



Landscape Descriptions and Emotional Qualities: Cognitive and Neurological Correlates

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Abstract

This paper further pursues my lifelong fascination with two intriguing issues in-volved in poetic language. First, language is logical and conceptual; but poetry uses it, sometimes, to convey nonlogical and nonconceptual experiences. Secondly, poets frequently solve this paradox by two additional paradoxes: expressing emotions by nonemotional descriptions of the immediate physical environment (mainly, but not exclusively, nature descriptions), and having recourse to deixis in combination with the genitive construction “the ABSTRACT of the CONCRETE”, manipulating the abstract noun into the referring position (abstract nouns are the conceptual tool par excellence, but in certain conditions may generate emotional qualities). This paper presents my attempts during the past decades to account for these paradoxes, first in the vein of New Criticism, then relying on cognitive psy-chology, finally invoking various stages of brain research. The discussion is fo-cussed on two excerpts, by Apollinaire and Wordsworth, describing an exceptionally serene morning in the great city, Paris and London, respectively.

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