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## Epilogue

A decisive insight in today's philosophy of images is the recognition that objects of vision are as a rule moving ones, rather than static. Vision and movement are bound up with each other. It has of course been known for a long time that the seeing eye is never at rest,<sup>1</sup> but that is not the main point here. The main point is that when we open our eyes to the world, the picture offering itself is, normally, a moving one. Likewise, our visual mental images tend to fluctuate, rather than stand still. Still images are man-made artefacts, compromises forced upon their creators by there not being technical means to put together moving ones. Drawing *image sequences*, the precursors of the animated image, of course has had a long tradition; and by the twentieth century there emerged film, animation, video. However, it was not until quite recently that handling and even creating moving images became possible on one's own computer. This latter development forms the immediate technological background of the pictorial turn, set on its way to victory. We now perceive still images as limiting cases of moving ones, we realize that it is the moving image that embodies what an image really is. Moving images are not in need of interpretation, or captions, or verbal context, as opposed to the way still images are. The notorious problem of the ambiguity of the static

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<sup>1</sup> A brilliant summary of this issue is provided by Ernst H. Gombrich, in his essay "Standards of Truth: The Arrested Image and the Moving Eye", in W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *The Language of Images*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980. I have discussed Gombrich's position in my paper "Gombrich on Image and Time", in *Journal of Art Historiography* ([https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/media\\_139131\\_en.pdf](https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/media_139131_en.pdf)), no. 1 (December 2009), published in hardcopy in Klaus Sachs-Hombach and Rainer Totzke (eds.), *Bilder – Sehen – Denken: Zum Verhältnis von begrifflich-philosophischen und empirisch-psychologischen Ansätzen in der bildwissenschaftlichen Forschung*, Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2011, pp. 9–32, reprinted in my volume *Meaning and Motoricity: Essays on Image and Time*, Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2014, pp. 53–71.

image herewith disappears.<sup>2</sup> Let me add that new light is here shed on another notorious problem, that of the existing or not existing grammar/syntax of pictures, discussed in volume 3 of the series *Perspectives on Visual Learning* both by Forceville and by Bárányi. Just think of the primal situation of one looking around in one's visual surroundings: looking at this *and* then at that, *or* at that, or *not* looking at something.

Moving images happen in time. Images and time hang together.<sup>3</sup> There is an intrinsic connection between how images mean and how time flows. We cannot gain a proper understanding of the function of images unless we have an at least approximate notion of what time is. On the other hand, the concept of time cannot be grasped through verbal definitions, as the history of philosophy has so depressingly shown. There is a famous passage by St. Augustine: "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not."<sup>4</sup> Augustine's embarrassment was understandable, since clearly he possessed certain perceptual images related to time, did not however have at his disposal, as neither have we today, a verbally articulated explanation. What we possess are verbal *images*, in the sense of verbal *metaphors*. Time cannot be conceptualized except by metaphors, and so ultimately by images, of movement in space. A fundamental metaphor is that of the *flow of*

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<sup>2</sup> The problem was classically formulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein, in a typescript posthumously published as *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I. This is way the passage inserted under § 22 runs: "Imagine a picture representing a boxer in a particular stance. Now, this picture can be used to tell someone how he should stand, should hold himself; or how he should not hold himself; or how a particular man did stand in such-and-such a place; and so on."

<sup>3</sup> The connection between image and time is the central topic of the chapter by James J. Kimble in the present volume. I myself have extensively discussed the topic in my film & metaphor essay (see note 5 below) and my Gombrich paper (see note 1 above), as well as in the chapters "Time As a Figure of Thought and As Reality" and "Image and Time in the Theory of Gestures", both in my volume *Meaning and Motoricity: Essays on Image and Time*.

<sup>4</sup> I have analyzed the Augustine passage in detail in my chapter "Die konservative Zeitauffassung", in my volume *Zeit und Bild*, Bielefeld: transcript, 2012, pp. 141–194, for this analysis see pp. 144 f.

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*time*. It is a complex figure of thought, synthesizing the experience of the passage of time as a physical force on the one hand, and the experience of the present as gradually receding into the past on the other. I have extensively discussed the flow of time metaphor in my 2008 essay “Film, Metaphor, and the Reality of Time”<sup>5</sup>. The essay contains a section with the heading “The Pressure of Time”, providing essential references to William James and Hugo Münsterberg; preceded by the section “The River of Time”, in which I begin by quoting the seminal twentieth-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein writing about the flow of time, him even attempting to draw a picture of that flow (Figure 1). The attempt is significant, since Wittgenstein here clearly thought himself able to at least *indicate* in a drawing something he implied one cannot *say*. The text runs: “The immediate finds itself in a constant flux [Fluß]. (It has in fact the form of a stream.)” As time went by, Wittgenstein became unhappy with the flow of time metaphor,<sup>6</sup> as indeed, to the detriment of his later philosophy I believe, with the role of metaphor in language generally,<sup>7</sup> the point I here wish to make however is that from a manu-

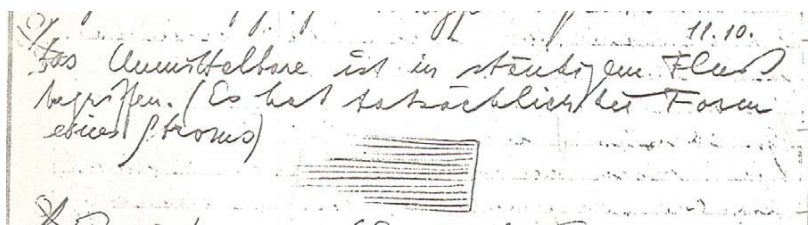


Figure 1: Wittgenstein's drawing, Nachlaß, MS 107, p. 159 (10 November 1929).

<sup>5</sup> *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (June 2009), pp. 109–118, accessible at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17400300902816796>, for the unabridged version see [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333371028\\_Kristof\\_Nyiri\\_Film\\_Metaphor\\_and\\_the\\_Reality\\_of\\_Time](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333371028_Kristof_Nyiri_Film_Metaphor_and_the_Reality_of_Time).

<sup>6</sup> As one can see from his 1934 *Brown Book* dictation, cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958, pp. 107 f.

<sup>7</sup> See the chapter “Image and Metaphor in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein”, in my volume *Meaning and Motoricity*.

script entry written at about the same time as the *Brown Book* dictation it becomes clear that Wittgenstein imagined the flow of time – and so this is the way we should interpret his earlier drawing – to run from left to right,<sup>8</sup> as Western thought, possibly influenced by the direction we write, commonly imagines.<sup>9</sup> It is important to recall, however – this is how I go on in my film & metaphor essay – what the eminent philosopher J. J. C. Smart, probably not uninfluenced by the *Brown Book*, in his 1949 classic paper wrote:

There are certain metaphors which we commonly feel constrained to use when talking about time. We say that we are advancing through time, from the past into the future, much as a ship advances through the sea into unknown waters. Sometimes, again, we think of ourselves as stationary, watching time go by, just as we may stand on a bridge and watch leaves and sticks float down the stream underneath us. ... Thus instead of speaking of our advance through time we often speak of the flow of time.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> MS 115, p. 172: “beim Nachdenken über die Zeit [hält uns] das Bild des Vorüberfließens gefangen hält... Wie etwa, wenn wir an einem Fluß stehen auf dem Holz geflößt wird: die Stämme ziehen an uns vorüber; die, welche vorüber sind, sind alle rechts von uns, die noch kommen, sind links. ... Wir sprechen vom Lauf der Ereignisse, aber auch vom Laufe der Zeit...”

<sup>9</sup> See, too, the Kimble chapter referred to above. I have discussed this subject quite extensively in my paper “Time and Communication”, in F. Stadler and M. Stöltzner (eds.), *Time and History / Zeit und Geschichte*,ontos verlag, Frankfurt/M., 2006, pp. 301–316. I here stress that time in the medium of preliterate orality is experienced as cyclic, rather than as linear. And it is indeed “a cyclic view of time that the daily movement of the sun, the changes of the moon, the seasons of the year, and the succession of generations in the animate world suggest” (*ibid.*, p. 306). The idea of linear time is a culturally subordinate one, an idea that did not become dominant prior to the age of the printing press. In my paper I refer to Jan Assmann as providing a masterly summary (*Ägypten: Eine Sinngeschichte*, Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999, pp. 27–38) of the simultaneous, but unequal, presence of the cyclic and the linear views in medieval Christianity (with the Church partaking in the sacred linear history leading to salvation, while events here in this world followed a cyclic pattern).

<sup>10</sup> “The River of Time”, *Mind*, vol. 58, no. 232 (Oct. 1949), p. 483.

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This varying pattern of time experience observed by Smart was rediscovered by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson some decades later in their paradigm-creating work *Metaphors We Live By*. They distinguish between the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor on the one hand, and the TIME IS STATIONARY AND WE MOVE THROUGH IT metaphor on the other, stressing, however, that these are just two subcases of the TIME PASSES US metaphor.<sup>11</sup> Lakoff and Johnson return to this topic, and analyze it in quite some depth, in their *Philosophy in the Flesh*, where they contrast THE MOVING TIME METAPHOR with THE MOVING OBSERVER METAPHOR.<sup>12</sup> In conceptual metaphor theory, these metaphors have come to be referred to in brief as the “ego-moving” and the “time-moving” metaphors, with Lera Boroditsky even drawing a picture representing them (Figure 2).<sup>13</sup>

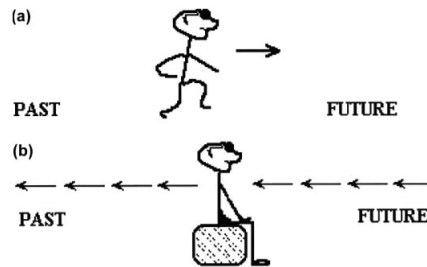


Figure 2: From Lera Boroditsky, “Metaphoric Structuring: Understanding Time through Spatial Metaphors”, *Cognition* 75 (2000).

I will below soon come back to the topic of metaphors, but let me first embark on a different train of thought by noting that the concept of the flow of time can be very well expressed in some specific *visual* languages: the languages of deaf communities, the language of gestures. There is every reason to believe, and this is the second deci-

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<sup>11</sup> Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980, pp. 42 ff.

<sup>12</sup> New York: Basic Books, 1999, see esp. pp. 139–149.

<sup>13</sup> In my film & metaphor paper (cf. note 5 above) I have provided an extended discussion of the Lakoff–Johnson analysis as put forward in their *Philosophy in the Flesh* book, and also displayed the Boroditsky picture.

sive insight in today's philosophy of images, that the language of gestures is the primordial language of humankind. My Postscript to volume 1 of the series *Perspectives on Visual Learning* provides detailed arguments, here let me just refer to the central point: verbal language could not have possibly emerged before the coming into being of visual language – the language of gestures and facial expressions. Verbal language rests on conventions, the language of gestures rests on immediate visual resemblances. In order to form conventions you cannot but use a language, and in the course of the development of verbal language – we are speaking of an evolution that probably happened as late as perhaps 30,000 or so years ago – the only language humankind had been in a position to use was visual language. Now once the fact of the historical priority of visual language is accepted, the primacy of visual thinking, too, must clearly be recognized. Our early ancestors were, obviously, thinking beings, however since they did not yet possess a verbal language, their thinking must have been sensual, and indeed, fundamentally, visual.<sup>14</sup>

The emergence of verbal language – spoken language – based on the language of gestures and facial expressions, must have been an immensely complex process, with so-called mouth-gestures – sound-producing mouth movements, most importantly lip movements – probably playing an essential mediating role. Now visibility is primarily bound up with the right brain hemisphere, while symbolic – verbal,

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<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it is fitting to refer here to Carl Gustav Jung's entirely hazy, but inescapably haunting, notions of archetypical images and the collective unconscious they make up. This is how F. C. Bartlett, in his classic *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), sums up the issue, remarking that if his summary "appears to be obscure", he can plead only "the difficulty of the original statements as affording at least some excuse". The collective unconscious is "a storehouse of pictures, of ideas, of themes. It preserves psychological material". There can be no doubt, and here Bartlett directly quotes Jung, that, "for example, those archaic symbolisms which constantly crop up in dreams and fantasies are collective". However, the question we must ask, concludes Bartlett, is "whether there is any way of showing in actual fact that there does exist this common stock of images, ideas and formulae which continue independently of individual acquisition" (*Remembering*, 1995 edition, pp. 284–287).

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arithmetical – processing with the left one. The rise of verbal language must have placed enormous psychological pressures on the generations subjected to the process. Imagine the accomplished orator of gesture language having to cope with the upcoming of spoken language. Stammering, he must have been looking for words. It is in this light we must see the role of early, and even contemporary, rhetorics. Rhetorics is not about the pictorial embellishment of ordinary spoken language. It is about recovering the original sensual-pictorial content having become buried under mere words. The Budapest Visual Learning Lab has had the good fortune of being able to count Petra Aczél, world-renowned theoretician of rhetorics, among its contributing members from the very beginning.

Developing through the phases of pictographs and syllabic writing, alphabetic writing emerged roughly around the 8th century B.C., in Greece. It was a real blow to visual thinking. It used no word spacing, as neither did early Latin texts, thereby making the optical recognition of single words difficult, with reading out loud the only option: you understood what you heard, not what you saw. This changed in the following centuries, but there still remained dramatic tensions between visuality and textuality, tensions wonderfully brought out by Anna Somfai's chapter "Visual Thinking in Medieval Manuscripts", in volume 2 of our series *Perspectives on Visual Learning*. Medieval manuscripts could be replete with elaborate illuminations and, even, small paintings, but let us add that, as William Ivins classically pointed out,<sup>15</sup> they were not accompanied by scientific drawings, since in the copying process they would have been inevitably distorted anyway. The technology of printing woodcuts, etchings and engravings was unknown in Europe until as late as 1400 A.D; then came book printing with the invention of the movable type by Gutenberg, but even after Gutenberg pictures were relatively rare in humanities publications, since both for the author and the printer to deal with images was much more cumbersome than to deal with texts. With the arrival of the age of photography this began to change, but the change was

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<sup>15</sup> William M. Ivins, Jr., *Prints and Visual Communication*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953.

not radical: humanities authors as a rule did still not add photos to their typescripts, they were happy to type away on their typewriters, pouring out words that dealt with words, even while cinema and television completely altered the culture surrounding them. The radical change, as we have claimed by way of introduction, came with the computer, first enabling authors to work with still images, and then, finally, with moving ones.

The full vocabulary of verbal language must have consisted, in its earliest phases already, mainly of metaphors – we are returning to the topic of metaphor. The meagre core vocabulary could not but refer to the human body itself – its parts, postures, and movements; any extension must have relied on a transposed mode of speech. But let me point out that even gesture language already made use of metaphors. It is indicated here to refer to Wilhelm Wundt's *The Language of Gestures*, the original German editions published around 1900. Wundt claims that gesture language has “an originality and naturalness such as speech neither possesses today nor has ever had in any forms hitherto uncovered by linguistics”, and agrees with the view according to which “gestural communication is the original means of communication”. He first analyzes what he describes as “concrete” gestures, but then introduces also the notion of “symbolic” gestures, of which he writes: “The over-all character of the symbolic gesture ... consists of transmitting the concept to be communicated from one field of perception to another, e.g. implying a temporal conception with spatial means or depicting an abstract idea physically.”<sup>16</sup> Wundt appears to be not only an early forerunner of conceptual metaphor theory, a fact not known to Lakoff and Johnson, but also of the conceptual metaphor approach as applied to the visual – a fact not known to leading figures recently pursuing research on the subject. And let me here add another idea to the theme metaphor

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<sup>16</sup> See Wilhelm Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie: Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythos und Sitte*, vol. I: *Die Sprache*, 2., rev. ed., Leipzig: Engelmann, 1904, ch. 2 (pp. 136–247). This is the chapter that has been published in the English translation Wilhelm Wundt, *The Language of Gestures*, The Hague: Mouton, 1973, see here pp. 56 and 74.



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and visuality, an idea that was indirectly alluded to in the present Epilogue some pages earlier: even verbal metaphors express what they express only by virtue of sensual, mostly visual, images. My Postscript to the first volume of our series *Perspectives on Visual Learning* provides some references backing this idea; just now it should suffice to recall a brilliant passage by the Jesuit Stephen J. Brown, dating back to 1927: metaphor amounts to an “imported image coming vividly before our mental vision, while the notion which is the real subject of the discourse momentarily fades into the background, and is seen only through the image”.<sup>17</sup>

One of the very few who were still aware of Stephen Brown in the post-WWII era was art historian and psychologist Rudolf Arnheim. He extensively quoted Brown in a 1948 essay.<sup>18</sup> At the time,

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen J. Brown, S.J., *The World of Imagery: Metaphor and Kindred Imagery*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1927, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> See Rudolf Arnheim, “Abstract Language and the Metaphor” (1948), in Arnheim, *Toward a Psychology of Art: Collected Essays*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, pp. 266–282. Arnheim here also quotes some parallel, essential, passages from John Middletown Murry, “Metaphor” (1927), in Murry, *Countries of the Mind: Essays in Literary Criticism*, second series, London: Humphrey Milford / Oxford University Press, 1931, pp. 1–16. The train of thought which brings Arnheim to these references is the idea of synesthesia. As he puts it: “we speak without hesitation of a ‘soft tune’, thus applying a quality of touch to sounds, or of a ‘cold color’, thus relating temperature to an optical phenomenon. ... words like ‘cold’, ‘sharp’, ‘high’, ‘dark’ have partially lost their specific perceptual connotation for us... this linguistic phenomenon itself bears witness to the fact that it is natural for man to rely on qualities that different senses have in common. These similarities ... provide the bases of metaphoric speech in poetry” (Arnheim, “Abstract Language and the Metaphor”, p. 275). I discuss Arnheim’s argument at some length in my online book *Pictorial Truth: Essays on Wittgenstein, Realism, and Conservatism*, Dunabogdány: 2007, pp. 115–118, accessible at [https://www.academia.edu/34190040/Pictorial\\_Truth\\_Essays\\_on\\_Wittgenstein\\_Realism\\_and\\_Conservatism](https://www.academia.edu/34190040/Pictorial_Truth_Essays_on_Wittgenstein_Realism_and_Conservatism). Here I also emphasize the impact the turn-of-the-century leading American psychologist Titchener had on Arnheim. Words build on imagery, but imagery, Titchener emphasized, builds on the *motor dimension*, on kinaesthesia. In my Postscript to the first volume of the present *Perspectives on Visual Learning* this how I summed up Titchener’s message: “When an organism encounters a problem, it reacts with a motor answer. If that answer is not equal to

Arnheim still had a long way to go before writing his 1969 magisterial book *Visual Thinking*. That book was the first indication that after decades under the yoke of the linguistic turn, a pictorial turn might follow. For a long time it did not happen. In the past few years however the trend has changed. We believe that the Budapest Visual Learning Lab, during the first ten years of its existence, has visibly contributed to that change.

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the problem, and if the organism is one gifted with sight, it then *forms itself a picture of the problem* – that is, it creates a specific mental image.”