Visual writing: a critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels from a visual communication design perspective

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ABSTRACT:
This thesis examines hybrid novels – novels in which graphic devices like photographs, drawings and experimental typography are integrated into the written text. Within hybrid novels, word and image combine to create a text that is neither purely written, nor purely visual. Although not new, hybrid novels are increasingly appearing in commercial publishing, and increasingly recognised as an insufficiently explained phenomenon by both literary critics and academics. Book reviews and essays show that readers and critics accustomed to conventional novels can find hybrid novels perplexing. They ask: What are these images? What are they doing in novels? How does one ‘read’ them? These questions point to the need for new approaches to the analysis and critique of hybrid texts, approaches that account for the interplay between words and images. This thesis proposes that Visual Communication Designers – those versed in both the verbal and the visual – offer useful analytical tools and critique for the study of hybrid texts. So the research asks: How could a designer’s particular knowledge of word-image interplay explain the function of graphic devices in hybrid novels? A preliminary study of fifteen hybrid novels develops: criteria for identifying hybrid novels; a typology of graphic devices in hybrid novels – photographs, illustrative elements, unconventional typesetting, ephemera and diagrams; and a set of analytical tools to critique the effectiveness of the graphic devices in hybrid novels. Then, a primary study uses the analytical tools to critique the graphic devices in three exemplar hybrid novels: Jonathan Safran Foer’s Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Steven Hall’s The Raw Shark Texts and Dave Egger’s You Shall Know Our Velocity. This thesis is practice-led in that an issue identified through my design practice led to the research, and analytical and critical tools derived from practice are applied as research methods. The research also draws upon a theoretical framework from the emergent field of Visual Studies, where scholars call for the interdisciplinary study of hybrid texts in a critically acute and widely accessible way. Finally, this thesis is itself a hybrid text; a combination of graphic devices and writing form parts of the argument.

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Today there is a wide range to fuel this confusion, from Graphic Design, Visual Communication Design, User Experience Design, User Interface Design and many more. Figuring out the difference is pretty much a learning process. These can include art history, design fundamentals and history, philosophy, film critique, photography, human behavior, curatorship, journalism or any other subject related to the human visual perception and communication. Tasks. The perspective of a visual communication designer is a wide one. As you can see from the above tasks and research, it touches on almost all the design perspectives. That means that the perspective would be of the whole, rather than one specific part. This would be in line with an Art Director or a Brand Manager. Drawing Out: How designers analyse written texts in visual ways The Routledge Companion to Design Research. 2014 | book-chapter. Source: Zoe Sadokierski. Preferred source. Photographic Devices in Jonathan Safran Foer's Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close. 2013 | book-chapter. Source: Zoe Sadokierski. Visual writing: a critique of graphic devices in hybrid novels from a visual communication design perspective. 2010 | dissertation-thesis. Source: Zoe Sadokierski.