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## Putting Bodies to Work – Bodies of Texts and Bodies of Readers Operating at a Whopping 75 Horsepower

**Abstract:** The present paper focuses on a targeted occurrence within the larger area of modern literature – namely the *75 HP* magazine. The literary-visual occurrence under scrutiny opens two possible approaches. The bodies of text present in the magazine either employ somewhat conventional grammar that embodies the spirit of unconventionality through the typographical dimension, or language that compiles almost entirely visual compositions, that involve the body of the reader to physically follow the new means of reading.

**Keywords:** Romanian Avant-Garde; *75 HP*; Participatory Reception; Visual Language; Visual Poetry; Textual Body; Typography.

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**75** *HP* was “the most avant-garde” single-issue magazine ever published in Romania, in October 1924, by Victor Brauner, Ilarie Voronca, Stephan Roll and Claude Sernet and it combined elements of constructivism, Dadaism and futurism. *75 HP* was a unique occurrence that loudly coined the concept of *pictopoetry* – in a manner rather similar to several other avant-garde phenomena that started with enthusiastic momentum but remained merely as starting points, announced and proclaimed with enthusiasm and zing, but ultimately never moved any further. The continuous push for new “ism-s” in the Romanian avant-garde did not, over the years, go unnoticed in the scholarly literature and the resounding declarations in *75 HP* were called out as such –

Except for *Pictopoezia No. 5721* and *No. 384* illustrated in the unique issue of *75 HP*, no other example of picto-poetry was ever shown, exhibited, illustrated, and, almost sure, also never created, either by Brauner or Voronca, or by any of their acolytes. (...) This was not so eccentric as it might seem, if one takes into account the

feverish will-to-trend of the Romanian Avant-Garde circles of the time, eager firstly to coin a new movement, and not to deliver a consistent artistic output<sup>1</sup>.

The examples Erwin Kessler gives in this sense are *synthetism*, which was announced and “baptised” by the magazine *Punct* in 1924, despite having produced no *synthetist* works, and *integralism*, supported by rather little<sup>2</sup>. The tendency of coining names for concepts that may or may not be universally original is indeed arguable, but it does open paths towards discussing both their validity and their actual influences,<sup>3</sup> which is not the objective the present paper.

Nonetheless, the manifesto-magazine *75 HP* declares the invention of *pictopoetry*, which is neither painting nor poetry, because “*Pictopoezia nu e pictură / Pictopoezia nu e poezie / Pictopoezia e pictopoezie*” [pictopoetry is pictopoetry], which, despite it looking like a low-effort axiom-like tautology, is is not (at least not in the strict sense). In his *Philosophy of Language*, Michael P. Wolf discusses *sense and reference* and offers and extremely ingenious analogy:

Allow me to make a bold statement:

(1) Farrokh Bulsara is Farrokh Bulsara. Shocking! Enlightening! It was insights like this that led you to choose this book, I know<sup>4</sup>.

He goes on to point out that the mechanism behind sentences that appear tautological make us interpret them that way and, in fact, make us believe them as such due to basic human logic and reason:

I would be willing to bet that even if you don't know anyone named ‘Farrokh Bulsara’ (as most won't), and don't know who I'm referring to here, you will still be willing to accept the truth of (1). Why? Just about everyone who reads this has an intuitive grasp of what logicians call the law of identity: roughly, every individual thing is identical to itself. You know this, and you read (1) as a statement of one such consequence of this law<sup>5</sup>.

Things get a bit more complicated when the individual thing is not only identical exclusively to itself. In fact, the truth-value is equal in the case of both “Farrokh Bulsara is Farrokh Bulsara” and “Farrokh Bulsara is Freddy Mercury” – just as it is for “Eduard Marcus is Eduard Marcus” and “Eduard Marcus is Ilarie Voronca”. This perspective creates a significant distance between structures that merely seem tautological, and other structures like “If I die, I die”, “I am what I am” etc..

The two “true” pictopoems in the magazine are No. 5721 (*75 HP*, p. 9) and No. 384 (*75 HP*, p. 10). Thus, what does “Pictopoetry is pictopoetry” bring to the table, if not a somewhat-nonsensical, somewhat-whimsical tautology? What has been established is *what it is not*, which means, following the same logic, that it is *not-painting* and *not-poetry*. If, in *75 HP*, 5721 and 384 are the only two that are fully worthy of the title, then the rest of the texts should fit (at least in part), one of the two *not-definitions*. However, a definition cannot rely solely on a negation, since that would sideslip the discussion dangerously close to a *tertium non datur* [law of excluded middle] approach.

The two above are indeed the only ones outright declared as such, but they do set the tone for the entire rest of the magazine. Pictopoetry contains a *dandy* gene, in the sense that the *dandy* is forced to always cause awe and plays a role in his own life, unable to actually live it<sup>6</sup> – which would appear to result in a rhetoric turned towards buffoonery, an amusing spectacle:

The adoption of the noisy style of commercial advertisements gives these statements [the ones present in the magazine – m.n., A.C.] a distinctly comical note, revealing the author's ironic detachment from their own manifesto and an awareness of the farce. The appearance of the *dandy* element in the text is reflective of the group's general attitude, namely the inclination towards spectacular revolt<sup>7</sup>.

The text, and indeed the magazine itself, can be interpreted as a *spectacle*, but this involves another important element: *the reader's gaze*. The spectacle *must be viewed*. Furthermore, the “commercial advertisements” seemingly emulated and reflected linguistically and visually by the magazine also involve *typographic* techniques that, in this case, construct images *that must be viewed*, rather than texts that must be read.

A game of signifiers that may or may not need their signified counterparts thus unfolds within the magazine and outlines two types of (for lack of a better word) installations. On the one hand, there are installations of *language that must be looked at*, literally, with our eyes, and, on the other hand, of *language that looks like language that must be looked at* but that, in fact,

convey a message in the most complicated manner possible, but still fairly readable.

At the time of the magazine's publication, not everyone was fully on board with the aggressively visual, typographically artistic nature of this approach. Const. I. Emilian, one of the first critics of the Romanian avant-garde as the one who published his approach chronologically closest to the writers he scrutinised<sup>8</sup>, for instance, intuitively recognized (somewhat condescendingly) the visual importance in the “lyrical” construction of their texts, but even more so, the significance of the typographic dimension:

While Symbolists created free verse, Modernists created typographic verse: neither rhyme, nor rhythm, nor meter; just a simple breaking of the text to impress the eye rather than the musical sense. The aim of these verses seems more about achieving a typographic aesthetic than a poetic one. There might be relationships and sonorities that we, the uninitiated, cannot perceive!<sup>9</sup>

Deeply unimpressed by the visual processes and their effects, Emilian goes on to hammer the final nail in his opinion by stating that the entire approach seemed so artificial that it was really not worth any further attention, given that more captivating schemes and images could have been imagined, if the typographic aesthetic were actually the only purpose if it all<sup>10</sup>. While this may partly be true, the avant-garde occurrences under scrutiny here do offer two types of images compiled of two types of languages, which was possible particularly with the aid of the not-at-all boring typographic processes and effects.

Beatrice Warde, in the chapter suggestively entitled “The Crystal Goblet *or* Printing Should be Invisible”, argues that printing should be just as invisible as a crystal goblet to a wine connoisseur – someone who is truly interested in the *contents* would never choose a solid gold goblet, but a clear, crystal one, given that what actually needs to be visible is the wine, and not the vessel.

Now the man who first chose glass instead of clay or metal to hold his wine was a ‘modernist’ in the sense in which I am going to use the term. That is, the first thing he asked of this particular object was not ‘*How should it look?*’ but ‘*What must it do?*’ and to that extent all good typography is modernist<sup>11</sup>.

Other parallels in the same spirit are made, like one in which a stained glass window is indeed *pretty to look at*, but a *pretty useless* window, per se. Sure. However, there are, as we shall show in the following, certain occurrences that do, in fact, walk the fine line between “How should it look?” and “What must it do?” Despite us basically having been taught to ignore the *body* of language, to regard it as invisible and to look past it, to merely use it as a trampoline and dive directly into the pool of meaning, the typographical deviation from the standard form of the textual body (even generally speaking, like a typo, a mistake of any kind) yanks us right back – to the surface, to a position facing the page directly. The deviation makes the reader become fully aware of the physical space and the entities that occupy it.

To ignore the printed body of modernism is to ignore one of its most

salient aspects. Writers, like painters and sculptors, saw the influence print was having on language, and therefore on perception. (...) Writers too began to consider printed words and paper the materials of their art, and as visual artists called attention to pigment, canvas, wood, and cardboard, so writers called attention to print, the page, and the conventions guiding their production.<sup>12</sup>

The general stance on the visually unconventional avant-garde text is that it is deeply connected to more than one human sense – sight, obviously, but also sound. The consensus is that, because of their graphic designs, the reader genuinely feels screamed at and the texts “feel” loud.

Printed versions of a presumed oral original, the avant-garde manifestos get a recognizable look, the vibrating look of noise. Paradoxically, although conceived as intellectual, conceptual, innovative propaganda productions, the avant-garde manifestos acquired, when printed, consequential aesthetic marks. As a graphic translation of sound, their inventive typography – exaggerated block letters, disruptive words, dizzying colouring – was a means of suggesting the blare of the supposedly original spoken, spontaneous version, the primordial one that was ‘authentic’ and creative, provocative, vociferous. In this sense, many avant-garde manifestos are the presumed reflections or visual copies of a verbal – though lacking – original, like readable musical scores as compared to music performed live<sup>13</sup>.

The auditory dimension, however, cannot truly apply in several examples under scrutiny in the present paper. The texts that employ both *languages that must be looked at* and *languages that look like languages that must be looked at* rely heavily on their visual dimensions. They become bodies to behold, by participatory reception or mere gaze. John Hollander outlines both “the poem in the ear” and “the poem in the eye”, the latter being of interest here:

The poem in the eye is a kind of picture, and one of the things we do when we read a poem is to discern visual structures, to make out parts, wholes, relationships, to see patterns in sub- and total contexts, and so forth. Our ability to do this will depend, in the use of pictures, upon the way in which prior associations, previously understood graphic conventions are engaged by the particular versions of those conventions in the individual style of the picture. All pictures look more like other pictures than what they are pictures of<sup>14</sup>.

### **Not Just *Not-Paintings*, but Rather *Language that Must Be Looked at***

One such occurrence in *75 HP* is Miguel Donville’s “Unt cu pâine”<sup>15</sup> [Buttered bread] – a poem-image constructed using *language that must be looked at*: written in multiple languages, multiple fonts, multiple orientations on the page and one mathematical equation. It is indeed a form of “inventive typography”, but it cannot realistically be regarded as a “graphic translation of sound”. We cannot, however, deny its “poem in the eye” quality.

The ability of the body of a text to act somewhat autonomously from the meaning it formally embodies, in *75 HP*, is held up by the visual support of the chosen vocabulary. The words used are actually terms that are part of one natural language or another, as opposed to being made-up words that would, in fact, compile the same *image*, but with a completely different *effect*. As it stands, Donville’s “bread” can be placed somewhere along the long (long!) line between Chomsky’s *colourless green ideas that sleep furiously*<sup>16</sup>, and Ted Chiang’s *Heptapod B*<sup>17</sup>, thus between grammatical, un-grammatical and *linguistic mandalas*.

One of the more visually and graphically complex pages compiles texts authored by Voronca and an image by Brauner, namely page 8. It not only requires, but demands participatory reception. The reader-viewer is physically involved in the process of experiencing it; if they choose not to merely view the created image as a whole, from afar, they must tilt their head, they must physically rotate the page. The reader’s body becomes involved in a manner that requires gestures that are not normally part of the scenography of reading. The body of the text thus engages the body of the reader in a way that actually adds to the overall meaning(s) that emerge<sup>18</sup>.

The dependency of the meaning, or the possible meaning(s) on the image itself, as well as on the existence of (firstly) a viewer and (secondly, by engaging in participatory reception and involving one’s body) a reader can be found in the seemingly “two-stanza” poem in the bottom right corner.

In the original, inverted form, Stanza I and Stanza II create a certain visual symmetry that is not completely lost when the

texts are placed in the conventional position, but it does move away from the initial image resembling wings or mirrored buildings. What remains, however, hints at the possibility of constructing a palindrome—in its inverted form (as shown above), it is identical when read from left to right and from right to left, a quality that disappears once the text is knocked over and forced to adopt a conventional position. There are numerous avant-garde texts that appear on the page in unconventional positions for various reasons, as part of the larger image economy of the page. Taken individually, however, as is the case here, most neither gain nor lose anything when placed or viewed in more conventional positions. Geo Bogza's "*De-scântec*" [Incantation], for instance, appears inverted, horizontally, in the magazine *Urmuz*, No. 3, March–April 1928, but the position of the text does not add anything to it, semantically, poetically, or even visually, as a matter of fact. It makes us tilt our heads when reading, but it does not challenge, does not jolt, and does not utilize the natural way we read (at least in the case of European languages): from left to right, from top to bottom. However, in the case of the poem in *75HP*, the position (this one, and no other) of the poem on the page gives it a potential quality of a palindrome.

The "Aviogram" in *75 HP*, for example, once transcribed into a conventional form, as in Marin Mincu's *Avangarda literară românească*<sup>19</sup> [Romanian Literary Avant-Garde], becomes a different text from the original because an entire dimension that was part of its construction was outright removed. The relationship between the text and the page itself has received a possible means for reconciliation through *liberation*:

The 'pictorial turn' diagnosed by W.J.T. Mitchell in his book *Picture Theory* brought about phenomena which have changed the relation between the graphical attire of the text and its verbal non-materiality. (...) In constructing their sense, texts created by those authors in the previous century (yet having much earlier antecedents) utilize just as much the semantics of language as the semiotics of matter: the shape and the spacing of print, the physicality of paper, the availability of a virtual link, the spaciality and architecture of the volume, the iconic potential of the page (or the screen)<sup>20</sup>.

Corporality and independence, in Zenon Fajfer's view, are the desire of words and what composes "*liberature*", as opposed to "literature":

Literature is full of descriptions of bodies. (...) Written and unwritten. Brought to life by the imagination of a poet, the voice of a singer, and the ear of a listener, fed by the imagination of a reader. For those bodies the word is only a placenta, a chrysalis from which a butterfly emerges. Sometimes a description is not enough: then, the description itself wants to be a body. The word wants to be flesh, to be writing indecently nontransparent, visible, not only audible. *STATELY* and *plump*. Flesh, not (a placenta). (The book is to be that)<sup>21</sup>.

If a literary construction typically includes all these components (in writing), in addition to the linguistic "non-materiality", applying a thick layer of *Lorem Ipsum*



to language can test the strength of the image, of the body of the text, in the absence of the verbal component. In the world of typography, the “texts” that come closest to being purely visual constructions, yet composed of words, are those created as “placeholders” for meaningful ones, namely texts formed from the automatically generated language, *Lorem ipsum*, the dummy text invented by the printing industry. A *pre-text*, a language that is only pretending to be a language, its purpose being that of creating an image of words without allowing the page to become a drawing.<sup>22</sup>

The technique eliminates all semantic meaning from the text and, therefore, leaves the body of the text stripped to its bare bones. Were this view applied to the page reproduced below, the entire overall meaning would by no means be outright destroyed, rendering the text useless. The body of the text stripped of its semantic dimension, still stands, as the image of a spiral with a red core (in *75HP*, page 2).

The form, emptied of signifiers, *lorem ipsum*-ized, remains valid, unlike other segments of literature that do not stand without signifieds. At the moment of *lorem ipsum*-ization, participatory reception disappears. The reader looks at the spiral with a red core, no longer needing to tilt their head, no longer needing to rotate the page. For conventional texts, both semantically and graphically, *lorem ipsum*-ization would completely obliterate the original meaning, because they do not “look like” anything other than texts. In a *lorem ipsum* version, the conventional text “looks”, at most, like Latin, without actually being Latin. Its shape on the page is what constructs one of its meanings. *Lorem ipsum*-izing the pages of *75 HP* temporarily

removes their semantic dimension to test their visual strength, to test the extent to which they remain standing and valid once the lexical meanings are filtered out. And most of them do.

**Not Just *Not-Poetry*, but rather  
*Language that Looks like Language  
that Must Be Looked at***

The *language that looks like language that must be looked at* created texts merely *in the spirit* of the images of signifiers, shown above, but they do, in fact, contain somewhat readable messages – by this, I mean: they *look weird*, they *sound weird*, but *I understand what they're saying*. One example of a text that, when looked at, seems rather normal, graphically speaking, but that continues to somewhat follow the general linguistic form of the aforementioned unconventionally shaped ones, is the following (in a translation that actually tried to follow the original Romanian structure as closely as possible):

The contribution that modernist research has brought to literature and art is unappreciable. In the past five years the whole baggage of melancholy boarding school girls romance has been gradually forgotten through suburban stations in the sound o! sacramental of barrel organ. Now, fresh with new virginity the thought designated or written cleaves express lightning strike the loudly unfolded steppes. On airplanes, travellers with strong sensibilities play poker or tap dance on their hands. The depth of the sensation no longer rests barrenly on the retina but bursts boom-boom

fruitfully onto the meninges. This is the triumph of music-hall elegant polite acrobatics intellectualness up to the gas meter. Life as a hot carburetor falls onto the head of the chestnut salesman. And words with dishevelled intestines run through the slum chained in the jazz of vertiginous sentences. Literature no longer rusts like autumn leaves no longer suppurates at intervals like a phlegmon but, rolled tire vulcanization collapses in the dance of fortresses. Automobile car truck huge boiler manometer tar all poured tumultuously over the canvases cured of imbecility. Painting is no longer the academic masturbation of colour tubes. It has potently broken away, above the prejudices, within the massive constructivist erection.<sup>23</sup>

Typographically speaking, the body of the text appears as conventional as possible, thus the reader's physical involvement is minimal. Only by actually diving deeper into the text does something begin to feel a bit off. The manifesto-dimension of the text is clear rather clear, given its message of surpassing the past and all outdated views and concepts. In fact, of the two chomskyan sentences ["(1) Colorless green ideas sleep furiously / (2) Furiously sleep ideas green colorless"], the texts that use *language that looks like language that must be looked at* can be placed in a somewhat close proximity to the first, if we were to take (1) as the coherent version of (2). Despite it having initially been given as an example of grammatically correct nonsense, (1) has, in fact, over time, received a number of interpretations that gave it coherence. Therefore, if "Furiously sleep ideas green

colourless" were taken as a type of scrambled translation of (1), then, for instance, "Acum, proaspătă cu virginități noi gândirea desemnată sau scrisă spintecă expres fulger stepele sonor desfășurate" [Now, fresh with new virginity the thought designated or written cleaves express lightning strike the loudly unfolded steppes], despite its obvious unconventional linguistic form, emulates the *language that must be looked at* and gives it a coherent, fairly readable, militant message.

Another example of a text that uses *language that looks like language that must be looked at* employs the aspects of visual typography present throughout the magazine would, in fact, be diluted, were it to be transcribed into a (visually) conventionally written form (as is the case with Alex. Cernat's text, on page 12).

What stands out in the text is the rhythm given by the typographical decisions that gave it its shape. It *looks like language that must be looked at*, but the message itself is grammatically coherent, and contains the same manifesto-type definition for the apparent sole reason for the existence of the entire magazine: "*Pictopoezia e sinteza artei noi și ar putea fi ea singură justificarea grupărei 75HP*" [Pictopoety is the synthesis of the new and it could, by itself, be the only justification for the 75 HP group]. *The language that looks like language that must be looked at* visually disturbs the rhythm of the text – if "rhythm represents the regularity in intervals of time"<sup>24</sup>, this text reflects precisely what it set out to do: speed, the relentless out-of-breath race for the future. If we were to *lorem ipsum*-ize the text, it would indeed continue to stand on its own, but the point of it was to place a coherent construction into the mould that



supports it. The text that employs *language that looks like language that must be looked at* is thus prone to losing on two fronts: the body of the text, stripped of its visual dimension (transcribed into a graphically conventional form) loses the means by which it disturbs its own rhythm in its acceleration, while the body of the text, stripped of its signifieds (*lorem ipsum*-ized), loses the very message it is panting.

The aim of the present paper was far from trying to prove that they are all pictopoems. Though close reading, based on a case-study-like approach, the goal was to open a bifurcated channel into understanding what goes into viewing such texts. The body of the text shows itself as such, by employing typography, but maintaining its signifieds, or it is bent into unnatural shapes that compel the body of the reader-viewer to come into play. What most discussions (and, for that matter, most anthologies) have done in treating *75 HP* was precisely that: stripping away (by disregard or superficiality) either one or the other of

the two dimensions – the texts compiled of *language that must be looked at* are deemed as cute typographically ingenious means of delivering manifestoes and the texts that use language that looks like language that must be looked at are clearer, more readable manifestoes that are often transcribed into conventional writing.

The *not-paintings* depict bodies of text that employ *languages that must be looked at*, in often un-grammatical forms of signifiers that demand participatory reception from a reader suddenly made aware of the physicality of the text and of their own body. If stripped to their bare bones, the *not-paintings* remain compelling visual constructions that, however, lose the physical involvement of the reader. The *not-poetry* renders bodies of text that seem to reflect a similar spirit as the former, but employs *languages that look like languages that must be looked at*, in fairly grammatically coherent forms that require both of its dimensions (verbal and visual) in order to conserve the meaning.

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## NOTES

1. Erwin Kessler, "Picto-poetry as Corporate Networking Avant-Garde", in *Victor Brauner. Victor-Victorious: drawings, etchings, objects, events*, ed. Cristinel Popa, Bucharest, Vellant, 2019, p. 51.
2. *Ibidem*.
3. Which E. Kessler actually does in the above article and argues that "the events, the publications, the activities and the works around the *First International Exhibition of the Magazine Contemporanul* represent rather one of the earliest instances of post-historical Avant-Garde", in *Ibidem*, p. 47.
4. Michael P. Wolf, *Philosophy of Language: 50 Puzzles, Paradoxes, and Thought Experiments*, New York and London, Routledge, 2023, p. 45.
5. *Ibidem*, p. 45-46.
6. Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté*, Paris Gallimard, 1966, p. 71, cited in Ion Pop, *Avangarda în literatură română*, Bucharest, Editura Atlas, 2000, p. 401.
7. Ion Pop, *op. cit.*, p. 402-403. Original text: "Preluarea stilului zgomotos al reclamelor comerciale conferă acestor afirmații o notă comică bine marcată, dezvăluind detașarea ironică a autorului față de propriul manifest, conștiința farsei. Apariția în text a elementului dandy e semnificativă pentru atitudinea generală a grupării, care înțelege să se revolte spectaculos" (translation mine).
8. Const. I. Emilian, *Anarhismul poetic. Studiu critic*, Bucharest, Institutul de Arte Grafice "Bucovina", I.E. Torofiu, 1932.
9. *Ibidem*, p. 55, Original text: "Dacă simbolisții au creat versul liber, moderniștii au creat versul tipografic: nici rimă, nici ritm, nici măsură; o simplă frângere a textului, care să impresioneze ochiul, nu simțul muzical. Scopul acestor versuri parcă ar fi mai mult de realizarea unei estetice tipografice decât poetice. Vor fi poate raporturi și sonorități, pe cari noi, profanii, nu le putem percepe!" (translation mine).
10. *Ibidem*, p. 58.
11. Beatrice Warde, *The Crystal Goblet. Sixteen Essays on Typography*, ed. Henry Jacob, London, The Sylvan Press, 1955, p. 12
12. Michael Kaufman, *Textual Bodies: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Print*, Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 1994, p. 16-17.
13. *TextImage. Perspectives on the History and Aesthetics of Avant-garde Publications*, ed. Erwin Kessler, Institutul Cultural Roman, Bucharest, 2008, p. 24.
14. John Hollander, *Vision and Resonance. Two senses of Poetic Form*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 246.
15. Miguel Donville, "Unt cu pâine", in *75HP, Ilarie Voronca 1924 Victor Brauner, Reproduction anastaltique de 75 HP, NUMERO UNIQUE* [ocobre 1924], editions Jean-Michel Place, preface de Marina Vanci-Perahim, p. 7. Full issue also available online, on *Monoskop*, here: <https://monoskop.org/images/4/46/75HP.pdf>.

16. Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*, The Hague, Paris, Mouton, 1969, p. 15: “the notion ‘grammatical’ cannot be identified with ‘meaningful’ or ‘significant’ in any semantic sense. Sentences (1) and (2) are equally nonsensical, but any speaker of English will recognize that only the former is grammatical”. (1) Colorless green ideas sleep furiously// (2) Furiously sleep ideas green colorless.”
17. The fictional language used in Ted Chiang’s *Arrival* that reflects the Sapir-Whorf theory of linguistic determinism. See, for instance, Israel Alves Corrêa Noletto and Sebastião Alves Teixeira Lopes, “Heptapod B and whorfianism. Language extrapolation in science fiction”, in *Acta Scientiarum: Language and Culture* 42 (1), 2020, p. 2-9, doi:10.4025/actascilangcult.v42i1.51769, here p. 5: “Syntax can be defined as a set of rules, not only in a natural human language, which must be followed in order to make a sentence, a programme or even a picture meaningful. If the rule of syntax in language, for example, is broken, words can be tossed as however one wants, but the sentences will not make any sense. As it happens, this can apply to the visual ‘text’ as well. Visual syntax explores colours, lines, shadows as a part of visual grammar. Heptapod B is said to have such representational properties that vaguely resemble some inhuman writing or esoteric symbolism. One of these comparisons posed by Louise is the Buddhist representation of human versus cosmos dynamics known as *mandalas*”.
18. In fact, the desire to involve the reader’s body into the entire installation is almost stated outright – in the first manifesto-text, “Aviograma”, the reader is addressed directly and forced to tilt his head to the right in order to read “Cetitor deparazitează-ți creierul” [Reader, deworm your brain], written inverted, on the right side of the page.
19. Marin Mincu, *Avangarda literară românească. De la Urmuz la Paul Celan*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, texts translated from French by Ștefania Mincu, Constanța, Editura Pontica, 2006, p. 512-513. However, *Avangarda românească*, the anthology edited by Ion Pop (pp. 14-15), more faithfully reproduces the pages from *75 HP* – it does not just transcribe the text, but also *shows it to us*. The drawback, however, is that the reproduction is in black and white, which again does a disservice to the overall construction.
20. Wojciech Kalaga, “Liberature: Word, Icon, Space”, in Zenon Fajfer, *Liberature, or total literature. Collected Essays 1999-2009*, trans. and ed. by Katarzyna Bazarnik, Cracow, Korpoacja Ha!art, 2010, p. 9.
21. Zenon Fajfer, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
22. Technically, the point trying to come across here could also be made (and the same effect could be achieved) by translating the words themselves into a language that the reader does not speak. However, the safest choice remains *lorem ipsum*, since, even though a world of hypothetical readers speaks a world of languages, nobody speaks *lorem ipsum*. The reliance on a natural language leaves the door to semantic interpretation somewhat cracked. For the obliteration of semantic meaning, of signifieds, to be complete, the use of an unnatural language is crucial. Either that or, hypothetically speaking, the same effect would be achieved by asking every polyglot in the world to unfocus their eyes, which would, once again, directly involve the body of the reader.
23. “1924”, in *75HP, Ilarie Voronca 1924 Victor Brauner, Reproduction anastaltique de 75 HP, NUMERO UNIQUE [ocrobre 1924], éditions Jean-Michel Place, préface de Marina Vanci-Perahim*, p. 11. Original text: “Inapreciabil aportul pe care cercetările moderniste l-au adus literaturii și plasticeii. În ultimii cinci ani întreg bagajul de melancolie fete de pension romantism a fost uitat treptat prin gări suburbane în sunetul o! sacramental de flașnetă. Acum, proaspătă cu virginități noi gândirea desemnată sau scrisă spintecă expres fulger stepele sonor desfășurate. În avioane călători cu sensibilități tari joacă pocker sau stepează în mâini. Și ascuțișul senzației nu se mai oprește sterp pe retină ci sparge dum-dum fecund pe meninge. E triumful cerebralității music-hallului acrobatismului elegant politicu până la gazometru. Viața carburator încins cade pe capul vânătorului de castane. Și cuvintele cu intestinele despletite aleargă prin foburg înlanțuindu-se în jazzul frazelor vertiginose. Literatura nu mai prinde rugină ca frunzele toamna nu mai supurează la intervale ca un flegmon ci, pneu rostogolit vulcanizare în danțul cetăților se prăvălește. Automobil auto camion cazan imens manometru catran toate s-au revărsat tumultuos peste pânzele vindecate de imbecilizare. Pictura nu mai este onania academică a tuburilor de culoare. Virilă s-a rupt mai presus de prejucii în erecțiunea masivă constructivistă” (translation mine).
24. See Sabin Borș, “Writing and Typography. Rhythm, Type, and the Materiality of the Letter”, in *Studia UBB. Philosophia*, Vol. 57 (2012), No. 1, p.121-140, here p. 128