"Remarks on Poetry as compared with painting and Sculpture," New Monthly Magazine, 10 (1824), 157-61

[illegible]
While the sorrow and pain that [illegible] his brain
[illegible]
But the [illegible] love's flame
[illegible]
Will [illegible] like [illegible] envy,
[illegible]
[illegible] many a tear
[illegible]
[illegible] her chamber-door
Calls her page to her couch's side.—

"My eyes overflow, haste, my dear page, go
To Gazul the Moorish knight,
Say Zelinda will wait at her garden-gate
At the hour of pale moonlight.—
Yet stay—oh, no!—yes, my good page, go."—
Then she call'd him back as fast,
As her pride prevail'd, and love's impulse fail'd,
But she sent him away at last.

The moon slept sweet on San Lucar's street,
And the trembling stars were bright,
When the lover stole to the maid of his soul,
Through the shades of that lovely night.
To the gate he is come where the page stands dumb
With the [illegible] in his hand;
He has [illegible] his mistress fair,
The star of Granada's land.
Zelinda blush'd, [illegible]
At the [illegible] of her pride and scorn,
And the Moor look'd down as he fear'd a frown
Might wither his hopes new-born.
A [illegible] would
[illegible]
Then the knight in his arms lock'd his mistress' charms,
In his bosom's [illegible]
"By our prophet! I swear, my Zelinda fair,
(Said the knight when his silence broke)
[illegible]

In the [illegible]
On the knight the maiden [illegible]
They told her tale more than words avail,
And the [illegible] within her [illegible]—
"Go, Gazul, go to the tourney's [illegible],
Thy [illegible] I'll [illegible] for thee,
Lest men should say that my fault to-day
Robb'd thy arm of a victory."
[illegible]
Like [illegible] in the [illegible] sky,
And [illegible]
In their [illegible]
To Gelves he went to the [illegible],
With his [illegible]—
Could he fear a blow from the boldest foe,
When Love was his armour there?

REMARKS ON POETRY AS COMPARED WITH PAINTING AND SCULPTURE.

The received opinion, that every well-described poem must also furnish a good subject for the artist in painting or sculpture, and that the representation of the two latter is the [illegible] of the poet's merit, so far at least as the artist is able to follow the poet in all the features of the poem, requires some limitation, even where the sphere of both is considered as [illegible]. For poetry [illegible] [illegible]

latter is a loud expression of the former; and it was justly observed, even by the ancient critics, that though the works of both produce a similar effect on our fancy, yet they are dissimilar both in their productions, and in their manner of imitating nature.

The limited nature of Painting and Sculpture compared with Poetry.

The boundaries which the ancients have fixed to the productions of art, are:—1. Beautiful objects, so as to exclude from its efforts the mere pleasure to be produced by a true imitation only, when the object represented is not pleasing on account of the beauty of its form. To this strict rule the Greek artists particularly adhered. They, moreover, condemned every effort to represent a likeness by exaggerating the ugly parts of the original; in other words, they condemned caricature. To represent beauty in all its forms was the chief rule of the Greek artists, with but few exceptions. The general characteristic in the painting and sculpture of the Greeks is, according to Mr. Winkelman, a graceful *naïveté* and a solemn grandeur, both in the attitude and expression of the objects represented. As the depth of the sea remains continually calm amidst the rage which reigns on its surface, in the same manner does the expression in the statues of the Greeks, under the dominion of the passions, exhibit a great and steady soul.

2. The distinguishing boundaries of art, in comparison with poetry, were, with the Greeks in particular,—never to represent the extreme expression of the various passions, but always to confine their imitations of them to some degrees lower, and to leave it to the imagination of the beholder [illegible]. Those degrees of the various passions which manifest themselves by an awkward distortion of the face, and which cause the whole body to assume such a posture, that the beautiful lines, by which the human figure is circumscribed, are lost, were either not represented at all, or at least, some fainter exhibition of these passions were fixed upon by the Greek painter or sculptor. Rage and despair are never represented in their masterpieces; and it may be said, that they never depicted a fury. They lowered indignation to mere earnestness. According to their poets, it is the indignant Jupiter who slings the lightning, but their artists represent him as merely grave. Lamentation was softened into sorrow, [illegible] and where this softening could not be effected, as in the picture of Timanthes, representing the sacrificing of Iphigenia, in [illegible] is depicted in the faces of the [illegible] which must have expressed [illegible] in order [illegible] have [illegible] the covering of the father's face, far [illegible] a prudent step of the [illegible] of a father on such an occasion [illegible] should be rather con[illegible] of beauty, in only depict[illegible] could be maintained; but [illegible] the rules of beauty, repre[illegible] [illegible] aforesaid limits in their [illegible] imitation to all visible [illegible] beautiful form but a small part; and have conceived that as nature itself generally sacrifices beauty

to higher purposes, in like manner must the artist allow beauty of form to yield to expression and truth; and never follow beauty farther, but rest satisfied that in realising the latter, he has made a deformed object of nature a handsome one of art. But even allowing these ideas to remain undisputed, still the artist must in some measure be restricted in representing the expressions of the mind, and never fix upon the highest degree of expression in any human action. The reason for this is as obvious as it is indisputable; for as the artist can imitate nature, which is ever changing, in one of her single moments only, and even that single moment [illegible] by the painter only from one point of view; therefore, if both the sculptor and the painter [illegible] performances to be [illegible] but to be repeatedly contemplated, and to be reflected upon for a long interval of time, it must be obvious, that the single moment, and the single point of view of that single moment, in the imitation of the catastrophe, can never be chosen too prolific for the fancy of the observer, and that that image alone can be considered as such which leaves ample scope for the imagination. The more the beholder sees, the more he must be able to add to the parts of the object represented; the more he fancies, the more must he imagine to find in the work.

But in considering any effect whatever, in all its various degrees, we shall not find one single moment less favourable in effecting the former object, as when the utmost extreme of such an effect is [illegible] presented; for beyond that is nothing more, and to shew to the eye the uttermost is to clip the wings of the observer's fancy, and to force the imagination to occupy itself with weaker images beneath the representation, as it is impossible for it to overreach the [illegible] produced on the senses by the representation; the perceivable [illegible] of which the imagination dislikes. When the sculptor represents Laocoon as sighing, our imagination is able to hear him crying out; had he represented him as crying out, the imagination would not be able to advance a step higher, or to descend lower, without changing the whole into an uninteresting scene. Our fancy would then either hear him but sobbing, or perceive him already dead. [illegible] Further, as the single moment of the effect obtains by the representation of the artist an immutable durability, it is certain that [illegible] [illegible] from representing Laocoon as crying out, although it might not [illegible]

[illegible] have injured the beauty of the form, and it would be the same if it had been allowed to the artist to express a state of suffering without a beautiful form. [illegible]

Among the ancient painters Timomachus seems to have best chosen the moment of the utmost effect in his representations. His raving Ajax, his infanticide Medea, were much admired paintings. He represented them so that the observer had to imagine the utmost, but not to behold it; he chose such moments as we do not necessarily connect with the idea of being of but transitory duration. He represents the Medea, not in that moment when she actually murders her children, but [illegible] previous to the murder, at a time when motherly love still struggles with jealousy. The artist makes us but anticipate the [illegible] and our imagination outstretches every thing which the painter could have exhibited to us relating to that horrible [illegible]. But so far from blaming the painter for representing Medea so [illegible] in a moment when the struggle is undecided, we [illegible] it would have remained so in the real occurrence, that the combat of the passions had either remained undetermined, or at least had [illegible] sufficiently long for time to subdue her rage, and at length insure a victory to maternal feelings. As to his Ajax, Timomachus does not represent him when he is raging, but sitting down, exhausted after having performed his mad deeds, and forming the design to kill himself. [illegible] this is really the raging Ajax, not because we see him in a [illegible], but because we perceive that he has raged, because we are [illegible] with the magnitude of his previous rage, which we con[illegible] from the being now driven to despair by shame, of which he [illegible] to be sensible [illegible] as we perceive the [illegible] by the wrecks and corpses which are thrown on the [illegible]

[illegible]

and thus unites them in one description; whereas the artist is obliged to divide them into so many different representations. Owing to this succession of moments in the event he describes, the poet is able to soften some of the less agreeable ones, either by some subsequent or antecedent effects, so that the whole will produce the best impression. When, for instance, we read in Virgil that Laocoon cries out when bitten by the serpents, although it may be considered unbecoming for a man to cry out in the agony of pain, [illegible] person whom the poet has previously caused us to admire as [illegible] patriot and a tender father, we do not attribute his crying out to his mental weakness, but solely to his insupportable sufferings. If it has been proved to be just in the painter not to represent his Laocoon as crying out, still it should be considered justifiable in the poet so to describe him.

Another distinction between the poet and the artist is that the artist ought not to represent his images as covered with garments, and to this rule we find that the ancients adhered. For instance, the poet describes his Laocoon as clothed with a pontifical dress, but the artist represents him as naked. The reason for this deviation in the latter is obvious; for though it may be considered as contrary to the rules of costume to represent the son of a king, who was also a priest, as undressed, yet no garment wrought by slavish hands can possess so much beauty as the work of eternal wisdom, expressed in an organized body. [illegible] has given rise to dress, but what has the artist to do with that? Beauty is the highest object for the imitation of art; and although it be agreed [illegible]

[illegible]

Around one glorious Deity!

T. D.