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A VISUAL ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNICATION PERSUASIVE FUNCTION IN THE COVERAGE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION VICTORY DAY PARADE



ABSTRACT: This article is an attempt to present the visual persuasive mechanisms observed in official communications of the Russian Federation on the example of materials published on the website of the President of Russia (Russian: Президент России) concerning the events related to the Victory Day celebrations. After Vladimir Putin came to power - since the military parade in 2005, i.e. on the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe - it became the most important national holiday and a high-profile social event in Russia. The material analyzed in this paper illustrates the events that took place in Red Square in 2022, being even more interesting - as the paper's authors intended- when realizing the historical and geopolitical context in which they were set. The starting point of the conducted visuality analyses was the tradition of Soviet avant-garde art of the first decades of the twentieth century, understood after Wassily Kandinsky as the relationship in which the point and the line remain in relation to the plane (Kandinsky 1986). It has been shown that in the visual messages presented, a conscious and planned management of the observer's perceptual processes is carried out using these tools (point, line and division of planes). The dynamics of points and lines distribution on the plane, the perspective used, the way the narrative is built, geometrization and symmetry - in our understanding - in terms of visual propaganda mechanisms of strength, power and unity of the Russian Federation.

KEYWORDS: visual communication, visual military propaganda, constructivism, perceptual processes

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INTRODUCTION

Russian avant-garde formalists, especially representatives of constructivism, perceived artistic work as a cognitive-research laboratory. According to them, the artist, rejecting representational art, becomes a constructor of new objects-things, which - devoid of copying and imitation characteristics - are primarily interested in directly affecting the senses of man, and through perception - on his thinking and acting.

The work of art – “the creation of novelty” - is a space reformulated by the artist, constructed with the help of innovatively put together materials. Thus, the workshop-laboratory of a constructivist is based on invention understood as redefining the interdependencies resulting from the juxtaposition of already existing structural elements of the work. In the study entitled “Point and Line to Plane”, Wassily Kandinsky presented a methodology for studying the formal structure of the “proto-elements” contained in the work of art: the basic components of a picture, the point and the line. Thus, the essence of the materiality of “proto-elements” lies not in their own existence (and in giving them creative meaning, as in the case of representational art) but in the physical potential of producing “forces” and “tensions” by the interacting proto-elements. The artist, operating with the relations of points and lines on the plane (strongly visual), creates compositional arrangements and determines the narrative of the entire message. The observer, on the other hand, reads and functionally interprets them. Constructivist art was intended to involve the observer in the perceptual processes of the work as strongly as possible, influencing his thinking and eliciting pre-planned, automated reactions. The essence, therefore, is communication based on the formulation of principles. Through their application, a hitherto non-existent reality, built completely from scratch (on the basis of preexisting elements that have always existed), is brought to life. The artist defines the rules of looking, while the observer, involved in the process of work perception, submits to them. From this perspective, in our opinion, the thinking of avant-garde artists about influencing the senses and mind of the observer through art is close to the goals of communication activities, referred to in the social sciences as propaganda, where the power - in a planned way and unconscious to the observer - influences his senses and mind¹.

¹ G. Henderson, M. Braun, *Propaganda and rhetoric in democracy. History, theory, analysis*, Southern Illinois University Press, 2016, p. 118.

The artist and the observer, like power and society, enter into a symbiotic relationship with each other, observed in nature as a form of coexistence of weaker and smaller organisms that can survive by combining with larger and stronger ones². The primary purpose of propaganda is - from this perspective - to create meanings in communication that transcend the life of the individual, shaping them around God, Country and Society. Individuals engage in propaganda, so to speak, automatically, despite the fact that they sacrifice something (autonomy, causality, freedom), they gain unity with the stronger: power, organization, political party. As a result, they are no longer alone against the world but are part of a larger and stronger union that helps them face it³.

MATERIAL ANALYZED AND RESEARCH TOOLS

The study conducted qualitative visual analyses of selected film frames from the cinematic commemoration of the Victory Parade in Moscow's Red Square, 2022⁴. A single film frame was taken as the basic unit of analysis, assuming that a still, two-dimensional image makes it most possible to realize (and depict) the compositional rules (understood by us in the category of mechanisms of persuasive influence) responsible for creating new realities through visibility: the dynamics of the functional arrangement of points and lines on the plane, the use of perspective, the ways of building narrative, the use of geometrization and symmetry. The purpose of the visual analyses conducted was:

- to isolate the means of visual communication used in the message (proto-elements) and the mutual relations between them (compositional systems)
- to determine their function in the analyzed message.

The concept of Russian constructivist Wassily Kandinsky was taken as a starting point. According to him the composition analysis of a visual message should be considered in relation to two aspects of the message:

- 1) isolate the figures and shapes placed in the picture space and
- 2) indicate their interaction with each other.

² E. Fromm, *Ucieczka od wolności*, Vis-a-vis Etiuda, Kraków 2021, p. 174.

³ A. Laskin A. (2019), *Defining propaganda: A psychoanalytic perspective*, *Communication and the Public*, vol 4, Issue 4.

⁴ *Меры поддержки в условиях санкций*, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/68366>, (access: 04.06.2022)

The above makes it possible, according to Kandinsky, to indicate the unfolding dialogue of forces, directions and tensions inherent in the compositional arrangements of forms. Forms, in turn, are created through the arrangement of points and lines on planes. Both the point and the line, according to the assumptions of the theory of iconic memory, are the basic organizing units of the perceptual processes taking place in the visual sense and the human mind. The fact that visual perception proceeds from a point, through a segment, to angles (slants) is responsible - at the physiological level - for the so-called saccadic eye movements, the trajectory of which resembles wandering along the contour of the observed object (from fixation point to fixation point)⁵. Taking the above into account, in this study, for each film frame: 1) the key points of spatial organization, i.e., those elements of the picture on which the gaze is fixated first were indicated and 2) the tension between them was described.

In interpreting the function of the depicted tensions and the dialogue between points and lines in the picture, reference was made to the assumptions of the so-called character psychology (gestalt) and its key concepts: figure and ground. According to the gestalt theory, perceptions, i.e. images of the whole (composition), are a secondary result of perceptual processes arising from the summation of impressions (sensory responses to a point appearing on the plane and a force applied to it, i.e. a line). How strongly perceptual visual elements (points and lines) are distributed on the plane determines the division of the picture into figure (what dominates is perceived primarily) and ground (what is subordinate to the dominant elements of the picture). The division of the perceptual field into figure and ground is done according to these rules: the figure has a shape, while the ground spreads beyond the figure in a continuous way; the figure is put forward and has the character of a thing, while the ground is often an unshaped material; the figure is better remembered and gives meaning to the whole picture. How is the relationship of the figure to the background depicted in the analyzed material? How are the figures constructed? How is it communicated what is the figure and what is the background, and how does the above translate into the realization of the overarching persuasive function of the analyzed message?

⁵ You can read more about the psychophysiological mechanisms of vision, among others in publications: J. Młodkowski, *Aktywność wizualna człowieka*, PWN, 1998; A. Mączyńska-Frydryszek A., *Psychofizjologia widzenia*, PWSSP, 1991; Francuz P. *Imagia. W kierunku neurokognitywnej teorii obrazu*, Publishing House KUL 2021.

ORGANIZATION OF PROTO-ELEMENTS IN A PICTURE: POINTS, LINES AND PERSPECTIVE OF LOOKING

“Seeing is a perpetual movement of the eyes, building a picture of the world again and again”⁶. Sight examines the found image of reality continuously, selecting those fragments that are relevant to human well-being. Gillian Rose proposes the following distinction of the phenomena being addressed: she refers to what the human gaze, thanks to its physiological structure, is able to note with the term “view”, while she refers to how the image is constructed and interpreted as “visuality”.

Polish painter and art theorist Władysław Strzemiński, counted among the Constructivists, assumes that the development of vision proceeded in two ways: as a result of biological evolution of the eye and as a result of the historical ability to use what is noted – the vision. Thus, we have the ability to see (in the biological sense) and the awareness of seeing (in the analytical-interpretive sense). As he notes, the consciousness of seeing is constantly subject to a process of accumulation, and the image we see “with our real visual consciousness is not an unchanging image, it is not the only ‘true’ reality, once and for all given to us in some abstract extra-historical vacuum but a changing image, dependent on the development of history”⁷. Not all elements trigger the process of conscious vision; a great part of the biological record goes to the subconscious interpreter. The interpreter succumbs to automated, persuasive mechanisms for managing not only the space of the image but also the urban-architectural area, the space of everyday life. Thus, the most powerful tools of visual persuasion are those actions that are not fully realized⁸. Among the most expressive are those hidden in the compositional structure, all those that do not have a physical form but arise from the sequence of perceptual points which the science of character psychology (gestalt) calls a figure. Tools that dispose of space and time as elements that determine the order of perception, therefore human orientation in time and space (perceptual processes)⁹.

⁶ M. Wimmer, *Przestrzeń jako tworzywo sztuki*, Akademia Sztuk Pięknych im. Władysława Strzemińskiego w Łodzi, Łódź, 2021, p. 281.

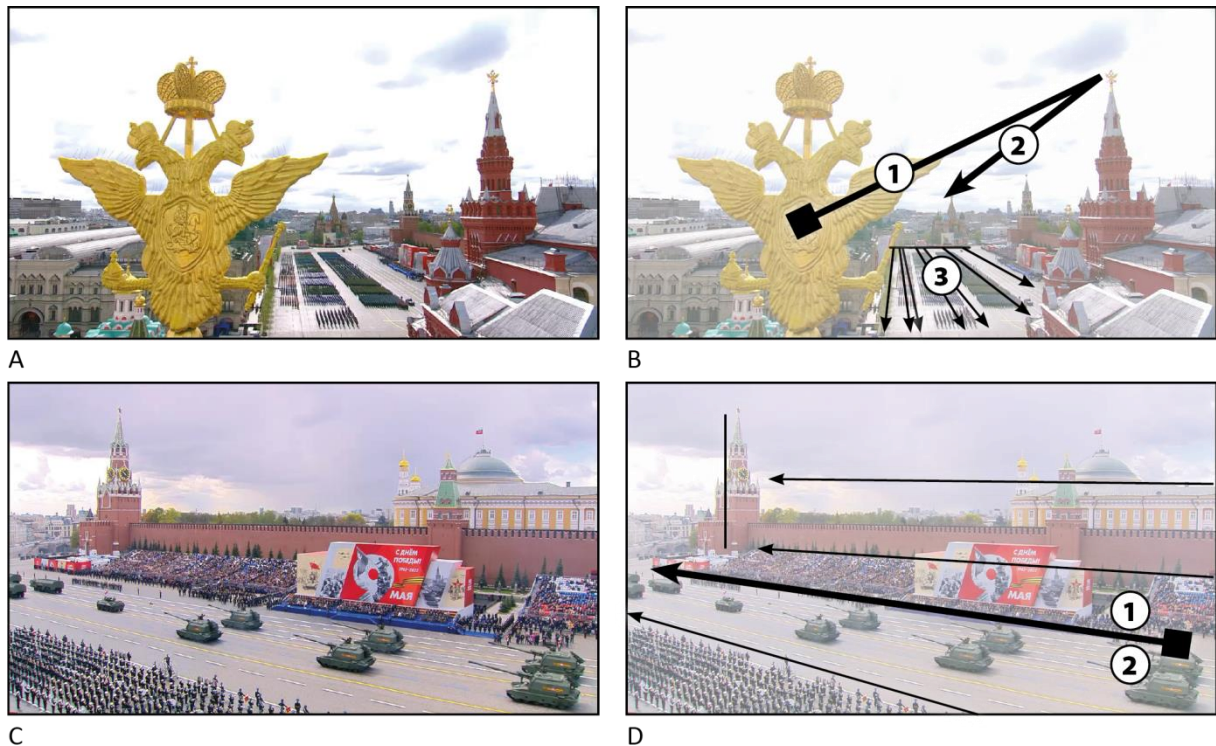
⁷ W. Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 2016, p. 55.

⁸ por. D. Doliński, *Techniki wpływu społecznego*, Wydawnictwo Scholar, Warszawa, 2011; R. Cialdini, *Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi, Teoria i praktyka*, GWP, Gdańsk 2007.

⁹ M. Wimmer, *Przestrzeń jako tworzywo sztuki*, Akademia Sztuk Pięknych im. Władysława Strzemińskiego w Łodzi, Łódź, 2021, p. 247.

Figure 1.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square. A: original shot, B: Points of perception, C: original shot, D: strip composition.



Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

Figures numbered 1A, 1B show freeze-frames from the coverage of the Victory Day Parade in Red Square in Moscow which took place on May 9, 2022. The first frame presented (Figure 1A) is used by the authors of the propaganda document repeatedly, as a cutaway separating selected scenes - also during the climax of the ceremony, just after Putin's speech, when the famous shout of Hoorah (Ура) is heard. The first time it was used in the 10th second of the film, when the voiceover welcomed the viewers. The second frame presented (Figure 1C) shows the passage of self-propelled howitzers along the honor stand and rows with the audience in the 51st minute of the film.

The presented frames cover the far plan from a bird's-eye perspective. The full area of Red Square is shown, along with the Moscow skyline. In the first one, the dominant elements are the golden emblem of the Russian Federation placed at the front of the set, the brick tower of the State Historical Museum in Moscow and the Red Square plane. The mentioned elements dominate over the others in color and shape. The composition layout follows the principles of convergent perspective. It is inscribed by the lines of buildings and columns of soldiers. The

dynamics of the composition is stopped by the horizon line of the city. The plane of the sky is neutral, it is the background.

The main compositional division is based on three points that suspend the eye. They are: The Emblem of the Russian Federation, the finial of the tower (also an emblem) of the Historical Museum, and the building of Saint Basil's Cathedral at the end of the square. Thus, the Emblem, the Museum and the Cathedral gain the role of a figure in the painting, while other elements become the background. The above manages the mechanism of distribution of visual engines, responsible for the focus of attention that is shaped on the depicted frames as follows: a basic line connects the figure of the emblem with the point of the finial of the museum's tower (also an emblem); this point is then the beginning for the next line, the second level of perception running diagonally, connecting the finial of the Spasskaya Tower with the tallest tower of Saint Basil's Cathedral. The main lines are reinforced by perspective lines circled by the bases and roofs of the buildings. The next direction of perception of the image takes the opposite course, from the end of the square, towards the viewer, it is drawn by the columns of soldiers lined up in Red Square. Thanks to this procedure, the viewer is prepared to receive new shots containing new threads of communicative content. The discussed photo with the described visual loop (entering and exiting the image space) plays the role of a cut-in shot.

The rectangular architectural and urban layout of Red Square, the orderly nature of the organization of the military columns imposes a strip composition of the photographs taken and film shots of the far set. The example of such composition is the illustration marked C in Figure 1. Here you can see two main lanes (Figure 1D), separated by a line along the first row of the audience and the honor stand: the upper one, with darker, saturated colors and the lower one with subdued colors. The dynamics of the aforementioned visual strips is subordinated to the direction of the confluence point - in this example, from right to left. Further, the internal division of the strips is the following: the upper one is divided into three more, enumerating from the top, a strip of cloudy, dark sky, buildings, audience. The lower consists of a central lane of parades, in this case the passage of self-propelled howitzers and a group of military orchestra. This is how two figures are distinguished in the image: howitzers and Red Square. The repetition of directional lines suggests the strengthening of the dynamics of the composition.

Attention is also drawn to the form of the Spasskaya Tower, whose role is to stop the action of the visual forces' thrust direction of the upper film frame. Consistently, stopping at

this point the direction of movement to the left in the composition increases the directional potential of the lane where the vehicles are moving. The far plane in the bird's-eye view, used in this case accentuating the vastness of the surroundings, minimizes the elements within it. The shot, however, is about manifesting the wealth of the army, the amount of equipment at its disposal. The following and preceding shots are intended to praise and show the power and might of military equipment. In Figure No. 2 shots in medium and close-up planes are placed, as well as inserts of close-ups of technical details, which serve to enhance the intensity of impressions of the machinery power perception. Noteworthy is the last freeze-frame of the shots sequence shown. It is a frame of the half-full plan filmed from below, in the so-called frog perspective.

Figure 2.

Analysis of sample stop-frames from film coverage of the 77th Victory Parade in Red Square.



Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022).

Kandinsky considers the point to be the basic proto-element of a picture, which "is the result of the initial collision of the tool with the material plane, with the basic plane" (Kandinsky, 1986: 23). Materially, it takes any form and any size. Immaterially, it is "the expression of the greatest conciseness, the most eloquent restraint"¹⁰. The condition for the existence of a point is: from the material side, the correct choice of proportions between it and the space in which it is located, from the immaterial side, maintaining the concentration and attention of the

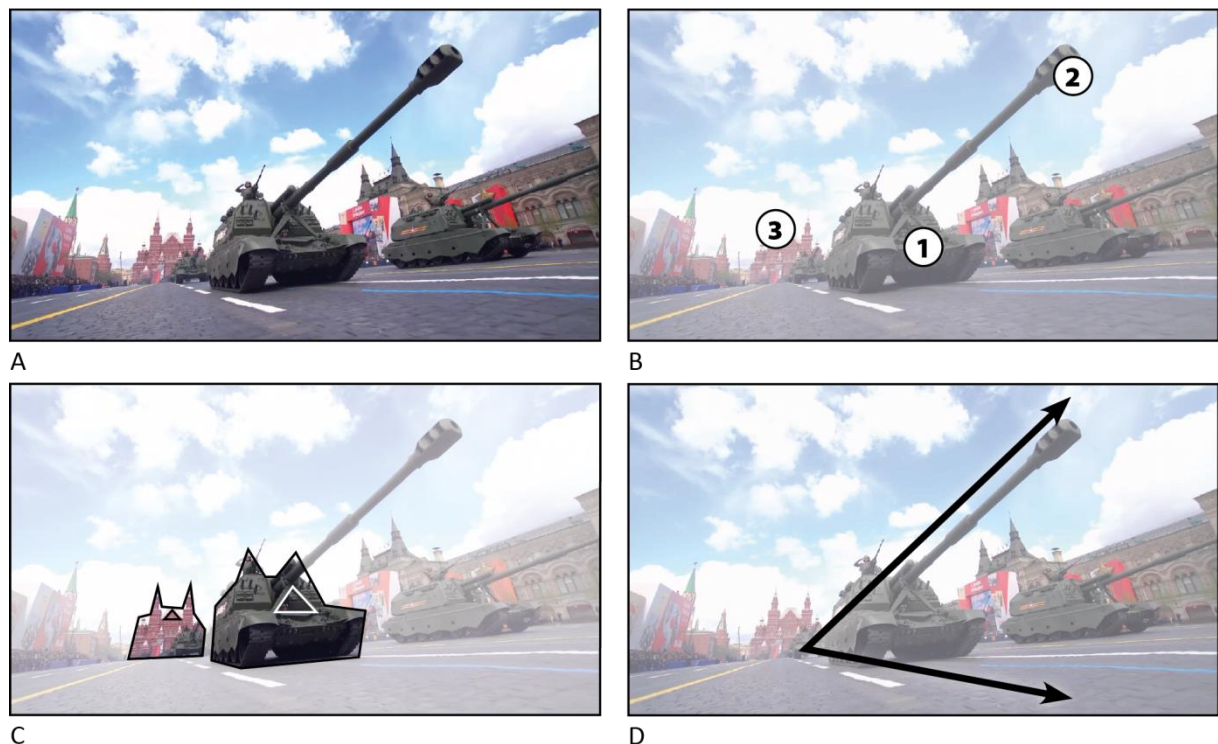
¹⁰ W. Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 2016, p. 219.

observer precisely on it. While the purpose of the point is to “spring” from the plane, so that it becomes the first element of the visual message to which the observer directs his gaze. To paraphrase the master’s words: “the point is the result of the first contact of the observer’s eye with the material surface of the picture”.

Figure 3.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square.

A: original shot, B: Focus points, C: Focus points through reinforcement, D: Perspective lines.



Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

In the film shot shown above (Figure 3), we see three main points of focus. The first is the silhouette of the self-propelled howitzer (Figure 3 B1), the second is the barrel discharge brake (Figure 3 B2), and the third is the distant silhouette of the Moscow Historical Museum building (Figure 3 B3). Wherein the role of the first two is to give the impression of the machine “going out” from the frame of the film. The third, on the one hand, through the similarity of the building’s shape to the howitzer, acts as a rhetorical reinforcement (Fig. 3C) through repetition, while on the other hand, it stops the dynamics of the composition based on the system of division, resulting from the arrangement of planes and lines ordered in convergent perspective.

As Kandinsky explains, the point is turned toward itself, “firmly fixed [...] in its place and shows not even the slightest inclination to move in any direction, either horizontal or vertical”

(Kandinsky, 1986: 28). It maintains this characteristic until it is knocked out of equilibrium by the impact of an external thrust, at which point it loses its inertia and determines the trajectory of the line (Kandinsky, 1986: 55). Both types of points are noticeable in the picture discussed. The unchanging point (not only in the depicted freeze-frame but also in the moving image) is the one determined by the surface of the museum building. The points that have lost their original feature are the point marked by the silhouette of the howitzer and the point of the end of its barrel. Both draw lines pointing to the right, in line with the direction of the howitzer's passage. Thus, it is the barrel that becomes the figure drawn in the picture.

The composition of the frame in question, as in the previous ones, is based on the layout of the lines of the convergent perspective grid. The point of convergence here is the form of the museum building (the figure at the second level of perception), to and from which the perspective lines run. The lines of direction of the self-propelled howitzer discussed above form a centrifugal composition, while the others, those drawn on the surface of the square and delineated by the buildings, form a centripetal composition. Thanks to this procedure, we have two directions of the movement dynamics in one frame: inwards and outwards of the composition, thus obtaining the effect of bifurcation in the picture (both the figure of the howitzer and the figure of the museum are visible). The discussed effect is very well visible while watching the film. The point of reference - the museum building remains stationary, the frame of the square covers a larger and larger area and the howitzers are increasingly large.

About the line, Kandinsky wrote that in its simplest form it is a record of a moving point path on which a unidirectional impact force acts. A straight line is then formed. Each successive impact of forces coming from outside breaks or bends it, complicating the course. New straight or smooth sections are formed. The catalog of line shapes is not limited; it includes straight lines, broken lines, but also fine lines with intricate structure and combinations of strokes. The line is subject to calculation of time units: the simpler its form, the shorter the process of tracing it and the more complex it is, the more time is required for the process of recognizing it. Like a point, a geometric line is invisible¹¹. In visual messages, it materializes taking different forms, it can be drawn in pencil, painted with a brush but it also can be outlined, arising at the junction of different forms, shapes, planes - and then it becomes a "perceptible" line. In space, lines draw, for example, folded forms of planes, the end or beginning of a given thing, a biological

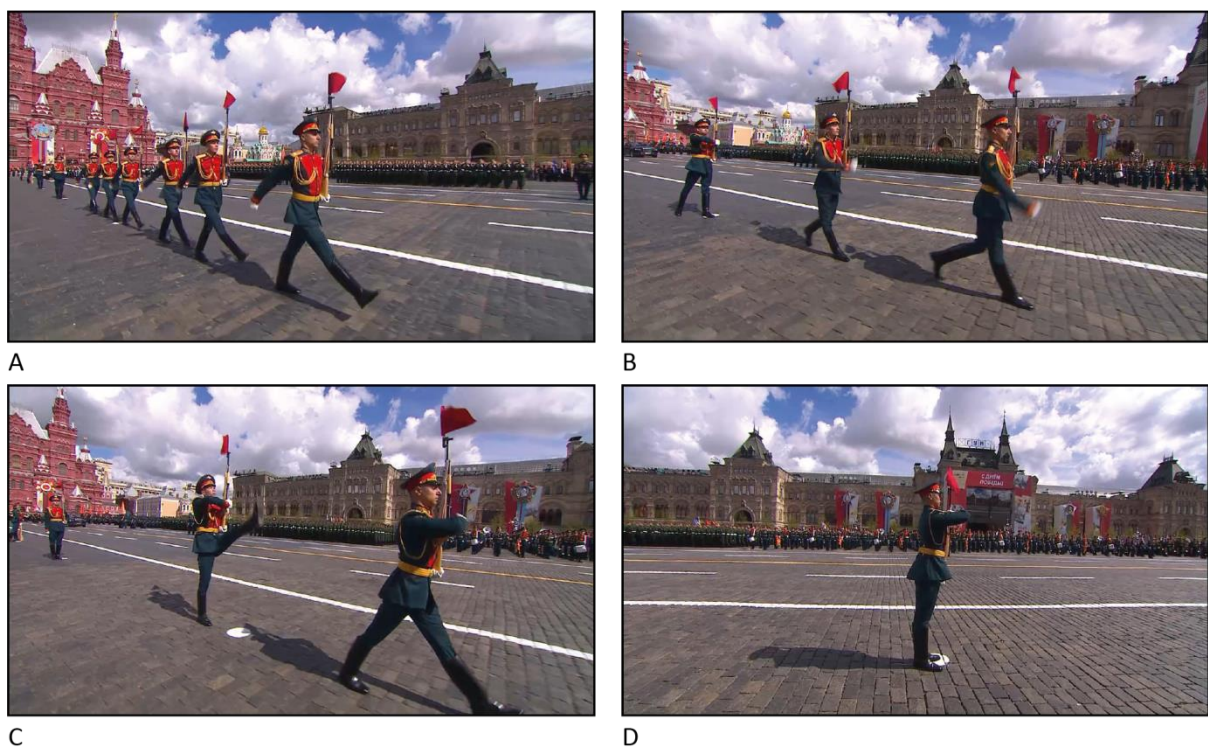
¹¹ W. Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 2016, p. 55.

form or other organic or inorganic matter. The difference between the immaterial and material form of a point or line is related to the human perception of what is seen and perceived, and what, and how is interpreted.

A point tends to expand, to spill beyond its boundary, to become a plane¹². A line, through its ability to connect and intersect with others, has the ability to outline space. A plane can also be achieved by thickening points or lines or lines and points together. This time the figure is extracted by grouping and ungrouping points on planes.

Figure 4.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square.



Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

An excerpt from the film coverage of the soldiers ceremonial marching in Red Square, beginning at the 28th minute, is an example of the use of visual reinforcements, of ordered visual formulas (Figure 4). The designated line march ends at the height of the honorary tribune (so only one figure is visible in Figure 4A): soldiers in line. When the marchers stop in a strictly directed temporal and spatial module, in Figure 4B and 4C another figure is distinguished: a column of soldiers in front of the GUM (Main Department Store) building. In Figure 4C, the last in the line of soldiers stops first, taking a characteristic parade step (in an oblique line). The

¹² Ibidem p. 95.

stopping point is emphasized by a high lift of the left leg. Finally, following the established pattern, the soldier turns his front towards the columns of military units (thus, in the 4D image, the figure of the soldier and the Department Store meld and become one). At this time the preceding soldiers are marching onward, becoming only the background. The whole cycle of visual handling of the image is repeated several times in the film. At a certain distance, the last soldier in the line repeats the described actions. This ritual is replicated until the first of the marching soldiers. In the visual perception, a straight line ceases to be as such, it pulsates with a designated rhythm of punctuated reinforcements by upsetting the dynamics of its course. Soldiers stop in front of their assigned military columns, thus drawing attention not only to themselves. The condition of rhetorical reinforcement of the spatial arrangement is fulfilled, while the figure is further distinguished by diagonal, easily perceived lines of the characteristic marching step.

The line described, consisting of the figures of soldiers and the shadows they cast, is the guiding line in the frame. The sequence of film shots maintains a belt pattern of lines repeating parallel to each other. Filmmakers assume that the lines drawn by stationary objects (in the example given, buildings and a square) mark landmarks for the space shown¹³. The well-visible geometrically ordered layout, while adhering to the rules of convergent perspective, contrasts with the upright figures of marching soldiers. Thanks to this manipulation, the vertical figures of soldiers are clearly distinguished from the background.

COMPOSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN SERVICE OF THE PERSUASIVE FUNCTION OF THE MESSAGE

In visual language, lines meeting criteria of similarity such as length, thickness, color, own material structure and the surface on which they are placed but differing in position in relation to the frame axis of the space, mean something completely different. As Rudolf Arnheim notes, a 45-degree rotated square is so different from the original - a square - that it received its own name - rhombus¹⁴. The example given includes three types of lines: horizontal, vertical and diagonal. Kandynski gives the horizontal line the properties of passivity and coolness, the vertical line the properties of active heat. Both types have the ability to extend in

¹³ B. Block, *Opowiadanie obrazem. Tworzenie wizualnej struktury w filmie, telewizji i mediach cyfrowych*, Wydawnictwo Wojciech Marzec, Warszawa 2020, p. 114.

¹⁴ R. Arnheim, *Sztuka i percepcja wzrokowa. Psychologia twórczego oka*, wydawnictwo słowo/ obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2004, p. 122.

both directions¹⁵. The arrangement of the horizontal and vertical lines is presented by Frutiger, saying that the horizontal is associated with calmness, with familiar places, with the ground we walk on, while the vertical is a symbol of lightning, rain, sunshine, but also the growth of plants, animals and ourselves¹⁶. The angular line, for Kandinsky, combines the characteristics of the horizontal and vertical lines, its special case - the diagonal contains equal values of passivity and activity, is cold-warm. For Frutiger, "The use of the diagonal is associated with a sense of untrustworthy uncertainty, of resonance"¹⁷. Block represents a similar position when considering the degree of intensity of the line's effect on the observer. "A diagonal line is the most intense, a vertical line less so, and a horizontal line is the least dynamic or intense"¹⁸. He also points out that straight lines are usually described as: direct, aggressive, industrial, orderly, strong, unnatural, mature and rigid. Curved lines are their opposite, being, among other things: soft, organic, safe and flexible¹⁹.

Kandinsky was a painter, so he was not interested in the post-frame smoothness of movement changing over time. However, when analyzing the film, this parameter should be taken into account. In the case in question, a straight line loses its drawing and painting ability to expand in both directions, and has its own clear beginning and direction of movement, often to infinity or vice versa - from infinity to a specific point. The construction of the analyzed message of the Victory Day Parade is based precisely on these means of cinematic expression. The Federation army is supposed to stretch to infinity, it is supposed to be great and invincible. The scenes are therefore constructed to expose this fact, to show it to the world. The pictorial scenery is constructed on the basis of a linear motif, endless diagonal lines, punctuated by cut-in shots - points (usually close-ups of the audience portraits or details of machinery): from size to detail, continuity, permanence and unity are communicated.

Moscow's Red Square takes up so much space that it cannot be photographed and filmed in its entirety. The flow and continuity of the army's march through the entire length of the square forces filmmakers to use film techniques known as continuous motion capture. Typically, filmmakers position their cameras so that the action of movement takes place on the

¹⁵ W. Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, Łódź 2016, p. 57.

¹⁶ A. Frutiger, *Człowiek i jego znaki*, d2d.pl, Kraków 2010, p. 23.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 23.

¹⁸ B. Block, *Opowiadanie obrazem. Tworzenie wizualnej struktury w filmie, telewizji i mediach cyfrowych*, Wydawnictwo Wojciech Marzec, Warszawa 2020, p. 117.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 122.

same side, so that there is no collision of visual overlap between the filmed objects. Russian filmmakers, like Soviet filmmakers, do not always follow this rule. Figures 5A and 5B show freeze-frames from the 1945 documentary Victory Day Parade at the twelfth minute, while Figures 5C and 5D are from the 2022, fiftieth minute.

Figure 5.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square:

A, B from 1945; C, D: from 2022.



A



B



C



D

Source: A,B: <https://youtu.be/hITzVSw6t18?t=745> (access: 04.06.2022); C, D: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

The composition of all four depicted freeze-frames follows the principles of three-quarter convergent perspective. What makes them different is the positioning of the camera relative to the line of human eye height. In the first one, the camera was positioned above the perspective line, thus showing the number of troops, while in the second one, it was positioned below, achieving the effect of enhancing the filmed object - in this case the mass and strength of the mounted troops. A set of photos from a contemporary parade uses the same visual principles. The first shot (5C), photographed from a frog's perspective, magnifies the silhouette of a passing rocket launcher. The second shot, of the driving Katyushas from a bird's eye view, has a different purpose - to show the number of motorized troops. The unusual rule of film art

applied probably serves to introduce confusion, according to the principle: the Soviet, Russian army is not only strong and large but also acts by surprise, in an unconventional way. Of course, not every viewer will notice the described inaccuracy of film technique. The scene is intended to have a subliminal effect, to communicate - using the principle of showing in a mirror image, how what is historical is nowadays relevant - the continuity and continuation of tradition. Two figures - exactly the same - thus overlap in the consciousness of the observer. The above seems all the more interesting as two gestalt figures are created: one real, the other - a mirror image.

The accepted rule is that during parades, soldiers are grouped into marching columns. From a visual point of view, these are arrangements with a duplicated geometric structure (Figure 6).

Figure 6.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square:

A: original shot, B: Geometrization of the military columns layout .



Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

The order introduced - linear geometric filled with textured figures of soldiers (Figure 6) - is another persuasive emphasis on the infinite number of soldiers in the army, the power of multiplicity in unity, in service of a common goal. The propaganda message of the army's greatness is shown in full plan, in a three-quarter view in convergent perspective in a bird's-eye view, from above or from below, from the so-called frog position. Using an open composition, the filmmakers create an endless space filled with soldiers and mechanized troops. In 2022, the air show was missing, so a kind of gap was created in the monumental military might of the Russian Federation.

The visual narrative drama of the analyzed parade is based on a dualistic set of persuasion-propaganda content. On the one hand, the purpose of the message is to show the

size and unity of the army, on the other hand, its structural subordination to the following figures of importance: the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin (7A) and the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation General Sergei Kuzugetovich Shoigu (7B, 7C), the commander of the ground forces of the Russian Federation General Oleg Leonidovich Salyukov as the leader of the troops parade (Figure 7D).

Figure 7.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square:

A: V. Putin, B, C: S. Shoigu, D: O. Salyukov.



A



B



C



D

Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](#), (access: 04.06.2022)

The composition based on the axis of symmetry is reserved for special people and for the presentation of symbols related to the ceremony. In the documentary, lasting an hour, the filmmakers applied the above procedure several times. Thanks to using the principle of symmetry, the viewer's attention is focused on one, usually centrally framed point of the image. The repetition of symmetrically organized shots, on the other hand, serves to reinforce the work of memory, keeping the viewer focused on important people or symbols.

In a similar function, communicating the dominant role, there are symbols in the pictures:

Figure 8.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square:

A: Clock on the Savior Tower, B: Image above the gate of the Savior Tower C, D: the flag of the Russian Federation and the Victory Banner



A



B



C



D

Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

- the clock on the Savior Tower (Spasskaya Tower) - as a symbol of Red Square - a point of reference, a figure of orientation (8A);
- the image of the Savior over the entrance gate of the Savior Tower (8B);
- the flag of the Russian Federation and the Victory Banner as symbols of victory over fascism, (8C, 8D);
- the Eternal Flame - an element of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier [a monument dedicated to Soviet soldiers killed in the Great Patriotic War] the only element located outside the square [Alexander Garden] - shown during Putin's speech when he announced a minute of silence to celebrate the fallen. The exit and entrance to Red Square are separated by a shot of the emblem and tower (Figure 1), opening the above analysis (9A);
- a tank from the Great Patriotic War - a symbol of Russia's former (and contemporary continued) greatness (9B).

Figure 9.

Analysis of freeze-frames samples from the film coverage of the 77th Victory Day Parade in Red Square:

A: Eternal Flame, B: tank from the Great Patriotic War.



A



B

Source: [Парад Победы на Красной площади • Президент России \(kremlin.ru\)](https://kremlin.ru), (access: 04.06.2022)

Thus - with the help of visual means - the figures of people shown are raised to the status of symbols (in reference to the centuries-old tradition of icon writing in Orthodoxy).

CONCLUSION

The conducted analyses allowed observing the consistent and systematic use of the following means of image organization in the analyzed material: 1) the dynamics of points and lines on the plane, 2) the use of bird and frog perspective, 3) the use of composition based on symmetry, 4) the construction of rhythmic visual narratives based on repetition.

We assumed that the choice of the above tools is not accidental, given the visual effect that can be achieved through their use:

1. highlighting important and significant figures in the image with the help of points and lines (fig.1), which serves to increase the focus of attention on them in a specific order: emblem - council - museum, i.e. federation - religion - tradition;

2. filming the depicted people and objects from two perspectives: bird's or frog's, allows to show what is dominant (the figure) and what is subordinated (the background) in proper relation; the leading figure in the picture filmed from the frog's perspective acquires the qualities of size and power, while filmed from the bird's perspective - unlimitedness and immensity (Figure 2 and Figure 3);

3. building a rhythmic narrative, based on repetitive frames presenting the same figures: columns of soldiers, columns of equipment, the architectural-urbane organization of Red Square, which, first of all, manifests the unity of the objects shown (textures in Figure 6) and the use of geometrization as a principle of space organization (Figure 3); and, in addition,

through the reinforcement and repetition obtained, the work of memory is accelerated (Figure 4 and Figure 5);

4. composing frames according to the principle of symmetry allowing to clearly distinguish the depicted figure and place it in the central point of the image and thus emphasize its rank, often its symbolic dimension (Figure 7 and Figure 8); thus, a hierarchy of figures in the message is obtained.

The filmmakers make use of all available film tools in order to create a regime of matching the means of expression with the communicative content. The most important figures are filmed according to the rules of symmetry, other, less important figures or people from the audience and the crowd, are shown in an asymmetrical approach, most often their faces are shown in three-quarters. These principles are carried out very consistently, not only in the analyzed example - they can be seen in earlier coverage of the parade and other films concerning the military and key state figures (for example, in filmed coverage of the inauguration and swearing the president into office).

Operating on figures and backgrounds in the analyzed coverage serves to build an image of unity, strength and power of the Russian Federation. It has been noted since President Putin came to power, which is noticeable all the more strongly when looking at the changes of filming the New Year speeches of President Yeltsin and then President Putin. Thus, in the analyzed message, a visually valid, new and precisely arranged reality (propaganda) is created (according to the principles of constructivism), in which the dominant role of the figure is played by symbols (including historical and religious), important figures and the unity of the army, to which the Russian people are to be subordinated on the basis of symbiosis (background). Although the chosen means of expression directly refer to the achievements of avant-garde artists, from the artistic point of view, they are far from, for example, Sergei Eisenstein's film "Battleship Potomkin", also created for propaganda purposes.

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