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## AN ELEMENT IN MICROCOSM: UNDERSTANDING THE POETIC METAPHOR

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**Abstract.** The article provides the literary analysis of poetic metaphors based on the structural-logical approach with metaphor considered the result of comparing or contrasting two notions. The importance of taking into account the individual closed-circuit poetic style is highlighted. Based on Vladimir Vinogradov's grouping of symbols according to the means of their objectification, the examples of metaphors involving shifts in meaning are considered. The following cases are dealt with in detail: a symbol with an abstract meaning is included into the synonymous line with concrete meaning; an abstract symbol acquires concrete meaning due to the collocation with a concrete verb or noun; an abstract symbol acquires concrete meaning due to the usage of prepositions of location, often together with verb collocation. All theses are illustrated by authentic literary and poetry quotes. **Keywords:** metaphor; poetic metaphor; semiotics; literary criticism; simile; symbol; metonymy; metaphonymy.

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The poetic metaphor is so multifaceted that attempts to classify it quite often cause a range of difficulties. There are different classifications of metaphor depending on the basis of grouping metaphorical units. In this article we will consider some features of the poetic metaphor using the methodology of contemporary linguists and literary critics [1; 2; 4; 5] and illustrative material from the Metaphors Dictionary [3].

According to the mechanism of metaphorisation (property) both poetic and language metaphors are characterized by the transferring: from a physical characteristics to a psychological one, from a concrete quality to an abstract one, from an inanimate object's characteristic to an animate's one or vice versa – from an animate to inanimate (personification): *His heart's a rock, a metronome, a clock, a foghorn drone of murder* (J. Harrison). *Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues we write in water* (W. Shakespeare). *The sea's white claws still*

*flung their eight fathoms to have my blood* (R. P. Warren).

According to the novelty and surprise effect of comparison (contrast) poetic metaphors can be defined as dead metaphors and live (original) ones. According to morphological representation, there are noun (nominative), verb, adjective and adverbial metaphors.

Depending on the correlation of the key components of the metaphor: source domain, target domain and reasoning (mapping, image schemas). This can be considered structural-logical and cognitive approach. The structural-logical approach manifests four groups of metaphors: the source is the target, the source replaces the target, something makes the target the source, the target itself turns into the source. The idea of understanding one idea in terms of another was well worked out by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* [2]. But if we compare their theory to earlier ideas and works of semiotic schools, and even more –

ancient works on metaphor – we will see, that it is just the focus of qualifying the metaphor has shifted from describing what it is used to define to how actually the process of deciphering metaphor goes. Contemporary research goes even further stating that cognitive models in language (target – domain models) can correlate with neural mappings in the brain which actually is another example of cognitive metaphor proving the tendency of humans to deal with the unknown in terms of well-known, subject matters.

The study of poetry is quite a challenging process, mostly due to the difficulties caused by specificity of each poet's individual style as a closed circuit of linguistic means [4, p. 369]. A critic's representation of a poets' works is supposed to be "precise and creative at the same time, ... a critic, being a scientist, is still a poet" [5, p. 551].

Vladimir Vinogradov pays attention to the antinomy of the contemporary literary criticism and scientific approach to literature facts. He claims that "every classification is static, it is only coexisting elements that can be classified" [4, p. 370], thus poetry should be relieved from its mechanical attachment to different traditions and should be neither explained nor judged within them. Linguistic study of contemporary poetry should begin with an intensive analysis of the individual closed-circuit system of linguistic means.

It is considered, that to analyse the individual closed-circuit poetic style, Ferdinand de Saussure's principle can be adjusted: the language is the system, all parts of which must be considered in their synchronous connection. For the contemporary literary criticism, it is "much more valuable to thoroughly study one element in an individual microcosm, than leaping around the whole poetics of the contemporary author" [4, p. 370].

Dealing with metaphorical meanings in poetry, Vladimir Vinogradov claims that it is the context that initiates the search of metaphorical meaning in phrases and outside events as they are "attached to emotion symbols" [4, p. 406]. The scientist considers that the aim of a simile is to create new semantic nuances around the whole system of the sentence. That is why the feeling of novelty of

the unusual and unexpected naming of a thing with another thing's name is particular for the figure of speech. And the next step is the search for "an excuse" [4, p. 409] – the explanation of the similarity of the two things involved in the figure.

The similes, in their turn, especially those involving phrasal parallelism, can merge with the primary flow of speech (in the dynamic course of speech) thus creating metaphors. In this relation, Vladimir Vinogradov enumerates such notions as "playing metaphorical riddles" and "revitalizing (raising) the dead metaphor" as well as claims that a metaphor reflects "an individual's creative approach to subjective contemplation of poetical visions" [4, p. 422–427].

Describing the process of metaphorisation based on comparison, the scientist pays attention to the adverb as a specific form of "prefixation" of qualifiers or actions. The adverb can create complex namings of adjectives and adverbs with contrast-neutralising or inter-tension relationship of the components, as well as it can bring in unexpected emotional nuances into a verb action representation. In the following lines the adverb brings in an unexpected nuance to the verb action: *Where thoughts serenely sweet express, how pure, how dear their dwelling place (G. Byron). Learning sleeps and snores in libraries, but wisdom is everywhere, wide awake, on tiptoes (J. Billings).*

As for semantic variation of habitual symbols, Vladimir Vinogradov manifests four groups of symbols according to the means of their objectification [2, p. 401]. The first case is when a symbol with an abstract meaning is included into the synonymous line with concrete meaning: *The child's toys and the old man's reasons are the fruits of the two seasons (W. Blake). How dull it is to pause, to make an end, to rust unburnished, not to shine in use, as though to breathe were life! (Lord A. Tennyson).* In the last example, the first two verbs – to pause, to make an end – are used in direct meaning, while the last two – in figurative meaning.

The second group of metaphors appears when an abstract symbol acquires concrete meaning due to the collocation with a con-

crete verb or noun: *Some beams of Wit on other souls may fall (J. Dryden). Tyrants fall in every foe! Liberty's in every blow! (R. Burns). My heart's in the Highlands chasing the deer (R. Burns).* In this example we witness a metaphor based on personification. Moreover, it is not a simple metaphor, but so called metaphonymy [1] as it represents a merger of a metaphor (heart is a hunter) and a metonymy (heart as a part (organ) representing the whole person), at the same time, as metaphonymies usually do, this one involves a symbolic meaning with interwoven metaphoric and metonymy references – the heart is the symbol of emotions, a container of emotions.

And finally, the third group is that where an abstract symbol acquires concrete meaning due to the usage of prepositions of location, often together with verb collocation. A combination of emotion symbols with the names of their bearers due to location prepositions in in the following excerpts: *Each day the trumpet soundeth in my ear, It's echo in my heart (G. Byron). O! Too much folly is it, .. To hazard all our lives in one small boat (W. Shakespeare).* The last example also applies a metaphonymy: metaphor of putting lives (abstract notion) into a concrete container (boat) merges with a metonymy – lives here mean people.

So, as we can see, each metaphor in poetry manifests a certain structure, one part of which is represented in word-image which can be a word-long or make up a whole phrase. Poetic metaphor, in contrast to the language metaphor, is rarely represented by

one word as the explicit existence of two objects – source and target – are necessary to create a novel image based on an unexpected comparison. Thus, a poetic metaphor usually emerges and is interpreted in a sort of individual microcosm involving a poet's personal vision of reality and linguistic means of its exteriorization.

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