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The Role of Image and Imagination in Paul Ricoeur's Metaphor Theory¹

Abstract:

Paul Ricoeur uncovered the creative aspect of language in his theory of metaphor. The metaphor is a special combination of words that as a clash of distant semantic fields forces the reader to interpret the sentence in a new way and see things in a new light. It is a process in which the imagination plays an important role. Ricoeur compares the metaphor to the Kantian schema which is a procedure to provide an image to a concept. The image helps in the process of assimilating distant elements and thus to achieve a new interpretation. To change perspective the suspension of reference (imaginary neutralization) is also needed. The aim of this essay is to analyze the imaginative functions which are operative in the metaphor and look for an answer to the question about the role of the imagination as a productive power as well as a power of internal intuitions.

Keywords:

metaphor, imagination, schema, Ricoeur, Kant

Paul Ricoeur in his analysis of the action of metaphor uncovers the creative and generative aspect of language. This aspect allows language to produce new senses. The work of metaphor refers us to the productive imagination, which creates the procedure for providing an image. The metaphor stimulates the imagination of the reader who travels through memory, which brings out past experiences and images. Above all, metaphor acts as

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a Kantian schema that shows the productive rather than the reproductive aspect of the imagination. Ricoeur's metaphor theory shows how the images are generated and how, in metaphorical process, discursive and sensual dimensions are intertwined. In this way, a metaphor occurs as a linguistic event which takes place between what is verbal and non-verbal. It is a linguistic creation and it works as a script for visualization. An image delivery takes place by organizing perceptions from previous experiences and synthesizing them in new constellations – content of experience.

What is the role of imagination, understood not only as productive power, but also as a wealth of representations, as an impact of visibility? What does it mean that a metaphor works as a schema and combines what is verbal (a sentence) and non-verbal (an image which is delivered)? What is the role of representations in creating sense? It seems that one can distinguish – following Ricoeur – at least four imaginative functions which are operative in a metaphor: 1) the work of providing the images; 2) the ability to see and see “something-as”; 3) the flow of images in the process of assimilation; and 4) imaginary neutralization. The aim of this essay is to analyze these aspects, as they are presented in Ricoeur's theory, and to look for answers to the above-mentioned questions.

Metaphor as a Language Event

Metaphor is a special linguistic composition that goes beyond the exchange of a name, from one thing to another, or a comparison. According to Ricoeur, this is a combination of words, and even more, a clash of distant semantic fields that forces the reader to interpret words in a new way. This view reveals new connections that explain this particular combination of words. It is a special language event because sense, not grounded in the lexical meanings of words, appears only in a given confrontation.

Ricoeur, in his consideration of the metaphor, has two important inspirations: one contemporary and the other classical. First of all, he refers to the semantic concept of metaphor, in particular to the semantic theories represented by Max Black, Ivory Armstrong Richards, and Monroe Beardsley, which accentuate the mutual influence of elements of the phrase or sentence. Second, he refers to Aristotle and the relation of metaphor and similarity, as well as to Kantian philosophy and to the schematic nature of the imagination. In this way, Ricoeur builds a perspective from which he poses the question: what does the procedure of providing an image in a metaphor look like?

The well-known definition of the metaphor is: “the application of an alien name by transference either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion.”² One word or image appears instead of another word, it is loaned from one place and it replaces an absent word in another. There is a transfer and a shift of meaning. This means that a metaphor enforces a certain movement within the established classification boundaries – the name-exchange movement is from genus to species as in definition. The metaphor occurs in the order already created in terms of genus and species, and in the game whose relations – subordination, proportionality or equality of relations – have already been given. At the same time, the metaphor consists in a transgression of this classification order of species and genus by transfer of the names from one to another. Changing the name of the genus to the name of the species and vice versa exceeds the logical structure of language. Ricoeur emphasizes that this is a movement concerning not the name itself, but rather the meaning.³

2) Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Samuel Henry Butcher (New York, London: Macmillan and Company, 1904), 78–79.

3) Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin, John Costello (New York, London: Routledge, 1977), 18.

Metaphor as the application of a name by transference can happen also by analogy – as is said in Aristotle’s definition. It means that metaphor appears between a set of elements that suit each other: the first thing is to the second as a third to a fourth. The Greek philosopher gives the example of an exchange between the goblet of Dionysus and the shield of Ares: “Thus the cup is to Dionysus as the shield to Ares. The cup may, therefore, be called ‘the shield of Dionysus’ and shield ‘the cup of Ares.’”⁴ Thanks to this, you can replace the name of the second thing with the name of the fourth thing, but it happens in a complex relationship, and not only between the two names. Metaphor is – as Ricoeur said – an event that happens in language before it becomes a replaced name.

The metaphorical relationship is based on analogy and is close to a comparison: “the simile also is a metaphor.”⁵ A metaphor presents the polarity of terms compared in a shortened form, thanks to which it is more attractive to a listener and still remains accurate. In this way, the phrase about Achilles “the lion falls” is more persuasive than the sentence “Achilles has fallen like a lion”. What connects the simile and metaphor, and what makes the comparison poetic, is the assimilation of the two elements that allows the names to be transferred.

Transfer and condensation of an expression means understanding a given thing by means of similarity – the use of a metaphor can teach about the possible meaning of a thing: “It is metaphor, therefore, that above all produces this effect; for when Homer calls old age stubble, he teaches us and informs us through the genus: for both have lost their bloom.”⁶ By means of an apt metaphor, one can therefore see something differently than before, and this vision consists in the perception of similarity. Building a metaphor and understanding it is a creative process. The one who creates them has innate talent, so you can say that he is a genius. This cannot be learned, because it is the ability to see something similar in a different way: “... the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius – for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances.”⁷ Due to a metaphor, you can not only exceed the classification order, but it also allows you to create or see new relationships that this classification does not reveal.

Linking (1) the relation of proportions between complex entities together with (2) the ability of a metaphor to transgress the categorical order, and (3) treating similarity as a relationship to be perceived altogether constitutes the basis for grasping the creative potential of metaphor, and opens up a perspective from which one can capture a creative work of language. It is crucial to understand the role of similarity in the creation of a metaphor – the question is: Is a similarity an existing feature that combines two objects and thus allows the creation of this linguistic figure, or rather it can be seen only through metaphor? How does one get the desired, persuasive effect based on the well-known similarity of things? This cannot be obvious similarity, but accurate and original, so that it is effectively persuasive. With regard to Aristotle, Ricoeur asks a rhetorical question: “But what is it to be perceptive of resemblance if not to inaugurate the similarity by bringing together terms that at first seem ‘distant’ then suddenly ‘close’?”⁸ Is the similarity the cause or the result of the transformation taking place in the language? This requires questioning the metaphor production process itself.

In the semantic conceptions of metaphor, the emphasis was shifted from the semantics of a word to the semantics of the sentence. It allows one to reconceptualize the metaphor. Along with this change, metaphor

4) Aristotle, *Poetics*, 79.

5) Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, trans. John Henry Freese (London, New York: William Heinemann, 1926), 367, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.aristotle-art_rhetoric.1926.

6) Ibid.

7) Aristotle, *Poetics*, 87.

8) Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), X.

is not treated as a single word but as a whole phrase, and focused on the process of metaphorizing, not on the effect itself. "Metaphor has to do with the semantics of the sentence before it concerns the semantics of a word."⁹ It has been recognized as a unique prediction method and meaning-making operation.

A metaphor results from the tension that appears in the appropriate expression. This special relationship of terms and meanings has various descriptions (metaphorical carrier and semantic color, frame and source), but the tension of meaning between the elements remains crucial. For example, Max Black calls it "the frame and source": the meaning of the context and the word that focuses the portable meaning. In the sentence quoted by Black, "The chairman ploughed through the discussion" the source is the word "ploughed through", the rest of the sentence constitutes the frame.¹⁰ The mutual influence of the frame and source, thanks to an accurate statement, creates a metaphor: a word is placed in an unusual context that allows its meaning to be broadened or transformed. Black indicates not only the semantic dimension of the metaphor, but also its necessary, pragmatic dimension. The reader can realize dependencies that connect the frame and source due to the appropriate knowledge and network of associations connected with the word. "Ploughed through" in this sentence frame indicates not only the polemical nature of the meeting, but suggests difficulties in its implementation; it points to effort, shows the meeting as both a challenge and a difficult duty (a necessity). This phrase also suggests that conducting the meeting, confronting the arguments and doubts, barely succeeded. It was not a spectacular success, but it was concluded.

The context defines and changes the current meanings of the words so that together they show more than would result from their lexical range. This happens through an unusual combination and an absurd effect. In Ricoeur's example, the "mantle of mourning", a mantle cannot be sadness if it is part of a wardrobe. Thanks to the ambiguity of the word "is", two systems of associations can be combined. Their comparison emphasizes features that can be considered in some respects as common or similar. In such expressions as "Richard is a lion", or "man is a wolf", the words "lion" and "wolf" are auxiliary elements, filters that consist of a grid of meanings. Black calls it a system of banal associations, truisms, corresponding to the doxa sphere, common opinions and opinions.¹¹ Elements from a given grid, which can agree with the associations that align with the main object, are highlighted. Associations typical of the wolf project on the perception of a human being. It is dangerous, it dominates, hunts, competes with others, engenders anxiety, is an endangered species and so forth.

The juxtaposition emphasizes human traits that can be described as wolf-like: "Any human traits that can without undue strain be talked about in 'wolf-language' will be rendered prominent, and any that cannot will be pushed into the background. The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, stresses others – in short, organizes our view of man."¹² In this sense, the metaphor is a filter that selects and highlights the appropriate features, changes the perception of the main subject – organizes the image of a human being. It also introduces an evaluation, showing its object in a given way, emphasizing the appropriate features and offering the possibility of criticizing it, though not necessarily in a direct way. The filter-metaphor forces – in two different association systems – the search for similarities that may appear in a given set and context.

Ricoeur emphasizes the importance of both moments: the negative moment, related to the absurdity and the experience of nonconformity, and the positive, defining the necessity to combine two mutually incompat-

9) Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, preface Ted Klein (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 49.

10) Max Black, "Metaphor," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55 (1954–1955): 275, <https://studfiles.net/preview/4538325/>, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aristotelian/55.1.273>.

11) Max Black, "More about Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28.

12) Black, "Metaphor," 288.

ible systems of meaning (semantic fields) in a metaphorical interpretation. He uses the category of semantic impertinence described by Jean Cohen.¹³ According to Cohen, semantic impertinence is a deviation in relation to the code of applicability. The latter regulates the compilation of predicates to create a semantically correct sentence. In other words, semantic impertinence occurs when the juxtaposed elements do not match each other with respect to the meaning.

Impertinence does not have to be a violation of the principles of syntax or general grammar – correct sentences may be absurd when the principle of predictive applicability is violated. This is well illustrated by Noam Chomsky's famous phrase "colorless green ideas sleep furiously."¹⁴ This sentence is grammatically correct, but absurd. The principle of applicability is responsible for the intelligibility of the sentence through the appropriate combination of words: "The law of semantic pertinence, according to Jean Cohen, designates the combinatory permissions that the signified must satisfy among themselves if the sentence is to be received as intelligible."¹⁵ In this way, the sentence "Heaven is dead" is grammatically correct, but it is inappropriate, because the term "dead" can be attributed only to living beings.

Predicative impertinence is a clash between semantic fields that happens in metaphor. The clash appears as a pressure of negation: that something is and is not at the same time.¹⁶ It forces the neutralization of this absurdity, which consists in changing the meaning of words. So, it is – according to classical rhetoric – a figure of rhetoric. This change is a response to the threat of destruction of sense through semantic ineptitude, an intervention that aims to reduce it.

The latter consists in proposing a new interpretation, which takes into account the entire sentence: "Poetry destroys ordinary language only to reconstruct it on a higher level. The 'de-structuring' done by the figure is followed by a 're-structuring' of another order."¹⁷ Portable interpretation opens up the possible meaning of the expression as a whole. These two deviations are situated at other levels and therefore can be completed: "The totality of the procedure comprises two inverse and complementary phases – (1) situation of deviation: impertinence; (2) reduction of deviation: metaphor."¹⁸

In this way – through the experience of incompatibility – there appears semantic innovation and a new semantic validity of the whole: its meaning. The semantic shock is a necessary moment of metaphor, it is a rupture in a given classification, thus providing a new perspective. This destructive moment, the pressure of negativity, requires further work of similarity, as a result of which the metaphorical riddle is solved. What is noticed is a kinship that cannot be seen in the everyday use of language. Metaphor allows us to see new relationships between what are usually separate and distant.

Opacity and Aesthetic Non-Differentiation

The process of assimilation is stimulated by negation – impertinence in the heart of the sentence – which is designed in a given context. It is a linguistic event, but it uses a specific aspect, which could also be called pictorial. In other words, one can find some parallel functions between the linguistic and the pictorial event. These functions are related to the contextuality and the negation of the metaphor – its opacity. Ricoeur speaks

13) Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 154.

14) Noam Chomsky, "Three Models for the Description of Language," *IRE Transactions on Information Theory* 2, no. 3 (1956): 116.

15) Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 178.

16) Hans Berger, *Figures of a Changing World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 5, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1287gfz>.

17) Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 177.

18) *Ibid.*, 179.

of the latter with regard to the polysemicity of a word whose meaning is made concrete in a given sentence. The process of creating a metaphor relies on this flexibility of language – is based on the fact that words are open to different contexts and can adopt different meanings. In the context of a sentence a meaning is specified. The word already has a smaller or greater openness (or rupture) in advance, which Ricoeur describes as opaque, obscurant or vague, which has yet to be clarified in a concrete realization.¹⁹

This dependence on context, this rupture, can be compared with aesthetic non-differentiation, the term described by Gottfried Boehm. It is based on the fact that the way a painted object is painted is part of its content. Therefore, in this particular context it determines its sensual sense. One can distinguish symbols or specific themes, but their unique sense and aesthetic impact on the viewer is based on a specific visual sensuality, which is always given with its material context – it is a visual event. In the impossibility of distinguishing between the being and the sense of a sensual phenomenon, Gottfried Boehm perceives the constitutive quality of sense that emerges sensually.²⁰

Differences in the manifestations of the subject are not abolished in the concept that gives the subject a categorical identity (as a theme, symbol, and scene). In other words, a painted object cannot be detached from the way it was painted. The way in which it is shown is the very thing, and in this sense the image is characterized by the unity of being and phenomenon. The image's being is coupled with the context that builds it. Like metaphorical meaning, it appears as an event in the given context of a sentence or even a whole text. It is coupled and inseparable from the context in which it appeared. For this reason, any paraphrase of a metaphor does not exhaust its sense and is like stating the subject of a given painting, determining what the picture represents – but such paraphrase is not able to summarize how it is presented and what its impact on the viewer is.

The impossibility of paraphrasing metaphor is associated with the richness of sense that appears in a given language event, in the multitude of semantic shades (like the emotions that accompany the emergence of a new interpretation of a sentence), which are the effect of the original, inappropriate context. The impossibility of a paraphrase is also caused by resistance to negation, a distance that is exceeded and preserved at the same time. The new pertinence does not abolish the lexical order which defines the juxtaposed elements. Harry Berger sums up this relationship as negative analogy, instead of positive simile.²¹ This capacity to remain in tension is what makes a metaphor so vivid – the remoteness persists despite the approximation. The differences shown in the relationship do not remain suppressed in the identity of the concept but are alive in a conflict of intimacy and remoteness. Perhaps it is this co-existence of differences, this particularity and concreteness – non-differentiation as the appearance in its sensual concreteness, and not as a defined meaning – of the described phenomenon that make the metaphor so suggestive and allows it to transcend its paraphrase and any unambiguous definition by concepts. Ricoeur sums this up: “Metaphor is the figure of style which enables the preparatory stage to interrupt conceptual formation because, in the metaphorical process, the movement toward genre is arrested by the resistance of the difference and, in some way, intercepted by the figure of rhetoric.”²² The ambiguity protects the metaphorical phrase from the obviousness of the statement.

19) Ibid., 132.

20) Gottfried Boehm, “Zu einer Hermeneutik des Bildes,” in *Die Hermeneutik und die Wissenschaften*, ed. Hans-Georg Gadamer and Gottfried Boehm (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 451.

21) Berger, *Figures of a Changing World*, 9.

22) Paul Ricoeur, “The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,” *Man and World*, no. 12 (1979): 131.

The Imaginative Dimension of Metaphor

A metaphorical reinterpretation requires a visual moment that Ricoeur combines with the work of similarity. It is a process of predicative assimilation, not a passive similarity or reproduction. It consists in the rapprochement which abolishes the distance between previously remote semantic fields and allows us to compare it and establish the similarity.

Imagination is the apperception, the sudden insight, of a new predicative pertinence, specifically a pertinence within impertinence. One could speak here of predicative assimilation, in order to underline by the word “assimilation”, on the one hand, that it is not a question of a passively recorded similitude, but of an active operation, coextensive with the “rapprochement” performed by the metaphorical statement.²³

It is a process to make us see the similar in dissimilarity. The assimilation leads through the transition between semantic inappropriateness, perception of incompatibility and semantic innovation, which funds a new semantic appropriateness.

Insight into similarity is both vision and thinking: the perception of relationships over systematized divisions: “...thinking is a seeing, to the extent that the insight consists of the instantaneous grasping of the combinatory possibilities offered by the proportionality and consequently the establishment of the proportionality.”²⁴ Poets teach their readers to see in a certain way. They form a linguistic construction that allows us to see the right aspect of things. This is what Ludwig Wittgenstein described in terms of “seeing-as”.²⁵ The breaking of the aspect consists in the sudden perception of someone’s likeness, peculiar features, facial expressions or mood. This happens immediately. It means that it does not have to appear right away, but rather suddenly, in a moment. Wittgenstein describes this experience by using the example of meeting someone whom he has not seen for a long time: “I meet someone whom I have not seen for years; I see him clearly, but fail to know him. Suddenly I know him, I see the old face in the altered one. I believe that I should do a different portrait of him now if I could paint.”²⁶ This aspect does not change the view of the subject, but changes how it is perceived – it changes the perception itself. Capturing the aspect is both seeing and understanding: “seeing-as”. In a few sketched lines you can see the house, square, clouds in the shape of clouds, whole figures, feelings of terror, and so forth. It is a mechanism that allows you to see at once a duck, once then a rabbit in the famous duck-hare drawing (as in many picture games of this type used in Gestalt psychology). The black dot is seen once as a duck’s eye, and once it is assigned to the hare, once the drawing elements are combined as the outline of the ears from the head of the hare, which were once taken as parts of the duck.

Black also emphasizes, without a direct reference to Wittgenstein or Gestalt psychology, that the perception of something in terms of seeing-as is an important moment of metaphor. He reaches for visual examples: the figure called the Star of David can be seen in four different ways, but they require a change in the point of view. One can picture the figure as two overlapping triangles, another time as a hexagon with surrounding smaller triangles, as three overlapping parallelograms or simply as a star shape.²⁷

23) Ibid.

24) Paul Ricoeur, “The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling,” *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 5 (1978): 148, https://www.humanities.uci.edu/poeticshistorytheory/user_files/Ricoeur.pdf

25) Marcus Hester, “Obrazowość i wolne skojarzenia,” trans. Józef Japola, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 62 (1971): 246.

26) Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 197.

27) Black, “More about Metaphor,” 31–32.

Donald Davidson, an opponent of the semantic theory of interaction, separates the meaning of metaphor (treated as the meaning of individual words) from its effect. According to him, the metaphor does not create a new meaning, but it performs. Davidson claims:

What I deny is that metaphor does its work by having a special meaning, a specific cognitive content. I do not think, as Richards does, that metaphor produces its result by having a meaning which results from the interaction of two ideas; it is wrong, in my view ... with Black that a metaphor asserts or implies certain complex thing by dint of a special meaning and thus accomplishes its job of yielding and "insight". A metaphor does its works through other intermediaries ... but not by standing for, or expressing, the fact.²⁸

The metaphor influences the reader, shows, shares a view, and lets him/her see something in another way. In this perspective, nothing specific is said in the metaphor, it has no hidden meaning that should be deciphered. However, it has a performative power: it causes the reader to perceive certain things in a different light. Metaphor provokes or invites a certain view of its subject. It calls our attention and much of what we are made to see is not propositional in character.²⁹

Ricoeur's perspective includes the power of imagination, vision, and what is not strictly linguistic in the work of language. But he also states that the sense of the metaphor arises due to the tension between the incompatibility of meanings and the new appropriateness as an interpretation of the sentence as a whole. This interpretation, the new meaning of the metaphor, appears with its influence on the reader as an imaginary and emotional effect. The problem in Davidson's theory is the connection of the sentence (which the metaphor is build) and its effect. One can ask if there is no special interaction of the words, how this sentence can prompt or inspire insight and provoke metaphorical effect?

Ricoeur situates the problematic of metaphor in a broader, hermeneutic perspective. Metaphor has an intrinsically processual character. It cannot be paraphrased precisely because it is a linguistic event (or an event designed by language). It interacts because it provides the reader with a wealth of sense. Seeing something "as" means taking some content in a certain context as something different (keeping the difference) and it appears to be something shown more than stated. But what is perceived in a metaphorical performance is the thing seen in a new light because of the overall meaning that is projected in a phrase. Seeing something-as – as Edmund Husserl said in his analysis of perception, which allows the making of judgments – presupposes capturing a certain stock of sense, even if it does not become thematized.³⁰

The metaphorical process of opening up a wider dimension of sense happens through the work of the imagination. The perception of similarity is made possible by the flow of images initiated by a metaphor. Ricoeur refers to the iconic aspect of the metaphor described by Paul Henle, who shows that metaphorical sense is given through images – so it is expressed iconically. In a metaphor from John Keats's poem – "When by my solitary hearth I sit / And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in gloom" – by drawing attention to the sensual, almost palpable aspect of wrapping up, sadness becomes severe and able to embrace one like a cloak.³¹ Ricoeur emphasizes, however, that the metaphor does not evoke perceptual memories by associating in the form of

28) Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 5 (1978): 46, <http://hartzog.org/j/davidsonmetaphor.pdf>. <https://doi.org/10.1086/447971>.

29) Ibid.

30) Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, trans. James Churchill and Karl Ameriks (London: Routledge, 1973), 34.

31) Ricoeur, "Metaphorical Process," 149.

a mental image. The icon in language is what these images produce. Icon – in the heart of poetic language – serves as a schema of metaphorical attribution. Schema in Kantian theory is a procedure for providing an image for a concept. There are schemata which create general shapes for empirical or mathematical notions, and which allow for images of objects (like a triangle or a dog), and there are schemata of pure concepts. The latter create a representation order that reveals the necessary connections between representations, so that they become meaningful (as relation of cause and effect). Schemata mediate between the generality of concepts and the particularity of sensual representations. In Ricoeur's concept, icon is a procedure for providing an image (or a series of images in some order) to the sentence, which is a set of distant semantic fields. Thanks to these images, sense and metaphorical similarity are realized. It participates in what is verbal and generates images subordinated to it.

The image-forming and sense-forming power of the metaphor is profoundly exploited by Rainer Maria Rilke:

Solitude is like a rain
That from the sea at dusk begins to rise;
It floats remote across the far-off plain
Upward into its dwelling-place, the skies,
Then o'er the town it slowly sinks again.
Like rain it softly falls at that dim hour
When ghostly lanes turn toward the shadowy morn;
When bodies weighed with satiate passion's power
Sad, disappointed from each other turn;
When men with quiet hatred burning deep

Together in a common bed must sleep –
Through the gray, phantom shadows of the dawn Lo!
Solitude floats down the river wan³²

The poem is an extension of the first comparison, which culminates in the last metaphor: "Solitude floats down the river wan." The flow of images gives shape to the emergence from the sea, meeting the twilight, growing into the sky. In this way, it allows one to understand the ubiquity and universality of loneliness. Rain falling on the city stands in front of one's eyes (as evidenced by the vividness of the metaphor) and creates the impression of heaviness, coldness, humidity, through which loneliness becomes distinct and tangible. The city appears as a cursed place in which all this accumulated moisture materializes and affects its inhabitants. The drizzling of loneliness, somehow lurking in every corner, in the nooks of the city, is parallel to the distance between people. Solitude flows with the rivers – images of vast rivers flowing through cities, recalling the relationships between rivers and cities, as cities build over them, show their inherent quality and naturalness. The presence of loneliness is obvious, unnoticeable and powerful. This metaphor evokes images – puts them in front of us – and creates an impression and is saturated with the relations and sense that someone can try to explicate out of them.

Metaphor brings things closer and condenses them. It happens in a flow of images showing together what is far away. Imagining, therefore, is a specific means of perceiving similarities and relationships: "By displaying

32) Rainer Maria Rilke, *Poems*, trans. Jessie Lemont, 1918, accessed January 28, 2019, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Poems_of_Rainer_Maria_Rilke_\(1918\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Poems_of_Rainer_Maria_Rilke_(1918)).

a flow of images, discourse initiates changes of logical distance, generates rapprochement. Imaging or imagining, thus, is the concrete milieu in which and through which we see similarities. To imagine, then, is not to have a mental picture of something but to display relations in a depicting mode.”³³ What is the role of images in relation to the iconic (schematic) aspect of language? We reach images through their linguistic core – then proceeding from the verbal to the nonverbal, from the semantic to the sensible, and not vice versa.³⁴ Do images lead through the metaphorical process to new pertinence? Are they just its implementation?

These questions can be asked differently: does the icon, as a language schema, reveal already-developed connections and similarities in the image as an illustration, or only through these images can the connections be established? Ricoeur is leaning towards the first answer, as can be seen in the following passage: “to form an image is not to have an image, in the sense of having a mental representation; instead it is to read, through the icon of a relation, the relation itself.”³⁵ It is less the image, more seeing, making something visible. It is a seeing created by language: “Language remains the bearer of the predictive relation, but in schematizing and illustrating itself in a pictorial manner, the predictive relation can be read through the image in which it is invested.”³⁶ The images are what helps to see the relationship, that is to capture and thus to contribute to the success of the metaphor.

Perhaps it would be possible to deepen this problem without referring to Kant's understanding of schema, but instead to the aesthetic idea. This shift allows us to shed some light on the visual power of imagination, on the role of a wealth of representations (internal intuitions). The aesthetic idea reveals the generic and visual aspect of imaginative work. The schema is determined by the concept that the image provides, it organizes representations to make them understandable. In Kantian aesthetics, one can find the conceptualization of free creativity of a genius that creates works of art. His piece of art has spirit which animates the soul and transcends the canon of the beautiful. Spirit “in an aesthetical sense, is the name given to the animating principle of the mind ... this principle is no other than the faculty of presenting aesthetical Ideas.”³⁷ It has a transcendental status in relation to the work of art and is connected with the power of intuition.³⁸ The aesthetic idea is a representation of imagination that exceeds the concept in Kantian sense. It cannot be exposed in the concept and it aesthetically extends the concept: it opens up the view of an unpredicted field of related ideas. It works, for example, through aesthetic attributes – these are side-effects of the imagination that express consequences and kinship related to the concept:

They do not, like logical attributes represent what lies in our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation, but something different, which gives occasion to the Imagination to spread itself over a number of kindred representations, that arouse more thought than can be expressed in a concept determined by words. They furnish an *aesthetical idea*....³⁹

33) Ricoeur, “Metaphorical Process,” 150.

34) Ricoeur, “The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,” 132.

35) Ibid., 133.

36) Ibid.

37) Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Critique of Judgement*, second edition, trans. J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan and C.O., 1914), 197.

38) An aesthetic idea is not an idea of Reason, it is representation of the Imagination, but they have something in common: they strive after something which lies beyond the bounds of experience. Aesthetic ideas also endeavor to approximate to a presentation of the concepts of Reason. They give to the latter the appearance of something real, but no concept can be fully adequate to them as internal intuitions. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 198.

39) Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 199.

The perception of relationships happens in motion and is caused by the aesthetic idea – in the multiplicity of images that provide different perspectives for recognition. According to Rudolf Makkreel, “[t]he imagination must not only supplement with mental images what it cannot directly perceive, but also it must use indirect interpretative strategies to compensate for what it cannot directly understand through the conventional reading of experience.”⁴⁰ Imagination brings a wealth of visibility, on the basis of which one can capture similarities and connections that were not demonstrated by the concept. In this way, it broadens the possibilities of understanding the world.

The aesthetic idea, in contrast to schematism, opens up a new understanding of reality through the extension of concepts. The schema, on the other hand, provides the concept with an image and organizes the presentations in such a way that they form a content of experience that can be recognized. The aesthetic idea is free from the principles of (empirical) association. Here, this does not mean that the imagination works without rules, but works according to analogous laws (including those contained in reason) in such a way that the field for the reflective authority of judging opens out. Imagination uses a variety of procedures in a free manner. Thus, it reaches/opens up the wealth of visibility – the uncovered images/imaginings which show relations and dependencies that could not have been thought of by means of the concept itself.

The work of imagination in a metaphor goes beyond the role of synthesizing and schematizing experience in the cognitive process described by Kant. It does not refer to the principles established in language according to the principles of pertinence. It is an anti-principle of semantic impertinence and it stimulates a reflective judgment that seeks a new interpretation, similarity, harmony, that goes, in the flow of images, beyond the systematized, language lexicon. Its meaning cannot be fully paraphrased. Metaphor – as the principle of creating semantic innovation – is not only a schema combining what is verbal and non-verbal, but it is the free action of the imagination in the aesthetic idea, that is, ordering and creating the images in a way that evoke their potential.

The aesthetic idea – the spirit of the work of art – is an apt and indeterminate representation, which brings together references to the multiplicity of other images. Metaphor, by combining and bringing together semantically distant fields, evokes a flow of images and opens words to an unexpected multiplicity of connections – it broadens, aesthetically and figuratively, the meaning of given concepts. The metaphor and the aesthetic idea, regardless of the lexical order and the order of concepts related to reproduction and association – and in fact against these orders – open us to the wealth of sense. It cannot be enclosed in the concept, just as metaphors cannot be paraphrased without losing the richness of the visions they offer to the reader.

Neutralization and Second-Degree Reference

Another important moment in metaphor, which can be called imaginary, is the suspension of references. This allows readers to create distance and to change a perspective. This moment, characteristic of fiction associated with imaginary neutralization, is necessary for the further impact of the metaphor. The poetic suspension of reference opens the way to second-degree reference, showing the world in a way like a lens: “... the suspension of the reference proper to ordinary descriptive language is the negative condition for the emergence of a more radical way of looking at things.”⁴¹ The neutralization of the reference allows us to grasp new associations and to see objects in a different light.

By appropriate combination, the work of assimilation and selection in accordance with a given filter of metaphor is initiated, which allows us to extract the relevant aspects of things. It can be said that one looks at

40) Rudolf Makkreel, *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 129.

41) Ricoeur, “Metaphorical Process,” 154.

an element through the other's meaning in a metaphor, and also that metaphor is, is a filter through which one can look at the world differently and see new, different aspects in it. This is a specific way of getting closer to what is real. The poetic and cognitive function, according to Ricoeur, are not contradictory – what is poetic is simply a transformation of the way of relating to the world. Suspending and rebuilding the reference relationship on a different level works on a similar basis to creating models. Metaphor as a model of reality is the closest to the theoretical model identified by Black, which consists in creating objects imagined with a simplified form.⁴² Thanks to this, these objects and their properties are better suited to description and are able to reveal aspects not previously noticed in the thicket of reality to be revealed.

The metaphor can say something new about the world, because it changes the relationship between objects and makes it possible to see a particular feature. This explorative-creative nature of the metaphor's action is analyzed by using the example of the novelty of a new view: "Did the view of Mount Everest from a point one hundred feet above its summit exist before anybody had seen that view?"⁴³ Despite the fact that nothing has changed in the system of the mountain, or its nature, the view implies someone who watches it – the view must be seen. Therefore, before observing Mount Everest from an appropriate height, this view did not exist. In this sense, it is a creative act. On the other hand, this view has objective – or better said – intersubjective features that are not created, but rather discovered. Another important example according to Black is the cinematographic view of a galloping horse in slow motion. It is not a human perception, because here we need an additional instrument as mediation, but once it is seen, it becomes part of the world.⁴⁴ The metaphor can be such an intermediary instrument, that is, a lens that highlights certain features. In this way, it helps to see relationships, the relationships that are recognized through it. Thus, at least some metaphors show certain aspects of reality that have been created due to these metaphors.

Conclusion

The impact of a metaphor leads the reader to a new interpretation, recognition of new relations between objects and opens one to a vision saturated with sense and emotions, to the images in which this sense and relationships appear – it is a complex process. It is a language event that designs an unusual juxtaposition of the words and a new context for their use, awakening the reader's imagination. It goes beyond the operation of the image-supplying schema and uses the imagination and imagery itself at many levels of its implementation. At some moments, the metaphorical use of words in its function approaches the features of the painting. In other moments the images are a means of realizing the sense of metaphor in the process of assimilation.

The sense of a metaphor happens within a given context, just like the sense of a painting works thanks to a particular combination of colors and shapes. The possibility for the interaction of words in a phrase occurs due to the opacity built into those words. They have capacity to indicate different things in different contexts. At the same time a metaphor, not as a statement of specific meaning, but just a phrase containing both "is" and "is not", or rather something "as" avoids the identity of the concept, preserves the difference and negation in itself, which allows for creative tension. In this sense, it takes over the functions of the image – it shows but does not state. Because of this ambiguity, it suspends the reference and gives the possibility of a different view of a given thing. Metaphor as a filter through which one looks at a given thing emphasizes some previously unnoticed features. It shows before unnoticed relationships and similarities.

42) Black, "More about Metaphor," 30. Every metaphor is the tip of a submerged model.

43) *Ibid.*, 37.

44) *Ibid.*

The assimilation acquires features of the aesthetic idea. It provides not only a representation for a given concept, but also opens up a view of the whole field, a flow of images that stimulate thinking of relations that are not included in a given concept. They not only provide the image, but also show new connections and similarity through the image. Reference to the aesthetic idea also allows for the moment of exceeding the classification system to be extracted, the familiarity of the unfamiliar, the moment of impertinence and ambiguity.

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