

# The Significance of Art Ideology in Ekphrasis: Marianne Moore's "The Camperdown Elm"

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**Abstract**—This study examines the relationship between the genre of ekphrastic poetry and art ideology. It provides a theoretical argumentation on this innate association in continuation with James W. Heffernan's observations in the field. The study argues that ekphrasis is theoretically related to the practice of art criticism, which, in its turn, stands on art ideological grounds. Two hypotheses about the nature of the relationship that combines ekphrasis and art ideology are generated from this theoretical investigation. The first is that art ideology is a *sine qua non* to ekphrasis, and the second is that art ideology especially contributes to the thematic structure of ekphrasis. The validity of this proposition is tested through analyzing Marianne Moore's poem "The Camperdown Elm," in which Moore's own art ideology as explicated in her non-poetic works is utilized. As a result, this study aims to contribute to both the theoretical and analytical studies of ekphrasis genre.

**Indexed Terms**—ekphrasis, art-ideology, James W. Heffernan, Marianne Moore, "The Camperdown Elm"

"Though silent form! Dost tease us out of thought, as doth eternity"

John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

## I. INTRODUCTION

The interaction of the sister arts – the visual and the verbal - has received a considerable attention since Horace's pre-eminent dictum "ut pictura poesis" (Louvel, 2011, p. 29; Zeitlin, 2013, p. 19): "as is painting, so is poetry" (Zeitlin, 2013, p. 19). This acknowledgement of the connection between the two arts justifies the age-old tradition of "the verbal representation of visual representation" (Heffernan, 1993, p. 03). 'Ekphrasis,' (ἐκφρασις), is the name given to this crossdisciplinary practice (Squire, 2015). The present paper sheds light on art ideology as one of the theoretical properties of ekphrasis, leaning in its theoretical framework on the work of James W. Heffernan: his definition of ekphrasis and analysis of ekphrastic poetry. It intends to eventually argue that art ideology is a consistent factor in ekphrasis.

*Ideology* is defined by the Oxford dictionary as "any wide-ranging system of beliefs, ways of thought, and categories that provide the foundation of programmes of political and social action: an ideology is a conceptual scheme with a practical application." The expression, *Art ideology*, is therefore used here to denote an individual's or a group's understanding of what art is and what it can do. It encompasses his/their artistic beliefs and principles that shape his/their aesthetic vision. Keohane (1976) adds that an ideology does not necessarily abide by one theoretical vision, it may be a hybrid selection from multiple theories. This paper argues that the ekphrast necessarily correlates the visual work of art with his art ideology.

Heffernan's (1993) definition of ekphrasis suggests the genre's innate association with art criticism, considered here as an ideological discipline. "[T]he verbal representation of visual representation" (p. 3) is an art form which is twice removed from reality: we have 'the real' object, the first level of its re-presentation in visual art which is once removed from this reality, and then the second level of its re-representation in poetry which is thereby twice removed from reality. The prefix "re-" indicates that new insights have been attributed to the object in hand in each time; it is not objectively presented. In the first level of imitation, that is the visual piece of art, the object in concern is the real-life element, whereas the insights attributed to it are the artist's artistic visions on how this object is transported through visual art. In the second level, that is, the ekphrasis poem, the poet reflects on the artistic re-representation of an object rather than the object itself. The artistic insights the poet provides are, therefore, targeted at both components of the art piece: the real-life object plus the artistic vision attributed to it by the visual artist. This is similar to the role attributed to art critics by Heffernan. An art critic, Heffernan (2015) says, is one who is concerned with three elements: the work of art, the artist, and the represented object. Sometimes, one of these elements might be eliminated (ibid). Ekphrasis could be, therefore, interpreted as a sort of *literary practice of art criticism*.

In his articles "Ekphrasis and Representation" (1991) and "Ekphrasis: Theory" (2015), Heffernan advocates the connection between ekphrasis and art criticism. He argues that the fields of art criticism and ekphrasis are very close to each other, and sometimes they intersect. Art criticism, he says, might be called ekphrasis' "purest form" (2015, p. 42),

that is to say it is the platform from which ekphrasis writing departs. The difference between the two disciplines remains, for Heffernan, a matter of language and style. A piece of art criticism is read for artistic knowledge per se, whereas a work of ekphrasis “demands to be read as a work of art in its own right,” in addition to the artistic knowledge it provides (2015, p. 43). Mitchell (1994) confirms that art history, which he uses almost interchangeably with art criticism, is the disciplinary version of ekphrasis. He considers art criticism as the verbal representation of visual representation, which is the way Heffernan defines ekphrasis.

Ultimately, we can consider the tasks of an ekphrast and an art critic to be one, it is the “liberat[ion of] the work [of art] from its own superficial appearance” through “*the context of thought* he creates for it” (Kuspit, 1977, p. 6; emphasis added). Since neither the art critic, nor the ekphrast are restricted to one line of thought, I came to label their artistic critical thought an art ideology, rather than theory, because of the term’s wide application scope<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, art ideology is unescapably expressed in ekphrasis, and this is a fact imposed by the nature of the ekphrast’s task: a poet-art critic.

On a practical level, Heffernan (1993) disperse ekphrasis analyses continually suggest the presence of art ideologies in ekphrasis. In the second chapter of his *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*, he examines a set of Ekphrastic metamorphoses of the Philomela myth from Ovid to Shakespeare from a feminist perspective, while alluding throughout the analysis to threads of art theories, such as realist principles and ut pictura poesis theory. In Ovid’s ekphrastic episode of Philomela’s rape, from his *Metamorphoses* (8 AD), he locates a sister arts theory, also called ut pictura poesis<sup>2</sup> meaning “as is painting, so is poetry” (Zeitlin, p. 19). He further argues that the text’s feminist theme is built on this art theory. Sister arts theory stands on the belief that pictures are not mute, but can speak just like words do. Ovid empowers the silenced Philomela, whose tongue is amputated, with the alternative means of visual weaving with which she reveals her rape story. In the words of Heffernan (1993), this “literally graphic tale - a tale told by a picture...Philomela’s power to speak...is woven into and hence bound up with the power of pictures to speak - to break through the silence in which they, like women, are traditionally bound” (p. 47-49). Significantly, Heffernan identifies the art ideology/theory carried in the text, and also specifies the role it plays in the narrative: the feminist narrative is basis on which ut pictura poesis art theory is built. Heffernan’s observations about art ideologies in ekphrasis are not always voiced out as in this case, sometimes they can be only tacitly sensed in his critique. Take for instance his critique of Chaucer’s “The Knight’s Tale” (14<sup>th</sup> c), he announces that Emyle’s standpoint from her arranged marriage is unclear in the text. But as he analyzes her prayers against the paintings in the temple, the setting of her prayers, he comes to see that she is actually forced into this marriage just like the paintings’ subjects who have been forcefully raped. This analysis implies a realistic art ideology which the critic has applied to the paintings, although he says nothing about it. The Realistic attitude is apparent in the parallelism he makes between real life and art, the commonality of the issue discussed - the status and significance of matrimony and maidenhood in society. Heffernan is one of the critics who often notice the existence of art ideologies in ekphrasis works and the role they play in it. Nevertheless, to this date, it seems no critic contends that art ideology is a sine qua non to ekphrasis genre.

This article aims to test the hypothesis generated from Heffernan’s definition and critique of ekphrasis: art ideologies are sine qua non of ekphrasis’ theoretical framework; and more precisely, they contribute in shaping ekphrasis’ themes and general narrative. This task is attempted through the analysis of “The Camperdown Elm” (1967), an ekphrastic poem by the American poet Marianne Moore (1887-1972), through the lenses of Moore’s art ideology extracted from her non-poetic work *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore* (1986), in addition to Linda Leavell’s “When Marianne Moore Buys Pictures” (1993), “Prismatic Color: Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts” (1986), and Zhaoming Qian’s “Marianne Moore and The Tao of Painting” (2003). The five components of the ekphrastic work are examined here: the visual art work, the object represented within it, the artist, plus the poem and the poet. This aim is pursued through the following questions: does Moore practice art criticism in “The Camperdown Elm”? If yes, does this criticism express clear theoretical principles of art that can formulate an art ideology? What is this ideology? How does the art ideology affect the structure of the ekphrastic narrative and its thematic meaning?

Similar to Ovid’s and Chaucer’s ekphrasis, Moore’s ekphrasis has also received art-ideological readings by critics, but not this particular poem. Walsh (2010), Molesworth (1990), Hadas (1977), Martin (1986), and Erickson (1992) each discusses a principle of Moore’s art ideology in one of her ekphrasis. Although these critics provide illuminating readings of Moore’s ekphrasis, the analysis of art ideology in these works is a casual one, it is brief and discordant. Moreover, they do not recognize the presence of art ideology in all of Moore’s ekphrasis, only the ones which directly deal with the subject of art criticism like “The Pangolin”, “No Swan So Fine”, and “An Egyptian Pulled a Glass Bottle in the Shape of Fish”. This paper aims to centralize the issue of art ideology in Moore’s ekphrasis, and to examine it in an ekphrasis which is far from art themes, “The Camperdown Elm”.

Thorough art-ideological readings of Moore’s ekphrasis are given by Suzanne Juhasz, Linda Leavell, and Bonnie Costello. Juhasz, in *Naked and Fiery Forms: Modern American Poetry by Women, a New Tradition* (1976), explores more than one art principle in “An Egyptian Pulled a Glass Bottle in the Shape of Fish.” She discusses the earlier principle of art vs natural model and the principle of art-inner necessity relationship. The work of Charles Altieri on the

<sup>1</sup> In making the distinction between the three terms theory, ideology, and philosophy I have relied on Nannerl O. Keohane’s “Philosophy, Theory, Ideology: An Attempt at Clarification” (1976).

<sup>2</sup> See Rensselaer W. Lee “Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting” (1940).

same poem, “Doubt and Display: A Foundation for a Wittgensteinian Approach to Art” (2016), is also important in this regard. Although he detects no art principles in “An Egyptian”, he wittingly deciphers the poem’s description of the art piece and disambiguates the narrative of the sculpture’s creation process. Linda Leavell, in her dissertation “Prismatic Color: Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts” (1986) and essay “When Marianne Moore Buys Pictures” (1993), thoroughly explores the relationship between Moore’s personal attachment to visual arts and its impact on her poetry. In this study, Leavell does not make any distinction between Moore’s artistic and poetic ideology, like Moore herself does in her prose. Leavell studies a large ekphrastic selection from Moore’s work, and involves many art principles in her discussion, producing a complete art ideology. Last but not least, Bonnie Costello, in *Marianne Moore: Imaginary Possessions* (1981), explores Moore’s artistic mind and the character of the poet-art critic displayed in her poetry. Like Leavell, she covers a range of poems, mostly ekphrastic. Costello even notices the role played by art pieces and art themes in some of Moore’s poems. But, she by no means deals with ekphrasis genre per se, there is no mention of this genre even when she deals with ekphrastic poems. It is also remarkable how both critics, Costello and Leavell, could find traces of Moore’s art ideology in works which are not centered around art themes, a task pursued in the present study of “The Camperdown Elm”.

These studies, like Heffernan’s previous critique, are of great value for the present paper as their textual analyses support the paper’s main thesis on the relatedness of ekphrasis and art ideology. Nevertheless, despite their frequent observations of this relationship, none of these critics argues for it in Moore’s work and in ekphrasis on the whole, neither theoretically nor practically. Art ideology-ekphrasis relationship is a concern beyond their study scope, it has been merely included in these works to serve other research objectives. The present study intends to argue on this relationship theoretically and to demonstrate it through the art ideological analysis of Moore’s ekphrasis “The Camperdown Elm.” This latter case study is used as an illustration, although the same can be said about other ekphrasis.

## II. ART IDEOLOGY IN MOORE’S “THE CAMPERDOWN ELM”

From surveying the previous studies indicated above we can see that Moore endorses a nexus of interwoven art theories and traditions - including Primitivism, Arts and Crafts Movement, Chinese art, The Stieglitz’ Circle and the American avant-gardism - out of which she develops a unique ideology of art specific to her. The traces of this ideology are arguably found in all of her ekphrasis pieces: they are either deliberately involved as in “The Pangolin”, “No Swan So Fine”, and “An Egyptian Pulled a Glass Bottle in the Shape of Fish” or indeliberately as in “The Camperdown Elm”.

### A. “Kindred Spirits” Through Moore’s Eyes

A poet and an art critic with a refined artistic taste and vision, Moore chose to convey her environmental quest in “The Camperdown Elm” through both methods, poetry and art criticism, or simply through ekphrasis. “The Camperdown Elm” is composed of two stanzas, the first is a reflection on Asher B. Durand’s painting “Kindred Spirits” (Figure 1), whereas the second is a literary narrative about the elm tree at the Prospect Park.



Figure 1 Asher Brown Durand, *Kindred Spirits*. 1849, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (A public domain image)

At first reading of “The Camperdown Elm”, and with a rudimentary knowledge of its subject - the painting, one senses a strong attraction to representational art on the part of Moore and Durand. Moore (1958) describes the pastoral setting of Durand’s painting with brevity. The figures are depicted in active conversation, apparently about the trees Bryant loves so much and to which he is pointing:

At the edge of a rockledge  
overlooking a stream:  
Thanatopsis-invoking tree-loving Bryant  
conversing with Timothy Cole  
in Asher Durand’s painting of them  
under the filigree of an elm overhead. (p. 243)

As the stanza ends, the speaker leaves us at a crossroad: whether we would like to be transferred to the painting itself outside the text to get a more profound portrayal of the scene with its impressive “elm tree” (Davis, 2020, p. 17), or else to continue with Moore’s own narrative of another elm tree in the next stanza. In this latter, Moore describes the possible effect of the Prospect Park’s elm tree on its viewers from Durand’s painting – Cole and Bryant – if they would ever come to see it. Moore’s contemplation on the natural scenery from Durand’s painting and the painter’s technique of verisimilitude, in the first stanza, indicates her appreciation of representational art, this is an aspect which Costello (2012) also examines. In her article “Tedium and Integrity” (2003), Moore praises the Sung academicians’ emphasis on “faithful representation” (p. 258). This attitude, she says, has controlled spontaneity in Chinese artistic creation, and also led to the “happy result” of “the superb paintings of insects, flowers, animals, and birds” in Chinese art (ibid).

Other principles can be located in Moore’s special focus on the painter, his work of art, and the artistic subjects depicted in it; after all, the inspection of the art piece is an important element in ekphrasis criticism. “Kindred Spirits” is a landmark painting of American Romanticism painted by Durand, a first-generation American landscape painter. It is a gift to Bryant, and a homage to their late friend Cole (Peck, 2005). Its title is excerpted from John Keats’s sonnet VII “O Solitude” (1815) (ibid), a poem that speaks of a man’s wish to have a solitary life in nature, with the company of a like-minded man, his “kindred spirit” (Keats, 1982). Durand’s has borrowed his painting’s title from Keats’ work in order to commemorate a similar anecdote to that of Keats about two friends from his artistic circle: Timothy Cole and William Cullen Bryant, portrayed in the painting. The kinship between these two figures is an ethical and an aesthetic one. Bryant, is an American Romantic poet, who is also famed for his environmental concerns; whereas, his kindred spirit, Cole, is the forefather of The Hudson River School of landscape painting, to which Durand belongs. This School is closely tied to Romantic naturalism, and its paintings specifically represent the Hudson River Valley and its shores (Avery, 1987).

In her poem, Moore (1958) emphasizes this kinship to which Durand also belongs. Durand’s Romantic naturalism is revealed through her overall description of his painting, and Cole’s is granted by his affiliation to the same art school. Moore moves therefore to Bryant, demonstrating how he is similar to them. She identifies him in the poem as “Thanatopsis-invoking tree-loving Bryant” (p. 243). His description as a “tree-loving” intellectual highlights his environmental concerns in social life and poetry as well, a matter further illuminated in her “Introduction” to *Central Park Country: A Tune Within Us* (1986), where she speaks about his call for the reservation of New York City’s “forest and woodland for shade and refreshment as a park” in 1836 (p. 618). This vision, she says, has come true in New York’s Central Park later on (ibid). His poem “Thanatopsis” (1817), which Moore recalls in this poem, is one of the earliest Romantic works to be known in America (Campanella, 2003). It has been a direct inspiration for another painting by Durand - “Landscape—Scene from Thanatopsis” (1850). Moore’s statement “Thanatopsis-invoking...Bryant” is, therefore, a reference to this poet’s instigation, or as she says “invocation”, of the Romantic movement in American literary and painterly art through this foundational poem. In her poem, Moore is saluting Bryant as the precursor of American Romanticism and the environmentalist.

Moore is, therefore, employing a work of a double romantic imprint: first is the Romantic pastoral setting in which humans peacefully co-exist with nature, and second is the line of the leading Romantic artists taken as its subject. “Kindred Spirits” is a Romantic painting which celebrates the American Romantic Movement. By recalling the names of the fathers of American Romanticism - Durand, Cole, and Bryant – together with their landmark works - “Kindred Spirits” and “Thanatopsis” – in her ekphrastic work “The Camperdown Elm”, Moore is expressing an interest in the artistic lineage driven by them as a movement: American Romanticism.

The first aspect, of concern to Moore, is the kindredness of these artists’ spirits, Cole, Bryant and also Durand and Keats: their environmentalist ethics which extend to their literary and artistic work. We can locate two similar ideas in Moore’s art ideology. The first is art-nature relationship; for Moore and the Romantics, art is a faithful imitation of nature. Durand and Moore provide the visual example of the elm tree and The Hudson River Valley surrounding it. The second idea is man-art relationship. Both Moore and the Romantics believe in the continuity between man’s ethics and his art. Their respective works, “The Camperdown Elm” and “Kindred Spirits” treat the ethical trait of man’s harmonious living with nature. All in all, in “The Camperdown Elm”, Durand, Cole, Bryant, and maybe Keats are kindred spirits who stand for two art principles from Moore’s art ideology which are art-nature relationship and man-art relationship.

#### B. The Romantic Principle of Man-Art Relationship in Moore’s Art Ideology

Moore's first principle of art-ethics relationship is traced back to the Chinese concept of integrity. Integrity is the major principle of the Daoist aesthetics (Qian, 2003), whose various facets are discussed by Moore in her essay "Tedium and Integrity". One facet of this concept is the wholeness (or integrity) of man's character: that is the harmony between his art, ethics, and also profession. Moore (2003) contends, "the view that painting is not a profession but an extension to the art of living" is an "important feature of Chinese painting" (p. 258). The artist is himself the social being and the professional as well. She further explains how the painter in China "underwent rigorous intellectual discipline" (ibid). That is to say, he is both ethically 'disciplined' and 'intellectually' trained to lead a complementary life and artistic career. This concept of the artist applies well to Durand, Cole, and their fellow poets as well. They have undergone environmental as well as artistic education, and their art links their aesthetic visions to their environmental ethics. "Kindred Spirits", for instance, speaks of the morality of peaceful living in nature which its painter practices in social life. It conveys well the principle of art-ethics which Moore preaches in her prose work.

Moore continues by stating that the integrity of the artist's character is not enough for the creation of an authentic work. In order to produce "genuine art", she insists, the totality of the artist's character – including his ethics, profession and art - should spring from his inner self (Leavell, 1993, p. 257). This is achieved through the artist's practice of individuality. Individuality is to deny external influences and impositions and follow one's his inner spirit. In her article, "E. E. Cummings, 1894- 1962", Moore (1986) underscores the urgent need to know how "to be ONEself ... in an epoch of Unself" (of nonself)"<sup>3</sup> (p. 563). The American Romantics, whom Moore's subject painting commemorates, are an example on the self-reliant intellectuals who break up with the old tradition of the Enlightenment to instigate their own artistic principles and vision of life. That is to say, their art is "genuine" and not a replication.

Accordingly, art for Moore has to stay true to the inner self of its creator. In another article by her, in Lincoln Kirstein's *To Honor Henry McBride*, she argues that it should hold the artist's personal touch which is reflected through his non-conformity and liberality in attitude, as well as gusto and creativeness in the selection of material and subject matter (Moore, 1986). In her interview with Donald Hall, Moore (1969) gives the example of *The Dial*'s artists, the magazine for which she was first a contributor and then an editor. She declares that "we didn't care what other people said...Everybody liked what he was doing...I think that individuality was the great thing. We were not conforming to anything...it was a matter of taking a liking to things. Things in accordance with your taste" (p. 36-37). Individuality is exactly "what made [*The Dial*] so good," she explains (p. 37).

### C. Moore's Romantic Principle of Art-Nature Relationship

The second principle represented by the figure of Durand and the other Romantics in the poem is art's imitation of nature, or art-nature relationship. This is the most oft-advocated artistic tendency in the totality of Moore's ekphrasis body of work, not only this one. Moore sets forth several reasons in her essays as to why she considers nature a valuable model for artistic creation, two of which are reflected in "The Camperdown Elm": one is the high beauty of natural objects, the other their spiritual importance. On nature's beauty, this poem gives the example of the elm tree; while in other ekphrasis Moore talks about the pangolin, the fish, the swan, etc. Answering Hall's question (1986) about the reason behind her excessive interest in animals in her poetry, she says, "they are *subjects* for art and *examples* of it, are they not?" (p. 552; emphasis added). Animals are 'subjects' for artistic representation because their beauty is an 'example' of aesthetics; Moore exclaims, "which of us has not been stunned by the beauty of an animal's skin or its flexibility in motion?" They have a "stunning...stupefying" beauty, which invites artistic representation (p. 573). This applies to the flora of the world as well.

In "The Camperdown Elm", Moore (1958) observes how the elm tree in Durand's painting looks like an art piece rather than a real tree. It stands as a "filigree overhead" of the two artists (p. 243). The Longman Dictionary (1978) defines the filigree as "*delicate ornamental wire work*" (p. 408). Nevertheless, the real elm tree at The Prospect Park is more alluring for Moore (1958); if only these "nature-loving" artists had come across it, they would have been even more astonished by its beauty:

... Imagine

their [Cole and Bryant's] rapture, had they come on the Camperdown elm's  
massiveness and "the intricate pattern of its branches,"  
arching high, curving low, in its mist of fine twigs. (p. 243)

The above description is actually a faithful portrayal of the elm tree at The Prospect Park. Olson (2011) remarks that this "tree was a mutation that lacked the gene for negative geotropism" (p. 22). So, it could not discern directions and crawled instead of growing upwards resulting in the peculiar shape she is in. Its shape rose the public curiosity and made it the most famous tree in the park (qtd.in Olson, 2011, p. 22). Moore (1958) describes it as the Americans' "crowning curio" (p. 243). The Longman dictionary (1978) defines the curio as "an object, valuable because of its age, rarity or its beauty" (p. 271). To say that Cole and Bryant would be pleased with the sight of this curio is a further emphasis on Romantic artists' interest in natural beauty as a model for artistic creation.

The second reason for imitating nature given by Moore, is nature's spiritual importance. For Moore, elements in nature are not empty figures, but have a certain spiritual value for humans. This value is attributed to them by man who seeks to find his own place within the universe through establishing associations with its elements. For instance, In

<sup>3</sup> Here, she is referring to the Modernist tendency of impersonality.

Chinese artistic culture, Moore (2003) attests, the dragon is a totem for the power of Heaven; and the bamboo symbolizes elegance; whereas the phoenix, the tortoise, the unicorn, the crane, the pine, and the peach symbolize long life. Moore believes that thinking about oneself as being part and parcel of the universe, in this way, is more profound than exclusive reflection on one's inner self. This latter state she calls "egotism", and it is known for the Buddhists as "ignorance"; whereas, the former is "the development of a whole personality" (Moore, 2003, p. 258). This means that introverted exploration of one's inner self (exclusive concentration on the first integrity) is just a part of the personality's development. It needs to be augmented by his integration into nature (the second integrity). Moore (2003) regards the first integrity, the integrity of man's/ artist's 'inner' personality including his art, ethics, and profession, as a profundity and the second, man's integrity into the 'outer' universe, as a yet more profound profundity. Now that art springs from the artist's inner self, and the artist spiritually conceives himself as an inseparable part of nature, his art would ultimately spring from nature's spirituality. In the discussion below, we will go back to see how this idea is manifested in Durand's Romantic painting.

Moving to the art piece itself, its internal constituents should also respect the principle of integrity among themselves. Its composite elements - nature's physicality and nature/artist's spirituality - have to be in harmony: "Painting," says Moore (2003), "should be a *fusion* of that which pertains to Heaven - the spirit - and the matter, which pertains to Earth, as effected by the painter's insight and skill... The function of brush and ink is to make visible the invisible" (p. 258; emphasis added). Her last statement indicates that the painting's spiritual content comes first for the artist, then comes the selection of an appropriate artistic matter and form in order to visually embody this spirituality. Moore often contemplates on the manifestations of this principle - the integration of spirit and form - in nature. This has been the subject of many of her ekphrasis, like "An Egyptian Pulled a Glass in the Shape of Fish" and "The Pangolin", where the titular animals remarkably embody this integrity. For Moore, and the Chinese before her, as the artist respects the natural law of integrity, his art has to abide by it as well.

In Chinese art culture, the spirit-form integrity is delivered through the *Six Canons of Painting* (6<sup>th</sup> century). Besides her contemplation on nature, Moore has obviously relied on this book for her conception of this principle. *The Canons* is a famous book by Xie He, to which "every single book on Chinese art alludes as the most honored standards of Chinese art criticism" (Qian, 2003, p. 255). The principles it delivers insist on the continuity between art form and its spiritual signification, and set forward a practical procedure for preserving this continuity. Moore explains the six canons, in her article "Tedium and Integrity" (1958), as follows

- the first [canon] - basic to all - [which] controlled the other five...was spirit.
2. The Second Canon says 'The brush is a means of creating structure.' The ideal takes form. The spiritual aspect has tangible expression...
3. According to the object, [addressing the artist] draw its form.
4. According to the nature of the object, apply color.
5. "Organize the composition with each element in its rightful place."
6. In copying, transmit the essence of the master's brush and methods. (p. 258-259; emphasis added).

Except for the sixth, each of these canons emphasizes "the fact that spirit creates form", which she speaks of in her other poem "Roses Only." The examples Moore has given earlier show how this harmony and correspondence between the painting's spiritual content and its formal traits is actually manifested in Chinese art. The turtle, for instance, is a visual embodiment of the concept of long life. The association between form and spiritual idea made here is valid, as the turtle actually enjoys the spiritual trait of long life. In her (ekphrastic) evaluation of visual art works, Moore pays special attention to the symbolism of the objects represented and the spirit-form relationship in them. This can be seen in her interpretation of the fish-shaped glass in her ekphrastic poem "An Egyptian Pulled a Glass Bottle in the Shape of Fish", the church architecture in "The Pangolin", and the elm tree from Durand's painting in "The Camperdown Elm".

#### D. "Kindred Spirit" 's Spiritual Connection to Nature

The elm tree which occupies the center of Durand's painting and Moore's ekphrasis is regarded by many Americans, including Durand and Moore, as a national symbol for the huge history it has. The story of this tree starts with the Britons' settlements in New England, where its presence as an indigenous tree was remarked across the American soil (Campanella, 2003, p. 1,139). By the end of the nineteenth century, the American elm has spanned the whole continent, and it became a universal aspect of the American urban topography especially (p. 01). By time, it passed as a national symbol, as intimated by Thomas J. Campanella, the specialist in urban studies, in his book *Republic of Shade: New England and the American Elm* (2003):

No tree has loomed larger in American history than the American elm ... [elms] also began to collect a range of historical and sentimental associations. Colonists planted elms as domestic ornaments, to shelter a home from lightning and storms, or to mark weddings or the birth of a child...occasionally such elms evolved into monuments of national importance. (p. 5-6)

In a newly uprising country preparing to present its national identity markers to the world like America, aged elm trees were especially estimated for being a "witness upon the field of history" and "vessels of collective memory" (p. 06).

Durand has started his artistic career soon after the formation of the independent state of The United States of America, a time when the expression of the American identity was a persistent issue in all arts. Artists debated the would-be markers of their national identity. They wanted to portray this spiritual ideal through an appropriate signifier in their art to preserve the unity of form and spirit, the would-be identity marker has to be an element of a special value for the American people. It also needs to have a consistent presence across the country's geography and history. Ralph W. Emerson suggests that, if the British culture is defined by its art, literature, music, and architecture; America has its natural legacy (qtd.in Campanella, 2003). He gives the example of the Niagara Falls, Lake George, The White Mountains, The Connecticut, and The Mississippi (ibid). Other American artists suggest the indigenous elm tree; it "has been so dominant" in the work of American artists who sought to speak for their Americanness "that few depictions of the region in literature and the arts failed to account for [it]" (p. 06). This nationalist artistic project was especially carried out by the Romantics, who did not only portray "*the beauty, [and] grandeur ... of the American elm*" but also "struggled to capture ... its *symbolism* and to *fathom its grip on the native imagination*" (p. 74; emphasis added). Campanella (2003) mentions the etchings of the village greens by John Warner Barber, the lithographs of Currier and Ives, and the sentimental photographs of Samuel Chamberlain which repeatedly feature the elm tree in visual arts; in literature, on the other hand, he gives the example of foreign and local writers like Henry David Thoreau, Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry James, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edith Wharton and Eugene O'Neill.

Through the employment of a suitable symbol, the American Romantic artists (and Durand) succeeded in conveying the intended spiritual message through their art. Campanella argues that they helped "forging a fresh identity for the young republic," and also contributed to the environmental awakening in the Jacksonian period (ibid). It is significant to notice also the artist-art relationship here. The American Romantics' representation of the elm springs from an inner necessity, which is the expression of one's national identity. Also important is the order of spiritual content and physical natural object in their work: the painters' initial concern is the expression of their sense of belonging to their natural space, after that comes the choice of a concrete symbol to represent this idea (the elm tree) and the two are in total harmony. These criteria add to the reasons why Moore pays homage to the American Romantic tradition and their moral values in her ekphrasis "The Camperdown Elm", of which Durand is a part.

#### *E. Moore's Attitude Towards Durand's Symbolic Use of the Elm Tree*

Although not directly indicated in the poem's text, Moore's estimation of the elm tree in Durand's painting is based on its cultural symbolism, which is its spiritual significance; in addition to its naturalness and exquisiteness that is, physical beauty. This painting is known for its naturalist status as the most iconic American landscape painting (Peck, 2005). This iconicity is credited to the Americans' "own formulations about nature and culture in that era" in which the elm tree, among other natural elements, holds a very special place as a national symbol (ibid). Moore is no exception to this critical opinion which was popular among the audience of "Kindred Spirits". The historical context of "The Camperdown Elm" indicates that she has noticed the cultural symbolism underneath the elm tree in Durand's painting, and made use of it in this ekphrasis piece accordingly.

Moore has written "The Camperdown Elm" in the late twentieth century, a time when American elms were on their way to extinction. The government, environmental activists, and critics around the country were fighting a tough war to save this precious species from the danger of eradication. In the chapter of "Boulevard of Broken Trees", Campanella (2003) specifies four threats that were gradually leading the American elm heritage to extinction: 1) trees removal within the project of streets modernizations beginning in 1860s, 2) Dutch elm disease beginning 1931, 3) The Great Hurricane of 1938, 4) The Second World War which diverted the "manpower and resources being used to fight Dutch elm disease... to combat the rise of fascism in Europe and Asia" (p. 158-159). Moore (1958) tells an anecdote of the weeping elm at New York City's park which was infected by the Dutch elm disease:

The Bartlett tree-cavity specialist saw it  
and thrust his arm the whole length of the hollowness  
of its torso and there were six small cavities also.  
Props are needed and tree-food. It is still leafing;  
still there; mortal though. (p. 243)

This anecdote is no special case, it is a miniature of the larger scenario of the eradication of elm trees from the American landscape that spanned the twentieth century.

Moore received M.M. Graff's call to save this elm tree when almost a century has passed since the American elms were first being endangered; the American government's efforts and finance were already worn out and new priorities came to the surface. Moore wrote her ekphrastic poem "The Camperdown Elm" to revive the national program of elm tree rescue. To strengthen her environmental and cultural plea, Moore opens her poem by associating the sick elm tree at the park to the culturally symbolic elm in Durand's painting:

I think, in connection with this weeping elm,  
of "Kindred Spirits." (ibid)

Then, she starts describing the scene portrayed in it. Recalling this particular painting here is an attestation to the elm's cultural value, and a reminder for the government and citizens of its predicament. Nardi (2001) makes clear that "Moore exalts the historical relevance of the park, focusing on a specific tree that becomes a symbol of the American



cultural past ...which must be preserved" (p. 46). This tree, Moore (1958) argues, is different from any other tree; it is not

lindens,  
maples and sycamores, oaks and the Paris  
street-tree, the horse-chestnut. (p. 243)

This is a tree that must be saved because it has its roots deep into the American cultural identity, art and literature since the early nineteenth century, not only its soil and geographical space. Moore concludes her poem by insisting on the need to save the park's elm tree.

#### F. Other Art Principles Displayed in "The Camperdown Elm"

Linked to the principle of the spiritual value of natural elements in art, is art's utility. In Moore's art (and poetic) ideology, art has always got a role to play: in other words, beauty has a function as well. This can be either an actual (physical) function or a spiritual one. Unlike in "The Camperdown Elm", this idea is directly addressed in her other ekphrasis work, "The Pangolin" and "An Egyptian Pulled a Glass Bottle in the Shape of Fish", among others. In "The Camperdown Elm", it is not clear at the poem's surface that Moore has employed Durand's painting for environmental purposes, but it is indeed the case. Thanks to the use she makes of this painting that she could finally appeal to her audience and bring financial aid for the rescue of the elm tree at Prospect Park at "a time when New York City and Brooklyn were caving in financially" (Olson, 2011, p. 18). This particular poem came to be remembered as a poem that "provides a strong paradigm for eco-activist poetics" (p. 16). It is also important to notice here that Moore has used the painting, whether intentionally or unintentionally, for another purpose: the concrete display of her art ideology; that is, all the principles discussed above. Yet, this ideological purpose had to be explained through language in order to direct the reader/viewer's focus to specific notions in the painting to the exclusion of others.

The role played by Durand's painting in "The Camperdown Elm" is partly granted by art's timelessness, in the display of Moore's art ideology and supporting her environmental quest as well. This is a trait Moore highly appreciates and emphasizes in her article "Tedium and Integrity" and ekphrasis piece "No Swan So Fine" among other works. In "The Camperdown Elm", Durand's painting "Kindred Spirits" is regarded as a cultural archive that can be used time and again to speak of nation's cultural heritage, and also of the Romantic tradition's art principles which are too close to Moore's multi-perspectival art ideology. Its utility is not limited to the time in which it was painted, nor that in which Moore has written her poem; it is fit for all times. When the elm trees would finally be driven into to extinction as a consequence of the natural and political calamities befalling it, its representation in American art will persist, and together with it its symbolism of a nation's natural outlook and cultural heritage at a certain time. It would similarly stand by as a monument of American Romanticism.

### III. CONCLUSION

The contribution of this study is to continue the discussion that Heffernan has concerning the ideological denotations of ekphrasis. After a theoretical demonstration of ekphrasis-art ideology relationship, deduced mainly from Heffernan's work, the study sets out to analyze art ideology that is envisioned in Moore's poem "The Camperdown Elm". It arrives at the conclusion that the proposal of art ideology's relevance to ekphrasis is validated because Moore's character of the art critic clearly pronounced in her prose – *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore* and "Tedium and Integrity" – is also exhibited in her ekphrasis, though indirectly as befits the norms of poetry. Her prose shows her as an amateur art critic with a multi-perspectival art ideology, yet a clearly defined one. The principles of her art ideology are attentively respected in her critique of Durand's "Kindred Spirits" in this poem; in nowhere we could find an art principle in this ekphrasis which is not strongly supported in Moore's other prose and verse. Her role in this ekphrastic piece meets that of an art critic as defined by Heffernan: she assays the visual artist, the art piece, and the object(s) represented in it. Ekphrasis is found to be indeed the literary practice of art criticism; and as such, it exhibits a certain art ideology, environmental preservation and man's wholeness, which the work allows and the ekphrast identifies with.

The art ideology displayed by Moore in "The Camperdown Elm" plays a crucial role in shaping the poem's environmental theme. As it has been demonstrated in this article, the success of Moore's call to save the vanishing elm tree is credited first of all to her evocation of the tree's cultural symbolism through Durand's painting. It is also credited to her reference to the Romantic school of art and poetry as the authority in matters concerning the environment, and for man's affinity with nature. Visual art principles are, therefore, for the ekphrast and the reader as relevant as literary principles. An adequate understanding of an ekphrasis poem requires an attentive listening to the art critic within it, not just the poet.

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