

Editors' Introduction

Since the beginning of philosophical thought to the present day, scholars have engaged in discourse on metaphor from multiple theoretical standpoints, encompassing rhetoric, linguistics, cognitive science, aesthetics, and hermeneutic phenomenology. This has led to its establishment as a quintessential feature of language — a vibrant interpreter that has traversed the course of history while retaining its 'youth'.

Paul Ricoeur describes metaphor as deviant predication: if metaphor constitutes a deviation, that deviation concerns the predicative structure itself. This peculiarity triggers a cycle of semantic innovation «thanks to which a new pertinence, a new congruence, is established in such a way that the utterance "makes sense" as a whole» (Ricoeur 1978: 146).

The development of metaphorical language can be regarded as a revolutionary process. It renews the structures of thought and language:

The maker of metaphors is this craftsman with verbal skill who, from an inconsistent utterance for a literal interpretation, draws a significant utterance for a new interpretation which deserves to be called metaphorical because it generates the metaphor not only as deviant but as acceptable. In other words, metaphorical meaning does not merely consist

of a semantic clash but of the new predicative meaning which emerges from the collapse of the literal meaning, that is, from the collapse of the meaning which obtains if we rely only on the common or usual lexical values of our words. The metaphor is not the enigma but the solution of the enigma. (Ib.)

The metaphorical process, by its very nature, seeks to establish order by highlighting the similarities and differences between things. It promotes collaboration among various elements by demonstrating that opposites can coexist. Metaphor opens up new perspectives, encouraging us to view the events unfolding around us in a new light.

Metaphor has been demonstrated to possess the capacity to significantly extend the limits of our imagination, transcending the confines imposed by language. The potency of metaphorical expression is such that it invariably engenders a fruitful dialogue, which in turn challenges expectations and calls into question preconceived ideas. Interpreting a metaphorical statement can be a journey of self-discovery, exploring the world's most unusual aspects. The process entails a re-examination of the origins of our knowledge, thereby challenging the conventional and fostering the perception of the novel.

As Douglas Berggren argues:

The possibility or comprehension of metaphorical construing requires, therefore, a peculiar and rather sophisticated intellectual ability which W. Bedell Stanford metaphorically labels "stereoscopic vision": the ability to entertain two different points of view at the same time. That is to say, the perspectives prior to and subsequent to the transformation of the

metaphor's principle and subsidiary subjects must both be conjointly maintained. (Berggren 1962: 243)

In the domain of visual arts, metaphorical language assumes a heightened expressive capacity and attains a performative dimension, thereby transcending the boundaries of the verbal realm and expanding the scope of meaning. The inherent syncretic nature of metaphor is fully realised in a visual framework. Metaphorically structured artistic images have been shown to stimulate the observer's capacity for empathy. Those who engage with metaphor immerse themselves in an 'other' dimension that fosters full involvement, entering an 'elsewhere' that becomes an affective experience in which mind and body are in tune.

To a certain extent, the researcher's engagement in the process of uncovering the metaphors encountered along their trajectory may be likened to that of participating in a treasure hunt. The identification of artworks can be approached from various perspectives. On a purely visual level, the composition of shapes and colours that make up a work of art (sculpture, painting) can be analysed. On a verbal level, the title given to the artwork and the critical or descriptive analysis of the work can be considered. When the structure of the object of investigation consists of poetic verses, the verbal level can prompt the vision of images in the mind. Within the contextual spaces in which the object of investigation is embedded, the identification of artworks can be approached from a bodily movement perspective. However, the potential for metaphorical expression appears to be infinite, suggesting that levels of observation may increase in parallel with the hybridisation of contemporary media.

Interpreting metaphors in the arts requires critical and analytical skills, an eye for detail, and a sense of wonder. While the interpretive

process may demand significant cognitive effort, the resulting insight and fulfilment make it worthwhile.

The observation and comprehension of metaphors in artistic expression has been shown to facilitate the renewal of knowledge and the acquisition of the emotional fortitude necessary for the fortification of one's personality. The encounter with artistic metaphors is pivotal to comprehending the intricacies of the contemporary world. They instruct us to meticulously examine the visual environment that surrounds us, employing a discerning mind and acute visual perception.

Metaphorical language facilitates dialogue between seemingly distant realms of expression, and the contributions in this volume serve the same purpose. The application of metaphor in these contexts serves to expand the scope of metaphorical expression beyond the confines of philosophical and poetic realms, extending its reach into the domain of visual arts and dance.

Metaphor, therefore, can be considered a means of communication between reality and imagination, as evidenced by the oeuvre of Wallace Stevens, as well as between speculative-philosophical and poetic discourse, as demonstrated by Paul Ricoeur's studies on the subject. The present study seeks to explain the correlation between Ricoeur's thought and the angelology of Stevens's poetics, thereby revealing how metaphor, as an attitude of being, serves as a messenger of truth-oriented knowledge (Giulia Giambrone).

The 'metaphorical nature' of the proverbial expressions in the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder is illustrated by the interplay between verbal language and visual composition (Giusy Mazza).

The cognitive and imaginative potentialities inherent within the metaphorical sphere of artistic languages have been demonstrated to enrich viewers' minds and their viewing experience (Alice Guerrieri).

From the perspective of choreographic art, the danced metaphor originates from the configuration of movement itself, thereby generating significant value as it unfolds. The assertion that dance functions as a metaphor for existence is not supported by the evidence. Rather, it is the case that dance represents existence, but not in a metaphorical sense. Instead, dance reproduces its intimate logic in bodily terms as a blend of forces, rhythms, and changes (Enrica Spada).

The propagation of metaphor within the domain of cultural heritage enhancement underscores its capacity to foster the rebirth of local identities (Francesca Dessì).

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