



Jean-Marie Klinkenberg

Group μ , University of Liège

Past president of the International
Association for Visual Semiotics

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?

OPERA APERTA

UMBERTO
ECO

Umberto Eco

Trattato
di semiotica
generale

Studi Bompiani



SAGGI TASCABILI

Umberto Eco KANT E L'ORNITORINCO



BOMPIANI

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 \simeq "graphic phenomena"

Referent \simeq "relations established by knowing and remembering the object"

Type \simeq "knowledge of the objet"

Transformation \simeq "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

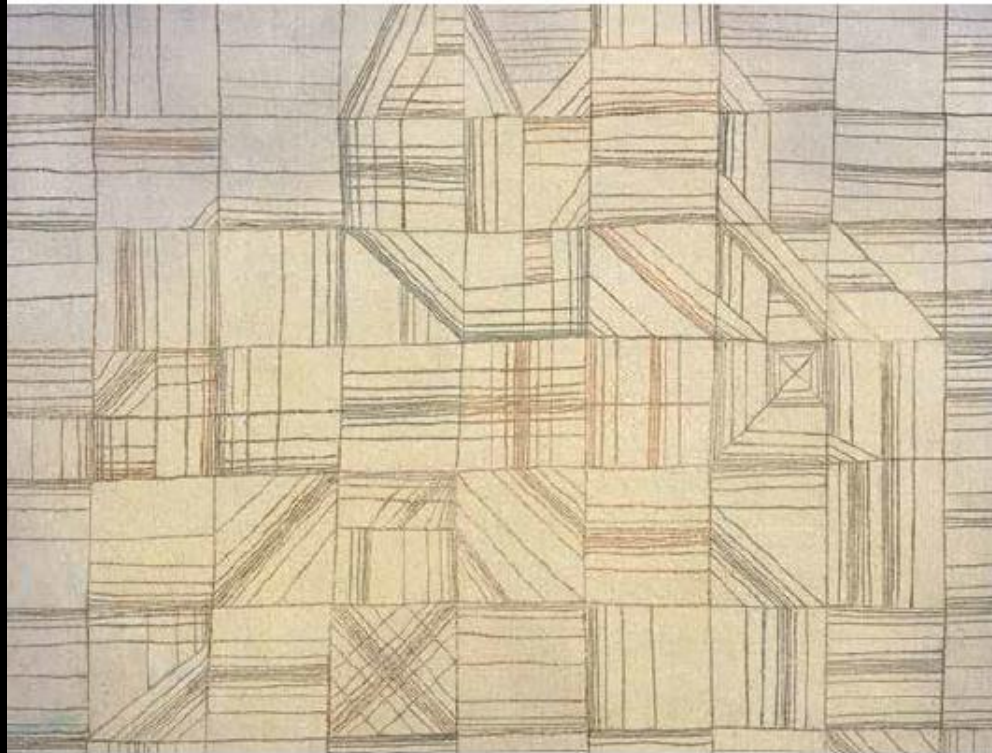
A headlong rush?



Groupe μ

PRINCIPIA SEMIOTICA

Aux sources du sens



LES IMPRESSIONS NOUVELLES



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

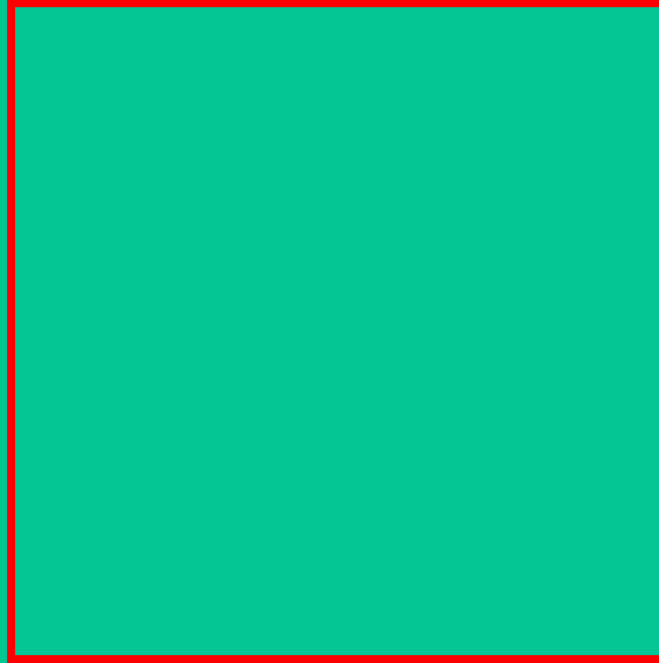
The signifier (or formal type)

The type (or semantic type)



**Semantic
type**

**Signifier
(formal type)**



Referent

Material

2. A general model of the iconic sign

2.1. Four elements

2.2. Four (dual) relations

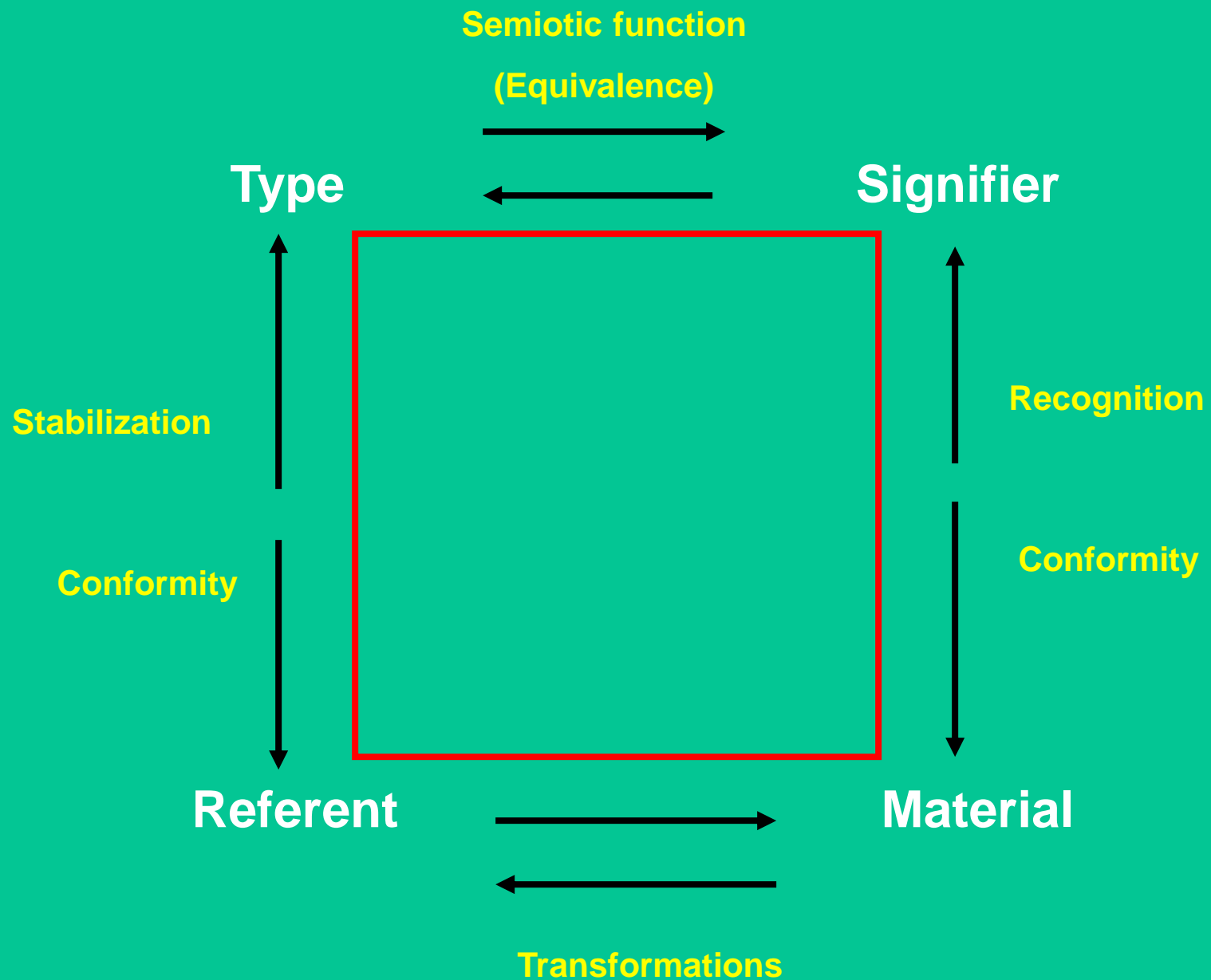
Material-referent axis: transformations

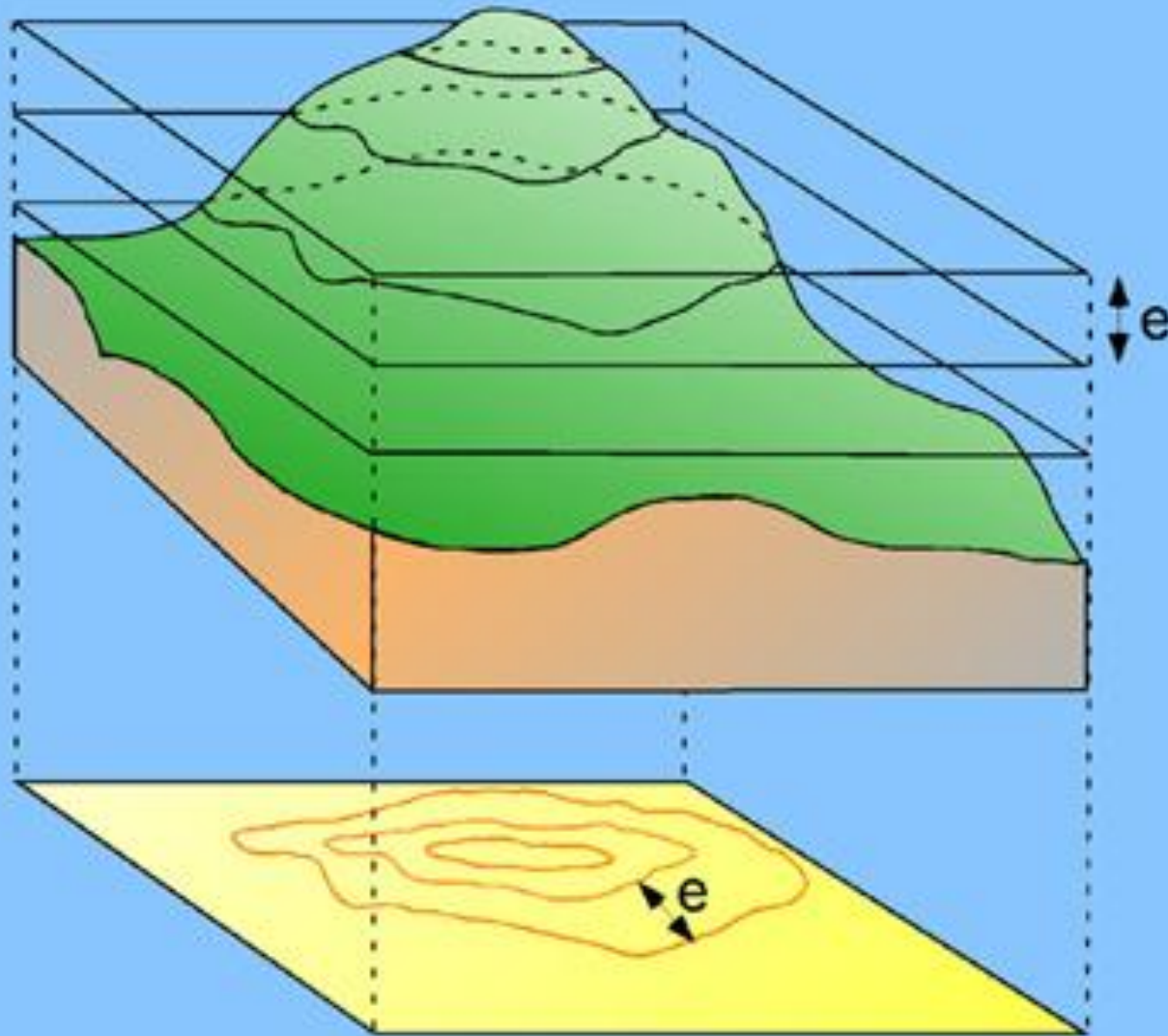
*Referent-type axis: stabilization
and conformity*

Type-signifier axis: semiotic function

*Signifier-material axis: conformity and
recognition*







A transformation : the projection

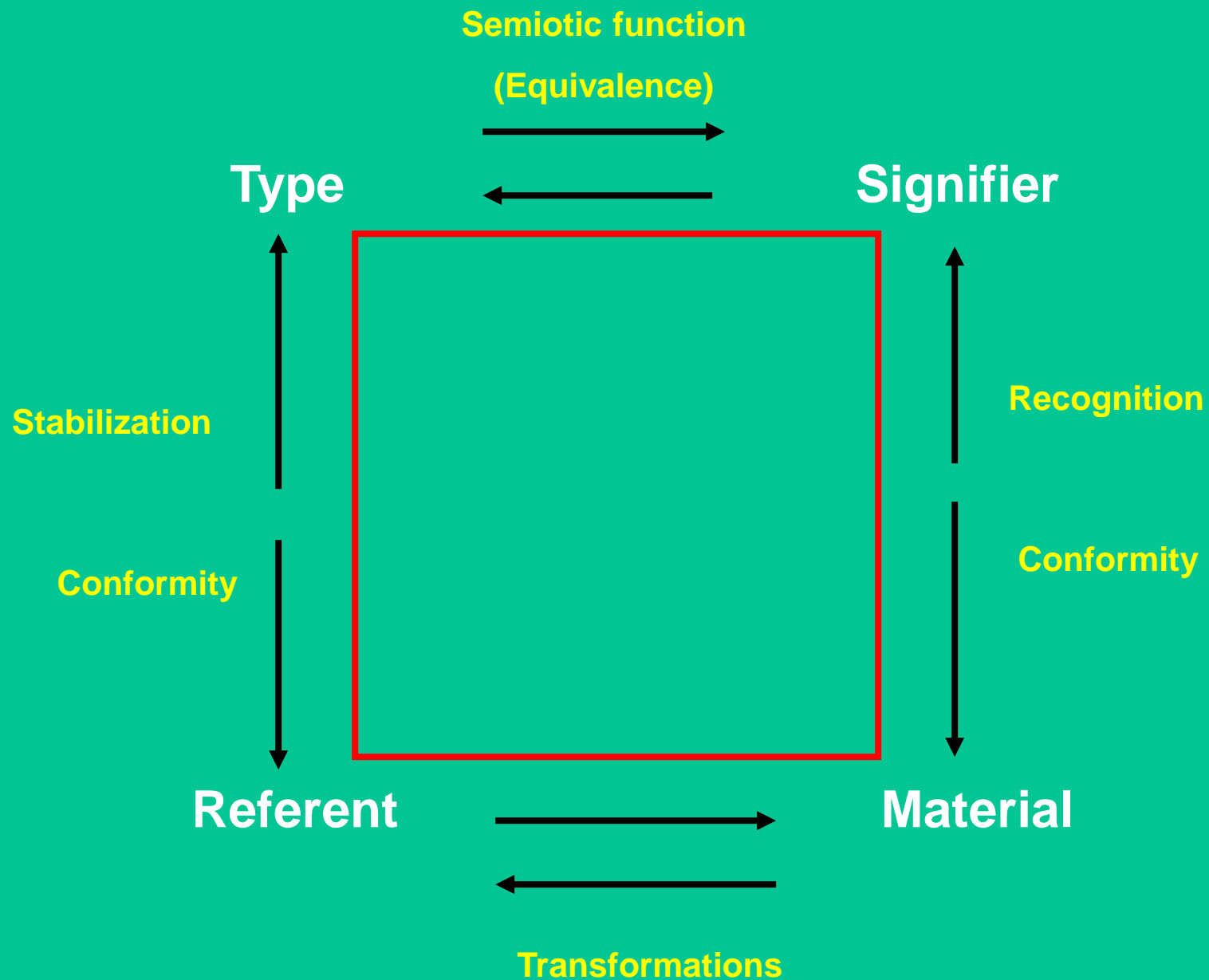
GROUPE μ
TRAITÉ DU SIGNE
VISUEL

Pour une rhétorique de l'image



La couleur des idées

Seuil





2. A general model of the iconic sign

2.1. Four elements

2.2. Four (dual) relations

2.3. Synthesis



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4. A pending problem: can anything iconize anything?
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5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?

5.1. A cotypy does not make an icon



Ceci ~~X~~ n'est pas ~~X~~ une pipe.



5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?

5.1. A cotypy does not make an icon

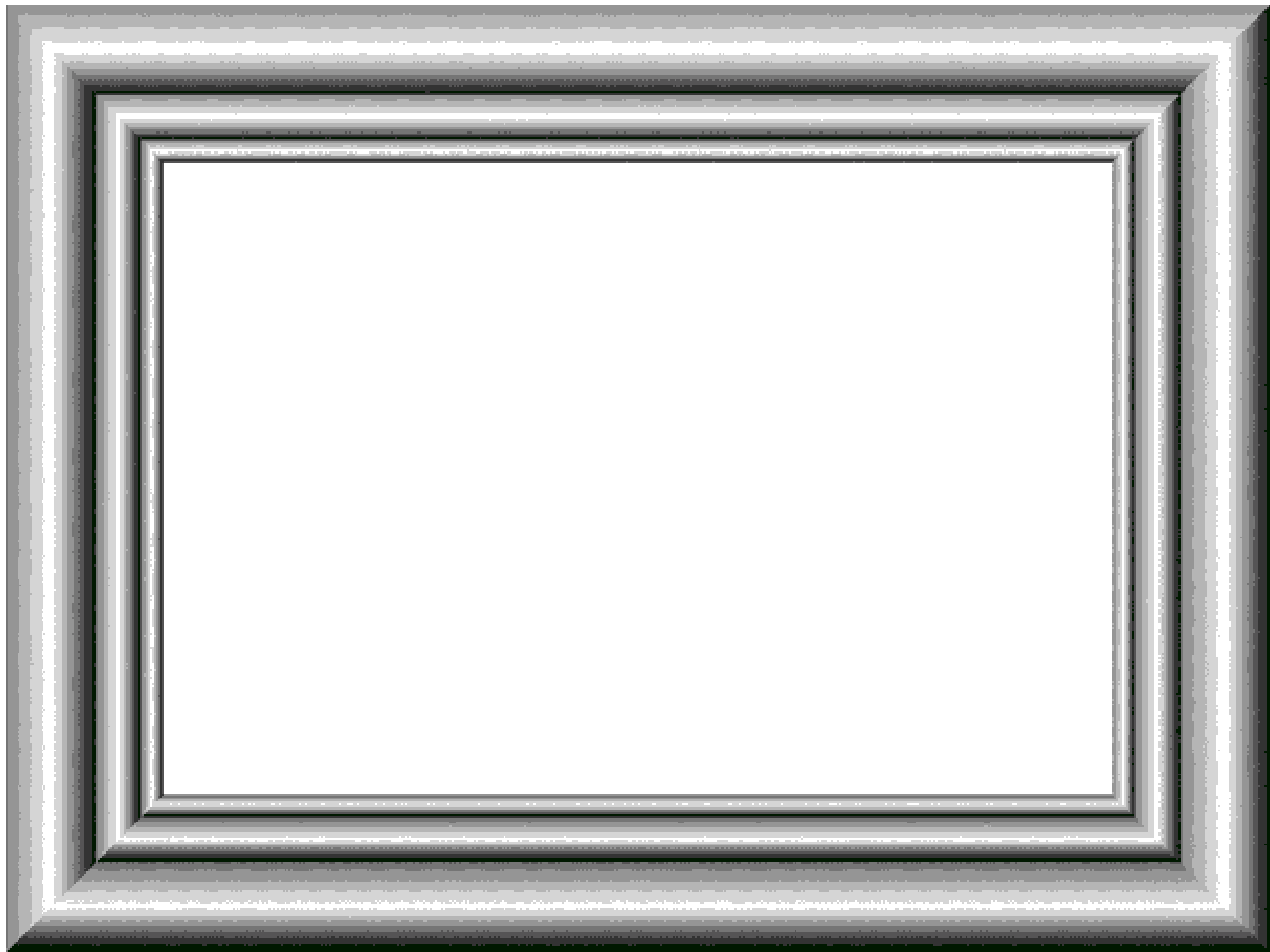
5.2. Making the icon: pluricodic procedures

Pragmatic shifters of iconicity

Pluricodic procedures

- indexical
- « indicial »







5. A second pending problem: when is a visual fact an icon?

5.1. A cotypy 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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jmklinkenberg@ulg.ac.be

www.klinkenberg.ulg.ac.be