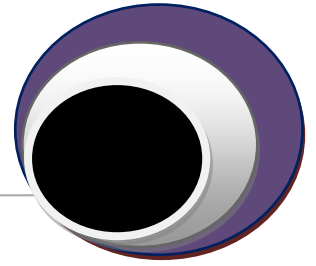


A prefatory note

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This issue of *Via Panorâmica* offers a selection of papers originally prepared for a conference held in November 2010 at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Universidade do Porto, and organised by the research group *Relational Forms* (based at CETAPS, the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies). The conference aimed to respond to the intense interest that intermedial designs have obtained in all areas of study pertaining to literature, the arts, and related cultural practices. It catered for contributions focusing on specific instances of intermediality, and on the frameworks of tradition within which they have been read; but it was equally open to studies that queried the barriers between verbal and non-verbal art forms, and interrogated the theoretical and critical tools that have traditionally been applied to the study of intermedial relations.

The articles below reflect, in various ways, this range of concerns. As in so many recent instances of the study of intermediality, the visual looms large as the *other* prevalent medium considered in this brief collection of studies. They combine a generic critical alertness to verbal artefacts with a commitment to extending the conditions for what James A.W. Heffernan has styled “picturacy”, construed as an ability to read visual signs and “speak for pictures”. Explicitly or not, the papers gathered in this issue of *Via Panorâmica* accord a dual value to the verbal: on the one hand, it is the medium (instrumentally, through discourse on the visual or performing arts) for investing pictures, or other visually accessed representations, with meaning; on the other, it is also the medium proper to texts *qua* objects of study (as considered in literary criticism and other modes of inquiry into verbal matter). As also pointed out by Heffernan, the latter practice is a source of enabling analogues for the former: we need “all the help that our experience of reading verbal signs – in language and literature – can give us” in order to broaden the cultural franchise of “picturacy.”*

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* James A.W. Heffernan, *Cultivating Picturacy* (Waco, Tex: Baylor U.P., 2006), *passim*.