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Figuration across artistic texts – master tropes in language and the visual arts

The presentation takes up the issue – discussed for several decades by theoreticians of art (cf. Gombrich 1996, Crowther 2009), practitioners of artistic semiotics (Porębski 1980/2009, Wysłouch 1994/2009) and stylisticians (Mayenowa 1974/2000, Ziomek 1974, Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2012, 2015 forthcoming) – whether verbal and visual *texts* (in the broad semiotic understanding of this term) can be claimed to draw from common resources. A natural candidate for such an integrational category is *style*, and among the stylistic devices *figuration* seems to play an inestimable role in the creation of textual coherence.

The author intends to focus on *master tropes*, the leading semantic figures, which – as reflections of creative conceptualization – shape artistic verbal texts. The author supports the claim about their presence in the fine arts, and specifically in painting and sculpture, where they belong to text-forming strategies, on analogy to verbal texts. Thus, it will be argued that the neo-classical tetrad of *metaphor-metonymy-synecdoche-irony* (cf. Vico 1744/1984, Burke 1954/1962, White 1978/1985) should also be discernible in the visual media. If this is the case, then figuration can be claimed to be a *multimodal category* in itself, whereas its presence in verbal and non-verbal texts is a realization of *intermediality* (*convergence of the arts*).

The proposed tetrad of master tropes is an extension of a limiting cognitivist approach to figuration through the *metaphor-metonymy* opposition (with its roots in R. Jakobson's figurative dichotomy). It is also worth considering a somewhat different set of three large figures proposed by Y. M. Lotman (1970/1977), as present in artistic texts: 1) *metaphor* (including *metonymy*), 2) *opposition* (*contrast*) and 3) *repetition* (cf. Shukman 1977: 50). The author agrees that opposition, known as *antithesis* in traditional rhetoric, should be added to the list of master tropes as one of basic ways of perceiving and cognizing the world. This agrees with Lotman's (2007/2008) arguments about the importance of binary oppositions in the structuring of semiotic space. Repetition, a figure of form and an important cohesive device rather than a trope proper, has a different status in stylistic description but is, undoubtedly, important in visual texts.

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