

“VISUAL BRIDGING”
TO AND FROM LITERARY TEXTS:
A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

By

LAURA SUSAN KROHN

Bachelor of Arts in English
Oral Roberts University
Tulsa, Oklahoma
1984

Master of Arts in English
Northeastern State University
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
2009

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
July, 2022

“VISUAL BRIDGING”
TO AND FROM LITERARY TEXTS:
A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Gouping Zhao

Dissertation Adviser

Dr. Lucy Bailey

Dr. Shelbie Witte

Dr. Ed Harris

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say a special thank you to my advisor, Dr. Gouping Zhao, and the rest of my committee for their support, guidance, and encouragement; without them I would never have made it across the finish line.

I would also like to thank all the educators (my parents, Sunday School teachers, preschool teachers, public school teachers, professors, et al.) who inspired me to read, write, and teach through the years. I am who I am because of each of you.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, family, and colleagues for supporting me during the long compilation of this dissertation. They never doubted I would finish, even when I doubted myself.

Name: LAURA S. KROHN

Date of Degree: JULY, 2022

Title of Study: “VISUAL BRIDGING” TO AND FROM LITERARY TEXTS:
A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Major Field: EDUCATION

Abstract: This theoretical study examines the use of visual images as a bridge to and from printed literary texts for secondary-level and higher-education students. Elementary educators and literacy experts have long embraced the visual as a means through which pre-readers begin to “read” stories and for supporting young readers’ comprehending verbal texts; however, secondary English educators are not as trained in effective pedagogy that embraces the visual, even though most older students are already comfortable with multimodal techniques and skilled at “reading” those texts outside the classroom. This theoretical study develops a concept of Visual Bridging to help these students cross into unfamiliar or uncomfortable texts using the familiarity and comfort of visual imagery, where they hopefully find interest, curiosity or conviction in the literature and then bridge back out to apply meaning and value to their own lives. Drawing on Roland Barthes’s reader-response and reviewer-response theories, the Visual Bridge relates to Barthes’s concepts and application of *studium* and *punctum* in photographic images. Included in the study are practical exemplars which demonstrate how classroom practices using this strategy allow students space to engage in creative ways with literary themes, resulting in meaningful aesthetic experiences which hopefully make them more willing to engage with future literary texts. Visual Bridging may also help students enter unfamiliar cultures found in literary texts they previously did not want to read, increasing their knowledge, understanding of, and empathy for others, as well as for themselves in their own place, time, and culture. The presentation and exploration of this concept articulates a hopeful vision for educators and teacher-education programs, concluding that students can find new perspective, beauty, *punctum* and personal relevancy in any literary work.

Keywords: visual images, literary literacy, Roland Barthes, aesthetic pedagogy, multimodal texts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background and Problem.....	1
Purpose and Proposition: Visual Bridging.....	3
Theoretical Inspiration: Roland Barthes’s Reader-Response Theory.....	4
Methodology: Theoretical Research.....	5
Significance of the Study.....	9
Overview of Chapters.....	11
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	9
Historical Background.....	17
Educational Background.....	25
III. BARTHES AND A THEORY OF VISUAL IMAGERY.....	30
Theories of Visual Imagery and Pictorial Narrative.....	31
Roland Barthes’s Theory of the Visual.....	35
Theories of Aesthetic Response.....	41
Theoretical Inspirations.....	43
IV. VISUAL BRIDGING AND VISUAL BRIDGES.....	46
The Concept of Visual Bridging.....	47
“Bridging over and in” to a Literary Experience.....	50
“Bridging Back Out” with an Aesthetic, Transformative Experience.....	54
Visual Bridging and “Visual Learning”.....	56
Visual Bridging and “Visual Literacy”.....	57
Visual Bridging and “Literary Literacy”.....	59
V. VISUAL BRIDGING IN ACTION: EXEMPLARS.....	63
Hands-on Projects: Bridging Students to Classical Literary Works.....	64
Photovoice and “Biographemes”.....	68

Chapter	Page
Photo Elicitation: <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>	75
Picture books as Visual Bridges	77
VI. A PEDAGOGY OF VISUAL BRIDGING	81
Visual Bridging: A Pedagogy of <i>Punctum</i> and Relevance	83
Visual Bridging: A Pedagogy of Identity Development through Reflection.....	85
Visual Bridging: A Multimodal Pedagogy	88
Visual Bridging: A Pedagogy of Aesthetic-Response	91
REFERENCES	94

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Chauvet Cave Drawing, Ardeche, France.....	17
2. Standard of Ur Panels in War and in Peace.	19
3. Bronze Doors of St. Michael of Hildesheim Cathedral	19
4. Bronze Doors of St. Michael of Hildesheim Cathedral	20
5. Book of Kells images, Folio 27	22
6. “Golden Head by Golden Head”	23
7. “Buy from Us with a Golden Curl”	23
8. D. Rosetti’s “Lady of Shalott”	24
9. Walter Crane, The Lady of Shalott (1862)	24
10. Titian’s “Diana and Actaeon”	32
11. Idiot Children in an Institution, New Jersey, 1924	38
12. Anti-Smoking PSA	53
13. Student Drawing of the Lake over Grendel’s Lair in <i>Beowulf</i>	65
14. “London” by William Blake (1794)	67
15. Sample student photos for culture presentation	70
16. <i>Love</i> illustration	78
17. <i>Voices in the Park</i> illustration.....	79

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Problem

Long before I knew about theoretical concepts, I knew the power of visual images, especially when presented with literary texts. Trained and certified as a secondary English teacher and later teaching many years at the college and university level, I have always employed visual imagery and assignments which required creative imagination from my students in my teaching of literature. As a new teacher, I quickly learned my middle school and high school students became more engaged with any educational experience that involved paper, markers, scissors, and glue; later in my career the tools included clip art, computer graphics and video design.

Reflecting on my many years of teaching students from grades six through college level, and after much reading on the topic of visual literacy, I find several commonalities which influenced my further research interest: (1) visual privileging is evident in today's media and culture; (2) continued streamlining or elimination of the arts and humanities at the secondary and university level exists; internet accessibility brings the world and diverse perspectives to the students in a more visual manner; and (4) students struggle with identity and culture connections between their formal education and their personal

perspectives, perceptions, and positions in the world (what is relevant and applicable to their real lives).

It has been my experience that adolescent-age students often dread (or even fear) reading texts labeled “classic” or “literary” because they associate the terms with “old,” “foreign,” “difficult,” and, therefore, “distant from” and “irrelevant to” their lives; some students also have found the “classic” texts irrelevant to their racially-grounded lives (or their nationality, for instance), even if they have some messages that transcend such grounding. As a result, these students frequently fail to connect with literary texts, missing the timeless messages concerning the human condition that make these texts “classic” and literary. They, along with many adults, often dismiss things they simply do not understand. Although different kinds of texts confront adolescents almost continuously in today’s electronic, media-driven world of instant gratification, they find many texts meaningless and “boring”; much like previous generations reading the newspaper, they have cultivated the art of skimming the surface searching for content within their immediate, experiential scope or of skimming to find information that piques their interests. When such content is not readily apparent, it is often dismissed. Even so, pictorial images appear to draw in and hold their attention faster and longer.

While storytelling has historical links to the visual (cave drawings, stain-glassed windows, illuminated manuscripts, illustrated Victorian texts), contemporary authors, educational publishers and even scholars largely ignore the pictorial’s potential role in storytelling when producing young adult texts and textbooks other than graphic novels. Although educators and literacy experts in particular have long embraced the visual as a means through which pre-readers begin to “read” stories and a means for supporting young

readers' comprehending verbal texts, secondary English educators are not as trained in effective pedagogy that embraces the visual. Some experts maintain their students have advanced beyond needing pictures, their students are too sophisticated for "picture books," or only "developmental readers" might benefit from pictorials accompanying verbal texts; however, these educators do not seem to consider the challenge of reading Renaissance English in Shakespearean and Spencerian texts, John Milton's allusion-filled poetry, or Charles Dickens' voluptuous prose may cause even advanced readers to opt out for less strenuous texts, incorrectly perceiving them as unnecessary for the modern reader anyway. While the rigor and sophistication of advanced texts filled with beautiful verbal imagery has merit and value, an important justification for using visual imagery along with the verbal is teachers can use visuals to conjure cultural and aesthetic connotations that are not directly stated but surround the textual meanings.

Purpose and Proposition: Visual Bridging

In this study, I seek to challenge the common assumption that once students learn to read, they neither need nor desire images to accompany verbal texts, because the images are secondary to the textual meaning and are used only as a tool to support the ultimate goal of understanding the verbal texts. In contrast to educators' apparent reluctance to supplement or enhance secondary students' reading with the pictorial, adults are demanding the pictorial, especially to enhance written texts. Adult graphic novels, adult graphic non-fiction explaining such difficult theories as Foucault's and Derrida's (Icon Books "Introducing..." Series, 2005-2013), adult coloring books, and adult illustrated journals pervade the marketplace. I suggest educators revisit how one might use the pictorial to support and enhance secondary students' reading experiences. I propose English Language Arts educators

of older students erect a visual path into verbal, written texts—especially those texts students deem “old,” “foreign,” “difficult,” and “irrelevant”—a visual path through which readers also exit those texts. While the visual guides them into the unknown where they previously feared to tread, the students light their exit across the visual bridge spotlighting various images, clues when they entered, now visual “hot spots” of meaning and value. This bridging provides a literary, aesthetic engagement that can lead to a new cultural experience. I name this visual construction a “visual bridge,” and the phenomenon, “Visual Bridging.”¹

Theoretical Inspiration: Roland Barthes’ Reader-Response Theory

My theoretical inspiration and starting point are French philosopher, semiotician, literary theorist, and critic Roland Barthes’s (1975; 1980) reader-response concepts, *text of pleasure* and *text of bliss*, and his viewer-response concepts, *studium* and *punctum*. I begin with Barthes’ (1975) reading theory differentiating between a text evoking the reader’s pleasure and one evoking the reader’s bliss. I then turn to Barthes’ (1980) theory of viewing photographic art focusing on his concepts *studium* and *punctum* before positioning them within his broader theory of the “art of photographic images.” Next, I draw parallels between Barthes’ reader-response theory from *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975) and his viewer-response theory from *Camera Lucinda* (1980). Ultimately, I draw conclusions concerning the meaning and value of using Barthes’ theory as the starting point for my concept, visual bridging.

In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), Roland Barthes posits no text exists without the reader, and the author cannot determine when he/she is writing which passages readers will

¹ It is important to note this visual privileging does preclude the visually impaired to a large degree, and I recognize that my analysis has excluded blind and visually impaired populations. I focus my research on analysis of visual methods for its significance and value for the larger student population.

or will not read (p. 11). The pleasure of the text comes from the reader's action, upon the "death of the author," a death which comes after the author has finished writing and publishing a given text; at this point, the author has completed his/her meaning making; and the reader's meaning becomes the only one that matters. For Barthes (1975), the text is nothing without the reader. Because each reader brings something different to each text, the text changes according to the reader. Identifying two types of reading experiences, Barthes defines the written text of pleasure "the text that contents...the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, [the text that] is linked to a comfortable practice of reading" (Barthes, 1975, p. 14). As a reader, Barthes (1975) eventually encounters a text that evokes more than pleasure but bliss: the "text of bliss: ...imposes a state of loss...discomforts...unsettles the reader's...assumptions...[and] brings to a crisis [his/her] relation with language" (p. 14). While Barthes equates "pleasure" with contentment and "bliss" with "rapture" (p. 19), he also notes their inherent opposition: "pleasure can be expressed in words, bliss cannot" (p. 21). Each reader determines if a given text evokes pleasure or bliss, for each reader in part creates the text, experiences the text differently than anyone else, and experiences the text differently each time he/she enters the text.

After theorizing the reading experience in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), Barthes (1980) theorizes the viewing experience related to the photographic arts. Reflecting upon the "art" of photographic images to determine what distinguishes them from paintings, Barthes (1980), in *Camera Lucida*, finds strange pleasure while examining the visual medium of photography as a record of "reality in a past state" (p. xvii). The obvious pictorial elements Barthes (1980) names *studium*. The *studium* is cultural; it is content which is clear. Barthes is "sympathetically interested, as a docile cultural subject, in what the photograph has to say,

for it *speaks*” (p. 43, emphasis in the original). *Studium* content is interesting to the “docile Spectator” as “testimony” or “historical scenes...for it is culturally that [the docile Spectator] participates in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions” (Barthes, 1980, p. 26). When viewers exclusively assign meaning based upon their own experiences and cultural knowledge, they can only reach a level of “*liking*, not of *loving*,” only reach a level of “encountering the photographer’s intentions” (1980, p. 27), only reach a level of what Barthes (1975) calls “pleasure” when writing about literary experience. Although what he “can name cannot really prick” or move him (Barthes, 1980, p. 51), he can enjoy or find pleasure in the viewing.

Upon reflection, Barthes (1980) realizes some elements exist in photographs the photographer perhaps neither knew existed nor intended to include, “what I [the Spectator] add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*” (p. 55; author’s emphasis): *punctum*. Rising from the *studium*, from the scene where content is clear, rising like “punctuation,” the *punctum* is the detail that “wounds” or “pricks” the viewer (Barthes, 1980, p. 26). No one else—not even the photographer—may see it, but it distracts the Spectator interrupting his/her focus. Barthes (1980) defines *punctum*’s effect as positive, for it causes him to “dismiss all knowledge, all culture, [and] refuse to inherit anything from another eye than [his] own” (p. 51). *Punctum* requires engagement with the text different from the docile Spectator’s engagement. With *punctum* engagement leads to new perspectives and understandings. Barthes (1980) also acknowledges that sometimes the *punctum* comes to him or “pricks” him when he is no longer viewing the image but reflecting upon his memory of it. Thus, mere viewing, like mere reading, does not lead to insight; reflection must follow each. I posit that in a visual image, Barthes’ (1980) *studium* parallels his definition of a written text

of pleasure: “the text that contents...the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, [the text that] is linked to a comfortable practice of reading” (Barthes, 1975, p. 14).

Similarly, his *punctum* in a visual image parallels the written text that discomfits the reader, the “text of bliss” (Barthes, 1975, p. 14).

Using Barthes’s theory as inspiration, I propose exploring whether a visual bridge can be created, and if so, what does it look like and how can it deliver students from the foreign land to the meaningful. Using Barthes’ (1980) concepts *studium* and *punctum* as my starting point (*studium* for “visual” and *punctum* for “bridge”), I posit creating a “visual bridge” through which readers enter and exit a literary text—however old, foreign, or distant from contemporary readers’ experiences the given text may seem—which transports readers into a text, allaying their fears and dread and opening them to the text. After engaging with the text, discovering its meaning and value to everyday life, readers exit the text, again crossing the visual bridge, this time spotlighting various images, merely clues when they entered, but now visual “hot spots” of meaning and value which ultimately lead to individual and collective aesthetic, literary experiences. In other words, creating this visual bridge from pictorial elements familiar to readers magnifies the meaning and value readers assign to their experiences engaging with the text. Then, through my exemplars, I demonstrate teachers and/or students creating a visual bridge, readers entering and exiting a text by that bridge, and those readers’ resulting cultural and (within that) aesthetic, literary experiences. Finally, I examine the visual bridging phenomenon in pedagogical terms, translating my theorizing of the “visual bridge” into an aesthetic-response pedagogy of visual bridging. With its possible connections to transitional place, reading practice, theoretical praxis, and aesthetics, “Visual Bridging” merits conceptualization and investigation for its educative possibilities,

particularly with high school and undergraduate college-level students.

Methodology: Theoretical Research

I have chosen theoretical research or study as my research methodology. Theoretical research is a logical investigation of beliefs and assumptions for the purpose of increasing understanding or adding to the current body of knowledge. This form of research includes theorizing or defining why an issue arises, what a relationship may look like, or predicting changeable behavior. A theoretical research study can use existing ideas or theories to generate a theoretical explanation and solution to an issue. The implications of the newly developed explanation and solution can then be explored or played out in real life situation (Edgar & Manz, 2017).

In this theoretical study, I will explore why and how students resist engagement with literature as they struggle to perceive meaning and value for themselves in written literary texts; I will then develop a concept of Visual Bridging to help students cross into unfamiliar or uncomfortable texts with the use of the familiarity and comfort of visual imagery, find interest or curiosity or conviction in the literature, and bridge back out to apply meaning and value to their own lives. Drawing on Barthes's theory of reader and response and reviewer and response theory, I will develop, define, and explain the ideas of "visual bridging" and visual bridges as relating to Barthes's concept and application of *studium* and *punctum* in photographic images. I will then describe how I have used this approach in classroom practice to allow students space to engage in creative ways with literary themes which they now see as relevant and meaningful.

In this study, Roland Barthes's (1975; 1980) reader-response theory, his concepts of *text of pleasure* and *text of bliss*, and *studium* and *punctum*, will not be used as a theoretical

lens through which to read data or some other kind of text, as is common in empirical research or literary analysis. Rather, it is my theoretical inspiration and starting point to develop my own theoretical propositions of visual bridging. I begin with Barthes's (1975) reading theory differentiating between a text evoking the reader's pleasure and one evoking the reader's bliss. I then turn to Barthes's (1980) theory of viewing photographic art focusing on his concepts *studium* and *punctum* before positioning them within his broader theory of the "art of photographic images." Next, I draw parallels between Barthes's reader-response theory from *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975) and his viewer-response theory from *Camera Lucida* (1980). Eventually, I draw from these ideas to develop a theoretical proposition of "visual bridging" to and from literary texts and ultimately toward an aesthetic experience of new understanding, one of beauty and cultural context. After fully exploring the meaning and value of these concepts for adolescent and young adult students, qualitative research using specific visual methods can test their efficacy.

Significance of the Study

A review of 21st century literature studies reveals in visual arts and within visual cultures disciplines, experts are adapting to the visual's changing role in society and the effects visual privileging has on culture (Anstey, 2002; Rose, 2016). Individual scholars in English Language Arts (ELA) and literacy education have been writing and researching the visual as part of new technologies and multimodalities within education at least since the 1990s (Gee 1996, 2004; Conquergood, 1997; Stokes, 2002). The National Council of Teachers of English published findings as long ago as 2006 evidencing meaning to be "conveyed by various media, brought together in productive ways" (qtd. in Shoffner, 2010, p. 76) and since that same time has imposed standards for preservice teachers concerning "non-

print” or visual texts. Yet, NCTE members did not reconceive their position statements to reflect what individuals within the field had long been preaching until 2018. Although NCTE-accredited colleges’ and universities’ pre-service, secondary English teachers must meet the NCTE standards once employed in U.S. public secondary schools, as new teachers they usually normalize to the school’s culture, the *status quo* of emphasizing traditional print literacy above all others. With public school curricula and federal and state standardized achievement tests driving that emphasis, most secondary English teachers’ teaching, states’ and districts’ curricula, and federal and state standardized tests fail both to reflect and influence contemporary society. Consequently, reading, like schooling, for many secondary students is drudgery (Dewey, 1916), doing tasks they do not understand or seem pointless, and that they do only for rewards such as good grades, gifts or privileges from parents, or college entry, scholarships, and grants.

Although much contemporary scholarship is emerging on multiple literacies and multimodalities in public secondary education (Jacobs, 2007; Luke, 2003; Shoffner, 2010), scholars often tend to focus on using these literacies and modalities as “non-traditional assessments,” including assessments replacing more traditional writing assignments. Early childhood and elementary school teachers’ success teaching young pre-readers and assisting new, young readers by mixing the visual and tactile (illustrations, paintings, photographs, and sculpture) with the verbal has rarely translated to teaching literature to young adults in public, secondary classrooms. This withholding of the visual seems hypocritical, even backwards, when students live in a world privileging the visual where marketers now target the adult market as requiring “coloring books,” visual journals (doodling), and “sophisticated” picture books for de-stressing, creative outlets, and alleviating boredom.

Analyzing and synthesizing research and theory relating to my concept, “visual bridging,” reveals interconnections among images, classic texts, connecting cultural identity to multiple perspectives, and secondary readers’ reluctance to read classic texts, encounter places, times, and cultures different from their own, and resistance to revisiting their own cultural values and practices. Even educators and researchers embracing multi-modalities have not used these modalities to assist and support reading itself, especially reading literary texts students may fear, dread, and identify as “old,” “foreign,” “difficult,” and, therefore, “distant from” and “irrelevant to” their lives. I maintain visual bridging may be the means not only by which readers enter and exit literary texts (especially difficult ones) but the means by which they enter different locations, times, and cultures increasing their knowledge of, understanding of, and empathy for others as well as themselves, their own place, time, and culture. In presenting this concept I articulate a hopeful vision for educators and teacher-education programs; I see the potential of teachers developing these strategies and putting them to work in English Language Arts and college composition classrooms.

Overview of Chapters

My analysis proceeds as follows: in Chapter 1 I will provide background as a foundation and justification for my study, including a review of the historical role of visual imagery in imagination and storytelling; In Chapter 2 I will delve deeper into Barthes’s concept of *studium/punctum* and the broader theory of the art of imagery, setting it up as a lens through which to view my concept of Visual Bridging. In the third chapter I will define and explain my concept of Visual Bridging congruent to my purpose: adolescent readers cross the visual bridge, enter into a classic literary text, use pictorials from the bridge to spur engagement with the text they have entered, and exit the text across the visual bridge to re-create

themselves in accord with their reading experience, ideally an aesthetic, literary one resulting from an encounter with Barthes's notion of *punctum*. In the fourth chapter, I offer an exemplar through which I will demonstrate Visual Bridging, and various ways the concept might play out in the classroom. Finally, in Chapter 5 I examine Visual Bridging in pedagogical terms which translate theory into an aesthetic-response pedagogy: each time readers return across a visual bridge to the selves they were before first crossing it, they add their experiences to those selves, selves and experiences upon which they build yet another visual bridge that advances them to another aesthetic reading experience, *ad infinitum*. Through this theoretical analysis, I support the conclusion that students can find new perspective, *punctum* and personal relevancy in any literature, propelling them toward lifetime learning and growth as they navigate their future relationships and roles in the world.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Kelly Gallagher (2009) invented the word “read-i-cide” to describe the “systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools” (p. 2). Writing six years later, veteran high-school teacher Willingham (2015) agreed, asserting students are not too easily distracted; they “just have a very low threshold for boredom” (p. 9). Therefore, teachers need to create environments that change beliefs about “what is worthy of sustained attention and what brings rewarding experiences” (Willingham, p. 9). Gallagher (2009) focuses solutions more specifically on reading identifying limited, non-assigned-reading experiences and teachers’ over-teaching or underteaching books as primary contributors to students’ loss of interest in reading (p. 5). Gallagher (2009) insists the value in teaching such texts as *To Kill a Mockingbird* is “not simply to [teach] cultural literacy or ... [how] to recognize literary elements such as foreshadowing,” to raise test scores. Instead, if students read and use the book to examine issues in their own worlds and cultures, that experience expands into “a golden opportunity for...children to read, write, and debate relevant issues” (p. 67) in ways connecting them to the story. Reading is, then, no longer merely a homework assignment, a requirement to earn an acceptable grade or “check” in the gradebook.

Although current teachers might agree with Gallagher's (2009) contentions, they still have difficulties "getting" students to read, especially "classic" texts. Many teachers and researchers draw upon new technologies to ready students for entering classic texts (Todd, 1995; Hull, 2003; Haynes-Moore, 2015; Styslinger, 2017, pp. 53–54). Haynes-Moore's (2015) study of digital role-play among adolescents reveals "[d]igital worlds... support students' exploration and examination of social identity, raising thoughtful questions about who we are or want to become in our world" (p. 43). Although teens' struggles to belong—to form their individual identities and identities within the community—are part of the human condition, teens tend not to connect the gaming world of storytelling with classic literature. Although many students consider themselves gamers, not readers, they tend to enjoy their classroom experiences when teachers mix media (Gee, 2004; Haynes-Moore, 2015). By tapping into multiple media and technologies, some teachers facilitate meaningful dialogue about stories and storytelling that leads to increasing students' interest in reading (Gee, 2004; Luke, 2003; NCTE, 2018).

Indeed, going back twenty-three years, one finds teachers and researchers experimenting with the visual as a means of decreasing secondary students' fears, anticipations of boredom, anxiety over, and difficulty telling their personal stories, respectively. For example, recognizing performance art as visual for its audience while kinesthetic for its performers, Janet Allen (1995) used acting performances *and* illustrations to engage her "at risk" students with literature.² Similarly, wanting to ease the difficulty some research participants have telling their stories either orally or in

² Although Allen (1995) also had students using other strategies, I do not digress but mention only those pertaining to my concept.

writing during interviews, qualitative researchers have for decades used such visual, qualitative methods as photo elicitation, in which participants take and use photos to tell their own stories and/or answer questions, to facilitate participants' comfort in and ability to tell their stories (Rose, 2016). Finlay, et al., (2013) focus their study specifically on young people to discover using "creative visual methods such as 'photographs, video and mapping techniques' ...give young people more control over the process of data generation" (p. 131). Their visual research methods enabled their young participants to "give authentic and trusted accounts of their lived experiences. [These were] hitherto silenced voices, [...] disengaged young people [or passive learners who] are now encouraged to tell their stories" (Finley, 2013, p. 138).

A 2016 study published by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) responded to the decline of arts education in British secondary schools, seeking to find data supporting the argument that "education in the arts has wider benefits for learning, attainment and skills development in school education" (Crossick & Kaszynska, p. 114). With the increasing emphasis on high-stakes, standardized testing to validate learning, the hope was that they would find evidence of increased cognitive abilities test scores resulting from participation in arts-based education. While the data did support some causal relationship, the increases in formal assessment scores were minimal (less than 20%); however, the importance of arts integration provided strong evidence of gains in skills "needed for all learning: habits such as following curiosities and possibilities, a willingness to practice repeatedly," as well as "cultivating confidence, motivation and pro-social behaviors" (p. 116). All forms of art, including visual, are still important in cultivating motivation and engagement in secondary education.

Might students more easily cross into those intimidating literary worlds they see as removed from their technologically, pictorially driven worlds using visual modalities already familiar to them? Similar to researchers' asking participants to create visual representations they use as cue cards when telling researchers their personal stories, might teachers create a visual "bridge" or means by which students cross unafraid into imaginative literary worlds? Such studies as Allen's (1995) twenty-three-year-old and Stokes' (2002) sixteen-year-old ones provide evidence that secondary educators and education researchers have recognized students' waning interest in and/or difficulties reading traditional texts within their fast-paced, visually rich, technology-dominated lives. They also demonstrate students' success "thinking and learning visually instead of or in addition to traditional lectures and verbal description" (p. 14) thus indicating teachers' need to shift teaching strategies and techniques: "Students need to learn visually, and teachers need to learn to teach visually" (Stokes, 2002, p. 14). If, according to Barthes's concepts of the text of pleasure and text of bliss, students are able to enjoy entering a story by "reading the text" in individually unique formats, would students find their expression of *bliss* more naturally expressed through visual imagery rather than words? Would that be acceptable in current secondary education institutions which privilege assessment and mastery of skills through verbal imagery over visual imagery, and if so, how would that kind of shift present itself in an academic setting? How might visual expression of literary texts help students beyond the classroom setting as they transition to adulthood? If, according to Barthes's concept of the "death of the author," the essence of visual and written texts lies primarily with the viewer/reader, would not students worry less about the "correct" interpretation and discover meaning which

connects them to themes and concepts more relevant in their own lives?

Historical Background

Illustrated stories are not a recent phenomenon; pictorial imagery has long been used to convey narrative and connect meaning and value to the stories without a dependence on letters and literacy. The earliest books (as far back as the 2nd century CE) were elaborately illustrated, and their owners were the wealthy and educated (Lyons, 2011, p. 45). These early illustrations functioned more as part of the narrative than to aid literacy; thus, visual narrative not only has been historically important in literary culture, but its continued presence makes pictorial imagery a familiar and comfortable method of telling a story; in fact, a whole direction of qualitative inquiry is called exactly this, narrative visual inquiry.

Evidence of visual storytelling dates back at over 35,000 years ago, long before

Figure 1

Chauvet Cave Drawing, Ardeche, France



DRAC Rhone-Alpes, Ministere de la Culture/AP Images

the oldest evidence of written text. The most famous “examples of writing as pictorial images” were discovered on the walls of caves in Lascaux, France, in 1940 and estimated to be up to 20,000 years old (Bradshaw Foundation, *Lascaux*, 2019). More recent discoveries include cave paintings in Sulawesi, Indonesia (at least

35,400 years old) and in the Chauvet Cave (Fig. 1) in France (30,000 to 33,000 years old). All these Paleolithic animal images display a beautifully detailed, aesthetic quality which is “very extensive and highly varied” (Bradshaw Foundation, *Chauvet*, 2019). As most of life at that time revolved around survival, archeologists see the drawings of

predatory and domesticated animals as appropriate cultural communications; but what stories do they tell?

The eminent French prehistorian Jean Clottes, who is “one of the world’s most respected authorities on cave art,” believes the “main function of cave paintings was to communicate with the spirit world” (Marchant, 2016). Another expert from the University of Western Australia notes, “They’re not just doing it to create pretty pictures. They’re doing it because they’re communicating with the spirits of the land” (Smith, qtd. in Merchant, 2016). Advancing another perspective, French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962) also theorized the animals depicted not an ancient food source, but animals which inspired primitive hunters: they represented good thinkers (Marchant, 2016). Yet the cultures which produced the images disappeared long ago, so can modern anthropologists accurately assign meaning to them? Is the “correct” interpretation of the images of primary importance? In his book *World Rock Art*, Clotte (2002) warns, “when dealing with art for which no ethnological data are known, ... [w]hat appears obvious may not be obvious at all. Does a painting of a bird depict an eagle, a supernatural spirit, or a shaman whose soul has taken flight? Is a bear really a bear, or a human transformed?” (Bradshaw Foundation, *Lascaux*, 2019). What is clear is these cave drawings communicate important elements of human culture and story, and that readings vary based on the context of production, the meaning within a culture at that time, and the meaning now; the meaning of the same visual does not remain fixed but is endlessly dynamic and reinterpretable.

The Standard of Ur is another example of iconic visual narrative, this time of the Sumerian civilization, circa 2500 BCE. Ancient Mesopotamia in the 3rd century BCE was a collection of city-states. The Royal Standard identified the presence of the King, and its

sides present a paneled story of Ur's people during times of peace and war (Fig. 2); it is historical-cultural documentation, presented in pictures. Anthropologists widely agree it is the story of "a Sumerian King of Kish – ruthless in war, but magnanimous in peace" (Sumerian Shakespeare, 2019), and not merely decorative but also to communicate the power and authority of the king to any who might challenge him.

Figure 2

Standard of Ur Panels in War (left) and in Peace (right).



Photo credit: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology

Two more early examples of narrative art are the Jataka murals detailing the lives of Buddha (circa 500 CE) and the bronze doors of St. Michael of Hildesheim Cathedral

Figure 3

Bronze Doors of St. Michael of Hildesheim Cathedral



(circa 1015 CE). The Jataka murals from the Ajanta Cave are panels containing images of Buddha, his sermons, and several legends and stories teaching morality (Dalrymple, 2014).

People read the panels in a serial fashion, in the same fashion they read the doors of St. Michael. Bishop Bernward commissioned the massive bronze doors (Figures 1 & 2) for Saint Michael's Cathedral in Hildesheim (Germany). The church is considered one of the finest examples of Ottonian Romanesque architecture: the doors narrate the Old

Testament on the left side and New Testament on the right side. Perhaps more fascinating

Figure 4

*Bronze Doors of St. Michael of
Hildesheim Cathedral*



than the individual panels, however, is the viewer's ability to get an entire reading of the stories in one large image, creating a lasting impression of the entire biblical narrative.

Stained-glass windows of the Gothic era also narrate without words, sometimes relating only one

story and other times presenting a paneled narrative around the cathedral. Key to Gothic architecture and windows is the symbolism of light as it penetrates interior spaces, illuminating the parishioners with sacred truths, "an attempt by learned clergy to speak to the diverse populations of cities" (Guest, 2008). In his study of "narrative cartographies" in gothic stained glass, G. Guest (2008) sees a "link[ing of] the visual to the social" (p. 124); he states the images "stand not so much as reflections of the medieval world but as reimaginings of it in a period marked by conflict and unrest" (Guest, 2008, p. 124).

Stained-glass windows remain popular even in contemporary settings, perhaps because of the artistic, aesthetic ability to communicate visually what can take much longer to communicate through written texts; they exhibit a layering of literacies. Marie Laure Ryan (2004), editor of *Narrative Across Media*, theorizes, "There are, quite simply, meanings that are better expressed visually or musically than verbally, and these meanings should not be declared *a priori* irrelevant to the narrative experience" (Ryan, 2005, p. 10). While biblical literacy may have been one factor in the use of stained glass in churches, its continued contemporary use in settings where literacy is not an issue supports its aesthetic value for all generations.

Clearly, people were reading pictures before written words existed; in fact, written alphabets directly derive from those pictorial representations! Egyptologist Dr. Yasmin el Shazly categorically states in a recent PBS production of NOVA about the first alphabets, “Writing always starts with pictures” (qtd. in Sington, 2020). As previously outlined, humans universally desire “to capture the world in concepts and pictures”; according to German Egyptologist Dr. Gunter Dreyer, this is “the basis of thought” (qtd. in Sington, 2020). Ancient hieroglyphs, found in 5000-year-old tombs near Cairo, form a pictorial writing system, or alphabet. Egyptologist Dr. Orly Goldwasser describes the Egyptian hieroglyphs as a language written “in pictures only,” using thousands of different symbols, “stylized pictures” or “pictographs,” put together to form written words (Sington, 2020). Chinese characters are also stylized pictures; for example, the character for “fish” looks like scales. However, sometimes the characters represent a sound, which when put together with another sign/sound creates new meaning. Roland Barthes (1977) proposes in his essay, “Rhetoric of the Image,” that in a literal reading of an image, like those presented in hieroglyphs, the signifier (the form the sign takes, in this case the hieroglyphic images) draws meaning from perceived knowledge, that which anyone in the culture understands; in an analysis of the pure image, signs work together to create a coherent message (Barthes, 1977, pp. 34-36). In other words, each of the individual signs, like letters (or images) in a word, create one pure image that communicates meaning, including symbolic meaning; the meaning is socially and historically constructed and dependent on a viewer within that sign system.

As written texts increased, visual imagery associated with storytelling did not disappear, but evolved into new forms of illustration and visual narrative. Christian

monks in Western Europe began producing “illuminated manuscripts” as early as c. 500 CE, designated as such “because of the use of gold and silver which illuminates the text and accompanying illustrations” (Mark, 2018). These handwritten copies and illustrations were time-consuming and costly to make, so only the wealthy could afford them. The Irish *Book of Kells* is perhaps one of the best known; it includes elaborately drawn

Figure 5

Book of Kells images, Folio 27. Photo credit: Trinity College.



images not only of Christian characters and iconography, but also mythological creatures and a colorful array of animals (Fig. 5). However, private collectors own many Books of Hours (illuminated prayer books) just as intricate. Cardinal Domenico Grimany, who bought the Grimani Breviary (c. 1510 CE), declared it “so beautiful that only select people of high moral standing should be allowed to see it” (Mark, 2018). His words do not support these illustrations as necessary for literacy but deem them works of art for the powerful and privileged. Art in this context was for the elite class, as a status symbol, not for the common people as aids to biblical literacy.

Even as paintings and drawing became commonplace for illustrating the written narrative in books, evidence of extra narrative within the images exists. When

Figure 6

“Golden Head by Golden Head”



Pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti illustrated his sister, Christina’s, publication of *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862), he did more than a strict, visual interpretive rendering of Christina Rossetti’s poems. Dante Rossetti’s wood-engraved illustrations deviate from the words of his sister’s poetry, adding elements

which he thought would add depth of meaning beyond the words themselves. For example, “Golden Head by Golden Head” (Figure 6) makes no mention of goblins when it says, “Moon and stars beamed in at them,” but Rossetti adds four goblin men with baskets of fruit on their heads in his image of the moon over the sisters’ heads. In doing so, he emphasizes “the power they now hold” over the sisters (*Victorian Web*, 2019). In

Figure 7

“Buy from Us with a Golden Curl”



another illustration, for “Buy from Us with a Golden Curl,” (Figure 7) Rossetti eroticizes Laura’s action of cutting her “golden curl” as payment to the Goblin men for their fruit. Christina’s poem does not mention cutting her hair with a pair of tiny scissors, as the image illustrates, but Dante’s visual portrayal presents a loss of virginity: “‘Breaking’ or ‘cutting’ the ‘virgin knot’ was a commonplace expression of mid-Victorian

culture, [...] Dante uses an expression which had contemporary currency” (Cooke, *Victorian Web*). The Rosettis emphasize different elements, creating different meanings

and significance for the readers. Peggy Fogelman (1985) also notes, in her book about the Lady of Shalott, that Dante Rossetti’s illustration of Tennyson’s poem (Figure 8) “reveals his personal interpretation [its] final scene in which Lancelot peered at the dead Lady and [...] said, ‘She has a lovely face;/God in his mercy lend her grace,’” (Fogelman, p. 158). Lancelot gazes more intently and compassionately than the words suggest, and Rossetti again adds more symbolism and mix of religiosity and sensuality than a strict interpretation might permit. Thus, the visual imagery co-constructs meaning with the text instead of merely reflecting the original written elements.

Figure 8

D. Rossetti’s “Lady of Shalott”



Artist and illustrator Walter Crane (1845-1915) built much of his career on creating narrative art, especially in the field of children’s books. The art of the Pre-Raphaelites, like Rossetti, greatly influenced Crane’s early gallery paintings of narrative works with mythological or romantic themes (Menges, 2010). He was one of the first artists to create a painting based on the ending of Tennyson’s poem, “The Lady of Shalott.” As a narrative painting, though, Crane’s image also departs from a strict illustration of the written text: “Under tower and balcony,/ By garden wall and gallery,/A pale, pale corpse she floated by,/Deadcold, between the houses high,/ Dead

Figure 9

Walter Crane, The Lady of Shalott (1862); Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT. Wikimedia Commons.



into tower'd Camelot" (Tennyson, 1832). While the Lady does appear corpse-like, the setting is more in the vein of fine art than illustration, painting in a pre-Raphaelite style of realism, but adding to the poem's narrative a gloomy and dramatic dusk lighting and an ancient wooded setting. Crane's painting obviously influenced Waterhouse's later, more famous painting (1888), which is similar but adds even more narrative to the poem itself.

However, throughout his career, Crane made clear distinctions between illustration and narrative paintings; his primary focus in picture-book illustrations for children *is* visual literacy, but he wanted to "create beautiful illustrations with the purpose of cultivating an appreciation for beauty in readers to help them resist the effects of industrial capitalism" (Korda, p. 327, 2016). He saw a book as "a complete package" with a "unified message derived from all of its facets," so his contribution to books went beyond his illustrations to decorative frameworks and handwritten passages (Menges, pp. ix–x, 2010). Crane desired an aesthetic experience for readers, believing that "art has the potential to become a universal language" (Brockington, p. 359, 2013). This sentiment reflects the influence of designer William Morris's socialist ideas, that "art should exist in all things and be available to all the people," including children and adults of all social classes (Menges, p. ix, 2010). Thus, while Crane's beautifully detailed illustrations do aid in literacy, they move beyond co-construction of meaning with the text to also provide an aesthetic experience for *all* ages and set a precedence for creative engagement with readers of all ages, not just children.

Educational Background

Fast-forwarding to today's culture, one finds visual images bombarding students daily, hourly, and often in minutes and seconds. In his introduction to *Picture Theory*,

cultural theorist W. Mitchell (1994) contends “the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of the image” (p. 2). In his Toronto *Globe & Mail* article, Valpy (6 June 2001) notes, “Symbols are rapidly replacing text on public signs. Marketers... [create packaging according to] the hierarchy [of] colours, shapes, icons and, last of all, words. Crummy videos are more appealing to children than the good books on which they are based” (Valpy, np, 2001). Yet, while images daily seduce students appealing to them as both visual consumers and producers (through Instagram and Snapchat, for example), educators continue to privilege alphabetic literacies over visual ones, especially in secondary-level teaching and standardized testing (Thomsen, 2018, pp. 54–55).

Literacy researcher and theorist, James Paul Gee (2004) observed in contemporary cultural and social life a “multimodal principle” in which “meaning and knowledge...built up through various modalities (images, texts, symbols, interactions, abstract design, sound, etc.), not just words” (p. 210). This continuing change in how people define texts requires educators and students to become more adept at analyzing and interpreting multiple literacies and bringing them into classroom settings. Yet, Thomsen (2018) points out the disconnect between in-school life and outside-school life still exists: “composing with images has increased in cultural contexts without equally increasing in pedagogical salience” (Thomsen, 2018, p. 54). In his article on pedagogy and multimodality, Luke (2003) claims the classroom might be one of the only places where students are not “blending, mixing, and matching knowledge drawn from diverse textual sources and communication media” (p. 398); at least they were not in 2003. Even if multimodal pedagogy is more prevalent today than it was in 2003, multimodality does not align with current standardized-testing methods. In fact, although one of the National

Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and its sister International Literacy Association's (ILA) most illustrious members, John Paul Gee (1996), was writing in 1996 about what he termed, "multiliteracy," new communication forms that include "multiple modes and technologies" (see also Conquergood, 1997; Anstey, 2002), it took the NCTE until 2018 to acknowledge the changes in literacies and update its 2004 position statements in "What We Know about Adolescent Literacy Instruction" (NCTE, 2018). In their 2018 update, Council members finally concede: "students must adapt new literacy resources in and out of school" because their "texts" now "range from digital texts to classic literature including gaming endeavors, interactions with popular music, and social media" (NCTE, 2018). New directions in literacy and teaching are embracing multimodal pedagogies and learning they work to engage adolescents more than printed verbal text alone (Witte & Rybakova, 2017). New teaching resources for secondary students are beginning to include ways to incorporate visuals as a teaching tool along with literature: "...because students receive information in a variety of formats, literacy must be expanded beyond traditional reading and writing to include the visual arts as one of the ways in which we communicate (Flood & Lapp, 1997/1998)" (cited in Seglem & Witte, 2009). In short, my concept of Visual Bridging is another process of embracing multimodality.

In the same way colorful illustrations in children's books attract a young reader's interest (Brookshire, Scharff, & Moses, 2002), today's marketing agents and publishers position images and media texts to lure the viewer almost demanding his/her engagement (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009). Research evidences book illustrations helping children remember over the long-term (Read & Barnsley, 1977) and "lure children to read and interact with the text" (Fang, 1996; Brookshire, et al, 2002). S. Pantaleo (2004) studies

the effects of reading “radical change” (Dresang, 1999) picture books with her first graders. These books’ authors play with forms, formats, and text-illustration relations that may prove as attractive to adolescents and adults as they do to children. For example, in Wiesner’s (2001) *The Three Pigs*, when the wolf “huffs and puffs,” the first pig tumbles out of the storyboard exclaiming, “Hey! He blew me right out of the story!” (Pantaleo, 2004, p. 181). While the wolf is still looking for them, all the pigs eventually leave the storyboard frame because it is safer outside it. Pantaleo (2004) discovers students’ reading and interpreting texts at “higher level[s] of sophistication and complexity” (p. 186) when filling in the plot gaps between text and illustrations (Iser, 1978) and when predicting and inferring meaning. As students enter adolescence, secondary-leveled books with illustrations are scarce while students’ necessary interactions with the pictorial outside school and class structures continue to increase. Might adolescent readers benefit as much as elementary readers from illustrated texts for the same reasons and with the same positive results?

Teacher-researcher D. Jacobs (2007) supports “the importance of disrupting the privileging of words in education” (Thomsen, 2018) by incorporating multimodal texts that “effectively help students become active creators, rather than passive consumers of meaning” (Jacobs, 2007, p. 24). This practice of passive consumption continues through high school into college including college composition courses; only in the past decade have composition studies “[begun taking] visual representation seriously” (Rice, 2007). Secondary teacher Jessi Thomsen (2018) reminds readers of *English Journal*: “text and image coexist, whether we fully acknowledge it or not” (p. 61), so teachers need to incorporate both when preparing students to negotiate meaning within different media.

She proposes “composing with images” as “a bridge back to alphabetic-centric” composing (Thomsen, 2018, p. 54). I propose building an image bridge readers cross to enter and exit literary texts, a bridge easing entry, as a means for making meaning and assigning value, and as a means for not merely exiting with this new-found meaning and value but also lighting the student’s path toward the next reading experience.

CHAPTER III

BARTHES AND A THEORY OF VISUAL IMAGERY

In his collection of essays entitled *Ways of Seeing*, renowned art critic John Berger (1972) comments on the proliferation of “publicity images” (advertising and marketing) inhabitants of cities in the early 1970s see daily: “all of us see hundreds of [them] every day... No other kind of image confronts us so frequently. In no other form of [human] society in history has there been such a concentration of images, such a density of visual messages” (p. 129). One could argue the number has not leveled off yet, and most likely is in the thousands of images per day now. Because today’s students live in pictorial worlds—television, film, posters, animated billboards, computer/tablet/smart phone technology, digital gaming, etc.—they can struggle with verbal media, and literary texts in particular, perhaps for such multiple reasons as literary texts being without physical movement, colored pictures, and speed. The significance of visual imagery has long been recognized and theorized by philosophers and writers throughout history. In this chapter, I will briefly review theories developed to address the value and nature of imagery and pictorial narratives before focusing on Roland Barthes' theory of visual imagery. I will also review theories that explore the processes of aesthetic response to texts, art, and imagery. Finally, I will explicate the theoretical inspirations, notions and ideas of Roland Barthes and others, from which I will develop the concepts of Visual

Bridging and Visual Bridges.

Theories of Visual Imagery and Pictorial Narrative

Before Roland Barthes's late twentieth-century writings about photography, early theories have been developed to address the value of pictorial narrative, particularly paintings, drawings, and other visual art forms. NYIT English Professor Kevin LaGrandeur (2003) notes that Aristotle acknowledged the power of the image by including *pathos* (appeal to the emotions) as one of the "artistic forms of proof ... important to argument" (p. 120). LaGrandeur (2003) further explains:

The source of the image's emotional appeal clearly depends on its mimetic quality; but it also depends significantly on the artist's manipulation of the image, on its rendering, not just on its "realistic" imitation of nature. This is why one may have no familiarity at all with the original object rendered in an image and still experience emotion when viewing the image. The emotion "will be due," says Aristotle, not to the realistic imitation of the object, but "to the execution, the coloring, or some similar cause." (p.120)

Certainly with current technology, manipulation of images has become more extensive and sophisticated, but Aristotle recognized the possibility even in the visual art of ancient culture.

Scholars have also note that pictorial images can provide a narrative on their own, even though they do so in a different manner than written text. Medieval History scholar Dr. Margriet Hoogvliet (2010) studied the text-image relationship in the published illustrations and stand-alone paintings associated with 17th and 18th century fairy tales, finding that "there is a certain degree of cohesion between [illustration and text as they

interact with each other]”; however, “a painting is a ‘stand alone’ visual retelling of a story where the artist has to be more explicit about the setting, the colours and the appearance the protagonists.” In a painting, as opposed to an illustration connected to the text, the setting (time and place in the story) is strategic, and “the visual narrative has to be functional on its own” (Hoogvliet, 2010, p. 199). She points out a common theory surrounding paintings of the Renaissance period involves the appearance of a *punctum temporis*, or “‘pregnant moment’: that one split second in a narrative where everything changes, ...the cleavage between ‘before’ and ‘after’” (p. 200). Yet, Hoogvliet also presents the opposing position of Renaissance scholar Lew Andrews (1995) who argues that because of the “rebirth of pictorial space during the Renaissance, some artists produced “continuous narrative” paintings where “several episodes from a narrative are ... represented in the unified space suggested by linear perspective” (Hoogvliet, p. 200). One example is Titian’s *Diana and Actaeon* (1556-1559), where the artist represents the main characters in two different scenes (narratives) in the same painting (Fig. 10), which would be unrealistic in a theory of pictures suggesting a moment frozen in time or a singular experience. In the foreground is Actaeon surprising the goddess Diana as she

Figure 10

Titian’s “*Diana and Actaeon*” (Photo credit: British National Gallery)



bathes; in the background (see close-up image), Diana is “hunting Actaeon who has been transformed into a deer” (p. 200). Hoogvliet agrees with other art theorists who argue

Renaissance artists did not originate continuous narrative, because evidence of it can be found in medieval painters in Biblical manuscripts; however, the 17th century did mark an “imperative for paintings evoking an action, history, or narrative, due to the influence of Aristotle’s statement that art should imitate nature. ...[M]odernism inspired a quest for pure images, in combination with a rejection of figurative and narrative art” (Hoogvliet, p. 201).

Modern linguists and semioticians make a distinction between written language, a temporal art which is *predominantly* linear and sequential, and visual arts which present “a simultaneity of various components” (Jakobsen, 1971, p.340). The distinctions are common, but not exclusive. According to children’s literacy expert Dr. Lawrence Sipe (1998), when looking at a picture readers look at a “series of temporal moments at various parts of it” (p. 100). Sipe argues that picture books demand re-reading because one “can never quite perceive all the possible meanings of the text ... or the pictures ... or the text-picture relationships” (p. 101). He explains the different ways people experience text and pictures, especially in relation to each other in a picture book. While readers think of the written narrative as linear and, therefore, desire to keep reading the story, visual images (special in nature), compel readers “to gaze on, dwell upon, or contemplate them” (Sipe, 1998, p. 100), creating a tension in how to read an illustrated book (or perhaps a highly visual, literary text as well).

D. H. Lawrence presents an early Modernist view of the reflective nature of visual and written art in his poem, “Thought,” which also plays with the emotional pull in this tension:

Thought, I love thought.

But not the juggling and twisting of already existent ideas.

I despise that self-important game.

Thought is the welling up of unknown life into consciousness,

Thought is the testing of statements on the touchstone of consciousness,

Thought is gazing onto the face of life, and reading what can be read,

Thought is pondering over experience, and coming to conclusion.

Thought is not a trick, or an exercise, or a set of dodges,

Thought is a man in his wholeness, wholly attending.

(Lawrence, 1932)

Here Lawrence advocates for value in thoughts, but not those that already exist in the mind, filling up one's head with the business of life or random knowledge. Instead, he espouses reflection and contemplation. When viewing art in any form, he is "gazing onto the face of life, and reading what can be read," intentionally pondering with his whole attention to what he may discover; and it is a conclusion only he can discover through his reflections of what only he sees through the lens of his own life experiences.

Virginia Woolf, around the same time, proposes a similar theory in her essay titled "How Should One Read a Book?" (1932). She agrees with Aristotle and Lawrence that all creativity builds on what came before and observes, "the newness of new poetry and fiction is its most superficial quality," arguing instead for a cultivation of taste in how readers perceive the arts. Woolf also acknowledges reflection is a necessary component of reading; she describes it as "[continuing to read] without the book before you, to hold one shadow-shape against another, to have read widely enough and with enough understanding to make such comparisons alive and illuminating" (Woolf, n.p., 1932).

This understanding requires imagination, creating visual narratives in one's mind as one reads the text, reflections of images already seen. In fact, the word "idea" derives from the Greek "idein", *to see* (McKim, 1980). As Berger (1972) reminds his audience, the visuals come naturally, for "[s]eeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak" (p. 7).

Roland Barthes's Theory of the Visual

Roland Barthes's theory of visual imagery resonates with many of these earlier views, although as a linguist and literary theorist his initial interest was in the codes and signs of culture and literature. Studying the semiotics theory advanced by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure led Barthes to become a leader in the literary criticism movements of Structuralism and New Criticism, in which New Critics look for the essence of an individual work of art, separated from any historical or biographical context, through a close analytic reading. Since one aspect of semiotics is the sign itself (an image or word), in addition to the codes (language) a given culture uses to analyze or organize the signs, Barthes finds himself developing a theory of "reading" images, specifically photographic images so prevalent in the popular culture. In his essay "The Photographic Message" (1961, published in *Image, Music, Text*, 1978) he defines a photograph as "a message without a code" which "common sense" would say "transmits...reality" (p. 17). This reality is the denotative message found in a "press photograph" which is never intended to be artistic; however, connotation comes from coding the culture adds to it "(the 'art', or the treatment, or the 'writing', or the rhetoric, of the photograph)" (p. 19). When text is applied to a press photograph, it becomes "a parasitic message designed to connote the image; ...the image no longer *illustrates* the words; it is now the words which,

structurally, are parasitic on the image” (p. 25), much as Sipe (1998) would articulate later in his argument about the tension created between text and pictures in reading a picture book.

When Barthes’s mother died in October 1977, he found himself in her apartment sorting through photographs of her, “gradually moving back in time with her, looking for the truth of the face [he] had loved. And [he] found it” (1980, p. 67). What he titles the “Winter Garden” Photograph portrays his mother at the age of five; Barthes reflects on the picture at length, describing minute details of it, along with all the memories and associated emotions evoked by her (albeit young) face, and his ruminations point his past studies of photographic imagery in a slightly new direction. He notes, “Something like an essence of the Photograph floated in this particular picture” (p.73). While he knows it is nothing more than the reality of a moment, it also contains something that drew him toward it, perhaps only him. This pull is strong enough to prevent him from every publishing the Winter Garden photograph, explaining,

It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the “ordinary”; ... in it, for you, [is found] no wound. (p. 73)

These individually written sketches of thought as he processes his mother’s death reveal a progression of his theory of images and photography which he later compiles into the book *Camera Lucida* in mid-1979, ironically published in France only a couple of months before his untimely death. Geoff Dyer, in his forward to the 2010 paperback printing, claims, “He was one of those writers whose life’s work was destined, by increments, to remain unfinished” (p. x), although many who were influenced by

Barthes's writings ensured his place in history was set.

In *Camera Lucida* (1980), Barthes reflects on the "art" of photographic images to determine what makes them different from paintings, to define "by what essential feature" Photography is "distinguished from the community of images" (p. 3). As Spectator (and never Photographer), he sees the image as an attempt to capture a moment in time, which he can only perceive in the constraints of his cultural experience. This view of the image has value in a dualism, which Barthes defines as "*studium*" and "*punctum*" (pp. 26-27, author emphasis). Previously known for his concept of "the death of the author" in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), Barthes suddenly finds a strange pleasure in examining the visual medium of photography as a record of "reality in a past state" and discovering elements perhaps not known or intended by the photographer. He terms this new concept "*punctum*": "what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*" (1980, p. 55, author emphasis). What he "adds" is literally in the photographic image, but no one might fixate on it except him. He sees something unique, from his perspective and peculiar to his experience, and it leaps out, grabs him and won't let go. The *studium* is cultural; it is the content which "is clear: [Barthes is] sympathetically interested, as a docile cultural subject, in what the photograph has to say, for it *speaks*" (p. 43). This content is interesting to the "docile Spectator," as "testimony" or "historical scenes: for it is culturally that [he] participates in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions" (1980, p. 26). It is the content everyone sees and finds interesting for whatever normal reason. However, the *punctum* rises out of the scene, like "punctuation," and Barthes defines it as the detail which "wounds" or "pricks" him (p. 26). No one else may see it, not even the photographer, but it becomes a point of

distraction and focus for the Spectator. So, for example, in a photo of two mentally delayed children in New Jersey (Fig. 11), the unusual heads and profiles belong to the

Figure 11

Idiot Children in an Institution, New Jersey, 1924; (Photo credit: Lewis H. Hine)



studium; yet, instead of the obvious, Barthes sees the “off-center detail, the little boy’s huge color, the girl’s finger bandage” (p. 51). These are the *punctum*. He describes their effect as inherit anything from another eye than [his] own.” What he “can name cannot really prick [him]” (p. 51), for it is what everyone sees.

Punctum requires a different kind of engagement with the text, one which can result in new perspective and understanding. When students only perceive meaning from their own experience and cultural lens, they only reach a level of “liking, not of loving,” only “encountering the photographer’s intentions” (Barthes, 1980, p. 27). However, Barthes also acknowledges (like Woolf earlier) that sometimes the *punctum* comes to him later, when he is no longer viewing the image but reflecting upon his memory of it (p. 53). Reading, like viewing, is not enough for deeper insight; reflection is a necessary component. In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), Barthes posits there is no text without the reader, and the author cannot determine when he is writing which passages will or will not be read (p. 11). The pleasure of the text comes from the action of the reader, upon the “death of the author,” the completion of writing and publishing. Barthes’s *studium* in a visual image parallels his definition of the “text of pleasure: the text that contents...; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a comfortable practice of reading.” Likewise, the *punctum* in an image is similar to his “text of bliss: the

text that imposes a state of loss, ... discomforts, ... unsettles the reader's ... assumptions... [and] brings to a crisis his relation with language" (1975, p. 14). When approaching the *studium* of the photo, the Spectator attempts to "encounter the photographer's intentions, but the *punctum* brings creative imagination into play. In seeing the *punctum*, Barthes encounters the "off-center detail." He describes himself as "a child" who "dismiss[es] all knowledge, all culture" and "refuse[s] to inherit anything from another eye than [his] own" (1980, p. 51). Barthes is compelled to reflection after putting the image away, drawn to relive and re-imagine the story behind the image.

Barthes's concept of the "biographemes" in "ethnological knowledge" (pp. 28-30) is another component of his larger theory in *Camera Lucida*. He says a photograph can provide knowledge of cultural details, much as an ethnography does with words. It records these details as the "very raw material of ethnological knowledge" (p. 28). These biographical aspects of a writer's life Barthes terms "biographemes" in photography. However, he looks for what new insight he can find from this perspective (as he means when he says, "What I can name cannot really prick me"). Barthes pushes the viewer to see without cultural blinders. Barthes argues that "culture (from which the *studium* derives) is a contract ... between creators and consumers" (p.28), and as such, he learns of the Photographer's intentions only according to his own "will as a *Spectator*"; these "myths" (intentions) the Photographer intentionally places within the Photograph to reconcile it with society, thus [informing or representing or causing to signify or provoking desire] (p.28). This *studium* Barthes connects to the text of pleasure; only his observations can add delight or pain (*bliss*). Looking at student engagement with literary texts through Barthes's lens reveals the common way these readers traditionally approach

meaning (and how teachers traditionally guide them): to see the author's or culture's message, which doesn't really interest or excite the student. While Barthes's applies his analysis to Photography, his insights could apply to all imagery, visual and printed text. If students are guided to view/create an image as a biographeme of culture, in the same way biography is part of the ethnography of History (Barthes, 1980, p. 30), then perhaps they will begin to perceive literature's connection to their own culture.

John Berger (1967/2013), Susan Sontag (1977) and Roland Barthes (1980/2010) all write about photography in developing a theory of the visual. While photography was not necessarily a "new" art form when they wrote, it did play a large role in the development of new theories of visual art and representation for the Modernists and Postmodernists. Barthes cites Sontag as a resource for further research; Sontag cites Barthes as influencing her ideas; and the influence of Walter Benjamin ("A Small History of Photography," 1931) appears in Berger's, Sontag's and Barthes's writings. According to Geoff Dyer, Berger shared Barthes's goal "to articulate the essence of photography" (Berger, p. xiv). Essence was an interesting concept in photography, for its method of production is so different from fine art. Benjamin (1935) refers to it as "mechanical reproduction":

In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. ... Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new....

For the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens. (Benjamin, 1935/1969, p.2).

Barthes's concept of the art of a photograph reflects similar arguments from Berger

(1967) and Sontag (1977). In his essay, "Understanding a Photograph," Berger claims a photograph's unique power is that "[w]hat it shows invokes what is not shown" (author's emphasis), and that its "truth" can't "ever be independent of the spectator" (p. 20). He continues to define a photograph as "a means of testing, confirming, and constructing a total view of reality" by that spectator, noting it can also be a "weapon which [the viewer] can use" or have used against them (p. 21). Sontag, in writing of the power a photograph can have in raising political consciousness or emotional outrage, notes, "Photographs shock insofar as they show something novel" (p.19). These points similarly appear in Barthes's concept of *punctum*, that which wounds or pricks the individual viewer.

Theories of Aesthetic Response

Apart from theories focusing on visual imagery, a few theorists have explored the processes of aesthetic experiences of encountering texts, art, and images. The appreciation of beauty and the impact of such aesthetic experiences has been the subject of Wolfgang Iser and Maxine Greene's work. In his books, *The Implied Reader* (1974) and *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978), Wolfgang Iser asserts an essential quality of the "aesthetic experience" of reading is "[t]he ability to perceive oneself during the process of" interacting with the text (p. 134). Like Barthes, Iser stresses the necessity of the reader's role in completing the story an author writes, or an image an artist creates: the gaps in the text "may be filled in different ways" because "each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way" (1974, p. 280). Yet, Iser also acknowledges that "with all literary texts ... the potential text is infinitely richer than any of its individual realizations," for people often see something new in second readings and

have different aesthetic experiences (1974, p. 280). The reader must recreate the text to see it as a work of art, which Iser refers to aesthetic recreation (1974, p. 288). While these are reader-response theories, I can see them applying to visual imagery as well.

Another great influence on the theory of aesthetic education was Maxine Greene, philosopher-in-residence at Lincoln Center Institute. Greene defines aesthetic education as "an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what is there to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful" (1980/2001, p.6). Greene developed her philosophy by building on Dewey's ideas in *Art as Experience* (1934) where he explained "the beholder" of art has to create his own experience to perceive meaning: "[t]he artist selected, simplified, clarified, abridged and condensed according to his interest. The beholder must go through these operations according to his point of view and interest" (p. 56). In *Releasing the Imagination* (1995), Greene also cites Iser as an influence on her understanding of the importance of aesthetics in education and proceeds to advance her views of the teacher's role in advancing their students' aesthetic experience: "Aesthetic experiences require conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed in [the work of art]" (p. 125). Greene's theory also aligns with Barthes when she argues that imagination "deals in unpredictabilities, in the unexpected. It then requires reflectiveness ... to acknowledge the existence of these ... vistas and perspectives in our experiences" (pp. 124-125). These unexpected encounters I conceive as *punctum*, and Greene posits, like Barthes, that it only occurs with "informed engagements with the arts" which "release ... students' imaginative capacity" (p. 125).

The arts are a bridge to individual aesthetic experiences which affect students' cultural awareness and potentially their lives' trajectories.

Theoretical Inspirations

Barthes's reader-response concepts, *text of pleasure* and *text of bliss*, his viewer-response concepts, *studium* and *punctum*, and his concept of the "biographemes," as well as Iser's notion that when reading stories and viewing images, readers must fill in the gaps in the text "in different ways" have provided a starting point and theoretical inspirations for me to develop a theoretical solution, the concept of visual bridging, to the issue students frequently encounter while reading classical texts they deem old, boring, and irrelevant.

The distinction that Barthes made between a text evoking the reader's pleasure and one evoking the reader's bliss is essential to my concept of Visual Bridging. For Barthes, the text is nothing without the reader. Because each reader brings something different to each text, the text changes according to the reader. Identifying two types of reading experiences, Barthes defines the written text of pleasure "the text that contents...the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, [the text that] is linked to a comfortable practice of reading" (Barthes, 1975, p. 14). As a reader, Barthes (1975) eventually encounters a text that evokes more than pleasure but bliss: the "text of bliss: ...imposes a state of loss...discomforts... unsettles the [and] brings to a crisis [his/her] relation with language" (p. 14). While Barthes equates "pleasure" with contentment and "bliss" with "rapture" (p. 19), he also notes their inherent opposition: "pleasure can be expressed in words, bliss cannot" (p. 21). Each reader determines if a given text evokes pleasure or bliss, for each reader in part creates the text, experiences

the text differently than anyone else, and experiences the text differently each time he/she enters the text.

The pictorial elements Barthes names *studium* and *punctum* are also fundamental to my concept. The *studium* is cultural; it is content which is clear. *Studium* content is interesting to the “docile Spectator” as “testimony” or “historical scenes...for it is culturally that [the docile Spectator] participates in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions” (Barthes, 1980, p. 26). When viewers exclusively assign meaning based upon their own experiences and cultural knowledge, they can only reach a level of “liking, not of loving,” only reach a level of “encountering the photographer’s intentions” (1980, p. 27), only reach a level of what Barthes (1975) calls “pleasure” when writing about literary experience. Although what he “can name cannot really prick” or move him (Barthes, 1980, p. 51), he can enjoy or find pleasure in the viewing. While *studium* is the scene where content is clear, from it rising the *punctum*. Like “punctuation,” *punctum* is the detail that “wounds” or “pricks” the viewer (Barthes, 1980, p. 26). No one else—not even the photographer—may see it, but it distracts the Spectator interrupting his/her focus. Barthes (1980) defines *punctum*’s effect as positive, for it causes him to “dismiss all knowledge, all culture, [and] refuse to inherit anything from another eye than [his] own” (p. 51). *Punctum* requires engagement with the text different from the docile Spectator’s engagement. With *punctum* engagement leads to new perspectives and understandings. Barthes (1980) also acknowledges that sometimes the *punctum* comes to him or “pricks” him when he is no longer viewing the image but reflecting upon his memory of it. Thus, mere viewing, like mere reading, does not lead to insight; reflection must follow each.

These ideas and concepts are inspirational for my development of the concepts, visual bridging and visual bridges (*studium* for “visual” and *punctum* for “bridge”). A visual bridge is a conduit through which readers enter and exit a literary text—however old, foreign, or distant from contemporary readers’ experiences the given text may seem—which transports readers into a text, allaying their fears and dread and opening them to the text. I posit that in a visual image, Barthes’ (1980) *studium* parallels his definition of a written text of pleasure: “the text that contents...the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, [the text that] is linked to a comfortable practice of reading” (Barthes, 1975, p. 14). Similarly, his *punctum* in a visual image parallels the written text that discomfits the reader, the “text of bliss” (Barthes, 1975, p. 14). After engaging with the text, readers can discover its meaning and value to everyday life, and exit the text crossing the visual bridge, this time spotlighting various images, merely clues when they entered, but now visual “hot spots” of meaning and value which ultimately lead to individual and collective aesthetic, literary experiences. In other words, creating this visual bridge from pictorial elements familiar to readers may magnify the meaning and value readers assign to their experiences engaging with the text.

Using Barthes’s theory as inspiration, I propose exploring whether a visual bridge can be created, and if so, what does it look like and how can it deliver students from the foreign land to the meaningful.

CHAPTER IV

VISUAL BRIDGING AND VISUAL BRIDGES

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) states, “Beyond its conventional concept as a set of reading, writing and counting skills, literacy is now understood as a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world” (UNESCO, 2021). The NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) Standing Committee on Global Citizenship interprets this definition to mean “literacy is the way we interact with the world around us, how we shape it and are shaped by it”; therefore, it is not only “how we communicate with others via reading and writing, but also by speaking, listening, and creating” (NCTE, 2020). Today’s students visually experience the world in more complex and creative ways than ever before, “reading” varied types of texts in varying ways. Print texts compete with a plethora of interactive and visually alluring mediums for students’ attention, especially literary texts encouraged in educational settings. In this context, the development of a concept of Visual Bridging and the pedagogical approach using visual bridges would be essential to help older students, especially reluctant readers at the secondary and college level, be more open to engaging with literature they deem old, difficult, or irrelevant to their lives.

The Concept of Visual Bridging

Visual Bridging, as I propose it, uses what is familiar and comfortable (everyday visual elements) to enter the unfamiliar or uncomfortable (alphabetically printed literary texts). Additionally, it is a metaphorical means of transport to and from literature, like actual bridges are a concrete means of transport. Physical bridges use different materials for different purposes in the same way different visual methods are needed for different literary texts and purposes; one must build a bridge. Finally, Visual Bridging is a means to an individual experience with literature and a personal aesthetic connection as a bridge back out of the text, providing opportunities for meaning which are unique to each student. This concept puts control more in the hands of the reader, inspired by Barthes's concept in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), where he posits no text exists without the reader, and the authors cannot determine when they are writing which passages readers will or will not read (p. 11). The pleasure of the text comes from the reader's action, upon the "death of the author," a death which comes after the author has finished writing and publishing a given text; at this point, the author has completed his/her meaning making; and the reader's meaning becomes the only one that matters. For Barthes (1975), the text is nothing without the reader. In this definition, Visual Bridging also functions as a gap-filler, as explained by Wolfgang Iser (1978): these "gaps [in dialogue or trivial scenes]... stimulate the reader into filling the blanks with projections. He is drawn into the events [of the text] and made to supply what is meant from what is not said" (p. 24). These "gaps" enable the reader to be active and creative, working things out for himself. In Visual Bridging, I assert readers may use visual methods as a way of filling gaps they encounter in the text.

In *Camera Lucinda*, Barthes finds strange pleasure while examining the visual medium of photography as a record of “reality in a past state” (1980, p. *xvii*). The obvious pictorial elements Barthes (1980) names *studium*. The *studium* is cultural, the content which is clear to the viewer. In *Visual Bridging*, the pictorial image itself is *studium* for students. They enjoy looking at it, perhaps because they themselves created it, assigning meaning based upon their own experiences and cultural knowledge. However, Barthes notes they can only reach a level of “*liking*, not of *loving*” (1980, p. 27) by looking at the image as presented, and only reaching a level of what Barthes (1975) calls “pleasure” when writing about literary experience. Yet, the image is pleasurable, leading the student into the literary experience, which hopefully is new, (perhaps surprising) and engaging; this bridge into and out of the story I see as *punctum*. Rising from the *studium*, from the scene where content is clear, rising like “punctuation,” the *punctum* is the detail that “wounds” or “pricks” the viewer of the photograph (Barthes, 1980, p. 26) or, I would posit, the story. No one else may see it, but it distracts the student, interrupting his/her focus. With *punctum* engagement leads to new perspectives and understandings, and in doing so it should lead the student toward an aesthetic experience not only of reflection but also possibly future action.

Most artists and authors recognize the interdependence of visual and written imagery. Authors Wordsworth and Thoreau each acknowledged the power of visual imagery in their writing. William Wordsworth’s (1807) famous poem “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” is inspired by a visual image of daffodils lodged in his memory; he concludes, “they flash upon that *inward eye*.../ And once again my heart with rapture fills, / and dances with the daffodils.” Likewise, Henry David Thoreau (1852) writes in

his journal, “First of all a man must see, before he can say” (p. 85), and to really “*see*” (author emphasis) he posits one must “taste the world and digest it” (metaphorically!). For Thoreau, the senses and emotion are essential to his writing, and Visual Bridging gives space for students to insert creative imagery they individually see and feel.

A Visual Bridge can serve to lead students into a literary experience, but several considerations are important in deciding what type of visual bridge to construct and with what visual materials, much as an engineer must consider when constructing an actual, physical bridge. A physical bridge is a connecting structure, allowing easier access between disconnected areas, gaps, or obstacles. Without the bridge, obstacles make passage more difficult or even impossible. A bridge is not the completion of a journey, but it provides a way to continue the journey, without which the journey would either be more treacherous (not worth the effort or risk); much longer than necessary, therefore becoming tedious and unappealing; or it would abruptly and decisively end because the means (skills) to continue are not available. If the bridge is not present, one must build it.

When constructing a physical bridge, one must consider several factors, such as purpose, use, and landscape. For example, if the purpose for the bridge is getting from one side of the river to the other, one must also consider its use and landscape. When building a bridge across a water, one must consider specific things; however, if instead of a river it is a gorge separating the two places, the purpose may still be to connect one place with another, but different considerations would be made about the bridge’s construction. Different materials might be preferred in each scenario, or they might require different safety protocols. What about the two sides the bridge is connecting? Is each side solid rock, or is it soft soil that gets wet and slides into the river? Thus, the

landscape also contributes to the kind of bridge one builds, the materials, and the bridge's use. Part of considering the landscape may be determining where in the landscape one needs to build. One might assume the shortest distance across the river or gorge is preferable, but where the distance is shortest perhaps the land will likely not hold or take the anchoring of a bridge. Again, one needs to consider use: are people walking, biking, driving, skiing or snowmobiling across the bridge, or is it just a decorative part of the landscape? Thus, what kind of bridge is one building when considering its purpose, use, and the landscape in or on which it is being built? As an educator, I use similar considerations of purpose, use, and landscape in my development of a metaphorical "visual bridge."

"Bridging over and in" To a Literary Experience

The metaphoric use of the word "bridge" is common and historic, and the concept of Visual Bridging is built upon its metaphorical strengths and potentials. The purpose of building a metaphorical bridge is also to connect that which is otherwise disconnected, like readers might be from a selection of literature they deem archaic, uninteresting, irrelevant, or merely unknown and too challenging. However, the builder (educator) must consider how the student might use this visual image, and the landscape of it, to determine which materials and anchoring best accomplish the purpose; should it be a photograph or a drawing? Does the student provide it or the teacher, or should it be a new creation of the student's in response to a prompt? Will it compliment what's in the literature or illuminate what's missing for the student? Or does it perhaps just provide a calming, aesthetic path luring the student gently into the story? The resulting visual bridge builds upon or relies upon or strengthens one's spatial intelligence or "picture

smart” (Gardner, 1983) and one’s level of visual literacy. The architects of Middle-Ages European cathedrals included beautiful stained-glass windows for an audience of illiterate peasants and those who did not know Latin, for the purpose of teaching Biblical stories and spiritual lessons; but these works of art were also a metaphorical bridge to a spiritual, aesthetic experience, bathing the setting in color and light and drawing congregants into worship. In a contemporary example, a photograph might help a student understand the historical landscape of an unfamiliar time or setting, but whether the teacher or the student provides the photograph depends on whether its purpose is to bridge a motivational gap or a skills gap; or, if the purpose of the visual bridge is to motivate them to access relevancy, for example, having students provide a conceptual image which perhaps only they understand fully would build a stronger bridge between the verbal text and their own lives and imaginative appreciation. The teacher supplying an image from his/her own perspective would not work.

Another consideration of educators must include the level of visual literacy each student has. The student’s sophistication as a visual reader largely determines what that student will glean from an image’s connection to the written text, thus influencing how the teacher constructs the visual bridge so all students can visually interpret (read) well enough to cross the bridge into the verbal text. Each reader’s sophistication will determine his/her experience crossing the visual bridge and, subsequently, inform his/her reading of the written text. From the adage, “A picture is worth a thousand words” one can conclude that “visuals summarize content into smaller and easier to process chunks” (Shift eLearning); therefore, the image selection becomes even more important to literary comprehension and value for the student. Barthes (1975) defines the written text of

pleasure “the text that contents...the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, [the text that] is linked to a comfortable practice of reading” (p. 14). Visual Bridging brings the reader, at no matter what level of literary sophistication he or she is, into a comfortable understanding of the story, experiencing *studium* in reading the text, which builds confidence to continue the journey.

While Visual Bridging helps in retaining the joy of life-long reading started with children’s illustrated books, it is also important for intellectual stimulation and discovery. In his groundbreaking treatise *Synecitics*, William Gordon (1961) defines metaphor as “an expressed or implied comparison which produces simultaneously meaningful intellectual illumination and emotional excitement” (p. 106). Good literature is such because it stirs the emotions and makes connections with the reader. For Barthes, the pleasure of the text eventually leads to a moment unique to his experience, one charged with emotion. As reader, Barthes eventually encounters a text that evokes more than pleasure, what he terms “bliss”: the “text of bliss: ...imposes a state of loss...discomforts... unsettles the reader’s...assumptions...[and] brings to a crisis [his/her] relation with language” (1975, p. 14). While Barthes equates “pleasure” with contentment and “bliss” with “rapture” (p. 19), he also notes their inherent opposition: “pleasure can be expressed in words, bliss cannot” (p. 21). Each reader determines if a given text evokes pleasure or bliss, for each reader in part creates the text, experiences the text differently than anyone else, and experiences the text differently each time he/she enters the text. An educator should strive to guide the student (reader) toward a personal encounter with bliss or *punctum*, using imagination (visual imagery) as a metaphorical bridge toward that hopefully transformative encounter.

This connection not only aids comprehension and motivation but strengthens memory and imagination as readers long for the worlds and experiences they realized once in a book. A child is often heard exclaiming, “Read it again! Read it again!” after the adult finishes the book; adolescents and young adults should continue to experience those emotions, and visuals are part of the materials for that bridge. According to studies cited by the Shift eLearning website, “visual memory is encoded in the medial temporal lobe of the brain, the same place where emotions are processed” (Shift Descriptive Learning, 2021). For example, the images of the smoked cigarettes in the printed PSA below (Fig. 12) add not only to the understanding of the verbal text, but also result in an emotional response which engages the reader in a way that is less likely to be forgotten than just reading the words alone:

Figure 12

Anti-Smoking PSA



The image uses metaphor to imply the reader’s life could be like the cigarette, and the color adds to the metaphor by showing the last completely smoked butt as nothing but charred ash, creating an emotional response of disgust or fear. New York Institute of Technology Professor Kevin LaGrandeur (2003) explains, “Rhetorical tradition recognizes the power of images and so promotes capturing the imagination of the

audience quickly by using imagistic words. The digital age allows the same purpose to be served by a return to the source of power, by a creation of 'lyrical' images that delight, enrage, frighten, or excite" (p. 127). While in this case the evoked emotion is negative, its purpose is to move the reader in a positive direction. These emotional tools do not end with childhood and should continue into and through adulthood. In Visual Bridging over and in to a literary experience, the visual images illuminate concepts and stir emotions more quickly and comfortably for readers toward a connection with the printed textual landscape; the intertextuality heightens understanding to a greater level than one or the other would alone.

“Bridging Back Out” with an Aesthetic, Transformative Experience

While it is true that bridges physically and metaphorically connect that which is otherwise disconnected, their purpose is not always to move toward or into a new or unknown experience; sometimes the bridge is needed to return from such an experience; bridges are not all on one-way roads! In Visual Bridging, the visual image(s) used to connect with the literature can continue in their role as a familiar experience and help the reader bridge back out to new understanding and application. A literary experience stimulates the imagination, giving way to new insight, compassion, and creativity. We don't remain in the story but eventually return from it to reflect on what we have experienced or learned. French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, in *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination* (1940), argues that consciousness and the “totality of our experience” enables imagination; it is a compilation of everything we have seen and heard and read: “this ‘being-in-the-world’ is the necessary condition of imagination” (Sartre, 1940/2010). So, bridging back out places the reader back in the

world, hopefully with new insight and perspective. Embedded in my concept of Visual Bridging is the hope that new aesthetic experiences lead students toward more creativity and a renewed interest in reading for pleasure, which leads to personal and cultural growth and acceptance.

Reluctant readers may be so because in a world of visual stimulation where content tantalizingly approaches (bombards?) them with little effort on their part, and life seems to move quickly toward the futuristic discoveries, reading printed words from past settings might seem tedious, difficult, or irrelevant. However, in his literary criticism *The Discarded Image*, C. S. Lewis (1964) notes that Medieval readers and scholars “depended predominately on books” (p. 5) and their own observations to learn about their world; he terms their development a “realizing imagination” (p. 12). Written imagery can certainly stir the imagination, but not in a student who isn’t interested in reading those words. Visual Bridging can provide a path into that undesired or foreign situation; however, students may then need guidance on what to do with the new information or insight gained. This “realizing imagination” develops with the help of a visual bridge back to their own environment, an aesthetic (beautiful, pleasurable) experience which cultivates imaginative creativity and relevancy. C. S. Lewis, as a prolific author and scholar, loved the written word; but he also acknowledged the importance of visuals in “awakening” the imagination. In a *New York Times* article, he wrote, “For me, it invariably begins with mental pictures. [...] Everything began with images; a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion” (Lewis, 1956). Then he seeks a form for the image, and it develops into a story.

My concept of Visual Bridging encompasses Lewis’s “awakening imagination”

and “realizing imagination” in much the same way as Roland Barthes’s *studium* and *punctum*. In some sense the present realizations that lead to future growth are always dependent on experiences from the past, which we know from reading, viewing, and listening to written, visual, and musical imagery from artistic storytellers of the past. In their book, *The Surprising Imagination of C. S. Lewis*, Jerry Root and Mark Neal (2015) explain,

Growth requires a change, not of kind but of degree. ... As Lewis notes, “Humanity ... has the privilege of always moving forward yet never leaving anything behind. Whatever we have been, in some sort we are still.” ... [T]he awakened imagination provided passage over the threshold that others could surmount if they were to take understanding to new heights. (p. 46)

Reading books changes people because it places them in new situations with new perspectives, and in doing so fosters empathy; and imaginative storytelling introduces readers “to different versions of the world by envisioning alternate possibilities for the way things are” now (Popova, 2016). I propose by using visual methods as a bridge to approach literature, students can find any text, no matter how old or foreign to their own experiences, can hold meaning which is relevant to their own lives by leading them toward contemporary global perspectives. *Punctum* which appears to them in a story from the past, and which they only discover because of their own, contemporary life experiences, can propel them forward; the “ethnological knowledge” of raw details in a photo (Barthes, 1980, p. 28) exposes not only biographemes from the photographer but also those of the Spectator, pushing students to be more keenly aware of their own cultural blinders and perspectives as it aids them in growth and identity development.

Visual Bridging and “Visual Learning”

While the concept of Visual Bridging may at first seem to resemble or duplicate such already existing visual-pedagogical tools and concepts as visual learning and visual literacy, including graphic novels or comic books, it is distinctly different from these. It may fit under the umbrella of Visual Learning, a term well-recognized now in educational studies. More commonly thought of as a learning style, visual learning means learning through the visual—vs. learning logically, linguistically, musically, through interacting with nature, etc.—and includes the use of graphic organizers, diagrams, and other visual aids to reading comprehension and literacy (Chen, 2004). Yet, unlike in most visual learning where images are used primarily as tools to aid the reader in decoding and analyzing meaning (Averis et al, 2005, as cited by Cuthell, 2005), Visual Bridges are designed to give the reader a meaningful experience in the literature. Chen (2004) notes that “scholars have discussed the concepts of visual learning in education since Arnheim published ‘Visual Thinking’ in 1969,” but educators largely are still “unable to articulate and apply effective principles of visual design in education” (Chen, 2004). Dr. Howard Gardner (1983), professor of education at Harvard University, developed a “theory of multiple intelligences,” proposing a broader range of nine intelligences in human learning, including Visual-Spatial Intelligence or “picture smart” (Kurt, 2020); from these intelligences emerged the concept of learning styles: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. However, Gardner believes “each individual possesses a unique combination of all nine intelligences,” some stronger than others, even while instructors “traditionally gear tasks towards the verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences” (Kurt, 2020). Visual Bridging benefits from an understanding of visual learning styles and procedures, but it is

a concept distinct from visual learning.

Visual Bridging and “Visual Literacy”

Visual Bridging is also not the same as visual literacy, although it may incorporate visual literacy skills at times. In his book introducing visual communication as an educational technology, R. E. Wileman (1993) defines visual literacy as “the ability to ‘read,’ interpret, and understand information presented in pictorial or graphic images” (Wileman, p. 114). The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) definition is “a group of competencies that allows humans to discriminate and interpret the visible action, objects, and/or symbols, natural or constructed, that they encounter in the environment” (as cited in Stokes, 2002, p. 12). Many experts regard visual literacy as a language that therefore communicates messages one must decode to have meaning (Branton, 1999; Emery & Flood, 1998; Stokes, 2002). Although in the visual-literacy language the “author” communicates through images, educators usually draw upon students’ visual literacy to improve their reading of verbal texts and writing skills by “relating imagery interpretation to conventional literacy” (Aastoos, 2004). In principle, one brings one’s visual skills and visual vocabulary to the reading.

Popular tools for visual literacy include graphic novels and comic books, which are similar though graphic novels generally have more complex plots (Rice, 2012). Educators first used and continue to use graphic novels to build literacy skills, especially with emerging, English-language learners and “slow-learners” (Rice, 2012). In fact, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) justifies incorporating multi-literacies into the curriculum, claiming multimodal learning “appears to improve understanding and recall of the content” (Hinds, 2019, p. 20). Still, when educators incorporate graphic

novels into the curriculum, their focus often remains on skills building and basic literacy—decoding and understanding the plot—over literary literacy or having an aesthetic experience. Graphic novels have gained popularity as a medium for adult readers and, as a result, often incorporate such perceived adult content as violence and exaggerated body imagery (Rice, p. 39), similar to the original comic books. Because graphic novels increasingly draw adult readers, educators sometimes have difficulty when introducing them to engage reluctant readers or add a multi-literacy experience to reading (Rice, 2012; Hinds, 2019). While graphic novels may be entertaining and appealing to reluctant readers, they can remain difficult for students to critically analyze, especially while navigating an artist’s interpretation of the text as an additional layer of potentially dissonant meaning from the original author’s (Rice, p. 40); therefore, traditionally their use in the secondary classroom has been more for literacy and skills building than as a visual bridge to an aesthetic experience.

While visual learning, visual literacy, and graphic novels all involve the use of images in reading and interpreting literature, and they are each helpful in the reading experience of varying students, often they are not enough for an aesthetic literary experience: an experience which “possesses internal integration and fulfillment” (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 40). These other practices can provide a path into literature for reluctant readers; however, “visual bridging” not only provides an alluring path into the skills of reading a story, but a bridge into and out of an aesthetic experience resulting in a memorable, meaningful literary encounter.

Visual Bridging and “Literary Literacy”

While the concept “Visual Bridging” is not a skills-based literacy practice,

students do need a degree of visual literacy as they bridge into the text and develop their “literary literacy” throughout the process. In a 1985 interview with the editor of NCTE’s publication *Language Arts*, Paulo Freire states, “The act of reading cannot be explained as merely reading words since every act of reading words implies a previous reading of the world and a subsequent rereading of the world” (Freire, 1985, p. 18). Freire’s statement contributes to a definition of literary literacy by proposing a connection between the reader’s personal response to literature and that reader’s changing level of social awareness (Hodgson, 2019). Similarly, Wolfgang Iser’s (1978) theory of literary reading describes “operations involved in the act of literary interpretations...demand the activation of a cluster of skills that can be presented as ‘literary literacy’” (cited in Baleiro, 2011), where the reader is filling in gaps in understanding. Iser sees a “difference between ‘innocent’ reading and reading as a conscientious act that has the potential to turn itself into interpretation ... in a permanent interaction between reader and text” (Baleiro, 2011). In other words, a bridge needs to be constructed to guide (or lure) the reader in; additionally, even if the casual reader has an appropriate level of motivation, as Stanford University professor Marjorie Perloff notes, not “everyone can read literature just because he or she knows how to read” (1997). One must be taught literary literacy. Finally, from her study of higher education practices in Portugal, Rita Baleiro (2011) concludes that literary literacy is “the competency to amplify individual self-reflective interaction with a literary text ... to produce an interpretation”; however, she also notes that students use specific skills reflecting standard literacy practices in completing this interaction (Baleiro, 2011). Here, Baleiro reinforces Rosenblatt’s (1965) two approaches to reading—one that involves basically decoding and knowing what happens in the story,

and the other engaging the text, interpreting, and having an aesthetic experience.

Spending time in the arts, both visual and literary, is necessary to cultivate visual and literary literacy before Visual Bridging can be effective, time which is increasingly limited in American schools. As far back as 1992 studies found “the arts receive[d] about two hours of instructional time per week at the elementary level and [were] generally not a required subject of study at the secondary level” (Eisner, 1992, p. 592). Time is an indicator of both value and opportunity, and in the 21st century American educational practices have privileged science, technology and math over the arts. However, as former Stanford art professor and president of the American Educational Research Association Elliot Eisner (1992) points out, “Schools are cultures...for growing minds, and direction this growth takes is influenced by the opportunities the school provides...and the artistry with which teachers mediate [the school’s] program” (p. 592). Educators can use art as the form (Bridge) “through which insight and feeling can emerge” personally for students and back out “in the public world” (Eisner, p. 595).

Visual Bridging helps students cross into unfamiliar or uncomfortable texts with the use of the familiarity and comfort of visual imagery, find interest or curiosity or conviction in the literature, and bridge back out to apply meaning and value to their own lives. A Visual Bridge draws readers over and in through the comfortable, familiar images that contain cultural and historical meanings, hopefully providing simultaneous intellectual illumination and emotional excitement; it is also built upon the individual student’s circumstances, the literary text’s landscapes, and the pedagogical purpose of educators. A Visual Bridge also transports students through an aesthetic experience in which they reconnect their past and future with perspectives of others’ discovered in the

literature. Therefore, readers can cross the visual bridge, enter a literary text, use pictorials from the bridge to spur engagement with the text they have entered, and exit the text across the visual bridge to re-create themselves in accord with their reading experience, ideally an aesthetic, literary experience. Each time readers return across a visual bridge to the selves they were before first crossing it, they add their experiences to those selves, selves and experiences upon which they build yet another visual bridge that advances them to another aesthetic reading experience, *ad infinitum*.

CHAPTER V

VISUAL BRIDGING IN ACTION: EXEMPLARS

Since studying Barthes's theories of visual imagery and its impact on readers, and since launching this project, I have purposefully engaged students with Visual Bridges in my classroom and in my research to examine the effectiveness of visual bridging on their learning experience. I considered many factors when introducing and eliciting pictures from students: I looked at how the pictures can provide joy, connection to the familiar, emotional engagement, and intellectual illumination, and how students return from an aesthetic experience with a stronger sense of themselves and their cultural identity, which forms their personal lens. Maxine Greene (2001) describes such engagement “Aesthetic Education,” defining it as

...an intentional undertaking designed to nurture appreciative, reflective, cultural, participatory engagements with the arts by enabling learners to notice what there is to be noticed, and to lend works of art their lives in such a way that they can achieve them as variously meaningful. When this happens, new connections are made in experience; new patterns are formed, new vistas are opened. (Greene, 2001, p. 6)

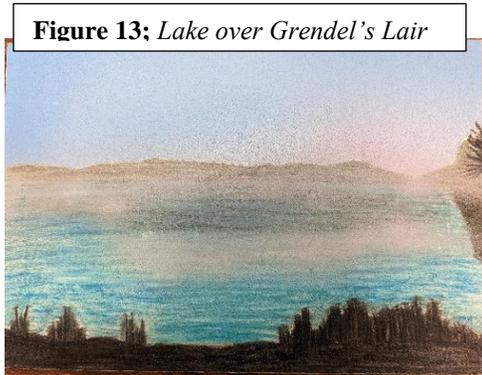
In this chapter, I will give examples of how I engage students with visual bridges and how the concept of visual bridging illuminates the process and the results.

Hands-on Projects: Bridging Students to Classical Literary Works

My initial attempts at bridging to literary works came in the form of hands-on projects, usually used to frontload the reading of major themes which would lead to discussion. When studying *Romeo and Juliet*, ninth-grade students engaged in an in-class assignment to create a Valentine for one of the two characters, including an original poem revealing their feelings. I set out construction paper, markers, doilies, glitter and glue while they worked on their rhyming verse; then they put it all together and we mounted them on the walls of the classroom, just like they had done in elementary school. Now, however, they were in jr. high school, and the visuals stimulated conversations about parental control of their relationships and the overwhelmingly powerful feelings of a first love (in addition to generating some laughter in the middle of a tragic story). With the aid of their creations, they were more easily able to place themselves in the story, even one with such a different setting than their own; the visual provided a bridge into the timeless themes expressed in the literature. When they read how Shakespeare's young lovers responded to these conflicts, they were more ready to make connections between the story and their own lives, drawing meaningful conclusions as well as learning about a different time and culture as they bridged back out. If the visual bridging was truly successful, student readers encountered both pleasure and *bliss* in the text and *punctum* through the characters' emotional and tragic responses as reflected in the students' valentines.

When I taught British literature to seniors in high school, our reading of *Beowulf* provided another opportunity for Visual Bridging. Students often had trouble with the archaic language in the translation, which provided an opportunity for practicing

paraphrasing; however, many also had problems understanding how to paraphrase accurately. Instead of paraphrasing the printed text, I read the description of the lake which covered Grendel's lair aloud several times while they each sketched a picture of it. Then they "paraphrased" their picture. We read the text again, and only then did they



NOTE: This is an actual student drawing; the back includes student credit.

paraphrase the text translations, with much better success. As homework, they completed a final version of their picture with the original translation and their paraphrase printed on the back (Fig. 13). Interestingly, the drawings were not all alike, and the variations exemplified their personal connections to the literary experience. While this was a visual experience, if I were to apply my new concept of Visual Bridging, I would instead read my paraphrase of the passage in *Beowulf* while they draw it; later when we got to that particular scene in the translation, they would recognize it and be more comfortable with the original text. Their drawings would be a Visual Bridge into the text, exciting the imagination to prepare them for the difficult written text and aligning with Barthes's concept of *pleasure* in making the language less daunting and unfamiliar. After reading the actual translated text, we would discuss what the scene might look like in their own lives. How does the feeling evoked by the passage and verbal imagery from an ancient culture translate to them and their culture? What is illuminated? Their drawing would then be acting as a bridge back out of the literature.

Other examples of asking students to create their own visual imagery when reading a classical literary text were when we were studying Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and

Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Students created masks of characters in *Macbeth* with not only a visual of what the character portrayed on the outside but also a drawing of what they were like on the inside, generating discussion about what it means to be two-faced or manipulative and issues of trust; then, when reading Macbeth's thoughts combined with his actions, they potentially experienced a moment of *bliss* or emotional enlightenment as they bridged back out to connect their new perspective to their own experiences with two-faced people. Another project involved students creating board games or card games illustrating aspects of Dickens's *Great Expectations*, which helped them figure out not only Pip's life journey (visually bridging in) but their own (bridging out). Their town was a small bedroom community of Tulsa, and most of them lived lives which they expressed as similar to their perception of Pip's mundane and often harsh one; Pip's good fortune was much like "winning the lottery" to them, and the construction of games which illustrated those themes was effective at visually bridging them into the story and its twists. These activities used visuals which engaged students with the literature and connect the literary themes to their own lives through the resulting discussions; however, these projects were all conducted before my concept of Visual Bridging and primarily employed for the purpose of creative assessment of their understanding after reading. As I now conceive it, I would involve using the art to get them interested in the story, helping them recognize those visual promptings within the story when they read, then using the resulting aesthetic experience to bridge back out to individual relevancy, instead of merely using them as an assessment of understanding.

I currently use an adaptation of a visual bridging project in three of my university courses which include a study of William Blake's art and poetry. A leading Romanticist,

Blake (1794) combined his three talents of poetry, printmaking, and visual art to communicate what he could not do with each individually; by combining them, he

Figure 14

"London" (Blake, 1794)



created a new intertextuality of communication and a new experience for the reader/viewer to interpret (Fig. 14).

Students bridge into a literary reading of the poems by viewing a Blake illustration without the corresponding title and poem, then discuss in small groups what they believe the poem to be about by “reading” the artwork. Only then do the students get the poem to read. The discussion then encompasses similarities and differences between the student interpretation and Blake’s. Explanation of cultural

context and differences follows, so students aren’t led to believe a certain meaning is correct or incorrect; in exploring the literary works in this format, students are more engaged in meaningful conversation generated from their own ideas and perspectives as Barthes advocates, and what Maxine Greene refers to as “readiness for fresh illumination, in the willingness to see something, to risk something unexpected and new” (1982/2001, pp. 53-54). The follow-up activity also encourages “unexpected and new” creativity: they emulate Blake’s artistic style of illustration on an original poem they write (emulating one of Blake’s themes) as they bridge out of the literature. The results are remarkable, and they enjoy viewing each other’s work. I am often told it was a favorite part of the course.

Photovoice and “Biographemes”

More in line with Modernist theories of the visual expressed by Barthes, Berger

and Sontag have suggested that photography can be an important bridge to textual understanding. The concept of “photo elicitation” was developed by anthropologist researchers to describe a research process where

[r]esearchers may provide photographs that they have taken themselves, or that they have chosen from other sources, and/or participants may bring their own photographs to the interviews and focus groups. There is a variety in approach, but with a unity in the aim of using a visual image as a tool for engagement within the research process. (Hopkins & Wort, 2020)

Using photography to capture images of metaphors or symbols believed to represent deep meaning for the individual also has been a research strategy in identity development (Woodley-Baker, 2009; Barthes, 1980) as it is believed that images “reflect the social realities ... that influence people’s lives” (Molloy, 2007, p. 49) when used in a group setting. When students take pictures which they then view as representing their cultural identities or perspectives, the pictures can give them a new lens, or a bridge, to approach the literary texts more deliberately with critical reflexivity. As Barthes’s Biographemes indicate, a photograph can provide knowledge of cultural details, much as an ethnography does with words. These biographical aspects of a writer’s life, Barthes famously argues, die with the author but elements carry through; he argues reading literature involves “rewriting the text of the work within the text of our lives” (1985, p. 101). For those more comfortable with reading visuals than words, the “life writing” in biographemes may be more compelling to students, bridging them into discoveries in the literary text and connecting them to their own lives. As an example of the potential biographeme nature in visual bridging, I conducted a Photovoice research project using photographs and other

visuals as a bridge to unfamiliar perspectives in non-contemporary literature. A collaborative research method, Caroline Wang first introduced Photovoice in her 1992 study of Chinese village women (Harper, 2012, p. 189): “Within photovoice participants may be encouraged to take photographs of a situation or issue within their community or environment, this can be to address a question or problem as in Wang’s ... seminal work” (Hopkins & Wort, 2020). In its role as a qualitative method of research, Photovoice encourages “strong engagement” through reflexivity, giving participants control of their voice and narrative (Hopkins & Wort, 2020). Both Photovoice and Photo elicitation use photographs for gathering information about a focus group or population either for research, education, advocacy, or healing; the main difference is Photo elicitation relies on one-to-one interviews for data collection, whereas Photovoice is a more collaborative, group method of research., I chose Photovoice to see if using visual images to define their own cultural identity would be easier for them. My purpose, inspired by Barthes’s concept of biographemes, was to help them more easily discover and discern previously unfamiliar cultural perspectives as they more clearly defined their own cultural identity, especially when finding differing perspectives in the literature they read, thus opening the door for more creativity in reflection and analysis.

Students attempted to define their own cultural identity (i.e., “Who am I? What in my culture contributes to how I see myself and others?”) by taking or collecting pictures which illustrate that definition. I urged them to ask family members questions, pour through memories and pictures of their childhood, and hopefully discover histories and connections that many of them have never known before. They then presented their findings briefly to the class, and we worked to co-construct new connections and cultural

Mexican, but her family is white. Her pictures were of family and dance. She noticed through this project how dance culture varies and believes her love of dance may come from her ethnic heritage; but her family encouraged her dancing. When showing her photos of ballet and specifically the slippers, Carolyn noted how the hours of practice gave her a value of respect and discipline, a keen sense of the value of equal opportunities and of balance between men and women. In her literary analysis, she connects to the characters in a meaning-making way because of this cultural influence. When reading Gabriel Garcia Marquez's story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," she describes it as portraying "how others treat someone who is different from them," noticing how "at times throughout the story the angel was treated as less than a person." She states, "As someone who grew up looking at myself as different from the normal due to being adopted, I have always had a sensitivity for others that may be different from everyone else. Accepting other people as they are shows great character and maturity." Carolyn is able to see the treatment of the old man in the story as a metaphor connected to her own experience by looking through her cultural lens.

Another aspect of this emerging theme, especially from U.S. students of multi-racial biology, is the ability to form one's own culture and choose to view the world based on it. Holly, whose family includes four different ethnicities, says her perspective of her culture "is unique yet beautiful because it is not restricted to the expectations of others or the bounds of race. On the other hand, Glenn felt the social pressure of each of his four ethnic backgrounds, stating, "a little line that's connected through all of those cultures is that [of] self-preservation at certain times, as well as trying to get that glory, that ultimate freedom of wanting to be on top. ... That way you'd be able to express what

you want to express.” Another student, Alexander, is surprised by a feeling of sorrow at the loss of cultural identity he uncovers through his Photovoice project and conversations with his parents, responding:

Memory is the individual’s defense against the oppression of a stronger and larger culture. Memory protects cultural birthright and individual’s identity. An individual’s cultural inheritance can be forfeited if a person will not endure the suffering necessary to withstand the world around them. The larger culture will always try to force the smaller culture to surrender. My family was given the choice to surrender our heritage. When we did, we thought we had sold it for a good price, but we had surrendered something that was priceless. My Italian heritage is priceless. I am struggling like [Alice] Walker [in “In Search of our Mothers’ Gardens”] to regain my past. (Alexander)

When looking at literature, those of multi-racial backgrounds often identified more with outlier characters, regardless of the character’s ethnicity. The Photovoice project helped these students develop a lens through which they not only gained a new perspective of their own cultural identity but were also able to see literary characters and settings from perspectives of new insight and identification.

Another theme which emerged from the interview analysis is the between their cultural identity and educational background. One interesting note is religious culture was connected to this theme as well as to the family values and community theme, because the students’ formal education is reflective of their family’s religious perspective. Several were home-schooled and several attended

private Christian schools, in addition to those graduating from public schools. This had a great impact on their exposure to literature, and what kind of literature they read in school. Some express difficulty remembering which texts they had studied in high school: "I honestly don't remember paying attention to that in high school, the background or the authors. I know that we did a lot of classical literature and a lot of traditional literature and stuff. ...I just don't remember" (Belinda). Others, such as Linda, find new perspectives every time they read. Linda was home-schooled, and views books as her best friends. She observes, "There's a difference in every culture in their writing style because there's a difference in how they speak...Words have power" (Linda). But outside the books, she recalls that students who are home-schooled "are raised in the world view of our parents, what they know, what they learned," which makes developing one's own cultural identity more difficult. And Anna never really thought about different cultures, even though she grew up in a suburban, public school: "4,000 students went to my high school, so there is a mix of every type of culture.... I got to experience all of that starting at such a young age, I just grew accustomed to it, and I never thought anything different between...color." However, it is evident that no matter their educational background, U.S. students clearly get much of their cultural identity from how they are formally educated.

A third major emerging theme is finding cultural identity in one's faith community. Since ORU is a private, Christian university, it is not surprising that most of the students interviewed find identity in their religious beliefs and church community. They understand they look at the world from a Christian world view, but it goes beyond

that. Anna knows she can't separate herself from her Christian perspective, saying, "Obviously being a Christian, and God and me, and my religion and morals is definitely something that's always guided me. Through that has kind of burnt these cultural ideas and perspectives, from understanding that we're created equal and that we are to love everyone despite any difference between us." Many of them see a seismic shift between their values and those of the community. Karen describes current U.S. culture as having gone through a definite "shift from morals ... because we have lost that Bible-based, God-centered, 'In God We Trust' theme. We've shifted from God-centered to self-centered. It's very, 'What can I get? How fast can I get it? What is going to be the most beneficial to me on my own' as opposed to this idea of working hard and loving your neighbor and stuff like that." They struggle to be "in the world but not of it" (John 15:19) but also express the desire to be an agent of change and an example of what is good in the U.S. today.

Through the Photovoice project and reflection, many students experienced what Edith Cobb (1977) refers to as "creative intelligence," a reductive method deriving from forms of childhood play requiring humility, which appears in the adult mind as it searches for "reinterpretation and reorganization of meaning" (p. 22). This "compassionate intelligence ... requires the ability to identify in and participate in otherness while retaining a sense of one's own ego-world identity" (Cobb, pg. 22). When students can begin to see literary texts as merely another person's story, they are able to use their newly cultivated lens to see themselves in the story, to reflect on how it not only entertains them, but also "wounds" them (*punctum* or text of *bliss*), as Barthes says (1980, p. 27). They then begin to bridge out from the biographemes of the visual imagery

to discovering relevancy to in the written stories. I have continued to use this activity in class because of the positive response from students, the engagement with the stories and discussion it creates, and the success of the aesthetic experience for them which they reflect in their written literary responses.

Photo Elicitation: *The Red Badge of Courage*

In researching the viability of my current concept of Visual Bridging with secondary-level students, I worked with one of my entry-year teachers on an activity for engaging students with Stephen Crane's novel, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895). Considered a writer in the American Realism tradition, Crane wrote his story of teenaged, Civil War soldier Henry Fleming's experiences on the battlefield without any first-hand knowledge, having been born in 1871, years after the war had ended; however, he garnered critical acclaim for his realistic portrayal, inspired, most believe, by Matthew Brady's photographs of actual events and people. His novels, as well as his earlier poetry, are replete with imagery, or "imagist impressionism" (1962 ed., p. vii). As a classic literary text many current students may find archaic, difficult, and irrelevant to contemporary experiences, the short novel full of colorful imagery is a perfect opportunity to test the Visual Bridging concept through the lens of Barthes's theory of the visual.

The teacher begins by asking students to sketch three images that come to mind when they hear the word "War." Then, using their phone or laptop, they search for photographic images that match or compliment the sketches they drew, ideally finding one for each but at least one or two. They paired off and discussed their pictures of war and why they drew what they did. These sketches and photos will become a bridge into

the text when they begin reading, with the purpose of providing a familiar path into the story and mental images that might connect with formerly unfamiliar descriptions of war in the 19th century. As Barthes discovers emotional connection (*bliss*) with the printed text and *punctum* in the visual image, the student moves toward and perhaps discovers a more meaningful connection to the story, which later they discuss and write about.

Other similar activities include sketches and pictures of what they would see if faced with their mortality, as in the idiom of their “life flashing before” them. These images would bridge to the passage after the protagonist’s injury when, in his delirium and pain, “he began to reflect upon various incidents and conditions of the past. He [thought] ... of certain meals his mother had cooked at home” and the “pine walls of the kitchen ... glowing from the warm light of the stove” (Crane, 1960, p. 62). Their images bridge students to discoveries of Crane’s images in the text, then helping them bridge back out to reflection in their own lives (Barthes, 1980; Greene, 2001). Crane’s writing is also full of similes and metaphors, which the teacher uses to connect students to their own pictorial descriptions of “war” and abstract images of “courage” and “cowardice.” A final exercise involves the color imagery Crane employs; for example, “The blue haze of evening was upon the field. The lines of forest were long purple shadows. One cloud lay along the western sky partly smothering the red” (p. 61). Students are asked to color their sketches of “War” and later discuss why they chose the colors they did, again visually bridging them into Crane’s imagery and back out with an artistic, aesthetic experience.

Photo elicitation is also used to thoughtfully bridge students to Crane’s presentation of Courage and Cowardice. Students bring photos representing those two concepts; they may take the pictures themselves or find them. Discussions of these photos

in smaller groups illuminate moments of *punctum* as students reflect on personal experiences. Later when reading Crane's description of Henry's emotions as he experiences shame for his cowardice and the lie about his injury, then his self-justification of behavior which others deemed courageous but he knew to be false, the teacher guides them through those feelings and how their own experiences differ or connect. The mental imagery evoked by these discussions are a visual bridge back out to relevancy in their own lives; they have filled in the gaps in their understanding of Crane's perspective and others around them, the "aesthetic recreation" Iser (1974) defines. I was encouraged by the level of engagement I witnessed among students, and the teacher expressed amazement as the maturity of her students' observations and discussion. Through a better cultural awareness of historical events and the people who experienced them, they had gained a better understanding of themselves and compassion for those with similar, contemporary experiences.

Picture books as Visual Bridges

While marketed for pre-readers, early readers, and elementary aged children, picture books can be found on the shelves of most home libraries long after the children are grown. Most of my college students can quickly name their favorite childhood book, and often it is a picture book. Of course, the story the essence of its lasting, sentimental appeal, but no one discounts the role of the book's illustrations as primary in the aesthetic experience. In picture books, readers use both the text and its illustrations to connect the world of the story with their own lived experience; both tell the story and shape the literary experience. As I have brought picture books back into the classroom for adolescents and young adults, I find students still receptive and engaged with the visual

bridge they provide.

One picture book I use in my Comp. 3 course at the university is Matt de la Pena's *Love*. Each page uses descriptive narrative and beautiful, large illustrations to present moments defined as love: playing in the summer under the spray of the fire hydrants while firemen look on; the sound of a parent's voice; or

the creases in grandfather's face as he sits fishing beside his grandson. However, the page I use when introducing the concept of cultural identities and perspectives shows multi-generations of a family gathered around the television, shielding the image on it from



Figure 16

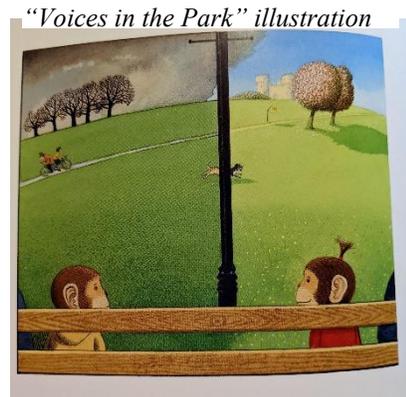
"Love" illustration

the smallest member (Fig. 16). The reader can't see what is on the screen either, and I ask students to write down the first thing they think of that might be on the TV, capturing their attention, that they protect the child from seeing. They share what they wrote down in small groups, then discuss what they shared as a class. The picture-book illustration acts as a visual bridge into discussions of cultural identity and varying perspectives of how love protects one from potential pain; their answers reveal different cultural events and ways to define love. Students then use their enhanced knowledge of perspectives to analyze Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" (1894), drawing connections between their concepts of "love" and what is meant by Chopin's final line, "...joy that kills," as well as the characters' various projections of love.

Another picture book which is useful as a visual bridge to literary understanding is Anthony Browne's *Voices in the Park* (1998). My students often struggle with the

concept of voice in their writing and in reading literary texts, especially those with dialogue. This book also helps readers realize how diverse the world is and how that diversity affects how they perceive others and how others perceive them. The characters all tell the same story, but each story is a little different because they each have a different “voice” or perspective. Even the font of each “voice” is different, and the illustrations reflect each perspective in unique ways. Students discover a kaleidoscope of surreal images embedded in the overall pictures as well, and we discuss how none of them see everything there (Fig. 17).

Figure 17



They each experience *punctum* from the context of their own lives, and the ensuing discussion of voice, perspective, and cultural beliefs about others is evidence of visual bridging to reflection and an aesthetic experience that would not have happened with the printed narrative alone.

Picture books in higher-level classrooms provide unique opportunities for visual bridging. Students find themselves intrigued by the nostalgia of childhood story time in combination with the aesthetic experience of beautiful illustrations that add to a story or complete it. They more quickly connect with relevancy of literary themes and engage in memorable moments of pleasure and bliss, moments that can shape their future relationships and actions if they are open reflection and learning.

Not only did I come to my concept of visual bridging over many years of reading in my doctoral work but also by years of *doing* the work in the classroom as a teacher-researcher. While it is true I saw the power of visuals and artistic creativity in connecting

students to literary texts and themes, it is also important to note I developed this concept as my thinking evolved over time, through years of trial and error in seeing students' reactions to and success with these activities and strategies. The importance of this development over time is further evidence of Barthes's concept of reflexivity, that *punctum* or "pricking" occurs as one sits with the images; the deepest impact and revelations ("wounding") take time. It is my objective as an educator to help students begin the process of finding insight for themselves, no matter when that eventually may occur in its fullness for them.

CHAPTER VI

A PEDAGOGY OF VISUAL BRIDGING

Although over the course of my twenty-five years as an English teacher in secondary schools I witnessed dramatic changes in teaching philosophies, methods, strategies, and techniques (mostly improvements), I also noticed a gradual change in the way students and school officials value education. First, most students no longer blindly accept (or pretend to accept) either the educator's expertise or his/her knowledge as truth, for they can easily check the teacher's words against those they find online before determining for themselves what they want to believe or "know." Second, increased government mandates calling for (expensive, private company) externally documented teacher and learner performances have led to augmented state and federal student testing while local governments and universities struggle with budget reductions and rising costs. Consequently, school districts and universities streamline their curricula by eliminating electives, especially in the arts and humanities, to stay in budget and then adjust high school and college students' requirements to include only content, concepts, and skills yielding immediate results in terms of test scores and employment. Such an education platform resembles vocational studies rather than education for lifetime growth and living in a democratic society; it also results in more emphasis on logos and information

gathering than poiesis, or literary style and storytelling (privileging non-fiction over fiction). Finally, as 21st century school populations in the United States become more diverse and global perspectives are more accessible to students not only inside the classroom but also in local communities at home, students' exposure to these culturally diverse perspectives increases. While this awareness is desirable and historically acknowledged as a benefit of literary experiences, more students may struggle to identify who they are and what viewpoints they embrace (common during adolescence without the extra challenges of so many voices and perspectives bombarding them daily from multimedia platforms), as well as connections between their formal education (what they study and perceive in the classroom) and personal perspectives, perceptions, and positions in the world outside the classroom.

In the preface to his recent textbook, *Street Lit: Teaching and Reading Fiction in Urban Schools*, Andrew Ratner (2010) recounts that he repeatedly hears from the teachers who attend his English education graduate classes that their students “can’t relate to the literature we read in class....They feel like it has nothing to do with their lives,” and “[t]he books can’t compete with video games and music videos” (2010, p. viii). Professors echo this sentiment at the college level as well; college composition courses, like middle-school and high-school courses, are required for all students, and often, therefore, a death-knell to motivation. Former English professor Robert Gallo (2001) notes that “once the lesson becomes the primary reason for using a book, the act of reading becomes a chore” (p. 36). Facing all the challenges, it is my hope that a pedagogy of Visual Bridging can motivate students to engage with literary texts, finding relevancy and self-identity through reflection and creative imagination culminating in a

meaningful, aesthetic experience. While this concept certainly does not address all the challenges of students' engagement with literature, it is one strategy teachers can use to create a safe space in the classroom for creativity and imagination. In Visual Bridging over and into a literary experience, the visual images illuminate concepts and stir emotions more quickly and comfortably for readers toward a connection with the printed textual landscape; the intertextuality heightens understanding to a greater level than one or the other would alone. Bridging back out places the reader back in the world, hopefully with new insight and perspective. Embedded in my concept of Visual Bridging is the hope that new aesthetic experiences lead students toward more creativity and a renewed interest in reading for pleasure, which leads to personal and cultural growth and acceptance. My hope is it will be a strategy that adds depth in dialogue as students realize it's okay for their individual perspectives to be unique; each is one piece of the larger picture, and no puzzle is complete with a missing piece!

Visual Bridging: A Pedagogy of *Punctum* and Relevance

While students naturally tended to parrot what their parents and others in their immediate circles say and believe, one of my jobs as an educator is to provide adolescents and young adults with the tools and encouragement to venture out of their familial comfort zones into the world, facing challenges and becoming their own persons. Ideally, adolescents' struggles to create themselves, express themselves, and consider viewpoints different from their own would occur in safe, nurturing, and facilitating classroom environments, enabling them to grow into independent adults who participate in their communities' social aims; however, if the literature and historical contexts are too safe to challenge these comfort zones and familiar ideas, and they are only exposed to

what is comfortable and familiar, growth cannot occur. Barthes's comment, "What I can name cannot really prick me" (1980) acknowledges this claim. They need to be exposed to past perspectives that "wound" and explore the context of the cultures that promoted harmful ideas to understand how those views affect people and culture, and to successfully affect change if necessary. They need a pedagogy that provides a bridge into what they may view as archaic, boring, or irrelevant to see its relevancy, its *punctum* in their own lives.

Relevancy is a key ingredient for students and teachers in literary pedagogy today, but it shouldn't be important to the exclusion of rigor and mastery objectives. One of the major purposes of my theoretical research is to argue that all texts can be relevant if taught a specific way, and both classic texts and contemporary ones should present challenging vocabulary and a depth of content expected of literary focus; easy reading and content that already interests students is not always best, just as not all texts once ensconced in the literary canon should remain. Former educators and literacy experts Beers and Probst (2016; 2017) caution teachers about the confusion between the words *interest* and *relevance*, noting

interest is about something out there, out in the world... [but it]is often fleeting, lasting about as long as the video clip.... *Relevance* ... is always personal...about what matters to [someone]. It starts with observing something in the world, but then it shifts to a thought or a feeling inside.... Something ... relevant is inherently interesting; but something ...interesting isn't always relevant. In short, getting kids' attention is about creating interest; keeping their attention is all about relevance. (2016, p. 45)

By looking at the situation through Barthes's lens, teachers need to guide the students through the *studium* (something interesting to them) of video clips or pictorial imagery to *punctum* (the personal relevancy and meaning). Visual bridging provides a way into the literature by piquing their interest and a way out to what personally matters to them. As they discover *punctum* which is relevant to them, their motivation and engagement naturally rises. Teachers undoubtedly understand the point but, again, are saddled with required curricula to meet state testing assessments and overcrowded classrooms (at the secondary level that can mean a total of 350 students a day!). They can easily become frustrated or overwhelmed by the seeming impossibility of making everything relevant, even if they want to. Students, as well, recognize the problem; one student's response to an online survey asking what types of issues students want to explore was "One problem I would like to solve in the world is the things that kids are taught in school. They don't help us solve real problems" (Beers and Probst, 2017, p. 118). Beers and Probst's answer is for educators to push for pedagogical change that embraces the curricular freedom to ask, "What do kids want to know?" rather than "What does the curriculum say we must cover?" (2017, p.115-116). My concept of Visual Bridging allows room for creative answers to embrace both questions with rigor, even using the "required" literature and with reading in different ways. Sometimes students "don't know what they don't know," so if the rationale for reading a "required" text is solid, my concept will help students discover new insights which may eventually be of value and significance to them, even if they initially don't perceive it as interesting or relevant.

Visual Bridging: A Pedagogy of Identity Development through Reflection

Today's adolescent and young-adult students are comfortable with visual imagery

in multimodal literacies; why not continue to use it as a bridge to deeper intellectual experiences? After experimenting in my own classrooms, I have learned when I combine the pictorial imagery with the written literature, students express their ideas more willingly and easily than when I do not; that these pictorially enhanced lessons interest them; and that, upon reflection, these visual-literary lessons offer a more memorable and meaningful learning experience which students discover as relevant to their own lives. Teachers can use visual methods such as photo elicitation to help students connect to the literature in a different way. The pictures become a Visual Bridge in and out. If students have difficulty engaging with a printed-text story, they approach it first with visuals, identifying *studium* and *punctum* within the images. Then the teacher can help them move to finding *punctum* in the text itself and ultimately in their own lives. Since literature provides insight into the human condition and the evolution of ideas in historical, cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts, students, with the teacher's fostering, increase their historical, cultural, political, and socio-economic awareness within their own lived contexts.

After analyzing my Photovoice results, I have kept that project in my Composition 3 course, with continued success. When made aware of their own cultural identity and its influence on them, my college students find themselves returning to the ecology of childhood imagination and bringing that creativity into their writing and narratives. They experience transcendence from meaning-making for themselves to world-making creative action, and they enjoy the process of discovery. They applaud each other's visual presentations and often comment they had no idea of the diversity of experiences and ideas surrounding them in class. Perception and discernment are

essential skills in effecting social change and empathy for others, especially those who are different or marginalized. In her interview, one student expressed, "I've tried to become more aware of, okay, 'this is what I've thought, and this is what I've seen, and this is what I've experienced,' but it doesn't mean that it just doesn't happen just because I haven't seen it. Somebody else is experiencing it and has seen it happen to whatever degree. Even if it's to a small degree, it's still happening and it's something that greatly affected that individual." Literature becomes more than a way to gain knowledge and present that knowledge to others; it becomes an avenue to engage us in conversations about our world, and writing becomes a way of sharing that conversation, generating interest, and persuading others. Literature and the arts become part of the self-development process for every student, but for some they go further, providing a foundation for future endeavors of global significance. Aristotle was once asked whether he thought history or fiction (poetry) was more important for him to teach; "his response ... was that although history teaches what has happened, fiction teaches that anything can happen" (Nielsen, 2018). How transformative the classroom could be if we can move from presenting information and cultural history, with our students as mere Spectators (i.e., Barthes' *studium*), to providing an environment of active reflection and musings which result in *punctum*, animation, and poiesis.

A problem originates with the power structures of the classroom and a pedagogy which convinces students that there is only one accurate interpretation of a text. Their job is to find it and repeat it back in some form of assessment. David Macaulay, a groundbreaking radical-change theory author, addresses the issue in a warning label on the title page of his picture book, *Black and White*: "WARNING. This book appears to

contain a number of stories that do not necessarily occur at the same time. Then again, it may contain only one story. In any event, careful inspection of both words and pictures is recommended” (1990). The book’s editor acknowledges that “[t]he perceptive reader will be rewarded with new perspectives each time the book is explored” (yet it is still marketed as an elementary age picture book). My experiences reinforce the theory that students are more able to learn when meaning is co-constructed and hands-on, as Dewey advocated: how do individual students interpret the text? Why do they interpret it that way? What does that say to them about who they are? Are they satisfied with that cultural lens, or would they prefer to change it? What will that mean for their future as they view an increasingly diverse world? A good narrative is an “invitation” to participate in the story (Crites, 1986). Good, literary stories are transformative, and students need to be given the freedom to express and enjoy them in multimodal ways: orally, visually, and eventually in written forms.

Visual Bridging: A Multimodel Pedagogy

A NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) blog article recently noted an ever-increasing number of “teens’ lives and experiences are mediated by online platforms amidst a churning flood of images,” arguing the “texts through which our culture communes and communicates are becoming increasingly visual” (Aleo, 2020). Teachers can no longer use printed text exclusively and adequately prepare students for the world outside the classroom. NCTE advocates English teachers addressing more multimodal standards in the curriculum, citing scholarship showing how “multimodal literacy can be leveraged to both support and challenge students by affording them a broader set of meaning making tools” (Aleo, 2020).

What is a multimodal text? “Multimodal” is not synonymous with “digital.” It encompasses a wide range of media, which is an important consideration in deciding which material is appropriate for building a Visual Bridge. The “text” can be paper, digital, performance based (live), or transmedia, using “multiple delivery channels” (Jenkins, 2011). Not only does a multimodal pedagogy offer new ways to create meaning, but it also creates different types of meaning through intertextuality; ideally, it requires “shifts in *both* form and function,” such as “images, music, special effects, acting, movement, color, and writing” used to create and present argumentative content (Jocius, 2016, p. 17). Teaching students how to navigate these complex texts is essential for future success: “if our learners become good at navigating across different contexts of language use, they will be good at living in a highly interconnected, globalized, multicultural world” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2012). However, this intertextuality and connection begins with a personal encounter with a text that catches their attention in a new and different way, unique to their own context, one that “wounds” or “pricks” them to see what no one else sees (Barthes, 1980); and they need a teacher to guide them to that place.

The word *text* expanded from referring to printed words only to a more broad meaning of “things that can be read” with the advent of mass media and its expansion into digital technologies: according to a 2010 national survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, “eight- to eighteen-year-olds use entertainment media ... more than seven-and-a-half hours a day, ... [and] the number goes up to ten hours a day if one accounts for media multitasking” (qtd. in Goble, 2016, p. 3). This media includes numerous communication modalities, which expand not only what people read but also how they

read. Students can “read” visual, “musical, digital and multimedia texts, just as they read poems and stories, about the creators’ experiences of living in a particular” setting, and then Bridge back out of the texts to their own stories (Jocius, 2016, p. 16). It only makes sense to incorporate multiple literacies into the school curriculum; “[t]he more [non-print and print] texts students can critically and creatively examine and create, the more well equipped they will be to mindfully navigate our complex and textually rich world” (Goble, p. 3-4). Despite technological advances and the increase of digital tools in school spaces, however, “print-based texts and well-established curricular practices (reading, writing, and interpreting these texts) continue to dominate many classrooms” (Jocius, 2016, p. 21).

Colleges can produce future teachers with bold, creative ideas for engaging and preparing students for an increasingly complicated world. Teachers need to bring creative narrative back into the classroom to give students voice in their own education. We can develop this research into strategies for changing the way we educate pre-service teachers. However, are these types of innovative strategies realistic? If university professors can get pre-service teachers to buy into these strategies, will their new teaching assignments come with the freedom to implement them in the classroom? Nothing will change if the required curriculum is tied to outcomes assessed in the same old ways: “despite emerging technological innovations and the increasing availability of digital tools within classroom spaces, print-based texts and well-established curricular practices (...reading, writing, and interpreting these texts) continue to dominate many classrooms” (Jocius, p. 21). I argue that Visual Bridging is one way teachers of post-elementary students can build on the multimodal literacies today’s students bring with

them to the classroom. Growth, like Barthes's *punctum*, can be painful and difficult, but it can be as rewarding as crossing a beautiful bridge into new territory and adventures.

Visual Bridging: A Pedagogy of Aesthetic-Response

As a teacher of literature, I am passionate about words and images and the intricate ways they work together to entertain and to educate. I appreciate the aesthetic aspects of storytelling through word and image, which led me to embark on a journey of extensive research on how to pass this appreciation on to my students. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (1934) argues that the aesthetic quality of art makes us “fully alive” because “it is framed for enjoyed perceptive reception” (p. 49). An aesthetic experience “has a satisfying emotional quality” because aesthetic expression is rooted in common everyday experiences (Dewey, p. 39). Gregory Wolfe, editor of *Image Journal*, says, “Art invites us to meet the Other.” It gives us a deeper appreciation of our common humanity. We see people, instead of homeless people. However, this experience must be rooted in the response of the student to the work of art for it to be meaningful (Dewey; Greene; Barthes), and aesthetic experiences are essential in a pedagogy of value for students in our classrooms.

Visual Bridging: Pedagogical Significance

In this theoretical study, I have focused on one type of art, the use of visual images, to help students bridge a connection to another artistic form, literature. I have argued for the inclusion of more visual images in the teaching of literature at older levels than elementary for many reasons, but primarily because today's students and society privilege visual imagery over written and are more comfortable with multimodal mediums of text. Visuals have been found to improve learning by up to 400 percent (Shift

Learning, 2021). Also, they affect learners on a cognitive level and stimulate imagination, therefore, enabling users to process the information faster. Stanford University's Robert E. Horn, explains, “When words and visual elements are closely entwined, we create something new and ... augment our communal intelligence ... visual language has the potential for increasing ...the capacity to take in and comprehend new information” (Shift Learning, 2021). Primarily in this study, I am speaking to educators, proposing a pedagogical repertoire to expand teaching possibilities, which I then hope will translate into students benefitting from the experiences as they further develop these ideas. I suggest educators revisit how one might use the pictorial to support and enhance secondary students’ reading experiences. I propose secondary-level English educators erect a visual path into verbal, written texts—especially those texts students deem “foreign,” “difficult,” or “irrelevant”—a visual path through which readers also exit those texts. While the visual guides them into the unknown where they previously feared or were reluctant to tread, it also lights their exit across the visual bridge. It is my hope this bridging provides a literary, aesthetic engagement that can lead to a new cultural experience which our students need and deserve.

This theoretical study ultimately should be of significance for not only students and educators, but also teacher educators and society at large. It is my hope that through visual bridging into and out of literary texts, students gain insight into learning what it means to be human, increase their empathy for others, and develop new perspectives as they become global citizens; educators will develop more life-long readers while preparing students for the rigors of college and career; teacher-educators will begin changing the direction in the meaning and value of secondary education in English

Language Arts; and the society at large will benefit from a more involved citizenry, with an increased awareness of social justice in the future.

REFERENCES

- Aanstoos, J. (2004). "Visual literacy: An overview." *IEEE Xplore*, IEEE.org.
DOI: 10.1109/AIPR.2003.1284270
- Aleo, T. (2020, January 24). "Reading the world: The case for multimodal literacy."
NCTE Blog, NCTE.org.
- Allen, J. (1995). *It's never too late: Leading adolescents to lifelong literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Anstey, M. (2002). "It's not all black and white": Postmodern picture books and new literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45(6), 444–57.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Barthes, R. (1975). *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1978). *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1980). *Camera Lucinda*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1985). Day by day with Roland Barthes. In Blonsky, M. (Ed.), *On signs*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 98–117.
- Beers, K. and Probst, R. (2016). *Reading Nonfiction: Notice & Note Stances, Signposts, and Strategies*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Beers, K. and Probst, R. (2017). *Disrupting Thinking: Why How We Read Matters*. New York: Scholastic.

- Benjamin, W. (1935/1969). "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books.
- Berger, J. (with Dyer, G.). (2013). *Understanding a Photograph*. London: Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1967)
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books.
- Bradshaw Foundation. (n.d.). *Lascaux cave paintings of Southern France: An introduction*. Retrieved October 19, 2019, from <https://www.bradshawfoundation.com/lascaux/>
- Brockington, GE. (2013). Rhyming Pictures: Walter Crane and the Universal Language of Art. *Word and Image*, 28(4), 359–374.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02666286.2012.740185>
- Brookshire, J., et al. (2002). "The influence of illustrations on children's book preferences and comprehension." *Reading Psychology*, 23(4), 323–339.
- Browne, A. (1998). *Voices in the park*. New York: DK Pub.
- Calvino, I. (1981/2000). *Why read the classics?* New York: Vintage Books.
- Carr, K.S. (1988). "How can we teach critical thinking?" *Childhood Education*, 65(2), 60–73.
- Chen, E. (2004). "A review of learning theories from visual literacy." *Journal of Educational Computing, Design and Online Learning*, 5(3). Retrieved from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.623.6423&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Chiariello, E. (2017). "A classic debate." *Literacy Today*. 34(6), 26–29.

- Cobb, E. (1977/1993). *The ecology of imagination in childhood*. Dallas: Spring Publications.
- Conquergood, D. (1997). "Street literacy." In J. Flood, S. B. Heath, & D. Lapp (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching literacy through the communicative and visual arts*. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, pp. 354–75.
- Crane, S. (1962). "The text of *the red badge of courage*." In S. Bradley, R. C. Beatty, & E. H. Long (Eds.), *The red badge of courage: An annotated text, backgrounds and sources, and essays in criticism*. New York: W. W. Norton. (Original work published in 1875)
- Crites, S. (1986). "Storytime: Recollecting the past and projecting the future," in T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *The storied nature of human conduct*. New York: Praeger, pp. 152–173.
- Crossick, G. & Kaszynska, P. (2016). *Understanding the value of arts & culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project*. Arts & Humanities Research Council (UK).
<https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-cultural-value-project-report/>
- Cuthell, J. P. (2005). "Towards a theory of visual learning." Retrieved from
<https://seeingthmeaning.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/towards-a-theory-of-visual-learning1.pdf>
- Dalrymple, W. (2014). The Ajanta cave murals: "Nothing less than the birth of Indian art." *The Guardian* (15 August 2014).
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/aug/15/mural-ajanta-caves-india-birth-indian-art>

- Damico, J., et al. (2007). From contexts to contextualizing and recontextualizing: The work of teaching. In L. Rush, A. J. Eakle, & A. Berger (Eds.), *Secondary school literacy: What research reveals for classroom practice*. Urbana: NCTE, pp. 203–216.
- Dewey, J. (c1920). *The child and the curriculum*. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/cul.5b250351>
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.fulltextarchive.com/page/Democracy-and-Education/>
- Dewey, J. (1934/2005). *Art as Experience*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group
Published by the Penguin Group.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Dunbar, A. (2013). Between universalizing and othering: Developing an ethics of reading in the multicultural American literature classroom. *The CEA Forum, Vol 42, No 1 (2013)*, 26–48. www.cea-web.org
- Edgar, Thomas W. & David O. Manz (2017). *Research Methods for Cyber Security*. Cambridge, MA: Syngress,
- Emert, T. (2017). “Of history lessons and forbidden loves and stories worth telling twice.” *The ALAN Review, Winter 2017*, 79–84.
- Finley, I., et al. (2013). “Rapid response research: Using creative arts methods to research the lives of disengaged young people.” *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 18(1–2)*, 127–142.
- Fish, S. (1982). *Is there a text in this class?: The authority of interpretive communities*. MA: Harvard University Press.

- Freire, P. (1985). "Reading the world and reading the word: An interview with Paolo Freire." *Language Arts*, 62(1), 15–21.
- Friere, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Gallagher, K. (2009). *Readicide: How schools are killing reading and what you can do about it*. Stenhouse Publishers.
- Gallo, D. (2001). "How classics create an aliterate society." *The English Journal*, 90(3), 33–39.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* (2nd ed.). New York: Basic Books.
- Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (2nd ed.). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Gee, J. P. (2004). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Goble, P. and Goble, R. (2016). *Making curriculum pop: Developing literacies in all content areas*. Golden Valley, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (paperback ed. 2000)
- Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Guest, G. (2008). "Narrative cartographies: Mapping the sacred in gothic stained glass." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 53/54, 121–142.

- Gustavson, L. & Appelbaum, P. (2005). Youth cultural practices, popular culture, and classroom teaching. *Classroom teaching: An introduction*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, pp. 281–296.
- Gutierrez, K. (2000). Teaching and learning in the 21st century. *English Education*, 32(4), 290–298.
- Harper, D. (2012). *Visual Sociology*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Haynes-Moore, S. (2015). Trading spaces: an educator’s ethnographic exploration of adolescents’ digital role-play. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 11(1), 34–46.
- Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with Words*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Herz, S. & Gallo, D. (2005). *From Hinton to Hamlet: Building bridges between young adult literature and the classics*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Hinds, G. (2019). The “particular appeal” of graphic novels. National Council of Teachers of English, *Council Chronicle*, (28), 20–21.
- Hoogvliet, M. (2010). How to tell a fairy tale with images: Narrative theories and French Paintings from the early nineteenth century. *Relief*, 4(2), 198–212.
- Hopkins, L., & Wort, E. (2020). Photo elicitation and photovoice: How visual research enables empowerment, articulation and dis-articulation. *Ecclesial Practices*, 7(2), 163–186. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/22144471-BJA10017>
- Hull, G. (2003). Youth culture and digital media: New literacies for new times. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 38(2), 229–233.
- Iser, W. (1974). *The implied reader: Patterns of communication in prose fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

- Iser, W. (1978). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (Paperback edition 1980)
- Iser, W. (1995). "Interaction between text and reader," in *Readers and Reading*, ed. Andrew Bennett. London: Longman.
- Jacobs, D. (2007). More than words: Comics as a means of teaching multiple literacies. *The English Journal*, 96(3), 19–25.
- Jakobsen, R. (1971). "On the relation between visual and auditory signs," in *Selected Writings II: Word and Language*. The Hague: Mouton, p. 340.
- Jenkins, H. (2011, July 31). Transmedia 202: Further reflections. *Confessions of an ACA fan*. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2011/08/defining_transmedia_further_re.html
- Jocius, R. (2016). Telling unexpected stories: Students as multimodal artists. *The English Journal*, 105(5), 16–22.
- Kennedy, J. (1963). President John F. Kennedy: Remarks at Amherst College, October 26, 1963 — Transcript. National Endowment for the Arts. <https://www.arts.gov/about/kennedy-transcript>
- Korda, A. (2016). Learning from "good pictures": Walter Crane's picture books and visual literacy. *Word & Image*, 32, 327–339.
- Kurt, S. "Theory of Multiple Intelligences – Gardner," in *Educational Technology*, December 19, 2020. Retrieved from <https://educationaltechnology.net/theory-of-multiple-intelligences-gardner/>
- LaGrandeur, Kevin. (2003). "Digital Images and Classic Persuasion," in *Eloquent Images* (Chap. 5), Eds. Mary Hocks and Michelle Kendrick. Cambridge: MIT Press, pp. 117–136.

- Laurence, S. & Margolis, E. (2003). Concepts and conceptual analysis. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 67(2), 253–282.
- Lawrence, D. H. (1994). “Thought.” *Complete poems*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 673.
(Original poem published in 1932)
- Lewis, C. S. (1956, November 18). Sometimes fairy stories may say best what’s to be said. *The New York Times*, Proquest Historical Newspapers: the New York Times (1851-2009), p. 310. <https://apilgriminnarnia.com/2014/01/27/sometimes-fairy-stories/>
- Lewis, C. S. (1964). *The discarded image*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, C. S. (1970/2014). On the reading of old books. *God in the dock*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 217–225.
- Luke, C. (2003). Pedagogy, connectivity, multimodality, and interdisciplinarity. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(3), 397–403.
- Lyons, M. (2011). *Books: A living history*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Macaulay, D. (1990). *Black and White*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Marchant, J. (2016). A journey to the oldest cave paintings in the world. *Smithsonian Magazine* (January 2016). <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/journey-oldest-cave-paintings-world-180957685/>
- Mark, J. (2018, March 6). Illuminated manuscripts. *Ancient History Encyclopedia*.
- McKim, R. H. (1980). *Thinking visually: A strategy manual for problem solving*. Parsippany, NJ: Dale Seymour Publications.
- Menges, J. (2010). Introduction. *The art and illustration of Walter Crane*. New York: Dover Publications.

- Mitchell, W. (1994). *Picture theory*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.
- NCTE (2018, July). A call to action: What we know about adolescent literacy instruction. *Position statements*. NCTE's Commission on Reading.
<http://www2.ncte.org/statement/adolescentliteracy/>
- NCTE (2020, March 23). Literacy is more than just reading and writing. NCTE's Standing Committee on Global Citizenship. Retrieved June 15, 2021.
<https://ncte.org/blog/2020/03/literacy-just-reading-writing/>
- Nielsen, J. (2018, September). The arts built my future. *Voices from the middle*, 26(1), 12–14.
- Otto, S. (2011). Studying visual culture. In S. Tozer, et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of research in the social foundations of education* (1st ed., pp. 533–543). New York: Routledge.
- Pantaleo, S. (2004). Young children and Radical Change characteristics in picture books. *The Reading Teacher*, 58(2), 178–187.
- Popova, Maria. (2016, August 3). Neil Gaiman on why we read and what books do for the human experience. *Brainpickings*. Retrieved from
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2016/08/03/neil-gaiman-view-from-the-cheap-seats-reading/>
- Ratner, A. (2010). *Street lit: Teaching and reading fiction in urban schools*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Read, J., & Barnsley, R. (1977). Remember Dick and Jane? Memory for elementary school readers. *Canadian Education and Research Digest*, 7, 312–326.

- Rice, J. (2007). *The rhetoric of cool: Composition studies and new media*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23269526>
- Rice, M. (2012). "Using graphic texts in secondary classrooms: A tale of endurance." *The English Journal*, 101(5), 37–43.
- Rose, G. (2016). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Rosenblatt, L.M. (1965/1995). *Literature as exploration*. New York: MLA of America.
- Rosenblatt, L.M. (1969). Towards a transactional theory of reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 1(1), 31–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10862969609546838>
- Ryan, M. L. (2004). *Narrative across media: The languages of storytelling*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (1940/2010). *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*. New York: Routledge Classics.
- Schell, K., et al. (2009). Photovoice as a teaching tool: Learning by doing with visual methods. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 21(3), 340–352. <http://www.isetl.org/ijthe>
- Seglem, R. & Witte, S. (2009, November). You gotta see it to believe it: Teaching visual literacy in the English classroom. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 53(3), 216–226. doi:10.1598/JAAL.53.3.3
- Shift Descriptive Learning. (2021). "Studies confirm the power of visuals to engage your audience in eLearning." Aura Interactiva. Accessed 20 May 2022. <https://www.shiftelearning.com/blog/bid/350326/studies-confirm-the-power-of-visuals-in-elearning>

- Shoffner, M., et al. (2010). Multiliteracies in the secondary English classroom: Becoming literate in the 21st century. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 9 (3), 75–89.
- Sington, D. (Writer & Director). (2020, September 23). A to z: The first alphabet (Season 1, Episode 1) [Tv series episode]. In H. Sington (Executive Producer), *NOVA*. DOX Productions; Films à Cinq for NOVA/WGBH Boston in association with Arté France and the BBC.
- Sipe, L. R. (1998). How picture books work: A semiotically framed theory of text-picture relationships. *Children's Literature in Education*, 29(2).
- Sontag, S. (1977). *On photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Stokes, S. (2002). Visual literacy in teaching and learning: A literature perspective. *Electronic Journal for the Integration of Technology in Education*, 1 (1), 10–19. Retrieved on 19/05/2017 from: <http://ejite.isu.edu/Volume1No1/pdfs/stokes.pdf>.
- Styslinger, M. (2017). *Workshopping the canon*. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Strauss, V. (2016). “Hiding in plain sight: The adult literacy crisis.” *The Washington Post: Democracy Dies in Darkness*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2016/11/01/hiding-in-plain-sight-the-adult-literacy-crisis/?utm_term=.67d313aadee6
- Sturken, M. and Cartwright, L. (2009). *Practices of looking: An introduction to visual culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thomsen, J. (2018). Comics, collage, and other things with crayons: The power of composing with image. *English Journal*, 107(3), 54–61.

- Todd, C. (1995). The Semester Project: The Power and Pleasures of Independent Study. *The English Journal*, 84(3), 73-76. doi:10.2307/820078
- UNESCO. (2021). Literacy. Retrieved June 15, 2021, from <https://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy>
- Valpy, M. (2001, June 9). High concept aliteracy: Can read, won't read. *Globe & Mail* (Toronto, Canada).
<http://link.galegroup.com/oralroberts.idm.oclc.org/apps/doc/A30442860/BIC?u=oru&sid=BIC&xid=4fe14c01>
- Walker, L.O., & Avant, K.C. (2011). Concept analysis. In L.O. Walker & K.C. Avant (Eds.), *Strategies for Theory Construction in Nursing* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, pp. 157–179.
- Wileman, R. E. (1993). *Visual communicating*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Educational Technology Publications.
- Willingham, D. (2015). For the love of reading: Engaging students in a lifelong pursuit. *American Educator*, 39(1), 4–13, 43.
- Winnicott, D.W. (2018/1965). *The maturational process and the facilitating environment*. New York: Routledge.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1971/2005). *Playing and reality*. New York: Routledge Classics.
- Witte, S. & Rybakova, K. (2017, Fall). Digging for deeper connections: Building multimodal text scaffolds. *The ALAN Review*, 98–106.
- Wolf, W. (2003). Narrative and narrativity: A narratological reconceptualization and its applicability to the visual arts. *Word & Image* 19, 180-197.

Woolf, V. (1932). "How should one read a book?" in *The Second Common Reader*,

London: Hogarth Press.

VITA

Laura Susan Krohn

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: "VISUAL BRIDGING" TO AND FROM LITERARY TEXTS:
A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Major Field: Education

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2022.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in English at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 2009.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in English at Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1984.

Experience:

Oral Roberts University (Fall 2011 to present) Instructor of English, 2011 to present; English Education Advisor/Secondary Rep. in English to College of Education, 2011-2021; Full-Time Adjunct Instructor 1999-2001.

Full-time Classroom Teacher (1984-1993 and 2004-2011) English, Grades 6-12, public and private schools; Greater-Tulsa (OK) Metropolitan Area.

Professional Memberships:

National Council of Teachers of English, Modern Language Association, Kappa Delta Pi, Sigma Tau Delta (Faculty Sponsor).