

# Introduction: from *paragone* to encounter

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I am not a painter, I am a poet.  
Why? I think I would rather be  
a painter, but I am not.<sup>1</sup>

Frank O'Hara's poem 'Why I Am Not a Painter' opens with this equivocal comparison between the roles of poet and painter. The poem focuses on the making of two works of art – one pictorial and one poetic – and implicitly invites the reader to compare the two art forms. The first section describes O'Hara's visits to a house on Long Island that the painter Michael Goldberg was sharing with another painter, Norman Bluhm. Goldberg is working on a painting that includes the word 'SARDINES'. As Goldberg explains to O'Hara, "Yes, it needed something there" (9). O'Hara drops in on another occasion, and finds that the word has been obscured in the finished painting: 'All that is left is just / letters' (15–16). The final section describes the writing of a sequence of twelve poems – which end up as prose – prompted by the colour orange, which the poet calls 'ORANGES'. At the end of the poem, O'Hara sees Goldberg's painting in a gallery: it is 'called SARDINES' (29). Despite its opening statement, then, which appears to differentiate between the roles of painter and poet, the poem ultimately points to an equivalence between them. While Goldberg's finished painting apparently no longer contains the word 'SARDINES', O'Hara's sequence does not contain the word 'ORANGES'.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, however, the poem cannot quite decide whether or not there are similarities between these two forms of art. The question, 'But me?' (17), which introduces the last section about the writing of the poetic sequence, seems to suggest a contrast, but this is left unexplored.

We might note that neither Goldberg's painting nor O'Hara's poem – nor the poetic sequence described within it – are realistic in the sense of corresponding to things in the real world. They are, however, systems of representation



1. Michael Goldberg, *Sardines* (1955)

that are held in a perpetual dialogue with each other. In Goldberg's completed painting, now in the Smithsonian American Art Museum (Figure 1), the word 'SARDINES' is just about legible at the bottom while the word 'EXIT' – not mentioned in O'Hara's poem – appears at the top. The painting thus plays with the distinction between words and images, and between abstract and representational art. The same could be said of O'Hara's poem, which also describes the temporal process by which both visual and verbal art are created. The phrase

'days go by' is repeated three times; and the 'One day' when the poet starts writing 'ORANGES' is echoed by the 'one day' when he sees the finished painting 'SARDINES'. 'Why I Am Not a Painter' attempts to perform this moment of encounter with Goldberg's painting in some of its multiple complexity. In terms of the way the poem works, it would not be going too far to say that it stages a collaboration between the process of making a painting and making a sequence of poetry.

'Why I Am Not a Painter' thus opens up various questions about the relationship between literature and the visual arts that have long fascinated writers, artists, theorists, and critics. Is it competitive or collaborative? To what extent can one form of art be used to define or describe the other? Can the supposed inadequacies of poetry and painting ever be overcome? What happens when one medium attempts to represent the other? Such questions come into particular focus when we consider the practice and process of *ekphrasis* – the verbal representation of visual art. In the past twenty-five years numerous books and articles have appeared covering different aspects of *ekphrasis*, with scholars arguing that it is a fundamental means by which literary artists have explored the nature of aesthetic experience.<sup>3</sup> The trope has typically been regarded by critics and theorists as a competition between different forms of representation. In *Writing for Art* (2008), Stephen Cheeke argued that 'the notion of the *paragone*, a struggle, a contest, a confrontation, remains central to all thinking about *ekphrasis*'.<sup>4</sup> And yet, many *ekphrastic* texts – including O'Hara's 'Why I Am Not a Painter' – reveal the inadequacy of the *paragonal* model in which word and image compete with each other for artistic supremacy. Indeed critics have begun to confront, or perhaps struggle with, this critical paradigm, and to query the traditional view that *ekphrasis* necessarily represents a struggle for mastery or dominance.

The present book sets out to explore this critical shift, and in doing so advocates a more reciprocal model of *ekphrasis* that involves an encounter or exchange between word and image. At the same time, however, we should acknowledge that there has always been an opposition or dialectic between these two models – antagonism and cooperation – and indeed this tension is itself the subject of debate within the theory and practice of *ekphrasis*. Nonetheless our central point is that the agonistic model was the primary means of conceptualizing *ekphrasis* during the first 'ekphrastic turn' of the 1990s, and has continued to be influential into the twenty-first century. Before we introduce the essays in the collection we might briefly outline the ways in which the *paragone* has dominated critical conceptions of intermedial relationships. As we shall see, *ekphrastic* works of various periods and styles have been read through the paradigm of the *paragone* that was established in the Renaissance; and yet this was not the only model available during that period. The Introduction goes on to explore how recent critics and theorists working across various disciplines and periods have started to interrogate this influential paradigm.

### Rethinking the *paragone*

This doubleness and ambiguity about ekphrasis can be located in the word *paragone* itself. The term is often used figuratively to mean a test or trial, although it actually derives from the Italian for ‘comparison’.<sup>5</sup> The word was originally used in relation to painting and sculpture – a debate that was itself visualized and extended in artworks such as Guercino’s *Allegory of Painting and Sculpture* (1637; Figure 2). During the Renaissance the term also came to encompass parallels between painting and poetry. Clark Hulse has written that the discourse of the *paragone*

describes literature and painting through comparisons with one other, establishes a discrete history for each art form, and approves particular modes of behavior for the creators and consumers of the arts. It marks a radical break with the ways medieval poets and, even more, medieval painters spoke of their art, for it submerges the craft elements of art in favour of an intellectualized and theorized language that could buttress the social claims of poet and painter alike.<sup>6</sup>

The *paragone* between poets and painters thus had a sociological basis as well as an artistic or theoretical one: it was a way for both groups to elevate the status of their work. In his classic study of *The Sister Arts* (1958), Jean Hagstrum argues



2. Guercino, *Allegory of Painting and Sculpture* (1637)

that this fascination with comparisons between literature and art was also part of a wider interest in aesthetic and intellectual rivalries: 'This tendency to view various occupations and even ideas and philosophies as competitive is one of the distinguishing marks of Renaissance thought. *Paragoni* existed not only between painting and poetry but also between sculpture and painting, between Florentine design and Venetian color, between nature and art.'<sup>7</sup> Hagstrum offers a seductive picture of the various forms of *paragoni* in the period, but perhaps overstates the extent to which 'Renaissance thought' – if there was such a thing – was distinguished by competition.

Certainly there are various classical and early modern examples of 'paragonal' discourse about poetry and painting. Critics and theorists who have written about the *paragone* frequently cite the comments of Plutarch and Leonardo da Vinci as illustrative examples, setting them in opposition to one another. In his *Moralia*, Plutarch quotes Simonides' saying that 'picture was a dumbe poesie, and poesie a speaking picture'.<sup>8</sup> Leonardo da Vinci playfully reworked Simonides' phrase in his defence of painting known as his *Paragone*, in which he describes painting as the superior art: 'poetry is the science for the blind and painting for the deaf. But painting is nobler than poetry inasmuch as it serves the nobler sense.'<sup>9</sup> In this way, Leonardo's treatise would appear to be as paragonal as its title might suggest. As Claire Farago points out, however, the word *paragone* is first used as the title of Leonardo's defence of painting in Manzi's 1817 edition of the *Trattato della pittura* – in other words, the treatise only became associated with the term *paragone* retrospectively.<sup>10</sup> Indeed the critical tendency to treat Plutarch and Leonardo's comments as fundamentally oppositional has obscured the extent to which they share common ground. Immediately after citing Simonides' saying, Plutarch writes that, while the two arts forms have different methods, they have the same overall aim:

for looke what things or actions painters doe shew as present and in manner as they were in doing, writings doe report and record as done and past; and if the one represent them in colours and figures, and the other exhibite the same in words and sentences, they differ both in matter and also in manner of imitation, howbeit both the one and the other shoote at one end, and have the same intent and purpose. (p. 984)

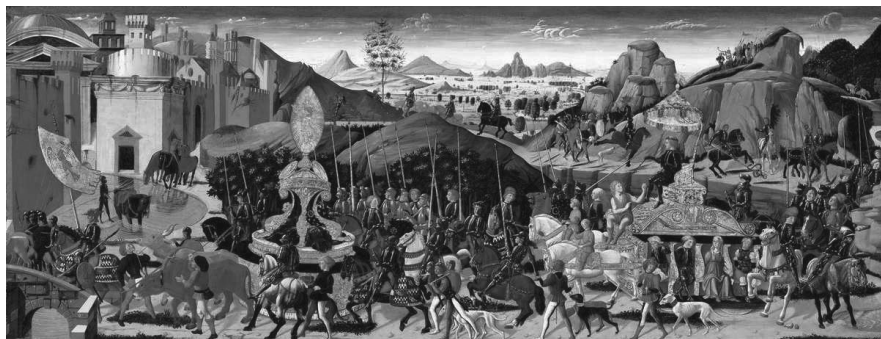
Leonardo, too, admits that poetry and painting share the same goal of 'imitating nature as closely as lies in their power' (p. 59). In this way, comparisons between the two art forms that might appear paragonal or competitive could bring out their similarities as well as differences. Both Plutarch and Leonardo concede that, while poets and painters are ostensibly in competition with one another, their apparent rivalry is part of a larger mimetic competition with Nature – to copy and outdo her.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed the related doctrine of *ut pictura poesis* – which derives from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, and stresses equivalence between the arts – was even more influential and ubiquitous than the *paragone* in the early modern period.

According to Christopher Braider, Horace's tag 'lies at the heart of Renaissance aesthetics', and 'appears in virtually every treatise on art or poetry from the early Renaissance to the Enlightenment'.<sup>12</sup> Part of the appeal of Horace's dictum – which can be translated as 'Poetry is like painting' – was that it corresponded to the period's sense that language should aspire towards pictorial vividness.<sup>13</sup> Classical and Renaissance rhetorical treatises recommended the use of figures such as *enargeia* and *hypotyposis* to produce descriptions so vivid that readers could not only see the things being described but also experience the same emotions as those being represented.<sup>14</sup> The aim of poetry – and other forms of literary writing – was to replicate the (supposed) immediacy of painting in its descriptions of nature and heroic human deeds. We can see something of this aspiration in Plutarch's praise of his fellow historian Thucydides, 'who throughout his whole history contendeth to attaine unto this diluciditie of stile, striving to make the auditour of his wordes the spectatour as it were of the deeds therein contained, and desirous to imprint in the readers the same passions of astonishment, woonder and agony, which the very things themselves would worke when they are represented to the eie'.<sup>15</sup> *Ut pictura poesis* was thus a celebration of the capacity of art – both visual and verbal – to bring about a powerful sense of direct physical presence.

This fascination with the visuality of language is one reason why ekphrasis became such an important literary device in the Renaissance. Adam McKeown comments that, 'as a kind of *enargeia*, it [ekphrasis] is part of the family of devices by which poets understood the capacity of language to approximate visual experience or, more precisely, to resemble picture'.<sup>16</sup> Renaissance readers would have recognized the term ekphrasis, but would have understood it to mean simply 'vivid description'. In classical rhetoric, ekphrasis could refer to virtually any extended description: the word literally means 'to speak out' or 'to tell in full'.<sup>17</sup> It appears as the twelfth exercise in Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* – a graded sequence of fourteen writing exercises used for the purpose of practising composition, which was still being used in the Renaissance: 'Ecphrasis (*ekphrasis*) is descriptive language, bringing what is shown clearly before the eyes. One should describe both persons and things, occasions and places, dumb animals and, in addition, growing things ... In composing an ecphrasis, one should make use of a relaxed style and adorn it with varied figures and, throughout, creating an imitation of the things being described'.<sup>18</sup> And yet, despite this wonderfully open definition of the term, many writers found themselves drawn to describing works of pictorial art. Following classical examples – such as Homer's description of Achilles' shield in Book 18 of the *Iliad* and Virgil's description of Aeneas' shield in Book 8 of the *Aeneid* – Renaissance authors found pictures, sculptures, and other elaborate artefacts to be ideal subjects for vivid description. As Claire Preston suggests, such descriptions presented each writer with an opportunity 'to write self-consciously about his own art even as he shows it off'.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the key Renaissance example appears in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*, which describes Lucrece's encounter with a painting of the fall of Troy.



3. Biagio d'Antonio and Workshop, *The Triumph of Camillus* (c. 1470–75)

As with several other ekphrastic texts from this period, Shakespeare invokes the notion of a *paragone* between words and images; as the narrator puts it, ‘To see sad sights moves more than hear them told’ (1324).<sup>20</sup> However, the ekphrasis itself offers a far more complex and ambivalent treatment of the relationship between seeing and hearing – and, implicitly, poetry and painting – than this phrase might suggest. The painting recalls the elaborately composed battle scenes found on the panels of Italian bridal dower chests (‘cassoni’), which often depicted Trojan or classical subjects (see Figure 3).<sup>21</sup> Yet the primary inspiration for Shakespeare’s ekphrasis seems to have been literary rather than pictorial. It resembles Virgil’s description of Aeneas contemplating similar images of the fall of Troy in Book 1 of the *Aeneid*, as well as incorporating elements from Philostratus’ verbal descriptions of paintings in the *Imagines*. These classical sources remind us that ekphrasis often involves an encounter between literary texts.<sup>22</sup>

Lucrece is fascinated by the painter’s skill, but she becomes increasingly interested by the figures depicted on the painting; comparing her sufferings to those of the tragic figure of Hecuba, Lucrece ‘shapes her sorrow to the beldam’s woes’ (1458).<sup>23</sup> And, in a remarkable formulation, Lucrece carries out an aesthetic transaction with the pictorial artwork she is looking at:

So Lucrece, set a-work, sad tales doth tell  
To pencilled pensiveness, and coloured sorrow;  
She lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow. (1496–8)

This passage ostensibly describes Lucrece’s emotional encounter with the painting – but it also offers a complex definition of ekphrasis itself. Lucrece seems to ‘borrow’ the visuality of the painting that Shakespeare has created verbally.<sup>24</sup> Ekphrasis is figured here as a symbiosis of ‘words’ and ‘looks’ rather than a competition; Shakespeare displays an awareness of the limitations of both forms of art, but suggests that they are able to borrow from each other. Even though the painter’s depictions of emotion are ‘pencilled’ and ‘coloured’ (1497) – terms that might imply misrepresentation or deception – Lucrece nevertheless finds

them remarkably powerful. Shakespeare implies that, while neither visual nor verbal representations can represent the thing itself, both have the capacity to conjure up images and ideas in what the narrator suggestively calls 'the eye of mind' (1426). This passage thus reminds us that Renaissance ekphrases – and *paragoni* between literature and art more broadly – often highlight the representational and philosophical affinities between word and image.

### Lessing and the *paragone*

When we turn to the critical history of writings on literature and the visual arts since the Renaissance, however, it becomes clear that the *paragone* – narrowly understood as competition or rivalry – has proved to be more long-lasting and influential than the notion of *ut pictura poesis*. Part of the explanation for this is the influence of G. E. Lessing's *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (1766), which directly attacked Horace's doctrine. Lessing famously argued that painting is a spatial art and that literature is a temporal or narrative art, and that the two media are therefore technically and philosophically distinct. He writes:

if it is true that in its imitations painting uses completely different means or signs than does poetry, namely figures and colors and space rather than articulated sounds in time ... then signs existing in space can express only objects whose wholes or parts coexist, while signs that follow one another and express only objects whose wholes or parts are consecutive.<sup>25</sup>

Like Plutarch and Leonardo, then, Lessing concedes some degree of similarity between the two arts, in the sense that they both imitate reality; but for him they do not represent the same reality.<sup>26</sup> By the nineteenth century the neoclassical concept of *ut pictura poesis* seemed outmoded as art came to be seen as an expression of what Wendy Steiner calls the 'human spirit' rather than an 'imitation of reality'.<sup>27</sup> Of course, there was still a close interaction between the 'sister arts' in the nineteenth century, exemplified by Pre-Raphaelitism. And yet, as Malcolm Bull puts it, during this period 'the *ut pictura poesis* motif ceased to be of central importance. Painters no longer needed to align themselves with poets to enhance their professional status for the academies had achieved that goal, and the new paradigm of genius emphasized spontaneity rather than learning.'<sup>28</sup>

The binary opposition between poetry and painting that Lessing reinforced continued to inform debates about word and image up until the late twentieth century. At this time, there was an expansion of critical interest in ekphrasis, and the modern understanding of the concept – as the literary representation of visual art – was crystallized. Lessing is discussed in Murray Krieger's pioneering essay 'Ekphrasis and the Still Movement of Poetry; or *Laokoön* Revisited', first published in 1967. Krieger uses the Chinese jar in T. S. Eliot's 'Burnt Norton' to make what he calls an 'anti-Lessing' assertion: that poetry does indeed have a 'claim to form'. He suggests that this is achieved in the poem 'by the use of an



object of spatial and plastic art to symbolize the spatiality and plasticity of literature's temporality'. Krieger continues: 'a classic genre was formulated that, in effect, institutionalized this tactic: the *ekphrasis*, or the imitation in literature of a work of plastic art'.<sup>29</sup> And yet, while Krieger introduced a generation of literary scholars to the modern conception of *ekphrasis*, he implies that the trope is an exception to Lessing's theoretical rules: 'literature retains its essential nature as a time-art even as its words, by reaching stillness by way of pattern, seen to appropriate sculpture's plasticity as well' (p. 285). Thus Krieger's essay effectively endorses the views of theorists such as Edmund Burke and Lessing by claiming that there is an essential difference between poetry and painting. Krieger argues that the competition between the two art forms favours poetry, which can 'uniquely order spatial stasis within its temporal dynamics'; in other words, it can incorporate the visual aspects of painting within language, and create 'the illusion of an organised simultaneity' (p. 285).

Some twenty years later, W. J. T. Mitchell devoted an entire chapter to Lessing in his study of *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986), which critiques the opposition between words and images from a more explicitly ideological standpoint.<sup>30</sup> Mitchell acknowledges that the differences between words and images 'seem so fundamental', but argues that

there is no essential difference between poetry and painting, no difference, that is, that is given for all time by the inherent natures of the media, the objects they represent, or the laws of the human mind ... These differences ... are riddled with all the antithetical values the culture wants to embrace or repudiate: the *paragone* or debate of poetry and painting is never just a contest between two kinds of signs, but a struggle between body and soul, world and mind, nature and culture. (p. 49)

While acknowledging the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* and the 'sister arts' in criticism, Mitchell suggests that such concepts of comparison and resemblance have been spurned by critics and theorists, who generally value ideas of difference and discrimination more highly. Mitchell thus seeks to expose the *paragone* as an ideological construct, bound up with various other institutional and political contests.<sup>31</sup> Yet his emphasis upon the *paragone* fed into several key studies of *ekphrasis* in the early 1990s – and, despite his deconstructionist approach, may ironically have reinforced some of the binaries that he sought to expose.

Perhaps the key study of *ekphrasis* that appeared during this period was James Heffernan's *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (1993). Heffernan's book opens with the claim that there is no more to learn about the sister arts by simply comparing them. It presents Mitchell's *Iconology* as upholding the *paragone*, which Heffernan presents as a more fruitful way of considering the relationship between word and image.<sup>32</sup> He goes on to offer a definition of *ekphrasis* that has become standard: 'the verbal representation of visual representation' (p. 3). Heffernan's explanation for the endurance of the trope is in its 'paragonal energies'. He writes: 'Because it verbally represents visual art, *ekphrasis* stages a contest between rival modes of representation:

between the driving force of the narrating word and the stubborn resistance of the fixed image' (p. 6). Showing the influence of the feminist and Marxist theories of the 1980s and 1990s, Heffernan argues that this competition is frequently figured in terms of gender: 'the contest it stages is often powerfully gendered: the expression of a duel between male and female gazes, the voice of a male speech striving to control a female image that is both alluring and threatening' (p. 6). Heffernan's analysis of the individual works he discusses is careful and illuminating, and his book is still valuable for its broad chronological sweep; but his argument that ekphrasis is permeated by 'the struggle for power – the *paragone* – between the image and the word' (p. 136) now seems like the product of a particular critical and theoretical moment.<sup>33</sup>

We can see something of the limitations of this paragonal approach when we consider its application to a key ekphrastic text. In his 1994 study *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts*, Grant F. Scott argued that Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' dramatises 'a *paragone* between poet and artwork'.<sup>34</sup> Certainly the *paragone* is implicit in the poem, not least in the speaker's rapturous address to the urn in the opening stanza: 'Sylvan historian, who canst thus express / A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme' (3–4).<sup>35</sup> But we might suggest that the poem resists and complicates the notion of the representational contest. Scott writes that, by the end of the poem, 'the urn holds the decided advantage in the *paragone* and is in an ideal position to take the laurel wreath' (p. 146). However the fact that the urn appears to have a legend – a piece of text – inscribed upon it collapses the very terms of the *paragone*: "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all / Ye know on earth and all ye need to know'" (49–50). Keats's urn appears to be a hybrid artwork that contains both words and images. It offers further evidence that words can be spatialized – and as puzzling as the images depicted on the urn itself. As Alastair Fowler has commented, 'The common contrast between texts that take time to read and pictures seen in an instant is entirely specious. Visual art is not instantaneously accessible. An educated eye tracking through a picture in repeated scans picks up impressions, associations, and allusions in a way quite comparable with the procedure of reading.'<sup>36</sup>

Raphael's cartoon *The Sacrifice at Lystra* (Figure 4), which may be an indirect source of Keats's poem, exemplifies this kind of pictorial complexity. The image depicts an episode from Acts 14, in which Paul and Barnabas cure a cripple, and the inhabitants of Lystra mistake them for the gods Jupiter and Mercury. The people are about to make a sacrifice to the pair, although some in the crowd recognize Paul and Barnabas' dismay, with one young man attempting to stop the sacrifice. In this way, the image is itself concerned with meaning and interpretation, and reminds us that our experience of visual artworks is a process: an act of 'reading' that unfolds in time. It is also textually mediated: as well as being inspired by a biblical narrative, the image prompted the painter B. R. Haydon to write two articles about it, which are themselves echoed by Keats's poem.<sup>37</sup> Raphael's cartoon thus prompts us to reflect upon the complex relationship



4. Raphael, *The Sacrifice at Lystra* (c. 1515–16)

between reading an image and reading a text, which is arguably the central theme of the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'. Scott concludes his reading of the poem by suggesting that "The *paragone* appears to result in a draw" (p. 147); but his account arguably highlights the problems of the *paragone* as an interpretative model. As with many ekphrastic poems, the comparison that the speaker sets up between poetry and visual art is not a source of genuine anxiety but rather a literary and rhetorical device: it is one of several strategies that the poem uses to persuade us that the urn has a prior and independent existence outside the text.

### **Beyond the *paragone***

In the twenty-first century we have seen a new wave of ekphrastic studies, which has coincided with an increasing interest in formal, aesthetic, and rhetorical concerns.<sup>38</sup> As noted above, critics working in different disciplines and periods have begun to query the notion of ekphrasis as rivalry or competition. This critical and theoretical shift demands a new form of ekphrastic poetics, which is less concerned with representational and institutional struggles, and more concerned with ideas of ethics, affect, and intersubjectivity.<sup>39</sup> There has also been a greater acceptance of the possibility of free will and agency – both in terms of how critics write about characters within texts and how they conceive of writers and artists. Correspondingly, we have seen a shift in the vocabulary used, with twenty-first-century critics increasingly describing ekphrasis as a form of encounter or exchange. For example, Valentine Cunningham has questioned Heffernan's emphasis on paragonal energies by suggesting that it is

rather ‘the tension between the realist, presencing, logocentric desire and the counter-pressure of absence ... that is manifested in the repeated moment of ekphrasis, and that keeps the tradition alive’.<sup>40</sup> Cunningham also discusses the ways in which ekphrasis frequently involves encounters between characters within the text and other fictional or mythical figures – such as the tapestried appearance of Ovid’s Philomel in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. He reminds us that such intertextual encounters raise ethical as well as aesthetic questions. As Cunningham puts it, ‘The ethical note is clear: the voice of the ekphrastic poet is often ... morally weighted, admonitory, instructive; the ekphrastic encounter is commonly for the good of the fictional character, is morally heuristic’ (p. 65). By characterizing ekphrasis as a meeting or encounter, Cunningham invites us to attend to its concern with the points of connection between both individuals and forms of mimesis.

Stephen Cheeke’s *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (2008), which focuses on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature, is also interested in questions of ethics as well as aesthetics. He argues that ekphrasis often focuses on artworks that represent the pain of others – his chapter on poetic responses to Brueghel, for example, is entitled ‘Suffering’.<sup>41</sup> Cheeke also raises larger questions about how we should conceive of the relationship between literature and visual art, writing that it is ‘best thought of not in terms of sisterly bonds at all but rather as one of radical difference and alterity’ (p. 6). Yet he goes on to acknowledge that ekphrasis is not always concerned with difference or otherness:

the poem knows something or tells something that had been held back by the silent image. But there is also the notion of transgression, of crossing borders, of translation. Sometimes the encounter with alterity takes on a special charm when it is not merely an occasion for the discovery of difference but a place of relation and therefore of the possibility of exchange. (p. 6)

In Cheeke’s reading of Derek Mahon’s ‘Courtyards in Delft’, for example, he argues that, while the poem ‘seems intended to break through the surface perfection of de Hooch’s painting’, this does not amount to hostility: ‘it would not quite be correct to say that the poet (or poem) somehow harbours a wish to control or dominate the image-as-other, or to overcome the differences between poem and painting, even though these differences are also the route of the exchange’ (pp. 35–6). Thus Cheeke’s conception of ekphrasis goes beyond the *paragone*, and admits the possibility of interartistic exchange or transaction.<sup>42</sup>

The potential alterity or foreignness of the ekphrastic object suggests that ekphrasis can be thought of as being akin to the practices of translation. As such, it opens up wider questions regarding intercultural – including postcolonial – relations that have attracted the attention of critics working in French and francophone studies. In 2010 Susan Harrow edited a special issue of *French Studies* that sought to ‘develop the ekphrastic beyond traditional assumptions of

linear influence, mimetic translation, and textual incorporation'.<sup>43</sup> She writes that the contributors to the issue 'conceive not of rival arts but of reciprocal visual and textual cultures' (p. 257). In particular, Harrow queries Heffernan's model of a struggle for mastery between image and word: 'Now the "struggle for mastery" trope is displaced by the anti-hegemonic project of new ekphrastic forms that are defined by their refusal to colonize art and by their preoccupation with the visual image that obstructs its own incorporation by the textual medium' (p. 258). Harrow's vocabulary remains politicized, likening ekphrasis to a form of colonization – yet she offers a more optimistic view than that of earlier critics, suggesting that ekphrastic writers may be attracted to visual art works that resist attempts to convert them into language.<sup>44</sup> This is especially the case when we consider abstract or non-representational art, which is often neglected in traditional conceptions of ekphrasis.

There has also been an increasing scepticism about the *paragone* among scholars of twenty-first-century Anglo-American literature. For example, in her discussion of the poetry of Cole Swensen and Sharon Dolin, Anne Keefe has described contemporary ekphrasis as 'an active poetic strategy or process', and as a 'hybrid of the verbal and visual'.<sup>45</sup> Such a conception of ekphrasis, she writes, 'allows us to understand the space of the ekphrastic poem as an open and fluid one of exchange between the arts, and thus complicate the historically inscribed generic boundaries and power dynamics inherent not only in the verbal/visual exchange but also in the social relationships of inequality that have become mapped onto the ekphrastic encounter' (p. 135). The idea of the ekphrastic encounter is fundamental to David Kennedy's book-length study of *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere* (2012), which explores the work of poets such as Kelvin Corcoran, Peter Hughes, and Gillian Clarke. Kennedy is drawn to the term *encounter* 'not only because of its meanings of an accidental unexpected meeting, but also because of its sense that as a consequence of such a meeting there is a change of direction ... There is no doubt that art can present us with sudden challenges, but we should be cautious about the idea that this means that ekphrasis is inherently *paragonal*, that is, a struggle between different modes of representation'.<sup>46</sup> Such arguments have considerable implications for our understanding of ekphrasis – and further highlight the gap between what critics analyse in the ekphrastic 'exchange' and what poets set out to do. Several of the contributors to the present book borrow and extend Kennedy's model of the encounter, and use the term to explore interpersonal as well as inter-artistic relationships.

Meanwhile, critics of Renaissance literature and culture have begun to recognize that, despite its currency in the period, the *paragone* does not always illuminate early modern ekphrastic texts.<sup>47</sup> In an important essay on Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, Catherine Belsey has argued that the paragonal model works rather better for actual rather than notional ekphrases: 'The conflictual model works with varying degrees of success when brought to bear on poems describing existing paintings, but it might be argued that there is some question about its

usefulness in relation to fictitious images ... An impartial observer might regard creation purely for the sake of control as an empty exercise: haven't the best creators allowed their products free will?'<sup>48</sup> Belsey also notes the emphasis in *Lucrece* on aesthetic lending and borrowing that we explored earlier, and offers the following critique of the concept of ekphrastic rivalry:

It is perhaps worth reflecting that contention requires a shared element. There is no possibility of rivalry between a raven and a writing desk, since there is no basis on which they can compete. Comparison implies common ground and offers alternative possibilities: either to do battle for sole possession of the terrain in question or to regard it as a place to cooperate ... Rather than contending against the picture it creates, Shakespeare's poem joins with it in the enterprise of defining and redirecting his protagonist's humiliation, her sense of irreparable loss, her justified anger, and her resolution to inaugurate what will be in effect a second Rome. (p. 190)

Common ground and co-operation would appear to be the new watchwords in twenty-first-century ekphrastic poetics. We might also note that Belsey is concerned to explore *Lucrece*'s emotional state, and the ways in which both words and images serve an important function in enabling her to represent her passions.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps, then, we may be seeing a revival of the alternative model of inter-artistic relations – *ut pictura poesis* – albeit a more complex and sophisticated version of the doctrine. In her recent discussion of artistic 'incompletion' in early modern drama, Chloe Porter notes that '*ut pictura poesis* is often linked to the transcendence of verbal/visual boundaries in the pursuit of aesthetic perfection'.<sup>50</sup> The concept thus returns us to the apparent *paragone* between Plutarch and Leonardo discussed earlier. *Ut pictura poesis* implies that both painting and poetry have the same end: to create representations that possess *enargeia* or vividness.<sup>51</sup> As we noted above, *enargeia* involved stirring the passions of readers and audiences as well as making them 'see' – and perhaps this is one reason why ekphrastic texts often describe emotional as well as representational encounters. Such moments both figure and augment the reader's emotional engagement with the literary text. Thus critics of ekphrasis in the twenty-first century are less concerned with emphasizing the differences between representational media, and more concerned with the capacity of art – whether visual, verbal, or a hybrid of the two – to explore the possibility of 'aesthetic perfection'; sublime experiences that are beyond representation or articulation.

## Ekphrastic encounters

The critical survey we have presented above suggests that, while some ekphrastic texts might invoke the idea of the *paragone*, they frequently go beyond it or question some of its terms. We have also begun to see that ekphrasis involves a variety of encounters: not only between word and image, but also between

literary texts. As Grant Scott rightly observes, ekphrasis is 'necessarily inter-textual'.<sup>52</sup> It can also involve an encounter between emotional individuals, between art and life, between the reader and the text, between the present and past, and even between scholarly disciplines.<sup>53</sup> But we have also seen how such binary oppositions – which the very duality of ekphrasis certainly encourages – begin to collapse under scrutiny. In other words, while the trope ostensibly reminds us of the difference between visual and verbal modes of representation, it may actually demonstrate the affinity and comparability between these forms.

The present book seeks to identify, map, and evaluate this important conceptual shift in ekphrastic studies. Some of the chapters offer fresh perspectives on well-known ekphrastic texts, while others introduce less canonical works. And while some contributors focus on examples of 'notional' ekphrasis, others explore encounters between specific literary and visual artists, or particular visual artworks that inspired literary authors. The later chapters in the volume seek to expand the definition of ekphrasis by considering the writings of visual artists, or postmodern works of art that combine words and images. Jerzy Jarniewicz's recent identification of nineteen types of ekphrasis in the poetry of Derek Mahon is matched, in the present book, by Liliane Louvel's argument for seven different types of ekphrasis in the writings of the British painter Stanley Spencer.<sup>54</sup> Both accounts suggest that the present-day ekphrastic critic is more interested in questions of range and scope than his or her predecessors. Such an interest allows discussions of ekphrasis to be extended beyond its traditional boundaries; and it is such an extension that underlies many of the chapters collected here. The chapters that follow are cross-period, transnational, and interdisciplinary, and offer an exciting range of case studies and theoretical approaches. What all of our contributors share, however, is a desire to complicate the paragonal model of ekphrasis and to offer a set of new methodologies that might shape and influence subsequent research.

The first part of the book explores four early modern ekphrastic encounters. In the opening chapter, Rachel Eisendrath offers a new reading of Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*. She argues that, instead of a static struggle between the arts, the ekphrasis in the poem represents an encounter between the past and present – at a time when Renaissance thinkers increasingly focused on material fragments as a way of understanding history. She also complicates our sense of the relationship between subject and object in ekphrastic texts, arguing that Shakespeare reveals the ultimate interdependence of the two. This is figured in various emotional encounters in the poem, including Lucrece's exchanges with her maid and with the painted figure of Hecuba. Richard Meek's chapter on Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* is also concerned with emotional encounters. He focuses on the so-called 'Painter scene' in which the play's protagonist, Hieronimo, encounters a Painter and commissions a visual artwork based on his plight. Critics have tended to argue that the representational *paragone* implicit in this scene ultimately demonstrates the superiority of drama. Meek's chapter

questions this approach to the play, and argues that *The Spanish Tragedy* highlights drama's interdependence with, rather than superiority to, other forms of art. He suggests that Hieronimo's quest for a suitable representational mode to communicate his emotions is intriguingly related to the play's ambivalent fascination with the art of narrative.

Keith McDonald argues that Andrew Marvell's poetry, while being deeply concerned with the visual arts, helps us look beyond the paragonal opposition between text and image. He examines two little known Latin poems that accompany an unusual portrait of Oliver Cromwell, and argues that they present ekphrasis as *prosopopoeia*, exposing the boundaries of language and culture in both visual and verbal modes. When Marvell's fascination with how lives are represented combines with metaphors of glass and reflection, we embark upon his ekphrastic encounter: of specific visual and temporal moments that define human mortality. Jason Lawrence's chapter takes us into the early eighteenth century, and considers a key early work of art history: Jonathan Richardson's *Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as it Relates to Painting* (1719). He focuses on Richardson's 'Dissertation' on Poussin's painting of *Tancred and Erminia* – which is itself a depiction of a scene from Tasso's epic poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (1581). Richardson's *paragone* of the two forms is intended to emphasize Poussin's ability 'to make use of the Advantages This Art has over that of his Competitor'. As Lawrence points out, however, the pre-eminence of the art of painting can only be proven via a sustained verbal comparison of the painting and its poetic source, which ultimately implies a more complex, symbiotic relationship in the encounter between the visual and literary arts than Richardson initially admits.

The second part of the book focuses on the long nineteenth century, and begins by considering the influence of Lessing's *Laocoön*. Catriona MacLeod examines the long afterlife of Lessing's treatise as it reappears as a discursive 'foreign body' within a number of novels, which themselves explore and test the relationship between narrative motion and visual spatiality. Going beyond strong critical readings of ekphrasis as a hostile stand-off between text and image, MacLeod considers the ventriloquizing of Lessing in Wilhelm Heinse's *Ardinghello* (1787) and Adalbert Stifter's *Der Nachsommer* (*Indian Summer*, 1857). She argues that these hauntings by Lessing reveal not only the entanglement of the modern novel with theories of representation, but also its self-reflexive and observational stance on its own and the reader's mediation. Stephen Cheeke's chapter is concerned with the influence of a specific work of visual art: the supposed portrait of Beatrice Cenci, which was a major nineteenth-century tourist attraction in Rome. Cheeke suggests that Nathaniel Hawthorne was the writer most obsessively drawn to the portrait, in which Hawthorne sought to read an original innocence and an innocence regained or redeemed after terrible experience. Through a detailed reading of *The Marble Faun*, Cheeke argues that the transfiguration of Beatrice Cenci occurs as an essentially pictorial effect that is posited as more potent than theological argument or discursive exposition: an effect of the image that cuts across discourse or verbal reasoning.



Lauren Weingarden explores the symbiotic relationship between Émile Zola's ekphrastic writings and Édouard Manet's paintings. She argues that Manet, an avid reader of Zola's novels and a friend of the writer, would have read Zola's 1868 preface to *Thérèse Raquin*, in which the author first put forward his theories of naturalism. Weingarden proposes that Manet painted Zola's portrait in 1868 as a retort to Zola's perceived misinterpretation of Manet's artistic method. The portrait of Zola also reveals how Manet, in turn, appropriated the writer and his writing for his own artistic agenda, the subsequent manifestations of which culminate in his final masterpiece, *A Bar at the Folies Bergère* (1882). Jane Thomas's chapter considers another example of an encounter between a writer and visual artist. She explores the non-hierarchical, creative exchange of meaning between Hamo Thornycroft's 1884 sculpture of *The Mower* and its accompanying epigraph from Matthew Arnold's 1866 elegy 'Thyrsis'. This relationship can be regarded as a form of 'reverse ekphrasis' – when a visual artist produces an equivalent of a verbal text. Thomas suggests that sculpture and epigraph, taken together, constitute a third intermedial artwork in which the compromised relationship between the aesthetic act and the desire to apprehend the 'real' is manifested through a complex series of textual encounters, with borrowings from classicism, naturalism, realism, pastoral elegy, and Romantic lyric.

The third part of the book turns to twentieth- and twenty-first-century examples of ekphrasis. The four chapters in this section further complicate the notion that ekphrasis is simply the verbal representation of visual art; these case studies involve texts and artworks that cannot be categorized as straightforwardly visual or verbal, and thus demand a more expansive and dialogic model of intermedial relations. Liliane Louvel explores the letters, diaries, and essays of Stanley Spencer. She argues that Spencer's writings are valuable because they combine ekphrasis with theoretical discussions and defences of his own artistic practice. Louvel's chapter suggests that ekphrasis is more a mood than a mode with its own distinctive characteristics. In Spencer's writings, what we might call ekphrastic desire manifests itself as sudden moments of recognition or of what Louvel calls 'advent'. In the process Louvel describes seven types of ekphrasis, which she suggests might constitute a renewal of ekphrastic criticism. Tilo Reifenstein's chapter considers the importance of writing within the artworks of the American artist Raymond Pettibon. He proposes that Pettibon's pen-and-ink drawings, which include varying amounts of written texts, question the implicit opposition between the visual and the verbal that underlies conventional critical definitions of ekphrasis. The chapter shows how Pettibon introduces textual fragmentation and nonlinearity through his complex responses to and paraphrasing of ekphrastic authors, and how this opens up writing to the contingencies usually associated with drawing. Reifenstein argues that this quality makes Pettibon's work reducible to neither the discourse of language nor that of the image.

Johanna Malt explores a different kind of ekphrastic encounter: namely the imprint or 'contact-image' made when an artwork encounters a body or some other real object. The chapter explores these questions in the light of the work of contemporary French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, notably through his notions of 'exscription' and touch. As Malt puts it, 'In Nancy's thought, signification and presence, the readable and the visible are articulated in a relation of mutual touching and withdrawal which is lateral, metonymic, and works in both directions.' The chapter uses Nancy's work to complicate W. J. T. Mitchell's theories of text-image relations – and claims that the image and its non-signifying other are engaged in a non-appropriating embrace rather than an antagonistic *paragone*. In the final chapter Claus Clüver reiterates his 1997 rejection of the conventional restriction of the objects of ekphrastic representation to visual representations of phenomenal reality. For Clüver, such a definition excludes all twentieth-century non-representational painting and sculpture, as well as all architectural objects and their verbal representations.<sup>55</sup> He also queries the designation of ekphrasis as a purely literary phenomenon; Clüver accordingly defines ekphrasis as 'the verbal representation of real or fictive configurations composed in a non-kinetic visual medium'. But he remarks that this formulation still supports the traditional emphasis on ekphrasis as an instance of intermedial transposition. Clüver argues that it is more rewarding to approach an ekphrastic text as the record of an intense gaze at a meaningful visual configuration, and to consider how in different periods and textual genres such encounters have been verbalized. While questioning the concept of 'iconotexts' as developed by Liliane Louvel, Clüver endorses her concern with studying the reception of such verbal representations and to examine, as he puts it, 'the reader's performance, or how verbal clues are processed to result in a mental image of a visual configuration'.<sup>56</sup>

These final chapters thus reflect the vibrancy and scope of ekphrastic studies today. They also demonstrate the continuing interest of artists, writers, and theorists in exploring and debating the relationship between visual and verbal art. James Heffernan's Afterword reflects upon the wider implications of the present book in relation to his own important work on ekphrasis, which has been so fruitful in framing – and reframing – critical ideas about the trope. He suggests that his earlier definition of ekphrasis may have its limitations, but nonetheless cautions against seeing all ekphrastic encounters as entirely harmonious. Like the collection as a whole, the Afterword points forward towards future scholarly conversations, meetings, and encounters.

## Notes

- 1 Frank O'Hara, 'Why I Am Not a Painter', in Mark Ford (ed.), *The New Poets: An Anthology* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2004), p. 30.
- 2 See Brian Glavey's discussion of the poem in *The Wallflower Avant-Garde: Modernism, Sexuality, and Queer Ekphrasis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 'Even as the

poem distinguishes between the arts it renders them casually interchangeable: The poem takes its inspiration from a color; the painting begins with a word and ends up “only letters” (p. 108). See also Hazel Smith, *Hyperscapes in the Poetry of Frank O'Hara: Difference, Homosexuality, Topography* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 170–4.

- 3 Several key studies of ekphrasis appeared in the 1990s: Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); James A. W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993); and John Hollander, *The Gazer's Spirit: Poems Speaking to Silent Works of Art* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See also W. J. T. Mitchell's important essay ‘Ekphrasis and the Other’ (1992), rpt. in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 151–81. In the twenty-first century critics have attempted to expand the definition of the term to include music and film: see Siglind Bruhn, *Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2000) and Laura M. Sager Eidt, *Writing and Filming the Painting: Ekphrasis in Literature and Film* (Amsterdam and London: Rodopi, 2008).
- 4 Stephen Cheeke, *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 21.
- 5 See Claire Farago, ‘Paragone’, in Jane Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996). The OED suggests that the Italian word *paragone* means ‘comparative analysis between alternatives resulting in a choice’ (OED, ‘paragon’, *n.* and *adj.*).
- 6 Clark Hulse, *The Rule of Art: Literature and Painting in the Renaissance* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 9.
- 7 Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 66. For further discussion of the relationship between visual and verbal art in the Renaissance see Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry 1560–1620: Relations between Literature and the Visual Arts in the English Renaissance* (Leamington Spa: James Hall, 1981); David Evett, *Literature and the Visual Arts in Tudor England* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1990); Judith Dundas, *Pencils Rhetorique: Renaissance Poets and the Art of Painting* (Newark and London: University of Delaware Press, 1993); Christopher Braider, *Refiguring the Real: Picture and Modernity in Word and Image, 1400–1700* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Norman E. Land, *The Viewer as Poet: The Renaissance Response to Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (eds), *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Mario Klarer, *Ekphrasis: Bildbeschreibung als Repräsentationstheorie bei Spenser, Sidney, Lyly und Shakespeare* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001); Leonard Barkan, *Mute Poetry, Speaking Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); and Rachel Eisendrath, *Poetry in a World of Things: Aesthetics and Empiricism in Renaissance Ekphrasis* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- 8 Plutarch, *The philosophie, commonlie called, the morals*, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1603), p. 984. Plutarch is referring to Simonides of Ceos (c. 556–467

- bc). Philip Sidney famously describes poetry as a 'speaking picture' in *The Defence of Poesy* (see *The Oxford Authors: Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 217).
- 9 Leonardo da Vinci, *Paragone: A Comparison the Arts*, trans. Irma A. Richter (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 50–1.
  - 10 See Farago, 'Paragone', in Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*.
  - 11 Cf. Leonard Barkan, who writes that 'The *paragone* is a medium of theory because ... the arts are able to define themselves largely by reference to each other and generally in terms of their means of representation. Mimesis is by its very nature a discourse of competition – or, at the very least, of comparison' (*Mute Poetry, Speaking Pictures*, p. 154).
  - 12 Christopher Braider, 'The Paradoxical Sisterhood: "Ut Pictura Poesis"', in Glyn P. Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 3: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 168–75 (p. 168).
  - 13 See Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, in D. A. Russell and M. Winterbottom (eds), *Classical Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 107.
  - 14 See Terence Cave, 'Enargeia: Erasmus and the Rhetoric of Presence in the Sixteenth Century', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 16 (1976), 5–19; and François Rigolot, 'The Rhetoric of Presence: Art, Literature, and Illusion', in Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, Volume 3*, pp. 161–7.
  - 15 Plutarch, *The philosophie, commonlie called, the morals*, trans. Holland, p. 984.
  - 16 Adam McKeown, 'Looking at Britomart Looking at Pictures', *SEL: Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 45 (2005), 43–63 (p. 43).
  - 17 See Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts*, p. 18 n34. Murray Krieger writes that 'The early meaning given "ekphrasis" in Hellenistic rhetoric ... was totally unrestricted: it referred, most broadly, to a verbal description of something, almost anything, in life or art' (*Ekphrasis*, p. 7).
  - 18 George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), p. 117.
  - 19 Claire Preston, 'Ekphrasis: Painting in Words', in Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (eds), *Renaissance Figures of Speech* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 115–29 (p. 121).
  - 20 The narrator of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* stresses the power of poetry to outdo painting in its ability to offer a visual representation of reality, referring to the 'Poets wit, that passeth Painter farre / In picturing the parts of beautie daint' (*The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche, Jr (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), book 3, Proem 2). For further discussion of word and image in Spenser see, among others, John B. Bender, *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972); Theresa M. Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation and the Decorums of Vision* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Dundas, *Pencils Rhetorique*, ch. 3; McKeown, 'Looking at Britomart'; and Jane Grogan, *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in 'The Faerie Queene'* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
  - 21 See Katherine Duncan-Jones and H. R. Woudhuysen (eds), *Shakespeare's Poems* (London: Thomson Learning, 2007), p. 48.
  - 22 See E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 4th edn (London: Phaidon, 1972), pp. 176–7. See also David Rosand, "'Troyes Painted Woes': Shakespeare and the Pictorial

- Imagination', *Hebrew University Studies in Literature*, 8 (1980), 77–97 (esp. p. 88). *Lucrece* is discussed in further detail by Rachel Eisendrath in Chapter 1, below.
- 23 Quotations from *Lucrece* are taken from Colin Burrow (ed.), *The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
  - 24 See Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 76.
  - 25 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. Edward Allen McCormick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 78.
  - 26 See Wendy Steiner, *The Colors of Rhetoric* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 13.
  - 27 Ibid., p. 14. Braider comments that, 'By the close of the eighteenth century, the deliberately anti-poetic version of realism associated with the rise of the novel had taken hold' ('The Paradoxical Sisterhood', p. 175).
  - 28 See Malcolm Bull, 'Ut pictura poesis', in Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art*. For an insightful overview of word–image relations in the Victorian period see Hilary Fraser, 'Art and the Literary', in Juliet John (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Literary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 637–55. She writes: 'Rather than looking back to the classical formulations of Aristotle, Horace, and others ... nineteenth-century writers and artists, technologies and media, inaugurate reciprocities between the literary and the visual that we associate with modernity, and that gesture forwards to the cultural preoccupations, the hybrid graphic textual genres, and the hypermedia technologies of our own post-digital times' (p. 640).
  - 29 Krieger's essay is reprinted as an Appendix in *Ekphrasis* (quotation on p. 265).
  - 30 See W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), ch. 4.
  - 31 Mitchell makes a similar point in his 1992 essay 'Ekphrasis and the Other': 'One lesson of a general semiotics, then, is that there is, *semantically* speaking ... no essential difference between texts and images; the other lesson is that there are important differences between visual and verbal media at the level of sign-types, forms, materials of representation, and institutional traditions. The mystery is why we have this urge to treat the medium as if it were the message, why we make the obvious, practical differences between *these* two media into metaphysical oppositions which seem to control our communicative acts, and which then have to be overcome with utopian fantasies like ekphrasis' (rpt. in *Picture Theory*, p. 161).
  - 32 Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, p. 1.
  - 33 See Heffernan's later study, *Cultivating Picturacy: Visual Art and Verbal Interventions* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), for a development of his earlier position. Jonathan Ellis has noted the absence of contemporary female poets in *Museum of Words*; Ellis considers the work of Elizabeth Bishop and Carol Ann Duffy in 'Ekphrastic Poetry: In and Out of the Museum', in Erik Martiny (ed.), *A Companion to Poetic Genre* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), pp. 614–26. See also Jane Hedley, Nick Halpern, and Willard Spiegelman (eds), *In the Frame: Women's Ekphrastic Poetry from Marianne Moore to Susan Wheeler* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009).
  - 34 Grant F. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, 1994), p. 132. Like Heffernan, Scott

- argues that ekphrasis should be conceived of as a form of gendered *paragone*: 'the strain of competition, of the *paragone*, in ekphrastic representation will loom large [in this study], especially as it comes to govern Keats's psychological reaction to "feminised" works of visual art' (p. xii).
- 35 Quotations are taken from John Keats, *The Complete Poems*, ed. John Barnard, 3rd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988).
  - 36 Alastair Fowler, *Renaissance Realism: Narrative Images in Literature and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. vi. For further discussion of these matters, see, for example, Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*; Bender, *Spenser and Literary Pictorialism*, esp. pp. 13–16; Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, 2nd edn (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1988); and Matthew Potolsky, *Mimesis* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), esp. ch. 5.
  - 37 See Barnard's headnote to the poem (pp. 672–3), and his note to l. 28. See also Paul Magnuson, *Reading Public Romanticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 208–9.
  - 38 See Barbara K. Fisher, *Museum Mediations: Reframing Ekphrasis in Contemporary American Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Claire Barbetti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions: A New Discussion in Interarts Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Emily Bilman, *Modern Ekphrasis* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2013). Other notable recent works on ekphrasis are discussed in the main text. On the new formalism see, for example, Marjorie Levinson, 'What Is New Formalism?', *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 122 (2007), 558–69; and Samuel Otter, 'An Aesthetic in All Things', *Representations*, 104 (2008), 116–25.
  - 39 See Ruth Leys, 'The Turn to Affect: A Critique', *Critical Inquiry*, 37 (2011), 434–72.
  - 40 Valentine Cunningham, 'Why Ekphrasis?', *Classical Philology*, 102 (2007), 57–71 (p. 71).
  - 41 Cheeke, *Writing for Art*, ch. 5.
  - 42 See also Loizeaux, who writes that 'it has been difficult to move beyond the appealing drama of *paragone*, with its plot of conflict and uncertain victory. But under its lens every ekphrastic relationship looks like linguistic appropriation, every gesture of friendship like co-option, every expression of admiration a declaration of envy by the work for the unobtainable power of the image' (*Twentieth-Century Poetry*, p. 15). See also Glavey, *The Wallflower Avant-Garde*, p. 7.
  - 43 Susan Harrow, 'New Ekphrastic Poetics', *French Studies*, 64:3 (July 2010), 255–64. The issue includes provocative essays by Elizabeth Geary Keohane, Clémence O'Connor, Emma Wagstaff, Margaret Topping, and Lia Nicole Brozgal.
  - 44 See also Robert J. Watson's essay "'I wanted them to breathe between my sentences": The Place of Paul Cézanne's *Card Players* in Colette Fellous's Postcolonial Life-Writing', *Word & Image*, 29:2 (2013), 129–38. He writes: 'In contradistinction to the model of the *paragone* that pits text and image as discrete entities competing against each other for mimetic excellence, I will focus on how Colette Fellous weaves images visually and verbally to constitute the text, even as the "silence" of the image becomes a narrative-generating element and the metaphor of a literary strategy of

- self-writing' (p. 129). Watson's essay is part of a special issue of *Word & Image* entitled 'New Perspectives on Ekphrasis'.
- 45 Ann Keefe, 'The Ecstatic Embrace of Verbal and Visual: Twenty-First Century Lyric Beyond the Ekphrastic Paragone', *Word & Image*, 27:2 (2011), 135–47 (p. 135).
  - 46 David Kennedy, *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 22.
  - 47 See also Barbeti, *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions*. Barbeti suggests that artists, critics, and theorists are beginning to recognize that ekphrasis is a 'tool wielding transformative power'. She writes: 'This recognition comes on the tails of new understandings of ekphrasis that break away from a long tradition rounded in Renaissance humanism and seventeenth-century empiricism that defined the concept according to a contest between the verbal and visual arts' (p. 3). While its focus lies outside the scope of the present book, Barbeti's study reminds us of the rich history of ekphrasis in medieval literature and culture. See also Andrew James Johnston, Ethan Knapp, and Margitta Rouse (eds), *The Art of Vision: Ekphrasis in Medieval Literature and Culture* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015).
  - 48 Catherine Belsey, 'Invocation of the Visual Image: Ekphrasis in *Lucrece* and Beyond', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 63 (2012), 175–98 (p. 188). For the distinction between actual and notional ekphrasis see John Hollander, 'The Poetics of Ekphrasis', *Word & Image*, 4 (1988), 209–19; and Hollander's 'Introduction' to *The Gazer's Spirit*, pp. 3–91. But see also Mitchell, who comments that 'in a certain sense all ekphrasis is notional, and seeks to create a specific image that is to be found only in the text as its "resident alien," and is to be found nowhere else' ('Ekphrasis and the Other', p. 157 n19).
  - 49 For a recent reading of *Lucrece* that attempts to go beyond the *paragone* see Margitta Rouse's chapter 'Text–Picture Relationships in the Early Modern Period', in Gabriele Rippl (ed.), *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature–Image–Sound–Music* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 65–81.
  - 50 Chloe Porter, *Making and Unmaking in Early Modern English Drama: Spectators, Aesthetics and Incompletion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 7.
  - 51 See Belsey, 'Invocation of the Visual Image', p. 190.
  - 52 Scott, *The Sculpted Word*, p. 1.
  - 53 For a provocative discussion of interdisciplinarity in relation to visual culture see W. J. T. Mitchell, 'Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture', in *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), ch. 16.
  - 54 See Jerzy Jarniewicz, *Ekphrasis in the Poetry of Derek Mahon* (Piotrków Trybunalski: Naukowe Wydawnictwo Piotrkowskie Filii UJK, 2013).
  - 55 Claus Clüver, 'Ekphrasis Reconsidered: On Verbal Representations of Non-Verbal Texts', in Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, Hans Lund, and Erik Hedling (eds), *Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations between the Arts and Media* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 19–33.
  - 56 See Liliane Louvel, *Poetics of the Iconotext*, ed. Karen Jacobs, trans. Laurence Petit (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). This book brings together some of the most significant material from Louvel's books *L'Oeil du Texte: Texte et image dans la littérature anglophone* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1998) and *Texte/Image: Images à lire, textes à voir* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002). For earlier

discussions of the notion of the 'iconotext' see the work of Peter Wagner, especially *Reading Iconotexts: From Swift to the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), and the 'Introduction' to Wagner (ed.), *Icons–Texts–Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996). Werner Wolf's work on intermediality is also relevant here: for a useful overview see *Selected Essays on Intermediality by Werner Wolf (1992–2014)*, ed. Walter Bernhart (Leiden: Brill, 2017).