

## Ekphrasis, Intertextuality and the Reader in Poems by Francisco Brines and Claudio Rodríguez

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The most general conception of intertextuality (that espoused by Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva) holds that this term "designates the relations between any text . . . and the sum of knowledge, the potentially infinite network of codes and signifying practices that allows it to have meaning" (Prince 46). Yet Jonathan Culler discerns a discrepancy between this general conception and its practical application. In his view specifying "the other discourses identifiable in and behind a discourse" (*Pursuit* 106) causes one to focus myopically on individual allusions at the expense of a more panoramic awareness of the linguistic, poetic and conceptual traditions at work in the language of the text. He concludes that "the concept of intertextuality leads the critic who wishes to work with it to concentrate on cases that put in question the general theory" (106–07).

Ekphrasis, the verbal representation of visual art, proffers a unique variety of intertextuality, for the visual text brings with it a corpus of artistic, literary and critical texts that amend our reading.<sup>1</sup> In order to plumb this idea further, I shall examine poems by Francisco Brines and Claudio Rodríguez (major figures of the second generation of post-Civil War Spanish poets) that begin with the observation of a painting.<sup>2</sup> In "Museo de la Academia" Brines evokes a depiction of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, while in "Hilando" Rodríguez concentrates on the major figure in Velázquez's *The Spinners*.<sup>3</sup> Each poet achieves diverse effects with a different handling of the respective paintings, yet both come to surprisingly similar conclusions with regard to the poetic act. Both recognize the indeterminacy of language, the interrelationship between art and life (see Debicki, *Poesía* 43–48), and the poem as epistemological and ontological construct.<sup>4</sup> Because of ekphrasis, each poem highlights the metapoetic dimension of the text and the reader's role in its actualization.<sup>5</sup> But these

poems also demonstrate that some intertexts import specific and limited information to the text, whereas others attract an overwhelming abundance of information. This distinction allows us not only to question the apparent contradiction between the general and practical conceptions of intertextuality but to deconstruct it.

At first, "Museo" appears to epitomize the way in which the first part of Brines's poems determines the context for reading the second part (see Debicki, *Poetry*). Metaphor and metonymy govern the poem by establishing a tension between its two stanzas. The first stanza involves the use of metaphor to posit a comparison between the speaker of the poem and St. Sebastian. In the second stanza the speaker participates in a contiguous scene—a metonymic variation of the martyr's experience. The *topos* of the martyr who attains everlasting life by giving up earthly life affords the initial insights into the tensions and reversals (peripeteias) that pervade the poem. The interaction between the two stanzas in "Museo" points to the central theme of the poem—a paradoxical conflict between becoming and being—and reveals the nature of the poem as both product and process.<sup>6</sup> "Museo" presents an ambivalent, enigmatic view of participation in the creative act.

In the first stanza the poet sets forth a metaphorical comparison between the speaker and the martyr.

(*Pintor italiano*)

- Atan sus manos, con un lienzo de hilo  
 le cubren la cintura; torso de oro,  
 feliz, hermoso, para quienes miran.  
 Está flechado el cuerpo, huele a rosas
- 5 la sala, está la luz abierta al cielo,  
 y el pintor se recrea en el martirio  
 de las finas saetas. Envidió  
 la hermosura, con él no fue la vida  
 complaciente, fue inextinguible hoguera.
- 10 Perdura aquí su sueño, la fatiga  
 de tanto ardiente amor; y el santo asciende,  
 volando al cielo va, danzan sus piernas,  
 une su cuerpo al viento. (Brines 187)

("[*Italian painter*] They tie his hands, with a loincloth / they cover his waist; golden torso, / happy, beautiful, for those who

look. / The body is pierced with arrows, the room / smells of roses, the light is open to the sky, / and the painter revels in the martyrdom / of the fine arrows. He envied / beauty, with him life was not / complacent, it was an inextinguishable bonfire. / His dream endures here, the fatigue / of so much burning love; and the saint ascends, / he goes flying to heaven, his legs dance, / he joins his body to the wind.”)

The very concept of metaphor embodies a paradox in that an awareness of the difference between the two elements being compared is concomitant with their suggested similarity (Lodge 75). Throughout the first stanza an interaction between the speaker and the painting brings out the similarities and differences between the speaker and the martyr. This comparison could also be expressed in terms of identification and distance as the speaker views the martyr through the perspective of the painter.<sup>7</sup> Brines postulates the metaphorical tension between speaker and martyr in the poem's language. In the first six verses the present tense and the sensorial description of the martyr's body contrast with the phrases “para quienes miran,” “la sala” and “el pintor.” The former techniques create a sense of immediacy that unites speaker and martyr, whereas the latter phrases create a frame (Culler, *On Deconstruction* 193–99) that calls attention to the speaker's separation from the painting and his distance from the martyr.

Changes in the verbs in vv. 7–9 continue the metaphoric comparison. A switch to the past tense creates temporal distance, while ambiguity concerning the subject of the verbs sets up parallel relationships between the saint, the painter and the speaker. At the same time that this ambiguity unites painter and martyr in their original metaphorical relationship, it sets the speaker apart from them and accentuates his metaphorical relationship with them. The final verses of the stanza (10–13) representationally describe the iconic depiction of the martyr's soul ascending to Heaven but metaphorically refer to the affective experience provided by the work of art. A constant tension between speaker and martyr—a metaphorical comparison that entails both similarities and differences, identification and distance—characterizes this first stanza.

In addition to this tension in the metaphor, the initial instances of reversal appear.<sup>8</sup> For example, since the speaker delays mention of the arrows until v. 4, he creates ambiguity concerning the identity of

the martyr. This “figure-ground” reversal is contrary to our natural focus when viewing the painting. Another curious ambiguity arises in the syntax in vv. 6–7. The use of the preposition “de” makes it seem that the arrows suffer the martyrdom rather than the saint. Ashamed of their function in the martyr’s suffering, these negatively-marked instruments for the martyr’s pain become sympathetic participants. One could argue that these reversals manifest the similarities and differences of the metaphorical relationships between speaker, painter and martyr or that they emphasize the paradox of the martyr’s experience. But these are the first in a series of reversals that eventually have a profound influence on our reading of the text.

The first stanza embodies a fundamental tension inherent in metaphor. The speaker has accomplished a metaphorical identification with the martyr through the painter’s perspective, making the painter and his painting the “vehicle” or “medium” for the speaker’s participation in the paradox of the martyr. The fixing of this metaphorical comparison is essential for reading the second stanza where the focus shifts from the painter and the painting to the poet and the poem.

- La sala se oscurece, la mirada  
15 tarda más en llegar, pierden vigor  
los hombros del desnudo, quedo solo.  
Ya en la calle, la última luz del sol  
se precipita en los tejados, pasan  
conversando los vivos, las palomas  
20 vuelan abiertas, y el verano deja  
caer, desde un balcón, muchos geranios.  
El cansancio se aleja, y en los ojos  
se agrupan las estrellas con sus fuegos,  
y en su misterio el pecho se conforta.

(“The room grows dark, sight / takes longer to arrive, the shoulders of the nude / lose vigor, I am alone. / Now in the street, the last light of day / falls on the rooftops, the living pass / conversing, open doves / fly, and summer lets / many geraniums fall from a balcony. / Exhaustion departs, and in one’s eyes / the stars with their fires gather, / and in their mystery one’s heart receives comfort.”)

If the first stanza posits the metaphorical comparison of speaker and martyr, the second presents the reduction of that experience through the use of metonymy.<sup>9</sup> To dramatize the effect of the speaker's experience with the painting, the poet now has him enter a new scene.<sup>10</sup> The reduction of the speaker's experience with the painting occurs in the first three verses of the second stanza. After his vivid participation in the experience of the martyr, the speaker's intensity fades, and he separates himself from the painting when he says "quedo solo." But that experience now forms part of his identity, and he carries it with him as he confronts a new scene. His encounter with external reality ("Ya en la calle") represents a metonymical dramatization of the martyr's experience. Now, instead of viewing the painting, the speaker views his anecdotal reality and undergoes an experience similar to that of the martyr.

A reversal in the intertext suggests an additional theme. According to legend, the emperor Diocletian ordered his archers to execute Sebastian because of his public encouragement of other martyrs and his persistent efforts to spread Christianity. Surprising as it may seem, St. Sebastian did not die of the wounds he received from the arrows. When his fellow Christians went to retrieve his body, they discovered that he was still breathing. He subsequently recovered from his wounds and again confronted Diocletian (Bell 237–38, Holweck 890, Tabor 177–78). These incidents reflect the theme of resurrection, resuscitation and revitalization.<sup>11</sup>

When the speaker enters a new scene in the second stanza of "Museo," he too undergoes a revitalization. What might have seemed a quite pedestrian reality—the sun on rooftops, flowers on a balcony—now has a heightened effect. These mimetic items act on the speaker as the arrows that pierced St. Sebastian. They strike him as if propelled, producing in him a sublime pain. The overdetermined language used to describe this new perception of reality (e.g., the personification of the summer) re-creates a process of resuscitation and revitalization as the speaker comes into contact with his anecdotal reality. The re-creation of the martyr's experience in this new context is a metonymical substitution for the previous scene (see Culler, *Pursuit* 216 and Lodge 99).

Just as metaphor establishes the comparison between the speaker and the martyr in the first stanza, so metonymy reveals the effect of that perception as the speaker encounters other scenes. The

speaker's participation in the martyr's experience makes him more sentient when he looks at ordinary reality. Each new scene becomes a metonymical representation of the paradox of the martyr, presenting fresh insights and new perspectives that define and give identity to the observer/participant. Metonymy allows us to perceive the speaker's revitalization in the poetic act because of the perspective he has adopted. We can deduce that participation in the creative act has the effect of confirming our being and providing us with identity.

The change of context also causes a dislocation of the relationships of the poem. The noticeable presence of a first-person speaker in the phrase "quedo solo" not only indicates that the reduction of the martyr's experience is complete, but has the further effect of separating the reader from the speaker.<sup>12</sup> The overdetermined language calls attention to the fact that we are reading a poem, defamiliarizing the poem itself and creating a frame—similar to the frame around a painting—that separates the reader from the speaker and the poem.<sup>13</sup> As the speaker asserts his presence in the first person and becomes the recipient of the sensations from his surroundings, he paradoxically effaces himself and becomes the vehicle between the poem and the reader.

In the first stanza the painter and his painting serve as a vehicle for communicating the martyr's paradoxical experience to the speaker. By appreciating the *topos* of the martyr through the painter's point of view, the speaker assumes an "active" role even though he is only contemplating the painting (cf. Jiménez, *Cinco poetas* 406, *Diez años* 201–02). His act of contemplation determines a metaphoric equivalence with the martyr. When in the second stanza he uses overdetermined language to describe his anecdotal reality, he becomes the "passive" vehicle or the perspective through which the reader experiences the poetic reality. In the act of communication—whether visually in the painting or verbally in the poem *or* in the critic's rewriting of the poem—a reduction occurs, and painter, poet or critic becomes the link between the text and the audience.

Because this dislocative process redefines his/her relationship with the speaker and the text, the reader must reconsider the interaction between the two stanzas. In the second stanza the reader has a metaphorical relationship with the poem, like that of the speaker with the painting in the first stanza. Also, if one considers the stanzas retrospectively instead of consecutively, the second stanza becomes a metaphoric equivalent of the first since it entails a comparison

based on both similarities and differences. Likewise, the metaphoric scheme of the first stanza can be seen as one in a series of experiences—all metonymical variations of the paradox of the martyr—converting it into metonymy. The dislocation of perspectives has blurred the distinction between metaphor and metonymy in both stanzas.<sup>14</sup> We now perceive these tropes as supplements to one another. In a concise definition of Derrida's term, Culler explains, "The supplement is an inessential extra, added to something complete in itself, but the supplement is added in order to complete, to compensate for a lack in what was supposed to be complete in itself" (*On Deconstruction* 103).<sup>15</sup> The presence of one trope indicates the absence of its counterpart and evokes its simultaneous and contradictory presence.

The concept of supplementarity and the series of reversals unite and culminate in the final verse of the poem. We usually think of humans as intimidated by the distance, timelessness and grandeur of the stars; but here the admitted "mystery" of the stars has a soothing effect. This reversal momentarily takes the reader aback for it seems to negate the tension found in the paradox of the martyr, in the reversal in the intertext, in the use of metaphor and metonymy, in the interrelationship between the two stanzas, and in the series of reversals. All that tension and yet the speaker says "el pecho se conforta"! This assertion magnifies the similarities and differences between the speaker and the reader's experiences in the second stanza and exerts a peripeteic force that compels the reader to seek the absent supplement.

As we have already noted with regard to the speaker, participation in the poetic act shapes and defines our identity. By determining the perspective that gives meaning to representational reality, the communicative act (whether in painting, film, music, poetry or any other art, including the critical act) confirms our essence and makes us aware of our identity as sentient human beings. But each time we come in contact with a new experience, our identity changes slightly. Each new experience not only revitalizes us but represents one in a series of permutations that alter our identity. This situation keeps us in a constant state of flux, making our identity and existence unstable, creating anguish rather than comfort and a constant need to seek additional experiences for reaffirmation (cf. Bradford, "Lenguaje" 643–44 and Jiménez, *Diez años* 179–80).

The nature of the poem itself evinces another manifestation of this duality. Any poem presents two contradictory aspects simul-

taneously. Although it is a "work of art"—that is, a predetermined number of words arranged in a predetermined order, framed by the margins of the page and the cover of the book (Culler, *On Deconstruction* 197)—its nature changes with each new reader and each new reading. The poem is therefore both static and dynamic, fixed and unstable, product and process, a literary artifact and an evolving text. A dialogic perspective obtains that encompasses both becoming and being as simultaneous supplements, each evoking the presence of its counterpart.<sup>16</sup>

While the first part of Brines's poems usually provides a context for reading the second part (as Debicki astutely observes), in this poem we must also acknowledge that the notion of supplementarity illuminates a new tension between the two stanzas—a tension that is retrospective and synchronic as well as consecutive and diachronic. The use of metaphor and metonymy in "Museo" does establish the means for the first stanza to lead into the second; but it also plays one stanza off against the other.<sup>17</sup> The tropes prohibit a unidirectional, univocal reading of the text. "Museo" creates an ambivalent, paradoxical view of participation in the creative act, simultaneously affirming and subverting its own and our identity, producing both ecstasy and anguish (cf. Nantell 416–17). Our awareness of this paradoxical view originates in Brines's use of ekphrasis.

In "Hilando" Claudio Rodríguez also describes a painting and sets up a tension between the poem's two stanzas to produce an enigmatic outcome with regard to the poetic act. The process of Rodríguez's poem—derived in large part from a variant approach to ekphrasis—is quite different from Brines's. While metaphor and metonymy act as the governing principles in Brines's poem, synecdoche plays the major role in Rodríguez's.<sup>18</sup> Through allusions to the painting, classical myth and his own poetry, Rodríguez overwhelms the reader with intertextual information. The dialogic perspective that emerges so stealthily and surprisingly from the peripeteias in "Museo" is present from the beginning of "Hilando." Even though his sententious dialogic comment in the first verse delimits a frame, Rodríguez subsequently expunges the boundary between the poem and the reader in contrast to the tensive effect Brines achieves by strategically reminding us of its presence. The similarities and differences evinced by these two approaches to ekphrasis enable us to plumb even further the notion of intertextuality.

The intertextual allusions in the first stanza of "Hilando" define

the potential of language as a means of knowing. As the parenthetical note after the title indicates, the speaker of “Hilando” observes Velázquez’s *The Spinners* —also known as *The Fable of Arachne*— focusing his attention on “the dominant figure” (López-Rey 109), “the finest and most pleasing figure in the work” (Beruete 114).<sup>19</sup> Even though he describes only this figure, the trope of synecdoche invokes the entire painting and incorporates much of its richness and complexity into the poem.<sup>20</sup>

(*La hilandera, de espaldas, del cuadro de Velázquez*)

- Tanta serenidad es ya dolor.  
 Junto a la luz del aire  
 la camisa ya es música, y está recién lavada,  
 aclarada,  
 5 bien ceñida al escorzo  
 risueño y torneado de la espalda,  
 con su feraz cosecha,  
 con el amanecer nunca tardío  
 de la ropa y la obra. Este es el campo  
 10 del milagro: helo aquí,  
 en el alba del brazo,  
 en el destello de estas manos, tan acariciadoras  
 devanando la lana,  
 el hilo y el ovillo,  
 15 y la nuca sin miedo, cantando su viveza,  
 y el pelo muy castaño  
 tan bien trenzado,  
 con su moño y su cinta;  
 y la falda segura, sin pliegues, color jugo de acacia.  
 (Rodríguez 230)

(“[*The spinner, with her back turned, from Velázquez’s painting*]  
 So much serenity is already pain. / Next to the light of the air / her  
 blouse is already music and it is freshly washed, / brightened, /  
 tightly fitted to the smiling and well-turned / foreshortening of her  
 back, / with its plentiful harvest, / with the never tardy dawn / of  
 her clothing and her work. This is the field / of miracles: here it is,  
 / in the sunrise of her arm, / in the flash of these hands, so  
 caressing / in winding the wool, / the thread and the skein, / and  
 the fearless nape of her neck, singing its liveliness, / and her very

chestnutcolored hair / braided so well, / and rolled with its ribbon;  
/ and the sure skirt, without wrinkles, the color of acacia juice.”)

Our fascination with *Las hilanderas* is due in great part to the different perspectives brought into play by its mythological content, the principal myth being that of Arachne (see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI). The correlation between the foreground and the alcove in the painting is integral to its effect “both compositionally and in the interpretation of the subject” (Harris 159) and has pointed implications for the poem. Many commentators believe that these two scenes portray different moments of the central myth (see Brown 143–44, Cavallius 161 and López-Rey 107). The contrasts between them cause Madlyn Kahr to state, “Velázquez used space here to emphasize a counterpoint between the demands of life and the gratifications of art. . . . The realm of art transcends labor and craftsmanship, but it is supported by them” (210; also see López-Rey 107–08). Gustav Cavallius goes even further, describing the scene in the alcove as a daydream or revelation, an ideal world envisioned by the dominant figure. This vision could refer to either the past or the future, a childhood remembrance or a projection of future events, both of which conflict with the mundane present (Cavallius 156; cf. Mudrovic, “Time and Reality”). The two scenes set forth a conflict between tedious labor and aesthetic experience, between pedestrian reality and myth, between transience and transcendence.

The tapestry hanging on the back wall of the alcove has been identified as an allusion to Titian’s *Rape of Europa* (see Brown 142, Cavallius 174 and Harris 159). Like the myth of Arachne, this myth also entails a metamorphosis, but it presents a different point of view (the divine vs. the human).<sup>21</sup> In this text within a text within a text (Titian’s painting within Velázquez’s painting within Rodríguez’s poem)—illustrating the synecdoche in force—a dialogic conflict is manifest. In accord with this conflict commentators agree that the scene in the alcove remains problematical, engendering a “curious disjunction” with the foreground (Kahr 209; also see Cavallius and López-Rey 108). This disjunction mirrors a comparable relationship between the two stanzas of the poem.

Intertextual allusions to Rodríguez’s own poetry further enrich the text. A few examples will demonstrate their effect. The description of the figure’s “camisa” (vv. 3–4) recalls the washerwoman and the spiritual renewal in “A mi ropa tendida” (“To My Clothes Hung

Out to Dry"; see Mudrovic, "Dialogic Perspective" 157). By isolating the word "aclorada" in v. 4, the poet also calls attention to synchronic variations of the word "claro" in his poetry. Clarity has been a major motif in Rodríguez's work since his very first poem, which Martha Miller has definitively associated with the metapoetic dimension ("Elementos metapoéticos"). It is significant that Clara is the name of the poet's wife, for that adds yet another synecdochic layer to the figure in "Hilando." This marginal layer causes us to question to what extent knowledge of the poet's biography should influence the reading of the poem. Here autobiographical allusions inform the transient, anecdotal level; but they also reflect the legend of Penelope, the faithful wife who wove and unwove a tapestry, and the *topos* of the poet and his beloved, implying a more universal, symbolic level of meaning. Vague suggestions of autobiographical information appear in other passages of "Hilando."

The word "cosecha" (v. 7) provides another important allusion. A memorable use of this image occurs in "Girasol" ("Sunflower") in which the poet equates the sunflower with a pregnant woman. Planting and harvest are images of writing, further indication of the metapoetic aspect. When the speaker's gaze falls on the figure's "pelo muy castaño / . . . con su moño y su cinta" (vv. 16 and 18), his words echo the female figure in "Un suceso" ("An Event") who represents the poetic muse and the transcendent experience of art.<sup>22</sup> Through synecdoche the intertextual allusions to Rodríguez's poetry manifest the dialogic conflict, support the metapoetic aspect and bring to light underpinnings of autobiographical information.

This intertextual richness culminates in the perception of another highly significant myth. The words "escorzo" and "torneado" (vv. 5–6), taken from the lexicon of the plastic arts, not only reinforce the figure's metapoetic qualities but also create a sense of three-dimensional depth. Along with the chiaroscuro of the "camisa," the illusion of movement is another major characteristic of the painting that the poet includes in his description of the spinner's hand (v. 12; see Brown 142). Because of these ekphrastic elements, this figure violates the boundaries of the two-dimensional canvas and comes to life (Mudrovic, "Time and Reality" 131) as "her opulent figure breaks free from the shadows of the workshop" (López-Rey 109). The poem thus presents us with a rewriting of the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea.<sup>23</sup> The multifarious levels generated by the ekphrasis and by allusions to classical myths and Rodríguez's poetry interconnect with

one another and weave the fabric of the text. In the process the spinner comes to life, violating the frame and integrating the world of the text with that of the participant.

This confluence shifts the focus to the reader, who until now has remained on the periphery of the experience. The active intervention of the reader becomes crucial in the last verse of the first stanza and in the cryptic second stanza of “Hilando”—precisely at the moment the spinner comes to life. On reading v. 19, the reader may wonder why the speaker mentions the skirt last. How does that add to the figure’s characterization? And what is the significance of its color? Cavallius (163) speculates that the form of the skirt implies pregnancy—another indication of the metapoetic aspect and perhaps an oblique autobiographical allusion. Even so, the color of the skirt is still an enigma. Its unusual color in Velázquez’s painting is captured in the indeterminacy of the language Rodríguez uses to describe it: “color jugo de acacia.” This phrase puzzles the reader because retrieval of the intertext (if one exists) is blocked.<sup>24</sup> The inaccessibility of this verse prefigures the hermetic nature of the final stanza, where a gradual draining of intertextual meaning impoverishes the text and compels the reader to address other facets of the language.

- 20 Con la velocidad del cielo ido,  
con el taller, con  
el ritmo de las mareas de las calles,  
está aquí, sin mentira,  
con un amor tan mudo y con retorno,  
25 con su celebración y con su servidumbre.

(“With the speed of the vanished sky, / with the workshop, with / the tidal rhythm of the streets, / she is here, without lies, / with a love so mute and with return, / with her celebration and with her servitude.”)<sup>25</sup>

This stanza consists of seven prepositional phrases beginning with “con.” In the midst of these phrases v. 23 stands out because of its difference from the others. The ambiguity of the subject of the verb phrase “está aquí” and the duplicity of the double negative “sin mentira” suggest a similarity between this verse and v. 19. Both function as turning points or pivots juxtaposing two sides of a balance. Because of the lack of symmetry, it would be more accurate to

describe these as balances thrown out of balance or moments of transition between one state of being and another.

On either side of the balance other pivotal phrases destabilize the stanza even more. Only two of the nouns in this stanza readily lend themselves to intertextual interpretation. The word "taller" alludes to the workshop in *The Spinners* but also recalls the tension between the representational and symbolic levels contained in the description of an ordinary workday in Rodríguez's "Alto jornal" ("High Pay"), another poem with metapoetic implications (Mudrovic, "Dialogic Perspective" 157–59). In contrast, the effect of the allusion in "celebración" is much weaker. This is the only instance of this word in *El vuelo de la celebración* except for the title. By evoking the title in its entirety, a duality in "vuelo" transfers to "celebración" in this context (see Martha Miller, "Linguistic Skepticism" 107).<sup>26</sup> But since the meaning of "celebración" is borrowed, transferred through allusion and contiguity, its impact is delayed and indirect, imbuing the sign with a hollow, vacuous quality. These pivotal phrases destabilize the ending of the poem. The lack of intertextual referents gradually drains the text of meaning, forcing the reader to take a more decisive part in its actualization.<sup>27</sup>

The disjunction between the two stanzas undermines the text and reveals its indeterminacy. Looking at the first stanza in retrospect, the reader discerns two things happening at once: even as the description of the spinner brings her to life, the various intertextual perspectives and the details that define her also fragment and destroy her, so that the text unravels at the same time that it is woven together. The contrast between the two stanzas reveals both the potential and the failure of language and of the text in its entirety (see Martha Miller, "Linguistic Skepticism").

This disjunction also brings to the fore the reciprocal relationship of text and participant. Even though the work of art is capable of bestowing transcendent experience, it is also an artifact, subject to the same temporal limitations as the participant. While it contains the potential for transcendent experience, it wants a participant to realize its capacity, to actualize it. Likewise, the participant cannot achieve transcendence without being engaged in the text as a dynamic, catalytic force (cf. Mudrovic, "Dialogic Perspective" 162). Ironically, when the language is rich in intertextual allusions as it is in the first stanza, the reader tends to remain on the periphery. The allusions limit the reader's role to recognition and revelation of the

intertextual meaning. But if the reader does nothing more than bring a collection of sterile, pedantic facts to bear on the text, both remain unfulfilled. When the intertext is unknown or when intertextual meaning is bled from the language as happens in the second stanza, the reader must take a more definitive role in actualizing the poem's meaning. The reader's attempt to come to grips with the problematic and disconcerting aspects of the text determines a reciprocal relationship between them, a delicate, uncertain balance between the transience and transcendence inherent in both, making reader and text dialogic supplements of one another.

In "Museo de la Academia" Brines emphasizes the reader's role in actualizing the text by divorcing the reader from it. He defamiliarizes the world of the poem and makes the reader aware of separation from it by means of a frame. Rodríguez does quite the opposite in "Hilando." By expunging the frame and merging the world of the poem with that of the reader, he involves the latter directly in the text. It is necessary, however, to deconstruct this apparent opposition. Even though Brines calls attention to the presence of the frame, that device in no way interferes with our experience of the speaker's anecdotal scene and its aesthetic effect. We willingly and eagerly "suspend disbelief" at the same time that we are aware of the separating frame. Similarly, in spite of the merging of the world of the poem with that of the reader brought about by the rewriting of the myth of Galatea in "Hilando," the frame does not disappear entirely. Its purported dissolution only forces us to recognize its presence more emphatically because of its suppression. These poems make us aware of the reciprocity between the reader and the text and attest to the indispensability of the reader's active intervention if the poem is to be more than a mere artifact.

Although it is hazardous to extrapolate definitive conclusions on the basis of just two poems, "Museo" and "Hilando" allow us to hypothesize about ekphrasis and its relationship to intertextuality. The variant approaches to ekphrasis in these two poems strongly remind one of the contradiction between the general and practical conceptions of intertextuality. In some texts intertextual allusions are more limited and specific; they evoke a finite number of characteristics that dovetail neatly with other aspects of the text. "Museo" exemplifies this type of intertextuality. The allusions in Brines's poem produce a repetition of the aesthetic experience, a metonymic chaining wherein each re-production entails a slight alteration of the

previous one. Other texts lead to one allusion after another, so that the accumulation of material seems almost endless. Rodríguez's use of intertextual allusions precipitates a proliferation of texts, a burgeoning in which each synecdochic representation emphasizes different aspects of the experience. To deconstruct this apparent opposition, once again we can apply the concept of supplementarity. If we accept the idea that tropes blur into one another and if we admit the simultaneous presence and absence of the frame, we must also concede that the general and practical acceptations of intertextuality mutually include and exclude each other. Because of the ekphrastic principle—illustrated in these poems by major figures of post-War Spanish poetry—I advance the hypothesis that these conceptions of intertextuality are dialogic supplements of one another.

## NOTES

1. Bergmann (1–2) provides a cogent discussion of the term “ekphrasis,” as does Persin, who also touches on intertextuality in “Ekphrastic Principle” (919).
2. The group to which Brines and Rodríguez belong is also called “the generation of 1956–1971,” “the generation of the 50s,” “the Rodríguez-Brines generation,” “la promoción de los 50,” and “la generación etilica” (a facetious reference to the alcoholism that afflicts many of these poets), among other rubrics. For a discussion of the concept of generations in post-War Spanish poetry, see Debicki, *Poetry* 14–18.
3. “Museo de la Academia” (“Museum of the Academy”) appears in *Palabras a la oscuridad* (*Words to the Darkness* [1966]), while “Hilando” (“Spinning”) is from *El vuelo de la celebración* (*The Flight of Celebration* [1976]). I will place information concerning the editions I have used in parentheses following each quote. All translations from the Spanish are mine.

A version of the first part of this article was presented at the Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Language and Literature—LA CHISPA in New Orleans, LA (February 1989) under the title “Metapoetic Implications of the Painting as Intertext in Francisco Brines's ‘Museo de la Academia.’” A version of the second part was presented at the Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature (November 1989) under the title “Visual Poetry: Claudio Rodríguez's ‘Hilando.’”

4. Several commentators (e.g., Debicki, *Poetry* and Persin, *Recent Spanish Poetry*) have discussed the poem as a means of knowing in the second generation of post-War Spanish poets, basing their discussion largely on the poets' comments in Francisco Ribes's anthology *Poesía última*.
5. See Debicki *Poetry*, Mangini González, Martha Miller “Elementos

metapoéticos," Persin *Recent Spanish Poetry* and Persin et al., among others, for recent discussions of the metapoetic dimension in Spanish poetry.

6. Persin has remarked the interrelationship between the existential question and the poetic experience in Brines's poetry in *Recent Spanish Poetry* 46–47, 51 and "Sexual Politics" 87. She has also discussed the concept of the poem as process in "José Angel Valente."

7. Burke explains, "Metaphor is a device for seeing something *in terms of* something else. . . . If we employ the word 'character' as a general term for whatever can be thought of as distinct . . . then we could say that metaphor tells us something about one character as considered from the point of view of another character" (503–04).

8. Bousoño ("Prólogo" 46) has called these reversals "rupturas del sistema," while Amusco has defined them as "la superposición significacional inversa" (60–63). Persin (*Recent Spanish Poetry* 58, 60) also mentions reversals in her discussion of the second half of *Insistencias en Luzbel* (*Insistences on Lucifer* [1977]).

While preparing this study I was struck by the many similarities between "Museo" and *Insistencias*. This work also has a bipartite structure whose two sections have similar subtitles ("Insistencias en Luzbel" and "Insistencias en el engaño" ["Insistences on the Deceit"]). Benson has noted that the poems of the first section rely on "the central myths of Western civilization" for their intertext, while those of the second section are more anecdotal in nature (318–19). He has also mentioned an opposition between these two sections (319–20), similar to the "binary opposition" between the two stanzas of "Museo."

9. Burke asserts that "reduction" is a synonym for "metonymy" and that "The basic 'strategy' of metonymy is . . . to convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible" (506).

10. As Burke explains, the poet "knows that human relations require actions, which are *dramatizations*, and that the essential medium of drama is the posturing, tonalizing body placed in a material scene" (506–07).

11. Villena (218) and Bradford ("Dialectic" 8), among others, have defined the same theme in *Insistencias*.

12. Bousoño ("Prólogo" 173ff.) has noted the concept of "distanciamiento" in Brines's poetry, and Bradford ("El lenguaje" 645) has stated that there is an abyss between poet and reader just as large as the gap between the poet and the aspect of himself revealed in the poem. These gaps are evident in the "desdoblamiento" (doubling of the self) of the speaker in the first stanza and in the rupture between the speaker and the reader that occurs in the second stanza of "Museo."

13. Debicki (*Poetry*) stresses the use of defamiliarization in Brines's poetry. For a discussion of defamiliarization, see Shklovsky.

14. In dealing with these two tropes Lodge warns us that "it must always be remem-

bered that we are not discussing a distinction between two mutually exclusive types of discourse, but a distinction based on dominance" (111).

15. Nantell has made a seminal contribution to the study of Brines's poetry by linking it with Heraclitus in her discussion of *Aún no* (*Not Yet* [1971]). Her comments imply the concept of supplementarity, but instead of seeking an "ultimate unity of symbolic opposites" (414), I view these opposites as supplements of one another. Indeterminacy, ambivalence and ambiguity rather than synthesis and unity are the result of this supplmentarity, as illustrated by the use of metaphor and metonymy in "Museo."

Jiménez's statement that "en la poesía de Brines la mirada emocional y la mirada reflexiva se corrigen recíprocamente" (see *Cinco poetas* 425–432) also embodies the concept of supplementarity and the reciprocal interaction between the two elements placed in juxtaposition. Other readers have noted the tensions between contradictory elements in Brines's poems (see for example Amusco 54, Bradford, "Dialectic" and "Lenguaje" 643–44, 648, Cano 9, Defarge 519, Jiménez, *Diez años* 181, and Villena 214–15) but have not explored how the concept of supplementarity influences our perception of these tensions and how it ultimately determines the poem's effect.

16. Hillis Miller gives a lucid description of a dialogic perspective in his essay "Ariachne's Broken Woof." Speaking of the confluence of two myths in the word "Ariachne" in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, he asserts that "Troilus's speech is an exploration . . . of the metaphysical implications of the possibility of dialogue," a dialogue being "two different languages [that] struggle for domination within a single mind" (49). Both "Museo" and "Hilando" (see below) contain a dialogic perspective. In Brines's poem this perspective emerges as we discover the reversals and recognize the blurring of the tropes and the nature of the text as both product and process.

17. In "Dialectic" (2) Bradford makes a similar statement about the interaction between the first and second sections of *Insistencias*; also see Benson (319–20).

18. Burke asserts that "the four tropes [metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony] shade into one another. Give a [person] but one of them, tell him to exploit its possibilities and if he is thorough in doing so, he will come upon the other three" (503). Certainly, metaphor and metonymy are not absent from "Hilando" (nor synecdoche and irony from "Museo"); again we appeal to Lodge's "distinction based on dominance" (see note 14 above).

19. Cirlot provides insight into several facets of this figure and her activity. "Weaving," he notes, "represents, basically, creation and life, and particularly the latter in so far as it denotes accumulation and multiplication or growth . . ." (369). Under the heading "Fairies" (which include spinners and weavers) he says, "Their nature is contradictory: they fulfill humble tasks, yet possess extraordinary powers. . . . Their powers, however, are not simply magical, but are rather the sudden revelation of latent possibilities. . . . In a more traditional sense, fairies are, objectively, spinners of

thread like the Parcae. . . . Fairies are, in short, personifications of stages in development in the spiritual life. . . . They are prone to sudden and complete transformations . . ." (101). He also states that "Spinning—like singing—is equivalent to bringing forth and fostering life . . ." (305).

Several of these characteristics pertain to the central figure in "Hilando." They stress her metapoetic properties, including the act of singing (see v. 15 of the poem) and refer to the concept of metamorphosis. Cavallius (165) also mentions the three Fates (Parcae) in his discussion of the three major figures in the foreground of the painting. The act of weaving is a significant aspect of the myth and the painting which adds to our appreciation of the poem. Synecdochically encompassing all the arts, weaving brings the self-referential nature of the poem to light: the word "text" comes from the Latin "texere" meaning "to weave" (*Webster's* 1888).

20. As Burke notes, "representation (synecdoche) stresses a *relationship* or *connectedness* between two sides of an equation, a connectedness that, like a road, extends in either direction, from quantity to quality or from quality to quantity . . ." (509).

21. Metamorphosis entails both "(a) a change of form, shape, structure, or substance; a transformation, especially by magic or sorcery" and "(b) the form resulting from such a change" (*Webster's* 1132). This definition coincides with the dialogic conflict and the concept of the poem as both product and process. Even the survival of myths in and of themselves expresses this duality: myths still hold attraction and meaning for us, though we no longer hold the same beliefs that led to their creation.

22. The following verses remind one of the description of the spinner:

La novedad de este suceso, de esta  
muchacha, casi niña pero de ojos  
bien sazonados ya y de carne a punto  
de miel, de andar menudo, con su moño  
castaño claro, su tobillo hendido  
tan armoniosamente, con su airoso  
pecho que me deslumbra más que nada  
la lengua. . . . (Rodríguez 167)

("The novelty of this event, of this / girl, almost a child but with eyes / already very expressive and flesh on the verge / of honey, with her small step, with her clear / chestnut-colored bun, her ankle shaped / so harmoniously, with her angry / chest that dazzles my tongue / more than anything. . . .")

My colleague Margarita Pillado-Miller has told me that the poet's wife wears her hair in this style (personal communication), another indication of the autobiographical level which functions so clandestinely and enigmatically in "Hilando."

23. Commentators of *The Spinners* have made similar statements about this figure; see esp. P. de Madrazo's statement quoted in Beruete (114–15). Cavallius also mentions the painting's "implications with respect to our own physical location and person," causing "an 'extension' of the context into ourselves" (171).
24. Michael Riffaterre addresses this issue:

The fact that [the reader] is unable to decipher the hypogram of reference immediately does affect the content of his reactions, but not his perception of the grid of ungrammatical or nonsense phrases. They function as buoys marking the positions of a sunken meaning. If retrieval is blocked, this denial of the reader's right to language as communication is not taken lying down. The reader looks elsewhere for a meaning, as well as for the reason why the text is playing tricks with language. (136)

25. I have used the feminine pronouns to facilitate the translation of this passage, but this usage is controvertible. In all likelihood the subject of these verses is the spinner, the focus of the entire poem. But is she the figure in the painting brought to life by the speaker or the one in the poem brought to life by the reader or a combination of both? Or is she perhaps the speaker's beloved, a part of his anecdotal world (Mudrovic, "Time and Reality")? The subject could also be the painting or the poem *qua* transient objects or the possibility for aesthetic experience and transcendence contained in each.
26. Rodríguez's enigmatic comments on the title of his book emphasize the dualities found throughout the poem and the entire collection:

*The Flight of Celebration*, title of my fourth book. To celebrate that which is opened or that which is closed from all the vital possibilities: the shape of things, the power of the sensations that can lead to abundance or drought. It is like an 'animation', that re-creates, transiently, that which overtakes us and directs us, and polishes us, and improves us. Celebration as knowledge and as regret. (20–21)

27. Rodríguez's explanation of the final word, "servidumbre" ("servitude") stresses its vacuity and the need for synchronic extensions: "Celebration as knowledge and as regret. As servitude, giving to that word its most clairvoyant meaning: human destiny, with all its adjectives" (21). Rodríguez has used this word in *Alianza*, but it still does not lend itself *readily* to intertextual interpretation. It first appears in "Lluvia y gracia" ("Rain and Grace"; 155) as an attribute of the rain—a symbol of purification—modified by the adjective "sencilla" ("simple"). It next appears in the last verse of the third section of "Oda a la niñez" ("Ode to Childhood"), where its use is paradoxical: "Amo que es servidumbre, bridas que nos hermanan" ("Master who is servitude, reins

that make us brothers"; 190). Rodríguez then uses it twice in "Oda a la hospitalidad" ("Ode to Hospitality"). First he links it with "fundación," the only words in the last verse of section I (193). (Federico Campbell mentions that Tomás Segovia discusses these words; 230.) It appears again in section III where it picks up meaning from the context.

. . . y la libertad cabe  
en una humilde mano hospitalaria  
quizá dolida y trémula  
mas fundadora y fiel, tendida en servidumbre  
y en confianza, no en  
sumisión o dominio. (194)

("... and freedom fits / in a humble, hospitable hand / perhaps pained and tremulous / but founding and faithful, extended in servitude / and in confidence, not in / submission or dominance.")

But notice that the adjectives that precede it refer to "mano," making their effect indirect like the effect of "celebración" in "Hilando," while the nouns define it synchronically. As a result, "servidumbre" remains elusive and enigmatic, forcing the reader to determine its meaning through synchronic comparisons with other words.

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