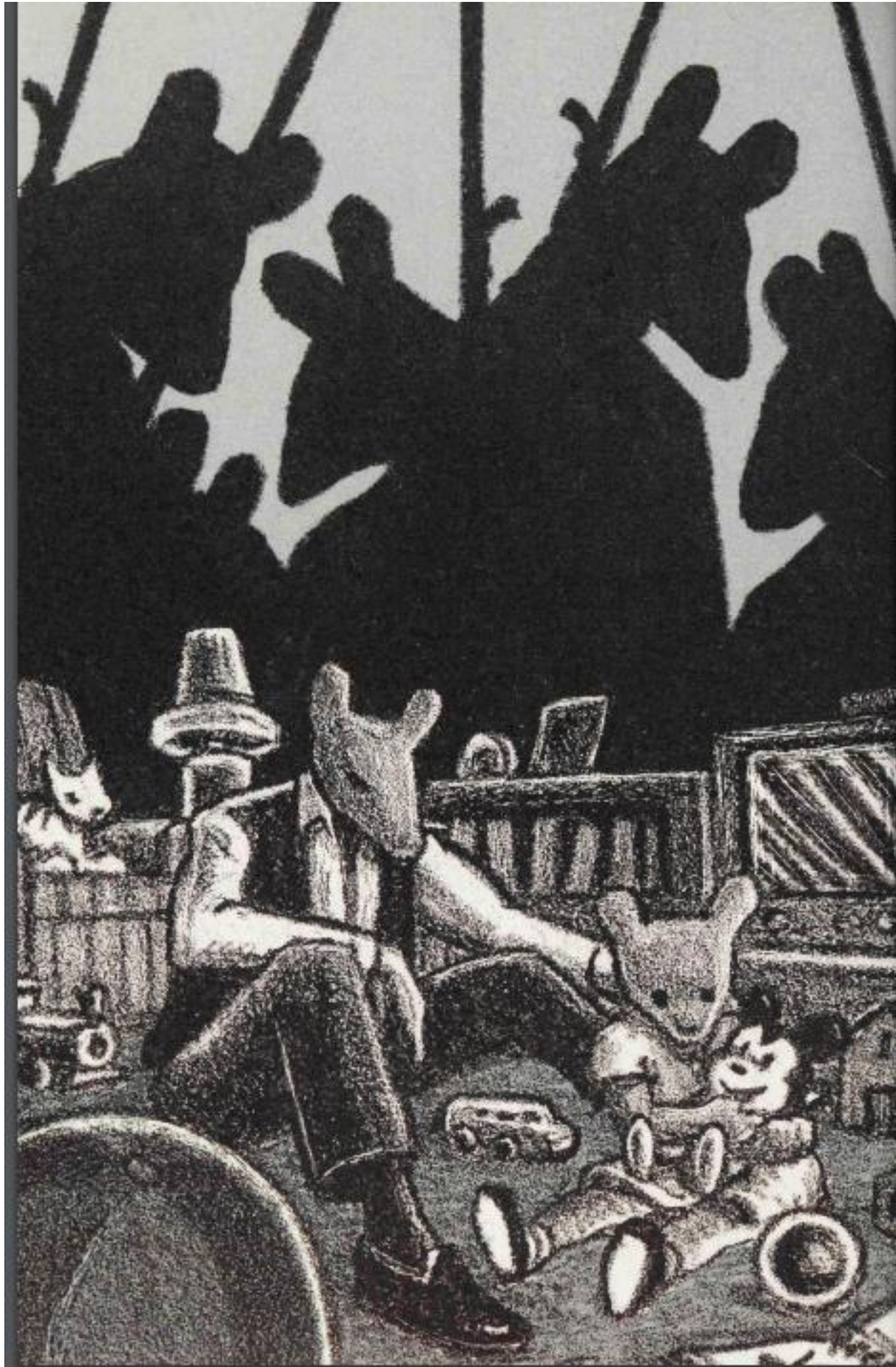
[72] *Maus* has been released in three main forms. The first volume of *Maus* collected the first six chapters and was published in 1986. That volume features Vladek and Anja in front of a wall, with the swastika and "cat Hitler" hovering above. The second volume, published in 1991 and containing the remaining five chapters of the story, features a group of Maus figures in concentration camp uniforms, with the "cat Hitler" once again hovering above. There appear to be two versions of the *Complete Maus* cover at the moment. The first is very similar to the cover of *Maus I*, except the mouse figures are magnified into a close-up of the two protagonists' heads, the figures are redrawn in a nearly identical pose, and some of the colors are changed. The second version of *Complete Maus* zooms even closer into the faces of the protagonists, which once more are redrawn and recolored in nearly identical fashion. The cover I'll be working with is the initial *Complete Maus* release.

degree of three-dimensionality by the presence of their shadows on the wall behind them. The cover is clearly a mixed-media work; the edges around the figures are not the edges of lines but rather appear to be cuts. The mouse figures appear to have been cut out of a piece of paper and placed against the wall image. Behind them is the cat Hitler symbol, hovering in front of a swastika. The swastika and Hitler face are drawn in a handful of very thick black lines.

The bizarreness of the cat Hitler symbol, with the swastika behind it, serves as one of *Maus*'s strongest visual motifs, appearing on each of the various covers of *Maus* and repeated once more on the side of the book, so that it will be visible even when the book is shelved. The prominence of this symbol is strange in light of the fact that it doesn't actually appear in the book itself; instead, it simply serves as an emblem for the evil of Nazism which the protagonists must survive -- although Hitler doesn't actually serve as an emblem of that sort in the work itself. Instead, it's a kind of visual shorthand which communicates that the book will be about Nazism and its victims, symbolized by the cat and mouse dynamic of predator and prey. The cat and mouse dynamic has a certain resemblance to what occurs in the narrative itself, as Nazi forces and their collaborators hunted Jews and other targeted groups. However, the form of Nazi oppression is distinctly unlike the dynamic of an animal and its prey -- its un-animal character is part of the horror which *Maus* presents; it is methodical, slow, and uneven. For example, Vladek finds himself able to get better treatment than most in the camps, whereas Anja's frail body leads her to be targeted by capos. To the extent that *Maus*'s animal metaphor leads one to expect a sort of chase or sudden predation, it is a metaphor which stands in ironic contrast to the events which the story actually depicts.

One of the consequences of Spiegelman's highly simplified style is that characters tend to look alike. A single *Maus* figure can easily denote multiple characters -- even young Vladek and

Artie might be confused for one another, in a sufficiently ambiguous panel. In the comic itself, this issue is normally solved via framing, dialogue, and clothing, but in certain cases there is still ambiguity, especially in the scenes in Auschwitz, where the characters are all dressed the same. In the context of the cover, this similarity is mostly important because of how strongly the two main characters resemble one another; the repetition of the simplified mouse face on the cover is just the beginning of a pattern which follows through the entire book.



Spiegelman, his daughter, and Mickey Mouse

The mouse faces themselves require some attention. For starters, they don't resemble the heads of actual mice -- that much is to be expected, given Spiegelman's cartoon style. Like other cartoon mouse figures like Mickey Mouse or Jerry, they have distinctive silhouettes; the size and shape of their ears, and especially the way their ears stick out vertically from their heads, are as unrealistic as they are memorable. Yet unlike other mouse cartoon characters, their heads are oblong and not spherical. Characters like Mickey Mouse are notoriously smiley, whereas in *Maus*, the mouse mouths are de-emphasized almost to the point of invisibility. The *Maus* heads look most like the heads of stuffed animals; they have a simplicity and continuity of form which looks plush, and this is especially true of their colored depictions on the cover. The softness of the shading, the button-like eyes and nose, and the featureless ears are all reminiscent of simple stuffed animals. Many mouse ears narrow at the base, a feature which is exaggerated in other cartoon depictions of mice, but the *Maus* figures do not; having sewn a very similar stuffed animal head before, I can't help but recall how much easier it was to simply form the ears and head in a single unit, resulting in puffy ears that stand straight up. Spiegelman himself makes reference to the stuffed animal resemblance in *Metamaus* on page 72; he depicts himself and his daughter Nadja, with Nadja holding a Mickey Mouse stuffed animal. The stuffed animal image does communicate a narrative through which Spiegelman positions himself as a man between a generation of trauma and a more peaceful generation, as Michael Rothberg discusses.[73] It is also, however, a juxtaposition of three kinds of representation -- the shadowy and foreboding

[73] Rothberg, Michael, and Art Spiegelman. "'We Were Talking Jewish': Art Spiegelman's 'Maus' as 'Holocaust' Production." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1994, p. 661. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1208703.

representation of the trauma of the previous generation, the cartoony stuffed animal forms of the Spiegelman and his daughter, and the odd repetition of that form in the Mickey Mouse doll.[74]

The Mickey Mouse comparison is deepened by the fact that Art Spiegelman was influenced by Carl Barks' Donald Duck comics, which he praised for their psychological truthfulness,[75] even writing an introduction to a collection of Barks' early work. Barks' work might be seen as a precursor to *Maus*' representational style; the characters are ducks, but they don't fly and they act like humans. Spiegelman's audience was likely familiar with the Barks comics, and the use of this kind of animal metaphorization would have been familiar to them. Barks and Spiegelman's approach stands in contrast to that of comic strips like Walt Kelly's *Pogo*, which also told serialized stories with anthropomorphized animal characters but did so in a more literal way, incorporating some animal aspects into the characters. In some ways, Spiegelman's use of animal metaphors is a kind of provocation found in lots of comix of that time: the use of innocent or childlike symbols or forms of representation for adult or mature subject matter. Even mainstream comics were developing in the same direction during the 80s, under the influence of author/artists like Frank Miller.

The animal figuration also plays with the physiognomic element of Nazi antisemitism; the Jewish nose, discussed by Sander Gilman in *The Jew's Body* as one of the features which physiognomists paid the most attention to[76], is transformed here into a mouse's snout. One could read this move as a way of playing with visual stereotyping; the marker of racial difference is transformed into a soft, stuffed animal-like feature. Whereas antisemitic propaganda depicts Jews as a race with one, exaggerated and stereotypical face – a face in which the "Jewish nose"

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[74] Here, as in many parts of *Maus*, Spiegelman provokes comparison between his own forms of narrative and those of Hollywood, with Mickey Mouse as its representative.
[75] *The Unexpurgated Carl Barks,* 3
[76] Gilman, 169-194

plays a prominent part – *Maus* also embraces this kind of uniformity of representation with regard to race. The characters all look the same or very similar, based upon which race they represent. This uniformity is by no means a necessary consequence of animal figuration, as many comics use animal figuration but give each character a very different face – Barks is an example here. Instead, the uniformity communicates the way that each character has to inhabit the same crude, racialized system; although Vladek manages to use his wits to get a better position than others as a prisoner in Auschwitz, he appears to the reader – and to the Germans and Poles running the camp – as almost physically indistinguishable from the rest of the mass of Jewish prisoners. The animal figuration is thereby also a marker of an essentialized concept of race, held both by the Nazis and by Vladek himself, as we see by his attitude towards an African-American hitchhiker who appears in the *Maus II.*

This form of cartoon representation, in which all of the characters are depicted as talking animals, rendered with the softness of childhood toys, and given somewhat infantilized features (particularly outsized heads and eyes), all of this gives the impression that the work is inviting; it doesn't intimidate with images of brutality or emaciation, and it doesn't point to the depth of the crisis which Nazism caused for Jews and Europeans as a whole. Instead, the invocation of childish symbols and forms of representation functions to represent the story as accessible and instantly sympathetic. It is not by accident that *Maus* has become one of the best-known stories about the Holocaust in America. *Maus*'s cover represents the story as simple, unintimidating, and engaging in a way which other books about the topic cannot or will not.

Neither does this cartooning choice stop being effective when the story itself begins; the characters are easier to sympathize with because of their anthropomorphized animal heads and the simplicity with which they are rendered. Vladek, in particular, is easier to accept as a grumpy

old mouse than as a flawed and wounded old man. By rendering his characters in this way, Spiegelman makes it easier for the reader to connect with Vladek and identify with his struggle in a way which would be more difficult if he were rendered as a human being. The choice is Spiegelman's, but it's also Artie's; it's a way for readers to connect to the characters, but it's also a way for Artie to take some of the rough edges off his father -- or at least make those rough edges more appealing. Rendering himself and all the other characters in this way is a kind of auto-infantilization: a return to childhood which may well have facilitated Artie's attempt to navigate and renegotiate the father-son relationship.

Three examples of the spotlight trope in comic covers[77]

The overall composition of the cover evokes a common trope of American comic covers: the fugitive against a wall, illuminated by a searchlight. Although the white circle hovering above the two mouse figures doesn't perfectly resemble a searchlight, which is typically coded

[77] Covers of *Batman* issue 9, Feb 1942, *The Amazing Spider-Man* issue 401, May 1995, *The Complete Maus*

as yellow in comics, it is still the brightest element in the image; we also know from the shadows on the wall that the light source is coming from in front of the characters at nearly their height. In other words, it's a directed light source coming from in front of them, likely a searchlight or the flashlight of someone identifying them. The biggest difference in the composition of the *Maus* cover is that the "searchlight" seems to hover above the figures, rather than surrounding them. By placing the cat Hitler symbol above the figures, Spiegelman visually reinforces the power of that symbol over the characters beneath it; it is a looming force which they must overcome in their stories. This kind of David and Goliath visual metaphor appears in all sorts of images which are intended to signify entire narratives, such as posters, book covers, and propaganda pieces. It is present in the *Sheik* cover, as well as the *Son of the Sheik* image on page 15; visually, elevation is a shorthand representation for power in a great majority of cases.

The appearance of cat Hitler on the cover suggests a drama -- or even a pastiche in the vein of *Inglourious Basterds* -- which is directly to do with Hitler's actions, his personality or place as a symbol of Nazism, or with the action of WWII, in which Hitler often serves as the personification of an enemy in a just war. Hitler does not actually appear in *Maus* at all, outside of the covers, and his role is minimal in the story. He does not represent or personify the evil of Nazism, as he does in so many other works. The representatives of Nazism are interchangeable German cat figures, and occasionally the Polish pig figures whom they recruit. The focus of *Maus* as a whole is not on WWII as a war, but rather as an unseen phenomenon which leads to oppression, discrimination, and the death camps. Vladek briefly fights to defend Poland against the invading Nazis, but Vladek's participation in war is little more than an experience of survival -- he kills one German soldier, is captured, and survives as a prisoner of war until he is released.

In short, *Maus* is not a story about war being waged. To a certain degree, it is about surviving war and recollecting that survival, but even more so it's about the relationship between Vladek and his son, Artie, and how Spiegelman transforms his relationship with his father and their difficulty understanding each other into a work of literature.

The exclusion of Artie from all the covers of *Maus* is also noteworthy, since the book is so much about Artie's life and relationships. Of course, Artie is not entirely absent -- the words "Art Spiegelman" at the bottom of the cover might attest to his presence -- yet Artie and Art Spiegelman are not the same. This emphasis on the narrative which takes place during the Holocaust might lead a reader to expect the discussion between Artie and Vladek to be nothing but a frame story, which is far from the case in *Maus*. Whereas Vladek, Anja, and even Hitler receive visual representation, Art Spiegelman has merely a signature and Artie has no representation. This distances the character of Artie from his parents; despite being one of the primary characters, the cover places him in no relation whatsoever to the other characters. This could also be seen as a sort of authorial self-suppression and a declaration that the work is not a memoir and isn't meant to be "about" Artie, and yet such a self-suppression would seem hollow given that Artie's role as a main character is clear from the moment the book begins. By showing Vladek and Anja and excluding Artie, the cover creates a gulf between Artie and his parents -- a gulf which the reader will see Artie negotiate as the work goes on.

The cover's emphasis on the Holocaust narrative, at the expense of the modern-day narrative, marginalizes the relationship between Artie and Vladek which is otherwise the focus of the book. Even the Holocaust narrative itself, when it takes over for chapters at a time, includes interjections from Artie and statements from Vladek directed towards Artie; the Holocaust narrative is not an alternative to the narrative about Artie and Vladek trying to

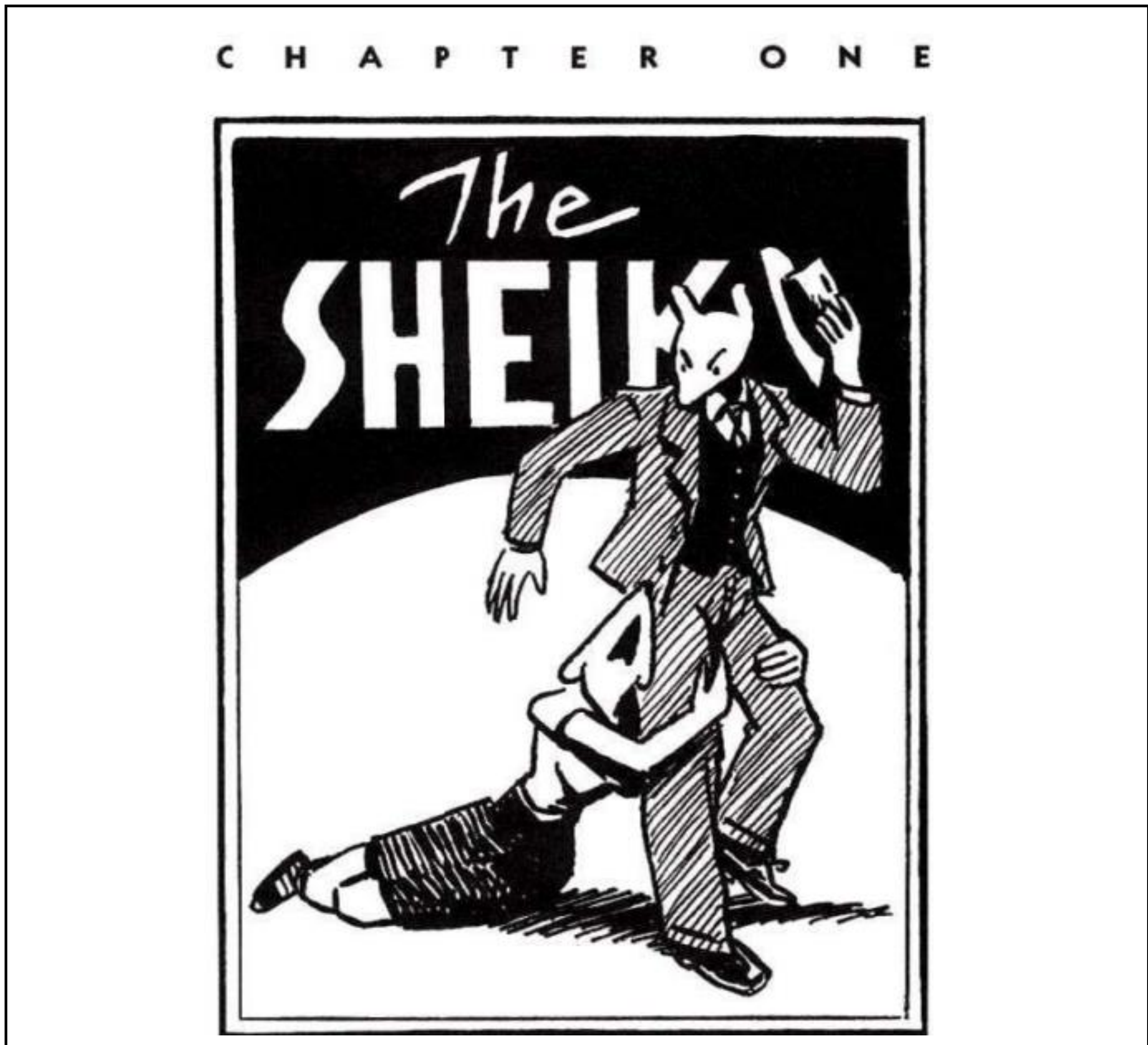
navigate their relationship -- it is itself part of that relationship narrative. And yet the covers of the book present the narrative in a decontextualized form, making it appear to stand on its own.

Chapter Covers

Some of the chapter covers in *Maus* represent a moment which actually takes place in the story, but all of them transform or heighten their subject matter, sometimes to the extent that they can no longer be seen as identifying a specific moment in the narrative. In other words, a *Maus* cover can be a visual synecdoche, in which the isolated moment of story is abstracted from its context, reimagined, and made to represent the entire chapter; alternatively, a *Maus* cover can depict something other than a moment in the chapter's narrative, which functions as a non-diegetic visual metaphor for the chapter's contents. Each *Maus* cover falls somewhere on this spectrum, with the first and last chapters of *Maus I* covering the extremes: the first cover, "the Sheik", reproduces a panel in the chapter, whereas the last cover, "Mouse Trap", fully metaphorizes its subject matter in a very literal way by staging the main characters in a giant mouse trap.

A chapter cover is also a liminal space; much like the images in Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, the chapter covers are set apart, always facing a blank opposite page and forming a dividing line between one chapter and the next. Since *Maus* was a serialized work before it was published in book form, the division between chapters is not just spatial but also temporal; each chapter is the product of a different time in the author's life. The impact of the release and reception of previous chapters even becomes the subject matter in chapters like *Time Flies.*

Chapter 1 Cover: the Sheik



The "Sheik" image depicts Vladek striding forward, annoyed by his former lover Lucia gripping his legs and weeping. The pose is very similar to a panel that appears later in the

chapter, once again depicting Lucia gripping Vladek's legs to prevent him from leaving her. The images themselves are quite different, of course. In the chapter, Vladek looks down in pity at Lucia, whereas the cover shows only annoyance or disdain in his expression. The cover page shows Lucia in a different outfit -- the outfit in which she is shown most often in the chapter, likely to make the image more readable. There is dialogue in the chapter image, which covers up part of it, and the panel is L-shaped in the chapter image, while the cover is square.

The most straightforward imagetext approach to the "Sheik" image would be to note the interactions between word and image that occur within the image itself; although these interactions are not the most significant and are more obvious, I'll briefly discuss them since they demonstrate one of the ways in which *Maus* lends itself to an imagetext approach.

Like the other covers which I discuss, the "Sheik" cover speaks to one of the core conflicts in the work: Artie's desire to identify with and also to resist identifying with his father. In this instance, this conflict plays out in a portrayal of Vladek's relationships with women, which Artie must understand but doesn't want to sympathize with.

The legacy of *The Sheik*

The reference in the cover to the Hollywood film, *The Sheik*, is primarily connected to Vladek's boast that he looked like Rudolph Valentino, a boast which is partially justified in *Maus II* when the reader sees the picture of Vladek after Auschwitz. However, there are also other possible valences for the reference which ought to be explored. *The Sheik* was the film which launched Valentino's career in 1921, by putting the actor in the role of a sexualized and romanticized stereotype of the oriental tyrant. Based on a series of "desert romances" by Edith M. Hull, *The Sheik* is the story of a sheik who becomes fascinated with a British woman and

kidnaps her, eventually earning her love through various heroic acts and by keeping her captive for a long time. In the books, the Sheik rapes the woman he captures, but the film version has him refrain from doing so. In both cases, the Sheik figure is a romanticized figure of male domination and essentially a fetishized rapist/kidnapper. Despite (or perhaps because of) this, the *Sheik* books were tremendously popular, and are remembered as important forerunners of the romance genre[78]. In the context of *Maus*, the reference to the film likens Vladek to a masculine and attractive yet abusive figure, in a way which would likely already have had a negative connotation in 1980 when *Maus* began serialized publication. The Sheik figure is meant to be a hero in his narrative, and was certainly considered positively in the early 20th century, given that the character made Valentino into an early sex symbol. Given that the primarily sexual relationship between Vladek and Lucia is one of the focuses of the first chapter of *Maus*, the connection makes sense on that level.

In another sense, the juxtaposition of a Hollywood star with a survivor of the Shoah draws attention to the way that Holocaust survivors are often idealized or thought of as almost superhuman; the Holocaust survivor, having lived through a genocide, are often seen as wiser or stronger for having done so. *Maus* consistently works to undermine this perception by showing the ways in which Vladek was not better than those who did not survive -- or even how the strategies that sustained Vladek in the camps were actually maladaptive in the context of a normal life. It therefore makes sense that *Maus* gestures towards this trope of idolizing survivors as a means of undermining it; unlike the traditions which have seen survivors of the Shoah as

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[78] Pamela Regis discusses the book's popularity in her *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*: "...R. M. Hull's The Sheik (1919) shows the way. It was enormously popular. Hull presents the courtship between the heroine and her hero with emotions foregrounded. Her heroine is independent; the hero is dangerous. The Sheik embodies the spirit and essence of the romance novel and still inspires imitators." Incidentally, the *Sheik* books have their own legacy in comics; they inspired many imitators in the form of Italian *fumetti* (photo comics), a tradition parodied in Fellini's *The White Sheik* (1952).

sources of wisdom, *Maus* insists upon depicting Vladek and Anja, as well as the other survivors, as fully capable of the most banal human flaws.

The juxtaposition with Valentino also connects to the portrait of Vladek on page 294; Vladek, in his youth, looks eerily confident and self-assured in the reproduced camp uniform which he wore to be photographed. As Spiegelman points out in *Metamaus*, the resemblance to Valentino which was mentioned in the first chapter is reiterated in the final chapter: “You get to find out that, well, he was a fairly good-looking guy. You can verify that, this Rudolph Valentino stuff wasn’t only self-aggrandizement; he was perceived as attractive by women.”[79] We also see an odd echo of the glamorization and theatricality of depicting Vladek as an actor -- here, Vladek poses wearing a camp uniform which has become a mere costume after the liberation of the camps; he looks to his left with an air of confidence and nonchalance that mirrors Valentino’s. The inclusion of this image as one of the three photographs in the entirety of *Maus* gives it even greater impact.

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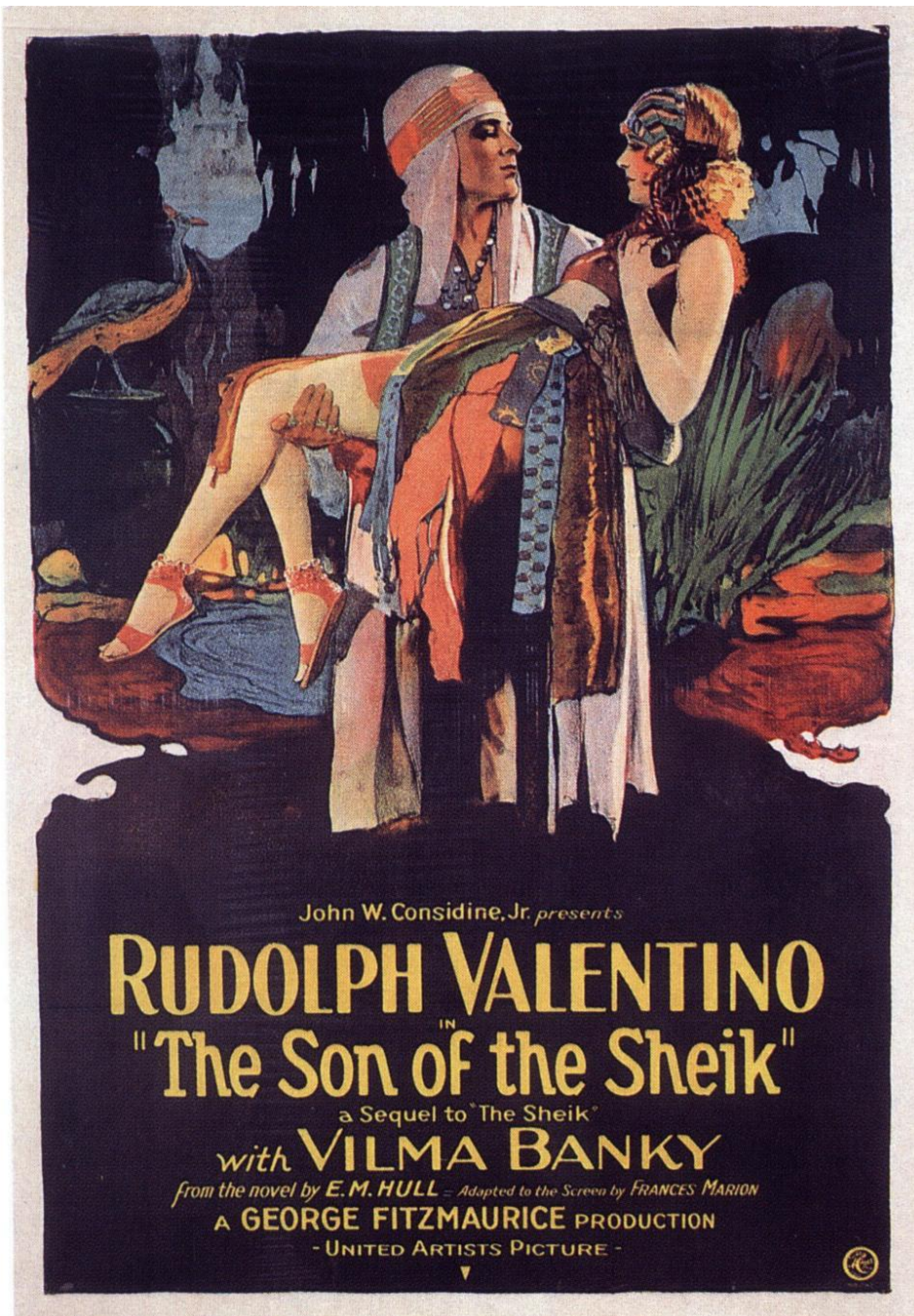
[79] *Metamaus*, 220

The proof of Vladek's resemblance to Valentino

The Sheik Poster[80]

[80] Image scan from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Sheik_poster_2.jpg

A more explicitly *Maus*-styled version of a *The Sheik* poster appears on page 15 of chapter one, in a form which resembles actual posters -- not posters of *The Sheik*, but of *The Son of the Sheik*, Valentino's final film, in which he played both the original Sheik character and that character's son. In this case, the image-word relation is misdirective; unless one is aware that a poster of *The Son of the Sheik* is being represented as a poster of *The Sheik*, one will not realize that the Artie is also being brought into the *Sheik* iconography. It's another example of the representational danger which Artie faces in the story of identifying with his father, whom he resents. The substitution of one image for another is a kind of misdirective or subversive image-word relation; misdirective because most readers will pass over it, never realizing its implication of Artie because of the way that the accompanying text misidentifies it. The use of *The Son of the Sheik* in particular is suggestive, since that was the film in which Valentino portrayed both members of a father-son pair. The image itself depicts Valentino as both father and son simultaneously -- the image implying the son and the text implying the father. In a text which took Christianity as its religious background rather than Judaism, one might even suspect the image of portraying a diunity. Here, image and word misdirect on the surface level, but close examination reveals them working together to reveal one of the core tensions in the text: Artie's struggle to identify with Vladek and yet not to identify with him.



The Son of the Sheik poster[81]

[81] Image scan from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Son_of_the_Sheik.jpg

One of the ways to regard "the Sheik" is as a visual synecdoche. The cover represents a moment from the story in which Vladek, a young Polish Jew who will later survive the Shoah, rejects his former lover Lucia despite her pleading with him and grabbing his leg. This moment comes to represent the chapter as a whole and much of Vladek's characterization prior to the invasion of

Poland. Vladek is often depicted as pragmatic, unsentimental, and unempathetic; he always chooses to advance his own interests and those of his loved ones, at the expense of those who he outsmarts or no longer needs. This side of Vladek is unflattering and personal, and Vladek asks Artie not to record it in his comic, which Artie agrees to -- an agreement which he later clearly breaks. This betrayal of his father is not, however, a mere potshot which doesn't connect to the broader themes of the text. Despite the fact that Lucia doesn't appear after this chapter, the first chapter's cover pertains to one of the primary issues of *Maus I*: Artie dealing with the suicide of his mother and his frustration with his father, whom he blames for having burnt his mother's notebooks and papers after her death.

This depiction is an accusation; it is initially unclear who the abandoned woman is; when Lucia is first introduced, Artie and the reader both assume that she is Vladek's future wife and Artie's mother, leading Artie to object when Vladek reveals her name to be Lucia and not Anna. This ambiguity is not entirely dissolved by revealing the name of the abandoned woman in the "Sheik" image. Instead, the accusation made by the image -- that Vladek fails or abandons the women in his life -- comes to take on greater significance as the book continues. Artie holds his father responsible, at least on an emotional and nonrational level, for the loss of his mother, since Vladek destroyed the notebooks that could have outlived her and preserved her memory.

This is made explicit in the final page of *Maus I*, where Artie repeatedly calls his father a murderer for having destroyed his mother's notebooks and papers. This final page of *Maus I* (pg. 161 in the *Complete Maus* edition) has a strong connection with the "Sheik" image; it is a reiteration of the accusation made in that initial image. Artie's anger and conflict with his father

throughout the book is grounded in this fundamental accusation: that Vladek abandoned his mother's memory. Vladek's remarriage after his wife's suicide doesn't seem to be a major issue for Artie, but Vladek's failure to preserve his deceased wife's memory certainly is. Dominick LaCapra interprets the issue of preserving memories as one of the main themes of *Maus* as a whole: in recording the lives of his father and mother, Artie does what his father cannot or will not do.[82] This interpretation captures the spirit of Artie's project and the motivation for creating *Maus*, but it is more redemptive than the book itself allows; the force of Artie's anger and accusation comes from the fact that what Vladek destroyed in a fit of despair was actually unrecoverable. Vladek can reconstruct parts of Anja's story for Artie, he cannot reveal it in great detail and certainly cannot replace her lost notebooks and mementos. Artie's anger also proceeds from his own guilt; he fears that he also abandoned his mother, as shown in the embedded comic "Prisoner on the Hell Planet". "Prisoner on the Hell Planet" tells the story of Anja's suicide, including her last conversation with Artie, in which Art Spiegelman depicts himself ignoring her and not showing appreciation for her. This lack of interest in his mother is repeated on the last page of *Maus* by Vladek, who defends himself for burning Anja's notebooks by pointing out that Artie had never shown interest in them before. The possibility of blaming himself for his mother's death informs Artie's attitude towards Vladek; because of the ambiguity of Art Spiegelman's Maus figures, who almost all look the same except for their clothing, the person depicted in the "Sheik" image could be anyone, even Artie himself. This representational danger -- the danger of seeing oneself in the "Sheik" image -- is one of the factors that drive the tension between father and son in the story. *Maus* poses the question of responsibility for Anja's suicide,

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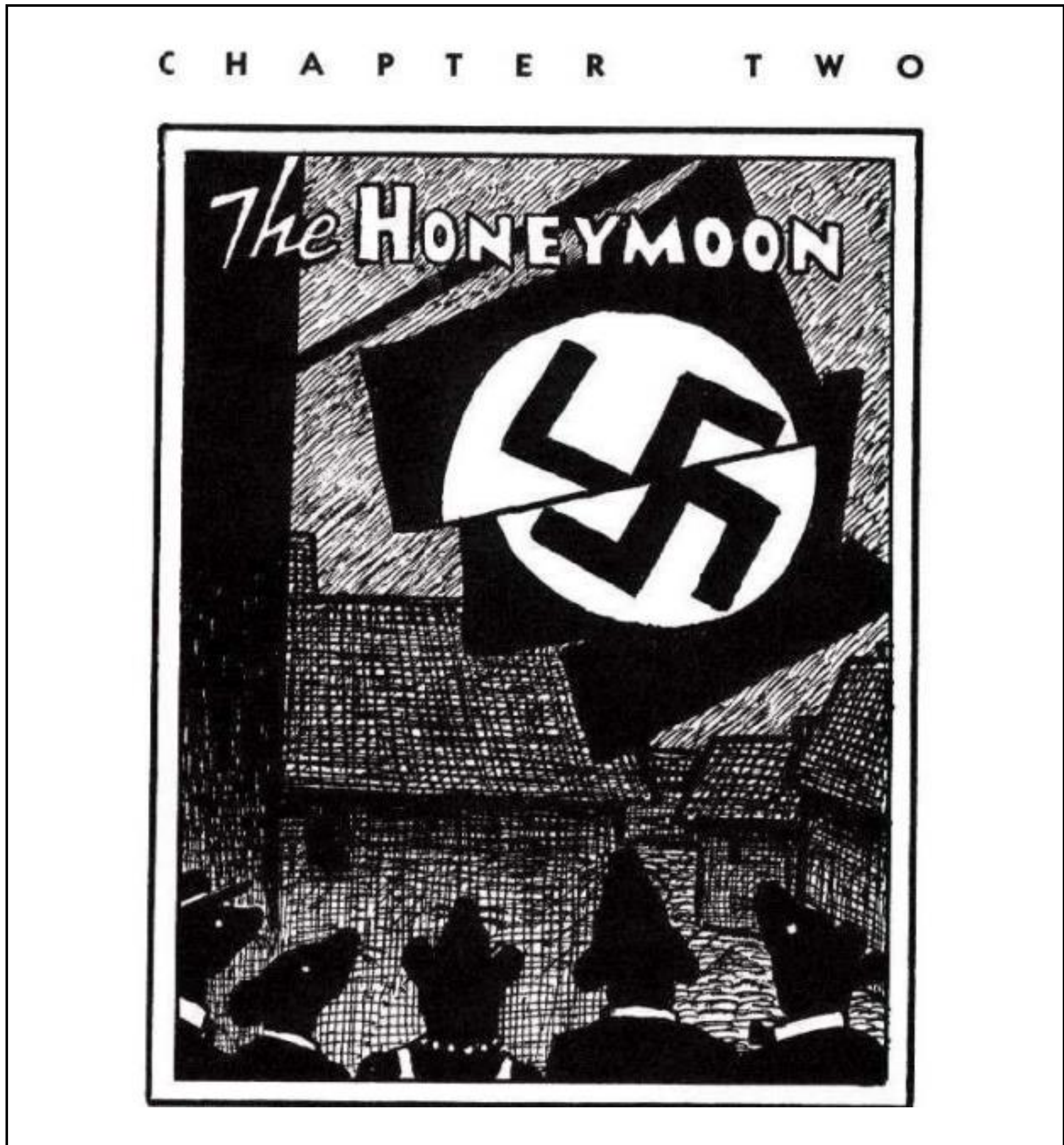
[82] LaCapra, Dominick. *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. 2018. *Open WorldCat*, https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501727450.

but doesn't answer it; both Vladek and Artie are faced with the possibility of blame. This is part of the representational danger for Artie; if he allows himself to identify with his father and be identified with his father, he risks holding himself responsible for his mother's absence, along with Vladek. This tension is what moves the story beyond the theme of "transmission"; what is at stake in the matter of transmitting memory is not only the memory itself but the relationship between Artie and his two parents, both of whom are deceased by the end of the story. *Maus* doesn't merely transmit the memory of survivors of the Shoah in an uncritical way; instead, it invites the reader to develop a relationship with people who are gone and with their memories and experiences. And as with the relationship between Vladek and Artie, the relationship that readers have with *Maus* will be complex and have moments of tension and ambiguity.

The Second Honeymoon

The final cover of *Maus II* depicts a passenger jet silhouetted against the moon, above a city and a palm tree. Unusually for *Maus*, the image actually appears again in the story itself as a small panel on page 282, although it is much smaller and not an exact copy but a redrawing. In that context, the image depicts Artie arriving in Miami to assist Vladek in returning to New

York. On the most surface level, the chapter's title is a reference to the second chapter of the first volume of *Maus*, titled "The Honeymoon". The cover for "The Honeymoon" bears certain resemblances to "The Second Honeymoon", although these resemblances don't come close to explaining the oddities of this final cover of *Maus II*.



Both images feature imagetext puns of a sort, with the Second Honeymoon featuring an actual moon and the Honeymoon featuring a slightly fractured moon shape in the form of the swastika.

The image represents a moment in which Artie and Vladek are reuniting and renegotiating their relationship. The title, “The Second Honeymoon”, clearly has two valences: it refers both to the case of Vladek’s reunion with Anja and his reunion with Artie as the end of his life approaches. The choice of cover image explicitly strengthens the latter connection. The covers of *Maus* chapters generally depict some significant dramatic event in the chapter or else show an abstract scene which summarizes the events of the chapter, such as in the “Mouse Trap” cover, depicting a trap being sprung upon Vladek and Anja.

The final cover of *Maus II* takes a very unconventional approach in this regard. Instead of showing a variety of other important dramatic events in the chapter, such as the reunion between Anja and Vladek or Vladek's deathbed scene, the image shows a plane above Miami. The image shows no figures, which is also unique among the covers of *Maus*. Perhaps most interesting is who it doesn't show: Artie, who is in the plane and whose arrival in Miami is the factor which

makes the plane dramatically relevant, is not shown. Instead, we are shown a plane which we know that Artie is on -- but not Artie himself. It's a puzzling choice which further highlights the strangeness of Artie's invisibility on the covers of *Maus*. If ever there was a time for Artie to appear on the cover, it would be in this chapter. For one thing, the chapter has proportionally more pages set in the "present day" than the other chapters; nearly half of the chapter follows Artie's visit to Miami and his care for his father there. And indeed, the cover depicts a scene which is Artie's and which contains Artie in its field of view -- only we can't see him, because he's inside the plane. The absence of Artie can be interpreted as a form of gap, in Iser's sense; by not showing Artie in this instance, the imagetext opens up the images for alternative interpretations. If it simply showed Artie on the plane, the reader would take it as a part of the narrative, at least on one level. Without Artie, the plane might take on a different sort of significance and be interpreted metaphorically, as I consider later in this section.

The Repeated Image on 282

The image on 282 is rendered more simply, and with different words attached to it; the image on 282 is marked “Florida”, whereas the cover bears the title of the chapter. The image on 282 uses even-toned hatching for the background, whereas the cover uses cross-hatching to create a gradient background which represents the dark night sky being illuminated by the light of the city below.

The use of the image as a cover is especially strange because no other cover duplicates an image from the chapter with such exactitude; the *Sheik* image is similar to a scene from Chapter 1, but isn't a copy of it. In contrast, the Second Honeymoon cover and the image on 282 are compositionally identical, although rendered slightly differently.

The image itself is more fantastical and abstract than most of the images in *Maus*'s narrative; stylistically, it looks more like a travel poster or advertisement than the cartoony but believable sets in which the action of the story takes place. The size of the airplane and of the moon behind it are greatly exaggerated in relation to the other elements in the picture; although such size discrepancies can appear in telephotography, *Maus* doesn't otherwise indulge in that kind of exaggerated imagery.

Perhaps most bizarrely, the plane is angled up, clearly departing from the city in the image -- and yet the image is meant to signify the arrival of Artie in Florida. On this level, the image simply doesn't work as a depiction of the moment which it is meant to show, both on 282 and on the cover. The dramatic upward angle of the plane could only represent a plane which is rapidly gaining altitude as it departs from a location, and yet the location being departed is clearly Miami and not New York, where Artie is coming from. Visually, the image shows a departure -- and yet narratively it shows an arrival. Since the image appears twice in the chapter, including in the privileged position of a cover, this oddity cannot simply be overlooked; it must be explained.

Although no analysis of this image has yet been made in scholarly circles to my knowledge, it's clear that those who emphasize *Maus* as transmission and those who emphasize its relational aspect would read the image in different ways. From the point of view of transmission, the image of the airplane taking off could represent a sort of beginning; a departure

is the beginning of a journey and a movement away from something. Departures are commonly used to provide narrative closure, as a movement away from the site of a narrative's action parallels the audience's departure from the narrative space when the story ends. In the case of *Maus*, the departure from Miami could be seen as a transmission of the content of the story beyond its own context, and forward to the next generation. The weakness of this transmission-oriented interpretation is that it doesn't acknowledge the simultaneous departure/arrival aspect of the text; it's not just a matter of departure here but a matter of arrival *as* departure, in a way which is far more strange than the kind of future-looking attitude signaled by departures and airplanes in fiction generally. This interpretation of the imagetext doesn't have a good explanation for why the image is so unusual and complex; it only offers an interpretation of a small part of the image.

The Second Honeymoon is the chapter in which the "present day" storyline gets the most space, proportionally speaking. It's a moment where Artie reaches out to help his father, something he had always resisted given his father's difficult personality. It's also where Vladek and Artie's relationship is concluded in the story at a moment of disconnection, as Vladek briefly mistakes Artie for his dead firstborn, Richieu. The relationship between the two is moving in two directions simultaneously: in traveling to Florida to help his father return to New York, Artie is closing the physical and emotional gap between the two. At the same time, Vladek is finishing his story -- a process which, in *Maus*, is portrayed as proceeding in a more or less linear fashion -- and therefore the process of recollection which formed the foundation of the relationship between Artie and Vladek is coming to an end. As Spiegelman has said elsewhere, the time he spent listening to his father recollecting the Shoah was most of their relationship; he claimed that *Maus* "isn't just images of Art and his father talking into a tape recorder that make up one little

fragment of a relationship; this is three-fourths of that relationship."[83] When the process of relating the past ends -- when the transmission of memory ends, so to speak -- the relationship also faces its own end. Artie and Vladek don't get along well enough to socialize in any other way than this one. The final page of the story, in which Vladek finishes his narrative with a Hollywood-like "we were both very happy, and lived happy, happy ever after"[84], shows both the ending of Vladek's narrative and his tombstone. The narrative and relationship end simultaneously, as Artie gains a better understanding of his father -- which theoretically would be the foundation of a stronger relationship -- and yet loses the means to continue that relationship, since it was only possible as a shared project of recollection.

[83] *Metamaus*, 24.

[84] Spiegelman on the Hollywoodism of Vladek's ending in *Metamaus*, 233: "That in some ways is the end of the story, and it's kept there with this moon of the honeymoon, of them embracing again, as a very satisfying end. "I don't need to tell you, we were both very happy, we lived happy, happy ever after." Three times "happy." Which is hardly something that holds up, after having lived through seeing what Vladek is like now (that's sometime after "ever after" I suppose), and seeing Anja's postwar life—she ended it herself. Still, all of that didn't let the book end in a way that would be anything other than partial and probably ersatz, but it allows one the illusions and satisfactions of closure that Hollywood traffics in."

— art spiegelman 1978-1991

Vladek's storybook ending

This strange, self-contradictory ending to the relationship, which leaves Artie and Vladek far from reconciled and yet provides the two of them with a degree of closure. As soon as the relationship is possible -- it ends. Perhaps the simultaneity of Artie's arrival at his father's side in Miami and his departure from his father, which is soon permanent, is echoed in the strange self-contradiction of the Second Honeymoon cover image; that would make The Second Honeymoon cover into *Maus*'s most meaningful visual synecdoche: one image of simultaneous arrival and departure which operates as a symbol for the entirety of Artie and Vladek's relationship in the story.

Conclusion

Maus is typically thought of as a son's transmission of his father's experience of the Holocaust, and this understanding of the work has played a great part in its success and in the attention it has received. In this chapter, I argue for a different perspective on *Maus*, which sees the book as the negotiation of a relationship, in which Art Spiegelman shows his younger self wrestling with his father *as a father* and as a human being -- not just as a survivor of the Shoah. This negotiation takes the form of a tension, in which Artie needs to understand and identify with his father, yet can't allow himself to truly identify with Vladek. Sometimes that form becomes a kind of self-erasure, in which Spiegelman hesitates to put Artie and Vladek into any sort of relation, and accomplishes this by leaving Artie out and essentially marginalizing himself. This internalized conflict of identification is what allows the work to avoid the kind of Hollywood-ized dramatization of the Shoah which so many films and even memoirs can fall into. Vladek's own narrative tends toward this kind of dramatization, although it is mostly rescued from falling into Holocaust cliche by its tight focus on his own individual experience. But the framing of this

narrative in the context of a tense father-son relationship turns both Vladek's "happy, happy ever after" and his casting of himself as a Valentino-esque protagonist into an opportunity for the Holocaust narrative to reflect upon itself.

The relational aspect of *Maus* has been overlooked in recent years, perhaps because it was thought to have been already covered in the 90s and early 00s, but perhaps also because the covers of *Maus* themselves have been so entirely overlooked. The imagetext approach is particularly suited towards dealing with these covers, because its emphasis on pulling together nonlinear networks of meaning allows it to deal with images that seem to stand outside the normal flow of a work. There are, however, a number of other questions which the imagetext approach generates for *Maus*. One of these is its development into a digital document, which creates entirely new issues of connection and disconnection for the words and images in the work. Another is the issue of *Metamaus*, and the effect of its intertextuality on *Maus* as a whole. These are issues which this chapter does not explore, but which it points to and offers a possible approach to.

Chapter 3: *Männerphantasien*: *Ströme* of Imagetext

On page 335 of Klaus Theweleit's richly and enigmatically illustrated tome *Männerphantasien*, Theweleit's text comments for the first time upon one of the images he uses. In a short paragraph, Theweleit describes a sequence from "Only a Poor Old Man", an Uncle Scrooge comic written by Carl Barks. The works of Carl Barks on the Donald Duck comics, published under the name of Walt Disney, have had enormous cultural impact; Art Spiegelman described the influence of Barks' work on his formative years, calling the duck characters "realer than most people I've met."[85] In the late 1970s, when Theweleit was writing *Männerphantasien,* the duck comics were experiencing a wave of critical and theoretical attention thanks to *Para Leer al Pato Donald* ("How to Read Donald Duck"), a Marxist polemic by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart which argued that the duck comics were propaganda that spread American capitalist and cultural imperialism. Barks' duck comics are still sold in many German supermarkets and have recently been rediscovered in America, where new editions accompanied by short critical essays are being released. The Barks image is unique among the images in Theweleit's book, as one of the only images which is actually addressed in the text in any way.

[85] *The Unexpurgated Carl Barks,* 3

This chapter will begin with an examination of the Barks image, and move from there into an examination of Theweleit's use of images more generally in *Männerphantasien*. The work is of interest as an example of a highly influential imagetext on the origins of Fascism in Germany, but also because of its unusual and striking usage of images. Theweleit's approach to image usage recalls the concept of self-grangerization which is more commonly associated with W. G. Sebald, but his use of images is perhaps even more enigmatic. In this chapter, I'll begin by discussing one of the few images in Theweleit which can really be dug into in the way I have done so far: by analyzing image-word relations. This image, Theweleit's visual quotation of Carl Barks' Dagobert Duck, connects backwards with Spiegelman and even Lavater in strange and surprising ways. After analyzing that image, I'll discuss the features which make it uniquely clear and suitable for the kind of imagetext analysis I've used so far. Then, I'll discuss how Theweleit uses images generally, and what makes them so difficult to deal with. I'll describe how his approach to imagetext frustrates the image-word relation paradigm, and why he might use images in the way he does. Finally, I'll propose and apply an altered version of the imagetext method which can make sense of Theweleit's unusual and enigmatic imagetext. With this altered method, I'll demonstrate how Theweleit writes a kind of imagetext écriture féminine.

Whether Theweleit was very familiar with Barks' work isn't clear from his text, but his attitude towards the duck comics is not; Theweleit lambasts a selection of chopped-up and rearranged panels as representative of American capitalism's ossification of the natural *Wunschfluss* of human desire into a mere *Geldfluss* – as shown by Uncle Scrooge's swimming in a pile of gold. The comic in question is about how Uncle Scrooge's absurd fortune is a burden to him – a critique of Scrooge's avarice, common in Barks' work – but Theweleit's five rearranged panels communicate something different: the love of money in American culture, as

communicated throughout the world in Disney products. For Theweleit, the image depicts a phenomenon associated with American capitalism: the transformation of libidinal flows into flows of money. Theweleit doesn't explicitly say so – his discussion of the image amounts to nothing more than a description of the panels – but the reader puts the connection together themselves, as they do with most of the points that Theweleit wishes to make. The image of the dam breaking makes visual the connection between the fluvial and the financial which Theweleit speaks of. The vast amount of gold – Scrooge's fortune – flows like water, bursting through the dam. This is Theweleit's image of capitalism's effect on the psyche: the replacement of the libido, the blood of desire, with the flow of cash.

Dagobert Duck's *Geldfluß*, bursting the dam

There have been various versions of the Barks page in Theweleit's work. In older volumes, it is usually given the upper half of two different pages: the first showing the dam breaking, and the second Dagobert Duck's swim through the "lake" of gold. The second is where Theweleit creates his own work to analyze by reordering the panels. In the newest edition of *Männerphantasien*, the dam image and the swim are put together into one page, forming a new composite sequence. The image is surrounded by a black border, in addition to the original white gutters of the comic panels. Unlike the previous editions, in which each image was paired with its own passage of text, the new *Geldfluß* sequence is in one, highly insulated chunk.

Theweleit's dislike of the Barks material is clear – seemingly not on the grounds that Dagobert Duck isn't high art, but rather because he seems to agree with the *Para Leer al Pato Donald* thesis that the duck comics have a propagandistic effect. It is perhaps the fact that the image bothers him which prompted Theweleit to linger with it longer than the others – strange in a book which contains many more explicitly offensive images, but possible given the context in which *Männerphantasien* was written. The threat of capitalistic cultural hegemony, centered in the United States, might have been more aggravating at the time.

A selection of deterritorialized/reterritorialized panels

Theweleit's analysis of the comic panels is redundant and short. Theweleit describes the images on the opposite page, exaggerating a few elements for humor; he claims that the Panzerknacker (Beagle Boys in the English version) break their necks, although the next panel in the comic makes clear that they've merely bumped their heads. The discussion is not an analysis, does not apply the comic to the ideas discussed in the text, and doesn't provide much context beyond what is clear in the image itself. In essence, the textual description would be redundant to the image, if it were an accurate description rather than an exaggeration. Theweleit's typical method is to supply images with a loose relation to the subject matter of the text, which the reader can then puzzle together themselves, determining what sort of image-text relation might

be relevant. Theweleit's analysis seems to short-circuit this approach, replicating the image in text form without applying it to the subject matter. The reader still has to figure out the significance of the image themselves, and yet the image is doubled in text form. If he is inspired by *Para Leer al Pato Donald*, it is only by its themes, and not its cynical but analytical methods. The approach is not ekphrastic – Theweleit does not describe the images themselves but rather what happens in them, with some alterations to suit his interpretation. In a similar case to Lavater, Theweleit writes what he wishes the reader to see when they look at his image:

> *Wunschfluß zu Geldfluß : was da los war, haben die unter dem Namen ›Walt Disney‹ produzierenden Mickey Mouse-Zeichner gespürt, als sie dem Superkapitalisten Dagobert Duck die Fähigkeit verliehen, im aufgestauten Meer seiner Goldstücke schwimmen zu können. Seinen ständigen Widersachern, den ›Panzerknackern‹, gelingt es einmal, den Staudamm zu durchstechen; der Strom der Goldstücke ergießt sich donnernd in ein ausgetrocknetes Flußbett…den letzten Wunsch des alten Geldmannes, noch einmal in seinem Fluß baden zu dürfen, können sie dann nicht abschlagen; begeistert vom Anblick des Alten, der im Goldstrom sich tummelt (Fisch im Wasser), springen sie selber hinein und brechen sich beim Aufprall das Genick.*

In order to persuade the reader to see things his way, Theweleit channels and manipulates the flow of images in the chapter. One example of this is his alteration of the Barks comic, which radically changes its meaning. The original comic, *Only a Poor Old Man*, shows how the Uncle Scrooge character is made miserable by his money, which he constantly worries about safeguarding. Many of Barks' Uncle Scrooge stories follow the formula that the titular character becomes concerned about safeguarding his wealth and takes measures to prevent its theft. Said

measures make it possible for the Beagle Boys to steal the wealth, until Scrooge gets it back. Scrooge doesn't operate on the logic of capitalism which Theweleit describes; the problem of *Geldfluss*, for Theweleit, is that it monetizes the endless libidinal flow, resulting in a venal psyche which only wishes to acquire more money. Some Uncle Scrooge stories describe the character looking to expand his fortune, but *Only a Poor Old Man* is not one of them; here, his fortune is a burden to him. Theweleit omits a panel between the dam break and Scrooge's swim, in which Scrooge admits that swimming in his money is his only pleasure. Scrooge's libidinal flows seem to be fully oriented around money, but not in the way that Theweleit describes. Scrooge's concern is to prevent his money from circulating and flowing; the image of gold and water flowing as the dam breaks comes after pages and pages of Uncle Scrooge and his allies attempting to stop the dam from breaking. Neither is the pile of money which Scrooge flows through fluvial in itself – as the Beagle Boys find out when they attempt to dive into it and bonk their heads. Instead, Scrooge himself is the fluvial element here as he slips mysteriously through the gold and bills.

Theweleit can hardly be blamed for seeing the Uncle Scrooge character as an icon for American capitalism and its excesses; the character's design is meant to invoke exactly that. The character's top hat, small glasses, and old-fashioned shoes make him a visual blend of the 19th century Dickensian iconography of Ebenezer Scrooge and a more modern mid–20th century American capitalist figure. He has the bushy look of an Ebenezer Scrooge, but he's also cartoonified in a style which was and is highly associated with Disney: highly anthropomorphized animals with cute, infant-like proportions. Barks was certainly aware of the cultural connotations of certain character design features, and he used them to his advantage. Yet unlike Lavater, Barks' interpretation of the cultural correlation between certain visual features

and certain character qualities was not so simplistic — at least, not in his Duck comics; a younger Barks started his career in comics drawing for a "girlie" magazine called *The Calgary Eye Opener*, and in that context he indulged in visual stereotypes of all kinds. By the time of the Duck comics, Barks' work had grown more liberal and less reliant on simplistic visual cliches. Uncle Scrooge looks like a miser and a rich capitalist, and is those things, but not only those things.

The Uncle Scrooge character generally represents American capitalism – that much is true – but Barks' depiction of the character is far more complex than a simple propagandistic endorsement. Scrooge normally spends his time trying to avoid anticipated thefts of his money, rather than in actually accumulating wealth. When Scrooge does make money, he typically does so through miserly frugality. However, Scrooge's money never brings him pleasure, luxury, or the good life – he's infamously so miserly that he's unwilling to spend any money at all, unless absolutely necessary. Instead, he spends most of his time taking calls at his desk, which inevitably contain bad news that send him to pace in his "worry room." Barks' depiction of Scrooge is amusing, but the character always provokes pity rather than envy; Scrooge's only happiness is relief, when one of the plots to steal his fortune has been foiled. The original work already enacts Theweleit's critique, by questioning the way in which human desire can become dominated by acquisition of money.

However, that doesn't mean that Barks' work is not ripe for analysis of the kind which Theweleit wishes to make. Theweleit's concern in the *Ströme* chapter is analysis of the roots of male anxieties about flow, as part of his attempt to account for the Freikorps imagination and its fascist qualities. In that regard, this comic is not a bad choice, since its theme is Scrooge's anxiety about losing his money. The *Geldfluss* which most preoccupies Scrooge is the *outward*

flow – the loss of money which he is obsessed with. Scrooge's anxiety speaks to the precarity of life in capitalist society, especially for older people whose powers to generate wealth are not at their height. Despite his allegiance to leftist politics, Theweleit doesn't pay much attention to the reality that individuals must make and keep money to survive, nor to the effect that this might have on the psyche – especially in the form of anxiety. It is the capitalist, the fascist, and the oppressor who desires money in Theweleit's account; money appears only as a tool for violence and coercion, and not survival.

"Es war 1955, als mein Vater meiner Schwester Helga und mir stolz den Hindenburgdamm vorführte. Nicht, als wäre er sein Eigentum, aber als wäre ***er selber*** *die EISENBAHN, in der wir saßen und unter die der Damm gehörte." – p. 9*

Theweleit's use of the Barks image is odd because of how rarely he makes any sort of statement about the images in his work; *Männerphantasien* contains hundreds of images, only a

few of which are commented on at all in the text itself. Some editions of the first volume begin with a striking image of a train crossing the narrow rail leading up to the Hindenburg Dam. In this latest edition, the image is no longer present in the prologue, although Theweleit discusses it there. The image does partially appear, in two instances. On the spine of the book's jacket, a fragment of the image appears in the corner, concealed by other images; The front matter of the book also contains a small, square portion of the image – or so one would think at first glance, but actually, the image is not the postcard itself, but a small recreation of it in watercolor. This small, watercolor version was on the cover of some editions of the first volume of Theweleit's work. Theweleit says in his prologue that his father was proud of the railway, as though his father were himself the railway. Theweleit also describes his father as an abusive fascist, so perhaps it isn't surprising that this portrait of Theweleit's father is made nearly invisible in this latest edition. In his *Nachwort* to the most recent edition, Theweleit described his approach to using images as a *Strang*, a kind of parallel thread to the discussion of the text. In places, the connection between text and image is fairly apparent, but the text almost never explicitly acknowledges or develops the significance of its images.

Far more significant than what Theweleit says about image is what he does not say. In Wolfgang Iser's terminology, Theweleit's image "analysis" of the Barks image operates as a *Minusverfahren.* When using an image like this one in a text, it would be typical to make comments regarding the kind of image it is – a comic – and use an awareness of that form of image to guide an interpretation. It would also be typical to describe how the image carries certain messages or encourages certain viewpoints, which could then be argued for or against. Theweleit defies the reader's expectations by refusing to deal with his images in this way. Much

like Lavater, Theweleit works in a kind of counter-ekphrasis: he describes an image which is pitted against the one which the reader can see.

One of Theweleit's goals in *Männerphantasien* is to account for Freikorps culture via cultural and heterodox psychoanalytic means. This includes an analysis of the narratives about masculinity in Freikorps culture and elsewhere, such as the idea that masculine identity is alignment with unchanging and supercorporeal ideals that defy the body's physical vulnerability. Thus the disdain for the penetrable, the disordered (which doesn't conform to an ideal), and the feminine, conceived of as the changeable, the carnal, and the fluvial. This narrative is complex and leads Theweleit in many different directions, making his work ultimately difficult to summarize adequately. Theweleit flows from topic to topic, and so the book is about many things, but principally *Männerphantasien* is about finding a new way to think about the men who were fascists and later became Nazis: how they thought about themselves, wrote about themselves, and conceptualized their world. Theweleit explores many aspects of the fascist imagination, but one of his major concerns is the fascist's relationship with women and the feminine. Part of Theweleit's method is to develop comparisons between the ideas of psychoanalysts and of fascists, coming close at times to equating the two as different strains of patriarchal anxiety. This chapter focuses on Theweleit's *Ströme* chapter, which makes one such comparison. One of the arguments of the *Ströme* chapter is that fear of the fluvial functioning of the unconscious is simultaneously a fear of and antagonism towards female sexuality; essentially, that both the self-desiccating psychoanalysis of late Freud and the metallic culture of the Freikorps have their roots in misogyny.

He begins with a discussion of various strains of psychoanalysis, describing their attitudes towards fluvial concepts like libidinal flow and Freud's infamous *ozeanisches Gefühl*.

Having established elsewhere in the book that the Freikorps were concerned with a kind of spiritual metallization, and therefore were opposed to fluvial elements which might penetrate them, rust them, or erode them, Theweleit spends the remainder of the chapter establishing that women are so strongly metaphorized as fluvial in western culture that anxiety about fluvial elements is anxiety about women. Beginning with a number of case studies from literature, Theweleit builds from a discussion of examples into a deluge of undiscussed quotes and images which is meant to sweep the reader along, convincing them of the equation of the feminine and the fluvial in the modern western symbolic order. Theweleit makes a more thorough analysis of fluvial woman in *Danton's Tod*, which he considers an unusually explicit and clear example.

Theweleit makes a brief stop at Welsh writer Elaine Morgan's version of the aquatic ape hypothesis, a fringe theory in evolutionary psychology which claims that women catalyzed the development of homo sapiens by descending from trees to live in water. Theweleit entertains the idea that the cultural connection between women and water is based in some sort of scientific foundation to do with human evolutionary history, although he also offers the perspective of those psychoanalysts who noticed something fluvial in female sexuality. Theweleit's point is that – if Morgan's hypothesis holds water – evolutionary development is both a biological and a social process. The consequence of this claim is that the psychosexual connection between women and water which Theweleit has pointed out might actually extend far beyond the scope of 19th-20th century European culture and constitute a more general trend.

In my discussion of Lavater, I focused on a single image and discussed its role in the imagetext. *Maus* required a slightly different approach, with a discussion of various cover images and a sort of typology of various roles played by those images. To proceed in the same way with Theweleit would be impossible; this is because Theweleit's use of images has a

provocative effect upon an imagetext methodology as I have conceived of it. An imagetext consists of an incalculable number of possible image-word relations and connections. Usually, there are obvious image-word relations and less obvious ones which present themselves, and the reader works through these possibilities to arrive at an interpretation. But Theweleit's use of images, as seen in the chapter *Ströme*, generates so many possibly relevant image-word relations that they can't be fully enumerated.

This makes *Männerphantasien* an ideal final case study in the context of developing an imagetext method; the imagetext method is aimed towards seeing networks of image-word relations and picking out interesting, relevant, and overlooked ones. What happens when these networks become so varied and dense that they threaten to become overwhelming? The question is especially relevant in a world which is more and more psychically saturated by the intoxicating surfeit of information flowing to and from the internet.

Theweleit's Discursive Style of Anti-Fascism

Because of Theweleit's aforementioned discursive style of writing, it can be difficult to tell which points he makes are connected to a main argument, and which are merely comments. This is the case with the *Ströme* chapter generally, which doesn't contribute much to the main argument of Theweleit's book and barely discusses the *Freikorps* themselves at all. Even within the chapter, the main points can be difficult to parse. Theweleit is at pains to establish that there is a common trope which equates women and water, and demonstrates this using his flood of examples. The significance of this trope is not nearly as well developed as its existence, however. His argument appears to be that if women are commonly thought of as similar to water, then the attitude people have towards libidinal flows reflects their attitude towards women.

Those individuals who prefer control and even desiccation of libidinal flows must therefore feel similarly about women. For Theweleit, such an attitude towards libidinal flows constitutes fascism, and therefore fascism is inherently misogynistic – perhaps it is even just a manifestation of misogyny.

However, there are a variety of other matters which Theweleit discusses, which are marginal to his point. The most important of these is Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, which he refers to, twists, and applies in a variety of ways which don't relate to his main argument but which pop up often. Most commonly, Theweleit makes use of the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, which refers to the process by which the expansion of capital robs meaning – deterritorializes or decodes – and then violently fills the void with its own meaning – retorritorializes or recodes. Although Theweleit does use this concept to discuss colonial violence, it doesn't play a crucial role in his discussion of women and flows. Another digression comes in the form of a discussion of machinery and how "machine-like" or "mechanical" things are looked down upon in certain cases; the individual who expresses their dislike of an artistic performance which seems machine-like thereby expresses their bourgeois prejudice against workers, who run the machines in capitalist systems. This too doesn't really connect with the main point. Even Theweleit's extended discussion of a fringe theory in evolutionary biology – the Aquatic Ape Hypothesis – doesn't actually have a clear bearing upon the discussion of women and flows, besides suggesting that women might have evolved in the water. If that were true, what impact it would have upon Theweleit's argument is difficult to say. Of course, the chapter contains far more detours than these.

Because of the way that Theweleit writes, it falls to the reader to try to make the text hold together, as I do here. In so doing, I am forced to ignore certain parts of the chapter which don't

contribute to the arguments which Theweleit means to make. In essence, the reader is thereby forced into the position of capital: to make sense of Theweleit's text, the reader needs to prune the digressions and reimagine the text as a more coherent form of itself. The reader thereby deterritorializes and reterritorializes the text itself. This is also true of the text's use of images; many of the images that Theweleit uses are ambiguous in their meaning, requiring further analysis and research to make sense of them. In some cases, Theweleit doesn't provide enough meaningful information – such as the date of production or the name of the artist – and so the reader actually cannot do the research necessary to put the image into context and make sense of it. The reader is therefore forced to either try to impose some meaning upon the images or simply ignore them, leaving them out of their own constructed understanding of the text. Theweleit's verbal and visual digressions therefore have a function: they change the kind of work which the reader must do, and force the reader to decode and recode the text, if it is to hold together.

There are a variety of reasons why Theweleit might choose to write in the way he does. The most prominent of these reasons has to do with a trend in continental academic writing in the 1970s; Theweleit was clearly influenced by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, who wrote in an elliptical, anti-conventional approach to academic writing that was fashionable among French philosophers at the time. Theweleit's writing isn't nearly as maddening as that of Deleuze and Guattari or even Lacan, and the peculiarity of his style is more on a paragraph and chapter level than on the sentence level. While those writers followed in the footsteps of Heidegger by contorting language on the sentence level, often out of a suspicion that ordinary language obscured some important understanding, Theweleit's stylistic innovation is more to do with organization. He refuses to make points in an orderly fashion; paragraphs jump from one subject

to the next, and the reader wonders what point is being made and how it relates to a larger argument.

"When I was a boy I was taught to think of Englishmen as the five-meal people. They ate more frequently than the poor but sober Italians. Jews are rich and help each other through a secret web of mutual assistance. However, the followers must be convinced that they can overwhelm the enemies. Thus, by a continuous shifting of rhetorical focus, the enemies are at the same time too strong and too weak." – Umberto Eco, "Ur-Fascism" in *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995

One reason for this approach to organization would be Theweleit's firmly anti-fascist outlook. Theweleit's hatred of fascism is clear throughout his book, and his definition of fascism

is broad and disorganized. Fascism doesn't require any sort of continuity or connection to tradition: "Niemand, der Faschist wird, orientiert sich an etwas, was früher gedacht oder geschrieben worden ist – er wird es aus seiner eigenen Lage heraus."[86] Fascism emerges out of one's position; it is a personal quality which might be mobilized by mass movements, but must first develop inside the individual as a result of their cultural and psychological position. Fascism is, among other things, the failure to sublimate: "...der faschistische Mann mit Sublimation nichts im Sinn hat (haben kann)."[87] Theweleit's fascist is an individual who cannot sublimate his socially unacceptable desires and therefore requires a fascist government to give license to these desires. Yet Theweleit also claims that these socially unacceptable desires are incestuous in nature; Theweleit's emphasis on incest is seen in his discussion of *Rote Schwestern* and *Weiße Schwestern*, the terms he uses to discuss the prototypical fascist man's relationships with women: they are either the kind of woman he pays and sleeps with, or the kind he marries. This dual attitude towards women is and was common among men, and so the number of fascists in Theweleit's estimation is seemingly quite high. Theweleit's twist on it is that the fascist holds it incestuously, actually desiring his sister but acting out this desire in socially acceptable relationships with other women. In other words, the fascist sublimates his socially unacceptable desires. That is to say, Theweleit's view of fascism is not rigorously internally consistent – it is so universally negative that it ascribes opposite negative qualities to its target.

Theweleit's fascist is orderly, obsessed with cleanliness and anxious about contamination by dirt, grime, and so forth. Theweleit devotes an entire section to anxiety about cleanliness: *Vermischungszustände der Körperränder* (473-500). It isn't just that Theweleit argues that fascist behavior is an example of the anal retentive, the result of a failed *Sauberkeitserziehung*;

[86] *Männerphantasien,* 442
[87] Ibid., 463

for Theweleit, any education which instills feelings of shame regarding bodily fluids is in the interest of fascism, since it instills feelings of shame and leads to the kind of self-desiccation which characterizes the fascist's libidinal state:

> "Die sogenannte Sauberkeitserziehung zeigt sich also als ein Vorgang der Trockenlegung und der Installation von Schuldgefühlen. Die traditionelle Psychoanalyse beschränkt deren Folgen zu Unrecht auf die Erzeugung des ›analen‹ Typus, des Zwangscharakters der Ordnung, des Pedanten, des Sammlers, Statistikers aus Lust, des bürofähigen Menschen oder begeisterten Positivisten. Die Folgen der ›Sauberkeitserziehung‹ sind wohl umfassender. Sie erscheint, in ihrem Zwang zur Trockenlegung, als der zentrale Eingriff zur Durchsetzung der Sexualunterdrükkung im weitesten Sinn ; und, verbunden mit der Installation der Schuldgefühle der Erwachsenen in den kindlichen Körper, als der wesentliche Vorgang zur Erzeugung der Sexualangst."[88]

Order and restraint is dangerous in Theweleit's view; far better is to allow any natural flow to continue or to constrain it as little as possible. This attitude is important to his writing style; his thoughts flow naturally and with little respect to organization, a value which he clearly suspects of fascist tendencies.

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[88] P. 506

“Der misstrauische Leser, dem das ungewohnt und verworren vorkommen mag, mag sein Misstrauen beibehalten. Es werden noch viele Ströme in diesem Kapitel fließen und an seinem Ende wird man vielleicht besser sehen, ob das alles zu etwas taugt.”

P. 314

Ambiguity and Flow

The core of Theweleit’s *Ströme* chapter is an overwhelming flow of images and quotations. They are not explained or analyzed in the text; instead, Theweleit simply whisks the reader from one quoted poem to the next, mixing in images throughout. This long passage of quotations is meant to impress upon the reader, through force rather than argumentation, that there’s a widely used equation between woman and water in European literature. Rational argument is not Theweleit’s primary mode of discourse; instead, he provides examples, makes

interpretations, and digresses in various directions. One might suspect that Theweleit does this to allow the reader to make up their own mind about the material, but a close examination of Theweleit's work makes this possibility unconvincing. Theweleit is not ambiguous about his attitudes, his interpretations, or his opinions. He is, however, ambiguous about his lines of argument and his main point – or rather, *Männerphantasien* doesn't have a main argument in the traditional sense. It returns to various themes and characterizations, but so much of the work is not in service of these broader issues that it would be misleading to claim that the work has a main argument. Even when Theweleit is writing in service of an argument – such as that fascism is anti-fluvial and misogynistic – his discussion mostly provides exhaustive support for parts of his argument that aren't likely to be disputed. That there is a trope which associated women and water is far from Theweleit's most arguable claim, yet he spends nearly a third of the chapter providing examples to demonstrate it. A thorough argument leading from the existence of this trope to the claim that anti-libidinal attitudes are misogynistic and fascistic would be desirable, but Theweleit doesn't make such an argument.

Thematic Connection

One way to attempt to manage the complexities of Theweleit's imagetext would be to claim the images are "thematically" connected with the content as a whole. It's true that the images are examples of the tropes connecting the fluvial and the feminine. However, a thematic relation isn't useful for an imagetext analysis. That the elements of a work are thematically related in some way is unavoidable, but this doesn't help the reader figure out exactly what role the images are playing and what sort of image-text interactions are taking place. It's clear that there are connections formed between women and water in both the images and the text, but

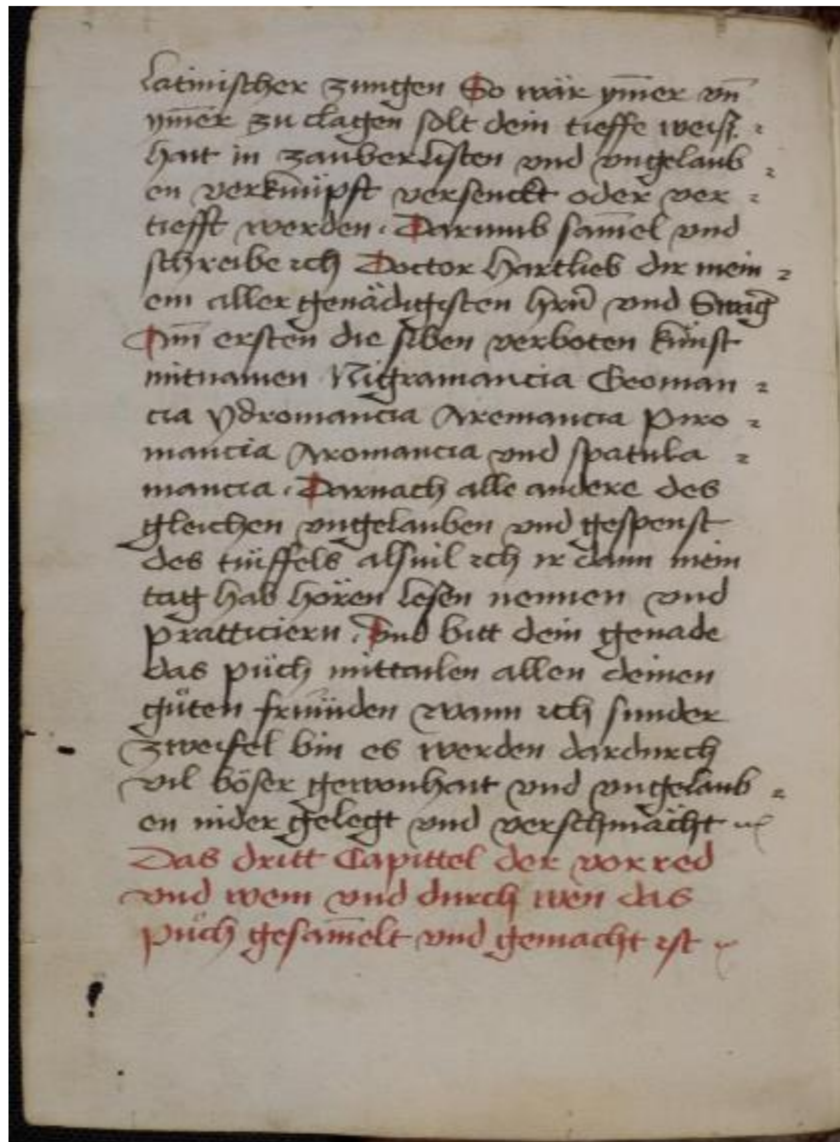
what matters in an imagetext perspective is how the images and text work together, and which exact portions of the image and text relate. On page 347, for example, a painting of a woman watering plants is juxtaposed with a passage from a Breton poem about a woman whose breasts are like a sea swell (among other things). It's clear that both image and text communicate a connection between water and woman – although the two connections are of very different kinds. However, Theweleit provides no discussion of either image or quotation, and the result is a very murky set of possible relations between image and text; the image could subvert the text by showing a woman who has made water into a tool instead of being metaphorically turned into water herself. Alternatively, it could be a more straightforward double juxtaposition between woman and water; whether becoming or being responsible for water, the woman remains in the watery domain.

"Versteht man Fiktion als Kommunikationsstruktur, dann muß im Zuge ihrer Betrachtung die alte an sie gerichtete Frage durch eine andere ersetzt werden: Nicht was sie bedeutet, sondern was sie bewirkt, gilt es nun in den Blick zu rücken. Erst daraus ergibt sich ein Zugang zur Funktion der Fiktion, die sich in der Vermittlung von Subjekt und Wirklichkeit erfüllt."
Wolfgang Iser, *Akt des Lesens*, p. 88

How to read a flow of imagetext

How then can the imagetext approach deal with a work like Theweleit's, which frustrates the normal means of breaking down a work's image-text relations? Theweleit's imagetext non-argument cannot be summarized or analyzed directly, since it deliberately defies such order. The imagetext, in opposition of fascism, is deeply committed to disorder and cannot be reduced to

one united message. However, there is a non-reductive way to approach the work as an imagetext, and this is to discuss its flows of passive syntheses. A discussion of *Männerphantasien* ultimately needs to become cartographic if it is to avoid reducing the work and turning it into an argument, which it is not. Instead, the reader who wishes to understand it must develop their own map of the text, identifying the position and flow of each disorderly point and mini-argument and giving it a place. In other words, the reader must reterritorialize the work and make it orderly. That is the *Minusverfahren* which Theweleit's work fulfills: it puts the reader in the position of Theweleit's idea of a Fascist. The reader thereby faces their expectations of orderliness, focus, and textual homogeneity. The strange, confusing, and seemingly alien image is mentally purged from the work by many readers, not realizing that they are playing the role of fascist in Theweleit's intersubjective space. An imagetext approach is necessary – not because it avoids the *Minusverfahren* or spares the reader from seeing their expectations depicted as fascist – but because it allows the reader to at least understand what is happening to them and why: why the argument is confusing, why so many images defy explanation, and what Theweleit wants to demonstrate with his approach to writing.



"...die siben verboten Künst mitnamen Nigromantia Geomantia Hydromantia Aromantia Pyromantia Chromantia und Spatulamantia."
Johannes Hartlieb, *Das Buch aller verbotenen Kunst*, p.8

We now plunge, therefore, into a map of the flows of passive syntheses in the *Ströme* chapter, in an attempt to respond to Theweleit in a way that would be in keeping with the sensibilities of his work. There are three main features on this map: wide flows, narrow flows, and gaps. A wide flow encompasses images and passages which occur throughout the chapter, often widely separated in space and time but still connecting. An example would be Theweleit's

theme of women and water, which extends through the chapter and grows strongest at the middle, where it entirely engulfs the discussion in the flow of examples and images. A narrow flow is more local, comprised of connections which operate in a smaller space, with only small, weak flows leading out of that area. An example would be the Barks image, which consists of very strong image-word relations in a small area. An example of a gap would be the inverted image of the seaside (p.351), which doesn't have a clear connection to the subject matter in either local or general sense. In the following table, I will discuss each image in the chapter in some detail, categorizing it as one of the previously mentioned kinds of image and discussing its place in the flow of the chapter.

A Map of Image-word Relations in *Ströme*

Image Metadata	Description	Type of	Most obvious image-word relations

		Image	
From *Plantas medicinales*, Dr Vander, Madrid 1946	Medical diagram of a female urinary tract	Narrow flow	Harmony between image and word; image is a medical map of flows in women's bodies, whereas text discusses the fluvial element in the history of psychology, especially with regard to psychoanalysis and Mesmerism. By juxtaposing a map of physical organs with psychoanalysis' speculative and later metaphorical view of flows in the mind, Theweleit might make the psychoanalytic method appear more scientific.
Erzeugung des Dampfes. Cartoon for a planned mural for an industrial hall, Wilhelm von Kaulbach, ~1880	Hermes embraces woman with water jug, possibly a nymph; Anemoi and train wheel in the background	Gap	Theweleit juxtaposes a 1880 mural draft with a discussion of late Freud; The image itself is ambiguous – Hermes here appears monstrous rather than godlike. The image appears to show a divine rape. The caption, which appears to be the original title for the proposed mural, puts the image in a different light, suggesting the combination of machinery and fluidity in the form of steam power. Theweleit writes on the opposite page about anti-machinery attitudes in 1920s culture, including Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and (in Theweleit's interpretation) late Freud. An image from *Metropolis* would have been the obvious choice, but Theweleit instead chooses an unfinished work from a well-known artist. Theweleit also presents his thesis for the chapter: that cultural opposition to the fluvial/mechanical production of the unconscious is actually opposition to women and female sexuality. This could connect to the image of divine rape, perhaps showing Hermes' opposition to the steam engine and thus the steam train, which threaten him as the new symbols of speed.
Pair of stills from	Boris Karloff as	Narrow	This pair of images has a very obvious

Frankenstein, 1931	Frankenstein approaches a lake – or perhaps a young girl.	flow	possible significance, connecting with the Melville quote on the previous page, which describes man's instinctive desire to find water. *Stell dir vor, du wärst zwischen Bergen und Seen. Welchen Weg du auch einschlägst, zehn gegen eins, er führt dich ins Tal hinunter, und auf einmal stehst du da, wo der Bach am breitesten ist. Eine Zauberkraft ist da am Werk. Der ärgste Träumer in der tiefsten Versunkenheit – stellst du ihn auf die Beine und läßt ihn gehen, er wird ans Wasser finden, wenn überhaupt welches da ist.* (*Moby Dick,* s. 7) The image is an almost too obvious match with the quote on the previous page – Frankenstein is in the mountains, next to a lake. In the image, water and the young girl are equated, as Frankenstein might be seen to approach either or both. Theweleit's double image makes the narrative of approach extremely clear, although the second image presents a strange negation of the first. In the first image, the young girl wears a dark dress and stands on a white shore, whereas in the second image, the girl's dress has become white, blending her with the lake in the background, while the shore has become black. The way in which the girl seems to blend in with the lake is a clear example of Theweleit's preoccupation in this chapter, which is demonstrating the feminine-fluvial connection in as many ways as possible. Theweleit dives here into the imagery of popular culture, made strange by the isolation of two rather blurry and ambiguous frames.
Autobahnbau, *Volk ans Gewehr*, 1934	The construction of an Autobahn through fields and forests; superimposed text: "*Die Straße ist*	Wide flow	Like the previous image, this one deals fairly clearly with the chapter's themes and therefore has a wide possible range of relevant image-word relations. Its significances, however, are far from

	Anfang, ist Beginn; Sie ist Gedanke, Begriff und Sinn. Die Straße ist Ursprung, ist trächtige Saat, Ister erster Baustein gewaltiger Tat." Theweleit's caption: *Flüsse des deutschen Faschismus*		obvious. Theweleit's caption metaphorizes the dusty half-formed road as a stream. There's a certain way in which the white road cutting through the landscape resembles a stream; there's a visual irony at play in the dry road's resemblance to a river. Theweleit's text on the nearby pages is a discussion of pro-libido and anti-libido discourse. In Theweleit's discussion generally, fascism is always associated with anti-fluvial and anti-libido attitudes; the fascistic river, therefore, is a dry road. The image of anti-libidinal dryness also connects to Theweleit's view of late Freud and his vision of mental health. Here, Theweleit uses Nazi propaganda imagery ironically against itself.
Atlantis magazine, Zürich, November 1936	Wheel-level view of a car pointed down an empty, incomplete Autobahn. Two black objects, apparently porcupines, on the roadside. Caption: *Begegnung auf der Reichsautobahn (1936)*	Gap	The image is a clear echo of the previous one, although from a worm's eye perspective rather than a bird's eye perspective. In this instance, the focus of the image is on the porcupines as they begin to cross the road. The image is from *Atlantis* magazine, a magazine published in Freiburg im Breisgau and Zürich which focused on culture, art, and travel. The image's significance is highly ambiguous, and there are many possible entry points. On a thematic level, the photo communicates the idea of a *Begegnung*, possibly between nature and civilization. Such an encounter is occurs at a point of intersection between natural and industrialized territories, which brings up the issue of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The image therefore connects in a nonlinear fashion to Theweleit's discussion of that subject four pages later. The more local text is a discussion which contrasts libidinal flows in Henry Miller and Elias Canetti – pro and anti-libidinal writers,

			respectively – and illustrates the qualities of the anti-libidinal mindset: *Permanenz und Härte*. For Theweleit, the *Begrenzung* of libidinal flow cannot be the expression of natural human desire, but is rather an internalization of societal pressures to conform, follow rules, and so forth. Anti-libidinal attitudes and fascism generally are therefore the expression of a hyperactive superego. In the context of the porcupine image, the conflict of natural freedom versus unnatural containment might be seen in the porcupine's presence on the road; the porcupine follows the law of nature and isn't constrained by the road's attempt to control flow of movement. The metal car, which at least aspires to *Permanenz und Härte*, is fully constrained by the flow of the road and its rules – as are the humans in the car.
Film advertisement of Mitchum and Russell in *His Kind of Woman*, projected over a traffic crossing in Los Angeles	Image of man and woman on bed, projected over busy traffic crossing; the image is blurry with many lines of action expressing frantic movement.	Wide flow	Here, Theweleit's image proceeds in the exact opposite direction of the previous image. If the road and traffic generally was constrained and anti-libidinal in the previous image, here it shows itself to be chaotic. The throngs of people, the streaking lights, and the sexual encounter projected larger than life all speak to a libidinal flow which is only barely contained, if at all. Theweleit's discussion, meanwhile, is about death in libidinal and anti-libidinal discourse; from the libidinal view, the threat of death is mainly from the stoppage of flow, either through obstruction or drought. The anti-libidinal view is more concerned with flood, drowning, and the leaking of fluid out of the proper channels. In the image we see, perhaps, the latter anxiety as the cars flow rapidly through their appointed channel, threatening to overflow it. The image on the screen above them is sexual, but

			perhaps the elaborate frame around it is enough to prevent it from overflowing its bounds and causing mass hysteria or melting the carefully guarded sexual lanes of 1951 America. Theweleit's book may be focused on the Freikorps – at least nominally – but Theweleit's claims regarding libidinal and anti-libidinal attitudes and the political consequences thereof are generalized by his inclusion of this and other images of which represent the Unites States as anti-libidinal. Quoted lines from a Neruda poem about dry death accompany the image – a strange choice from a modern perspective, since Neruda's currently better known poems deal in watery death (*Sólo la Muerte*, *Alturas*). The Neruda and the Los Angeles image work together to generalize – perhaps even to try to universalize Theweleit's claims regarding fluvial anxieties.
Lucien Coutaud, *Plage du Cheval de Brique*, 1955	Abstracted human figures in what appears to be a beach landscape with tidepools; there are two main figures and many smaller figures in the background. One has their pelvis replaced with a diamond-shaped image of a man confronting an ox. The other has their pelvis replaced with what appears to be a beach image but is too small to see. Each of them have fly-trap heads with tiny human figures stuck inside.	Gap	Theweleit's discussion in the nearby pages treats the political identities of rivers; named rivers, he contends, become political and historical – writers who wish to speak about rivers as fluvial rather than political must keep them nameless. The image is difficult to situate within this context. The image is from surrealist Lucien Coutaud's exposition, *Plage du Cheval de Brique*; the name of this particular image isn't cited by Theweleit – if it has one. The image's abstract forms are mostly sexual rather than geographic or even fluvial; the male figure's legs appear to be made out of women, but this doesn't have a clear bearing upon the content of the text. Thematically, all the elements are there – the figures, the sexes, and water in the form of tidepools and what appears to be a beach – and yet the significance of the image is not clear.

			The surreal and ambiguous aspect might connect to the text's discussion of how to interpret rivers – the viewer is given many interpretive options by the image's strange patterns and mix of representation and abstraction. More than other images in Theweleit's chapter, *Plage du Cheval de Brique* slows the reader down and forces them to consider many possible interpretations – unless they are simply frustrated by the image's ambiguity and skip past it. Perhaps the real trouble is that the figures, although containing some gendered elements, are not clearly a male/female pair in which the female is associated with water. Rather, the figures are of ambiguous gender and neither is more strongly associated with water – they're all on the beach.
Selected panels from "Only a Poor Old Man", an Uncle Scrooge comic by Carl Barks for Disney's *Four Color Comics*, 1951	A dam erupts, creating a flow of water and gold; Uncle Scrooge ("Dagobert Duck") swims through the gold joyously; the Beagle Boys ("Panzerknackern") dive after him and bump their heads.	Narrow flow	Relevant connections discussed in detail above.
Postcard, Riga, 1906	A sea scene; the watery forms of women are visible among tumultuous waves.	Wide flow	Here, the most obvious connections are very obvious indeed; Theweleit's discussion in the nearby text is about the cultural symbology which associates women with water, and here we have an example of women whose bodies are constructed of water. The image has far-reaching possible connections since it relates so clearly to the main themes of the chapter.
Drawings by Paul Kamm during	Two images, both portraying uniformed	Gap	Here, Theweleit is launching in earnest into his flow of examples. Most of the

WWI, according to the citation – Theweleit's citation seems dubious, as Paul Kamm seems to have been active from the early thirties onward, although information about him is difficult to find.	men with women. The first image show a man in black grasping at a naked woman, whereas the second shows two army men – one older and one younger, courting a woman in a gown.		page is made up of quotes from Goethe, Heine, Brecht, Davičo, and Roumain, demonstrating instances of the trope which concerns Theweleit: the association and occasional equation of women and water. Here, the image is somewhat ambiguous. The provenance of the images is unknown; Paul Kamm illustrated a number of erotic novels in the thirties and forties, focusing on sadomasochism and transvestism. The sexual aspect of these images is apparent, although they don't present a clear example of the trope which Theweleit discusses. The women's flowing gown and shawl could be seen as fluvial, or otherwise the overly soft rendering of their faces might reflect the softness which Theweleit connects to the trope and its opposite, the Freikorps self-image.
Notice from the *Freiburger Lokalanzeiger*, Summer 1975	A newspaper notice announcing a women's soccer match held by *Aktion Sorgenkind* (now known as *Aktion Mensch*). One of the teams is named the *Quellennymphen*.	Gap	This image is a bizarre one, although its most obvious possible significance is clear: a women's team calls itself the *Quellennymphen*, which serves as an example of the women-water trope that Theweleit lays out here. In this part of the text, it becomes difficult to lay out explicit connections between images and particular passages of text because the text is all quotes, generally left undiscussed, and because there are so many images put next to one another. The effect on the reader is an overwhelming, and the connections between images and words extend in all directions. This particular image is puzzling because of the fact that it's an image, and not a quote – the image is a scan of a newspaper clipping, and it shows very little beyond the quotation itself. It's essentially a quoted block of text from a newspaper made to function as an image. The question becomes: why scan the newspaper instead of just

			quoting it? One argument would be that the newspaper clipping wouldn't make sense in Theweleit's barrage of quotations from authors and poets, but this leap in tone and meaning is already present because the newspaper clipping still functions as a text, despite including some visual artifacts of being a scanned newspaper ad. As a result, the clipping functions as both an image and a text and blurs the line between the two. The clipping draws attention to its image-ness by using a different size and style of font than the rest of the text. By departing in shape and formatting from the rest of the text, it draws attention to the shape of the text as a whole, which becomes interesting as Theweleit's use of poetry leads to short lines that leave a lot of negative space on the page.
Postcard, "Wyk auf Föhr", 1905	Three nude women seem to make up the body of a fish at sea; the words "Eine appetitliche Flunder" appear on the top right of the postcard.	Wide flow	This image is one of the more suggestive ones in the chapter, with its caption drawing attention to the desirability of its naked female subjects. While the image contributes to Theweleit's flood of examples, it simultaneously undermines the examples as well by being so transparent in its motivations; the subject of the image is naked women as attractive objects. The fact that they make up a fish shape hardly disguises that fact, which makes the image a problem for Theweleit's argument. Theweleit wishes to dig into psychoanalytical and cultural grounds for the association of women and water in European cultural tropes, but this image invokes that association solely as a license to depict naked women. In the depiction of nymphs, mermaids, and other watery women, one cannot help but notice their tendency towards undress, made palpable to audiences by their classical or fantastical aspects. Of

			course, that interpretation doesn't foreclose Theweleit's more complex theories – women and water might be associated because of evolutionary psychology and also because such an association provides a license for nudity – but it does lead the reader away from them.
A mural by Swiss painter Lothar Bechstein, from Albert Speer's 1937 journal *Kunst im Dritten Reich*.	Three women beside the sea, in various transitional states of undress	Wide flow	Here we have essentially the same image as the previous one, given a different connotation by Theweleit's caption, which identifies it as a mural by Lothar Bechstein. Whereas the previous image was a commercial product – a postcard – here we have the fine art equivalent. The fact that Theweleit encountered this image in Speer's *Kunst im Dritten Reich* gives the work a different connotation, although that information is in the notes at the end of the book and is not in the main chapter. These notes on the images appear to be new additions in the latest collected edition of *Männerphantasien* and are not present in older copies that I've seen. In the light of Speer's later involvement, one might look at the image for traces of Nazi ideals of purity and beauty – something which clearly factors into the following image – but although the image portrays the kind of classical beauty which the Nazis later imitated and narrowed, it doesn't appear to extol Nazi ideals any more than the majority of paintings at the time, with their countless pretty white women in classical poses. As for connections with the text, they are too numerous and too general. Most of the nearby quotes consist of the work of Henry Miller, who portrayed the woman-water trope with greater gusto than most novelists – although Miller's depictions of sexuality are highly associative in

			general, and water is far from the only thing which gets tied up with women and female sexuality in his works.
Das Wasser, Adolf Ziegler, ~1933. Painting hung in the München Braunen Haus.	Two women, blonde, seated, naked.	Wide flow	Lots of ink has already been spilled on the works on Adolf Ziegler, who put his modest painting skills fully in the service of Nazi ideology and propaganda. These two female figures, lumped onto a bench as they are, are clearly meant to represent the ideal of the Aryan woman. One holds a chunky sheaf of wheat, while the other holds a bowl of water. The connection between women and water is certainly there, although here the water is no longer in the form of an ocean; the bowl appears to be for hand washing. The title of the painting, *Das Wasser*, implies that the painting is meant to be taken as a representation of water, fertility, and agriculture generally. Interestingly, the text of Theweleit's barrage of examples does not focus on or even include quotes from Freikorps members or Nazi representatives like Ziegler; Ziegler's image being one of the few representatives of fascistic association between women and water is peculiar.
Poitevin, *Les Diableries Erotique*, 1832	An enormous woman lays in the water, while people line up to dive off a cliff into her vagina.	Narrow flow	As is typical of this *Strang* of example images, the water connection is obvious. The tone of the image is wanton, absurd, and lighthearted. The joke appears to be at the expense of Eduard Mörike, whose poem "Anakreon" Theweleit quotes: "Vom Leukadischen Fels herab Stürz' ich mich in die weiß schäumende Meerflut mit dem Brand der Liebe!" In the poem, Anakreon threatens to follow the example of his fellow erotic poet Sappho and throw himself from the Leucadian cliffs.

Unidentified painting from Albert Speer's 1937 journal *Kunst im Dritten Reich*.	A woman wearing a white dress, with a watering can	Gap	Many of Theweleit's images require the reader to do some degree of extra research in order to understand how they fit with the text, but in some cases that research becomes very difficult – or even impossible. Such is the case with this image, which Theweleit mentions as coming from Speer's journal. The artist and name of the painting are not specified, and so far I haven't managed to determine what they might be. If this is an instance where the image makes more sense in the context of its cultural impact or history, the possibility of sense-making seems to be foreclosed by lack of detailed citation. On a surface level, the image is a similarly shallow connection between women and water as the previous image; a woman is shown with a container of water, which in this case she uses.
Hieronymus Bosch, illustration from *Ausschweifungen der Mönche*, 1562	Monks float along a river inside of a clam, feasting, making music, and kissing.	Gap	This is an unusual image because it doesn't strongly feature women at all; most of the figures appear to be male monks. Instead, the image's significance appears to be more connected to the libidinal issues of the chapter; the dissipation of the monks is mirrored in their voyage in a low-riding vessel, swept along the libidinal flow and in danger of drowning in it.
Saks Fifth Avenue advertisement, *New York Times*, June 1977	A woman sits on the rock in the water; the lowest ⅕ is advertisement copy and photos of fragrance products	Wide flow	With this image ends the flow of examples that makes up the middle of the chapter. Theweleit's first words after this deluge sum it up well: *"Es ist ein Fluss ohne Ende und riesig breit, der so durch die Literaturen fließt."* There is a broadness to this image, with the female subject taking up only a small portion of the large frame. The effect is solitary and isolating. The image shows turbulent water, which creates hundreds of tiny shapes and waves, magnifying the sense of space.

A photo from a late *The Who* LP. Theweleit notes that he took the image from a *Männerbuch* and inverted it.	The image is of a figure on what appears to be a shore, looking out upon two large rocks. At the top is a barely legible word: Männerbilder. The image is inverted and laid directly in the flow of the text.	Gap	The formatting of the image is remarkable, in the context of the style of this book. Most images are either given their own page or take up the upper half of a page, while this one occupies its own space in the lower right of the page, forcing paragraphs to bend around it. Here, his image seems to be in an illustrative mode, connecting explicitly to his statement "*Die Vagina als Eingang in den Ozean, als Teil aller Ozeane, die Ozeane als Teil jeder Vagina."* The inverted image illustrates this sentence, as the oceanside rocks resemble legs, leading up to the ocean beyond them.
Illustration by Max Ernst, titled *Seelenfrieden*	A man sleeps on an easy chair, floating in the ocean. In the background, a tower is surrounded by a fountain of water. A bare arm emerges from the water.	Wide flow	The image rather explicitly depicts a psychoanalytically inflected understanding of dreams, with the phallic and libidinal aspects emphasized. The woman in water might be present as well – the arm itself isn't clearly gendered, although the musculature looks feminine. The discussion in the nearby pages is of a scene in *Dantons Tod*, in which a prostitute character figures herself in fluvial terms. The scene is of interest to Theweleit because it puts the fluvial connection in a feminine voice; the prostitute declares herself oceanic, rather than having male figures image her as such. The image of the dreaming man is therefore ironic; the Büchner play is the product of a man's imagination, and the feminine voice therein is ersatz in that sense. The image is general enough to have a broad bearing upon various passages and themes in the chapter, but its placement here inevitably plays against the content of the text.

Francis Picabia, Cover of *Littérature* Journal, 1911	Ink describing various female forms, with the word *Littérature* written on their bodies.	Gap	This image is highly ambiguous and general, potentially applying to various passages in the chapter. Unlike most such images in the chapter, the fluvial element here is subtle; the loose flow of the ink lines and the way the headless female forms guide the eye upward through the composition is as close as the image comes to representing the women/water trope. The nearby discussion in the text is not so focused on modern literature as it is upon medieval sagas. The disconnection between the focus of the text and the content of the image is palpable. The image functions as both a node of meaning and as a gap.
Günter Brus, *Irrwisch*, 1971. Theweleit quotes from Brus's book in his notes: "ihre Augen schweifen…In die Vergangenheit…in die Zukunft."	The image is a diagram of a complex mechanism which connects a typewriter, a bell, and a needle which hovers above a woman's breast, presumably puncturing her if a certain key is pressed.	Wide flow	The sadomasochistic element of the image is its most prominent feature. Theweleit's discussion in the nearby text is of a trope opposite to that which dominated the chapter: women as land, particularly land coded as unconquered and vast. Woman in this case stands for deterritorialized land in the medieval sagas which Theweleit discusses; the female body and the unconquered land are the primary concerns of the adventurer/hero in Theweleit's analysis, and to a certain extent they blend into one another. The violence against a woman in the image thereby echoes the colonial violence of de/reterritorialization discussed in the text, and this resonance strengthens Theweleit's claim that violence against women and colonial violence are expressions of the same thing – in Theweleit's case, the drive for libidinal control.
Poitevin, *Les Diableries Erotique*, 1832	A figure in a dress, carrying a penis, chased by a cupid figure riding on a	Gap	Theweleit's discussion here is of the Oedipus complex, but which the image might represent in some loose way. Overall, the image's connection with

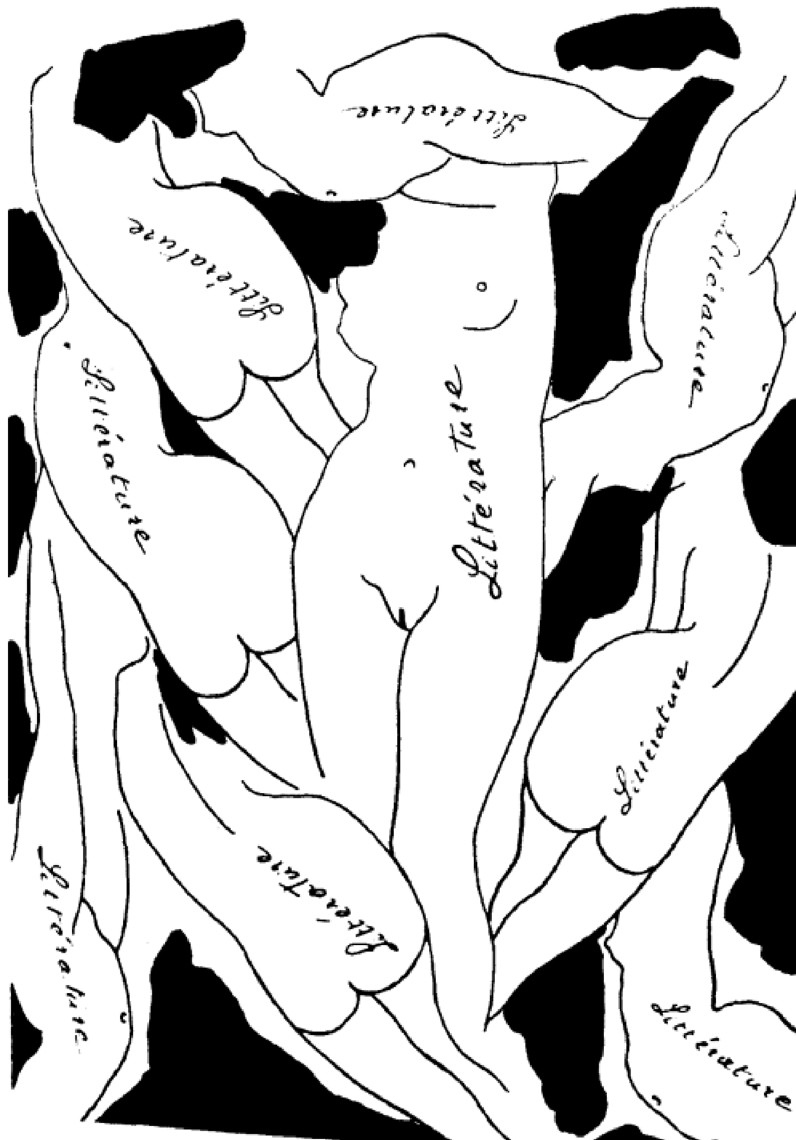
	winged, chicken-like penis.		the text is ambiguous, and it functions as a very bizarre sort of gap in the text. The sexual element is clear, and the image of a woman hunched under the weight of a giant penis is certainly broadly suggestive, but its connection with the nearby text – beyond providing a moment of strange and crude humor – is not clear.

Conclusion

As the map above shows, *Männerphantasien* is a work which defies the kind of image-word relation analysis that worked in Lavater and *Maus*. However, it's still possible and necessary to analyze as an imagetext. A reading which ignores or misses how images are used won't be able to identify the work's *Minusverfahren*, and won't be able to see the depth of Theweleit's commitment to an anti-fascist style of writing and thinking. The passive syntheses which Theweleit's work generates are more unusually difficult to summarize and formulate as an argument, and intentionally so. The message of *Männerphantasien* is ultimately not about the history of fascism in Weimar Germany but rather about how fascistic thinking exists also in modern times, in the reader, and in the norms of society. Academia is not spared, as Theweleit's method demonstrates his suspicion of the norms of academic writing and his desire to promote natural flows of thought and discourse. The weakness of the work is that Theweleit is so general in his assessment of fascist thinking that fascism itself seems to lose its sting; Theweleit sees fascism in so many places that it becomes mundane. Still, the provocation of the work still functions, especially as a point of contrast to typical approaches to academic writing.

So instead of working through the individual image-word relations in detail, as we did before, instead it is better to look at them as a whole and think about how they operate

collectively. We recognize in Theweleit's work a flow of images which Theweleit has cultivated and controlled. What is the effect of this flow? What is the flow like? And although it's impossible to describe each detail of the flow exhaustively, what does the big picture look like?



"Das Unbeschreibliche
Hier ist es gethan;
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan."
Goethe, *Faust - Der Tragödie zweiter Teil*

Mapping Imagetext Flows: The Case of Theweleit's *Ströme*

One word which I've often used to describe Theweleit's use of images is "overwhelming". When describing Theweleit's imagetext flow as a whole, this overwhelming aspect is the most obvious. What is it about this flow that overwhelms? The images overwhelm precisely because they don't proceed logically. The reader, faced with their presence in the text, is often at a loss to explain this presence and fit it into their own understanding of what's being spoken about. They do not fit the order which the reader is making of the text; they therefore are either ignored or kept as an unresolved remainder which the rest of the text might – but ultimately does not – explain. To be left with so many unexplained remainders when reading a text is a humbling experience, and it signals to the reader that something is going on beyond their full comprehension. It functions almost on the religious, instinctual level which so many have feared images for; the flow of images presents itself, but defies full comprehension. Whereas Theweleit's text is often fairly easy to understand, although it digresses, in his images we find a show of force; the denial of full comprehension to the reader as a demonstration of the deeper understanding which the creator of the imagetext possesses.

Imagetext analysis can also be affective, when an experience with an imagetext has an emotional element. When faced with images, the meaning of which is unclear to the reader and which are not fully explained, one might feel frustration or intimidation at the denial of comprehension; the Bosch image, with its strange interjection into seemingly unrelated material, might provoke something of the kind. One might also respond to the missing meaning in a different way, experiencing it as an expression of loss or of as a kind of "haunting"; the unresolved portions of the imagetext might express a present absence which impresses itself

upon the reader. The enigmatic images of the construction of the Autobahn, with their prominent use of negative space, might have this sort of effect. In the case of Theweleit, the images can also be simply experienced as a kind of play – indeed, many of the image choices are playful, like the juxtaposition of Melville with Frankenstein or the outright joke at the expense of Mörike. Of course, the issue with Theweleit is that his images are all of these things, and many others as well. Theweleit's imagetext is overwhelming not only because it ignores the rational order of the text, but also because it provokes so many sorts of emotional responses. Theweleit deliberately develops a flow of imagetext which is irrational, emotional, overwhelming, anti-hermeneutic, irreducible, digressive rather than directed – what sort of flow is this? It's precisely the sort of flow which Theweleit sees as the fascist's greatest fear: it's Theweleit's version of a feminine flow. It's his écriture féminine and his peinture féminine as well.

Some scholars have detected this note in Theweleit's work; Michael Rothberg mentions the resemblance to écriture féminine in his article "Documenting Barbarism: Yourcenar's 'Male Fantasies', Theweleit's 'Coup'": "...Thus, we ought to situate Theweleit's endeavor in specifically feminist context…From the mid-1970s, theoretical work from France also began to influence German feminism along with the theoretical stylistics of Irigaray's and Cixous's écriture féminine, which Theweleit's 'flowing' style often seems approximate".[89] Similarly, Alice Yeager Kaplan acknowledges the feminist influences on Theweleit and compares him with Spiegelman in her article "Theweleit and Spiegelman: of Mice and Men"[90], which discusses the way both books deal with inherited trauma from fathers who experienced Nazi fascism, albeit in

[89] Rothberg, Michael. "Documenting Barbarism: Yourcenar's 'Male Fantasies', Theweleit's 'Coup.'" *Cultural Critique*, no. 29, 1994, pp. 83. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1354422.
[90] Kaplan, Alice Yeager. "Theweleit and Spiegelman: Of Mice and Men," *Remaking History*, ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Marian (Seattle, 1989)

very different ways. The feminine flow of the imagetext was not lost on these scholars, although they lacked the framework to articulate what this feminine flow consists of.

Although Theweleit doesn't mention Cixous, he certainly seems to have had something similar to her proposals in mind; he makes liberal use of the excluded other of text, image – which Lessing and others maligned as the feminine, weaker counterpart to text. Theweleit works with Lessing's assessment of images as feminine, but overturns Lessing's values by embracing it on the grounds of its association with femininity. Using images, and particularly using them in the flow that he does, part of his anti-fascist approach to academic writing. Theweleit writes about the roots of fascist anxieties and fears and transforms his own text into what they fear: the unconventional, the heterogynous, and the "impure". Rather than fearing their ambiguity, their force, and their power to influence a text's meaning, Theweleit instead embraces images and forms his text around the interplay between image and word. When one overlooks Theweleit's use of image, one overlooks the fact that their tendency to sway the text and make it ambiguous is highly intentional. Writing in the form of imagetext is the most fundamental of the anti-fascist measures which Theweleit employs in his work; he rejects even the "purity" of the linguistic sign, instead embracing its murkiness, its complexity, and its internal heterogeneity. We see this attitude, for example, when Theweleit uses a newspaper clipping as an image. He could just as easily have simply quoted the newspaper article, but instead he uses the clipping itself as an image, showing how text can also be image. Theweleit has continued to write in this way for the rest of his career and up to the present day, creating rich imagetexts that are provocative and ambiguous while still carrying persuasive force.

There are aspects of Theweleit's work and its emulation of an écriture féminine that are deeply troubling. The less troubling aspect is that Theweleit isn't a woman but tries to articulate

a feminine flow. It's clear that he's emulating the things which fascists fear and oppose, and that he therefore embraces a style of writing which heavily features things that are associated with the feminine: image, anti-rationality, openness rather than directness, and so forth. And of course, it's perfectly fine to embrace those things and see the value in them, but one wonders in the first case whether Theweleit's imagetext can really represent something female in the way that he seems to want. Can you be anti-fascist by assuming this seemingly feminine pose? Is Theweleit in a position to do so? Theweleit is consciously slipping into the kind of conflation between the fluvial and the feminine that he discusses, but certainly doesn't address the implications of doing so.

Beyond the fact that he takes it upon himself to create a feminine flow here and represent women's concerns, the more troubling aspect of the imagetext is that Theweleit seems to ignore some troubling implications of positioning his imagetext as "irrational" or "anti-hermeneutic", "unknowable", "emotional", and therefore "feminine". It's a combination that's sure to annoy fascists, but does that make it a responsible and sensible way to position the text? Theweleit inverts the traditional value structure by emphasizing the feminine and the image, but there's a lot of baggage which comes along with that structure such that, even inverted, it generates some concerning implications. Theweleit's use of imagetext is deeply committed to opposing fascism and misogyny, but its opposition is perhaps too simple, in that he rejects these things in such an uncomplicated way – if fascists say that order is good and therefore anything violating order must be destroyed, Theweleit responds that order is bad and disorder should be nurtured. If misogynists say that women are emotional and irrational and that's their flaw, Theweleit responds that it's a virtue and a strength. Utter and complete contradiction of the opposing view is often tempting, especially when there are compelling emotional reasons for opposition, such as

a German scholar in the 1970s with a fascist father might have. However, this kind of contradiction is not always sensical and can lead to troubling implications – as Theweleit's inversion of misogynistic anxieties about the feminine is itself disturbing.

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