The Visual Experience of Image Metaphor: Cognitive Insights into Imagist Figures

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Abstract   In this essay I investigate how image metaphors—metaphors that link one concrete object to another, such as "her spread hand was a starfish"—promote visualization in the reader. Focusing on image metaphors in Imagist poetry, I assert that the two terms (e.g., the hand and the starfish) of many of these metaphors are similar in shape and that this "structural correspondence" encourages the reader to visualize those metaphors. Readers may spontaneously form a "visual template," a schematic middle ground that mediates between those similar shapes, in order to smoothly move between the two images within each metaphor. The structural correspondence and the mediating visual template allow readers to mentally shift back and forth between the two images, yet readers cannot fuse the two terms through visual imagery. Research supports these claims: reader reports have demonstrated that subjects understand image metaphors primarily through their physical features, and work on the visual interpretation of ambiguous figures suggests that though one cannot fuse images together, one may switch back and forth between multiple images of a figure, especially if the images share the same frame of reference. These findings indicate that readers may be particularly likely to understand image metaphor through visual imagery, especially when the terms of the metaphor correspond physically. This essay is drawn from a larger project on the "poetics of literary visualization"—a part-by-part investigation of the formal features of texts that elicit visual imagery. Such an account helps reveal the workings of the visual imagination and restore critical attention to this neglected aspect of the reading experience.

The Fall and Rise of the Visual Imagination in
Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

As several champions of the visual imagination have pointed out, the visual image was practically banished from several powerful twentieth-century academic movements in psychology and literary criticism.[1] At the beginning of the century, however, the visual image was accorded quite high status, figuring prominently in experiments and criticism. The imageless thought debate (i.e., can one think without a mental image?) that swirled in the wake of Wilhelm Wundt's 1879 imagery experiments at Leipzig spurred many psychological studies at the turn of the century (Roeckelein 2004: xii). In this environment, many literary critics (Downey 1912; Wheeler 1923; Valentine 1923) published accounts on the role of imagery in understanding literature.

Yet toward the middle of the century, dominant voices in both disciplines spurned the visual imagination and disparaged its cognitive value for readers and thinkers. In psychology, the dominance of behaviorism, which rejected introspection as a valid measure of thought and replaced it with a more objective verifiable study of behavior, effectively minimized interest in visual images between 1920 and 1960. John B. Watson (1913: 163) declared in 1913 that "the time has come when psychology must discard all reference to consciousness"; to him, images were insubstantial and untrustworthy. Watson (1928: 76–77) later derided images as pleasant fictions: "Touching, of course, but sheer bunk. We are merely dramatizing. The behaviorist finds no proof of imagery in all this." Allan Paivio (1971: 4) declares that "Watson's stand on imagery . . . effectively suppressed interest in the concept, particularly in America." Jon E. Roeckelein (2004: xii) notes that with behaviorism, "the study of mental imagery largely waned and lapsed into disfavor among experimental psychologists, and became a 'pariah' that was not much studied in 'respectable' departments of psychology." The behaviorist rejection of imagery did not totally eliminate imagery research but rather pushed much of it underground. Though a few brave thinkers dared to consider mental images explicitly, most others did so only after they had renamed the images and thus concealed their visual nature—consider E. C. Tolman's (1948) "cognitive maps" and C. E. Osgood's (1953) "representational mediation" (Paivio 1971: 6).

Similarly, in literary studies key critics and movements abandoned the visual imagination either through active rejection or sheer neglect. I. A.

1. For the account of imagery within psychology, see Roeckelein 2004: xi–xii; Paivio 1971: 4; Kosslyn et al. 2006: 5–6. For the case of literary criticism, see Esrock 1994: 1–6; Collins 1991: 30–46.

Richards, the legendary and prolific critic, helps reveal the shift away from the visual image. In his 1925 *Principles of Literary Criticism*, he made several reasonable points about images—for example, "images which are different in their sensory qualities may have the same effects" (Richards 1985 [1925]: 123)—and dryly noted that they have a "prominent place in the literature of criticism, to the neglect somewhat of other forms of imagery" (ibid.: 121). While not quite arguing here for the value of visual images, Richards at least acknowledged their prominence and sought to understand them. But by 1929 his view of images had darkened. In *Practical Criticism* he warned that "visualizers are exposed to a special danger" (Richards 2001 [1929]: 45)—namely, that of (foolishly) using their own visual images as a basis for literary evaluation. To Richards (ibid.: 15), images are idiosyncratic phenomena, associations that bear no logical relation to what the poet was imagining: "Images are erratic things; lively images aroused in one mind need have no similarity to the equally lively images stirred by the same line of poetry in another, and neither set need have anything to do with any images which may have existed in the poet's mind." In fact, he extends the separation between reader's image and poet's mind, broadly declaring that "images . . . are hardly ever a means which the poet uses" (ibid.: 132). Richards (ibid.: 124) quietly savages visual imagery, lodging it in his chapter "Irrelevant Associations and Stock Responses," and even associates visual imagery with the meretricious and false lure of advertising: "Colours and pictures, the appeal to the mind's eye, to the visualizer, are sources of attraction that able advertising agents have known and used for many years."

Other New Critics were even harsher (and closer to the behaviorists)[2] in their resistance to visual imagery. The New Critics focused on "the text itself" and urged readers not to mistake their own experiences in reading (what the text *does* to an individual reader) for hermeneutical assessments (what the text *is*). In this regard, a visual image inspired by a poem was a trivial by-product of the poem, not an inherent and important feature of it. W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's (1954: 21) "affective fallacy" categorized interest in the reader's felt experience of the poem (which of course includes visual imagery) as a logical error, "a confusion between the poem

2. Collins (1991: 45) suggests that the two movements have significant common ground "despite their mutual aversion." He itemizes their shared interests: "Both struggled for American academic ascendancy in their respective disciplines . . . when Freudian metapsychology was expanding its horizons. Both upheld the ideal of objectivity; both consigned imagery to the limbo of epiphenomena. Behaviorists built their system on the rubble of introspectionism; New Critics built theirs on the rubble of impressionism. Both engaged in objectively distanced explication of behavior: one, that of rats in a maze, the other, that of words on a page" (ibid.).

and its results." Further, they declared grave consequences for such confusion; Wimsatt and Beardsley (ibid.) found that the attempt "to derive the standard of criticism from the psychological effects of the poem . . . ends in impressionism and relativism. The outcome . . . is that the poem itself, as an object of specifically critical judgment, tends to disappear." René Wellek and Austin Warren (1956: 26) worked hard to insulate figurative language from mental images; they claimed that "imagery" refers only to the former, and as for the latter, "much great literature does not evoke sensuous images." William Empson (1962: 45) called imagery a "grand delusion," asserting that images have no cognitive function and contribute very little to understanding.

The literary rejection of images extended beyond the New Critics as well. Close on the heels of the behaviorist valorization of language, the "linguistic turn" in literary studies turned sharply away from the visual, encouraging theorists to focus on structures of linguistic signification within texts. Early structuralist critics looked to Saussurean linguistics as a model for their studies of textual signs; as Fredric Jameson (1972: vii) notes, the goal of structuralism was "to rethink everything through once again in terms of linguistics." Though later critics adapted structuralist insights for many different topics (e.g., cooking, clothing), structuralism began with Ferdinand Saussure's founding principle of linguistic difference;[3] literary critics applied various differential and relational concepts from linguistics (e.g., phonemic and morphemic levels, syntagmatic and paradigmatic networks) to texts in an attempt to codify how readers understand them.[4] Though their goal was important—to describe the "grammar" of literature that explains literary competence—their focus on meanings and forms most often excluded the visual imagination.[5]

Later poststructuralist critics challenged many of the assumptions in the structuralist paradigm, including the belief that language manifests stable,

3. As Norris (1991: 24) notes, "If there is a single theme which draws together the otherwise disparate field of 'structuralist' thought, it is the principle—first enounced by Saussure— that language is a *differential* network of meaning."

4. Culler's seminal study *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) deserves mention here. See chap. 1 (ibid.: 3–31) for a clear summary of the relational linguistic concepts at use in structuralism.

5. Culler reveals structuralism's central focus on meaning in a key statement. In his response to Paul Ricoeur (who claimed that structuralism ignores phenomenology), Culler's (1975: 27) language is telling: "The utterance itself, as a material object, offers no hold for analysis: one must be concerned with the speaker's judgments about its meaning and grammaticality if one is to reconstruct the system of rules which make it grammatically well formed and enable it to have a meaning." Culler attempts to prove structuralism's phenomenological basis through its interest in meaning alone—this attempt suggests, strangely, a poetics of hermeneutics, or a poetic for hermeneutics, rather than a poetics for the reader's full range of experiences with the text, including visual, affective, and interpretive.

transparent meanings and the latent bias for spoken language over written language; however, despite such challenges these critics maintained the notion that logical relations within language stand at the center of the textual universe. While Jacques Derrida (1977: 43), for one, critiqued the primacy of speech in Saussure's linguistic theories as "logocentric," he looked to written language as both the true power underlying logocentrism and the primary victim of its bias: "This logocentrism . . . has always placed in parenthesis, *suspended*, and suppressed for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and status of writing." In essence, Derrida put pressure on Saussure's linguistic paradigm by investigating the relationship between oral and written languages, not by looking beyond language. Further, in his project of "deconstructing" philosophical texts, Derrida set out to reveal (often by unpacking figures of speech) how language frames and skews meanings. As Christopher Norris (1991: 19) puts it, "Above all, deconstruction works to undo the idea . . . that reason can somehow dispense with language and arrive at a pure, self-authenticating truth or method." However laudable the project of deconstruction may have been, its methods and interests were rooted in the logic of language meanings; thus notions of the visual imagination had little place within its language-centered theoretical economy.

In the 1960s, however, the cognitive turn in psychology and the rise of reader-response theory in literary studies helped thaw the mental imagery freeze. Slowly, and then with increasing speed, psychology studies brought the visual image back into circulation.[6] As Roeckelein (2004: xii) notes, scientific interest in the topic of imagery made "a dramatic recovery with enormous increases from 1961 to the present."[7] Stephen Kosslyn, William Thompson, and Giorgio Ganis (2006: 5) note that this shift was sparked by changes in methodology: "Cognitive psychology offered a way to begin to assess properties of internal representations, which opened the door to studying mental imagery objectively." Alan Richardson (1969), Paivio (1971), and P. W. Sheehan (1972) were among the first psychologists to

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6. While some key thinkers within the cognitive turn did investigate visual imagery, the movement has been criticized for its emphasis on meaning and interpretation to the exclusion of other mental operations, such as affective and imagery responses. Meir Sternberg (2003: 355) has challenged cognitive science's limitations (and its corollary limitations for approaching texts) on these grounds: "'Cognitive study,' has, indeed, typically suited its object to the name, thus restricting its scope . . . to issues of comprehension or memory, exclusive of feeling or value judgment. Reading or 'processing' a text amounts to understanding it, 'mental representation' to organizing the text's meaning by and into a structure of 'knowledge.' So 'cognitive' might, or at times does, interchange with epistemic, semantic, conceptual, propositional, informational in the narrowest world-oriented sense."

7. For an account of this shift as it was just getting started, see Holt 1960.

closely investigate mental imagery after behaviorism. During this time, the modern imagery debate (the successor to the imageless thought debate of the late nineteenth century) began, and cognitive psychologists conducted experiments to discover the format of mental representations; some argued that the brain represents information through a propositional code (i.e., an abstract verbal code) alone, and others countered that the brain makes use of both propositional and depictive (i.e., visual image–based) formats.[8]

Paivio's "dual coding theory," which posits a nonverbal, mental image–based mode of mental representation alongside a verbal one as an explanation for the mnemonic superiority of concrete words over abstract words,[9] has attracted serious attention to mental imagery and visual imagery in particular. Though the "nonverbal" code accommodates mental imagery in general, Paivio's early methods and discussion privileged the visual mode within mental imagery. Indeed, in Paivio's (1971: 233) 1971 formulation the dual coding theory proposed the image and verbal codes after studying responses to "abstract words, concrete words, and pictures," a framework that helps reveal the theory's particular investment in visual imagery. Much of Paivio's (ibid.: 207) discussion reveals a slippage between broad term image and the more specific visual image: "Thus concrete words not only are read or heard but some of them also evoke referent images; familiar pictures are perceived (images are aroused)." Perhaps because a few thinkers challenged the preeminence of visual imagery within his nonverbal system (Kintsch 1977; Flanagan 1984), Paivio (1986, 1991, 2007) moderates this visual investment in later versions of the theory, carefully noting the many modalities within the image system. Nonetheless, visual imagery remains a key feature within Paivio's system.

One strain of literary studies was mirroring cognitive psychology's return to mental imagery in the late 1960s and 1970s. Reader-response critics moved attention from the textual artifact toward the reader, whose internal process of understanding the text, they argued, determined the text's

8. This debate between depictionalists and propositionalists (other names include pictorialists and descriptionalists, respectively) continues today and now includes neuroscientific data. See Kosslyn et al. 2006 for the depictionalist case and Pylyshyn 2004 for the propositionalist case; Tye 1991 has an older survey. This debate, while certainly interesting and related to our topic here, does not directly bear on literary visualization—I am interested in the text-induced *experience* of visualization, not the fundamental cognitive format of that visual imagery.
9. Concrete language can be defined in various ways. Paivio mentions at least two main definitions for the concrete: language that directly refers to sense experience and language that refers to particular objects. We will mainly use the second definition, which is more clearly linked with visual experience.

meaning. This mode of criticism directly opposed Wimsatt and Beardsley's position, set forth in "The Affective Fallacy" (1954 [1949]: 21–39), that the poem must not be confused with "its results." As Jane Tompkins (1980: ix) notes, "Reader-response critics would argue that a poem cannot be understood apart from its results"; further, to these critics "meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of a reader." This interest in textual effects in the reader helped turn attention back to the visual image. Rather than experiences to be scorned or disregarded, visual images were reconsidered as significant. Wolfgang Iser (1972: 287) values the creative powers of the reader's visual imagination enough to lament authorial *over*direction: "The author of the text may . . . exert plenty of influence on the reader's imagination . . . but no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the *whole* picture before his reader's eyes." Iser (ibid.: 288) in fact focuses so much on the importance of the reader's visual imagination that he feels it necessary to remind the reader that "the 'picturing' that is done by our imagination is only one of the activities through which we form the 'gestalt' of a literary text." George Poulet (1980 [1972]: 42) notes that "the book is no longer a material reality. It has become a series of words, of images, of ideas which in their turn begin to exist."[10] Stanley Fish focuses most on the reader's logical responses to the text's grammar, but he does attend to the visual imagination as well.[11] In "Literature in the Reader," Fish (1970: 135) trims Walter Pater's phrase "concurrence, renewed from moment to moment, of forces" to a sleeker "concurrence of forces" and declares that his version stimulates a more visual experience than Pater's original: "The one [Fish's redaction] allows and encourages the formation of a physical image which has a spatial reality; the mind imagines (pictures) separate and distinct forces converging . . . on a center where they form a new . . . force; the other determinedly prevents that image from forming." Reader-response critics attended to the reader's multiple modes of interpretation, ushering in new interest in the reader's visual images.

   More recently, several prominent literary studies of visual imagery have appeared, registering an even deeper interest in the reader's visual imagination. Ellen J. Esrock's 1994 study *The Reader's Eye* surveys the long-

10. While Poulet does not specify visual images, they are contained within the broader set of images; his notion that the text exists in his "innermost self" makes consciousness, with its visual imagery, the site of meaning.

11. The breadth of his method in "Literature in the Reader" ("an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time") suggests that Fish (1970: 126–27) will investigate a wide range of reader responses, including semantic, affective, and visual dimensions. However, Fish attends primarily to the ways grammatical patterns create particular semantic responses to the text.

standing critical rejection of visualization and then outlines the literary applications for psychological insights about imagery. Esrock examines the relevant empirical data from cognitive linguistics and notes that visualization exerts powerful, beneficial effects on readers, such as improved memory and comprehension. Elaine Scarry's 1999 work *Dreaming by the Book* is perhaps more literary in its focus than Esrock's work. Scarry analyzes the ways authors direct the visual imaginations of their readers; with examples ranging from Homer to Proust, Scarry catalogs the mechanisms of "directed seeing." She notes, for example, that authors often have readers superimpose hard-to-imagine visions on more easily imageable visions, such as a flying spear on its moving shadow (the weightless shadow is easier to "move" mentally); this direction helps readers visualize the scene more easily. Together *Dreaming by the Book* and *The Reader's Eye* suggest that after a long period of disavowal, literary critics are beginning to focus on the issue of visual imagery again.

While these works have been foundational in rekindling interest in visual imagery, there is much still to be done. Most important, the study of literary visualization needs to take up a closer examination of how visualization actually happens at the level of the word. Esrock examines a few attributes of "visual" language, but her project analyzes these attributes within texts quite briefly.[12] Scarry's work does not identify verbal features of texts[13] but rather focuses on higher-order authorial procedures, extrapolated mainly from novels; Scarry assumes that readers visualize and focuses on how authors direct imaging through conceptual techniques (such as the moving shadow) rather than through the specific grammatical and lexical choices that help constitute those techniques. In crude terms, Esrock examines some features of language but without texts, and Scarry examines texts without investigating the features of language. What would extend the visual imagery research is more work that examines features of language within texts.[14] This essay furthers this research by examining one feature or mechanism within a larger poetics of literary visualization.

12. Esrock's volume brilliantly examines both the critical resistance to visualization and the cognitive research on visualization, but her study is not based in literary texts. In her conclusion, Esrock brings in several textual examples, from Dante to Kafka to Marguerite Duras, to exemplify her claims about specific textual features in a literary analysis; she also investigates more abstractly the case of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. Overall, however, Esrock's work is a foundational account of visualization's place within literary criticism and a study of the consequences of visualization for readers, not an analysis of texts.

13. *Features* is a broad word, and I use it here to encompass a diverse array of language elements, including figurative language (e.g., metaphor), grammatical patterns (e.g., hypotaxis and parataxis), and types of diction (concrete versus abstract language).

14. Interesting work has been done on this score by Collins, whose *Poetics of the Mind's Eye* (1991) links cognitive psychology and a broad range of literary texts. This study sets forth

Critical Blindness to Imagism's Visual Poetics

My investigation focuses on Imagist poetry, primarily because the Imagists worked hard to create a particularly visual poetry and secondarily to keep the study focused. Imagism, the Anglo-American movement of early 1910s London, led in turn by T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, and Amy Lowell, rejected the abstraction, sententiousness, and plodding meter that reigned in turn-of-the-century poetry and lobbied instead for verbal economy, directness, and metrical fluidity. The Imagists produced four anthologies of work between 1914 and 1917. There are several good histories of the movement and its aims, so I will not give a detailed overview here.[15] It is important to note that *image* itself, the root word for the entire movement, is a vexed term for both critics and Imagists alike: its exact meaning is rarely clear or consistent among Imagists, and it is not obviously visual.[16] Despite this confusion about the image, in their many calls for literary revolution the Imagists presented a particularly visual poetics. Their theories of poetry, both in "official" propaganda pieces and in related philosophical tracts, are shot through with references to sight and visual imagery. Crucially, the

some provocative ideas about the ways language mediates visual imagery (e.g., prepositions may relate to saccades, or quick movements of the eye), but it spends far more time on higher-order cognitive phenomena (such as retrospection and introspection) than it does on specific textual features.

15. The most thorough account of Imagism's history is in Harmer 1975: 17–44; this exhaustive account corrects historical errors made by previous scholars, including Coffman (1951) and Pratt (1963). Less detailed but also strong is the version given in Jones 1972: 13–28; for a thumbnail sketch, see Gage 1981: 5–7.

16. Pound's (1913a: 200) famous definition in "A Few Don'ts"—"that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time"—is both confusing and nonvisual. Pound's other, later definitions in "Vorticism" are confusing negations that do not explain what an image *is*, much less address the visual charge within the word *image*: the image is "the word beyond formulated language" (Pound 1970b [1914]: 88); "the furthest possible remove from rhetoric" (ibid.: 83); and "not an idea" (ibid.: 92). Pound (ibid.: 91–92) also defined the image as "an equation" between objects named in poetry ("sea, cliffs, night") and poetic mood. Further, Pound (1973a [1915]: 374–75) notes that an image can be either "subjective," arising within the mind, or "objective," when "emotion seizing upon some external scene or action carries it in fact to the mind." We do not know if the subjective form is a visual image, and we do not know what form the external scene takes when emotion (somehow) has carried it to the mind. Harmer (1975: 163–65) notes that Pound's version of the image is more broadly psychological and less visual than Hulme's. Adding to the confusion is the question of number: Imagists used the word to refer to both the *single* phrase (or visual image) or, following Henri Bergson, the *combination* of two dissimilar phrases or images, a combination that would yield an intuitive leap toward understanding (see Gage 1981: 9–13). This slipperiness suggests that the tantalizing silence about the image in some early Imagist propaganda pieces (e.g., Flint's [1913: 199] gesture in "Imagisme" toward "a certain 'Doctrine of the Image,' which they had not committed to writing") may have been expedient as well as commercially savvy. Indeed, Flint asserted in 1940 that "we had a doctrine of the image, which none of us knew anything about" (quoted in Harmer 1975: 168).

Imagists take a strong interest in the reader's visual images; the Imagists were by turns focused on *making* their readers form visual images and certain that their readers form them as a matter of course.

Pound explicitly makes the reader's visual experience a central (and perhaps *the* central) feature of Imagism. For example, in "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," Pound (1913a: 205) claims that what can be visually imagined by readers will be the most durable aspect of a poem: "That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative eye of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue" (note that Pound both assumes that the imaginative "eye" exists and implicitly calls on poets to write for it). The following year, in his essay "Vorticism," Pound (1970b [1914]: 82) describes Imagism (vis-à-vis lyric poetry) as "another sort of poetry where painting or sculpture seems as if it were 'just coming over into speech.'" Pound makes the reader's visual imagination a key part of his poetics by 1918. Within Pound's (1968 [1929]: 25) tripartite account of poetry, next to *melopoeia*, the musical property of poetry, and *logopoeia*, the conceptual association of its words, is *phanopoeia*: the "casting of images on the visual imagination." Crucially, phanopoeia is related to Imagism—in his first adumbration of the three-part theory in 1918, Pound (1973b [1918]: 424) does not use the term *phanopoeia* but instead lists *imagism* in its place between melopoeia and logopoeia: "imagism, or poetry wherein the feelings of painting and sculpture are predominant."[17] Pound (1960 [1934]: 52) even uses the two words synonymously when looking back at Imagism in 1934: "If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis, or action." This interrelation of terms suggests that, to Pound at least, the practice of Imagism is very close to the practice of casting visual experiences onto the reader's mind.

Other Imagists only confirm this devotion to visual imagery. Lowell places vision at the center of Imagist poetry by implicitly linking poem and picture. She wrote in 1917, "Imagists fear the blurred effect of a too constant change of picture in the same poem" (Lowell 1921 [1917]: 246). Here the blurriness is obviously visual, almost photographic, as if Imagists court poetic ruin if they move their mental cameras when capturing a scene. Ironically, such an association of Imagist poem and picture prompted the editors of *Some Imagist Poets* (1916: v) to attempt to push beyond this simple

17. Pound (1967: 102) uses the word *phanopoeia* earlier than 1918 when describing his early work on the *Cantos* in a 1917 letter to James Joyce: "I have begun an endless poem, of no known category. Phanopoeia or something or other, all about everything. . . . Will try to get some melody into it further on." For some reason he decides to use *imagism* in 1918, but by 1923 the term *phanopoeia* was firmly in place.

equation: "In the first place 'Imagism' does not mean merely the presentation of pictures. 'Imagism' refers to the manner of presentation, not the subject." Finally, there is Hulme. In his dogmatic, declarative way, Hulme is perhaps most emphatic about the importance of visual imagery in poetry, both for the reader and for the writer. Hulme's literary philosophy centers on a sharp, visual language that communicates through images. He declares: "Each *word* must be an image *seen* . . . a man cannot write without seeing at the same time a visual signification before his eyes. It is this image which precedes the writing and makes it firm" (Hulme 1955c [1925]: 79). To Hulme, authors can only write through visual imagery, and readers must be able to see (presumably through visual imagery) each word that the author has written—a daunting requirement.[18] Hulme (1955a [1908]: 73) even argues that the best poetry will make readers visualize so much that they become exhausted: "The new visual art . . . depends for its effect . . . on arresting the attention, so much so that the succession of images should exhaust one." Certainly, other sensory modes, most notably touch,[19] appear within Imagist theories of poetry, but overall their visual poetics is foundational.

Despite these strong claims of visuality for both the writer and the reader in Imagist theories of poetry, many scholarly accounts of Imagist poetics seem uninterested in or even hostile to the visual aspect of those poetics. Scholarship on Imagism disagrees widely on a few contentious issues (e.g., who really created Imagism?), but the central accounts of Imagism seem to agree that the visual imagination is not a very important subject for scholarly attention.[20] These accounts particularly devalue the reader's visual imagery, minimizing its role within Imagist poetics and its contribution to poetic understanding.

The early criticism largely repeats Imagist assertions for visual poetry

18. Schneidau (1969: 44) remarks on the absolutism in Hulme's statement: "Only an ideologue could have written that. A practicing poet would have seen the obvious danger, that poetry made by that rule would very likely become picture-postcard verse."

19. In his "Lecture on Modern Poetry," Hulme (1955a [1908]: 75) claims: "This new verse resembles sculpture rather than music; it appeals to the eye rather than to the ear. It has to mold images, a kind of spiritual clay, into definite shapes." Of course, even here the sculptural model calls on the visual sense, as Hulme notes that the shaped clay will solicit the eye. Such mixing of touch and vision is also apparent in the guidelines laid out in the preface to the 1915 *Some Imagist Poets* anthology. One rule demands "poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite" (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915: vii), in which a "hard" feel matches up with a "clear," unblurred picture.

20. Harriet Zinnes, in *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts* (1980), suggests a broader trend than visual imagery. Zinnes (ibid.: xvii) argues that Pound's strong interests in the visual arts (painting and sculpture) have been understudied: "Until recently critics have almost ignored the significance of this lifelong interest."

without examining exactly what such claims mean on the ground; such criticism generally ignores the visual imagination by not engaging very seriously with Imagist policy statements. Two of the earliest large-scale works on the movement, those by Glenn Hughes (1931) and Stanley Coffman (1951), are especially susceptible to this complacency; they both quote full-length Imagist policy statements with little explicit commentary. William Pratt (1963) notes that the image develops out of Hulme's philosophy of communication based on combined visual images[21]—a promising start—but then almost drops the notion of visual imagery, relying on an almost mystical definition: "It [the image] is a moment of revealed truth" (ibid.: 29)—but revealed where, and in what form? Pratt (ibid.) does note that the image should be "rendered . . . with the maximum of visual content," but what exactly this visual content means or how it appears in the reading experience is not clear.[22] In short, these early accounts do not seem very interested in grappling with the visual elements within Imagist theories.

Herbert Schneidau's (1969: 3–4) study *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real* reads Imagism primarily as a movement for stylistic discipline according to Pound's concept of a "living language" and claims that such discipline "remained at the heart of the achievement." The visual currents within Imagism, in Schneidau's (ibid.: 192) view, have been overemphasized, and he is explicit about his antivisual orientation: "In my discussion of Pound's poetics I have been at some pains to subordinate the visual, since I had discovered when I began that neither Imagist theory nor its practice were predominantly visualist." Not surprisingly, the study stays true to this orientation: it focuses on the conceptual richness of the psychological account of the image; it emphasizes the artistic limits of a visual approach to poetry; and it dismisses the reader's visual images as insufficient registers of poetic depth (ibid.: 45).

J. B. Harmer (1975) gives a detailed account of the changing status of "the image" for Hulme and Pound over the course of Imagism,[23] but he

21. Pratt (1963: 27) cites Hulme's notion of synergistic visual images—"thought is prior to language and consists in the simultaneous presentation to the mind of two different images" (Hulme 1955c [1925]: 84)—and declares, "Hulme maintained that real communication by human beings is made only by means of images."
22. The closest Pratt (1963: 30) gets to addressing the reader's visual experience of the poetry comes when he notes, "Imagist poems differ from other poems in leaving more to the reader to interpret." Yet this comment hints at visual imagery only to the extent that we think of images as products of interpretation.
23. Harmer (1975: 164–66) notes that the image was much more visual for Hulme and that Pound offered a more psychological account of the image, though one that took on some of Hulme's visual basis by 1914.

tends to neglect the reader's visual imagery in his assessments of Hulme. Harmer emphasizes the writer's role in perceiving and documenting visual images within Hulme's account of the image and undervalues the reader's role in receiving, creating, and experiencing them. As we have seen, Hulme is quite attentive to the reader's experience of visual imagery, and Harmer even cites a few of these passages.[24] Yet Harmer's (ibid.: 165) assessment addresses only the poet's perceptual vision—Hulme "reduced" the image to "a percept"—and the poet's faculty for translating percepts into poetry—"Hulme's doctrine of the recording of visual images." Harmer's history seems at times exhaustive, yet even he neglects the ways Imagist theorists considered the reader's visual experience.

John T. Gage's *In the Arresting Eye* (1981) challenges the coherence of Imagism by pitting its aggressive theoretical stances (e.g., the assertions of carefully transferred emotion and immediate understanding by the reader) against the reader's experience with the poems. While Gage's method implies an interest in the full range of the reader's responses, he takes pains to demonstrate that visualization is not necessary for comprehension of the poetry. Arguing that metaphorical meaning does not hinge on visualization,[25] Gage (ibid.: 72) concludes that visualization does "not contribute to our understanding of the intended effect of the poem." Further, he takes the sensible point about the necessary difference in visual imagery between poet and reader to an illogical extreme; the visual asymmetry, for Gage (ibid.: 74), renders the poem "no more than an arbitrary stimulus." In other words, the reader's necessarily idiosyncratic visual image compromises not just the procedure of visualization but the poem itself.

Daniel Tiffany's *Radio Corpse* (1995) is not an account of Imagism per se but is especially relevant for our purposes anyway. The volume carefully traces the ghostly, the cadaverous, and the cryptic through Pound's literary career, from antecedents in decadent literature to Pound's embrace of fascism. Tiffany (ibid.: 21) places "Doctrine of the Image" at the center of such ghostliness and claims that this ghostly image resists visualization: "The modernist poetic Image is equivocally, but intentionally, *nonvisual*,

24. For instance: "Nowadays, when one says a hill is 'clothed' with trees, the word suggests no physical comparison. To get the original visual effect one would have to say 'ruffed,' or use some new metaphor" (Hulme 1955b [1909]: 10); and "the new visual art . . . depends for its effect not on a kind of half-sleep produced, but on arresting the attention, so much that the succession of visual images should exhaust one" (Hulme 1955a [1908]: 73); both quoted in Harmer 1975: 164. Both pay close attention to visual effects in the reader.

25. Gage (1981: 61) writes, "'My love is like a red, red rose' does not tell us anything about roses. It brings certain qualities of 'my love,' shared by red roses, into prominence. Although we are certainly able to visualize the roses, it is not on this ability, specifically, that the comparison depends. . . . Without visualization, then, comparison is possible."

insofar as it resists, contests, and mediates the experience of visuality, but also in its preoccupation with the invisible." To make this claim, however, Tiffany engages far more with Imagist policy statements than with Imagist poetry.[26] When the study does turn to poems, its readings often note that the poem is *about* ghostly material rather than creating a ghostly (i.e., nonvisual) reading experience.[27] At times Tiffany seems not just to ignore the visual image but to snub it; in arguing that Pound's vision for "In a Station of the Metro" may have occurred behind closed eyes, Tiffany (ibid.: 157) declares that "the visuality of the Imagist poem must therefore be described as highly ambiguous, if not dependent on a kind of blindness." Certainly, Tiffany has little faith in the clarity and fidelity of the visual image.

Given the strong visual poetics of the Imagists and the paucity of critical attention to the visual effects of their poetry, Imagist poetry is a particularly fecund site for studies of literary visualization. In one respect, a study of literary visualization that focuses on Imagism investigates whether or not Imagist poetry lives up to its declared visual poetics—do Imagist poems encourage visual images in the reader's mind?[28] Do they solicit images for the "imaginative eye"? This present study asserts that they do and recruits the latest accounts in cognitive psychology and linguistics to explain how. In another sense, however, a poetics of visualization for Imagism attempts to make Imagist *scholarship* live up to Imagist poetics—that is, to address and repair a gap in criticism, the gap of the reader's visual imagination. I hope that a poetics of visualization for Imagism will help bring visual imagery back into the fold of Imagist scholarship at the levels of both textual features and the reader's experience. Further, an Imagism-based poetics of visualization can extend beyond those narrow bounds, informing the study of literary visualization for a broader range of texts, including other poetry types and prose. At its broadest level of critical impact, the study

26. Tiffany similarly privileges the poetics over the poetry when he takes critics to task for their willingness to treat the image in visual terms. He chastises critics for treating key figures within policy statements—not lines of poetry—as visual: "Critics rarely acknowledge that the most celebrated figures of the Image (vortex, ideogram, Freudian complex, algebraic equation, and so on) are curiously resistant to conventional notions of visual experience" (Tiffany 1995: 23).
27. For example, Tiffany (1995: 58) quotes Pound's poem "Sugit Fama"—"Kore is seen in the North / skirting the blue-grey sea / in gilded and russet mantle"—not to interrogate its visual or nonvisual status for the reader but to note that it refers to antiquity and the underworld.
28. This study acknowledges as a matter of course that not all readers will experience visual imagery, no matter what textual features are at work. Thus I use words like *encourage*, *solicit*, *foster*, *induce* and attend to the fact that, despite my arguments about image-inducing textual mechanisms, no text can ever guarantee visual imaging in its readers.

of visualization in Imagism helps balance literary critical approaches by focusing on poetics rather than hermeneutics; it may contribute to textual meanings, but its primary goal is not to privilege certain meanings over others but to understand how textual features or mechanisms help control the reader's visual experience. As such, the study of visualization is part of a larger poetics that investigates how texts constrain and guide the reading experience.

The Present Focus: Image Metaphor

This essay will look at only one feature in this poetics: image metaphor. Image metaphor—a metaphor that connects one concrete object to another concrete object,[29] as in the sentence "Her spread hand was a starfish"—is a relatively new term and has not been theorized as much as metaphor as a whole. The term was coined by George Lakoff (1987a: 219) and used by Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989: 90–99), Lakoff (1993: 229–31), and Raymond Gibbs (1994: 258–60), among others. Lakoff and Turner (1989) argue that image metaphors are variations within the larger rule of metaphor. This larger rule is the conceptual theory of metaphor,[30] an interconnected system of thought in which one concept (the source domain) helps govern how we think about another concept (the target domain); further, the theory notes that the source domain is usually more concrete and "grounded" than the target domain, which suggests an experiential mode of understanding abstract concepts. In this view, seemingly isolated phrases about love relationships, such as "Look at how far we've come," "We're at a crossroads," and "This relationship is a dead-end street," indicate that the (more abstract) target concept of a relationship is understood through the (more concrete) source concept of a journey.[31]

It is not clear exactly how image metaphors fit into this conceptual system. In Lakoff and Turner's (1989: 99) account, image metaphors are "one-shot metaphors, relating one rich image with one other rich image";

29. This definition is less inherently visual than Lakoff's (1987a: 219) original definition: a "type of metaphor that maps conventional mental images onto other conventional images by virtue of their internal structure." Lakoff's definition assumes visualization, and in keeping with the notion that some people do not visualize, I have chosen to use an object-driven definition. Lakoff's definition moreover strongly implies a shared (or at least similar) structure between terms, while mine does not. Thus my definition accommodates unusual, hard to visualize metaphors (such as "the pencil is fondue"), while Lakoff's definition seems not to.
30. The original work here is Lakoff and Johnson 1980: esp. 3–13, 46–60, and the theory is developed in Lakoff 1993: 202–5, 208–12; Gibbs 1994: 161–67, 251–64; Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 31–44.
31. The examples are from Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 44–45.

in other words, they occur on their own, without a surrounding system of similar and conventional examples. Lakoff (1987a: 221) also declares that image metaphors do not play a role in "grounding"—"they are not used to understand the abstract in terms of the concrete." Adding to the uncertain footing for image metaphors within the conceptual theory of metaphor, their status as conceptual or nonconceptual is in dispute, or at least confusing: Lakoff and Turner (1989: 90) note that image metaphors do not map concepts onto other concepts but "the structure of one domain onto the structure of another"; four years later, however, Lakoff (1993: 229) argues that "the metaphor is conceptual; it is not in the words themselves, but in the mental images."[32]

One scholar who has examined image metaphors within Imagist poetry is Peter Crisp.[33] In his article, however, Crisp is not concerned primarily with Imagism[34] but with creating a theory that links image metaphors to conceptual ones. His study begins with an acknowledgment of image metaphor's exceptional status: "If you are sceptical about the conceptual nature of metaphor you are likely to use image metaphor to buttress your scepticism" (Crisp 1996: 79). Crisp uses the concept of the "image schema," a mental figure more abstract than an image but less abstract than a proposition,[35] to argue that image metaphors are not exceptions to the system of conceptual metaphor and quite the opposite: to him, image metaphors reveal the image schemata that undergird all metaphor. Crisp provides insights into controversies surrounding metaphor, but for all his discussion on the exact nature of mental figures, he does not really examine the reader's experience of image metaphor. In fact, Crisp makes a key error

32. The claim that image metaphors are conceptual is a difficult one to make and seems limited to the extent that concepts can be defined by or understood through physical structures. Nonetheless, Lakoff (1993: 231) and Crisp (1996: 88–90) both make this claim and use the image schema as a bridge between physical structures and mental concepts. Because it is a mediating figure, however, the image schema can only be both structural and conceptual in quite abstract senses. Image metaphors are not conceptual in the way that the domains treated by the standard conceptual metaphor theory (e.g., a relationship and a journey) are each richly conceptual, with many parts and entailments.

33. Another scholar who examines figurative language more broadly (metaphors, similes, analogies) in Imagism is Craig Hamilton (2004). Though Hamilton's "cognitive rhetoric of Imagism" does not mention image metaphors by name, it addresses a few image metaphors through cognitive concepts, such as Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory (ibid.: 472–74, 478–80) and image schema (ibid.: 480–82).

34. Crisp (1996: 79) notes, "I could, for the purposes of this article, have made a more or less random selection of image metaphors." Imagism seems to be a merely expedient backdrop: "It seemed best to concentrate on a specific body of work explicitly centered on image metaphor. Imagism provides just such a body of work" (ibid.).

35. As Crisp (1996: 88) points out, the concept was created by Kant (1934 [1781]: 119) but developed by contemporary theorists. See Johnson 1987: 18–30; Lakoff 1987b: 271–75, 440–46, 1993: 214–16; Turner 1996: 16–25; Gibbs 2006: 90–96.

about that experience—he argues that image metaphors can produce a fusion of disparate visual images.

As my study will attempt to show, many of the image metaphors within Imagist poetry help foster a visual experience of the poem and a particular visual experience at that—one in which correspondent images shift back and forth in the imagination but never fuse together. The cognitive insights about image metaphor can help reveal how Imagist poetry is experienced within the reader's mind and how this experience in turn shapes poetic meaning.

Image and Nonimage Metaphors in Imagist Poetry

But first, how common is image metaphor within Imagist poetry? One might expect that image metaphor would be quite common. After all, if Imagist poetry contains any metaphors at all, these metaphors should be image metaphors, according to the explicit anti-abstraction policy within Imagist theory. As Pound (1913a: 201) urges in a famous "don't" in the seminal March 1913 issue of *Poetry*, "Go in fear of abstractions." Yet metaphors of any kind may be challenged by the call for direct language. In the same March 1913 issue, F. S. Flint's (1913: 199) first rule in "Imagisme," his treatment of Imagist poetics, demands "direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective."[36] Hulme's poetic philosophy moreover owes deep debts to Henri Bergson, whose metaphysics stressed absolute perception over relative perception; by this account, one must strive to understand an object on its own terms, not through the mediation of other objects (Gage 1981: 9–11).

These twin urges toward concrete language and direct representation of experience create a tension within Imagism, especially for its practices of image metaphor. On the one hand, the push toward concrete language suggests that image metaphors should dominate as figurative language; the rejection of abstract language implies that figurative comparisons should always link a concrete term with a concrete term. On the other hand, however, the notion of directness might imply a ban on comparisons in the first place—that is, is not the most direct treatment one that does not use a comparison with other objects as a method of registering experience? This

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36. Certainly, *direct* here also suggests impersonal or objective, as the Imagists sought to cut through the saturation of emotional commentary found in late Victorian poetry. But there is a stronger implication of *direct*—that is, the thing on its own terms—here as well. Pound (1973a [1915]: 375) does not clarify the issue when he writes, "By 'direct treatment', one means simply that having got the Image one refrains from hanging it with festoons." "Festoons" might be affective comments, rhetorical flourishes, or the alluring distractions of other, related subjects.

tension suggests that Imagist poems might pull away from metaphor in general but specialize in image metaphor if metaphor is used.[37]

Despite this tension, however, Imagist poetics *did* stress the value of metaphor and even leaned slightly toward image metaphor. Pound (1913a: 203), though at times dismissive of metaphors—calling them "extravagances" at one point (Hatlen 1995: 119)—uses metaphor to demonstrate poetic *presentation*, which he champions over mere *description*: "When Shakespeare talks of the 'Dawn in russet mantle clad' he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents."[38] Hulme (1936 [ca. 1912]: 134–35), in "Romanticism and Classicism," claims: "Poetry is not a counter language, but a visual, concrete one. . . . It always endeavours to make you continuously see a physical thing. . . . Visual meanings can only be transferred by the new bowl of metaphor." Not only does Hulme claim that metaphor is uniquely able to transfer visual references, he implies that the real mechanism is image metaphor. After all, Hulme's concrete language works to showcase a "physical thing"—not an abstract concept (or, in his words, a near-mathematical "counter"). If a poem shows a physical object metaphorically, it makes the most sense for this object to be seen through another physical object, making an image metaphor. Concrete-abstract renderings are quite rare (e.g., "his hand was justice") and, as mentioned, prohibited by the anti-abstraction rule.

The Imagists did use metaphor in their poems, and much of it was image metaphor. Their poems are full of concrete-concrete comparisons.[39] Exact numbers or proportions are hard to come by of course, but a good average seems to be in the area of one or two per poem. My survey of the 1915

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37. Hamilton notes a similar tension between the Imagists' call for objective language and their use of figurative language. He contends that the Imagists, sensing the importance of figurative language for their own poems, tried to find "a balance between their use of figurative language in their own poems and their criticism of the figurative language in others" (Hamilton 2004: 472).

38. Pound (1970b [1914]: 84) in fact repeats this suggestion that the poet surpasses the painter through poetic presentation, with Shakespeare's metaphor again, in "Vorticism."

39. Here, to maintain our focus on visual imagery, our definition of the concrete within image metaphor is based on objects, and at times image metaphors stretch the category of "objects." The wind, for instance, does not seem to be an object, but the wind's effects can be seen in other objects, as in D. H. Lawrence's "Round Pond": "WATER ruffled and speckled by galloping wind / Which puffs and spurts it into tiny pashing breaks" (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915: 12). Here the wind's effects compare to a puffing and galloping horse, and their visibility through another material (water) makes the metaphor eligible for our purposes. The wind is not so visual in H.D.'s "The Garden"; the wind is compared to a concrete plow, but it remains a nonobject: "Cut the heat, / plough through it / turning it on either side / of your path" (ibid.: 23). Here the wind takes all of its object cues from the plow, providing none on its own; the metaphor thus does not count as an image metaphor.

Imagist collection found fifty-four image metaphors in thirty-seven poems. (This accounting considers only the main titles as poems; the image metaphor ratio drops to fifty-four per fifty-eight poems if subheadings within poems—both numerical and titled—are counted.) As one might guess, these image metaphors are not spread evenly throughout the anthology: the ratio is highest in D. H. Lawrence's poems (nineteen per seven or eight poems, depending on the counting method) and lowest for Flint (one per seven poems). Nonetheless, the overall numbers suggest that image metaphor is quite a common and significant feature within Imagist poetry.

Despite the prevalence of image metaphors in the Imagist canon, some metaphors produced by Imagists do not satisfy the concrete-concrete structure and thus are not image metaphors. Often an emotional component takes one side of the structure, barring clear visuals; consider Richard Aldington's "New Love":

> She has new leaves
> After her dead flowers,
> Like the little almond-tree
> Which the frost hurt.   (*Some Imagist Poets* 1915: 15)

Here new leaves apply not to some concrete, easily imaged thing but rather to the experience of finding love after pain (explicit in the poem's title). The leaves relate to an emotional state, and emotions, perhaps because felt but not visible, make for tricky cases of concrete reference.[40] New love is hardly a tangible, concrete thing, but new leaves are tangible things: an abstract-concrete pattern. As another example, consider these lines from H.D.'s "Mid-day": "A slight wind shakes the seed-pods. / My thoughts are spent / As the black seeds" (*Some Imagist Poets* 1916: 30). Here we have another abstract-concrete pattern; thoughts are presented in physical terms, as dispersed seeds. Aldington's poem, H.D.'s lines, and many other examples like them reveal that Imagist practice did not always follow its anti-abstractionist policy, and thus metaphor in Imagism is less exclusively a mode of "image metaphor" than one might have expected.

At other times, confused metaphorical reference may sabotage what might otherwise be a simple concrete-concrete rendering. For example, ambiguous pronouns are often tricky, suggesting either personification

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40. In fact, Paivio (1971: 79) notes that emotion words challenge his data patterns for rated imageability (I): "Another group of words rated as abstract but relatively high I were affect labels and other terms implying sense experience other than visual-auditory, e.g., anger, happiness, etc." (Abstraction normally correlates to low imageability.) Our insistence here on object-based visual sensory information would mean that emotions implying nonvisual experience would not count as concrete.

or depersonalization. In "The River," for example, Aldington begins the third stanza of the first section with an unintroduced pronoun:

> She has come from beneath the trees,
> Moving within the mist,
> A floating leaf.   (*Des Imagistes* 1914: 16)

The reader has to relate "she" and the leaf, and the order of these words ("she" precedes "leaf") as well as our intraspecies bias (our tendency to read "she" as a female human) suggests a depersonalizing movement: a woman (or a girl) is presented as a leaf. By this reading, the woman moves with the fluid grace of a leaf in midair, though probably more slowly (the mist suggests slowness). Yet at the same time, another reading is possible, one in which the floating leaf retrospectively defines the pronoun *she*: the leaf has been feminized; the leaf begins as "she," though the reader does not know it at the outset. In this case the original pronoun momentarily suggests a person but then removes this notion, attaching instead to an impersonal object.

Such ambiguity of pronominal reference may make the stanza difficult to image. Depending on one's reading, there are either two objects (woman/girl and leaf) or one object (feminized leaf) to visually image; correspondingly, either the woman/leaf (a combination of the two objects) or the feminized leaf alone moves out "from beneath the trees" in the reader's imagination. In the first reading we have an image metaphor (though a somewhat far-fetched one) because we have two concrete terms. These terms imply a correspondence of motion between the leaf and the woman. In the second reading we have only a conceptual (i.e., nonimagistic) metaphor: there are not two separate terms here but rather a leaf that bears a personalizing pronoun ("she"). In other words, we think of the leaf in some part as a woman, though we do not see the leaf in this way; the leaf still looks like a leaf, but it is charged with a female quality or a broader human import. At any rate, the fact of the two readings suggests that some image metaphors, especially those involving ambiguous nouns, may be slightly compromised by secondary, nonimagistic readings.

Further, some Imagist poems have very little metaphor at all, image or otherwise; these poems seem to present a scene very literally. In Flint's "Easter," for instance, the speaker mentions the setting but does not develop it through figurative language:

> FRIEND
> we will take the path that leads
> down from the flagstaff by the pond
> through the gorse thickets;

> see, the golden spikes have thrust their points through,
> and last year's bracken lies yellow-brown and trampled.
> (*Some Imagist Poets* 1916: 51)

The speaker and the friend continue traveling through the landscape, watching it unfold before them, without using metaphor to focus or estrange the views. (There may be a metaphor in the notion of gorse thorns as "spikes," but such a usage is almost totally conventional.) Such "straight" narrative may be responding to the slightly anti-metaphoric feel of both Hulme's "absolute" perception and the directive toward the "direct treatment of the 'thing'" (Flint 1913: 199). This impulse toward the literal, however, may pull the poet dangerously close to description, which Pound (1913a: 203) warns against: "Don't be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it." Uneasily situated between these two directives—be direct but not descriptive—a subset of Imagist poems avoids conspicuous metaphor, image or otherwise, as the poems closely render a scene.

Such counterexamples challenge the prevalence of image metaphor in Imagism and threaten to negate its relevance. After all, how can image metaphor be important or central to Imagism if there are many poems without metaphor at all or with another type of metaphor? Prototype theory (Rosch 1983; Lakoff 1987b) suggests an answer; it is the theory of categorization based on prototype effects—features that the prototypes, or best examples, of a category are likely to manifest. In line with this theory, Crisp (1996: 82) convincingly argues that Imagist poetry can be categorized through "simple family resemblance, a list of properties such that the more of them a poem has, the more Imagist it is." To Crisp, image metaphor is one of these properties (or prototype effects) for Imagism.[41] This theory holds that image metaphor does not have to be universal throughout Imagism in order to be a defining feature of the poetry. Accordingly, one can note in good faith, as Crisp does, the centrality of image metaphor in Imagism (Imagism is "a specific body of work explicitly centered on the image metaphor" [ibid.: 79]) and also take pains to highlight its absence from many poems ("It is not perfectly exemplified even in *Autumn*. . . . H.D.'s *Epigram (after the Greek)* makes no crucial use of image metaphor at all" [ibid.: 82]). Prototype theory helps us reconcile the prevalence of image metaphor with counterexamples of many types and therefore maintain a more realistic conception of its importance within the oeuvre; through prototype theory we understand that deviations from (or absences

41. Other properties Crisp (1996: 82) cites are brevity, free verse, concrete (and static) scenes, and impersonality.

of) image metaphor do not by themselves undermine the overall importance of image metaphor within the poetry.

Structural Correspondence

Image metaphor, when it appears, often plays upon similarity of shape—what I call "structural correspondence," following theorists of image metaphor;[42] this congruence fosters a visual "reading" of the metaphor. The word *often* is chosen advisedly here: not all image metaphors are made of congruent terms. Indeed, the broad object-object linkage includes physically dissimilar terms, as in "the coiled rope is a maple leaf," or "her spread hand is a banana," or even the woman and leaf in the ambiguous stanza of Aldington's "The River." Yet when the terms of image metaphor are physically similar, as they often are, the image metaphor seems to encourage a correspondence in visual imagery.[43] For instance, the physical correspondence between the moon and a human face in Hulme's "Autumn" helps organize the visual imagery that the poem produces. The poem's central figure, the simile (a close relation to metaphor) linking the moon and a face, directs attention to the similar look of a farmer's face and the moon visible over a hedge:

> A touch of cold in the Autumn night—
> I walked abroad,
> And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
> Like a red-faced farmer.
> I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
> And round about were the wistful stars
> With white faces like town children.   (Pound 1912: 60)

The similar shapes of the moon and the face are conventional and perhaps even culturally determined; indeed the phrase "the man in the moon" is a synecdoche for the more exact *face* we image onto the full moon. Despite the poem's lack of specification about what phase the moon is in, this convention suggests that readers may be primed to link, imagistically, a full moon and a face. Further, the poem strengthens this correspondence with nearly synonymous color modifiers—the "ruddy" moon and the "red-faced" farmer—that prod the reader even more toward "seeing" the two

42. Lakoff (1987a: 220), in his original article on image metaphor, uses this terminology: "In mapping one image onto another, we make use of the internal structure of the images." Gibbs (1994: 259) writes that "metaphoric image mappings work . . . by mapping the structure of one domain onto the structure of another."
43. Note again the qualification. No amount of physical correspondence can guarantee visual imagery in the reader.

items as visual cognates. (This poem matches colors again with the second simile between the stars and the children's faces: presumably town children—as opposed to farm children—are indoors more often, and thus their faces remain pale.) Finally, the speaker notes that he "saw" the moon—an explicitly visual cue; such a cue toward sight is strongly correlated with visual imagery. The reader, prodded by the speaker's declaration of visual experience and grasping the implicit similarity of shape (a similarity affirmed by the color cues), may be more inclined to register this correspondence through visual imagery.

For another example, consider Lowell's "Sunshine." It is a short poem, but it manages to impress an inventive image metaphor upon the reader:

> The pool is edged with the blade-like leaves of irises.
> If I throw a stone into the placid water
> It suddenly stiffens
> Into rings and rings
> Of sharp gold wire.   (*Some Imagist Poets* 1917: 80)

The poem presents the water rings created by the stone's impact as solid wire rings, a metaphor that fixes the water, stops its implied motion, as if in a picture. Details about the rings of wire in fact support the idea of a picture: the wire is "sharp," which implies not just a tactile sense but a visual crispness as well, which opposes the inherent blurriness of perceived motion. In other words, the clarity of the wire rings creates a sharp picture of those rings rather than a fluid expansion outward. In addition, the verb *stiffens* supports the sharp rendering—the water is now more solid and motionless than its normal watery self.

But what kind of picture (visual image) do we have, exactly? One might see *one* image of a pond with several (two? three?) concentric circles on the surface, equidistant from each other. The poem suggests this single image through the phrase "suddenly stiffens"—"suddenly" implies a one-shot immediacy, and "stiffens" implies a hardness that cannot be changed. Alternately, one might image the metaphor as a *sequence* of frozen images: the narrative sequence of "rings and rings" (rather than just one mention of "rings") implies multiple iterations of the concentric circles image, with more rings in the second image to correspond to the poetic restatement. And while the poem only specifies one addition—"rings *and* rings"—the reader may follow the pattern and extend the sequence of images as part of a more lifelike continuation. (In this version, the water "suddenly stiffens" multiple times, with each additional image.) Most likely, a larger gold ring appears on the outside of the subsequent image (or images) of the pond, pushing outward until they reach the edge or dissipate on their own, per-

haps through image overload. The crucial imagery difference seems to be one's reading of "rings and rings": if one reads the phrase as a method of intensification, one will probably see one image; if the phrase registers a narrative sequence, one will likely see multiple images.

Unlike the first reading, the second version—the multiple image approach to the image metaphor—suggests that the water is in motion as readers image. Significantly, the multiple images imply motion without demanding that readers image a fluid progression of waves; imaging the sequence of snapshots is a much simpler act of cognition than imaging the rings moving fluidly outward while simultaneously being generated in the center. As Scarry (1999: 100) argues, a series of discrete images implies motion without stating it directly; she names "addition and subtraction" as her third method by which authors get readers to imagine objects in motion. In her account, when objects are added or subtracted from otherwise still images, the imager appreciates that the change involves motion. "Sunshine" indicates the limits of this illusion. The poem, at least in its multiple-image version, manifests the technique of addition (in "rings and rings") for implying motion, but the visual experience of frozen images reminds us that the method only signifies motion and does not actually represent fluid movement.

"Sunshine" also helps indicate the extent of the reader's role in generating structural correspondence. Certainly, the reader always performs acts of visual interpretation; even in "Autumn" the reader probably chooses to image a full moon (rather than a sickle moon) to correspond to the farmer's face. But in "Sunshine" the reader's role in structural development is even greater. The poem does not specify the arrangement of the rings, and thus a reader could imagine scattered separate rings on the poem's surface. It is only most readers' lived experience with stones and bodies of water that makes the image of concentric circles far more likely than the image of disconnected, decentered rings. The visual image of concentric circles reflects the reader's role in creating that specific type of physical correspondence, a topic we will return to later.

Research on the Comprehension of Image Metaphor

Readings of the poems above suggest that their image metaphors may be understood through visual imagery. Research supports the premise that readers use the visual imagination—not information alone—to understand image metaphors. Gibbs and Jody Bogdonovich (1999) asked twenty college students to provide a line-by-line gloss of André Breton's surrealist

poem "Free Union,"[44] a poem dominated by image metaphors. Here is the opening to that poem:

> My wife whose hair is brush fire
> Whose thoughts are summer lightning
> Whose waist is an hourglass
> Whose waist is the waist of an otter caught in the teeth of a tiger
> Whose mouth is a bright cockade with the fragrance of a star of the
>   first magnitude
> Whose teeth leave prints like the tracks of white mice over
>   snow   (Breton 1984 [1931]: 183)

Gibbs and Bogdonovich hypothesized that participants would "map" (i.e., project) concrete images rather than "relational information" from source (e.g., brush fire) to target (e.g., hair) domains. That is, students would not use general knowledge of brush fires (including how brush fires start, dangers associated with them, etc.) as much as their visual images of brush fires when faced with a metaphor that approaches hair in this way.

Gibbs and Bogdonovich found that their predictions were justified. They organized responses into seven different categories and found that most responses (60 percent) fell into the category of physical transfer: "physical features of X [target] that are based on projection of the physical features of Y [source]" (Gibbs and Bogdonovich 1999: 41). In other words, the "look" of the source domain structures one's reading of the target domain. For example, given the line "My wife whose eyelashes are strokes in the handwriting of a child," one participant wrote, "Her eyelashes are thick, long as if they were single strokes of a child's writing or painting" (ibid.: 40). The second largest category (28 percent) was "associations about X based on Y," which were based primarily on the physical features of the source; for instance, given "whose waist is an hourglass," one respondent wrote, "She has a Barbie doll figure" (ibid.). Transfer of related information from source to target, as in "Her eyelashes are original, pure, and innocent" following the "handwriting" line, was quite rare (8 percent) (ibid.).

The researchers then pressed the inquiry further by working to separate visual images from general knowledge. They asked twenty new participants to describe their visual images for individual target and source domains that were presented randomly; twenty others had to describe the "main characteristics" of those domains, again presented randomly. Given the

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44. Gibbs cites Lakoff and Turner 1989: 89 for the poem. It was published in French in 1931; this translation is by David Antin and appears in *The Random House Book of Twentieth-Century French Poetry* (1984), edited by Paul Auster.

phrase "nests of swallows" (the source domain in the line "Whose eyebrows are nests of swallows"), the imagers came up with what the nest was made of (twigs, straw, grass), where it was located (tree, rafter of old house), what it looks like (circular, delicate), what was inside the nest (birds waiting to be fed, eggs), and what the swallows were doing (chirping, singing) (ibid.: 42). Those who described their knowledge of "nests of swallows" produced evaluative comments about birds (cute birds, unsanitary, alert), associations (birthplace, shelter, home, sanctuary, security), and some "image-like features," though usually vaguer than what the imagers produced.[45] Gibbs and Bogdonovich (ibid.) found that 58 percent of the mental images of the source domain corresponded to those readings from the first study, while only 21 percent of the knowledge of the source domain corresponded to those interpretations. Further, since 59 percent of the general knowledge was identical to the correspondent imagery, Gibbs and Bogdonovich (ibid.) reasoned that really "only 12 percent of the non-imagistic, characteristic knowledge that people have about source domain gets mapped during comprehension of image metaphors." By their math, then, the interpretations from the first study were powered by visual imagery far more than nonimagistic knowledge—at almost five times the rate in fact (58 percent to 12 percent).

These clarifying phases of the experiment suggest that people use their mental images of the source domain to a much greater extent than general or relational knowledge of the source domain to comprehend image metaphors. This study speaks to the power of mental imagery overall in the process of interpreting image metaphor. As Gibbs and Bogdonovich (ibid.: 43) summarize, "It appears that understanding image metaphors depends on how people map their concrete mental images for aspects of the source domain better to structure target domains in these statements."

Gibbs and Bogdonovich's findings are certainly useful in that they argue quantitatively for the centrality of visual imagery in the processing of image metaphors. But their research also helps reveal the limits of the concept of physical ("structural") correspondence between metaphorical terms. Specifically, their notion of "mapping" or projection suggests that readers *transfer* the physical, imagistic qualities of the source to the target rather than finding similar qualities in both domains. In other words, mapping basically suggests that physical correspondence is almost entirely created in the reading. This thought forces a reconsideration of the poems we have investigated: for "Autumn," one might argue that the moon is only

45. Gibbs and Bogdonovich (1999: 42) do not give examples of these "image-like features" but report that they "were not nearly as detailed and concrete" as those produced by the visual imagers.

full because the face makes it so; for "Sunshine," one could note that the water hardens into rings (rather than into slowly spreading undulations) only through the image of the gold wire. We are left wondering if the terms of image metaphor are ever correspondent on their own, or if rather one term (the source) always creates an appropriate physical agreement in the other term (the target).

The Visual Template

One poem that resists the notion of purely created correspondence is Pound's famous "In a Station of the Metro." This poem presents a rich symmetry of relations that imply a fundamental (i.e., not simply fabricated) physical agreement. Most important, though, this poem's rich symmetry strongly implies a mechanism of visual imagery—the "visual template"—that allows readers to visualize the image metaphor easily. While this mechanism is most clearly evident with "Metro," it in fact helps guide our understanding of *all* physically correspondent image metaphors.

We should note first how the poem first appeared: the poem's original spacing (upon initial publication in the April 1913 issue of *Poetry* [Pound 1913b]) provides the loose picture of discrete units scattered against a background:[46]

> The apparition   of these faces   in the crowd   :
> Petals   on a wet, black   bough   .

Taken as a graphic image alone (i.e., as a visual perception of word groupings rather than as visual imagery prompted by the meanings of those words), this experience can take two forms: either the white spaces stand out between the disconnected groups of text, or the words in the text, clustered into discrete units, pull apart from the white spaces between them. Either way, the spacing of the text brings attention to foregrounded units against a background.

The two visual images inspired by the poem, one in each line, correspond well to this print-based picture—and also correspond to each other. Each line defines a separate figure-ground relation, so there is an immediate structural similarity at play. Further, the figures seem well matched: petals

46. Lewis (1994: 200–204) provides a brief history of this poem's spacing and punctuation changes over its publication history and suggests, while acknowledging Kenner (1971: 197, 159) for the insight, that Pound's return to conventional spacing in *Personae* and *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1970a) may well have been his own choice, a desire to move away from a more static version of the poem. For an even more detailed account of the changes to the poem's punctuation and spacing throughout its publication history, see Ellis 1988.

are more unified and undefined than faces, but these faces lose definition through the situational descriptor "apparition"; the notion of "apparition" lends the faces a vagueness or gauziness that turns them toward petals. Finally, the two grounds (the crowd in the station and the bough) also correspond through connotation and visual image. Crowds are indistinct and jumbled, and a bough that is wet and black is most likely decaying and physically uneven—both look choppy and incoherent. In addition, as Hugh Kenner (1971: 184–85) has noted, the metro's location underground (as well as the ghostly ring of "apparition") points to Hades and the underworld, which serves to strengthen the connection to the dark, decaying bough.

In his famous birth story for the poem, Pound (1970b [1914]: 86–87) keeps the visual experience quite vague and open-ended; he describes the poetic "equation" that later came to him for this experience as "little splotches of color":

> Three years ago in Paris I got out of a "metro" train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then a beautiful child's face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried all that day to find words for what this had meant to me, and I could not find any words that seemed to me worthy, or as lovely as that sudden emotion. And that evening, as I went home along the Rue Raynouard, I was still trying and I found, suddenly, the expression. I do not mean that I found words, but there came an equation . . . not in speech, but in little splotches of colour. It was just that—a "pattern," or hardly a pattern, if by "pattern" you mean something with a "repeat" in it. But it was a word, the beginning, for me, of a language in colour.

Pound's indeterminate equation, if visualized, works especially well for the poem because "little splotches of color" provides a schematic image for both lines—both the faces and the petals stand out against their mottled backgrounds, the crowd and the bough. The image of "little splotches of color" aligns the two visual images (i.e., faces against crowd; petals against bough), allowing the reader to shift between the two more detailed images quickly, enjoying a rich visualized comparison. Such an indeterminate mediating image is close to an "image schema," the cognitive concept that has its roots in Kantian philosophy.[47] Mark Johnson (1987: 18–30) and Lakoff (1987b: 271–75, 440–46) adapted Kant's notion of a figure more

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47. Kant used the term "schema," which was, for him, an imaginative procedure for creating images in alignment with concepts. In his famous example of the triangle, for instance, Kant (1934 [1781]: 119) emphasizes that the schema for triangle is a "rule" for synthesizing specific triangle images into a more abstract figure: "The schema of the triangle can exist nowhere else than in thought, and it indicates a rule of the synthesis of the imagination in regard to pure figures in space."

abstract than specific images but less abstract than a concept to develop their theories of cognitive embodiment—that is, the ways abstract thinking and concepts are based in experiential, sensory perception. Johnson and Lakoff both insist that image schemata grow out of bodily experience. In Johnson's (2005: 16) recent definition, image schemata are "structures of sensory-motor experience . . . which can be used to understand abstract concepts and to perform abstract reasoning."

My notion of the "visual template" is similar to the image schema but different in a few crucial respects. Like the image schema, the visual template is schematic—more abstract and sketched out than a detailed image; otherwise, it would not support both of the images prompted by the two lines. But the visual template is less abstract than an image schema, as central examples of the image schema suggest.[48] Johnson (1987: 126) and Lakoff (1987b: 267) both enumerated classic image schemata, such as container/containment, path or source-path-goal, blockage, attraction, link, and part-whole in their original lists. These image schemata are so abstract that they can accommodate a wide range of visual experiences: Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 32) note that the "container" schema includes concrete objects, such as cups and rooms, as well as bounded areas, like basketball courts and football fields. The container schema must be quite abstract to organize all these examples into one category. On the other hand, the visual template is only as abstract as is necessary to mediate between the two visual images of a particular image metaphor. In this sense, the template serves as a greatest-common-factor image. The visual template does not need to accommodate a wide range of embodied experience but rather just the two images within each image metaphor; thus the visual template is metaphor specific. The template can be as detailed as the physical correspondence between the two visual images allows.

This difference in specificity between the image schema and the visual template can be seen in Craig Hamilton's cognitive analysis of "Metro." Hamilton (2004) cites Johnson's LINK image schema as the poem's controlling mechanism; to Johnson (1987: 118–19), this schema "makes possible our perception of *similarity*. Two or more objects are similar because

48. While Grady (2005: 36–37) mentions in his recent review of definitions of the image schema that "there is a wide range of degrees of schematicity that researchers would accept into the category," he suggests too that more specific versions of the definition violate the "original spirit of the notion" as expressed in Lakoff 1987b and Johnson 1987. In particular, Grady (2005: 37) singles out Turner's (1996: 167) claims that "a cup" and "two circles of the same size" count as examples of image schemata, noting that they are out of line with the prevailing trend among image schema researchers. Hampe (2005: 2) mentions that the central and abstract examples enumerated above are part of "the core of the standard inventory."

they share some feature or features." This schema is obviously vague, and Johnson admits as much, but the larger problem is that it does not do justice to the visual imagery prompted by the poem. The image schema specifies a link or links between objects (faces and petals), and Hamilton (2004: 481) extends himself as far as he can to express those links: "Two features shared by faces and petals . . . are (1.) their relatively small size in relation to the objects that (2.) they are *linked* to." But the true power of the image metaphor in "Metro," as noted above, is that it joins two figure-ground relationships, not just two objects. The LINK schema does not address the figure-ground relationships; Hamilton's analysis describes the fact of a connection ("they are *linked* to") rather than the more particular figure-against-ground connection.[49] (The nonspecific link is broad enough to include petals touching the edges of the bough or even petals partially hidden behind the bough.) For clarity with the figure-ground relationships, Hamilton (ibid.) turns to Ronald Langacker's notion of a "relational profile," a joint concept for figure-ground object relations and trajector-landmark linguistic relations. The LINK image schema, it seems, is broad enough to capture some visual connections (e.g., size) between faces and petals in "Metro" but not the poem's more complex relationships.

The visual template, on the other hand, is metaphor specific and thus can capture as many elements (including patterns) as the two terms of the metaphor have in common. A greatest-common-factor accounting of the visual images in "Metro" certainly includes the figure-ground relationships of faces against the crowd and petals against the bough, and it also can manifest more shared features, depending on one's particular imagination. Though the poem does not specify the shape of the petals, one might imagine them to be oval, like faces. One might also imagine the crowded subway station and the bough not just as empty spaces but as dark, and perhaps visually mottled, backdrops. In short, the visual template's specificity to this poem, and one person's reading of it, allows the reader to generate visual images through a personalized mechanism that is more detailed than an image schema.

It is important to note here that this template does not unify the dispa-

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49. Lest readers think that Hamilton (2004: 481) has merely used an infelicitous, vague phrasing (i.e., "linked to") when describing the connection between the petals and the bough (or the faces and the crowd), another example proves him quite consistent in his wording: "Both faces and petals are *smaller* objects *linked to* objects (human bodies and tree boughs) that are *larger* in size, respectively." Hamilton is quite clear that a clearer spatial connection is not specified by the image metaphor. N.b., the verb *link*, while consistently vague here, recalls the name of the schema (LINK) and confusingly suggests that the image schema connects items within each image (e.g., petals and bough) rather than similar features in both images (e.g., faces and petals).

rate terms or images of an image metaphor. Rather, the template provides a common structure so that each image can be considered in turn; using the schematic visual of discrete shapes (ovals, perhaps) against a jumbled background allows the reader to switch between the two scenes quickly. The template is not a sheer combination of the two images; it is not a superposition of one image on top of the other. It operates instead as a sort of greatest-common-factor schema involving characteristics that are shared by both images.

Visual Images of Ambiguous Figures

Images such as the Louis Albert Necker cube (1832) or Joseph Jastrow's duck-rabbit (1899) prove useful as analogies for this template. Drawings like these, known in psychology as "ambiguous figures" or sometimes "classical bistable configurations," are figures that may be seen in two separate and incompatible ways: the Necker cube (figure 1) has two different top segments, depending on how one scans the image, and Jastrow's duck-rabbit figure (figure 2) can be viewed as either a duck or a rabbit. What is important here is that each figure supports two distinct perceptions. The figure allows viewers to shift between images, but significantly viewers cannot see both images at the same time.

Given the strong correlation between visual perception (i.e., sight) and visual imagery,[50] the ambiguous figures help mark the limits of the visual imagination. They reveal that the mind cannot "fuse" two images by seeing them at the same time, no matter how physically similar (or even equivalent); the mind sees one and then the other. This failure to fuse multiple images of the ambiguous figure is relevant for image metaphor: if one cannot fuse two images that have exactly the same shape, how could one fuse two physically different (though correspondent) images—the two terms of image metaphor? Our inability to see doubly implies an inability to image doubly. Of course, though imagery and perception may share fundamental cognitive processes, they are not equivalent, and many cognitive psychologists have attempted to find out exactly what ambiguous figures can tell us about imagery processes.[51]

Some research suggests that ambiguous figures can shift during perception (so that the mind sees one image and then the other), but the figures do

50. See Kosslyn et al. 2006: 151–68 for a thorough survey, including counterevidence, of the cognitive connections between visual perception and visual imagery systems.
51. Researchers have used ambiguous figures both to support and to challenge the notion that visual images can be ambiguous (i.e., interpreted as multiple different images). For a good survey, see Kosslyn 1994: 336–39.
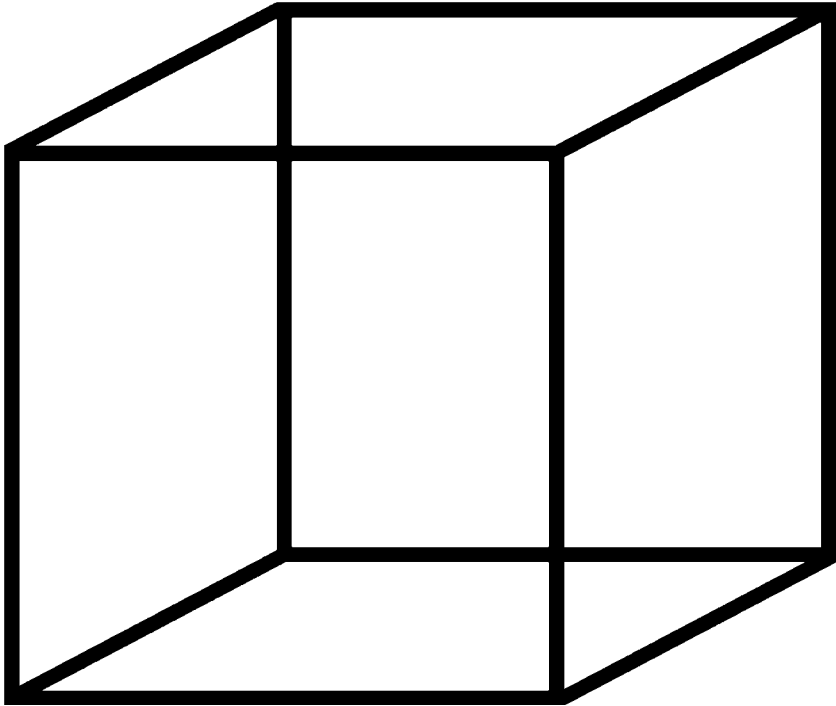
Figure 1   Necker cube

not shift once imaged. Deborah Chambers and Daniel Reisberg (1985) discovered that subjects who originally perceived just one version of Jastrow's duck-rabbit figure could not experience reversals of its form within visual imagery (an "image reversal"); the memory image remained fixed as either the duck or the rabbit. The researchers concluded that image reinterpretation (i.e., a shift between the two visual images) is not possible because visual images are singular iterations: "According to our results, images are not ambiguous. None of our 35 subjects reported a single reversal on any of the test trials" (ibid.: 323). To explain this conclusion, Chambers and Reisberg hypothesized that images are inextricably linked to meanings: "An image's referent is specified by the imaginer" (ibid.: 325); "How a stimulus is internally described governs what prior figures are evoked from memory" (ibid.: 327). In other words, an image is likely tied to an initial (semantic) interpretation of its form that prevents creative reimagining. On its surface, this research seems problematic for the possibility that the visual template allows the imager to shift between two related images. As we shall see, the case is more intricate than it may appear.

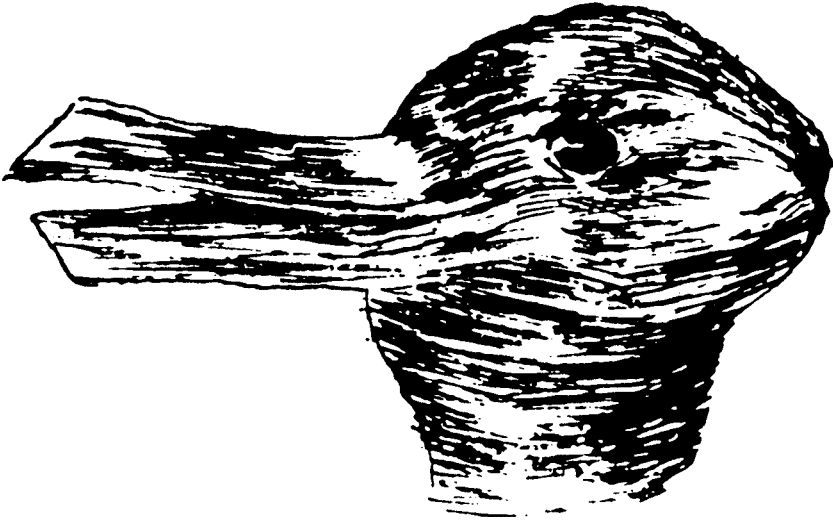   Mary Peterson, John Kihlstrom, Patricia Rose, and Martha Glisky (1992)

Figure 2   Duck-rabbit figure

assert, for example, that Chambers and Reisberg oversimplified the case of ambiguous figures.[52] Peterson et al. (ibid.: 108) hold that reinterpretations of these figures within visual imagery are of two kinds: "reconstruals" and "reference-frame realignments." In the first, one only assigns a "new interpretation" to image components; in the second, one mentally reconfigures the "object-centered" directions, such as top/bottom and front/back (ibid.).[53] In flat opposition to Chambers and Reisberg, Peterson et al. found that mental images of all types can be ambiguous, though some may be more susceptible to reversal than others. Significantly, the researchers discovered that subjects experience reconstruals of imagery more easily than reference-frame realignments: "These experiments indicate that the structural aspects of an image may be separated less easily from the reference frame in which they are specified than from the interpretation assigned within that reference frame" (ibid.: 119). Peterson et al. show that the duck-rabbit figure necessitates a difficult reference-frame realignment in

52. Kosslyn (1994: 336) makes a different critique and claims that the ambiguous figures used by Chambers and Reisberg may have been too complicated—"rather complex stimuli"—for subjects to hold and work with as visual images. Kosslyn argues that Chambers and Reisberg should have used simple stimuli to ensure that no cognitive capacity limitations affected the findings.

53. E. G. Boring's (1930) wife/mother-in-law figure involves only part-based reconstrual—the wife's jaw becomes the mother-in-law's nose, but the global directions are in general preserved; the Necker cube demands only reference-frame realignment; the duck-rabbit figure entails both types of reversals.

Figure 3   Boring's figure (Boring 1930: 444). From *American Journal of Psychology.*
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addition to reconstrual; therefore Chambers and Reisberg's claim against
image reinterpretation in general ignores the relative ease of reconstrual
alone within visual imagery. Overall, Peterson et al. demonstrate, contra
Chambers and Reisberg, that visual images can be reversed, some more
easily than others.

   Peterson et al.'s finding that part-based reconstrual is easier than
reference-frame realignment bodes well for the visual template. When
working from the template, visualizers do not have to alter the global
directions of the image; what they do more closely compares to a reinter-
pretation of parts than a reorientation of the object. This is because the
two visual images prompted by image metaphors are likely to share global
directions, and even when they might not seem to, the mind *makes* them

share a similar reference frame. Consider part of Breton's poem "Free Union" that Gibbs and Bogdonovich used in their study of image metaphor comprehension:

> My wife whose hair is brush fire
> Whose thoughts are summer lightning
> Whose waist is an hourglass
> Whose waist is the waist of an otter caught in the teeth of a tiger

The image metaphor "whose hair is brush fire" seems to suggest separate, even opposing, global directions between the visual images prompted by its terms: her hair probably falls down, while fires reach upward, and hair gets thinner and more tendril-like as it reaches its full length, while flames get thinner as they reach upward.[54] Nonetheless, as part of the mind's desire to recognize patterns, the images become aligned. Either one rotates flames downward to line the flames up with downward-pointing hair, or one imagines the strands of her hair propped up a bit (on a pillow, perhaps) to align with fire's standard upward trajectory.[55] In other words, the mind makes the global directions align, and the visual template then mediates between the two aligned visual images. The real work for the visual template at that point is to help the reader image the schematic tendrils as hair, then as flames, then as hair again, an activity very close to a reinterpretation of parts. The visual template thus bears strong affinities to Peterson et al.'s category of easily reversible ambiguous figures, with the implication that one may shift back and forth between the two visual images.

What is more, though the visual template matches up well with Peterson et al.'s distinction among reversals, it can still accommodate the broad (and seemingly mistaken) claim that visual images cannot be reversed at all. Though Chambers and Reisberg assert that visual images of ambiguous and unambiguous figures cannot be reversed, their findings do not account for the key difference between an ambiguous figure and the visual template: articulation. That is, even if we ignore Peterson et al.'s challenge to Chambers and Reisberg, even if we assert, ignoring their findings, that visual imagery cannot be reinterpreted, the fact of articulation separates the visual template from ambiguous figures. The visual template is the structural intermediary between two richer images, and thus it points

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54. Certainly, other interpretations of this line are possible, and many of these do not necessitate an alignment of object directions. The hair may be red like a fire or tangled and wild as a brush fire might look.

55. Such alignments are implicit between image metaphors whose terms seem aligned to begin with. The line "whose waist is an hourglass," for instance, does not specify that the hourglass is standing up, but most readers probably imagine the hourglass this way so that it shares "global directions" with the torso of a standing woman.

in two visually distinct directions. Crucially, in distinction to an ambiguous figure, the template demands an active filling in of details for different visual images (the bough surely looks different than the crowd, for instance), not a reinterpretation of a single memory image. The template model seems to combine the structural simplicity and singularity of one (basic) image with the distinct articulations of two different images.

The Impossible Dream of Fusion

Despite the contention surrounding image reversals, the most important aspect of the analogy between the visual template and ambiguous figures—the impossibility of fusing multiple visual images—still stands. Like the ambiguous figures, visual templates do not permit simultaneous views of different images. Certainly, the mind can mingle parts of disconnected visual images and place petals against the crowd (or any other figure-ground cross-matching), but it cannot fuse the images so that faces and petals form a new image with all the features of both. This limitation productively challenges the common critical assumption that Imagist metaphors unite their terms visually.

  Crisp, for example, makes several straightforward claims for fusion. Discussing Hulme's "Autumn," he writes, "The reader is led to see the moon distinctly and to see it simultaneously as a red-faced farmer" (Crisp 1996: 85). On H.D.'s "Oread," he argues that the "absence of any overt references to waves helps the pine tree image to dominate and so fuse with the wave image" (ibid.: 86). These are not isolated examples for Crisp (ibid.); rather they reflect the tendency for Imagist metaphors "to either distance or fuse their source and target domains." Not all claims are so clear. Susan Stanford Friedman (1981: 56) argues that "Oread" "illustrates how the visual language of imagism parallels the mechanisms of the dream-work as Freud described them." The mechanism of the dream work that Friedman emphasizes is "condensation"; Friedman notes that this mechanism allows the dreamer to synthesize "contraries" and "contradictions" (Freud's terms) within "a single picture" (Friedman's words). Regardless of the accuracy of Freud's concepts of condensation, Friedman's mode of applying this concept suggests too aggressively that the poem can achieve a nonrational union of visual images. Friedman (ibid.: 57) writes: "The poem significantly does not rely upon similes, which by definition remind the reader that the images only make comparisons, not equivalences. The speaker does not say that a rough sea looks *like* pointed trees; she *sees* tree waves. Just as the dream-work gives the dreamer a visual representation of unconscious impulses, so the poem conjures an illustration of non-rational

reality." Friedman may be right to emphasize one's nonrational *impression* of dream images (i.e., tree waves, not treelike waves), but the poem is unable to fuse these two images for the conscious reader. Thus the poem only "conjures an illustration" of fused sea and land in the most conceptual, nonimagistic sense of "illustration." The cognitive lesson of ambiguous figures is that the terms of image metaphor, no matter how conceptually related or physically similar, must remain distinct in visual imagery.

Such critical confusion is not new of course. Remy de Gourmont, an intensely provisual writer and critic who proved quite influential for the Imagists, suggested that literature is superior to painting because literary works can combine visual images, while paintings cannot. His reasoning is complicated and deserves to be quoted at length:

> Flaubert is not being literal when he writes: "The elephants . . . the spurs on their chests like the prows of ships cut through the cohorts; they rolled back in great waves." He is able to amalgamate the two images (elephants and cohorts, ships and waves) so well only because he has seen them simultaneously. What he gives us is not two designs fitting symmetrically one over the other, but the confusion—visually absurd and artistically admirable—of a double and cloudy sensation. Try to represent the image of elephant-prows, of cohort-waves, visually! You would need a stormy sea which was a real sea and yet one not made of waves, but of soldiers' chests and heads; and elephants who, whilst still remaining elephants, would also be ships. . . . Images can only be translated into painting—a literal, and indeed geometric, art—when they are not metaphors.   (translated in Furbank 1970: 36)[56]

Certainly, de Gourmont is not entirely clear about his meaning here: the notion that Flaubert's "two designs" are "visually absurd" suggests that he might disavow the fusion of two visual images (i.e., the sea and the soldiers; the elephants and the ships). But his declaration that Gustave Flaubert has "seen" two distinct images (e.g., elephants and ships) "simultaneously" seems to be an unmistakable claim for fused visual images, and in this light, his other remarks about the visual (i.e., "visually absurd"; "try to represent the image of elephant-prows . . . visually") seem to refer to painting. De Gourmont may be right to argue that texts can treat metaphor more readily than painting can, but he is mistaken to think that readers of those metaphors are able to visually image a fusion of metaphorical terms.

The Imagist theorists seem to be quite careful to avoid the claim of visual fusion, though the exact meanings of their statements are not always clear. In *Gaudier-Brzeska*, Pound (1970a: 120) takes as an example a spe-

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56. This passage is from de Gourmont's *Le probleme du style* (1902), a book that has not been translated into English.

cific visual perception—"the pine tree in mist upon the far hill looks like a fragment of Japanese armour"—and warns the poet against "doubling or confusing an image" when describing it. His language is quite sensitive to the fallacy of visual fusion: "Still the artist, working in words only, may cast on the reader's mind a more vivid image of either the armour or the pine by mentioning them close together or by using some device of simile or metaphor" (ibid.: 121). Here Pound notes that metaphor makes only *one* image—"either the armour or the pine"—more vivid; the metaphor effectively treats just one of the terms visually instead of creating a composite image. Pound addresses only physical proximity on the page and seems careful to avoid the problematic notion of visual fusion.

In addition, Pound's concept of a "super-position" seems close to the fallacy of visual fusion but ultimately avoids direct error. In "Vorticism," Pound (1970b [1914]: 89) introduces the term in connection to "Metro": "the 'one image poem' is a form of super-position, that is to say, it is one idea on top of another. I found it useful in getting out of the impasse in which I had been left by my metro emotion." Pound describes trimming down the poem to its final "*hokku*-like sentence"; though he does not state it explicitly, one assumes that his finished version ("Metro") is such a "one image poem" or super-position. Pound's relation to visual imagery here is provocative and seemingly mistaken (in terms of the visual fusion fallacy), but ultimately his terminology is vague enough, in two separate ways, to avoid the fallacy.

First, Pound uses the word *idea*—not *image*—in a key spot: one idea superimposed on another idea creates a "one image poem." Here Pound skirts the dangerous implication that two images can combine to form a single image.[57] Second, the very meaning of such a final "image" is in question. The looseness of the word *image* within the phrase "one image poem" may allow Pound to use that phrase for a poem like "Metro," with its two concrete figure-ground relationships that demand two distinct, though related, visual images. Here we must recall Gage's insight that the Imagists spoke of the image both as a single visual image and as the intuition sparked by a combination of images; as Gage (1981: 13) notes, "The imagists used the word image indiscriminately to refer to both the single descriptive phrase and the result of the combination of two such phrases." That is, even if Pound's "idea" did mean a visual image, what seems to be faulty math could work out, given the flexibility of the term in Imagist

57. Certainly, the substitution of ideas for images does not explain very much. The relation of idea to image is confusing (Pound does not offer an explanation), as is the relation of one idea to another: how is one idea placed "on top" of another? Merely physically, on the page? Pound does not clarify.

usage. While Pound's "superposition" concept is dangerously suggestive of visual fusion, his description of it avoids such a trap.

Hulme's "visual chord" analogy also edges close to the mistake of claiming visual fusion, but like the "super-position," his concept ultimately misses that mistake. Hulme (1955a [1908]: 73) explained it thus: "Two visual images form what one may call a visual chord. They unite to suggest an image which is different to both." Certainly, Hulme's "visual chord" implies a mistaken simultaneity of visual images, but it does not necessarily imply a mistaken fusion of visual images. After all, in a chord all pitches retain their distinctness while also combining together; fused images would be categorically unified, nondistinct. If, on the other hand, Hulme had proposed a "visual pigment" for the combination of two images, that analogy would suggest that the combination would not show the distinctive elements of the original images (many different pairs of original pigments could form a single pigment). The chord is not a fusion in that an essential multiplicity remains within it. Admittedly, however, Hulme's analogy fallaciously suggests that images can be seen at the same time; Hulme would have been better served perhaps by a "visual counterpoint" or a "visual trill." The latter replacement seems quite appropriate in fact for the back-and-forth switching between visual images that physically correspondent metaphorical terms often evoke.

It is important to reiterate the relevance of ambiguous figures for my notion of the visual template. The visual template allows readers to move between the two images but does not unify them. The reader of "Metro," prompted by physical correspondence to conceive of the lines as parallel figure-ground images (faces against the crowd; petals against the bough), organizes each image in terms of the common template, and then can switch back and forth between these physically similar images easily. The reader can visualize one image and then the other, changing faces into petals and petals back into faces. The analogy with the ambiguous figures seems quite strong: the ambiguous figures change as the viewer reconstrues parts and changes spatial perspective (minimally, as in Boring's figure [figure 3], or globally, as in Jastrow's duck-rabbit), and the two images mediated by the visual template switch back and forth as the imager articulates different details within the shared structure, similarly reconstruing parts and changing perspective as necessary. Yet the analogy is not perfect: the images linked by the visual template, because articulated by the imagination, may be much more different than the two visual images of the ambiguous figure. After all, the visual images linked by the template are drawn from verbal cues and thus can be imagined with rich contextual cues that the reader images (e.g., the yellow shine on the gold rings in "Sunshine" or the foliage

surrounding the pond). The two visual images of the ambiguous figure, however, are more limited through their original basis in perception and their lack of additional verbal cues attached to the metaphorical terms.

Before we move on from the template to broader questions about the reader's role in creating correspondence, we must again acknowledge that the structural correspondence of "Metro" or "Autumn" does not necessarily produce the Necker cube–like visual switching, or even any visual imagery at all, for that matter. However, the structural similarities most likely help organize the visual response when it occurs, guiding the reader toward a shifting comparison of the metaphor's two visual images.

Correspondence: On the Page or in the Mind?

At this point an objection may appear again, one anticipated in the previous discussion of Lowell's "Sunshine" and the cognitive notion of "mapping." That is, the notion of structural correspondence implies an essential similarity of forms between the terms of the image metaphor, a preexisting similarity that does not depend on the structuring activities performed by the reader's mind. Such a position must acknowledge, however, the mind's powerful ability to create relations and similarities from disparate things; that is, the possibility exists that mind may simply *create* the correspondence rather than respond to the correspondence already existing within the objects. We already noted, for instance, that the reader probably makes the gold rings of "Sunshine" concentric circles to match up with the pond's spreading waves; the poem does not specify this physical layout. Other poems reveal the role of the reader's synthetic imagination even more. For example, the first stanza of Lawrence's "Brooding Grief" points to the reader's ability to make a relation intelligible:

> A YELLOW leaf from the darkness
> Hops like a frog before me—
> Why should I start and stand still?   (*Some Imagist Poets* 1916: 74)

Obviously enough, a leaf does not normally hop "like a frog." Yet the reader, if imaging this simile, soon visualizes a leaf, perhaps blown by the wind, moving with little jumps. Guided by the simile (or, to use the terms of conceptual metaphor, mapping the features of the frog onto the leaf), the reader makes the leaf's motion similar to the frog's motion. In other words, perhaps the reader actively creates the entire correspondence between the terms of metaphor rather than merely organizing a preexisting correspondence.

Yet such an acknowledgment of the mind's creative power goes too far

if it suggests that all image metaphors are equally amenable to this power. That is, we must recognize that some image metaphors *are* more structurally well matched than others. Both the farmer's face and the moon in "Autumn," for instance, are equally positioned (according to the speaker's perspective) above the hedge. Both faces and petals in "Metro" stand out as small, discrete units against a jumbled background. What is key here is that not all image metaphors manifest clear correspondence. If "Metro" had been written (and here I commit aesthetic heresy for comparative purposes) "The apparition of these faces in the crowd: / pencils on a wet, black bough," the reader would struggle (and almost certainly fail) to visualize a physical match between the faces and the pencils—the figures are very different in shape. And still this revision, while heretical, retains the similar jumbled grounds of the crowd and bough; had I also reduced the similarity of backdrop ("pencils on a still, black pond," perhaps), the chance of matching the two figure-ground relationships would sink even further.

So: there is a middle ground between pure formalism (the text contains the similar structures) and pure Constructivism (the reader creates all similarity), and in this middle ground a basic structural congruence in the metaphorical terms is developed and strengthened by the reader's interpretation. Similarity both preexists and increases through the reader's semantic strategies. The argument presented here holds that preexisting structural correspondence prompts the reader to form a visual template that organizes and further develops that correspondence.

Conclusion: A Wider View

The tendency for structurally correspondent image metaphors to elicit a shifting play of visual images certainly bears on Imagist poetry, flush as it is with these metaphors, but it also bears on poems far outside Imagism's purview. What else but an image metaphor, after all, do we find in the first four lines of John Donne's (1990: 121) poem "The Ecstasy"? Here a cognitive assessment of figures and grounds can reveal the poem's complexity.

> Where, like a pillow upon a bed,
> A pregnant bank swelled up to rest
> The violet's reclining head,
> Sat we two, one another's best.

The first two lines present a pillow and a swollen bank that are similarly plump and thus invite the reader to put them into visual alignment. The next two lines reveal that these two objects are merely the grounds for more visual images, as the poem places a "violet's reclining head" on the

bank, along with the speaker and his partner. Crucially, the poem subverts our desire to match figures and ground evenly: in a more symmetrical image metaphor (like that of "Metro," for example), the two people would recline on the pillow as the violet does on the bank. This hypothetical symmetry would retain a categorical and visual order—natural object resting on a plump natural object, people resting on a plump man-made object. (Admittedly, the visual correspondence of the hypothetical situation would be greater with *two* flowers on the bank.) But the poem denies this potential symmetry and only leaves that possibility to our active and visually oriented imaginations.

Over three hundred years later, W. H. Auden's (1945: 197) deceptively simple opening stanza to "As I Walked out One Evening" likewise encourages readers to visually image a strange scene:

> As I walked out one evening,
> Walking down Bristol Street,
> The crowds upon the pavement
> Were fields of harvest wheat.

The metaphor encourages readers to see the crowds, probably dense in the postwork rush or full of walkers taking in the twilight air, as thickly packed fields of wheat. Certainly, the metaphor suggests many nonvisual interpretations—that the crowds are simultaneously dehumanized and restored to a more "natural" setting than the city; that the speaker feels disconnected from other people—but these interpretations are heightened and perhaps even initiated by a visual reading of the metaphorical terms. The reader who images the crowd and the fields, and then mentally switches between them through the mediation of a visual template, is likely to experience the true surprise of the comparison both visually and conceptually. We see therefore that it is image metaphor at large, not some specifically Imagist version of it, that solicits visual imagery; the insights of psychological research apply to any poetry (or even writing in general) with structurally correspondent image metaphors.

This cognitive and phenomenological investigation of image metaphor is just one piece of a larger "poetics of literary visualization." Research by Gibbs and Bogdonovich suggests that the basic mechanism most readers use to understand image metaphor is visual imagery, not knowledge. Extending this visual basis, I hypothesize that most readers organize visual images of structurally correspondent metaphorical terms through a visual template, an abstract mediating figure that allows readers to move easily back and forth between the two images. This template is metaphor specific

and thus less abstract than an image schema, though it is broadly similar to an image schema. The template depends on both the creative, organizing power of the reader and some basic physical agreement between image terms.

The template earns some credibility through an analogy to ambiguous figures, because those figures are more likely to be reversed during visual imagery if the frames of reference for each separate image generally match up; as Peterson et al. demonstrated, a *reconstrual* is an easier type of reversal than a *reference-frame realignment*. Through the visual template, the frames of reference for each metaphorical image are aligned—thus research suggests that the visual images mediated by the visual template may be reversed fairly easily, as I have proposed. The case of ambiguous figures also reminds us that multiple images cannot be fused within visual imagery, a point that forces us to recognize the overreach in some critical claims about image metaphor and perhaps also appreciate the deftness of Imagist theorists in avoiding such overreach in their poetic concepts ("superposition," "visual chord").

A poetics of literary visualization can sharpen our critical acumen: an understanding of the cognitive impossibility of visual fusion helps steer us away from arguments that try to recruit a spurious unity of visual imagery to support a conceptual unity, for example. But I hope that this poetics will be valued not *just* for its service to hermeneutical understandings of texts. I hope that a poetics of visualization will help renew interest in the visual imagination on its own terms too. A poetics should encourage readers to pay closer attention to what kind of visual images they form (if any) in response to what textual encouragement. Considering the ways texts solicit creative responses in our visual imaginations can help produce a fuller picture of the reading experience; this bigger picture includes affective responses to texts, idiosyncratic memories, imagery responses (visual and otherwise), and modes of attention and distraction in addition to interpretive responses that create and assess meanings. A poetics of literary visualization may inform our interpretations of course, but it should also encourage us to think about the broader context of reading and the power of the visual imagination to enliven, reveal, and regulate the text.

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