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Foreword

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Foreword

Linda Collinge-Germain

- 1 The conference on The Image and the Short Story in English, organized by Laurent Lepaludier, Linda Collinge-Germain and Lauric Guillaud, members of the CRILA (Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires de Langue Anglaise), was held at the University of Angers March 19th and 20th, 2010. We were very pleased and honored to have as our keynote speaker Liliane Louvel, one of France's most accomplished specialists in the field of text/image dynamics, and as our guest short-story writer Steven Millhauser, prize-winning author of numerous short-story collections including *In the Penny Arcade*, *The Barnum Museum*, *The Knife Thrower and Dangerous Laughter*. Additional attention was drawn to the dynamics between the visual arts and literature as the conference participants visited the medieval Tapestry of the Apocalypse displayed in the Château d'Angers, the same tapestry which two years earlier inspired Helen Simpson, a CRILA guest that year, in her writing of the short story entitled "The Boy and the Savage Star", published in 2009.
- 2 The present issue of the *Journal of the Short Story in English* contains articles selected from the papers presented at the 2010 conference. Liliane Louvel's keynote address is published here as it was presented in the opening session. As author of three major critical works on text/image dynamics (*L'oeil du texte* (1998), *Texte/Image: Images à lire, textes à voir* (2002) and *Le tiers pictural, pour une critique intermédiaire* (2010), she provided an excellent theoretical introduction on intermedial criticism. Her aim was to draw a parallel between the short story and the pictorial in the single effect they produce, to examine the competition between and/or dynamic co-existence of word and image, and to propose tools from the visual arts for examining the short story. Different types of visual arts were then examined by the conference participants and will provide the structure for the first section of this issue, first photography, then cinema and painting. The second section is based on the image and its relationship to the unsaid, the inexpressible and then, more specifically, to the question of colonialism.

Photography/Cinema/Painting and the Short Story

- 3 Photography and cinema and the short story were examined by Shannon Wells-Lassagne, Ailsa Cox and Michelle Ryan-Sautour, studying respectively stories by Elizabeth Bowen and Angela Carter. In “Disjuncted snapshots’: Photography in the Short Stories of Elizabeth Bowen”, Shannon Wells-Lassagne draws attention to Bowen’s own analogy of her short stories as “snapshots”. She shows how Bowen uses the photographic genre within her short stories and how photography is in fact “a prevalent example of one Modernist writer’s struggle to use other artistic forms to better extend the possibilities of language, and so to capture the fleeting nature of reality”, representing therefore “both the promise and the limitations of transartistic intertextuality.”
- 4 Ailsa Cox also looks at stories by Elizabeth Bowen, but especially at how one story, “Ivy Grippled the Steps”, deploys cinematic strategies, an approach which Cox justifies by once again referring to Bowen’s own comments on short-story writing in the twentieth century. Cox observes in the story a particularly striking use of scene-setting, lighting, framing, composition and a “seemingly depersonalised cinematic gaze”, but she also notes that “film narrative, like narrative in the modern short story, is elliptical and elusive; meaning often lies in the gaps between what is said and what is seen.”
- 5 Cinema’s influence on short-story writing is also observed by Michelle Ryan-Sautour in her analysis of Angela Carter’s “John Ford’s ‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore””, a story which “navigates between the cinematic representations of John Ford, the 20th century American film-maker, and the original drama of incest by John Ford, 17th century English dramatist [...] for speculative and political ends”, says Ryan-Sautour. “Having written for the screen, the stage, and for the radio”, she continues, “Carter invests the aesthetic landscapes of her short fiction with a spirit of intermediality, revealing an extension of the generic layering that characterizes her writing.”
- 6 And indeed, Karima Thomas and Martine Hennard Dutheil also observe this “spirit of intermediality” in Carter’s writing as they analyse the influence of painting and engraving. Thomas looks closely at Carter’s story “Impressions: The Wrightsman Magdalene”, whose title announces the “pictorial project” of the short story in its reference to Georges de La Tour’s 17th century Baroque painting *The Magdalene and Two Flames* acquired by Mr and Mrs Charles Wrightsman. Thomas’ aim is to reveal the “the permanent construction and deconstruction of meaning out of existing cultural artifacts”, a process that implies “creative reading”.
- 7 Martine Hennard Dutheil studies both Martin Ware’s unconventional illustrations of Angela Carter’s translation of Charles Perrault’s “contes” (published in 1977 as *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*) and the influence of these illustrations on Carter’s subsequent fairy-tale rewritings collected in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. The elements integrated by Carter include “motifs and a modern treatment of the tale but, perhaps even more importantly, visual strategies that Carter adapts to the realm of writing.”

The image, the unsaid and the inexpressible

- 8 Peter Gibian takes us back to the 19th century, proposing in “The Image and its Discontents: Hawthorne in Dialogue with Poe” an in-depth reflexion on the place and

complex function of the image in self-reflexive stories by Hawthorne and Poe. “Hawthorne’s early tales often revolve around the mysterious power of a single image ; characters and readers in these minimalist works come to focus their emotional energy on response to one monolithic visual symbol – a serpent appearing on a chest, a black veil worn by a minister, (“The Minister’s Black Veil”) a birthmark on a new wife’s face (“The Birthmark”). These are imagist works, then, but they speak at the same time for a powerful, fundamental ‘horror of the image.’” Gibian aims at highlighting the stakes in “The Birthmark” “through a recreation of its place in Hawthorne’s 1842-43 dialogue with Poe – as the two authors produced paired tales as a way of meditating on the bases of the ‘image drive.’”

- 9 Claude Maisonnat sees another Hawthorne story – “The Great Stone Face” – as a literary opposite of the Irish writer Daniel Corkery’s story “The Stones”. “The images that are at the heart of Corkery’s story are stone effigies which are believed to announce the death of the men who recognize them as their own. When an alleged breach of solidarity threatens the peace of the small community, the images begin to wreak havoc in the lives of the protagonists.” Unlike the benevolent stone face in Hawthorne’s story, the effigies in Corkery’s story “return the gaze and function as blind spots in the field of the visible,” says Maisonnat.
- 10 Lhorine François, in her article entitled “The image, the inexpressible and the shapeless in two short stories by Elizabeth Bishop” notes how “moments of revelation – of the self, of death, of the shapeless or the strange within the self – are most often connected with images in ‘Gwendolyn’ and ‘In the Village’ : those moments are sometimes triggered by a picture or, when the revelation touches upon an inexpressible feeling, images come as a means to construe a specific atmosphere that puts the reader into contact with the strange, inexpressible reality in a more direct and efficient manner than the description of the feeling itself would do”.

The image and the question of colonialism

- 11 “An Outpost of Progress” by Joseph Conrad is the subject of M’hamed Bensemmane’s article in which he analyses how this African *terra incognita* for the Western protagonists resists the notion of progress brought by Europe. “The signifiers of a superior mode of existence are shown, under the writer’s critical gaze, to convey the illusion of progress where there is only brutishness. The de-familiarisation achieved through this structured irony, and the cumulative effects of gothic elements of depiction in this tale produce the image of a problematic intercultural relationship,” says Bensemmane.
- 12 The aim of Xavier Lachazette’s article entitled “Images and the Colonial Experience in W. Somerset Maugham’s *The Casuarina Tree*” is “to put Maugham’s *art poetica* (telling tales in as plain and image-free a style as possible, doing away with any unessential details or ornamented metaphors or personal and political comments) to the test by analysing the power of visual, verbal and reading images in *The Casuarina Tree*, and by trying to understand why Maugham’s best stories are usually those in which the metaphoric dimension of language and story-writing has not been entirely erased.” Indeed, as Lachazette remarks, “the Casuarina tree itself, supposedly a tree which ‘solidifies and fortifies the soil till it is ripe for a more varied and luxuriant growth,’ as Maugham points

out in the Preface, is an apt metaphor for the colonial experience, doomed as it is to come to an end when the local population takes over once again.”

- 13 Steven Millhauser actively participated in the conference’s reflexion on the dynamics between word and image in the short story by choosing to read his story “Klassik Komix #1”, “composed entirely of images”. As Millhauser put it : “The story is a description, panel by panel, of an invented comic strip, i.e. a verbal description of an imaginary series of drawings (so an instance of ekphrasis) based themselves on a poem by T.S. Eliot : ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’. The process then is the transformation of a poem into painted images, and the further transformation of those images into a new set of verbal images which are sharp and clear but clearly distort the original verbal images.”
- 14 As Assistant Director of the “Pôle Nouvelle”, I would like to thank all of those who participated in the preparation of our two-day conference on The Image and the Short Story through their contributions during our preparatory seminars : Yannick Le Boulicaut for his theoretical introduction to photography, Emmanuel Vernadakis for his introductory presentations on the image, Laurent Lepaludier for his contribution on Katherine Mansfield’s “Miss Brill”, Noreen Doody for her study of Claire Keegan’s “The Ginger Rogers Sermon”, Héliane Ventura for her analysis of Alice Munro’s “I and the Village” and Liliane Louvel for her study of Gabriel Josipovici’s collection of stories *Goldberg : Variations*. I would also like to thank Joëlle Vinciguerra, our Research secretary, for her continued collaboration in preparing for the seminars, the conference and this issue of the *Journal*. Finally, this Special Issue of the *Journal* is dedicated to Laurent Lepaludier, Professor of English, Director of the “Centre de Recherches Interdisciplinaires en Langue Anglaise” and former Director of the “Pôle Nouvelle”, who will retire in September 2011. Laurent Lepaludier’s distinct contribution in the field of poetics of the short story (metatextuality, the implicit, orality, theatricality...), his constant endeavor to identify relevant theoretical questions for exploration by the research team and to promote a collective and democratic spirit of work have made a significant impact on the research conducted on the short story in English at the University of Angers over the past decade.

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