

*The Cognitive Essence of
Ekphrasis and Literary
Pictorialism: A Theory
Encountered*

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Abstract :

This study examines the cognitive essence of ekphrasis. It investigates the cognitive crossing between the visual arts and literary verbal-images, emphasizing each art's mimetic method and principle. The study mainly reviews the most relevant theoretical contributions to highlight one marginalized but very important aspect: the scientific and cognitive nature of literary pictorialism which is usually attributed exclusively to the language of science. For that matter, the study tackles such concepts as mimesis, space, time, memory, photography, and illustration as they relate to literary pictorialism and the visual arts, emphasizing meanwhile the cognitive purpose of ekphrasis whereby the memorized, recalled, and pictorialized is (re-)studied, (re-)analyzed, and intellectually and emotionally comprehended. It turns out that the ekphrast is a mental observer of things, rendering his observation into a language that 'stems from matter', becoming hence a thinker in words; and the reader should redo the process by 'recalling the material' (in addition to the sensual, emotional, intuitive, and intellectual) aspects of the things communicated in that language. By doing so, both the ekphrast and the reader will have performed a cognitive investigation of that which is pictorialized.

*The Cognitive Essence of Ekphrasis and Literary
Pictorialism: A Theory Encountered*

Some high, some low-the painter was so nice.
The scalps of many, almost hid behind,
To jump up higher seemed, to mock the mind.
Here one man's hand leaned on another's head,
His nose being shadowed by his neighbor's ear; . . .
For much imaginary work was there;
Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
That for Achilles' image stood his spear
Griped in an armed hand; himself behind
Was left unseen, save to *the eye of mind*:
A hand, a foot, a face, a leg, a head
Stood for *the whole to be imagined*.

(Italics mine, William Shakespeare, *Lucrece* lines
1412-28; Colvin; Fairchild, 139-47)

In this illustrative ekphrasis, Shakespeare translates into words not just the painting but also what it might suggest intuitively, emotionally, intellectually, and technically. As Leonard Barkan puts it: "It is Shakespeare, interestingly enough, who goes further in the Troy painting that occupies Lucrece's tormented thoughts; he actually refers to technical details, for instance in the depiction of a crowd scene" (Barkan, 330). There is here a great deal of awareness of what the body's eye views, as reflected in the technical jargon of the

verses, denoting shapes, masses, angles, spaces, dimensions, and positions. Hence, poetry and painting share visual dimensions. The poet, however, is allied of the painter in the ability to explicate, to use 'the eye of the mind... for the whole to be imagined'. Nonetheless, this particular kind of ekphrasis, of the illustrative type, is not exclusive of poetry's incorporation of the visual. Literary pictorialism is far more visual and cognitive than it appears in this particular case.

Many a time, and even since the evolution of ancient philosophy and literary theory, definitions of poetry drew analogies to the visual arts. But these analogies have been approached from different perspectives, sometimes as a study of metaphor, other times as a field of sisterly relationship between poetry and painting (and visual arts in general), which incorporated two different methods: first, a naïve study of poets and painters illustrating each other's work (Přaz; Bohn; Gombrich 1960, Gombrich 1963); second, a more relevant study of the idea of representation and mimesis at large, an in-depth investigation of the similarity of the process of depiction each art uses in relation to reality rather than to the work of the other, using such terms as *et picture poesis*, ekphrasis, pictorialism, and spatial form. Thus there evolved interdisciplinary approaches which have also been considered fields of comparative literature and art studies. Earlier interdisciplinary studies thought of literary pictorialism in relation to iconography and iconology, relating artistic images to pre-existing verbal formulations and considering poetic works as being composed of pre-existing motifs. Such method remains

within the confines of illustration, relating poets' and artists' works to a sense of mutual influence and *intertextuality*, emphasizing a shared period of creativity by arguing that artists and poets of the same period influence each others (Barkan, Bohn, Smoot, Panofsky 1939; Sypher; Gombrich 1971, 1972).¹

Nonetheless, recent interdisciplinary approaches have attempted to theorize a more intellectually intrinsic parallel between word and image; the idea that speech and image-making are interrelated methods of rhetoric and figurality, and that artistic images are made to invoke verbal responses; the center of this approach is 'rhetoric' (Baxandall 1971). But a far more significant aspect of this relation should be the idea of representation, *mimesis*. For by tracing how each art's method of representing reality works, it might be possible to underline the parallel -- or lack of it -- between these arts (Alpers 1960, 1983; Baxandall 1985; Wellek 1941; White; Summers 1991; Wolheim 1970, 1987, 1991; Goodman; Bryson 1981, 1983, 1991; Bryson, Holly and Moxey; Mitchell 1986, 1994). Rather than the restrictive idea of illustration, the essential questions, in fact, are: what are the similarities and differences between the visual arts

¹. For example, Barkan concentrates mainly on the historical aspect of the relation in the Renaissance and focuses on the wealthy visual legacy, of the time, which found its easy entrance into the literature of the period, with numerous references to cases of mutual influence between painters and poets illustrating each others (Barkan). For similar approaches see also Bohn and Smoot.

and literary pictorialism? And what is the cognitive purpose of such arts?

There is sameness and difference in the interrelation between the visual arts and literary pictorialism. A comprehensive account of this interrelation should in the end pin point the cognitive crossing between the arts and literary verbal-images, by emphasizing each art's relation to the depiction of reality, its mimetic method and principle. The purpose of this study is to review the most relevant contributions to highlight one marginalized but very important aspect: the scientific and cognitive essence of literary pictorialism that is usually attributed exclusively to the language of science. The study focuses mainly on the cognitive aspect of the experience of totality generated by literary pictorialism, the crossing between the literary and the scientific. For that matter, the study is to tackle such concepts as mimesis, space, time, memory, photography, and illustration as they relate to literary pictorialism and the visual arts, emphasizing meanwhile the cognitive purpose of ekphrasis whereby the memorized, recalled, and pictorialized is (re-)studied, (re-)analyzed, and intellectually and emotionally comprehended.

Literary pictorialism and visual arts share the purpose of depicting reality but it seems that the relation of each art to reality entails a great deal of competition, with a claim to being closer to truth on the part of the painter, the sculptor, and the poet. In fact the competition between painters and poets is responsible for a few painters' opposition to the value of literary pictorialism.

Alberti argued that: "The virtues of painting, therefore, are that its masters see their works admired and feel themselves to be almost like the Creator... So I would venture to assert that whatever beauty there is in things has been derived from painting." (Alberti 1972, 61). Leonardo da Vinci also argued that

If you, historians or poets or mathematicians, had not seen things through your eyes, you would only be able to report them feebly in your writings. And you, poet, should you wish to depict a story as if painting with your pen, the painter with his brush will more likely succeed....The works of nature are far more worthy than words, which are the products of man, because there is the same relationship between the works of man and those of nature as between man and god. Therefore, it is nobler to imitate things in nature, which are in fact the real images, than to imitate, in words, the words and deeds of man. (Leonardo, 20-1).

Da Vinci's perception brings the historian, poet, and mathematician in *one category* and the painter in *another*, the earlier being superficial and the latter more intuitive and, opposed to the poet, more successful. However, da Vinci's argument suffers the partiality of the painter who is biased to his craft. He therefore takes for granted that the painter is a creator and a god, both creators of nature who are associated with deeds rather than words; words are the domain of the poet. Hence, da Vinci's bias renders a lacking argument which is blinded by his partiality whereby he loses sight of the issue of rendering nature in

painting and poetry to argue that the poet only imitates the words and deeds of man while the painter imitates the creations of the divine.

Within the same endeavor, Michelangelo contested that (as reported in the dialogues of Francisco de Hollanda): "Whenever...a great painter makes a work which seems to be artificial and false, this falseness is truth.... [To which Hollanda himself adds:] A painter is worthy of great praise if he paint an impossible thing which has never been seen with such art and skill that it seems alive and possible and causes men to wish that such things did actually exist" (Hollanda, 61, 63). Both Michelangelo and Hollanda view painters as creators who are as innovative as the divine, therefore suggesting that the poet's imitations are inferior renderings of that which exists, a redundant and reiterative production. The painter's creations, on the other hand, become independent domains of truth, unlike the poet's. Such is an argument which follows Plato's philosophy-biased cosmological sentiments regarding the truthful world of Ideas and the falsehood of the imitative arts. As Barkan puts it while defining mimesis:

Mimesis is by its very nature a discourse of competition –or, at the very least, of comparison. The agnostic relations it establishes between representation and the represented give rise to a similar set of contrasts -- or contests – among different media of representation (Barkan, 336).

In fact, the emphasis on truth is an inevitable outcome of the rivalry spirit of the disciples of each creative domain

(poetry, painting, philosophy etc.). It is indeed a quality of single-talented proponents. In the case of multi-talented minds, the bias almost dissolves as, for example, with poets who were painters, historians, and/or philosophers, a matter which is beyond the scope of this paper and which the researcher has already investigated in various places elsewhere.² The relation between ekphrasis and literary pictorialism is a matter of mimesis with a competition between words and pictures (and sculpture, including -- more than just colors -- shapes, angles, masses, and surfaces). As Barkan puts it: "to capture mimesis is to master the relations between word and image" (Barkan, 339). And this relation is indeed that of the ability of words to translate the dimensions of visual arts into the lexicon which turns out to be a verbal painting and/or sculpture; in other words, a painting and/or sculpture in words.

The purpose of mimesis in literary pictorialism is not necessarily imitation in the strict sense. Sir Philip Sidney's definition of poetry as "a speaking picture" is a case in hand. The aim of poetry according to Sidney is "to teach and delight" (Sidney, 483), a clear testimony to the cognitive aim of pictorial poetry. Sidney's definition is also accompanied by the assertion that poets do not

² . See, for example, "The Influence of Painting on the Language of Isaac Rosenberg's Poetry", *Al-Manarah*, vol. 8, no. 2. 2002, pp. 27-48. See also "A Portrait of the Historian as Artist: The Fusion of Painting and History in the Prose Narratives of Hind Abu-Sha'ar", *A-Manarah*, vol. X, no. 3. 2004, pp. 21-56.

necessarily create an image or imitate nature as much as they create a new nature.

There is no art delivered to mankind that bath not the works of nature for his principal object. Only the poet...lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as never were in nature....Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done, neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers (Sidney, 482-4).

Barkan examines Philip Sidney's phrase describing poetry as a "speaking picture" considering it a methodological guide for the study of the mimetic essence of poetry being "one of the most famous of all definitions of poetry, and like many other such definitions—Plato's in *the Republic*, Horace's in the *Ars Poetica*--it arrives at saliency by drawing an analogy to the visual" (Barkan, 326). Barkan's discussion is concerned with Sidney's 'picture that speaks' and this study examines the picture that is, more than just heard, can be seen, smelled, tasted, and touched; that is, felt and sensed collectively, emotionally, and cognitively altogether. Nonetheless, Barakan says that the imaginative nature of the 'speaking picture,' more than makes up for what it lacks by its imaginative force, it promises

something like a totalizing experience, one that embraces both eyes and ears, one that combines the

discursive force of language with the sensuous power of real experience (figured as visual), one that unites doctrine with aesthetics--in short, 'with this end, to teach and delight' (Barkan, 327).

The aim of the 'speaking picture', as Sidney puts it, is purely cognitive, by which poetry might turn out as the perfect means of cognition. And the 'speaking picture' then aims at achieving a unity of aesthetic impulses, which is nothing but a unity of the tools of cognition. It is not surprising that Sidney's defense of poetry focuses on the image as a totality which responds to the ear, eye, and mind because his Elizabethan culture was so much concerned with the visual arts and an intensively pictorial poetry, notwithstanding the theater which might be the 'speaking picture' Sidney defines.

In a much recent view, Roland Barthes has defined ekphrasis as: "a brilliant detachable morsel [of description], sufficient unto itself" achieved through "the pleasure of verbal portraiture" (*L'Effet du Reel*, 88). Once again ekphrasis is seen as a way of comprehending reality and grasping truth through the medium of words that are capable of rendering the qualities of painting, sculpture, and live-images along with all related sensations such as smell and touch, and emotional and intellectual states, into the verbal image, which is far more advanced than Sidney's 'speaking picture', as it renders more qualities and attitudes than just speech. Ekphrasis presents itself as an intellectually successful method of investigating and incorporating realities and truths, a method that is 'brilliant', 'detachable', and

'sufficient unto itself', a method that encompasses all that human sense needs of any object it is to analyze scientifically. Such is a quality of ekphrastic literature which is usually denied for the sake of a more favored intellectual science.

The contest between the humanities and the sciences over political power and supremacy is accountable for the marginalization of literary pictorialism's cognitive capabilities. In fact, ekphrasis is opposed to laboratory science. Angela Cozea has highlighted the contest between the humanities and sciences and asserted that the humanities are not less scientific, as in the case of "speculative arts, such as literature and philosophy", and this shared scientific thread has opened the way for the nineteenth-century interdisciplinary studies, a major aspect of which Cozea considers -- and places under focus -- an example of translation between discursive types of humanistic disciplines and "non-discursive forms of representation such as the pictorial, photographic, or architectural arts" (Cozea, 209-10). Cozea focuses on the fictionalized accounts of such relation (translation) in Proust's novel *Remembrance of Things Past* and theorized accounts of it in Walter Benjamin and others. Benjamin differentiates between 'reading' and 'copying' a text, emphasizing what he calls "the power of the road", as he distinguishes the "one who is walking along it [the road] from when one is flying over it by airplane," which he brings as an analogy for the difference between reading a text and copying it: "the power of a text is different when it is read from when it is copied out" (Benjamin, 50). Benjamin argues that

the airplane passenger's knowledge of the road is lacking compared to that of the one who walks it; the airplane passenger can only see from above how the road moves through the landscape, while the one who walks it on foot "learns of the power it commands... Only the copied text thus commands the soul of him *who is copied with it*, whereas the mere reader never discovers the new aspects of his inner self that are opened by the text" (Italics mine, Benjamin, 50). It is interesting that Benjamin alludes to the walker's ability to (re-)live the experience ('who is copied with it'). But it seems that Benjamin does not differentiate between different types of reading/readers, for not all readers are like his airplane passenger. Or, may be 'copying' for him is a distinctive type of reading which involves a sense of re-writing the text; that is, reliving what it writes. Cozea recognizes how Benjamin here distinguishes two aspects of perspective, 'optical' and 'temporal', the latter, for Benjamin, "commands the subject's thinking process" (Cozea, 213). Important here is that in pictorial scripts the temporal is significant for the mental comprehension of described space; thus 'time' is essential in grasping 'space', the two should not be sundered, and the more time is stretched, the better the understanding of the space it is taken to analyze and internalize. Stretched-time reinforces the observer's (writer's/reader's) ability to analyze the contemplated object and bring it from its external position into the mind's laboratory. Hence in the understanding of space the passage of time is essential, and this significance of the temporal aspect is clearer in photography.

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There is a difference between the photograph's memory and the memory of the mind, for regarding the so-called photograph/photographer's 'emotional detachment' (Cozea, 210) there is none of the genuine emotions and thoughts associated with the mentally recalled image or scene that is now photographed. Benjamin's thoughts on photography in his "Small History of Photography", an essay in his *One-Way Street*, hence:

No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an irresistible urge to search such picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the Here and Now, with which reality has so to speak seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future subsists so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it. For it is another nature that speaks to the camera than to the eye: other in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious... It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis." (Benjamin, 243).

Indeed, such a difference also pertains to 'seeing with the naked eye', an act at the heart of scientific inquiry, which means differentiating between actual seeing – sensing in the larger sense—and photography, and between different

types of photography and photography-like activities, such as pictorial writing. Photography lacks the contingency and temporality needed for scientific (cognitive) inquiry. Skillful literary pictorialism is (more) identical to actual seeing and hence to scientific investigation than photography. As Cozea puts it, "the fascination of the medium, as Benjamin emphasizes, lies not in its 'artistic' dimension but rather in its power to present us with an image that speaks of the passage of time" (Cozea, 222). In other words, the photographer provides technically one 'visible' moment of many other invisible moments (concerning sensations, thoughts, ideas he/she felt and thought then) the rememberer recalls and re-senses retrospectively and simultaneously.

Benjamin further underlines the difference between photography (and perhaps painting) and verbal pictorialism:

there remains something that goes beyond testimony to the photographer's art, something that cannot be silenced, that fills you with an unruly desire to know what her name was, the woman who was alive there, who even now is still real and will never consent to be wholly absorbed in art (Benjamin, 242-3).

The matter becomes that of the ability of pictorial art to enable the beholder to relive the past, that which Proust highlighted in his fiction while talking about the difference between the figure of the grandmother and her picture:

For this photograph was like a supplementary encounter added to all those that I had already had with Madame de Guermantes; better still a *prolonged* encounter, as if, by a sudden stride forward in our relation, she had allowed me for the first time to gaze my leisure at the rounded cheek, that arched neck, that tapering eyebrow (veiled for me hitherto by the swiftness of her passage, the bewilderment of my impressions, the imperfection of my memory); and the contemplation of them, as well as the bare throat and arms of a woman... (*Remembrance*, 2, 77).

Such is not unlike the scientific method of investigation, enabled through the opportunity to have more time to see, re-see, sense and re-sense, as slowly as needed, to contemplate, and to process the impressions, observations, and thoughts in the analyzing mind. This in fact is the heart of analytical fictional pictorial literature, of the type that goes beyond mere physical description of space -- merely like mechanical photography -- to mental, emotional, and analytical descriptions of the place along with the time and experience associated with that space. It is when fictional (literary) pictorialism aims at making the described a present experience which, rather than narrated, is disclosed to the reader to experience it anew and at first hand. Hence in the fiction *Remembrance*, Proust is concerned with a "method of interpreting the art of making presents" (*Remembrance*, 1, 43).

Studying the "ekphrastic moment" in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy's major work in which an artist is

engaged in the creative process, Amy Mandelker claims that "In the ekphrastic moment, the stalling of the narrative flow required for ekphrastic exposition is re-narrativized in the course of temporally unfolded descriptions of the visually discrete work of art...[an] artistic encoding of meaning" (Mandelker, 2-3). Mandelker then argues that "poetry constitutes thinking in images... the contemplation of images facilitates the primary cognitive processes... Such 'framed' and 'frozen' moments reflect the degree to which art informs and forms our vision" (Mandelker, 3). Thus ekphrasis necessitates that time be stretched out because ekphrasis is a way of grasping and essencing information into a linguistically constructed image. It is similar to a scientist taking an element of nature to the laboratory to have more time to discern, dissect, and analyze it. As Mary Ann Caws puts it, literary pictorialism "makes a statement of coherence against the narrative flux and against the flux of our own time, so that our reading of frames and the framed passages... is the model of not just reading, but of what, while reading, we live" (Caws, 30; see also Smith, 463). Once again the question of truth and reality comes to the fore. Temporality is an essential dimension of cognition whereby the pictorialized is not only seen but also lived and, therefore, that which is pictorialized is not just narrated or described but rather presented for the recipient to experience it as a reality he/she is to examine and grasp individually as a truth of their own existence. Rather than an imitation for the sake of leisure, the pictorial work of fiction (and poetry) turns out to be a real-life segment of the recipient's life, one in

which he/she should immerse themselves before they can reach a judgment. Rather than reading about or being told or told, the recipient takes the main role in judging the segment of life disclosed in the pictorial work of literature. Consequently, the distance between the reader and the disclosed experience vanishes and the reader becomes the character or persona. Hence, an advanced level of cognition is established with essential guidelines in the texture of the ekphrastic literary text. The message such a literary piece proposes would then have a better chance of interaction with the reader and the vocation of the artist, of any sort, would be given further conditions to facilitate its successful reception. Such is the influence of a literary text that technically provides the reader with the chance to have a cognitive interaction with its content.

It is agreed that the identification of literary descriptions of space with pictorial arts has been going on since Homer—in his description of the shield of Achilles in the *Illiad*--, the idea being that for an image or description to be called 'pictorial', it (image/description) should be capable of translation into painting or some other visual art, whereby the poet becomes a painter, and each one's art resembles the other's. (Hagstum, xxi-xxii, 162; Mitchell 1980, 541-2; Shapiro, 97). Jean Hagstum, however, relates ekphrasis to what he calls "iconic poetry", which represents an act of "giving voice and language to the otherwise mute art object" (Hagstum, 18). Peter Wagner associates ekphrasis with a form of mimesis the aim of which is "to give voice to the allegedly silent image" (Wagner, 13). Linking time and space, Murray Krieger has identified the goal of ekphrasis as "to make

that [pictorialized] object in its spatial simultaneity a true emblem of itself" (Krieger, 267).

On the other hand, one finds opponents to this idea, such as Lessing who stated that:

There are paintable and unpaintable facts, and the writer of history can narrate the most painterly in as unpainterly a fashion as the painter can represent the most unpainterly in a painterly fashion... A poetic painting is not necessarily something that can be transformed into a material painting (9: 91-2).

This is to the advantage of poetry over painting, for the latter is static and the earlier is dynamic, and while poetry can express meta-painting sensations and thoughts while maintaining its painterly manner, the capabilities of painting stand short before such sensations and thoughts. Claudia Lacour investigated the art of pictorialism in Lessing's *Laocoon*, in which Lessing's view of poetry is modeled on painting, and which "seeks to defend the identity of the arts by questioning the equation of verb and image which, seeming to bestow riches, threatens to usurp the very ground of reception" (Lacour, 234).

However, Lacour fell in the trap of misunderstanding Lessing's distinction between painting and pictorial poetry for she joins those who argued "the limits of Lessing's own understanding of painting" (Lacour, 247). E. Allen McCormick also argued that "Lessing's opposition to descriptive nature poetry, based on his

conviction that the dynamic is essentially opposed to the pictorial, has tended to obscure the underlying unity of painting and poetry" (McCormick, 196). As Lessing, criticizing Caylus's painting of Helen, says: "Caylus did not consider that the poet works in a double genre of beings and actions; visible and invisible. Painting cannot declare this difference; in it everything is visible and visible in the same way" (14: 363). In fact, it is not just a matter of rendering scenes, but rather a scientifically analytical picturing of them. And this is not a simple, mechanical, detached memory or recall, but rather an intuitive re-cognition and reliving of the remembered, painted, picturized, and pictorialized past in the poetry; 'to usurp the very ground of reception'. And pictorial poetry is far away from the constraining static nature of painting, for poetry is necessarily dynamic. Mario Praz associates *ut picture poesis* with the so-called "aesthetic memory", arguing that the sisterly relationship between the arts is restricted to a shared period the temporal aspects of which they together register in distinctive pictorial forms (Praz, 54; 57-8). Praz thinks of literary pictorialism in terms of illustration within a fixed period of time, a restrictive way of thinking that hinders the understanding of the cognitive essence of ekphrasis. Illustration pertains to very particular cases while ekphrasis and pictorialism are more comprehensive and inclusive, since the matter is not of particular works representing each others but of the whole concept of

representing reality, which reminds of Sidney's assertion that poets represent nature, recreate nature anew or, even, create a new nature.³ But Praz rightly asserts the value of memory in pictorial writing, uniting time and space, whereby the static is turned dynamic.

St. Augustine's remarks on memory seem relevant here; he thinks of memory as a dualistic activity where one part of the mind recalls the past and the other listens, watches and reacts; for him, memory is:

like a great field or a spacious palace, a storehouse for *countless images* of all kinds which are conveyed to it by *the senses*... When I use my memory, I ask it to produce whatever it is that I wish to remember ... These [irrelevant memories] I brush aside from *the picture which memory presents to me*, allowing my mind to pick what it

³. Willard Bohn studied an emerging tradition early in the twentieth century towards the production of poem-painting and painting-poem, the lines of the poem written in a certain painterly manner that spreads, distributes, organizes, and scatters the words, phrases, and lines in certain visual designs; and paintings containing letters, words, phrases, and sentences (Bohn). Nonetheless, one may also think of the pre-Raphaelite movement which adopted the idea that poetry illustrates painting and painting illustrates poetry. (Hilton). In addition, Jean J. Smoot studied mutual relationships between painting and poetry and examined that 'mutual illumination' by comparing Euripides' *Hippolytus* with a vase-painting on the same subject and inspired by Euripides' work, emphasizing the illustrative nature of painting to poetry and vice versa. (Smoot; see also Walzel)

chooses, until finally that which I wish to *see*
stands out clearly and emerges into sight from its
hiding place... (Augustine, 214)

Recall is performed in the manner of live-picture and remembrance is brought within a focused act of visualizing. In other words, memory is objectified within highly visual organs of remembrance, an act that is rooted into a psychologically bound vision of the respected organs of remembrance. Thus pictorialism becomes a strategy to visualize recalled fragments of memory and turn them into live-action. The physically *imaging* of elements of memory requires greater skill in art (mainly painting and sculpture). However, this requires a different artistic skill, that which involves the ability to paint and sculpt, using the tools of writing, basically words, to essence the visual in the written; to turn the *scriptural* into *sculptural*, before adding to it the remaining qualities of live-action, and hence overcome the stationary nature of painting and sculpture, literary pictorialism being a far more advanced technique in that regard. The need to collectively re-see is part of the larger need to re-sense the remembered past, to relive it again. The 'stationary' nature of painting and sculpture hinders such collective re-sensing and it falls short of recovering the past in the form of live-action. It can only help recalling static images of the remembered past while the need is, more than to determine the shapes and visual dimensions of the past, to bring the remembered in a way that it can also be re-tasted, re-touched, re-smelled, re-

seen and re-heard, whereby the past becomes like a television colorful picture that moves and speaks and, even more, smells and can be touched. Therefore, the eyes, ears, hands, nose, and tongue are altogether activated in the case of skilful pictorial writing as much as in that of reading the ekphrastic text. It turns out that describing discourse in visual terms, developing the earlier into cognitive scenes, is an analytical way of rendering history/memory.

Nonetheless, in responding to Lessing, McCormick relies on Lessing's English contemporary, Edmund Burke, who argued that "verbal description evokes the effect of objects rather than sensuous images of them," and proceeds "to examine nature descriptions and landscape as inventions of the mind and hence amenable to psychological explication" (McCormick, 196). But it is significant that pictorialized memories are psychologically telling.⁴ A recaller prefers to relive the (desirable) recalled again rather than have photographed glimpses of it. Once again, pictorialism is associated with memory in a psychological relation to the pictorialized past. In fact Lessing's *Laokoon* underlines the essential superiority of poetry over painting (and sculpture), asserting that word-painting is more evocative of life-like

⁴ Its worth mentioning here that Freud drew analogy between dreams and pictures in that both are desyntacticalized, arguing that neither narrative paintings nor dreams have an easy time with 'if,' 'then,' 'because,' and so forth; and hence dreams are devoid of the exact temporal context (Freud, *Standard Edition*, 4:312-14).

effects except for the lacking nature of poetry's verbal description of bodies:

Bodies with their visible properties are the true subjects of painting and actions the true subjects of poetry. Since bodies exist in time as well as in space, painting can also imitate actions and poetry can depict bodies. But only by suggestion: painting by using the most suggestive moment of an action, and poetry by using one single property of a body (Lessing, 78).

Lessing assigns time to the poet and space to the painter:

That which the eye takes in a single glance [the poet] counts to us with perceptible slowness, and it often happens that when we arrive at the end of his description we have already forgotten the first features. And yet we are supposed to form a notion of the whole from these features (Lessing, 86).

Are these 'perceptible slowness' and 'a whole' not but the collective stimulation of the reader's vision (all senses) to live the action, and the place's and the body's involvement in the action, a reliving of the experience as a whole, so to speak? In fact McCormick found out the answer for Lessing's opposition to the pictorial in literature earlier in Lessing's career which he later abandoned; Lessing's enmity, like Horace's, as McCormick points, was not against verbal description in itself but rather against the poet's wandering away from his/her topic into description passages; in Horace's terms, "when a versifier hasn't anything better to do he paints a grove with meadows, streams, etc." (McCormick, 197).

Motivated by studying Matthew Arnold's poetic landscapes, Alan Roper dictated: "All poets of landscape must face the problem of uniting natural description with human significance if they wish to write something more than country contentments in verse... there are as largely variations in the naturalism of the description as there are in humanity of the significance" (Roper, 9). And this is exactly what Burke stood against, "merely as *naked* descriptions" which "convey so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described" when Burke is emphatic on the artist and poet to "display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker... than to present a clear idea of things themselves" (italics mine, Burke, 177; 180). Here is the essence of skilful literary pictorialism: the (emotional, psychological, and intellectual) effects of the objects on the mind (and psyche). The essential answer to McCormick's helpless attempt to gather critical and philosophical opposition to poetry's pictorial capability, reading others for his own favor, is that he is never free from his paralyzing motto announced so emphatically in his paper as 'truth': "poetry is nonpictorial philological representation. This along with its pronouncedly temporal aspect would seem to render it far less suitable for some kinds of description" (McCormick, 200). He is contradictory hence when he later notes the difference between enjoying landscape in nature and enjoying landscape descriptions in art, "how description becomes a landscape, that is, a *spatio-temporal* structure" with effective psychological impact on the reader (italics mine, McCormick, 201-2). Literary pictorialism unites both time and space, action, figure, and scene, and such unity

generates a field of (re-)experience enabled by a stretched time to sense, analyze, and grasp, with more than just the psychological (enjoyable) memory effect of which McCormick speaks.

In his discussion of the relation between memory, pictorial writing, and photography, Anselm Haverkamp states that picture-taking is a “memory-storing activity” and asserts the need to distinguish that from “mental images”, a distinction he roots into a better understanding of memory:

the metaphor of ‘images’ as mentally stored visual representations – the metaphors of actual pictures carried around in our heads – appear to be most truly illustrated by photographic pictures carried around in our pockets... At the same time the happy photographic sublation of memory in pictures reveals a destructive, negative dialectic more than it embodies the hoped-for synthesizing effects. The reason for this, I suggest, is a deeply seated misconception of what we call memory, a forgetting so to speak, of its mnemotechnical and trooping structure (Haverkamp, 258-9).⁵

Haverkamp relies on Roland Barthes to show that the “photographic picture” is “the non-metaphoric opposite of pictorial imagination” and he employs Barthes’s ideas of the phenomenology of the (dead) picture as an allegory

⁵ See also accounts of memory in Renaissance terms of ‘imagination’ and mediaeval conception of ‘learning’ in Yates, Jean-Philippe, and Carruthers.

of the tomb, whereby the memory inherent in the pictures becomes, rather than memory, an act of mourning, that which Barthes calls "flat death" (Haverkamp, 259).⁶ In fact this idea of the distortion of the positive nature of memory through photography shows that through mental memory, that which does not rely on photographic pictures, the rememberer relives the past again, the past being turned into present. While the photograph generates nostalgia for a lost past and asserts its loss, the mental literary pictorial image enables the person to relive that which his/her mind recalls. (Skillful) pictorial writing is more of the mental image rather than the photographic one. It is a painting in words, but different from static and visible painting and also from photography in that it provides the targets of all senses, emotions, and the mind.

The photograph, according to Barthes, creates a paradoxical reality: "it establishes not a consciousness of the *being-there* of the thing (which any copy could provoke) but an awareness of its *having-been-there*"; in other words

an illogical conjunction between the *here-now* and the *there-then*... the real unreality is that of the *here-now*... its reality that of *having-been-there*... the always stupefying evidence of *this is how it*

⁶. Haverkamp exhaustively discusses Barthes's theory of memory in the light of St. Augustine's, and in the context of the effect of the death of Barthes's and Augustine's mothers on their writing in that regard.

was, giving us, by a precious miracle, a reality from which we are sheltered. (*Image*, 44).

Haverkamp's comment that the photograph generates "a 'truly unprecedented' consciousness" – saddening/tragic realization of the loss of the photographed-- , serves but to add to the unreal aspect of the photograph, that which Barthes calls 'miracle' (Haverkamp, 261). Thus, (the remembered) space can never be freed from its temporal aspect. Such is that which Barthes considers 'contingency', investigated in *Camera Lucida* (4), as pertaining to a difference between the *operator* and *spectator* of the photograph, the emotionally detached, mechanical, and technical taking of the picture as opposed to the emotional attachment of the spectator seeing it, or even, seeing the actual scene photographed.⁷ The opposition between the *here-now* and *there-then* brings together life and death, or even the dead as living, a paradox related to an essential linkage between time and space. In the words of Barthes, it "is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the *noeme* (that has been), its pure representation", "Whether or not the subject (of a photographic picture) is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe" (*Camera*, 96). In the words of Haverkamp: "What photography is taking pictures of, in short, is Time itself" and taking pictures is a

⁷. Haverkamp so wittily relates Barthes's distinction between *operator* and *spectator* to Barthes's idea of 'the death of the author' relating the photograph to a counter idea of "the return of the dead", the death being of the object in the photograph, which is left to an unspecified interpretations of the spectator. (Haverkamp, 263; *Camera*, 9)

mummification of corpses which "consequently entails the notion that painting and sculpture were invented 'to keep up appearances in the face the reality of death'" (Haverkamp, 264-5; Bazin, 9; Burgin, 84). Once again one finds mental images, characteristic of literary pictorialism, superior to photography, for the latter keeps appearances, while the earlier invokes essences, in an almost science-like manner.⁸ While it is a return of/to the dead, the photograph is an evidence of its/his/her/their death. Photographs are intentional, automatic, and conscious memory mechanisms, unlike other pictorial representations and unlike the nature of the response they receive by spectators of the photograph, of the (original) spectators of the actual scene and/or figure photographed, a difference at the essence of Augustine's theory of memory which, as discussed earlier, assigns utmost significance to live-action.

Thus, Barthes insists that "[T]he Photograph does not call up the past" (*Camera*, 82), and there arises, therefore, a need for another type of recalling pictures of the past, of both its appearance and essence, which is to be found in literary pictorialism, that which not only provides scriptural account of the scene as a picture, but also a collective stimulus of the objects of all the senses

⁸. Haverkamp then discusses how Barthes relates a sense of trauma and hysteria to the history embedded in photography; in the words of Barthes: "hysterical: the photographic picture is constituted only if,, we look at -- and in order to look at, we must be (and consequently are) excluded from it" (Haverkamp, 265; *Camera*, 65)

together. If there is a difference between seeing a citation of a (dead) person, and hearing it on a taper recorder (photographic and phonographic) there is also a great deal of difference between a photograph and a pictorial piece of literature.⁹ The writer (poet) uses words to paint features and scenes, make music, and produce sounds, smell, touch, taste and, even, execute related intuitive activities. It is for the readers to reverse the words of the writer back to their original sensations before their translations into words. It is the skill of both the writer and the reader upon which this storage of memory relies and it is in the writer's ability to render into his painterly, sculptural, scriptural, malodorous, and phonographic work of words the appearances and essences of what he writes about, that a scientific approach lies, an approach that overpowers the language of science which is nothing but intellectual and referential, producing (in the case of literary pictorialism) a language that is simultaneously intellectual, emotional, intuitive, and cognitive. Literary language is stimulative of the reader's senses and once the reader leaves him/herself to the words of the literary text, then he/she will relive the written. In pictorial writing, there is a desire for a coherent presentation of the experienced place and time, a desire to frame (a portion of) life in a manner that is capable of providing an

⁹. Bettine Menke, quoted in Haverkamp, argues that quotation marks, just like the frame of a picture, generate the after-life of the quoted. (Haverkamp, 275)

opportunity to relive comprehensively that which is pictorialized. For the aim of ekphrasis and pictorialism is not to describe that which is described into a lifeless photograph, but rather to endow that description with an ever-present and live nature. In addition, the pictorial poet/writer employs his aesthetic organization of the world into symbolizing landscapes to enhance his rational, intuitive, and cognitive approach to external and internal reality.¹⁰

Marianne Shapiro has discussed poetry's relation to the visual arts and related that to a recurring theme in verse: "transformation of seemingly resistant material into expressive verbal form celebrates the power of words to

¹⁰. Commenting on spatial disorientation in poetry, Kathleen Dolan discusses how poets attempt to create/disclose in their poetry spaces for the mind, locations of transparency through which to see the visible and invisible, fulfilling a moment of revelation and speculation. Dolan highlights the need of the poet's mind for such a disclosed space in order to "disclose itself for itself... contexts for solitary contemplative activity" (Dolan, 245). Dolan's concept of pictorial space in poetry is totally different from that with which this paper is concerned. However, Dolan's idea that pictorial space is a domain for the poet to think within, a domain created by the poet for that purpose, is significant in revealing how space is a field of thinking, pictorialism being a way of thinking and a revelation of thought, an investigation and analysis which, no matter how far prophetic, remains scientific, and which might be called a landscape of and for the mind. In fact, pictorial literature teaches through a distinctively skilful manner by exposing the recipient to that which is taught to experience it first hand.

encompass any other art" (Shapiro, 97). Relating ekphrasis to the "synthesizing power of physical vision", Shapiro asserts that ekphrasis "encapsulate[s] the epistemologically ambivalent situation in poetry as a didactic source and a repository of information"; hence pictorialism is a learning/teaching method, a scientific domain and by "the time the picture is described the reader has been given the information necessary" (Shapiro, 97; 103). Arguing that "in Augustine's terms Memory meditates the experience of art", Shapiro highlights a tripartite construction of Augustine's memory: 'sensory appeal', 'Intellect', and 'Will': "Intellect[,] is represented by the reported inner workings of the... mind upon the sensory formation and re-emphasized by the poet's meditation on faulty human vision" and "Will: this crowning phase parallels the more openly Aristotelian active intellect to carry the achievement of learning beyond the text" (Shapiro, 99). This triad is underlined by a scientific, cognitive activity, for the passage from sense to intellect (thought) to will, is based on an internalization of information through the senses, an analysis of data through the intellect, and a will's response based on reasoning. Pictorialism enables the observer (rather than just a spectator) to internalize the sensory aspects of the image and expose them to intellectual (and emotional) investigation, an act of projecting "an image into 'inner' matter"; therefore, "ekphrases offer signs for interpretation" (Shapiro, 104; 113). Therefore, ekphrasis unites both perception and

conception on the part of both writer and reader.¹¹

Consequently, literary pictorialism is a way of thinking and re-thinking, of questioning and re-questioning, of seeing the visible and invisible and this cognition-bound mechanism is connected to the past in a multi-faceted manner, to understand it, overcome it, preserve it, and relive it. It's a matter of scientifically examining objects and exposing them to different environments. Literary pictorialism -- verbal paintings -- is not just a translation of visual elements, but rather of all related visible and invisible, sensual, cognitive, emotional, and intellectual aspects of the pictorialized. Therefore, readers should, more than just retranslate, comprehend these verbal paintings into a united spatial, temporal, psychological, emotional, and intellectual manner.

In fact, the reader's response is essential.

Discussing Lessing's *Laocoon*, Joseph Frank argues that "modern aesthetic theory has evolved not from a set of fixed categories imposed on the work of art but from a relation between the work and *the conditions of human perception*. Aesthetic form and perceiving mind mutually implicate one another" (italics mine,

¹¹. Willard Bohn argues that "[P]erception and conception, image and metaphor tend to merge into one indivisible whole" (Bohn, 247). And Annette Colodny attests that: "metaphor (and image-making, in general) may be our way of *exploring, again and again*, the potent and potential center of our archetypal structures, putting ourselves in touch with their changing contents or even changing those contents at will" (Italics mine, Colodny, 160).

Smitten, 17; Frank 1991, 5ff.). Frank is associated with the term 'spatial form' but it is agreed that his term ('spatial form') lacks precise critical tools (Frank; Smitten, 15; Mickelson, 63). Perhaps that is what later development of the concept and method needed, and managed, to provide. David Mickelson argues that one problem that rose from that lack of precision is that the term has been mistakenly related to literary pictorialism, and notions of poetic space, when it should only be used to describe narrative technique (Mickelson, 63-4; Rabkin, 99). Nonetheless, the matter may rest on a distinction between space in narrative and narrative space; that is, narrative pictorial depiction of space and the space of narrative episodes. And in both cases one significant aspect is the temporal space, for the limits of both narrative space and space in narrative rely on the role of time; more (leading and stretched or suppressed, in the sense of hindered movement; slowed down) time enables elucidated space of both types while less (panoramic) time renders laconic spaces.¹² In this case, spatial form is essentially related to literary pictorialism, to painting, sculpture, and architecture.¹³ What is more important,

¹² Eric Rabkin's discussion of spatial form in connection with plot underlined the essential relation between time and space, the temporal and the spatial, the diachronic and synchronic. Ivo Vidan also provides an elucidated discussion of the relation of Frank's concept 'spatial form' to Lessing's polarization between spatial and temporal types of art.

¹³ Joseph Kestner has discussed the overlapping between the notion of spatial form and what he called spatial arts – painting, sculpture and architecture.

though, is that a space treated with stretched time is a scientifically cognitive activity. Stretched time becomes an obedient servant of space, the more stretched the more obedient. Space is contingent upon time. As Jerome Klinkowitz asserts: "fiction does not abandon time as an organizing element, and time has been the mainstay of narrative art" (Klinkowitz, 47). The case is so even when, it is claimed, modern and postmodern literature gave themselves more to space than to time.¹⁴

¹⁴ Edward Soja underlines what he considers modern "continuous transformation of time into space" and opens his discussion of *Thirdspace* with an interesting comment on the relation between space and knowledge, borrowed from Michel Serres's comment on Jule Verne's *The Extraordinary Voyages in Hermes*:

Space makes an inventory of the adventures of knowledge, omitting nothing; knowledge traces a cartography of known lands, omitting nothing. The minute filling in of terrestrial reaches and the exhaustive account of cycles of knowledge are one and the same operation and permit *The Extraordinary Voyages* to establish the difficult relationship between the spatial and geographic model and the model of knowledge as encyclopedia... To read and to journey are one and the same act (in Soja, 26).

In simple terms, *Thirdspace* conceives *being* as consisting of a tripartite dimensional state, called also 'thinking trialectically': 'spatiality', 'historicality', and 'sociality' (Soja, 70-1). *Firstspace* is that which puts the artist against the scientist; *secondspace* is that which reacts against the excessive objectivity of firstspace, but rather than being set against it [firstspace], creates a blurred boundary between the two (Soja, 78). Though thinking in political, geographical, and philosophical terms, Soja's conception of the multiple

Nonetheless, Gaston Bachelard, turning from a philosopher of science, interested mainly in physics, a career which made most of his life and profession – writing volumes of books on that matter, such as *The Experience of Space in Contemporary Physics* –, into a philosopher of aesthetics and poetics, has produced, in his *The Poetics of Space*, one of the most influential, transcendental, intellectual, and philosophic exploration of the notion of aesthetic and poetic space. Focusing mainly on domestic space, he moves from the geometrical dimensions of the house to the psychological complexity it generates within the human psyche, and thinks of and accounts for the mystical experience of remembering and recalling past experiences of such space. He builds up his evidence from a wide range of domains such as poetry, folktales, and psychology. Most distinctive of the book is Bachelard's mastery of a highly poetic language within which his enlightening and inspiring ideas and visions are incorporated, interring immediately the soul, every statement presenting itself as an everlasting, wise, and universal quotable comment. John R. Stiloge, in his forward to the 1994 edition, asserts that the book makes

a titanic importance of setting in so much art from painting to poetry to fiction to autobiography... Bachelard reveals time after time that setting is more than scene in works of art, that it is often the

nature of the cognitive essence of being, which entails the need for a united and holistic experience and his conception of the analogy between geography and knowledge are significant for highlighting the distinction of literary pictorialism, whereby pictorial space becomes a domain for cognition.

armature around which the work revolves... and offers readers a new angle of vision that reshapes any understanding of great paintings and novels (Stiloge, x).

Bachelard's main concern, Etienne Gilson argues, is to do pioneering work in the field of "images of matter" (Gilson, xiii). One major question for Bachelard is "how can an image, at times very unusual, appear to be a concentration of the entire psyche? And in answering this question, he attests: "the reader of poems is asked to consider an image not as an object and even less as the substitute for an object, but to seize its specific reality" (Bachelard, xviii, xix). Bachelard argues that there are two cognition poles, the soul and the mind, when "In my opinion, the soul and the mind are indispensable for studying the phenomena of the poetic image from the original state of reverie to that of execution (Bachelard, xxi). Bachelard's perception is based on a distinctive understanding of (poetic) language, an understanding he shares with Van den Berg. Insisting that "A great verse can have a great influence on the soul of language", and adopting den Berg's words, Bachelard attests "that things 'speak' to us and that, as a result of this fact, if we give this language its full value, we have a contact with things" (Bachelard, xxvii-xxviii). Language becomes the domain where the reader can relive the pictorialized experience. "Even in an art like painting", Bachelard notes, one has "to relive it [experience] entirely" since, using the words of Jean Lescure, "An artist does not create the way he lives, he lives the way he creates." (Bachelard, xxxii-xxxiii).

In fact, the reader should not create the work of literature, but rather (re-)live or recreate it again. And regarding the space in the work, the reader needs to relive in that space, reliving in the sense of going into it to re-sense all that can be sensed, collectively, in 'a concentration of entire psyche'. The reader's medium is language, with its painterly, sculptural, architectural, audible, redolent, intuitive, emotional, and intellectual propensities. For the writer who creates the pictorial language, space constitutes "a localization of [our] memories" and "contains compressed time"; and hence for readers "space is everything, for time ceases to quicken memory. Memory... does not record concrete duration" (Bachelard, 8, 9). In other words, pictorial writing is an (a parallel) act of memory and its reception should be executed with *uncompressed* time, to fathom all that is *essenced* (in)to the verbal painting, along with the emotive dimensions of the words. Space is to be read; Bachelard "pointed out that it was reasonable to say we 'read a house,' or 'read a room,' since both room and house are psychological diagrams that guide writers and poets in their analysis of intimacy", when the essence of what Bachelard himself does in *The Poetics of Space* is reading "*Slowly* several houses and rooms 'written' by great writers (italics mine, Bachelard, 38). Bachelard's idea of 'images of matter', in fact, reminds of Walter Benjamin's theory of 'thing language'.

Benjamin's theory of "thing language", or "natural language" might provide an answer for those who are doubtful about the cognitive aspect of literary pictorialism. Benjamin argues that "All expression, in so

far as it is a communication of mental meaning, is to be classed as language. This mental being communicates itself as in language and not through language. Language is the mental being of things" and "the word is simply the essence of things" (Benjamin, 108' 112; 117). In other words, by naming things into (painterly, sculptural, emotional and intellectual) words, the writer/poet communicates his/her thoughts about the essence of the things they name:

There is the language of sculpture, of painting, of poetry. Just as the language of poetry is partly, if not solely, founded on the name language of man, it is very conceivable that the language of sculpture is founded on certain kinds of thing language, that in them we find a translation of the language of things into an infinitely higher language, which may still be of the same sphere. We are concerned here with nameless, nonacoustic languages, *languages issuing from matter; here we should recall the material community of things in their communication* (italics mine, Benjamin, 122).

That is to say, the cognitive is essenced into the pictorial and which thus implies the mental domains of the uniquely disparate imaginative vision of the ekphrast, delineated into a disclosed descriptive piece of (temporally determined) space, producing a landscape off/for the mind; the heart of the ekphrastic moment. Benjamin's emphasis on 'recall' is central as it underlines that 'time', the temporal aspect, is significant for mentally comprehending described space. As outlined earlier,

stretched-time reinforces the observer's ability to analyze the contemplated object and brings it from its external position into the mind's laboratory, a process enabled through the opportunity to have more time to see, re-see, sense and re-sense, to contemplate, and to process the impressions, observations, and thoughts in the analyzing mind, as slowly as needed.

The language that *issues from matter* is represented in the picture that, more than being just a painting to be seen, is to be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched; that is, felt and sensed collectively, emotionally, and cognitively altogether. The ekphrast is not to be seen as one who writes — or writes about— nature and man. Rather, he is one through whom nature and man write and communicate themselves. In other words, skillful literary pictorialism is identical to actual scientific investigation. The ekphrast becomes a mental observer of things, rendering his observation into a language that 'stems from matter', becoming hence a thinker in and into words; and the reader should redo the process by 'recalling the material (in addition to sensual, emotional, and intellectual) aspects' of the things communicated in that language. By so doing, both the ekphrast and the reader will have performed a cognitive investigation of that which is pictorialized.

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