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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/14820>

ISSN: 1991-9336

Publisher

European Association for American Studies

Electronic reference

Gabriele Rippl, « Liliane Louvel, *The Pictorial Third: An Essay into Intermedial Criticism*, edited and translated by Angeliki Tseti », *European journal of American studies* [Online], Reviews 2019-3, Online since 23 October 2019, connection on 31 October 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/14820>

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- 1 Liliane Louvel, *The Pictorial Third: An Essay into Intermedial Criticism*, edited and translated by Angeliki Tseti.
- 2 New York and London: Routledge, 2018. Pp. 227. ISBN: 978-1138599017
- 3 Gabriele Rippl
- 4 Liliane Louvel is one of the most renowned specialists of word-image interrelationships. Her numerous book-length studies and articles include *L'œil du texte. Texte et image dans la littérature de langue anglaise* (1998), *The Picture of Dorian Gray. Le double miroir de l'art* (2000), *Texte/Image. Images à lire, textes à voir* (2002), *Poetics of the Iconotext* (2011), translated by Laurence Petit, edited by Karen Jacobs, and *Le Tiers pictural. Pour une critique intermédiaire* (2010). In her long-awaited *The Pictorial Third. An Essay into Intermedial Criticism* (Routledge 2018), edited and translated by Angeliki Tseti, Louvel builds on and further develops her previous research results. Louvel's entire oeuvre has had a decisive theoretical and conceptual influence on the development of what is now called intermediality studies. Grown out of the comparative arts and intersemiotic studies in the 1990s, intermediality studies has become one of the most bustling research fields in the humanities. As happens so often, research published in French is not properly studied by English- and German-speaking scholars, while the latter's work has the same fate in francophone research circles. With Tseti's important translation of Louvel's most recent book into English, researchers will now be able to catch up on the latest word/image research in French.
- 5 In her extremely thought-provoking study, Louvel's study opens a wide theoretical, methodological and analytical field that takes her readers through numerous historical, cultural and geographical contexts. This enlightening and encompassing study of the complex and wide-ranging relationships between literary texts and various forms of images--painting, photography, drawings, cinematic images and 'ekphrasis'--

from different cultural and historical contexts is subdivided into five chapters which are framed by a preface by Julie Leblanc (University of Toronto) and an introduction and closing remarks by Louvel; it ends with an impressive research bibliography and an index. Demonstrating how well-versed she is, not only in literary studies (in particular Anglo-American literature) but also in semiotics, narratology, art history, film studies, theories of perception and phenomenology, psychoanalysis as well as several traditions of textual analysis, the author's 'intermedial criticism' offers her readers a stunningly broad panorama of readings of the 'energetic collaboration' between literary texts and their entanglement with images.

- 6 The starting point of Louvel's "Introduction" (1-3) is a first sketch of the field: by pointing out the basic different conceptualizations of the word-image relationship as either agonistic or irenic, Louvel introduces her own agenda, namely to avoid any domination and imperialism of language and to understand the relationship between literary text and image as a dialectic one, as a "transaction operating in the economy of the visible-in-the text" (1): "I will offer a critical method resting on close text analysis, so as to investigate to what extent the pictorial as a tool enables us to analyze the literary text (whereas until now it was the linguistic tool that has been widely applied to the visible)," which will then lead to "a poetics of the pictorial" (2) and a pragmatics of the image/visible-in-text (3). Louvel aims at proposing a supple critical approach that proves useful to literary analysis. With its focus on the reading process, the approach leads to the emergence of a concept, she calls "the pictorial third," that gives the body and the affects back their full role (2).
- 7 Chapter 1, "Language and Image" (4-54), is an extended theory chapter, which offers a dialectical, cooperative model of word/image relationships which goes far beyond the *paragone*, i.e. the antagonistic conceptualization of the relationship with its long history of the visual being dominated by the verbal. Louvel acknowledges the "heterogeneity of the two media or artistic forms" (35) and underlines the impossibility of reducing an image to a text and vice versa. The slash she uses to write "word/image" acts as "the visible manifestation of both the possibility of a unit and its impossibility" (12). The necessary oscillation between the two is paralleled by the position of the "spectator/reader, neither one nor the other but both at the same time" (13). It is the fruitful oscillation between text and image, image and text, the 'intermedial transposition' that interests Louvel. She replaces the term 'intersemiotic' by 'intermedial' because the latter "insists on the medium, on its materiality as art" (39) and helps to propose her 'intermedial poetics'. Louvel offers an absolutely stunning walk through a plethora of theoretical positions from Leonardo, Descartes, Kant to more contemporary scholars such as Ernest B. Gilman, Nelson Goodman, Michel Foucault, Mario Praz, Mary Ann Caws, Philippe Hamon, W. J. T. Mitchell, David Freedberg, Aron Kibédi Varga, Wendy Steiner, Roland Barthes, Mieke Bal, Gilles Deleuze, Georges Didi-Huberman, Claus Clüver, J. Hillis Miller, Jean-Luc Nancy, Tamar Yacobi, Giorgio Agamben, and many others. Among the numerous writers Louvel draws on are E. A. Poe, Herman Melville, William Blake, Emily Brontë, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Claude Simon, Gabriel Josipovici, A. S. Byatt, Jeanette Winterson, Jonathan Coe, Rosamond Lehmann, W. G. Sebald, Tracy Chevalier, Deborah Moggach, Mark Z. Danielewski, Paul Durcan, Siri Hustvedt, Salman Rushdie, and others novelists, short story writers and poets.

- 8 After offering an excellent review of past and present conceptualizations of word and image interrelations, Chapter 2, “*L’ut Pictura Poesis, Daverro*” (55-80), discusses the theoretical reversals necessary to delineate what Louvel calls ‘intermedial criticism,’ which takes the image as a point of departure and allows for an assessment of a text’s literariness under a different mode—such is Louvel’s working hypothesis. The functions of the pictorial, i.e. the effects of the image, “are part of a reading experience that relies on modulations of pleasure” (55), an exciting reading process that is understood as an event that changes the course of things. Since literature and literary criticism have often borrowed from pictorial theory and practice, it is only logical that the pictorial poetics and intermedial criticism Louvel has in mind should take its cue from foundational writings such as Horace’s formula *ut pictura poesis*, poetry like painting. Louvel suggests reversing critical habits and applying the theory of the pictorial to poetry/text, so as to analyze the literary text differently. This would take the image in the text seriously, not just as a decorative element but rather as a necessary one, and help to theorize the hybridity, the in-betweenness of and dynamic intermedial exchange processes between the arts. Louvel’s convincing theoretical elaborations are interspersed with literary examples that illustrate what a pictorial po(i)etics and intermedial criticism, i.e. a close study of the role of the image-in-text, would imply and where its potential lies. Louvel recommends applying theories of painting to literary texts saturated by images; hence, notions such as perspective and *trompe-l’oeil*, but also genres and *topoi* that play a central role in art history, as well as pictorial techniques (framing effects, colors, composition, light, etc.) and form should all be the basis of close readings of visual literary texts. Such an approach would help to elaborate the specificities of image/text dynamics (73-75), to grade the descriptions (that bring to the fore the image/the visual quality) according to the nuances of the pictorial (see Louvel’s *Iconotext*), and to place them on a scale regulated by the degree of pictorial concentration: from ‘painting effect’ to ‘picturesque view’ to ‘tableau vivant,’ and from ‘pictorial description’ to ‘*ekphrasis*’ (75).
- 9 Chapter 3, “Poetics of the Pictorial (I): Towards Picturo-Criticism: In the Painter-Poet’s Studio: Borrowing from Art History” (81-113), offers in-depth negotiations of how art history and literary criticism can be brought into dialogue with each other. From the perspective of art history, Louvel demonstrates her immense knowledge and explores a range of intermedial styles, genres, and pictorial saturation in connection with writers such as Herman Melville, Emily Brontë and Gabriel Josipovici. While Chapter 3 establishes Louvel as an extremely erudite and talented theoretician of intermediality and text/image configurations, Chapter 4, “Poetics of the Pictorial (II): In the Painter-Poet’s Studio: Questions of Form” (114-163), reinforces this impression by examining questions of form such as framing effects, perspective, anamorphosis and *trompe-l’oeil*, as well as questions of *dispositif* (apparatus) at great length. Again, the richness of Louvel’s knowledge of art history and picture theory is stupendous and the plethora of visual and literary examples she discusses truly amazing, offering numerous insights into the functions of framing equally from a historical and a more contemporary point of view. This chapter ends with a table that brings together and summarizes some applications of the intermedial critical typology: it situates the function of an image-in-text at the junction between the level of appearance of the reference and the type of borrowing, and between the microtextual and the macrotextual level. It also makes a theoretical plead, namely that literary scholars return to the descriptive as a central “critical category, as a ‘critical’ moment of the literary text [...]. The descriptive may be

a means of renewing criticism and exploring theory from another angle, that of intermedial criticism” (156 and 157).

- 10 Chapter 5, “The Pictorial Third When the Body (Re)turns” (164-205), explores text/image reception which is characterized by an activation of the senses. Pictorial allusions, iconotexts, and intermedial transpositions such as ekphrasis trigger effects of double seeing and double understanding during the reading process. Louvel argues that the image, once integrated in the literary text, creates a disruption, “an event which is necessarily double, received between reading and seeing, in the sense of a dynamics, phenomenon, or movement, it produces a ‘third’ term” (164). At the center of Louvel’s interest is the term ‘pictorial allusion’ which refers to the “practice and hermeneutics of evoking painting so as to speak of the text, by taking a detour through the text’s other” (165-166). An important function of pictorial allusion, no matter whether recognized or not, is that it brings about a defamiliarization, but it also traces “a mnemonic presence, [...] an already crossed territory, put in memory,” hence signaling a presence in an absence and performing “an excentric (centrifugal) movement” (174). With references to different theoreticians of phenomenology (e.g. Merleau-Ponty and Sartre), Louvel defines text/image as an “in-between event” that produces double perception: double seeing and double reading. One reads the text while at the same time one chooses to see the image—an event that is characterized by “its intensity, its *energeia*” (177) and turns the reader into an affected, stimulated and active one (185). The performative dynamics of the pictorial third, i.e. its energy, brings about “perturbation, a surplus of meaning and affect” (188). Louvel ends her chapter on the pictorial third with a broad palette of literary examples which demonstrate how productive Louvel’s analysis of the reading/seeing experience and her elaborations on a text/image poetics are.
- 11 Finally, in the “Closing Remarks” (207-208), Louvel returns to her central claim of “the inextricability of the relation between the two arts” which she sees as less competitive and less hierarchical, but instead as “a plane of immanence, a horizontal, rhizomatic structure that dismisses the imprinted separation of domineering, imperialist, or even gendered conjectures. The text/image relation is not a mortal combat but an energetic, fruitful collaboration that culminates into the pictorial third; text and image are, thus, interdependent, connected in a dialectic, fruitful oscillation” (207). This “synaesthesia, [...] this in-between movement, the desire of one for the other” is what Louvel terms “the pictorial third” (208).
- 12 Louvel’s erudite book, presented in Angeliki Tseti’s reader-friendly English translation, is an essential contribution to ekphrasis research, intermedial criticism and intermediality studies, adding much-needed analyses to existing investigations into word/image constellations. The fact that Louvel develops her own hypotheses and new critical takes against the backdrop of a rich theoretical landscape explains why her study encompasses so much information on (past and recent) word/image scholarship, historical and contemporary intermedial material, a plethora of very informative footnotes and an extended research bibliography which serves as an ideal source of information for beginners as well as specialists working in the field of intermedial studies. As Julie Leblanc in the “Preface” (vii-xiii) succinctly summarizes, in *The Pictorial Third*, Liliane Louvel displays “an original, leading-edge theoretical and critical perspective on word/image interactions” (xii); the study is “daring and innovative” and

“an attestation to [Louvel’s] talent as a theorist and literary critic and to her impressive knowledge of art history” (xiii).

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