LANDSCAPE: THE PROBLEM of REPRESENTATION

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One of the aims of the present article is to concentrate on the notion of *pictorial representation* and different traditions of its interpretation. Defining pictorial representation requires that the notion should be associated with other similar or related ways of representation – depiction, description and expression, but also that representation as such should be specified in the given context.

One of the most suitable examples for illustrating interrelations between representation, depiction and description and their connections with reality should be landscape. A landscape is a visual phenomenon, which excellently represents the primary means of expression inherent to pictorial arts. On the other hand, a landscape is one of the most typical objects of verbal description, being therefore well-suited for the examination of verbal expression of a visual phenomenon. Finally, we might expect that a landscape is, at least to some extent, related with reality, and we may talk about the indicatory relationship, although such relationship could be only too intermediated and generalised.

The landscape

At present, *landscape* is primarily one of the fundamental notions of modern geography. It is rather impossible to give a singular and exhaustive definition of the notion here, and this is not the aim of this presentation. Geographical landscape as a regional unit and a geographical system can be characterised by certain natural uniformity, harmonious and organic unity, and distinction from other parts of the earth's surface.

The original meaning of the word landscape – 'a picture representing an area of countryside' (see OED) – is still in use, and a number of metaphorical derivatives (soulscape, industrial landscape, cityscape, literary landscape, etc.) have been added to it. Partly, landscape is similar to several other art terms, which were widely applied in literary studies especially in the first half of the 20th cen-

tury, such as *a portrait, to outline, to draw, to sketch*, etc. Quite often *landscape* and *portrait* become the metonymies of the image.

If we agree with such an alteration of historical meanings, we can outline two processes:

1. Withdrawal from the original meaning, 'a picture representing an area of countryside,' or more specifically, the broadening and further development of one of its aspects – harmonious unity. Thus, we could say that the focus of the meaning was just as if shifted from the image, from representamen in the Peircean sense to the object.

2. At the same time, the function of the border becomes more important – one natural landscape is differentiated from the others by its natural borders, it differs from other landscapes. A question arises immediately of whether the border can be related with the frame of the landscape, or with the choice of the motif and the horizon, and perspective?

In spite of differences in the above-mentioned meanings, the different usages are still united by **landscape as a cognitive category**, being on the one hand related to the information received via sensory perception, and on the other hand, to certain conventions. This is not only an external, objectively existing object, but a phenomenon, which can be defined by some certain agreement (e.g. predefined types of landscapes), and where intentional categorisation and abstraction occur.

Subject → Landscape A [category] → Object [nature/environment]
Subject → Landscape B [image]   → Object [nature/environment]

Consequently, in both of its meanings, landscape requires a kind of a mediatory stage, which can be an image (real), or classification and typification (conscious).

The opposition culture-landscape cannot be applied to modern geography; similarly, it is not valid in art as well. Landscape cannot be placed wholly onto the side of nature in the opposition of culture-nature. A painted landscape is rather a cultural act than a natural act. Landscape can be treated as a mediator between man and his environment. Landscape represents nature that has been influenced and shaped by the human mind. Landscape is a way of seeing nature.

Landscape painting

From the Eurocentric point of view, landscape painting has almost always occupied a rather marginal position in art history. On the one hand, landscape has not been an independent object of depiction in European art; in most cases it has been a background for something else or preliminary studies and sketches for something else; in the academic hierarchy it has been a less prestigious genre. Landscape as an independent genre rises in the works of single authors and some schools (e.g. in 17th-century Dutch painting, and especially, in the great ideas of Romanticism in the 19th century). On the other hand, although mute, landscape has always been there. Only brief glances of it and some singular motifs from nature can be seen in the art of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. But starting from the Renaissance, landscape becomes one of the most exploited backgrounds for Biblical plots and themes from classical mythology. However, such background landscapes have most obviously been shaped by human activities and the human mind (ideal landscape).

The scene of European paintings is mostly laid in the open air, one of the reasons for this certainly being the pastoral Arcadian spirit. The most prominent reviver of the theme in literature was Jacopo Sannazzaro with his pastoral *Arcadia* (1504, an anonymous edition in 1502), but his works had already been preceded by Francesco Petrarca's lyrical motifs of nature and his 12 eclogues of *Bucolica carmen* (after 1356). This phenomenon embodies the unified spirituality of literature and art, their interrelated development and mutually elevating tendencies.

The depiction of landscape loses its importance after Impressionism and Postimpressionism in the 20th century, and at least in the avant-gardist trends the genre has become marginal again. Landscape can more often be seen in the works of Expressionism and Abstract Expressionism.

Against such a background, the striking focus on landscape in Estonian painting has an unexpected effect, it can be interpreted as a deviation, or a subconscious wish to treat something less important and not so high, but also as something characteristic and typical to Estonia. We can outline five more important stages of painting (see also Vaga 1941):

– At the beginning of the 20th century, moderate Impressionism influenced by Latvian painting prevailed, seconded by Konrad Mägi's powerful landscapes.

– The landscape of the peak of the Pallas school in the 1930s.

– The realistic landscape of the 1950s as a refuge and escape from the Stalinist ideology of art.

– The innovative landscape of the 1960s, again partly a refuge and an easier way to the innovation of form in both painting and graphic art.

– The continuous broadening and metaphorisation of the notion of landscape, beginning from the 1970s – cityscapes, symbolic landscapes, Land Art; the identification of landscape through territory (Saaremaa Biennal'97 *Invasion*, an exhibition of four artists "Endless Landscape. Four Solutions" 1997).

Several aspects can be pointed out as possible reasons why Estonian painting has been centred upon landscape:

– The pre-WW II Estonian culture was predominantly a peasants' culture. Many of the artists connected with the Pallas school still had their roots in the country; landscape painting and country thematics were probably more familiar to them.

– The beginning of Estonian art and its foreign contacts were mostly related with Impressionism and Postimpressionism – the period most favourable to landscape in the European art tradition.

– The already mentioned self-withdrawal and lack of belief of the artists in their talent in other genres.

– The later, post-war focusing on landscape can be considered as the continuation of the earlier trends, but it already had a clear counter-ideological or escapist attitude: "…wrong and harmful views can still be found regarding landscape, where the depiction of nature is conceived as a quiet and peaceful genre of fine arts, which makes no great demands on the artist and does not require ideological content of the work [---] Because of bourgeois and nationalist influence, the depiction of landscape, using corpse-like colours, is still passive and pessimistic in the majority of the works displayed at the present reporting exhibition." (Makarenko 1952).

– The wave of landscape paintings of the 1990s is metaphorical, being based on the art trends prevalent in other countries of the world – such as location-

specific art, Land Art, maps, photos and territories – and thus the "artistic landscape" is again blended into the geographic notion of the landscape.

However, the present article does not aim at giving an overview of the development of the genre of landscape painting in Estonia. For further discussion, it is important to know that even in pictorial art, which is a more immediate means of presenting the visual experience, landscape is often complemented with human beings, with events and plots. Naturally, landscape is an ideological genre as well; its ideology can be expressed either by turning away from the reigning ideology or by turning to the ideal landscape – by the way of presenting the landscape (negative and positive ideology) (see also Mitchell 2000).

Representation

We have already seen that the geographic use of the notion of landscape requires a kind of mediation. In this collection, Hannes Palang more thoroughly discusses the possible pictorial or merely visual character of landscape in the geographical sense. In case of the landscape painting and description, the role of a more or less materialised mediator is unavoidable.

This brings forth the notion of representation and one of the most essential discussions in post-WW II semiotics and the philosophy of art.

Heavily depending on the Western European tradition of painting, art theory has mostly focused attention on a work of art as a depiction, as mimesis, and only recent decades have seen a withdrawal from these ideas. In the semiotics of art, the same notions are based on Peircean tradition, which relates a pictorial work of art to an iconic sign. Generally, the researchers are sure that the landscape painting is a depiction of something.

The definitions of representation are rather similar to those of a sign or semiosis[1], embodying both that which signifies, and the relationship between signifier and signified. Although the meanings of these notions do not wholly coincide, and the usage of the term 'representation' is often more extended[2], we

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[1] E.g. "representation – That which stands for, refers to or denotes something or the relation between a thing and that which stands for or denotes it." – *Dictionary of Philosophy of Mind*. Ed. Chris Eliasmith, *sub* representation. –
http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~philos/MindDict/representation.html.

[2] Winfred Nöth (Nöth 1990: 94–54), has attempted to systematise differences between representation and reference.

could declare that the processes, which form the basis of both of these notions, are analogous – to stand for something to some extent and for some purpose, to refer to it and to replace it functionally.

In the given context we are mostly interested in pictorial representation, the possible definition of which has been coined by Crispin Sartwell as: "The relation of depiction to what it is a depiction of, in virtue of which it is depiction of that item" (Sartwell 1992: 364).

In this case an additional question arises about the relationship between the close notions of *depiction* and *description*. The exact interrelation of representation and other close notions is still not the main point – it is clear that different authors attribute different meanings to these notions, depending on the narrower perspective of their speciality and on the wider perspective of the trends of different schools. The main point is a question of principle, which is to some extent common to the philosophy of language, semiotics and linguistics – how conclusive and how essential to the discussion of representation is its referent that exists in reality?

The English-language art theory and the philosophy of art conceives pictorial representation commonly (but not exhaustively) as the depiction of something recognisable. Consequently, abstractionism would be excluded from representational art. Still, an opportunity can be found of widening the meaning of the notion, treating the expression of ideas, feelings and fantasies as representation as well.

The main problems of pictorial representation are:
1. Whether the existence of a real referent is conclusive or secondary (i.e., can representation be possible in the form of representing something, which lacks a counterpart in reality, which requires the broadening of the notion to fit the function of the art, expressing and/or creating a new object)?
2. Whether representation can be analysed on the basis of the relationships of similarity (mimesis, imitation), or is the role of convention more important?
3. The importance of distinguishing between *representation-expression* and *representation-description*.

These questions have probably been posted in the sharpest way in Nelson Goodman's book, *Languages of Art*, where he has aimed at the narrowing and

clarifying of the notion of representation (Goodman 1976). This, in its turn, requires the above-mentioned distinguishing.

Conventionalist theories of pictorial representation have been remarkably popular in recent decades. This means that several characteristics of pictorial representation cannot convincingly be explained only by studying the natural relationships of similarity between the representation and the object of representation, but still something else – convention, the coding of the image – is required. The meaning of a picture is to a greater or lesser extent regulated by some convention, which is not singularly motivated by what can be seen on the surface of the picture. We need to study and know the rules of representation. Realism is relative and originates from the familiarity of certain codes.

Conditionally, contextualism and relativism can be listed as subtrends of conventionalism. Contextualism characterises those theories of pictorial representation which do not support the uniformly understandable convention, pictorial language or symbol system. This trend stresses the essential or even conclusive role of the context of the work in shaping the meaning (accompanying text, title, political conditions, montage, the preliminary knowledge and experience of the spectator, the period, the preceding, following and surrounding information). Quite often it is directed at revealing certain ideological influencing (e.g. Roland Barthes's *Rhétorique de l'image* – Barthes 1985). Without the awareness of the context, pictorial representation itself is not loquacious, exhaustive and uniformly understandable: its meaning changes along with the context.

Relativism could denote the conception, according to which the meaning of the picture depends, foremost, on the interpreter, the reader, and again, a uniform understanding is not possible. The meaning of the picture depends on the traditions of rendering meaning to it, and can be changed via these traditions.

Naturalism, or emphasising natural signification is the opposite of conventionalism – pictorial representation uses generally understandable and natural methods, which consciously, but more often intuitively use the rules of human perception. Similarity is a uniformly acceptable category:

P is the picture of some object O then and only then, when P resembles O.

Goodman was very successfully able to prove that *resemblance* is an abortive criterion. Resemblance cannot singularly form the basis of representation, since – all things resemble other things in some aspect;

– resemblance is a symmetrical and reflecting relationship; representation, at the same time, is not.

The problem of pictorial images, representing non-existing objects or objects, the existence of which is not firmly established, still persists. Goodman finds that in such cases we are dealing with *null denotation* (i.e. the representation just as if worked similarly to naming), in which case there is no representation – a picture could not simultaneously represent a unicorn and nothing at all. As a solution, Goodman offers differentiating – in such a case we have a *unicorn-picture*, meaning an object class, and not a *picture of a unicorn*. In the same way we should differentiate between a man-picture and a picture of a man. To represent a man, the picture has to refer to it, but the man-picture does not need to do it. Not all man-pictures represent men, and vice versa, not all pictures of men are man-pictures. (Goodman 1976: 20–23).

Still, it is obviously not important from the viewpoint of both the spectator and the picture, whether the represented object is or has existed in reality. It is easy to find numerous intermediate stages, which would show only the impossibility of representation: a picture with a mythological (and therefore non-existent) plot, depicting real, natural people; a unicorn, drawn after the artist's white horse; a real historical event that has occurred in the past, where some of the figures have been painted after real models, but others are the fantasy of the artist; the formal sculpture of Viktor Kingissepp, the head of which has been modeled after a man who resembled Kingissepp; a portrait of a man unknown to us, which actually represents an English duke; we could add to this list all Estonian works of art depicting Kalevipoeg and the Old Devil.

All these examples confirm the fact that this problem is non-existent from the perspective of a work of art – each work denotes something, very often it represents something, and the representation does not depend on the real existence of the represented object. This watershed divides the methods of representation, not the representation of real and fictional objects.

The representation of landscape has also been governed by quite strict rules in different times. Ideal landscape presented both a generalisation and an ideal. The artist did not represent only a single tree, but also the whole essence of trees, not only a single lake, but also the essence of all lakes, bound together by the canon of the given epoch.

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In literature there is no clear distinction between the description of nature and the description of a landscape. Based on the unavoidable conventionality of description, all landscapes described in written form should more resemble each other than an actual landscape. Consequently, the first question that arises when examining a landscape painting, a description of a landscape and a description of a landscape painting, is the question about the relationship between a direct experience and convention.

To explain the above we can point out the following relationships:
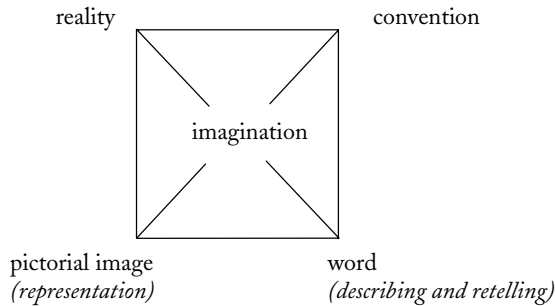
The four components are joined together by the conscious imagination in the role of a mediator, and a touching point where the tradition and direct experience, and the pictorial and verbal representation meet.

Verbal representation of landscape has in any case to be more concrete, excluding dim areas near the abstraction. We find a wide range of expressions of different nature here: from the minimalist common noun (tree, sky, field, sea) to detailed descriptions.

A literary landscape or a literary description of a landscape is not only a visual phenomenon, but mixes together data retrieved by other senses – particularly, all kinds of smells, and the perception through one's body (movement, touching, feelings of cold-warm-dry-wet). Sensual experiences create the feeling of physical presence. Naturally, there are the so-called picture-like descriptions, which are very often given through the frames – a view through a window or a door, from a balcony, on the ship deck or through a train window – the window creating a clear feeling of separateness and boundaries and taking the description nearer to a painting. Thus, one of the important criteria of the verbal description

is the distance from the environment and movement – either the state of existing in the natural environment or that of being a spectator. Such features could help to distinguish between the descriptions of a landscape and nature.

One of the best-known differentiations between the description and representation has been defined by Goodman; it is based on the discretion of the former and the density of the latter. Goodman's differentiation is still valid mostly on the level of the way of denotation, the elementary unit of a semiotic system. If we base upon the above hypothesis of the mediatory role of the conscious imagination, such a difference loses its importance. Even Goodman himself does not treat the description and depiction as functionally different – both of them denote the same content, but use different methods.

Ekphrasis. Representation of that which cannot be represented

Since the aim of the present discussion is to observe relationships between verbal and pictorial representation, the chief example to the discussion being landscape, we can state that one of the interesting intermediate forms between these two phenomena is the verbalisation of the landscape painting. If we are able to point out the characteristic features of the description of landscape, these characteristics should also be valid for other kinds of descriptions.

The verbalisation of landscape is already possible due to the fact that words can be found in language for different elements of landscape (tree, river, wood, lake, road, sky, sea); the landscape painting is in some way or another engaged in representing these elements. The representation of landscape requires even the smallest possible hint of inner discretion, meaning at least a few recognisable elements of landscape. Here I do not refer to abstract works, where only the title, hinting at landscape, aims at bringing some content to the work, but to such pictures, where we can recognise a landscape, which we could call a *landscape*. Such discreet elements can be distinguished in description or depiction, in time or space. We should be able to recognise at least the sky and the earth or some characteristic elements of nature in such a pictorial or verbal presentation. Depiction of a landscape allows for shadowy areas bordering on abstraction (for instance, the semantically more dominating image of a face does not allow such liberties). But when provided with a suggesting title, even a minimalist image, e.g. a framed straight line, could be related with an image of a landscape (Fig. 1).

Thus, the creation of a fictional image of landscape without any indication to a real one is actually very easy.
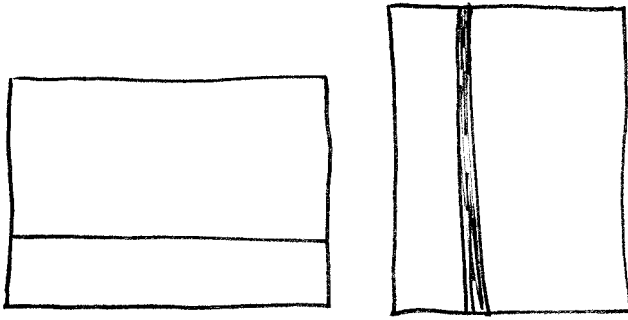

Figure 1. Horizontal line *versus* vertical line: a) the sea; b) the trunk of a pine.

Ekphrasis (Greek *ekphrasis*) is a notion that inevitably comes forth when talking about these matters. Why should we talk about the verbalisation and translation of a painting, while all this can be called ekphrasis? In recent decades, considerable attention has been paid the subject of ekphrasis, which has been directed towards the broadening of the meaning of the notion[3], while in earlier times it had remained rather marginal.

Ekphrasis is the description of a work of art or an imaginary scene derived from this work of art (Hollander 1995: 5), the verbal depiction of a visual depiction (Heffernan 1993: 3), "the concentration of action in a single moment of energy" (Steiner 1982: 41; Greek *energeia* 'brightness, vivacity'). Murray Krieger moves to the farthest, proceeding from ekphrasis as an illusionist representation of that which cannot be represented, and finally defining it as a principle. Ekphrasis expresses the secret desire and striving of the verbal arts for presenting the spatial and visible, for including them, similarly to poetical objects, into a temporal sequence, which has never been destined to be fulfilled. It moves from epigram (where the word is subjected to the object), via the minimal ekphrasis (where

[3] For instance, Murray Krieger (1992), James A.W. Heffernan (1993), W.J.T. Mitchell (1994: 151–182), John Hollander (1995); in Estonian – Boris Bernstein (1996). Against the background of ekphrase, the analogies between, for instance, music and art, have been neglected. Among the first examples we could naturally mention Modest Mussorgski's "Pictures from an Exhibition" (1874), inspired by the exhibition of Victor Hartmann's watercolours. The production of this work was organised by Vassili Kandinsky in Dessau in 1928. (One of the sketches for the production is "The Great Gate of Kiew," 1928, Indian ink, water colour. Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne.)

the word is seeking equality with the object) to emblem – the fulfilment of ekphratic principle, where the word itself becomes the object (Krieger 1992: 9–23).

The description of Achilles' shield in the 18th song of *The Iliad* (483–608) is considered as the canonical example of ekphrasis, all the others have been shaped after it. Achilles' shield as an ideal reflects the Classicist pure principle of the archetype of Classical culture, all that follows is only a commentary and an echo to it. Lessing's comparison of the descriptions of shields given in *The Iliad* and *Aeneid* (Book VIII) is the best example of such a view. Achilles' shield is the ultimate; Aeneas's shield is only its poor imitation.

Krieger thought that ekphrasis was at the same time captivating and disagreeable. Against the background of the struggle for independence caused by the self-preservation of all genres of art, it could well be so. The depiction of some other field reflects both the desire to be superior (I can do the same), and the acknowledgement of the superiority of that other field and its illustration. Illustration can, in fact, be observed as a reversed ekphrasis. Behind ekphrasis we can find the rivalry of different kinds of art – *paragone*.

Proceeding from the more specific definition of the notion, we can see that as a literary method, or even as an independent genre, ekphrasis is still a marginal phenomenon and it is not of much interest when considering literature as a whole. The main methods and trends of literature differ from it. But the reason why ekphrasis has recently held much attention is just its position on the borderline of two kinds of art. The synthesis and synchrony of arts are the topical questions of modern culture. The clear Lessingian distinction between art genres is relevant to classical genres, but it cannot be used discussing present-day art forms. Therefore, all possible explanations to the existing phenomena are under scrutiny.

Compared with the others, the treatment of ekphrasis by W.J.T. Mitchell is of great interest. On the one hand, Mitchell acknowledges the exceptionality of ekphrasis, the fact that it is clearly distinct from the epic text, and its tendency of reversing the traditional preferences of time and space and narrative and description characteristic to literature (Mitchell 1994: 179). He concedes that ekphrasis cannot be realised, concentrating it into three steps: ekphratic belief (the ability of rendering the visible, the wish to see), the fear that this is not possible, and finally, the disappointed indifference (the result is not what had been expected). On the other hand, Mitchell regards the unity of the creative human

mind as a leading principle of his ideas: "...from the semantic point of view, from the standpoint of referring, expressing intentions and producing effects in a viewer/listener, there is no essential difference between texts and images and thus no gap between the media to be overcome by any special ekphrastic strategies. Language can stand in for depiction and depiction can stand in for language because communicative, expressive acts, narration, argument, description, exposition and other so-called "speech acts" are not medium-specific, are not "proper" to some medium or other." (Mitchell 1994: 160.)

Mitchell grants a peculiar ambition to semiotics, postulating the state of being absolutely unmotivated as its main principle. This is a kind of semiotic indeterminism, a step further from Goodman, (who talks only about convention), but this idea cannot directly be based either on semiotics or Goodman, or even on real denotation systems. Denotation embodies unity; the content conditions the way of denotation and shapes the form. Mitchell admits differences between the content of description and narration (Mitchell 1994: 158), but forgets it instantly. The most logical way of shaping these different contents into signs would be via the most suitable expression for these contents. All kinds of denotation are inevitably the coexistence of the conditional and the conditioned, the motivated and the unmotivated. The lack of motivation of the Saussurean linguistic sign is limited – all languages are characterised by economy, by the tendency to denote important notions, objects and activities with shorter, more easily pronounceable words.

Picture and word do not constitute two essentially different ways of expression for Mitchell. This is confirmed by several intermediate forms, such as the language of profoundly deaf people, pictograms, hieroglyphs, texts related to illustrations and the works of canonical author William Blake, which create the impression of smooth transition from picture to word. There are forms, which at the same time resemble writing, letters and figures. However, a letter is a letter and a word is a word as long as we can find a meaning in them. Contrary to this, a pictogram and sign language are not pictorial images; they have a different aim, they have a deep verbal content. We can say that the visible and the utterable are not differentiated from each other, but the pictorial and the verbal expression, the written and uttered word are positioned on the different edges of the picture. In music, the word and the sound are separated from each other by

song, which can be compared with Mitchell's *imagetext*[4]. A song as poetry, and its monumental form – the opera as a play are often not so remarkable. Although such intermediate forms are at least as ancient as imagetext, we still cannot claim that the uttered word and music were a unity. Different ways of expression have pure forms and synthesised forms, but synthesis is and remains the association of two things, just as the metaphor is. Imagetext is also a synthesis of two forms of expression, inherently resembling the song, ekphrasis and illustration.

Mitchell does not understand "...why we have this urge to treat the medium as if it were the message, why we make the obvious, practical differences between these two media into metaphysical oppositions which seem to control our communicative acts, and which then have to be overcome with utopian fantasies like ekphrasis" (Mitchell 1994: 161). He thinks that ekphrasis is mostly based on the ideological false conception of the visual as the alien, drawing from it the necessary tension and food for thought for the theoreticians. At least in this case it is worth doubting that ideology could determine all – if there were no essential difference between the media, (or, to be more exact, between pictorial and verbal denotation), there would be no chasm that should be crossed with the help of utopian fantasies, or the crossing of which would at least not be *impossible* ekphratically. Thus, the chasm does not separate different expressions, but different ways of denotation, which link expression and content. One kind of expression better suits a certain content; another kind better suits another content.

Naturally, the description cannot replace the picture or present it in an exhaustive way. The ways of presenting ekphrasis are very interesting. Heffernan has found that one of the most used methods is narrative (Heffernan 1993: 9). Accordingly, facing the double representation, the readers and spectators will naturally start to narrate a story to solve this ambivalence. The narrative texture of ekphrasis seems to confirm the strong belief of many researchers of narration that essentially, the narrative is verbal.

If we confine ourselves to the narrower sense of ekphrasis (the representation of a work of art in literature), we need to solve a couple of vital problems, such as ekphrasis and representation and ekphrasis and mimesis.

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[4] Mitchell uses the notion of *imageword*, but the phenomena described by this word should rather be called imagetext (Mitchell 1994: 89).

The ekphratic principle of Krieger practically coincides with the verbal presentation of the visible, and the attempts of imitating it. Ekphrasis expresses the paradox of all kinds of presentation and representation – "the illusion of a natural sign" (Krieger 1992: 9–11). Although Heffernan extracts iconicity and pictorialism from ekphrasis, this is rather superficial – their aim is rather to represent natural and artificial objects than works of art (Heffernan 1993: 4). Hollander bases his work on Plato's idea that the painting recedes from the idea of the object via threefold mimesis (*The Republic* 596a–598d). Ekphrasis of a picture is seemingly even farther off, but on the other hand, it may get closer to its essence (Hollander 1995: 7). In this way, Hollander's ekphrasis is ultimately nothing more than mimesis.

There is no direct need to broaden the notion of ekphrasis. As soon as we do it, a number of phenomena, which could successfully be specified in other ways, such as mimesis, depiction, description, locate themselves under it. Essentially, ekphrasis is undoubtedly mimetic in the Platonic sense of the word as the illusion of representation. But as already seen in the description of Achilles' shield, ekphrasis is a special case of mimesis, a double representation, presenting simultaneously the object and its interpretation.

Ekphrasis can present the object using narrative, paying no attention to its objectiveness, just as it occurs in the description of Achilles' shield. Here we have the description of the shield, but we have no description, there is only a narrative, acting as a description. Sacrificing the visible, ekphrasis always adds something to the work of art – generally this complement is the narrative, or in the broader sense, the animation of the representation.

Ekphrasis can also be formally specified. A work of art is verbally described by art criticism and art history; we may want to include all such descriptions into the notion of ekphrasis. Still, we should remain true to genres. Ekphrasis is the point of contact between literature and art, where one is expressed by the other, and criticism and art history might well use the techniques of ekphrasis, but they do not represent ekphrasis.

The description of a work of art in art criticism and art history can be presented using methods similar to those of ekphrasis, but not only. Characteristically, four levels are intertwined here. The describer can:

– Identify with the object of description, being, so to say, inside the landscape, to describe the landscape as living nature. This can be compared to and is equal to the narrative in ekphrasis;

– "Name" the object from a distance ("the painting depicts woods and a lake");

– Describe the surface of the painting (i.e. the methods of painting, composition, paints, texture, techniques) – in this case the distance is even greater due to the "perspicacious and analysing eye" of the writer;

– And finally, present the relationship of the artist with his work, trying to identify with the author or observing the work from an external position.

In the first case the painting becomes an environment and loses its limited two-dimensionality; in the second and third cases the surface of the painting between the spectator and the depicted scene acquires importance. The fourth case is the most heterogeneous – sometimes the describer attempts to identify with the author and to enter into the depicted world with him, sometimes he tries to observe the author and his activities from the distant all-seeing viewpoint outside the time.

For centuries, pictorial art has been distinguished from other art genres by a strict boundary between the spectator and the work. The depicted landscape is only a small framed part of the field of vision. Even with the most illusionist representation and perspective there is no sense in asking how differently from the representation the eye experiences reality. Such a difference is unavoidable and inevitable. Consequently, we can compare the different ways of representation, not landscape and reality. Music and literature can surround us, they can fill the space until the listener or the reader dissolves in the work. A painting is a surface, it is like a skin, which remains between us and the depicted object and which can disappear only for a moment. Maybe this is the main problem of representing space – the most overwhelming impressions appear only then, when the resistance of the surface disappears. All authors are inspired by their belief in the omnipotence of their future works. For a painting this means a metamorphosis – the frames disappear and we are surrounded by the represented environment. The relationship between the work and the spectator is actually a battle, where the secret passion of the author is to engulf the spectator with his work. The stories of "falling in love" with the work and "going into the picture" stem from the same passion.

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