The problem of iconism in visual semiotics:
A cognitivist solution
1. Criticism of the visual icon

2. A general model of the iconic sign

3. Return to motivation: weakened, but surviving

4. A pending problem: can anything iconize anything?

5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?
1. Criticism of the visual icon

1.1. An illusion to be liquidated?
Segno
di Umberto Eco
Enciclopedia filosofica ISEDI

Umberto Eco
Le Signe
biblio essais
1. Criticism of the visual icon

1.1. An illusion to be liquidated?

The two critics of Umberto Eco
A sign is iconic when it has a "native resemblance" to the object or when "it can represent its object mainly by its similarity".

Charles S. Peirce

The iconic sign has "from a certain point of view, the same properties as the denoted".

Charles Morris
1. Criticism of the visual icon

1.1. An illusion to be liquidated?

The two critics of Umberto Eco
"Staying only on the level of perception, [we can] affirm that the iconic sign constructs a model of relations (between graphic phenomena) homologous to the model of perceptual relations that we are constructing by knowing and remembering the object"

Umberto Eco
Material ≃ "graphic phenomena"

Referent ≃ "relations established by knowing and remembering the object"

Type ≃ "knowledge of the objet"

Transformation ≃ "homologation of the model of perceptual relations"
1. Criticism of the visual icon

1.1. An illusion to be liquidated?

The two critics of Umberto Eco
Iconism seems to "define many different phenomena: from the 'analogy' of measuring instruments or computers, to cases where the similarity between sign and object is produced by very sophisticated rules that must be learned and to the case of the specular image".

Umberto Eco
1. Criticism of the visual icon

1.1. An illusion to be liquidated?

The two critics of Umberto Eco

A headlong rush?
1. Criticism of the visual icon

1.1. An illusion to be liquidated?

*The two critics of Umberto Eco*

*A headlong rush?*

1.2. Should we really break the icon?
Designatum: "That of which one becomes aware"

Denotatum: "the real and existing object"

Charles Morris
Designatum:

"not a thing, but an objective category, a class of objects"

« the type of object to which the sign relates, that is, the objects possessing the properties of which the interpreter can become aware through the presence of the sign's vehicle".

Charles Morris
2. A general model of the iconic sign

2.1. Four elements

*The referent*

*The material*

*The signifier (or formal type)*

*The type (or semantic type)*
2. A general model of the iconic sign

2.1. Four elements

2.2. Four (dual) relations

Material-referent axis: transformations

Referent-type axis: stabilization and conformity

Type-signifier axis: semiotic function

Signifier-material axis: conformity and recognition
Semiotic function
(Equivalence)

Type

Signifier

Stabilization

Conformity

Referent

Material

Transformations
A transformation: the projection
GROUPE μ

TRAITÉ DU SIGNE VISUEL
Pour une rhétorique de l'image
Semiotic function
(Equivalence)

Type

Referent

Signifier

Material

Stabilization

Conformity

Recognition

Conformity

Transformations
2. A general model of the iconic sign

2.1. Four elements

2.2. Four (dual) relations

2.3. Synthesis
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2. A general model of the iconic sign

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5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?
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5.1. A cotypy does not make an icon
Ceci n'est pas une pipe.
5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?

5.1. A cotypyp does not make an icon

5.2. Making the icon: pluricodic procedures
Pragmatic shifters of iconicity

Pluricodic procedures

— indexical

— « indicial »
5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?

5.1. A cotypyp does not make an icon

5.2. Making the icon: pluricodic procedures

5.3. Making the icon: cognitive procedures
Pragmatic shifters of iconicity

Pluricodic procedures
  — indexical
  — « indicial »

Cognitive procedures
  — internal (« indicial »)
  — external (indexical)
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