國立臺灣大學外國語文學系

碩士論文

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

College of Liberal Arts

National Taiwan University

Master Thesis

隱喻的存有學：

以鄧恩、華茲華斯、及史帝文斯為例

The Ontology of Metaphor:

With Examples from John Donne, William Wordsworth, and Wallace Stevens

陳韋翰

Wei-Han Chen

指導教授：齊東耿

Advisor: Duncan McColl Chesney, Ph.D.

中華民國 102 年 8 月

August 2013

Acknowledgment

For Prof. Chesney, who guides me with wisdom and patience,

for Kate and Meg, who tolerate me,

and for my parents, with love.

Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore the ontological potential and epistemological status of metaphor by probing into several theories of metaphor and reading some poems of John Donne, William Wordsworth, and Wallace Stevens. The thesis is mainly based on I. A. Richards' and Max Black's interaction theory of metaphor, which asserts that metaphor is the unifying interaction between tenor and vehicle, and on Paul Ricoeur's semantic theory that integrates Kant's schematic theory in order to illustrate metaphor's world-constructing ability. The thesis discusses three generic exceptions to the interaction theory—the distanciation between tenor and vehicle in Donne, the non-impertinent metaphors and the reversibility between tenor and vehicle in Wordsworth—as a way to engage with the theory. On the other hand, the discussions on Stevens mainly serve the interaction theory, trying to provide an effective account and examples for the concept of interaction.

The thesis examines in the chapter on Donne the distanciation between tenor and vehicle, the relation between metaphor and absence, and the phenomenon of "cumulative metaphor" through which a series of metaphors becomes a "real" presence. On the other hand, the chapter on Wordsworth discusses the union between tenor and vehicle into one single word, the relation between metaphor and symbol, the metaphor's resistance to *Aufhebung,* and the metaphor's status as a border being. The chapter on Stevens surveys his binary motive for metaphor—to undo outworn metaphors for a world uncreated and to weave a new supreme fiction with fresh metaphors. The chapter also examines the connection between Stevens' notion of decreation, metonymy, and an anti-metaphor tendency in Stevens, as well as the transition from the metonymic world of decreation to the metaphorical world of revelation in his poetry.

Keywords: metaphor, ontology, John Donne, William Wordsworth, Wallace Stevens

摘要

　　本論文試圖閱讀分析鄧恩（John Donne）、華茲華斯（William Wordsworth）、及史帝文斯（Wallace Stevens）等人詩作，以探討隱喻在存有學及知識論中可能扮演的角色。本論文的理論基礎立足於理查茲（I. A. Richards）及布萊克（Max Black）的互動理論，以及呂格爾（Paul Ricoeur）的語義學和詮釋學理論。互動理論以為隱喻是由喻體（tenor）和喻依（vehicle）兩者間的互動關係建構，而呂格爾的理論納入康德的先驗理論，以試圖闡明隱喻建構世界（觀）的可能性。耙梳理論之外，本論文也嘗試於閱讀詩作的同時，討論三種「反例隱喻」—鄧恩隱喻中喻體與喻依間的疏離、華茲華斯的「直述隱喻」（non-impertinent metaphors）、及其喻體和喻依間的可逆性（reversibility）。另一方面，史帝文斯的隱喻則可為互動理論提供適切的例證。

　　於閱讀鄧恩的章節中，本論文試圖探討喻體和喻依間的疏離、隱喻與不在場（absence）間的關係、以及一「堆疊隱喻」（accumulative metaphor）之現象，即隱喻透過積累堆疊而成一「現實」之存在。於討論華茲華斯的章節中，將處理喻體及喻依如何於一單詞中結合的問題、隱喻與象徵的關係、隱喻對棄存揚升（Aufhebung）之抵抗、以及隱喻如何作為「邊界存有」（border being）而存在。於分析史帝文斯的章節中，本論文嘗試探討史帝文斯的二元隱喻動機—消除陳腐隱喻以滌淨老舊的世界（觀）以及編織一新的極致想像世界。本章同時也處理換喻及消弭（decreation）概念如何在史帝文斯詩作中一反隱喻時期扮演要角，以及史帝文斯如何從換喻及消弭轉換到隱喻與啟示（revelation）的想像世界。

關鍵字：隱喻、存有學、鄧恩、華茲華斯、史帝文斯

Table of Contents

Chapter One: The Ontology of Metaphor—An Introduction

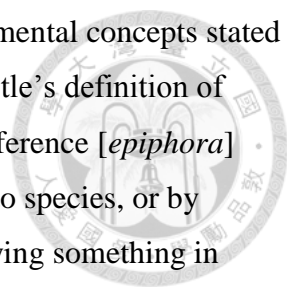"But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor."

—Aristotle

Since Aristotle and Quintilian, the study of metaphor had been in an extended dormancy until the mid-twentieth century when narratology and structuralism in continental Europe, especially in France, and analytic philosophy and cognitive science in England and the U.S. revived the studies of metaphor.[1] This thesis follows the tradition of the semantic twist accounts of metaphor, which assert that metaphor is a "twist," a turning away from the current usages and associations. The most significant advocates of the semantic twist accounts are the transference theory and the interaction theory of metaphor, both of which will be introduced shortly with Aristotle and I. A. Richards respectively, and I will attempt to prove their theories to be compatible with each other despite their divergence. Shortly before coming to my center of theories—Paul Ricoeur's semantic theory of metaphor—, the counterpart of the semantic twist account—the substitution theory—will also be discussed with Roman Jakobson, in order to demonstrate, from the other side of the coin, the validity of the semantic twist account. On the other hand, the main theoretical focus of the thesis lies in Ricoeur's Aristotelian and Kantian orientation of the semantic twist theory, which offers a profound insight into an ontology of metaphor. The discussions of the theories will be applied to the readings of the literatures in the following chapters, in which some elements not often discussed in the theories mentioned will be proposed as an occasion to engage with or even augment the theories.

Aristotle and the Transference Theory

Umberto Eco remarks that, "of the thousands and thousands of pages written about

---

[1] For the European studies on metaphor, see Pierre Fontanier's *Les Figures du discours*, Emile Benveniste's *Problems in General Linguistics*, Paul Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor*, Jacque Derrida's "White Mythology" and "The Retrait of Metaphor," Jacque Lacan's "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," Paul de Man's "The Epistemology of Metaphor," Umberto Eco's "The Scandal of Metaphor: Metaphorology and Semiotics" and others. For the English and American studies on metaphor, see I. A. Richards' *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Max Black's *Models and Metaphor* and "More about Metaphor," Monroe Beardsley's "Metaphorical Twist" and "Metaphorical Senses," Philip Wheelwright's *Metaphor and Reality*, Nelson Goodman's *Languages of Art*, John Searle's "Metaphor," Lakoff and Jonson's *Metaphors We Live By* and *More Than Cool Reason*, and others.

metaphor, few add anything of substance to the first two or three fundamental concepts stated by Aristotle" (217-8). Aristotle is therefore a good starting point. Aristotle's definition of metaphor states: "Metaphor is the application of an alien name by transference [*epiphora*] either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or by analogy, that is, proportion" (*Poetics,* 1457b). Metaphor is basically saying something in terms of another. Several implications could be drawn from this classical definition. First, Aristotle's is a transference theory, in which a metaphor transfers a name to an unfamiliar field. Further, the transference is conceptually productive, since it grafts the field of reference belonging to the name transferred onto something else, whose own field of reference is thereby expanded. Metaphor is not merely decorative but capable of producing new meanings and knowledge, and therefore Aristotle remarks that, "it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh. When the poet calls old age "a withered stalk," he conveys a new idea, a new fact, to us by means of the general notion of bloom, which is common to both things" (*Rhetoric*, 1410b). A metaphor produces new knowledge by boundary-crossing, transferring something we know to something we are not so familiar with, which anticipates the contemporary theory of cognitive metaphor (Kirby, 1997; Eco, 1983; Ricoeur, 2003; Lakoff and Johnson, 2003).[2] The fact that metaphor can convey new knowledge is of the highest importance, for metaphor can serve as an epistemological outlook through which we perceive and describe reality, and insofar as the reality is always under a certain description (if we accept the phenomenological position), metaphor can also be an effective ontological foundation.

The second implication is that metaphor is deviation and impertinence. The name that metaphors transfers "belongs to something else" and is therefore an "alien [*allotrios*] name," which is opposed to "the ordinary" or *kurion* (*Poetics*, 1457b; Ricoeur, 2003: 19). In other words, metaphor is an anomaly to which codes of speech cannot be applied directly without a twist. By *kurion* Aristotle does not mean the normal but "the ordinary," "the current," or the "familiarity and typicality of usage" (Kirby, 539, n69), which implies the idea of speech community in which a metaphor can be seen as a deviation from a name's common usages. Related to the idea of deviation, the third implication is that metaphor is a borrowing—a

---

[2] The cognitive approach posits that metaphor contributes to the formation of conceptual framework, and metaphor is a basic cognitive unit or schema through which we grasp meaningful information from sensations. The process of cognition through metaphor is a mapping based on transference: metaphor maps an idea from a source domain (usually a familiar domain) to a target domain (usually an unfamiliar domain) (e.g. "life is a journey"). See Lakoff and Jonson's *Metaphors We Live By* and *More Than Cool Reason*, and others.

metaphor borrows "an alien name" that "belongs to something else" (*Poetics*, 1457b; Ricoeur, 2003: 18).

Finally, Aristotle's definition also draws a typology of metaphor. The four kinds of metaphor are: a). the transfer from genus to species, b). the transfer from species to genus, c). the transfer from species to species, and d). analogy.[3] However, the typology seems to smuggle other figures under the rubrics of metaphor. Eco, among others, points out in "The Scandal of Metaphor" that the first two kinds of metaphor are actually synecdoche (the transfer from a part of something to the whole or *vice versa*) and the third kind is metonymy (the transference according to contiguity). As for the fourth kind, the analogy, Aristotle explains that: "Analogy or proportion is when the second term is to the first as the fourth to the third. We may then use the fourth for the second, or the second for the fourth…as old age is to life so is evening to day, we can say either 'evening is old age' or 'old age is evening'" (*Poetics*, 1457b). However, Monroe Beardsley in his "The Metaphorical Twist" denies the idea that tenor and vehicle can be reversible (e.g. "evening is old age" and "old age is evening"), for "this man is a lion" is apparently different from "that lion is a man" (297). Beardsley therefore states: "That is just the difference between a metaphor and Aristotle's proportional analogy, or relational simile—even if Aristotle himself thought the difference was not great" (297).

What then is metaphor proper if Aristotle's definition of metaphor is so comprehensive to encompass synecdoche, metonymy, analogy, catachresis,[4] and simile.[5] For Eco and Beardsley alike, there is a generic confusion in Aristotle's definition. However, the most important thing for Aristotle is that metaphor is not just one figure among others, but the *epiphora* or *the transference as such*, which is the general principle of transference common

---

[3] Aristotle himself provides some examples: "Thus from genus to species, as: 'There lies my ship'; for lying at anchor is a species of lying. From species to genus, as: 'Verily ten thousand noble deeds hath Odysseus wrought'; for ten thousand is a species of large number, and is here used for a large number generally. From species to species, as: 'With blade of bronze drew away the life,' and 'Cleft the water with the vessel of unyielding bronze.' Here, *arusai*, 'to draw away,' is used for *tamein*, 'to cleave,' and *tamein*, again for *arusai*— each being a species of taking away. Analogy or proportion is when the second term is to the first as the fourth to the third. We may then use the fourth for the second, or the second for the fourth. Sometimes too we qualify the metaphor by adding the term to which the proper word is relative. Thus the cup is to Dionysus as the shield to Ares. The cup may, therefore, be called 'the shield of Dionysus,' and the shield 'the cup of Ares.' Or, again, as old age is to life, so is evening to day. Evening may therefore be called, 'the old age of the day,' and old age, 'the evening of life,' or, in the phrase of Empedocles, 'life's setting sun'" (*Poetics*, 1457b).
[4] "For some of the terms of the proportion there is at times no word in existence; still the metaphor may be used. For instance, to scatter seed is called sowing: but the action of the sun in scattering his rays is nameless. Still this process bears to the sun the same relation as sowing to the seed. Hence the expression of the poet 'sowing the god-created light'" (*Poetics*, 1457b).
[5] "The simile also is a metaphor; the difference is but slight…. Similes are useful in prose as well as in verse; but not often, since they are of the nature of poetry. They are to be employed just as metaphors are employed, since they are really the same thing" (*Rhetoric*, 1406b).

to all tropes and figures (Ricoeur, 2003: 280). Several modern theorists support such an inclusive idea of metaphor, for instance, Pierre Fontanier's, Nelson Goodman's, and Gilbert Ryle's conceptions of metaphor, among other modern theorists of metaphor. Fontanier claims in *Les Figures du discours* that metaphor is "presenting an idea under the sign of another idea that is more striking or better known*"* (99). Likewise, in *Language of Art*, Goodman defines metaphor as a process in which "[a] label along with others constituting a schema is in effect detached from the home realm of that schema and applied for the sorting and organizing of an alien realm" (72). Ryle's idea of "category mistake" similarly defines metaphor as the "presentation of facts belonging to one category in the idioms appropriate to another" (*The Concept of Mind*, 8). The conception of metaphor as a transfer or *epiphora* has always remained influential, and we will also see how the notion of transfer works with the idea of interaction later.

Roman Jakobson and the Substitution Theory

Quite different from the transference theory, the substitution theory has its origin in the comparison theory, which claims that a metaphor compares one term to another and that the comparison, to be reasonable and fair, must be based on the commonly observed similarity between the compared terms (e.g. "her eyes are glistening stars"). In other words, similarity precedes metaphor. As a result, metaphor cannot produce any new information or knowledge because whatever it says has already been articulated, and the metaphor only says it rather beautifully. This is the traditional Quintilian stance that metaphor is merely a rhetorical device rather than something capable of becoming a conceptual guidance. On the other hand, the substitution theory similarly supposes that a metaphor substitutes one term for another similar term, and the similarity has also been recognized already. The major difference between the two theories is that a substitution-metaphor requires no two-term comparison structure (e.g. "the ship *ploughs* the sea" instead of "the *ship* is a *plow* working on the sea").

The most influential modern proponent of the substitution theory is Roman Jakobson. In the seminal "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," he distinguishes two poles of language—the metonymic pole (operating by the principle of contiguity and combination) and the metaphoric pole (based on the principle of similarity and substitution). The two poles correspond to the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of the

Saussurean linguistics. Hence, metaphor is defined as the paradigmatic selection and substitution between similar equivalents, whereas metonymy is determined by the syntagmatic combination. The definition is both necessary and sufficient: almost every paradigmatic selection and substitution becomes a metaphor, and almost every syntagmatic combination a metonym. Jakobson's dichotomization of metaphor against metonymy and the categorization of literary genres according to the dichotomy have been very influential:[6]

> The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the so-called "realistic" trend, which belongs to an intermediary stage between the decline of romanticism and the rise of symbolism and is opposed to both.
>
> (1971: 91)

Moreover, the dichotomy of metaphor and metonymy has been overgeneralized and extended to encompass the cognitive, psychological, and behavioral operations in general.[7]

However, Jakobson's substitution theory and the overgeneralized dichotomy between metaphor and metonymy have also suffered serious criticisms. Ricoeur provides a profound insight for us. First of all, he assumes that the dichotomization between metaphor and metonymy actually derives from de Saussure's psychologizing of rhetorical figures, linking metaphor and metonymy to the psychological principles of resemblance and contiguity (2003: 155).[8] In other words, linguistics and rhetoric are confused with certain psychological

---

[6] The dichotomy had enjoyed its vogue especially in the 70's and 80's. Numerous works were under Jakobson's influence, for example, Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*, Lacan's *The Language of the Self* and "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," Claude Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*, Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading*, David Lodge's *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature*, among others.

[7] For example, in his "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," Lacan employs the dichotomy to explain two major mechanisms of the unconscious—displacement and substitution. Moreover, metonymy and metaphor have not only become the operating principles of the unconscious but also been related to a psychoanalytic ontology: while both metaphor and metonymy are tropes about lack, metonymy displaces lack with relatively insignificant things based on the logic of contiguity, whereas metaphor replaces lack with something else based on the principle of similarity. Also, metaphor is an imaginary anchorage (a *point de capiton*) that halts temporarily the floating of metonymic chain and helps the subject to have a relatively stable though illusionary imagination. See also Claude Lévi-Strauss' *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism,* where he applies the paradigmatic axis to the selection of similar mythical elements and the syntagmatic axis to the actual combination of a myth, and *The Savage Mind*, in which the metonymic modern society is distinguished from the metaphoric and mythical society. In Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading*, metaphor is related to an authoritative interpretive structure, while metonymy is the antithesis of the metaphor-mimesis, since it is about contiguity and therefore randomness and fragment.

[8] Freud also connects metaphor and metonymy with some psychological mechanisms. For Freud, metaphor

phenomena. More importantly, Ricoeur supposes that the dichotomization between the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic is the consequence of a larger separation between semiotics and semantics, that is, the separation between the word level and the sentence level,[9] but a proper definition of metaphor should include the both instead (2003: 207). Roland Barthes also notes that:

> any metaphoric series is a syntagmatized paradigm, and any metonymy a syntagm which is frozen and absorbed in a system; in metaphor, selection becomes contiguity, and in metonymy contiguity becomes a field to select from. It therefore seems that it is always on the frontiers of the two planes that creation has a chance to occur.
>
> (*Elements of Semiology*, 88)

What Jakobson does by associating metaphor with substitution—one word for another—locates metaphor only in semiotic process, without regarding properly its semantic potential in sentence level.

On the other hand, despite the criticisms, Jakobson also presents some qualities that distinguish him from the traditional substitution theory. When describing the substitutions employed by the aphasic suffering the contiguity disorder (i.e. the aphasia characterized by the loss of syntactic ability and the extensive use of metaphors), such as the substitutions of spyglass for microscope and of fire for gaslight, Jakobson states that they are "QUASI-METAPHORIC EXPRESSIONS…since, in contradiction to rhetoric or poetic metaphors, they present no *deliberate transfer of meaning*" (1971: 86, italics mine). In other words, a full-fledged metaphor should possess two qualities—the paradigmatic substitution *and* the transfer of meaning. The relapse into the Aristotelian transference theory indicates either that Jakobson confuses the two theories or that his theory to a certain degree deviates from the classical substitution theory and believes in the metaphor's ability to generate new meaning and knowledge by transference. One reason that renders the latter implication more plausible is that the diminishment in metaphoricity in the "quasi metaphoric" substitutions is accompanied with the aphasic's loss of syntactic ability to compose a complete sentence.

---

means identification and symbolism, while metonymy means displacement and condensation (Jakobson following Freud's distinction) (S.E., XIV, 186). For Lacan, however, metaphor means condensation while metonymy displacement.

[9] Ricoeur's distinction between semiotics and semantics is adopted from Emile Benveniste, who asserts that semiotics dwells in word level while semantics in sentence level (Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, 104-10; Ricoeur, 2003: 76-82). In other words, every metaphorical word is meaningful only when it is in a sentence.

Without being put into a relation with other words in a sentence, a word cannot veritably substitute for another word or initiate any transference. Perhaps more or less conscious of the consequence of separating the paradigmatic axis from the syntagmatic axis, Jakobson fuses the two in his famous definition of the poetic function: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (1960: 358). I believe that the interaction and intersection between the two axes should apply not only to the poetic (not necessarily poetry) but also to an essential qualification of metaphor as well. Semantics and semiotics should work together, and words acquire their meanings only in a sentence. The relation is like that between "focus" and "frame" in Max Black's terminology, in which a metaphorical focus (a word) occurs in a non-metaphorical frame (a sentence). Hence, the substitution theory needs not be disregarded provided that the word level and the sentence level are integrated.

I. A. Richards, Max Black, and the Interaction Theory

I. A. Richards proposes the classical definition of the interaction theory in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*: "when we use a metaphor, we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (95). The "two thoughts of different things" are tenor and vehicle: the tenor is something which a vehicle applies to and predicates (e.g. "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players; / They have their exits and their entrances"). The metaphor's meaning is the "resultant of their interaction," which cannot be exclusively ascribed to either: "the vehicle is not normally a mere embellishment of a tenor which is otherwise unchanged by it but that vehicle and tenor in co-operation give a meaning of more varied powers than can be ascribed to either" (100). Insofar as the metaphorical meaning emerges only *after* the interaction, the interaction theory avers that, contrary to the comparison theory, metaphor in fact *creates similarity*. Max Black remarks that: "It would be more illuminating in some of these cases to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing" (1962: 37). Hence, the interaction theory is a three-term theory: tenor, vehicle, and the mediating third term—interaction.

Insofar as the similarity between tenor and vehicle does not preexist the metaphor that brings the two together, the relation between the tenor and vehicle is characterized by tension

and dissimilarity. In fact, the interaction theory emphasizes much the importance of the tension in dissimilarity between tenor and vehicle, as Richards states: "When Hamlet uses the word *crawling* [when speaking to Polonius] its force comes not only from whatever resemblances to vermin it brings in but at least equally from the differences that resist and control the influence of their resemblance" (127). Aristotle also evaluates highly the role the dissimilarity plays in metaphor: "a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars" (*Poetics* 1459a). The tension in dissimilarity, or "the semantic clash" in Ricoeur's words (2003: 229), is what motivates the interaction between tenor and vehicle, since the interaction serves as the mediating third term that reconciles the clash between tenor and vehicle. The interaction is, to borrow Dr. Johnson's comment on Donne, a kind of *discordia concors* achieved between tenor and vehicle.

Following Jean Cohen's idea that the goal of poetry (as well as the goal of any poetic metaphor) is to establish a new semantic pertinence to counteract the deviation or impertinence it brings about,[10] Ricoeur states that metaphorical meaning "is not the enigma itself, the semantic clash pure and simple, but the solution of the enigma, the inauguration of the new semantic pertinence" (2003: 254). Moreover, "[t]he force of the interaction theory lies in keeping together the two stages of the process, production and reduction of deviation [i.e. the semantic clash violating and deviating from the code of speech], on the same level, namely that of predication" (Ricoeur, 2003: 182). Hence, the metaphorical resemblance achieved between tenor and vehicle is what metaphor creates through the interaction to reconcile the two into a more or less unified and harmonious relation.

On the other hand, Max Black is also a great contributor to the interaction theory for his illustrations on the process of interaction, as well as his theoretical distinction from, or we may say his supplement to, Richards. Black states in *Models and Metaphors* that "[t]he metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject," the principal subject being Black's term for tenor while the subsidiary subject for vehicle (44-5). Black further explains the process of interaction with the concept of "the system of associated commonplaces" (1962: 40). For example, in the metaphor "man is a wolf," the subsidiary subject's (i.e. the wolf's) system of associated commonplaces is evoked (e.g. being predatory, fierce, hungry, etc.) to construct a "corresponding system of implications about the principal

---

[10] Cohen writes in *Structure du langage poétique*: "The poet plays upon the message in order to change the language. The poet changes the language in order to play upon the message…. If the poem transgresses the code of speech, it is in order that the language re-establish it by transforming it" (115; in Ricoeur 2003: 182).

subject" (e.g. man is predatory, fierce, hungry, etc.) (1962: 41). Metaphorically speaking, the principal subject is seen through the "filter" or the "screen" of the subsidiary subject[11] (Black, 1962: 39, 41).

However, the notion of the system of associated commonplaces is severely criticized, for the idea suggests that metaphor is no more than the tenor's platitudinous associations and connotations chosen and organized by the vehicle, which would deny metaphor the ability to produce new meanings other than the already existent associations (Ricoeur, 2003: 102-3; Hausman, 37-8). Hence, Black revises his formulation and downplays the idea of "system" while maintaining the idea of speech community years later in "More about Metaphor" in order to emphasize that metaphor "may introduce a novel and nonplatitudinous 'implication complex'" (28):

---

[11] The paradox of every metaphor theory is that it is always metaphorically stated, such as Aristotle's *epiphora*, Richards' tenor, vehicle and interaction, Black's filter and screen, Ricoeur's predicative assimilation and metaphorical discourse, etc. Derrida comments on this phenomenon:

> metaphor remains, in all its essential characteristics, a classical philosopheme, a metaphysical concept. It is therefore enveloped in the field that a general metaphorology of philosophy would seek to dominate. Metaphor has been issued from a network of philosophemes which themselves correspond to tropes or to figures, and these philosophemes are contemporaneous to or in systematic solidarity with these tropes or figures. This stratum of "tutelary" tropes, the layer of "primary" philosophemes (assuming that the quotation marks will serve as a sufficient precaution here), cannot be dominated. It cannot dominate itself, cannot be dominated by what it itself has engendered, has made to grow on its own soil, supported on its own base. Therefore, it [the stratum] gets "carried away" each time that one of its products—here, the concept of metaphor—attempts in vain to include under its own law the totality of the field to which the product belongs.
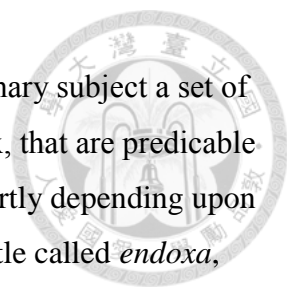>
> (*Margins of Philosophy*, 219)

In other words, since the concept of metaphor is a classical philosopheme which in turn is derived from rhetorical tropes or figures, the concept of metaphor cannot really dominate or explain its origin—the "stratum of 'tutelary' tropes, the lay of 'primary' philosophemes"—without being tautological. The concept of metaphor and any metaphorical theory cannot but be metaphorical. In the same vein, Paul de Man's "The Epistemology of Metaphor" examines several "concepts" that the philosophers have deeply relied on, such as "foundation" and "sensory data," and points our their origins in metaphors.

On the other hand, concerning the issue of concept formation, dead metaphor, and theory of metaphor, Ricoeur thus responds:

> Applying these remarks on the formation of the concept in its schema to the concept of metaphor is enough to dispel the paradox of the metaphoricity of all definitions of metaphor. *Speaking metaphorically of metaphor is not at all circular, since the act of positing the concept proceeds dialectically from metaphor itself.* Thus, when Aristotle defines metaphor as the *epiphora* of the word, the expression *epiphora* is qualified *conceptually* by its insertion in a network of intersignifications, where the notion of *epiphora* is bounded by the primary concepts *phusis*, logos, *onoma*, *semainein*, etc. *Epiphora* is thus *separated from its metaphorical status and constituted as a proper meaning, although "the whole surface of [this discourse]," as Derrida says, "is worked by metaphor."*
>
> (2003: 346-7, emphasis mine)

In other words, although Ricoeur agrees with Derrida that almost everything, including concepts, arises from metaphor, it does not mean that everything is metaphorical. Some dead metaphors can become conceptual, e.g. "life is a *journey*" (we *always* conceive life as going toward a goal); "you are *wasting* time" (the objectification of time is *always* the case). The distinction and discontinuity between metaphor and concept should be preserved.

The metaphorical utterance works by "projecting upon" the primary subject a set of "associated implications," comprised in the implicative complex, that are predicable of the secondary subject…. [T]he secondary subject in a way partly depending upon the context of metaphorical use, determines a set of what Aristotle called *endoxa*, current opinions shared by members of a certain speech-community.

(28)

Apparently, while the primary/secondary subjects are the alternatives to the principal/subsidiary subjects, the system of associated commonplaces becomes a more moderate yet general "associated implications" concerning the *endoxa* (or by implication the *kurion*), and the prized third-term interaction—"implicative complex"—resurfaces rather eminently.

On the other hand, a terminological difference between Black and Richards reflects their theoretical distinction. Black employs "frame" and "focus" in place of Richards' tenor and vehicle (1962: 27). The focus is the word possessing a metaphorical twist while the frame is the rest of the sentence in which the focus takes place (e.g. "the chairman *ploughed* through the discussion") (1962: 27). The terminological shift is in fact an expansion of the metaphorical structure, since it allows metaphor to be more than "X is Y" or "X is like Y,"[12] that is, exempting metaphor from an explicit tenor-vehicle structure. It can be "the chairman *ploughed* the discussion," or "Look, love, what *envious* streaks / Do *lace* the severing clouds in yonder East / Night's *candles* are burnt out, and *jocund* day / *Stands tiptoe* on the misty mountain tops" (*Romeo and Juliet*). The structural expansion also helps to alleviate

---

[12] The relation between metaphor and simile has been long debated. This thesis adopts the Aristotelian stance, considering simile a variation of metaphor and capable of producing new knowledge just like metaphor. It is a radical position to take, however. *Propositionally* and *literally*, "X is Y" (e.g. Juliet is the sun) certainly differs from "X is like Y" (e.g. Juliet is like the sun). Identification is certainly different from resemblance. Moreover, simile is always true propositionally and literally, since we can always find some grounds on which X resembles Y, whereas metaphor is usually propositionally and literally false. Yet, *metaphorically*, it can be *true* to say that "Juliet is the sun," even true in the sense of identification.

Moreover, as Ricoeur points out, the metaphorical "is" always contains "is not" and "is like" (i.e. to say "Juliet is the sun" is also to say "Juliet is like the sun" and "Juliet is not the sun") (Ricoeur, 2003: 6). Metaphor is the tension between identity and resemblance/difference, and making a metaphor always involves making a simile as well, and making a simile also implies making a metaphor. Ricoeur takes this position to extremes by attaching the "like" or "as" of the simile to the metaphorical "is": "'To be like/as' must be treated as a metaphorical modality of the copula itself; the 'like/as' is not just the comparative term among all the terms, but is included in the verb *to be*, whose force it alters. In other words, the 'like/as' must be brought alongside the copula, as in 'her cheeks *are-like* roses'. In this way, we would remain faithful to the tradition of Aristotle" (2003: 293, emphasis original). The verb *to be* in metaphor has to be understood as the copula in general—as whatever that connects a predication to the predicated—and therefore even if a metaphor does not contain any verb *to be*, the abovementioned is applicable as well.

Beardsley's concern that Richards' tenor-vehicle structure may prompt an interpreter of metaphor to make up a farfetched vehicle when there is no obvious vehicle present and therefore misinterprets the metaphor.[13] We may say that the tenor is enlarged to a context in which a vehicle can be recognized as metaphorical: the focus-metaphor is a semantically impertinent or incongruent element in a relatively predictable context. To carry it on further, metaphor can be an anomalous knot existing in a metonymic context, a metaphorical imposition upon the axis of combination, just like Barthes' "syntagmatized paradigm" (88) or Jakobson's poetic function that "projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (1960: 358). In fact this kind of interpretation of metaphor as a peculiar point within a metonymic context has been developed in Lacan,[14] among others.

Moreover, Black points to an epistemological and ontological possibility of metaphor. In "More about Metaphor," he affirms the metaphor's creativity with an analogy: a metaphor can disclose to us a fresh view of reality just as a modern camera reveals to us for the first time a galloping horse in slow motion (37-8). He goes on further: "if one believes that the world is necessarily a world *under a certain description*—or a world seen from a certain perspective. Some metaphors can create such a perspective" (1993: 38, emphasis original). Metaphor is an epistemological vantage point on which we perceive reality, and insomuch as objective reality is partly dependent upon the subjective perceptions and descriptions (if we accept the phenomenological stance), metaphor is also an ontological foundation on which we contribute to the construction of the world. In Ricoeur's words, metaphor is a "*heuristic fiction*" that helps "redescribe reality" for us (2003: 282, emphasis original).

On the other hand, however, Carl Hausman suspects that this kind of creation is not creation *per se* but is in fact a discovery, since a galloping horse runs in the same way with or without the camera's capture. In other words, for Hausman, Black's is at best an epistemological account, and what a novel metaphor discloses to us becomes simply a preexisting yet unrecognized perspective of reality rather than a world newly created through

---

[13] For example, interpreting these lines of *Julius Caesar*—"Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it, / As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd / If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no"—John Crowe Ransom supposes that the tenor is the blood while the vehicle is a page opening the door, which for Beardsley is rather gratuitous since a "page rushing out of doors" is not exactly or necessarily connected with "rushing out of doors" (295).
[14] See his "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," where metaphor (a *point de capiton*) occurs in a metonymic chain of displacements, and it is metaphor's intervention and grafting that anchors momentarily the metonymic flow and brings about a (imaginary) signification. However, it is important to note that metaphor for Lacan is more about substitution than interaction, since he follows Jakobson's and Freud's model. Yet, his examples of metaphor, such as "love is a pebble laughing in the sun," have been noted to be more akin to the idea of interaction than substitution.

fresh metaphors, and the reality remains unaltered except that we see it differently (Hausman, 37-8). For Hausman, creation is more than a new discovery. However, from a phenomenological point of view, the paradox of metaphor is that creation *is* discovery *and vice versa*, if we are really convinced that the objective world is partly dependent on the subjective conditions: "It would seem that the enigma of metaphorical discourse is that it 'invents' in both senses of the word: what it creates, it discovers; and what it finds, it invents" (Ricoeur, 2003: 283). In other words, we recognize and confirm our invention—our subjective participation in the construction of the world—by discovering it in the world. Ricoeur actually offers a more thorough account on metaphor's epistemology and ontology.

Paul Ricoeur and the Ontology of Metaphor

Developed from the interaction theory and the transference theory, the cornerstone of Ricoeur's theory, expounded in his canonical *The Rule of Metaphor*, is the idea of "predicative assimilation"—the reconcilement coming after the clash between tenor and vehicle or between focus and frame in a predicative relation of metaphor (2003: 350). In "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," Ricoeur explains that:

> I want to underscore a trait of predicative assimilation which may support my contention that the rapprochement [between tenor and vehicle or between frame and focus] characteristic of the metaphorical process offers a typical kinship to Kant's *schematism*. I mean the *paradoxical* character of the predicative assimilation which has been compared by some authors to Ryle's concept of "category mistake," which consists in presenting the facts pertaining to one category in the terms appropriate to another.
>
> (146, emphasis original)

The compact paragraph needs elaborations. Gilbert Ryle's idea has been explained earlier as a modern variant of Aristotle's *epiphora*. On the other hand, a significant and meaningful rapprochement reduces the distance and antithesis between tenor and vehicle and between frame and focus, and it is the counterpart of resemblance: "Resemblance ultimately is nothing else than this rapprochement which reveals a generic kinship between heterogeneous ideas. What Aristotle called the *epiphora* of the metaphor, that is, the transfer of meaning, is nothing else than this move or shift in the logical distance, from the far to the near" (Ricoeur,

1978: 145). Yet the rapprochement or assimilation always preserves the cherished tension in disparity crucial to the interaction theory:

> To see *the like* is to see the same[15] in spite of, and through, the different. This tension between sameness and difference characterizes the logical structure of likeness. Imagination, accordingly, is this *ability* to produce new kinds by assimilation and to produce them not *above* the differences, as in the concept, but in spite of and through the differences. Imagination is this stage in the production of genres where generic kinship has not reached the level of conceptual peace and rest but remains caught in the war between distance and proximity, between remoteness and nearness.
>
> (Ricoeur, 1978: 146-7, emphasis original)

The other issue is Kant's schematism. Kant is known for his attempt to overcome the subjective-objective dualism by claiming that the subjective conditions help organize and construct the objective world. This is not an absolute idealist stance, since he asserts that the material source of objectivity must come from the outside world to verify the subject's perception and understanding. The subject interacts with the world by accommodating empirical sensations to pure concepts, the *a priori* forms of sensibility and categories of understanding through which the subject always experiences and understands the world. Insomuch as the world is always seen through a certain perspective offered by the *a priori* forms and categories, the subject in a sense constructs the world it experiences, and according to Black, "some metaphors can create such a perspective" (1993: 38). But what exactly enables the interaction and accommodation between the *a priori* forms and categories and the *a posteriori* sensations? Kant proposes a mediating third term—the schematism—between the *a prior* and the *a posteriori*, and Ricoeur assumes "a typical kinship" that metaphor's predicative assimilation shares with Kant's schematism, because metaphorical resemblance is also a third-term that enables the rapprochement between tenor/frame and vehicle/focus as well as the production of a new perspective through which we see the world.

Kant explains in *Critique of Pure Reason* that, the schema works by representing and translating the empirical sensation with an image for a pure concept: "This representation of a

---

[15] [my note] Ricoeur follows Aristotle here, suggesting that similarity is a kind of identity, just as simile is a species of metaphor. Ricoeur further refers to Aristotle's *Metaphysics Δ* where he assimilates "the same" into "the similar": "those things are called 'like' which have the same attributes in every respect, and those which have more attributes the same than different, and those whose quality is one; and that which shares with another thing the greater number or the more important of the attributes (each of them one of two contraries) in respect of which things are capable of altering, is like that other thing" (1018a15–18).

13

universal procedure of imagination in providing an image for a concept, I entitle the schema of this concept" (A140, B179-80). Imagination in Kant is usually more about image making, or more precisely, schematic-image-making, and the imagination usually understood as resourcefulness and creativeness comes next. A schematic image differs from a simple empirical image (e.g. a reflection of a car projected on the retina) by the fact that the object a schema imagines is not an actual, specific object but a possible object or an object in general:

> It is schemata, not [empirical] images of object, which underlie our pure sensible concepts. No [empirical] image could ever be adequate to the concept of a triangle in general. It would never attain that universality of the concept which renders it valid for all triangles, whether right-angled, obtuse-angled, or acute-angled; it would always be limited to a part only of this [empirical] sphere.
>
> (Kant, A140-41, B180)

For example, when someone receives a certain sensation (e.g. when sighting three dots on a paper), it is the schematic image (e.g. a triangle in general) that helps him/her to translate the raw sensation into a processed intuition, so to speak. More importantly, the image a schema produces is meaningful, for it has to speak to the pure concepts, the basic constituents of any meaningful experience or knowledge. In other words, the schematic image is a meaning-guiding image, a kind of verbal icon: "It seems to me that this notion of imagery tied by meaning is in accord with Kant's idea that the schema is a method for constructing images" (Ricoeur 2003: 250).

For Ricoeur, metaphorical resemblance and rapprochement work like the schematism, because a metaphor brings together in a meaningful relation not just the tenor and vehicle but also the conceptual and the non-conceptual (e.g. the semantic clash) without abolishing the differences between them. The process is also an intuitive process as Aristotle asserts: "the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an *intuitive perception* of the similarity in dissimilars" (*Poetics* 1459a, emphasis mine). Most importantly, like the object in general produced through the schema, the metaphorical reference creates a world-revealing perspective for us to perceive and conceive the world.

Furthermore, while a metaphor enables different elements to interact, two schemata can also interact with each other in a metaphor, that is, to borrow from Ryle's concept of category mistake, a metaphor representing an image pertaining to one schema in the terms

appropriate to another. In Kant's theory it is the synthesis of reproduction in imagination, a process in which an intuition is retained (i.e. reproduced in image) and combined with other intuitions to establish imaginatively a new association between images that can "bring about a transition of the mind" (Kant, A100). On the other hand, since Kant's theory is mostly a theory of fusion (e.g. the schematism synthesizes the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*), Ricoeur employs Aristotle's idea of "seeing as"—metaphor being seeing something as something else, which is another expression of the idea of category mistake—to preserve the prized tension in disparity essential to the interaction theory:

> once it is re-interpreted on the basis of "seeing as," the theory of fusion is perfectly compatible with interaction and tension theory. "Seeing X *as* Y" encompasses "X is *not* Y"; seeing time as a beggar is, precisely, to know also that time is not a beggar. The borders of meaning are transgressed but not abolished…. I should say that *fusion* of sense and the imaginary, which is characteristic of "iconized meaning," is the necessary counterpart of a theory of interaction.
>
> (Ricoeur, 2003: 253, emphasis original)

Sustaining the tension in disparity is extremely important, because the tension helps us to pursue the metaphor's "ontological vehemence" without the "ontological naïveté"—a naïve affirmation of the metaphorical "is" that ignores the literal "is not" (e.g. "Juliet *is* the sun"), or on the contrary, a equally naïve denial of the metaphorical "is" as something unreal or untrue (e.g. "Juliet *is not* the sun") (Ricoeur, 2003: 294-300).

Kant also claims that every *a priori* form or category has to be fused with the *a posteriori* sensation in the schematism, or otherwise it is simply empty concept, or worse, fanciful thought.[16] Likewise, for Ricoeur, a metaphor, in order to be ontologically vehement, it has to be both subjective and objective and allows a room for resistance and error (i.e. maintaining the tension between the literal "is not" and the metaphorical "is"). The fact that what a schema represents is a *possible* object or an object *in general* instead of an actual, particular object is therefore very crucial, since what a metaphor produces is also a *possible* perspective through which we see the world. Clive Cazeaux explains it well:

> The [represented] object's status as a possible object in relation to its concept also

---

[16] "Categories, therefore, without schemata are only functions of the understanding necessary for concepts, but do not themselves represent any object" (Kant, A147).

forestalls any charge of formularity which may be made against Hausman or Ricoeur. The objectivity of a metaphor, for Ricoeur, derives from its primary subject being a component in *a play of meaning* [i.e. in the semantic clash and tension] *which entertains the actualities and potentialities* introduced by novel predication…. The [metaphor's] creation of an object admits objectivity not through simply accepting any empirical content as an object, but through *being the horizon before which and in virtue of which possible contents may appear.*

(*Metaphor and Continental Philosophy*, 28, emphasis mine)

Hence, Ricoeur points a way to the ontology of metaphor and metaphorical reference by drawing an analogical relation with Kant's transcendental philosophy. Metaphor and imagination produce a kind of schematic image through which the subject perceives and constructs the world, and the metaphorical reference is also a kind of transcendental object or a possible horizon in which the reality is represented and disclosed to us as a world seen through a certain perspective.

After Theories:

In the following chapters, the theories will be applied to the readings of Donne, Wordsworth, and Wallace Stevens, in order to see how each perceives and constructs a world with metaphors. Also attempting to supplement the interaction theory, the thesis will discuss three generic exceptions to the interaction theory—the distanciation between tenor and vehicle in Donne, the non-impertinent metaphors and the reversibility between tenor and vehicle in Wordsworth. I also examine in the chapter on Donne the phenomenon of "cumulative metaphor" through which a series of metaphors becomes a "real" presence. In the chapter on Wordsworth I discuss the resistance of his metaphors to *Aufhebung* and their status as border beings. The chapter on Stevens returns to the traditional interaction theory and surveys Stevens' binary motive for metaphor—to undo outworn metaphors for a world uncreated and to weave a new supreme fiction with fresh metaphors. The chapter also examines how Stevens passes from the metonymic world of decreation to the metaphorical world of revelation.

Chapter Two explores how Donne's Neoplatonic worldview—an ideal world of forms existing in separation from the intelligible world—is displayed through his division between

tenor and vehicle. Located in the tenor are usually the other world of the unchanging and the elevated private world of love, while this world of change and the public world of business are placed in vehicle, and the two separated rhetorical places are also the divided metaphysical spaces. Donne's metaphorics, by relating tenor to vehicle, is then a means to unify the two worlds by producing a correspondence based on the metaphorical resemblance that was held by the Ramist school to be a valid discovery of reality. On the other hand, however, the chapter examines how Donne magnifies the tension between tenor and vehicle to the extent that the vehicle becomes a troping away from rather than a troping into the tenor's world. For example, the various metaphors in "To His Mistress Going to Bed" do not really "reveal" the mistress's body but instead indicate the distance between the mistress herself and the diverse references of the vehicles predicated on her. The distancing split between the tenor and vehicle proves to be a counter example of the interaction theory, which claims that the interaction between tenor and vehicle unifies the two. The motive for Donne's distanciation between tenor and vehicle is to protect the private world of love (elevated as divine and everlasting) from the intrusion of the public world of business (e.g. the second stanza of "The Canonization"). The fact that the world of the unchanging is located at the tenor also suggests another motive of Donne's extravagant vehicles—to mask the lack of this world by continuously covering the tenor with various resemblances-in-apparent-dissimilarities as a way to trope away from the tenor. The chapter mainly analyzes "The Canonization," "A Valediction of Weeping," "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," "To His Mistress Going to Bed," "A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day," and "Batter my heart."

Chapter Three explores Wordsworth's subtle use of metaphor. Unconvinced by the "vehicular metaphors" (whether of Donne's or not), Wordsworth is conscious of the separation between tenor and vehicle in formal metaphors and attempts to overcome it by compressing tenor and vehicle into a single word (therefore a single unified rhetorical and metaphysical space) that can be both literal and metaphorical. For instance, in "There was a boy" Wordsworth writes "[T]he visible scene / Would enter *unawares* into his mind / With all its solemn *imagery*, its rocks, / Its wood, and the uncertain *heaven received* / *into* the *bosom* of the steady lake." While the references of "imagery" and "heaven" can be both literal and metaphorical (i.e. the physical scene/the images reflected by mind; the sky/the divine presence felt), the mind is made analogous to the lake that *reflects* the scene, and the lake is also a mind that *reflects* the scene as well. The lake on which the scene is reflected is both the tenor and vehicle, and both the occasion and reference of the metaphor. Wordsworth's deliberate blurring of tenor and vehicle implies his attempt to undo the

Cartesian schism between the subject and object and express his belief (shared with Coleridge) in the One Life in which man and nature are unified. Something remarkable about Wordsworth's uses of metaphor is that the reversibility between tenor and vehicle becomes possible—the mind is like the lake that reflects the scene *and vice versa*—which is generally excluded from the qualification of metaphor. Also, Wordsworth's use of metaphor usually does not allow a conspicuous semantic clash or impertinence crucial to the interaction theory (e.g. the passage quoted above), but Wordsworth still manages to create new meanings. The chapter examines "There was a boy," "To the Same Flower," the "Immortality" ode, "Tintern Abbey," "Resolution and Independence," the Lucy Poems, and some parts of *The Prelude*. The chapter will also discuss Wordsworth's borderer metaphors as exemplified by the Lucy in the Lucy poems as a model of the Wordsworthian metaphorics' dual ontology, which crosses the borders between the literal/figurative, subject/object, inner/outer, man/nature, etc.

While Stevens shares with Donne a tendency to proliferate metaphors exuberantly and buoyantly, there are also metaphors submerged under plain and simple metonyms as Wordsworth's use of metaphor, and chapter Four discusses how Stevens manages to proceed from an uncreated world of metonymy to a world of total metaphor. An important concept for Stevens is "decreation," which is "making pass from the created to the uncreated" (*The Necessary Angel* 174). Stevens' motive for decreation is to remove from the world the "wormy metaphors" ("Delightful Evening")—metaphors that become our very impoverished epistemological home and eat up our imagination and perceptiveness. Hence Stevens has exhibited an anti-metaphor tendency in which metaphor is withdrawn for metonymy to appear prominently, the figure *par excellence* of Stevens' decreation I will argue, in order to present a decreated world (e.g. "Delightful Evening," "Crude Foyer," "Bouquets of Roses in Sunlight," "Credences of Summer," "Add This to Rhetoric," "Metaphors of a Magnifico," etc.). For example, in "Metaphors of a Magnifico," after the metaphors have failed, what remains is an imagist picture composed of metonyms: "The boots of the men clump / On the boards of the bridge. / The first white wall of the village / Rises through fruit-trees." However, as soon as the wormy metaphors are removed, decreation becomes a seed for creation and a supreme fiction: "Modern reality is a reality of decreation, in which our revelations are not the revelations of belief, but the precious portents of our own powers" (*NA*, 175). For example, the final "nothing" in "The Snow Man" is both a metonym for being and a submerged metaphor that enables us to "behold the junipers *shagged* with ice." The transformation from decreative metonymy to creative metaphor will be further examined in "The Man with the Blue Guitar" and "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven." Finally,

oscillating between numerous images ranging from an uncreated world to a world of supreme fiction, metaphor is the metamorphic force that concludes "An Ordinary Evening": "It is not in the premise that reality / Is a solid. It may be a shade that traverses / A dust, a force that traverses a shade."

Chapter Two: John Donne's Two Worlds—Union in Separation
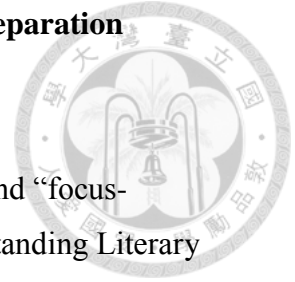
      If the typological distinction between "vehicle-interpretation" and "focus-interpretation" is valid, as Tanya Reinhart has proposed in "On Understanding Literary Metaphor" based on the theoretical distinction between I. A. Richards (tenor-vehicle) and Max Black (frame-focus), Donne's metaphors are almost always relentlessly "vehicular," overloading the tenor with a cluster of vehicles. His most famous metaphor juxtaposes lovers or their souls with a pair of compasses, binding together the spiritual realm and an unremarkable mechanical instrument regardless of their extreme dissimilarity. Eluding common logic and bringing together images so distinct from each other, Donne's metaphors become excellent examples for the interaction theory of metaphor, in which the tension in disparity between tenor and vehicle is highly appreciated as a motive for interaction and *discordia concours*. However, insomuch as the vehicular metaphors are always divided into two parts, they cannot but admits first of all the disjunction between tenor and vehicle. If we can speak of a spectrum of interaction measured by the degree of the unification or disjunction between tenor and vehicle, Donne's metaphors are very close to the pole of disjunction, for there almost always seems to exist an incommensurable gap between his tenor and its heterogeneous predications. Thus, Dr. Johnson rightly characterizes Donne's metaphor as "a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike" through which "[t]he most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together."[17] I will argue that the disjunction between tenor and vehicle in Donne actually indicates a larger Neoplatonic division between two worlds. An aim of this chapter is to explore the different metaphysical statuses Donne assigns to the distinct rhetorical places of tenor and vehicle and to see how the metaphorical resemblance between tenor and vehicle in Donne paradoxically becomes the boundary that separates the tenor from the vehicle as a counter example of Richards' unifying interaction. The other aim is to see how Donne's vehicles attempt to drop the tenor's references and build in themselves a substitute world of tenor.

"When on a divers shore"—the Two Worlds of Donne's Tenor and Vehicle

---

[17] Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, reprinted in Norton, 194.

<div style="text-align: center">

On a huge hill,

Cragged and Steep, Truth stands, and he that will

Reach her, about must, and about go:

And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so.

</div>

<div style="text-align: right">

(*Satire 3*, ll. 79-82)

</div>

The image of Truth as someone hardly reachable for any pursuer is a pivotal image in this chapter, for it resembles the relation between Donne's tenor and vehicle: the vehicle's desire to be unified with tenor is often thwarted by the distance and distanciation between them. The vehicle has but to go about the tenor and invoke the most heterogeneous images in order to approach the elusive tenor, but the efforts often come to nothing, just as the image of Truth in the poem does not really advance our understanding about truth but only reconfirms the age-old idea that truth is quite difficult to pursue. Donne's tenor and vehicle stand at different places so remote away from each other that any connection between them only seems to reinforce the boundary between them.

In "The Lyric in the Field of Information: Autopoiesis and History in Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*" Richard Halpern illustrates how Donne's intricate metaphorical resemblance achieved between the tenor and vehicle paradoxically induces a distanciation between them and how the distanciation is the result of a larger separation—the separation between the private sphere of love and the public sphere of business that are allocated to tenor and vehicle respectively. Halpern, following Jean Laplanche's psychoanalytic understanding of metaphor and metonymy, demonstrates how Donne's metaphorical structure detaches the private world from the public world as the process of producing sexuality as such. Laplanche, following Freud, suggests that sexuality as such must be detached from its anaclitic status (i.e. dependent on the self-preservative instincts) and become self-reflexive and autoerotic. This is only achieved when the aim of desire is metaphorically replaced (e.g. when life-preservation is replaced with fantasy) and when the object of desire is metonymically displaced (e.g. when milk is displaced by breast) (Laplanche, 29-32; Halpern, 110-1). Halpern adopts this theory and suggests that metaphor serves to detach sexuality not only from the self-preservative instincts but also from a "social anaclisis" to form an autoerotic enclosure of love (112). What "The Canonization" attempts to achieve is precisely such separation and independence from the public world:

<div style="text-align: center">

21

</div>

> For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love
>   Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
> My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune flout,
>   With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
>   Take you a course, get you a place,
>   Observe his Honour, or his Grace,
>   And the King's real, or his stamped face
>   Contemplate; what you will, approve,
>   So you will let me love.
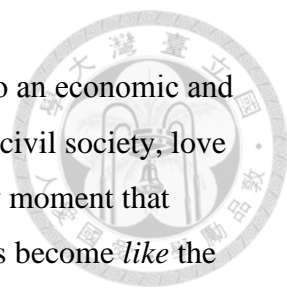
<div align="right">(ll. 1-9)</div>

Situated outside the array of options offered by the external world, the lovers achieves a unity through the separation from the public world: "Love is not a reaction to this or that social system but to the ramifying distinction among them" (Halpern, 109).The statement of segregation from the society proceeds with the metaphorical turns of the second stanza:

> Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
>   What merchant's ships have my sighs drown'd?
> Who says my tears have overflow'd his ground?
>   When did my colds a forward spring remove?
>   When did those heats which my veins fill
>   Add one man to the plaguy bill?
> Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
>   Litigious men, which quarrels move,
>   Though she and I do love.

<div align="right">(ll. 10-18)</div>

These questions are apparently rhetorical and also critical of the absurdity of the already banal Petrarchan love metaphors, since the lovers' love certainly does not sink a ship or flood the land. Yet the questions are less rhetorical and the metaphors are more convincing if we acknowledge that the madness of the lovers' love *does* interfere with the public world of business, as Donne's secrete marriage to Ann More did impede George More's right to dispose of his daughter's hand in any profitable manner (Halpern, 113). As a result, Halpern remarks that

<div align="center">22</div>

> Sexual desire no longer plays a role of "propping" with regard to an economic and political order; but in abandoning its productive contiguity with civil society, love then substitutes for this a metaphorical resemblance. At the very moment that sexuality ceases actually to be a form of cargo or wares, its sighs become *like* the winds that propel (or sink) a merchant's ship.

> (113, emphasis original)

The ridiculed absurdity turns out to be precisely what is meant, and the metaphorical resemblances become the compensatory substitution for the world renounced and disassociated. Recycled and revived, the Petrarchan metaphors now have sharpness and bite.

Arthur Marotti has proposed that Donne's love is not love but the product of the "coterie poetry," in which love, mostly courtly love, is intricately associated with Donne's frustrated ambitions for socioeconomic and political power.[18] On the contrary, however, this chapter argues that Donne, often distributing the private world of love and the public world to the separate places of tenor and vehicle respectively, nevertheless manages to establish a boundary between them. For example, although Donne's metaphors often invoke images of the public world and thus reintroduce the public world into the private world of love (e.g. the second stanza of "The Canonization"), Halpern indicates that

> this seeming contradiction dissolves once we grasp the fact that for Donne, resemblance is a way of negating causality, metaphor a way of fending off metonymy or contiguity…. [Donne's forceful] conjunction of vehicle and tenor serves to drive the two apart, generating the semantic equivalent of a repulsive force. The Donnean conceit is a structure of absolute difference or separation generated paradoxically through the medium of resemblance.

> (113)

While Donne's speaker in "The Canonization" is saying "our love is like this or that," he is also saying "our love is not this or that" or "our love is independent from this or that." Like

---

[18] Arthur F. Marotti, "'Love is not love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order" *ELH* 49 (1982): 396-428; *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: Uni. of Wisconsin Press, 1986). Achsah Guibbory, among others, also reveals the intricate relationship between Donne's love poetry and Elizabethan court in her "'Oh Let Mee Not Serve So': The Politics of Love in Donne's *Elegies*" (*ELH* 57 (Winter 1990): 811-33, reprinted in Norton).

the twin compasses that are connected at one end while separated at the other, Donne's metaphors are the split places where the

> vehicle is held at a rigid distance from the tenor, troping around it but never actually approaching it…. Metaphor…does not work here as a window which allows us to peer voyeuristically into love's pretty rooms; it is, rather, a mirrored surface which simply reflects the public world back onto itself…. The emergence of sexuality is thus at one with its disappearance.
>
> (Halpern, 114)

Tenor and vehicle are not merely two rhetorical places but also two worlds apart, and the metaphor is what provides a correspondence between the two, whereas the correspondence hardly achieves the status of identification and usually admits the division between the two. The resemblance-in-apparent-dissimilarity is the way for Donne's metaphors to trope around and *away from* the tenor with images deflecting our attention from the sacred love world safely guarded to things loosely associated. Moreover, the deflecting metaphors constitute a special mirror of desire distorting the images the spectator sees: what the public world (e.g. the Elizabethan courtiers or even Marotti himself) can see complacently in the mirror is its own images safe and sound (e.g. the merchant ships unsinkable by lovers' madness), and the rhetorical questions in the second stanza remain rhetorical—they are only the trivial sonneteer's figures of speech harmless and ignorable.

The differentiation between tenor and vehicle stands not only for the separation of the private sphere from the public sphere, but also for a larger metaphysical distinction between the divine world and the human world and between the macrocosm and the microcosm. In "The Two Worlds of Donne" George Williamson demonstrates that Donne's poetry is much influenced by the Platonic cosmological belief in the two worlds: "the world of change or alteration, of the body of man; and the world of the unchanging or constant, of the soul of man" (28). In Donne, the tenor is usually the place in which he locates the world of the unchanging (or whatever is elevated to that status such as the love he has celebrated in *Songs and Sonnets*), which is accommodated into a metaphorical relation with the vehicle's diverse fields of reference that are the manifestations of this world of change. Metaphor is thus the medium channeling Donne's obsession with the problem of unity by connecting the two worlds through inventive resemblance, which was held by the Ramist school to be a valid argument of the relatableness between things and between the two worlds in the great chain

of being.[19] The numerous references of Donne's vehicles indicate his attempt to discover in almost everything in this world a link to the other world, a correspondence of the concrete reality to the abstract reality. Yet insofar as this world is always detached from the other world, Donne's metaphors are always a unity in separation, and the metaphorical bridge between tenor and vehicle cannot but admit first the split between them. The split between the two worlds is always a necessary condition of any possible unification in Donne as a guarantee that maintains the hierarchy of the Platonic two worlds. If this is so, Donne's tenor is not only the protected private sphere of love, the transcendent world that the outrageous vehicles attempt to reach in vain, but also the place of lack and absence that the vehicles endeavor to cover up with a variety of images. Thus two motives for Donne's vehicular metaphors can be proposed: one is to isolate and preserve the tenor's world of the unchanging by predicating it with references so numerous that the tenor is loosened from any fixed essence; the other is, on the contrary, to cover up the lack of this world by dropping the tenor's references in order to create a substitute world by accumulating numerous vehicles that become themselves a new tenor and a new world. The next section will examine the second motive, and now we shall see some other examples of the first.

Another memorable mirror of metaphor that reflects this world of change back to itself is in "A Valediction of Weeping":

> Let me pour forth
> My tears before thy face, whilst I stay here,
> For thy face coins them, and thy stamp they bear,
> And by this mintage they are something worth,
> > For thus they be
> > Pregnant of thee;
> Fruits of much grief they are, emblems of more:
> When a tear falls, that thou falls which it bore;

---

[19] Scholastic thinking claims that everything is related to everything else in the great chain of being, and man, with his natural reason, can discover the relatedness between things through reasonable arguments. Metaphor and analogy are qualified as reasonable arguments according to the Ramist school. Rosemund Tuve illustrates that the Ramist conception of argument "seems to indicate the relatable*ness* of a word or thing; that aspect by which we conceive of it as relatable to another word or thing…. [T]he moment I look at any of these [a word, a thing, a concept, etc.], seeing its fitness to be related to another, I see it as an argument" (*Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, 344, emphasis original). Thomas Sloan also remarks on this point that "[o]ne may go *almost* so far as to state that Donne believed a proposition was established if it could be proved by means of similitudes—that is, if its existence could be tested or experienced by drawing conclusions from demonstrable relationships. If one thing is true or exists, a similar thing could be true or could exist" ("The Rhetoric of Poetry of John Donne" 34, emphasis original).

So thou and I are nothing then, when on a divers shore.

On a round ball
A workman that hath copies by, can lay
An Europe, Afric, and an Asia,
And quickly make that, which was nothing, *All*;
So doth each tear
Which thee doth wear,
A globe, yea world, by that impression grow,
Till thy tears mix'd with mine do overflow
This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven, dissolved so.

(ll. 1-18)

The tear is another mirrored surface on which some worldly images are reflected (e.g. the financial business of moneymaking and the colonial business of cartography). The reflectivity of the tear also prevents the external world from penetrating into the private world of love by projecting on itself some images the public world is content to find (e.g. the moneymaking and cartography). Those signs of sufficiency promise rather misleadingly that the public world would not be absent even from the world of love. Once again, hiding behind the mirror of desire is the tenor representing lack and absence (i.e. the transcendent love is unapproachable and even invisible), which the vehicles deflect and blur with heterogeneous images devised as a defensive mechanism to trope away from the originary lack.

On the other hand, the mirror in "A Valediction of Weeping" also reflects the images of its own makers as well, namely, the royal stamp on the tear-coin or even the topological outline on the tear-globe. But the mistress' presence and image are not something unmediated or particular of a specific woman but the miscellaneous and apparently irrelevant images densely troped. A common mishap of Donne's mistresses (especially those in *Elegies*) is that they are seldom represented as a certain particular woman but "misrepresented" with images taken from diverse fields of knowledge obviously unrelated. In "To His Mistress Going to Bed" Donne likens the mistress to a variety of things:

Your gown's going off, such beauteous state reveals,
As when from flow'ry meads th'hill's shadow steals.
Off with your wiry coronet and show

The hairy diadem which on you doth grow….

…………………………………………………………

O my America, my new found land,

My kingdom, safeliest when with one man mann'd,

My mine of precious stones, my empery;

How blest am I in this discovering thee!

…………………………………………………………

Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made

For laymen, are all women thus arrayed;

Themselves are mystic books, which only we

(Whom their imputed grace will dignify)

Must see revealed.

<div align="right">(ll. 13-6, 27-30, 39-43)</div>

The vehicles' referential diversity and unpredictability overwhelm the tenor's capacity such that the mistress' body is so diffused into these images that it is not itself anymore. In "John Donne's Worlds of Desire" Catherine Belsey observes that Donne's mistresses are "constantly desexualised by reference to knowledges which have no erotic associations… [and the] woman's body is distanced rather than invoked by the utopian allusions to heaven, paradise and the new world" (65). Once again the tenor is continuously troped away, and the mistress' fleeting presence also marks her extended absence.

The fact that the mistresses are increasingly detached also suggests the metaphor's mortality: once something transcendent and unnamable is metaphorically named and enters the world of change, the resemblance it bears to its vehicles cannot but activate its disappearance and dissipation into the myriad of (mis)representations. Metaphor, or more precisely vehicle, is what enacts both the emergence and disappearance of the Platonic other world. Like the tear in "A Valediction of Weeping," Donne's metaphor is both the supporting material of the world of love (e.g. the tear-globe) and its destruction and disappearance (e.g. the tear-flood). The paradoxical qualities of the tear (i.e. the tear-globe vs. the tear flood) are the binary force of Donne's metaphor—the movement toward tenor's realization and the movement away from the tenor's unavailable world of transcendence.

The abstraction of the mistresses, especially in *Songs and Sonnets*, is not simply the result of Donne's masculine desire to (mis)represent his objects of desire but the fact that his

romance with the mistresses is the love supreme that cannot be represented with any image of this world. As described in "Air and Angels," the love is immaterial and otherworldly:
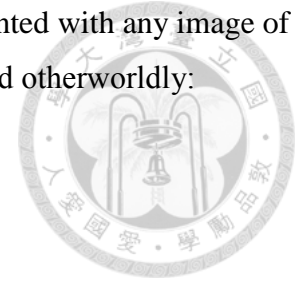
> Twice or thrice had I lov'd thee,
> Before I knew thy face or name.
> So in a voice, so in a shapeless flame,
> Angels affect us oft, and worship'd be
> Still when to where thou wert I came,
> Some lovely glorious nothing I did see.

(ll. 1-6)

Pure and spiritual, their love is a "shapeless" form—the incorporeal "lovely glorious nothing"—that transcends human flesh. The love is between their souls, so to speak. On the other hand, since the human soul must assume a body in this world, the love must be physical as well:

> But since my soul, whose child love is,
> Takes limbs or flesh, and else could nothing do,
> More subtle than the parent is
> Love must not be, but take a body too.
> And therefore what thou wert, and who,
> I bid Love ask, and now
> That it assume thy body, I allow,
> And fix itself in thy lip, eye, and brow.

(ll. 7-14)

Precisely as the immaterial needs the physical to serve as its foil and temporary realization, the mystery and unrepresentability of the love supreme is paradoxically revealed only when it is represented and predicated with every image possible. During the movements to and fro its diverse references and (mis)representations, the unrepresentable is gradually detached from any fixed essence and becomes an evanescent presence of the ideal in this world of change:

> For, nor in nothing, nor in things
> Extreme and scatt'ring bright, can love inhere;

Then as an angel, face and wings

Of air, not pure as it, yet pure doth wear,

So thy love may be my love's sphere.

Although the lovers' souls have to be embodied to love each other, their love is still pure and superior, just as an angel is pure all the same even taking on a face and wings (corporeal things not as pure as the angel itself) to appear to human beings (Redpath, 197). Representing the unrepresentable to demonstrate the unrepresentability is precisely Donne's way of telling his mysterious love stories.

Donne's daring metaphors perhaps do not so much affect the metaphysics as Dryden claims[20] but mediate between the metaphysical and the physical while keeping them separated. His extravagant metaphors draw a borderline separating the two worlds—the world of love and the world of "not love," so to speak—and outline a binary system of tenor-vehicle. Unless there emerges a final repository of reference that temporarily halts the tenor's *différance* in the myriad of vehicles, the world of love is hidden behind its dissemination into other elements of the world of not-love. As a result, we can only try to glimpse the world of love by putting it into a differential relation to the signs of "not love," and this way the world of love is so elevated that it cannot be known directly and absolutely. As whoever tries to reach Truth, "about must, and about go," we can only attempt to more or less approach Donne's seriously guarded world of love by enumerating what it is not, as negative theology endeavors to understand God by eliminating the false identifications.

"A quintessence even from nothingness"—Metaphor and Absence

In "A Valediction of Weeping" the mistress' elusive presence is doubly evanescent because it is the collection of images attached to the tear, an insubstantial entity that falls or evaporates anytime. However, if the world of love falls with tear, Donne can no longer make any metaphor and is forced to confront directly the absence and death. The precariousness of the tenor often signals the threat of absence in many of Donne's poems. In "A Nocturnal

---

[20] Dryden remarks that Donne "affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love" (*A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, reprinted in Norton, 193).

upon St. Lucy's Day," upon the death of the beloved and the collapse of the lovers' world, Donne's speaker utters his last metaphor and is then almost silent:

> But I am by her death (which word wrongs her),
> Of the first nothing the Elixir grown;
>> Were I a man, that I were one,
>> I needs must know; I should prefer,
>>> If I were any beast,
> Some ends, some means; Yea plants, yea stones detest
> And love; All, all some properties invest.
> If I an ordinary nothing were,
> As shadow, a light and body must be here.
>
> But I am none; nor will my Sun renew.

<div align="right">(ll. 28-37)</div>

As soon as the supposedly eternal world of love comes to nothing, Donne's metaphors almost die out as well. Although the speaker becomes metaphorically "the Elixir" "Of the first nothing," the metaphor is in fact but a variation of the alchemical metaphor in the second stanza and relocates the speaker to the place of lack and silence ("the first nothing" is by definition unknowable and unapproachable as it is what subsisted before the Creation). While in the second and third stanzas the speaker can still produce metaphors to predicate the nothingness ("For his art did express / A quintessence even from nothingness") and rewrite the Christian theology into an amorous cosmology in which the "*two* Chaoses" takes place *after* the Creation of humans (i.e. the lovers) and of world (i.e. the lovers' world), in the fourth stanza the apocalypse simply reduces the speaker to the ultimate nothing—"the *first* nothing"—which cannot be predicated whatsoever. The suicidal metaphor immobilizes the metaphorical flow completely as it transforms the speaker into a solitary non-metaphorizable tenor without any possible vehicle to console him. He can now only be blurrily distinguished through the hypothetical negations, and none of the hypothetical "I weres" turns into a positive "I am": the metaphorical potentials remain unrealized. Without the lovers' mutual presence and interdependence, the speaker and his metaphor are "nothing then, when on a divers shore." This is the Donne most desperate, the master of metaphor stops short at any further metamorphosis when confronted with absence and death.

On the other hand, if "A Valediction of Weeping" ends as a conventional valediction would end, that is, dissuading the lovers from crying anymore upon departure, then the poem may be in danger of losing the world of love (insofar as the tear is the foundation of the love world) and encountering directly the threat of absence:
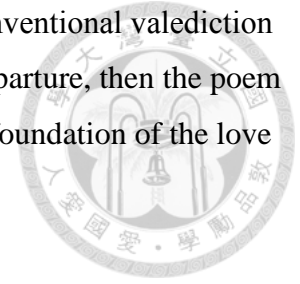
> O more than Moon,
> Draw not up seas to drown me in thy sphere,
> Weep me not dead, in thine arms, but forbear
> To teach the sea, what it may do too soon;
> Let not the wind
> Example find
> To do me more harm than it purposeth;
> Since thou and I sigh one another's breath,
> Whoe'er sighs most, is cruelest, and hastes the other's death.
>
> (ll. 19-27)

However, insomuch as to stop crying only brings about the collapse of the world of love and deadly silence, and judging from the fact that the stanza is abundant in metaphors, I think the "Let not" of the final stanza does not really intend to prohibit crying but is actually a Donnean injunction in disguise. In "The Prohibition," Donne sets up two prohibitions for the mistress—"Take heed of loving me" and "Take heed of hating me"—since the speaker will either die from the "great joy" of requited love or from the beloved's hatred. However, the injunctions become imperatives in the final stanza:

> Yet, love and hate me too;
> So, these extremes shall neither's office do:
> Love me, that I may die the gentler way;
> Hate me, because thy love's too great for me….
>
> *Oh, let me live; yet love, and hate me too*.
>
> (ll. 16-24)

The lover is paradoxically preserved if he is both loved and hated, because he will not perish by her hate if she loves him nor by her love if she hates him. Likewise, it is likely that the

"Let not" of "A Valediction of Weeping" is another "Let me pour forth / My tears" and "Let you pour yours" in disguise. This way the final stanza can be viewed as a scene in a play, and the plea is like the long goodbye in *Romeo and Juliet* (Act 2, Scene 2) that prolongs the scene and persuades the mistress to stay and offer her presence to the speaker and his tears/metaphors. The stanza may be just an interval between several weeping and metaphor-making performances implicitly encouraged as a way to extract more metaphors even from the impending departure and absence.

Because the tearless absence and silence are simply too dreadful to bear, Donne's tear does not dry up but becomes an overwhelming flood (ll. 17-8) that invokes more tears as a way to delay the mistress' presence and the world of love, and the valediction of weeping becomes a persuasion of weeping. The repetition and reinforcement of the tenor provide the speaker with an opportunity to proliferate his metaphors as an attempt to detain and even approach the mistress and the world of love. Previously, the extensive troping of vehicles serves to distinguish and detach the world of love from the public world (e.g. in the first part of "The Canonization"), and now, as the world of love is getting more and more independent and autonomous and gradually disappearing out of sight, the vehicles' troping however becomes a gravitational pull trying to infinitely delay and capture the sacred love world enclosed in the tenor as a way to avoid absence and lack. Hence, the multiple metaphors do not simply strive to retain and embody the mistress' presence in metaphors (e.g. impressing the coin with her appearance) but also endeavor to escape the impending absence through the resemblance-in-apparent-dissimilarity into a world of vehicle (e.g. tear-globe) where many of the tenor's references (of tear) can be given up. Thus, the poem also moves on to the vehicle's other desire—to evade and supplant the tenor's lack with a newly created world of vehicles.

"We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms"—the Constructive Motive of Vehicular Metaphors

The other motive of Donne's vehicular metaphors is to construct a world of metaphor to replace the lack located in the tenor—the unavailable transcendent world of love. In the new world of metaphor, there is a tendency for the tenor's references to give way to the vehicle's imagination and fantasies contrived as the cover-up and replacement of the

inaccessible world in the tenor.[21] The everlasting love supreme as something non-existent in this world is the most highly celebrated and extensively troped fantasy in *Songs and Sonnets*. This section will examine how Donne constructs a fantasyland with vehicular metaphors to escape from the lack implied by tenor.

The first phase of fantasy, according to Lacan, is the mirror stage in which an infant, misrecognizing its mirrored image as someone complete and intact, thereby identifies with the image as a substitute for its own uncoordinated and therefore fragmented body.[22] To imagine an ideal image of the self in its wholeness and integrity is the basic function of fantasy. This is exactly what the mirror of desire in "The Canonization" does in addition to distancing. While the metaphors in the second stanza serve to detach the otherworldly lovers from the elements of this world, they are also attempts to mask the absence by reflecting back to the world its images apparently intact (e.g. the ships unsinkable). The tear-mirror in "A Valediction of Weeping" likewise enables the illusion that the public world is sufficient and powerful enough to interfere with the private sphere (e.g. the businesses of money-making and cartography intervene in the love world).

The metaphor's mirror of fantasy does not just stay at this elementary stage of fantasy presenting simply some images of the existing world unimpaired. Like the tear-mirror of "A Valediction of Weeping," the third stanza of "The Canonization" evolves into a kaleidoscope, presenting a multitude of images for the lovers to identify with:

> Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
>   Call her one, me another fly,
> We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
>   And we in us find th'eagle and the dove.
>   The phoenix riddle hath more wit
>   By us; we two being one are it;
> So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.

---

[21] My conception of metaphor and fantasy is indebted to Lacan, who claims that metaphor, by producing a signification, generates a *point de capiton* or "the quilting point between the signifier and the signified"—an imaginary anchorage fixing a signifier upon a signified, which is the basic structure of fantasy (S3, 268). Also in "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," Lacan proposes a crucial ontological account of metaphor and metonymy. While both figures are about the lack of being, metonymy is the displacement of the lack, a defense mechanism that displaces the lack with less significant objects, whereas metaphor is the replacement or substitution of the lack, an imaginary anchorage in the floating metonymic chain, helping the subject to have a stable though illusionary image of the self.

[22] Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage," *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English.* Trans, Bruce Fink, et al. New York: Norton 2006. Print.

We die and rise the same, and prove

Mysterious by this love.

A collection of the Petrarchan images is again recycled and revived to idealize the lovers and their love. The "fly" is an alternative for moth or butterfly, which dies in the fire of the lover's eyes (the "tapers" that burn with love) and then rises as a phoenix, which is a recurrent theme in the Petrarchan tradition (Redpath, 239). Appropriating literary tradition, Donne's mirror of metaphor enables the lovers to identify with heterogeneous images apparently unlike themselves, especially with the phoenix. The phoenix dies in order to live again, just as the lovers "die" to the world to live a more intense life with their love. Otherwise, considering the sexual connotation of "die" in the Renaissance, the phoenix lovers' love "can outlast its consummation" (Brooks, 1968: 12) and resuscitate in order to "die by…love" again (ll. 27). As the lovers can literally justify the fantastic identifications, the metaphors become the proofs of the loves' newly acquired sainthood, another imaginary identification, by testifying to the two miracles they perform—"we two being one" and "We die and rise the same."

But Donne's mirror of desire is so carefully designed that one can see a totally different set of images from another angle because it is Donne's primary goal to separate the two worlds. Until the holy lovers are veritably canonized in the next stanza, the same metaphors offer still another fantasy of integrity for the public world. Like the mirror in the second stanza that reflects back to the public world its own images safe and sound (e.g. the ships unsinkable), the metaphors of the third stanza, rather than suggesting the disruption the world-renouncing lovers do to the public world, are again camouflaged with domesticated Petrarchan images that the public world can complacently dismiss as only some harmless and disciplined performances of a poet's passionate madness. Even as the tone is getting more determined and serious, the metaphors only paradoxically render the lovers more ridiculous and foolish to the outside world. The two miracles performed by the phoenix-lovers are not so much the divine miracles as the embellished excuses for a licentious relation. In others' eyes, the lovers are as mad and insane as those hysterical saints who were the world's laughingstocks prior to the posthumous canonization.

Metaphor again serves as a mirror of desire on which one sees whatever he/she wants to see in order to make up a fantasy to cover and disguise the lack. As the metaphors continuously separating the two worlds, we also have two distinct voices as two kinds of

reaction against lack. The public world's fundamental denial of the existence of an everlasting love is a defense by repression, just as someone who, having gone through too many failed relationships, denies the existence of true love. (In psychoanalytic terms, the public world's denial suggests that the idea of everlasting love has already been abjected and excluded during the primal repression.) On the other hand, the fact that the lack—the absence of the eternal love and the Platonic other world—is constantly troped and elevated with a fantasy of miraculous lovers rather than being repudiated indicates another voice in the poem. It is Donne's voice, we may assume, uttered because he still believes in and weaves himself the fantasies of a never-ending love, and the whole *Songs and Sonnets* and the Holy Sonnets are resonant with such fantastic faith in building a world of love to replace the original lack.

The final part of "The Canonization" is the ultimate constructive motive of the poem, anchoring all the fantastic images and attempting to grasp and even materialize the other world in metaphors:

> We can die by it, if not live by love,
>   And if unfit for tombs or hearse
> Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
>   And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
>   We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;
>   As well a well-wrought urn becomes
> The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
>   And by these hymns, all shall approve
>   Us canonized for love.

(ll. 28-36)

As the lovers are finally canonized, the heterogeneous images also become a coherent whole organized by the canonization metaphor, which is the final repository of references that proceeds from "proof of personal sanctity, to proof of heroic virtue, to proof of miracles, examination of burial place and the saint's writings, and finally to the declaration of Sainthood and the veneration of the Saint" (Clair, 332). As the poem builds up more metaphors, the increased metaphoricity paradoxically becomes a thrust toward actualization:

> The poem is an instance of the doctrine which it asserts; it is both the assertion and
>   the realization of the assertion. The poet has actually before our eyes built within the

song the "pretty room" with which he says the lovers can be content. The poem itself is the well-wrought urn which can hold the lovers' ashes and which will not suffer in comparison with the prince's "halfe-acre tomb."

<div align="right">(Brooks, 1968: 12)</div>

Like Shakespeare's "eternal lines" that still sustains the Fair Youth in "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" the sonnets' pretty rooms become "actually" a well-wrought urn bearing the eternal lovers' ashes for the world to venerate, and the metaphors become a "real" thing that contains in itself an alternative world where the lovers and their love are canonized and venerated. Toward the end, the vehicles' centrifugal force is becoming a center of metaphor-turned metonyms that almost supplant the tenorial origin, leaving behind many of the tenorial references (e.g. of a profane love) to reach a realm that is out of the tenor's reach (e.g. the divine realm).

The fact that Donne's vehicles drop the tenor and escape from the tenor's reach into a newly created world of fantasies is actually a reaction against the tenor's elusiveness and unavailability. If the tenor almost always keeps a distance from the vehicle's desire for unification (or even for intervention and domination, e.g. the public world's intrusion into the love world) and thereby almost always implies lack, the vehicle, confronted with the lack and absence, has to repress the tenor and move on by constructing a substitute world accessible and comprehensible. Glorifying and elevating a worldly love to the transcendent realm of divinity is symptomatic enough—the fantasy of a sacred love compensating for the unavailability of the transcendent—and the final stanza continues:

And thus invoke us, "You, whom reverend love
    Made one another's hermitage;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage,
    Who did the whole world's soul extract, and drove
        Into the glasses of your eyes
        (So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize)
    Countries, towns, courts: beg from above
A pattern of your love."

<div align="right">(ll. 37-45)</div>

What is even more symptomatic is that the now otherworldly and transcendent love is rather accessible, because what is extracted and epitomized into the lovers' eyes is the microcosm of this world (the "whole world's soul"), whose declaration and veneration of the lovers' sainthood more or less testify to its participation in the transcendent realm. Yet, insofar as the fantasy woven with metaphors is a make-believe cover-up, the new world of sacred love is a virtual anchorage providing the speaker with some imaginary meanings and significances. A make-believe nonetheless, the world made up with metaphors' fantasies is what we need desperately to cope with the terrifying absence.

The most dramatic centrifugal actualization of vehicle is perhaps in "Batter my heart." A multitude of vehicles complicates the tenor—a cliché expression "you broke my heart":

Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you
    As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
    That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I like an usurp'd town, t'another due,
    Labor t'admit you, but O, to no end;
    Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
    But am betroth'd unto your enemy.
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again;
    Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor even chaste, except you ravish me.

As the military references (ll. 1-8), the marital references (ll. 9-11), and the references to a masochistic rape (ll. 12-4) interchange, the tenor loses its own references and alternates with the vehicles: "The battered heart becomes the attacked city which becomes the ravished vagina. The tinker's tools become the monarch's engine which becomes, indeed, the penis of God" (Kerrigan, 43). As the vehicles loosen the tenor from any particular essence, there emerges a new anchorage which pins down the drifting metaphors that keep transforming and reorienting the initial "Batter my heart." The final metaphor of rape transforms "you broke my heart" from the stock complaint of an upset sufferer to the invitation of a willing "victim"

to a "consensual" rape. Seen retrospectively, the military images already develop the erotic potential of the poem, which is progressively reinforced with the images of besieging and imprisonment in anticipation of the climatic images of rape.

As the battered heart loses almost all its common associations and becomes a ravished vagina, Donne is once again building in sonnet rooms of fantasy. According to William Kerrigan's "The Fearful Accommodations of John Donne," the fantasy of rape is based on an ancient theological conceit of the soul's marriage to God: "If the good man weds God, then the sinful man weds God's 'enemie,' and if God would claim this recalcitrant soul, then he must grant divorce and possess her by force" (40). The whole poem can be seen as a collection of vehicles predicating the soul's union with God, another transcendent mystery unknowable and unapproachable. Like the more common theological metaphors (e.g. God the father/son, God the lord/shepherd/servant; God is love; God is light, etc.), Donne's pervert metaphors also attempt to approach the unknowable by realizing it in metaphors. Conceiving of divine love in terms of a loving relationship and unfolding the metaphorical accommodation of God with infidelity, divorce and even rape, Donne once again substitutes the absence with a world of fantasy—an unusual, anthropomorphic world where god the rapist enjoys his willing and masochistic victim and where a consensual rape is the marital bond between the divine chaste-rapist and a ravished-virgin soul.

Donne's fantasy is again very symptomatic of the desire for union. While the rape indicates the speaker's poignant desire for the unification with God and for becoming God's object of desire, the fantasy actually masks a deep anxiety—the fact that no immediate unification is in sight. In "John Donne Awry and Squint" Richard Strier points out that the confusions of thoughts and feelings in the Holy Sonnets reflect Donne's doubt and uncertainty about his relation with God, which stems from his struggle between Protestant Reformation theology and Roman Catholicism. To a large extent, "Batter my heart" is not so much a love poem as a theological exercise. According to Strier, the lines 1-4 suggest the Reformation perspective which asserts that man is alien to God and that the unregenerate self totally depends on God for its spiritual regeneration (e.g. "make me new") (375). On the contrary, the middle part of the poem (ll. 5-10) portrays a healthy self with pure intention ("Labor t'admit you…"; "Yet dearly I love you….") who is not an unregenerate person and therefore "does not have to be made new" or be converted since she "merely needs to be freed from impediments (usurpations, unwilling betrothals)" (Strier, 376). The transition from a passive self to an active one marks a perspective change in theology, and there is an impression that the poem and the speaker (and the Holy Sonnets as a whole) do not fall in

love but argue themselves into love. To a certain extent we may say that love is not love in the Holy Sonnets, not in Marotti's sense of coterie love poetry but in the sense that the divine love is dissipated with theological exercises and forced into arguments, and once again the tenor is distanced from the vehicles. The uncertainty and confusion about his relation with God lead to Donne's "inability in this period to conceive of divine love in terms of a loving relationship" and the "failure at poetically rendering divine love apart from images of force" (Strier, 380-1).

The climatic fantasy of rape plays a very important role in resolving Donne's uncertainty about his stance vis-à-vis God. At the first glance the forceful rape belongs to the Protestant conception that the spiritual regeneration coming from God is violent and forcible. Yet, the fantasy of rape is also a fantasy of seduction, and the speaker is simultaneously the passive victim and the active seducer, and the fantasy thereby intricately maintains the active search for God's grace of a regenerate Christian. The fantasy of seduction is also very symptomatic of Donne's lack of certainty and confidence about his relation with God, since a passive victim is transformed into a willing and sexually independent seducer who seems to be in control of her partner.[23] Moreover, what the divine intervention brings—the spiritual freedom and chastity (ll.12-4)—is the cause of the speaker, regenerate or unregenerate, to plead for ravishment, which culminates in a superhuman paradox: the speaker is ravished into chastity, and God who ravages violently is virtuous and abstinent. Kerrigan insightfully illustrates the paradox. Quoting Milton, Kerrigan explicates that "we may participate without error in accommodated speech [i.e. the anthropomorphic accommodation of the divine into what is intelligible to human] so long as 'weakness when viewed in reference to ourselves' is understood as 'most complete and excellent when imputed to God,'" and a complete anthropomorphism lies in "conflating earthly weakness with earthly virtue" and attributing the conflation to God (44). The result is that

> the rape of "Batter my heart" must preserve, rather than destroy, chastity. The God who violently ravishes must be the God who honorably abstains, the possessed soul a virgin soul. To escape from an irregular anthropomorphism, Donne introduces a "complete and excellent" anthropomorphism, equating the imputed human vice to the appropriate and opposite human virtue. Anthropomorphism twice applied eludes

---

[23] Stanley Fish also points out that Donne's assuming a posture of a female creature eagerly to remain subject to her male creator in the Holy Sonnets actually arises from his deep anxiety of losing the control over his lovers (God included) and literary creatures ("Masculine Persuasive Force: Donne and Verbal Power," 170-9).

anthropomorphism altogether. God, unlike any man, can be at once lustful and honorable. The soul unlike any body, can be at once ravished and chaste.

<div align="right">(Kerrigan, 44)</div>

Furthermore, the climatic accumulation of vehicles into a fantasized rape does not merely complicate and transform the tenor (i.e. "Batter my heart") but becomes itself a new tenor and a new event. Kerrigan points out the phenomenon that the fanciful vehicles sediment into a realistic tenor:

> [T]he design of the poem grants extraordinary emphasis to the penetration of a tight body. Insofar as the tropes reach out of local context to describe the climactic invitation, that sexual event acquires the force of a tenor. The intercourse of the speaker and God becomes virtually a "real" presence in the poem, a final repository of reference…. Donne has turned his anthropomorphic conceit toward actual event, generating what might be termed a "cumulative metaphor."

<div align="right">(42-3)</div>

It seems to me that Kerrigan implicitly indicates an ontological difference between tenor and vehicle by linking "the force of a tenor" to "a 'real' presence" and "actual event." On the other hand, vehicle is subordinated to tenor, being tenor's one interpretant among many that cannot exhaust the tenor (e.g. God is love/light/life). This is also precisely why Donne prioritizes tenor over vehicle in his metaphysics of two worlds.

However, we also witness in "Batter my heart" (and "Canonization") how Donne overloads the tenor with heterogeneous vehicles to the extent that the vehicles exceed the tenor's capacity, and what the vehicles perform is not so much expounding the tenor from a new perspective as dropping many of the tenorial references and build a world of vehicles. Leaving tenor to construct a new world, the other motive of Donne's vehicle is to escape from the lack located in the tenor into a newly created world where fantasies are realizable and realized. As the heart becomes a "real" vagina, the metaphoricity of rape metaphors is lessened and becomes "realistic" as if the metaphors are now describing a real event straightforwardly and literally. Meanwhile, the final metaphor of rape almost turns the whole poem into a fantastic metonym of rape—a rather "realistic" account on an "actual" event of rape—an effect similar to that of the "realistic" metaphors in works of magic realism and fantasy. This is precisely the metaphor's ability to produce a new genre and a new kind—a

"heuristic fiction" in Ricoeur's term—for us to redescribe reality. Donne's "cumulative metaphor" drops the tenorial references in order to be treated literally and realized into an actual event. Or rather, the reader is forced to take the vehicular references as the tenorial references. Owen Barfield in his "The Meaning of 'Literal'" writes: "Just as our immaterial language has acquired its literalness by dropping the vehicular reference, so our material language has acquired literalness by dropping the tenorial reference" (32). As the poem's metaphors gradually detach themselves from the tenorial references and move toward literalness, they replace the tenor and become a palpable occurrence. If the original heaven of tenor is unapproachable, Donne's vehicles create their own instead.

Chapter Three: Wordsworth and Metaphorical Resonance

From Tenor-Vehicle to Metaphorical Resonance—the Unification of Rhetoric and Metaphysics

In a letter to William Sotheby, Coleridge writes:

Nature has her proper interest; & he will know what it is, who believes & feels, that every Thing has a Life of it's own, & that we are all *one Life*. A poet's *Heart & Intellect* should be *combined, intimately* combined *& unified*, with the great appearances in Nature—& not merely held in solution & loose mixture with them, in the shape of formal Similes. I do not mean to exclude these formal Similes—there are moods of mind, in which they are natural—pleasing moods of mind & such as a Poet will often have, & sometimes express; but they are not his highest, & most appropriate moods.

(*The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ii. 864)

Coleridge's statement indicates an ambitious project Wordsworth shares with to unite the realm of rhetoric with that of metaphysics (Lindenberger, 657): the One Life, as an intimately combined and unified whole, should not be fractured by the immature poet's formal similes, where the split between tenor and vehicle hinders any sincere attempt at unification.[24] On the other hand, this is perhaps why sometimes Wordsworth's explicit tenor-vehicle patterns look rather insincere. In "To the Same Flower," for example, he writes to a daisy:

Oft on the dappled turf at ease
I sit, and play with similes
Loose types of things through all degrees
　　Thoughts of thy raising:
And many a fond and idle name
I give to thee, for praise or blame,
As is the humour of the game,

---

[24] For the relation between simile and metaphor and for the stance of this thesis, see chapter 1, note 12.

While I was gazing

A nun demure of lowly part;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies drest;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
Thy appellations.
A little Cyclops with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy….
…………………………………
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some faery bold
   In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar—
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
   In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest….

                                      (ll. 9-38)

As being "Loose types of things" that are "idle" and even "blam[able]," what these various formal similes do is not so much bring close the tenor and vehicles as separate and distance them further apart. These similes are less a union between rhetoric and nature than a rhetorical game where the signifiers constantly slip and digress on their way to the signified. Rhetorical differentiation between the tenor and vehicles is accompanied by an ontological separation: unlike other Wordsworth's more memorable speakers who are intimately united with nature, the Adam speaker playing the naming game is rather set apart from what he names and from the names he gives. The similes' rhetorical separation also divides the One

Life into several tiny lives, and the Romantic pantheism becomes a second-class pantheism in which a daisy is a fairy or "A little Cyclops with one eye."

Therefore, it comes as little surprise that the similes are abandoned in favor of a simple name in the final stanza:
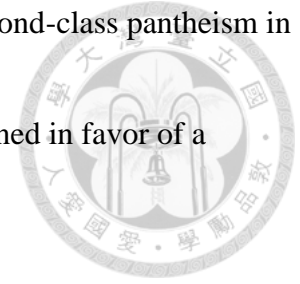
> Bright *Flower!* For by that name at last,
> When all my reveries are past,
> I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
>   Sweet, silent creature!

<div align="right">(ll. 41-4)</div>

The artificiality and formality stop to return to a quieter rhetoric where the flower should be respected and treated as itself. It is only after this move that the speaker could approach the interaction between humans and nature characteristic of Wordsworth that vibrates through certain unassuming words:

> That *breath'st* with me in sun and air,
> Do thou, as thou art wont, *repair*
> My heart with gladness, and a *share*
>   Of thy meek nature!

<div align="right">(ll. 45-8, italics mine)</div>

While the breath reminds us of the Romantic correspondent breeze in the opening of *The Prelude* and in Coleridge's "Eolian Harp," *re-pair* suggests a reunification after the separation brought by the tenor-vehicle structure, in order to "share" each other in the One Life.

In his influential essay "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery," W. K. Wimsatt comments on a major characteristic of Romantic metaphors that distinguishes them from the formal similes by discussing Coleridge's "To the River Otter":

> Dear native Brook! wild Streamlet of the West!
> How many various-fated years have past,
> What happy and what mournful hours, since last
> I skimm'd the smooth thin stone along thy breast,

Numbering its light leaps! yet so deep imprest

Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes

I never shut amid the sunny ray,

But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,

Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,

And bedded sand that vein'd with various dyes

Gleam'd through thy bright transparence! On my way,

Visions of Childhood! oft have ye beguil'd

Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:

Ah! that once more I were a careless Child!

Wimsatt notes a subtle union between surface and depth: a minute description of the natural surface is however accompanied by a great inwardness of memory, and an apparently light-hearted motion (skimming smooth thin stones on the water) is nevertheless "so deep imprest." The union actually belongs to an implicit metaphor, suggesting that the childhood experiences "rise *like* the tinted waters of the stream; they gleam up through the depths of memory—the 'various-fated years'—*like* the 'various dye' which vein the sand of the river bed" (Wimsatt, 109, my emphasis). Wimsatt thus puts forward an essential observation on the Romantic metaphorics:

> Both tenor and vehicle…are wrought in a parallel process out of the same material. The river landscape is both the occasion of reminiscence and the source of the metaphors by which reminiscence is described…. The tenor of such a similitude is likely to be subjective—reminiscence or sorrow or beguilement—not an object distinct from the vehicle, as lovers or their souls are distinct from twin compasses.
>
> (109)

For many Romantic poets, the idea of tension in disparity crucial to the metaphysical poets is not so important as the union between tenor and vehicle that manifests "the one life within us and abroad"—the (meta)physical unification of surface and depth and of nature and man.

Following Wimsatt's analysis, Herbert Lindenberger in "Images of Interaction in *The Prelude*" observes that Wordsworth also performs a "deliberate blurring of tenor and vehicle" (657) and the "[d]istinctions between tenor and vehicle are…of little avail" in reading Wordsworth's poetry (643). In the same vein, Keith Hinchliffe, in his "Wordsworth and the

Kinds of Metaphor," points out that Wordsworth's "metaphorical resonance" usually does not lie in the tenor-vehicle juxtaposition or the formal analogical structure prevalent in the late seventeenth-century English verse but in the metaphorical twist of a familiar word: "[t]he wavelength of metaphorical resonance, we might say, has been shorten until it vibrates in a single word" (87). Given this tendency, Hinchliffe suggests that Max Black's "focus-interpretation"—a metaphorical focal word within an apparently non-metaphorical frame—rather than I. A. Richards' "vehicle-interpretation" is usually more compatible with Wordsworth's unassuming and "natural" metaphors, which can be set against the formal tenor-vehicle metaphor formation since Shakespeare and Donne.

A passage in "There was a Boy" exhibits such a use of metaphor by Wordsworth:

> [T]he visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake
>
> (ll. 21-5; 1805 *Prelude*: V, 409-13)

Syntactically, the adverb "unawares" applies to "enter" whose agent is "the visible scene" but semantically to "his mind" that is capable of being aware. The indeterminacy of the reference results in the oscillation between the literal (i.e. the speaker takes in the scene) and the figurative (i.e. a personified landscape that can "enter unawares" into the speaker's mind) (Hinchliffe, 82). Also, the "imagery" suggests both the visible landscape and the mind's workings imposed on the landscape, which is typical of Wordsworth's use of the words like *image*, *form*, and *shape*. The "uncertain heaven" is truly uncertain that it represents either the dappled skyline merged into the lake or the unintelligible yet felt divine presence of the heaven, and perhaps it is both. Moreover, while "received / into the bosom" explicitly means the sky absorbed into the bosom of the personified lake, it nevertheless implies a human consciousness analogous to a mirroring lake that reflects the scenery, which is reinforced by the syntactical parallelism ("the visible scene / Would enter unawares into his mind… and that uncertain heaven received / Into the bosom of the steady lake"). The lake-mind mirror is not a mimetic mirror since the "imagery" it receives and *reflects* is something already processed and interpreted. The passage is saying "the mind taking in the scene is (like) the lake receiving the sky" *and vice versa*. It is also saying "what the mind reflects is (like) what

the lake reflects" *and vice versa*. Like the landscapes in "To the River Otter," the scene and imagery in "There was a Boy" are both a celebrated encounter and the source of metaphor, *both the tenor and vehicle,* and *both the end and means of metaphor.*

On the other hand, with respect to Richards' theory (if we do not exclude it as a criterion of Wordsworth's use of metaphor), something remarkable about the unusual interpenetration between tenor and vehicle in Wordsworth's (and Coleridge's) metaphors is that the reversibility between tenor and vehicle becomes possible, without evoking any analogical structure. Beardsley has precluded this reversibility as a criterion of metaphor, since "this man is a lion" is simply different from "this lion is a man" (297). However, with Wordsworth, it becomes possible to say that "the mind is (like) the lake" *and vice versa*, and that, with Coleridge, "the merry experiences gleaming up through the depths of mind is (like) the skimming of thin stones on the water" *and vice versa*. The reversibility consists in the fact that the tenor and vehicle are merged into a composite being—the One Life. Also, concerning the interaction theory as a whole, we hardly find anything impertinent and deviant in Wordsworth's unpretentious metaphors. In other words, they possess little tension in disparity that serves to motivate the interaction between tenor and vehicle or between frame and focus, but the interaction and production of new meanings are nevertheless managed. Unlike Donne or Stevens, whose extravagant metaphors attempt to "force, to dislocate if necessary, language into meaning" (T. S. Eliot, 289), Wordsworth's use of metaphor does not disrupt the existing language but nevertheless transcends it with new meanings.

William Empson helps us understand how Wordsworth's metaphor enables a simple word to transcend itself with new meanings while remaining within itself. In his "Sense in *The Prelude*," Empson examines many passages where the word *sense* appears and illustrates how the word directs us to "a new kind of *sense*" while it also means almost all its common associations (629). We can see a famous passage he quotes and analyzes:

> Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
> How Nature by extrinsic passion first
> Peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair,
> And made me love them, may I here omit
> How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
> Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
> Not seldom even in that tempestuous time,
> Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense

Which seem, in their simplicity, to own

An intellectual charm….

And Empson writes:

> The effect is that, though Sensation and Imagination appear as the two extreme ends
> of the scale in view… the word [*sense*] is so placed that it might equally well apply to
> either…. [Readers] are forced to keep the whole range of the word in view, and there
> is a claim that the whole range of the word has been included in one concept.
>
> (636)

By that inclusive concept Empson means a new kind of sense: whether translated as
"Sensation is Imagination" or "Sensation and Imagination interlock," it is a new faculty of
sensing related to imagination (Empson, 637), which is the unified "intercourse of sense" in
Wordsworth's own words (1850 *Prelude*: II, 240). Advantageous to our discussion,
Empson's analysis indicates that a simple word in Wordsworth can constitute a semantic
complex in which almost all the connotations are meant at once along with a new concept
that exceeds the original range of connotation.

On the other hand, we must exercise caution when using Black's model. I would like
to draw attention to an analysis given by Hinchliffe using the focus-interpretation. The lines
he examines are from the "Immortality" ode:

> Blank misgivings of a Creature
> Moving about in worlds not realised
> High instincts before which our mortal Nature
> Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised….
>
> (ll. 148-51)

Surveying the word *realised*, he writes:

> the word *realised* can hover between the sense "made real, transformed into a reality"
> and the sense "apprehended, understood." The word in fact contains within its
> semantical hypothesis one of Wordsworth's great principles, the notion that in

apprehending the world we "half create" it. The two kinds of realising are the same thing, or aspects of one process, and, the poet seems to suggest, it is not necessary to weave new patterns of words to express this. We can instead clear a space around this one word. The meaning is *in* it.

<div align="right">(90, emphasis original)</div>

When Hinchliffe says that "[t]he meaning is *in* it," we wonder whether or not the meaning of Wordsworth's metaphor (or *realised* at least) is really immanent in the "potential range of connotation" of the focused word, to use Beardsley's term (1962: 300)? Hinchliffe's conception may be attributed to a controversial theoretical difficulty of Black's frame-focus model. According to Black, the metaphorical focus works like a filter or screen, selecting from its commonly associated implications some meanings that are appropriate to the frame while toning down other irrelevant elements. Hence, the metaphorical meaning is already in the focus, and the metaphorical twist may merely be an accentuation-and-suppression.[25]

On the other hand, we can reexamine the lines quoted from the "Immortality" ode and see what else *realised* can mean. An alternative interpretation can read the "worlds not realised" as "worlds not yet formalized or determined" and therefore flexible and full of potential. Thus the Creature is capable of motion, moving about the blank potentiality to be realized by his "vision splendid" (ll. 73). As the love of the lovers on Keats's urn is "for ever warm and still to be enjoy'd" because it is never enjoyed, so it is precisely because the imaginative vision mediates between potentiality and realization that the Creature's imaginative Soul can be immortal. On the other hand, the contrast between the immortal Child of high instincts and the trembling and mortal Nature is difficult to understand given Wordsworth's persistent confidence in Nature. It seems that here, consciously or not, Wordsworth relapses into the Cartesian schism between subject and object and elevates imagination over nature. Accordingly, it is perhaps that, trembling before the immensity and immortality of the supreme vision of the Soul, the Nature is "mortal" because it is "guilty" of realizing itself into some actual landscapes or specific animals and plants. Thus the "worlds not realised" is also the "worlds not to be realised," for realization brings mortality and decay. Rather than being moored and fixed to a particular scenery, the worlds should be constantly changing and moving and "[c]an in a moment travel thither" within the Soul's unifying vision where the worlds of past and now and of here and there are interconnected (ll. 168).

---

[25] For Ricoeur's criticism and Black's revision and justification, see chapter 1 p.10.

Another explanation of Nature's mortality is, on the contrary, the fact that it is "not realised" by the immortalizing imagination and is therefore subject to decay. It trembles "like a guilty Thing surprised" because it feels overwhelmed and diminished in the presence of the surprising power of imagination, as when man, standing before God, must tremble in awe of God's power and be reminded of his guilt of falling off from his grace. As the repentant soul stands trembling before God hoping for grace, the Nature also trembles for a mixed feeling of fear and excitement, anticipating that imagination will exert its power on it, "mis-giving" and "mis-representing" some images to Nature and transforming it to something else. Indeed, the Nature's mortal existence quickly turns into an "immortal sea" where the visionary "Children sport upon the shore" (ll. 167, 170). Yet this realization/representation is also a de-creation and re-creation. The "immortal sea" is a (blissful) misrepresentation of nature: the natural objects described earlier in the poem are removed from the scene, clearing a space for the mind to project its childhood memory of children playing upon the shore:

> Hence in a season of calm weather
> > Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> > Which brought us hither,
> > Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the Children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

(ll. 165-71)

Hence, "not realised" is also "un-realized, de-created, and removed," and these connotations are quite contrary to the ordinary meanings of "realised." The removal of the established representation is intended for a subsequent re-creation and re-representation. The natural objects resume their places immediately after the withdrawal:

> Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
> > And let the young Lambs bound
> > As to the tabor's sound!

(ll. 172-4)

50

But they are replaced in a Nature shone by the "master-light of our seeing" (ll. 156), and therefore we can join them "in thought" (ll. 175):

> The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
> Do take a sober colouring from an eye
> That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality….

<div align="right">(ll. 200-2)</div>

The schism between imagination and nature is once again reconciled into the One Life.

If this is so, the word *realised* does not just hover between "made real" and "apprehended," the immanent meanings of the word, but also between potentiality/actuality, mortality/immortality, and de-creation/re-creation. Moreover, if *realise* usually means "making something abstract concrete" and "embodying some ideas or thoughts," here it means rather the reverse—"animating and abstracting something concrete and physical" or "leaving for an imagined world where the past and now and here and there are interfused." The word *real* has now a different meaning as well. Not merely being physical and palpable, the real or reality is now more concerned with the mental and invisible phenomena and visionary experiences that are more often described as "unreal" or "illusionary." Here, "made unreal" is also "made real," and what is imagined and abstract is also real and concrete. The meanings we have come up with are hardly contained in the usual range of *realised*. Rather, they exceed the word because the semantic complex comprised in other focal words (e.g. "mortal," "immortal," "tremble," "guilty," etc.) pulls the *realised* out of itself. Although it is true that Wordsworth does not usually weave new patterns of words, the metaphorical resonance of his subtle words is not confined in the common associations.

Wordsworth's metaphorical resonance is also a kind of automatic expansion from the literal level to the metaphorical and symbolic level. In one passage of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth writes:

> And in the shelter'd coppice where I sate,
> Around me, from among the hazel leaves,
> Now here, now there, stirr'd by the strangling wind,
> Came intermittingly a breath-like sound,
> A respiration short and quick, which oft,
> Yea, might I say, again and yet again,

Mistaking for the panting of my Dog,

The off-and-on Companion of my walk,

I turn'd my head, to look if he were there.
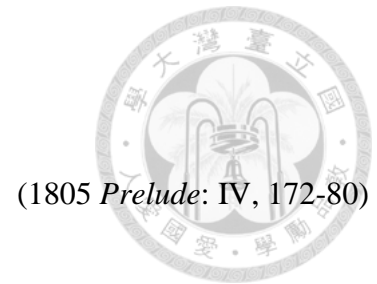
<div align="right">(1805 Prelude: IV, 172-80)</div>

Few readers fail to associate the apparently innocent breeze with the human and divine

presence after they have read the opening of *The Prelude* (Lindenberger 645):
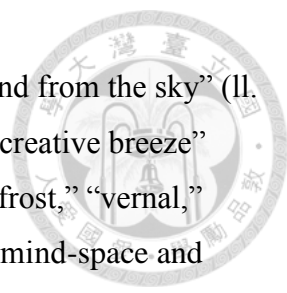
Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze

That blows from the green fields and from the clouds

And from the sky: it beats against my cheek,

And seems half-conscious of the joy it gives

<div align="right">(1805 Prelude: ll. 1-4)</div>

The "half-conscious" works exactly like the "unawares" in "There was a Boy," making the

breeze oscillate between a literal wind and the poet's breathing ("I breath again; / Trances of

though and mountings of the mind / Come fast upon me" [I, 19-21]). Soon after, it in fact

becomes the prized Romantic correspondent breeze:

For I, me thought, while the sweet breath of Heaven

Was blowing on my body, felt within

A corresponding mild creative breeze,

A vital breeze which travell'd gently on

O'er things which it had made, and is become

A tempest, a redundant energy

Vexing its own creation. 'Tis a power

That does not come unrecogniz'd, a storm,

Which, breaking up a long-continued frost,

Brings with it vernal promises, the hope

Of active days, of dignity and thought,

Of prowess in an honorable field,

Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,

The holy life of music and verse.

<div align="right">(1805 Prelude, I: 41-54)</div>

As the breeze that "blows from the green fields and from the clouds / And from the sky" (ll. 2-3) transforms into an Aeolian breeze evoking "A corresponding mild creative breeze" within the poet's mind, words like "tempest," "storm," "vital breeze," "frost," "vernal," "active days," and "field" alternate indeterminately between the figural mind-space and mind-season and the literal descriptions of an observable landscape.

Like Donne's "cumulative metaphors" whose vehicles "reach out the local context," become "virtually a 'real' presence," and acquire "the force of a tenor" (Kerrigan 42-3), Wordsworth's winds are such that they are not simply rhetorical and figurative but have a certain reality of their own. The correspondent breezes—the poet's and the Heaven's breath, the vexing tempest, and the frost-breaking storm—are moving toward a kind of actualization and materialization, as if they were all actual events happening in the real world. On the other hand, whereas Donne's extravagant vehicles often distance their tenors away, Wordsworth grips tenaciously his tenors/frames (usually about nature), protecting them from the pull of the vehicles/focuses. Thus, his vehicles/focuses seldom deviate much from their tenors/frames (e.g. the intimate proximity between an imagery-reflecting lake and an imagery-reflecting mind, or between the various forms of the correspondent breeze), and their cumulation actually helps the tenors/frames to preserve the naturalistic materiality, which is accompanied by a greater subjective inwardness. As shown by the lines just quoted, the vehicles of the breeze in the opening of *The Prelude* are almost as actual and literal as their tenor, and the correspondent breeze accordingly becomes more "real" and "actual" even though more and more metaphors accumulate. This is why the tenor/frame and vehicle/focus are so bound up in the Romantic poetry that usually a vehicle matters only insofar as it is a vehicle for the tenor (Jones, 194).

Diminishing the reliance on the formal tenor-vehicle metaphorical structure is a way to retreat from the extravagant rhetoric since Shakespeare and Donne and return to the "language really used by men," or more precisely "the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes" ("Advertisement to *Lyrical Ballads*"). Insofar as the formal tenor-vehicle structure necessarily introduces some differences between tenor and vehicle, it cannot but undermine the unification and interaction between man and nature. Instead, what Wordsworth achieves is a semantic and ontological complex, in which the separated realms of the literal and the metaphorical, of the physical and the metaphysical, of the subject and object, and of the real and the imagined are all present at once in the One Life union. Hinchliffe claims that Wordsworth "is punning his way back towards a pre-dualistic manner

of thinking and talking about mind and world, searching for terms in which he can speak simultaneously of mental and physical, rather than driving between them the wedge of analogy" (100). Almost in the same fashion, Lindenberger regards Wordsworth's language— the "deliberate blurring of tenor and vehicle" and the "insistence on fusing the literal level of things with their larger symbolic meanings"—as something that "brings together the realm of rhetoric with that of metaphysics" (657). The goal of Wordsworth's Romantic metaphorics is to reunite man's inner world with the external world of nature that have been separated since Descartes by using a subtler language to cross the boundary that divides the subject from its object.

Metaphor and Symbol

However, sometimes the metaphorical potential is in danger of becoming a disembodying abstraction and symbolization. In "To the Same Flower," we have seen what Wordsworth writes on renouncing the artificial similes:

Bright *Flower!* For by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
    Sweet, silent creature!

<div align="right">(ll. 41-4)</div>

Nevertheless, what his speaker hails, intriguingly, is "Bright *Flower!*" rather than "Bright *Daisy!*"—a more complete return to the simple name as he has invoked in the very beginning of the poem (ll. 3). Instead of returning to the very original name of daisy, the similes are transferred to the daisy's genus—flower. In place of a supposed return to the original and the literal following the renunciation of formal similes, the synecdochic transfer (here from species to genus) however inadvertently hinders a sincerer interaction typical of the Wordsworthian metaphorics, unwittingly rendering the daisy a typological symbol. The daisy does not exist as pure and simple but is abstracted as a species of flower, one of the "Loose *types* of things" that seem to subsume under a symbolic totality all the things of nature. According to de Man, as a figure that relates part to whole and *vice versa*, synecdoche invokes a preexisting symbolic totality (1983: 187-208). Similarly, in "The Primrose of the

Rock," the synecdochic chain—"A lasting link in Nature's chain / From Highest heaven let down!"—proceeds from the primrose to the Rock, the earth, and ultimately to God (ll. 11-2):
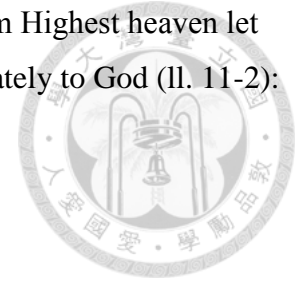
> ...Let myriads of bright flowers,
>   *Like* Thee, in field and grove
> Revive unenvied; —a mightier far,
>   Than tremblings that reprove
> Our vernal tendencies to hope,
>   *Is God's redeeming love*;
>
>
> That love which changed...
>   Their moral element,
> And turned the thistles of a curse
>   To *types* beneficent.
>
> (ll. 31-42, emphasis mine)

The metaphorical statement is transformed into a symbolic abstraction through which the Primrose and the like flowers become religious types and symbols. At the same time, the peculiar reversibility between tenor and vehicle representative of many Wordsworth's metaphors disappears: the Primrose is God's redeeming love but *not vice versa*.

Aristotle defines that the synecdochal transfer can be metaphorical,[26] but merely transferring a daisy to a flower is unproductive and dull. On the other hand, Northrop Frye characterize how a poetic and creative synecdochical metaphor works:

> The distinctively poetic use of such metaphor is the identifying of an individual with its class, where a tree becomes Wordsworth's "tree of many one," or a man becomes mankind. Poets ordinarily do not, like some philosophers, replace individual objects with their total forms; they do not, like allegorists, represent total forms by individuals. They see individual and class as metaphorically identical.
>
> (1957: 365)

---

[26] Synecdoche belongs to the first two kinds of metaphor—the transfer from genus to species and the transfer from species to genus. See chapter 1, p.3.

Simply put, a poetic and meaningful synecdochical metaphor creates a new concrete universal rather than evoking an established totality. The mind-lake we have just seen may be such a poetic metaphor that creates a new genus of which it is the only individual, but here the synecdoches only call forth some familiar total forms at the price of rendering the individuals the disembodied symbols serving as signposts pointing toward the total forms.

One of the most memorable examples of the sublimation from object to metaphor and to symbol can be found in "The Simplon Pass":

> The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
> And everywhere along the hollow rent
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
> The rocks that muttered close upon our ears—
> Black drizzling crags that spake by the way side
> As if a voice were in them—the sick sight
> The unfettered clouds, and region of the heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light,
> Were all *like* workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
> Characters of the great apocalypse,
> The *types* and *symbols* of eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.
>
> (ll. 4-20, emphasis mine)

The poetic antithesis-reconciling vision of the "woods decaying, never to be decayed" and the "stationary blasts," as well as the metaphorical resonance in the shooting torrents, the muttering rocks and the speaking crags, is reduced to the level of formal simile and rhetorical manipulation. As Jonathan Wordsworth remarks, "however impressive are Wordsworth's analogies, analogy they remain" (1975: 183). In "The Rhetoric of Temporality" de Man proposes what I think can serve as a footnote to "The Simplon Pass":

in observing the development of even as geographically concrete a poet as Wordsworth, the significance of the locale can extend so far as to include a meaning that is no longer circumscribed by the literal horizon of a given place. The meaning of the site is often made problematic by a sequence of spatial ambiguities, to such an extent that one ends up no longer at a specific place but with a mere name whose geographical significance has become almost meaningless…. In the terminology proposed by Abrams, passages of this kind no longer depend on the choice of a specific locale, but are controlled by "a traditional and inherited typology"….

<div align="right">(206)</div>

Like "To the Same Flower" and "The Primrose of the Rock," "The Simplon Pass," while accumulating extra turns of metaphor ("…were like workings of one mind, the features / Of the same face…"), dwindles in metaphoricity for the anthropomorphic and pantheistic symbols to intervene, and interestingly this suppression-elevation of metaphor—the *Aufhebung* of metaphor—is achieved with metaphors. Like the transcendent symbolism where the symbol emerges only to be transcended or is used as a signpost pointing toward the symbolized, the empirical landscape in the poem contains tenors that do not exist as themselves or for themselves but appear in order to disappear, to undergo the *Aufhebung* to become the symbolic vehicles. The denaturalized nature is at first personified ("workings of one *mind*, the features / Of the same *face*… / *Characters* of the great apocalypse") and then dehumanized and reified into the symbol of "eternity." Like the landscape, the human images appear only to be sublimated. The most prized Romantic quality—the interactive unification between man and nature—surrenders to a process of *Aufhebung* and symbolization.

    Ironically, by referring to the "workings of one mind" "The Simplon Pass" inadvertently betrays the Romantic creative-receptive axiom it is supposed to obey. In the Infant Babe passage Wordsworth's writes:

>   his [the Babe's] mind
> even as an agent of the one great mind,
> Creates, creator and receiver both,
> Working but in alliance with the works
> Which it beholds.

<div align="right">(1805 *Prelude*, II: 271-5)</div>

Elsewhere, what the creative-receptive minds experience is "both what they half create, / And what perceive" ("Tintern Abbey"). Yet the mind of "The Simplon Pass" seems overwhelmingly creative and almost idealistic, and the resemblances it imposes between the landscape and the symbolic vehicles are merely asserted rather than demonstrated. If the landscape perceived undergoes the creative transformation to the extent that it suffers the disembodying abstraction to the symbolic level, then "The Simplon Pass" is convincing only as a moralized landscape poem. Deviant from the highly valued Romantic immanent symbolism where the symbol is significant both in itself and in the symbolized (or that tenor/frame has value both in itself and in vehicle/focus), the poem's symbolic suppression-abstraction of metaphors cannot but invoke a transcendent symbolization that produces either a conventional totality (e.g. the pantheistic belief) or a mere poeticism. Either way, the rhetoric remains rhetoric, and nature is subordinated to man's overpowering mind. The same applies to "To the Same Flower," "The Primrose of the Rock," "To the Cuckoo," "A Flower Garden," "To a Skylark," and "Yes, it was the mountain Echo," among others.

On the other hand, in the Snowdon passage Wordsworth writes:

> A meditation rose in me that night
> Upon the lonely mountain when the scene
> Had passed away, and it appeared to me
> The perfect image of a mighty mind,
> Of one that feeds upon infinity,
> That is exalted by an under-presence,
> The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim
> Or vast in its own being—above all,
> One function of such mind had Nature there
> Exhibited by putting forth, and that
> With circumstance most awful and sublime:
> That domination which she oftentimes
> Exerts upon the outward face of things,
> So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines,
> Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence
> Doth make one object so impress itself
> Upon all others, and pervades them so,
> That even the grossest minds must see and hear,

And cannot chuse but feel. The power which these

Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus

Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express

Resemblance—in the fullness of its strength

Made visible—a genuine counterpart

And brother of the glorious faculty

Which higher minds bear with them as their own.

This is the very spirit in which they deal

With all the objects of the universe:

They from their native selves can send abroad

Like transformation, for themselves create

A like existence, and, when'er it is

Created for them, catch it by an instinct.

(1805 *Prelude*, XIII: 66-96)

The passage is more convincing than "The Simplon Pass" for the landscape suffers no alienating abstraction even when the "lonely mountain" is elevated to a symbolic level to be the "perfect image of a mighty mind" that "feeds upon infinity." What remains is not merely a symbol but an organic whole interwoven with nature, human, and "an under-presence" of God. The landscape (1805 *Prelude*, XIII: 1-65) presented in a fashion not less detailed or specific than that in "Tintern Abbey" is no so much sublimated as preserved in itself while its immanent being goes along with the transcendent meanings given by the poet spectator.

Giving up the overt comparisons that assert rather than demonstrate the linkage between nature and its transcendent vehicles in "The Simplon Pass," the language modulates into a quieter rhetoric where the Wordsworthian metaphorical resonance vibrates. The spatial quality of the prepositions is telling:

A meditation rose *in* me that night

Upon the lonely mountain when the scene

Hath passed away….

The meditation is simultaneously at the depth of the speaker's mind and upon the surface of the landscape, bringing to the mind another memorable interpenetration between depth and surface and between the internal and the external elsewhere in *The Prelude*:

> For I, me thought, while the sweet breath of Heaven
>
> Was blowing *on* my body, felt *within*
>
> A corresponding mild creative breeze….

Further, the spatial interpenetration between the physical space and the mental space goes on with an ontological intermingling of different kinds of being:

> The perfect image of a mind,
>
> Of one that feeds upon infinity,
>
> That is exalted by an *under*-presence,
>
> The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim
>
> Or vast *in* its own being—above all,
>
> One function of such mind had Nature there
>
> Exhibited by putting *forth*…

Felt *upon* the landscape is an *under*-presence deep down in the mind, and the corresponding resonance renders the landscape being both a natural imagery and an "image of a mind." In addition, as the poet should be a "creator and receiver both," what he receives into his mind should also be put forth:

> They [the higher minds] *from* their native selves can send *abroad*
>
> Like transformation, for themselves create
>
> A like existence, and, when'er it is
>
> Created for them, catch it by an instinct.

The Coleridgean spatial-ontological interpenetration of "the one life within us and abroad" goes on, and Wordsworth thus writes upon ascending Mt. Snowdon:

>   …on the shore
>
> I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
>
> Which meek and silent rested at my feet.
>
> A hundred hills their dusky back upheaved

60

All over this still ocean, and beyond,

Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves

In headland, tongues, and promontory shapes,

Into the sea, the real sea, that seemed

To dwindle and give up its majesty,

Usurped upon as far as sight could reach.

<div align="right">(1805 Prelude, XIII: 42-51)</div>

Girded by a sea of mist, Wordsworth's speaker is metaphorically standing on an island within the mountain. The images of mist-sea and island are not simply based on physical resemblance, since the island also suggests a state of mind—the blissful Romantic solitude. According to Lindenberger, the island is one of the great Romantic images since Rousseau's Saint-Pierre to Yeats' Innisfree, isolating poets and objects from ordinary visions in order to envision a profounder reality (649-54). The geographical metaphor of island relocates the poet from the empirical mountain and the visible sea to a visionary world:

…and from the shore

At distance not the third part of a mile

Was a blue chasm, a fracture in the vapour,

A deep and gloomy breathing-place, through which

Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams

Innumerable, roaring with one voice.

……………………………………………

…but in that breach

Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,

That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged

The soul, the imagination of the whole.

<div align="right">(1805 Prelude, XIII: 54-65)</div>

The isolation brought by the island accumulates to the extent that the ordinary world is transformed and another geographical metaphor—gorge—emerges to carry on the transformation. What the speaker hears from the chasm, which oscillates between a real gorge and a figurative depth and inwardness of the mind, is both the voice from without and from within. It is therefore possible for Nature to lodge deep down in the soul, *and vice versa*.

As the metaphorical resonance is submerged under the seemingly literal language, what the "dark deep thoroughfare" leads to beneath the linguistic surface is a "subterranean reality" (Lindenberger, 655) where the "one voice" is heard and "an under-presence" is felt. What Wordsworth maps is at once a geographical topology of Mt. Snowdon, a rhetoric topology in which the literal and the figurative are merged, and a metaphysical topology where the boundaries between the inner/outer, surface/depth, man/nature, and real/imagined are blurred. The metaphorical resemblance thereby becomes a genuine ontological rapprochement:

> The power which these
> Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
> Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express
> Resemblance—in the fullness of its strength
> Made visible—a genuine counterpart
> And brother of the glorious faculty
> Which higher minds bear with them as their own.
>
> (1805 *Prelude*, XIII: 84-90)

Surely Mt. Snowdon is also a symbol of eternity, but the symbolism is no longer a transcendent symbolization but belongs to the prized Romantic immanent symbolism of man and nature. The landscape is never ignored or treated merely as a necessary mediation on the way to a sublimated synthesis. Instead, they are appreciated both as themselves *and* as something more than themselves.

The Borderer Metaphors and *Aufhebung*

To a certain extent, we can say that most of Wordsworth's more convincing metaphors are "borderers," which negotiate the boundaries between the literal, the metaphorical, and the symbolic. In his classical "Wordsworth's 'Borderers,'" Jonathan Wordsworth states that many of Wordsworth's conflict-reconciling visions are expressed through what he calls "borderers." For example, in the last book of the five-book *Prelude*, Wordsworth offers a horse-borderer:

> 'Twas a horse, that stood

Alone upon a little breast of ground

With a clear silver moonlight sky behind.

With one leg from the ground the creature stood,

Insensible and still; breath, motion gone,

Hairs, colour, all but shape and substance gone,

Mane, ears, and tail, as lifeless as the trunk

That had no stir of breath. We paused awhile

In pleasure of the sight, and left him there,

With all his functions silently sealed up,

Like an amphibious work of Nature's hand,

A borderer dwelling betwixt life and death,

A living statue or a statued life.

<div align="right">(ll. 35-47)</div>

As Jonathan Wordsworth discovers, Wordsworth's borderers, though various, demonstrate the same vision—a border-being dwelling betwixt life and death. In "Resolution and Independence," there is another amphibious being existing between life and death:

Like a Sea-beast crawl'd forth, which on a shelf

Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself.

Such seem'd this Man, not all alive nor dead,

Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:

His body bent double, feet and head

Coming together in life's pilgrimage;

As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage

Of sickness felt by him in times long past,

A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

<div align="right">(ll. 62-70)</div>

The Lucy in the Lucy poems is also such a border being:

A slumber did my spirit seal,

   I had no human fears:

<div align="center">63</div>

She seem'd a thing that could not feel
    The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force
    She neither hears nor sees
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course,
    With rocks and stones and trees!

("A slumber did my spirit seal")

I would like to develop the conception of "borderer" to demonstrate that metaphor is a border being whose existence fluctuates between the literal and the symbolic without being identified to any. I will also argue that the Lucy in the Lucy poems serves as an excellent analogy to the metaphor's border ontology.

According to Cleanth Brooks, Wordsworth's Lucy poems exhibit an "a-logical structure" typical of Romantic poetry that eliminates a logical and comprehensible framework (1965: xv). For example, "A slumber" challenges the reader to fill in the structural and narrative lacuna between the two stanzas with the death of the beloved (Lucy's death presumably) and the speaker's sudden, tragic awareness of it. Otherwise, the two stanzas are simply an unexplained juxtaposition. As a result, the metaphor of the first stanza ("She seemed a thing….") becomes an ironic description of a fact in the second stanza. This way, the Romantic poetry, along with modernist poetry, "reveal[s] gaps in logic that the reader is forced to cross with a leap of the imagination" (Brooks, 1965: xvii). However, as far as I am concerned, a logical gap capable of being abridged at best amount to a temporary suspension of logic, rather than the "elimination of a logical structure" (Brooks, 1965: xviii). Instead, the metaphor—as an "a-logical structure"—is what gets eliminated. On the other hand, de Man similarly indicates that the metaphor of the first stanza is an error or misrecognition of the past, which is corrected and "becomes literally true in the retrospective perspective of the eternal 'now'" of the second stanza (1983: 224). Fair enough, but again the metaphor, along with its a-logical structure, is lost forever and reduced to an allegory of temporality.

Brooks and de Man nullify the metaphor by reducing it to a mistake correctible by hindsight, literalizing metaphor by treating it as an illusion or misrecognition, which is, in effect, not treating metaphor as metaphor but as irony or allegory. Hence I attempt a further interpretation that should reinforce the metaphor's a-logicality and compensate for the loss of

metaphor. I propose that the "she" in "A slumber" can transform from a tenor to a vehicle and predicate herself and her now literal properties (i.e. the natural and inert thingness) on the speaker, now a tenor. De Man comments that "Wordsworth is one of the few poets who can write proleptically about their own death…. The 'she' in the poem is in fact large enough to encompass Wordsworth as well" (1983: 225). Thus, the now literal "She seemed" encompasses the metaphorical "I seem" or "I seemed," and the slumber can be more than an erroneous illusion of immortality of the past and become a realistic anticipation of the future necessity of death or a hypothetical proposition contrary to the present. Either way, the slumber is both the real thing experienced and described and the occasion of metaphor, both the end and means of metaphor.

In "There was a Boy," Wordsworth's speaker meditates on the death of his own split ego that reappears in *The Prelude*:
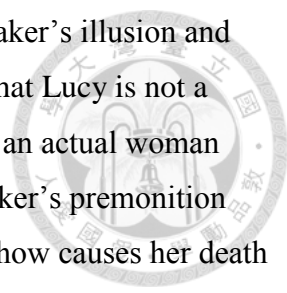
> This boy was taken from his mates, and died
> In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
> ……………………………………………………
>   …I believe that there
> A long half-hour together I have stood
> Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies!
>
>   (ll. 26-7; 32-4)

The death is indeterminate between a real death and a figurative one of losing child's original vision like that in the "Immortality" ode ("Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting" [ll. 58]), and between the death of an actual boy and an imagined, projected being. The boy's life and death are both within and without the poet's mind. Likewise, Lucy is also such a "boundary being" (Hartman, 1964:158), dwelling not just between life and death (we cannot be sure whether her life and death is actual or metaphorical either), but also between an actual existence and an imagined being, thus possessing a "dual ontology" (Jones, 229) and a "double existence" (Kroeber, 106). Like the boy in "There was a Boy," Lucy's mode of being cannot be reduced to the imagined or the real by a temporal principle of anteriority or an ontological one of priority" (Hartman, 1966: 50). Thus, her death, as well as her existence, has been treated too literally by Brooks and de Man, as if there can really be a "perspective of eternal 'now'" (de Man, 1983: 224) that can judge determinately Lucy's mode of being and death within the severely limited scope of the poem.

On the other hand, while both critics can sensibly detect the speaker's illusion and disillusionment, they ironically convince themselves, willingly or not, that Lucy is not a daydream existence born out of the speaker's mesmerizing slumber but an actual woman whose death is no less physical than her life. Also, considering the speaker's premonition about Lucy's death in "Strange fits of passion have I known" that somehow causes her death in other Lucy poems, to see Lucy as an actual person without regarding her as a psychical wish fulfillment is perhaps rather literal minded.[27] As Frances Ferguson points out, to assume Lucy as a real person is perhaps mistaken: "The similes and metaphors [in the Lucy poems as a whole] are figural substitutions for Lucy which stand in for Lucy completely enough to suggest that there may be a fundamental category mistake in seeing her as a human being— she is, perhaps, a flower (or a simile, or a metaphor)" (534). Hence, is it not possible that, like the lamenting speaker of "There was a Boy," the mournful speaker of "A slumber" also stands mutely in front of and within the grave of mind grieving for the death of his inner, transformed self? Lucy's death can be transformed into an elegiac and poetic expression, as well as an occasion for metaphor and as a metaphor (and symbol) itself. As a metaphor, Lucy crosses between borders, and also as a metaphor, Lucy's "she" encompasses or substitutes the speaker's "I," thus dying a metaphorical death for the poet and achieving the poet's wish fulfillment.

Therefore, the immortalizing metaphor "She seemed a thing that could not feel / The touch of earthly years" can be preserved. Her immortality is first stated metaphorically in the first stanza and then demonstrated in the second stanza as a being unified with nature. As Geoffrey Hartman remarks, Lucy's "star-like quality [as described in "She dwelt among untrodden ways"] is maintained despite her death, for the poet's sense of her immutability deepens by reversal into an image of *participation mystique* with the planet earth" (2004: 395, emphasis original). David Ferry also comments that Lucy's death

> was right, after all, for by dying she was one with the natural processes and fantastically ennobled thereby…. Eternal nature is her true lover, and the poet's first idealization of her was right after all, for she had nothing to do with humanity…. It is better after all to become immortal than to be the mortal object of a human relationship.

---

[27] Richard E. Matlak claims that Lucy is the incarnation of Wordsworth's unconscious resentment at Dorothy Wordsworth during their stay in Germany. See his "Wordsworth's Lucy Poems in Psychobiographical Context." *PMLA*, 93.1 (1978): 46-65

Though paradoxical, the immortalization by dying is a recurrent mythological and literary theme (e.g. Donne's "Canonization") and also accounts for another memorable metaphorical death in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey":

> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.
>
> (ll. 43-9)

If slumber implies death, as does Lucy's sleep and the newly born baby's sleep in "Immortality," it also points toward a revival: "we are laid asleep / In body, and become a living soul" (ll. 45-6). The possibility of revival after a slumber-death is also revealed a few lines after as if Lucy was awoken from her slumber and participated in a new life in which she "roll'd" with nature:

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of the setting suns,
> And the round ocean and living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.
>
> (ll. 93-102)

In these lines and "A slumber," a pantheistic spirit (if we believe Lucy is such a spirit) is felt both upon the landscape and within the mind. The melancholy and grief in "A slumber" might as well be elated and sublimated with these lines into a confident belief in the One Life, and the elegiac form of "A slumber" also metamorphoses into a pastoral elegy to immortalize the dead beloved.

From another perspective, perhaps we do not even need to conceive a death in "A slumber" if the poem is read together with "Resolution and Independence." As Jonathan Wordsworth illustrates, the leech-gatherer is an amphibious boundary being (stanzas nine and ten), and in the sixteenth stanza Wordsworth's speaker, along with the leech-gatherer, peculiarly drifts to a daydreaming like that in "Strange fits of passion":
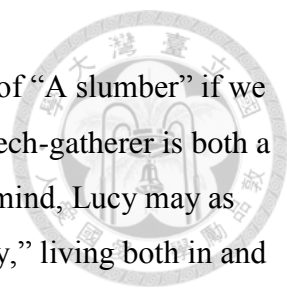
> The old Man still stood talking by my side;
> But now his voice to me was like a stream
> Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
> And the whole body of the Man did seem
> Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
> Or like a man from some far region sent,
> To give me human strength by apt admonishment.
>
> (ll. 106-12)

Combining these lines with what appears earlier in the poem—"Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead, / Nor all asleep"—it is as if we can simply modify one word of the first stanza of "A slumber" to describe the speaker and the leech-gatherer: "A slumber did my spirit seal / I had no human fears: / *He* seem'd a thing that could not feel / The touch of earthly years." If the co-reading of these two poems seems plausible, the gap between the first and second stanzas of "A slumber" does not necessarily require the reader to fill in Lucy's death, especially as the leech-gatherer remains alive when the speaker is restored to sober consciousness:

> My former thoughts returned; the fear that kills;
> And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
> Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
> And mighty Poet in their misery dead.
>
> (ll. 113-6)

On the other hand, these lines can be taken as a footnote to the speaker of "A slumber" if we must have a dead Lucy in "A slumber." But we do not have to. If the leech-gatherer is both a mental image and a real man *living* both within *and* without the poet's mind, Lucy may as well be alive as a bordering pantheistic spirit like that in "Tintern Abbey," living both in and out of the poet's mind. Then, we do not need to conceive "A slumber" as an elegiac expression, and the second stanza can be interpreted as straightforwardly describing the motions of the spirit Lucy that rolls with nature, a further qualification of the metaphor in the first stanza, and building up a "cumulative metaphor" that realizes itself.

However, no interpretation can dominate others, and Lucy remains an indeterminate figure, oscillating between a real/imagined existence and between a literal/metaphorical/symbolic figure. By her indeterminacy, Lucy is an exceptional embodiment of a borderer as well as an ultimate figure of metaphor. Hartman remarks in *Wordsworth's Poetry* that "Lucy is a boundary being, nature sprite and human, yet not quite either. She reminds us of the traditional mythical person who lives, ontologically, an intermediate life, or mediates various realms of existence" (158). Lucy also "is an intermediate modality of consciousness…[since she] is seen entirely from with the poet, so that this modality may be the poet's own, and Lucy the "inner maiden"[28] (158). Following Hartman, Mark Jones assumes that the most important characteristic of Lucy is her "liminal ontology" which is irreducible to either a real person or an imagined being (220):

> By undeciding Lucy's status, or by projecting his [Hartman's] indecision as *her*
> liminal ontology (she is "a boundary being" [*Wordsworth's Poetry*, 158], inner and
> outer, spirit and human, symbol and "thing" in herself)…[His] practice is also truer
> than others', I shall argue, to high symbolism's [i.e. the Romantic immanent
> symbolism's] emphasis on the duality of the symbol, to the deconstructionist both-and,
> or double gesture, and to Wordsworth's own anti-mediate and stereoptical interpretive
> mode.
>
> (220, emphasis original)

---

[28] Although Hartman prioritizes the interpretation of Lucy as the poet's intermediate modality of consciousness over the Lucy as an intermediate being, he later still affirms the possibility of a real Lucy in the poems, just as we have quoted: "Her [Lucy's] mode of being, therefore, cannot be reduced to the imagined or the real by a temporal principle of anteriority or an ontological one of priority" (Hartman 1966: 50).

I want to draw attention to a specific passage in Jones. He first quotes another passage form Hartman:

> [The second stanza of "A slumber"] does not close out the illusion [of the first stanza]; it preserves it within the elegiac form. The illusion is elated, in our sense of the word: "aufgehoben" seems the proper term. For the girl is still, and all the more, what she seemed to be.
>
> (Hartman, 1987: 189; Jones, 237)

Then he remarks that:

> Taking *aufhebung* as "elation," Hartman makes a term of philosophical resolution, par excellence, into one of irresolution, incomplete synthesis, self-difference: in "the girl is still, *and all the more*, what she seemed to be," he emphasizes the difference that remains even *within* the resolution of "is" and "seemed."
>
> (237, emphasis original)

Perhaps the most important thing about Lucy is that she resists *Aufhebung*, or rather, she is caught between different phases of *Aufhebung* without ever coming up with a final synthesis.

The interpretive act that reduces "She seemed a thing…" to "She is a thing…" by critics like Brooks and de Man attempts to pinpoint Lucy and the poem by designating a conclusive meaning and being to Lucy and sublimating the poem to something intelligible and definite. Ricoeur illustrates the two processes of *Aufhebung* and the metaphorical elements in *Aufhebung*:

> This text [Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Mind*] describes two operations [of *Aufhebung*] that intersect at one point—dead metaphor—but remain distinct. *The first operation, which Aufhebung is purely metaphorical*, takes a proper (*eigentlich*) meaning and transports it (*übertragen*) into the spiritual order. Out of this expression—non-proper (*uneigentlich*) because transposed—the other operation makes a proper abstract meaning. *It is the second operation that constitutes the "suppression-preservation" which Hegel calls Aufhebung*. But the two operations, transfer and suppression-preservation, are distinct. The second alone creates a proper sense in the spiritual order out of an improper sense coming from the sensible order.

70

The phenomenon of wearing away (*Abnutzung*) is only a prior condition allowing the second operation to be constituted on the ground of the first.

(2003: 346, emphasis mine)

Reducing "She seemed" to "She is" is exactly trying to make the metaphor a dead one, with a view to abstracting a proper meaning out of the dead metaphor, ignoring the tension between the metaphorical "is" and the literal "is not," and this is surely what Brooks and de Man have done. However, as the above analyses show, Lucy's ontological status vacillates between the metaphorical "seemed" and the literal "is," and to pin down Lucy in either side of border only manifests the forceful and willful act of *Aufhebung* for the sake of interpretation. Unlike "The Simplon Pass" where the landscapes and metaphors are sublimated into transcendent symbols that designate decisive meanings, Lucy and the Lucy poems are both immanent *and* transcendent, dialectic but not synthetic. If (poetic) metaphor is "the disrespecter of domains" (Cazeaux, 37), Lucy, as a superior borderer, is a supreme figure of metaphor that can metamorphose herself into almost anything but remains irreducible to anything whatsoever, sustaining the dialectic between the literal "is" and metaphorical and symbolic "seem" without being solidified into a decisive conclusion.

<center>**Chapter Four: Wallace Stevens and Metamorphic Metaphors**</center>

Reality is a cliché

From which we escape by metaphor

It is only *au pays de la métaphore*

Qu'on est poète.

<div align="right">

From Miscellaneous Notebooks (*OP*,[29] 204)

</div>

The Motive for Metaphor

      Wallace Stevens' metaphorical style is well known, and for Stevens it is metaphor that helps us to get away from banal reality and acquire "A new knowledge of reality" (*CP*,[30] 534). Conversely, lifeless metaphors paralyze reality and our perceptiveness. In "Delightful Evening," Stevens writes pejoratively about such life-draining metaphors:

> A very felicitous eve,
>
> Herr Doktor, and that's enough,
>
> Though the brow in your palm may grieve
>
> At the vernacular of light
>
> (Omitting reefs of cloud):
>
> Empurpled garden grass;
>
> The spruces' outstretched hands;
>
> The twilight overfull
>
> Of wormy metaphors.

<div align="right">

(*CP*, 162)

</div>

The German doctor, supposedly searching for enlightenment, ironically finds himself in an unfavorable, "de-light-ful" situation (Cook, 2007: 111) where there is only a "vernacular of light" rather than an illuminating language for research. The "vernacular of light" is

---

[29] Wallace Stevens, *Opus Posthumous*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997. Print.
[30] *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954. Print.

<center>72</center>

composed of "wormy metaphors" which consume the worn-out language's body, and the "felicitous eve" turns out to be an undesirable darkness. As the synesthetic metaphor "vernacular of light" associates language with light and vision, the darkened and infected image of wormy twilight in the end of poem also implies a dull and diminished perceptiveness as the consequence of stale or even dead(ly) metaphors. In a seemingly lyric poem the figure of parasitic and deadening metaphors seems obtrusive and gratuitous, but it is less strange if we understand that metaphor for Stevens is not one rhetorical figure among others but an essential epistemological foundation and a major approach to the Romantic imaginative perception. Contrarily, if all we have is wormy metaphors, our language and perceptiveness must be losing their vitality.

"Crude Foyer" expresses such a desolation when our epistemological bases are only wormy metaphors:

Thought is false happiness: the idea
That merely by thinking one can,
Or may, penetrate, not may,
But can, that one is sure to be able—

That there lies at the end of thought
A foyer of the spirit in a landscape
Of the mind, in which we sit
And wear humanity's bleak crown;

In which we read the critique of paradise
And say it is the work
Of a comedian, this critique;
In which we sit and breathe

An innocence of an absolute,
False happiness, since we know that we use
Only the eye as faculty, that the mind
Is the eye, and that this landscape of the mind

Is a landscape only of the eye; and that

We are ignorant men incapable

Of the least, minor, vital metaphor, content,

At last, there, when it turns out to be here.

<div align="right">(CP, 305)</div>

The "foyer of the spirit in a landscape / of the mind" is a figure for the connection between the subjective perception and the objective world like the metaphorical bridge in "Metaphors of A Magnifico." In her insightful *Wallace Stevens' Experimental Language*, Beverly Maeder suggests that the foyer we sit in "is our very impoverished, or at least frustrating, epistemological 'home.'[31] Seeing with the mind's eye is a dead metaphor, a 'crude foyer'—as a place for seeing/focusing, and as a place for articulating a transfer of signifier from one noun position to another within the poem's syntax" (56). What these exhausted metaphors can offer is an equally lifeless syllogism ("since we know that we use / Only the eye as faculty, that the mind / Is the eye, and that this landscape of the mind / Is a landscape only of the eye"), which is the barren result of rationalism ("Thought is false happiness…."). When metaphors are overly tamed and domesticated, they become worms and parasites that hide in our epistemological bases and eat up our imagination and perceptiveness. On the other hand, the desire to escape the stale and unproductive epistemological foyer composed of wormy metaphors is accompanied, not with the desire to escape metaphor, but with the desire for "vital metaphor" that can salvage our terribly worn-out language and creativity.

"Poem Written at Morning" offers some vital metaphors and explores metaphor's epistemological and ontological function in constructing reality:

A sunny day's complete Poussiniana

Divide it from itself. It is this or that

And it is not.

      By metaphor you paint

A thing. Thus, the pineapple was a leather fruit,

A fruit for pewter, thorned and palmed and blue,

To be served by men of ice.

<div align="right">The senses paint</div>

By metaphor. The juice was fragranter

---

[31] [my note] Foyer means "home" in French.

<div align="center">74</div>

Than wettest cinnamon. It was cribled pears

Dripping a morning sap.

                                   The truth must be

That you do not see, you experience, you feel,

That the buxom eye brings merely its element

To the total thing, a shapeless giant forced

Upward.

   Green were the curls upon that head.

                                                     (*CP*, 219)

Metaphors that identify the pineapple with something else ("leather," "pewter," "cribled pears," etc.) paradoxically do not divide the pineapple from itself but strengthen the pineapple's integrity by combining the images into "the total thing." The pineapple thus becomes a synecdoche, a part for the whole—the complete being (i.e. "a shapeless giant") that it is going to metamorphose into. However, the metaphors are not a futile synecdochical transfer which Stevens is wary of: "And though one says that one is part of everything, / There is a conflict, there is a resistance involved; / And being part is an exertion that declines: / One feels the life of that which gives life as it is" ("The Course of a Particular" *OP*, 96). The metaphorical transfer the pineapple undergoes in effect creates a new genus—"a shapeless giant forced upward"—of which the pineapple seems to be the only species— "Green were the curls upon that head." In other words, the pineapple is a concrete universal metaphorically created. Being simultaneous an individual and a larger genus, the pineapple oscillates between its being and becoming, or it is a becoming being, always fresh and energetic.

       Metaphor is a double-edged blade—it sharpens yet blunts perception and language when it becomes over-domesticated, wormy, and tenacious. However, reconsidering "Delightful Evening" again with a passage in "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction," perhaps the wormy metaphors in "Delightful Evening" can be seen in a different light and regain their vitality:

                                 You lie

In silence upon your bed. You clutch the corner

Of the pillow in your hand. You writhe and press

> A bitter utterance from your writhing, dumb,
> Yet voluble dumb violence.

<div align="right">(I.V)</div>
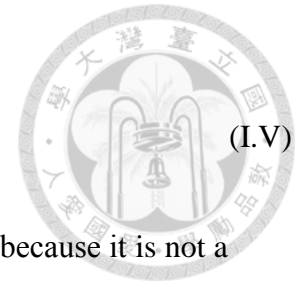
The wriggling, worm-like poet ephebe's utterance is dumb yet voluble because it is not a spoken language, just as "the vernacular of light" is not. It is a voice not yet realized but full of potential and therefore voluble, as the unheard melodies of Keats' urn are sweeter than those heard. Immediately in the next canto, Stevens affirms the potentiality of imagination:

> Not to be realized because not to
> Be seen, not to be loved nor hated because
> Not to be realized….
>
> Without a name and nothing to be desired,
> If only imagined but imagined well.

<div align="right">(I.VI)</div>

For the time being, the ephebe is "a worm composing on a straw" ("Blue Guitar" XVII) that hardly produces any proper sound of poetry. Yet the ephebe's utterance will be more than a vernacular and becomes an en-lightening language (e.g. "the imagination's Latin" II.IX) and a supreme fiction toward the end of "Notes," and the "worm composing on a straw" will also become "the lion in the lute" ("Blue Guitar" XIX) that plays the poetry's "luminous melody of proper sound" ("Notes" III.VII). Thus, the wriggling ephebe turns out to be a glowworm whose light flickers and alternates between light and de-light, between the visible and invisible, and between realization and potentiality, which becomes the best positive embodiment of the wormy metaphors of twi-light.

In the very beginning of "Notes," it is "In the uncertain light of single, certain truth, / Equal in living changingness to the light" that Stevens meets someone he loves, presumably the personified figure of supreme fiction (Cook, 2007: 215). The light of every supreme fiction must be ever-changing like the flickering light of glowworm, which is the "luminous flittering" that "never reaches words" but is nevertheless voluble, mediating between two kinds of language—the vernacular and the lingua franca—as the superior utterance of imagination:

The poem goes from the poet's gibberish to

The gibberish of the vulgate and back again.

Does it move to and fro or is it of both

At once? Is it a luminous flittering

Or the concentration of a cloudy day?

Is there a poem that never reaches words?

……………………………………………………

It is the gibberish of the vulgate that he seeks.

He tries by a peculiar speech to speak

The peculiar potency of the general,

To compound the imagination's Latin with

The lingua franca et jocundissima.

("Notes" II.IX)

As J. Hillis Miller observes in his "Wallace Stevens' Poetry of Being," Stevens' poetry is "a poetry of flickering mobility" and an "oscillation rapid enough [that] becomes a blur in which opposites are touched simultaneously, as alternating current produces a steady beam of light" (94).[32] This is the motion characteristic of metaphor: "the first idea becomes / The hermit in a poet's metaphors, / Who comes and goes and comes and goes all day" ("Notes" II).

In "The Motive for Metaphor," Stevens' manifesto of metaphor, the image of metaphor as a voluble glowworm may be more illuminating:

You like it under the trees in autumn,

Because everything is half dead.

The wind moves like a cripple among the leaves

And repeats words without meaning.

In the same way, you were happy in spring,

---

[32] A similar comment is also made by Helen Vendler: "Polarities are abandoned [in Stevens' poetry], at least theoretically, and in their place we find either a constant motion back and forth, as the hermit 'comes and goes and comes and goes all day,' or else a recurrent convergence. The poems embodying movement sometimes show it as perpetual oscillation 'from that ever-early candor to its late plural'" (*On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems*, 172).

With the half colors of quarter-things,
The slightly brighter sky, the melting clouds,
The single bird, the obscure moon—

The obscure moon lighting an obscure world
Of things that would never be quite expressed,
Where you yourself were never quite yourself
And did not want nor have to be,

Desiring the exhilarations of changes:
The motive for metaphor, shrinking from
The weight of primary noon,
The A B C of being,

The ruddy temper, the hammer
Of red and blue, the hard sound—
Steel against intimation—the sharp flash,
The vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X.

(*CP*, 288)

The poem is also a twi-light poem, negotiating between the sun and the moon. The volume of both sound and light is tuned down in the first half of the poem, preparing for the appearance of the motive for metaphor, the "You" addressed in the poem. The autumn wind that blows decay in the first stanza is a banal, wormy metaphor, not a glowworm but an undesirable parasite, hence a crippled figure. Unlike Shelley's autumn wind in "Ode to West Wind" that has the power to regenerate after destruction, Steven's wind is so exhausted that it only "repeats words without meaning," audible but not voluble. Maeder clearly observes that "the 'evasion' of the wind metaphor lies less in its own metaphoricity than in the chain of attenuations it produces in the signifiers of the second and third stanzas, ultimately even curbing the desire of a self who 'did not want nor have to be' itself" (70-1). The first part therefore can be read as another "De-light-ful evening" where banal metaphors diminish imaginativeness and desire.

The second and third stanzas, however, offer the possibility of an alternative reading. The obscure moon is an alternative figure of glowworm, slightly lighting a world of potential

78

metaphors not yet realized—"an obscure world / Of things that would never be quite expressed"—just like the world of imaginative potentiality that is "Not to be realized because not to / Be seen…" ("Note" VI). As Eleanor Cook remarks in her seminal *Poetry, Word-Play, and Word-War in Wallace Stevens*, the sublunar world is a land of metaphor, a *pays de la métaphore*: "Such a land would include unmade metaphors, moving to or from completeness, or just moving about, content not to be themselves" (183). As the light of a glowworm can only be visible at night, so a burgeoning metaphor's light is fluorescent, most visible without light pollution and most voluble yet dumb when vibrating beyond the normal audible frequency of banal language. Thus, that the motive for metaphor "did not want nor have to be" is not necessarily the result of a thwarted desire but an affirmation in negation, and the cripple figure turns out to be an appropriate figuration for these half-formed metaphors full of potential.

On the other hand, the sunlight has to be avoided as the opposite of the moonlight. Harold Bloom, in his canonical *Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate,* demonstrates that the "weight of primary noon" is an overbearing, sterilizing light that has already been avoided since Shelley: "Shelley, rising and seeing the dawn, sighs for night: 'When light rode high, and the dew was gone, / And noon lay heavy on flower and tree' [Shelly's "To Night"]. This is 'the weight of primary noon' from which Stevens shrinks in 'The Motive for Metaphor,' still 'desiring the exhilaration of changes'" (221). While the night is the inspiring muse, the sun is its opposite, either the neutralizing light of empirical reality or the imposing weight of established traditions. This is the mortality and death of metaphor. As Maeder comments: "The inventive engagement required by metaphor carries this risk: that by naming—and more particularly, by inventing new relations through the transfer of names—the poem comes to signify the namer's own mortality" (72). The allusion to Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" is audible in "Steel against intimation." To a certain extent, "against intimation" is against immortality and opts for an active mortal life where imaginative potentiality is given existence. Unlike his Romantic predecessors who believe in the immortality of non-realization of a Grecian urn or of Byzantium, Stevens sings the unheard melodies on his Blue Guitar and brings Byzantium down to New Haven.[33] The

---

[33] Stevens' impulse to materialize potentiality is also clearly seen in the beginning of "Notes," where the ephebe's mentor violates his own decree by naming the sun:

> There is a project for the sun. The sun
> Must bear no name, *gold flourisher*, but be
> In the difficulty of what it is to be.

<div align="right">(CP, 381, emphasis mine)</div>

mortality of metaphor in Stevens is not unfortunate, for "it epitomizes the power of language for engaging with life and divulging the contingency of infinite potential upon finite form" (Maeder, 74). The sublunar potentiality in the second and third stanza transforms into a heliotrope even though this is what it shuns, realizing "the exhilarations of changes," and this oscillation and "luminous flittering" ("Notes" IX) between the opposites has always been a key word in Stevens.

Endlessly oscillating, Stevens' metaphor, phoenix-like, arises from its own ashes. The primary noon is also Apollo's light, the light of civilization and realization that domesticates any obscure possibility brought by the moon. However, Apollo's light is itself a twilight figure, bringing also plagues and worms, a self-negating figure that allows something antithetical—the glowworm moon—to appear. Yet the sun-moon alternation is not a banal metaphor for the natural cycle but a materialization of "the exhilarations of changes," since in the later part of the poem Apollo also metamorphoses into another figure—Hephaestus, who recycles the cripple image of the first stanza into the great forger. Further, Hephaestus' "vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X" is another *pays de la métaphore* that

> include[s] the place where metaphors are made—not a landscape as in the first part but a forge or crossing-place as in the second. Not nature but art. Not safe simile ("you like it") but dangerous metaphor. In short, Stevens has attempted a poem like Yeats's "Byzantium," with a similar ambivalence about fixing things in art, a similar figure for doing so (a smithy), with a weaker, less tormented world of flux.

Similarly, in the end of "Notes," the ephebe demonstrates his new gained civility and maturity also by violating his own principle, this time by naming the earth:

> Fat girl, terrestrial, my summer, my night….
> …………………………………………………
> I should name you flatly, waste no words,
> Check your evasions, hold you to yourself….
> …………………………………………………
> You remain the more than natural figure. You
> Become the soft-footed phantom, the irrational
> Distortion, however fragrant, however dear.
> That's it: the more than rational distortion,
> The fiction that results from feeling
> …………………………………………………
> I call you by name, my green, my fluent mundo….

(*CP*, 406-7)

Stevens, like his own creations, has a tendency to test his own principles by producing their contraries, just as what should be avoided in "The Motive for Metaphor"—the world of sun—is still stated, created, and put into further figurations and metamorphoses.

For Cook, the poem offers two *pays de la métaphore*: "a natural, changing world of metamorphosis, and a place of art, of fixing, of againstness, a forge" (1988: 183). Maeder also outlines a psychological profile of metaphor that I think supports Cook's reading: "These are the two sides of the 'motive,' a tendency toward and a retreat from: desire for what is lacking, and shrinking from what should be but is not known" (70).
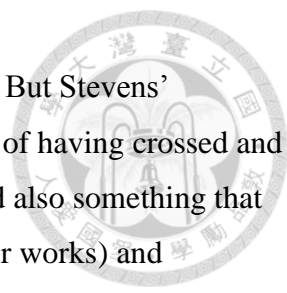
Yet there is almost always a third party and a third place in Stevens—a mediating oscillation that mediates between the two places and the two kinds of motive. The syntactically and semantically indeterminate "The A B C of being" that hovers between the apposition of "The motive for metaphor" and of "The weight of primary noon" mediates between the two contrary tendencies, negotiating a contact zone for the sublunar motive and Apollo/Hephaestus. "The A B C of being" may be explained further with another passage in "Notes" where the metaphor's characteristic oscillation is evident:

> We move between these points:
> From that ever-early candor to its late plural
> And the candor of them is the strong exhilaration
> Of what we feel from what we think….
>
> (I.III)

If "The A B C of being" is the "ever-early candor" that vivaciously arises from the transition from an old supreme fiction to a new one, it can also be the "late plurals" or "The vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X" as the world of sun interchanges with the world of moon. "The A B C of being" is *the* land of metaphor *par excellence*, the borderland mediating between the land of the metamorphic moon and the land of the forging Apollo/Hephaestus. This land is where Stevens can assert elsewhere that that "is and as and is are one," and "Real and unreal are two in one" ("An Ordinary Evening" XV, XXVIII). "The A B C of being" is also a no-place, because it cannot be identified with any place and because it mediates between potentiality and realization. Dwelling in this land is the pure being of metaphor that appears at the end of "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven" as a pure force of crossing: "It is not in the premise that reality / Is a solid. It may be a shade that traverses / A dust, a force that traverses a shade" (XXXI). Cooks offers a similar reading regarding "The vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X":

81

Wayne Booth thinks of metaphor as "additive" or a "synthesis." But Stevens' metaphor ends in an X not a +. I read this as a sign of the action of having crossed and also of crossing, something achieved and fixed and finished, and also something that goes on. Such a reading is both synchronic (this is how metaphor works) and diachronic (this is how metaphors have worked) and makes a way of proceeding, as we leave dead or crossed metaphors, and keep moving or crossing ones.

(1988: 187)

I would only like to add to this insightful reading that the "X" is itself an extension and expansion of the "A B C," the original action of having crossed and crossing.

Metaphor is a border being and disrespecter of domains that dwells in the boundary that separates a clarified reality from a potential world. What "The *Motive* for Metaphor" deals with is not the various kinds of metaphor but the *being* and *raison d'être* of metaphor. None of any metaphorical transformation offered by the poem, or we may say, none of any phenomenal existence of metaphor is identified with the ontological motive of metaphor. As a pure being not yet realized and full of potential, the motive for metaphor remains within itself while transcending itself, metamorphosing into something more than itself, and still remaining distinct from its own transformations. Like the Lucy of Wordsworth's Lucy poems, the motive for metaphor resists synthetic resolution while synthesizing. Metaphor is a mobile being, moving "from that ever-early candor to its late plural" and back again (*CP*, 382). In "A Primitive like an Orb," Stevens' version of Cartesian existential statement is "It is and it / Is not and, therefore, is," which can also be understood as the ontology of metaphor that moves back and forth between the metaphorical "is" and the literal "is not," a resolute irresolution oscillating between imagination and reality. Yet, Miller discovers that, in the oscillation between imagination and reality, "there is an unperceived emptying out of both" (1964: 100). But this is precisely what Stevens wants to achieve with metaphor—not the blankness and bleakness of "The Snow Man" but a momentary glimpse of being pure and simple. It is precisely because the motive for metaphor is unfastened from any particular essence that it remains a border being full of potentiality. For Stevens, such a "living changingness" (*CP*, 380) is the ultimate image of both metaphor and reality.

Moreover, it is precisely the cherished potentiality of metaphor's motive that guarantees the metaphor's ability to metamorphose. Northrop Frye in "The Realist Oriole: A Study of Wallace Stevens" suggests that "the theoretical postulate of Stevens' poetry is a

world of total metaphor, where the poet's vision may be identified with anything it visualizes. For such a poetry the most accurate word is apocalyptic, a poetry of 'revelation' [*CP*, 344] in which all objects and experiences are united with a total mind" (367). Associating metaphor with an apocalyptic vision of revelation, Frye sees in Stevens a tendency to employ the radical form of metaphor as identity (i.e. X *is* Y), a poetic identity that is "illogical" if taken literally and thus "anti-logical" (364). Therefore, "A man and a woman / Are one. / A man and a woman and a blackbird / Are one" ("Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird") and that "he is and as and is are one" and "Real and unreal are two in one" ("An Ordinary Evening" XV, XXVIII).

"Sea Surface Full of Clouds" is composed of a series of such apocalyptic identifications. The sea-wave becomes sea-cloud and then sea-bloom, and during these protean identifications, there is also a commingling of senses, as the painterly images resonate with other sensory impressions—"the cloud / Diffusing balm in that pacific calm" and "The gongs rang loudly as the windy booms /Hoo-hooed it in the darkened ocean-bloom" (I, II). The oneness of senses corresponds to the universal amalgamation of surfaces—sky, sea surface, and reflections on the water floor. Hence, regarding the poem as a vision of the maternal, pre-symbolic union as well as a narcissistic pleasure achieved through the unifying metaphors, Michel Benamou in his "Displacements of Parental Space" assumes that metaphor "is *participation mystique*, oneness with cosmos, [and] unbroken communication" (478, emphasis original). The highest apocalyptic vision, supposedly having gone through the pre-symbolic semiosis and narcissistic solipsism by identifying a "there" in the final line (Bloom, 62), is the almighty sun-man Hoon of "Tea at the Palaz of Hoon":

> Not less because in purple I descended
> The western day through what you called
> The loneliest air, not less was I myself.
>
> What was the ointment sprinkled on my beard?
> What were the hymns that buzzed beside my ears?
> What was the sea whose tide swept through me there?
>
> Out of my mind the golden ointment rained,
> And my ears made the blowing hymns they heard.
> I was myself the compass of that sea:

I was the world in which I walked, and what I saw

Or heard or felt came not but from myself;

And there I found myself more truly and more strange.

<div align="right">(CP, 65)</div>

This is the apocalyptic vision Frye suggests—an expanding identification of the self with the world and a participation mystique in which any individual, stable identity is reconciled with a larger, ever-changing, and poetic identity of metaphor.

Metonymy, Decreation, and Antiapocalypse

Speaking of revelation, Stevens' idea of revelation is closely related to another idea— "decreation": "Modern reality is a reality of decreation, in which our revelations are not the revelations of belief, but the precious portents of our own powers" (NA,[34] 175). Decreation, the other motive of Stevens' long pursued dialectic between imagination and reality, is clearly stated in "An Ordinary Evening in New Haven":

We keep coming back and coming back

To the real: to the hotel instead of the hymns

That fall upon it out of the wind.

<div align="right">(IX)</div>

The other motive is to return from the high revelatory vision to the "pure reality" and "reality grimly seen" ("An Ordinary Evening" IX, XIV) and search for "The Plain Sense of Things" and "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself" (CP, 502, 534). It is almost an imagist manifesto that persuades the fellow poets to dwell on the objectivity and particularity of things[35] and seek

---

[34] Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951. Print.

[35] Ezra Pound's *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste* asks the modern poets to present a "Direct treatment of the 'thing,' whether subjective or objective." William Carlos Williams also summarizes his poetics as "No ideas but in things" ("A Sort of Song").

The poem of pure reality, untouched

By trope or deviation, straight to the word,

Straight to the transfixing object, to the object

At the exactest point at which it is itself,

Transfixing by being purely what it is,

A view of New Haven, say, through the certain eye,

The eye made clear of uncertainty, with the sight

Of simple seeing, without reflection. We seek

Nothing beyond reality.

<div align="right">("An Ordinary Evening" IX)</div>

Retreating from metaphor's high vision, Stevens returns to a pure objectivity where any artificial description and added meaning are withdrawn, and what is left is "the dilapidation of dilapidation," "the total leaflessness," and "the dominant blank" ("An Ordinary Evening" XVI, XVII). This great repression of meaning for the sake of preservation of being is what Bloom calls Stevens' *kenosis*, a "metonymic isolation and emptying out" (120; 309), or more succinctly what Stevens himself calls "decreation." The word is borrowed from Simone Weil and Stevens explains that:

> She says that decreation is making pass from the created to the uncreated, but that destruction is making pass from the created to nothingness. Modern reality is a reality of decreation, in which our revelations are not the revelations of belief, but the precious portents of our own powers. The greatest truth we could hope to discover, in whatever field we discovered it, is that man's truth is the final resolution of everything.
>
> <div align="right">(*NA*, 174-5)</div>

In "The Decreations of Wallace Stevens" Cook explains that decreation "is seeing the *schema* of the world move from a *schema* of something that is created—a world issued, say, by divine fiat from the Logos—to a *schema* of something that is uncreated" (1980: 46, emphasis original). This is why Stevens starts "Notes" with a fable of decreation:

Begin, ephebe, by perceiving the idea

Of this invention, this invented world,

The inconceivable idea of the sun.

You must become an ignorant man again

And see the sun again with an ignorant eye

And see it clearly in the idea of it.

(I)

In this case, a mythological schematizing process of helio-troping is exposed and uncreated ("Phoebus is dead, ephebe" [I]) through "an ignorant eye" which is the Snow Man's eye that also appears as the "eye's plain version" in "An Ordinary Evening" (I).[36]

Totally contrary to the revelatory vision brought by metaphors, what Stevens wants the reader to see through the decreative vision is a glimpse of the things themselves stripped of any imaginative coloring (if this vision is really possible at all). This vision is, to use Cook's idea, an "antiapocalypse" or a "commonplace apocalypse" where revelatory reconciliation is replaced by commonplace appearances without any profound reality hidden behind (1988: 267). J. S. Leonard and C. E. Wharton in *The Fluent Mundo* point out that "Stevens, to overcome subjective obscurations, performs various mental and linguistic gymnastics that thwart the imagination's insidious chromatisms, making possible a momentary revelation of 'the things themselves.' The poet-as-critic becomes a de-creative creator inscribing an anti-poetic poetry" (2).

Returning to "An Ordinary Evening," Stevens' poetic drama of decreation, the passage just quoted (IX) is devoid of metaphor, nor is there any imaginative disclosure that usually comes along with Stevens' metaphors. Bloom observes that these lines are a "metonymic rejection of poetry" which is "destroying the only language in which poems can be written" (317). What Bloom means by "metonymic" is not simply the prose-like composition and repetitive syntax and diction, which can be well presented in Helen Vendler's style:

---

[36] Decreation is not destruction, as Stevens himself explains. Decreation is also itself a creative use of imagination: "the absence of the imagination had itself to be imagined" ("Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing itself"), and "Ozymandias said the spouse, the bride / Is never naked. A fictive covering / Weaves always glistening from the heart and mind" ("An Ordinary Evening" VIII). Hence it is "a *schema* of something that is uncreated" rather than the total destruction of schemata (Cook, 1980: 46). The Snow Man's eye, as well as the ephebe's "ignorant eye" and "the eye's plain version" ("An Ordinary Evening"), is also itself a schema that will undergo a series of metamorphoses that will be examined in the next section.

We keep coming back

    and coming back

         To the real:

         to the hotel….

straight to the word

Straight to the *transfixing object*,

      to the *object*…

      Transfixing by being purely what it is

A view of New Haven, say, through the *certain* eye,

The eye made clear of *uncertainty*….

What Bloom means by the "metonymic rejection of poetry" is also the absence of a poetic vision that anchors and enables the reader to see a new heaven or a new earth. Instead, what these lines offers is a "pure" reality—a plain version of New Haven in an ordinary evening— and the reader moves from the surface of one thing to another by logic of contiguity and displacement ("To the real: to the hotel…."), and what is left is our "improvisational sensibility" without any interpretive guidance (Leonard and Wharton, 6).

According to Roman Jakobson's influential definition (itself a modification of de Saussure's definition), metonymy is the principle of syntagmatic combination based on the relation of contiguity, which is dichotomized against metaphor as the principle of paradigmatic selection and substitution based on the relation of resemblance ("Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances").[37] Jakobson's categorization of literary genres according to metaphor and metonymy has been very influential:

The primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged, but it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the

---

[37] See chapter 1, p.4-5

so-called "realistic" trend, which belongs to an intermediary stage between the decline of romanticism and the rise of symbolism and is opposed to both. Following the path of contiguous relationships, the realist author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. He is fond of synecdochic details. In the scene of Anna Karenina's suicide Tolstoi's artistic attention is focused on the heroine's handbag; and in War and Peace the synecdoches "hair on the upper lip" and "bare shoulders" are used by the same writer to stand for the female characters to whom these features belong.

<div align="right">(91-2)</div>

A significant implication is that metaphor usually offers a guiding interpretive structure, while metonymy digresses from such a structure and presents a "realistic" world where objects are represented "as themselves" and arranged rather contingently without necessarily a coherent narrative and plot. Hence, metonymy is a crucial part in Stevens' motive for decreation that frees us from the established interpretive hegemony and returns us to "the eye's plain version" ("An Ordinary Evening" I). Accordingly, I would like to draw attention to a tendency that in the movement of decreation, as the imaginative vision gives way to the objective reality, metaphor also retreats from the scene for metonymy to emerge as the primary trope to represent, paradoxically and impossibly, a "pure" reality "untouched / By trope or deviation."

In "The Latest Freed Man," the transition from metaphor to metonymy is evident. The Hoon-like figure's metaphorical identifications and transmutations of sun-man, man-ox, and sun-ox give way to a decreative vision in which being is "being without description" and morning is simply "color and mist" and everything is "bulging and blazing and big *in itself*":

> It was the importance of the trees outdoors,
> The freshness of the oak-leaves, not so much
> That they were oak-leaves, as the way they looked.
> It was everything being more real, himself
> At the centre of reality, seeing it.
> It was everything bulging and blazing and big in itself,
> The blue of the rug, the portrait of Vidal,
> Qui fait fi des joliesses banales, the chairs.

<div align="right">(*CP*, 205)</div>

The oak-leaves, rug, portrait, and chairs are metonymically arranged through the logic of contiguity, and they are things themselves without the imposition of banal descriptions by outmoded doctrines. Similarly, "The Poems of Our Climate" presents the readers with
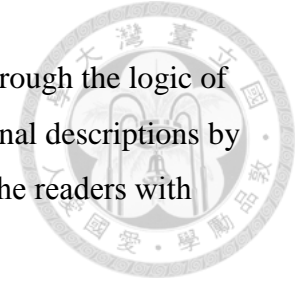
> Clear water in a brilliant bowl,
> Pink and white carnations. The light
> In the room more like a snowy air,
> Reflecting snow. A newly-fallen snow
> At the end of winter when afternoons return.
> Pink and white carnations—one desires
> So much more than that. The day itself
> Is simplified: a bowl of white,
> Cold, a cold porcelain, low and round,
> With nothing more than the carnations there.

<div align="right">(CP, 194)</div>

The verbal economy and plain descriptions with unembellished adjectives almost make for an imagist expression. Even the simile here ("The light / In the room more like a snowy air") is almost a straightforward description of a typical phenomenon. Were it not for the qualification after the dash, the passage might be Stevens' equivalent of William Carlos Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow." In "Metaphors of a Magnifico" another seemingly imagist picture emerges after the metaphorical attempts have failed in the previous lines:

> The boots of the men clump
> On the boards of the bridge.
> The first white wall of the village
> Rises through fruit-trees.
> Of what was it I was thinking?
> So the meaning escapes.
>
> The first white wall of the village...
> The fruit-trees....

<div align="right">(CP, 19, ellipses original)</div>

Likewise, in "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," the readers experience a flux of sensations and a collection of visual pictures, as if what underlies the poem is Ezra Pound's adoption of Japanese haiku:

> XII
>
> The river is moving.
> The blackbird must be flying.
>
> XIII
>
> It was evening all afternoon.
> It was snowing
> And it was going to snow.
> The blackbird sat
> In the cedar-limbs.

(*CP*, 94-5)

In "The Snow Man," arguably Stevens' most decreative vision, the winter landscape is displaced from a traditional and over-metaphorized *topos* (the "misery in the sound of the wind") to a surface description of contingent objects:

> One must have a mind of winter
> To regard the frost and the boughs
> Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;
>
> And have been cold a long time
> To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
> The spruces rough in the distant glitter
>
> Of the January sun.

(*CP*, 9-10)

90

In addition to metaphor and symbol, metonymy is another master trope of modern (American) poetry, embraced especially by Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams. In his "Objective Image and Act of Mind in Modern Poetry," Charles Altieri suggests that "[f]or Pound and Williams, metonymy is a step in the right direction because the creation of an empty background forces one to attend to the energy present in particular objects, experiences, and thoughts" (109). Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow," one of the most metonymic poems in English language, consists of the metonymic cataloguing of objects juxtaposed by the logic of contiguity without narrative or plot:

> so much depends
> upon
>
> a red wheel
> barrow
>
> glazed with rain
> water
>
> beside the white
> chickens.

In pursuit of objective materiality, Williams refuses metaphor because metaphor means saying one thing in terms of another rather than seeing the thing properly in its own right and because metaphor often imposes a subjective interpretive structure on the images. Williams remarks: "This thing I wanted to do. This is, after all, the substance, therefore, the explanation, of my poems and my life in which *there exists* (instead of '*you exist*')," the "you" being a subjective intervention in the object (*Imaginations*, 302, emphasis original). For Williams, straightforward and metonymic description of objects without any authoritative interpretive scheme is the best that language can do to approach immediate objects and experiences. To a certain extent, Stevens shares with Williams an anti-metaphorical tendency in the belief that metaphor alienates humans from objects and experiences, and this is usually the moment that metonymy plays the main role in Stevens' language.

In "Bouquets of Roses in Sunlight" Stevens writes pejoratively about metaphor as something that detaches us from the things themselves:

Say that it is a crude effect, black reds,

Pink yellows, orange whites, too much as they are

To be anything else in the sunlight of the room,

Too much as they are to be changed by metaphor,

Too actual, things that in being real

Make any imaginings of them lesser things.

……………………………………………………………

Our sense of these things changes and they change,

Not as in metaphor, but in our sense

Of them. So sense exceeds all metaphor.

<div align="right">(CP, 431-2)</div>

Similarly, in "Credences of Summer," Stevens regards metaphor as something digressive or even distorting:

Let's see the very thing and nothing else.

Let's see it with the hottest fire of sight.

Burn everything not part of it to ash.

Trace the gold sun about the whitened sky

Without evasion by a single metaphor.

Look at it in its essential barrenness

And say this, this is the centre that I seek.

<div align="right">(CP, 373)</div>

In "Add This to Rhetoric" Stevens favors a more truthful figure which seems to be based on metonymy over an "evading metaphor":

The poses of speech, of paint,

Of music—Her body lies

Worn out, her arm falls down,

Her fingers touch the ground.

Above her, to the left,

A brush of white, the obscure,

The moon without a shape,

A fringed eye in a crypt.

The sense creates the pose.

In this it moves and speaks.

This is the figure and not

An evading metaphor.

Add this. It is to add.

<div align="right">(CP, 199)</div>

In "Metaphors of a Magnifico," metaphor is ridiculed and renounced in a different way:

Twenty men crossing a bridge,

Into a village,

Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,

Into twenty villages,

Or one man

Crossing a single bridge into a village.

This is old song

That will not declare itself...

Twenty men crossing a bridge,

Into a village,

Are

Twenty men crossing a bridge

Into a village.

That will not declare itself

Yet is certain as meaning…

Stevens is playing with the most prevalent metaphorical structure "X is Y" here, but the tenor cannot really have a heterogeneous vehicle to initiate a productive interaction. Instead, the speaker can merely offer tedious synecdoches, shuffling between the particulars ("one man," "a bridge," and "a village") and the collectives ("twenty men," "twenty bridges," and "twenty villages"). But simply abstracting particulars into larger wholes is dull and unproductive and compromises the sensuous particulars. A more bleak view emerges with the highest degree of similarity disorder in Jakobson's definition: the third stanza is a total tautology where there is no metaphorical transfer or substitution at all, and the statement is an insipid repetition. It is Stevens' sterile equivalent of Gertrude Stein's "A rose is a rose is a rose." Read allegorically, if the "Are" in the middle of the tautology is "the bridge of all metaphor" (Cook, 1988: 178), metaphor cannot cross the gap between sense perception (twenty men crossing a bridge into a village) and discursive representation and transfer. Hence, metaphor, or at least the futile synecdochic metaphor, is the "old song / That will not declare itself," like the wormy metaphors in "Delightful Evening" that dull our perceptiveness. The poem's final part presents an imagist picture with simple descriptions of objects of perception, as if the sense perception has to vanquish the fruitless speculation (Vendler, 1984: 22):

> The boots of the men clump
> On the boards of the bridge.
> The first white wall of the village
> Rises through fruit-trees.
> Of what was it I was thinking?
> So the meaning escapes.
>
> The first white wall of the village...
> The fruit-trees....

In "The Rejection of Metaphor," Helen Regueiro regards Stevens as no less an objectivist than Williams:

> The metaphor [for Stevens]… is an artifice that cannot take hold in reality. It is "never the thing but the version of the thing" [*CP*, 332], never the immediate object but the conscious image that the natural world rejects. Each version is a projection a little different from reality and ultimately a diversion from the object it projects. Instead of finding in metaphor a generation of reality, that poet sees "metaphor as degeneration" [*CP*, 444], always altering the object and undermining the possible experience.
>
> <div align="right">(179)</div>

Regueiro assumes that the reality Stevens seeks is the things in themselves and immediate experiences unadulterated by imaginative distortion, and therefore Stevens' decreative poetics intends to "silence itself" (181) and seek "a voice of silence" (190) in order to preserve the purity and exactness of experience and objectivity with minimum discursive intrusion. Thus, metaphors have to be reduced so that an empty background does not distract our attention away from objects or experiences depicted. Therefore we have Stevens split in two—Stevens the anti-metaphor objectivist and Stevens the believer in the metaphorical reality.

However, Stevens' self-contradiction is not difficult to resolve. As already pointed out in the very beginning of this chapter, what Stevens wants to dispel is those "wormy metaphors" that paralyze our imagination and perceptiveness, rather than the creative metaphors that revive us from the paralysis. His seeming contradiction may be the consequence of an imprecise use of terms. In "Three Academic Pieces," as he elaborates I. A. Richards' idea of metaphor's capability to create resemblance which is "one of the significant components of the structure of reality," Stevens suggests tentatively that "metamorphosis might be a better word" than metaphor (*NA*, 72). Metamorphosis or re-creation of reality is the major function of a metaphorically created resemblance that has the potential to reach a new supreme fiction. Metaphor *as* metamorphosis is Stevens' supreme figure and not an "evading metaphor."

To arrive at a world constituted by metaphor-metamorphosis, Stevens needs first to remove the wormy metaphors, and this usually involves withdrawing metaphors at all as a decreative-creative operation with a view to future metamorphosis. Decreation is the most extended operation in "An Ordinary Evening" that aims at seeing reality as it is ("not grim / Reality but reality grimly seen" XIV). During this decreative operation, Stevens' repression of metaphor is often accompanied with metonymy's coming to the center. Metonymy

emphasizes the contingency of the world as well as its resistance to the symbolic and metaphorical enclosure, and such emancipation from the wormy metaphor's domination and from an illusionary logocentric presence behind signs is the redeeming function of metonymy. Metonymy, as a figure of pure displacement and combination, is necessarily a decentering center without any fixed meaning. Moreover, Benamou suggests how significant a role metonymy plays in Stevens:

> The death of metaphor coincides in the poetry of Wallace Stevens with the birth of a hero. This coincidence comes as no surprise if we keep in mind the post-symbolist act of "decreation." A shift from maternal to heroic imagery takes place at the end of the *Harmonium* period, 1914-1931. At the same time that the moon is eclipsed by the sun and the symbolic constellations of the hero, style changes from the impressionist metaphors to the cubist metonymies.
>
> (477)

For Benamou, Stevens' hero born out of the death of metaphor is the figure of metonymy, so to speak. Such a hero is a hero of decentering, continuously displacing and separating himself from the tyranny of outmoded metaphors' false totality and unity. To a certain extent, metonymy is Stevens' figure of decreation *par excellence* that enables him to perform a heroic *askesis*, but it is also a trope of turning and crossing toward a new supreme fiction.

   According to Benamou, "The Man with the Blue Guitar" is one of the earliest expressions of Stevens' heroes of metonymic mode, for the poem "concerns itself with absence, desire, and the rejection of all symbols of plenitude"[38] and it is "a poem of patches that 'cannot bring a world quite round' [*CP*, 165]; a poem of deprivation, refusing the consolations of metaphor" (479). In Bloom's term, Stevens performs a *kenosis* or "metonymic isolation and emptying out" (120) in the poem from section VII to XVII where the narrative context is destroyed by a "metonymic cataloging" (125). For example, in section VIII, Stevens writes:

---

[38] According to Lacan, desire is metonymic, since it keeps displacing from one signifier to another: "it is the connection between signifier and signifier that permits the lesion in which the signifier installs the lack-of-being in the object relation...in order to invest it with the desire aimed at the very lack it supports" ("The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," 167). Anthony Wilden explains it in a more accessible fashion: "metonymy, by the displacement of the 'real' object of the subject's desire onto something apparently insignificant, represents the *manque d'être* (lack of being) which is constituent of desire itself" (*The Language of the Self*, 242-3). On the other hand, metaphor can temporarily halts the desire's metonymic chain by fixating on a certain signifier and producing a signified for the signifier (e.g. the Name-of-the-Father and the incest taboo).

The vivid, florid, turgid sky,

The drenching thunder rolling by,

The morning deluged still by night,

The clouds tumultuously bright….

<div align="right">(CP, 169)</div>

And in section IX he writes:

…the tragic robe

Of the actor, half his gesture, half

His speech, the dress of his meaning, silk

Sodden with his melancholy words,

The weather of his stage, himself.

<div align="right">(CP, 169-70)</div>

Section X presents:

Raise reddest columns. Toll a bell

And clap the hollows full of tin.

Throw papers in the streets, the wills

Of the dead, majestic in their seals.

And the beautiful trombones….

<div align="right">(CP, 170)</div>

The fragmented narrative, the absence of plot, and the relentless displacement and
combination downplay several potential allusions, such as the allusion to Genesis and Eliot's
The Waste Land in section VIII. With the contextual clues and associations withdrawn, an
empty background emerges against which nothing is really foregrounded. The language also

proceeds with a repetitive syntax and limited diction, as if it were issued by a similarity-disorder aphasic:

> It is the sun that shares our works.
> The moon shares nothing. It is a sea.

> When shall I come to say of the sun,
> It is a sea; it shares nothing;

> The sun no longer shares our works….

<div align="right">(VII)</div>

Benamou therefore assumes that such a metonymic decreation in "Blue Guitar" is "de-ontology, the ultimate displacement, Nietzschean more than Emersonian" (480). Similarly, Maeder, observing the poem's emptying out of a concrete mimetic narrative, remarks that "'The Blue Guitar' is the poet's most radical realization of the non-ontological possibilities of the chain of language" (127). As metonymy disintegrates the obsolete ontological structure offered by outworn metaphors, it also discloses an extra-ontological perspective in the sense that it does not exist in the current ontological framework (thus non-ontological) or it resists the framework (thus de-ontological).

The negation of decreation is the affirmation of the freedom that liberates us from the confines of outmoded metaphors. While there are other heroes of decreation, such as the Latest Freed Man, the Man whose Pharynx was bad, the sister of Canon Aspirin and the ephebe's mentor in "Note," Professor Eucalyptus of "An Ordinary Evening," and others, the prototypical hero of decreation of Stevens' is probably the Snow Man, who appears much earlier than the Man with the Blue Guitar at the very beginning of Stevens' career, and therefore, we may say, the hero of metonymy has always been there in Stevens. "The Snow Man" also exhibits minimally the swing from metaphoric to metonymic pole (i.e. from "the pine-trees *crusted* with snow" and "the junipers *shagged* with ice" to the rest of the poem), and the Snow Man is also the hero who dares to stare into the blank when the metaphor-mimesis is dispelled and whose transparent eyeball is a lasting motif throughout Stevens' career (e.g. "eye's plain version" in the later "An Ordinary Evening"). Both the Man with the

Blue Guitar and the Snow Man are "spirit[s] without a foyer"[39] ("Local Objects," *OP*, 112) who abandon our very impoverished epistemological home built upon the desolated metaphors even at the price of a broken language that cannot really refer to anything secure.
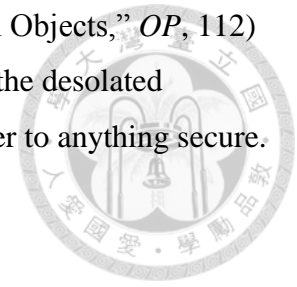
Metaphor Revisited—Metaphor *as* Metamorphosis
"The only possible order of life is one in which all order is constantly changing."
(*Letters* #328)

But Stevens is not Williams, and metonymy is not the final savior for Stevens either. As Albert Gelpi in "Stevens and Williams: The Epistemology of Modernism" claims: "Williams or Pound or Moore tend to think of the poem as an 'image of the world.' But the 'world of the image' is a more accurate phrase to describe Stevens' concern—or, in his own phrase, 'the *mundo* of the imagination,' for 'a poet's words are of things that do not exist without the words'" (14; *NA*, 57-8, 32). On the other hand, the ultimate consequence of metonymy is a relentless *différance*, in which anything is in danger of losing itself in the infinite differentiation and deferral. While metonymy frees the poems from some reigning interpretive structures, it nevertheless traps them into a "nauseating objectivity" that keeps displacing, deferring, and differing (Alteri, 103). Stevens' motive for decreation is not to reach the imagists' objectivity but rather purge the language of the old ways of seeing in order to come up with his own version of supreme fiction. The opening fable of decreation of "Notes" is only the prelude to the later reimaging of reality, and even in "An Ordinary Evening," the drama of decreation, the "eye's plain version" becomes the "endlessly elaborating poem" (*CP*, 465, 486). Stevens' decreation is the point zero from which the reimagination of reality starts anew. What follows the decreation is the revelation of "the precious portents of our own powers" and the understanding that "man's truth is the final resolution of everything" (*NA*, 175). Decreative metonymy is a means to sublimate metaphor in order for the metaphor to be transumptive and creative. This section will examine how metonymic decreation transforms into metaphoric metamorphosis.

As J. Hillis Miller points out in "Deconstructing the Deconstructers," many of Stevens' figures in his late lyrics oscillate between metonymy and metaphor (1975: 31). Miller, like de Man, regards metaphor as mimesis and metonymy as "a discontinuity or

---

[39] Cf. the foyer in "Crude foyer."

contingency which destroys mimesis" (1975: 31). Thus, Miller indicates that many of Stevens' late poems contain figures that function simultaneously as a metaphor and metonymy and are therefore "self-destructive, open to two simultaneous incompatible readings" (1975: 31). This feature, I believe, is also applicable to works of other periods, including the earlier "The Snow Man" and "Blue Guitar," and it can also guide us to read a unique Stevensian figure that is a flamboyant variant of Wordsworth's metaphorical resonance in which metaphor is submerged under metonymy, waiting for its exuberant metamorphosis. Following this trajectory, I would like to reread "The Snow Man" with Miller and Bloom as the exemplar of the transition from metonymic decreation to metaphorical metamorphosis. Let us simply focus on the final line of the poem, especially on "the nothing that is." Millers reads the final "nothing that is" as "being," which is

> a pervasive power, visible nowhere in itself and yet present and visible in all things. It is what things share through the fact that they are. Being is not a thing like other things and therefore can only appear to man as nothing, but it is what all things must participate in if they are to exist at all.
>
> (*Poets of Reality*, 279).

On the contrary, Bloom reads the final nothing

> as a passion for transumption, as a trope-undoing trope, rather than as a trope for "being." To behold "nothing that is" is also "to behold the junipers *shagged* with ice," so that "nothing" is rather a tangled and mangled nothing…. The listener, reduced to nothing, remains human because he beholds something shagged and rough, barely figurative, yet still a figuration rather than a bareness. This "nothing" is the most minimal or abstracted of fictions, and yet still it is a fiction.
>
> (62-3, emphasis original)

This conflict of interpretations is exactly the result of the figure's oscillation between metonymy and metaphor as Miller suggests. Miller reads "the nothing" as a metonym for no-thing ("Being is not a thing like other things and therefore can only appear to man as nothing") and for no-place ("being…[is] a pervasive power, visible nowhere in itself…."), which in their turn are also metonyms for being, which is limited to nothing and nowhere. On the other hand, Bloom does not read "*the* nothing" as no-thing but as *something*, whose

obscure existence is a repressed and contained metaphor for "a passion for transumption," a Stevens' alternative to Emerson's transparent eyeball that sees anything ("the junipers *shagged* with ice" included) when it is reduced to nothing (61).[40] Even though it is meant to stand for the absence, "the nothing" is still the presence of something, just as "the total leaflessness" (*CP*, 477) is itself a trope, one of the "time's images," because "the absence of the imagination / had itself to be imagined" (*CP*, 503).

Conflating Miller's and Bloom's mutually exclusive readings can indicate a *decreative-transumptive ontology of metaphor*. The conflict zone is also the point of convergence. It is precisely because the trope-undoing trope is itself undone at first—reduced to a metonymic nothing/no-thing—that "the nothing" can metaphorically transform into almost anything and without really being fastened onto anything. Stevens' decreation is a kind of negative ontology that purges us of any established metaphorical formation and figuration, returning us to a "pure" reality or at least to "a *schema* of something that is uncreated," and it is only out of this antiapocalyptic and purgatorial process that the potentiality of any new metaphorical vision and revelatory identification can emerge (Cook, 1986: 40, emphasis original). "[T]he nothing" is not only a prefiguration of "the junipers shagged with ice" but also of "the sound of the wind" and "the sound of the land / Full of the same wind." In its metamorphoses, the trope of nothing conflates wind and land and confuses the inside and outside:

> …. and not to think
>
> Of any misery *in* the sound of the wind,
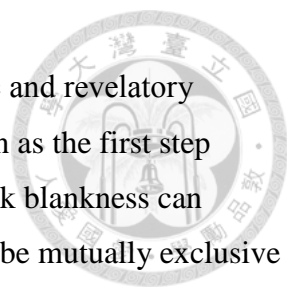> In the sound of a few leaves,
>
> Which *is* the sound of the land
> *Full of* the same wind
> That is blowing in the same bare place….
>
> <div align="right">(CP, 10, emphasis mine)</div>

---

[40] Emerson writes in *Nature*:

> We return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life,—no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite spaces,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.
>
> <div align="right">(10, Essays and Lectures)</div>

Such an interactive fusion is a miniature of Frye's notion of apocalyptic and revelatory reconciliation, but it is often accompanied with an antecedent decreation as the first step toward a new supreme fiction. Moreover, to a certain extent, as the bleak blankness can become a potential for transumption, metonymy and metaphor cease to be mutually exclusive opposites but an extension of each other, as the metaphor contained in metonymy is released and becomes a metamorphic force. The true figure in Stevens is the pure oscillation between decreation and recreation and between metonymy and metaphor.

Blooms assumes that the Emersonian Snow Man is the prototype of the magnificent sun-man Hoon:

> The Snow Man is not yet Hoon, but he is going to be, and that *potentia* is felt in the *pathos* of his poem's closing trope…. Let us call "Pharynx" ["The Man Whose Pharynx Was Bad"] a large, composite trope of *ethos*, "The Snow Man" such a trope of *logos* or "crossing," and "Hoon" the most beautiful, so far, of Stevens' exaltations of the will or of *pathos* conceived as Emersonian Power.
>
> (63-4)

This reading is compatible with my reading of a decreative-transumptive ontology in Stevens. Bearing this in mind, let us reread "Blue Guitar" and "An Ordinary Evening."

Stevens says that the subject of "The Man with the Blue Guitar" is "the incessant conjunctions between things as they are and things imagined" (*Wallace Stevens: Collected Poetry and Prose*, 998). Hence, the poem starts with a statement of metamorphosis:

> The day was green.

> They said, "You have a blue guitar,
> You do not play things as they are."

> The man replied, "Things as they are
> Are changed upon the blue guitar."
>
> (I)

The audience is asking for a realistic song of "things as they are" that sings the "green" of the day, but what the guitarist plays is a variation (Maeder, 128): "things as they are / Are changed upon the blue guitar." In "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words," Stevens explains his idea about reality and things as they are: "The subject matter of poetry is not that 'collection of solid, static objects extended in space' but the life that is lived in the scene that it composes; and so reality is not that external scene but the life that is lived in it. Reality is things as they are" (*NA*, 25). By "things as they are," Stevens does not mean the empirical reality but rather a Romantic reality where the subjective and the objective interact, though Wordsworth does not describe this reality as "things as they are" but as things "as they *seem* to exist to the *senses,* and to the *passions*" ("Essay Supplementary to Preface," 63, emphasis original). To a certain extent, we may say that Stevens unites "things as they are" with "things as they seem to be," thus affirming the collocation of is and as that is crucial to every poetic metaphor ("The gay tournamonde as of a single world / In which he is and as and is are one" ["An Ordinary Evening" XV]). Indeed, "things as they are" never stay the same:

> If to serenade almost to man
> Is to miss, by that, things as they are,
>
> Say that it is the serenade
> Of a man that plays a blue guitar.

<div align="right">(II)</div>

While the old song, possibly epic (Cook, 2007: 115), can only celebrate ancient heroes and previous supreme fictions, that is, things as they were that are now obsolete and fragmented ("I cannot bring a world quite round, / Although I patch it as I can. / I sing a hero's head, large eye, / And bearded bronze, but not a man…" [II]), "things as they are" now float through the serenade played upon a blue guitar:

> And that's life, then: things as they are,
> This buzzing of the blue guitar.

<div align="right">(IV)</div>

Furthermore, the blue guitar becomes not only a musical instrument but also an extra-ontological place where the "real" and "unreal" integrate and where new "things as they are" are heard and created, as if Hoon is claiming "my ears made the blowing hymns they heard" once he is liberated from the outworn "thinking of god":
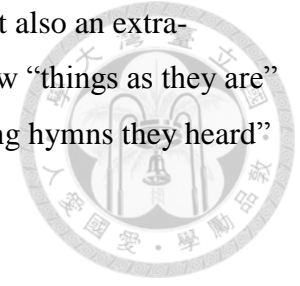
> For a moment final, in the way
> The thinking of art seems final when
>
> The thinking of god is smoky dew.
>
> The tune is space. The blue guitar
> Becomes the place of things as they are,
> A composing of senses of the guitar.
>
> (VI)

On the other hand, as a result of Stevens' typical oscillation, the blue guitar is reduced to a mere "mould" and "shell," but the emptied-out images are to be released into a series of metamorphoses later:

> The blue guitar a mould? That shell?
> Well, after all, the north wind blows
>
> A horn, on which its victory
> Is a worm composing on a straw.
>
> (XVII)

Stevens tells us, rather strangely, that the north wind "blows with little or no sound" (*Letters*, 360, 1940). The imaginative blue guitar, Stevens' Eolian harp, diminishes into an empty shell, whimpering sounds as inaudible and silent as the voice of "a worm composing on a straw," another wormy image. But it is a diminuendo before a forthcoming crescendo, as the wriggling ephebe is about to break out his cocoon:

> A dream (to call it a dream) in which
> I can believe, in face of the object,

A dream no longer a dream, a thing,

Of things as they are, as the blue guitar

After long strumming on certain nights

Gives the touch of the senses, not of the hand,

But the very senses as they touch

The wind-gloss. Or as daylight comes,

Like light in a mirroring of cliffs,

Rising upward from a sea of ex.

<div align="right">(XVIII)</div>

Reality or "things as they are" is not a reduction to empirical reality, for the guitarist's act of believing materializes the dream into "a thing," which is also one thing among the "things as they are" (Cook, 2007: 122). Projection is the first act of a similar operation in "An Ordinary Evening":

It is the philosopher's search

For an interior made exterior

And the poet's search for the same exterior made

Interior: breathless things broodingly abreath

With the inhalations of original cold

And of original earliness.

<div align="right">(XXII)</div>

The second act, introjection, begins as the dream-thing starts a journey of metaphors in order to be introjected into the poet-guitarist' mind. The literal "as" of "thing as they are" becomes increasingly metaphorical as it evolves into the "as" of "as the blue guitar /After long strumming on certain nights," of "the very senses as they touch," and of "as daylight comes," and finally metamorphoses into the "like" of "Like light in a mirroring of cliffs, / Rising

upward from a sea of ex." The reality is now volatile as Stevens tells us that "[t]he imagination takes us out of (Ex) reality into a pure irreality. One has this sense of irreality often in the presence of morning light on cliffs which then rise from a sea that has ceased to be real and is therefore a sea of Ex" (*Letters*, 360, 1940). The dream-thing the guitarist materializes is absorbed into metaphors, which become a verbal thing that exists both outside and inside the poet's mind. The projection and introjection of reality is what Bloom believes to be Stevens' characteristic use of metalepsis or transumption: "Stevens introjects his own poetic future and projects or casts out his poetic past, at the knowing expense of any poetic resolution in the present moment"[41] (133). As a result, a unification of senses, including the exterior senses (hearing, touching, and seeing) and the interior sense (imagination), is achieved through a series of metamorphoses like that in "Sea Surface Full of Clouds." The unification is completed in "the very senses as they touch / The wind-gloss"—since we cannot really touch gloss, we touch it with the amalgamation of all senses and sense, which is the "universal intercourse" that appears later in the poem (XII) or Wordsworth's "intercourse of sense" (1850 *Prelude*: II, 240).

  As the desolate wormy image of XVII transforms into an apocalyptic and transcendent unification in XVIII, it metamorphoses even more into "the lion in the lute" in XIX:

    That I may reduce the monster to
    Myself, and then may be myself

    In face of the monster, be more than part
    Of it, more than the monstrous player of

    One of its monstrous lutes, not be
    Alone, but reduce the monster and be,

    Two things, the two together as one,
    And play of the monster and of myself,

    Or better not of myself at all,

---

[41] The expense of present moment is the "original cold" and "original earliness" acquired with the decreative Snow Man's eye, and out of this vision the reimagination of reality arises.

But of that as its intelligence,

Being the lion in the lute
Before the lion locked in stone.

Stevens himself identifies "the monster" with "nature: the chaos and barbarism of reality" and Cook identifies it as "the lion locked in stone" (Cooks, 2007: 123); either way, the monster is the empirical reality that is to be accommodated into imagination. Like the wind-land conflation in "The Snow Man," the monster is both inside and outside: "That I may reduce the monster *to* / myself, and then may be myself / *In face of* the monster, be more than *part* / *Of* it." The great force of the monster is difficult to contain so it can escape from the imaginative mind's control. Or better still, the monster that later becomes a sublimating metaphor—"the lion in the lute," the supreme figuration of the Man with the Blue Guitar—is a creature of Hoon's fluid reality where both inside and outside and both projection and introjection are merged into one larger whole in which one loses one's own identity: "the two together as one, / And play of the monster and of myself, / Or better not of myself at all, / But of that as its intelligence, / Being the lion in the lute / Before the lion locked in stone." In this Stevens' *Song of Myself*, the self and reality are constantly changing and merging into each other, and this rhapsody is the "tune beyond us, yet ourselves" that the audience requests in Section I.

The metamorphic images of musical animals proceed from the Man with the Blue Guitar to the "worm composing on the straw" and to "the lion in the lute," and finally to the jay of the final section that is Stevens' equivalent of Shelley's skylark or Keats' nightingale:

We shall forget by day, except

The moments when we choose to play
The imagined pine, the imagined jay.

(XXXIII)

The "green" of the "pure" reality that the audience has asked for in Section I returns, but not without a metamorphosis—the metonymic green of day becomes the metaphorical green of "the *imagined* pine" on whose branches the blue of "the *imagined* jay" shines, as the "gold-

feathered bird" that shines upon the palm in "Of Mere Being." As Bloom remarks, the "imagined" here "has achieved a transumptive freshness. We are very near to the 'every-early candor' of 'Notes' and to the celebration of that candor as 'an elixir, an excitation, a pure power'" (135). At the end of the poem we start all over, just as the palm and gold-feathered bird in "Of Mere Being" that "stand[] on the edge of space," ready to cross to another realm unexplored, and what awaits us is not just a fresh beginning but also a refreshed end: "Alpha continues to begin. / Omega is refreshed at every end" ("Notes" VI). As the silenced worm and the monster of empirical reality evolve into "the lion in the lute"—a creature of metamorphic reality—the audience's unimaginative green is transformed with the blue melody into a turquoise that is the gem of poetry in which "he is and as and is are one" and "Real and unreal are two in one" (*CP*, 476, 485).

Stevens' decreation is a seed for revelation, and after decreation comes vision splendid. In "An Ordinary Evening," soon after the antiapocalyptic statement—"We seek / The poem of pure reality, untouched / By trope and deviation"—what follows is not the "simple seeing" of the "eye made clear of uncertainty" but a high vision in which everything visible and invisible is extensively troped and included in a visionary wholeness (IX):

> We seek
> Nothing beyond reality. Within it,
>
> Everything, the spirit's alchemicana
> Included, the spirit that goes roundabout
> And through included, not merely the visible,
>
> The solid, but the movable, the moment,
> The coming on of feasts and the habits of saints,
> The pattern of the heavens and high, night air.
>
> <div align="right">(CP, 471-2)</div>

The "eye made clear of uncertainty" does not see simply, or rather, it sees simply *and* splendidly. As a major figuration of the motive for metaphor in Stevens, the Emersonian eye is almost always a trope of crossing out and crossing, and in this case, we cross from the crossed out tropes uncreated ("The poem of pure reality, untouched / By trope or deviation") to a creative oneness. The eye/I that sees "the dilapidation of dilapidation," "the total

leaflessness," and "the dominant blank" (*CP*, 476-7) is itself a submerged and sublimating metaphor. As the "eye made clear of uncertainty" sees "the spirit alchemicana" which is the imagination's genius, the Emersonian eye also becomes a Hoon-like figure whose world is both his projection and introjection: the world consists of "not merely the visible, / The solid, but the movable, the moment, / The coming on of feasts and the habits of saints, / The pattern of the heaves and high, night air."

The transparent eyeball personified—Professor Eucalyptus, *eucalyptus* etymologically meaning "sudden uncovering," which also implies a "natural revelation" as the flower eucalyptus gradually unfolds itself (Cook, 2007: 266)—also gradually evolves from a resolute objectivist to another Hoon:

> The dry eucalyptus seeks god in the rainy cloud.
> Professor Eucalyptus of New Haven seeks him
> In New Haven with an eye that does not look
>
> Beyond the object. He sits in his room, beside
> The window, close to the ramshackle spout in which
> The rain falls with a ramshackle sound.
>
> (XIV)

Sitting in a scene metonymically arranged, the hero of decreation gradually reveals himself as a Hoon of New Haven:

> The instinct for heaven had its counterpart:
> The instinct for earth, for New Haven, for his room,
> The gay tournamonde as of a single world
>
> In which he is and as and is are one.
>
> (XV)

Stevens explains his own coinage "tournamonde": "For me it creates an image of a world in which things revolve and the word is therefore appropriate in the collocation of is and as" (*Letters*, 699n). Things revolve and evolve dynamically rather than staying as they are. If "he is and as and is are one," then revelation is a process through which being oneself is

becoming and self-othering, a "living changingness" (*CP*, 380) in which the self and reality are constantly split and integrated into each other. This is the world where Hoon asserts that "I found myself more truly and more strange," where "A tune beyond us, yet ourselves" can be heard, and where otherness/selfness and projection/introjection comingle. Hence the earth is not a bare place but "the earth / Seen as inamorata, of loving fame, / Added and added out of a fame-full heart" ("An Ordinary Evening" XXVI).

The most ascetic and reductive part of "An Ordinary Evening" is arguably Canto XVI, which Vendler believes is the "desiccation itself" and an "unimaginable ruin" (*On Extended Wings*, 272):

> Among time's images, there is not one
> Of this present, the venerable mask above
> The dilapidation of dilapidations.
> ………………………………………………
> The venerable mask,
>
> In this perfection, occasionally speaks
> And something of death's poverty is heard.
> This should be tragedy's most moving face.
>
> It is a bough in the electric light
> And exhalations in the eaves, so little
> To indicate the total leaflessness.

(*CP*, 476-7)

Vendler assumes that these "bare tokens, the most meager signs" imply "the whole decay of nature, the total leaflessness of his [Stevens'] life, the lifelessness of his leaves" (1969: 273). On the other hand, Bloom suggests that "the total leaflessness" is itself a sublimating metaphor that is set "against the fiction of the leaves" (323). Again, the conflict of interpretation is the consequence of treating "the total leaflessness" as either metonymy or metaphor. "An Ordinary Evening" invites such interpretive conflict, since it is a drama of both decreation and recreation, of both antiapocalypse and apocalypse. Yet here our interest is rather the transition from decreation to revelation, so let us focus on Stevens' submerged and sublimating metaphor embedded in metonymy. Substituting for "the junipers shagged

110

with ice," "the total leaflessness" is another image seen through the Snow Man's eye and another passion for transumption. Hence, "the total leaflessness" is also a "venerable mask," one of the "time's images" put on the surface of the uncreated scene. The simplest street view of New Haven is also a projected reality, no matter how seriously the projection is checked by Stevens' ascetic repression. The very first affirmation of "An Ordinary Evening" is that "The eye's plain version is a thing apart, / The vulgate of experience" (I). The "total leaflessness" is such a thing realized and actualized metaphorically, a thing apart from yet a part of reality.[42]

In one of the most eloquent and moving cantos (XXVIII), we are finally released from the pressure of decreative repression:

If it should be true that reality exists
In the mind: the tin plate, the loaf of bread on it,
The long-bladed knife, the little to drink and her

Misericordia, it follows that
Real and unreal are two in one: New Haven
Before and after one arrives or, say,

Bergamo on a postcard, Rome after dark,
Sweden described, Salzburg with shaded eyes
Or Paris in conversation at a café.

This endlessly elaborating poem
Displays the theory of poetry,
As the life of poetry. A more severe,

More harassing master would extemporize
Subtler, more urgent proof that the theory
Of poetry is the theory of life,

---

[42] Stevens has played the pun elsewhere in "Notes": "It is the celestial ennui of apartments / That sends us back to the first idea" (*CP*, 381). A supreme fiction should be apart from the previous fictions but remains a part of the reality and community. On a postcard he sent to his wife's parents, Stevens writes: "Our house is under the mark. Our floor is next to the top. Therefore, we face the chapel, which is only across the street. Chimes every evening. *We are not a part of the chapel*—but apart from it. Hence, the word apartment. Hope this is clear" (*Souvenirs and Prophecies: The Young Wallace Stevens*, 246, 1909).

As it is, in the intricate evasions of as,

In things seen and unseen, created from nothingness,

The heavens, the hells, the worlds, the longed-for lands.

<div align="right">(CP, 486-7)</div>

After the extended ascetic reduction and repression, Hoon is revived and the reality is expanded to include the irreality and the imagined: "Real and unreal are two in one" "in the intricate evasions of as." We no longer need to distinguish the real from the unreal, and metaphor's evasions turn out to be a positive figure that relieves us of the pressure of empirical reality, as long as the "as" amalgamates the "as" of "things as they are" and the "as" of metaphorical resemblance. "[C]reated from nothingness," the opening trope "eye's plain version" that starts from the point zero of imagination finally becomes a phantasmagoria ("The heavens, the hells, the worlds, the longed-for lands"). The collection of metonymic descriptions ("the tin plate, the loaf…"; "Bergamo on a postcard, Rome after dark…"; "The heavens, the hells, the worlds, the longed-for lands") also becomes a series of metaphorical appositions that keeps "endlessly elaborating" a tenor—New Haven or "the earth / Seen as inamorata" (XXVI). Such a visionary amalgamation of decreation and revelation is exactly how Stevens defines decreation: "Modern reality is a reality of decreation, in which our revelations are not the revelations of belief, but the precious portents of our own powers" (*NA*, 175). Hence, although it is true that "[t]he death of metaphor coincides in the poetry of Wallace Stevens with the birth of a hero" (Benamou, 477), the hero of decreation is only the first transformation Stevens' metamorphic heroes take before they are confident enough to become the almighty and ever-changing Hoon, the Stevensian hero of becoming *par excellence*.

In Canto XXIX, one of the most moving cantos I believe, New Haven undergoes its last series of metamorphoses in the poem:

In the land of the lemon trees, yellow and yellow were

Yellow-blue, yellow-green, pungent with citron-sap,

Dangling and spangling, the mic-mac of mocking birds.

In the land of the elm trees, wandering mariners

Looked on big women, whose ruddy-ripe images

Wreathed round and round the round wreath of autumn.

They rolled their r's, there, in the land of the citrons.
In the land of big mariners, the words they spoke
Were mere brown clods, mere catching weeds of talk.

When the mariners came to the land of the lemon trees,
At last, in that blond atmosphere, bronzed hard,
They said, "We are back once more in the land of the elm trees,

But folded over, turned round." It was the same,
Except for the adjectives, an alteration
Of words that was a change of nature, more

Than the difference that clouds make over a town.
The countrymen were changed and each constant thing.
Their dark-colored words had redescribed the citrons.

(*CP*, 486-7)

The land of the lemon trees is an image of paradise, Goethe's paradise most probably (Cook, 2007: 272; Bloom, 333), and the land of the elm trees is a metonym for New Haven as Elm Tree City or a synecdoche for this earth. The mariners of the earth sailing for heaven are Ulysses, a synecdoche for all the great voyagers including poets. The mariners discover that the land of lemon trees *is* the land of the elm trees, because the paradise above is also the paradise within and the grand voyage outward is also the voyage inward. New Haven *is* heaven, which is also "Bergamo on a postcard, Rome after dark, / Sweden described, Salzburg with shaded eyes / Or Paris in conversation at a café." "Real and unreal are two in one" and New Haven is both a new heaven and a new earth. In this New Haven/new heaven, "Description is revelation" (*CP*, 344), since "the adjectives" and "an alteration of words" are "a change of nature" that "had redescribed the citrons." Thus the land of the elm trees "folded over, turned over"—that is, troped[43]—is the land of the lemon trees *and vice versa*. If turquoise is the Blue Guitar's ultimate color that blends reality with imagination, New

---

[43] Etymologically, trope means "to turn."

Haven's color is the multi-colors of bird of paradise, the prototype of the mockingbird here,[44] whose "mic-mac" mixed with the mariners' "r's" will be a new song for the Man with the Blue Guitar.

The final canto gives us the residents of New Haven/new heaven who are Hoon's other selves.

> The less legible meanings of sounds, the little reds
> Not often realized, the lighter words
> In the heavy drum of speech, the inner men
>
> Behind the outer shields, the sheets of music
> In the strokes of thunder, dead candles at the window
> When day comes, fire-foams in the motions of the sea,
>
> Flickings from finikin to fine finikin
> And the general fidget from busts of Constantine
> To photographs of the late president, Mr. Blank,
>
> These are the edgings and inchings of final form,
> The swarming activities of the formulae
> Of statement, directly and indirectly getting at,
>
> Like an evening evoking the spectrum of violet,
> A philosopher practicing scales on his piano,
> A woman writing a note and tearing it up.
>
> It is not in the premise that reality
> Is a solid. It may be a shade that traverses
> A dust, a force that traverses a shade.

(*CP*, 488-9)

---

[44] The North American mockingbird is the counterpart of the European nightingale, the bird of an earthly paradise (Cook, 2007: 272).

All the things described and catalogued metonymically in the first six lines are things in transition and transmutation, which are "Flicking from finikin to fine finikin." The line's epicurean rhythm, rhyme, and semantic unpredictability is poetry's "luminous melody of proper sound" ("Notes" VII): "Poetry is a finikin thing of air / That lives uncertainly and not for long / Yet radiantly beyond much lustier blurs" (*CP*, 155). The metonymic cataloguing of the residents of New Haven/new heaven is another series of metaphoric appositions predicating directly the "major man" ("Notes" VIII) of Stevens' heroes and indirectly the "final form" of reality. As its various predications, the "final form" of reality is necessarily volatile and formless:

> It is not in the premise that reality
> Is a solid. It may be a shade that traverses
> A dust, a force that traverses a shade.

Reality becomes a pure force of crossing and metamorphosing. Bloom remarks: "Stevens ends his great poem on 'shade,' but the final emphasis is upon a force crossing a 'shade,' and so freshly breaking a form, writing another canto on an ordinary evening in New Haven" (337). In the end the poem starts all over again and the reality restarts afresh, with everything, everyman, and every image melted into a formless metamorphic identity. In the end the ultimate commonplace becomes the greatest apocalypse and an ordinary evening in an ordinary city becomes another supreme fiction in a new heaven and a new earth.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

       As mentioned earlier in the end of chapter one, the thesis aims at engaging with the interaction theory and supplementing the theory if possible, so let us retrace our progress so far. In chapter two, we have seen how Donne's extravagant vehicles produce a "semantic surplus" that exceeds and overwhelms their tenors. Paradoxically, the seemingly limitless potential for the interaction between the tenors and vehicles actually impedes a meaningful union between them. The tension in disparity is so intense that the literal "is not" forcefully outweighs the metaphorical "is." As a result, the tenors are lost in the semantic dissemination and distanciation of the vehicles. The juxtaposition of the tenors and vehicles ends up highlighting and even heightening the original split between them. Donne's metaphors are not so much about synthesis than antithesis, just like Stevens' final metaphor in "The Motive for Metaphor" that "ends in an X not a +" (Cook, 1988: 187). Donne's examples, or we may say counterexamples, of the interaction theory cannot but let us wonder: is every interaction a "co-operation" (rather than "uncooperation") that can create a new similarity (Richards, 100)? Is distanciation a kind of interaction nonetheless? If not (then what rules it out?), what exactly initiates a unifying and meaningful interaction and transference? In other words, Donne's (counter)examples challenge the interaction theory by pointing toward an unresolved difficulty—the exact process by which a metaphor is produced and recognized.

       Aristotle's and Richards' definitions are more descriptive than explicative of a phenomenon that we call metaphor—i.e. the transfer from one conceptual boundary to another (e.g. a genus or a species) or the creation of a new concept by interaction. But how does the transfer and interaction occur and what prevents it from taking place? Ricoeur endeavors to answer the questions by referring to Kant's schematism. But the same problems remain: how does the transfer from one schema to another or the interaction between schemata occur, and, on the other hand, what forestalls the transfer and interaction? According to the theories I am familiar with, including the cognitive theory, the production of metaphorical meaning remains a mysterious process. Aristotle says that "a good metaphor implies an *intuitive* perception of the similarity in dissimilars," and Ricoeur's Kantian orientation does not go too far from this conception (*Poetics* 1459a, emphasis mine). The metaphorical transfer and interaction simply occur, and an interpreter of metaphor simply knows it: metaphor is "the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius" (*Poetics* 1459a). It seems disheartening and futile that at the end of the thesis we

cannot really go beyond the limit of the established theories. Yet perhaps it is less so if we recognize that the limit is also a motivation for the ongoing research and that a counterexample may serve as a constructive modification to the theories, say, qualifying and refining the definition of tension in disparity by delineating a conceptual threshold over which the tension can hardly be productive.

On the contrary, chapter three examines Wordsworth's metaphorical resonance, in which the tension in disparity exists in forms scarcely detectable, since the tenor is "not an object distinct from the vehicle" (Wimsatt, 109). Wordsworth's "deliberate blurring of tenor and vehicle" (Lindenberger, 657) into one focal word also enables the reversibility between tenor and vehicle without evoking the analogical structure. Thus, Wordsworth's use of metaphor also downplays two essential concepts of the interaction theory, namely, the semantic clash and the irreversibility between tenor and vehicle. Regarding the problem of semantic clash, Wordsworth is the opposite of Donne, putting into question the concept of tension in disparity as a necessary qualification of metaphor. For Wordsworth's metaphorics, it seems that the "co-operation" of several focal words is sufficient to activate a productive interaction and create new meanings (Richards, 100). On the other hand, it is perfectly logical for the interaction theory to assume the irreversibility between tenor and vehicle, since "this man is a lion" is simply different from "this lion is a man." However, Wordsworth's belief in the One Life overcomes the split between tenor and vehicle and thereby the clash between a metaphorical statement and its reverse as well.

Wordsworth's use of metaphor encourages us to reconsider what the necessary qualification(s) of metaphor is. The two anomalies Wordsworth presents with regard to the interaction theory are in fact related to one thing: Wordsworth's use of metaphor usually develops metaphor in terms of total identity (i.e. X *is* Y and therefore Y *is* X), which has much to do with the One Life philosophy. (Stevens' apocalyptic metaphorics also emphasizes the metaphor as total identity.) Hence, for Wordsworth's speaker in "There was a Boy," there is little difference between "the lake is my mind" and "my mind is the lake" in a world of total union. However, as a predicative and semantic theory that distinguishes between subject, copula and predicate, the interaction theory finds it rather difficult to accept metaphor as total identity. But that does not necessarily prevent metaphor as total identity from becoming a good metaphor as Wordsworth (and Coleridge and Stevens) shows us, especially when his metaphors do not exhibit explicit tenor-vehicle structure that implies separation and when the metaphors are as figurative as they are literal (i.e. the metaphorical "is" is accompanied with the literal "is").

In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye characterizes five kinds of metaphor: 1) metaphor as simple juxtaposition; 2) metaphor as simile; 3) metaphor as an analogy; 4) metaphor as an individual identified with its class (synecdochical metaphor); 5) metaphor as total identity (123-5). The second, third, and fourth kinds of metaphor are already included in Aristotle's typology, and the first and the fifth kinds can also be incorporated into Aristotle's general definition of metaphor as the transference as such. For the interaction theory however, it is the first kind of metaphor that is of most importance, since a predication is, simply put, a subject juxtaposed with a predicate through copula, which is also the basic structure for interaction. Yet if we accept that metaphor is not an ordinary mechanism that can be subsumed under the normal predicative and propositional principles, other kinds of metaphor can still be good metaphors.

Finally, Stevens offers what I believe to be one of the most effective illustrations of the interaction theory: his metaphors' signature movement—a constant oscillation between all the possibilities of a metaphor—epitomizes the spirit of interaction. The interaction of a metaphor is "The A B C of being" in "The Motive for Metaphor" that hovers between potentiality and actuality, that is, between the two *pays de la métaphore*: "a natural, changing world of metamorphosis, and a place of art, of fixing, of againstness, a forge" (Cook, 1988: 183). Further, the metaphorical interaction is also a pure force of transferring, crossing (out), and metamorphosing that ends one of Steven's most impressive masterpieces: "It is not in the premise that reality / Is a solid. It may be a shade that traverses / A dust, a force that traverses a shade" ("An Ordinary Evening" XXXI).

Also, as J. Hillis Miller points out, "there is an unperceived emptying out of both" during metaphor's oscillation between imagination and reality (1964: 100). This emptying not only unfastens metaphor from any particular essence and offers a momentary glimpse of (metaphor's) being pure and simple, but also indicates a modernist motive of metaphor—dissociating itself from the established tradition in order to "force, to dislocate if necessary, language into meaning," or in Stevens' terms, to imagine a new supreme fiction (T. S. Eliot, 289). In terms of metaphor theory, Stevens' metaphors defy the "law of precedence" proposed by Goodman: "Even where a schema is imposed upon a most unlikely and uncongenial realm, antecedent practice channels the application of the labels" (74). Likewise, Black's idea that metaphor works like a "filter" or "screen" is equally inapplicable, since what Stevens' metaphors strive to elude is the influence of the anterior language use (in poetry). In other words, with Stevens, we have to return to a more general definition of

metaphor—either Aristotle's general principle of transference or Richards' "two thoughts of different things active together" (Richards, 95).

Moreover, during its oscillation, metaphor becomes metonymy and then goes back again. The ultimate trope in Stevens is the pure oscillation between decreation and recreation and between metonymy and metaphor, and the two master tropes cease to be mutually exclusive opposites but an extension of each other. The intertwinement between metaphor and metonymy is also an operation visible in Donne and Wordsworth. In the process, the metaphor is becoming more and more "realistic," "actual," and even literal, a process that Kerrigan attributes to the effect of "cumulative metaphor" (43). In Ricoeur's terms, it is a creation of a new schema by interaction through which we always see the world. Donne overloads the tenor with numerous vehicles in order to drop the tenorial references and achieve a new literalness in a newly realized world of metaphors. The rape in "Batter my heart" is not merely a metaphor for union but almost becomes a "real" presence, a metaphor-turned metonym that transforms the entire poem from a fantasy to a detailed account of an "actual" event. On the other hand, the Wordsworthian metaphorical resonance usually turns a metonym into a metaphor. In the "Immortality" ode, Wordsworth writes: "Hence in a season of calm weather / Though inland far we be, / Our souls have sight of that immortal sea" (ll. 165-7). The "inland" is both a real interior of a county and the subjective depth and inwardness, and "a season of calm weather" is also both a real season and a mind-weather taking place in a mind-space. Stevens shares both Donne's and Wordsworth's uses of metaphor. The relentless oscillation of metaphor detaches a metaphor from any established meaning, giving rise to an undeterminable image, such as "The A B C of being in "The Motive for Metaphor." It is also possible for metaphor to transform into a "real" thing, the Blue Guitar that "Becomes the place of things as they are" for instance ("The Man with the Blue Guitar" VI). On the other hand, an apparent metonym is also metaphorically resonant and full of metamorphic potential, like "the nothing" in "The Snow Man" and "the eye's plain version" and "the total leaflessness" in "An Ordinary Evening."

The intermingling of metaphor and metonymy not only redresses the Jakobsonian dichotomy with a well-rounded semantic theory of metaphor (and metonymy), but also exemplifies metaphor's desire to realize imagination. Actualization and metaphor is connected in *Rhetoric*: metaphor "sets the scene before our eyes" in a state of activity, which enables us to "seize a new idea promptly" (*Rhetoric* 1410b). Or in Ricoeur's terms, the schema offered by a metaphor can be an epistemological basis for us to grasp new knowledge by presenting before the eyes the world seen through a certain perspective that has not existed

before the metaphor. For our philosophers and poets, metaphor is an incessant dialectic between imagination and reality, striving to create such a world-disclosing perspective for us to redescribe and recreate the reality; it is therefore a necessary angel of reality as Stevens' words describe it:
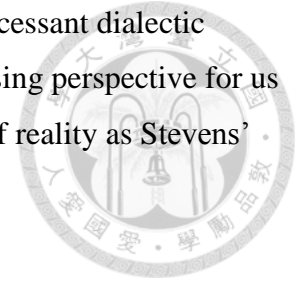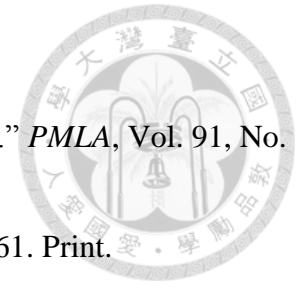
> …I am the necessary angel of earth,
> Since, in my sight, you see the earth again,
>
> Cleared of its stiff and stubborn, man-locked set,
> And, in my hearing, you hear its tragic drone
>
> Rise liquidly in liquid lingerings,
> Like watery words awash….

<div align="right">(CP, 496-7)</div>

Works Cited

Altieri, Charles. "Objective Minds and Acts of Mind in Modern Poetry." *PMLA*, Vol. 91, No. 1 (1976), p101-14.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. S. H. Butcher. New York: Hill and Wang, 1961. Print.

---. *Rhetoric*. Trans. New York : Modern Library, 1984. Print.

Barthes, Roland. *Elements of Semiology*. Trans. **Annette Lavers and Colin Smith.** New York: Hill and Wang, 1967. Print.

Barfield, Owen. "The Meaning of 'Literal.'" *Literary English Since Shakespeare*. Ed. George Watson. London: Oxford U P, 1970. Print.

Beardsley, Monroe. "The Metaphorical Twist." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Mar., 1962), p. 293-307.

Benamou, Micheal. "Displacements of Parental Space: American Poetry and French Symbolism." *boundary* 2, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Winter, 1977), p471-486.

Benveniste, Emilie. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek and Coral Gables. Florida: U of Miami P, 1971. Print. (*Problèmes de linguistique générale*. Paris: Gallimard, 1966)

Belsey, Catherine. "John Donne's Worlds of Desire." In Mousley.

Binkley, Timothy. "The Truth and Probability of Metaphor." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Winter, 1974), pp. 171-180.

Black, Max. *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1962. Print.

---. "Metaphor." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 55 (1954 - 1955), p. 273-294.

---. "More about Metaphor." *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.

Bloom, Harold. *Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate*. Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1977.

Brodsky, Claudia. "Donne: The Imaging of the Logical Conceit." *John Donne and the Seventeenth-Century Metaphysical Poets*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1986. Print.

Brooks, Cleanth. "The Language of Paradox." *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*. London: Methuen, 1968. Print.

---. *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965. Print.

Bruns, Gerald. "Stevens without Epistemology." In Gelpi.

Cazeaux, Clive. *Metaphor and Continental Philosophy: From Kant to Derrida*. New York: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Clair, John A. "John Donne's 'The Canonization.'" In Norton.

Cohen, Jean. *Structure du langage poétique*. Paris: Flammarion, 1966. Print.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Collected letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. E. L. Griggs. London: Oxford UP, 1956. Print.

Cook, Eleanor. *Poetry, Word-Play, and Word-War in Wallace Stevens*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1988. Print.

---. *A Reader's Guide to Wallace Stevens*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2007. Print.

---. "The Decreations of Wallace Stevens." *Wallace Stevens Journal,* Vol. 4, No. 3/4 (1980) p46.

Corthell, Ronald. *Ideology and Desire in Renaissance Poetry: The Subject of Donne*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. Print.

De Man, Paul. "The Rhetoric of Temporality." *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*. 2nd revised ed. U of Minnesota P, 1983. Print.

---. "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image." *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*. New York: Columbia U P: 1984.

---. "Symbolic Landscape in Wordsworth and Yeats." *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*. New York: Columbia U P: 1984.

---. *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*. New Haven: Yale U P, 1979. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. "White Mythology." *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Print.

---. "The Retrait of Metaphor." *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*. Ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2007. Print

Eco, Umberto. "The Scandal of Metaphor." *Poetics Today*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Metaphor (1983), p. 217-257.

Eliot, T. S. "The Metaphysical Poets." *Selected Essays*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1958. Print.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson. "Nature." *Essays and Lectures*. Ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America, 1988). Print

Empson, William. "Sense in *The Prelude*." *The Prelude*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, et al. New York: W. W. Norton, 1979. Print.

Ferguson, Frances. "The Lucy Poems: Wordsworth's Quest for a Poetic Object." *ELH* Vol. 40, No. 4 (Winter, 1973), p. 532-548.

Ferry, David. *The Limits of Mortality*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1959.

Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: An Approach to A Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis : Hackett, 1976. Print.

Fish, Stanley. "Masculine Persuasive Power: Donne and Verbal Power." In Mousley.

Fontanier, Pierre. *Les Figures du discours*. (1830) Paris: Flammarion 1968. Print.

Frye, Northrop. "The Realistic Oriole: A Study of Wallace Stevens." *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1957), p353-370.

---. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U P, 1957. Print.

Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: An Approach to A Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis : Hackett, 1976. Print.

Guibbory, Achsah. "'Oh Let Mee Not Serve So': The Politics of Love in Donne's *Elegies*." *ELH* 57 (Winter 1990): 811-33, reprinted in Norton

Halpern, Richard. "The Lyric in the Field of Information: Autopoiesis and History in Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*." In Mousely.

Harries, Karsten. "Metaphor and Transcendence." *On Metaphor*, Ed. Sheldon Sack. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Print.

Hartman, Geoffrey. *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1964. Print.

---. "Nature and the Humanization of the Self in Wordsworth." *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. M. H. Abrams. London: Oxford UP, 1975. Print.

---. *The Geoffrey Hartman Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U P, 2004. Print.

---. *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987. Print.

Hinchliffe, Keith. "Wordsworth and the Kinds of Metaphor." *Studies in Romanticism*, 23:1 (1984, Spring) p81-100.

Jakobson, Roman. "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disorders." *The Fundamentals of Language*. Ed., R. Jakobson and Morris Halle. The Hague: Mouton, 1980. Print. Reprinted in his *Language in Literature*, 95-114. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987. Print.

---. "Linguistics and Poetics." Closing Statement in *Style in Language*. Ed., T. A. Sebeok. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960. Print. Reprinted in his *Language in Literature*, 62-94. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987. Print.

Jones, Mark. *The "Lucy Poems": A Case Study in Literary Knowledge*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1995. Print

John Donne. Ed. Andrew Mousley. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999. Print.

John Donne's Poetry. Ed. Donald R. Dickson. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007. Print.

Kant, Immanuel. (1929) *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith, London: Macmillan. Original work published 1781; second, revised edition published 1787. References are to pagination in the original first and second editions, signified by 'A' and 'B' respectively and given in the margins of the translation.

Kerrigan, William. "The Fearful Accommodations of John Donne." *John Donne and the Seventeenth-Century Metaphysical Poets*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1986. Print.

Kirby, John. "Aristotle on Metaphor." *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 118, No. 4 (Winter, 1997), p. 517-554.

Kroeber, Karl. *The Aritfice of Reality: Poetic Style in Wordsworth, Foscolo, Keats, and Leopardi*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1986. Print.

Lacan, Jacques. "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious." *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. Trans, Bruce Fink, et al. New York: Norton 2006. Print.

---. *The Psychoses 1955-1956*. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 3. Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Trans. Russel Grigg. New York: Norton, 1993. Print.

Lakoff, George. "Contemporary Theory of Metaphor." In Ortony.

---. and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003. Print.

---. and Mark Turner. *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989. Print

Laplanche, Jean and J. –B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*. Trans. Donald. N. Smith. New York: Norton, 1973. Print.

Leonard, J. S. and C. E. Wharton. *The Fluent Mundo: Wallace Stevens and the Structure of Reality*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1988. Print.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Structural Study of Myth and Totemism*. Ed. Edmund Leach. London: Routledge, 2004.

Lindenberger, Herbert. "Images of Interaction in *The Prelude*." *The Prelude*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, et al. New York: W. W. Norton, 1979. Print

Lodge, David. "The Language of Modernist Fiction: Metaphor and Metonymy," *Modernism: 1890-1930*. Ed. **Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane.** London: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.

---. *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature*. New York: Cornell U P, 1977. Print.

Maeder, Beverly. *Wallace Stevens' Experimental Language: The Lion in the Lute*. Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1999. Print.

Marotti, Arthur F. "'Love is not love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order." *ELH*, Vol. 49 (1982): 396-428.

---. *John Donne, Coterie Poet*. Madison: U of Wisconsin Press, 1986. Print.

Matlak, Richard, E. "Wordsworth's Lucy Poems in Psychobiographical Context." PMLA, 93.1 (1978): 46-65

Miller, J. Hills. *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965. Print.

---. "Wallace Stevens' Poetry of Being." *ELH*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Mar., 1964), p86-105.

---. "Deconstructing the Deconstructers." *Diacritics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer, 1975), p24-31.

Redpath, Theodore. *The Songs and Sonets of John Donne*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge MA: Harvard U P, 2009. Print.

Regueiro, Helen. *The Limits of Imagination: Wordsworth, Yeats, and Stevens*. Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1976. Print.

Reinhart, Tanya. "On Understanding Literary Metaphor." *Linguistic Perspectives on Literature*, ed. Marvin L. Ching, et al. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. Print.

Richards, I. A. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Rule of Metaphor*. Trans. Robert Czerny, et al. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.

---. "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling." *On Metaphor*, Ed. Sheldon Sack. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Print.

---. "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics." *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*. Ed. Mario J. Valdés. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. Print.

---. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976. Print.

---. *Time and Narrative.* Vol. 1. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1984. Print.

Ryle, Gilbert. *The Concept of Mind*. London: Hutchinson, 1949. Print.

Sacks, Sheldon, ed. *On Metaphor*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978. Print.

Searle, John R. "Metaphor." In Ortony.

Sloan, Thomas O. "The Rhetoric in the Poetry of John Donne." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 3, No. 1, The English Renaissance (Winter, 1963): 31-44.

Stevens, Wallace. *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. New York: Alfred A. Kopf, 1954. Print.

---. *Letters of Wallace Stevens*. Ed. Holly Stevens. New York: Alfred A. Kopf, 1972. Print.

---. *Wallace Stevens: Collected Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Frank Kermode and Joan Richardson. New York: Library of America, 1997. Print.

---. *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and the Imagination*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951. Print.

---. *Opus Posthumous*. Ed. Milton J. Bates. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.

Strier, Richard. "John Donne Awry and Squint: The 'Holy Sonnets,' 1608-1610." *Modern Philology*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (May, 1989): 357-384.

Tuve, Rosemund. *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1947. Print.

Vendler, Helen. *On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems*. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1969. Print.

---. *Wallace Stevens: Words Chosen Out of Desire*. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1986. Print.

Wilden, Anthony. "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other." *The Language of the Self*. Trans. Anthony Wilden. Baltimore: John Hopkins U P, 1968. Print.

Williams, William Carlos. *Imaginations*. London: Mac Gibbon & Kee, 1970. Print

Williamson, George. "The Two Worlds of Donne." *Six Metaphysical Poets: A Reader's Guide*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967. Print.

Wimsatt, W. K. Jr. "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery." *The Verbal Icon*. Kentucky: The University of Kentucky Press, 1954. Print.

Wordsworth, Jonathan. "Wordsworth's Borderers." *English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism*. Ed. M. H. Abrams. London: Oxford UP, 1975. Print.

Wordsworth, William. "Essay Supplementary to *Preface*" *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1974. Print.