

Special Project report

Poetry- reflections on the Mirror

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We will borrow from painting first and call it pattern. Later we will borrow from music and call it rhythm.

- E. M. Forster

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ABSTRACT

This project began with an inquisition into the phenomenon of the methods and processes used in a medium borrowed from another medium. Why are these methods and ideas borrowed? How are they borrowed?

How does it affect the new medium? Do these ideas transform themselves with the material of the new medium? Do they act as brakes or do they help in flourishing. Do these finally end up as adaptation of well-worn methods that come under imitation or mechanical craftsmanship or are they taken forward to a new dimension to suit the material of the new medium? The interdependency and how it would move away and gain its own autonomy.

This project aims at understanding this phenomenon and attempts to answer some of the queries.

METHODOLOGY

Talked to people

Recollected presentations given by linguistic experts

Read books on language criticism

Read poetry

After reading about literature and poetry I realised doing a study of language and poetry is vast and was out of scope. I decided to take a specific case, which could later on be generalised. Study a case where there is intermixing of 2 mediums. The mediums has to be original and well developed. Study both the mediums separately. And see how the intermixing happens.



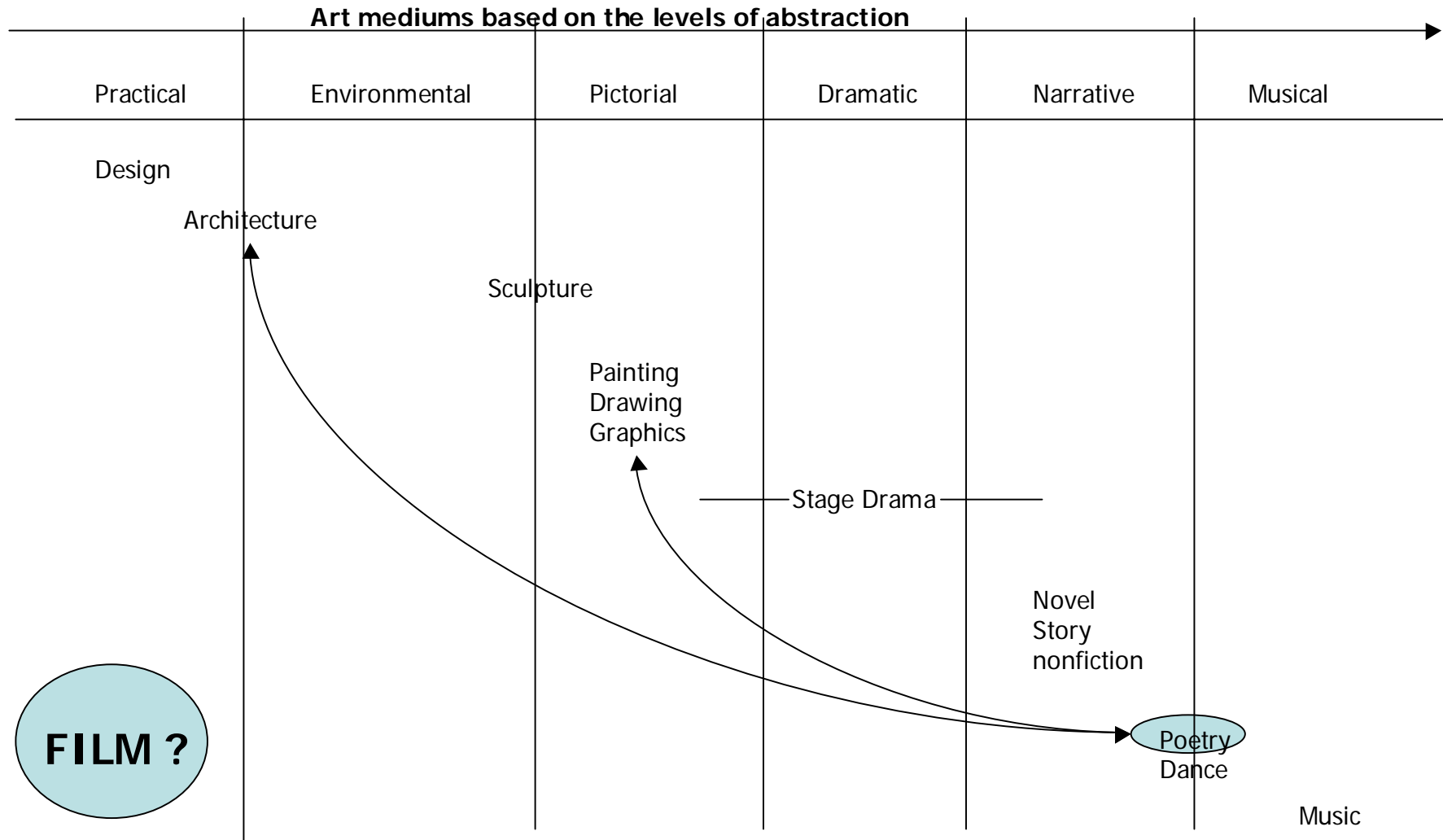
The old pond was still
A frog jumped in the water
And a splash was heard.

THE MEDIUMS OF ART

From the splatter of color on canvas, to the symbols of meaning in a dance form, to that of the ordered beauty of words in poetry. All of them essentially trying to reach out and communicate. Western art, which is free expression, eastern art, which is bound by symbols of meaning, and poetry, which is bound by the structure of language.

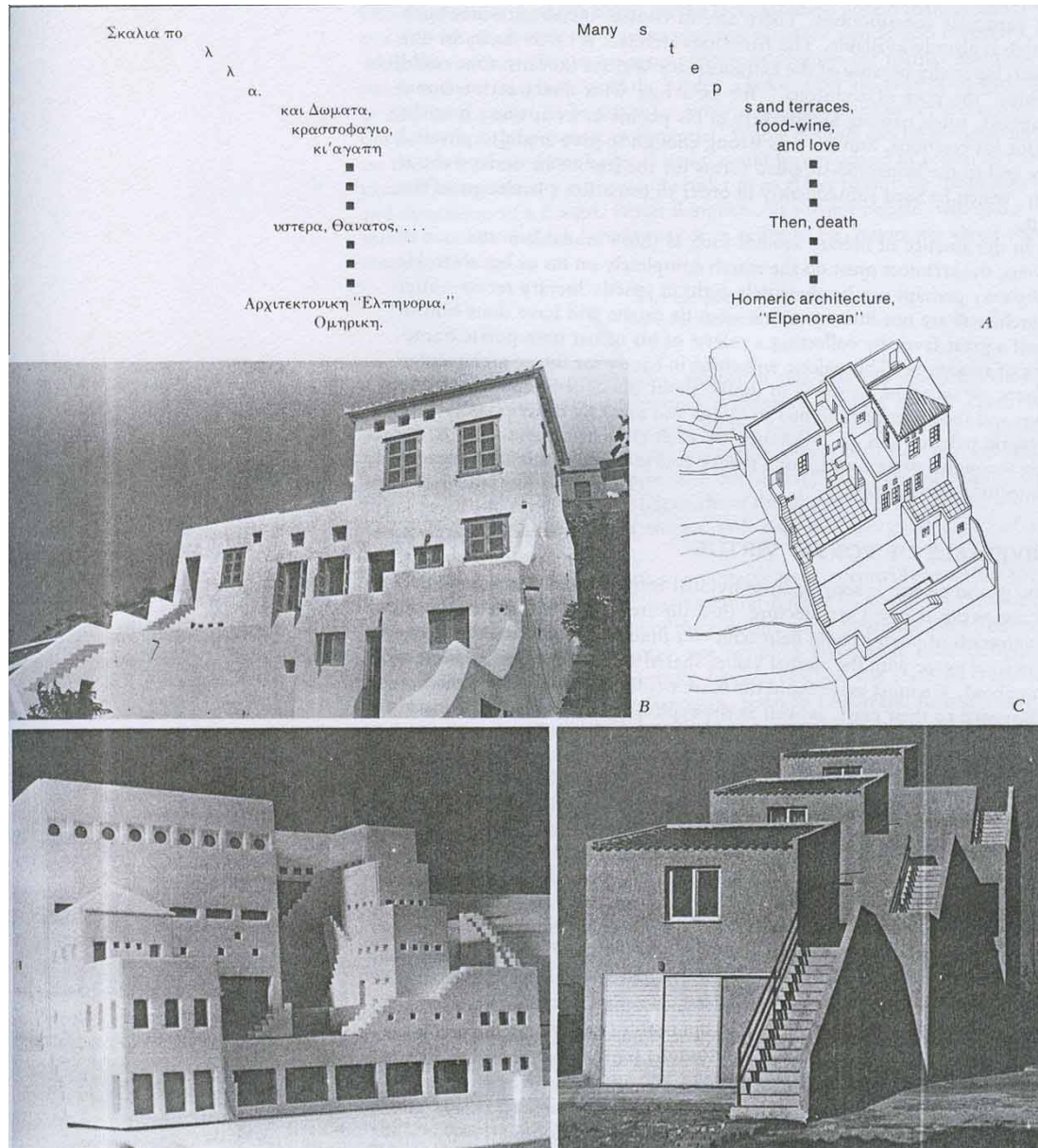
THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF MEDIUMS

The artist discovers a method when he says 'His face became as white as a sheet of paper'. It is purely an artistic creation. And these methods are understood, interpreted and generalised. It could be reused in the same medium or it could be taken forward to another. A nascent medium influenced by the older established medium, fashionable methods of the day are being borrowed by the neighbour arts.



An Art form due to technical invention
 Hanging between art and factory
 Original sin of its genesis in the market place

Include the whole range

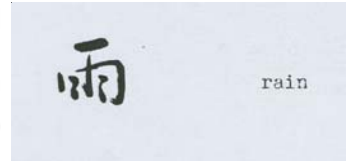
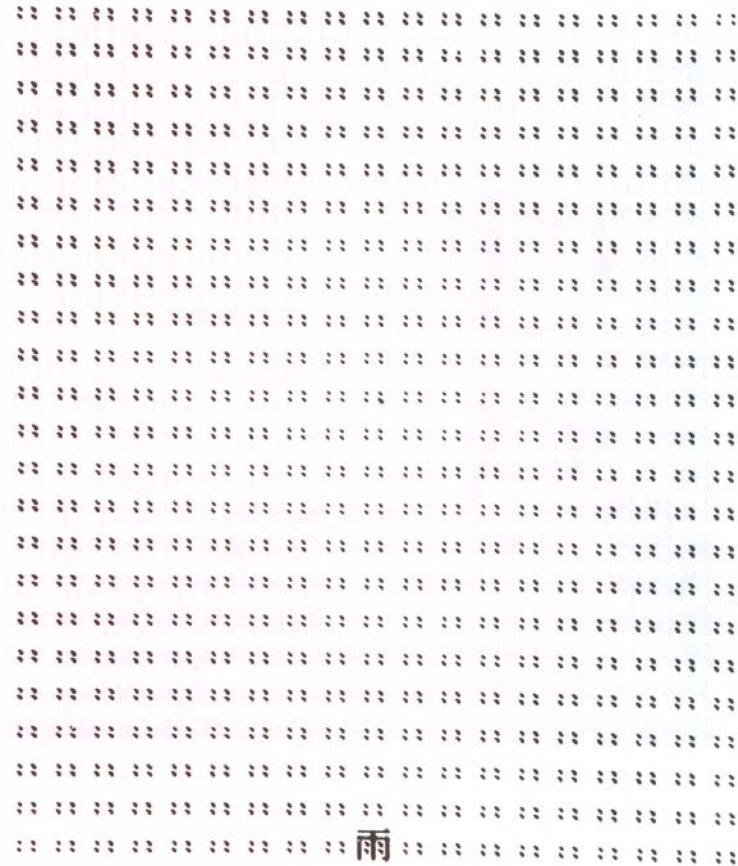


In order to study this I looked at 3 scenarios

Poetry in architecture
Concrete poetry
And poetry in cinema

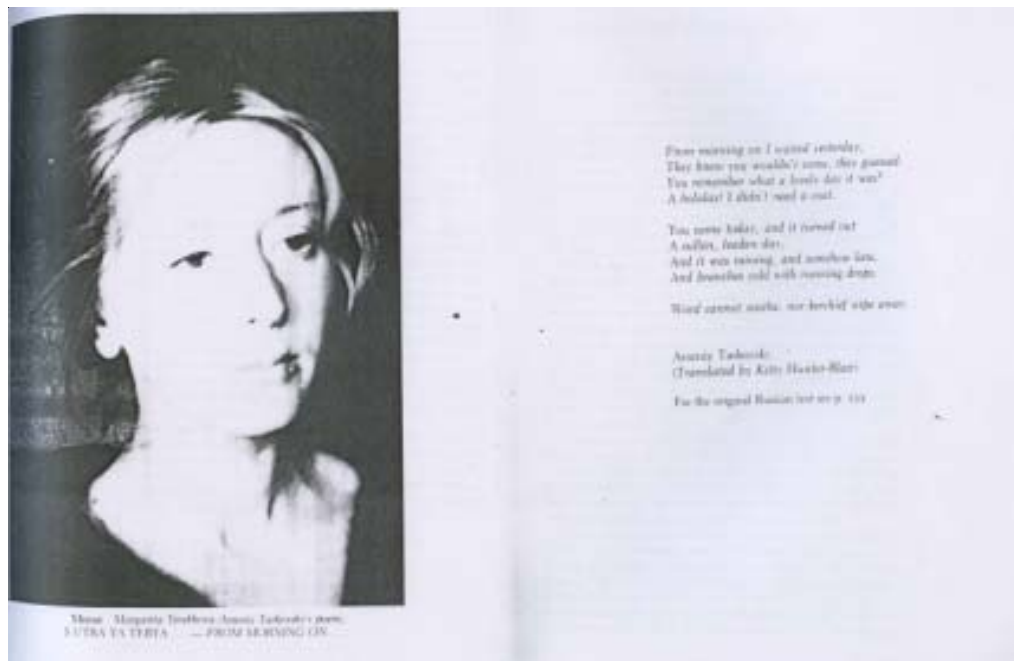
Influence of poetry in architecture

Visual depiction of Elpenorean architecture, an architecture of stairs and stairs, at the cutting edge between celestial sublimity and freedom.



Concrete Poetry The word and the image

Poetry expressed in visual form attaining the dimension of a painting. Here two traditional mediums are brought together to create something of a newer dimension.



Films which originate from poetry
Tarkovsky film Mirror

Poetry in cinema

Cinema, an Art form due to technical invention, the motion camera. Though termed as art, it actually hangs between art and factory. And it has the original sin of its genesis in the market place.

I decided to study poetry in cinema in detail.

The old pond was still
A frog jumped in the water
And a splash was heard.

The Simple observation of life.

Poetry

Poetry began as an Oral tradition usually sung or chanted. It has lot of significance in our lives. It is life itself, as it is derived from life. It is Original and unique. Poetry is open ended which gives a person an experience of mood and emotion. The words which create imagery.

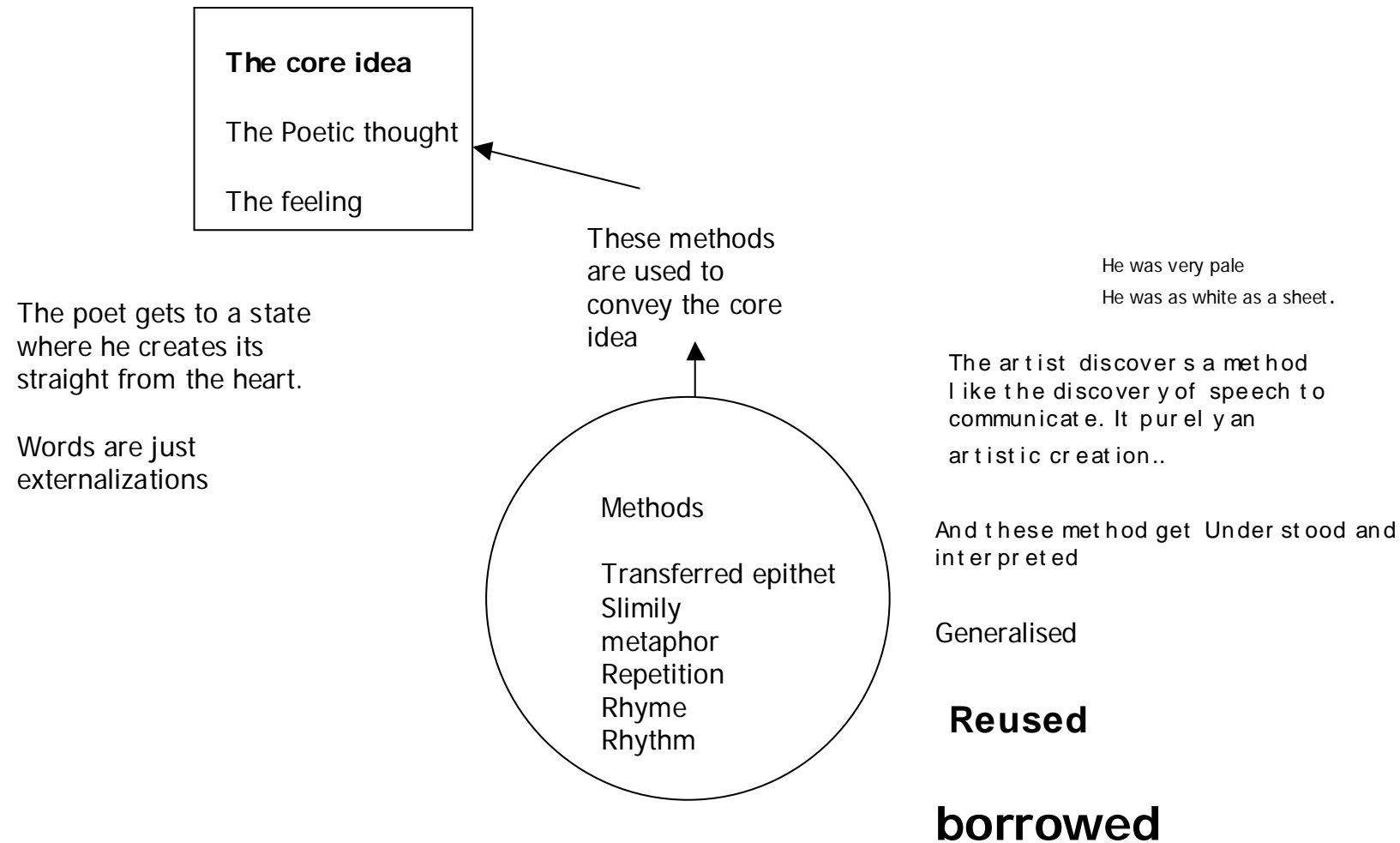
The poetic thought is prime. The artist devices methods to express the thought. The techniques like Repetition, Rhyme / Rhythm, Simile, Metaphor are used to convey the thought.

A definitive discussion of the semantic content of the word would obviously exceed the scope of this project, but perhaps one might take a short cut by referring to the German word for poetry, "Dichtung", which has connotations of compression or density. Haikku poetry is notable in this scenario.

No,not to my house.
That one,pattering umbrella
Went to my neighbour.

Can you feel the loneliness ?

Poetry



Trope

Unusual and illogical ways the codes and signs are bent to produce new unexpected meanings.

Cinema

Cinema is about recreating time. Recording moment of reality. The **element of time** is what separates it from art forms like painting or poetry. It has no enumerated vocabulary, no codified grammar, no specific rules of usage. But there exists system of signs and codes which had been evolved and explored over the time.

Other than the notions of art. Cinema essentially is 'Wish fulfillment' for the viewer. He goes to the theatre to re-live those moments. Cinema



The Mirror

'The mirror', basically a Self-expression. is a mans reflections upon his own life. Direct image of time created by a flux of *thought-images*. It's a real life recollections and habitual memories of the artist himself in relation to his family. The separate episodes are bound together by his father's poetry. The acclaimed Russian poet Arseni Tarkovsky, recites his poetry at intervals.

Poetry in 'Mirror' can be looked at from three views

Inspiration - **How it was inspired by poetry.**

Direct - **How poetry was used in it.**

Poetics - **How cinema itself is poetic**

Inspiration - **How it was inspired by poetry.**



The ideas of immortality expressed in the father's poem -as a continuation of life from generation to generation. The film spans three generations, telescoping them into each other and merging identities in its dense imagery.

The author is viewing himself in the eyes of his own son. In many of the memory episodes the author's son replaces the author himself. The lines written by Tarkovsky's father inspired this poetic thought.

"I only need my immortality for my blood to go on flowing from age to age."



*We celebrated each moment
 of our meetings as a revelation
 Alone in all the world
 You were lighter and bolder bolder than the wing of a bird
 Flying down the stairs two at a time
 Pure giddiness, leading me through moist lilac
 To your domain beyond the looking glass
 When night fell ... I was favoured
 The altar gates were opened
 And in the dark there gleamed
 Your nudity, and I slowly bowed
 Awakening, "be blessed" I said.
 And knew my blessings to be bold
 For you still slept
 The lilac on the table stretched forth
 To touch your lips with heavenly blue
 And your blue tinted lids
 Were calm, and your hand was warm
 Locked in crystal, rivers pulsed
 Mountains smoked, seas glimmered.
 You held a sphere of crystal
 in your hand and slept on a throne
 And righteous Lord! – You were mine
 You awakened and transformed our mundane, human words
 Then did my throat fill with new power
 And give new meaning to 'you'
 Which now meant sovereign.
 All was transformed even such simple things as basin, pitcher
 When like a sentinel layered solid water lay between us
 We were drawn on and on
 Where cities built by magic parted before us like mirages
 Mint carpeted our way .. Birds escorted us
 And fish swam upstream while the sky spend out before us
 And fate followed in our wake
 Like a madman brandishing a razor.*

Direct - How poetry was used in the film.

It is with these beginning shots that Tarkovsky introduces us to the premises of the film.

The poetry recited which was written previously by Tarkovsky's father acts as a good old memory and the present visuals, which are actually in contradiction to what it used to be.

Tarkovsky's father's poetry provides the contextual element between the episodes.

Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic

Coldly shining moon;
Near the ancient monastery
A wolf was howling

The combination of three separate elements creates something different in kind from any of them.

Coldly shining moon;
Near the ancient monastery
A wolf was howling

The simple observation of life.

"poetic reasoning"

Tarkovsky used techniques like simple observation of life, a process of reduction, and a concentration on essentials .

The poetic reasoning manifests itself in many forms: in fewer cuts, in the epigrammatic use of symbols, emblems and metaphors as a means of condensing expression, and even in the elimination of music, condensing various layers of meaning into single images.

Elements like Fire Water and other objects are used for Symbolic meaning.

Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic

“The image is an impression of the truth, a glimpse of the truth permitted to us in our blindness. The incarnate image will be faithful when its articulations are palpably the expression of truth, when they make it unique, singular-as life itself is, even in its simplest manifestations.”

- Andrei Tarkovsky

The poetry of the film lies not in establishing parallels with the iconography of the painting, but in the density of meaning within the images and in the creation of a fabric in which the complex fictional action is interwoven with real life.

- Andrei Tarkovsky



The leaves swaying in the breeze which left a long lasting image in my mind

The Image

Poetry Word after word

Cinema image after image

Both of them create imagery.

Poetic image.

The single act of perception, as with the perception of an object in real life.

An image has an unlimited number of possible interpretations.' A real image is inexhaustible and unlimited in its meaning. 'Through the image is sustained an awareness of the infinite: the eternal within the finite, the spiritual within matter, the limitless given form.' The essence of an image cannot be described in words, because it always incorporates infinity. 'It can be apprehended through art, which makes infinity tangible. The absolute is only attainable through faith and in the creative art.'

Disjunctions and breaks

A group of images jumbled up and thrown at the audience, enables interpretation at different levels. The absence of logical order, enables the viewer to go wild with his own imagination.

Its poetry.
Where words after words...
Lines after lines....
Images one after the other
Which enables interpretation
And then The wholeness ... which finally binds it together.

Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic



The objects

Tarkovsky's films are filled with specific objects and events from his own childhood memories-ceramic milk jugs, lace curtains, children watching a barn burn down in the rain.

Objects convey deeper meanings.



Coins

The son has a moment of déjà vu when he drops a pocketful of coins, saying, "It's like it all happened once." Later in the film, we learn that his father also dropped a handful of coins in a scene in which his grandmother is selling her most precious possession-her earrings-in order to provide food for the family. Tarkovsky uses the simple medium of coins to intimate the bargains and sacrifices we make in our moments of desperation. In making connections from episode to episode.

Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic



Mirrors

Mirrors occupy most of the film space, and often the characters are shot as a reflection on a mirror or speak to one another's mirror image.

Mirrors signify introspection, looking at oneself, since the whole film about Tarkovsky himself.

Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic



The bottle on edge of table
The camera forcefully shows it falling down
The barn burns and worse things are yet to happen. Tarkovsky deliberate attention to simple happenings to signify things of greater importance is noticeable here.



The gust of wind

Elements like wind are used to convey deeper meanings. The man walking away turns back not because of his relationship with the person from whom he is walking away from but merely because the gust of wind made him look back.



Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic



The dream sequence

In the a dream sequence the authors mother is seen to washing her hair in tumbler. She stands up. There water and rubble falling down.

The water flowing on the mirror signifying the passing time.



The levels of abstraction

The episode between Tarkovsky's mother and her colleague is abstracted to that extent that only people with deeper understanding of what a woman to woman relation is, could actually grasp the essence of the episode.

Though I saw this episode plenty of times. I couldn't grasp what was being tried to be conveyed. But a lady who is aware of the intricacies of woman to woman relationship easily got a grasp of what Tarkovsky was trying to say.

Poetic - How cinema itself is poetic

third shot



second shot



first shot

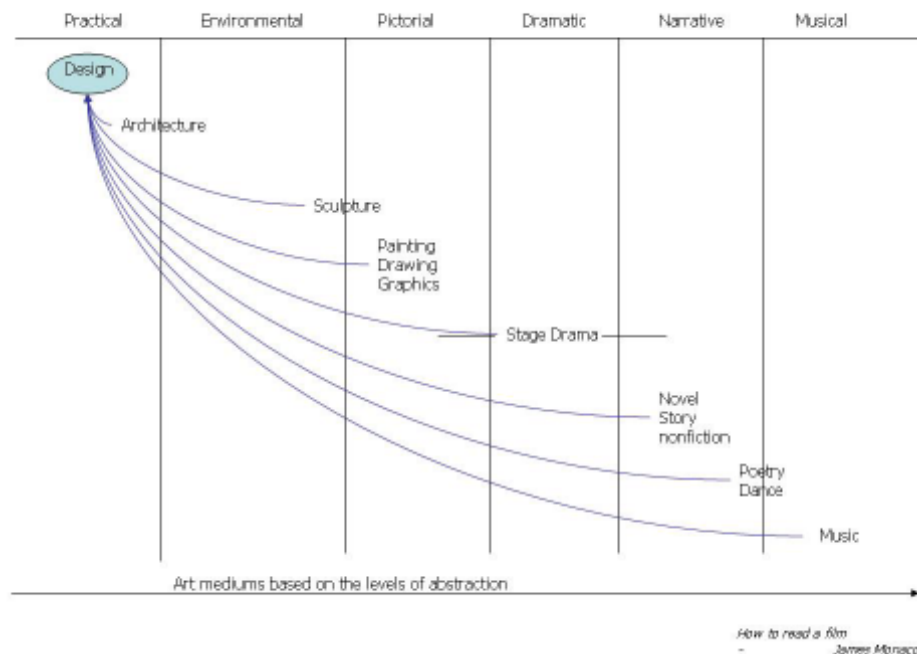


fourth shot

The first shot shows his mother when he was a child, the second shot showing Tarkovsky as a child in his father's arms looking at his mother, third shot spans outward from the Leonardo's picture, the fourth shot showing Tarkovsky's wife.

Leonardo's painting is rich in its ambivalence. The lady in the painting is unique. She has both attractive as well as beautiful qualities on her face.

The intricacies of human relationships is being tried to portray here, Tarkovsky deep feelings about his mother and his wife, both portrayed by the same actress, is being linked with the interpretation of the painting.



Epilogue

This paper could be the beginning point in understanding the phenomenon of borrowing techniques of one medium to another. In Design since we use lot of the terms and techniques like metaphors, which are borrowed from literature. This paper is an attempt that tries to understand how meaningful borrowing of the techniques that was new and original yesterday and prevent them from being stereotyped today.

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