Poetics of the Iconotext makes available for the first time in English the theories of the respected French text/image specialist, Professor Liliane Louvel. A consolidation of the most significant theoretical materials of Louvel's two acclaimed books, *L'Oeil du Texte: Texte et image dans la littérature anglophone* and *Texte/Image: Images à lire, textes à voir*, this newly conceived work introduces English readers to the most current thinking in French text/image theory and visual studies. Focusing on the full spectrum of text/image relations, from medieval illuminated manuscripts to digital books, Louvel begins by introducing key terms and situating her work in the context of significant debates in text/image studies. Part II introduces Louvel's typology of pictorial saturation through which she establishes a continuum along which to measure the effect of the most figurative to the most literal images upon writerly and readerly textual 'spaces.' Part III adopts a phenomenological approach towards the reading-viewing experience as expressed in conceptual categories that include the trace, focal range, synesthesia, and rhythm and speed. The result is a provocative interplay of the categorical and the subjective that invites readers to think at once more precisely and more inventively about texts, images, and the intersections between the two.

Cover art by Henry Louvel, 2011

ASHGATE
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East, Union Road,
Farnham, Surrey,
GU9 7PT, England
www.ashgate.com

ISBN 978-1-4094-0031-8
9 781409 400318

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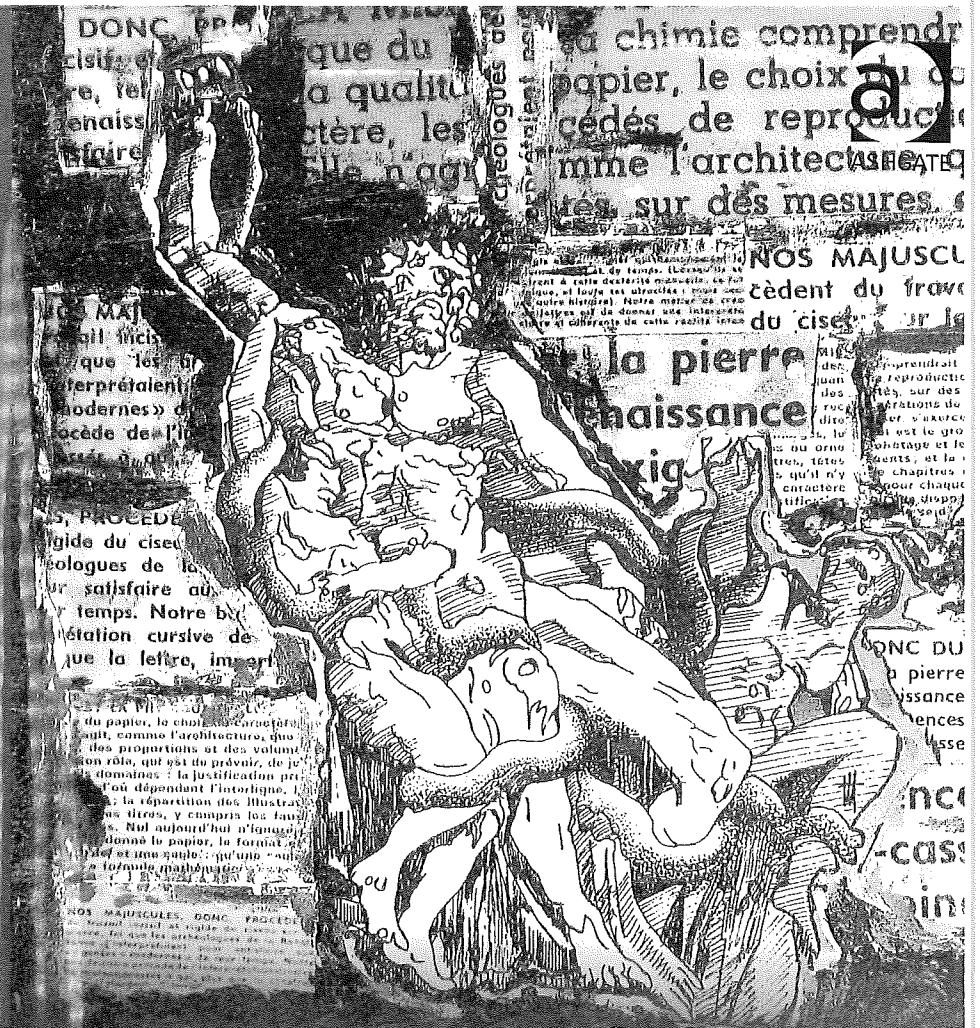

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Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
Suite 420
101 Cherry Street
Burlington
VT 05401-4405
USA

www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Louvel, Liliane.
Poetics of the iconotext.
1. Ekphrasis. 2. Art and literature. 3. Words in art.
4. Visual literature--History and criticism.
I. Title II. Jacobs, Karen, 1961- III. Petit, Laurence.
809-dc22

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Louvel, Liliane.
Poetics of the iconotext / Liliane Louvel ; edited by Karen Jacobs and Laurence Petit and translated by Laurence Petit.
p. cm.
Translation of L'oeil du texte and texte/images: images á lire, textes á voir.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4094-0031-8 (hardcover) -- ISBN 978-1-4094-3116-9 (ebook) 1. English literature--History and criticism. 2. Art and literature. 3. Imagery (Psychology) in literature. 4. Visual perception in literature. 5. Intertextuality. I. Jacobs, Karen, 1961- II. Petit, Laurence. III. Title.

PR408.A68L68 2011
801--dc22

2011003044

ISBN 978 1 4094 0031 8 (hbk)
ISBN 978 1 4094 3116 9 (ebk)

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C013056
FSC www.fsc.org

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall.

Contents

Chapter 2
The Infinite Dialogue Between Text and Image

Ever since the beginning of the representational arts, poetry and painting have been related. As Rensselaer W. Lee explains in his book *Ut Pictura Poesis*, which is now a classic:

> Between 1550 and 1750, almost all the treaties on art and literature insist on the kinship between painting and poetry. Admittedly, "the two sisters," as they were commonly called—Lomazzo notes that they were even born at the same time—were different in their means of expression, but they were considered as quasi identical in their profound nature, their contents and their purpose.[1]

Poetry and painting were seen as two inseparable twins, two "sisters,"[2] who were both trying to find their own identity independently of one another. Now, poetry was ranked amongst the liberal arts while painting, considered as a mechanical art, seemed closer to the work of a craftsman, and therefore not noble. Being compared to poetry was therefore to the advantage of painting. However, one of the most valued exercises in poetry—the one that best demonstrated the talent of the artist—was the description of works of art, like that of Achilles' shield, in the far-reaching rhetorical exercise called *ekphrasis*. Horace's famous phrase, *ut pictura poesis*, was thus used both ways: undoubtedly "poetry should be like painting," but "painting should be like poetry" too. We shall see how this debate was taken up by whole philosophical systems, by modes of apprehension of the seeing act, by rhetoric, and by the analysis of descriptive modes.

Ut Picture Poesis: The Paragone[3]

The link between painting and poetry has been acknowledged ever since Antiquity. Lucian and then Petrarch celebrated Homer, "the first painter of ancient memories,"

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[1] Rensselaer W. Lee, *Ut pictura poesis: humanisme et théorie de la peinture XVème, XVIIème siècles* (Paris [1967], 1991), p. 7.

[2] "The nouns signifying art are feminine in Greek, Latin, and Italian," points out Maurice Brock, Lee's translator.

[3] The following titles are most useful: Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*; W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, 1986); Yves Bonnefoy, "Ut pictura poesis,"

according to Petrarch.[4] Plutarch saw in Simonides of Ceos, in the sixth century BC, the father of the famous aphorism supposedly at the origin of the comparison between painting and poetry:[5] painting is mute poetry and poetry a speaking painting. "Simonides also affirmed that the poetic word is an image (*eikon*) of reality: in the poetic text, the word is like those *eikones* produced by painters and sculptors," as Daniel Arasse explains.[6] The analogy had also been established by Plato in Book Ten of *The Republic* and in *Cratylus*.

The origin of the comparison between painting and poetry derives from two major theoretical texts: Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Even though neither Aristotle nor Horace had tried to force a comparison between the two arts, both had suggested stimulating analogies. In *Poetics*, after positing that painters and poets imitate men and make them better, worse, or similar to us, Aristotle uses a parenthesis to trace a parallel between the structure of the painted work and that of tragedy, i.e. history:

> The principle or, as it were, the soul of tragedy is history. The characters come second (this is somewhat similar to painting: if a painter applied at random the most beautiful materials, the result would not be as charming as an image drawn in black and white).[7]

The plot is therefore a mere groundwork or sketch.

In *Ars Poetica*, Horace twice makes a comparison between painters and poets. Lee mentions that he describes:

> a painting representing grotesque hybrids and compares it to a book whose wild imaginings mimic the dreams of a deranged person. He concludes by admitting that painters and poets also have the right to exercise their imagination freely as long as this Pegasus whose powers are sometimes dangerous stays tied up in the stables of the probable and the decent.[8]

This is an interesting passage which highlights the connection between artistic creation, the work of the imagination—I am thinking here of Henry Fuseli's *Nightmare*, which shows a horse leaning over a woman—and the work of dreams. The famous lines 361–5 from Horace's *Ars Poetica* are the ones, however, in which Horace makes the definite parallel which was to have such an enduring posterity:

> Ut pictura poesis. Erit quae, si propius stes,
> Te capiat magis, et quaedam, si longius abstes;

Lisible/Visible, ed. D. Moncond'huy, *Cahiers Forell*, 9 (March 1998).

4 See Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*, fn. 6, pp. 7–8.

5 Plutarch, *De Gloria Atheniensium*, III, pp. 346f–347c.

6 Daniel Arasse, *Le détail: Pour une histoire rapprochée de la peinture* (Paris, 1992), p. 257.

7 Aristotle, *Poétique*, VI, p. 50a.

8 Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*, p. 12; reference to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, lines 1–13.

> Haec amat obscurum, volet haec sub luce videri,
> lucidis argutum quae non formidat acumen;
> Haec placuit semel, haec deciens repetita placebit.
>
> A poem is like a painting. This one will appeal to you more than another if you stand closer to it; this other one if you stand further away. This one requires darkness; this other one needs to be seen in full light, for it can stand the critic's scathing eye. Some only please once, while others, examined over and over again, continue to please.[9]

Now, critics altered Aristotle's and Horace's comparisons by ranking painting as one of the liberal arts. By doing so, they were distorting the original arguments of the two theorists who merely saw, in the parallel between the two arts, a way of showing, in the case of Aristotle, the primacy of structure in tragedies, and in Horace, the various sources of "pleasure" that both painting and poetry can offer depending on point of view, frequency, and lighting effects. It is true, however, that a metaphor is never innocent and that rhetoric plays the part of theory in action, as evidenced by the success of the two comparisons and the ensuing recommendation that poetry must act as painting. Murray Krieger comes back to this aspect of the debate in his discussion of *ut pictura poesis*: nobody is asking poetry to "act as painting."[10]

In 1667, Charles du Fresnoy provides the paradigmatic example of an inversion of the phrase. In his poem "De Arte Graphica," he pushes back the period in Horace's quotation beyond the verb *erit*, thus permanently articulating the similitude around an eloquent chiasmus to such a point that some critics, citing Horace's lines, are in fact citing the first four words of du Fresnoy's poem:

> Ut pictura poesis erit; similisque Poesi
> Sit Pictura; refert par aemula quaeque sororem,
> Alternantque vices et nomina; muta Poesis
> Dicitur haec, Pictura loquens solet illa vocari,
> Quod fuit auditu gratum cecinere Poetae;
> Quad pulchrum aspectu Pictores pingere currant:
> Quaeque Poetarum Numeris indigna fuere,
> Non eadem Pictorum Operam Studiumque merentur.
>
> Poetry will be like painting; and painting like poetry; the two sisters vie with one another in reflecting each other, they exchange their tasks and their names; painting is said to be mute poetry, and poetry is given the name of speaking painting; poets sing what is pleasant to the ear, while painters endeavor to depict what is beautiful to look at; and what is unworthy of the poets' verse is not worth the painters' efforts either.[11]

9 Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*, p. 13, fn. 15.

10 Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore, 1992).

11 Charles du Fresnoy, *De arte graphica* (Paris, 1967), lines 1–8; cited by Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*, fn. 5, p. 8.

As Daniel Arasse explains:

> When classical theory uses again Simonides of Ceos's arguments and relates them to Horace's parallel, it does not retain the end of the comparison, forgetting that the Roman poet spoke of the two modalities (close and distant) of pleasure that one can derive from these two art forms. As a result, by inverting the terms of the equivalence and by positing that "painting will be like poetry," classical thinking, ever since its humanist origin, has worked hard for painting to have the same prestige as poetry, that is to say, in reality, to be submitted to its order, that of discourse.[12]

This enticing analogy encourages a closeness between the two arts but also a necessary differentiation, even a competition. This is precisely what Leonardo Da Vinci does through what he called *Paragone*—the fight between the two arts as to which will come first. For Leonardo, which is not surprising, painting wins over her "sister," poetry, for the basic reason that the visual arts are ... visual, and that the eye is superior to the ear.[13] As W.J.T. Mitchell writes:

> Leonardo musters every traditional sensory prejudice he can think of: the eye is the noblest sense, the window of the soul; it is the most far-reaching and capacious; it is the most useful and scientific, since it naturally constructs a perspectival view "along straight lines that compose a pyramid based in the object and leading to the eye.[14]

Leonardo thus states the principle of the visual pyramid and affirms "the difference between painting and poetry, which relies on the difference between shadow and substance, fact and the mere signs of facts."[15]

Ut pictura poesis, ut poesis pictura: the reversibility of the phrase is edifying. It shows how there has been a shift from the principle advocating the vividness of poetic images when "poetry is like painting" and ascribes the scene described before one's eyes—the very definition of *enargeia*—to the tradition of historical

[12] Arasse, *Le détail*, p. 257.

[13] Let us mention on the subject Marianna Torgovnick's clever use of the *Paragone* as applied to the biographical in her chapter "The Sisters' Arts," a chapter in which she studies the emulation that existed between the two Stephen sisters. As was the proper thing to do, Virginia and Vanessa had divided the realm of the arts between the two of them, the one opting for painting and the other for "poetry." This emulation was not without jealousy on the part of Virginia, as evidenced by her letters in which her compliments come with critical comments, which was not the case with Vanessa. *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism, and the Novel: James, Lawrence and Woolf* (Princeton, 1985).

[14] Mitchell, *Iconology*, pp. 119–20, citing the American edition of Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting*, ed. A. Philip McMahon (Princeton, 1956), p. xx.

[15] Ibid., p. 118.

painting, placed at the top of the hierarchy of pictorial works, when painting must be like poetry—because, that is to say, it must draw its inspiration from a text (mythological, biblical, historical, etc.) and select the elements in the composition which will make possible the truest and greatest representation of the action. This is what Alberti advocates in *De la peinture* when, after telling the painter to "endeavor to *simulate* only what is seen; the things that cannot be seen are not his responsibility,"[16] he suggests to start by drawing a rectangle on the figurative plan in the manner of an open window through which the painter will see, not nature, but what he wants to represent; in other words, the arrangement of the scene, the composition of the *istoria*, which corresponds to the rhetorical *dispositio*:

> Principio dove io debbo dipigniere. Scrivo uno quadrangolo di retti angoli quanto grande io voglio, el quale reputo essere una finestra aperta per donde io miro quello che quivi sarà dipinto.[17]

It is appropriate to cite the text in Italian so as to cast aside erroneous translations, like the ones which turned painting into "a window open onto the world." These metaphorical errors, however, made possible the invention of literary scenic and descriptive devices, as well as framing effects which we shall describe further on.

Text and image are brought together again in Poussin's famous phrase regarding *La Manne*, when he tells his friend Chantelou: "Read the story and the painting."[18] As Daniel Arasse emphasizes:

> From this perspective, what we could call the "language" of painting is based on much more than a mere comparison or even the domination of linguistic and rhetorical conceptions of classical culture. If, according to Yves Bonnefoy, the contour of figures is "a trap set by language," that trap is the very trap of Western representation. Standing at his window, Delacroix sees no contours in nature, but in front of his easel, he uses Nature as a "dictionary." Poussin, once again, is the one who gave the clearest and most concise formulation of this similarity: "In the same way the twenty-four letters of the alphabet serve to form our words and express our thoughts, the outlines of the body serve to express the various passions of the soul so as to reveal to the outside world what goes through our minds."[19]

[16] Hubert Damisch, *Théorie du nuage: Pour une histoire de la peinture* (Paris, 1972), p. 152, citing Leon Alberti, *De Pictura* (1435) (Paris, 1992), vol. II, p. 78.

[17] Ibid., vol. I, p. 70.

[18] Letter to Chantelou dated November 1747. See Louis Marin's analysis, which takes up again Poussin's "alphabet" to evoke the "letters of pictorial writing [...] the bodily signs left by the movements of the minds as traces of their emotions," *Détruire la peinture* (*To Destroy Painting*), "Musique poussinienne encore: à propos de la *Manne*" (Paris, 1977); and Arasse, *Le détail*, pp. 138–9.

[19] Arasse, ibid., p. 142, specifies in a footnote that the reference to Yves Bonnefoy is to be found in Bernard Vouilloux, "La description du tableau: la peinture et l'innommable,"

To paint "all that can be seen under the sun" but also to interpret what one sees; to structure the image on the model of language, and also to choose one's subject matter; and finally, to strive towards an ideal form and not a mere imitation of nature—this is another way of espousing Alberti's Neoplatonic Idealism: to paint nature not as it is, but as it should be and also to conform to Aristotle's theory of a selective imitation of nature,[20] for instance by making a hybrid painting which would pick up in various models the details of beauty—as in the case of Zeuxis who drew his inspiration from six young women so as to paint Helen[21]—or by having in mind an ideal of beauty. Imitation painting must be larger than life and present such an Idea of beauty and truth that one cannot tell what is fiction and what is reality. Hence the longevity of the story told by Pliny, the famous episode of Zeuxis' grapes which deceived birds, and the accounts of Philostratus's paintings in which it was impossible to tell "if it was a real bee which was deceived by the painted flowers or we who were mistaken, thinking it was real."[22] Is it a bee lured in by the painting or a painting which lures in the viewer? This tale brings us back to the origins of painting: to make absence present and replace it by an illusion.

The Fortunes of *Ut Pictura Poesis*: A Few Theoretical Approaches

Let us now examine briefly a few theories which have had a major impact on the study of the relations between text and image. These theories will help clarify some of the allusions contained in the pictorial devices, as well as highlight the questions debated by experts that we will encounter in our analyses of literary works. In the wake, as it were, of the humanist theory of *ut pictura poesis*, theorists have periodically felt the need to reconsider the *Paragone* in the light of their own

Littérature, 73 (February 1989): pp. 61–82, citing Bonnefoy, p. 63. Poussin's phrase about the "twenty-four letters" is mentioned by Felibian, cited in Nicolas Poussin's *Lettres et propos sur l'art* (Paris, 1964), p. 184.

[20] For a discussion of these principles, see Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*, in the chapter on "Imitation," pp. 22–37.

[21] Ibid., p. 33. Lee specifies that Cicero tells the story of Zeuxis in *De inventione*, II, 1, 1, sq., as well as Pliny in *Natural History* and Giovan Pietro Bellori in *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni* (Turin, 1976), pp. 13–15.

[22] André Chastel, in *Musca depicta* (Milan, 1994), lists the numerous stories of deception induced by *trompe-l'œil* paintings, *inganno*, and the strategic importance of the fly, ever since Zeuxis's grapes in Philostratus's *Imagines*, I, 23, "Narcissus" (Chastel 16), via the classical example give by Filarete in 1464 in Giotto's *Burla* (*Trattato di architectura*, Milan [A.M. Finoli and L. Grassi], 1972, II, 665) (Chastel 20), and then by Vasari in 1568 in *Vita di Giotto*: the apprentice painter put a fly on the painting of his master Cimabue, who could not wave it away. The story took on several forms until a certain Marechal Ferant, an unknown painter who was in love with Rubens's daughter, used the same technique to display his talent and thus obtain the object of his desire (Chastel 44).

period of time.[23] We have seen how Simonides of Ceos viewed painting as mute poetry and poetry as speaking painting, and how Leonardo considered painting as the leader of the arts because of the natural superiority of the eye over the word. Pictorial works thus have an evidentiary value, which explains their apparently immediate presentation of the object.

Edmund Burke, in *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*,[24] takes up again the famous opposition between the eye and the ear. Borrowing from the work of Locke[25]—particularly concerning the categories of *wit*, the apprehension of resemblances, and *judgment*, the perception of differences—Burke compares the "sublime" words to the "beautiful" images, thereby drawing the main arguments of his theory of the "sublime." Locke compared poetry and prose, putting poetry on the side of the obscure because of the abundance of images which cannot be seen, and prose on the side of clarity, that of mental images, thus inverting the initial theory which conferred on images a cognitive value. Burke extends this opposition to the comparison between poetry and painting. For if, on the one hand, words are on the side of the obscure, of the difficulty generated by the recognition of resemblances, but also of the suffering caused by the excesses of verbal imagery, leading to confusion and pain and, by extension, to the effect of the sublime, images, on the other hand, are on the side of evidence and clear judgment. Following a painful process which makes possible the perception of distinct images, the subject finally experiences the pleasure of clarity which causes the aesthetic pleasure of the beautiful. We know also how Burke applied the differentiation between the beautiful and the sublime, resemblance and difference, and image and text to the categories of gender and race—the sublime relying on terror and power by being a male aesthetic mode, whereas the beautiful, with its qualities of softness and refinement and its capacity to provide pleasure, was on the side of the feminine. According to him, the French people were on the side of the sublime and the English people on the side of the beautiful; hence his ideological discourse and the political consequences of his theories,[26] inevitable in the context of the French Revolution.

Lessing's *Laocoon*, published in 1766,[27] is famous for its critique of *ut pictura poesis* "as it was embodied by history painters, but also, among the critics of this doctrine, by those who, like de Piles, advocated a wider range of legitimate

[23] This section draws heavily from Mitchell, *Iconology*, who takes up the various relationships between text and image and offers an excellent synthesis.

[24] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), ed. James T. Boulton (Notre-Dame, 1958).

[25] John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II and Book III, in particular (1690).

[26] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 12 vols, ed. George Nichols (Boston, MA, 1865–67).

[27] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon* (Paris [1766], 1990).

activities for painters."[28] For Lessing, the aim of painting was above all to represent beautiful bodies. Everything is subordinated to the "koperliche Schonheit," the beauty of the body. Hence the hierarchy he proposes of the various genres, with landscape painting and still lifes at the bottom of the ladder. History painting did not find favor with him either. The avowed goal of the *Laocoon* was to put an end to the confusion between poetry (a temporal art) and painting (a spatial art), a famous distinction which concealed the fact that, by assigning to painting the task of rendering the beauty of the body before its expression—"beautiful bodies in beautiful postures"—Lessing unconsciously gave painting the same status as sculpture, as evidenced in the example of the sculpted group emblematic of his theory. If he was criticized for his narrow conception of formal beauty and his rigorous classicism, his famous dichotomy, which divides poetry and painting according to temporal and spatial axes, is still mentioned by critics. According to this theory, poetry is a temporal art requiring a linear form of apprehension, like reading. It is only afterwards, at the end of the reading process, that the work can be appreciated in its totality, through a process of mental reconstruction. Painting, however—the art of visible space, with an evidentiary value—can be apprehended immediately and globally. This theory, as we know, is easy to criticize. Indeed, even if it takes longer to read a novel than to view a painting, it does take time also to decipher a painting. The more knowledgeable in art is the viewer, the longer s/he will contemplate the work, examining its inner structure, its symbolic elements, and its use of matter. A poem reads faster than a novel but requires one or several re-readings as it resonates with itself and with other works long after the first reading. There are poems whose layout, like calligrams, define a textual space in the same way paintings may tell stories.[29]

Marianna Torgovnick explains that reading a book or a painting requires similar processes as they are both interpretive activities:

> Cognitive psychologists have unsettled widely accepted ideas that reading pictures and reading printed pages radically differ. They have shown that the eye does not really perceive paintings holistically, nor really perceive words sequentially.[30]

She cites Ernest Gilman's argument according to which, in both cases, one has to see the whole thing, and then the parts, and then the whole thing again, this phenomenon being comparable to two activities—that of "reading" and that of

[28] See Lee, *Ut pictura poesis*, pp. 45–9 for a discussion of Lessing's formula, and also Mitchell, Ch. 4, "Space and Time: Lessing's *Laocoon* and the Politics of Gender," pp. 93–115.

[29] See the discussion and clarification by Torgovnick, *The Visual Arts*, pp. 31–3, as well as work by Rudolph Arnheim, in particular in *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley, 1969).

[30] Torgovnick, *The Visual Arts*, p. 31.

"vision" as comprehension.[31] The difference between the two experiences is apparently in the order of the two operations: we first see a painting, then we "read" it; we read a text, and then we "see" it (in the sense of "understand"). There is also a considerable difference between the first and last perceptions of a painting:

> The order of experience in painting (seeing first, then "reading") is superficially the reverse of the literary experience, except that the final painting which, having been seen and "read" is finally known, is no longer identical with the square of canvas we happened to notice when we first walked into the room.[32]

This schematization of the experience of the legible and the visible in a chiasmic mode provides a common ground to the interpretation of texts and paintings. Let us note, however, that if a text is read, and then "seen" as a mental image, painting is seen, then "read," and then seen again. The text is rarely re-read immediately, except if it poses any specific reading problem; or if the textual strategy requires it to be re-read; or else if a professional obligation compels the reader to go through it again. Is an extra stage therefore necessary in the case of the pictorial or photographic image?

Not only did Lessing contrast painting and poetry in terms of space and time, he also conceived them according to the following dichotomies: natural signs/arbitrary signs; finite/infinite; imitation/expression; body/soul; exterior/interior; silence/words; the beautiful/the sublime; the eye/the ear; femininity/masculinity. These distinctions illustrate how close Burke's and Lessing's theories were at the time. Much later, Ernst Gombrich, in *Art and Illusion*,[33] discusses the platonic opposition described in *Cratylus* between "conventional" signs and "natural" signs, drawing the dividing line between language and image according to the axis separating artifice (what is made up by man) and nature (what is given). As was commonly thought even before Plato, images represent objects "directly" and are therefore on the side of nature, whereas language, which requires the mediation of thinking as well as the knowledge of a code, is on the side of convention and artifice. Gombrich criticizes this dichotomy by putting forward the idea of a graphic language of pictorial signs, and of a vocabulary of conventional forms, which rules out the idea of pictorial representation as a mere translation of the real. He thus lays out the foundation stone for a future "linguistics of the image." "Nature," in that sense, is merely a conventional figure, a "second nature"—and not a physical necessity—a code, like, for example, the code of "perspective" that seems "natural" to us. Finally, Gombrich recreates the difference between nature and convention at the level of the reception and production of images for, if the act of seeing is just as natural as the act of opening one's eyes, the production of

[31] Ibid., p. 34.

[32] Ernest Gilman, cited by Torgovnick, *The Visual Arts*, pp. 34–5.

[33] Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (London [1960], 1995).

an image necessitates all the art available to the creator of images. Therefore, to draw an outline is not merely a conventional way of circumscribing a subject; it is also the trace of a routine operation that we carry out when we differentiate the objects which surround us.

Gombrich's theory is not approved unanimously; Mitchell criticizes it, seizing the opportunity to reaffirm the text/image dichotomy in terms of natural vs. artificial:

> Gombrich's power stems from his ability to retain the "traditional view" of imagery while flirting with notions that seem innovative, modern or which approach the boundaries of common sense.[34]

Mitchell opposes the easy access to images to the difficulty of reading, images being the signs that we share with animals and which are thus "naturally" adapted to our senses.

In *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman elaborates a general grammar of symbolic systems which relies on a theory of language and resorts to semiotics in the wake of Roland Barthes's work in *Essais de sémiologie* (*Elements of Semiology*) and "Rhétorique de l'image" (Rhetoric of the Image). He makes use of the distinction between a sign and an icon, following the typology established by Charles Pierce, for whom the world of signs is comprised of icons, symbols, and indexes—i.e. of signs by resemblance and analogy, signs by convention, and signs by causal or existential connections.[35] The producer of the text or the image, and consequently the reader or viewer, must carry out operations of denotation and connotation. Gombrich elaborates a grammar of difference. For him, the image is part of a dense, even system, which provides an example of a continuous system akin to infinity. Each element is connected with the totality and derives its meaning from the rest. Gombrich illustrates this proposition thanks to the metaphor of the non-graduated thermometer. Language, on the contrary, is a differentiated symbolic language which functions in a discontinuous way, as evidenced in the alphabet, which contains a limited number of well-separated letters. Even when combined as words, the letters remain isolated by blanks—there is no intermediate character between *a* and *b*—and function as differentiated units, which may be combined and transferred from one system to another. Language relies on a finite system due to the limited number of characters, whereas a dense system remains open to an infinite number of marks which are new, significant, and easy to integrate with the symbol. The image of the thermometer, graduated this time, provides the model for this system which functions on the mode of disjunction.

For Mitchell, "The trope of *ut pictura poesis*, seems, in Goodman's work, to have achieved its verbal apotheosis. Pictures, like paragraphs, have to be read as

[34] Mitchell, *Iconology*, p. 87.

[35] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis, 1976); Charles Pierce, *Ecrits sur le signe* (Paris, 1978).

an arbitrary code."[36] Goodman's system is obviously not a series of prescriptions for the artist. Inventiveness and creativity are there to defy the rules of theorists and enable artists to create their own theory in constant rupture with what precedes them. Hybrid forms combining text and image are numerous enough for the analogical system to be satisfied. As Goodman summarizes it, "a picture in one system may be a description in another system."[37] A paragraph may become a skyscraper's skyline, or a pictorial work may be covered with letters or legible sequentially from left to right. It is a matter of symbolic systems and questions of habit, convention, and prescription on the author's part.

The aim of this survey of major theoretical works in text and image studies is to give a few guidelines to the reader. Any review of a theory is necessarily distorted, and we can only encourage the reader to go back to the sources to elucidate the questions raised above. Let us note, however, that the issue of the *Paragone*, the rivalry between text and image, is still much debated among theorists, who tend to organize the painting space into a "syntax of the visible." We have seen that Jean-Louis Schefer's book, which provides a "scenography of a painting" under the auspices of signs and syntax, applies a grammar of painting to Paris Bordone's *The Chess-Players*.[38] As to Hubert Damisch in *Fenêtre jaune cadmium*,[39] who studies the works of contemporary painters Rouan, Mondrian, and Adami, he compares the paintings to the texts from which they supposedly originate. Such is the case with Adami's *Freud en voyage* (Freud's Journey) and Rouan's braiding effects. In the first example, Damisch takes up again Poussin's phrase, "Read the story and the painting," and integrates it to the semiotic analysis of the painting. In the second example, he uses the old etymology—relayed by Barthes who connects "text" and "tissu" (fabric)—in Rouan's work by bringing together "tresses" (braiding) and text. We may be tempted to see in this constant seesaw movement between text and image a reminder that language "speaks" human beings as much as human beings are "language beings," and that between pictorial works and human discourse there is an infinite dialogue. Language figures in and around the works, either in the form of a title which, even when reduced to the denegation of "Without Title," exists as a text which produces an effect. This text triggers a process of *gestalt*, as is the case, for instance, in this small painting by Nicolas de Staël in which vertical blue and white stripes break apart a pale yellow space—a painting which all at once comes together thanks to its title, *Le Lavandou*.[40] Admittedly, one needs to know what the Lavandou is, and what connotations this place has—such as Provence, the sea, and the sunshine—hence the parasols and the deckchairs. However, far removed from the abstraction

[36] Mitchell, *Iconology*, p. 65.

[37] Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 226.

[38] Jean-Louis Schefer, *Scénographie d'un tableau* (Paris, 1969).

[39] Hubert Damisch, *Fenêtre jaune cadmium* (Paris, 1984).

[40] Nicolas de Staël, *Peintures et dessins*, Catalogue de l'exposition (March 15–June 19, 1994), p. 133.

process, the painting may also be read, first and foremost, as a pictorial manifesto and as a sheer jubilation of paste, matter, and rhythm. There is therefore a double level of reading, as well as the outline of a narrative—the narrative of a day by the sea, or the narrative of the sketch of a composition displaying the paste of the pure color, in one location, and the graphic gesture in another. "We could say that the trace, the hatching, the shape, in other words, the graphic event is what gives the sheet or the canvas its existence, its significance, its jouissance."[41]

Sometimes the text also appears in the painting, figuring the words uttered by the characters, as in the phylacteries of medieval manuscripts, or inscribed on one of the objects represented. The text may also stand for the voice of the *logos* inside the tomb, as in Guerchin's *The Arcadian Shepherds* or in Poussin's *Shepherds of Arcadia*, which was so brilliantly analyzed by Louis Marin.[42] The text may also be the artists' signatures as they appear on the sixteenth-century *cartellini*, sometimes adorned with a fly which seems to have come to perch on the surface represented, beyond the boundaries of the representing space—as a striking example of *inganno*, savoir faire, and *trompe-l'œil*. The text may also appear briefly as a commemorative plaque, like that of Philippe de Champaigne which was painted in 1662 and is now displayed at the Louvre.[43] Finally, a sentence may sometimes negate the subject of the representation, like Magritte's famous and polysemic *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (*This is Not a Pipe*). The text constitutes the painting's system when "undecipherable" types of writings, signs without referents, and simulacra of letters cover the surface of the painting, as in some of Nicolas de Staël's Indian ink drawings—see his 1953 *Etude(s) d'après Seghers* (*Study(ies) after Seghers*) and 1953 *Etudes de Paysages en Italie* (*Studies of Italian Landscape*),[44] which are nothing but traces, accents, and spaces—or some of Braque's drawings, such as his 1931 *Still Life*.[45] We might also be tempted to do a similar "reading," at least in part, of Pollock's *drippings*, which represent gestures very close to a mode of writing.

The legible may also figure in the form of an object, like the innumerable books that punctuate the history of painting, such as the books in the hands of the Virgin or of the saints; the Books of Hours like that of Mary of Burgundy;[46] or the books that the Evangelists or the saints are supposed to be writing, like Hans Memling's *Tryptich with Saint-John the Baptist and Saint-John the Evangelist*, which is kept at the Hôpital Saint-Jean in Bruges, Belgium, and in which one can see Saint John,

41 Barthes, *L'obvie et l'obtus*, p. 178.

42 Marin, *Détruire la peinture*, pp. 82–114.

43 See Svetlana Alpers in her chapter "Regarder les mots," *L'art de dépeindre: la peinture hollandaise au XVIIème siècle* (Paris, 1990); and André Chastel, *Musca depicta*.

44 De Staël, *Peintures*, pp. 11–12 and pp. 187–8.

45 Braque, *Nature morte* (1931), watercolor in grey, white, and black. Baltimore Art Museum, reproduced in *Modern Drawings*, ed. Monroe Wheeler (New York, 1947).

46 *Mary of Burgundy Reading, Mary of Burgundy's Book of Hours*, tenth century, Illumination, reproduced by Daniel Arasse, *Le détail*, p. 53.

sitting, writing his narrative with various scenes from the Apocalypse painted behind him.[47] Finally, even though Duchamp's *ready-mades*, for example, turn into art the most prosaic objects, such as a urinal or a bottle-holder, they take on an iconoclastic dimension which destroys painting even more than Caravaggio did according to Poussin's famous accusation: " M. Poussin, who could not stand the Caravaggio, would say that the latter was born *to destroy painting*."[48] Those objects nonetheless do produce a theoretical "text" through their incongruous and provocative presence in museums,[49] as evidenced by the title of Mitchell's book, *Picture Theory: Ut Pictura Theoria*, which plays on Horace's famous phrase.

After noticing the conflicting relationships between painting and poetry—we have seen that, through a predictable inversion, or chiasmus, painting worked just like poetry, by telling a story—we are now going to examine the instances of the pictorial arts within literary texts. By giving back all its strength to Horace's phrase, we shall try to see how poetry "is like" or "acts like" painting through a distortion of the phrase. The pictorial image thus appears as the return of the repressed of the "poetic" text ("poetic" being used here in its broadest sense), in the form of a narrative or indirectly through the descriptive mode.

Figures, Figural, Figured, Figurative, Figuration ...

Ekphrasis

To prolong the comparison between the Sister Arts and *ut pictura poesis*: *ekphrasis* is the major figure to which hypotyposes and "tableaux," among others, will conform. Over time, the meaning of *ekphrasis*—*ek-phraso* meaning "to speak out," as Ruth Webb recalls,[50] was defined at its origins as "an extended description of an object in vivid, animated terms"—became restricted to the description of an art object (painting or sculpture) which, by being rich and detailed, seems to give it life. It endowed a silent work with the capacity to speak, as the etymology suggests, thus bringing an answer to Simonides of Ceos's aphorism: mute painting was beginning to talk. It was the ear at the service of the eye, a wider domain traditionally reserved for *enargeia*, a rhetorical device which consisted in giving a vivid description meant for the eye of the soul. Used by lawyers, *enargeia* was

47 Like the burning rock destroying ships, the grasshopper plague, the horses on the beach, the angel, the Lady of the Apocalypse, and the seven-headed dragon. Hilde Lobelle-Caluwe, *Musée Memling* (Bruges, 1987), p. 54.

48 Marin, *Détruire la peinture*, p. 14.

49 See Alain Séguy-Duclot's analysis in "Un ready-made est-il une œuvre d'art?", *Poétique*, 105 (1996): pp. 3–22.

50 For a more recent, sound, and detailed approach of *ekphrasis* resting on classical theory, see the work of Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, 2009).

supposed to help depict the scene in such a way as to lead the judges to a favorable verdict. It gradually ended up coinciding with *ekphrasis* as a poetic principle, *ekphrasis* itself having now a restricted field.

In *Ekphrasis*, an exhaustive book which expands on W.J.T. Mitchell's work on iconology, Murray Krieger starts by listing the canonical examples of the shields that served as prototypes for ekphrastic description,[51] and then proceeds to examine the theories that punctuated the endless fight Da Vinci called *Paragone*. Homer's description of Achilles' shield, and then Virgil's description of Aeneus' shield are indeed descriptions of fictitious works of art since the shields will remain mythical. The rhetorical artifice serves to suspend the action in progress while presenting other actions of a heroic nature, which are supposed to be sculpted onto the shields. Let us note that we are presented here with one of the two functions of narrativized description, as we shall discuss later. Krieger juxtoposes two reproductions of shields. One, after an engraving by Vleugel reproduced for Pope's *Iliad*, appeared in Jean Boivin's *L'Apologie d'Homère et le bouclier d'Achille* (*Homer's Apology and Achilles' Shield*); the other, after a photograph of Flaxman's shield, consists in a silver bas-relief stuck on a plaster mold, dating back to 1821 (Huntington Library).[52] These Achilles' shields testify to the efforts made by artists to give life, down to the slightest detail, to what was a mere textual shield—a just reward which highlights the constant seesaw movement between text and image.

The circular shape of the shield produces a circular narrative, the narrative of the injury to Achilles and the hero's decision not to get revenge, in the same way the *Odyssey* will be later the narrative of a journey, a voyage in the shape of a loop. We can see through this example that the spatialization of a narrative plays a prominent part, as evidenced by the great number of spatial metaphors in literary discourse, through words such as "structure," "frame," "circularity," "mirror," "*mise en abyme*," "chiasmus," "figure," "construction," "antithesis," "parallel," "opening," "rise," "peak," "fall," typographic "blank," "texture," "image," and "*période carrée*," as evidenced in the old rhetoric books. The Renaissance used the word "commonplace," from the Ciceronian tradition of the eulogy, to codify and list the clichés and forms to use in speeches. This phenomenon may be an indicator of the importance of the visual in the act of reading, since the textual image is what remains in the reader's eye once he/she has put down the book: devices, "frames," scenes, places, and atmospheres.

Krieger finds the circularity of the canonical *ekphrasis* in another archeo-literary model, that of the funeral urn as in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," or in Donne, Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, and Faulkner.[53] Leo Spitzer, in his analysis of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn,"[54] has brilliantly shown the fecundity of the circular

[51] Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, fn. 10.

[52] Ibid., p. xiii.

[53] Ibid., Appendix, pp. 263–88, 271.

[54] Leo Spitzer, "The 'Ode on a Grecian Urn,' or Contents vs. Metagrammar," in Anna Hatcher (ed.), *Essays on English and American Literature* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 67–97.

shape of the Grecian urn as a modeling principle—a container which mimics its contents since the urn contains the ashes of the deceased. A variation on this theme is to be found in Graham Swift's novel *Last Orders*, in which four friends of the deceased, carrying out his last orders, travel from London to Margate, Kent, so as to scatter his ashes. The novel, scattering the narration into a multiplicity of voices—four major ones to which are added minor ones—builds itself as a funeral urn containing fragments of the life of Jack the butcher, which the reader can reconstruct thanks to the polyphonic discourse. "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes," the rotundity of the last orders' (plastic) urn is superimposed in parodic mode to the rotundity of the polysemic "last orders" beer glass, the last ritualistic injunction for "last orders" just before a pub closes.

The shape of the funeral urn therefore functions as a paradigmatic model for a lot of other circular narratives which are, for Krieger, like the ouroboros, the eternal return. He sees in it a sign of closure in modern narratives, against which postmodernism will react, refusing closure and, to quote Derrida, the logocentrism of the word which says the world. There are lots of well-known examples of narratives "eating their own tails." Let us mention, for instance, Barthelme's Möbius ring in *Welcome to the Funhouse*, Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, whose last sentence takes the reader back to the incipit, or Paul Auster's *Moon Palace*. Another emblem of circular structure is the wheel which often, as in T.S. Eliot, turns and stays still: "That the pattern may subsist, that the wheel may turn and still/Be forever still."[55] It suffices to read W.B. Yeats and John McGahern to see the importance of wheels, circularity, and circles in Irish literature, for instance, possibly to echo the religious word and also Eliot's ("in my end is my beginning, in my beginning is my end"),[56] as well as the Celtic entanglements of the *Book of Kells*. Thinking is thus structured along the axes of time and space, paradigm and syntagm, upon which man inscribes himself in the manner of Leonardo Da Vinci's human figure.

To summarize, *ekphrasis* was therefore, in the great poetic tradition, a celebration, an homage. It was part of the epideictic genre. The representation of a representation, *ekphrasis* shows itself through this distance as a theoretical act of self-reflexivity from an art form which discloses another art form. It is the non-natural sign of a natural sign within the conversation which aimed at ranking the arts according to the categories of the natural (painting, on account of its immediacy) and non-natural (poetry, on account of its convention and artificiality). The insertion or inclusion within the flux of the narration of a spatial object—shield, urn, painting—spatializes narrative, which is a temporal art, and blurs the

See also Grant F. Scott on Keats in *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis and the Visual Arts* (Hanover, NH, 1994), and James Heffernan's own references to such a favorite of word/image studies, in his *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago, 1993).

[55] T.S Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*, cited by Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, p. 265.

[56] John McGahern, "Like all Other Men," *Collected Stories* (London, 1992).

sharp distinctions made by Lessing between painting as a spatial art and narrative as a temporal art. Let us note also that Krieger makes a distinction between two types of *enargeia*. Hypotyposis was one of the forms of the rhetorical trope of *enargeia*.[57] *Enargeia*, to quote Krieger, is "the capacity of words to describe with a vividness that, in effect, reproduces an object before our very eyes (i.e. before the eyes of the mind)" (68). For Krieger, the first type of *enargeia* consists in giving a vivid description of the object so as to place it before the eyes of the viewer, who sees it from the exterior and therefore stays at a distance from it. The aim is to produce a verbal equivalent of the object. In the second type of *enargeia*, the idea is to penetrate the very process of representation, to be as close as possible to the acting creator, to "render" what he felt, what is at the source of his inspiration; in the same way, at the other end of the spectrum, the idea was to "render" the viewer's feelings and emotion. This is the theory of empathy with the subject, i.e. M.H. Abrams's "expressive theory," of which Krieger offers a definition based on the writings of Longin on the sublime—hence its success with the Romantics. This second type of *enargeia* makes possible, among other things, the description of the fantastic visions which exist only in the creator's mind. There is therefore an intensity of the visual representation in *Enargeia I*, and of the emotional reaction in *Enargeia II* which goes beyond the mimetic representation, central in *Enargeia I*. This distinction seems useful concerning the various possible combinations between the poles of reception and production of a work, thereby enabling *ekphrasis* to focus on the description of an image from the viewer's perspective or to step across the mirror from the creator's perspective, which changes the textual data and shifts the modalities at stake.

The polarities characterizing the various actors of Krieger's *ekphrasis* can be schematized in the following way:

object (of imitation) referent

viewer creator

work of art

This chart illustrates clearly the systems of polarity and triangularity which are at stake in the relationships between viewer-work-referent, creator-work-referent, and work-referent, but it lacks the interaction between creator and viewer. This schema shows the modes ruling the relationships between the thing and its icon, relationships which can take place on the symmetrical or dissymmetrical, analogical or antithetical, and even transgressive mode.

M.H. Abrams had already suggested a model taking into account the same actors of the artistic relationship, but functioning in a slightly different way. In *The Mirror and the Lamp*, he draws the famous triangular schema highlighting

[57] Not to be confused with *energeia*, the powerful presentation of an argument.

the various directions taken by criticism, depending on which of the four actors of representation it focuses on:[58]

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WORK

ARTIST AUDIENCE

Hence the following aesthetic preoccupations: "mimetic theory" (concerned with the referent); "pragmatic theory" (whose object is the effect on the viewer and the aim, edifying or didactic); "expressive theory" (the artist expresses his/her feelings); and "objective theory" (concerned with the object, hence the phrase "art for art's sake"). We can see that these two schemas are reminiscent of that of Roman Jakobson highlighting "the various factors of verbal communication":

CONTEXT

ADDRESSER MESSAGE ADDRESSEE

CONTACT

CODE

This schema encompasses the six functions, which are oriented according to the six factors of communication: the emotive function (addresser); the poetic function (message); the phatic function (contact); the metalinguistic function (code); the referential function (context); and the conative function (addressee). Jakobson classifies poetic genres also by involving the participants:

> Beside the predominant poetic function, [there are also] other verbal functions, in a hierarchical order which varies. Epic poetry, centered on the third person, draws heavily on the referential function; lyric poetry, centered on the first person, is intimately linked to the emotive function; the poetry of the second person is marked by the conative function, and is supplicatory and exhortative, depending on whether the first person is dependent on the second or the second on the first.[59]

We saw that *ekphrasis* belonged to the epideictic genre, which Philippe Hamon calls "the semiotic counter-gift, in the form of a text, owed by the collectivity who designates the describer to do so, and given to some benefactor (king, nature, God, etc)."[60] *Ekphrasis* therefore combines the referential function and the conative function, which also appears in classical descriptive modes, such as prosopopeia which gives a voice to the absent, hence *apostrophe* and *dialogism*.

[58] M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford [1953], 1971), p. 6.

[59] Roman Jakobson, "Linguistique et poétique" [1960], *Essais de linguistique générale* (Paris [1963], 1986), pp. 214–20.

[60] Philippe Hamon, *Introduction à l'analyse du descriptif* (Paris, 1981), p. 10.

And prosopopeia is one of the staples of James Heffernan's own discussion of *ekphrasis* and of Krieger's work:[61] thus he makes a point of drawing a line between Krieger's work and his own. His approach is more rhetorical and he clearly advocates the dynamic quality of *ekphrasis*, refusing to see it as a frozen part of a text, a trait I would strongly support. Interestingly enough, he puts forth the fact that "what has kept it alive is its paragonal energy" (Heffernan 6). For Heffernan, *ekphrasis* is "an enduring as well as ancient poetic mode" (Heffernan 137). He also sees it in gendered terms, which is a trait I also defended:[62] image (description) is seen in feminine terms, whereas language (narrative) verges on the masculine. Heffernan mostly studies *ekphrasis* in relation to poetry, its ideal locus as it were. This book will focus on *ekphrasis* in fiction, a different kind of *ekphrasis* altogether producing or responding to different ways of working/reading. Heffernan also insists on it being a mode more than a genre. For Heffernan, *ekphrasis* works along four lines—conversion, friction, *Paragone*, prosopoeial envoicing (Heffernan 136)—that we shall also find in my analyses. From mere ornament to self-sufficient detachable piece as Barthes recalled, the evolution of *ekphrasis* is also linked to the evolution of museums according to Heffernan, a stimulating point indeed (Heffernan 138).

To represent works of art through language is to proceed to an operation of over-coding, i.e. to present a second time the sensible world which was already represented, i.e. Plato's appearances of appearances. The artistic image within the text takes on an epistemic or heuristic value. It is always "already there," "pre-constructed," as the linguists say. It thus appears as a place where meaning is increased, a place of aesthetic over-saturation. This will lead us to posit the artistic image as a trope, a full-fledged "figure" of *enargeia* of which hypotyposis and *ekphrasis* are specific forms.

Svetlana Alpers has brilliantly shown the heuristic value of Dutch painting, a "descriptive" sort of painting which she opposes to the narrative value of Italian painting based on the Albertian model.[63] Dutch painting is supposed to have popularized the discoveries of physics, in particular optics. The minute work of Dutch painters—who were more concerned with the details and light (*lumen*) coming from the objects than with the light (*lux*) coming from the viewer's eye, and who lit up the objects according to an anthropocentric tradition—paved the way for Kepler, whose theories of vision as a mere recipient of images at the back of one's eye revolutionized dioptrics. Therefore, according to Alpers, Dutch painting, concerned with nature, has a descriptive nature, recording the world as the image

[61] Heffernan, *Museum of Words*. For further discussion of *ekphrasis*, see J. Hillis Miller, *Illustration* (London, 1992); Peter Wagner, *Icons – Texts – Iconotexts* (Berlin, 1996); and Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion*.

[62] See Liliane Louvel, *Le tiers pictural: Pour une critique intermédiale* (Rennes, 2010).

[63] Alpers, *L'art de dépeindre*, pp. 18–19, and the chapter entitled "*Ut pictura, ita visio*."

does at the back of the retina, which Kepler calls "pictura," *ut pictura, ita visio*—unlike the Albertian model which imposes a frame on representation in the form of a window. Let us mention that in the hierarchy of arts, the Italian Renaissance ranked narrative painting, and above all history painting, first. Landscapes and still lifes, which were favored by Dutch painting, came last.

Finally, let us note that according to the rules of *ekphrasis*, to describe a work of art so vividly that it seems to place the object before the viewer's eyes paved the way for fantastic and Gothic art, which knows no boundaries when it comes to making paintings talk, animating statues, or having their characters step off their pedestals, or out of their frames, as in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*—not to mention conversations which resurrect the dead and leave behind houses fissured from top to bottom and about to collapse into the dark waters of a pond (think of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*).

Hypotyposis

According to Pierre Fontanier,[64] there are only two "figures of style by imitation": hypotyposis (to make someone see) and harmonism (to make someone hear). He reminds his readers that hypotyposis comes from the Greek word signifying "model, original, painting" and derives from the verb "to draw, to paint." Stemming from "under" and "to figure," hypotyposis, just like *ekphrasis*, makes the person see the object vividly, "replaces the original with the copy" (Fontanier 266):

> Hypotyposis paints things in such a vivid and forceful manner that it places them, as it were, before the eyes of the viewer and turns a narrative or a description into an *image*, a *painting*, *or even a real-life scene* [...] sometimes, it consists in just one stroke [...] sometimes, there are several strokes, brought together in a narrow frame, more or less one single sentence [...] sometimes also, a series of sentences, a series of hypotyposes, produce a *painting* which is more or less large and more or less complex. (390, emphasis mine)

It is pertinent to mention that if, in the definition, hypotyposis varies in length (the shorter version being the diatyposis, which has fewer words and things visualized, in the same way a metaphor is shorter than an allegory), the sentence plays the part of the *frame*, the series of sentences that of the *painting*, and the pictorial code is brought up to convey the vividness of the description. Bernard Dupriez confirms the link with the pictorial in the following way:

> Hypotyposis is therefore a development of the image in the double sense of the term: visual image and rhetorical image (metonymy or metaphor); [...]

[64] Pierre Fontanier, *Les figures du discours* (Paris [1821–30], 1977).

> comparisons, allegories, and applications will often be hypotyposes when they "form an image."[65]

He makes the distinction between a descriptive hypotyposis and a rhetorical hypotyposis, "in which the action is an artificial representation of the idea." It is therefore not surprising that in order to convey the impression of life, writers should sometimes resort to what was called in the nineteenth century a "tableau vivant," a kind of *mise en scène* of a famous painting or historical event, which is a hybrid form drawing from the theater, from painting, and from real life. A writer like Angela Carter made the most of this hybrid form in *Nights at the Circus*, thanks to a baroque and lush kind of writing. It would be worth analyzing the relations between theatricality and painting for, as we know, certain "scenes" were the occasion of veritable pictorial or artistic arrangements within Italian design. They were conceived as "tableaux," a term used in the theater. The *mise en scène* is like a survival of the painter's eye framing the scene, setting the décor, and choosing the colors of the costumes; while in their interpretation of body language or kinesics, the body movements were like Poussin's alphabet, which was mentioned above. Bob Wilson's work is there to remind us of this period, just like the memory of the dialogue between Greuze's paintings and Rousseau's theatrical attempts.

For Morier also, hypotyposis is a figure which consists in "describing a scene so vividly, dynamically, and accurately that it meets our eyes with the presence, the sharpness, and the colors of reality."[66] Note here the word "presence" for what is in fact absent, which is precisely one of the functions of re-presentation, making the scene so lively, as well as the word "relief," a characteristic of animated beings but also of sculpture. The reference to "colors" also suggests the emphasis on the pictorial code. These comments are corroborated by the following remark by Francis Wey and his insistence on the analogy with painting:

> Almost all figures are descriptions in disguise: any allegory, any metaphor even, is a brief description; he who cannot describe cannot write. Poetic imagination is conveyed through a multiplicity of images; to describe is to paint, and to paint is to form images.[67]

Rhetoric offers a whole series of categories which make it possible to relate a "pictorial" description to the various genres of painting. Bernard Dupriez suggests as synonyms of hypotyposis: "image (Boileau); painting (Fenelon); painting (Fontanier); painted image (Edmond De Goncourt), *mise en scène*, energy

[65] Bernard Dupriez, *Les procédés littéraires* (Paris, 1984).

[66] Henri Morier, *Dictionnaire de poétique et de rhétorique* (Paris, 1981).

[67] Francis Wey, *Remarques sur la langue française* (Paris, 1845), vol. 2, p. 404, cited by Philippe Hamon, *Introduction à l'analyse du descriptif*, p. 25.

(Du Bellay)." To these categories can be added collages, mirrors, *mises en abyme*, clichés and so on.

For Jean-Louis de Boissieu and Anne-Marie Garagnon, an image designates:

> in the usual sense, certain forms of visual representations and oral or written descriptions. In the rhetorical sense, the image is used, without any specifications, for an expression in which, through a trope (based or not on analogy), through a figure or through any semantic anomaly, a second meaning appears"[68] (Dupriez).

For the sake of clarity, let us propose two schemas which take up again Bernard Dupriez's distinction between a "literary image" (the emergence of a second analogical meaning) and a "visual image" (a synonym for "mental image"):

"the literary image"

metaphor	comparison	allegory
(one word)	(a syntagm)	(a series of syntagms)

"the visual image" (= mental image)

description	hypotyposis	diatyposis	portrait	prosopopeia

A few concluding remarks: one could object that if hypotyposis and *a fortiori ekphrasis* are two means of conjuring up the visual image, they are nonetheless, since they draw on art, an analogical system of discourse which creates "figures." Let us posit also that since hypotyposis differs from *ekphrasis* in the fact that hypotyposis does not concern an art object identified as such, but rather evokes a painting indirectly, thus producing a "painting-effect," it forces the critic to establish rigorous criteria which will enable him to spot in the text the pictorial markers without succumbing to easy analogies. The role of hypotyposis and *ekphrasis* cannot simply be reduced to ornamentation, as people thought for a long time, in particular in classical times. We shall have the opportunity to see its pragmatic impact on the reader, but also on the narrator thanks to its expressive force, in the etymological sense of the term "to bring out of." From hypotyposis, which suggests a pictorial analogy, to *ekphrasis*, where the art object is present, via all the intermediary forms presented above, "pictorial description" shall enable us to lay the foundations of a poetics of the iconotext. Whereas other theorists and critics have tended to put under the same heading very different ways for the image to manifest itself in a text, what I will offer is a scale of pictorial description that takes into account their precise gradations and different degrees of saturation.

[68] Jean-Louis de Boissieu and Anne-Marie Garagnon, *Commentaires stylistiques* (Paris, 1987), p. 264.

many twinklings of meaning that signal themselves in the interstices opened by the wound caused by the image to the body of the text, when the image "touches" and "leaves marks." The image is also a figured fantasy which manifests itself against the resistance of the text. Style is what opens the text,[54] revealed like those anatomy figures, cutaway drawings. The image is what also makes possible a thorough investigation of the flesh of the text, the layered organics under smooth aesthetics when the anatomic Angel spreads its wings. This too is an illusion.

[54] See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ouvrir Vénus* (Paris, 1999), "Le temps des images," back cover.

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