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# Synopsis

**Theme:Metaphor**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The term 'metaphor', as the etymology of the word reveals, means transference of some quality from one object to another. From the times of ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric, the term has been known to denote the transference of meaning from one word to another. It is still widely set to designate the process in which a word acquires a derivative meaning. Quintilian remarks: "It is due to the metaphor that each thing seems to have its name in language." Language as a whole has been figuratively defined as a dictionary of faded metaphors. Thus by transference of meaning the words grasp, set and see come to have the derivative meaning of understand. When these words are used to that meaning we can only register the derivative meaning existing in the semantic structures of the words. Though the derivative meaning is metaphorical in origin, there is no stylistic effect because the primary meaning is no longer felt. A metaphor becomes a stylistic device when two different phenomena (things, events, ideas, actions) are simultaneously brought to mind by the imposition of some or all of the inherent properties of one object on the other which by nature is deprived of these properties. Such an imposition generally results when the creator of the metaphor finds in the two corresponding objects certain features which to his eye have something in common. The idea that metaphor is based on similarity or affinity of two (corresponding) objects or notions is, as I understand it, erroneous. The two objects are identified and the fact that a common feature is pointed to and made prominent does not make them similar. The notion of similarity can be carried on ad absurdum, for example, animals and human beings move, breathe, eat, etc. but if one of these features, i.e. movement, breathing, is pointed to in animals and at the same time in human beings, the two objects will not necessarily cause the notion of affinity.

Identification should not be equated to resemblance. Thus in the following metaphor:

"Dear Nature is the kindest Mother still" (Byron) the notion Mother arouses in the mind the actions of nursing, weaning, caring for, etc., whereas the notion Nature does not. There is no true similarity, but there is a kind of identification. Therefore it is better to define metaphor as the power of realizing two lexical meanings simultaneously.

Due to this power metaphor is one of the most potent means of creating images. An image is a sensory perception of an abstract notion already existing in the mind. Consequently, to create an image means to bring a phenomenon from the highly abstract to the essentially concrete. Thus the example given above where the two concepts Mother and Nature are brought together in the interplay of their meanings, brings up the image of Nature materialized into but not likened to the image of Mother.

The identification is most clearly observed when the metaphor is embodied either in an attributive word, as in pearly teeth, voiceless sounds, or in a predicative word-combination, as in the example with Nature and Mother.

But the identification of different movements will not be so easily perceived because there is no explanatory unit. Let us look at this sentence:

"In the slanting beams that streamed through the open window the dust danced and was golden."

The movement of dust particles seem to the eye of the writer to be regular and orderly like the movements in dancing. What happens practically is that our mind runs in two parallel lines: the abstract and the concrete, i.e. movement and dancing .

Sometimes the process of identification can hardly be decoded. Here is a metaphor embodied in an adverb:

"The leaves fell sorrowfully."

The movement of falling leaves is probably identified with the movement of a human being experiencing some kind of distress—people swing their bodies or heads to and fro when in this state of mind. One can hardly perceive any similarity in the two kinds of movements which are by the force of the writer's imagination identified.

Generally speaking, one feature out of the multitude of features of an object found in common with a feature of another object will not produce resemblance. This idea is worded best of all in Wordsworth's famous lines:

"To find affinities in objects in which no brotherhood exists to passive minds."

Here is a recognition of the unlimited power of the poet in finding common features in heterogenous objects.

### **1.1. Interaction of Primary Dictionary and Contextually imposed Meanings**

The interaction or interplay between the primary dictionary meaning (the meaning which is registered in the language code as an easily recognized sign for an abstract notion designating a certain phenomenon or object) and a meaning which is imposed on the word by a micro-context may be maintained along different lines. One line is when the author identifies two objects which have nothing in common, but in which he subjectively sees a function, or a property, or a feature, or a quality that may make the reader perceive these two objects as identical. Another line is when the author finds it possible to substitute one object for another on the grounds that there is some kind of interdependence or interrelation between the two corresponding objects. A third line is when a

certain property or quality of an object is used in an opposite or contradictory sense.

The stylistic device based on the principle of identification of two objects is called a metaphor. The SD based on the principle of substitution of one object for another is called metonymy and the SD based on contrary concepts is called irony.

Let us now proceed with a detailed analysis of the ontology, structure and functions of these stylistic devices.

The metaphor is often defined as a compressed simile. But this definition lacks precision. Moreover, it is misleading, inasmuch as the metaphor aims at identifying the objects, while the simile aims at finding some point of resemblance by keeping the objects apart. That is why these two stylistic devices are viewed as belonging to two different groups of SDs. They are different in their linguistic nature.

True, the degree of identification of objects or phenomena in a metaphor varies according to its syntactic function in the sentence and to the part of speech in which it is embodied.

Indeed, in the sentence 'Expression is the dress of thought' we can hardly see any process of identification between the concepts expression and dress, whereas in the lines .

"Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him  
In soul and aspect as in age: years steal

Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;  
And Life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

The metaphors steal, fire, cup, brim embodied in verbs and nouns not used predicatively can be regarded as fully identified with the concepts they aim at producing.

Genuine metaphors are mostly to be found in poetry and emotive prose. Trite metaphors are generally used as expressive means in newspaper articles, in oratorical style and even in scientific language. The use of trite metaphors should not be regarded as a drawback of style. They help the writer to enliven his work and even make the meaning more concrete.

There is constant interaction between genuine and trite metaphors. Genuine metaphors, if they are good and can stand the test of time, may, through frequent repetition, become trite and consequently easily predictable. Trite metaphors, as has been shown, may regain their freshness through the process of prolongation of the metaphor.

Trite metaphors are sometimes injected with new vigour, i.e. their primary meaning is re-established alongside the new meaning. This is done by supplying the central image created by the metaphor with additional words bearing some reference to the main word. For example: "Mr. Pickwick bottled up his vengeance and corked it down." The verb to bottle up is explained in dictionaries as follows: 'to keep in check' ("Penguin Dictionary"); 'to conceal, to restrain, repress' ("Casell's New English Dictionary"). The metaphor in the word can hardly be felt. But it is revived by the direct meaning of the verb to cork down. This context refreshes the almost dead metaphor and gives it a second life. Such metaphors are called *sustained* or *prolonged*. Here is another example of a sustained metaphor:

"Mr. Dombey's cup of satisfaction was so full at this moment, however, that he felt he could afford a drop or two of its contents, even to sprinkle on the dust in the by-path of his little daughter." We may call the principal metaphor the central image of the sustained metaphor and the other words which bear reference to the central image - contributory images. Thus in the example given the word cup (of

satisfaction) being a trite metaphor is revived by the following contributory images: full, drop, contents, sprinkle. It is interesting to note that the words conveying both the central image (the cup) and the contributory images are used in two senses simultaneously: direct and indirect. The second plane of utterance is maintained by the key word—satisfaction. It is this word that helps us to decipher the idea behind the sustained metaphor.

Sometimes, however, the central image is not given, but the string of words all bearing upon some implied central point of reference are so associated with each other that the reader is bound to create the required image in his mind. Let us take the following sentence from Shakespeare:

"I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent." The words spur, to prick, the sides in their interrelation will inevitably create the image of a steed, with which the speaker's intent is identified.

The same is to be seen in the following lines from Shelley's "Cloud":

"In a cavern under is fettered the thunder, t struggles and howls at fits."

Here the central image—that of a captive beast—is suggested by the contributory images—fettered, struggles and howls.

Metaphors may be sustained not only on the basis of a trite metaphor. The initial metaphor may be genuine and may also be developed through a number of contributory images so that the whole of the utterance becomes one sustained metaphor. A skilfully written example of such a metaphor is to be found in Shakespeare's Sonnet No.

Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath stell'd

Thy beauty's form in table of my heart;



My body is the frame wherein 'tis held,  
And perspective it is best painter's art.  
For through the painter must you see his skill,  
To find where your true image pictured lies;  
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,  
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.  
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done:  
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me  
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun  
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee;

Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,  
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

The central image—'The eye—the painter' is developed through a number of contributory images: to draw, to still, table, frame, hanging and the like.

In conclusion it would be of interest to show the results of the interaction between the dictionary and contextual meanings.

The constant use of a metaphor gradually leads to the breaking up of the primary meaning. The metaphoric use of the word begins to affect the dictionary meaning, adding to it fresh connotations or shades of meaning. But this influence, however strong it may be, will never reach the degree where the dictionary meaning entirely disappears. If it did, we should have no stylistic device. It is a law of stylistics that in a sty-

listic device the stability of the dictionary meaning is always retained, no matter how great the influence of the contextual meaning may be.

Metaphors, like all stylistic devices, can be classified according to their degree of unexpectedness. Thus metaphors which are absolutely unexpected, i.e. are unpredictable, are called genuine phors. Those which are commonly used in speech and therefore are sometimes even fixed in dictionaries as expressive means of language are *t r i t e* metaphors, or dead metaphors. Their predictability therefore is apparent. Genuine metaphors are regarded as belonging to language-in-action, i.e. speech metaphors; trite metaphors belong to the language-as-a-system, i.e. language proper, and are usually fixed in dictionaries as units of the language.

## II. MAIN PART

**Metaphor** is the concept of understanding one thing in terms of another. A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that constructs an analogy between two things or ideas; the analogy is conveyed by the use of a metaphorical word in place of some other word. For example: "Her eyes were glistening jewels". etaphor is or was also occasionally used to denote rhetorical figures of speech that achieve their effects via association, comparison or resemblance (e.g., antithesis, hyperbole, metonymy and simile, which are then all considered types of metaphor). Aristotle used both this sense and the regular, current sense above. he word metaphor derives from the 16th century Old French *métaphore*, in turn from the Latin *metaphora*, "carrying over", which is the latinisation of the Greek *μεταφορά* (*metaphorá*), "transfer", from *μεταφέρω* (*metaphero*), "to carry over", "to transfer", itself a compound of *μετά* (*meta*), "between" + *φέρω* (*pherō*), "to bear", "to carry".

### 2.1. Types, terms and categories

Metaphors are comparisons that show how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in one important way. A metaphor is more forceful (active) than an analogy, because metaphor asserts two things are the same, whereas analogy implies a difference; other rhetorical comparative figures of speech, such as metonymy, parable, simile and synecdoche, are species of metaphor distinguished by how the comparison is communicated.<sup>[1]</sup> The metaphor category also contains these specialised types:

- **allegory**: An extended metaphor wherein a story illustrates an important attribute of the subject
- **catachresis**: A mixed metaphor used by design and accident (a rhetorical fault)
- **parable**: An extended metaphor narrated as an anecdote illustrating and teaching a moral lesson.

## 2.2. Common types

- A **dead metaphor** is one in which the sense of a transferred image is absent. Examples: "to grasp a concept" and "to gather what you've understood" use physical action as a metaphor for understanding. Most people do not visualize the action — dead metaphors normally go unnoticed. Some people distinguish between a dead metaphor and a cliché. Others use "dead metaphor" to denote both.
- An **extended metaphor (conceit)**, establishes a principal subject (comparison) and subsidiary subjects (comparisons). The As You Like It quotation is a good example, the world is described as a stage, and then men and women are subsidiary subjects further described in the same context.
- A **mixed metaphor** is one that leaps from one identification to a second identification inconsistent with the first. Example: "If we can hit that bullseye then the rest of the dominoes will fall like a house of cards... Checkmate." Quote from Futurama TV show character Zapp Brannigan.<sup>[6]</sup>

- Per Hans Blumenberg's metaphorology, **absolute metaphor** denotes a figure or a concept that cannot be reduced to, or replaced with solely conceptual thought and language. Absolute metaphors, e.g. "light" (for "truth") and "seafaring" (for "human existence") – have distinctive meanings (unlike the literal meanings), and, thereby, function as orientations in the world, and as theoretic questions, such as presenting the world as a whole. Because they exist at the pre-predicative level, express and structure pragmatic and theoretical views of Man and the World.

### 2.3. Use outside of rhetoric

The term metaphor is also used for the following terms that are not a part of rhetoric:

- A **cognitive metaphor** is the association of an object to an experience outside the object's environment.
- A **conceptual metaphor** is an underlying association that is systematic in both language and thought.
- A **root metaphor** is the underlying worldview that shapes an individual's understanding of a situation.
- A **therapeutic metaphor** is an experience that allows one to learn about more than just that experience.
- A visual metaphor provides a frame or window on experience. Metaphors can also be implied and extended throughout pieces of literature.

### 2.4. History in literature and language

Metaphor is present in the oldest written Sumerian language narrative, the Epic of Gilgamesh:

Beloved friend, swift stallion, wild deer, / leopard ranging in the wilderness  
— / Enkidu, my friend, swift stallion, wild deer, / leopard ranging in the wilderness

— / together we crossed the mountains, together / we slaughtered the Bull of Heaven, we killed / Humbaba, who guarded the Cedar Forest — / O Enkidu, what is this sleep that has seized you, / that has darkened your face and stopped your breath?— (Trans. Mitchell, 2004)

In this example, the friend is compared to a stallion, a wild deer, and a leopard to indicate that the speaker sees traits from these animals in his friend (A comparison between two or more unlike objects).

The idea of metaphor can be traced back to Aristotle who, in his “Poetics” (around 335 BC), defines “metaphor” as follows: “Metaphor is the application of a strange term either transferred from the genus and applied to the species or from the species and applied to the genus, or from one species to another or else by analogy.” For the sake of clarity and comprehension it might additionally be useful to quote the following two alternative translations: “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.”<sup>[8]</sup> Or, as Halliwell puts it in his translation: “Metaphor is the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy.”

Therefore, the key aspect of a metaphor is a specific transference of a word from one context into another. With regard to the four kinds of metaphors which Aristotle distincts against each other the last one (transference by analogy) is the most eminent one so that all important theories on metaphor have a reference to this characterization.

The Greek plays of Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides, among others, were almost invariably allegorical, showing the tragedy of the protagonists, either to caution the audience metaphorically about temptation, or to lambast famous individuals of the day by inferring similarities with the caricatures in the play.

Even when they are not intentional, they can be drawn between most writing or language and other topics. In this way it can be seen that any theme in literature is a metaphor, using the story to convey information about human perception of the theme in question.

**In historical linguistics.** In historical onomasiology or, more generally, in historical linguistics, metaphor is defined as semantic change based on similarity, i.e. a similarity in form or function between the original concept named by a word and the target concept named by this word.

ex. **mouse**: small, gray rodent → small, gray, mouse-shaped computer device.

Some recent linguistic theories view language as by its nature all metaphorical; or that language in essence is metaphorical.

## **2.5. Metaphor as style in speech and writing**

Viewed as an aspect of speech and writing, metaphor qualifies as style, in particular, style characterized by a type of analogy. An expression (word, phrase) that by implication suggests the likeness of one entity to another entity gives style to an item of speech or writing, whether the entities consist of objects, events, ideas, activities, attributes, or almost anything expressible in language. For example, in the first sentence of this paragraph, the word "viewed" serves as a metaphor for "thought of", implying analogy of the process of seeing and the thought process. The phrase, "viewed as an aspect of", projects the properties of seeing (vision) something from a particular perspective onto thinking about something from a particular perspective, that "something" in this case referring to "metaphor" and that "perspective" in this case referring to the characteristics of speech and writing.

As a characteristic of speech and writing, metaphors can serve the poetic imagination, enabling William Shakespeare, in his play "As You Like It", to compare the world to a stage and its human inhabitants players entering and exiting

upon that stage; enabling Sylvia Plath, in her poem "Cut", to compare the blood issuing from her cut thumb to the running of a million soldiers, "redcoats, every one"; and, enabling Robert Frost, in "The Road Not Taken", to compare one's life to a journey.

Viewed also as an aspect of speech pudding, metaphor can serve as a device for persuading the listener or reader of the speaker-writer's argument or thesis, the so-called rhetorical metaphor....

## **2.6. Metaphor as foundational to our conceptual system**

Cognitive linguists emphasize that metaphors serve to facilitate the understanding of one conceptual domain, typically an abstract one like 'life' or 'theories' or 'ideas', through expressions that relate to another, more familiar conceptual domain, typically a more concrete one like 'journey' or 'buildings' or 'food'.<sup>[15][16]</sup> Food for thought: we devour a book of raw facts, try to digest them, stew over them, let them simmer on the back-burner, regurgitate them in discussions, cook up explanations, hoping they do not seem half-baked. Theories as buildings: we establish a foundation for them, a framework, support them with strong arguments, buttressing them with facts, hoping they will stand. Life as journey: some of us travel hopefully, others seem to have no direction, many lose their way.

A convenient short-hand way of capturing this view of metaphor is the following: CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (A) IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN (B), which is what is called a conceptual metaphor. A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another. A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of experience. Thus, for example, we have coherently organized knowledge about journeys that we rely on in understanding life. How does this relate to the nature and importance of our conceptual system, and to metaphor as foundational to our conceptual system?

## **2.7. More than just a figure of speech**

Some theorists have suggested that metaphors are not merely stylistic, but that they are cognitively important as well. In *Metaphors We Live By* George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but also in thought and action. A common definition of a metaphor can be described as a comparison that shows how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in another important way. They explain how a metaphor is simply understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. The authors call this concept a ‘conduit metaphor.’ By this they meant that a speaker can put ideas or objects into words or containers, and then send them along a channel, or conduit, to a listener who takes that idea or object out of the container and makes meaning of it. In other words, communication is something that ideas go into. The container is separate from the ideas themselves. Lakoff and Johnson give several examples of daily metaphors we use, such as “argument is war” and “time is money.” Metaphors are widely used in context to describe personal meaning. The authors also suggest that communication can be viewed as a machine: “Communication is not what one does with the machine, but is the machine itself.” (Johnson, Lakoff, 1980).



### III. CONCLUSION

A metaphor is the interaction between the logical and the contextual logical meanings of a word which is based on a likeness between objects. For example, in the sentence: "Dear nature is the kindest mother still" Nature is likened to a Mother; i.e. the properties of a mother "nursing, caring for" are imposed on the nature. Thus the metaphor can be defined as the power of realizing two lexical meanings simultaneously. Metaphor can be embodied in all the meaningful parts of speech, in nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, even in prepositions. E.g.: "The leaves fell sorrowfully." Here it is the adverb that is a metaphor.

The metaphor is a well-known semantic way of building new meanings and new words. According to scientists "It is due to the metaphor that each thing seems to have its name in language". Metaphors are classified according to three aspects:

1) the degree of expressiveness;

2) the structure, i.e. in what linguistic it is presented or by what part of speech it is expressed;

3) the function, i.e. the role of a stylistic device in making up an image.

There are different sources where the authors borrow the material for images. Favourite images in oriental poetry are nightingale, rose, moon, nature, art, war, fairy tales, myths; science may also serve as sources for metaphorical images. A metaphor is a productive way of building up new meaning and new words. Metaphor may be genuine, that is original, invented by the writer where the image is quite unexpected, i.e. unpredictable, or trite or dead, that is hackneyed, often used in the language. Their predictability is apparent. Genuine metaphors are also called speech metaphors. They belong to language-in-action. Examples of genuine metaphors are: the dark swallowed him; Mrs. Snaal's eyes boiled with excitement; the words seemed to dance.

#### **IV. LIST OF LITERATURES**

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