

11 May

Written Component 2

*No studio progress.

This week I worked on clarifying what I have been working and its focus.

With reference to a text or someone's creative practice, explore the development of a position in relation to iteration. Explain how this helps you approach your own emerging position.

(Recap)

Week 1 - Iterative process intuitively, select one element from the previous iteration and expand it in the following one, adapt one format in half of the iterations, use of text and images.

Week 2 - Read 'what do pictures want?' Images text relationship to be compared to power relationships between men and women. Images are compared to women, submissive to text. Visual studies - images and texts to be linked and interpreted in relations to social and cultural ideologies.

Week 3 - Iterative exercises to explore image text relationship. Redo a theme/message 10-20 times. 3 sets of iterations. The use of text and abstract image is more obvious. Advice: Where do you find the content? / What is the image text relationships in illustrations?

Week 4 - Read 'LitReview_Part2_V7'. Analyse image text relationships in illustration and how it relates to my practice plus position.

(Position — Iteration)

This week, I intended to sit back and look at all the iterations I have done in the past few weeks. At the start, I created 100 images intuitively, selecting one element from the previous work and continue by expanding it. It resulted in the discovery in my keen use of text and image in an illustration.

Week 2, I intended to explore on image and text relationship from reading ‘What do picture want?’ by Mitchell (2005). He claims there is a power structure in the relationship of image and text, where image is described as woman. Image acts as a supportive role. Mitchell explains this relationship linguistically, in the context of visual studies, where images and texts are linked and interpreted in relations to social and cultural ideologies.

I wanted to test if image and text has the equal power/influence in illustration. Through iterative process, I created 3 sets of work, reiterating one theme (ie. Love, loneliness and ground) 10-20 times. In these work, I played with text and image in every one of them. Throughout the exercise, I tried to identify the qualities and devices that made useful in representing and interpreting an idea, then evaluate on the differences and similarities between the initial idea of the work and the interpretations by the reader. All of these analysis was made linguistically.

Yet, categorising these qualities and values felt overly rigid. To be honest it feels like a dead end. In this investigation of my illustration practice, I focused much on the illustrator and the illustator’s thoughts. It may possibly has a lot to do with her personal history and culture inhabited. It feels like a dead end doing personal background checks.

How about image-text relationship in ‘illustration’ as general practice?

Editorial illustrations printed in magazines have a historic reputation of being submissive to the text given. Take the illustration published in an article “The enduring romance of the night train” (fig.1) as an example. The train illustration travelling in night time serves as a complimentary device to the article. The text carries the main abstract idea. It controls the meaning. Meanwhile, the image serves as a tool to visualising a scene of reality. It is representational and submissive.

LETTER FROM EUROPE

THE ENDURING ROMANCE OF THE NIGHT TRAIN



Illustration by Christoph Niemann

(fig.1)

It may not be always the case. Compared to fig.1, illustration published in an article “How the coronavirus pandemic has shattered the myth of collage in America?” (fig.2) has a different take. The illustration presents a pathetic attitude, where the protagonist falls into a hole of darkness. The parachute in the shape of a surgical mask hints the subject of the text - coronavirus pandemic. Here the image presents a message that is beyond the text. Image and text are dependant yet independent in their meanings. The power of image and text are equal.

U.S. JOURNAL

HOW THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HAS SHATTERED THE MYTH OF COLLEGE IN AMERICA



Illustration by Grace J. Kim

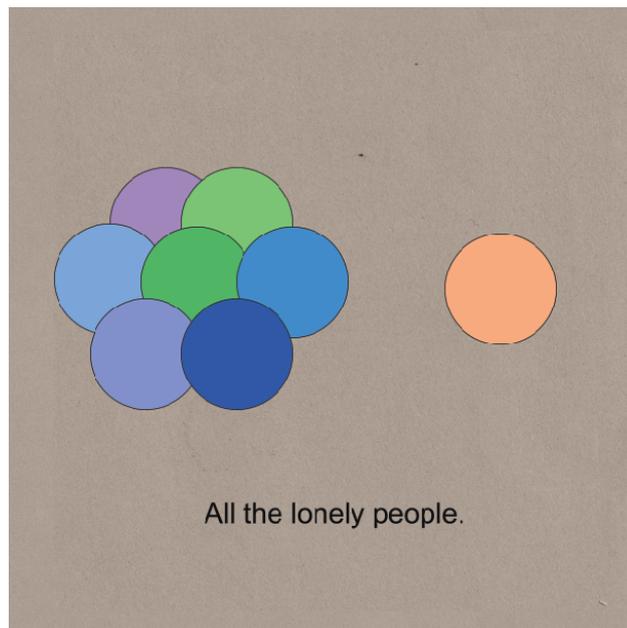
(fig.2)

Image-text relationship is equal in some satirical cartoons published on newspapers. Take fig.3 as an example. The image presents a woman showcasing a rat to the man on the sofa. The text underneath it indicates a dialogue between them. When both the image and text are combined, its underlying message is hinted, aka. they stayed at home for a long time, aka. they are in lockdown. The image and text are correlated. If one is taken out, it loses its meaning.



"I got you a rat to remind you of the subway."

(fig.3)



(fig.4)

My work takes similar approach. I combine image and text to control meaning. Yet fig.3 consists of text that carries an abstract idea and a representational image that hints the scene. Compared to fig.3, my work (For example, All the lonely people) fig.4 presents an abstract idea and an abstract image. The image eliminates details of realities. Only when it is combined with the text beneath it, the image can be interpreted as groups of people. Hence the message 'lonely people' is intensified.

In the case of fig.3 and fig.4, the reader becomes an important factor in delivering the message. They stand in meaningful positions, forming a compound. The reader is where the compound becomes a story, where the story comes together, where the dual discourse of image and text is synthesised. (Vormittag, 2020)

Initially, my position was to clarify the qualities and useful devices in my work and build a better understanding of my illustration practice. It gradually took a turn in exploring the relationship between text and image, nature of illustration and expanding the scope of an illustration practice.

Reference

Susan Sontag ([1965] 2009) 'On Style' in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. London: Penguin, pp.15–36.

Vormittag, L. (2020) 'LitReview_Part2_V7'. London. 08 May 2020.

W.J.T. Mitchell (2005) 'What Do Pictures want?' in *What Do Pictures Want: The Lives and Loves of Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.28–56.

Image reference

Fig.1

The New Yorker (2020) 'The Enduring Romance of the Night Train.' New York. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/11/the-enduring-romance-of-the-night-train> (Accessed: 10 May 2020)

Fig.2

The New Yorker (2020) 'How the coronavirus pandemic has shattered the myth of collage in America?' Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/us-journal/how-the-coronavirus-pandemic-has-shattered-the-myth-of-college-in-america> (Accessed: 10 May 2020)

Fig.3

The New Yorker (2020) 'Remember rats? #NewYorkerCartoons.' Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_m1SV3n6sn/?igshid=p5ysjszqf505 (Accessed: 10 May 2020)

Fig.4

Kong, L. (2020) 'All the lonely people.' Available at: <https://lilykongyuet.myblog.arts.ac.uk/2020/05/03/studio-progress/> (Accessed: 10 May 2020)