Multimodality in Franz Kafka's *The Castle* and its Movie by Konstantin Seliverstov: A Reading in the Light of Reception Theory

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Abstract

Multimodal analysis, as a technique of decoding the hidden messages within sign systems, has revolutionized the field of meaning-making and the process of interpretation. The process of communicating messages or forming ideologies is no longer dependent on the verbal input presented to the reader or the audience. The paralinguistic elements, that comprise all the audio-visual and kinesthetic content communicated to the recipient, are pivotal in understanding and interpreting the intended, as well as the *unintended*, messages revealed through the multimodal collage. The fact that multimodal analysis can unveil meaning and interpretations that might not have been intended by the author paves the way before reception theories to act as a complementary and an interdisciplinary discipline with multimodality. The aim of this paper is to investigate how Franz Kafka's *The Castle* and its movie by Konstantin Seliverstov function as multimodal ensembles that disclose the mechanisms of sense-making, and how the text and the media text cast light on the cognitive process of interpretation itself. The paper also aims to point out, through the analysis of the text and the media text, the importance of reception theories when introducing a multimodal analysis and when studying the cognitive process of interpreting and reacting to a content. With the death of the author, the transience of meaning, the instability of the sign, the written text can no longer function as an enclosed entity and the reader is always summoned to reconstruct and recontextualize the meaning communicated to him.

Keywords: multimodality, compositionality, reception as remaking, semiotics and discourse analysis, multimodal metaphor theory, Kafkaesque, place and distance.

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1. Introduction

Multimodality, as a system of sign-making and sign-assimilation, is the offspring of revolutionary approaches to the nature of the sign. Transcending the limits of the binary relationship claimed to exist between the signifier and the signified, multimodal analysis investigates a wide range of possible interpretations that arise via the interaction of modes of representation in a multimodal ensemble. Multimodal analysis, thus, has a dual efficient role in the field of representation and in the field of inquiry. Adami illustrates that multimodality "defines the combination of different semiotic resources, or modes, in texts and communicative events," as far as representation and communication are concerned, and that multimodality is "concerned with developing theories, analytical tools and descriptions that approach the study of representation and communication considering modes as an organizing principle," as far as the field of inquiry is concerned (2016, pp. 1-2).

The process of analysis that concerns itself mainly with the linguistic input can never provide a sufficient interpretation of meaning. As the process of social communication is threefold – the sender of the message, the medium of delivering the message, and the recipient of the message – one finds oneself within an intricate web of signs interacting with one another in an incessant process of meaning-making. Within the framework of multimodal analysis, the written text is only one mode of representation and the extratextual milieu –

the audio-visual and semiotic components – represents the crucial and the underlying medium that supports data visualization and data assimilation.

Interpreting a multimodal collage inevitably takes the researcher into the domain of reception theory[1] as a critical approach that is concerned with the mechanisms of receiving and interacting with literature and art. Reception theory thus acts as a critical framework that better illustrates how multimodality works, how it frames the intended message, and how the intended message is assimilated by the recipient or is destabilized by intertwining multimodal stimuli. This complementary relationship between multimodal analysis and reception theory actually radicalizes many taken-for-granted notions about social structure, social and individual identity, and the nature of representation and communication.

This paper investigates Kafka's *The Castle* and its movie by Konstantin Seliverstov as two multimodal ensembles that complement each other, and that represent a multimodal discourse in which the written text collaborates with the audio-visual semiotic components in the movie to create *signs* that are communicated to readers and recipients from heterogeneous backgrounds. Dealing with the written text and the movie as two complementary modes of representation serves to avoid the suffering from the dichotomy that exists between speech and writing, and further allows one to explore the hidden, yet dynamic, relationship between multimodality and reception theory. The paper deals with the text beyond the traditional criticisms that have been written

on *The Castle*. For many critics, *The Castle*, is a literary masterpiece that deals with the absurdity of human existence and the problem of bureaucracy. According to Webster, "although it has frequently been treated as though it were a metaphysical essay, Farnz Kafka's *The Castle* is actually an excellent expressionistic novel, one of the greatest works of art produced in our time" (1951, P. 37). The aim of the present paper, however, is to investigate the dynamics of sense-making and meaning-reception revealed through the text as a dynamic discourse and the movie as a mise en scène that are both crammed with unstable signs and semiotic components that actually problematize the process of meaning-making and meaning-assimilation.

2. Multimodality as a System of Representation

Multimodality, as a system of representation, is an embodiment of the turn that has taken place regarding the nature of the sign, on the one hand, and the analytic approach to language that has put the rationalist capacity of the human mind *under erasure*[2], on the other. A multimodal perspective on the issue of meaning and communication is thus a multilayered one. According to Bucher,

> On the one hand, a theory of multimodality has to explain the meaning of not only linguistic signs but also visuals, gestures, colors, design, sounds, etc. On the other hand, meaning in communication becomes a complex and multilayered entity, raising the question of how the meaning of an orchestration of different modes is composed by individual modes (2017, P. 91)

Within the framework of multimodal analysis, the *idealist*[3] perspective of tackling the meaning in its totality is not welcomed.

The atomic structure of meaning, with all its intratextual, intertextual, and extratextual details, has to be taken into consideration when one is about to interpret a meaning.

Multimodality, as a system of meaning-making and meaning-assimilation, is thus a highly challenging critical discipline that makes use of the premises introduced by a heterogeneity of linguistic and philosophical schools. As a critical thought, multimodality, it can be claimed, is the culmination of social semiotics, critical discourse analytic, Grice's conversational maxims, Austin's speech act theory, Forceville's multimodal metaphor theory, and Halliday's systemic-functional grammar.

As an investigation into the nature of the sign, social semiotics and critical discourse analysis assert themselves to be intellectual disciplines that have looked at the sign within its social and interactive context. Whereas "semiotics is a more global inquiry into the nature of symbols than is symbolic interaction" (Gottdiener, 1995, P. 59), social semiotics has sought to explore the nature of social communication and how the sign can function differently in a variety of social contexts. Discourse analysis is another area of critical thought that has paid heed to the atomic structure of texts. Referring to Halliday's linguistic method of analyzing texts, Hiippale illustrates that "a discourse analysis that is not based on grammar is not an analysis at all, but simply a running commentary on a text" (Hiippale in Engebretsen, P. 278). The importance given to the grammar of the text and how grammar is *influenced* by the social context that communicates it has been further accentuated within the framework of critical discourse analysis – an area of critical thought that examines the socio-political issues related to texts and the mechanisms of producing texts.

Grice's conversational maxims and

Austin's speech act theory[4] represent the linguistic tools for the analysis of meaning within the field of pragmatics, and, moreover, embody the theoretical premise that language is not an abstract or a stable system of signifiers and signifieds. Grice's maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner provide the critical reader with the tools that can analyse language as a communicative activity. The maxims, or, more precisely, the *violation* of these maxims, form the basis for inferences that we draw in conversations and that can totally depart from the meaning of the verbal input written on paper. Austin's speech act theory, introduced in his seminal book *How To Do Things With Words*, emphasizes the fact that texts cannot be studied as a whole, and that sentences have to be looked at as utterances that are deeply immersed in the web of social communication. Within the framework of pragmatics, however, sentences and utterances are looked at in isolation, and the atomic structure that concretizes the hidden relations between these sentences and utterances is not fully explored.

Forceville's multimodal metaphor theory and Halliday's systemic functional grammar are two linguistic approaches to language that contribute in boosting the linguistic basis upon which multimodality rests. According to Forceville, "academic research in the humanities is beginning to shift from a focus on exclusively verbal text to discourse in which language is but one – albeit still highly important – communicative mode" (P. 3). Metaphorical expressions are thus linguistic tools that structure our lived experience and determine how we think and act. The communicative function that depends on the interdisciplinary relation between different sign systems has also been brought to the forefront by Halliday's SFG. Chapman illustrates that Halliday's SFG is "an approach to linguistic description which aims to provide a comprehensive account of

how language is used in context for communication. The approach views language as a resource that is fundamentally shaped by the uses that people make of it" (2009, P. 225). Language, for Halliday, acts as a social structure that performs a specific social and semiotic function.

Multimodal meaning-making and multimodal meaning-assimilation are thus two intricately interwoven intellectual activities that encompass acts of meaning analysis based on the relations among modes in a multimodal collage that incessantly influence each other. Within the framework of multimodality, sign-making is a continuous process that has to be analyzed, and speakers' utterances are emblematic of the social structure they belong to and of the system of signification in which they are entangled. Encoding and decoding of messages, within a multimodal explanation, are not looked at through the verbal input being communicated. They are rather approached through the extratextual factors that envelop the verbal input; including the audio-visual elements, the semiotic significance, and the patterns of experience that come from the mental images drawn by different recipients from different socio-political backgrounds.

3. Reception Theory and Unstable Signifieds

Reception theory, as a critical discipline that investigates the cognitive and emotional reception of literature and art, is closely interrelated with the problematic activity of interpretation. The process of meaning reception then is a multilayered one. It is entangled within a web of cognitive, linguistic, extralinguistic, and socio-cultural factors. And even the context of any text is hard to define, as the word context is an interdisciplinary term that involves a variety of changing factors, multiple perspectives,

and paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations related to the ontology of the text.

Reception mechanisms are, moreover, intricately interwoven with the mechanisms of multimodal analysis. According to Bucher, "the meaning making of the author has to be distinguished from that of the recipient" (2017, P. 97). Within the framework of multimodal analysis, the recipient is an active participant in the interpretation of all the connotations that a multimodal collage can present. Thus, the interaction between a recipient and a multimodal stimulus triggers a variety of ideas about the context of the situation, the context of culture, the cognitive context, and the framework of knowledge and the system of representation in general.

There lies, thus, between the text and the context of the text, on the one hand, and the recipient, on the other, a dynamic relationship that shatters the concept of the text as the only source of information. The recipient, with his cognitive and emotional background, reacts to the audio-visual stimuli that penetrate his mind and actively participate in the making and interpretation of the events. This active participation on the part of the recipient shatters the concept of the text that provides its readership with a sense of *closure*[5] and that it is self-contained. The recipient, moreover, acts synchronically and diachronically to the text and its related context. He reacts to what he reads/sees as a syntagmatic structure with many multimodal elements that interact with each other to elicit meanings, and as a diachronic structure that is related to other structures that preceded it in time.

The process of receiving multimodal meanings is deeply influenced by the extratextual elements that represent the context of the text. According to Grant, "an important concept of reception theory is that the media text – the individual movie or television program – has no inherent meaning in and of itself" (P. 395). Meaning thus is decoded by the viewer as he interacts with what he watches, and this interaction is governed by a heterogeneity of contextual and cognitive factors. These factors include the recipient's social and individual identity, the medium of expression, the viewer's intellectual beliefs and psychological components, and the historical context in which the media text is presented. The process of identification – that is perennially changing – is a pivotal factor that draws the features of the reception process. It problematizes the process of decoding, and, consequently, reception theory has to account for all the factors that interfere in the reception process and determine it. Offering an enclosed account of how a media text is received is not the aim, however, as it is a practical impossibility to trace all the factors that affect the decoding of meaning. The aim is to investigate how multimodal ensembles trigger a web of meanings, interpretations, and a chain of unstable signifiers and signifieds.

Within the framework of reception theory, the issue of space and distance is central in determining the mechanisms of reception. According to Agrew, reception theory "applies to audience of film and television, though with one key difference. The embodied space between screen and audience is vastly different to the embodied space between live performers and audience" (2014, P. 125). Television screen, as a medium of communicating media texts, provides the audience with a chance to think deeply of what they watch, and, thus, to actively participate in a process of telling and retelling of the story itself. This dynamic reciprocity between the media text and the mind of the recipient can actually lead to the creation of a multiplicity of versions of the same media text, that vary in their intellectual depth and aesthetic value as they are the

products of different minds representing different cultures and different cognitive contexts.

4. Compositionality in *The Castle* and its Movie

Compositionality is that problematic activity of verbalizing the meaning intended to be introduced on the part of the author, and how this intended meaning can divert from the author's intentions due to the interplay that happens between its multimodal components. The sum total of the linguistic input, the cognitive matrix, and the audio-visual stimuli of the text or media text represent a framework of knowledge and a network of relations that comprise a multimodal collage with a hybridity of extratextual connotations. The surface level of this framework carries the author's intended meaning, whereas the deep level contains several gaps that allows the linguistic games and the context of the situation to introduce new meanings.

4.1. Social semiotics in the text and the media text

Franz Kafka's *The Castle* and its movie by Konstantin Seliverstov both represent a text and a media text that collaborate together and form multimodal ensembles through which the problematic issues of multimodal analysis, interpretation, and the mechanisms of reception are investigated. What is noteworthy to mention here is that the literary text, in terms of being the verbal input written by Kafka himself, cannot be claimed to be totally a Kafkaesque production. The text has been translated by J. A. Underwood, and edited by Kafka's writer friend Max Brod. Moreover, an introduction by Idris Parry has been added to the literary script. In his introduction, Parry briefly discusses how art exercises its power over the recipients, and how the relation between its

parts, even if not logically or clearly understood, allows us to think of new perspectives and deeper interpretations of our system of representation and our framework of knowledge. Parry says,

> Perhaps art is simply induction. The picture in prose or paint or stone touches vibrations in us we did not know existed. We respond and understand, beyond explanation. The secret understanding induced by art changes the structure before us from the absurd to the magical, and we know there is a common relationship between parts ever if it can't be understood (Kafka, 2000, P. xiv)

Functioning as multimodal ensembles, both the text and the movie can be taken as examples of how signs work, how the meaning is framed, and how the assimilation of this meaning is achieved. Tomkins illustrates that "Kafka scholars have long argued that *The Castle* is not just open to multiple interpretations, but is – more fundamentally – about the business of interpretation itself (Sokel, 1966; Woods, 2014)" (2019, P. 39). Crammed with signs that invite the viewer to react and interpret, the movie likewise functions as an audio-visual context that implicitly discusses the issue of literary interpretation and the process of reception.

The text and its movie exhibit different modes of representation and sign systems that complement each other in the process of meaning-making. The sequential presentation of incidents in both is very systematic, and yet the deep level of this presentation reveals futility and disruption of time equilibrium – events are eternally recurring without reaching the end. The technique of narration in the text and how events are displayed to the audience in the media text reveal a gap between what is said and what can be understood by the recipients.

In the text, Klamm remains an enigma from beginning to end. The landlady says, "we worry about him [Klamm], of course, and do our best to protect him, so we assume enormous sensitivity on Klamm's part. That's fine, and it is certainly what Klamm wants. But what the real situation is, we don't know" (Kafka, 2000, P. 99). Within the text and the media text recipients are perplexed by what K., as a first person narrator, says and what the other characters say. The method of narration in the text and how the literary ambiance is presented in the media text reveal a state of deep ontological uncertainty regarding the plot and its hidden meaning in the text and the media text.

4.2. Speech Act Theory and the Violation of Maxims in The Text and The Media Text

The linguistic input, of the text and the media text, reveals a state of epistemological skepticism concerning the framework of knowledge and communication in the literary context. Knowledge, as recognizable conventions and shared assumptions, is disrupted. And, hence, recipients find themselves distracted by the discrepancy between the locutionary force of the utterance and the perlocutionary force or the inference that is cognitively formed by them. The letter sent from Klamm's office to K. communicates the following message: "the land surveying operations that you have carried out so far meet with my approval" (Kafka, 2000, P. 106). Keeping in mind the fact that no land surveying has been done, the linguistic input highlights this epistemological gap between the signifiers and their signifieds.

In the text and the media text, the repertoires, or *registers*[6], communicated by the characters embody the existence of a dichotomy between their artistic reality and what they are expected to say and between the linguistic input they produce. The landlady says, "I'm not denying it's possible, sometimes, to achieve something even completely contrary to regulations and in defiance of tradition" (Kafka, 2000, P. 47). In the previous quotation, "regulations" and "tradition" are signifiers without clear signifieds, and, moreover, the landlady who communicates the message produces a *register* that completely departs from her position in the literary context. Violating the maxims of manner and relation, the landlady's utterance is an epitome of the epistemological framework of our system of communication, in general, and the epistemological framework of the text and the media text, in particular. The discourse, communicated through the text and the media text, reveals how the conventional linguistic components can totally miss to meet their contextual equivalences.

The Castle and its movie function as a multimodal collage that exhibits an auditory, a visual, and a Kinesthetic content that deepens the process of meaning making. What is of particular interest here is that the generic structure of the text and the media text is deconstructed by this audio-visual and kinesthetic content. The visual salience of the mise-en-scène of the text and the media text lures the audience into a suspension of belief[7], and allows them to interact with the content as multimodal ensembles that shatter their expectations. The castle and the building surrounding it are an embodiment of the visual deception that is itself an epitome of the state of epistemological uncertainty communicated through the text and the media text from beginning to end. The third person narrator says, "this road, the village high street, did not in fact lead to Castle Hill, it only went close to it but then curved away, as if on purpose, and although it took one no farther from the castle, nor did it come any nearer" (Kafka, 2000, P. 11). The nature of the castle, as a place and as a symbol of

authority, remains a puzzle that will never be solved.

The element of visual deception is foregrounded to the recipients from the very beginning. The text starts with the following words: "It was late evening when K. arrived. The village lay deep in snow. Nothing could be seen of Castle Hill, it was wrapped in mist and darkness, not a glimmer of light hinted at the presence of the great castle" (Kafka, 2000, P. 3). The media text, likewise, shocks the audience with the gloomy atmosphere, the snowy environs, and a visual context of people whose gestures, facial expressions, and body language are eccentric. Inside the castle, there is a painting hung on the wall. The third person narrator says, "as K. walked away, his attention was drawn to a picture on the wall, a dark portrait in a dark frame" (Kafka, 2000, P. 7). This painting highlighted in the media text and, in one particular moment in the movie, it totally occupies the screen. The function of the painting, though, is not an informative one, and its visual effect rather functions to obscure the literary and cinematic context even more.

The auditory context in the text and the media text helps to deepen the discrepancy between the literary ambiance – that of silence, mist, and darkness – and the incidents that take place in both the text and the movie. The third person narrator says, "the sound of a bell rang out there, gaily vibrant, a bell that for a moment at least sent a tremor through the heart, as if it was threatened – for the sound was also painful – with the fulfillment of what it vaguely yearned for" (Kafka, 2000, P. 15). Referring to the gala held by the authorities, Olga tells K. that "the noise was dreadful, admittedly, worse than at most galas" (Kafka, 2000, P. 170). The auditory content and the way its effect is communicated to the reader of the text aggravate the reader's perplexity even more, and keep him fluctuating between two worlds – the world of real people having fun and entertaining themselves and the world of silence and darkness that envelops the contexts in both the text and the media text.

The kinesics and proxemics of the characters as described in the text and as shown in the movie create a sense of absurdity concerning the human situation in general. After being recognized as the land surveyor, K. "had no need even to ask for the lounge to be vacated because they were all pushing through the door with faces averted, possibly to avoid being recognized by him in the morning" (Kafka, 2000, P. 6). The facial expressions of the characters and the reason behind their strange movement in the lounge are not rationally justified. The whole literary situation, thus, works as a multimodal collage that triggers a variety of interpretations, and that accentuates the fact that the signified is absent and what is left for us is a maze of unstable signifiers interacting with each other.

Space and distance in the text and the movie are manipulated to address the problematic issue of meaning making. According to Gottdiener, "there is… a complex relation between semantic fields and material culture… All sign value implicitly presupposes its material expression, and in the same way, all material objects exist within socially constructed semantic fields in order for them to be understood and used" (1995, P. 54-55). The castle, as a symbol of an elusive authority, is entangled within a semantic web that puts its very existence *under erasure*[8]. At one moment, the recipient is made to ask: does the castle really exist? This sense of epistemological skepticism concerning the nature of the castle, as part of the system of signification, and the absurdity of the literary situation communicated through the text and the movie are accentuated by the linguistic input and the paralinguistic content that baffle the

recipients and leave them in the middle of nowhere.

5. Reception of *The Castle* and its movie

The human mind has mental abstract patterns that are stored in its cognitive apparatus and recalled when one gets involved in social situations. These mental patterns function as a point of reference that shapes and codifies the linguistic output of the participants in any social communication. The human mind is thus involved in hermeneutic efforts to interpret language, audio-visual and kinesthetic content, and then come up with a meaning of that hypertextual structure that surrounds multimodal ensembles. The text and the media text studied shock the recipients by introducing a linguistic and an audio-visual content that is not congruent with their mental schemata. Tomkins illustrates that "Kafka punctures the mythology of understanding, rupturing the near-sacrosanct hermeneutic connection between interpretation and meaning. His work undermines both objective and subjective understandings, leaving us distrustful of both expert and experiential perspectives" (2019, P. 37).

Recipients of *The Castle* and its movie are imprisoned within a static context in spite of the fact that all the characters are actively immersed in conversations from the very beginning to the very end. Hanging around Giza's house, Schwarzer "listens at the invariably locked door… there was total, inexplicable silence" (Kafka, 2000, P. 147-148). The literary situation is obscured even more by a linguistic input that forces recipients to shuffle their cognitive apparatus and their mental frames. The violation of the *cooperative principle* in the conventional and everyday speech that runs between the characters in the text and the media text exhibits how the linguistic input communicated to the recipients baffles and imprisons them within inexplicable linguistic inconsistencies. Olga says to K., "Is it even castle work that Barnabas does, we wonder then; all right, he goes to the offices, but are the offices the castle proper?" (Kafka, 2000, P. 156). The referential value of what is being said is always in conflict with the perceived effect that is inferred by the addressee. According to Sperber, "A code-decoding mechanism, left to operate unhindered and in a vacuum, would create a copy of the communicator's meaning in the recepient's mind. The sociologically crucial fact that contents get transformed, distorted, lost or suppressed in most social communication cannot be explained in terms of such a basic mechanism" (p. 146). Receiving ambiguous and multilayered sign systems, recipients are dazzled by a multiplicity of dialogic encounters that take the form of *infinite regress structures*[9].

The process of interacting with place and distance in the text and the media text is a highly problematic one. According to McCabe, "Distance refers to a way of *not* seeing those below us in the hierarchy… 'Distance' created between human beings through bureaucratic ways of organizing is potentially debilitating" (2015, P. 58). The verbal and visual representation of place and distance in the text and the media text aggravates the state of ontological uncertainty suffered by the recipients. Olga says, "There are several roads leading to the castle. Now one will be in vogue, so most people use it, now another, and they'll all throng that way. What rules govern the change have yet to be discovered" (Kafka, 2000, P. 194). The castle, as a place, is cognitively perceived by the recipients in terms of being a labyrinth and an entity in which "any trivial change in the most trivial matters can cause a serious upset" (Kafka, 2000, P. 242). Reminiscent of Foucault's

Panopticon[10], the castle, as a place, and the labyrinthine distance surrounding it stir in the minds of the recipients the image of a bureaucratic power that exercises *surveillance* over people in order to achieve discipline in organizational institutions.

Notions, that have long been taken for granted, have been radicalized within the text and the media text through the interaction between the pieces of the multimodal collage and the mechanisms of reception practiced by the readers. The web of signifieds that comes across one's mind when talking about social structure, social and individual identity, has been destabilized within the texts. The landlady says to K.,

> listen to me, sir. Mr Klamm is a gentleman from the castle, that in itself, quite apart from his position otherwise, signifies very high rank. But what are you, whose marriage permit we're so humbly applying for here. You're not from the castle, you're not from the village, you're nothing (Kafka, 2000, P. 44).

The Reader encounters a social structure in which principles of classification are reflexive of complex relations that are in themselves ambiguous and incomprehensible. The fact that the castle, as the sitting that ties all the incidents together, remains an enigma throughout the whole text compels the reader to reconsider the notion of social structure and the way people are institutionalized within that social structure.

Within the framework of the text, the judicial system, as part of the social structure, becomes a signifier without a signified. Commenting on Amalia's punishment by the castle, Olga says,

> The worst thing we could have done, …, we betrayed Amalia, we broke free from her silent command, we couldn't go on living like that,

> …, and we began, each in his own way, to beg or besiege the castle, asking for pardon. … But to obtain a pardon he first had to establish guilt, and up in the offices that was being denied him (Kafka, 2000, P. 190-191).

Judicial system, within the framework of the text, functions as a signifier that refers to other signifiers in an endless chain of signifiers. The text thus violates the expected meaning that should have been assimilated through the signs that comprise the multimodal collage.

The generic agreement on how social and personal identity is formulated is no longer valid in the world of the text. Commenting on the interview with the mayor, the narrator says that

> Direct dealings with authorities were never too difficult because, however well organized those authorities were, they only ever had to defend remote, invisible matters on behalf of remote, invisible masters, whereas K. was lighting for something of the most lively proximity, namely himself (Kafka, 2000, P. 52).

The Degree to which the formation of social and personal identity becomes dependent on an enigmatic and inconsistent institution is part of an interrogative process that questions the aforementioned notions. The multimodal and linguistic analysis of the text thus allows the reader to probe into the mechanisms of meaning-making and to question the system of signification and the hidden rules that shape it.

6. Conclusion

With the proliferation of different sign systems and miscellaneous techniques of meaning making, it has become a necessity in the field of humanities to head towards

interdisciplinary studies to explore and understand the mechanisms of sense making and to decode how systems of signification frame ideologies and shape mental frames for recipients. Multimodal analysis, thus, functions as a framework that provides answers for the sophisticated process of producing a meaning and how the relation between modes in a multimodal collage paves the way before a heterogeneity of interpretations to float to the surface.

The space between the author's intended meanings and the meanings created by the readers is that space in which multimodal analysis goes hand in hand with theories of literary and artistic reception. Recipients of literary works pass through two phases of data processing: a process of retrieval and a process of reconstruction. They retrieve the linguistic input, the audio-visual and kinesthetic content, and they go through a cognitive process of reconstructing and reevaluating the received data. Taking into consideration the fact that there is an endless number of recipients belonging to different ideological and socio-political backgrounds, scholars working in the field of reception theories should formulate a methodology that can adapt to an endless number of contexts, and an endless number of individuals and social groups receiving and interpreting these contexts.

Kafka's *The Castle* and its movie by Konstantin Seliverstov, as exemplary of multimodal ensembles complementing each other, disclose the intricate process of meaning making and the mechanisms of cognitive reception of hidden messages and literary insinuations. Offering a "normative self-reflection"[11], Kafka explores the relation between "implicit notions of human nature and explicit conceptualizations of social life" (Chernilo, 2014, P. 338). Through the temporal stasis that confronts the readers of the text and the gloomy ambiance that

prevails in the media text, Kafka manages to probe into the absurdity of human condition, in general, and the problematic issue of meaning making and interpretation, in particular. Crammed with signifiers that denote no signifieds and that transcend the boundaries of logic, the Kafkaesque text and the media text offer a new and deep perspective concerning social structure, the enigmatic nature of language and social communication, and the nature of the systems of representation that give shape to our lived experience.

Notes:

1. Reception theory: According to Hawthorn, reception theory is a "term generally used in a relatively narrow sense to describe a particular group of (mainly German) theorists concerned with the way in which literary WORKS are 'received' by their READERS overtime, but also sometimes used in a looser sense to describe any attempt to theorize the ways in which art works are received, individually and collectively, by their 'consumers'" (1992, P. 149).

2. Under erasure: Derrida's term "*under erasure*" is used here to illustrate how analytic philosophy has radicalized the Cartesian power of reasoning, and has asserted the fact that all our intellectual capacity can be intrigued within a web of language games and elusive signifiers. The inevitable result is that man's mind is entangled within multimodal ensembles that need a power beyond the power of the human mind to interpret them.

3. Idealist: The word "*idealist*" is used here to refer to the tendency of idealist philosophies to seek an inevitable point of reference, and to examine things in their totality, thus suffocating differences and points of rupture that, if allowed to float to the surface, can introduce new perspectives and innovative interpretations.

4. Grice's conversational maxims (The cooperative principle) and Austin's speech act theory are referred to and made use of in this paper to exemplify how the dynamics of

sense-making operate within multimodal ensembles. Bucher illustrates that Grice's concept of implicature helps "bridging the gap between sentence-meaning and utterance-meaning (on 'sense'), [and] can be transferred easily to multimodality to explain cooperation and communication with all types of signs" (2017, 107). Austin's speech act theory is also made use of to reflect upon the threefold structure of sentences and utterances that is comprised of the sender of the message, the medium that communicates the message, and the recipient of the message. In his book *How To Do Things With Words*, Austin enlists three types of force in his speech act theory:

1. the locutionary force – the referential value:

    (the meaning of code).

2. the illocutionary force – the performative function:

    (the implication of speaker).

3. the perlocutionary force – the perceived effect:

    (the inference by addressee).

Thus, any incongruity that might exist between these forces work as an indicator of a meaning that would never have been assimilated if looked at only through the words written on paper.

[5] Closure: in Derrida's deconstruction, closure means the end of the metaphysics of presence. It also refers to Derrida's emphasis that no text can achieve self-sufficiency or function as an enclosed system.

[6] Register: the term is used by Mona Baker in her seminal book *In Other Words*. Register means "a variety of language that a language user considers appropriate to a specific situation" (Baker, 2008, P.15).

[7] Suspension of belief: The term "suspension of disbelief" is that act of willingly suspending one's critical thinking when interacting with literature and art. In the present paper, suspension of *belief* is used to illustrate the idea that the recipients of the text and the media text are shocked from the very beginning and made to think critically about the ontology of both texts and about their epistemological framework.

[8] Under erasure: in Derrida's deconstruction, the term means that a word can be crossed out within a text, but allowed to remain in its place. Under erasure is used here to illustrate how the different modes in multimodal ensembles can undermine the author's intended meaning from within.

[9] Infinite regress structure: in her article "No Successful Infinite Regress", Luna illustrates that "no such [infinite regress] structure can perform the task of providing determination to the items composing it, that is, that no determination process containing an infinite regress structure is successful" (Luna, 2014, P. 189).

[10] Panopticon: the panopticon is that imaginary place mentioned by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. The panopticon embodies the kind of surveillance exercised in organizational institutions, and how disciplinary power is exercised over all the subjects belonging to these institutions.

[11] Normative self-reflection: Chernido explains that normative self-reflection is "a fundamental aspect of sociology's scientific tasks because key sociological questions are, in the last instance, also philosophical ones" (Chernido, 2014, P. 338).

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