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Re-presenting a Love Affair: Wright Morris and Photo-text Friction

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Re-presenting a Love Affair: Wright Morris and Photo-text Friction

Sasha Richman

PLAN

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TEXTE

1 True to form, in his 1972 "photo-text" work, *Love Affair – A Venetian Journal*[1], American writer and photographer Wright Morris (1910-1998) juxtaposes photographs and text that attest to his profound admiration for Venice. Morris himself employed the term "photo-text" to describe the books in which he associated his own photographic images with his own accompanying text, and *Love Affair* is just one of such works, alongside *The Inhabitants* (1946), *The Home Place* (1968), and *God's Country and My People* (1968), to name but a few.

2 Morris was recognized as a professional photographer before dedicating himself primarily to his literary work, though photography and literature went hand in hand throughout his career. Photographically, Morris is perhaps best known for his black-and-white photographs of abandoned structures and artifacts in the Midwestern United States, taken in the 1940s. These photographs, which were produced during his two Guggenheim Fellowships for photography, have been compared with those produced during the Great Depression in the 1930s by the Farm Security Administration, yet there is a striking feature of Morris's photography that distinguishes his images from the latter: people are notoriously absent from the majority of Morris's photographic work. It was Morris's belief that in these images devoid of human presence, the presence of people was nonetheless visible and felt in the buildings and objects they left behind[2]. With regard to

his vocation as a writer, Morris received critical acclaim for his literary oeuvre, winning The National Book Award in 1957 and The American Book Award in 1981[3]. His photographic oeuvre has garnered ongoing recognition, as evidenced by three museum retrospectives of his photographs in the final decades of his life[4], as well as a more recent, posthumous exhibit at the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in Paris in 2019.

3 Travel was an integral part of Morris's life and work. His travels around the United States and his experiences abroad greatly informed his literary and photographic reflections on memory, nostalgia, identity, and documentation. Morris and his wife lived in Venice on several occasions beginning in 1959, and the photographs in *Love Affair* were taken on one such trip in 1969. In a departure from Morris's habitual use of a "wide-angle lens, yellow filter, and very slow fine-grain film[5]", the photographs in *Love Affair* were instead taken using a Rollei 35 mini camera and Kodachrome film[6]. Unsure whether he and his wife would have the occasion to return to Venice, Morris revealed in an interview with his colleague and fellow photographer James Alinder[7] that he had originally taken these color photographs "for [his and his wife's] own fireside, nostalgic viewing[8]". However, these photographs became the object of Morris's photo-text book when he showed the slides to his editor at Harper & Row, who suggested making a book. While teaching at Princeton the following year, Morris wrote *Love Affair*'s accompanying text, calling it "a narration that reflected our own experience[9]". Insofar as a photograph constitutes a visual and tangible trace of what the photographer saw or experienced, the photographs in *Love Affair* equally attest to Morris's own experience.

4 Reflecting on *Love Affair*'s text, Morris wrote in his monograph *Photographs & Words*:

> Like so many of the objects and places in my life, Venice too was threatened by air pollution, high tides and crumbling foundations. It had recently been suggested that an elevated motor ramp, circling the city, would provide tourists with a more intimate view without the unthinkable thought of actual motor traffic. Sentiments anticipating the demise of Venice have surely enhanced her charms

> for centuries. My text had in mind the quotidian side of what it was like to live in Venice, possessed by an unflagging enchantment [10].

5 Central to Morris's work – both literary and photographic – was his preoccupation with capturing and documenting what was fleeting. Morris's photographic ambitions were firmly rooted in his desire "to salvage what was vanishing. Nothing will compare with the photograph to register what is going, going, but not yet gone. The pathos of this moment, the reluctance of parting, we feel intensely [11]".

6 His reflections on the pollution and the seemingly imminent demise of Venice are also echoed in his short story "In Another Country [12]", which was written in 1972, the same year *Love Affair* was published. The story's opening sentence describes Madrid's dense smog and American tourist Carolyn's concern for the Prado's paintings amidst such pollution. Carolyn goes as far as writing letters to several museum directors, "urging them to save the paintings [...] while there was still time [13]".

7 Morris's preoccupation with the smog and the ephemeral nature of things and places is reminiscent of Federico Fellini's 1972 *Fellini Roma* [14]. The film having been released the same year as *Love Affair*'s publication, the latter was not influenced by the film, though it is nonetheless interesting to note the parallels between the two, as Fellini's film pays homage to a Rome that has all but disappeared. Moreover, Fellini's depiction of pollution and in particular the excavation scene in the metro, in which ancient frescoes disintegrate when uncovered and exposed to air, reinforces the feeling of nostalgia for what no longer is. In the same way that *Fellini Roma* depicts Fellini's own vision of a Rome that is no more, *Love Affair* could be considered "*Morris's Venezia*", insofar as Morris paints a very personal portrait of the city.

8 Whether the Venice Morris has captured in *Love Affair* has actually ceased to exist is of minimal importance; it is rather Morris's conviction of Venice's demise that informs the relationship between photographs and text.

Friction in the epigraphs

9 In the two epigraphs of *Love Affair – A Venetian Journal*, Morris evokes his desire to hold on to what he fears will soon be lost.

10 The first one is taken from one of Marcel Proust's letters to Madame Straus: "When I went to Venice I found that my dream had become – incredibly but quite simply – my address![15]" While nothing in this quote directly alludes to Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Morris's choice of quote indicates his familiarity with Proust's work. *La Recherche* was first translated into English as *Remembrance of Things Past*, and only at the end of the 1990s did the literal translation of the French title, *In Search of Lost Time*, gain steam. From a semantic point of view, this is rather significant, as *Remembrance of Things Past* could just as aptly have been the title for a large body of Morris's photographic work.

11 The second epigraph is Morris's own:

> These photographs illustrate nothing, they seek to demonstrate nothing, but hopefully they reveal the intent to salvage something of a love affair with a wondrous city.
> Venice is sinking, but slower than most of us, and the sea will be less harsh than her likely survival, ringed by motorcades[16].

12 While Morris does not explicitly employ the term "represent," the verbs he uses ("illustrate," "demonstrate") can be seen, depending on context, as synonyms of "represent." Morris's statement, however, seems eminently paradoxical on two levels. Firstly, as photography and film scholar Philippe Dubois asserts in *L'Acte photographique* [The Photographic Act], the photographic image is inherently inseparable from its reference source, or the object represented in the image[17]. Secondly, the very notion of "salvaging," or, in this case, what is understood as "remembering," is necessarily tied up in questions of representation and how one represents the past – mentally, textually, and photographically. The incongruities between the epigraph and the work itself suggest a fracture between the author's stated intentions and the reader's interpretation of the work, as well as with the notion and act of representing, both textually and photographically.

13 In light of Morris's assertion and his other photographic, literary, and photo-text work, what, then, is actually being represented in *Love Affair*? By "salvaging," isn't Morris necessarily *representing*? And how does the photo-text dynamic of this work challenge or confirm such notions of representation? In order to understand how this form of photo-text representation functions, I would like to address several follow-up questions about how the two mediums interact. Does textual representation complement photographic representation, or are the two at odds? Do they function independently of one another, despite Morris's amalgamation in his photo-text book? How does the photo-text dimension of *Love Affair* reveal frictions between the two types of representation and, more generally, within representation itself? This paper aims to challenge Morris's claims about representation and proposes a counter-reading of his photo-text book, as I argue that at its core, *Love Affair* is ultimately an exploration of and a meditation on issues of textual, photographic and intermedial representation.

14 Before addressing the aforementioned questions, it is essential to consider the work's layout and design as well as establish a working method. Inside *Love Affair*, which includes roughly 40 photo-text pairings, the text is situated on the left-hand page and the accompanying photograph, on the right. Reading this book entails a back-and-forth movement between the pages of each spread. In other words, the reader-viewer may start with the left page, then move to the right (or the other way around), but we will inevitably return to the other page and so on, comparing text and image with one another. Be it consciously or unconsciously, this comparison is made in an attempt to understand the relationship between the two mediums, as well as what information this intermedial entity[18], or the photo-text pairing, conveys. In reference to how photography and text interact within Morris's work, James Alinder remarked that they are "sometimes complementary, sometimes competitive[19]". Owing to this back-and-forth reading, each medium will inform, color and clarify our impression and understanding of the other.

15 There is no established method for analyzing works in which photographs and texts are juxtaposed together. While there is existing scholarship on Morris's photo-text work, emphasis has been placed on the socio-historical context of production and reception, and not

on the analysis of individual photo-text pairings[20]. The method[21] I would like to propose entails "reading" or examining each medium individually before looking at the new possible meanings or impressions that emerge when considering the pairing as a single entity. In other words, this method first combines close reading and close viewing of each respective medium; we consider what each medium could signify individually, when considered "in a vacuum." Then, we consider the overall impression given when the two mediums are juxtaposed together, in order to understand the relationship between the two mediums and how the text and the photographs enter into a dialogue with one another. In this way, perhaps we can better understand what *Love Affair* actually represents. Within each photo-text pairing, we examine what the text represents, what the photograph represents, and how the juxtaposition of these two different modes of representation challenges or confirms Morris's apparent distinction between representing and salvaging.

Mediums at odds

16 The frictions between the two types of representation are most immediately apparent in the photo-text pairings in which the two mediums appear at odds with one another. That is to say, certain pairings are incongruous because the two mediums do not appear to represent the same object. These frictions are best illustrated in the following photo-text pairing[22]:

> 'Come sta?' he shouts.
> I reply "*Va bene*!" I have found him again, my friend Luigi. Here he is in the Campo Santa Margherita, strong with the smell of fish this morning. Dumbfounded he asks how in such a short time I speak such stupendous Italian. His excitement – and my Italian – attracts customers, prospective buyers. He cranks up the plastic gondola that plays "O *Sole Mio*," as the gondolier paddles. Sensing a handout, pigeons materialize, strut at our feet. We have a small-scale *festa* going until a blue-rinsed poodle, dragging his leash, scatters the birds and eludes all pursuers. The confusion is Venetian: Luigi bellows, my wife shrieks, and a squadron of pigeons, like low-flying jets, darken the Campo with their pale, wavering shadows, the air sparkling with debris that falls, just like old times, into our upturned

> eyes. Luigi and I wait calmly while my wife gropes in her purse for her mirror [23].

[*Untitled*, 1969.]


[Untitled, 1969.]

17 Morris's text evokes a certain atmosphere of frenzied activity, movement, and noise. However, the accompanying photograph does not correspond with the type of photograph one would imagine associated with such an anecdote. In contrast to the anecdote, which is peopled with both humans and animals, the photograph depicts a decrepit façade absent of human presence, the only sign of life being a cat crouched on the window ledge.

18 Photographic images and text undoubtedly constitute two different modes of representation. This particular photo-text pairing, however, raises further questions, showing us that it is possible to conceptualize the notion of representation in *Love Affair* on two distinct levels. First, there is a clear friction between what the text and the photograph each represent. In other words, the photograph does not illustrate the text, nor does the text describe the photograph [24]: text and photograph are not representations of one another. Insofar as Morris considers each respective medium a sort of "mirror" for the other, there is a clear disconnect between the two mediums. Second, when we consider Morris's experiences as the object and *Love Affair* as its representation, there is no apparent friction: both the photograph and the text attest to Morris's time in Venice. In this context, we see a coherent dialogue between the object and its representation.

Seemingly complementary mediums

19 In other cases, no immediate tension is discernible between the two mediums, for they appear complementary and mutually enhance one another's meanings [25]. In other words, there appears to be an undeniable, poetic dialogue between the photograph and its accompanying text. There is a clear interplay between the two mediums, even when

the relationship between the two is not immediately evident. Such is the case in this photo-text pairing:

> What is there to say?
> My friend Pietro admits to the difficulty, but being Venetian he is not speechless. He spreads his hands in the manner of a man invoking rain. It's the muscles of the eye (he tells me) rather than the legs that are exercised. It is all solid stone—yet *it is all illusion*. For this effect one waits for the evening performance, and the lights come on. *Stand at any point, look about you anywhere, and the figure of a man is the measure.* He is diminished, but not overpowered. He is exalted, but not exaggerated. Man is the measure here as he was in Athens, another colony of shrewd merchants. *The gaze is horizontal, rather than up; the pigeons both maintain and establish proportion.* Let that man with his eyes on heaven calculate the risks. No amount of gawking exhausts this prospect, and no amount of exposure depletes the impression. Amplitude and control, spiritual in its effect, sensible and secular in its practice. Pietro is now speechless. I am speechless. But this does not surround us with silence. A babble of tongues, a clamor of bells, and the music of three orchestras are now free to compete for our attention with the whirr of the world's greatest air force, as it comes and goes, performing intricate manoeuvres flawlessly [26].

Photograph by Wright Morris



20 The text predominantly evokes questions of dimension, perspective, the act of seeing, and also the auditory experience of being in Venice. Opposite the text, Morris has included a photograph depicting a man standing before St. Mark's Basilica (*Basilica di San Marco*). This man is the photograph's logical subject, as he is more or less centered and the only person facing the camera. But who is this man, and why is he in the photograph? Is this Morris's friend Pietro? Or is that simply what the text would lead us to believe, since we know that Morris was the one behind the lens? Here, the text and photograph appear to complement one another. To a certain extent, the photograph echoes what is described in the text, when we employ the back and forth reading I previously mentioned.

21 Morris's assertion that "the figure of a man is the measure" confers scale to the image. The man in the foreground stands out with his black suit, and he immediately attracts the viewer's eye. The viewer then considers the photograph with the man as the starting point; our vision is constructed from the center point outward, as if he were indeed a unit of measure for seeing the image as a whole. Moreover, given the man's prominence in the field of view, this could also be understood as instructions for looking at the photograph. Morris further insists that "the gaze is horizontal…the pigeons both maintain and establish proportion." These details appear coherent with the accompanying photograph, as the photograph is taken straight on, and likely from eye-level. Together with the man in the black suit, the pigeons in the middle ground could in fact be used to conceptualize scale.

22 What is worth noting here is Morris's decision to insert the text *before* the photograph. While there are clearly several ways to interpret and analyze each photo-text pairing, it seems reasonable to assume that he intended his text to inform his reader's view and interpretation of the accompanying photograph. Perhaps in this process we can see the glimmers of a possible friction: these two mediums, each one theoretically representing something different, are ultimately read and understood to represent the same object. Unless the anecdote relates Morris's exact conversation and experience at the precise moment he took the accompanying photograph, it is unlikely that both text and image represent the same object.

23 Additionally, Morris's comment that "it is all illusion" is not to be underscored. This could be read as an allusion to the difficulties of deciphering and interpreting the photo-text dynamic. Perhaps we interpret a photo-text pairing to mean one thing, though the frictions between the two mediums reveal other possible, and sometimes contradictory, meanings. In the photo-text pairing on the following page, Morris writes that "the *trompe l'oeil* speak[s] with more persuasion than the facts[27]". Indeed, the impression that the text and the photograph of the St. Mark's Basilica pairing represent the same object is but an illusion. Morris evokes the "evening performance" and "the lights [that] come on," yet the photograph clearly depicts a daytime scene. This detail then holds the key to addressing the photo-text pairing: while other aspects of both text and image could

lead the viewer to believe otherwise, the two mediums are ultimately at odds with one another.

Distinguishing between text and photo

24 In this final example, I aim to demonstrate how Morris possibly distinguishes between the two mediums, or modes of representation, that he juxtaposes in *Love Affair*. How do text and photography relate to Morris's attempt to salvage his experience? And how does the act of salvaging necessarily constitute the act of representing?

> Near San Giorgio Degli Schiavoni, made holy by Carpaccio, the alley we followed ended in a court where a piece of bent pipe provided a foundation. A big white and grey tomcat, indifferent to our intrusion, stood erect as if to snatch fish from the stream of water, his left paw delicately placed on the bent pipe for balance. In that posture he took little bites of the water, as the dogs of my boyhood took it from sprinklers, or garden hoses. Between bites, showing his long pink tongue, he licked the drops from his cheeks and whiskers. His thirst sated, still indifferent to us, he took himself off.
> 'What a picture!' cried my wife, 'did you get it?'
> I got one, but not the other. I had settled for the blurred, vulnerable impression on my mind's eye. More basic than my impulse to capture the moment had been my instinct not to disturb it. My eyes were not so sharp as the lens of the camera but they would prove to have a wider field of vision. The cat that got away, of all the cats in Venice, would prove to be the most memorable. *The camera confronts the traveller with a choice of impressions—a souvenir that is sharp, and goes into his album, or one that is unrecorded, fragmentary, doomed to fade, and inexhaustible* [28].

[Untitled]


[Untitled]

© Estate of Wright Morris, Courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography

25 The final line is key to understanding how Morris not only conceives of representation as a construct, but also how he distinguishes

between two different modes of representation in his work. A "souvenir that is sharp" can be understood to be a photographic image, while the "one that is unrecorded, fragmentary, doomed to fade, and inexhaustible" to be text. Photography offers us a realistic and objective rendering of reality. Conversely, recreating experience via text renders a far more subjective version. Morris wrote the accompanying text a year after the photographs were taken, and the adjectives he has used here ("unrecorded, fragmentary, doomed to fade") directly apply to this creative process. In the lapse of time between his stay in Venice and his writing, Morris's memories necessarily shifted, evolved, and changed shape, as is natural with any memory, and the adjective "inexhaustible" further underscores the subjective nature of textual representation. Understood in the most immediate sense of the term, "inexhaustible" suggests the limitless possibilities of conjuring textual representation. Moreover, the term undoubtedly underscores the role of imagination and, thereby, the writer's boundless ability to textually represent *ad infinitum*, as well as the countless ways in which the reader may interpret the text.

26 Both mediums attest to Morris's attempt to salvage the past as well as to the act of *re*-presenting, despite his epigraph. As previously mentioned, the photographic image is inseparable from its reference source, just as Roland Barthes asserts that the photographic image attests that "*ça a été*", or that what is depicted in a photograph existed and belongs to the past [29]. In this way, *Love Affair*'s photographs are a testimony, or proof, of what Morris experienced.

27 Since Morris himself acknowledged in no uncertain terms his desire to "reflect [his] own experience", the text then also constitutes representation [30]. The accompanying photograph, which shows a building façade at the end of an alley, does not seem particularly complementary to Morris's text, insofar as the photograph does not depict a cat. Interestingly, *Love Affair* contains several photographs of cats that would appear far better suited for this photo-text pairing. However, Morris may have purposefully chosen this seemingly incongruous photograph to demonstrate the phenomenon described in his text: giving up one photograph for another, or, in other words, giving up one representation for another. Here, it is Morris's *text*, not the *photograph*, that attests to this particular experience.

28 In *Love Affair*, Wright Morris juxtaposes photographic images and accompanying text in an effort to "salvage" his experience in Venice. Morris's stated intention that this photo-text book does not aim to represent anything raises questions about the act of representing and about the dynamics between photographic and textual representation. As we have seen, frictions between photographs and text are most evident when the two juxtaposed mediums appear at odds with one another. However, we see that even seemingly complementary photo-text pairings equally attest to possible frictions between the two mediums. Both photograph and text may give the *impression* that their reference source is one and the same, thereby raising questions about the necessary interplay between photograph and text in the reader's conception and interpretation of this work. Regardless of Morris's intentions, both mediums constitute representation, and "salvaging" then necessarily equates to *re*-presenting. The photographs and text attest to Morris's desire to *save* something of his own experience and of a city he believes will soon be underwater. This desire to salvage what is fleeting is found, to varying degrees, in nearly all of Morris's works. Having here considered questions of representation in his intermedial work, it would be interesting to explore his respective "single-medium" literary and photographic works to determine whether they raise similar questions about representation, or whether such questions are absent altogether.

NOTES

1 Wright Morris, *Love Affair – A Venetian Journal*, New York, Harper & Row, 1972. The pages of this work are unnumbered. I have therefore attributed the following method for indicating page numbers in my citations: the page immediately following the second epigraph is designated page 1. For clarity, I have also indicated the number of the photo-text pairing in parentheses next to the page number. E.g.: "p. 3-4 (2)" = "pages 3-4, 2nd photo-text pairing."

2 Wright Morris, *Wright Morris: Photographs & Words*, James Alinder (ed.), Carmel, CA, Friends of Photography Publisher, 1982, p. 20.

3 Stephen H. Longmire, "Picture a Life: The Photo-texts of Wright Morris" [PhD dissertation], University of Chicago, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing,

2010, p. 1.

4 *Ibid.*

5 James Alinder, "Structures and Artifacts: Interview by James Alinder," *in* Wright Morris, *Time Pieces: Photographs, Writing, and Memory*, New York, Aperture, 1989, p. 144.

6 Wright Morris, *Photographs & Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

7 James Alinder and Wright Morris collaborated on a photo-text volume entitled *Picture America* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1982), in which Morris's texts are juxtaposed with Alinder's photographs. Alinder also wrote the introduction for and served as editor of Morris's 1982 *Photographs & Words*.

8 Wright Morris, "Structures and Artifacts: Interview by James Alinder," *op. cit.*, p. 144.

9 Wright Morris, *Photographs & Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

12 Wright Morris, "In Another Country", *Collected Stories, 1948-1986*, New York, Harper & Row, 1986 [1972], p. 146-154.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

14 Federico Fellini (director), *Fellini Roma* [film], Les Artistes Associés, 1972, 113 minutes.

15 *Love Affair*, *op. cit.*, epigraph.

16 *Ibid.*

17 Philippe Dubois, *L'Acte photographique et autres essais*, Paris, Nathan, 1990 [1983], p. 50.

18 In his introduction to *Picture America*, Ansel Adams employed the term "intermedial entity" to designate the book's photo-text pairings. I have here borrowed the term to designate Morris's single-authored photo-text pairings in *Love Affair – A Venetian Journal*. See Ansel Adams in *Picture America*, James Alinder and Wright Morris (ed.), Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1982, p. xi.

19 James Alinder, *Photographs & Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

20 See Stephen H. Longmire, "Picture a Life: The Photo-texts of Wright Morris", *op. cit.*

21 I first developed and employed this method for reading photo-text books in my paper on James Alinder and Wright Morris' *Picture America*, presented at the OSL PhD Day held in Amsterdam in May 2022. This paper addressed methodological considerations for studying photo-text works in light of Ansel Adams's assertion that the juxtaposition of the two mediums (photography and text) in *Picture America* gives rise to a new intermedial and expressive entity.

22 Disclaimer: At the time of Wright Morris' death in 1998, the copyrights to *Love Affair – A Venetian Journal* reverted from Harper & Row back to the author. However, since the passing of the will's executor, Stephen Arkin, in 2020, I have been unable to determine who holds the rights to Wright Morris's estate.

23 Wright Morris, *Love Affair*, *op. cit.*, p. 49-50 (25).

24 In his introduction to *Picture America*, Ansel Adams makes a similar observation about the interplay between Alinder and Morris's photo-text collaboration. See Ansel Adams in *Picture America*, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

25 James Alinder, *Photographs & Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

26 Wright Morris, *Love Affair*, *op. cit.*, p. 9-10 (5). Italics mine.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 11-12 (6).

28 *Ibid.*, p. 27-28 (24). Italics mine.

29 See Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire. Note sur la photographie*, Paris, Seuil, 1980.

30 Wright Morris, *Photographs & Words*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

RÉSUMÉS

Français

Dans l'épigraphe de son « photo-texte » *Love Affair : A Venetian Journal* (1972), un ouvrage qui associe des images photographiques et du texte, l'écrivain et photographe américain Wright Morris déclare que les photographies « n'illustrent rien, […] ne cherchent à rien démontrer ». Cependant, il indique que le but de ses photos est de « sauver quelque chose d'une histoire d'amour avec une ville merveilleuse ». Bien que Morris n'emploie pas directement le terme « représenter », les verbes utilisés (« illustrer », « démontrer ») peuvent être considérés, selon le contexte, comme étant synonymes de « représenter ». Des incongruités, non seulement entre le texte et l'image, mais aussi entre l'épigraphe et l'œuvre elle-même,

suggèrent une fracture entre les intentions verbalisées par l'auteur et l'interprétation de l'œuvre par le lecteur, voire entre la notion et l'acte de représenter. La représentation textuelle complète-t-elle la représentation photographique ? Les représentations textuelles et photographiques s'opposent-elles, ou bien fonctionnent-elles indépendamment l'une de l'autre, malgré l'amalgame établi par Morris dans son ouvrage ? Cet article examine la manière dont Morris distingue les deux types de représentation et comment la dimension « photo-texte » de *Love Affair* révèle des frictions entre ces deux médiums.

English

In the epigraph of his 1972 photo-text book *Love Affair – A Venetian Journal*, American writer and photographer Wright Morris paradoxically informs his reader that the following photographs, taken while in Venice with his wife, "illustrate nothing, […] seek to demonstrate nothing." However, Morris indicates that the purpose of the photographs is to "salvage something of a love affair with a wondrous city." While the artist does not directly use the term "represent," the verbs he has used ("illustrate," "demonstrate") can be read, depending on context, as synonyms of "represent." A number of incongruities, not only between text and image, but also between the epigraph and the work itself, suggest a fracture between the author's stated intentions and the reader's interpretation of the work, as well as a degree of disconnection between the notion and the act of representing, both textually and photographically. Does textual representation complement photographic representation? Are textual and photographic representations at odds, or do they function independently from one another, despite Morris's amalgamation in his photo-text book? This article aims to examine how Morris makes a distinction between these two types of representation, and to shed light on what the "photo-text" dimension of *Love Affair* reveals about such frictions between the two mediums.

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Mots-clés

intermédialité, photographie, photo-texte, représentation, Wright Morris, mémoire

Keywords

intermediality, photography, photo-text, representation, Wright Morris, memory

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