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The Rearrangement of the Text, Images, and Symbols in the Visual Poetry of Bob
Cobbing, Mary Ellen Solt, and Charles Bernstein: A Theoretical, Thematic, and
Technical Study

A thesis

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In spite of the difficulty of giving an accurate definition, visual poetry can be defined as a kind of poetry in which the poet's major concern is to rearrange text, images, and symbols in order to convey the intending meaning of his literary work. Moreover, it is known poetry which is meant to be consciously seen. Visual poetry is also intermedia between poetry and painting. It is a mixture between two different kinds of art. Some scholars considered some visual poems as a kind of de-aestheticizing as they lack the traditional standards of both literature and language. However these poems have a figurative meaning to express a certain philosophy.

The visual poet's major concern is to rearrange text, images, and symbols in order to make his poem seen not read so the visual poet uses certain techniques to visualize the text. According to the techniques used by the visual poet, the study shows that visual poetry can be divided into three types: Concrete Poetry, Visual poetry, and the new form of visual poetry which depends on modern technology such as taking a photo, then commenting on it in a poetic language.

Chapter one attempts at highlighting visual poetry's interrelated and subclass kinds and forms, such as concrete poetry, pattern poetry, minimalism poetry, fluxus poetry and electronic poetry. Chapter two illustrates that visual poetry not only adopted some features of postmodernism, but also it shared some features of what so-called post-postmodernism.

Mary Ellen Solt, Bob Cobbing, and Charles Bernstein are three visual poets, who share some characteristics of visual poetry; however, each of them has his own style, thematic concerns, technique, and special concepts for visual poetry. As visual poets, they wanted to open poetry up to new areas of experience. They created their own poetic world by making their poetry seen, not read. However, it is impossible to categorize any visual poet, according to a certain school of poetry movement, or philosophy, as visual poetry represents overlapped interrelated confusing movements and philosophies. Thus, chapter three tries to discuss and

illustrate the themes and styles and techniques used by the three selected poets.

In an exclusive interview, dedicated to the present study, Charles Bernstein highlights the differences between the overlapped and interrelated terms of visual poetry and the relation between visual and sound poetry. Moreover, he elucidates some controversial points in his poetry, especially in *Veils*, and *The Nude Formalism*.

Thus, the present study attempted to highlight and clarify some controversial points concerning visual poetry. It illustrated its definition, origin, and development. Moreover it casts a shadow on the avant grades movements which made up visual poetry's identity. Furthermore it clarifies the various techniques and themes which are used in the visual poetry of the three selected poets.